Gender-based groups lament Bayelsa rape cases, violence against women

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Gender-based groups lament Bayelsa rape cases, violence against women  
  
By Simon Utebor, Yenagoa  
  
Stakeholders involved in gender-based advocacy have expressed concern over the rising cases of violence against women and rape of the girl-child in Bayelsa State, declaring that 50 cases were recorded in 2020.  
  
The advocacy groups led by the DO Foundation International, said out of the 50 cases recorded, two convictions were got and the remaining ones were still pending in law courts.  
  
The President, DOF, Dise Sheila Ogbise, while speaking during the inauguration of the nine-person executive of the Bayelsa State chapter of DOF, led by Comfort Itoru, said abandonment of complaints by victims was a major setback in the fight against gender-based violence as parties usually settled and abandoned their cases.  
  
The stakeholders present at the inauguration included the Permanent Secretary, State Ministry of Women Affairs, Mrs. Kuro Ebiowe, the Chairman of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), Ebinyu George Aderigha, the Chairman of BANGOF, Keme Opia, and the Chairman of the Nigerian Women Medical Association, Dr. Ebi Okpomo.  
  
They all agreed that the issue of violence against women and the girl child must be checked in the state.  
  
The Permanent Secretary, State Ministry of Women Affairs, Mrs. Kuro Ebiowe, who commended the advocacy efforts of the DOF, urged the stakeholders to work with the state government in the fight against gender violence in the state.  
  
Also Speaking, Ogbise noted that DOF had over the years carved a niche for itself with its dogged committment to the fight against gender-based violence.  
  
She said since the incorporation of the foundation in 2017, it had raised the bar on the issue of victims speaking up and reporting cases of gender based violence because that is better than silence.  
  
She said: “We initiated speak up campaigns in primary and secondary schools and communities in the state and it has greatly broken the culture of silence and settlement of rape cases.  
  
“With particular reference to this year, DOF has recorded over 50 cases of gender based violence and has with the partnership of some of its partners secured two convictions while most of the cases of gender-based violence are still in court.”