69% of sexual violence survivors under 18 years, says WARIF

Date: 2019-07-24

Source: https://guardian.ng/news/69-of-sexual-violence-survivors-under-18-years-says-warif/

Inanna Women Empowerment Foundation (IWEF), has called on students to report any form of sexual assault offering such persons free legal assistance.  
  
  
  
A fresh data released by Women at Risk International Foundation (WARIF) has exposed the alarming rate of rape and sexual violence incidents, especially among minors, saying 69 per cent of survivors of sexual violence fall under the age of 18.  
  
WARIF, a non-profit organisation, which was set up in response to the high incidences of rape and sexual violence in Nigeria, seeks to reduce the numbers by using a holistic “WARIF Approach” to tackle these issues through awareness, sensitisation programmes and post-incident care of survivors of gender-based violence.  
  
It offers immediate care to survivors, including forensic medical examinations, treatment of physical injuries and dispensation of emergency contraceptives at WARIF Rape Crisis Centre in Yaba, Lagos.  
  
It also offers administration of post-exposure prophylaxis, which prevents HIV/AIDS, psychosocial counseling and referrals for associated services such as legal aid, among others.  
  
The data indicates that in less than three years, no fewer than 1,100 girls have been attended to at the WARIF Centre, of which 759 (or 69 per cent) were minors between the ages of 0 and18 years old.  
  
Also reported, based on monitoring and evaluation of the number of these cases by the foundation since inception, are incidents of sexual assault, which it stated, was highest in 2018 making up 45 per cent of reported incidents till date.  
  
Founder of WARIF, Dr. Kemi DaSilva Ibru, an Obstetrician and Gynecologist stated that WARIF was established in response to a grave need in our society where 25 per cent of females were being exposed to sexual violence and rape.  
  
“Majority of the young women had nowhere to access free healthcare or seek help after their abuse. At WARIF, we ensure that all women are supported and their needs addressed for their healing and recovery process,” she said.  
  
With the alarming rate of sexual assault survivors coming out to speak the truth, organisations like WARIF, which have been at the forefront of addressing the menace are prepared to do all they could to support the survivors.  
  
Speaking on the 24-hour confidential helpline being run by the centre, she disclosed that in the last two years it had received 632 calls from people calling to report cases of gender-based violence and seek counseling from trained therapists at the WARIF Centre.The organisation has also launched group therapy sessions from June 2019 to support survivors who relive the trauma of their past experiences and in two months, 60 women have come to WARIF for the sessions, 83.9 per cent of who are below 30 years old.