Natasha accuses Akpabio of sexual harassment, Senate President denies claim

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The Senator representing Kogi Central, Natasha Akpoti-Uguaghan, has accused the Senate President, Godswill Akpabio, of sexual harassment.  
  
Akpabio has since denied the allegation through his media consultant, Kenny Okulogbo.  
  
Akpoti-Uduaghan made the allegation during an interview with Arise Television on Friday.  
  
She alleged that Akpabio blocked her motions from being heard on the floor of the Senate because she rejected his advances.  
  
The Kogi lawmaker added that by rejecting Apkabio’s sexual advances, she was subjected to persistent harassment and malignment in his home in Uyo, the Akwa Ibom state capital, and his office.  
  
She said, “My issue with Akpabio started on the 8th of December, 2023, when my husband and I attended a pre-birthday invitation extended by the Senate President at his residence in Uyo. We had earlier gone to his house at Ikot-Ekpene, and he held my hand and said he wanted to show me around his house. Just the three of us, my husband and him. I noticed he hastened his pace while still holding my hand, and he got to this particular sitting room.  
  
“He asked ‘do you like my house?’ and I replied ‘of course yes,’ and he said, ‘now that you are a Senator, you are going to create time for us to spend quality time here and you will enjoy it.’  
  
“Later, on the floor of the Senate, I attempted to raise a motion regarding corrupt practices at the Ajaokuta Steel Company. I listed this motion five times, and it was only on the sixth occasion that it appeared on the order paper. When I approached the Senate President to enquire why my motion had been repeatedly stepped down, he told me ‘Natasha, I am the Chief Presiding officer of the Senate. You can enjoy a whole lot if you take care of me and make me happy.’ At that point, I told him that I would pretend I didn’t hear that.  
  
“My case is a case of a student being punished by a lecturer for refusing to sleep with him.”  
  
Speaking further, Akpoti-Uduaghan said some senators had warned her to adhere to the seat change because it was a trap.  
  
She added, “I was approached by a sergeant-at-arms in the Senate chamber who informed me that my seat had been changed by the Senate President, Godswill Akpabio. This was news to me because I had attended the last session and had not been informed of any changes. Before the Senate President could announce my suspension, I needed to invoke Order 10, which serves as an SOS for Senators who feel their rights have been breached. The Senate President made a mistake by not allowing me to speak on that Order 10.”  
  
Reacting to the allegation in an interview with PUNCH Online correspondent, the media consultant to the Senate President, Kenny Okulogbo, described the allegations as tissues of lies.  
  
Okulogbo stated that the Kogi lawmaker is angry because she was removed as the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Local Content.  
  
He said, “All that Senator Natasha said are all tissues of lies. She is just angry because she was removed as the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Local Content.  
  
“The Senate President will respond. We will make an official statement soon.”