

POLICE SERVICE COMMISSION

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE POLICY

FOR

THE NIGERIA POLICE FORCE

Chapter One

a. **Introduction:**

Domestic violence especially against women and children is a problem that is taking place all over the world. Domestic violence has been defined as violence that occurs in the home carried out mostly but not exclusively by male members of the family against female members and children.ⁱ For the purposes of this policy, domestic violence shall include but not limited to harassment; emotional, psychological and verbal abuse; damage to property; sexual abuse; physical abuse and forced marriage. Scholars have given the causes of domestic violence among which include the patriarchal arrangement of society, culture, loopholes in our laws and the discrimination of the laws against women and non-enforcement of the existing laws.ⁱⁱ It is also clear that stress at workplace, transferred aggression, medical problem, aculturation into violent behaviour and use of drugs and stimulants contribute to domestic violence.

It is well established all over the world that the Police Officers perpetuate a lot of violence in their families. The National women in Policing website in the United States of America for instance quotes that “two studies have found that at least 40 percent of Police Officer’s families experience domestic violence, in contrast to 10 percent in the general population.” But there are allegations that Police departments can be overly protective of Officers accused of domestic violence. This is why there is domestic violence policy and domestic violence advocacy programme to guide police activities in many parts of the world.

b. **Situation Analysis (The Problem):**

The challenge of domestic violence is a huge one in Nigeria. It is widespread and cuts across classes and nationalities. Several reports and newsletters have showed clearly that domestic violence is widespread in Nigeria.ⁱⁱⁱ Meanwhile, it has been documented that the Nigeria Police Force is over-centralised, under-resourced, ill-equipped and suffers undue political interference.^{iv} It is therefore likely that these pressures will lead to a high level of domestic violence among police officers in Nigeria.

c. **Justification:**

In the modern world, domestic violence is unacceptable. This policy is therefore meant to raise awareness about the issue, support and protect the victims of domestic violence in police families and the general public as well as put measures in place to reduce domestic violence in the society including counselling/treatment for victims, and punishment for perpetrators. The policy will cover domestic violence in police families and the response of the police to complaints on domestic violence by the public.

Chapter Two

a. **Policy Framework:**

The domestic violence policy is formulated within the framework of the Nigerian Constitution, the Police Act, the Police Service Commission Establishment Act, the United Nation's Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against women and National Gender Policy.

- All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.
- Every individual is entitled to respect for the dignity of his person and no person shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment; held in slavery or servitude.
- Domestic violence issues shall be given attention in all Police Stations across the country whether it involves police families or members of the public.
- Emphasis will be placed on educative and preventive measures within police families and integrated with support for victims and treatment/punishment for perpetrators.

b. **Policy Declarations:**

The NPF and the oversight institutions realise domestic violence is unacceptable.

- The NPF Authority shall ensure the full implementation of the domestic violence policy for the Officers and Men of the NPF.
- The NPF shall ensure that domestic violence unit is created in all Police formations across the country and at the Force Headquarters.

- The NPF shall ensure that all cases of complaints of domestic violence are attended to in a professional and timely manner.
- The NPF shall provide an enabling environment to give support to victims of domestic violence and treatments/punishment for perpetrators.
- The NPF shall enforce the prohibition on the use of drugs, alcohol or any other intoxicating substance during official hours/ duties.
- The NPF shall ensure that there are avenues for alternative dispute resolution

c. **Guiding Philosophy and Principles:**

This policy is formulated in recognition and affirmation of the following principles:

- Respect for human rights
- Equity, fairness and justice
- Gender Equity
- Men and women take responsibility for their actions

Chapter Three:

a. **Goals:**

The overall goal of the domestic violence policy is to reduce domestic violence in Nigeria and support the victims.

b. **The specific objectives and targets are:**

- i. To improve the level of knowledge of Police Officers on domestic violence issues.
 - Domestic violence will be included as an area of study in Police Training Colleges and promotion courses in the Police Force.
 - Training on alternative dispute resolution will be introduced into the NPF training Curriculum.
 - Domestic violence will be included in regular police weekly lectures and briefings
 - Domestic violence unit will be established in every police formation.
- ii. To give adequate help, protection, support and justice to victims of domestic violence.
 - The domestic violence unit will provide information to victims and perpetrators of domestic violence including counselling services.
 - Telephone hotlines will be established and popularised for victims of domestic violence to call.

- The NPF will set up Shelter for Battered Women for Police Families.
 - Special measures put in place to protect children against abuse
 - Counselling and Treatment programme put in place for victims and perpetrators of domestic violence.
 - The NPF will prosecute cases of domestic violence and present an annual report to the Police Service Commission
- iii. To change the attitude of the police and the public to victims and issues of domestic violence.
- Public enlightenment campaign will be carried out within the Police Force on the dangers of domestic violence.
 - Advocacy for the change of the laws for a better environment for the prevention of domestic violence

Chapter Four

a. **Strategies and Institutional Framework for Implementation:**

The strategic approach for the implementation of the strategy shall constitute:

- i. Awareness creation and sensitisation
- ii. Training, re-training and re-orientation
- iii. Research and Advocacy
- iv. Sanctions (Reprimand, Severe Reprimand, Reduction in Rank etc).

b. **Roles and Responsibilities:**

- i. Nigeria Police Force (NPF): The Nigeria Police Force shall faithfully implement the domestic violence policy and submit an annual report to the Police Service Commission on progress.
- ii. Police Service Commission (PSC): The Police Service Commission shall consider the annual report from the NPF and make recommendations.
- iii. Ministry of Police Affairs: The Ministry of Police Affairs shall provide infrastructural and logistic support to the police to implement the domestic violence Policy
- iv. Civil Society Organisations and Development Partners: Civil society Organisations shall support in capacity building, training in Police institutions and monitor the implementation of the policy including the production of shadow reports on the state of domestic violence in the Nigeria Police Force and the country.

ENDNOTES

ⁱ Umar, L. and Chinyere, N. (No date), *Sophia's Place: Experiences Running the First Battered Women's Shelter in Nigeria*. Lagos, Project Alert on Violence Against Women.

ⁱⁱ Igbuzor, O. (2005), *Perspectives on Democracy and Development in Nigeria*. Lagos, Joe-Tolalu & Associates and Umar, L. and Chinyere, N. Op cit

ⁱⁱⁱ Project Alert Annual Reports

^{iv} Odinkalu, C. A. (2008), *Criminal Force? Torture, Abuse and Extrajudicial Killings by Police in Nigeria*. Ikeja, Lagos, Network on Police Reform in Nigeria.