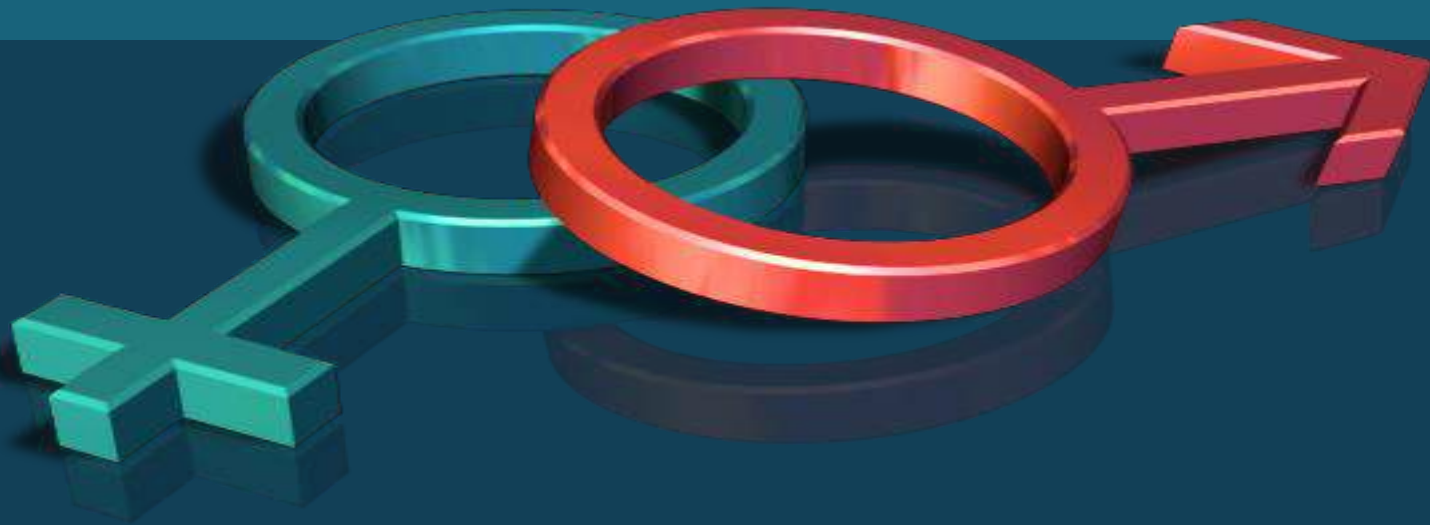


Gender & Religious Freedom

Gender and Religious
Freedom Consultation

Abuja, Nigeria
28th - 30th March 2019



Gender and Religion

Challenges and Dynamics of Nigerian Society

Gender and Religious Freedom Consultation (Abuja, 28-30 March. 2019)

Prof Oluwafunmilayo J. Para-Mallam, mni: NIPSS, Kuru and CWEENS, Jos.



My 5 Hats

- Scholar/Researcher,
- Gender & Development Consultant,
- Christian women leader & activist
- Woman
- Wife



We envision a Nigeria where :

- There is justice, equity, development and peace for all, particularly women and girls who often face discrimination



The CWEENS' mission is to put ***the Gospel in Action*** through loving service, creative projects, female capacity development and peace-building .

WE ARE COMMITTED TO JUSTICE AND PEACE



Proverbs 29:7:

- The righteous considers the rights of the poor.



Psalm 89:14:
Righteousness and
justice are the foundation
of your throne.

- **SHI: SAFE HARBOUR INITIATIVE to tackle GBV**
 - A Shelter for Victims/Survivors of Violence: Kampke House
 - Beneficiaries receive trauma counselling, peer support, skills training, medical/education assistance
- **OB§: Observatory on Violence Affecting Women & Girls (VAWG)**
 - A platform to report, refer, respond to & document VAWG

**CWEENS
PROJECTS**





OVERVIEW

1

Introduction

2

Gender Profile
of Nigeria

3

Life Stories

4

Evidence

5

Way Forward

6

Conclusion

FACT:
**Persecution is a
highly gendered
experience**



GENDER-SPECIFIC RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION IS GLOBAL

WORKING DEFINITION:

Religious persecution is the ***systematic*** mistreatment of an individual or group, on account of their religious ***identification*** or ***faith***, by another individual or group. It consists of ***open*** or ***hidden*** acts of hostility, persistent annoyance or harassment.

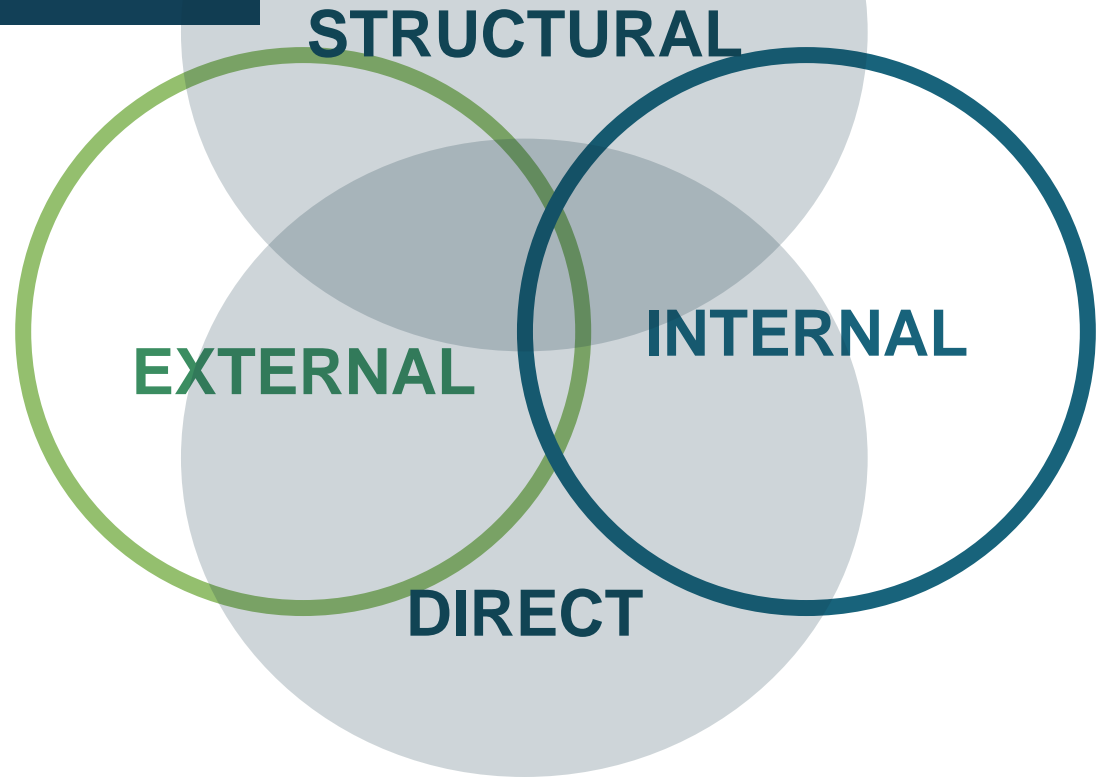
*Persecution is an act of **violence**; violence
is an instrument of persecution*

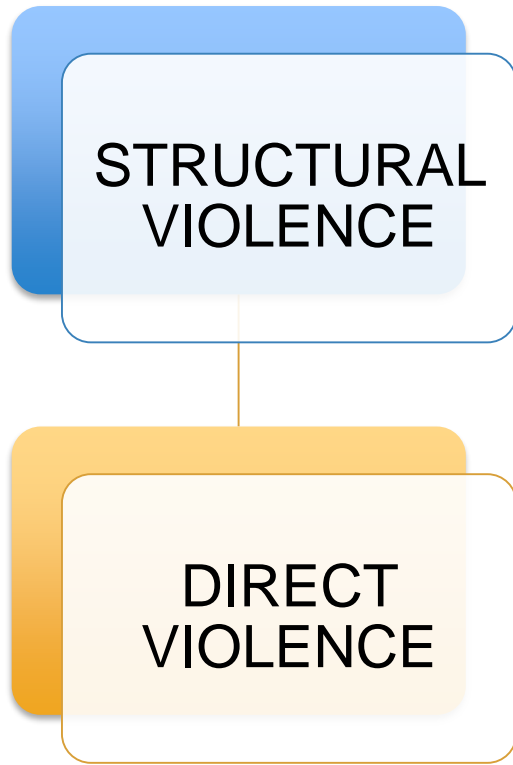
(UN ASEAN Report, 2017)

*“Persecution against any identifiable group
or collectivity on political, racial, national,
ethnic, cultural, religious, gender or other
grounds are universally recognized as
impermissible under international law”*

Article 7.1.h of ICC Statute

OVERLAPPING LEVELS OF ANALYSIS: Nature & Source





Rooted in social, political,
economic & cultural
structures of injustice
and inequality

Inter-personal
interactions often
empowered by the above

2 BROAD CATEGORIES



SOURCE

EXTERNAL

- Gender-specific religious persecution against Christians from outside the Church

INTERNAL

- Gender-specific religious persecution against Christians from inside the Church



Intersections of Gender, Religion & persecution

African Traditional Religions (ATRs)

The term 'gender' refers to:

- The value, identity & roles that society & culture ascribe to individuals based on their sex, as well as the relations of power & privilege between males & females



The term
“gender-
specific
religious
persecution”
refers to:

- “Persecution that targets individuals or groups on the basis of their SEX.”





IN NIGERIA BOTH MALES AND FEMALES ARE VICTIMS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN THE FORM OF GENDER-SPECIFIC RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION

30/03/2019

Types of GSRP: Points of Vulnerability

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graph TD; A[Sexual violence] --> B[Battery & Torture]; B --> C[Emotional & Psychological Trauma]; C --> D[Harmful Traditional Practices]; D --> E[Socio-Economic Deprivation]; E --> A;
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**Sexual
violence**

**Socio-
Economic
Deprivation**

**Battery &
Torture**

- Spread
- Severe
- Sustained

**Harmful
Traditional
Practices**

**Emotional &
Psychological
Trauma**



Statistical Pattern: 82.3% of victims are
FEMALE

Boys conscripted as child Soldiers (NE); Men targeted for extermination during attacks

Christian minority areas: Males deprived of access to employment & other opportunities

- ***Political exclusion***
- ***Taking their wives***
- ***Child labour & trafficking***

MALE GENDERED EXPERIENCES





CHIBOK GIRLS: Kidnapped, raped, denied access to education, forced into early marriage & forcefully converted to Islam: EXTERNAL, STRUCTURAL & DIRECT

- *The nature of the battlefield has changed. Warfare is no longer fought in remote battlefields between armies but in our homes, our schools, our communities, and – increasingly – on women's bodies.*

- Heyzer, 2004



DIMENSIONS

EXTERNAL

Islamist
Ideology

INTERNAL

Stigmatized
(pregnant
girl)

STRUCTURAL

State failure to
create safe
school
environment/
protect

DIRECT

Physical
harm,
deprivation
of liberty, sv

Complex, compounded and continuous vulnerability and victimization

STORIES of EXTERNAL GSR PERSECUTION

▪ Usa

- Boko Haram insurgency
- Re-victimized by socio-cultural norms (ATR)
- Deprived of social safety nets
- Abandonment

▪ Parmata

- Abduction
- Forced marriage
- Forced conversion
- Failed governance (educational system/ security)

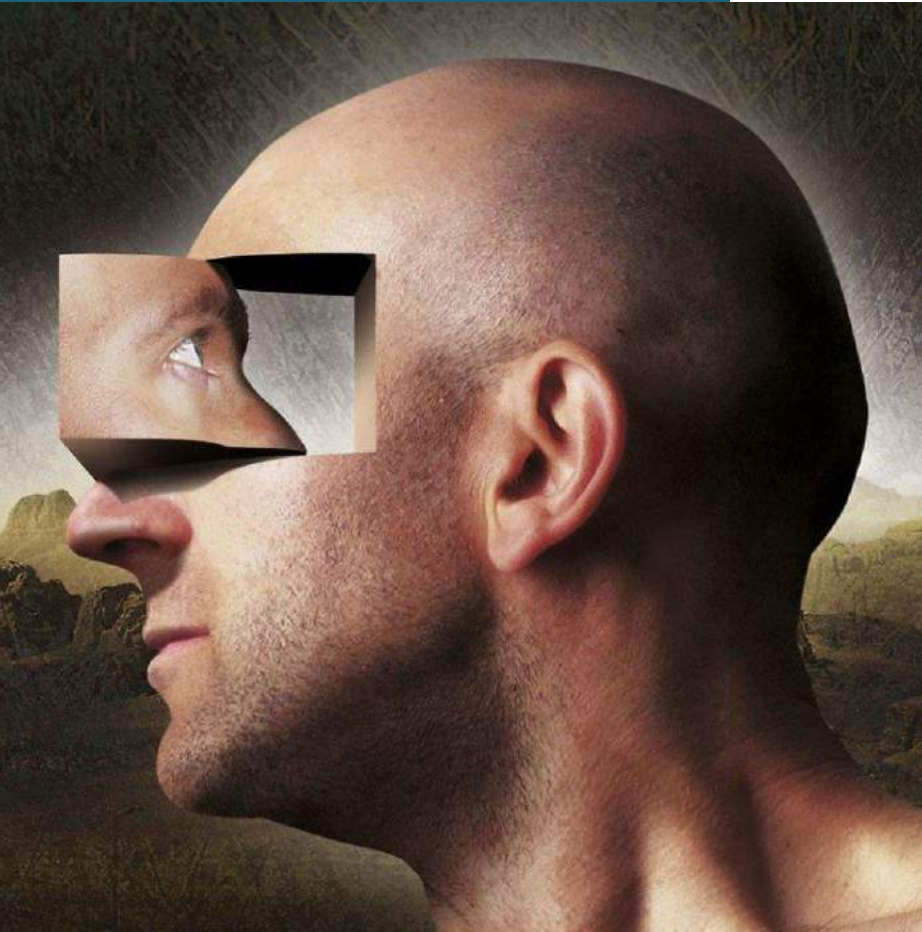
▪ Zainab

- Forced marriage
- Persecution for conversion
- Harmful traditional practices (cultural and religious (ATR))



STORIES OF INTERNAL

Gender-Specific
Religious Persecution



**The Church in
Nigeria needs to
look inward.**

Physical Violence: Hauwa is married to a security officer who battered her consistently for 15 years of their marriage and kept her in a state of total dependence depriving her of opportunity to earn income, further her education and associate with family and friends. Asked why she endured it for 15 years, she replied: “They said the Bible said we should submit.” (Language of headship & submission)

- Dorcas was married for 22 yrs when she discovered her husband had HIV/AIDS. She withdrew her life savings to get him treated. The Dr advised the use of condoms to prevent cross infection. He became violent when she suggested they follow the Doctor's advice and reported her to his pastor who supported him and advised her to sacrifice her life for her husband's sexual pleasure as other 'good' women had done.
- Hanatu, a middle aged govt. employee married a pastor about 20 years ago. He beat and raped her repeatedly. But for several years, in order to 'protect his ministry' she & his co-workers in the mission kept silent about his sexual exploitation of house helps, neighbours & relatives as well as domestic violence & embezzlement of mission funds.



CONVERGENCE

Sexual Exploitation & Economic Dependency

- Sarah: 24 year-old victim of ethno-religious violence in Plateau State; forced to sleep with her in-law for shelter & food. Helped by missionary.

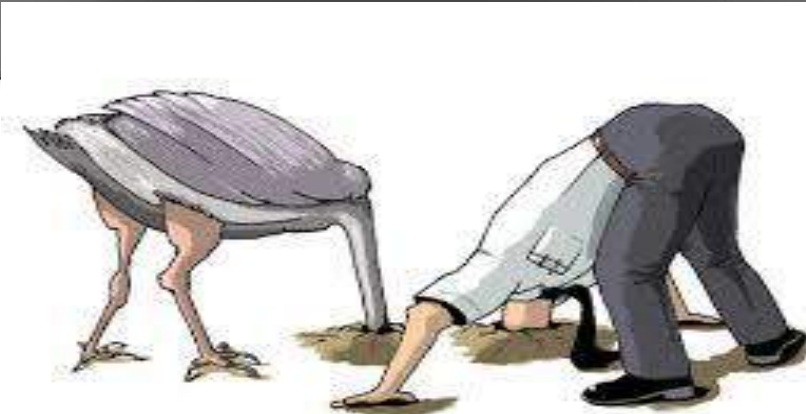
Failed legal reform

- Rejection of GEO Bill by Muslim & Christian legislators in 2016

1,400 CASES

Directly handled by CWEENS between 2014-2018 besides referrals

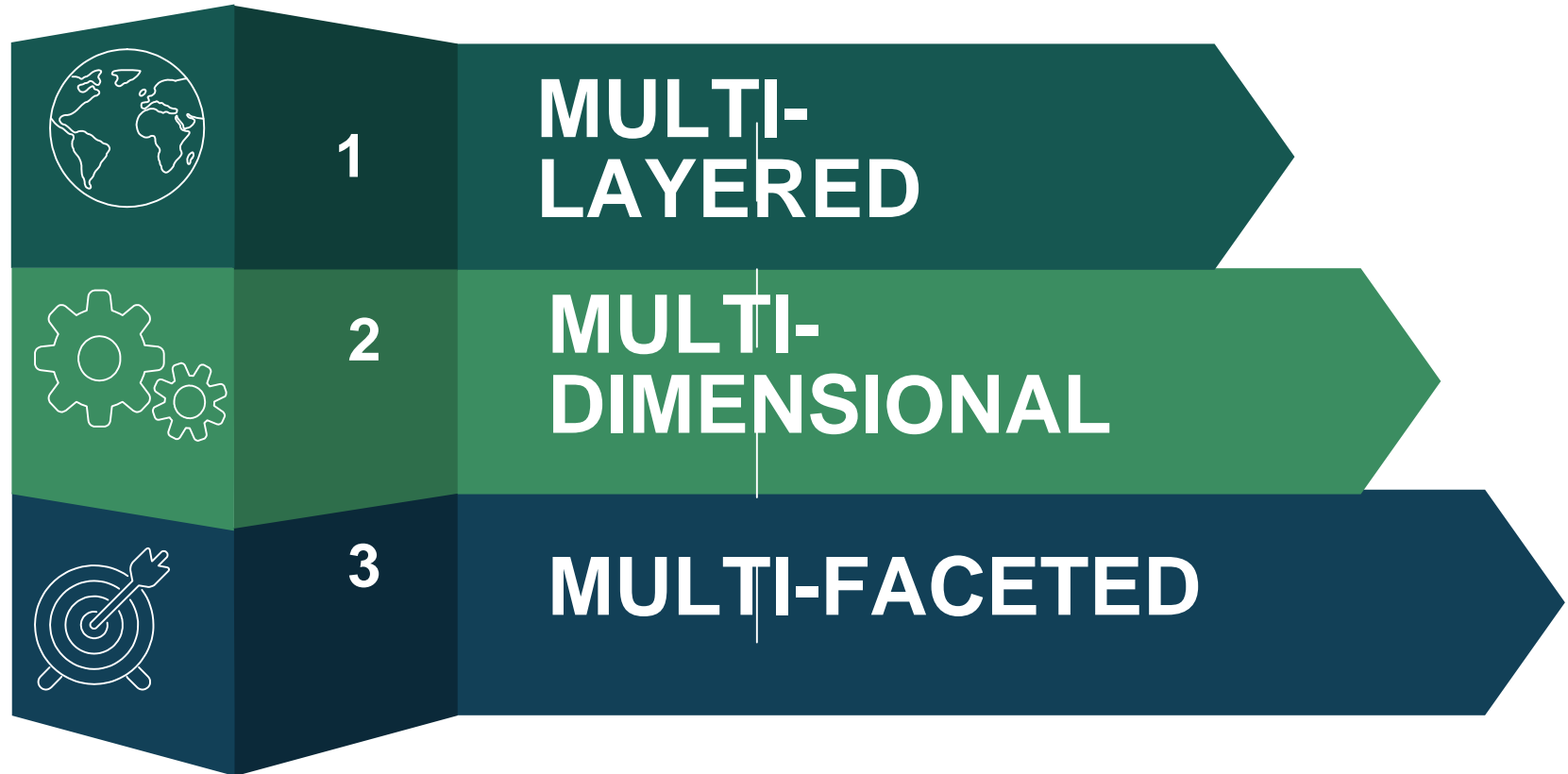
The signs are everywhere! But, like the proverbial ostrich the Church is burying its head in the ground.



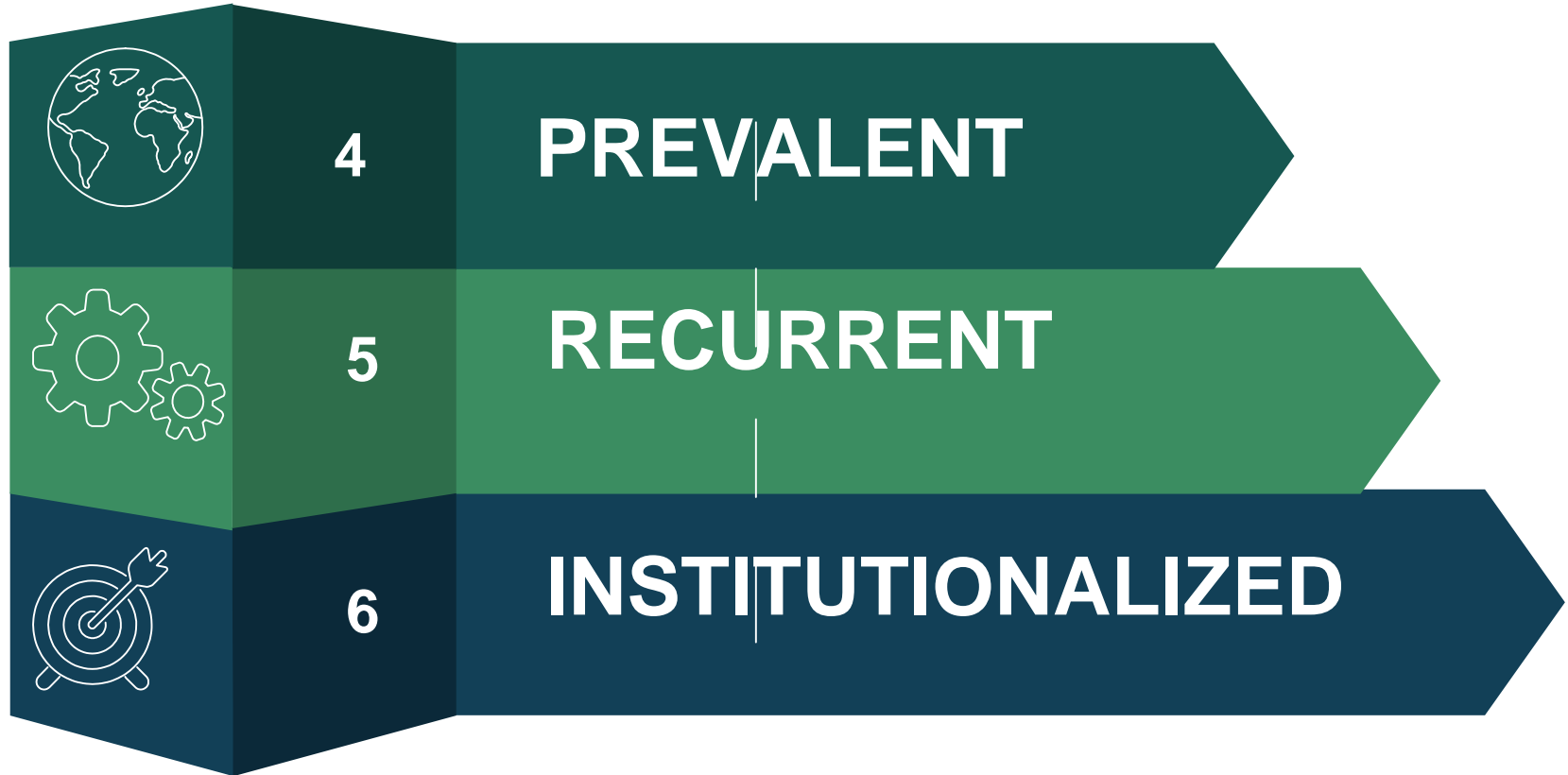
Most people are clueless about just how widespread and severe VAWG is.



GENDER-SPECIFIC RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION IS:



GENDER-SPECIFIC RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION IS...



HOW IS IT SUSTAINED?

Discriminatory doctrines
devalue & disempower women

Women and girls internalize
societal devaluation – 12 yr old

Pseudo-patriarchy: women-on-
women persecution

Delegitimizing discontent





EFFECTS OF GSRP

SHAMING

- **Blame the victim**

SHUNNING

- Community rejection

STIGMATIZING

- **Loss of reputation**

SILENCING

- Don't complain
- Don't report



371.1 & 333.0/1000

Mortality rate for adult men & women: its **RISING!**



5 of 10 girls raped by 15

A recent study; UN Women baseline public/private



Society is waking up slowly

There is a gender-specific problem; things are changing. Praise God!



WAY FORWARD



CHRISTIAN WITNESS



MAKE
THINGS
HAPPEN!

Acknowledgement

Awareness creation –
Women liberation
Jesus Style.

Action! Address
injustice, criminality
and impunity

THANKS!

Any questions?

You can find me at: ojpara-mallam@gmail.com
@MniFunmi

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Priscilla Papers. CBE, 2002

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