



On Thursday, November 20th, 2014 the Voice of Women of Peace, and the Institute for International Women's Right – Manitoba sponsored a program titled “Why Girls Matter – Stories from Nigeria”. It was well supported by the community, with a good turn out

We heard from three presenters, all who have either lived or spent time in Nigeria - Badriyya Yusuf, who has an MA Indigenous Development Practice; Dr. Grace Kyoon-Achan, who has a Ph.D. in Peace and Conflict Studies, and Florence Okwudili with a B.A. International Development Studies, Post Graduate Diploma in Public Policy and Administration. We heard about the country, the most populous country in Africa, and also the wealthiest, but with many living in poverty. It is a country with great potential because of oil reserves.

The abuse of women, the violence against women and girls is shocking. Many incidents of the recent increase of Gender Based Violence were provide, and not just the abduction of the school girls in Chibok in April. Girls and mothers sleep with “one eye open”. There is constant stress in communities where just a few years ago, there was peace.

One analogy was given- Right now the situation in Nigeria is like two elephants fighting over the grass, with the two elephants being the political and military men, and the grass being women and children. Corruption, even between the military and Boko Haram is suspected

Moderated by Nadia Kidwai, there was time to ask questions, one excellent one being what happened to the military representatives and experts sent by Canada and the US? More action is needed!

Submitted by Mary Scott

