

ALLIANCES FOR AFRICA (AFA) SUBMISSION ON NIGERIA

UN UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW 31ST SESSION OF THE UPR WORKING GROUP, OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2018

Alliances for Africa is an African led International human rights, peace and sustainable development organization and makes this submission on Nigeria by reviewing human rights commitments Nigeria has made and the current situation with particular focus on women's human rights.

THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN NIGERIA

Nigeria is signatory to many international and regional human rights treaties including Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Protocol to the African Charter of the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol). The 1999 Constitution of Nigeria provides for the fundamental human rights citizens.

Nigeria accepted 175 out of 219 recommendations during the last UPR review of Nigeria in October 2013. These included recommendations to domesticate CEDAW by enacting a national legislation such as the Gender and Equal Opportunities bill and Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) bill into law.

The following are the concerns on the ongoing human rights violations against women in Nigeria and recommendations to address them.

Gender based Discrimination and Violence Against Women

Hundreds of women in Abuja between 2011 to 2017 have been harassed by agents of the Abuja Environment Protection Board (AEPB) supported by the Nigerian Police Force and Nigerian Military on the basis of carrying out their statutory function of keeping Abuja environment clean and by extension getting rid of prostitutes and destitute persons on the streets of Abuja. There appears to be a systematic and institutional abuse of women's rights by security agents and lack of protection by the government to address this.

Four women in the case of Dorothy Njemanze & 3 others v Federal Republic of Nigeria before the Economic Community of West Africa (ECOWAS) court¹ challenged the arbitrary arrests, illegal detentions, psychological, verbal, physical and sexual abuse they experienced by the AEPB and its partners and demand for their rights. On 12 October 2017, the ECOWAS court held that Nigeria had violated the women's human rights and awarded three of them the sum of Six Million Naira (about US\$16,700) each. The government is yet to pay the damages.

¹ Suit no: ECW/CCJ/APP/17/14

The Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Act has been passed at the National level but same is yet to be domesticated in states apart from four namely Lagos, Ogun, Ekiti and Anambra that have passed similar laws.

Nigeria has the lowest number of women representatives in parliament in Africa and 181st position in the world.² Currently at the National Assembly out of 360 house of representative members, 20 are women while in the senate that has 108 seats, women occupy only 7 seats. , In March 2018, a communication company in Nigeria allegedly laid off over 100 workers with majority being married women. The affected women are considering legal action as to enforce their rights to freedom from gender discrimination.

The Gender and Equal Opportunity (GEO) Bill 2016, which specifically prohibits all forms of discrimination is still before the Senate. The bill has suffered series of setbacks; the latest being the postponement indefinitely of the public hearing of the bill by the Senate in December 2017. If the bill is passed, it would provide the legal framework for protecting women's human rights and holding government accountable for all forms of gender discriminations.

Recommendations:

- The Nigerian Enforce the ECOWAS Court decision in Dorothy Njemanze v Nigeria by ensuring that the claimants receive their damages and that security agent and others respect human rights by investigating, disciplining and prosecuting those who violates the rights.
- Expedite the passage of the Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill at Federal level and in states yet to adopt the bill

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² Women in National Parliaments by IPU: <http://archive.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>