

Policyweekly

Women, Peace, and Security Resolution 1325: How has Nigeria Fared?



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Policy Recommendations

- 1 The government should continue strengthening institutional frameworks for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in Nigeria.
- 2 There is a need to establish a robust monitoring and evaluation framework to ensure that the NAP is effectively implemented and achieving its intended outcomes.
- 3 There is a need to address the root causes of conflict in Nigeria, including socio-economic inequality, political instability, and environmental degradation.
- 4 Implementing gender policy in Nigeria requires a bottom-up approach that considers the local context and cultural norms of the various regions in the country.

Introduction

The United Nations Security Council adopted the Women's Peace and Security (WPS) Resolution 1325 in October 2000, recognising the gendered impacts of conflict and the need to address them¹. The WPS agenda encompasses four pillars: women's participation in decision-making and peace processes, gender mainstreaming in conflict prevention, protection of women's and marginalised groups' rights, and gender perspective in relief and recovery. Since UNSCR 1325, nine other resolutions on Women, Peace, and Security have been adopted, further emphasising the importance of women's participation in peace and security. Additional frameworks for implementing the WPS agenda and global commitment to women's rights include the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action².

Nigeria adopted and domesticated the UNSCR 1325 on WPS Agenda through National Action Plan (NAP). The NAP is a strategic framework that outlines a country's commitment to implementing the four pillars of the WPS Agenda³. Nigeria NAP on WPS is developed through a participatory process with government agencies, civil society, and stakeholders. The implementation is led by the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development with collaboration from other government agencies and civil society. The country's first NAP was adopted in 2013 and implemented from 2013-2017. However, gaps were identified, including emerging issues like violent extremism and post-conflict reintegration⁴. To address these gaps and adopt a broader framing, Second-Generation Action Plan was adopted in 2017 (2017-2020)⁵. In this edition of the Nextier SPD Policy Weekly, this policy brief reviews Nigeria's progress in achieving the WSP Agenda.

Overview of Nigeria National Action Plan (NAP) on WPS

The Nigeria NAP on WPS has five priority pillars that guide its implementation⁶. The first priority is preventing conflict and all forms of violence against women. This involves efforts to prevent conflict, disaster preparedness, and measures to prevent violence against women and girls, including sexual and gender-based violence. The second priority focuses on increasing women's participation and representation in peacebuilding and decision-making processes at all stages of peace and security processes. The third priority is protecting and promoting women's rights in conflict and post-conflict situations. This priority aims to ensure women's rights are protected during conflict and included in post-conflict reconstruction efforts.

The fourth priority focuses on ensuring that relief and recovery services are gender-responsive, with women's needs considered in efforts to provide healthcare, education, and economic opportunities. The final priority is partnerships, capacity building and institutional development, aimed at strengthening the capacity of relevant government agencies, civil society organisations, and other stakeholders to implement the NAP effectively. These priorities guide Nigeria's efforts to promote women's participation in peace and security, creating a more peaceful and secure society for all.

Progress made in implementing the NAP

Since its adoption, there has been some progress in implementing the Nigeria National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS). For instance, it has led to the establishment of institutional structures, such as the multi-sectoral national steering Committee on Women, Peace and Security, which coordinates the

implementation of the NAP across government ministries and agencies. The Nigerian government has also adopted policies and legal frameworks to address sexual and gender-based violence, including the Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) law⁷- domesticated in 33 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Kano, Kaduna, and Zamfara states are yet to pass the legislative bill for domestication⁸-the National Gender Policy and the National Security Strategy. These policies and frameworks provide a basis for addressing women and girls' specific needs and concerns in conflict-affected communities.

Over the years, the Nigerian government has made some efforts to increase women's participation in peace and security, including appointing women to key positions in the security sector, such as establishing women's corps in the Nigerian Army and the women of war for the Nigerian Air Force. The Nigerian Navy has equally deployed women as sailors and in other key positions. In addition to the establishment of gender desks within the military and other paramilitary agencies, the Nigerian Armed Forces and Police are making efforts to promote gender equality and empower women by establishing gender policies. The policies aim to eradicate gender-based discrimination and violence, offer equal opportunities, and encourage women's participation in leadership roles. The Nigerian Armed Forces introduced its gender policy in 2021, while that of the Nigerian Police Force was launched in 2010.

The Nigerian NAP has supported the development of women-led peacebuilding initiatives. Over the years, women's participation has increased in peacebuilding efforts⁹. While most of these efforts are in the informal space, women's organisations and movements have been instrumental in advocating for peace and conflict resolution, often through grassroots mobilisation and community-based initiatives.

These success stories and best practices demonstrate the potential impact of the NAP in promoting gender equality, women's empowerment, and peacebuilding efforts in Nigeria. However, despite these efforts, improving female representation in peacebuilding and closing gender gaps is challenged by a number of issues. First, Nigeria is very good at adopting and enacting policies and often fails to follow through with the necessary actions, resources, and sustained effort required to achieve the desired outcomes. The Nigerian National Security Council's (NCS) deeply male-dominated nature indicates this trend¹⁰. As a forum that advises the President on national and public security matters, the NSC plays a vital role in shaping policies and actions related to security. The absence of women's perspectives leads to the perpetuation of gender stereotypes and biases, undermining the effectiveness of security policies and actions.

¹UN Women (2023). Global norms and standards: Peace and security. Available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/peace-and-security/global-norms-and-standards>

²Ibid

³Peace women (2023). National Action Plans: At A Glance. Available at: <https://1325naps.peacewomen.org/>

⁴Peace women (2023). Available at: <https://1325naps.peacewomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/NAPNigeria.pdf>

⁵Ibid

⁶Ibid

⁷NAPTIP (2023). Available at: <https://naptip.gov.ng/violence-against-persons-prohibi->

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⁸PWANNigeria (2023). The Violence Against Person's Prohibition Act (VAPP) Available at: <https://www.partnersnigeria.org/vapp-tracker/>

⁹Nwokolo, N., Dlakwa, H., Donli, P., Kwaja, C., Anyanwu, N., & Maduagwu, K. (2019). Entrenching Peace: Assessing Community Resilience and Peacebuilding Initiatives in Northeast Nigeria. Abuja: Nextier SPD

¹⁰Abdullahi, M. (2021). Nigeria's National Security Establishment Has A Patriarchal Problem. Available at: <https://humanglemedia.com/nigerias-national-security-establishment-has-a-patriarchal-problem/>

In addition, the lack of specific mechanisms for enforcing the Nigerian National Action Plan (NAP) provisions is a major challenge that limits its effectiveness in promoting women's participation in decision-making. While the NAP provides a framework for advancing gender equality and women's empowerment, it would not achieve the desired outcomes without clear mechanisms for monitoring and enforcing its provisions. For example, the expiration of the Second-Generation Action Plan without the development and adoption of a new plan indicates a lack of sustained commitment and follow-through on the part of the government to prioritise gender equality and women's empowerment. Additionally, only 15 out of 36 states adopting the plan further highlights the challenges of implementing gender policies at the state level.¹¹

Furthermore, there is still a significant difference between policies and the day-to-day experience of Nigerian, especially women and girls. While the NAP aims to address the specific needs and experiences of women and girls in conflict situations, it fails to fully address the underlying root causes of conflict, such as poverty, inequality, and social exclusion. Women continue to be disproportionately affected by rising conflicts, with their rights and bodies targeted as weapons of war. Terrorism, banditry and kidnapping, militancy, and secessionist movements are among the most significant security challenges. The group has killed thousands of people and displaced millions, causing significant economic losses and social disruptions. The attacks in schools have led to the abduction of over 1,500 school children¹².

During these conflicts, women have been subjected to various forms of violence, including sexual and gender-based violence, forced displacement, and loss of family members and livelihoods. Women and girls have also been specifically targeted by Boko Haram, with reports of abductions, sexual slavery, and forced marriage. Due to the breakdown of social structures and the loss of traditional sources of support, women and girls have been forced to engage in transactional or survival sex. As conflict exacerbates pre-existing gender inequalities and discrimination, women and girls are more vulnerable to various forms of violence, including sexual and gender-based violence, forced displacement, and other forms of human rights abuses.

In addition to the direct impact of conflict, women face structural and systemic discrimination and marginalisation. One example is the inequality in

education, where 60 per cent of out-of-school children are girls¹³. The invisibility of women is particularly evident in positions of power and decision-making. Although women in the armed forces are now engaged in all areas of specialisation, including combat operations, their representation remains low compared to their male counterparts. Women's representation in political power positions has also declined. In the 8th National Assembly, there were only seven females out of 109 Senate seats and 22 females out of the 360 House of Representatives' seats. In the 9th National Assembly, the number of female Senators remained seven, and the number of female House of Representatives decreased to 11.¹⁴ The 10th Assembly will have fewer female members, as only 3 female Senators and 14 female House of Representatives members were elected.

Ultimately, improving female inclusion in all areas benefits society as a whole, leading to greater equality, stability, and prosperity. Improved female inclusion in education, security, and governance is important because it empowers women to contribute to their communities and improve their overall quality of life. It also helps to ensure that women's voices are heard and their needs are met in policy-making and decision-making processes. Addressing these challenges will require sustained commitment and action from government, civil society organisations, and other stakeholders to promote gender equality, women's empowerment, and peacebuilding efforts in Nigeria.

The Way Forward

Strengthening institutional frameworks: The government should continue strengthening institutional frameworks for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in Nigeria. This includes reviewing and reforming legal and policy frameworks to ensure gender-responsive and strengthening institutional structures and mechanisms for promoting gender mainstreaming and women's participation in decision-making processes.

Monitoring and evaluation: There is a need to establish a robust monitoring and evaluation framework to ensure that the NAP is effectively implemented and achieving its intended outcomes. Developing clear indicators and targets for measuring progress and establishing regular reporting and feedback mechanisms would help to achieve the desired result.

¹¹Aborisade, S. (2023). UN Tasks Governors on Action Plan for Women, Peace, Security. Available at: <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2022/12/09/un-tasks-governors-on-action-plan-for-women-peace-security/>

¹²Musa,N., Oyewole, R., and Musa,W. (2022). 'Eight years after Chibok, 11,536 schools closed, over 1,500 pupils abducted'. Available at : <https://guardian.ng/news/eight-years-after-chibok-11536-schools-closed-over-1500-pupils-abducted/>

¹³Sardauna, F. (2023). UNICEF Decries 18.5 Million Out-of-school Children in Nigeria. Available at: <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2022/05/12/unicef-decries-18-5-million-out-of-school-children-in-nigeria/>

¹⁴Eke, B.O. (2022). Women's Representation in Nigeria's National Assembly: An Assessment of Their Contributions to Legislative Activities of the 8th and 9th Assemblies. Available at: <https://ir.nilds.gov.ng/handle/123456789/889>

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Addressing root causes of conflict: There is a need to address the root causes of conflict in Nigeria, including socio-economic inequality, political instability, and environmental degradation. This requires a more comprehensive and integrated approach to peacebuilding and development, including promoting inclusive economic growth and addressing environmental degradation.

Bottom-up Approach: Implementing gender policy in Nigeria requires a bottom-up approach that considers the local context and cultural norms of the various regions in the country. While a national-level conversation on gender policy is important, expanding the conversation to include state and local-level engagements is equally essential. Local-level conversations on gender policy can provide a platform for stakeholders to identify, address, and overcome cultural barriers that impede the implementation of gender policy.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Nigeria National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) is an important policy document that seeks to promote gender equality, women's empowerment, and peacebuilding efforts in the country. The NAP provides a framework for addressing women's unique challenges in conflict and post-conflict situations and ensuring their meaningful participation in peace and security processes. While progress has been made in implementing the Nigeria National Plan on UNSR 1325, significant challenges and limitations still need to be addressed for the country to promote gender equality and a more peaceful and inclusive society for all.

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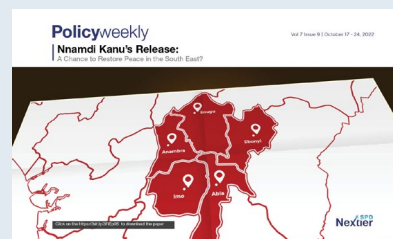
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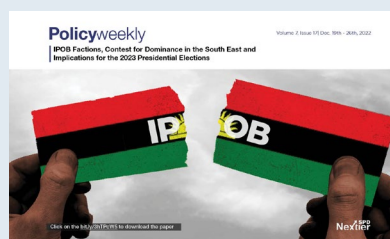
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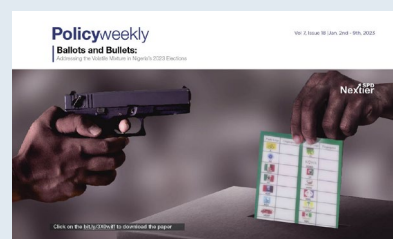
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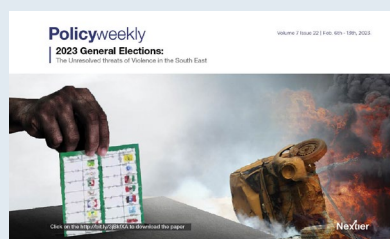
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