Activist calls for sustained fight against domestic violence in Lagos

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Activist calls for sustained fight against domestic violence in Lagos  
  
A human rights activist and Executive Director of the Centre Against Injustice and Domestic Violence (CAIDOV), Comrade Gbenga Soloki, has urged Lagos residents and government functionaries to intensify efforts in combating sexual and domestic violence.  
  
Soloki made this call while addressing the case of Dr. Femi Olaleye, who faced allegations of sexual misconduct brought forward by the Lagos State Government.  
  
In a statement personally signed and dated Wednesday, January 8, 2025, Soloki emphasised that anyone found guilty of sexual offences must face the full consequences of their actions.  
  
“On November 29, 2021, Dr. Femi Olaleye was reported to the Anthony Village Police Division for alleged sexual harassment and unlawful carnal knowledge of his wife’s niece, whom he threatened would die if she revealed the atrocities,” the statement read.  
  
He added that the survivor was under his care and that he moved in with Dr Olaleye and his family in 2019 after the demise of her grandmother, who happens to be Dr Olaleye’s mother-in-law.  
  
Soloki recounted that at the police station, Dr. Olaleye admitted to the offences and made a confessional statement as well as a video confessional statement before the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) of the station, DSP Amadin.  
  
“However, the matter was reported at the Lagos State Police Command headquarters. The police referred the matter to the Gender Section, where Dr. Olaleye was again arrested and repeated his confession that he defiled the 16-year-old girl.  
  
“The survivor informed the court under oath that Dr Olaleye introduced her at age 15 to pornography and later groomed her into giving him oral sex and later penetrative sex.  
  
“The Lagos State Government subsequently arraigned Dr. Olaleye in November 2022 at the Domestic and Sexual Violence Court in Ikeja on a two-count charge of defilement of a child and sexual assault by penetration.  
  
“After a year-long trial, Justice Rahman Oshodi convicted Dr. Olaleye and sentenced him to life imprisonment, describing him as a “dangerous offender” who showed no remorse. The court heavily relied on his confessional statements and other compelling evidence presented by the prosecution.  
  
“The judge recalled Dr. Olaleye’s confessional statement made before his former counsel, Olalekan Guruje of Iwelumo Chambers, and the Divisional Police Officer at Anthony Police Division as key evidence. Justice Oshodi stated that the defendant’s denial during the trial could not stand against the weight of the evidence.  
  
“In a twist, the Lagos Division of the Court of Appeal overturned the conviction, citing errors in the trial court’s judgment. Justice Bada, delivering the appellate court’s decision, questioned the reliability of the testimonies provided by the defendant’s estranged wife and the alleged survivor,” the statement read.  
  
The activist stressed that the acquittal sparked outrage, with many questioning the implications for justice and the protection of vulnerable individuals.  
  
Soloki then stated that Dr Olaleye’s confessional statements, made at the Anthony Police Station and before family members, raise significant concerns, saying that how can such admissions be deemed insufficient to establish guilt.  
  
“Dr Olaleye’s past is equally troubling. He reportedly fled the United Kingdom after committing similar offences, while working at Darrent Valley Hospital in Kent and even wrote an email to his son, asking for forgiveness for his past actions.  
  
“It’s also on record various recording of videos, while he was sexually abusing female patients, which he reportedly deployed to blackmail them for more sexual activities.  
  
“What could be more compelling evidence if not the statement and oral presentation of the survivor, who was sexually assaulted by Dr Femi Olaleye?  
  
“Experts who presented their reports equally ascertained that truly the survivor was sexually abused and penetration happened and that her consistency made their jobs easier, yet, that’s not compelling evidence?  
  
“To also substantiate the claims, on December 5, 2021, he was admitted at a rehabilitation centre named; Grace Cottage Clinic in Ilupeju, Lagos under Dr Peter Nubi, for sex addiction, a treatment he failed to complete.  
  
“There are several emails from him of admittance to family members of the survivors, where he sought their forgiveness, yet, this is not compelling enough.  
  
“It’s important to note that the survivor, a minor, who was at the time under the care of Dr Olaleye, confronted him in court and maintained he abused her and penetrated her on several occasions with a stern warning not to inform anyone. What will be more compelling for a minor to look up to a father figure in the face?  
  
“Despite these alarming revelations, he has been acquitted, leaving many wondering about the implications for justice and the protection of vulnerable individuals,” he said.  
  
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Soloki then emphasised the importance of a thorough review of the case to ensure justice is served.  
  
“Lagos State has been a leader in the fight against domestic and sexual violence, achieving notable successes. However, the Court of Appeal’s decision threatens to undermine these efforts and embolden other predators,” Soloki stated.  
  
He concluded by urging the judiciary to prioritise justice for victims, saying, “The Supreme Court’s verdict will be a litmus test of the Nigerian judiciary’s commitment to safeguarding victims’ rights and ensuring accountability.  
  
“The public awaits the Supreme Court’s decision, hoping it reaffirms progress in the fight against domestic and sexual violence.”