As child rape risks persist in Nigeria, these are some cases to track in 2025

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Just starting though, 2025 has shown early signs of a year to be noted for worrying incidence of rape, with minors emerging as targets of perpetrators.  
  
Within the first three weeks of the year, law enforcement agencies have arrested and launched prosecution of suspects in court in different states.  
  
The trend, from the reports of the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), has included incidents from different regions of the country, wide age difference and relationship between suspects and victims, and horrifying circumstances.  
  
While most of these incidents occurred in 2024 or earlier and only brought to court this month, they reflect a troubling trend that persists and signals the heightened risks girls potentially face from sexual predators in the new year.  
  
The cases, involving mostly girl victims aged 8 to 13, reveal the various methods employed by suspected abusers to target them.  
  
Sexual abuse is a deeply traumatic experience for individuals of all ages, but its impact on minors is particularly devastating, often causing irreversible harm to their social life, mental health, and overall development.  
  
The cases compiled in this piece, though not exhaustive, suggest that child rape may be a widespread menace in every part of the country. Many rape cases go unreported to law enforcement agencies, and an equally significant number of reported cases are likely not covered by the media across the country.  
  
Below are some cases reported by NAN so far in the year and can be subsequently tracked for progress.  
  
2 January, Rivers (South-south):  
  
Police arrest couple over rape, assault of minor  
  
The police in Rivers State confirmed the arrest of a couple over alleged rape and assault of a13-year-old girl in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, South-South Nigeria.  
  
The wife reportedly assaulted the girl by stripping her and inserting pepper into her private part after accusing her of having sexual intercourse with her husband.  
  
The spokesperson for the police in the state, Grace Iringe-Koko, a superintendent of police, disclosed the arrest of the girl in an interview with NAN in Port Harcourt on 2 January.  
  
Goodness, the mother of the teenager, whose full name was withheld to avoid stigmatisation, recounted the incident to NAN.  
  
A resident of Rupokwu town in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Goodness revealed that the assault on her daughter occurred on the evening of 29 December 2024.  
  
According to her, earlier that day, the wife visited her shop and asked the teenager to follow her to her apartment and assist her with chores.  
  
Goodness, who said she was later alerted to the assault on her daughter by neighbours, recalled that on the fateful day, the man sent his wife and her friend on an errand, leaving the teenager alone with him in the house.  
  
The distraught mother reported that after the two women had left the apartment, the man attacked her daughter and allegedly raped her multiple times, threatening her to remain silent.  
  
Prince Wiro, the National Coordinator of the Centre for Basic Rights Protection and Accountability Campaign, condemned the alleged torture of the minor, calling it inhumane and barbaric.  
  
8 January, Bauchi (North-east):  
  
Man arrested for raping girl in uncompleted building  
  
On 8 January, the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) Command in Bauchi State, North-east Nigeria, announced the arrest of a suspect accused of raping a 12-year-old girl in an uncompleted building in Misau Local Government Area of the state.  
  
The State Commandant of NSCDC, Oloyede Oyerinde, said the rape suspect was arrested on 27 December for allegedly raping the girl in an uncompleted building.  
  
Mr Oyerinde announced the arrest of Mr Oyerinde alongside nine others detained for various crimes committed during the 2024 yuletide period.  
  
The official, who said the other suspects were arrested for vandalism and theft, warned perpetrators to desist from vandalism and other crimes or face consequences.  
  
9 January, Ekiti (South-west):  
  
38-year-old man allegedly raped minor in uncompleted building  
  
A chief magistrate’s court in Ado Ekiti remanded a 38-year-old man, Olasunkanmi Francis, in the Ado Ekiti Correctional Centre for allegedly defiling a 13-year-old minor.  
  
The prosecutor, Elijah Adejare, a police inspector, told the court at the hearing on 9 January, that the defendant committed the offence on 23 December 2024 at Efon Alaaye-Ekiti.  
  
The defendant allegedly lured the minor into an uncompleted building and defiled her while she was on an errand.  
  
The prosecution said the offence contravened section 31 of the Child Right Law of Ekiti State, 2021.  
  
The magistrate, Kehinde Awosika, ordered the remand of the defendant in the correctional centre, pending legal advice from the office of the Director of Public Prosecution (DPP).  
  
She adjourned the case until 7 February for mention.  
  
10 January, Edo (South-south):  
  
Police detain three men for gang-raping 12-year  
  
The Edo State Police Command detained three men for allegedly gang-raping a 12-year-old girl in Okpella, Etsako East Local Government Area of the state.  
  
The state Commissioner of Police, Umoru Ozigi, said this on Friday, 10 January, in Benin, the Edo State capital, South-south Nigeria, when the Administrator, Office of Edo State First Lady, Edesili Anani, visited him.  
  
Ms Anani said the minor was allegedly gang-raped by five men on 24 December 2024, at Igiafodo Awuyemi in Okpella.  
  
She said the girl had visited the victim at the Senator Daisy Ehanire Danjuma Women Centre, Benin.  
  
She vowed that perpetrators would face the full wrath of the law in accordance with the Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Law of the state.  
  
Mr Ozigi, who did not disclose the identities of the suspects, assured the administrator that the victim would get justice.  
  
13 January, Lagos (South-west):  
  
Father faces charges for allegedly defiling his toddler  
  
In another heart-wrenching case, a father, Patrick Onyegbule, was accused of defiling his toddler.  
  
On 13 January, police in Lagos State charged 41-year-old Mr Onyegbule at a chief magistrate’s court in Badagry.  
  
The prosecutor, Ayodele Adeosun, a police inspector, told the court that the defendant committed the offence between August and November 2024 at Shapview Plaza, Alaba International Market in Ojo, Lagos State.  
  
He alleged that the defendant sexually assaulted the toddler, who was left in his care.  
  
The wife reportedly left the toddler in her husband’s care following a marital dispute. However, she later discovered during a visit that her daughter was allegedly sexually abused by him.  
  
Mr Onyegbule faces charges of defilement and unlawful penetration.  
  
The prosecutor said that the offence contravened the provisions of sections 137 and 261 of the Criminal Code, Law of Lagos State, 2015.  
  
The magistrate, Patrick Adekomaiya, granted the defendant bail in the sum of N500, 000 with two sureties in like sum.  
  
He adjourned the case till 5 March.  
  
14 January, Lagos (South-west):  
  
Man in court over alleged rape  
  
The Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Court in Ikeja, Lagos State, ordered the remand at the correctional service, of a defendant, Shuaibu Olufowobi, who allegedly raped a 35-year-old woman.  
  
The judge, Rahman Oshodi, ordered the remand of the defendant, following his arraignment on five counts of conspiracy, rape, sexual assault by penetration, sexual harassment and assault.  
  
The prosecutor, Bukola Okeowo, told the court that the defendant committed the offences on 15 August 2023 alongside others at large in Ibeju-Lekki, Lagos State.  
  
She alleged that the defendant with one Franklin Immana at large conspired to rape the woman.  
  
According to the prosecutor, the defendant kept watch, while Mr Immana raped the woman.  
  
Mr Okeowo, further alleged that the defendant harassed and fondled the victim’s breasts and later stripped her.  
  
The offences contravened the provisions of sections 173, 211, 260, 261, 264 of the Criminal Laws of Lagos State 2015.  
  
The court adjourned the case until 6 May for trial.  
  
15, January, Lagos (South-west):  
  
54-year-old man remanded for defiling 12-year-old girl  
  
On 15 January, a chief magistrate’s court in Ikorodu in Lagos State, remanded a 54-year-old man, Kajola Ahmed, in a correctional centre for allegedly defiling a 12-year-old girl.  
  
The prosecutor, Aminu Isaac, an assistant superintendent of police, told the court that the defendant committed the offence at 28, Tomatee Hotel Street, Ajegunle in the Ita-Oluwo area of Ikorodu, about 11 a.m. on 17 July 2024.  
  
According to him, the offence contravened the provisions of Section 137 of the Criminal Law of Lagos State, 2015.  
  
The magistrate, B.A. Sonuga did not take the defendant’s plea.  
  
Instead, he adjourned the case until 27 February for legal advice from the office of the Lagos State Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP).  
  
15 January, Kaduna:  
  
74-year-old allegedly rapes an 8-year-old  
  
On 15 January, Samson Goje, 74 years old, was remanded for raping a minor in Zonkwa, Kaduna State, Noth-west Nigeria. The victim was an eight-year-old girl.  
  
Mr Goje allegedly lured the girl into an uncompleted building.  
  
He was said to have been caught in the act by the girl’s father Yusuf Pama, who reported the matter to the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) on 3 January. The case was filed at a chief magistrate’s court in Kafanchan.  
  
Copies of the case file have been forwarded to the State Director of Public Prosecution for legal advice.  
  
18 January, Lagos:  
  
44-year-old defiles four-year-old girl  
  
On 18 January, a chief magistrate’s court in Ikorodu, Lagos, remanded a 44-year-old man, Stephen Samson, in a correctional centre for allegedly defiling a four-year-old girl.  
  
Mr Samson was charged with defilement.  
  
The prosecutor, Aminu Isaac, an assistant superintendent of police, told the court that the defendant committed the offence at No. 7, Araromi Street, Eyita area of Ikorodu.  
  
He said that the defendant defiled the girl with his finger.  
  
The offence was said to contravene the provisions of Section 137 of the Criminal Law of Lagos State, 2015.  
  
The magistrate, B.A. Sonuga, adjourned the case till 27 February for legal advice from the office of the Lagos State Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP).  
  
20 January, Lagos (South-west):  
  
Hearing impaired 30-year-old remanded for raping 17-year-old minor  
  
On Monday (20 January), a chief magistrate’s court in Badagry, Lagos State, South-west Nigeria, remanded a 30-year-old man with hearing impairment, Temitope Holo, in Awarjigoh correctional facility over alleged defilement of a 17-year-old girl.  
  
The prosecutor, Ayodele Adeosun, a police inspector, told the court that the defendant committed the offences in July 2024 at No. 18, Oba Beyioku Street, beside Winners’ Chapel, Badagry, Lagos.  
  
Mr Adeosun said the defendant unlawfully removed the girl’s pants and penetrated her private part with his finger without her consent.  
  
The offences, according to him, contravened sections 261 and 263 of the Criminal Laws of Lagos State, 2015.  
  
The magistrate, Patrick Adekomaiya, directed the police to forward the case file to the Director of Public Prosecution (DPP) for legal advice.  
  
He adjourned the case till 2 April for mention.  
  
21 January, Lagos (South-west):  
  
Court remands man for raping 14-year-old minor  
  
The Lagos State Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Court in Ikeja remanded a man, Chidi Gabriel, at the Kirikiri Correctional Centre for allegedly raping a 14-year-old girl.  
  
The prosecutor, a State Counsel, Bukola Okeowo, told the court that the defendant unlawfully had sexual intercourse with the minor by inserting his manhood into her vagina on 23 June 2020 in Okokomaiko Junction, Alaba in Lagos.  
  
Mr Gabriel pleaded not guilty to all three counts of defilement filed against him.  
  
According to the prosecution, the alleged offence contravened section 137 of the Criminal Laws of Lagos State, 2015.  
  
After his plea, the judge, Rahman Oshodi, ordered his remand at the Kirikiri Medium Custodial Centre.  
  
The judge adjourned the case until 7 May for the commencement of trial.  
  
22 January, Kaduna (North-west):  
  
34-year-old man remanded for raping 7-year-old girl  
  
A magistrate’s court in Kaduna, Kaduna State, remanded a 34-year-old man, Yusuf Mamman, in a correctional centre, for allegedly defiling a seven-year-old girl.  
  
The prosecutor, Chidi Leo, a police inspector, told the court that the defendant lured the minor into his room and raped her at about 1 p.m. on 19 January at Ungwan Sarki, Kaduna State.  
  
He said that the offence is punishable under Section 258 of the Penal Code of Kaduna State, 2020 (as amended).  
  
The magistrate, Ibrahim Emmanuel, ordered that the defendant be remanded in a correctional centre pending legal advice from the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) for legal advice.  
  
He adjourned the matter until 24 February.  
  
27 January, Ekiti (South-west):  
  
Court remands man, 27, for allegedly defiling wife’s 14-year-old sister  
  
A chief magistrate’s court in Ado Ekiti, Ekiti State, has scheduled 27 January for a hearing regarding the case of a 27-year-old man, Ayeni Gbenga, accused of defiling his wife’s 14-year-old sister.  
  
On 27 December 2024, the magistrate, Abayomi Adeosun, ordered the remand of the defendant in the correctional centre in Ado Ekiti, pending issuance of legal advice from the Ekiti State Director of Public Prosecution (DPP).  
  
The prosecutor, Akinwale Oriyomi, a police inspector, told the court that the defendant defiled the girl, his wife’s younger sister, between October and December 2024 in Ado Ekiti.  
  
He said that whenever the defendant took the victim to her school, he would check into a hotel to rape her. He reportedly did this on many occasions.  
  
The police said the offence contravened section 265 of the Criminal Law of Ekiti State, 2021.  
  
The chief magistrate overseeing the case, Abayomi Adeosun, adjourned until 27 January.  
  
Justice for victims  
  
A glimmer of hope of justice for rape victims has also risen early in the year.  
  
On 13 January, the Ekiti State High Court in Ado Ekiti sentenced a 25-year-old man, Olajide Fajana, to life imprisonment for raping a 17-year-old girl.  
  
The prosecution led by Adetola Johnson had accused the convict of committing the offence on 14 July 2023 in Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State.  
  
The prosecution called three witnesses, including the victim, and tendered statements as exhibits to prove his case, while the convict did not call any witness.  
  
In her testimony before the court, the victim said the convict had hypnotised her and asked her to follow him home.  
  
“He gave me an egg to rub all over my body and broke it inside a bucket where he kept black and red thread.  
  
“He ordered me to lie down on the bed and then had sexual intercourse with me saying I should go home and bring N16,000 to complete the sacrifice,” she said. “He had earlier warned me not to tell anyone about him otherwise I would die but I told my mother.”  
  
In his judgement, the judge, Lekan Ogunmoye, convicted and sentenced the convict of rape in line with section 31(2) of the Child’s Rights Law, Cap. C17, Laws of Ekiti State, 2012.  
  
Rape cases in numbers from Benue, Ebonyi, Sokoto  
  
Last year’s record of enforcement activities of the police in some states show that rape, including incidents involving a girl child victims, were rampant.  
  
Of 1,270 suspects arrested last year by the police in Ebonyi State last year, 38 were involved in rape and defilement, according to a statement detailing the police command detailing the enforcement activities of the police command in the state last year.  
  
A statement from the police command in the state said other suspects were arrested for murder and homicide, kidnapping, armed robbery, and unlawful possession of firearms and other offences.  
  
The Benue State Police Command also said on 30 December that of 270 persons arrested for various crimes in the state from April to December, 47 of them were rape suspects.  
  
Similarly, the police in Sokoto State, North-west Nigeria, said that of the 575 suspects arrested for various crimes last year included those accused of rape, but the suspect did not specify their number.  
  
Punishments for child rape  
  
Nigeria’s legal framework against child rape has evolved over the years, with state and federal laws under which suspects in the reported cases have been charged prescribing various degrees of punishments for it.  
  
For instance, section 31 of the Child Rights Act 2003 prescribes life imprisonment for anyone convicted of raping a child.  
  
Also, Section 32 imposes 14 years imprisonment on any person who sexually abuses or sexually exploits a child.  
  
The Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act 2015 does not differentiate between the rape of a child and that of an adult when prescribing punishments.  
  
In section 1(2), the law stipulates the punishment of life imprisonment for anyone above 14 years of age. For offenders below the age of 14, the maximum sentence is 14 years imprisonment. In the case of gang rape, all perpetrators are liable to a minimum of 20 years jointly without an option of a fine.  
  
Section 137 of the Criminal Law of Lagos State prescribes life imprisonment for any person who has unlawful sexual intercourse with a child.  
  
Also, section 265 of the Criminal Law of Ekiti State, 2021, says any man who has sexual intercourse with a woman or girl without her consent is guilty of rape and is liable to imprisonment for life.  
  
Kaduna State is among the states with the most severe punishments for child rape, after amending its Penal Code of 2017 in 2020.  
  
The amendment to section 258 of the law, now Penal Code of Kaduna State, 2020 (as amended), prescribes “surgical castration and death” for anyone found guilty of having sexual intercourse with a male of female child the age of 14 years  
  
Also, section 261 of the Criminal Law of Lagos State states that “any person who sexually touches another without his consent is guilty of a felony and liable to imprisonment for three years.”  
  
Lois Amele, founder of Good Tides Philippians Missions Foundation, non-governmental organisation concerned with human rights, mental health and Sexual-Gender Based Violence issues, said “One of the systemic issues is the economic issue, you know, where people are frustrated and because they are frustrated, they just feel that they should take it out on a young girl or a woman.”  
  
She continued, “I think one of the reasons they do it to young girls is because some of those girls are not strong enough to run away or they’re not even educated enough to say, oh, this thing is wrong.”