

**Women, Peace And Security Network Open Letter on the Current Security Situation in  
Nigeria**  
June 11, 2014

Dear Ministers,

We, concerned Nigerian civil society organisations, under the umbrella of the Women, Peace and Security Network, welcome growing national and international resolve to tackle insecurity in the north-east of our country. Concerted action is needed to tackle the impact of violent conflict and its underlying causes. We however regret that the women of Nigeria have been conspicuously absent from recent meetings related to peace and security in our country and in our region (Paris, 17 May and London, 12 June). We urge you to take immediate steps to involve Nigerian women, including those in civil society and those living in the north-east, into all future discussions and decision making aimed at bringing about peace in Nigeria.

The violence in the north-eastern states of Nigeria continues unabated, including serious gender-based crimes. The mass abduction of girls on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2014, just one example of a phenomenon that has been happening for several years, shows the serious implications of the on-going conflict for women.

As recognised by UN Security Council Resolutions, regional instruments and Nigeria's own National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, the promotion of women's rights and participation is critical to peace and security. Women in Nigeria continue to be excluded from local, national and international decision-making processes on peace and security. This is even though we constitute almost half of the Nigerian population and bear more than 80% of the brunt of the on-going alarming security situation.

From the Aba women's protests of 1929 and recent marches calling for peace and human rights in the north-east to their key roles of negotiating conflict and ensuring peace in communities, women continue to be at the forefront of maintaining peace and security in Nigeria. Unfortunately, this is not recognised and our capacities for peace initiatives not used in formal processes. We remain largely ignored, far removed from the decision making table where our lives and the fate of our children are being decided.

We ask that the Government of Nigeria, Member States and international community, (where relevant):

- Agree to ensure women's meaningful participation in all future discussions on peace and security in line with their existing international, regional and national commitments.
- Demonstrate political will and provide international assistance to implement the Nigerian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security including a dedicated budget.

- Cooperate on implementing a comprehensive gender sensitive strategy to prevent violence around the 2015 elections and protect the rights of all citizens, particularly women, to participate in the elections.
- Stop arms trade and militarization of Nigeria. In line with this, to support Nigeria to domesticate, without delay, its ratification of the Arms Trade Treaty and all other regional arms treaties and put in place a comprehensive regional plan to strictly control and regulate arms proliferation.
- Address the root causes of attacks by Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad including gender sensitive socio-economic development.
- Provide protection and adequate and accessible humanitarian services to those affected by the violence executed by Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad, particularly rehabilitation and counseling services.
- Perpetrators must be brought to justice for the crimes they have committed and we recommend effectively strengthening the justice system.
- Protect freedom of assembly, non-violence and the protection of activists calling for an end to insecurity and the safe return of the missing girls.

The Women, Peace and Security Network, Nigeria

Contact: Joy Onyesoh, President, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) Nigeria

[joy.onyesoh@wilpfpeace.org](mailto:joy.onyesoh@wilpfpeace.org), [dzoious@yahoo.com](mailto:dzoious@yahoo.com)

+234-8033134762, +234-8025682086