Natasha reports her suspension, case against Akpabio to UN Inter-Parliamentary Union

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Natasha reports her suspension, case against Akpabio to UN Inter-Parliamentary Union  
  
‘She’s plotting to discredit Akpabio, destabilise National Assembly’  
  
Suspended Kogi Central Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan has taken her case with the Red Chamber to the Inter-Parliamentary Union Meeting (IPU), a global body of legislators with headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland.  
  
Contrary to her claims, the Senate has reiterated that her suspension was not based on her allegation of sexual harassment against Senate President Godswill Akpabio but the result of its investigation which found her guilty of misconducts against Standing Rules, among others.  
  
Akpoti-Uduaghan was seen yesterday in a viral video inside a parliamentary chamber 9of the global legislative house narrating her ordeal amid tears.  
  
She described her suspension as an assault on democracy, saying it depicted the plight of women in Nigeria.  
  
The Kogi Central lawmaker alleged that the punishment was visited on her for daring to report a case of sexual harassment against Akpabio.  
  
Akpoti-Uduaghan said: “I am not here to bring shame to our country. I am here to seek help for the women of Nigeria. Again, my name is Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan.  
  
“Five days ago, on March 6, 2025, I was suspended as a senator. I was suspended illegally because I submitted a petition of sexual harassment against the President of the Nigerian Senate, Senator Godswill Akpabio.  
  
“I thought that by submitting the petition, he would recuse himself and both of us would submit ourselves to the Committee on Ethics, Privileges and Public Petitions for a fair and transparent investigation.  
  
“But unfortunately, I was silenced and I was suspended. I was suspended for six months, amongst many other stringent conditions, such as taking away my security, taking away all the officials vehicles and other items that were given to me as a senator.  
  
“My salaries have been cut off. I must not appear anywhere near the National Assembly. And for six months, I’m forbidden to introduce myself or present myself as a senator locally in Nigeria or internationally.  
  
“I’m here because I have no other place to go but to come here. This is a bigger picture …of what happens to women in Nigeria. It depicts the crisis of women’s political representation.  
  
“My suspension is not just about me. It’s about the systemic exclusion of women from political leadership in Nigeria.  
  
“Women make up 3.6 per cent of political offices in Nigeria, and in the Senate, it’s just four women out of 109. Now that I have been suspended, it is now three women among 108.  
  
“This is a clear case of political victimisation and punishment for speaking out against sexual harassment, corruption and gender-based violence. The United Nations declares sexual harassment as a form of gender violence.  
  
“The Senate’s action is an assault on democracy. I was elected by my constituents to represent them, yet a few powerful men have largely decided to silence their voices by suspending me for six months.  
  
“My call for an open and transparent investigation into sexual harassment allegations has been met with hostility instead of accountability.  
  
“If a female senator can be treated this way, in the full view of the world, imagine what ordinary women will go through every day, in the work places, in universities…”  
  
Also, some women yesterday protested at the National Assembly over alleged attempt by suspended Senator Akpoti-Uduaghan to discredit Akpabio and destabilise the National Assembly.  
  
The protesters gathered at the entrance of the National Assembly, calling for additional sanctions against the Kogi Central senator, if she persisted in mobilising her supporters against the Senate.  
  
The protesters, under the auspices of Women for Good Governance, accused Akpoti-Uduaghan of collaborating with certain individuals to soil Akpabio’s image and destabilise the National Assembly.  
  
They carried placards with various inscriptions, such as: “Senate Committee on Local Content is not our birthright but a privilege”; “Nigerian women for sustainable democracy support Senator Akpabio”; “Nigerian women for good governance ask Senator Natasha to stop embarrassing Nigerian women,” and “Nigerians are proud of Akpabio.”  
  
The Secretary of United Women for Good Governance, Enakeme Ojineme, led the protest.  
  
The protesters accused Akpoti-Uduaghan of political manipulation.  
  
Addressing reporters, Ojineme described Akpoti-Uduaghan’s sexual harassment allegations against the Senate President as part of a politically-driven agenda to undermine the integrity of the Senate President.  
  
“We, in the United Women for Good Governance, have discovered that this false allegation of sexual harassment has a very strong political undertone heavily propelled in collaboration with Senator Natasha by those who are interested in the office of the Senate President at all cost,” she said.  
  
According to her, any effort to undermine the Senate through “unconventional, unlawful, and demonic means” is tantamount to treason.