



**RULE OF LAW AND EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE**  
also known as **PARTNERS WEST AFRICA NIGERIA**

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## **President Buhari, Army Council should re-think gender discriminatory practices in Defence**

**Abuja, 14 Nov. 17--** President Muhammadu Buhari's recent meeting to revise the National Defence Policy 2014 on the Harmonised Terms and Conditions of Service Officers 2017 has drawn the attention of the Rule of Law and Empowerment Initiative, also known as Partners West Africa-Nigeria (PWAN). We are concerned about the decision by the Army Council to reverse progress made in 2013 towards the recruitment of female combatant cadets as contained in Recommendation 19 of the new Harmonised Terms and Conditions of the Armed Forces of Nigeria, which proposes to "Phase out the training of female regular combatant cadets".

Just recently, the National Assembly was debating the need to repeal some sections of the Police Act (2004) that discriminate against women, including providing disparity in age requirement for recruitment into the Force. The Act prescribes that a female officer intending to marry must have served a minimum of 3 years in the Force, a provision not required for male officers.

The new Harmonised Terms and Conditions of the Armed Forces of Nigeria and other discriminatory developments are gloomy for the security sector, and for women who have contributed to serving their nation, as well as girls who would aspire to do so. This is in particular as Nigeria is signatory to International instruments such as the United Nations Resolution 1325 which is geared towards mainstreaming women in peace and security. This contradiction is also glaring in the light of Nigeria's re-launch of her Action Plan on Resolution 1325 (2-17-2020), which seeks to support women's participation and representation in security processes and provide space for women's interactions in governance and decision making structures.

We call on the President and members of the Army Council to re-think its decision and address the issues of disparities within the nation's security agencies, taking into cognisance the important and valuable role of mainstreaming women as agents of peace, safety and security. We reaffirm that representation in security should be based on competency. We will continue to advocate for policies that represent opportunities and give equal platforms for every citizen of Nigeria to participate irrespective of gender, religion and ethnic background. Nigeria's security policymakers must continue to strive for a more inclusive security sector that will live up to their constitutional mandate of protecting the territorial integrity of the country.

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