Natasha’s husband speaks on wife’s sexual harassment allegations against Akpabio

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Emmanuel Uduaghan, the husband of Kogi Central Senator, Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan, has confirmed that his wife confided in him about her interactions with the Senate President, Godswill Akpabio.  
  
Mr Uduaghan, a traditional chief of Warri Kingdom in Delta State, South-south Nigeria, stated that he initially approached the matter with diplomacy and respect.  
  
He said he had always seen Mr Akpabio as a family friend and as a result of the perception, he sought an amicable resolution by meeting the senate president to discuss the situation privately.  
  
The senator’s husband said these in a statement on Saturday.  
  
“My wife has confided in me about her interactions with the senate president, whom I considered a family friend. In response, I approached the matter with the utmost maturity and responsibility, as it is my duty as a traditional leader who has immense respect for constituted authority and upholds core family values, foster peace and harmony” he said.  
  
Private discussion with Akpabio  
  
Mr Uduaghan recounted that in his meeting with Mr Akpabio, he urged him to extend the courtesy and respect that his wife, who is a sitting senator, deserved.  
  
As a result of their previous friendship, he noted that he believed the issue could be resolved peacefully.  
  
“I personally met with the senate president and respectfully urged him to extend the courtesy and respect my wife deserves, while also honouring the friendship between us. We reached an understanding and agreed to resolve the issue amicably,” he said.  
  
However, despite the supposed agreement, Mr Uduaghan noted that his wife continued to raise concerns about harassment from Mr Akpabio, a situation that suggests the issue remained unresolved despite his intervention.  
  
“However, despite this agreement, my wife continues to express concerns about the harassment she has endured from the senate president,” he added.  
  
Allegations against Akpabio  
  
In an interview with Arise Television on Friday, Mrs Akpoti-Uduaghan alleged that Mr Akpabio made inappropriate advances towards her during a visit to his residence in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, on 8 December 2023.  
  
She claimed that the senate president took her by the hand, led her around his house, and made sexual advances towards her in the presence of her husband.  
  
She further alleged that Mr Akpabio had, on a separate occasion, insinuated that she should “take care of him” if she wanted her motions to receive favourable consideration on the Senate floor.  
  
However, Ekaette Akpabio, wife of the senate president absolved her husband of the allegations and filed two defamation lawsuits against Mrs Akpoti-Uduaghan, demanding N350 billion in damages to her husband’s reputation.  
  
Call for probe  
  
On Friday, hours after Mrs Akpoti-Uduaghan’s made the allegations, former Vice President Atiku Abubakar asked President Bola Tinubu to ensure an independent and transparent investigation into them.  
  
Former Senate President, Bukola Saraki, on Saturday, also advised Mr Akpabio to submit himself for open investigation in order to ensure fairness and transparent resolution.  
  
I have faith in my wife’s loyalty  
  
Despite the controversy, Mr Uduaghan reaffirmed his trust and confidence in his wife.  
  
He expressed his unwavering faith in her loyalty and remained resolute in his commitment to their marriage.  
  
“I have unwavering faith in my wife’s loyalty and am fully committed to our marriage, which is grounded in love, compassion, and mutual respect. I would never trade her for anything, as she is the greatest joy of my life,” he added.  
  
He, therefore, appealed to the Senate to treat his wife with the respect and dignity she deserves while allowing the relevant authorities and courts to determine the facts of the matter.  
  
“I now respectfully urge the Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the Senate President to treat my beloved wife with the respect and dignity she truly deserves while the relevant authorities and the court determine the underlying issues.”  
  
A call for fairness and due process  
  
Mr Uduaghan complained about unnecessary sentiments being stirred around the issue, which he believes are distracting from the real allegations.  
  
“It is clear that certain sentiments are being stirred up unnecessarily, distracting from the serious underlying allegations, which should concern every discerning individual with sound family values.  
  
He further stressed that his wife was elected by the people of Kogi Central because of their trust and confidence in her leadership.  
  
“Without prejudice to the ongoing legal proceedings, I wish to emphasise that my wife was duly elected by her people due to the immense love, respect, and confidence they have in her and she is committed to delivery quality representation to her district and the nation at large. She is a devoted wife, and the bond we share is deep and unwavering. She has always remained truthful, even in the face of adversity,” Mr Uduaghan said.