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Violent violation  
  
Attempted rape of minor in Abia should not go unpunished  
  
A case of brutal sexual assault in Obete Nchina village, in Obingwa council area of Abia State, further highlighted the problem of female-targeted gender-based violence (GBV) in the country. A 33-year-old man, Chinazum Nwaubani, was reported to have attacked a 14-year-old girl, Felicia Anaba, with a machete following her resistance to attempted rape, leaving her unconscious as a result of blood loss. He has been arrested and detained. She has been hospitalised.  
  
According to the spokesperson for the Abia State Police Command, DSP Maureen Chinaka, the victim and her twin brother had gone to their father’s farm where the suspect, “a resident of the same village, allegedly approached them armed with a machete.” She said: “He reportedly grabbed the female twin, ordered her to lie down and remove her clothes. When she refused, the suspect allegedly attacked her with the machete, inflicting injuries on her head, back, and leg.” Her brother escaped and alerted the family, leading to the suspect’s arrest by the police.  
  
Normally, the suspect should be prosecuted for the crime. However, the victim’s father, Chijioke Anaba, fears that the matter may take a different turn and his daughter may be denied justice. He said his daughter “had fallen into a coma when she was rescued by the search party in the bush.” After taking her to the hospital, the family had “lodged a report with the police at the Eastern Ngwa Division.”  
  
According to him, “The police demanded N30,000 to investigate the matter, which I paid. They have arrested the suspect, but from what’s happening, I am afraid that Chinazum may be released from detention.” He added: “The police should do their job because the boy is now a risk to the people in the village. The police are saying he is a mad man but it’s not true.”  
  
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The police described his claims as “unverified allegations.” They said he should “come forward with evidence” to show that police personnel had demanded money from him to facilitate investigation of the matter and he paid such money.  
  
His claims are concerning. Police authorities should investigate them. Also, they should investigate the case of sexual assault and ensure that the perpetrator is prosecuted, and punished for a deterrent effect.  
  
There is a need to send a strong signal that sexual assault is unacceptable. Importantly, the victim in this case is a minor, which makes the attack even more egregious and condemnable. Nigeria’s Child Rights Act (2003) defines persons under the age of 18 as children. Apart from the victim being a child, there is also the possible dimension of attempted murder, given the severity of the attack. Indeed, the victim’s father expressed fear that she may be disabled as a result of the deep machete cuts inflicted on her by the suspect.  
  
Gender-based violence against females includes sexual violence. Sexual violence includes rape; and attempted rape, as in this case. Any sexual activity with a child (any person who has not yet completed 18 years of age) is regarded as constituting sexual violence. Experts say it has devastating effects on the development of the child involved, as well as on his or her physical and mental health.