President Buhari must read this

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IN the last few weeks, I’ve received desperate reports of more rape cases in some Nigerian tertiary institutions. How can a rapist who walks freely around campus lord himself over female students who have to sit in class and take his lectures? Thousands of girls are going through hell and are too afraid to even tell their parents because they can’t stand being further victimised by school authorities. In fact, I’ve gotten reports from different quarters about a Dean of a Law faculty in one of the federal universities who has not only been notorious for sexual harassment for several years but recently raped a female student who was hospitalised while the university authority is doing all it can to bury the case. This is just so horrifying and would never have degenerated to this extent but for the entire society’s lackadaisical attitude towards sexual harassment. However, we want a change which must take effect as soon as possible. Thankfully, President Buhari administration has promised us change and we are assured we won’t be disappointed.  
  
To start with, government cannot trust the universities and other tertiary institutions to police themselves. When a university claims to have committees set up to investigate allegations of sexual harassment/assault committed by faculty members, because the committee members are usually members of the university faculty they would rather protect the reputation of their colleague, the faculty and the university name than objective fact findings even when the committee is headed by a female faculty member. Never should these allegations be left alone to the universities and other tertiary institutions to investigate because they have proven to make investigations complicated and unrresolvable.  
  
Imagine Dr. Baruwa, the University of Lagos lecturer who recently raped a teenager being disowned by the university even when another lady who was a former student of the university boldly exposed how he sexually assaulted her years ago and with proven documentary evidence too. I’ll be shocked if the National Universities Commission and the federal ministry of education are not currently conducting their independent investigations on this rape allegation and how rampant sexual harassment and assaults are in University of Lagos.  
  
This is why the federal government must set up a committee immediately in every university which should comprise the National Universities Commission, professional bodies like The Nigerian Bar Association etc., the police, the judiciary and a member of the student union to carry out an independent investigation on cases of sexual harassment and assault in our tertiary institutions. And if the allegations are proven, the following steps should be taken:  
  
The National Universities Commission must blacklist the lecturer involved and sanction him from being employed by any tertiary institution in Nigeria. The police must charge him to court. The judiciary must prosecute the offender and make him and the institution where he lectures pay financial restitution to the victim. The offender must serve a jail term. The professional body he belongs to must withdraw his license and make him unable to practice their profession. This person must not be allowed to work with females from age 6-40 and barred from being around schools and school children regardless of gender. An appropriate protocols and procedures of protection should be set for students. All universities and higher education institutions must set protocols for lecturers on how they should conduct themselves with students. For instance, during office hours when a student has to see a lecturer in his office, there must be a secretary around just like nurses chaperone doctors when examining patients. The National Universities Commission must have an independent standing committee in every university and higher education institutions to investigate every allegation of sexual harassment and assault. As American universities are currently doing, the National Universities Commission must start ranking Nigerian universities and other higher education institutions on the risk of female students being raped by faculty members and fellow students on their campuses. This will force universities and higher education institutions to be proactive in the prevention of rape and sexual harassment and every other form of sexual assault by faculty members and fellow students on their campuses. There must be a strong advocate with legal knowledge to champion this cause and I volunteer myself to fight and protect our female gender from being sexually, morally and emotionally abused by people who have supervisory functions over them. I am poised to ensure every tertiary institution in Nigeria has a standing incorruptible protocol for preventing and dealing with cases of sexual harassment and assault. I am young, energetic and courageous, passionately committed to the well-being of the female folk and possess the right mental capacity and capability.  
  
The Girls Club of Nigeria is aimed at influencing a positive change in the female folk and re-orientating the Nigerian girl. Amongst other things, to promote and enhance the development of girls by instilling a sense of self-worth, competence, usefulness, belonging and influence while of course restoring traditional moral values and encouraging the girls to toe the paths of righteousness. If this generation can make amends, the next generation will come out clean.  
  
Dear fans of Girls Club,  
  
The lecture series on “The amazing power of the spirit-filled girl” continues next week.