



2024 ScheerFoundation campaign

The issue of violence against women is deeply troubling, and its prevalence in Africa is particularly alarming. The incidence of such violence is significantly higher in this region, underscoring an urgent need for action. In line with this, the Scheer Foundation is actively engaged in the countries where it operates, with plans to establish Centers for Abused Women as part of its 2024 initiative. These centers aim to provide crucial support and resources, reflecting the foundation's commitment to addressing this grave concern in a tangible and impactful manner.

Afro-Barometer – violence against women in Sierra Leone

Gender-based violence

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a serious and urgent concern. An estimated 62 per cent of women age 15–49 report having experienced physical or sexual violence, according to the 2019 SLDHS. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was feared that the rates of GBV, which were already unacceptably high in Sierra Leone, would be exacerbated. Sixty one percent of ever-married women age 15-49 have experienced spousal violence whether physical, sexual or emotional by their husband or partner.

In late 2018, the alleged rape of a 5-year-old girl by her uncle and her subsequent partial paralysis launched the Black Tuesday movement in Sierra Leone, which many credit with driving President Julius Maada Bio's decision to declare rape a national emergency in February 2019 (M'Cormack-Hale, 2022). The movement initially committed to wearing black every Tuesday to bring attention to the issue of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) with a particular focus on victims who are minors. In 2019, one of every four SGBV cases reported in Sierra Leone was sexual penetration of a minor (Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone, 2020; Sierra Express Media, 2021).

Many saw the president's declaration as bringing much-needed attention to the problem of SGBV, and soon after, in October 2019, Sierra Leone passed an amended sexual offences act. Among other things, the act provides for stronger penalties (up to life in prison) for rape and sexual assault; establishes the Sexual Offences Model Court to fast-track justice; and provides for government one-stop centres where SGBV survivors can receive free services, including treatment and counseling (Martin & Koroma, 2021; Sierra Network Salone, 2020).

These are important steps in a country where, according to the Sierra Leone Demographic and Health Survey, 61% of married women say they have experienced spousal violence, whether physical, sexual, or emotional (Stats SL and ICF, 2020). However, many SGBV survivors do not report the attacks, for reasons that may include stigma, shame, and

economic concerns (Rainbo Initiative, 2021; Schneider, 2019a). Adults are particularly unlikely to report, and for cases that are reported, prosecution rates remain low; many are thrown out or settled out of court (Schneider, 2019a).

Moreover, according to Afrobarometer 2020 data, while 93% of Sierra Leoneans approved of the president's declaration of rape as a national emergency, 71% felt it did not go far enough and the government needed to do more to address SGBV (M'Cormack-Hale & Appiah-Nyamekye Sanny, 2021).

This dispatch reports on a special survey module included in the Afrobarometer Round 9 (2021/2022) questionnaire to explore Africans' perceptions on gender-based violence.

Survey findings show that in Sierra Leone, gender-based violence is the most important women's-rights issue that citizens want the government to address. Most citizens strongly oppose the use of physical force against women. But a majority of citizens also say domestic violence should be treated **as a private matter** to be resolved within the family rather than as a criminal matter requiring law enforcement to get involved.

And while most Sierra Leoneans think the police take GBV cases seriously, many also consider it likely that a woman reporting an incident of GBV will be criticized, harassed, or shamed by other members of the community.

South Sudan ranks second* in GBV prevalence rate in East Africa – a new study indicates.

South Sudan accounts for the second highest prevalence case of GBV in the region; this was revealed during a validation workshop held on March 22, 2023, on the findings of a nationwide GBV prevalence survey in South Sudan.

A study conducted by WHO in 2018 indicated that Uganda reported the highest rates of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) among married women aged 15-49 (49%, physical and/or sexual) followed by South Sudan (41%, physical and/or sexual). With the support of UNFPA, the current study conducted by the Sudd Institute shows that the prevalence of IPV among married women aged 15-49 is rising (standing at 49.6%, physical and/or sexual). According to the study, substantial proportions of women (aged 15-64) in South Sudan experience GBV either in form of physical (34.0%) or sexual (13.5%) violence in their lifetime.

Dr. Augustino Ting Mayai, while presenting the survey results, revealed that Ruweng Administrative Area (43.1%), Warrap (39.7%), Eastern Equatoria (39.1%), Jonglei (39.1%) and Central Equatoria (38.6%) report the highest rates of physical violence in the country. Similarly, the study documented a high prevalence of child marriage (34.6%, nationally) with Lakes and Jonglei states accounting for the high rates of child marriage in the country - 60.7% and 40.9%, respectively.

Dr. Michael Tawanda, from the embassy of Norway, noted that GBV and Gender Equality are not just about human rights, but equally important indicators of economic growth. He also stressed that the government of the Republic of South Sudan should act on combating GBV and improving Gender Equality. He underscored that South Sudan is one of the signatories of the Maputo protocol which mainly focuses on ending all forms of gender inequality. UNFPA Representative, Dr. Ademola Olajide, noted that GBV hinders the capacities of individuals to positively contribute to the development of any country.

The national Minister of Gender, Child, and Social Welfare, Hon. Ayaa Benjamin Warrile, thanked UNFPA and the Sudd Institute for conducting the survey.

Celina Peter, the Director for child welfare at the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare thanked UNFPA as a long-time partner of the Ministry in combating GBV in the country and engaging men to promote gender equality for the wellbeing of women.

Unsustainable for anyone, abstract from a UN report.

GENEVA, 21 March 2022 – Today the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan published a 48-page report that describes a hellish existence for women and girls. Widespread rape is being perpetrated by all armed groups across the country, often as part of military tactics for which government and military leaders are responsible, either due to their failure to prevent these acts, or for their failure to punish those involved.

“It is outrageous and completely unacceptable that women’s bodies are systematically used on this scale as the spoils of war,” declared Yasmin Sooka, chair of the UN Commission. “Urgent and demonstrable action by authorities is long overdue, and South Sudanese men must stop regarding the female body as 'territory' to be owned, controlled and exploited.”

The report is based on interviews conducted with victims and witnesses over several years. Survivors detailed staggeringly brutal and prolonged gang rapes perpetrated against them by multiple men, often while their husbands, parents or children have been forced to watch, helpless to intervene. Women of all ages recounted being raped multiple times while other women were also being raped around them. A woman raped by six men said she was even forced to tell her assailants that the rape was good, or they threatened to rape her again. The resultant traumas ensure the complete destruction of the social fabric.

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- Number one country in Africa for GBV prevalence rate is South Africa.

Afro-Barometer – violence against women in Uganda

Gender-based violence (GBV) is an everyday threat for Ugandan women and girls. National demographic data from 2020 reveal that 56% of married women aged 15-49 reported having suffered physical and/or sexual violence by a husband (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2021). More than one in three women (36%) had experienced sexual violence, most often from a partner; 28% reported victimization by sexual violence in the past year. Child sexual abuse is also pervasive, with 59% of women reporting sexual abuse in childhood. National data also show that 33% of girls below the age of 15 years were forced at first sex. Among women who said they had experienced GBV, only a minority reported it to police.

Uganda Police Force (2016-2021) crime reports document 272,737 GBV cases between 2016 and 2021, including 2,278 homicides attributed to intimate partners. Domestic violence cases account for 33% of the female homicide caseload. Community policing programs and public awareness campaigns do not appear to have reduced the number of GBV cases over the six-year period.

Uganda has stated its commitment to ending GBV as part of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) No. 5 (UN, 2022) and integrated its targets into its National Development Plan (Republic of Uganda, 2020; Office of the Prime Minister, 2020). Laws and policies that target GBV include the Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act (2010), the Domestic Violence Act (2010), the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act (2009), the Uganda Gender Policy (2007), and the National Policy on Elimination of Gender Based Violence in Uganda (2016).

The government and partners have put in place mechanisms to improve the reporting and handling of GBV crimes, including Uganda Police Force (2021b) units and training devoted to child and family protection and sexual offences.

This dispatch reports on a special survey module included in the Afrobarometer Round 9 (2021/2022) questionnaire to explore Africans' experiences and perceptions of gender-based violence. (For related findings on gender equality, see Ssevume, Faiaz, Rao, & Raj, 2023).

Survey findings show that GBV ranks at the top of Ugandans' priorities among women's-rights issues that need government and societal attention. Most citizens reject a husband's use of physical force to discipline his wife, but half report that violence against women and girls is a common occurrence in their community. And while they are confident that the police take GBV cases seriously, a majority think that women reporting violence will be criticized and that domestic violence is a private matter to be handled within the family.

Afro-Barometer – violence against women in Zambia

More than one-third (36%) of Zambian women have experienced physical violence since age 15. One in five women and girls (20%) suffer sexual abuse before age 18, and 39% are married before age 18 (Zambia Statistics Agency, 2019; Republic of Zambia, 2018; Bessa & Malasha, 2020).

The Victim Support Unit of the Zambia police reported a 29% increase in gender-based violence (GBV) cases in the fourth quarter of 2022 compared to the same period in 2021, from 7,920 to 10,241 (Xinhuanews.com, 2023), though many other incidents of GBV go unreported.

Activists point to poverty, women's power disadvantage in relationships, and social acceptance of GBV as key factors leaving many women vulnerable to abusive spouses, workmates, male relatives, and well-off individuals (Care, 2017; USAID, 2010).

To protect women and girls, Zambia has domesticated international and regional conventions on women's rights in national laws and instruments such as the Anti-Human Trafficking Act (2008), the Anti-Gender Based Violence Act (2011), the National Gender Policy (2014), and its National Plan of Action. The World Bank's (2023) Zambia Gender-Based Violence Assessment identifies a variety of GBV prevention and response programs in the country, including hospital-based and village-led one-stop centers and shelters, counseling services, and fast-track courts. But it notes that these efforts are often under-funded, poorly coordinated, and geographically limited, failing to reach many of the country's GBV survivors.

This dispatch reports on a special survey module included in the Afrobarometer Round 9(2021/2023) questionnaire to assess Africans' experiences and perceptions of gender-based violence.

Survey findings show that Zambians see GBV as the most important women's-rights issue that their government and society must address. While most Zambians say it is never justified for a man to use physical force to discipline his wife, a majority say violence against women and girls is common in their communities.

Slim majorities also consider domestic violence a private matter to be handled within the family and think it's likely that a woman who reports GBV to the authorities will be criticized, harassed, or shamed by others in the community.



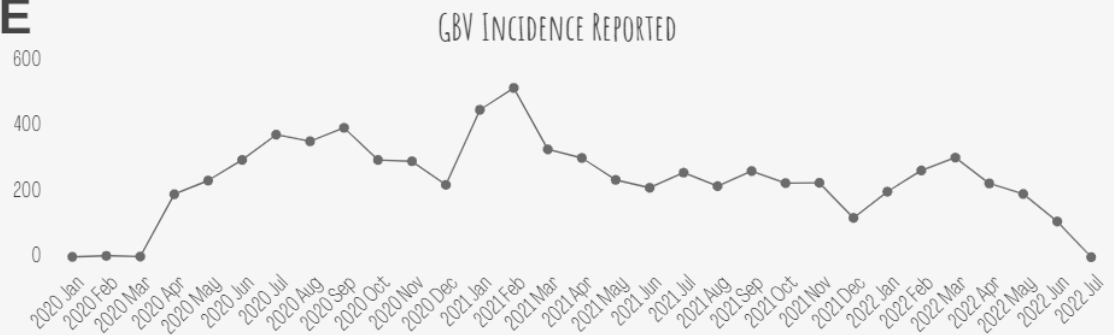
GBV SITUATION ROOM

FACT SHEET:

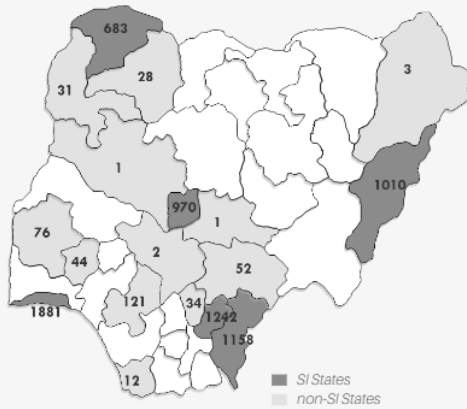
January 2020 - July 2022

GBV INCIDENCE

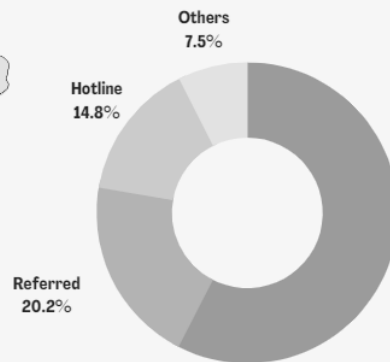
7,349
INCIDENCE REPORTED



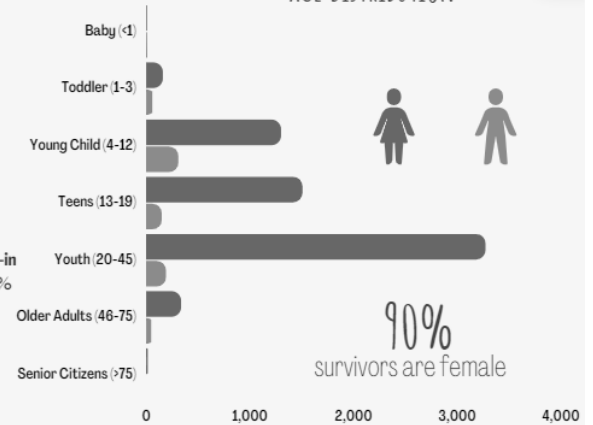
MAP OF NIGERIA SHOWING STATES REPORTING GBV INCIDENCE



PREFERRED CONTACT CHANNEL



AGE DISTRIBUTION



KEY FACTS



3,266 (44.4%) incidence were reported within 72hrs

Access to Services

* 1,315 incidence were reported same day



In 4,281 (58.25%) of reported incidence, the relationship with perpetrator was non-intimate

Perpetrator Type

* Non-intimate includes strangers or a person with whom the survivor/victim had only superficial relationship



1,071 (14.57%) survivor/victim had no form of education

Educational Level



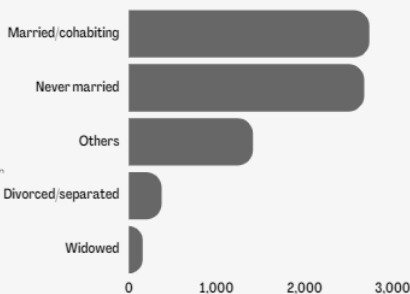
Sexual and physical violence accounts for 72.3% of violence reported

Type of GBV Reported

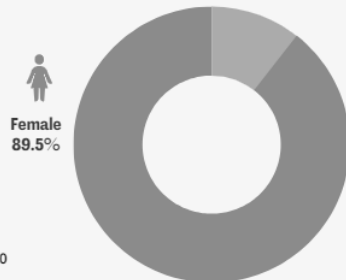
* 901 cases of emotional violence was reported

MARITAL STATUS

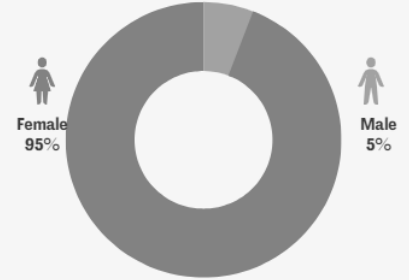
68% of survivors are females who have never been married or are married.



NEVER MARRIED



MARRIED/COHABITING

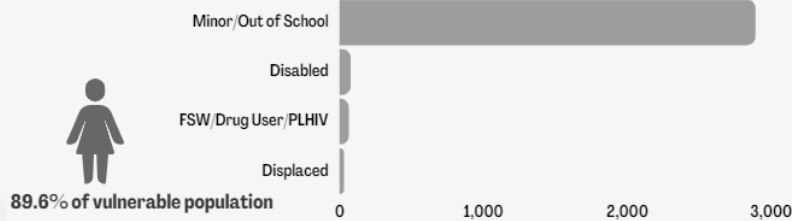


MINORS EXPERIENCING GBV

About **50%** of females reporting GBV were <18yrs compared to **70%** of males who reported GBV in the same age band

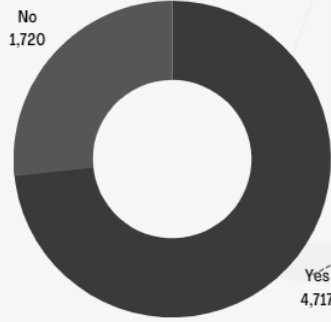


VULNERABLE POPULATION



ACCESS TO JUSTICE

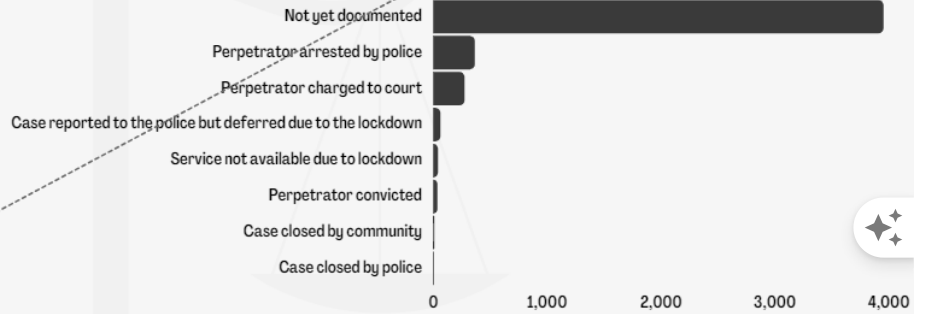
SURVIVOR WANTS JUSTICE



OUTCOME OF PROSECUTION

32
CONVICTIONS RECEIVED

STATUS OF ACCESS TO JUSTICE



384
CASES CLOSED

GBV SERVICE PROVISION

15,538
SERVICE PROVIDED



ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED

154
Entities reported



117
Individuals trained on use of GBV dashboard across 34 states



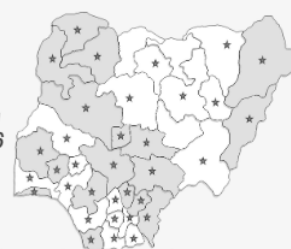
4
SKMTWG organized



5
Multi-sectoral agencies in collaboration



18
States currently reporting from 6



34
States with GBV Situation Room set-up

*Inclusive of MDAs in Education, Healthcare, Justice, Law Enforcement, Social Services as well as Development Agencies & Implementing Partners

*Establish the implementing partner assistance concept (IMPACT) to strengthen coordination of data reporting mechanism