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IRIAD Strongly Condemns the Silencing of Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan

As we cry against rising femicide in Nigeria, we say no to the silencing of women in politics, we say no to the invisibilising of women, and we denounce the action of the Senate President on Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan

The Initiative for Research, Innovation, and Advocacy in Development (IRIAD) strongly condemns the events of February 20, 2025, in the Senate, where Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan voice and participation were suppressed by the Senate President, Godswill Akpabio. The action of the Senate President is a reflection of the deeply rooted culture of patriarchal domination, which undermines democratic participation of women and is a setback to the struggle for gender equity in governance. Such actions are particularly troubling given the broader context of rising femicide in Nigeria, persistent challenges to gender equity across various sectors and in particular the poor female representation in the National Assembly. We condemn any attempt to silence women in political spaces, as it undermines democratic principles and hinders progress toward a more inclusive and equitable society.

The incident involving Senator Akpoti-Uduaghan, reflects the structural challenges women in governance and leadership continue to encounter. The actions taken against her by the Senate President are inconsistent with the Senate Standing Order which Senator Akpoti-Uduaghan was standing on to make her point. IRIAD firmly believes that true democracy requires the active and uninhibited participation of all citizens, including women.

We recognise that Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan's experience is not an isolated incident but rather reflective of the broader issue of systemic marginalisation of women in politics. Her courage to challenge the structures designed to exclude women should be commended, and more leaders like her are needed in the political arena. As we enter the Women's Month – March 2025, IRIAD calls on all stakeholders including political leaders to recognise that women have a rightful place in every political space, not as silent observers but as active participants.

We firmly say loudly, **STOP WOMEN SILENCING AND MARGINALISATION!** Enough of sidelining women and disregarding their valuable contributions to society.

We call for a change in mindset and a commitment to creating an environment where women's voices are not only heard but valued and respected. Women's voices and presences are not just necessary; they are non-negotiable in the struggle for an inclusive and just society. IRIAD remains committed to advocating for policies and practices that promote gender equity and ensure that all Nigerian women can participate fully in political and socioeconomic spaces and processes.

IRIAD continues to stand in solidarity against gender-based marginalisation and suppression in politics. Together we must break the barriers and create political inclusivity, we say NO to silencing women!

*#NoToSilencingWomen #WomenInclusionInGovernance
#NigerianWomenWillNotBeSilenced
#WeStandWithNatashaAkpoti-Uduaghan
#YesToGenderEquityAndJustice
#NoToPatriarchalDomination*

Signed

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ABOUT IRIAD

The **Initiative for Research, Innovation, and Advocacy in Development (IRIAD)** is an interdisciplinary knowledge, policy, and advocacy hub committed and focused on advancing public accountability, human rights, rule of law, peace and security, local governance, sociopolitical inclusivity, urban environment, democracy, and developing critical understanding of governance processes and regimes from research, documentation, policy engagements, public education and impact advocacy.

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