BEYOND
COMMITMENTS

A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF UNSCR 1325 IN NIGERIA

...Marking 25 years of UNSCR 1325 globally and 12 years of Nigeria's localisation (2013–2025)

WANEP - NIGERIA

Beyond Commitments:

A Critical Assessment of the Implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 in Nigeria.

...Marking 25 years of UNSCR 1325 globally and 12 years of Nigeria's localisation (2013–2025)

Contributors

Bridget Osakwe, PhD – National Network Coordinator
Patience Ikpeh-Obaulo – Head of Programmes
Emmanuel Ami-Okhani – MEAL Manager
Mary Nkifan Owor-Agbor – WPS Officer

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

Acronym	Meaning
AU	African Union
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (UK)
FMWA	Federal Ministry of Women Affairs
FOMWAN	Federation of Muslim Women's Associations in Nigeria
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
INEC	Independent National Electoral Commission
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
IPCR	Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution
KII	Key Informant Interview
LAP	Local Action Plan
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDA	Ministry, Department or Agency
MMR	Maternal Mortality Rate
NAP	National Action Plan
NDHS	Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey
NEMA	National Emergency Management Agency
NEWS	National Early Warning System

NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NHRC	National Human Rights Commission
NIS	Nigerian Immigration Service
NPF	Nigeria Police Force
NSCDC	Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps
NPS	Nigerian Prison Service
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PCVE	Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism
PFNAP–PCVE	Policy Framework and National Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism
SAP	State Action Plan
SARC	Sexual Assault Referral Centre
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNIDIR	United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research
UNSCR 1325	United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325
VAPP	Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act
WANEP	West Africa Network for Peacebuilding
WEE	Women's Economic Empowerment
WISCOD	Women's Initiative for Sustainable Community Development
WIPNET	Women in Peacebuilding Network
WPS	Women, Peace and Security
YPS	Youth, Peace and Security

Acknowledgement

Executive Summary

Beyond Commitments: A Critical Assessment of the Implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 in Nigeria. captures Nigeria's twelve-year journey from policy promises to tangible institutional and social transformation under the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. It reflects WANEP-Nigeria's conviction that genuine progress lies not in drafting new plans but in translating existing ones into measurable outcomes at national and community levels.

The assessment, led by WANEP-Nigeria under its Research and Knowledge Management commitment, documents how far Nigeria has advanced in localising UN Security Council Resolution 1325 across its three tiers of governance. It also distils lessons to guide the implementation of the Third National Action Plan (NAP III, 2024–2028) and contribute to ECOWAS's and the African Union's broader regional reviews marking twenty-five years of the global WPS agenda.

Purpose and Scope

The study evaluates Nigeria's implementation of UNSCR 1325 since 2013, identifying progress, gaps, and emerging priorities for the next phase. Specifically, it:

- Assesses how national commitments have translated into State and Local Action Plans.
- Examines the impact on women's participation, protection, and leadership in peace and security.
- Highlights successes, barriers, and lessons for replication and sustainability.

Methodological Overview

A mixed-methods design combined policy and literature review, quantitative indicator tracking, and Key Informant Interviews across six geopolitical zones. Data were triangulated and thematically analysed around the four core pillars of UNSCR 1325, Prevention, Participation, Protection, and Relief & Recovery, to ensure both breadth and depth of evidence.

Key Findings by Pillar

1. Prevention – From Reporting to Accountability: Reporting of women's and girls' rights violations has improved through institutions such as the **National Human Rights Commission** and expanded gender desks across security agencies. Yet investigation and prosecution remain weak, with limited referrals and inconsistent data systems. Conflict-related sexual violence persists, and prevention efforts are more reactive than survivor-centred.

2. Participation – Numbers versus Power: Women constitute **47.5 percent** of registered voters but less than **10 percent** of political candidates. Representation has grown in security institutions, for example, the Nigerian Police Force and Immigration Service now include women in command roles, but political and financial barriers still constrain elective participation. Structural reforms such as reserved seats and gender quotas remain urgent.

3. Protection – Strong Laws, Uneven Justice: The **Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act (VAPP, 2015)**, now domesticated in 35 states, represents a major legal advance. However, conviction rates for sexual and gender-based violence remain below 2 percent. Training and gender-sensitivity initiatives within the justice and security sectors have expanded, yet enforcement and survivor support services require deeper institutionalisation.

4. Relief and Recovery – Resilience amid Weak Financing: Women lead recovery and livelihood initiatives in conflict-affected communities, but funding remains donor-driven. Federal allocations to Women's Economic Empowerment fell below 1 percent of the capital budget in 2025, and maternal mortality (993 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2023) remains among the highest globally. Formal DDR programmes still overlook women, who depend on community-based or NGO-led reintegration efforts.

Cross-Cutting Barriers and Emerging Lessons

Three enduring constraints cut across all pillars:
1. **Unpredictable Financing**: WPS budgets rarely exceed 2 percent of total capital spending, and most State Action Plans rely on donor grants.
2. **Weak Coordination**: Overlapping mandates among MDAs limit coherence between national and sub-national frameworks.
3. **Incomplete Inclusion**: Youth, displaced persons, and women with disabilities remain marginalised in participation and recovery processes.

Nevertheless, localisation has deepened: sixteen states now have SAPs, and gender desks, peace commissions, and women's mediation networks are expanding. *Beyond Commitments* shows that when political will, institutionalisation, and civic partnership align, tangible results follow.

Implications for Policy and Practice

The findings reinforce Nigeria's alignment with the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan and the AU Continental Framework on WPS, both calling for institutionalised funding and monitoring. The new NAP III (2024–2028) presents a critical opportunity to consolidate gains by:

- Establishing dedicated national and state WPS budget lines.
- Legislating statutory backing for peace commissions and action plans.
- Creating a national WPS Data Tracker to link federal and state reporting.
- Embedding gender-sensitivity modules in security and judicial training curricula.
- Expanding youth and disability inclusion within WPS platforms.

Conclusion: From Paper to Practice

Nigeria's WPS agenda has evolved from advocacy to measurable institutional change, but sustainability depends on domestic financing, continuous learning, and inclusive coordination. As this assessment demonstrates, the next decade must move *beyond commitments* – from policy pledges to durable, system-wide transformation.

For WANEP-Nigeria, this study reaffirms its role as a knowledge broker and convener, generating evidence to strengthen national accountability and inspire region-wide learning. Through

continued research, documentation, and policy engagement, WANEP-Nigeria will sustain its mission to ensure that women are not only protected in conflict but also empowered as architects of lasting peace.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Global Framing: UNSCR 1325 Adoption, 25 Years of WPS Evolution, and Nigeria's Localization.

The United Nations Security Council's adoption of Resolution 1325 in October 2000 marked a turning point in global peace and security policy[1]. The resolution recognised women not only as victims of conflict but also as active agents of peace. It called for their meaningful participation in conflict prevention, peace negotiations, peacebuilding, and post-conflict recovery, alongside stronger protections for women and girls during conflict and in peace processes.

Over the past 25 years, the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda has expanded through additional resolutions and global commitments, consistently reaffirming that gender equality is central to peace and security. Building on this momentum, more than 100 countries had developed National Action Plans (NAPs) as of 2023[2]. These plans became the primary tools for turning global commitments into concrete results at national and local levels, underscoring that the WPS agenda is a shared responsibility of governments and civil society alike.

Nigeria joined this global effort in 2013 with its first NAP (2013–2017), followed by a second (2017–2020)[3]. Both sought to embed gender-responsive approaches in peace and security through the core WPS pillars: prevention, participation, protection, crisis recovery, and partnerships. Work on a third NAP is now underway, aimed at consolidating progress and addressing emerging challenges.

Importantly, localisation has gone beyond the national level. Several states have adopted State Action Plans (SAPs), while some local governments have introduced Local Action Plans (LAPs), bringing the WPS agenda closer to communities. As of 2023, 16 of Nigeria's 36 states had SAPs in place, supported by LAPs in selected areas[4]. This multi-level effort reflects Nigeria's recognition that sustainable peace and security depend on broad-based inclusion from the federal to the grassroots. However, challenges persist. Nigeria's complex insecurity, from insurgency to banditry, has disproportionately harmed women and girls, making UNSCR 1325 commitments more urgent than ever. Women continue to face displacement, violence, and exclusion from peace processes. In response, civil society, especially WANEP-Nigeria, has taken the lead in shaping policies, supporting NAPs, and ensuring women's voices are included in peacebuilding, security reforms, and reconciliation efforts.

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[1] United Nations (2000) Landmark Resolution on Women, Peace and Security (Security Council Resolution 1325). Available at: https://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/wps/ (Accessed: 19 August 2025).

[2] 1325 National Action Plans – An initiative of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (2025) 1325 Naps. Available at: https://1325naps.peacewomen.org/ (Accessed: 19 August 2025).

[3] Durueke, O. (2025) 'Contextualizing universal norms: Evaluating Nigeria's National Action Plans on UNSCR 1325 and women's lived realities in rural areas', Women's Studies International Forum, 109, p. 103045. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2024.103045 .

[4] Ibunge, B. (2023) Group Charges States Assembly to Domesticate Action Plans on Women, THISDAYLIVE. Available at: https://www.thisdaylive.com/2023/08/16/group-charges-states-assembly-to-domesticate-action-plans-on-women/ (Accessed: 20 August 2025).

After twelve years of implementation, progress is visible but uneven. Women's participation has grown and gender reforms advanced, yet weak political will, limited funding, poor coordination, and inadequate monitoring have slowed results. The lapse of the second NAP in 2020 further stalled momentum until the development of the third currently underway. Against this backdrop, the 25th anniversary of UNSCR 1325 offers a timely opportunity for reflection and renewal. Globally, governments and partners are reviewing commitments; regionally, the African Union and ECOWAS are assessing progress and addressing new challenges. In Nigeria, WANEP-Nigeria is spearheading this national assessment to document achievements and gaps, and to galvanise renewed commitment from policymakers, communities, and international partners.

1.2 Objectives: Assessment Scope

The *Beyond Commitments* assessment evaluates Nigeria's implementation of UNSCR 1325 since 2013 and identifies lessons to guide the next phase of the WPS agenda.

The specific objectives are to:

- **Assess implementation** of UNSCR 1325 since 2013, examining how far NAP commitments have been realised and integrated into governance at national and subnational levels.
- **Evaluate the impact** on women's participation in decision-making across peace negotiations, security sector reforms, conflict resolution, and related processes.
- **Identify successes and challenges**, highlighting best practices and barriers to localisation, including institutional, cultural, and societal constraints.
- **Document innovative approaches** by government and civil society, such as community-led peacebuilding, gender training, and policy reforms, providing models for replication or scale-up.
- **Provide actionable recommendations** for policymakers, security actors, civil society, and international partners to close gaps and strengthen women's empowerment and protection in peace and security.

1.3 Methodological Overview

The assessment employed a mixed-methods design, combining quantitative data with qualitative insights to provide a balanced analysis. Key methodological components included:

- **Desk Review**: National policies, past NAPs (2013–2017, 2017–2020), gender and peacebuilding frameworks, NGO reports, assessments, and prior studies were analysed. A checklist adapted from UN indicators guided quantitative data collection on women's participation, GBV, and related areas.
- **Key Informant Interviews:** Purposive sampling identified policymakers, security actors, women leaders, CSOs, and community representatives across geopolitical zones. Semi-structured interviews captured experiences, successes, and challenges. (*See Appendix 2 for a list of key Informants*)

- **Case Studies**: Exemplary WPS initiatives were documented to illustrate practical lessons and achievements.
- **Analysis**: Quantitative data were reviewed with descriptive statistics, while qualitative data underwent thematic coding. Findings were triangulated for reliability.
- **Ethical standards**, including informed consent, confidentiality, and "do no harm," guided the entire process.

In summary, the methodology provided a robust framework to capture the multifaceted nature of WPS implementation in Nigeria.

1.4   WANEP's Role in Advancing WPS in 12 Years.

WANEP–Nigeria WIPNET Programme: Background and Achievements

The Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, established through United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 in 2000, created an international mandate to recognize women not only as victims of conflict but as indispensable actors in peacebuilding, conflict prevention, and post-conflict reconstruction. In response to this global shift, the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) institutionalized the WPS agenda at the regional level in 2001, establishing a specialized women-focused structure. By 2003, WANEP–Nigeria operationalized this commitment domestically by establishing its WPS unit and formally inaugurating the Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET), a nationwide platform that has grown into a vibrant movement of hundreds of women peacebuilders across Nigeria's six geopolitical zones. WIPNET became the engine for mobilizing, training, and amplifying women leaders from rural, peri-urban, and urban communities, ensuring they are firmly positioned as influencers, mediators, and monitors within Nigeria's peace and security landscape.

Over the last 22 years, WIPNET has evolved into one of Nigeria's most expansive women-led peacebuilding networks. One of its most innovative contributions lies in the use of radio and media programming to democratize the WPS agenda. The flagship programme Women's Voices for Peace, broadcast weekly across seven states (Delta, Edo, Rivers, Gombe, Bauchi, Borno, and Lagos), offered a sustained platform for women's testimonies, SGBV awareness, peace education, and expert dialogue. It aired in multiple languages, English, Pidgin, Hausa, and Fulfulde, ensuring broad accessibility and community ownership. Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, WIPNET adapted by delivering specialized broadcasts that provided emergency referral information and addressed conflict-sensitive protection concerns at a time when face-to-face mobilization was restricted. Complementing this outreach, the Media4Peace initiative trained more than 70 journalists in gender-sensitive reporting, significantly improving how media houses depict women's peacebuilding contributions.

Beyond media amplification, WIPNET has played a critical role in grassroots advocacy and coalition building, particularly in the Niger Delta and Edo State. Through tailored Training-of-Trainers (TOT) workshops in Edo, Delta, and Rivers, WIPNET equipped women with mediation, advocacy, and leadership skills that they subsequently transferred into their local communities. In

Ossissa (Delta State), these engagements produced a dynamic coalition of over fifty trained women peace actors who organized peace rallies, community sensitization forums, and dialogues addressing farmer–herder tensions. In Akoko Edo and across other Edo communities, WIPNET facilitated the *Storytelling for Peace* initiative, which provided safe spaces for women to narrate their experiences, build solidarity, and negotiate reforms at the community level. These forums fostered women's inclusion in traditional governance councils and strengthened local capacity for peaceful dispute resolution.

WIPNET has also been central to localizing the WPS agenda across Nigeria, translating high-level policy commitments into functional state and local interventions. Through carefully structured localisation consultations and write shops, WIPNET supported states like Gombe and Bauchi to draft or review State Action Plans (SAPs) and develop Local Action Plans (LAPs) that reflect grassroots priorities. These processes established LAP Steering Committees, strengthened monitoring frameworks, and ensured that budgeting for gender-responsive peacebuilding became more systematic. In addition, WIPNET translated WPS manuals, mediation guides and key instruments into Nigerian local languages, making the WPS agenda accessible to rural women with little or no English proficiency.

In the civic space, WIPNET contributed meaningfully to election monitoring and women-led electoral safety initiatives. During the 2019 elections, WANEP deployed 196 observers nationwide, many of whom were women mobilized through WIPNET structures. These women monitored electoral processes, documented gendered early warning signals, and fed their findings into the Election Situation Room, strengthening real-time risk analysis and informed decision-making. Their contributions helped highlight women's safety concerns around polling units, political intimidation, and electoral violence, ensuring these issues received attention from stakeholders across security, media, and civil society.

Over two decades, WIPNET has expanded its training footprint across all six geopolitical zones, producing a cadre of women mediators, peace monitors, negotiators, and community educators who sustain peace at the grassroots level. Its trainings, spanning mediation, confidence building, negotiation, community dialogue facilitation, and gender frameworks for state actors, have cemented women's leadership in local peace structures. Strategic partnerships with organizations such as GNWP, NORAD, USIP, Mercy Corps, and other donors further strengthened the institutional capacity of WIPNET and contributed to the success of broader programmes which improved early warning systems and response coordination across states.

WIPNET's commitment to inclusion, particularly of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs), has been consistently reflected in its program design. Zonal workshops and stakeholder consultations intentionally included PwDs, ensuring their perspectives were integrated into community action plans, gender assessments, and reconciliation structures. Psychosocial and recovery engagements targeted vulnerable groups, including women with disabilities affected by conflict, enabling them to participate meaningfully in post-conflict healing and early warning systems. This inclusive approach aligns WIPNET's work with global and regional commitments to disability rights within peacebuilding processes.

Through its multifaceted interventions, spanning media outreach, coalition building, localization of action plans, electoral engagement, capacity development, and inclusive programming, WIPNET has transformed the WPS landscape in Nigeria. What began in 2003 as a small women's mobilization wing within WANEP has evolved into a nationwide movement redefining women's participation in peace and security. Its work bridges policy and practice, channels rural voices into national frameworks, and ensures that women across Nigeria continue to shape local and state-level peace architectures with confidence, legitimacy, and strategic influence.

2.0 Nigeria's Peace and Security Landscape

2.1 Conflict Dynamics (2013–2025)

Nigeria's security landscape between 2013 and 2025 has been shaped by persistent and evolving conflicts. In the Northeast, the Boko Haram insurgency, which began in 2009, reached its peak in the mid-2010s and continues at lower intensity today. Boko Haram and its splinter group, the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP), have killed tens of thousands and displaced more than two million people, devastating communities mainly in the Northeast[5]. The insurgents have targeted civilians and infrastructure, with atrocities such as the 2014 abduction of 276 schoolgirls from Chibok drawing global outrage[6].A multinational military response involving Nigeria and neighbouring countries rolled back Boko Haram's territorial control by 2016[7], but the threat shifted rather than ended. ISWAP strengthened its hold around Lake Chad, and periodic surges in violence persist. In May 2025, ISWAP mounted one of its most sophisticated assaults in years, overrunning military sites and towns in Borno State[8]. The Northeast remains a conflict hotbed, with daily attacks on soldiers and civilians, and insurgents still entrenched in stronghold areas.

Meanwhile, conflicts have intensified across Nigeria. Violence between pastoralist herders and farming communities escalated in the North-Central "Middle Belt" and parts of the Northwest. These resource-based clashes, driven by competition over land and water and often framed along ethnic and religious lines, have worsened since 2011[9]. This led to the rise of local armed groups and militias, often labelled "bandits," who engage in cattle rustling, pillaging, kidnappings, and massacres. By the late 2010s, rural banditry had become a major security crisis in Zamfara, Kaduna, Katsina, Niger, and Sokoto States. Bandit groups have committed murder, mass abductions, rape, and plunder, occupying farmland and forcing farmers to flee. In response, communal vigilantes emerged, further complicating the conflict. Intensified military operations

[5] European Union Agency for Asylum (2021) *Boko Haram, including JAS, ISWAP, and Ansaru*. Available at: https://euaa.europa.eu/country-guidance-nigeria-2021/131-boko-haram-including-jas-iswap-and-ansaru (Accessed: 20 August 2025).
[6] Human Rights Watch (2024) Nigeria: 10 Years After Chibok, Schoolchildren Still at Risk, Human Rights Watch. Available at: https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/04/11/nigeria-10-years-after-chibok-schoolchildren-still-risk (Accessed: 20 August 2025).
[7] International Crisis Group (2016) *Boko Haram on the Back Foot?*, *www.crisisgroup.org*. Available at: https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/west-africa/nigeria/boko-haram-back-foot (Accessed: 20 August 2025).
[8] Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (2023) Nigeria: Population at Risk. Available at: https://www.globalr2p.org/countries/nigeria/ (Accessed: 20 August 2025).
[9] Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (2023) Nigeria: Population at Risk. Available at: https://www.globalr2p.org/countries/nigeria/ (Accessed: 20 August 2025).

since 2021, including aerial bombardments, have had mixed results, with some strikes causing civilian casualties.

Nigeria's South has faced its own security challenges between 2013 and 2025. In the oil-rich Niger Delta, the post-2009 amnesty reduced insurgency, but sporadic resurgences, such as the Niger Delta Avengers' 2016 attacks on oil facilities, highlighted lingering grievances[10]. Since 2023, rising militia-linked violence, especially kidnappings, has further destabilised parts of the region. In the Southeast, separatist agitation for Biafra revived as the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and its armed wing, the Eastern Security Network (ESN), launched an insurgency around 2020, attacking security forces and enforcing "sit-at-home" orders that paralysed economic and social life[11]. By 2023, unrest linked to pro-Biafra militants had become a major source of insecurity in the region, alongside organised crime and cult violence. For Southwest, insecurity is centred on armed robbery, kidnappings, and herder–farmer clashes. In 2020, the six governors launched the Amotekun regional security outfit, pressing the federal government on state policing[12]. While Amotekun improved local vigilance, debates over its legality and effectiveness highlighted deeper tensions in Nigeria's security governance.

Overall, Nigeria's conflict dynamics since 2013 have become increasingly complex and widespread. What began as an extremist insurgency has evolved into nationwide insecurity. Between 2021 and 2023, Nigeria accounted for 45% of violent deaths in West and Central Africa, making it the region's conflict epicentre[13]. In 2023, about 75% of these deaths occurred in the northern states, driven by insurgency and banditry, while fatalities in the south were mainly linked to criminal violence, militancy, and communal clashes[14]. That same year, Nigeria ranked 10th among Africa's most unsafe countries for women[15]. Recent data from WANEP-Nigeria NEWS shows that violence is not abating. In the first half of 2025 alone, at least 4,665 people were killed due to violent extremism and organised crime[16]. These conflict dynamics both shape and are shaped by the roles and experiences of women, as discussed next.

2.2 Impact on Women and Girls

Conflict in Nigeria has had a devastating impact on women and girls. They have been disproportionately victimised yet shown resilience and agency in the face of violence. This was most evident during the Boko Haram insurgency, where extremists deliberately targeted women and girls through abductions, sexual violence, forced marriages, and the use of girls as weapons.

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[10] Maclean, R. (2016) 'Niger Delta Avengers militants shut down Chevron oil facility', *The Guardian*, 26 May. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/may/26/niger-delta-avengers-militants-shut-down-chevron-oil-facility (Accessed: 21 August 2025).

[11] Ejiofor, P.F. (2025) 'When Separatists Secure the Homeland: The Neglected Role of Securitisation in Ethnonationalist Violence in Southeastern Nigeria', Civil Wars, pp. 1–37. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/13698249.2024.2423147 .

[12] Olatunji, D. (2020) Amotekun: A regional security outfit and its baptism of fire, Punch Newspapers. Available at: https://punchng.com/amotekun-a-regional-security-outfit-and-its-baptism-of-fire/ (Accessed: 21 August 2025).

[13] Security – Mapping Africa Transformations (2023) Mapping-africa-transformations.org. Available at: https://mapping-africa-transformations.org/security/ (Accessed: 21 August 2025).

[14] Nigeria Watch (2023) Thirteenth Report on Violence in Nigeria 2023. Available at: https://www.nigeriawatch.org/media/html/Reports/NGA-Watch-Report23VF.pdf (Accessed: 21 August 2025).

[15] Yusuf, A. (2024) Nigeria Ranks 10th in Africa's Most Unsafe Countries for Women , ThisDayLive. Available at: https://www.thisdaylive.com/2024/03/10/nigeria-ranks-10th-in-africas-most-unsafe-countries-for-women/ (Accessed: 21 August 2025).

[16] WANEP-Nigeria NEWS Monthly Bulletin, January to June 2025

Evidence reveals how fighters subjected women to "horrific abuse, including rape and forced marriages", and even deployed girls as suicide bombers[17]. The April 2014 abduction of 276 schoolgirls from Chibok, Borno State, became a symbol of these atrocities. It sparked the global #BringBackOurGirls campaign and galvanized Nigerian women's groups to demand action. About 107 girls later escaped or were freed, but 82 remain missing a decade on, a tragic reminder of conflict's enduring trauma[18].

Chibok was far from an isolated incident. Boko Haram and ISWAP have continued abducting civilians, often women and children, during raids. Since 2014, more than 1,600 children have been kidnapped in the Northeast. Alarmingly, mass abductions spread to other parts of Nigeria[19]. From 2018, armed "bandit" groups in the Northwest began seizing schoolchildren for ransom, including hundreds of girls in incidents reminiscent of Chibok. In February 2021, bandits abducted more than 300 girls from a boarding school in Jangebe, Zamfara[20]. Such attacks persist: in 2024 alone, at least 580 civilians, mainly women and girls, were kidnapped across several states, facing forced labour, sexual abuse, and use as bargaining chips, while survivors suffer lasting psychological and physical scars[21].

Women and girls in conflict zones face widespread sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). Armed groups use rape as a weapon of terror and retribution; in the bandit-affected Northwest, women have been raped during village raids. Conflict also amplifies other hardships. Of the 7.8 million people in Nigeria needing humanitarian assistance, about 80% are women and children[22]. In displacement camps, women endure inadequate shelter, healthcare, and sanitation, and are further at risk of exploitation, with reports of officials and security personnel coercing them into sex-for-food arrangements[23].

Conflict in Nigeria has deeply affected women's health, livelihoods, and political participation. Attacks on clinics, flight of medical staff, and diversion of resources to the military have worsened maternal health, contributing to one of the world's highest maternal mortality rates, about 512 deaths per 100,000 live births[24], especially in the conflict-affected North. Women's economic roles

[17] Nagarajan, C. *et al.* (2024) *From Survival to Struggle: Women and Girls' Experiences with and After Boko Haram*. UNIDIR. Available at: https://doi.org/10.37559/meac/24/10

[18] Amnesty International (2024) Nigeria: Decade after Boko Haram attack on Chibok, 82 girls still in captivity. Available at: https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/04/nigeria-decade-after-boko-haram-attack-on-chibok-82-girls-still-in-captivity/ (Accessed: 21 August 2025).

[19] Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (2023) Nigeria: Population at Risk. Available at: https://www.globalr2p.org/countries/nigeria/ (Accessed: 20 August 2025).

[20] BBC News (2021) 'Nigeria's Zamfara school abduction: More than 300 Nigerian girls missing', 26 February. Available at: https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-56188727 (Accessed: 21 August 2025).

[21] Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (2023) Nigeria: Population at Risk. Available at: https://www.globalr2p.org/countries/nigeria/ (Accessed: 20 August 2025).

[22] Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (2023) Nigeria: Population at Risk. Available at: https://www.globalr2p.org/countries/nigeria/ (Accessed: 20 August 2025).

[23] Yusuf, A. (2025). Sex For Food In IDP Camps, Thisdaylive. Available at: https://www.thisdaylive.com/2025/07/28/sex-for-food-in-idp-camps/ (Accessed: 21 August 2025).

[24] Oweibia, M. et al. (2025) 'Maternal and Child Health Trends in Nigeria: A Scoping Review of NDHS 2018 vs. NDHS 2023'. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1101/2025.05.18.25327864.

as farmers and traders have also been disrupted, forcing many widows and survivors into risky livelihoods.

Yet women have not been passive victims; across the country, they have mobilised as peacebuilders, counsellors, and advocates. Despite these contributions, women remain excluded from formal decision-making, underrepresented in security institutions and politics, underscoring the urgency of advancing the WPS agenda.

In sum, Nigeria's conflicts have taken a heavy toll on women and girls, as victims of violence, as caretakers of families under siege, and as a population often marginalised in peace and security efforts. Yet women have also proven vital to breaking the cycle of violence. The past decade underscores why the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, which calls for protecting women's rights and ensuring their inclusion in peacebuilding, is critical in the Nigerian context.

2.3 Nigeria's Commitments and Localisation of the WPS Agenda

Recognising the immense impact of conflict on women and girls, Nigeria has made formal commitments to the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda and attempted to localise these commitments through national, state, and local frameworks. A major step was the adoption of a National Action Plan (NAP) to implement UNSC Resolution 1325.

2000	2014	2017	2020	2025
Global adoption of UNSCR 1325	Launch of Nigeria's 1 National Action (NAP I)	Launch of 2nd National Action Plan (NAP II)	End of NAP II period	Presidemtial approval of Third National Action Plan (NAP III 2025-2030) 25th Anniversaryy of UNSCR 1325
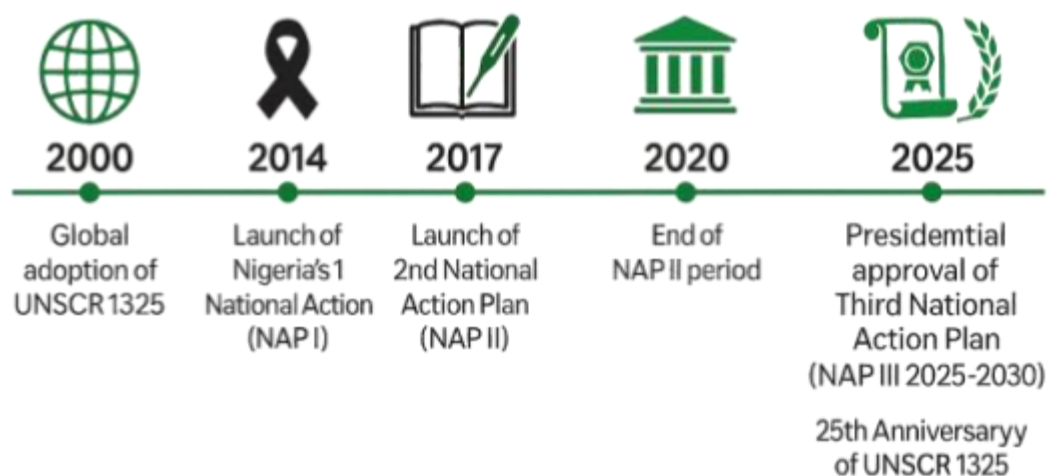
Figure 1 Key Milestones of UNSCR 1325 in Nigeria

The first NAP (2013–2017), developed by the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs with support from civil society and international partners, outlined strategies under five pillars: Prevention, Participation, Protection, Promotion, and Prosecution[25]. It aimed to increase women's role in peace processes, protect women's rights in conflict, and address their needs in relief and recovery.

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[25] Nigeria – 1325 National Action Plans (2017) Peacewomen.org. Available at: https://1325naps.peacewomen.org/index.php/nigeria/ .

However, it fell short in tackling emerging issues such as violent extremism and lacked clear monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

In 2017, Nigeria adopted a second-generation NAP (2017–2020) and outlined five pillars: Prevention and Disaster Preparedness, Participation and Representation, Protection and Prosecution, Crisis Management, Early Recovery and Post-Conflict Reconstruction, Partnerships, Coordination, and Management, which integrated lessons from the first plan. It added new priorities, including countering violent extremism, rehabilitation of survivors, and gender training for security forces. Importantly, it recognised the reintegration needs of women and girls associated with Boko Haram[26]. While coordination improved, the absence of a dedicated budget limited implementation. Still, some progress was noted, such as the inclusion of women in councils of traditional rulers, gender-sensitivity training for the military, and modest gains in women's political participation.

After the plan expired in 2020, Nigeria faced a brief policy gap. By 2023, work on a third NAP was underway[27]. The Federal Ministry of Women Affairs, supported by UN Women and civil society, began drafting a new plan. This ongoing framework is expected to reflect current realities, including banditry and new peacebuilding initiatives, while emphasising grassroots women's inclusion, youth engagement, and stronger accountability through dedicated resources.

In October 2025, the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria formally approved the Third National Action Plan (NAP III) on Women, Peace and Security (2024–2028). [28]The plan, developed through a multi-sectoral process led by the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs in collaboration with UN Women, civil society, academia, and traditional institutions, builds on lessons from the previous NAPs and aligns with NAP II, the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan and global frameworks such as Beijing +30. NAP III introduces strengthened mechanisms for implementation, monitoring, and reporting, alongside clearer financing arrangements intended to enhance accountability and sustainability. Its approval marks an important policy milestone, providing renewed momentum for national and sub-national actors to consolidate localization gains and address persistent coordination and funding challenges identified in earlier cycles.

Crucially, Nigeria recognised that a national policy alone is insufficient; localisation is essential. As of 2023, 16 of 36 states had adopted State Action Plans (SAPs), adapting the NAP pillars to local realities[29]. In addition, some Local Government Areas have developed Local Action Plans

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[26] Nigeria NAP Overview – 1325 National Action Plans (2017) Peacewomen.org. Available at: https://1325naps.peacewomen.org/index.php/nap-overview/nigeria-nap-overview/ (Accessed: 22 August 2025).

[27] Mercy Corps (2024) Breaking Down Barriers: How Women's Peace Groups Help Advance Gender, Peace, and Security in Nigeria. Available at: https://www.mercycorps.org/research-resources/womens-peace-groups-advance-nigeria (Accessed: 22 August 2025).

[28] Ohagwu, G. (2025) 'Nigeria Reaffirms Commitment to Women, Peace and Security', *Voice of Nigeria Broadcasting Service*, 8 October. Available at: https://von.gov.ng/nigeria-reaffirms-commitment-to-women-peace-and-security/ (Accessed: 4 October 2025).

[29] Ibunge, B. (2023) *Group Charges States Assembly to Domesticate Action Plans on Women*, *THISDAYLIVE*. Available at: https://www.thisdaylive.com/2023/08/16/group-charges-states-assembly-to-domesticate-action-plans-on-women/ (Accessed: 20 August 2025).

(LAPs), establishing women's peace committees and GBV response teams. This tiered system of NAPs, SAPs, and LAPs aims to embed WPS principles at all levels of governance.

Legal and policy reforms have reinforced this framework. The Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act of 2015, criminalising multiple forms of gender-based violence, has now been domesticated by 35 states[30]. The National Gender Policy aims to advocate for 50:50 affirmative action in both appointive and elective positions in Nigeria[31] and new initiatives, such as a draft National Action Plan on Gender and Climate Security[32], recognise the link between climate stress and conflict. However, broader gender equality legislation has repeatedly stalled in parliament, reflecting political resistance.

Civil society has played a pivotal role in advancing WPS in Nigeria. Women-led organisations such as WANEP-Nigeria, WILPF Nigeria, and local NGOs have trained women peace mediators, supported survivors of violence, and spearheaded SAP development. Campaigns like Bring Back Our Girls demonstrated the power of women's advocacy. International partners, including UN Women, the EU, and Mercy Corps, have funded projects that strengthen grassroots women's peacebuilding structures, often filling gaps that state institutions cannot.

Nigeria's WPS architecture is thus multi-layered: policy frameworks, legal reforms, institutional mechanisms, and civil society engagement. While challenges remain, particularly uneven implementation, weak funding, and reliance on donor-driven projects, the progress achieved provides a foundation to build upon. The task ahead is to move from commitments on paper to sustained, tangible improvements in women's security and participation across Nigeria.

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[30] PWAN (2025) VAPP Tracker. Available at : https://www.partnersnigeria.org/vapp-tracker/ (Accessed: 22 August 2025).
[31] Federal Ministry of Woman Affairs (2021) *National Gender Policy*. Available at : https://www.wrapanigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/NATIONAL-GENDER-POLICY.pdf#page=1.00&gsr=0 (Accessed: 22 August 2025).
[32] Odogwu, G. (2021) *Unveiling national action plan on gender and climate change*, *Punch Newspapers*. Available at: https://punchng.com/unveiling-national-action-plan-on-gender-and-climate-change/ (Accessed: 22 August 2025).

3.0 Findings: UNSCR 1325 Implementation in Nigeria

This section explores Nigeria's implementation of UNSCR 1325 using the four core pillars of the Women, Peace and Security agenda. It considers prevention, with attention to early warning and accountability structures, and participation, examining how women are included in political, security and peace processes. It also addresses protection, focusing on legal, institutional and community measures to safeguard women and girls. Finally, it looks at relief and recovery, reviewing access to services, livelihoods and reintegration support. Together these pillars provide a structured lens for assessing Nigeria's progress and challenges. They frame the analysis that follows, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of localization efforts over the past twelve years

3.1 Pillar 1: Prevention

The prevention pillar of UNSCR 1325 centers on safeguarding women and girls from the root causes and consequences of conflict. In this assessment, it is examined through four adapted UN indicators: the reporting and investigation of rights violations, the prevalence of sexual violence, the inclusion of protective measures in national security policies, and women's representation in conflict prevention institutions. These indicators provide a focused lens for evaluating Nigeria's progress in embedding gender sensitivity within its prevention architecture.

3.1.1 Extent of Reporting, Referral, and Investigation of Women's and Girls' Human Rights Violations

The ability of human rights institutions to record, refer, and investigate violations against women and girls is a core test of Nigeria's implementation of the prevention pillar of UNSCR 1325. The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) is Nigeria's statutory body mandated to monitor, investigate, and address human rights violations. Its reports provide the most authoritative public record of complaints received across the country, including those affecting women and girls in both stable and conflict-affected contexts. Looking at NHRC data is therefore imperative for assessing progress under this pillar.

Between 2014 and 2022, NHRC complaints rose sharply from 31,487 to more than 2.3 million. Yet, within this growing caseload, women's and girls' violations were inconsistently captured. In some years they were broken down by categories such as sexual violence, domestic violence, and harmful practices, while in others they were aggregated under broad headings like "SGBV," "Women and Gender Rights," or "Child Rights."

Table 1 highlights this inconsistency and the limited visibility it gives to women and girls in the national complaints system.

Table 1NHRC Complaints Relating to Women/Girls' Human Rights (2014–2022)[33]

Year	National Complaints (All HR)	Reported Cases (Women/Girls Specific)	Conflict States – W/G Specific	Referrals (Conflict States)	Investigated (NHRC)	Resolved (NHRC)	Notes
2014	31,487	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	Aggregate total only; no disaggregation.
2015	547,473	Sexual violence 468; DV 23,687; Harmful practices 852; Custody/Access 56,671; Child abandonment 1,533	Borno 540; Adamawa 63; Nasarawa 445; Plateau 1,492; others smaller	Borno 23; Nasarawa 13; Plateau 14	ND	ND	First year with granular breakdown.
2016	1,099,919	Sexual violence 50; DV 24,688; Harmful practices 965; Custody/Access 56,671; Child abandonment 1,533	Adamawa 13; Benue 54; Yobe 37; others <10	Adamawa 9; Benue 473 child cases	ND	ND	Continued classification, but mostly referrals for child protection.
2017	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	Report explicitly states investigations not captured.
2018	1,097,777	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	Total only; no gender breakdown.
2019	1,304,849	Sexual violence 2,901; DV 172,981; Reproductive rights 4,402; Harmful practices 9,743; Custody/Access 116,664; Child abandonment 1,980	ND	ND	ND	ND	Classification given, but no referrals or investigations.
2020	1,287,760	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	Reports a "spike in SGBV" but without numbers.
2021	1,701,537	SGBV 193,360; Women/Gender rights 198,220; Child rights 388,700	Kaduna 16,336; Adamawa 4,911; Benue 9,000; Borno 7,960; Yobe 8,760; Nasarawa 9,000; Niger 10,128	ND	162 (SIP-SGBV)	Some damages awarded	First concrete record of investigations.
2022	2,314,440	SGBV 193,360; Women/Gender rights 198,220; Child rights 388,700	Kaduna 20,185; Adamawa 5,469; Benue 2,952; Borno 662; Yobe 727; Nasarawa 795; Niger 9,139	ND	ND	ND	Continued high reporting; no investigation data.

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[33] National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), *Annual and Thematic Reports, 2014–2022*. "ND" = No Data available in the reports.

The frequency data demonstrate a steep increase in reporting, with women's and girls' cases reaching nearly 800,000 in 2021 alone. However, referrals and investigations remained negligible. In 2015 and 2016, only a few dozen referrals were recorded in conflict-affected states, and in 2021, just 162 cases were investigated by a Special Investigative Panel on SGBV, an insignificant fraction of the reported caseload. As one civil society actor put it: *"Laws like the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act exist, but enforcement is weak due to poor prosecution, inadequate evidence preservation, and corruption. Survivors face stigma, and services for trauma care and economic rehabilitation are insufficient."* (CSO Representative, WIPNET Delta State).

Conflict-affected states consistently registered high SGBV caseloads, but without comparable disaggregated data across years, it is difficult to measure the burden accurately. Stakeholders repeatedly stress the gap between legal frameworks and enforcement: *"Kaduna has the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act, Penal Code, and Criminal Justice Law, but implementation is weak. Prosecutors favour the Penal Code, which allows lighter penalties, over the VAPP Act."* (Permanent Commissioner, Kaduna State Peace Commission). This selective enforcement dilutes the protective value of legal reforms under UNSCR 1325.

Underlying these patterns are entrenched social norms and institutional weaknesses. As one youth advocate observed, *"Nigeria has legal frameworks like the VAPP Act, but measures are largely inadequate. Societal attitudes often silence victims, and police sometimes exacerbate the problem by blaming victims or making dismissive remarks."* (WPS Youth Inclusion Advocate, WANEP-Nigeria). Displacement adds another layer of vulnerability. A community leader explained: *"Displacement exacerbates vulnerabilities, disproportionately affecting women and children. Protection efforts are inadequate, safe spaces are overwhelmed, and IDP camps or schools used as shelters lack resources. Sexual exploitation, including food-for-sex demands, is common."* (Community Development Initiative Founder, WIPNET Delta State).

Taken together, the data and testimonies reveal that while UNSCR 1325 has improved visibility, more women and communities are reporting violations, and the institutional follow-through lags far behind. The absence of systematic disaggregation obscures trends, minimal referrals weaken accountability, and very few investigations mean most violations remain unresolved. For the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Nigeria, the implications are profound: the prevention pillar risks being reduced to mere paper compliance rather than actual protection. Without gender-sensitive data systems, the scale of harm to women and girls remains underestimated, responses are poorly targeted, and the state's commitment to prevention is undermined. To fulfil its international and national obligations, Nigeria must equip the NHRC and related agencies not only to document violations but also to pursue them through referral, investigation, and resolution. Only then can UNSCR 1325 move from rhetorical commitment to effective protection in practice.

3.1.2 Prevalence of Sexual Violence in Conflict and Fragile Settings

Sexual violence in conflict-affected and fragile areas of Nigeria remains widespread, undermining the prevention pillar of UNSCR 1325. Since the abduction of the Chibok schoolgirls in 2014, conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) has been a persistent feature of the Boko Haram insurgency and other insecurity contexts. UN and NGO monitoring between 2014 and 2025 consistently document rape, forced marriage, and sexual exploitation, while intimate partner violence (IPV) continues to dominate in fragile settings.

In 2014, international reports confirmed mass abductions and systematic assaults by Boko Haram. By 2018, the National Human Rights Commission and UN identified both insurgent and state actors as perpetrators, though under-reporting limited the full picture. The COVID-19 lockdowns in 2020 coincided with 210 documented CRSV cases, rising to 601 incidents in 2021. Yet, stigma, weak services, and fear of retaliation ensure that these figures understate the real prevalence. As one policy reform expert observed: "*Crises worsen vulnerabilities, with high rates of child marriage, sexual violence, and kidnappings in IDP camps. Relief materials sometimes end up in markets, showing weak accountability. The root causes of insecurity need addressing, not just the symptoms.*" (National Defence College)

Localised data also confirm the scale of sexual violence. In 2019, a medical study in Enugu State found that 53.1% of recorded GBV cases were sexual violence. By 2024–2025, academic research highlighted persistently high rates of IPV and non-partner sexual assault in fragile communities, showing that the problem extends beyond insurgency zones. A community development consultant described the lived reality of displaced women: *"Displacement exacerbates vulnerabilities, disproportionately affecting women and children. Protection efforts are inadequate, safe spaces are overwhelmed, and IDP camps or schools used as shelters lack resources. Sexual exploitation, including food-for-sex demands, is common."* (Founder, community development initiative)

Displacement remains a critical driver. Camps in Bauchi and elsewhere faced harassment and insecurity until advocacy secured police and vigilante patrols. Survivors often choose silence, fearing stigma or retaliation. As a peacebuilding practitioner noted: *"In conflict zones like Borno State, women face heightened risks of rape and harassment, sometimes by security actors meant to protect them. Survivors prioritise survival over reporting, fearing retaliation or stigma, which undermines protection measures."* (Program Director, Building Blocks for Peace Foundation)

Not all experiences are negative. Some states have piloted approaches that mitigate risk. In Gombe, displaced persons were integrated into host communities within months, reducing exposure to camp-based abuses: *"Gombe avoids long-term IDP camps to prevent SGBV. During the Boko Haram crisis, IDPs were housed in communities within three to five months, with food and sanitary pads provided."* (WPS Coordinator, Gombe State)

Nigeria faces a dual burden under Pillar 1 of UNSCR 1325: conflict-related sexual violence linked to insurgency and widespread intimate partner and non-partner assaults in fragile communities. Survivors frequently remain silent due to stigma and fear, weakening the deterrent effect of existing laws. Perpetrators range from insurgents to community members and, at times, security forces, yet accountability and oversight mechanisms remain weak. Services such as safe spaces, clinical care, and psychosocial support are chronically under-resourced, leaving many survivors without viable protection or redress.

Promising practices, such as Gombe's rapid reintegration of displaced persons, demonstrate that risks can be reduced, but these remain isolated and lack institutionalisation at the national level. Overall, Nigeria's prevention efforts are fragmented and reactive rather than comprehensive and survivor-centred. Quantitative trends confirm persistent prevalence, while qualitative testimonies

highlight systemic failures in protection and accountability, leaving women and girls at sustained risk in both conflict and fragile settings.

3.1.3 Integration of Women's and Girls' Rights in National Security Policy Frameworks

Nigeria's evolving national security landscape reflects a growing commitment to gender inclusion and the protection of women's and girls' rights, aligning with the prevention pillar of UNSCR 1325. Over the past decade, policies such as the National Security Strategy (2019), the Policy Framework and National Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PFNAP–PCVE, 2017), and the Terrorism Prevention and Prohibition Act (TPPA, 2022) have formed the core of this framework. Collectively, these instruments set out the principles guiding national responses to insecurity and violent extremism while providing an opportunity to assess how far gender perspectives are embedded within their objectives and implementation pathways.

A qualitative assessment applying the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) analytical lens revealed that gender responsiveness and institutional inclusion are improving, albeit unevenly. Security institutions now exhibit greater awareness of gender sensitivity, partly driven by internal reforms and donor-supported training. As one representative from a national security institution noted, *"security institutions now have gender desks and SGBV units, like the police, expanding theirs. The police and other agencies have gender policies, and some, like the army, have appointed women to top roles. Recruitment is up, with 35% female quotas in some agencies since 2024."* (National Defence College)

This progress marks a shift from rhetorical commitment to operational change, reflected in increased female representation in command structures and technical units. A federal-level WPS actor highlighted that *"last year, we recorded the first female Force Secretary appointed by the Inspector General, a role that puts her in high-level decision-making meetings. Before that, the highest rank for women was Assistant Inspector General, and they couldn't join those meetings. Now, women can raise gender issues directly."* [(Federal Women, Peace and Security Coordination Unit)

Table 2: Summary of Evaluation of National Security Frameworks from a WPS Perspective

Policy Framework	Gender Responsiveness	Protection & Prevention Measures	Accountability & Implementation	Alignment with WPS Frameworks	Transformative Potential	Overall Rating
National Security Strategy (2019)[34]	Explicitly references UNSCR 1325 and Nigeria's NAP pillars; commits to integrating women into security governance.	Outlines concrete actions, training of security personnel, gender-responsive assessments, and protection of	Mentions performance measurement but lacks WPS-specific indicators or institutional leads.	Aligned with WPS and National Gender Policy; promotes inclusion in strategic planning.	Advances participation but limited on enforcement mechanisms.	High Integration

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[34] NCTC, National Security Strategy 2019. Available at : https://nctc.gov.ng/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/NSS-2019.pdf

		women and girls from violence.				
Policy Framework and National Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PFNAP–PCVE, 2017)[35]	Recognises women as both vulnerable groups and active agents in preventing extremism; adopts a participatory approach.	Addresses sexual and gender-based violence, the rule of law, and survivor-sensitive justice measures.	Establishes steering committees, coordination platforms, and a monitoring matrix for progress tracking.	Explicitly aligned with UNSCR 1325 and human rights principles.	Strong on empowerment and inter-agency coordination.	High Integration
Terrorism Prevention and Prohibition Act (2022)[36]	Gender is not explicitly mainstreamed; it focuses on general victim rights.	Provides for a Special Victims Trust Fund, but without gender-specific safeguards.	Details enforcement institutions and sanctions, but lacks gender oversight provisions.	No explicit linkage to WPS or gender equality frameworks.	The legal framework offers entry points for reform but minimal gender visibility.	Low Integration

Beyond these formal policy provisions, qualitative evidence underscores both progress and persisting implementation gaps. A civil society peacebuilding actor observed that *"the Police Act prohibits gender discrimination, and agencies like the police and civil defense have gender or peace units. Officers attend WPS trainings, improving sensitivity to issues like domestic violence, previously dismissed as 'family matters.'"* (Permanent Commissioner Commission, Kaduna State Peace Commission). Similarly, a women's rights advocate involved in Nigeria's NAP consultations explained that *"gender desks with trained personnel and gender policies now guide security institutions like the police and military, though implementation varies."* (National Civil Society Network on Women, Peace and Security)

Despite these advancements, experts agree that institutional coherence and structural reforms are still required. A practitioner working with a humanitarian peace organisation emphasised that *"comprehensive reforms are needed to ensure recruitment, accommodations, and operations reflect gender perspectives, enabling women to participate effectively in security roles across these states."*, (NEEM Foundation)

Overall, the findings reveal that Nigeria's national security policy framework demonstrates moderate to high integration of women's and girls' rights. The National Security Strategy and PFNAP–PCVE show strong alignment with WPS principles, embedding gender mainstreaming and participatory measures within their design. However, the Terrorism Prevention and Prohibition

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[35] NCTC, Policy Framework and National Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism 2017. Available at : https://nctc.gov.ng/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/PFNAP-FOR-PCVE-2017.pdf?__cf_chl_rt_tk=oAMLZIW0u61M.DiFpHWYfOVfRx6anqc_M41wZKQ3HFQ-1759934810-1.0.1.1-0DDIk6yGk2SBmrgubAsJl.dg2_eXQ.r_tj_gntns0qc
[36] Government of Nigeria(2022) Terrorism Prevention and Prohibition Act. Available at: https://placng.org/i/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Terrorism-Prevention-and-Prohibition-Act-2022.pdf

Act remains largely gender-neutral, limiting its utility for advancing women's protection and participation. While institutional reforms, gender desks, and leadership appointments signal tangible progress, these gains are yet to be systematically institutionalised across all security agencies. In summary, Nigeria's security policy environment is transitioning from commitment to practice, but sustained reform, monitoring, and gender-responsive accountability mechanisms are essential to translate policy intent into enduring transformation for women's inclusion and protection in the security sector.

3.1.4 Women's Representation in Executive Positions of Conflict Prevention

Women's participation in executive and command positions linked to conflict prevention has grown steadily over the past decade, though progress remains uneven across institutions. Representation has expanded within the Nigerian Police Force, Nigerian Immigration Service, Armed Forces, and the Federal Civil Service, with women also assuming leadership roles in conflict-prevention initiatives at the sub-national level. These developments mark a gradual shift from symbolic inclusion to substantive participation in decision-making spaces central to national and human security.

Across the Nigerian Police Force, female officers have occupied senior command and coordination positions (see Table 3). High-ranking officers such as *AIG Dr Aishatu Abubakar Baju* continue to promote gender equity and institutional reforms, with optimism that Nigeria will soon appoint its first female Inspector-General of Police[37]. This transformation is reinforced by internal policy shifts and deliberate inclusion measures. As one respondent explained, *"security institutions now have gender desks and SGBV units, like the police, expanding theirs. The police and other agencies have gender policies, and some, like the army, have appointed women to top roles. Recruitment is up, with 35% female quotas in some agencies since 2024."* (National Defence College) Such measures signal the institutionalisation of gender considerations across command structures and security operations.

The Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS), a key agency under the Ministry of Interior responsible for border management and migration control, has also maintained a strong record of women's leadership. Between 2010 and 2025, women have periodically headed the Service, including, illustrating continuity in female executive command over critical migration and border-security functions.

At the sub-national level, women are also shaping Nigeria's conflict-prevention architecture. They serve as Commissioners, Permanent Secretaries, and Executive Secretaries of State Peace Commissions in Plateau, Kaduna, Benue, and Adamawa States, where they lead early warning, mediation, and social cohesion initiatives. This trend reflects the growing localisation of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. A federal gender official affirmed that *"women have been integrated into traditional councils, where they mediate conflicts and engage in*

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[37] Igwe, I. (2025) '"It's A Matter Of Time", AIG Abubakar-Baju Speaks On Nigeria Producing Female IGP', *Channels Television*, 16 March. Available at: https://www.channelstv.com/2025/03/16/its-just-a-matter-of-time-nigeria-will-produce-female-igp-says-aig-abubakar-baju/ (Accessed: 8 September 2025).

peacebuilding." (Federal Ministry of Women Affairs). These roles not only extend women's leadership beyond Abuja but also embed gender-sensitive approaches within community-level governance and traditional authority systems.

Table 3 Key Milestones in Women's Executive Representation in Conflict-Prevention Institutions (2010–2025)

Year / Period	Institution / Agency	Position / Appointment	Significance for Conflict Prevention Leadership
2010 – 2013	Nigerian Immigration Service	*Rose Chinyere Uzoma*, Comptroller-General	Pioneered female leadership in a border-management agency; expanded women's visibility in national security administration.
2015	Nigeria Police Force	*Olabisi Alofe-Kolawole*, Force Public Relations Officer	First woman to lead police communications; strengthened crisis information and community trust-building.
2023 – Feb 2024	Nigerian Immigration Service	*Caroline Wura-Ola Adepoju*, Acting Comptroller-General	Reaffirmed the tradition of women leading the NIS in migration and border-security management.
2024 – 2025	Nigeria Police Force	*DIG Rhoda Adetutu Olofu*, Force Secretary	Senior command and policy coordination role; advanced gender inclusion at the apex of police leadership.
2024	Nigeria Police Force	*AIG Yetunde O. Longe*, Force Secretary	Continued women's representation in central command; reflected institutionalisation of female leadership.
2024 – present	Nigerian Immigration Service	*Kemi Nanna Nandap*, Comptroller-General	Sustains the record of female executive leadership in migration and human-security management.
2024 – present	Ministry of Interior / Civil Service	*Dr Magdalene Ajani*, Permanent Secretary	Oversees administration and identity systems crucial for early warning and security governance.
2025	Nigerian Army	*Lt. Col. O. A. Anele*, Military Spokesperson	First female spokesperson for any military arm; improved gender representation in operational leadership.

In sum, Nigeria's representation of women in executive and command positions related to conflict prevention shows steady but incomplete progress. The Police and Immigration Services have demonstrated consistent inclusion, while sub-national peace structures increasingly reflect gender-balanced governance. However, representation remains concentrated in a few institutions, with fewer women at the highest decision-making levels in defence, intelligence, and national security coordination. Sustaining these gains will require institutionalising gender-responsive promotion pathways, establishing annual representation scorecards across all security MDAs, and ensuring that women's leadership at both national and sub-national levels is fully recognised as central to Nigeria's conflict-prevention and peacebuilding strategy.

3.2 Pillar II: Participation

The participation pillar of UNSCR 1325 emphasizes the equal and meaningful inclusion of women in political, governance, and peace processes at all levels. In this assessment, it is examined through three adapted UN indicators: women's representation in parliaments, ministerial positions, women's inclusion as mediators, negotiators, and technical experts in peace processes, and their participation as voters and candidates in electoral processes. Together, these indicators provide insight into the extent to which Nigeria has advanced women's leadership, influence, and decision-making power across political and peacebuilding structures.

3.2.1 Women's Representation in Parliaments and Ministerial Positions

Women's political representation in parliament and ministerial positions is a core pillar of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) framework. It translates the principle of participation in UNSCR 1325 into measurable influence over national decision-making, resource allocation, and peacebuilding priorities. Without women in legislative and executive spaces, gender-responsive security and governance policies often remain rhetorical rather than transformative.
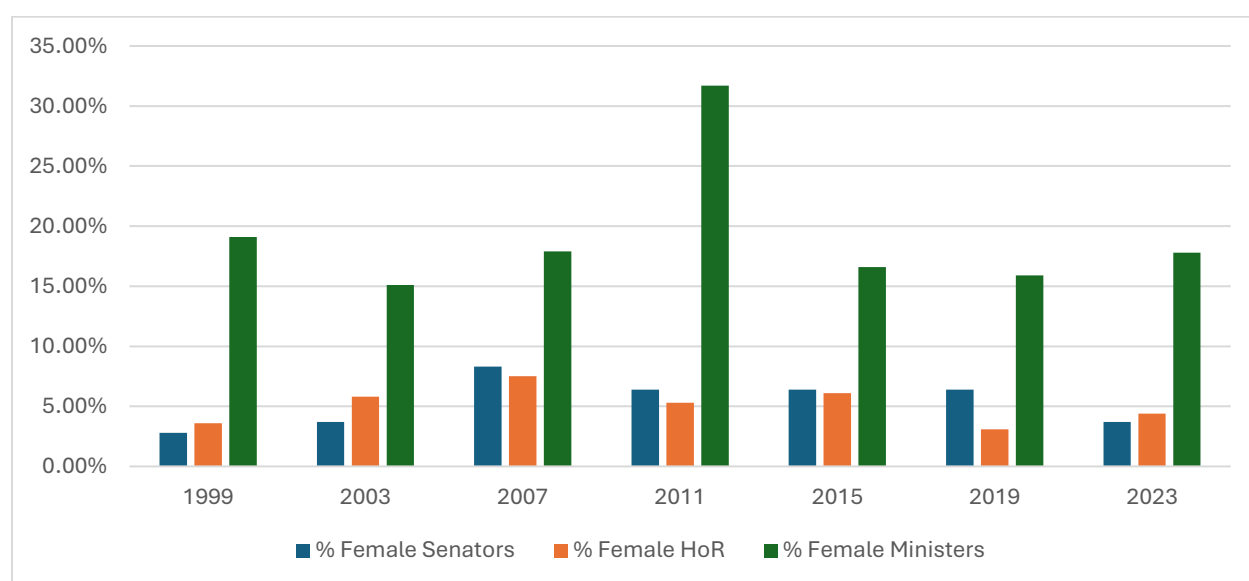
Figure 2 Trends in Women's Representation in Parliament and Ministerial Positions, 1999–2023

As shown in the report, Nigeria's progress has been uneven and persistently below international benchmarks. Since the return to democracy in 1999, women have held less than 10 percent of seats in both chambers of the National Assembly and rarely exceeded 20 percent in ministerial appointments. These figures remain well below the UN Women minimum threshold of 30 percent [38]and the African Union's parity aspiration of 50 percent[39]. By contrast, Rwanda (61 percent), South Africa (46 percent), and Senegal (44 percent) demonstrate that sustained political will and

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[38] UN Women (2019) *Global norms and standards: Leadership and political participation*, *UN Women*. Available at: https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation/global-norms-and-standards.

[39] African Union (2015) Agenda 2063: The Africa ewe Want, P.9. Available at: https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Policy-Documents/Agenda2063_Popular_Version_English.pdf

quota systems can yield rapid parity gains. Nigeria, meanwhile, trails the West African sub-regional average of about 15 percent female representation.

Stakeholder interviews confirm that the challenge is less about the absence of policy and more about the gap between normative frameworks and implementation. A senior officer from the National Defence College reflected, *"My work shows progress at the national level, but grassroots realities are different. Policies are in place, but implementation lags."* This mismatch underscores why experts argue that affirmative measures such as reserved seats are essential: voluntary commitments have not delivered meaningful representation.

A programme director from a national peacebuilding organisation noted, *"According to statistics, it's actually like it's a 4 percent representation of women in political participation currently."* Such marginalisation has direct implications for peace and governance outcomes, weakening inclusive dialogue and accountability. Yet, as a Gender Desk Officer in a State Ministry of Women Affairs highlighted, there are glimpses of sub-national progress: *"The current administration appointed a female deputy governor, 20 female vice chairpersons across 21 local governments, and one female chairperson, a significant improvement."*

Financial exclusion remains a core structural barrier. A senior official from the Federal Ministry's WPS team explained that, *"The biggest issue is the monetization of politics. During the 2023 primaries, huge sums, like billions, changed hands to secure nominations. No woman in Nigeria has that kind of money to compete."* This reality reinforces the argument for legislated reserved seats, as competitive elections alone cannot correct entrenched economic and cultural disadvantages. The data in Figure 2 visually capture this counterfactual: where no quota system exists, women's representation stagnates or declines.

Institutional weakness compounds the problem. A programme officer from a justice reform organisation observed that, *"The VAPP Act exists, but enforcement is weak in Kano and Kaduna… A case in Kaduna South, where a survivor was dismissed by police, shows distrust."* Such examples highlight how broader governance deficits mirror the political exclusion of women.

Nonetheless, there are encouraging signs within other components of the WPS agenda. An officer from the National Defence College reported that, *"Women make up 27.9 percent of Nigeria's peacekeeping personnel, above the UN's 17 percent benchmark."* This demonstrates that where institutional targets are explicit and monitored, such as in peacekeeping, gender balance can be achieved.

In sum, Figure 2 depicts a two-decade trajectory of under-representation that validates expert calls for structural reforms like the Reserved Seats Bill. Without such legislative guarantees, Nigeria risks continued divergence from both continental norms and its own WPS commitments. Bridging this gap requires not only political will but enforceable mechanisms that secure women's voices in the legislative and executive arenas where national security and peace decisions are made.

3.2.2 Women's Role in Mediation and Peace Negotiation Processes

Women's inclusion in mediation and peace negotiation processes is a central measure of how far Nigeria has advanced in fulfilling the participation pillar of UNSCR 1325. Beyond representation in formal politics, it is in the negotiation rooms, dialogue platforms, and community reconciliation spaces that women's perspectives often shape the substance of peace. Their participation determines whether issues such as justice, protection, and livelihoods are addressed in ways that reflect lived realities. Yet, while Nigeria has made progress in widening women's roles in peacebuilding, their engagement in formal mediation processes remains largely informal, localised, and occasionally tokenistic.

Interviews and secondary sources reveal a complex but encouraging trajectory. Across several states, women have taken on increasingly visible roles as first responders, community mediators, and facilitators of inter-group dialogue. They now sit in traditional councils, lead peace committees, and intervene in market and land disputes, tasks that historically belonged to men. A senior official at the Federal Ministry noted that *"women have been integrated into traditional councils, where they mediate conflicts and engage in peacebuilding."* In Plateau and Benue States, local ministries have trained women mediators to lead peace committees, resolve land disputes, and prevent escalation through community dialogue. Similarly, in northern states such as Borno, Kaduna, and Zamfara, women have emerged as critical actors in preventing radicalisation and supporting victims of violence. As one director of operations from a humanitarian organisation explained, *"women are pivotal as first responders, mediators, and gatekeepers… many mentor young boys to prevent radicalisation and provide psychological first aid."*

However, the breadth of women's involvement has not translated into depth of influence. As one independent consultant observed, *"The UNSCR has opened doors but not decision-making rooms. Patriarchal norms limit women's influence, and decision-making appointments are often tokenistic."* This reflects a structural imbalance where women are often included symbolically rather than substantively. At the national level, few women are positioned as lead negotiators or mediators in high-stakes peace processes such as those involving resource conflicts or insurgency dialogues. Their contributions are frequently confined to community peace efforts, which, while vital, seldom inform the formal architecture of peace negotiations.

This limited integration underscores the importance of institutional reforms that

> **Box 1: Women's Mediation Roles : Expanding Spaces, Constrained Power**
>
> • Women increasingly mediate community disputes, lead local peace committees, and prevent radicalisation in conflict-affected LGAs.
>
> • Influence remains largely informal; few women occupy lead negotiator or high-level mediation roles.
>
> • Tokenistic inclusion persists in national processes despite normative commitments under UNSCR 1325.
>
> • Documentation gaps and absence of a national mediator registry obscure women's actual contributions.
>
> • Formal mechanisms, such as a national roster or reserved quotas in peace panels, are critical to institutionalise gains.

guarantee women's participation as a matter of policy, not discretion. Several experts argue that the absence of a formal mechanism to recognise and deploy women mediators perpetuates dependence on donor-driven projects rather than sustainable national structures. In states where ministries of women's affairs collaborate with CSOs, such as in Adamawa and Kano, women's peace networks have achieved measurable local impact. Yet, without a national framework or database of mediators, their contributions remain largely invisible in policy terms.

Despite these limitations, the qualitative evidence indicates that women are reshaping mediation from the bottom up. In Plateau State, one peacebuilding leader described a *"stark contrast to pre-1325 days when women had no voice,"* noting that the WPS agenda has significantly increased women's presence in local peace and security processes. In Benue, *"women-led mediation has successfully resolved land conflicts and averted violence,"* while in Kano, *"community-based organisations have trained women to handle market disputes and mentor youth against extremism."* These examples demonstrate that when empowered, women's peacebuilding roles extend beyond participation; they redefine what peace means for affected communities.

Ultimately, women's mediation work in Nigeria reflects both progress and paradox: expanding engagement but constrained authority. The challenge is to translate grassroots influence into formal recognition, ensuring that women not only enter the peace space but shape its outcomes. Establishing a national roster of mediators, linked to ECOWAS and AU networks, would bridge the gap between local practice and institutional legitimacy. Only then can Nigeria's mediation architecture fully embody the participatory spirit of UNSCR 1325.

3.2.3 Women's Participation as Voters and Electoral Candidates

Women's political participation, as both voters and candidates, is central to the participation pillar of UNSCR 1325, which calls for women's equal and meaningful involvement in political and public decision-making at all levels. Voting is the most visible expression of civic inclusion, while candidacy and election mark the transition from symbolic participation to substantive power. The degree to which women move from the ballot queue to the ballot paper therefore, reflects the inclusiveness and gender responsiveness of a country's democratic institutions.

Nigeria's electoral data reveals a persistent paradox. According to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), out of 93,469,008 registered voters in 2023, 44,414,846 were women, representing 47.5 percent of the total electorate [40]. This near parity in voter registration demonstrates that Nigerian women have not been passive bystanders in the democratic process. Women turn out in large numbers to vote and participate actively in campaigns and civic education. Yet, this political engagement rarely translates into representation as candidates or elected officials.

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[40] Jimoh, A. (2023) '49.5m men, 44.4m women to vote in 2023 polls -INEC - Daily Trust', *https://dailytrust.com/*, 11 January. Available at: https://dailytrust.com/49-5m-men-44-4m-women-to-vote-in-2023-polls-inec/ (Accessed: 11 August 2025).

Table 4 Female Candidacy in Nigerian Elections (2007–2023)[41]

Year	Position	Female Candidates	Male Candidates	Total Candidates	% Female Candidates
2007	President	1	24	25	4.0%
	Vice President	5	20	25	20.0%
	Senate	59	740	799	7.4%
	House of Representatives	150	2,196	2,346	6.4%
	Governorship	14	460	474	3.0%
	Deputy Governorship	21	453	474	4.4%
2011	President	1	19	20	5.0%
	Vice President	3	17	20	15.0%
	Senate	90	800	890	10.1%
	House of Representatives	220	2,188	2,408	9.1%
	Governorship	13	340	353	3.7%
	Deputy Governorship	58	289	347	16.7%
2015	President	1	13	14	7.1%
	Vice President	4	10	14	28.6%
	Senate	128	618	746	17.2%
	House of Representatives	270	1,507	1,777	15.2%
	Governorship	23	357	380	6.1%
	Deputy Governorship	64	316	380	16.8%
2019	President	6	67	73	8.2%
	Vice President	22	51	73	30.1%
	Senate	234	2,590	2,824	8.3%
	House of Representatives	543	4,137	4,680	11.6%
	Governorship	77	3,192	3,269	2.4%
	Deputy Governorship	265	3,004	3,269	8.1%
2023	President	1	17	18	5.6%
	Vice President	0	18	18	0.0%
	Senate	92	1,008	1,100	8.4%
	House of Representatives	288	2,832	3,120	9.2%
	Governorship	25	394	419	6.0%
	Deputy Governorship	102	317	419	24.3%

As shown in *Table 3*, women remain significantly underrepresented as candidates across all elective positions. Despite occasional improvements, the proportion of women contesting

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[41] ElectHer (2023) Nigeria 2023 Female Candidacy Analysis: Where are the Women Now, p. 10. Available at: https://eusdgn.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Women-in-Politics-Candidacy-Report-ElectHer.pdf#page=8.27

Box 2: Women as Voters and Candidates : The Paradox of Participation
• Women constitute nearly half of Nigeria's registered voters (47.5%) but remain less than 10% of political candidates across most elective positions.
• Persistent underrepresentation in legislative and executive offices highlights the disconnect between political engagement and political power.
• Systemic barriers include financial exclusion, gender-biased party structures, and electoral violence targeting women aspirants.
• Declining trends in female candidacy undermine Nigeria's commitments under UNSCR 1325 and the African Union Gender Policy.
• Affirmative actions such as the Reserved Seats Bill, gender quotas within political parties, and reduced nomination fees are critical to reverse the decline.

presidential, gubernatorial, parliamentary, and local government positions has remained in single digits for over two decades. In 2023, the share of female candidates fell further in some categories, confirming what several key informants described as a "shrinking space" for women in competitive politics. One civil society leader observed that *"The last election shows the percentage. In fact, it was lower than the other. Election cycle… According to statistics, it's actually like it's a 4% representation of women in political participation currently."* (GESI Expert, INGO).

The implications are far-reaching for UNSCR 1325. The participation pillar is premised on women's ability to influence policy outcomes,not merely to be counted as voters. The data show that although women are electorally engaged, they remain structurally excluded from decision-making spaces, particularly in legislative assemblies and executive positions. As a state-level official reflected, *"In the current Imo State House of Assembly, there are no women, a decline from two or three in the previous term. Appointed women follow their bosses' directives, limiting their influence."* (Director of Women Affairs, Imo State Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Welfare). Such regression signals that political inclusion in Nigeria is still driven by appointment and patronage rather than competitive equity.

This imbalance has implications that extend beyond elections; it undermines the legitimacy of Nigeria's commitments under UNSCR 1325 and the African Union's target of achieving 50 percent representation of women in decision-making. When women are systematically excluded from formal power, the gender perspectives that underpin inclusive peace, equitable budgeting, and social protection rarely reach the policy agenda. The consequences are most visible at the sub-national level, where few women occupy council or assembly seats despite strong grassroots activism. As one community peacebuilder in Kano explained, *"Women's political interest is growing in Kano, but representation in LGA councils, like Kano Municipal, is below 15%, with only 3 women elected in 2023."* (Senior Leader, Kano-based CSO / WANEP-Nigeria member).

These patterns point to a widening gap between participation in numbers and participation in power. While Nigerian women constitute nearly half of the electorate, they remain a small minority among those who shape national and local policy. Financial barriers, intra-party exclusion, and gendered political violence continue to discourage female aspirants. Without enforceable affirmative measures, Nigeria risks stagnating below regional averages, well short of the 30 percent global minimum standard for women's representation.

In sum, Nigeria's electoral landscape demonstrates that voting equality has not yet evolved into political equality. Bridging this gap requires deliberate policy reforms, targeted financing, and party-level accountability that translate the energy of women voters into tangible representation and leadership, core to the transformative vision of UNSCR 1325.

Pillar III: Protection

The protection pillar of UNSCR 1325 underscores the duty of states to safeguard the rights, dignity, and security of women and girls in conflict and peacebuilding contexts. It focuses on preventing and responding to gender-based violence, ensuring access to justice, and promoting safe and inclusive environments.

This assessment applies four indicators to examine Nigeria's progress: alignment of national laws with international human rights standards; women's participation in the justice, security, and foreign service sectors; the proportion of reported SGBV cases that are investigated and result in convictions; and training provided to decision-making personnel in handling SGBV cases.

Together, these indicators reveal how far Nigeria has advanced institutional accountability, legal protection, and gender-sensitive practices in its justice and security systems.

3.3.1 Alignment of National Laws with International Human Rights Standards

The protection pillar of UNSCR 1325 highlights the need for strong legal and policy safeguards to uphold the rights and dignity of women and girls. A key measure of progress is the extent to which national frameworks reflect international obligations such as CEDAW, the Maputo Protocol, and UNSCR 1325 itself.

Nigeria has made significant strides in this regard, most notably through the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act (VAPP) 2015, which provides comprehensive legal protection against sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), harmful practices, and abuse in both public and private spheres[42]. Although the Act initially applied only within the Federal Capital Territory, sustained advocacy has driven widespread adoption. As of 2025, 35 states and the FCT have domesticated the Act, marking one of the most extensive legal alignments with international standards in the region[43].

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[42] Government of Nigeria (2015) Violence Against Persons(Prohibition) Act 2015. Available at: https://fida.org.ng/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Violence-Against-Persons-Prohibition-Act-2015-1.pdf
[43] PWAN (2019) *VAPP TRACKER*, *Partners West Africa Nigeria*. Available at: https://www.partnersnigeria.org/vapp-tracker/ (Accessed: 10 September 2025).

Despite this progress, implementation and enforcement remain the major challenges. Evidence from interviews and state-level consultations reveals persistent gaps in prosecution, awareness, and institutional capacity, suggesting that the strength of Nigeria's protection framework lies more in its existence than its consistent application.

> **Box 3: Participation Voices from the Field – The VAPP Act in Practice**
>
> "The VAPP Act exists, but enforcement is weak in Benue." – *Benue State Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development*
>
> "Legal frameworks like the VAPP Act exist, but implementation is weak in Borno, Kaduna, and Zamfara." – *NEEM Foundation*
>
> "The VAPP Act is a strong tool for prosecuting perpetrators, but implementation is the issue." – *Federal Ministry of Women Affairs*
>
> "Prosecutors favor the Penal Code, which allows lighter penalties, over the VAPP Act." – *Kaduna State Peace Commission*
>
> "Plateau State has robust legal frameworks, including the VAPP Act, Gender Law, and Child Rights Law, supported by designated courts." – *WISCOD, Plateau State*
>
> "Imo has the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act , Child Rights Law, and Widowhood Law,

The quotes reflect a broad consensus across institutions: the VAPP Act is a milestone achievement, yet its enforcement remains weak and uneven across states. While states like Plateau demonstrate promising practices through specialised courts and coordination mechanisms, others struggle with limited awareness among judicial officers, reliance on outdated penal codes, and poor evidence management.

This imbalance underscores a critical lesson for the Protection pillar: legal domestication alone does not guarantee protection. Bridging the gap between law and practice requires stronger institutional frameworks, better resourcing of justice actors, and sustained accountability mechanisms to ensure that the rights enshrined in law translate into tangible safety for women and girls nationwide.

3.3.2 Women's Participation in Justice and Foreign Service Sectors

This indicator under the Protection pillar assesses women's representation and influence within Nigeria's justice and foreign service sectors, focusing on their access to leadership and decision-making positions that directly shape the protection and promotion of women's rights at home and abroad.

In the justice sector, women's visibility has grown steadily across all tiers of the judiciary. Out of the 20 current Supreme Court justices, five are women, representing 25 percent of the apex bench[44]. At the Court of Appeal, women now occupy 28 of 85 seats, or about 33 percent, with Hon. Justice Monica Bolna'an Dongban-Mensem serving as the current President of the Court of Appeal[45], a milestone that highlights women's increasing presence in senior judicial leadership. Data from the National Judicial Council (NJC) and in 2022 further show that, across state-level courts (comprising High Courts, Sharia Courts of Appeal, and Customary Courts of Appeal), 288 out of 914 judicial officers are female, representing 31.5 percent[46].

The appointment of Justice Kudirat Olatokunbo Kekere-Ekun as Chief Justice of Nigeria in 2024, the second woman ever to hold that office after Justice Mariam Aloma Mukhtar (2012–2014), symbolises renewed momentum toward gender inclusion at the highest levels of judicial authority. The career paths of women occupying these senior roles demonstrate that professional competence and merit are increasingly recognised in judicial advancement. As observed by the Adamawa State Ministry of Women Affairs, women's growing participation in the justice sector reflects broader progress toward gender

> **Box 4: Trailblazers in the Justice and Foreign Service Sectors**
>
> Women continue to break barriers in Nigeria's justice and foreign service sectors, occupying top leadership roles that reflect growing institutional inclusion.
>
> **Justice Sector**
> - **Justice Kudirat Olatokunbo Kekere-Ekun** – *Chief Justice of Nigeria (2024)*, the second woman to hold this position after *Justice Mariam Aloma Mukhtar (2012–2014)*.
> - **Justice Monica Bolna'an Dongban-Mensem** – *President, Court of Appeal*, leading one of Nigeria's most influential judicial institutions.
> - **Justice Uwani Musa Abba-Aji** – *Supreme Court Justice (since 2019)*, known for her advocacy on gender justice.
>
> **Foreign Service Sector**
> - **Ambassador Uzoma Emenike** – *Ambassador to the United States (2021)*, the first woman to hold the post.
> - **Ambassador Modupe Enitan Irele** – *Ambassador to France (2017)*, among the first women to head a major European mission.

equality and the gradual dismantling of barriers that once restricted women from ascending to decision-making positions.

In Nigeria's foreign service, however, progress has been more modest. The 2024 Women in Diplomacy Index places Nigeria's female ambassador representation at 20 percent, reflecting a gradual rise but still far below the national gender policy benchmark of 35 percent[47]. Notable examples include Ambassador Uzoma Emenike (United States) and Ambassador Modupe Irele (France), who have become visible symbols of women's leadership in international diplomacy. In

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[44] Nigerian Weekly Law Reports (2025) *Justice of The Supreme Court*, *NWLR Online*. Available at: https://nwlronline.com/supreme-court (Accessed: 10 August 2025).

[45] Court of Appeal (2025) *Current Justices*, *Courtofappeal.gov.ng*. Available at: https://www.courtofappeal.gov.ng/current-justices (Accessed: 10 September 2025).

[46] CJID (2022) *International Day of Women Judges : ' Women In Justice, Women for Justice'*, *Thecjid.org*. Available at: https://thecjid.org/international-day-of-women-judges-women-in-justice-women-for-justice/ (Accessed: 19 September 2025).

[47] Chehab, S. (2024) *2024 Women in Diplomacy Index*. Anwar Gargash Diplomatic Academy (AGDA). Available at: https://www.agda.ac.ae/docs/default-source/2023/2024-women-in-diplomacy-index-2.pdf#page=2.34 (Accessed: 5 September 2025).

2023, during International Women's Day celebrations, Nigerian women ambassadors publicly called for a minimum of 40 percent inclusion of women in government and diplomatic appointments, underscoring both the persistence of gender imbalance and the appetite for deeper reform among women already serving in leadership roles[48].

Despite these gaps, Nigeria has shown encouraging progress in related global arenas. According to the National Defence College, *"Women make up 27.9 percent of Nigeria's peacekeeping personnel, above the UN's 17 percent benchmark."* This achievement reinforces Nigeria's growing recognition of women's capabilities in diplomacy, peacebuilding, and international security operations.

Overall, the data reveal a positive but incomplete trajectory. The judiciary has made more visible strides than the foreign service, with women occupying key leadership positions such as the Chief Justice of Nigeria and President of the Court of Appeal. Yet, underrepresentation persists, particularly in the most senior judicial and diplomatic roles. Sustaining these gains requires deliberate institutional reforms, transparent selection processes, and continued monitoring of sex-disaggregated data across both sectors to ensure that symbolic achievements evolve into systemic inclusion.

3.3.3 Investigation and Prosecution of SGBV Cases

This indicator under the Protection pillar assesses how effectively cases of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) are investigated, prosecuted, and lead to convictions. It serves as a key measure of institutional responsiveness and survivor access to justice, reflecting whether legal reforms such as the VAPP Act are translating into tangible protection outcomes.

Across Nigeria, data on SGBV prosecution remain fragmented and scarce, largely due to poor inter-agency coordination, weak case documentation, and the reluctance of survivors to report. As a senior official from the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs noted, *"Every state has laws, but convictions are rare because of community or family interference."* Many survivors withdraw cases under pressure from relatives or local mediators, while others never report incidents for fear of stigma or retaliation.

Quantitative evidence from the Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption (RoLAC) programme illustrates the depth of this gap. Between January 2021 and November 2022, Sexual Assault Referral Centers (SARCs) recorded 3,068 arrests, of which only 604 cases were charged to court and 36 resulted in convictions. This means that fewer than 2 percent of arrests ended in conviction, a sharp attrition that underscores systemic weaknesses in investigation, prosecution, and judicial follow-through.

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[48] Okoji, L. (2023) *IWD: Women Ambassadors Call For 40% Women Inclusion In Incoming Govt. - News Agency Of Nigeria*, *News Agency of Nigeria*. Available at: https://nannews.ng/2023/03/09/iwd-women-ambassadors-call-for-40-women-inclusion-in-incoming-govt/ (Accessed: 21 September 2025).
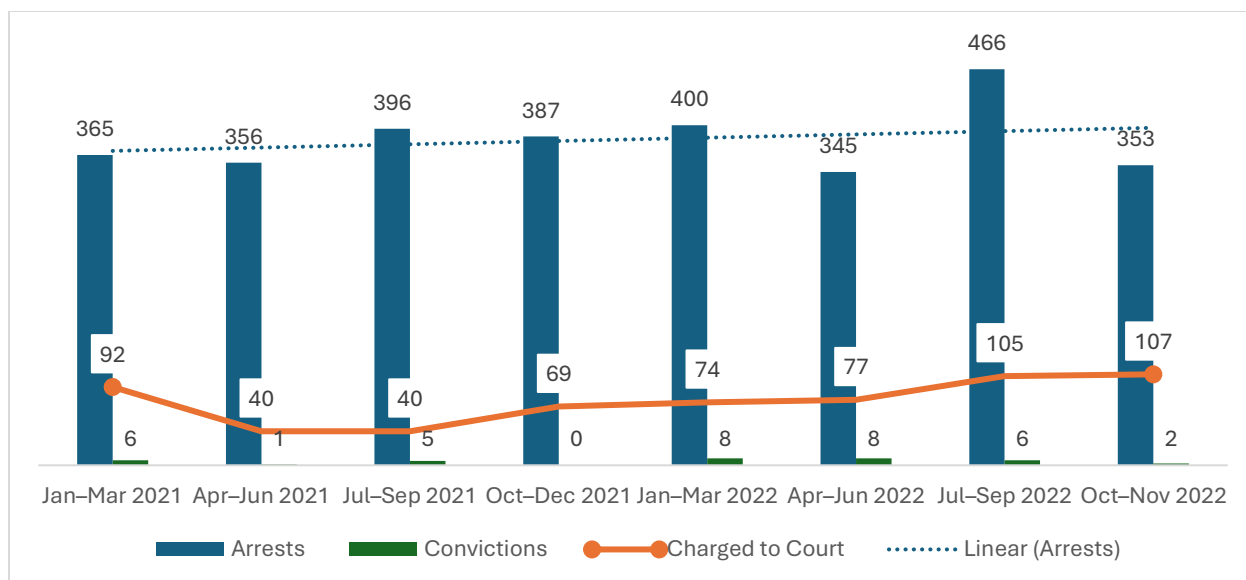
Figure 3 Trends in SGBV Arrests, Prosecutions, and Convictions (Jan 2021 – Nov 2022)[49]

The gap between arrest and conviction reflects multiple structural barriers. According to the Women, Peace and Security Team at the Ministry of Women Affairs, *"The VAPP Act is a strong tool for prosecuting perpetrators, but implementation is the issue."* In practice, investigators face resource constraints, while prosecutors often prioritise other offences or rely on the Penal Code, which allows lighter penalties, as observed in some state peace commissions.

At the community level, cultural pressure to settle SGBV cases out of court remains pervasive. The Building Blocks for Peace Foundation reported that in Oyo State, *"SGBV cases are often settled out of court due to cultural pressures, undermining justice."* Such informal settlements deny survivors both justice and closure, eroding confidence in the formal justice system. Similarly, an independent consultant from Delta State explained that *"enforcement is weak due to poor prosecution, inadequate evidence preservation, and corruption."*

Despite the constraints, there are modest signs of institutional progress. Some states have strengthened their SARCs and gender desks, and national reporting platforms now exist for tracking cases. However, enforcement remains inconsistent. As one WANEP Nigeria focal person observed, *"We still record cases of sexual and gender-based violence daily, and there are still women out there who have not gotten justice."* This highlights the enduring gap between the legal protection framework and its operational effectiveness.

The persistently low conviction rate demonstrates that laws alone are insufficient without systematic enforcement. Improving outcomes will require dedicated funding for investigations, specialised prosecutorial units, and continuous training for police and judicial officers on survivor-centered approaches. Strengthening inter-agency data sharing, protecting victims from

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[49] Data Source: RoLAC (2022) Tackling Sexual And Gender-Based Violence, p. 5. Available at: https://www.justice-security.ng/sites/default/files/rolac_c2_impact_report_tackling_sexual_gender_based_violence_final.pdf#page=6.52 | Graph Developed by WANEP-Nigeria

intimidation, and expanding access to SARCs remain essential steps toward achieving meaningful accountability under the Protection pillar of UNSCR 1325.

3.3.4 Capacity Building and Training on SGBV Response

Strengthening institutional responses to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) depends not only on laws but on the competence and sensitivity of those enforcing them. This indicator therefore, assesses how training and professional development within Nigeria's justice and security sectors are shaping survivor-centered practice. While awareness of gender-based violence has expanded nationwide, training remains fragmented, short-term, and unevenly embedded across institutions.

In several states, ministries of women's affairs have led initiatives to raise awareness among law enforcement officers. The Gender Desk Officer in Adamawa State confirmed that *"efforts are underway to train security personnel on gender sensitivity."* Similar efforts in Benue and Delta States have improved awareness, though officials admit that *"survivor-centred approaches are still limited."* These comments capture the current phase of Nigeria's capacity development, where knowledge building has increased, but systemic transformation is still emerging.

Civil society organisations have filled important gaps by targeting frontline institutions. The Building Blocks for Peace Foundation ran a *2024 training for female Amotekun officers to mainstream gender into operations and handle SGBV cases sensitively.* In Kano, the CLEEN Foundation delivered related training, while the **I**nstitute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR) held sessions in Chikun LGA for both security and judicial actors. Yet, as IPCR observed, *"survivor-centred approaches are lacking,"* underscoring that technical sensitisation has not yet translated into consistent behavioural change.

The Nigeria Police Force Gender Policy, developed in 2010 with UN Women and UNFPA support, remains the central framework for institutionalising gender-sensitive policing[50]. Although the UNDP Rule of Law Report (2023) notes that the policy has been validated by police leadership but not fully adopted across the force, it has nonetheless guided the expansion of GBV desks and the introduction of gender training modules for designated officers. Recent NPF communications reaffirm the policy's goals of eliminating discrimination, increasing women's representation, and embedding gender awareness into all operational levels.

This reform momentum has influenced parallel initiatives. The NEEM Foundation's Ford-funded project trained judiciary, security, and traditional leaders in Maiduguri and Zaria, integrating *psychological first aid* and *survivor-centred case handling* into its curriculum. Similarly, the National Defence College emphasised that *"security institutions must rethink training and include gender in everything, from curricula to leadership."* In Kaduna, the Peace Commission reported that officers now *"attend WPS trainings, improving sensitivity to issues like domestic violence once dismissed as 'family matters.'"*

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[50] Nigeria Police Force (2010). *A Gender Policy for the Nigeria Police Force.* Abuja: Nigeria Police Force, with support from UN Women and UNFPA. Available at: https://www.endvawnow.org/uploads/browser/files/security_nigeria_gender_policy_police_unwomen_2010.pdf

Yet, capacity building remains patchy and thinly institutionalised. As a national WPS coordinator noted, *"insufficient training for security personnel remains a major gap,"* and WANEP Nigeria added that *"security personnel require sensitisation and training to handle SGBV cases with empathy and professionalism."* High staff turnover, limited funding, and lack of refresher courses continue to undermine sustainability, resulting in awareness without consistent institutional reinforcement.

Overall, Nigeria's capacity-development landscape has broadened significantly but lacks depth. The challenge is to consolidate disparate training efforts into a coherent, mandatory system, where gender and SGBV response are built into security and judicial curricula, monitored for quality, and linked to promotion and performance benchmarks. Such institutionalisation will determine whether the progress achieved so far can translate into sustained protection outcomes for women and girls under the Protection pillar of UNSCR 1325.

3.4 Pillar IV: Relief and Recovery

The Relief and Recovery pillar of UNSCR 1325 ensures that post-conflict reconstruction, humanitarian response, and peacebuilding efforts are gender-responsive and inclusive. It addresses the specific needs of women and girls while promoting equitable access to resources, services, and opportunities that strengthen long-term recovery and resilience.

This assessment applies five indicators to measure Nigeria's progress: gender-responsive use of donor funds, maternal health outcomes, education enrolment by sex, gender budgeting in strategic plans, and women's access to disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR) benefits. Collectively, these indicators show the extent to which recovery processes in Nigeria advance gender equality and empower women as agents of sustainable peace.

3.4.1 Gender-Responsive Use of Multi-Donor Trust Funds

Understanding donor and government support for women's issues is essential to assessing Nigeria's progress under the *Relief and Recovery* pillar of UNSCR 1325. Financing patterns reveal how effectively recovery and development programmes address gender-specific needs and whether women benefit equitably from post-conflict interventions. Tracking these allocations also exposes structural gaps, fiscal dependencies, and institutional commitment to women's empowerment in national recovery planning.

Between 2013 and 2018, Nigeria received significant development finance from donors and philanthropies, yet only a small fraction targeted gender equality[51]. Official Development Assistance (ODA) totalled USD 17 billion, with 40% (USD 6.97 billion) directed to health. International philanthropy, led by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, contributed USD 1.15 billion, of which only 13% (USD 56 million) addressed gender equality, mainly reproductive health. Domestic foundations such as MTN, PIND, and TY Danjuma provided USD 89 million,

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[51] OECD (2022), "Philanthropy and Gender Equality - Domestic Philanthropy for Development and Gender Equality in Nigeria", OECD Development Centre, Paris. Available at:
https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2022/09/domestic-philanthropy-for-development-and-gender-equality-in-nigeria_aab01c59/8efe47b4-en.pdf

with 13% (USD 4.1 million) focused on women's education, health, and empowerment[52]. While awareness of women's empowerment has grown, gender-focused financing remains modest across all funding streams.

A major advancement came with the World Bank's USD 500 million Nigeria for Women Programme Scale-Up (NFWP-SU) approved in 2023. Building on the 2018 NFWP, it supports 427,000 women across six states through 20,506 Women Affinity Groups (WAGs) that have collectively saved ₦4 billion (USD 8.9 million), reaching over 835,000 beneficiaries[53]. The programme deepens financial literacy, promotes savings, and builds partnerships to expand women's access to credit and climate-resilient livelihoods.

Despite these gains, domestic fiscal commitment remains weak. Allocations to Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) from the federal capital budget rose from 0.77% in 2019 to 1.82% in 2023, before falling to 0.91% in 2024 and 0.98% in the proposed 2025 budget. [54]This underlines low institutional prioritisation compared with donor-driven efforts. As a federal officer noted, *"Most progress relies on donor support, not government budgets. Donor dependency is another issue, they only fund what fits their work plan, limiting our flexibility"* (Federal Ministry of Women Affairs). Similarly, *"Over-reliance on donor funding is a big issue, there's no*

> **Box 5: Price of Progress: Who Really Funds Women's Recovery in Nigeria?**
> - Only 13% of donor and domestic philanthropic funds (2013–2018) directly targeted gender equality initiatives.
>
> - Federal allocations to Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) peaked at 1.82% in 2023, but dropped below 1% in 2024–2025.
>
> - The World Bank's USD 500 million NFWP-SU now supports 427,000 women and over ₦4 billion in savings through Women Affinity Groups.
>
> - Persistent donor dependence and weak government investment continue to undermine the sustainability of gender-focused recovery programmes.

national or state budget for WPS" (National Defence College). Civil society actors share this concern: *"International funders impose rigid policies that often misalign with local needs, further complicating coordination"* (WISCOD, Edo State). At the state level, *"Four Sexual Assault Referral Centres exist, but their coverage is limited, budgets are minimal, and they rely on NGOs and donors for supplies"* (Kaduna State Peace Commission). A women's network leader added, *"CSOs and donors push for inclusiveness, but coordination needs improvement. More local resource mobilisation is needed to reduce donor dependency"* (FOMWAN, Kano).

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[52] OECD (2022), "Philanthropy and Gender Equality - Domestic Philanthropy for Development and Gender Equality in Nigeria", OECD Development Centre, Paris

[53] The World Bank (2023) *Press Release: Nigeria to Scale Up Women's Empowerment for Better Economic Outcomes*, *World Bank*. Available at: https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2023/06/22/nigeria-to-scale-up-womens-empowerment-for-better-economic-outcomes (Accessed: 9 August 2025).

[54] dRPC(2025) Gender Responsive Budgeting And Federal Government of Nigeria 2025 Appropriation Bill: A Critical Analysis of Women Economic Empowerment Budgetary Provisions. Available at: https://drpcngr.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/GENDER-RESPONSIVE-BUDGETING-AND-FEDERAL-GOVERNMENT-OF-NIGERIA-2025-APPROPRIATION-BILL-A-CRITICA.pdf

These perspectives reflect a persistent imbalance between donor-driven and domestically financed gender programmes. While initiatives like NFWP-SU show tangible results, sustainability remains uncertain without stronger national ownership and consistent funding. Limited transparency in gender budgeting also weakens accountability and restricts evidence-based planning.

In conclusion, Nigeria's gender-responsive financing landscape is improving but remains constrained by low public investment, donor dependence, and weak coordination. Strengthening gender budgeting and transparency at federal and state levels is vital to sustain gains under UNSCR 1325's Relief and Recovery pillar.

3.4.2 Maternal Mortality Rate
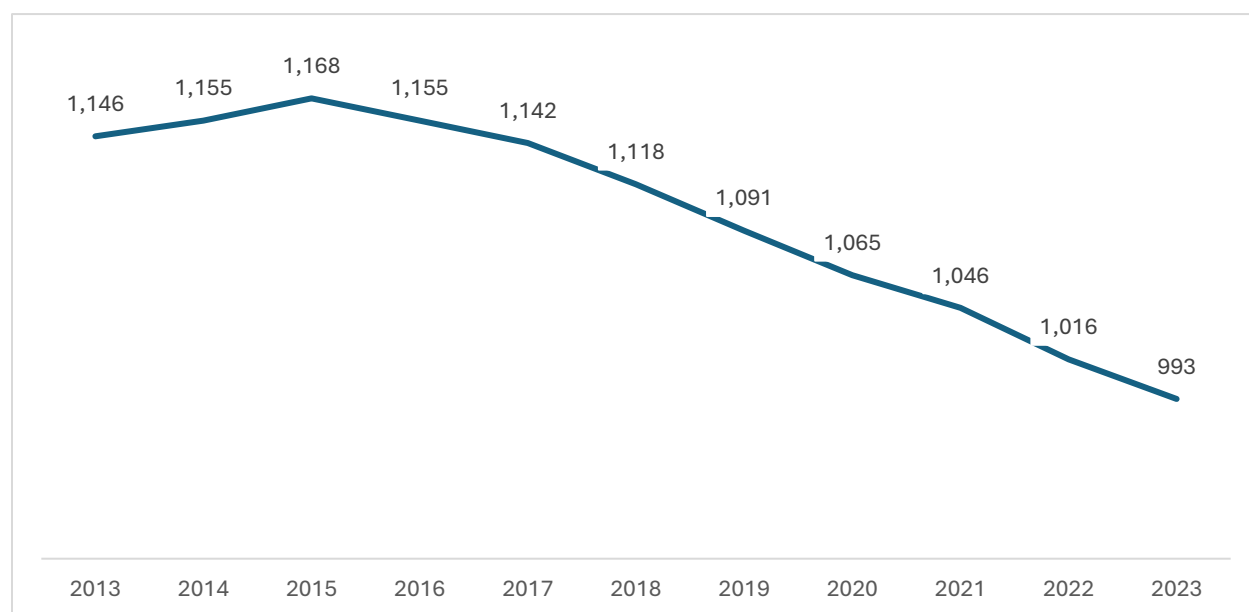
Figure 4 Nigeria's Maternal Mortality Rate(Per 100,000 Live Births)[55]

From *Figure 4,* the numbers, though declining, show that the celebration is far from over; it is not yet *uhuru* for Nigeria's maternal health outcomes. While maternal deaths fell from 1,146 per 100,000 live births in 2013 to 993 in 2023, this slow reduction conceals the gravity of the crisis when viewed against regional benchmarks. Nigeria's maternal mortality rate remains one of the highest in the world, 993 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2023, compared with 256 in Sudan, 149 in Kenya, 234 in Ghana, and 118 in South Africa[56]. The magnitude of this disparity underscores Nigeria's continuing struggle to achieve maternal health equity, despite decades of policy commitments and donor-backed programmes. Over the past decade, the country's MMR declined

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[55] Macro Trends (2024) *Nigeria Maternal Mortality Rate 2000-2024*, *www.macrotrends.net*. Available at: https://www.macrotrends.net/global-metrics/countries/NGA/nigeria/maternal-mortality-rate (Accessed: 1 September 2025).
[56] The World Bank (2024) Economies | World Bank Gender Data Portal, World Bank Gender Data Portal. Available at: https://genderdata.worldbank.org/en/economies (Accessed: 10 September 2025).

by only 13%, far below the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target of reducing global MMR to less than 70 per 100,000 by 2030.[57]

Field interviews and qualitative accounts reveal that progress in women's access to healthcare remains severely constrained by resource diversion, inadequate infrastructure, and weak prioritisation of women's health in recovery planning. A national WPS coordinator observed that *"COVID-19 lockdowns escalated SGBV by trapping women with perpetrators and redirected resources from women's health to pandemic response."* This diversion of funding during crises exposed the fragility of reproductive and maternal health services and their vulnerability to competing policy pressures.

Across states, testimonies further point to the absence of basic dignity and hygiene items for women in humanitarian and recovery contexts. One respondent noted that *"services are inaccessible due to corruption and lack of women-specific items like sanitary towels."* Similarly, a federal-level official emphasised that *"a teenage girl in a camp needs more than rice and beans,she needs sanitary pads to maintain her dignity."* These narratives underscore the systemic neglect of women's specific health and dignity needs within relief operations, reducing recovery planning to a narrow focus on survival rather than holistic well-being.

In internally displaced persons (IDP) camps and post-conflict communities, limited coordination and oversight continue to hinder the equitable distribution of essential materials. As a WANEP focal person stated, *"IDP camps often lack essentials like sanitary towels,"* while another added that *"oversight is needed to ensure equitable, non-exploitative distribution, prioritising women's specific needs such as menstrual hygiene products and safe spaces."* Where formal systems fail, community women's groups have stepped in: *"Women in communities offer psychosocial and first aid support, but more is needed,"* explained an Imo State official. These accounts highlight both the resilience of local women's networks and the institutional weaknesses that necessitate their interventions.

Overall, maternal health remains a fragile link in Nigeria's recovery framework. The slow decline in mortality rates is overshadowed by inequities in access, quality, and inclusion, particularly in crisis-affected zones. Donor-led programmes, such as the Nigeria for Women Project, have improved women's economic resilience but have yet to deliver transformative impacts on health outcomes. While women now hold strategic leadership roles in health and humanitarian ministries across some regions, systemic issues,such as limited gender budgeting, poor inter-agency coordination, and inconsistent provision of women-specific medical and dignity kits,continue to undermine progress.

In summary, Nigeria's maternal mortality trend captures a persistent paradox: policy-level advancement amid service-level exclusion. To align with UNSCR 1325's *Relief and Recovery* pillar, Nigeria must transition from emergency response to gender-responsive recovery, where women's health, dignity, and participation are central to humanitarian and reconstruction planning.

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[57] WHO (2021) *SDG Target 3.1: Reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births*, *Who.int*. Available at: https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/themes/topics/topic-details/GHO/sdgtarget3-1-reduce-maternal-mortality .

3.4.3 Education Enrolment by Sex

Education remains a cornerstone of women's empowerment and recovery. Data from the Federal Ministry of Education show that Nigeria has made significant strides toward gender parity in access to basic education. Across primary and secondary levels, enrolment between boys and girls is now nearly balanced, demonstrating the impact of targeted interventions, including the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme, community sensitisation, and donor-supported girls' education initiatives in conflict-affected areas.

Table 5 Gender Indicators in Basic Education (Primary–SSS), Nigeria[58]

Indicator	Primary	JSS	SSS
% Female Pupils	48.9%	51.5%	48.9%
Gender Parity Index (GPI)	1.04	1.06	1.04
Completion Rate (Female)	81.46%	44.54%	44.47%
Completion Rate (Male)	84.41%	45.72%	46.15%
Gross Enrolment Ratio (Female)	88.70%	50.73%	44.27%
Gross Enrolment Ratio (Male)	92.13%	47.79%	45.11%
Net Enrolment Ratio (Female)	79.14%	37.32%	32.62%
Net Enrolment Ratio (Male)	82.14%	34.20%	32.02%

At the primary school level, girls constitute 48.9% of total pupils, with a Gender Parity Index (GPI) of 1.04, indicating near equality in enrolment between boys and girls. The completion rate of 81.5% for girls compared to 84.4% for boys suggests strong participation, although challenges of poverty, insecurity, and household responsibilities still cause dropouts. The net enrolment ratio (NER), 79.1% for girls and 82.1% for boys, shows that access gaps are steadily closing across both public and private schools.

At the junior secondary level (JSS), girls now make up 51.5% of total pupils, with a GPI of 1.06, meaning slightly more girls than boys are enrolled. This improvement reflects the success of awareness campaigns and recovery programmes that promote girls' transition from primary to junior secondary schools. However, the completion rate (44.5%) remains low, signalling persistent challenges in keeping adolescent girls in school.

At the senior secondary level (SSS), female enrolment remains strong (48.9%) with a GPI of 1.04, showing that parity continues through the higher levels of basic education. Yet, overall completion rates for both sexes are low, 44.5% for girls and 46.2% for boys, reflecting system-wide issues such as poor infrastructure, insecurity, and teacher shortages that affect education quality and continuity.

While parity in enrolment is a major achievement, Nigeria still faces an out-of-school children crisis, with an estimated 10.5 million children, mostly in the North-East and North-West- still out of school (UNICEF, 2023). Many of these are girls from poor or displaced families, whose

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[58] FMoE(2022) Statistics & NEMISfact Sheet 2022.Available at: https://nemis.education.gov.ng/factsheet/fact%20sheet%202022_.pdf

schooling is disrupted by insecurity, economic hardship, and cultural norms that favour early marriage. A Gender Desk Officer in Adamawa State noted, *"Cultural norms view women's roles as domestic, discouraging education and political engagement. Early marriage limits opportunities."* Nonetheless, perceptions are changing. As a WPS coordinator in Gombe State explained, *"Patriarchy, religious, and cultural norms are barriers, but these are declining due to better education for girls, who now outnumber boys in schools."*

Donor and civil society efforts have been crucial to sustaining these gains. A FOMWAN member stated, *"I contributed to the Girls' Education Program, improving enrolment and retention of girls, leading to more female doctors and political participation."* Similarly, a Kaduna Peace Commission official observed that *"Peace clubs in schools engage girls, spreading peacebuilding skills."* These initiatives not only support enrolment but also link education with empowerment, peacebuilding, and leadership.

Overall, the data show that gender gaps in education are now minimal, reflecting years of advocacy, investment, and reform. Achieving full equity, however, requires tackling barriers that keep girls from completing school, especially in conflict-affected and poor communities. The next priority is improving retention, learning quality, and completion through greater investment in safe schools, mentorship, and cash transfers that ease the cost of girls' education.

3.4.4 Gender Budgeting in Strategic Planning

Gender budgeting is a key test of institutional commitment to inclusive recovery and women's empowerment. It reflects how effectively Nigeria's fiscal planning translates policy intent into tangible investment in gender equality. Evidence from recent budget data shows that allocations to Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) programmes have increased in visibility since 2019 but have remained below 2% of total national capital expenditure, a sign that gender priorities are still marginal within the national budget framework(*see Figure 5*)

While the inclusion of WEE-responsive infrastructure and healthcare projects represents a step forward, budget performance remains weak, with only about two-thirds of allocated funds typically released or implemented each year. This gap between allocation and expenditure limits the real impact of gender budgeting and underscores Nigeria's broader fiscal challenge: low budget credibility and poor absorption across ministries.

Interviews reveal that institutional underfunding and donor dependency continue to undermine gender-focused recovery efforts. As one expert noted, *"The second NAP ended in 2020, and the third has not been operationalized, possibly due to lack of budget allocation."* A senior official from the National Defence College reinforced this, stating, *"Over-reliance on donor funding is a big issue, there's no national or state budget for WPS."* Similarly, an official from the Ministry of Women Affairs explained, *"Most progress relies on donor support, not government budgets,"* adding that *"if we had stronger political will and budget allocations, we'd go further."*
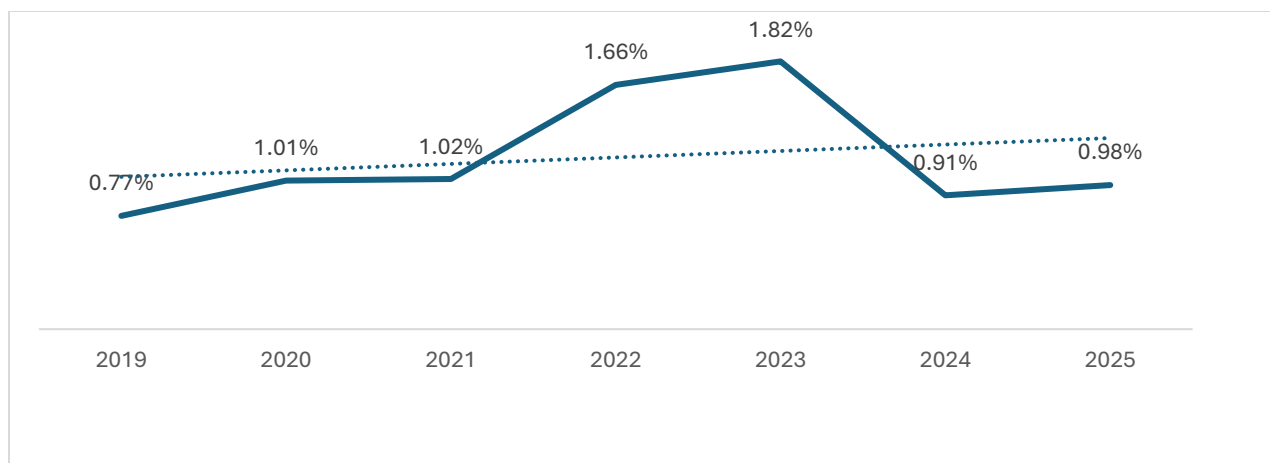
Figure 5 Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) Allocations as a Percentage of Nigeria's Total Capital Budget, 2019–2025[59]

This lack of consistent domestic financing affects both national and subnational implementation. Officials from Benue, Kano, and Borno confirmed that *"underfunding limits SAP implementation, with Ministries of Women Affairs struggling to support rural LGAs."* The same challenge was echoed by an IPCR representative, who noted that localising WPS frameworks is impossible without financial backing. These testimonies illustrate that gender budgeting remains reactive, dependent on advocacy or donor cycles, rather than a permanent feature of Nigeria's planning architecture.

Nonetheless, there are emerging models of progress. Kaduna's State Action Plan (2024–2028) now includes dedicated budgets for each WPS pillar, and Oyo State has begun implementing multi-sectoral, gender-responsive budgeting through its Ministry of Women Affairs. A WANEP focal person from the Southwest summarised the need succinctly: *"Gender-responsive budgeting is needed to improve access, as current relief materials fall short of women's specific needs."* These developments show that while the policy foundation exists, institutionalisation remains incomplete.

In summary, Nigeria's gender budgeting framework demonstrates incremental progress but limited depth. Allocations remain low, coordination weak, and accountability mechanisms underdeveloped. Sustained progress will require statutory gender tagging across all ministries, transparent tracking of WEE expenditure, and stronger political commitment to financing gender equality as a national development priority. Until then, gender budgeting will remain visible on paper but fragile in practice, hindering inclusive recovery under UNSCR 1325.

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[59] dRPC(2025) Gender Responsive Budgeting And Federal Government of Nigeria 2025 Appropriation Bill: A Critical Analysis of Women Economic Empowerment Budgetary Provisions. Available at: https://drpcngr.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/GENDER-RESPONSIVE-BUDGETING-AND-FEDERAL-GOVERNMENT-OF-NIGERIA-2025-APPROPRIATION-BILL-A-CRITICA.pdf

3.4.5 Women's Access to DDR Benefits

Disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR) efforts in Nigeria remain largely gender-blind, with little evidence of women's inclusion or benefit share. Findings from UNIDIR and national interviews show that although reintegration programmes exist for persons associated with Boko Haram, women and girls are often invisible within them. They receive fewer economic and psychosocial benefits than men due to stigma, restrictive norms, and programme designs that treat them as dependents rather than participants in peacebuilding.

UNIDIR's 2024 findings show that few women access formal DDR support because eligibility focuses on male combatants. Women who experienced forced marriages or captivity are often excluded or redirected to humanitarian assistance without reintegration components[60]. Many rely instead on informal community structures, women's cooperatives, and NGO-led livelihood projects. As a Gender Desk Officer in Adamawa State noted, *"Women play a significant role, receiving most aid due to their prevalence in camps with children. The Ministry provides psychosocial support, skills training, and start-up kits to help women recover and support their families."*

Across conflict-affected states, recovery efforts act as local substitutes for DDR. In Benue, *"Women drive recovery in Guma, forming cooperatives for farming and providing psychosocial support. These efforts rebuild communities but need funding."* Similar patterns appear in Delta, Kano, and Kaduna, where women's groups engage in tailoring, farming, and trauma counselling. These local initiatives show women's resilience but also highlight the absence of formal support structures.

The scale of support remains limited. A National Defence College respondent observed, *"Women support recovery through savings groups and community efforts, but their contributions are small-scale due to limited resources."* The Women Initiative for Sustainable Community Development (WISCOD) added, *"CSOs run vocational skills centres, training women to regain financial independence, though government contributions remain minimal."* These statements confirm that women's reintegration is sustained more by NGOs and communities than by public funding.

Psychosocial recovery and community acceptance are also weak. The NEEM Foundation explained that *"Women in Borno, Kaduna, and Zamfara lead dialogues, mediate disputes, and provide trauma counselling, helping survivors rebuild emotionally."* Such initiatives reflect the intent of UNSCR 1325 but remain under-recognised in national DDR frameworks.

Overall, Nigeria's DDR architecture is partial and gender-imbalanced. Formal programmes focus on male ex-combatants, while women rely on ad hoc community or NGO interventions. Closing

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[60] UNIDIR (2025) *Women and girls' struggle to (re)integrate after Boko Haram*. Available at: https://unidir.org/women-and-girls-struggle-to-reintegrate-after-boko-haram/ (Accessed: 15 August 2025).

this gap requires embedding gender-responsive reintegration into national DDR policy, linking psychosocial and economic recovery with peacebuilding and resilience.

4.0 Cross-Cutting Analysis

This section synthesises findings that cut across the four core pillars of UNSCR 1325, identifying the underlying factors shaping Nigeria's progress and constraints. It examines structural barriers such as financing and coordination, the intersecting experiences of marginalised groups, and regional disparities in localisation. It also maps the status of State Action Plans and civil-society contributions, highlighting WANEP's convening role. Finally, it links Nigeria's Women, Peace, and Security agenda to emerging global frontiers, including climate security, violent extremism, and technology-enabled peacebuilding.

4.1 Structural Barriers

Nigeria's localisation of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda continues to face entrenched structural barriers that undermine implementation across all four pillars of UNSCR 1325. Three interrelated obstacles, funding shortfalls, weak political will, and poor inter-institutional coordination, remain the most persistent constraints to sustained progress.

Chronic Funding Gaps

Chronic funding gaps limit WPS activities despite high control.

Donor Dependence

Donor dependence significantly impacts WPS progress with high control.

Weak Coordination Mechanisms

Weak coordination mechanisms hinder WPS effectiveness with low control.

Inconsistent Political Will

Inconsistent political will severely impacts WPS outcomes with low control.

Figure 6: Challenges in Women, Peace & Security Implementation in Nigeria

Funding limitations are the most widely reported challenge. Ministries of Women Affairs at both federal and state levels operate on minimal allocations, relying heavily on donor projects and ad hoc support from civil-society partners. As one Gender Desk Officer explained, "*However, funding shortages limit effectiveness, as the Ministry self-funds meetings, straining resources and reducing participation.*" (Adamawa State MWA). Similarly, in Benue, "*Underfunding limits SAP implementation, with the Ministry struggling to support rural LGAs.*" (Benue State MWA). Data confirm that gender-responsive budget lines rarely exceed 2 percent of total capital spending[61],

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[61] dRPC(2025) Gender Responsive Budgeting And Federal Government of Nigeria 2025 Appropriation Bill: A Critical Analysis of Women Economic Empowerment Budgetary Provisions. Available at: https://drpcngr.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/GENDER-RESPONSIVE-BUDGETING-AND-FEDERAL-GOVERNMENT-OF-NIGERIA-2025-APPROPRIATION-BILL-A-CRITICA.pdf

and most State Action Plans depend on donor-driven projects rather than recurrent public funding. This pattern echoes UN Women's (2022) finding that fewer than one-third of African NAPs receive dedicated national budgets, exposing localisation processes to discontinuity once external grants lapse.

Political will will also remain inconsistent. While some states, such as Kaduna and Plateau, have institutionalised WPS frameworks, others lag. "*Edo State lacks an SAP due to insufficient political will and misunderstanding of UNSCR 1325's importance*," noted a WANEP state coordinator, while Imo's Director of Women Affairs confirmed that its absence "*stems from limited political will, as gender issues aren't prioritised*." Without consistent high-level endorsement, even well-drafted plans risk dormancy when administrations change.

Finally, coordination deficits weaken coherence between government, security agencies, and civil society. Multiple respondents described fragmentation and overlap: "*Poor coordination among stakeholders, including local councils in Plateau's Jos North, leads to duplicated efforts.*" (IPCR); "*Coordination is weak in Kano, with duplication in Kano Municipal.*" (Kano MWA); and "*organizations work in silos.*" (Safe Environment Action). The Federal Ministry of Women Affairs lacks a fully functional monitoring framework linking State Action Plans to the National Action Plan.

Collectively, these structural constraints explain why Nigeria's progress, though visible, remains uneven. Without predictable financing, sustained political commitment, and an integrated coordination mechanism across federal and state tiers, localisation risks remaining project-based rather than systemic, a pattern that future policy reforms must address to translate commitments into durable institutional practice.

4.2 Intersectionality and Inclusion

The Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda in Nigeria has expanded the visibility of women in governance and peacebuilding, yet its reach remains uneven across social categories. Intersectional gaps persist, revealing how class, age, disability, and displacement shape women's experiences and access to peace processes.

Youth are the most visible yet least empowered demographic. As one program director (Building Blocks for Peace Foundation) observed, *young and marginalised women are often excluded from WPS discussions, as the agenda focuses on adult women, overlooking the intersection with the Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) framework.*

Cultural hierarchies reinforce exclusion. *Patriarchal attitudes in Borno, Kaduna, and Zamfara marginalise young women, who struggle to be taken seriously in local councils* (NEEM Foundation). These norms echo patterns identified by the African Union's 2023 Continental

framework on WPS Implementation, which observed that social conservatism continues to restrict women's leadership[62].

Displacement compounds these inequities. Several humanitarian respondents stressed that *crises worsen vulnerabilities, with high rates of child marriage, sexual violence, and kidnappings in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps* (National Defence College). Protection systems remain inadequate; *safe spaces are overwhelmed, and camps or schools used as shelters lack resources* (WIPNET, Delta State). Even more troubling, *some relief distribution processes are exploitative, with women coerced into sexual acts to access aid* (WPS Youth Inclusion Advocate), a trend also documented in Human Rights Watch (2022) reports on survival sex in Borno IDP camps.

Beyond displacement, other groups face invisibility. *Disabled and minority women are often marginalised*, facing social stigma and limited funding for inclusion initiatives (FOMWAN, Minna). Grassroots exclusion persists as *rural women remain outside advocacy efforts, their realities filtered through elite representation* (WPS Youth Inclusion Advocate).

Collectively, these findings confirm that Nigeria's WPS localisation has yet to internalise intersectionality as a principle. Without deliberate inclusion of youth, displaced, disabled, and minority women, implementation risks reproducing the very hierarchies it seeks to dismantle.

4.3 Regional Variations

The localisation of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda across Nigeria's six geopolitical zones reveals a pronounced North–South divide. States in the North-East, North-Central, and North-West have generally advanced further in adopting and operationalising State Action Plans (SAPs), while most in the South-West and South-East have yet to localise the agenda formally. This contrast reflects differences in conflict exposure, donor engagement, and political prioritisation of gender and security governance.

In the North, conflict realities have accelerated localisation. The North-East and North-Central zones, particularly Plateau, Adamawa, Benue, and Kaduna, stand out as leaders in institutionalising UNSCR 1325 commitments. As one civil society representative (Women Initiative for Sustainable Community Development, Plateau State) explained, *"Plateau State is a leader in Nigeria for domesticating the National Action Plan, it adopted its first SAP during the first NAP, followed by a second."* This momentum has been reinforced by peace commissions, state-level gender desks, and coordination with the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs. Even where challenges persist, such as *underfunding and duplication across LGAs*, the northern experience demonstrates a shift from advocacy to institutional practice, driven by necessity amid protracted insecurity.

By contrast, the South lags significantly. No state in the South-West or South-East has yet adopted a State Action Plan, despite years of consultations. As a respondent from Imo's Ministry of Women

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[62] African Union (2019) *Continental Results Framework Monitoring and Reporting On The Implementation Of The Women, Peace And Security Agenda In Africa (2018 - 2028)*. Available at : https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/35958-doc-continental_results_framework_wps_.pdf

Affairs noted, *"The lack of a state action plan stems from limited political will, as gender issues aren't prioritised."* In Oyo and Edo (South-South), discussions remain at the advocacy stage, with no formal frameworks or budget allocations. The relative absence of high-intensity conflict has reduced policy urgency, leaving WPS implementation largely symbolic.

These regional divergences extend to women's participation. In the North, necessity has driven inclusion; women now mediate local disputes, lead peace committees, and serve in state peace commissions. In the South, participation is mostly appointive and concentrated in urban activism.

Across all zones, a shared weakness persists limited translation of national and state frameworks into community-level impact. As a youth advocate observed, *"Plans often lack context-specific approaches, failing to address the realities of rural versus urban women."* The overall pattern confirms that while localisation has taken deeper root in the conflict-affected North, it remains largely aspirational and unstructured in the South. Sustaining national parity will require political commitment and resource allocation that match the northern pace of institutionalisation.

4.4 Tracking Localization and Civil Society Contributions

More than a decade after Nigeria committed to UNSCR 1325, localisation remains uneven and poorly tracked. While 16 states have formally adopted State Action Plans (SAPs) and an equal number of Local Action Plans (LAPs) can be independently verified, there is still no central database that monitors adoption, funding, and implementation. The result is fragmented accountability and limited visibility of progress at sub-national levels.

Data compiled from national and civil-society tracking show that SAPs are concentrated in the North, where conflict has driven urgency and donor engagement. The North-Central and North-East each account for five SAPs, the North-West and South-South three each, while none have yet been adopted in the South-West or South-East. This North-South divide mirrors political prioritisation patterns: northern states view WPS localisation as a conflict-response imperative, while many southern governments still treat it as an advocacy issue.

Table 6 State Action Plan Adoption in Nigeria (2013 – 2025)

Geopolitical Zone	State	Adoption Year
North Central	Plateau	2015
	Kogi	2018
	Nasarawa	2020
	Benue	2021
	Kwara	2022
North East	Borno	2014
	Adamawa	2017
	Gombe	2017
	Yobe	2020
	Bauchi	2021
North West	Kaduna	2016

	Kano	2016
	Katsina	2023
South South	Rivers	2015
	Bayelsa	2017
	Delta	2017

NB: *No SAPs verified in the South-West (Lagos, Oyo, Osun, Ekiti, Ogun, Ondo) or South-East (Imo, Anambra, Abia, Ebonyi, Enugu).*
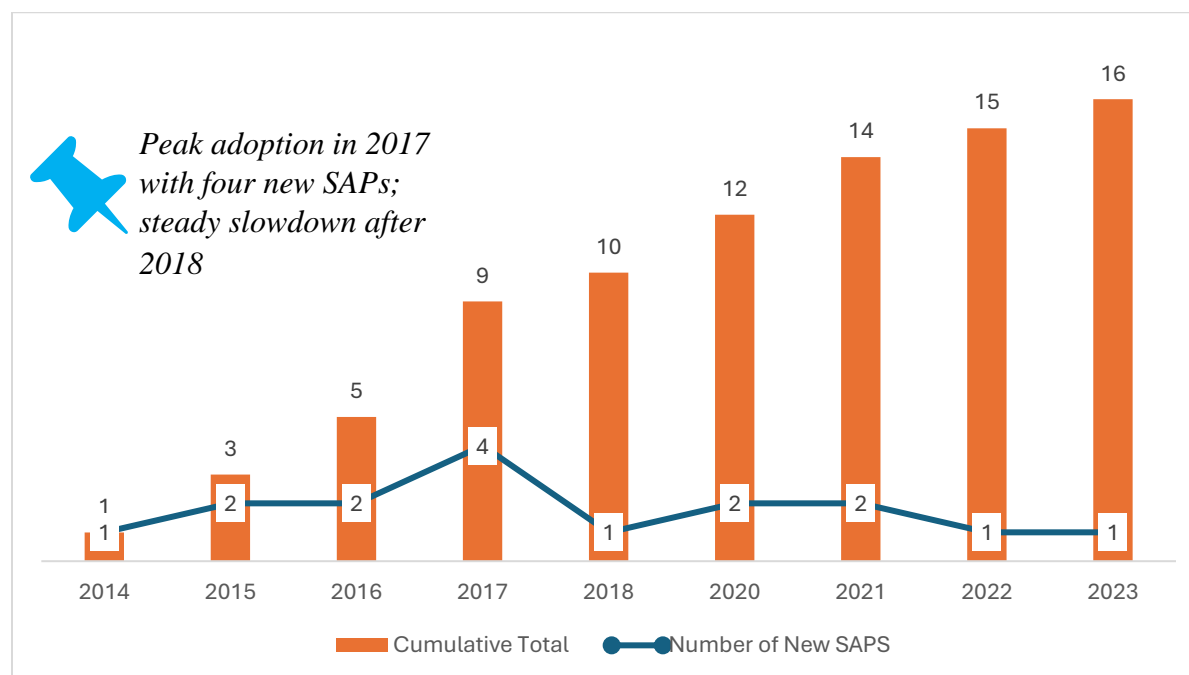
Figure 7: Adoption Over Time

Civil society leadership has been the driving force behind WPS localisation in Nigeria. WANEP-Nigeria remains the most consistent catalyst, bridging policy and community engagement. It co-facilitated the development of State Action Plans in Borno (2014) and Gombe (2017), supported Local Action Plans in Plateau and Benue, and is currently leading new localisation processes in Edo and Lagos. These efforts exemplify WANEP's sustained coordination and technical leadership across successive NAP cycles.

Other partners, including the Nigeria Stability and Reconciliation Programme (NSRP), UN Women, ActionAid Nigeria, the European Union, and the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs, have been instrumental in funding and providing technical support for SAP and LAP implementation across multiple states.

Together, these collaborations highlight a strong ecosystem of civil society and donor engagement. Yet, the absence of a unified national tracking mechanism linking sub-national plans to the Federal

NAP continues to constrain visibility, coordination, and evidence-based learning across Nigeria's WPS framework.

5.0 Impact and Lessons Learned

Twelve years of implementing the Women, Peace and Security agenda in Nigeria have produced visible institutional, behavioral, and policy shifts. Localization has expanded to 16 states, embedding gender perspectives in peace and security structures and broadening women's participation in decision-making. Yet, progress remains uneven and underfunded, with gaps in coordination, financing, and accountability. This section analyses national outcomes, highlights transformative state experiences, identifies persistent barriers, and distils lessons that can inform replication across West Africa's evolving WPS landscape.

5.1 Overall Impact of Localisation (2013–2025)

Over twelve years of implementing the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, Nigeria has achieved discernible systemic and behavioural transformations. What began in 2013 as fragmented advocacy has evolved into a structured policy framework, with growing sub-national ownership, institutional reform, and shifting gender norms across peace and security institutions.

The most visible systemic milestone is the expansion of localisation itself. As a senior official from the Ministry of Women Affairs noted, *"After those meetings, awareness grew, and 16 states have localised their plans."* This marks a transition from rhetoric to measurable implementation, with one-third of Nigeria's states now operating State Action Plans (SAPs). The process has decentralised WPS policy, embedding women's participation more firmly in peacebuilding and governance at state and local levels.

Institutional integration has also advanced. *"Security institutions now have gender desks and SGBV units, like the police, expanding theirs,"* explained a National Defence College representative, reflecting increased gender sensitivity in operational systems. Similarly, *"women are now pilots, paratroopers, and peacekeepers, roles once deemed too tough,"* observed an official from the Ministry of Women Affairs. These shifts signify a deep cultural reorientation within Nigeria's security architecture, replacing tokenism with practical inclusion.

At the community level, participation outcomes are equally notable. In Kano, *"women now lead 25% of peace committees, up from 5% a decade ago,"* while in Kaduna, *"advocacy has led to women's inclusion in traditional councils, with five women appointed in Tudun-Wada and two in Sabon-Gari."* These examples show that the WPS agenda has not only diversified peace structures but also challenged patriarchal norms that once restricted women's agency in northern Nigeria.

Progress in gender-responsive budgeting and planning is modest but visible. Federal and state budgets now reflect dedicated allocations for Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) and SGBV response, while peace commissions in Plateau and Kaduna integrate gender indicators in their performance frameworks. To improve accountability, the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs has revived zonal WPS coordination platforms that convene state ministries and civil society to

harmonise SAP reporting and share lessons across regions, an emerging mechanism that strengthens vertical policy coherence.

Yet, financing remains a critical weakness. As the *UN Women Global Study on 1325 (2015)* cautioned, *"the persistent failure to adequately finance the women, peace and security agenda must be addressed."* Limited domestic funding and donor dependence continue to undermine sustainability, particularly for monitoring and community-level interventions.

Overall, localisation has catalysed enduring institutional, cultural, and behavioural change. Traditional resistance is yielding to recognition of women as credible peace actors, and national coordination mechanisms are beginning to take shape. Nigeria's experience demonstrates that when policy, advocacy, and social transformation converge, WPS localisation can move from compliance to genuine transformation. These national patterns are best illustrated through specific sub-national cases.

5.2 Success Stories and Transformative Shifts: Sub-National and Practical Achievements

The overall impact of UNSCR 1325 localization in Nigeria is best illustrated through sub-national examples that demonstrate how institutional reforms and behavioral shifts have materialized at the state level. The following four cases, Plateau, Kaduna, Borno, and Gombe, capture the diversity of approaches that have advanced women's inclusion, strengthened peace structures, and embedded gender perspectives into policy and practice.

A. Plateau State: Pioneer of Dual SAP/LAP Adoption and Community Mediation Model

Plateau State remains Nigeria's foremost example of sustained localisation leadership. As one of the first states to develop a State Action Plan (SAP) in 2015 and later cascade it into Local Action Plans (LAPs), Plateau has embedded the WPS agenda into both policy and community structures. A civil society leader affirmed that *"Plateau State is a leader in Nigeria for domesticating the National Action Plan."* (Executive Director, Women Initiative for Sustainable Community Development).

Women's peace committees, trained through WISCOD-led programmes in Jos North and Bokkos, now mediate land and interfaith conflicts once dominated by male elders. *"Women trained through WISCOD's programs now mediate conflicts and organise interfaith dialogues,"* explained the same source. These interventions have transformed women from observers to recognised peace actors, supported by consistent collaboration between government and civil society. Plateau's model demonstrates how long-term investment in capacity building and local ownership can institutionalise women's peace leadership beyond donor cycles.

B. Kaduna State: Integrating the WPS Agenda into Peace Institutions and Traditional Governance

Kaduna has moved beyond policy commitment to embedding WPS within its institutional architecture. The State Peace Commission, established in 2017, mainstreams gender in its operations and coordinates cross-sector collaboration with the Ministry of Women Affairs. Persistent advocacy has also driven inclusion in traditional governance: *"Five women were appointed in Tudun-Wada, Kaduna South, and two in Sabon-Gari,"* reported a Peace Commission official.

The state launched its second-generation SAP (2024–2028), aligning it with the African Union and ECOWAS frameworks and introducing dedicated budgets for each WPS pillar. This institutionalisation marks a significant step toward sustainability and accountability. Kaduna's experience shows that political will, combined with legal anchoring and advocacy, can shift WPS from rhetoric to policy implementation.

C. Borno State: Women-Led Reintegration and Psychosocial Recovery

Borno, the epicentre of Nigeria's insurgency, has redefined recovery through women-led peacebuilding. Civil society initiatives under the NEEM Foundation have empowered women to lead peace committees and trauma-healing projects. *"Our POCI project, funded by the Karuna Centre, has women heading peace committees in LGAs like Maiduguri, driving community trust and plan momentum,"* explained a NEEM Foundation director.

Similarly, *"our Mind Care project provides trauma counselling led by women, helping survivors rebuild emotionally."* These approaches align with UNSCR 2467's call for survivor-centred responses to conflict-related sexual violence. By positioning women as mediators and counsellors, Borno's model demonstrates that empowerment and recovery are inseparable pillars of peacebuilding in conflict-affected settings.

D. Gombe State: Integrating Displaced Women into Host Communities

Gombe has adopted an innovative, prevention-focused model that avoids the pitfalls of prolonged displacement. The State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) conducts gender-sensitive assessments and integrates displaced persons directly into host communities, reducing exposure to sexual and gender-based violence. As the WPS Coordinator noted, *"Gombe avoids long-term IDP camps to prevent SGBV, as seen in Maiduguri."*

Moreover, *"the governor mandates women's inclusion in committees, ensuring gender sensitivity and representation of people with disabilities."* These measures reflect a deliberate effort to embed inclusivity within crisis management and reconstruction planning. Gombe's pragmatic approach underscores that WPS implementation is most effective when protection and participation are pursued simultaneously.

Collectively, these cases demonstrate that effective localisation thrives where policy, leadership, and local innovation intersect. Plateau and Kaduna showcase institutionalisation and political will;

Borno exemplifies resilience-driven recovery; and Gombe reflects adaptive protection models rooted in gender sensitivity. Together, they illustrate how Nigeria's WPS commitments translate from policy into tangible transformation across diverse security and social contexts.

5.3 Transferable Lessons for West Africa: Practical Insights for Replication

Nigeria's localisation of UNSCR 1325 offers actionable lessons for West Africa's collective Women, Peace and Security (WPS) journey. It shows that when localisation, institutionalisation, and financing align, the agenda moves from policy rhetoric to tangible peace dividends. ECOWAS and other regional bodies can adapt these lessons as they advance the Regional Action Plan on WPS.

1. **Localisation, not legislation, sustains impact**: Nigeria's three-tiered model – National, State, and Local Action Plans- demonstrates that WPS gains endure when policies reach the grassroots. Replication across West Africa should focus on building capacity for state- and district-level action rather than multiplying national plans without ownership.
2. **Civil-society networks drive scale and accountability:** WANEP-Nigeria's convening role shows that coordinated CSO platforms can link communities, governments, and donors. Regional bodies within the region should embed such networks into their monitoring framework to ensure community voices inform regional reporting.
3. **Conflict contexts can catalyse innovation**: Northern Nigeria's insecurity accelerated reform, women mediators, peace committees, survivor-led recovery. Similar momentum has emerged in Burkina Faso and Niger, where the crisis created openings for inclusive peacebuilding. Turning instability into opportunity remains a regional imperative.
4. **Institutions must outlive political cycles**: Plateau and Kaduna demonstrate that political will must be converted into statutory mechanisms, peace commissions, gender desks, and budget frameworks, to safeguard continuity beyond leadership changes.

Box 6: Reflections on "Prevailing Missed Opportunities": Nigeria's Implications

- **Missed Opportunity #1 – Financing:** Despite Nigeria's progress in localising UNSCR 1325, funding for women-led peace initiatives remains largely donor-dependent, reflecting the global trend where only 0.3% of aid in crisis contexts reaches women's organizations directly. The low awareness of the 1% funding goal and declining gender focus in humanitarian aid continue to constrain sustainability.
- **Missed Opportunity #2 – Data Systems:** The absence of a central tracker for Nigeria's SAPs and LAPs echoes the worldwide lack of disaggregated WPS monitoring frameworks.
- **Missed Opportunity #3 – Political Will:** Fluctuating government commitment, particularly in southern states, mirrors the global failure to embed WPS in mainstream security agendas.
- **Missed Opportunity #4 – Protection to Empowerment Gap:** While Nigeria strengthened GBV response mechanisms, it has yet to fully transition from protection to women's empowerment and leadership.
- **Missed Opportunity #5 – Local Ownership:** Where localisation thrives, progress is

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These insights reaffirm that localisation, inclusive partnerships, and predictable financing, rather than policy proliferation, are the true markers of WPS maturity in the region. At the same time, new frontiers such as digital peacebuilding and youth inclusion present cross-border learning opportunities, linking the WPS and Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) frameworks into a more coherent regional approach.

Nigeria's ongoing corrective measures, expanding peace commissions, institutionalising gender desks, and leveraging WANEP's coordination networks, illustrate how national innovation can close global implementation gaps. Addressing missed opportunities will define the next decade of WPS action across Africa.

6.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

Nigeria's localization of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda has evolved over twelve years from policy commitment to tangible institutional practice. The findings across all four pillars, Prevention, Participation, Protection, and Relief & Recovery, reveal visible progress in legal frameworks, security-sector reform, and women's inclusion at national and sub-national levels. However, uneven financing, weak coordination, and inconsistent political will continue to limit sustainability. This section presents practical recommendations aligned with national priorities and the recently assented Third National Action Plan (2025–2030). They are directed to key actor groups whose coordinated actions will determine whether Nigeria can consolidate a decade of gains into a transformative WPS architecture.

6.1 Recommendations

Actor	Recommendation	Rationale	Timeframe	Indicator
6.1.1 Government and Policy Institutions				
Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and State MWAs	Establish a dedicated national WPS budget line linked to SAP/LAP implementation.	Predictable financing will ensure implementation beyond donor cycles and enable annual progress reporting.	Immediate	Annual federal and state budgets include gender-tagged WPS lines.
National Assembly / State Legislatures	Legislate statutory backing for State Peace Commissions and SAPs under NAP III.	Anchoring WPS structures in law protects continuity across administrations.	Medium-term	Enacted WPS/Peace Commission legislation in ≥ 20 states.
Federal Ministry of Budget & National Planning	Integrate gender budgeting into Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks (MTEF).	Mainstreaming ensures WPS alignment within national planning cycles.	Medium-term	Gender-budget tagging is operational in MTEF templates.
Federal Ministry of Women Affairs / National Bureau of Statistics	Develop a National WPS Data Tracker with disaggregated indicators.	Centralised monitoring enables evidence-based coordination and evaluation.	Immediate	Functional online tracker with federal–state dashboards.
National Council on Women Affairs / ECOWAS Liaison	Institutionalise periodic peer reviews of SAP performance.	Peer learning drives accountability and cross-state innovation.	Long-term	Biannual national WPS performance review meetings held.
6.1.2 Security Institutions				

Nigeria Police Force / NSCDC	Adopt and operationalise the Police Gender Policy (2010) with training modules.	Embedding gender standards improves SGBV response and internal equity.	Immediate	Gender Policy officially adopted; ≥ 60 % of officers trained.
Armed Forces / Defence Headquarters	Introduce mandatory gender-sensitivity and SGBV accountability training at all levels.	Institutional culture change requires sustained professional development.	Medium-term	Annual training records and disciplinary data are published.
Security Institutions & IPCR	Create joint gender desks linking military, police, and civil authorities.	Coordination enhances survivor referral pathways and trust.	Immediate	Inter-agency gender desks are functional in all six zones.
Ministry of Interior & Defence Service Commissions	Implement gender-balanced promotion quotas (minimum 35 %).	Increases women's representation in command and decision-making roles.	Long-term	Annual representation scorecards show ≥ 35 % female officers.
National Defence College / Training Institutes	Embed the WPS curriculum in defence and security training schools.	Mainstream gender perspectives in national security education.	Medium-term	WPS modules are accredited in all service colleges.
6.1.3 Civil Society and Development Partners				
WANEP-Nigeria / Women's CSO Networks	Consolidate a National Coalition on Localisation of WPS to coordinate SAP/LAP support.	Unified advocacy strengthens coherence and reduces duplication.	Immediate	Coalition charter adopted; joint workplan implemented.
CSOs & Faith-Based Organisations	Strengthen the inclusion of youth, displaced, and disabled women in peacebuilding.	Addresses intersectional exclusion identified in localisation gaps.	Medium-term	Inclusive representation (≥ 30 %) in SAP steering committees.
International Partners (UN Women, EU, USAID, FCDO)	Transition from project to pooled-funding models for WPS financing.	Shared baskets improve coordination and sustainability of support.	Medium-term	Pooled WPS Fund established with multi-donor governance.
Development Partners & Government	Invest in institutional capacity-building for	Strengthens accountability and harmonises	Long-term	Annual M&E reports validated jointly by

	data, monitoring, and evaluation.	reporting under NAP III.		FMWA and CSOs.
Academia / Think Tanks	Conduct longitudinal studies on the WPS impact and cost-benefit of localisation.	Provides evidence for policy reform and budget advocacy.	Long-term	Publication of the biennial WPS Impact Review.
6.1.4 Media and Advocacy Actors				
National Orientation Agency / Media Houses	Mainstream gender-sensitive reporting on peace and security issues.	Reduces stereotypes and amplifies women's peace leadership.	Immediate	$\geq$ 50 % of media content on security includes female voices.
Journalists & Editors Guilds	Adopt editorial guidelines on ethical reporting of SGBV.	Promotes survivor dignity and accountability journalism.	Immediate	National media code referencing SGBV ethics adopted.
CSO Communications Units & Influencers	Use digital platforms to link WPS and Youth, Peace & Security (YPS) agendas.	Broadens youth engagement and modernises peace narratives.	Medium-term	Social-media metrics show cross-campaign reach increase.
Community Radio / Local Press	Highlight women's peace achievements and SAP outcomes.	Encourages community ownership and transparency.	Medium-term	Quarterly radio programmes on WPS aired in $\geq$ 15 states.
Media Regulatory Agencies	Include gender parity indicators in media-sector scorecards.	Aligns national communication standards with WPS goals.	Long-term	Annual broadcast compliance reports include WPS metrics.

6.2 Conclusion

Nigeria's twelve-year journey under the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) framework (2013–2025) captures both the promise and the paradox of localisation. From the first National Action Plan in 2013 to the presidential assent of the Third NAP (2024–2028), the country has moved from ad-hoc advocacy to a structured system of policies and institutions that have expanded women's visibility in peacebuilding, governance, and security. Sixteen states have adopted State Action Plans, and gender desks now function across multiple agencies, demonstrating institutionalisation once thought impossible. Yet progress remains uneven, constrained by fragile financing, fragmented coordination, and inconsistent sub-national ownership. The next phase must therefore consolidate these gains and convert them into durable systems.

The Third NAP arrives at a critical inflection point. It aligns with ECOWAS and African Union frameworks and provides a renewed opportunity to embed gender-responsive peace and security within Nigeria's governance architecture. Real transformation will depend on three interlinked conditions: sustained financing, accountable coordination, and integrated data systems. Predictable funding anchored in national and state budgets will reduce donor dependence; strengthened coordination through peace commissions and inter-agency gender desks will translate commitments into action; and a unified national WPS tracker will generate the evidence needed for timely policy adjustment.

Future monitoring should operate through a coherent, multi-level framework. At the national level, the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs should coordinate NAP III implementation using quarterly dashboards that link ministries, security institutions, and development partners. At the state level, each SAP should maintain a results matrix aligned with national indicators, reporting progress through the central tracker. Local Action Plans should capture community-level data on participation, protection, and peace outcomes, while civil society and academia provide independent validation through periodic WPS Impact Reviews to sustain transparency and learning.

If effectively implemented, this architecture can move Nigeria from compliance to transformation, where women are not merely beneficiaries of peace but architects of it. The next five years should therefore entrench institutional permanence: making peace commissions statutory, institutionalising gender-responsive budgeting, professionalising security reforms, and expanding civic-media partnerships that reinforce public accountability. By doing so, Nigeria will not only honour twenty-five years of global WPS commitments but also define a distinctly Nigerian model of inclusive security governance, rooted in local leadership, sustained by national ownership, and measured through transparent data. **This is the pathway from beyond commitments to enduring transformation.**

Appendix I: Data Collection Tool

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW (KII) GUIDE

Introduction:

Good [morning/afternoon], and thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. We truly appreciate your time and willingness to share your insights with us.

This conversation is part of a broader assessment on the implementation and impact of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) in Nigeria. Our goal is to understand the progress made so far, identify key challenges, and explore opportunities for strengthening women's participation in peacebuilding and their protection in conflict and post-conflict settings.

Your perspectives are incredibly valuable to this process. We believe that those working directly in the field or affected by these issues are best positioned to provide honest, practical, and constructive reflections.

Please be assured that this interview is entirely confidential. Your responses will be anonymized and used solely for research and advocacy purposes. You are also free to decline answering any question you're uncomfortable with, or to pause or stop the interview at any point.

Before we proceed, do you give your consent to participate in this interview?

SECTIONS	QUESTIONS	PROBES AND FOLLOW-UP PROMPTS
Introduction & Role	Can you describe your role and involvement with the WPS agenda and UNSCR 1325 in Nigeria?	What specific programs or initiatives have you contributed to? How long have you been engaged in this work?
	How has your experience shaped your understanding of WPS progress and challenges in your area?	Can you share a personal story or key moment that stands out?
	Are you aware of Nigeria's National Action Plan (NAP), State Action Plan (SAP), and Local Action Plan (LAP) on UNSCR 1325?	How did you first learn about them? How widely known are these plans among stakeholders in your state/LGA?
	In your view, how well do the NAP, SAP, and LAP reflect the realities and needs of women in your context?	Are there specific issues well-covered or neglected?

Awareness & Action Plans	Has your state or LGA developed and implemented a SAP or LAP? If so, what has been your experience?	What stage is your SAP/LAP at (development, implementation, review)? Who was involved in the process?
	What are the main challenges and successes you have observed in the development and implementation of NAPs, SAPs, and LAPs?	Consider funding, political will, coordination, capacity, or awareness.
	What recommendations would you suggest to improve the impact and localization of these action plans?	What practical steps or stakeholder actions could drive change?
Participation	How has UNSCR 1325 influenced women's participation in peace and security decision-making at all levels?	Can you provide examples of women in leadership, negotiation, or mediation roles in your area?
	What barriers still limit women's meaningful participation in peacebuilding and security governance?	Consider cultural, institutional, political, or resource-related factors.
	How are youth and marginalized women included or excluded in participation efforts?	Are there mechanisms to ensure diverse representation?
	What strategies or programs have been most effective in increasing women's participation?	What lessons can be shared or scaled up?
Political Participation	How would you describe women's involvement in political processes (elections, appointments, party leadership) in your area?	Are women contesting for office? Are they being appointed to key positions?
	What are the main obstacles to women's political participation at the local, state, and national levels?	Consider party structures, electoral violence, funding, social norms, or legal barriers.
	Have you seen any positive changes or setbacks in women's political participation in recent years?	Can you share specific examples or stories?
	What actions or reforms do you think would most effectively increase women's political representation and influence?	Are there successful models or policies (e.g., quotas, affirmative action) that could be adopted or improved?
	How effective are current measures in protecting women and girls from SGBV and other forms of violence?	Are protection mechanisms adequately

Protection		resourced and accessible?
	What gaps exist in legal frameworks, enforcement, and support services for survivors of violence?	How can these gaps be addressed?
	How do humanitarian and security actors coordinate to ensure women's protection during conflict/displacement?	Are there examples of good practices or failures?
	How have recent crises (e.g., COVID-19, displacement) affected protection efforts for women and girls?	What new challenges or adaptations have emerged?
Prevention	What role have women played in preventing conflict and promoting peace at the community and state levels?	Can you share examples of women-led early warning or conflict prevention initiatives?
	How are gender perspectives integrated into security sector reforms and peacebuilding policies?	Are women involved in designing and implementing these reforms?
	What are the main obstacles to effective conflict prevention with a gender lens?	How can these obstacles be overcome?
	How do traditional and religious leaders engage with women on peace and security issues?	Are there successful partnerships or tensions?
Relief & Recovery	How accessible are relief and recovery services to women and girls affected by conflict and displacement?	Are there gender-sensitive programs in place?
	How have women contributed to post-conflict recovery and rebuilding efforts?	Can you highlight any women-led initiatives or organizations?
	What challenges do women face in accessing economic empowerment and psychosocial support during recovery?	How can these challenges be addressed?
	How is the sustainability of recovery programs ensured, especially those targeting women?	Are there mechanisms for monitoring and community involvement?
Coordination & Institutional Framework	How effective is coordination among government agencies, CSOs, security forces, and international partners in advancing UNSCR 1325?	What platforms or mechanisms facilitate this coordination?
	What institutional strengths and weaknesses affect the implementation of the WPS agenda?	How can institutional capacity be improved?

Monitoring, Evaluation & Accountability	What mechanisms exist for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of NAPs, SAPs, and LAPs?	Who is responsible for M&E? How often is it conducted?
	How are findings from M&E activities used to improve WPS programming and accountability?	Are there feedback loops to communities and stakeholders?
	What challenges have you observed in M&E of WPS action plans at the national, state, and local levels?	Consider data collection, reporting, capacity, and resources.
	What recommendations do you have for strengthening M&E and accountability for WPS action plans?	What role can stakeholders play?
Impact, Lessons & Future Directions	What positive changes have you observed in women's roles and security outcomes since UNSCR 1325's adoption?	Can you share success stories or moments of change?
	What are the biggest missed opportunities or gaps in the WPS agendas' implementation in Nigeria?	What caused these gaps, and how can they be addressed?
	What innovative approaches or best practices should be scaled up or replicated?	How can stakeholders support these innovations?
	What are your key recommendations for policymakers, civil society, and development partners to strengthen UNSCR 1325 implementation in the next years?	What priorities should be set?
Closing	Is there anything else you would like to add about women's participation, protection, prevention, or recovery in peace and security in Nigeria?	Any final thoughts or messages for stakeholders?

Appendix II: List of Key Informant Interview (KII) Respondents

S/N	Acronym/Organisation	Designation/Role (Interviewee)	Primary Location / State Focus
1	IPCR (Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution)	Head, Gender, Peace and Security Unit	National
2	WANEP (West Africa Network for Peacebuilding)	National and Zonal Coordinators	National
3	WIPNET (Women in Peacebuilding Network)	State-level Coordinator	Delta and Gombe States
4	Kano State Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development	Senior Official	Kano State (Kano Municipal, Dala)
5	Benue State Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development	Senior Official	Benue State (Makurdi, Guma)
6	Adamawa State Ministry of Women Affairs	Official, Gender Department	Adamawa State
7	Oyo State Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Inclusion	Director of Women Programmes	Oyo State
8	Kaduna State Peace Commission	Permanent Commissioner (Former)	Kaduna State (Jema'a, Chikun, Kajuru, Zaria, Kaduna South, Sabon-Gari)
9	NEEM Foundation	Programme Staff	Borno, Kaduna, and Zamfara States
10	CLEEN Foundation	Programme Staff	Kaduna and Kano States (Zaria, Kano Municipal, Kumbotso)
11	WISCOD (Women's Initiative for Sustainable Community Development)	Programme Staff	Plateau State (Jos North, Jos South, Bokkos)
12	Federal Ministry (Gender and Peacebuilding Unit)	National Coordinator	Federal Capital Territory (Coordination role)
13	Oxfam	GESI Specialist	North East
14	NEMA (National Emergency Management Agency)	Representative (Relief and Humanitarian Operations)	Federal Level
15	WRAPA (Women's Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative)	Field Representative	Bauchi State

ABOUT WANEP NIGERIA

BACKGROUND:

The West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP-Nigeria) serves as a national platform for collaborative peacebuilding, bringing together indigenous organisations working in conflict prevention, transformation, and peacebuilding. As part of the regional WANEP structure in West Africa, the Network supports sustainable peace and development by strengthening the capacity of local NGOs and community-based organisations. Through its membership system, WANEP-Nigeria provides technical support, coordination, and grassroots engagement to address the complex conflicts affecting Nigeria's stability.

WOMEN IN PEACEBUILDING NETWORK (WIPNET)

At the core of WANEP-Nigeria's work is the Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET), a programme dedicated to amplifying women's voices, leadership, and participation in peace and security processes. WIPNET has over one hundred active members across Nigeria, serving as a nationwide force for women-led mediation, early warning, community engagement, and policy advocacy. The programme is central to advancing the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda, and has played a pivotal role in the development, localisation, and implementation of Nigeria's National, State, and Local Action Plans (NAPs, SAPs, and LAPs) on UNSCR 1325.

GOAL:

To build a sustainable peaceful coexistence amongst all the various sectors and groups of the Nigerian community, thereby creating an enabling environment for national growth and development.

OBJECTIVES:

WANEP-Nigeria seeks to: Strengthen the peacebuilding capacity of organisations and practitioners to actively engage in the prevention and/or peaceful transformation of violent conflicts in Nigeria; Increase awareness and use of non-violent strategies as a proactive response to conflicts in order to avoid violence. Promote principled and responsive leadership in the country within context that appreciates the culture of non-violence, advocates for just social, political structures and relationships; Engender conflict prevention and peacebuilding issuses in the country; and Harmonize and develop conflict prevention through peacebuilding activities by networking and coordination of WANEP members into viable networks and mechanisms.

FIELDS) OF ACTIVITY:

The Network works under 5 thematic areas that include

- Gender / Women, Peace and Security
- Democracy and Governance
- Early Warning and Human Security Responses
- Research and Knowledge Management
- Youth, Peace and Security
- Network Coordination and Management