Rape victims: Stakeholders seek support for centre

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Rape victims: Stakeholders seek support for centre  
  
Senator Florence Ita-Giwa has pledged her support for Mirabel Centre, Lagos a non-government organisation (NGO) providing free medical and psychosocial services for sexual assault and rape victims in Lagos.  
  
Ita-Giwa, who revealed this following the expiration of the centre’s three-year sponsorship deal with the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) in March this year, called on the government and individuals to help the centre because of the important roles it plays in the lives of rape victims.  
  
Senator Ita-Giwa, a guest at an event tagged “Magenta and Black, Art and Fashion for Charity,” which aimed at raising funds through public support and auction of art works donated by friends and partners of the Mirabel Centre in Lagos, nearly betrayed her emotion during a presentation by the founder of the centre, Mrs. Itoro Eze-Anaba on some of the experiences of rape victims, particularly the story of 14-year-old girl who was raped severally by her father but was saved and treated free at Mirabel Centre.  
  
She said such a man should have his organ cut off, because “that child has been killed as far as I am concerned.” She expressed her support for the centre, even as she urged the government and Nigerians to support the initiative in order to keep it alive.  
  
“The Mirabel Centre is a wonderful idea. The management should continue with the laudable initiative; they have my support. I do hope the government will come in and give their support,” Senator Ita-Giwa said.  
  
According to Mrs. Eze-Anaba, the Mirabel Centre, which is located at the Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH), has provided free medical and psychosocial services for over 1,300 clients in the last three years.  
  
”The funding for Mirabel Centre by DFID came to an end in March this year. We appreciate DFID’s support for the past three years. The Magenta and Black Art, Fashion event was born out of necessity and the passion of some friends of the centre who felt compelled to do all they could to ensure the continued survival of the centre. We also felt that it was time that we Nigerians took personal responsibility for the protection of our sons and daughters, sisters and mothers from the scourge of sexual abuse,” Mrs. Eze-Anaba said.  
  
Mrs. Ayotola Jagun, a supporter of the Mirabel Centre said she was surprised that despite the huge responsibilities and benefits of the centre to the society, it only got the attention of foreign organisation without any government’s assistance.  
  
Other friends of Mirabel such as Victor Ehikhamenor, Gbolahan Ayoola, Jumoke Sanwo, Olumide Oresegun, Malaika Najem, Deola Ade Ojo and Lisa Folawiyo, among others, donated their works which were auctioned to support the centre.  
  
Mother of a victim, Mrs. Anyanwu narrated how a 40-year-old man came into her house to rape her daughter. She thanked Mirabel Centre for the free treatment provided to save the girl’s life. She urged the government and Nigerians to support the organisation, saying “Mirabel must not die.”