



FACT SHEET ONE: PRIORITISING THE VOICES OF WOMEN IN SECURITY IN NIGERIA

The Facts

Since Nigeria returned to democracy in 1999, it has been faced with internal conflicts linked to issues relating to marginalisation, citizenship and identity politics, resource control, and elections.

In recent times, the insurgency in the North East has led to the country dealing with her worst humanitarian crisis since the civil war in 1967.

Women and children continue to be the worst affected by these conflicts. For example, out of the 111,387 persons in the formally recognised IDP camps in Borno State, there are 30,519 women and 34,925 girls as at 11th March 2017. This means 58% of the total population in the camps are women and girls.

Apart from being victims, women and girls are also becoming more active in conflict situations either on the side of formal security agencies like the military and police; informal or non-state security outfits like the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), and the insurgents such as Jama'atu Ahulus – Sunnah Lidda'Awati Wal Jihad (JAS) also known as Boko Haram.

Including Women in Security Dialogues

It's becoming more apparent that women have a role to play in promoting security in Nigeria even as they continue to struggle with socio-cultural inhibitions. As a patriarchal society, Nigeria continues to consciously or unconsciously reinforce these inhibitions.



Cross Section of Women at the 3-Day Workshop on Prioritising the Voices of Women in Security in Nigeria

There is a need to create spaces for women to express their opinions and listen to them, rather than simply acknowledging them as victims or perpetrators of violence.

It is vital to engage women as social actors with their own views and contributions. This can be done by encouraging women, nonprofit workers, or community and religious leaders to support the formation of women groups, which gives them a chance to formulate and create spaces to express their opinion to decision-makers and the broader society in ensuring that they have the opportunity to be heard.

Ongoing dialogues in Kaduna, Benue, Plateau, Borno, Yobe, Adamawa and the Niger Delta broadly aimed at addressing security challenges should include creating safe spaces and opportunities for women to share their opinions and make contributions to addressing these challenges and ensuring the restoration of peace.