17 states record 16,000 reports of sexual assault

Date: 2020-12-14

Source: https://thenationonlineng.net/17-states-record-16000-reports-of-sexual-assault/

17 states record 16,000 reports of sexual assault  
  
By Grace Obike, Abuja  
  
There were 16,000 reports of sexual abuse to the 29 Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) in 17 states as of September this year, it was learnt on Sunday.  
  
National Programme Manager, Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption (RoLAC) Programme, Danladi Plang, said many people are rejecting the culture of silence and coming out to seek help.  
  
He added that there has been an increase in reportage of sexual assault even in places considered to be conservative.  
  
Plang spoke on Sunday in Abuja at the SARC Network Conference/International Human Rights Day/Grand Finale of the 16 Days of Activism organised by RoLAC.  
  
He said: “Right now, we have 29 centres, the latest being the one opened in Bwari, FCT ,two weeks ago, and more is coming. We should be able to open a second one in Lagos by the beginning of next year  
  
“Many people are rejecting the culture of silence and coming out to seek help, which has increased the number of survivors coming to SACRs centres with about 16,000 victims as at September this year. There has been an increase in reportage even in places we have always considered conservative.  
  
“More people in authority now speak against Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV), more states are willing to establish the sexual offenders register and we are hoping that more states will do same and key in with the national register to enable us have a central information base on sex offenders.  
  
“More needs to be done especially in pursuing justice for our survivors, we want to see more prosecutions and names on the register, the idea is to name and shame and, if we don’t have more names, we can’t do that, so we call on more states to establish the register.  
  
“Even when victims’ families are not ready to prosecute, we can take a cue from the Ekiti State model where their law makes it mandatory that any case of sexual abuse must be prosecuted. So it will be an offence for workers at the centre not to report cases brought to them, even when parents are not ready to pursue. It will be good if all states can adopt this.  
  
“We also need to sensitise our communities on stigmatising victims of rape. Some communities see it as a curse so they will not want others to know. If we continue to discourage people from talking, we encourage perpetrators because they will feel they can keep up with their act since people are not reporting.”