NAPTIP rescues nine pregnant women from Abuja baby factory

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NAPTIP rescues nine pregnant women from Abuja baby factory  
  
…as Bishop bags 20-year jail over rape  
  
The National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) has rescued expectant mothers from an alleged Baby Factory in Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).  
  
The women were rescued during a raid of the baby factory located at an estate in the Ushafa area of Abuja on Monday, NAPTIP said in a statement yesterday.  
  
According to the statement signed by the agency’s Press Officer, Vincent Adekoye, the victims were locked up in a rented apartment inside the estate by a yet-to-be-identified suspected human trafficking agent.  
  
Adekoye alleged that the said agent recruited the women through an online platform, adding that the place was raided after NAPTIP received a tip-off from a concerned resident who noticed an unusual movement and situation around the area.  
  
Meanwhile, NAPTIP, Adekoye said, secured the conviction and sentencing of a prominent Abuja Bishop who allegedly raped a member’s daughter in March 2023.  
  
He said a Federal High Court in Gudu presided by Justice Adebiyi Osolo sentenced the rapist bishop to 20 years imprisonment without an option of fine.  
  
According to Adekoye, the bishop identified as Kenneth Duke, 52, founder of a prominent church located at Dantata Zuba Expressway, raped the victim, aged 12, on March 6, a day after she arrived at his residence so that his wife could enroll her for a skills acquisition programme.  
  
Adekoye said: “The 52-year-old convict, an indigene of Cross River State, was dragged to Court by NAPTIP for raping a 12-year-old girl (name withheld), the daughter of his church member who was entrusted under the care of his family.  
  
“In case no: CR/702/2023 Federal Republic of Nigeria Vs Bishop Kenneth Duke, the defendant was arraigned before Court 16 on 02/11/2023 on a two-count charge for the offence of rape and intentionally causing emotional and psychological abuse on the victim.”  
  
Giving the facts of the case, NAPTIP explained that the bishop on March 6, 2023, sent his wife’s children on an errand to take advantage of the minor, adding that he ignored all her pleas and cries while raping her.  
  
“Investigation revealed that the victim, an indigene of Ondo State was living in Lagos before she was brought to Abuja to live with her mother.  
  
The report indicated that on 5th March 2023, her mother took her to the Church located at Dantata Zuba Expressway, and after the service, she was taken to the family house of the Bishop who is also the Pastor of the Church so that she could stay with them to enable the Bishop’s wife to take her to where she will learn a skill which both families had earlier discussed.  
  
“It was gathered that the following day, 6th March 2023, the convict, father of five children, sent his children on an errand, and being alone with the victim at home at about 10 am, gave her some mathematic work to solve and as she was trying to do it, the Bishop pounced on her, covered her mouth and violently raped her on a chair despite her crying and pleading.  
  
“In the judgment, the randy clergy was found guilty of a one-count charge of rape and was sentenced accordingly without an option of fine,” Adekoye stated.  
  
Reacting to the judgment, the Director General of NAPTIP, Binta Adamu Bello, expressed gratitude to the judiciary, saying it would serve as a deterrent to others.  
  
“I want to sincerely thank the judiciary for this judgment. It will certainly serve as a deterrent to other people. Like, I warned a few weeks ago, NAPTIP will not spare anyone found to have violated any of the laws irrespective of status, either on human trafficking or violence against persons.  
  
“Rape is a serious crime with everlasting psychological effect and lasting trauma on the victim. We must all rise to say no to this heinous crime and ensure the protection of our children.  
  
“How, can you imagine a 52-year-old man violating a 12-year-old girl? It is painful and it is criminal.  
  
“I am relieved that the judiciary has served the convict the commensurate dose of punishment for his action. This is a warning to others,” the Director General said.