



# NIGERIAN BAR ASSOCIATION

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## SEXUAL ASSAULT ON WOMEN AT OZORO FESTIVAL IS A NATIONAL DISGRACE

A society reveals its true character in how it treats its women. Where women are chased, stripped, groped, violated, and publicly humiliated by mobs under the guise of celebration, what is on display is not culture. It is barbarity. It is a collapse of conscience. It is a stain on our shared humanity.

The deeply disturbing reports emerging from a recent festival in Ozoro, Delta State, are not just troubling; they are horrifying. Women were allegedly accosted in broad daylight, forcefully stripped of their clothing, sexually assaulted, and subjected to degrading treatment by groups of young men while others watched, recorded, and, in some instances, cheered. No woman should ever have to endure such terror, such exposure, such violation of her dignity.

This was not a festival. This was lawlessness. This was gender-based violence in its most primitive and shameful form.

These acts constitute a grave violation of the fundamental rights to the dignity of the human person, personal liberty, and security, as guaranteed under the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended), as well as other international human rights instruments. They also constitute serious criminal offences under our laws, including assault, sexual violence, and public indecency.

The NBA condemns these acts in the strongest possible terms. No tradition, no custom, no so-called cultural practice can excuse or legitimise the degradation and violation of women. Any practice that permits such cruelty is not a culture. It is criminality.

We call on the Delta State Government and all relevant law enforcement agencies to act swiftly and decisively. The perpetrators must be identified, arrested, and prosecuted. Those who aided, enabled, or failed to intervene must also be held accountable. Justice must not be delayed, and it must not be selective.

Silence, indifference, or excuses in the face of such brutality only embolden further abuse.

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We further call on community leaders, traditional institutions, and festival organisers to take urgent responsibility. Cultural celebrations must never become theatres of violence. They must reflect dignity, order, and respect for human life, not chaos and cruelty.

The protection of women is not optional. It is a legal duty. It is a moral obligation. It is a test of who we are as a people. Nigeria must not become a place where women live in fear of being stripped of both their clothing and their dignity in public spaces.

This must never happen again!



**MAZI AFAM OSIGWE, SAN**  
President,



**HUWAILA MUHAMMAD**  
Chairperson, NBA Women Forum

