



**Interfaith Forum of Muslim &  
Christian Women's Association**  
(a.k.a. Women's Interfaith Council)

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**SEMINAR ON EXTREMIST VIOLENCE, SECURITY AND WOMEN**  
**Held at the Women's Multipurpose Centre, Kaduna on December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2013.**  
**COMMUNIQUE**

**PREAMBLE**

The need for an increase in women's participation in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace building, peace keeping and humanitarian response has been recognized by the international community through the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325. This resolution calls on all actors to ensure equal and full participation of women in all peace processes and for all parties involved in conflicts to take measures to protect women and girls from gender based violence particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse in situations of armed conflict.

It is in this regards and as a follow-up to the Seminar on UNSCR 1325, the Women's Interfaith Council (WIC) hosted a seminar on the theme: Extremist Violence, Security and Women. The seminar was held on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2013, at the Women's Multipurpose Centre, Kaduna. Participants at the Seminar were drawn from the different women's faith associations, experts in conflict mitigation and resolution, emergency response, government officials, representatives of religious leaders, the media, NGOs and security agencies.

The Seminar provided an opportunity for the voices of women and the voices of the top security agencies to be heard as they seldom do to share ideas and perspectives on how women of faith in Kaduna can be more involved in security measures by way of early warning signs which lead to radicalisation, partnership and information sharing. Some of the early warning signs include withdrawal of the individual, change in the mode of dressing, mood; crave for latest gadgets, kind of friends/associations, etc.

The seminar focused specifically on the issue of Extremist Violence, Security and Women which today has constituted serious threat to peaceful coexistence in Northern Nigeria in particular, and the entire Nigerian nation in general. The reasons for the present day insurgencies, as well as other forms of extremist violence which we experience in our society today were analyzed. Possible ways in which women can respond to these violent occurrences so as to prevent future ones as well as becoming more actively engaged in countering violent extremism.

During the paper presentations, brainstorming sessions as well as question and answer sessions, some factors were identified as the main **causes of violence**. In addition, some general **observations** and **recommendations** were proffered for the abatement of violence in the society.

**A. CAUSES OF VIOLENCE**

1. The overarching cause of extremism and violence is political but it finds expression in religion and ethnicity; however, religion and ethnicity have shown to also constitute causes in themselves;

2. There is the absence of rule of law in the dispensation of justice which has bred anger, frustration, despair and desperation; thus engendering fertile conditions for breeding extremism;
3. There is a huge army of unemployed and unemployable youths, ready to feed the destructive agenda of mischief makers in high places;
4. The family system and structure is greatly challenged as a result of high divorce rates which dislocates for the child the proper environment under which to grow and develop;
5. The prevailing level of poverty in Nigeria today also threatens the very fabric of the family;
6. Drug addiction is on the sharp rise. It is even so amongst women/mothers whose roles it is to make the home. It makes it impossible for such mothers to play their expected roles in the upbringing of their children;
7. Negative solidarity holds sway and generates violence and latent anger capable of being transformed into extremism;
8. There is a high level of ignorance amongst many, of their own religion, much less the religions of others: the opposite of which will definitely serve as basis for proper engagement hence, lasting harmonious living with others;
9. There is a proliferation of religious leaders who mislead their followers and feed them with hate messages;
10. Most Nigerians and Nigerian groups are selfish: they don't believe in Nigeria;

## **B. OBSERVATIONS**

1. The roles of women are very critical in society's engagement with extremism, violence and general security;
2. The roles of women are both formal and informal, but largely informal because of their primary role as home-makers and the first role model for their children;
3. Women are affected most in the event of occurrence of act(s) of violence because apart from being saddled with the responsibilities as home makers and care givers, they also take up the responsibilities of bread winners.
4. Women get traumatised the most each time acts of violence occur because; they bear the shocks and burdens of bereavements of their spouses and children.
5. The prevailing poverty in the country and the crave for materialism has deprived most parents, mothers in particular, their primary responsibilities of nurturing their children in the right way.
6. The security system in Nigeria has not earned the trust and confidence of Nigerians generally; therefore, Nigerians find it difficult to collaborate with it in the fight against extremism and the present insecurity.

## **C. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. Women**

1. Women have to be integrated in the global response strategy to extremism and violence;
2. Women must pursue the goal of moving away from a militaristic to social and ideological engagement with violence and extremism;
3. Whether or not as policy makers, women have a role to play by speaking out with knowledge to demystify extremism and terrorism;
4. As custodians of the family, women can influence their children; they must at all times be attentive so as to spot radicalisation tendencies in their children.

## **2. Government and Society**

1. Rule of law must be entrenched in the life of this nation;
2. Until corruption is addressed, insecurity will remain with us;
3. Women should be use to build trust within the society amongst peoples and groups;
4. The Ministry of Education should work with women to identify capacity building needs amongst women to be able to play their roles properly;
5. Women's access to religious education should be increased to prepare them for their roles as first educators and the moral compass for their children;
6. Women should be supported as first responders with regard to radicalisation and extremism among children;
7. Society must tackle cultural practices that can hinder engagement with children to be able to decipher radicalisation;
8. The doors of government must be open to dialogue;
9. Women should be supported in career building and pursuits;
10. Online campaign against violence and extremism must be initiated and vigorously pursued and that is a platform on which the young spend a lot of their time;
11. Religious leaders must continually be engaged with a view to discouraging the spread of hate messages;
12. The state must provide and support counselling units and other such structures to provide support to persons struggling with extremism and other such conditions.

## **CONCLUSION**

Women's Interfaith Council (WIC) and other participants appreciated the opportunity provided by this Seminar to grow in awareness of the issues involving extremist violence, early warning signs and security, and the need to dialogue with the Security Agencies on these very pertinent issues. Our faiths, Islam and Christianity, compel us to be committed as instruments of peace, reconciliation, and security in our land. Today we renew our commitment to this responsibility. The observations and recommendations expressed in this communiqué will be our guide as we collaborate with the Security Agencies and other leaders in our society to build a better Nigeria for our children, as *Women of Faith, Working together as Mothers of a Culture of Peace*.

Signed on behalf of the participants:



Mrs. Comfort Fearon  
**General Coordinator**



Hajiya Amina Kazaure  
**Muslim Coordinator**



Mrs. Elizabeth Abuk  
**Christian Coordinator**