

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND BALTIMORE COUNTY AN HONORS UNIVERSITY

Baltimore, MD, USA

**Women and the Nigeria-Biafra War: Reframing Gender and Conflict in Africa  
An International Conference in Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the War  
May 8-9, 2018**



**CALL FOR PAPERS**

**The Department of Africana Studies, University of Maryland, Baltimore County welcomes panel, paper, and poster presentations that will contribute to a better understanding of the complexity of women and gender in the Nigeria-Biafra War.**

The civil war that broke out in Nigeria on July 6, 1967 between the seceded Eastern Region, which adopted the Republic of Biafra as its name, and the rest of the country, often called the Nigeria-Biafra War, is regarded as a watershed in African continental affairs and global order. It came at enormous human and material costs, carried implications for ethno-nationalist movements and political stability in Africa, and unleashed a wave of humanitarianism in postcolonial conflict. As a phenomenon, warfare is usually preconceived as an exclusive male preserve, a sporting exploit for displaying masculine virility or winning local/national honor, and even women's admiration. Nearly fifty years after the Nigeria-Biafra War ended in January 1970, the complex experiences of Nigerian and foreign women affected by the conflict have yet to be told and adequately recorded. There has been no conference focused on the role of women in the war or how the conflict affected them, a void which demands to be filled. This international conference is to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the war and to highlight the cost of the conflict on Nigerian women, their participation in the hostilities, and their contributions to the survival of families, communities and the country.

Fictional and nonfictional accounts of the war, especially those written by men, often peripheralize or stereotypically represent women as passive spectators or helpless victims of the armed conflict. Such works tend to promote a form of heroism drawn directly from the involvement of men just as they highlight and exaggerate women's moral laxity and sensationalize their marital infidelities. These narratives obscure the fact that women and girls disproportionately experience sexual violence in war times. The valiant and gallant ways women carried out old and new responsibilities occasioned by the war have often been minimized or even ignored. Thus, this international conference serves as an important platform to present and discuss women as embodiment of vulnerabilities and agency, active participants and survivors, who demonstrated remarkable resilience and initiative, waging war on all fronts in the face of precarious conditions and scarcities, and maximizing opportunities occasioned by the hostilities.

**SUB-THEMES FOR PRESENTATIONS INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO THE FOLLOWING:**

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| 1. Women, ethnic politics and conflict in pre- and post-war Nigeria     | 12. Women and post-war reconstruction, reconciliation and rehabilitation                       |
| 2. Women, religion and conflict in pre- and post-war Nigeria            | 13. Women, war memories and counter-memories   |
| 3. Women and the military in pre- and post-war Nigeria                  | 14. Comparative studies on women, genocide, and international criminal law                     |
| 4. Women militia and combatants in the war                              | 15. Theorizing gender, refugees and returnees  |
| 5. Comparative studies of starvation and rape as weapons of war         | 16. The war and the representation of women in literary and other genres                       |
| 6. Women's life stories and personal accounts of the war                | 17. Comparative studies on women in conflict, conflict resolution and peace-building in Africa |
| 7. Women and humanitarian activities during the war                     | 18. Methodological issues in researching and writing about women and war in Africa             |
| 8. Women in diplomatic missions during the war                          |  |
| 9. Women and war economies (Nigerian and Biafran)                       |  |
| 10. Women and war crimes during the hostilities                         |  |
| 11. Women and inter-ethnic marriages in pre-, war, and post-war Nigeria |  |

Papers presented at the conference will be peer-reviewed, and those assessed to be of high quality will be included in an edited book. Interested participants should send a 250-word proposal for paper or roundtable no later than **Wednesday, January 31, 2018**. The Local Organizing Committee will review the proposals as they are submitted and you will be promptly notified of their decision. If your proposal is accepted for the conference, a full draft of your paper should be submitted by **Monday, April 16, 2018**. Proposals should contain the following information and in this order: (a) title of paper or presentation, (b) author(s), (c) affiliation, (d) email address, (e) phone numbers, (f) abstract of maximum of 250 words, and (g) 5 keywords of your proposed presentation. Proposals should be submitted through this link <https://goo.gl/forms/0YPgqZQ2uw9MJATS2>. All conference inquiries should be sent to the Local Organizing Committee at: [afst2018conf@umbc.edu](mailto:afst2018conf@umbc.edu)

**THE CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FEE, WHICH SHOULD BE PAID IMMEDIATELY ONCE YOUR PROPOSAL IS ACCEPTED, IS AS FOLLOWS:**

**Students \$100** (with institutional affiliation and valid ID); **African-based participants \$165**; **All others \$200**

The fee will cover conference materials, two continental breakfasts, one lunch (African food), and one dinner banquet (African food and dance). Please note that the Department of Africana Studies and the University of Maryland, Baltimore County are not in a position to assist with participants' conference travel or subsistence other than those meals listed above.

**THOSE WHO NEED ACCOMMODATIONS SHOULD RESERVE THEIR ROOMS AT ANY OF THESE HOTELS:**

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| 1. Hyatt place Baltimore BWI airport -- <a href="http://baltimorebwi.place.hyatt.com">baltimorebwi.place.hyatt.com</a> | 3. Sheraton Baltimore Washington Airport Hotel BWI                                  |
| 2. La Quinta BWI Airport-- <a href="http://www.LQ.com">www.LQ.com</a>  | <a href="http://www.sheratonbwiairport.com/">http://www.sheratonbwiairport.com/</a> |

**LOCAL ORGANIZING COMMITTEE:**

1. Prof. Gloria Chuku, Department of Africana Studies, University of Maryland, Baltimore County, USA: [chuku@umbc.edu](mailto:chuku@umbc.edu)
2. Dr. Carol Njoku, CODESRIA Fellow, Marquette University, Wisconsin: [carol.njoku@marquette.edu](mailto:carol.njoku@marquette.edu)
3. Dr. Sussie Okoro, Department of Africana Studies, University of Maryland, Baltimore County, USA: [suokoro@umbc.edu](mailto:suokoro@umbc.edu)