Natasha: FCT senator backs Akpabio’s probe on sexual harassment allegation

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The senator representing the Federal Capital Territory, Senator Ireti Kingibe, on Friday, promised to champion the probe of sexual harassment allegation raised by Kogi Central lawmaker, Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan, against the Senate President, Godswill Akpabio.  
  
Kingibe made the promise in a statement posted via her official X handle on Friday titled ‘My Unwavering Stance for Justice, and Women’s Rights.’  
  
Her statement comes two weeks after she berated Akpoti-Uduaghan for lashing out over the seating reassignment in the Senate.  
  
Kingibe, while appearing on Arise TV, faulted Akpoti-Uduaghan for not following senate rules, stressing that she should not have made a big deal out of the seating rearrangement controversy.  
  
However, the FCT senator made a U-turn on Friday, claiming that she was initially unaware of the sexual allegation incident.  
  
She said, “First, I would like to assure Nigerians that I will be at the forefront to champion the sexual harassment case involving my colleague, Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan when the investigation comes to the red chamber.  
  
“I am aware of the narrative that has been going around, and to set the record straight, my actions were not to undermine her claims, but to buttress that I was not aware in the first place of any such happenings. Notwithstanding, I remain steadfast in the fight against all forms of violence against girls and women.  
  
“As a sitting Senator, I will always defend the truth and fight to right all wrongs. Over the years, sexual harassment and assaults have become commonplace in our homes and workplaces. Every Nigerian, irrespective of gender, ethnicity, or religion, should be committed to the struggle to end it as it affects all genders.”  
  
According to her, once an accusation of sexual harassment is formally tabled before the Senate, it should be taken as a duty to call for a thorough investigation via the appropriate mechanisms within the institution of the Senate.  
  
The lawmaker also affirmed that she would always stand on the threshold of truth and equity.  
  
“It’s in this capacity that I am demanding an open, transparent and fair investigation into the allegations of sexual harassment. Justice, fairness and equity must be provided for everyone regardless of gender, position or social class.  
  
“I align with the global community in advocating for increased gender equity in political representation and across all sectors of our society. To this end, I am focused on advancing the 35 per cent Gender Inclusion Bill and the establishment of special seats for women to ensure greater participation of women in governance.  
  
“I would like, therefore, to assure Nigerians, especially women, my Obidient political family and my FCT Constituents that I remain focused on delivering good governance even amid daunting challenges, that a new Nigeria may prevail.  
  
“Any disinformation trying to purport that I am sympathetic to sexual harassment of any kind, whether in the Senate or elsewhere, should be disregarded,” she stated.