Emi unveils ‘Broken Wings’

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Emi unveils ‘Broken Wings’  
  
By Ernest Nwokolo, Abeokuta  
  
JUSTICE Development and Peace Commission (JDPC) has said that the requirements of the criminal code that a rape victim must corroborate her testimony with evidence is a barrier to justice for rape victims in Nigeria.  
  
JDPC, a non – governmental organisation arm of the Catholic Church, Ijebu diocese, added that this also explained the low conviction rate for rape offenders despite the staggering statistics of rape offences in the country.  
  
These were the submissions of Mrs Ekundayo Olubunmi of the JDPC Legal Aid unit at Adeola Odutola (Private) College, Ijebu – Ode, Ogun State during the unveiling of a book titled ‘Broken Wings’ and public lecture on ‘The Inadequacy of Legal Provisions To Protect Rape Victims.’  
  
The 325 – page book, ‘Broken Wings,’ an exposition of the misconceptions on rape and gender violence was authored by Ifeanyi Henry Emi.  
  
Mrs Ekundayo said though many cases have been instituted in court against rape suspects, but lamented that securing conviction again them haa not been easy to come by.  
  
Clarifying the issue to The Nation, the civil rights and social justice lawyer noted that the laws in use today in the country are not only obsolete, but also demand from victims of rape, the evidence they could hardly provide to ensure nailing of suspects irrefutably.  
  
According to her, rape incidents always take victims unaware and as a result, they are always incapacitated and unlikely to consider collecting and storing evidence required to successfully prosecute a rape case in court against a suspect.  
  
She said unless those aspects of the nation’s laws, particularly section 2:2:1 of the criminal code which pertains to handling of rape issues, were reviewed and amended, the situation would not change in terms of getting justice for rape victims.  
  
She appealed to the National and States Assemblies to look into the portion of the laws pertaining to sexual defilement and related issues, reviewed and put them in proper perspectives by addressing the inadequacies to ensure justice for victims of rape.  
  
“You see a lot of rape cases instituted in the court but at the end of the day, how many people have been convicted of the offence? The law is asking for a lot of things that will be very difficult for a rape victim to provide. That is why we are having low conviction in court.  
  
“For instance, a lady says ‘I have been raped,’ she was not prepared for rape, she was taken unaware by the rapist and she has come to the police to report ‘I was raped’ and the law, section 2:2(1) of the criminal code is asking the victim to corroborate her testimony with evidence, that means she should show evidence that she was raped. How many victims can provide that? Those are the things that are actually affecting prosecution and getting conviction for rape offenders.  
  
“We should review the laws, the law makers should think outside the box and review the laws. I mentioned the section 2:2(1) of the criminal code that asks about corroboration, such places should be reviewed. I think some aspects of our laws have become so obsolete, they have become too old. They were prepared long time ago.  
  
“So, we should sit down, discuss and review these laws. And if this is done and things are put in proper perspectives, I think we will get more results in terms of conviction for rape offences.”  
  
The author of the book and organiser, Ifeanyi Emi, said the event was put together for students of some selected schools in Ogun state to create awareness about the dangers of rape and how to avoid being a victim.