Gender and the Western Reaction to the Case
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in Shari'ah on Trial: Northern Nigeria's Islamic Revolution

This chapter explores the western reaction to Amina Lawal’s case. It outlines how famous western leaders, from Nicolas Sarkozy to Bill Clinton to Oprah Winfrey treated this case, and critically examines western non-governmental organizations’ responses. The chapter also examines how difficult it can be to discuss how Nigerian women feel about shar’iah, if their views are negative, in western scholarly discourses that are understandably concerned about the damage done by “imperial feminism.” This chapter tries to unearth Nigerian women’s voices in as authentic a way as possible, and provides two visions of gender rights in Northern Nigeria: that of Northern Nigerian historian Ibraheem Sulaiman and Northern Nigerian journalist, the late Balkisu Yusuf. The chapter ends with a short conclusion.