Rape victims should be shielded during trials, says foundation

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The Country’s Executive Director of Ikra Foundation for Women and Youth Development, Amina Garuba Ahmed has called for a special court for cases relating to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) for speedy justice delivery and to boost the confidence of the survivors.  
  
  
  
Amina said that SGBV cases need special attention and a new approach to the trial process to encourage victims to report the perpetrators who are impeding the rights of others.  
  
She said this over the weekend while speaking about the activities of the Foundation in partnership with USAID and Palladium.  
  
She said that over 500 cases of SGBV were recorded in Bauchi State within the last year while over 100 cases of rape were recorded –with Toro, Alkaleri, and Katagum local government areas leading.  
  
  
  
Speaking on the topic ‘Consolidating the Advocacy for Justice Delivery for Survivors of SGBV in Nigeria’, she added that “Let there be a special court for SGBV cases where priority will be given to those issues. This will allow speedy justice delivery.  
  
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“Also, we want the court to fix a special time for rape cases. It could be early morning or late afternoon when no other case will be heard. In our engagement with some survivors, they have always been shamed to appear in court when so many people are gathered. People tend to point at them as raped victims and this adds up to the stigmatisation.  
  
  
  
“We have been engaging the court staff to provide protection for the SGBV survivors while appearing in the courtroom. The new law –Violence Against Person Prohibition (VAPP) allows the victims to be protected. This means that all forms of their identity including in their file could be pseudonymous.”  
  
She also said that both Police and the media are prohibited from revealing identities including any form of description that could expose the victims.  
  
Bauchi State had in December 2022 enacted VAPP Law to protect anyone from any form of violence and victimisation. The law sentences the convicted rapist to life imprisonment and the rapist of a minor to death by hanging.  
  
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