NAPTIP urges stiffer penalties for rape

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Hajiya Binta Bello, Director-General of the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), has called for stricter penalties for rape to serve as a deterrent.  
  
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Bello made this demand during the close-out event of the Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Law implementation in Cross River on Monday, organized by Stand to End Rape.  
  
Represented by Mr. Jacob Oba, Head of Operations, NAPTIP, Cross River Command, Bello emphasized that rape was a heinous crime against humanity.  
  
She advocated for collective efforts to eradicate it through timely reporting, assisting survivors, providing legal services, and awareness campaigns to reduce stigmatization.  
  
Bello appealed for a united front against rape, reaffirming NAPTIP’s commitment to combating VAPP Act violators, including human traffickers.  
  
On her part, Dr Mercy Kwabe, Co-director of Stand to End Rape Initiative, acknowledged Nigeria’s progress in promoting equal rights through the VAPP Act.  
  
However, she highlighted the need for a better public understanding of the law, particularly in local languages.  
  
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Kwabe stressed the importance of amending the VAPP Act to incorporate harsher penalties for perpetrators, rather than repealing it.  
  
Similarly, Ms Ann Awa, Chairperson of the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA), Cross River Chapter, echoed the need for full implementation of the VAPP Act across states.  
  
She suggested fine-tuning contentious sections rather than abolishing the law.  
  
The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that in partnership with agencies like the National Orientation Agencies (NOA), the Stand to End Rape Initiative conducted VAPP Act sensitization in the Ikot Awatim community, encouraging residents to report suspected cases.