We need concerted efforts against rape

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SIR: What a sweeping generalization, that the evil winds of rape and its ferocious storms leave a sour taste in the mouth. It is now rampant and daily escalating and its menace is highly worrisome, saddening and embarrassing.  
  
The ugly monster, a thorn in the flesh, a disease in the blood, a societal defilement, a threat, is also a fear of every sane woman, young and old, including kids.  
  
But it is disheartening that events of the past have proved it without any iota of doubt, that this ugly monster, sucking the pride of our girls, continues unabated, because those who are supposed to end this notorious evil are not helping matters.  
  
As a matter of fact, the failure of government to create enabling environment for the security of lives and property, is the cogent factor that opens the evil door for the injurious activities of rapists as they continue to flourish. This reminds one of the words of Thomas Jefferson that”the care of human life and happiness, and not their destruction is the first and legitimate object of a good government.”  
  
And also, Article 3 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 6 of African Charter on People’s Rights, hold that everyone has the right to life and security. Honestly, we cannot rule out the essence of security, and we cannot say that the failure of government to provide security for the citizenry is not part of what exposes our ladies to falling victim of rape.  
  
Another crucial causal factor is the docility and unwillingness on the part of victim to expose the rapist(s) or to demand justice. Without any fear of contradiction, many ladies have experienced the bitterness of rape, and yet, keep it to their chest, as topmost secret, which they will carry to their grave, out of fear or shame. Therefore, they give rapists more audacity to further perpetrate the heinous acts. Many of them refuse to confess that they have been raped when they fall victim, and despite the fact that the perpetrators are known to them  
  
Another cause of the menace of rape today is the incompetence and unwillingness on the part of the enforcers and dispensers of law, by completely deviating from the legal maxim, “justitia nemini neganda est,”which means “justice is to be denied to no man.” Another maxim says “quiqlupoe ignoscit uni suadet pluribus,” which implies, “pardon one offence and you encourage the commission of many.” “Qui pacet innocentis innocentibus” is another, meaning, “pardon the guilty and you punish the innocent.”  
  
With due respect, our law enforcers and even the dispensers, seemingly lack the will for ex-debito justitae, the obligation to do substantive justice. Our police are seriously overlooking the case of rape brought to them out of flimsy excuses, thereby killing most rape or defilement cases, having forgotten the maxim, “suppressio veri,suggestio est falsi” (suppression of the truth is equivalent to expression of what is false).  
  
It seems our law dispensers do not aver their hearts to the cases of rape as crimes against humanities and instead of doing substantive justice; they too hide under the canopy of legal technicalities to foster injustice. The time is no more when disputes are dealt with rather on technicalities and not merit and this was buttressed by Aloysius Kastina Alu (JSC) as he then was, in the case of Amaechi v Omehia that “the court shall rise up to do substantial justice, without any regard to technicalities.”  
  
Our judges in particular, must always bear in mind the legal dictum, “ad officium justitiae rio rium spectat unicuigua corameis placitatanti justitiae exhibere,” which means “it is the duty of those who discharge judicial functions to render justice to everyone who comes before them in accordance to their oath of office.”  
  
To clip its evil wings of this monster, all hands must be on deck. The victim must be able to come out and report the perpetrators to the appropriate authorities; the law enforcers must ensure the prosecution of the perpetrators, and the dispensers of law must be willing and expedite action to dispense justice for all and sundry to see. The government should also create an enabling environment for the protection of lives and property and for quick dispensation of justice. It was the late legal icon and irrepressible human rights crusader, Chief Gani Fawehinmi, S.A.M, S.A.N, who once held that “a nation that is not interested in providing an enabling mechanism for dispensation of justice will be inviting chaos and instability.’’  
  
It is time every one of us put heads together and put an end to the scourge of the evil sucking the pride of womanhood.  
  
• BelloDestiny Paul  
  
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