



Nigeria – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 23 September 2015

Any current information on NGOs or other organisations in Nigeria such as Womans Aid Collective (WALCOL), Women's Rights Advancement and Protection alternative (WRAPA) and Legislative Advocacy Coalition on Violence against Women (LACVAW)

A report on a fact-finding mission to Nigeria published by the Danish Immigration Service, in a section titled “Possibilities to escape domestic violence, FGM and forced marriage” (paragraph 1.8), states:

“Representatives of a United Nations (UN) organisation advised that internal relocation is possible and is done in practice by adult victims of domestic violence, forced marriage or FGM. Many NGOs deal with such women seeking protection at local, state or national levels. The most well known women's NGOs are Women's Aid Collective (WACOL), Project Alert on Violence Against Women and Women's Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative (WRAPA). WRAPA was founded in 1999. It has over 15,000 members as of December 2003 and a network of volunteers in all of Nigeria's 36 states. The Federal Capital Territory supports the operations of WRAPA. Some NGOs even provide shelter, counselling and legal assistance to relocating women; whilst some NGOs also provide vocational training and post-shelter assistance in the form of empowerment, and assistance to find accommodation and/or employment for the women.” (Danish Immigration Service (28 October 2008) *Report of Joint British-Danish Fact-Finding Mission to Lagos and Abuja, Nigeria: 9 - 27 September 2007 and 5 - 12 January 2008*)

In paragraph 1.9 this report states:

“The NGO coalition Legislative Advocacy Coalition on Violence Against Women (LACVAW) provides post-shelter assistance to women who are victims of domestic violence, forced marriage or FGM. It achieves this through its referral system whereby LACVAW guarantees that women who need further assistance or accommodation will receive this by one of its members.” (ibid)

A document published on the Women's Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative (WRAPA) website refers to the work of this group as follows:

“WRAPA works to promote and protect the rights of Nigerian women, whose lives are governed by three legal systems: customary, common, and Sharia. WRAPA uses a unique holistic approach to helping women that weaves together the provision of legal defense, public education, shelter, and skills and literacy training. WRAPA serves an average of 15-30 women and girls each day at the national and state levels. The organization's membership of more than 15,000 men and women forms a powerful network of actors across

the country that can be leveraged to support its work and efforts within government, communities, and other circles of influence. WRAPA's success is largely due to its large and growing base of supporters, as well as its deep knowledge of and involvement in the Nigerian legal systems, enabling it to confront discriminatory cultural practices and processes that have become embedded in Nigerian law." (Women's Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative (WRAPA) (24 February 2014) *Press Conference: WRAPA Wins 2014 MacArthur Foundation Award*)

A report on a grant awarded to WRAPA published on the website of the US-based Borgen Project states:

"However, this sizable grant is a necessary first step to address these widespread problems. Luckily, WRAPA has first-hand experience confronting controversial issues hindering women's progress in the West African Nation. The organization continues to fight for universal marriage consent as well as a divorced woman's right to child custody. In addition, WRAPA is publically speaking out against the oppressive nature of Sharia Law in courts by providing first-class legal representation to women who otherwise would have been denied due process. Finally, the organization is using its grant money to respond to the Nigerians' demand for counseling clinics. With this substantial increase in funding, WRAPA will construct a resource center to help abused women by providing temporary shelter and mental health professionals." (The Borgen Project (May 2014) *MacArthur Fights for Women's Rights In Nigeria*)

An article from the Abuja newspaper Daily Trust states:

"Head of Legal Unit Women's Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative, (WRAPA) Barrister James Oluwashegun said an average of 80 to 100 women come to WRAPA office each year to lodge complaints of sexual violence both at home and also in office places. Statistics from the Mirabel centre, a sexual violence referral centre in Lagos shows that as of last week, 515 clients had received treatment from the centre. Majority of who were minors, between the ages of 11 and 15." (Daily Trust (15 February 2015) *'We Were Violated and Forced to Keep Quiet'*)

An article posted to the Oxfam website, in a paragraph headed "How WRAPA made a difference", states:

"So, who and what made the difference between the rejection of the bill in 2003 and its approval in 2008, with only minor modifications? Step forward Oxfam's partner WRAPA - or the Women's Rights' Advancement and Protection Alternative. This organisation has first hand experience of the consequences of violent crime gained through providing legal aid and counselling services since 1999. As Secretariat for the Legislative Advocacy Coalition on Violence Against Women (LACVAW) WRAPA has tirelessly built up a head of pressure on parliamentarians to vote in the VAPP Bill, powered by national and pan-African advocacy and policy connections and the critical mass of seventeen civil society, faith and community groups galvanising support from across Nigeria's ethnic groups and states. In 2008 WRAPA starting working with Oxfam's Raising Her Voice Programme (RHV). The partnership added renewed momentum to the push for poor women's participation and the domestication of the African Union Women's Protocol and breathed new life into WRAPA's campaigning and advocacy around the

VAPP bill. Working simultaneously at regional, national, state and grassroots level, WRAPA developed a multi-faceted campaign that inexorably and relentlessly drove the Bill forward. Skilfully drawing upon the coalition members' strengths and connections, campaign tactics included: public information campaigns to increase the demand for rights, mock tribunals to showcase abuses of women's rights, vox pop in schools and market places, parliamentarians bombarded by: 'Vote for DV Bill or we won't vote for you' texts, a former MP hired to navigate and fast track the Bill's parliamentary passage, songs, slogans and always, simple, harmonised messaging. (Oxfam (9 May 2013) *History is made as Nigeria passes domestic violence law*)

A synopsis by the Women's Aid Collective (WACOL) of the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act states:

"WACOL, as a foundation member of the Legislative Advocacy Coalition on Violence against Women (LACVAW) has been involved since inception, especially through the contributions of its founding director Joy Ngozi Ezeilo in the drafting and follow-up social and legislative advocacy towards the passage of the law on violence against persons. At the Public Hearing organized by the Senate of the National Assembly on 2nd March 2015, WACOL submitted comprehensive memoranda to the Senate Committee on Judiciary, Human Rights and Legal Matters, making a strong case for the immediate passage of the law, including suggestions for its expansion. Further WACOL organized on October 23, 2014 a Mock Tribunal/Court on Sexual and Gender Based Violence right inside the parliament in collaboration with the National Assembly Women Affairs Committee and Ipas. The Mock Tribunal/Court was used to spotlight cases of gender based violence in Nigeria and raise the voices of victims and survivors towards urgent action in enacting protective laws, especially the passage into law of the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Bill." (Women's Aid Collective (WACOL) (May 2015) *Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act, 2015, Nigeria - Synopsis by Women's Aid Collective (WACOL)*)

An article from Nigerian newspaper The Guardian states:

"This development puts to rest agitations by civil society groups, including the Legislative Advocacy Coalition on Violence Against Women (LACVAW), Federation of Muslim Women Association of Nigeria (FOMWAN) and IPAS, among others, who have been pushing for the passage of the bill for over 10 years." (The Guardian (Nigeria) (7 May 2015) *Senate passes violence prohibition bill*)

An article on domestic violence published by the Lagos-based newspaper Vanguard states:

"Interestingly, women and men in Nigeria are drawing attention to injustice and discrimination against women, and asserting the rights of women and girls who suffer violence in the home. Women's Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative (WRAPA), a non-governments organization, frowns at the unacceptable way men inflict injuries on their spouses in the course of domestic violence. The Secretary-General of WRAPA, Hajia Saudatu Mahdi, said the organisation has been in existence since 1999 to eradicate the menace of violence against women." (Vanguard (18 April 2015) *Nigeria: Living With the Enemy - Inside Wife Beaters' Homes, By Battered Women*)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research and Information Unit within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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