Lagos records 8,692 cases of sexual abuse in one year

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Lagos records 8,692 cases of sexual abuse in one year  
  
Lagos State has said that 8,692 cases of Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) were reported in the state in the last year.  
  
The Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice, Lawal Pedro (SAN), who disclosed this yesterday, however, stated that the state, through the Ministry of Justice, is taking necessary steps to restore hope and confidence in the victims, enabling them to overcome the trauma.  
  
Pedro disclosed this while briefing the press on the Domestic and Sexual Violence awareness month, which comes up in September.  
  
The state’s Attorney General also stated that 90 per cent of the survivors disclosed that they have experienced low self-esteem, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), extreme fear and anxiety, while about 5 per cent suffered from depression and had to seek medical help.  
  
The Attorney General said the theme of the awareness month for this year is “SGBV? It concerns us all.” He said the topic was chosen because SGBV is not a respecter of age.  
  
The Attorney General, who was represented by the Permanent Secretary and the Solicitor General of the ministry, Hamid Oyenuga, said all stakeholders will be involved in the awareness program.  
  
He also stated that, for the first time, the private sector would be involved.  
  
According to Pedro, “We are also set to launch the guidelines on Sexual harassment prevention in the workplace, thereby fostering safer and more respectful work environments.  
  
“Children would not be left out, as the safeguarding and child protection week would witness the gathering of over 1,200 students, debates on the topic- It’s okay to tell,” Pedro explained.  
  
Shedding more light on the activities of the agency involved in sexual abuse, he noted that between August 2024 and July 2025, the DSVA received a total of 8,692 cases through both physical walk-ins and the Virtual Referral and Response Service (VRRS), and on average, the Agency attends to over 400 clients monthly.  
  
He said 3,685 cases of domestic violence were reported, making it the most prevalent category. According to him, 243 cases of defilement and 244 cases of child abuse and physical assault were handled; 99 cases of rape, 48 cases of sexual harassment, and 25 cases of sexual assault by penetration were also recorded.  
  
Pedro said the DSVA conducted a total of 402 preliminary investigations and rescue missions of survivors of Domestic and Sexual Violence in Lagos State.  
  
During the period under review, he said, a total of 57 safeguarding and child protection concerns were received by the Lagos State Taskforce on Safeguarding and Child Protection, which comprises the Office of Education Quality Assurance and the Department of School Social Work of the Ministry of Youth and Social Development, Ministry of Health, DSVA and NGOs.  
  
“One of the agency’s main responsibilities is to provide immediate and quick response to SGBV cases by providing support, counselling, empowerment, shelter, mediation, and other referrals and services to survivors”, he said.  
  
The Attorney General disclosed that out of the 20 Local Government Areas in the State, the top LGA with the highest reporting for adults includes Alimosho, Eti-Osa, Ikorodu, Kosofe, and Oshodi-Isolo Isolo while for cases involving children, high reporting was from Ikorodu, Kosofe, Badagry, Alimosho and Oshodi-Isolo, respectively.  
  
Pedro highlighted that a significant 3,090 children were identified as having suffered emotional abuse due to exposure to domestic violence at home.  
  
He said DSVA provided them with counselling support to ensure they are not permanently scarred by these experiences.  
  
“The youngest survivor was 18 months old, while the oldest survivor of domestic violence was a 79-year-old woman, demonstrating that SGBV affects every age group.”  
  
Pedro said free legal aid was provided to 146 survivors through in-house lawyers, the Bureau of the Public Defender, private law firms and the Lagos Public Interest Law Partnership.  
  
He maintained that the agency gave support to the victims by providing health care services for them, whereby survivors received treatment at General Hospitals, Primary Health Centres, and referral centres such as Mirabel Centre, WARIF, and Idera Centre.  
  
Pedro stated that shelter and safety were provided for 30 survivors as they were housed at Eko Haven and other safe shelters, and listed other support rendered to the victims to include psychological and rescue missions.  
  
He stressed that during the period under review, the analysis revealed that male reports were higher compared to previous years for adults.  
  
He added by saying, “With growing awareness of mental wellness and the need to continue to ensure the psycho-social wellbeing of couples for a better society, the Clinical Psychology Department provided Psychotherapy and psycho social support for 1489 survivors, including children, and 249 abusers respectively.”