



COI QUERY

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COI QUERY RESPONSE – Nigeria

Gender-based violence (GBV) in Lagos

1. Prevalence

Nigeria ranked 163rd out of 191 countries featured in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) 2023 Gender Social Norms Index (GSNI),¹ which was based on a compilation of data as of 12 January 2023.²

Gender-based violence (GBV) in Nigeria was described as ‘common’³ and ‘rife’.⁴ According to the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), nearly one in three women (31 %) aged 15-49 have experienced physical violence in Nigeria.⁵ In its 2023 annual report on the state of human rights in Nigeria, Amnesty International (AI) noted that according to the Minister of Women’s Affairs, 24 720 cases of sexual and gender-based violence, including 975 deaths, were reported in the country between January and October 2023.⁶

According to a report on the implementation of the federal law Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act of Nigeria (VAPP Act) in Lagos state, commissioned by the Westminster Foundation for Democracy, a UK public body and democracy support organization,⁷ published in February 2022, violence against women and girls was ‘very prevalent’ in Lagos state, with ‘sexual and domestic violence ranking first and second respectively.’⁸ Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES)⁹, in a report published in November 2023, also noted that GBV and sexual harassment were ‘rife’ in many ‘informal communities’¹⁰ across Lagos.¹¹

The government of Lagos state, through its Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency (DSVA), stated that, during the period between August 2022 and July 2023, the agency received 5 624 cases of domestic violence, sexual assault, rape, child abuse, physical assault, among

¹ The Gender Social Norms Index (GSNI) is a report that ‘quantifies biases against women, capturing people’s attitudes on women’s roles along four key dimensions: political, educational, economic and physical integrity’. See: UNDP, 2023 Gender Social Norms Index (GSNI), n.d., [url](#)

² UNDP, 2023 Gender Social Norms Index (GSNI), 12 June 2023, [url](#), p. 32

³ Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, General Country of Origin Information Report Nigeria, January 2023, [url](#), p. 60

⁴ AI, The State of the World’s Human Rights; Nigeria 2023, 24 April 2024, [url](#)

⁵ UNICEF, 16 facts about violence against women and girls in Nigeria, November 2022, [url](#), p. 6

⁶ AI, The State of the World’s Human Rights; Nigeria 2023, 24 April 2024, [url](#)

⁷ WFD, Who we are, n.d., [url](#)

⁸ WFD, Policy Brief: Overcoming the Barriers to the Adoption and Implementation of the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act in Lagos State, February 2022, [url](#), p. 12

⁹ Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) is a non-profit German foundation funded by the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany. Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), About, [url](#)

¹⁰ According to the FES report, the term ‘informal communities’ refer to informal settlements and slum communities in Lagos ‘characterised by poor housing quality and sanitary conditions’ and poor living conditions. FES, Lagos Micro-Struggles Report, November 2023, [url](#), p. 14

¹¹ FES, Lagos Micro-Struggles Report, November 2023, [url](#), p. 40



others.¹² The Peoples Gazette, a Nigerian news agency, reported that according to DSVAs, the above-mentioned 5 624 cases included 2 331 reports of domestic violence, 90 reports of rape, 72 cases of sexual assault, 1 attempt to commit rape, 2 cases of sexual assault, 123 cases of threat to life, 143 cases of child abuse and physical assault, 235 cases of ‘defilement’, 3 cases of ‘defilement/molestation by minor to minor’, and 33 cases of sexual harassment/molestation.¹³ According to the same source, ‘for cases concerning adults, 91 per cent of survivors are female and nine per cent are male, whilst for children, 45 per cent of survivors are boys and 55 per cent are girls.’¹⁴

In July 2023, the spokesperson of the Nigeria Police of Lagos State Command noted that 111 cases of ‘defilement’, 14 of rape, and 56 of domestic violence were recorded between April and June 2023.¹⁵ The police spokesperson also reported that within the same period, 83 cases were under investigation, while 99 suspects were charged in court.¹⁶

According to data by Punch, a Nigerian media outlet, and PUNCH HealthWise,¹⁷ a total of 24 009 cases, including cases of sexual, physical and psychological abuse, were reported in all 20 Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Lagos state between January 2019 and December 2023.¹⁸ According to the same data, numbers of GBV cases increased over the past five years, namely since 2019, and ‘surged in 2022 and 2023’ with 5 929 and 6 389 of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) cases reported, respectively.¹⁹ According to the same source, of the 6 389 SGBV cases reported in Lagos during 2023, 3 813 cases concerned adults and 2 576 cases concerned children.²⁰ For cases concerning adults, 90 % of the victims were female, with cases including ‘99 rape cases, 114 sexual harassment, 110 threats to life, 2 649 domestic violence, 3 attempts to rape, 9 sexual assaults by penetration, 506 denials of resources, and 323 non-SGBV.’²¹ For cases concerning children in 2023, 54 % of the victims were female and 46 % were male, with cases including ‘263 cases of defilement, 153 physical assaults, 1,953 emotional violence, 136 neglect, 35 child molestation, 20 child labour, and 16 non-SGBV.’²²

¹² Lagos State DSVAs, Lagos Reiterates Commitment To Combat SGBV To Extinction... Received Over 5,624 Domestic And Sexual Cases Since 2022, 31 August 2023, [url](#)

¹³ Peoples Gazette (The), Lagos recorded 5,624 sexual, gender-based violence cases in one year: Official, 31 August 2023, [url](#)

¹⁴ Peoples Gazette (The), Lagos recorded 5,624 sexual, gender-based violence cases in one year: Official, 31 August 2023, [url](#)

¹⁵ NAN (News Agency of Nigeria), Police record 111 defilement cases in 3 months in Lagos, 5 July 2023, [url](#)

¹⁶ NAN (News Agency of Nigeria), Police record 111 defilement cases in 3 months in Lagos, 5 July 2023, [url](#)

¹⁷ Punch HealthWise is ‘an online health vertical commissioned in January 2020 by the PUNCH Media Foundation with funding support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation’, seeking to ‘improve the quality and quantum of health reportage’ and increasing public awareness and knowledge about public health and development issues in Nigeria’. PUNCH Media Foundation, Punch HealthWise, n.d., [url](#); The home page of Punch HealthWise is available at: [url](#)

¹⁸ Punch, Lagos records 24,009 sexual, gender-based violence in five years, 28 May 2024, [url](#)

¹⁹ Punch, Lagos records 24,009 sexual, gender-based violence in five years, 28 May 2024, [url](#)

²⁰ Punch, Lagos records 24,009 sexual, gender-based violence in five years, 28 May 2024, [url](#)

²¹ Punch, Lagos records 24,009 sexual, gender-based violence in five years, 28 May 2024, [url](#)

²² Punch, Lagos records 24,009 sexual, gender-based violence in five years, 28 May 2024, [url](#)



Furthermore, the same source also noted that between January and May of 2024, 279 GBV cases were recorded in Lagos state, which ranked ‘among the top five states with the highest reported cases of SGBV in Nigeria in 2024.’²³

In May 2024, the Commissioner for Women Affairs and Poverty Alleviation stated that a total of 662 cases of domestic violence were received since 2023, of which 592 were women and 70 were men,²⁴ recording ‘an all time high rate of domestic violence in the last one year.’²⁵ Of the total number of cases reported, 88 cases were referred to the Office of the Public Defenders (OPD) for further action.²⁶ According to the same statement, ‘27 male and 247 female reported domestic violence directly to the ministry while 43 male and 345 female reported spousal violence through the ministry’s toll-free line 767/112.’²⁷

2. Legislation

Nigeria ratified the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW) in 1985,²⁸ the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1991,²⁹ the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of women in Africa (Maputo Protocol) in 2004,³⁰ and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child in 2001.³¹

The VAPP Act was adopted in 2015³² and, according to sources published in 2024, the VAPP Act has been adopted by 35 Nigeria’s states.³³

The United States Department of State (USDOS) annual report on human rights practices in Nigeria, covering 2023, noted that despite the criminalization of rape and various forms of domestic violence, the law was not effectively enforced by the government, with sentences for convictions of rape and sexual assault being ‘inconsistent and often minor.’³⁴ According to the same source, although the federal law included provisions on the protection and on various forms of assistance to victims of sexual violence, as the federal legislation was not adopted in all states, state laws ‘governed most rape and sexual assault cases and typically allowed for

²³ Punch, Lagos records 24,009 sexual, gender-based violence in five years, 28 May 2024, [url](#)

²⁴ Daily Trust, 592 women, 70 men allege battering by spouses in Lagos, 23 May 2024, [url](#); Vanguard, Lagos records high domestic violence cases, 21 May 2024, [url](#)

²⁵ Vanguard, Lagos records high domestic violence cases, 21 May 2024, [url](#)

²⁶ Vanguard, Lagos records high domestic violence cases, 21 May 2024, [url](#)

²⁷ Daily Trust, 592 women, 70 men allege battering by spouses in Lagos, 23 May 2024, [url](#); Leadership News, 592 Women, 70 Men Report Spousal Battering In Lagos, 22 May 2024, [url](#)

²⁸ UN Treaty Body Database, Nigeria, n.d., [url](#)

²⁹ UN Treaty Body Database, Nigeria, n.d., [url](#)

³⁰ AU, Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, 19 September 2023, [url](#)

³¹ ACERWC, Ratifications Table, n.d., [url](#)

³² Nigeria, Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act, 2015, [url](#)

³³ Guardian Nigeria, UN Women seeks media collaboration to improve advocacy, inclusion, 18 May 2024, [url](#); Premium Times, Gender Matters Across Nigeria (February 2024 Edition), 1 March 2024, [url](#)

³⁴ USDOS, 2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Nigeria, 23 April 2024, [url](#)



lesser sentences.³⁵ Furthermore, the same source noted that enforcement of the federal law criminalising female genital mutilation (FGM) was ‘rare’.³⁶

Different sources, dated up to November 2023, reported that Lagos state has not incorporated the VAPP Act into its legislation.³⁷ Sources reported, however, that Lagos state had in place, even before the adoption of the federal VAPP Act, legislation with provisions of similar content with the ones embedded in the VAPP Act, addressing various forms of GBV.³⁸ Further information on the incorporation of the VAPP Act in Lagos state could not be found among the sources consulted by EUAA within time constraints.

At the state level, legislation concerning GBV in Lagos includes:

- Protection Against Domestic Violence Law, 2007³⁹
- Domestic and Sexual Violence law, 2021⁴⁰
- Lagos State Criminal Law, 2007⁴¹
- Child’s Rights Law, 2007⁴²

According to a 2023 report titled ‘Womanity Index’⁴³ by Invictus Africa⁴⁴ and BudgIT⁴⁵, Lagos was ranked among the first four states under the laws and policies index for having

³⁵ USDOS, 2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Nigeria, 23 April 2024, [url](#)

³⁶ USDOS, 2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Nigeria, 23 April 2024, [url](#)

³⁷ Business Day, Lagos. Kano yet to sign the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act, 17 November 2023, [url](#); Partners West Africa – Nigeria, VAPP Tracker, [2023], [url](#); WFD, Policy Brief: Overcoming the Barriers to the Adoption and Implementation of the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act in Lagos State, February 2022, [url](#), p. 13

³⁸ Premium Times, Gender Matters Across Nigeria (February 2024 Edition), 1 March 2024, [url](#); Partners West Africa – Nigeria, VAPP Tracker, [2023], [url](#); WFD, Policy Brief: Overcoming the Barriers to the Adoption and Implementation of the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act in Lagos State, February 2022, [url](#), p. 13; Tribune Online, Six years after, Nigeria’s VAPP law still struggling for domestication in 17 states, 14 December 2021, [url](#)

³⁹ Nigeria, Lagos State, Protection Against Domestic Violence Law, 2007, [url](#)

⁴⁰ Nigeria, Lagos State, Domestic and Sexual Violence law, 2021, [url](#)

⁴¹ Nigeria, Lagos state Criminal Law, 2007, [url](#)

⁴² Nigeria, Child’s Rights Law, 2007, [url](#)

⁴³ The Womanity Index (GBV) report provides a ranking and assessment of Nigerian states’ performance in preventing and responding to GBV, based on ‘18 indicators spread across five indexes (Laws and Policies, Access to Legal Justice, Support Services, Information and Awareness, and Budget and Spending)’. It is based on quantitative and qualitative data analysis, employing mixed research and data collection methods, including informant interviews and self-administered and electronic interviewer-administered questionnaires, while the overall ranking ‘is by colour codes in the order of blue, green, amber, and red’. Invictus Africa, BudgIT, Womanity Index, Gender-Based Violence, Prevention and Response, A subnational assessment: Nigeria, 2023, [url](#), pp. 4, 9 – 10

⁴⁴ Invictus Africa is an NGO based in Abuja, Nigeria, that ‘promotes human rights and gender equality through data-driven advocacy, digital technologies, and capacity development’. Invictus Africa, About us, n.d., [url](#)

⁴⁵ BudgIT is a Nigerian civic organisation using ‘creative technology to simplify public information, stimulating a community of active citizens and enabling their right to demand accountability, institutional reforms, efficient service delivery and an equitable society’. BudgIT, About us, n.d., [url](#)



established robust legal frameworks that criminalise GBV.⁴⁶ Furthermore, according to sources, Lagos made efforts to address GBV and strengthen related legislation.⁴⁷

Examples of the implementation of GBV-related laws by the Lagos government, as reported by sources, include:

- Various agencies were created to respond to GBV, such as the DSVAs and the Office of the Public Defender.⁴⁸
- In December 2022, a mobile app and web portal for responder agencies was launched to digitally manage, monitor, and update information on GBV cases.⁴⁹
- In 2021, the Lagos government launched a 24/7 helpline for victims of GBV,⁵⁰ providing emergency psycho-social and legal support, and referral services.⁵¹
- Lagos state employed awareness and training programs related to GBV, including engagement with traditional leaders.⁵²

Main challenges reported in the implementation of GBV-related laws in Lagos included limited funding or lack thereof in case of government agencies and civil society organisations involved in responding to GBV and providing support to victims; poor capacity of government personnel, including police, judicial and ministerial institutions⁵³; low awareness of GBV-related laws across the state,⁵⁴ particularly among residents ‘in riverine areas where the incidence of violence against women and girls is high’⁵⁵; and delays in the prosecution of cases.⁵⁶

Moreover, Lagos established specialized courts in the state to deal specifically with GBV cases,⁵⁷ including a Domestic and Special Offences Court, a specialized magistrate court for

⁴⁶ Invictus Africa, BudgIT, Womanity Index, Gender-Based Violence, Prevention and Response, A subnational assessment: Nigeria, 2023, [url](#), p. 17

⁴⁷ Invictus Africa, BudgIT, Womanity Index, Gender-Based Violence, Prevention and Response, A subnational assessment: Nigeria, 2023, [url](#), p. 143; WFD, Policy Brief: Overcoming the Barriers to the Adoption and Implementation of the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act in Lagos State, February 2022, [url](#), pp. 12 – 14

⁴⁸ Invictus Africa, BudgIT, Womanity Index, Gender-Based Violence, Prevention and Response, A subnational assessment: Nigeria, 2023, [url](#), p. 143

⁴⁹ Leadership News, Lagos Launches Mobile App To Tackle Domestic, Sexual Violence, 8 December 2022, [url](#); PM News, Lagos launches app to fight domestic, sexual violence, 6 December 2022, [url](#)

⁵⁰ Vanguard, How far has Lagos State come in addressing Gender-Based Violence?, 27 March 2022, [url](#)

⁵¹ PM News, DSVAs: Two years of battling Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Lagos, 21 September 2023, [url](#)

⁵² Invictus Africa, BudgIT, Womanity Index, Gender-Based Violence, Prevention and Response, A subnational assessment: Nigeria, 2023, [url](#), pp. 143 – 144; WFD, Policy Brief: Overcoming the Barriers to the Adoption and Implementation of the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act in Lagos State, February 2022, [url](#), pp. 13, 15, 17

⁵³ WFD, Policy Brief: Overcoming the Barriers to the Adoption and Implementation of the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act in Lagos State, February 2022, [url](#), p. 15

⁵⁴ Invictus Africa, BudgIT, Womanity Index, Gender-Based Violence, Prevention and Response, A subnational assessment: Nigeria, 2023, [url](#), p. 142; WFD, Policy Brief: Overcoming the Barriers to the Adoption and Implementation of the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act in Lagos State, February 2022, [url](#), p. 15

⁵⁵ WFD, Policy Brief: Overcoming the Barriers to the Adoption and Implementation of the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act in Lagos State, February 2022, [url](#), p. 15

⁵⁶ WFD, Policy Brief: Overcoming the Barriers to the Adoption and Implementation of the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act in Lagos State, February 2022, [url](#), p. 15

⁵⁷ WFD, Policy Brief: Overcoming the Barriers to the Adoption and Implementation of the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act in Lagos State, February 2022, [url](#), p. 14



SGBV offenses against children, and about 22 Family Support Units within the police.⁵⁸ According to the 2023 report by Invictus Africa and BudgIT, however, the specialized courts ‘are not sufficient for Lagos’ large population.’⁵⁹

3. State protection

According to Freedom House, despite the existence of ‘strict laws’ against forms of GBV, including rape, domestic violence, female genital mutilation (FGM), and child marriage, these offenses remained ‘widespread’ in Nigeria, ‘with low rates of reporting and prosecution.’⁶⁰

A UN Human Rights Council report, providing information from the joint submissions of stakeholders on Nigeria in the context of the Universal Periodic Review, published in November 2023, reported on the lack of accountability for GBV-related cases, while additionally noting that police authorities ‘had often refused to intervene in domestic violence cases, and in some cases blamed the victims for provoking the abuse.’⁶¹ The 2023 USDOS annual report on human rights practices in Nigeria indicated that, in rural areas, both judicial and police authorities were reluctant to intervene in cases of women that formally accused their husbands of abuse, ‘if the level of alleged abuse did not exceed local customary norms.’⁶² Sources cited in the 2023 General Country of Origin Information Report on Nigeria by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, including confidential sources, similarly stated that domestic violence was considered ‘a family matter and police officers often refused to get involved, especially if the alleged abuse was not incompatible with local customary norms.’⁶³ According to the same source, victims who reported SGBV to police authorities often experienced ‘victim-blaming, contemptuous treatment, financial extortion, gender stereotyping and lack of empathy,’ while the police ‘also sometimes encourage victims and perpetrators to resolve the case out of court.’⁶⁴ The same source also noted that ‘[o]bstacles such as cost, stigmatisation, lack of protection and assistance for victims and lengthy legal processes prevented victims from seeking justice’, and, consequently in practice, ‘the ability to make use of the law’ mainly relied on the financial situation and connections of the victim.⁶⁵

As reported by Premium Times, a Nigerian media organisation based in Abuja, the Minister of Women Affairs, addressing judges presiding over GBV cases in an event organized in January 2023, noted that despite some progress made in addressing GBV against women, including

⁵⁸ Invictus Africa, BudgIT, Womanity Index, Gender-Based Violence, Prevention and Response, A subnational assessment: Nigeria, 2023, [url](#), p. 43, 143

⁵⁹ Invictus Africa, BudgIT, Womanity Index, Gender-Based Violence, Prevention and Response, A subnational assessment: Nigeria, 2023, [url](#), p. 142

⁶⁰ Freedom House: Freedom in the World 2024 - Nigeria, 2024, [url](#)

⁶¹ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights: Summary of stakeholders’ submissions on Nigeria, 10 November 2023, [url](#), para. 70

⁶² USDOS, 2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Nigeria, 23 April 2024, [url](#)

⁶³ Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, General Country of Origin Information Report Nigeria, January 2023, [url](#), p. 62

⁶⁴ Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, General Country of Origin Information Report Nigeria, January 2023, [url](#), p. 62

⁶⁵ Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, General Country of Origin Information Report Nigeria, January 2023, [url](#), p. 62



the domestication of the Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Act by 35 states and the FCT (Federal Capital Territory) Abuja, “not much has been happening in the area of prosecution”.⁶⁶ Furthermore, it was highlighted that the main challenges in court proceedings of GBV cases included ‘delay in all stages of proceedings’ and ‘lack of survivor-sensitive approaches in court procedures.’⁶⁷

Concerning Lagos state, according to the 2023 report by Invictus Africa and BudgIT, data on police responses to SGBV is limited.⁶⁸

Media sources reported that, according to a 2023 report by Stand to End Rape Initiative (STER), a Nigerian non-governmental organisation (NGO), analysing the ‘efficiency of the criminal justice system, and the financial and management capacity’ for GBV response, including laws and policy adoption across Nigeria for the period of January to November 2022, Lagos state ranked among the first five states with the highest rate of prosecution of SGBV perpetrators in Nigeria.⁶⁹

Incidents of convictions for GBV-related offenses in Lagos state, as reported by sources, include:

- In January 2024, the Ikeja Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Court in Lagos State sentenced a bishop to life imprisonment for raping his assistant and sexually assaulting another church member.⁷⁰
- Premium Times reported on ‘high-profile case’ convictions for GBV offenses in Lagos state. According to sources, in October 2023, a doctor, head of the Optimal Cancer Care Foundation, was sentenced to life imprisonment for the rape of an underage female relative on ‘two counts charge of defilement’ and ‘sexual assault by penetration’.⁷¹ The court also ordered that the doctor’s name be added in the Lagos state sex offenders register.⁷²

⁶⁶ Premium Times, Minister tasks judges on speedy determination of sexual, gender-based violence cases, 18 January 2023, [url](#)

⁶⁷ Premium Times, Minister tasks judges on speedy determination of sexual, gender-based violence cases, 18 January 2023, [url](#)

⁶⁸ Invictus Africa, BudgIT, Womanity Index, Gender-Based Violence, Prevention and Response, A subnational assessment: Nigeria, 2023, [url](#), p. 142

⁶⁹ Premium Times, Rape: What Femi Olaleye’s life sentence means for fight against SGBV in Lagos, 24 November 2023, [url](#); Cable (The), Report: Zamfara, Niger, Ogun — five states with lowest criminal prosecution of SGBV cases, 9 March 2023, [url](#)

⁷⁰ Punch, Rape sentence: Church members say popular Lagos pastor framed, conviction will be overturned, 27 January 2024, [url](#); Vanguard, Lagos bishop Feyi Daniels jailed for life for raping assistant pastor, 26 January 2024, [url](#)

⁷¹ Premium Times, Rape: What Femi Olaleye’s life sentence means for fight against SGBV in Lagos, 24 November 2023, [url](#); Punch, Lagos cancer doctor, Olaleye, bags life jail for rape, 25 October 2023, [url](#)

⁷² Punch, Lagos cancer doctor, Olaleye, bags life jail for rape, 25 October 2023, [url](#); BBC News, Nigerian doctor Olufemi Olaleye sentenced to life in prison for rape in Lagos, 25 October 2023, [url](#)



- In September 2023, the Lagos State Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Court sentenced a security officer to life imprisonment for defiling a four-year-old girl.⁷³
- In September 2023, the Lagos State Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Court sentenced a 59-year-old artisan to two terms of life imprisonment for defiling his two daughters.⁷⁴
- In July 2023, the Ikeja Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Court in Lagos State sentenced a 56-year-old driver to life imprisonment for defiling his employer's five-year-old granddaughter.⁷⁵
- In June 2023, media sources reported that a 45-year-old businessman was sentenced by the Lagos State Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Court, in Ikeja, to triple life imprisonment for raping three underaged daughters.⁷⁶
- In July 2022, an actor was convicted by a Lagos state court on sexual assault and attempted sexual assault of a minor.⁷⁷ The court sentenced him to 16 years imprisonment for all charges and that the sentences will run concurrently.⁷⁸

4. Societal attitudes

The 2023 UN Human Rights Council report, citing information from the joint submissions of stakeholders on Nigeria, indicated that 'stigma and silence around sexual violence prevented many survivors from reporting such violence to the authorities.'⁷⁹

According to a Gender-Based Violence Reporting Handbook, a 2022 survey published by the Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development (CJID),⁸⁰ of 102 Nigerian journalists interviewed, silence from victims and their families, and threats were reported among the top five challenges journalists face while reporting GBV cases.⁸¹ According to the same source, the main challenges faced by survivors of GBV included 'stigmatisation, victim-blaming, self-

⁷³ Premium Times, Rape: What Femi Olaleye's life sentence means for fight against SGBV in Lagos, 24 November 2023, [url](#); Peoples Gazette (The), Security guard gets life imprisonment for defiling four-year-old girl, 20 September 2023, [url](#)

⁷⁴ Leadership News, Artisan Gets Life Jail For Defiling His Daughters, 19 September 2023, [url](#); Punch, 59-year-old man gets life imprisonment for raping two daughters, 19 September 2023, [url](#)

⁷⁵ Premium Times, Rape: What Femi Olaleye's life sentence means for fight against SGBV in Lagos, 24 November 2023, [url](#); Daily Trust, Driver bags life jail for defiling employer's granddaughter, 11 July 2023, [url](#)

⁷⁶ Cable (The), Father gets triple life imprisonment for raping three underaged daughters in Lagos, 13 June 2023, [url](#); PM News, Lagos man Orisakwe sentenced to 3 life sentences for defiling 3 daughters, 13 June 2023, [url](#)

⁷⁷ Guardian Nigeria, Sexual assault: Appeal court affirms five-year sentence of Baba Jjesha, 29 June 2024, [url](#); Premium Times, Rape: What Femi Olaleye's life sentence means for fight against SGBV in Lagos, 24 November 2023, [url](#)

⁷⁸ Guardian Nigeria, Sexual assault: Appeal court affirms five-year sentence of Baba Jjesha, 29 June 2024, [url](#); Premium Times, Rape: What Femi Olaleye's life sentence means for fight against SGBV in Lagos, 24 November 2023, [url](#)

⁷⁹ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights: Summary of stakeholders' submissions on Nigeria, 10 November 2023, [url](#), para. 70

⁸⁰ Centre for Journalism Innovation and Development (CJID) is a Nigerian NGO, founded in 2014, aiming at the 'promotion of the welfare and safety of journalist, elections, the freedom of information and expression' through investigative journalism, innovation and open data. CJID, About us, n.d., [url](#)

⁸¹ CJID, Gender-Based Violence Reporting Handbook, 2022, [url](#), p. 25



blame, fear of reprisal and lack of trust in the justice process.⁸² The same source also noted that survivors of GBV ‘can also face stigma and blame from their families and communities,’ as well as ‘threats and further violence from perpetrators and their associates’ when their cases become widely known.⁸³

According to a 2022 report on the implementation of the VAPP Act in Nigeria by the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking Persons (NAPTIP),⁸⁴ differences in statistics between the complaints received and the complaints investigated was a result ‘of the fact that some complaints were withdrawn almost immediately, while some complainants never showed up after reporting.’⁸⁵ Specifically, according to the same report, the main reasons for the withdrawal of cases of spousal battery were ‘family persuasion and reconciliation’, whereas for cases of inflicting injuries and intimidation, ‘forgiveness by the victim’ was reported as a reason for complaints’ withdrawal.⁸⁶

Concerning Lagos state, PM News, a local media source, quoted the Executive Secretary of Lagos state DSVAs as saying in March 2024 that ‘harmful gender norms and attitudes continue to persist, perpetuating inequality.’⁸⁷

According to the 2022 report by the Westminster Foundation for Democracy, among the main challenges in the implementation of GBV-related laws in Lagos state were societal challenges, including a ‘culture of silence due to stigmatization of survivors.’⁸⁸ According to the same source, the ‘community continued blaming and shaming of survivors of SGBV which makes them recoil and not want to report or follow up on cases they reported.’⁸⁹

5. Support services

According to the 2023 report by Invictus Africa and BudgIT, Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) were active at 57 of the over 300 primary healthcare centres, 26 general hospitals, and the federal medical center in Lagos state.⁹⁰ According to the same source, SARCs were available and accessible in all the LGAs.⁹¹ There were also SARCs operated by non-state organisations, including the Mirabel centre, Women at Risk International Foundation (WARIF),

⁸² CJID, Gender-Based Violence Reporting Handbook, 2022, [url](#), p. 24

⁸³ CJID, Gender-Based Violence Reporting Handbook, 2022, [url](#), p. 94

⁸⁴ NAPTIP is mandated by the VAPP Act as the regulatory and administrator body for the provisions of the Act. Nigeria, Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act, 2015, [url](#)

⁸⁵ Nigeria, NAPTIP, 2022 Implementation Report: Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act – 2015, 6 February 2024, [url](#), p. 25

⁸⁶ Nigeria, NAPTIP, 2022 Implementation Report: Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act – 2015, 6 February 2024, [url](#), p. 25

⁸⁷ PM News, Lagos conducts door-to-door campaign against gender-based violence, 8 March 2024, [url](#)

⁸⁸ WFD, Policy Brief: Overcoming the Barriers to the Adoption and Implementation of the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act in Lagos State, February 2022, [url](#), p. 15

⁸⁹ WFD, Policy Brief: Overcoming the Barriers to the Adoption and Implementation of the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act in Lagos State, February 2022, [url](#), p. 15

⁹⁰ Invictus Africa, BudgIT, Womanity Index, Gender-Based Violence, Prevention and Response, A subnational assessment: Nigeria, 2023, [url](#), p. 144

⁹¹ Invictus Africa, BudgIT, Womanity Index, Gender-Based Violence, Prevention and Response, A subnational assessment: Nigeria, 2023, [url](#), p. 144



and the Idera Centre, which provided a variety of services to GBV victims such as medical and psychosocial support.⁹² Specifically, managed by the non-profit organization Partnership for Justice,⁹³ the Mirabel Centre was reported as the first Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) in Nigeria, operating in Lagos state.⁹⁴ The Centre provided support services, including medical and psychosocial support, to survivors of sexual violence, as well as information and data on sexual assault in Lagos.⁹⁵ According to the Centre's website, it has provided 'direct free medical care and psychosocial support to 8000+ survivors of rape and sexual violence,' including men, women, and children.⁹⁶

Moreover, in December 2022, the National Human Rights Commission of Nigeria (NHRC) with the support of the Spotlight Initiative⁹⁷, launched the 'NHRC GBV Toll – Free Help Line 6472' to improve service delivery in reporting and responding to complaints of human rights violations, especially to GBV.⁹⁸ According to its 2022 annual report, the NHRC received 10 091 complaints concerning SGBV in Lagos during 2022.⁹⁹

According to the above report by Invictus Africa and BudgIT, seven active shelters for adults victims of GBV were located in Lagos.¹⁰⁰ Six of these shelters were owned by NGOs, while one was owned by DSVa.¹⁰¹ According to the same report, the number of shelters and professional counsellors in the existing shelters was 'insufficient', and that government SGBV agencies were understaffed.¹⁰²

In June 2023, the Lagos State Government, through its Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency (DSVA), opened the "EKO HAVEN" shelter, a 30-bed space facility, for survivors of SGBV.¹⁰³ According to DSVa, the shelter's aim was to provide accommodation, health, psychosocial and livelihood support to assist GBV victims' reintegration.¹⁰⁴

⁹² Invictus Africa, BudgIT, Womanity Index, Gender-Based Violence, Prevention and Response, A subnational assessment: Nigeria, 2023, [url](#), p. 144; WFD, Policy Brief: Overcoming the Barriers to the Adoption and Implementation of the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act in Lagos State, February 2022, [url](#), pp. 13 – 14

⁹³ PJ (Partnership for Justice) is a non-profit organization aiming to 'equality, justice and globalization of human rights standards' and working 'to offer services to victims of human rights violations and create linkages for the promotion and protection of human rights in Nigeria'. PJ, Who We Are, n.d., [url](#)

⁹⁴ Premium Times, Analysis: What Nigeria's new Women Affairs Minister must do to tackle gender-based violence, 22 August 2023, [url](#); Mirabel Centre, Who we are, n.d., [url](#)

⁹⁵ Mirabel Centre, Who we are, n.d., [url](#)

⁹⁶ Mirabel Centre, Who we are, n.d., [url](#)

⁹⁷ Spotlight Initiative is a United Nations initiative in partnership with the European Union aiming 'to end violence against women and girls'. Spotlight Initiative, Who we are, n.d., [url](#)

⁹⁸ NHRC, 2022 Annual report, 25 May 2023, [url](#), p. 32

⁹⁹ NHRC, 2022 Annual report, 25 May 2023, [url](#), p. 46

¹⁰⁰ Invictus Africa, BudgIT, Womanity Index, Gender-Based Violence, Prevention and Response, A subnational assessment: Nigeria, 2023, [url](#), pp. 143 – 144

¹⁰¹ Invictus Africa, BudgIT, Womanity Index, Gender-Based Violence, Prevention and Response, A subnational assessment: Nigeria, 2023, [url](#), pp. 143 – 144

¹⁰² Invictus Africa, BudgIT, Womanity Index, Gender-Based Violence, Prevention and Response, A subnational assessment: Nigeria, 2023, [url](#), p. 142

¹⁰³ Premium Times, Lagos opens shelter for survivors of sexual and gender based violence, 26 June 2023, [url](#); Cable (The), Lagos opens 'Eko Haven' to shelter survivors of domestic, sexual violence, 25 June 2023, [url](#)

¹⁰⁴ DSVa, Lagos opens Eko Haven; shelter for survivors of Domestic Violence, n.d., [url](#)



In March 2021, the NGO Centre for Children’s Health Education, Orientation and Protection (CEE-HOPE)¹⁰⁵ in partnership with Hearts 100 Initiative inaugurated a shelter, named ‘Hearts of Hope Shelter’, for women victims of GBV.¹⁰⁶ The shelter’s goal is to provide temporary accommodation, psychosocial support and empowerment to women and girls who are GBV victims.¹⁰⁷

The NGO Project Alert¹⁰⁸ has operated since 2001 the first GBV shelter in Nigeria called ‘Sophia’s Place’, which is located in Lagos.¹⁰⁹ It was reported that the shelter, in its full capacity, could accommodate 6 families or 12 individual women.¹¹⁰ In a May 2022 article, Premium Times noted that, according to the shelter’s administrator, due to financial and sponsorship difficulties the shelter ‘can afford to feed survivors on an occasional basis when sponsored by donors.’¹¹¹

Furthermore, a children’s shelter operated by Cece Yara Foundation provides housing and advocacy support services for children ‘who have been sexually abused or at risk alongside their non-offending families.’¹¹²

6. Treatment upon return of GBV victims, including access to employment, housing and public services

Information on the treatment upon return of GBV victims, including access to employment, housing, and public services, in Lagos state could not be found among the sources consulted by EUAA within time constraints of this query.

¹⁰⁵ The Centre for Children’s Health Education, Orientation and Protection (CEE-HOPE) is a Nigerian non-governmental organisation focusing on ‘children’s rights, welfare, protection and development with particular focus on those in urban slums and rural areas of the country’. CEE-HOPE, Who we are, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁰⁶ Daily Trust, Shelter for abused women, girls opens in Lagos, 16 March 2021, [url](#); Nation (The), Groups establish shelter for women, girls, 16 March 2021, [url](#)

¹⁰⁷ Daily Trust, Shelter for abused women, girls opens in Lagos, 16 March 2021, [url](#); Nation (The), Groups establish shelter for women, girls, 16 March 2021, [url](#)

¹⁰⁸ Project Alert is a Nigerian non-governmental women’s rights organization set up in January 1999, to promote and protect the rights of women. Project Alert, Project Alert in Brief, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁰⁹ Premium Times, Special report: In Nigeria, safe shelters are helping survivors of GBV, 31 May 2022, [url](#); Project Alert, Support services programme, n.d., [url](#)

¹¹⁰ Project Alert, Support services programme, n.d., [url](#)

¹¹¹ Premium Times, Special report: In Nigeria, safe shelters are helping survivors of GBV, 31 May 2022, [url](#)

¹¹² Invictus Africa, BudgIT, Womanity Index, Gender-Based Violence, Prevention and Response, A subnational assessment: Nigeria, 2023, [url](#), p. 144

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