

# POLICY BRIEF

## Overcoming the Limitations to the Implementation of the Lagos State Violence Against Persons Prohibition Law



Foreign, Commonwealth  
& Development Office

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## Overcoming the Barriers to the Adoption and Implementation of the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act in Lagos State<sup>1</sup>



Foreign, Commonwealth  
& Development Office

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# 01. INTRODUCTION

Violence against women (VAW) is defined as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life”.<sup>1</sup> It has been identified as the most pervasive human rights violation in the world, and it is estimated to cost countries up to 3.7% of their GDP – more than double what most governments spend on education.<sup>2</sup> An offshoot of gender inequality, violence against women is a significant cause of female morbidity and mortality, may be physical, emotional, sexual, psychological, or economic harm, and it takes place in the private or public arenas, affecting 1 in 3 women in their lifetime. Considering Nigeria’s estimated female population of over 106 million<sup>3</sup> as of January 2022, that translates into about 35 million women. Recent happenings such as the lockdown caused by the COVID-19

pandemic further exacerbated the cases of violence against women, particularly sexual violence. The UN brief of May 2020 revealed that during this time, the increase in reports of domestic violence cases in April 2020 was more profound in three states under total lockdown (Lagos state, Ogun state, and the Federal Capital Territory). The number of cases rose from 60 in March to 238 in April, an increase of 127%. Furthermore, women and girls are disproportionately affected by insecurity – Boko Haram insurgency, banditry, kidnappings, herder-farmers conflict, armed robbery, and so on – and an estimated 79% of internally displaced persons are women and children<sup>4</sup>, who are also “targeted for abduction by Boko Haram and are often raped, forced into labour, marriage, or religious conversion, abused, exposed to sexually transmitted infections and are often pregnant upon escaping captivity.”<sup>5</sup>

The Violence Against Persons (Prohi-

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1 UN General Assembly, *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women*, 20 December 1993, A/RES/48/104, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3b00f25d2c.html> [accessed 10 February 2021]

2 World Bank. 2019. Gender-based Violence (Violence against Women and Girls) <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/socialdevelopment/brief/violence-against-women-and-girls>

3 <https://countrymeters.info/en/Nigeria>

4 Displacement Tracking Matrix. (2017). Displacement Tracking Matrix: Nigeria Round XV Report 2017. Retrieved from <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/56254> (assessed on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2021)

5 <https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/results-baseline-survey-gender-based-violence-borno-state-nigeria>

bition) Act (VAPPA) is the most comprehensive and progressive law for addressing the silent pandemic of violence against women and girls in Nigeria. The main thrust of the VAPPA is to “eliminate violence in private and public life, prohibit all forms of violence against persons and to provide maximum protection and effective remedies for victims and punishment of offenders; and for other related matters”<sup>1</sup>. It guarantees maximum protection to all citizens by prohibiting all forms of violence and harmful traditional practices against women or men, boys or girls occurring in private and /or public spaces.

The Act is the first criminal legislation which expanded Nigerian criminal jurisprudence by recognising various forms of related crimes hitherto unacknowledged. Accordingly, the definition of rape was expanded beyond penetration of the female genitals and mouth, to forced sexual action on a male. It addresses a broad-spectrum of violence - physical, verbal, emotional, sexual, economic, and psychological abuses, as well as discrimination against persons, particularly women and girls. These include child abandonment, rape, incest, defilement of minors, forced eviction of a spouse and children, harmful widowhood laws and practices, female genital mutilation (FGM), forced financial dependence, attacks with harmful substance, political violence, among others. It also sets appropriate punishment for convicted

perpetrators. For instance, the offence of rape may attract life imprisonment, subject to the circumstance and the discretion of the judge. The offender will also be listed in the sexual offenders’ register as a deterrent to others. Similarly, the Act makes provisions for effective remedies for victims of violence – rehabilitation support, and compensation, among others. According to Section 38 (1) of the Act, victims of violence are entitled to material, medical, psychological, and legal assistance from governmental and non-governmental agencies providing such services. Additionally, they are afforded opportunity to acquire skills in any vocation of their choice and access to micro credit facilities.

Since it was enacted in 2015, the Act has the force of law in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and in twenty-three (23) states across Nigeria where it has been adopted into law.

The Act recognizes as punishable a wide range of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) offences including forced financial dependence or economic abuse, harmful widowhood practices, genital mutilation, abandonment of children, harmful substance attacks, and incest. Furthermore, due to its all-encompassing nature, the Act does not just protect women and girls from violence, it can also be used to improve the participation of women in politics and other positions of power. This is because violence and discrimination are amongst the reasons why

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1 Violence against Persons Prohibition Act, 2015

women get excluded from politics and other aspects of public life.

Prior to the enactment of the VAPPA, there was no comprehensive legislation on violence against women at the national level. Nigeria only had disparate pieces of legislation, which did not address violence against women or gender-based violence uniformly across the country. A few states had passed legislation on domestic violence, harmful traditional practices, or gender-based violence. A few others had attempted to do so unsuccessfully. Much of the existing legislation was outdated, not sufficiently comprehensive, not specifically directed to this grave problem, and not adequately enforced. The coming together of more than fifty-five (55) different groups and individuals under the umbrella of the Legislative Advocacy Coalition on Violence Against Women, (LACVAW), eventually

helped mobilise action to improve the legislative landscape for violence against women in Nigeria in 2002. The result of that activism was the signing into law of the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act on May 25, 2015, after about thirteen (13) years in the legislative process. The National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in persons (NAPTIP) is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the law at the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja.

This policy brief gives an update to the status of the uptake of the VAPPA by the 36 states and provides information on the current status of the domestication of the Act in Lagos specifically. It is aimed at guiding decision makers and relevant stakeholders in facilitating effective engagement towards successful implementation of the law in the state.



***Violence against women (VAW) is defined as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life”***

## 02. OVERVIEW OF THE NATIONAL RESEARCH ON THE IMPACT OF THE VAPP ACT AND RELATED LAWS

Between January and March 2021, the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) commissioned a national research in twelve (12) states of the federation to assess the impact of the VAPP Act in Nigeria, five (5) years after it was enacted. Titled “The Impact of the Violence against Persons (Prohibition) Act and Related Laws in Nigeria”<sup>1</sup>, the project aligned with WFD’s objective of promoting inclusion by ensuring gender equality and protecting women and girls from violence. The increased number of cases of violence against women and girls in particular in the context of COVID-19 and the frequent cases of perpetrators of gender-based violence facing insubstantial punishment provided the need for research on the uptake of the VAPPA by the states as well as the implementation of the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Law (VAPPL) in states that had already domesticated the Act across the country. The research is the first national impact assessment of the Act since its enactment.

Originally designed to focus on the implementation of the Act in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and in eleven (11) out of the eighteen (18) states across the six geo-political zones where it had been domesticated at that time, the study assessed the adoption, successes, and challenges of the implementation of the Act, identified the factors that promote or limit the implementation of the Act, as well as the gaps that need to be addressed to ensure the Act achieves its objective of prohibiting violence against citizens, especially women, and promoting gender equality in the Nigerian society. It was also aimed at assessing the level of citizen participation and engagement in the adoption and implementation processes of the VAPPA.

The study was undertaken in Abia, Akwa Ibom, Anambra, Bauchi, Cross River, Edo, Enugu, FCT, Kaduna, Lagos, Osun, and Plateau States. It was however noted during the planning process that contrary to available data, three (3) of the selected states - Cross River, Osun, and Plateau - were only in the process of domesticating the VAPPA, while the domestica-

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1 <https://www.wfd.org/2021/12/07/the-impact-of-the-violence-against-persons-prohibition-act-and-related-laws-in-nigeria/>



tion process was yet to start in Lagos State as of January 2021. Although those four states did not have a VAPPL in place yet, they had various legislations to protect women and girls from violence. Therefore, for ease of analysis, the study integrated related anti-violence against women and girls' laws into the research framework by identifying major pieces of legislation for protecting women and girls from the various forms of violence in those states. It assessed the legal and policy frameworks to determine how adequately the laws protect women and girls from violence; it also elicited information on the processes being undertaken to domesticate the Act.

The national research also identified best practices in the focal states, and generated recommendations to encourage rapid progress in the implementation of the VAPP Law of the states and /or its adoption by the states yet to domesticate it, while contributing to existing body of knowledge on the impact of anti-violence against women and girls' laws in Nigeria.

## 2.1. KEY FINDINGS

The national research revealed that:

- ❑ The VAPPA does not offer a universal coverage to all Nigerian women and girls as the uptake by states was generally low across the country.
- ❑ The culture of silence and concealment; stigmatisation; trivialisation; threats and intimidation; and inadequate funding of necessary structures and mechanisms for implementing anti-violence against women and girls' legislations are key constraints to the achievement of the significant success in the fight violence against women and girls in Nigeria.
- ❑ More cases of violence against women and girls are reported and taken up in places where the relevant implementation structures are put in place.
- ❑ Although the VAPPL seems to have helped in the decrease in the incidence of violence against women and girls in some states, the implementation can still be observed to be largely weak.
- ❑ The Sexual Offenders' Register (SOR) is an effective deterrent to perpetrators in states where such has been established, updated, and publicised.
- ❑ The VAPPA and related laws are more effectively implemented in states where the First Ladies take a keen interest in and contribute to efforts aimed at eliminating violence against women and girls.
- ❑ The intersection of disabilities, violence and gender is not often considered in the implementation of the VAPPA/VAPPL. As such, response mechanisms do not prioritise persons with disabilities who usually experience VAW differently.
- ❑ Institutions and personnel expected to be involved in the implementation include the police, the judiciary, desk-officers, relevant ministries and agencies. However,



they are challenged by lack of capacity in terms of training, funding, effects of corruption, and corrupt practices.

- ❑ Though some level of awareness of some of the VAPPL and anti-violence against women and girls' laws has been created, many of the research participants do not know of their existence or the mechanisms to implement them.
- ❑ Ignorance, cultural beliefs and practices, misinterpretation of the major religions, misinformation, poor socialisation, and poverty are the major barriers to the effective implementation of the VAPPA/VAPPL and other anti-violence against women and girls' legislation.
- ❑ There is a general satisfaction with the VAPPA as an all-encompassing legal instrument. However, study participants largely faulted the implementation within the FCT and in states where it is in force for reasons of lack of political will, paucity of funds, lack of infrastructure, and low capacity among implementing officers.
- ❑ The simplification and popularisation of the VAPP Act and related laws help keep children, especially the girl-child, in school.
- ❑ Active collaboration between state actors and non-state actors enhances the level of effectiveness of the VAPPA/VAPPL.
- ❑ The VAPPA/VAPPL is rarely used to promote women's political participation.
- ❑ The National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) is not adequately resourced to solely lead the implementation of the Act in the FCT effectively.
- ❑ There are still gaps in the laws, specifically relating to response and coordination in some of the states, and what specific penalties are attached to specific violations. These need to be reviewed and clearly designated.
- ❑ The challenges to the implementation structures set up by the government ranged from lack of synergy, intimidation, slow judicial process, to inadequacy of interventions specific to various needs or categories of victims.
- ❑ Poverty remains one of the factors that heightens the vulnerability of women and girls to all forms of sexual and gender-based violence.

## **2.2. BARRIERS TO THE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE VIOLENCE AGAINST PERSONS PROHIBITION ACT/LAWS AND RELATED LAWS**

The study also highlighted some of the barriers to the success of the VAPPA. These include:

- ❑ Ignorance: For 39% of the research participants across the research sites, ignorance was the major barrier to the utilisation of the laws by the citizens.
- ❑ Cultural beliefs and practices: 25% of the study participants confirmed that patriarchal traditions and cultural beliefs ascribe power and control to men and boys. Therefore, VAWG has been normalised in most communities.
- ❑ Lack of political will by governments at the national and state levels was identified by 23% of the respondents as another barrier to effective implementation of the laws. What this means is that it is not enough to enact a law, the political will to ensure its successful implementation must be evident.
- ❑ Misinterpretation of the major religions is a limiting factor in the opinion of 9% of the respondents.
- ❑ Other factors such as misinformation, poor socialisation and poverty were highlighted for consideration when discussing the barriers to the implementation of the VAPPA and related anti-VAWG laws by the last 4% of the survey population.

## **2.3. UPDATE ON THE UPTAKE OF THE VAPPA BY SUB-NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS**

Prior to the research, the Act had only been domesticated by twelve (12) states and by the time the report was presented, the figure had increased to fifteen (15). There has been a significant leap in the number of states that have domesticated the Act to twenty-five (25) since the national research was commissioned in January 2021.

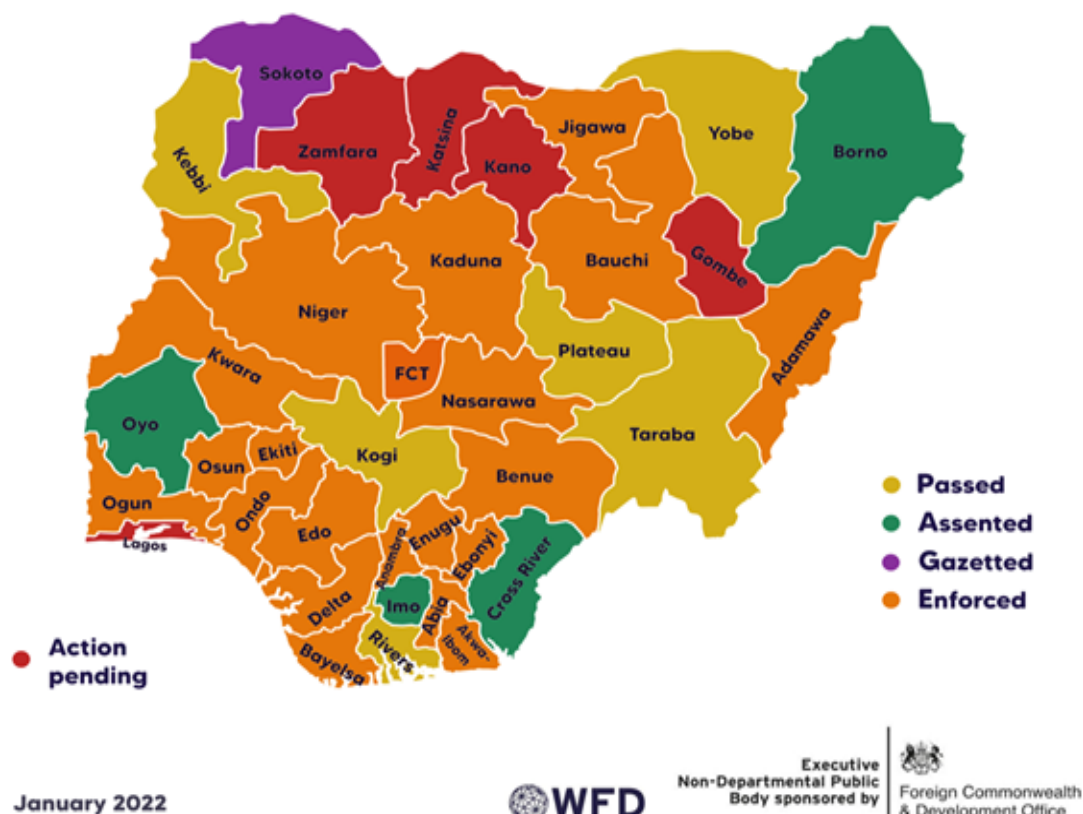
## Status of the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act in Focal States

S/N	State	January 2021	January 2022
1.	Abia	VAPPL in place	VAPPL In place
2.	Akwa Ibom	VAPPL in place	VAPPL in place
3.	Anambra	VAPPL in place	VAPPL in place
4.	Bauchi	Amendment of VAPPL in process	Amended VAPPL awaiting assent
5.	Cross River	Domestication in process	VAPPL in place
6.	Edo	Amendment of VAPPL in process	Amended VAPPL in place
7.	Enugu	VAPPL awaiting gazette	VAPPL in place
8.	FCT	VAPPA in place	VAPPA in place
9.	Kaduna	VAPPL in place	VAPPL in place
10.	Lagos	No Action towards domestication	Amendment of anti-VAW laws in process
11.	Osun	Domestication in process	VAPPL in place
12.	Plateau	VAPP Bill awaiting assent	VAPP Bill awaiting assent

At the time of preparing this Brief, six (6) states had passed their VAPP bills and are awaiting assent by the governors of their respective states. There are five (5) states yet to pass the VAPPA into law – Gombe, Katsina, Kano, Lagos, and Zamfara.

The success recorded within such a short period has been facilitated largely by the efforts of state and non-state actors, particularly the Honourable Minister of Women Affairs and Social Development, Dame Pauline Tallen who has been a strong pillar of support to women's rights organisations and international development agencies working on domestication and adoption of the Act; putting the domestication of the Act on the front burners by civil society actors, especially women's organisations and groups; the accurate data on the uptake of the Act shown by the national research findings; the engagement of development partners, including WFD with the Nigerian Governors' Wives Forum (NGWF); and the dedication of members of the Erelu Bisi Fayemi-led NGWF to ensure universal adoption and effective implementation of the Act by the 36 states to protect women and girls from GBV in the states so that the lives of women and girls can be more meaningful.

## The Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act PAGE Scorecard



### 2.4. Findings from Lagos State

VAWG is very prevalent, with sexual and domestic violence ranking first and second respectively in Lagos state. A 2017 report revealed that sexual violence had assumed epidemic proportions, with child sexual abuse accounting for 70% of reported cases<sup>1</sup>. In the same vein, another report which analysed 648 reported cases of sexual violence nationwide, Lagos alone accounted for 40 cases or 7% of the cases out of the 36 states<sup>2</sup>.

Lagos State is one of the few states that are progressive when it comes to addressing issues of violence against women and girls. Successive governments since 2005 have enact-

1 Project Alert, 2017. *A Silent Epidemic: Sexual Violence in Nigeria*

2 Project Alert, 2020. *A Pandemic within a Pandemic: GBV & COVID-19*

ed laws and put in place mechanisms to respond to VAWG in the state. However, the state had not domesticated the VAPPA at the time of the national research. Similarly, according to study participants, the state had no plans to domesticate it and is not under any pressure to do so, given that it already has three (3) different laws that have similar contents to the Act, and which are considered by the government as sufficiently addressing various forms of violence against women and girls in Lagos. The following are the major legislations in Lagos State for the protection of women and girls from physical, sexual, psychological including threat to life and financial violence:

The Lagos State Protection Against Domestic Violence Law, 2007; The Child Rights Law, 2007 (Amended 2015); The Criminal Law of Lagos State, 2011.

However, there is consideration by the state to review the anti-VAWG laws so as to identify aspects of the VAPPA that are not sufficiently provided for in the state laws and incorporate them. Study respondents reiterated that the VAPPA is an all-encompassing legislation that covers all aspects including women's participation in politics and decision-making processes as it has provisions for addressing political violence. They suggested that the provision should be integrated into the existing laws to engender an increase in the number of women in politics and other positions of power in the state.

### **2.4.1. *Structures for implementing anti-VAWG laws Lagos State***

The mechanisms for implementing the laws prohibiting violence against women and girls in Lagos state are:

- The Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Response Team (DSVRT) at the Ministry of Justice is the one-stop shop for addressing domestic and sexual violence cases in Lagos State. It was established to provide a coordinated response. The team works in partnership with non-state actors working to eliminate SGBV and according to the Team Lead, Lola Vivour-Adeniyi, the platform creates unprecedented levels of collaboration among professionals, provides essential avenues for survivors and third parties to report cases of domestic, child and sexual abuse.
- The Office of the Public Defender (OPD), Lagos Public Interest Law Partnership (LPILP), and the International Federation of Lawyers (FIDA) provide free legal representation to indigent survivors.
- The Ministry of Youth and Social Development and strategic CSO partners like Project Alert, Day Spring, God's Home for women, Cee Hope among others provide shelters for survivors of domestic violence.
- There are also Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARC) run by non-state actors like the Idera Centre, Mirabel centre, Women at Risk International Foundation (WAR-

IF) providing a wide range of services to survivors of violence - medical, counseling, legal, psychosocial support.

## 2.4.2. *Achievements of the anti-VAWG Laws of Lagos State*

According to the study participants, some of the achievements/successes of the state anti-violence laws include:

- The intentional implementation of the laws encourages survivors to speak out as they are convinced that justice is available and accessible.
- Knowledge and use of the laws by women's rights organisations and activists has enabled constant advocacy for deliberate and professional implementation as well as an appreciation of the challenges in the implementation.
- The effective implementation of the laws has resulted in significant success in achieving justice for survivors significantly. Study participants cited the case of the 3-year-old pupil of Christland School who was sexually abused by a teacher in the school. Using the Child Rights Law, DSVRT working with MWAPA, pursued the case and the perpetrator was jailed 60 years. Similarly, the case of Titilayo Arowolo who was battered and killed by her husband Akolade in 2011 was prosecuted using the Criminal Law and the accused was sentenced to death. Participants also shared the recent case of a man at Lekki, Lagos Island, who during the COVID-19 lockdown, battered his wife leaving her with a bloodied face, and went ahead to boast on FB, that he was waiting for her to bring the police to arrest him. He was said to be a notorious hooligan. DSVRT and MWAPA stepped in to arrest and charge him to court using the Criminal and domestic violence laws of Lagos State. Another instance was the case of a child who was sexually abused by a man, and physical assault resulting in injuries by the man's wife. Both were reported to the police and charged to court under the Child Rights Law and the Criminal Law of Lagos State.
- Provision of an effective legal framework for promoting and protecting the rights of women and girls in Lagos.
- The enactment of the Child Rights Law and its popularization in public schools and the introduction of the yellow card as a warning to parents/guardians has helped keep children, especially girls in schools and reduced loitering on streets during school hours.
- Setting up of specialized courts in the state – family courts with designated courts for sexual violence adjudication.
- The development of a Practice Direction by the office of the Lagos Chief Judge to guide the implementation of the DV Law of Lagos
- Setting up of a specialized team of government and non-governmental organizations to work together to respond to sexual and gender-based violence in the state,

known as the Domestic & Sexual Violence Response Team, DSVRT.

- The creation of various agencies under the Ministry of Justice to respond to SGBV issues amongst others, such as the Office of the Public Defender, OPD; Citizens' mediation Centre, CMC; DSVRT, Directorate of Public Prosecution etc.
- The political will on the part of the Lagos State government to always speak out and act against SGBV is evident and appreciated by residents.

### 2.4.3. ***Challenges to the Effectiveness of anti-VAWG Laws and adoption of the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act***

The research revealed some major challenges in the implementation of the three anti-GBV laws in Lagos State. They include:

- Poor capacity of government personnel tasked with the implementation of the laws within various ministries and agencies to deliver effectively and professionally. These institutions include the police, the courts, and the relevant ministries.
- Low awareness of the existence of these laws and the various mechanisms that have been put in place to ensure implementation. Notwithstanding that the Lagos DV and Child Rights have been in existence for fourteen years, awareness of the laws is still low, especially among residents in riverine areas where the incidence of violence against women and girls is high.
- Lack of awareness about the existence of the VAPP Act and sensitization about its content amongst a lot of Lagosians.
- Societal challenges by way of secondary victimization of survivors. This involves community continued blaming and shaming of survivors of SGBV which makes them recoil and not want to report or follow up on cases they reported.
- Poor funding of government agencies tasked with responding and lack of funding for CSOs who often are the first to respond and provide care and support for the survivors.
- Delay in prosecuting cases which limits implementation of the laws and discourages survivors from accessing justice.
- The culture of silence due to stigmatization of survivors.



***The Act provides under Section 38 that every victim of violence is entitled to receive the necessary medical, psychological, social, and legal assistance through governmental and non-governmental agencies providing such assistance.***



### **03. UPDATE ON THE STATUS OF THE VAPP ACT DOMESTICATION PROCESS BY THE STATE.**

The government is currently reviewing the Domestic Violence Law of Lagos State (2007) in collaboration with women's rights organisations and development partners in order to incorporate vital aspects of the VAPP Act as it relates to domestic violence in particular. The differences of the two laws have been observed – whereas the DVL protects the rights of persons in domestic violence, the VAPPA criminalizes violence against the offender. The fusion of the VAPPA into the Protection Against Domestic Violence Law of Lagos State means more access to support and protection against GBV and other forms of violence in the law.

During recent interactions with stakeholders, it was reported that though the VAPPA is widely recognised by state-level actors, the case is not the same at the community level. There were also suggestions that relevant key ministries especially Justice, and Women Affairs working with NGOs could either work on, and present an executive bill with the Governor sending to the state House of Assembly. It could also be a private bill. However, there must be a consensus to domesticate the VAPP bill in its entirety because of its benefits to residents of the state.

In June 2021, The Rule of Law Anti-Corruption (RoLAC) programme of the British Council and the Lagos State Domestic and the Lagos State Sexual Violence Response team (DSVRT) organized a meeting to review the DVL in partnership with Lagos State Law Reform Commission, the European Union Funded Rule of Law, and various stakeholders of SGBV, which include Judges, Magistrates, Police Officers, Students and Non-Governmental organizations (NGOs).

A media briefing to commemorate the Domestic and Sexual Violence Awareness Month, was organized by Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Response Team (DSVRT) themed 'Institutionalizing our Reforms' in September 2021. The team launched a report which presented a record of cases handled in the last two years. According to available data, the team dealt with 10,007 cases, both adult and children. The breakdown of the cases shows 4150 domestic violence, 177 rape, 255 attempts to commit rape/sexual assault,

246 sexual assaults by penetration /threat, 877 others – separation, not taking responsibilities of children, neglect, custody of the child, non-GBV, and so on, 436 child abuse/physical assaults, 271 Defilement cases, 13 defilements by minor to minor, 454 child labour, abduction neglect/others, 148 sexual harassment/molestation cases. A total of 2980 children experienced emotional abuse having been exposed to domestic violence.

The Domestic and Sexual Violence Response Team (DSVRT) has since been upgraded to an Agency headed by an Executive Secretary. The Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency (DSVRA) aims to increase victim safety and offender responsibility by providing a cross jurisdictional response that is uniform in approach in gender-based cases in Lagos.

## 04. RECOMMENDATIONS

To address the challenges identified during the national research and in the course of the follow-up assessment, the following recommendations are proposed to fast-track the domestication of the VAPPA into law, and the effective implementation in the state:

### SHORT-TERM

#### *Lagos State House of Assembly*

- ❑ Conclude the review process and pass the Bill for Amendment as appropriate. The review should include other consensus policies where applicable alongside VAPPA to produce a comprehensive and inclusive DVL in Lagos State.
- ❑ Members of Appropriation sub-committee should demand adequate budgetary provisions for effective implementation of the Law.

#### *Lagos State Government*

- ❑ Match political will with political action by integrating the VAPP Act into the DVL without delay.
- ❑ Ensure deliberate and intentional gender budgeting for implementation of the VAPPL when it comes into force.
- ❑ Simplify and translate the amended DVL/VAPPL of Lagos State into local lan-

guages, with consideration for the cultural diversity of the state and pidgin.

- ❑ Make the simplified DVL/VAPPL of Lagos State available to all citizens as much as possible.
- ❑ Carry out massive grassroots community campaign against blaming and shaming of survivors to encourage survivors and their families and friends to report incidences.
- ❑ Design and implement an accountability structure for the anti-VAWG coordination structures responsible for the implementation of the expanded DVL (or VAPPL).
- ❑ Set up anti-GBV School Clubs to address school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) in the state.
- ❑ Initiate cluster systems where responses are coordinated to enhance service delivery and develop mechanisms to eliminate duplication of service delivery among coordination structures.
- ❑ Link the Sex Offenders' Register to the National Sex Offender's Database (NSOD) and publish regularly.
- ❑ Set clearly defined roles for anti-VAWG Agencies for greater effectiveness by removing unhealthy rivalry between coordination structures etc. that continue to frustrate the fight against violence against women and girls.

### ***Civil Society Organisations***

- ❑ Continuous sensitization of the general populace on the DVL/APPL and various anti-VAWG laws in the state, with priority given to riverine communities.
- ❑ Simplify, translate into major languages and pidgin, and popularize the VAPPL and other anti-VAWG laws of the state.
- ❑ Monitor the implementation of the VAPPL and track release of funds to ensure judicious use for the intended purposes.

### ***Development Partners***

- ❑ Provide strategic support to state actors working on different aspects of the implementation of the DVL/VAPPL and other anti-VAWG laws of Lagos State.
- ❑ Enhance the capacity of partners to collect and interpret data reflecting diversity and inclusion.
- ❑ Identify, engage with, and provide funding support (including institutional support) to CSOs actively working on ground to provide legal, medical and shelter to abused women and girls.

## MEDIUM-TERM

### *Lagos State House of Assembly*

- ❑ The House Committee on Women Affairs should prioritise the success of the VAP-PL in its oversight functions.

### *Lagos State Government*

- ❑ Integrate the DVL/VAPPL into the school curriculum when amended. Include the simplified version of the VAPPL in the reading list of primary school curriculum. This will go a long way in raising a next generation of anti-VAWG adults.
- ❑ Set up a response/implementation mechanism that would also be responsible for reporting, monitoring, evaluation, and learning.
- ❑ Facilitate an enhanced synergy of actors and coordination structures to sustain the fight against VAWG. through continuous learning, unlearning, and relearning to provide a more coordinated response to VAWG in the State.
- ❑ Strengthen the implementation/enforcement of the Child Rights Law and the Criminal Law to reflect best practices through increased public and grassroots awareness and by translating them into local languages.

### *Civil Society Organisations*

- ❑ Sensitise and collaborate with local level administration – traditional rulers and local government council leaders advocate the implementation of anti-VAWG laws to stop VAWG in the communities.
- ❑ Continuous sensitization of the general populace on the DVL/APPL and various anti-VAWG laws in the state, with priority to riverine communities.
- ❑ Partner with the media in holding the various government agencies accountable for the implementation of the anti-VAWG laws in the state.

#### Development Partners

- ❑ Undertake research on good practices in GBV response at national and sub-national levels and produce factsheets that facilitate peer learning.

## LONG TERM

### *Lagos State House of Assembly*

- ❑ Periodic review of the effectiveness of the Lagos State DVL/VAPPL and amendment as appropriate.
- ❑ The House Committee on Women Affairs should prioritise the success of the VAP-

PL in its oversight functions

### ***Lagos State Government***

- ❑ Set up and run shelters professionally to provide temporary safe place for women and girls running from abusive environments.
- ❑ Provide funding for frontline CSOs actively providing services to survivors.
- ❑ Establish a Survivors' Support Fund without further delay and provide clear management structure.
- ❑ Strengthen coordination structures by reinforcing existing anti-VAWG Laws for more effective implementation through knowledge and experience-sharing by members, training, and capacity building, thereby making them more accountable and more inter-dependent.
- ❑ Conduct periodic mental health checks of first responders to protect them from suffering secondary trauma

### ***Civil Society Organisations***

- ❑ Partner with the media in holding the various government agencies accountable for the implementation of the anti-VAWG laws in the state.
- ❑ Continuous advocacy and training to further build the capacities of stakeholders to strengthen the implementation of DVL/VAPPL and to ensure continuous learning that will make Lagos State a learning environment where everyone fully understands what their rights are and are free from all forms of violence.

### ***Development Partners***

- ❑ Enhance the capacity of lawmakers to periodically assess the effectiveness of the law and review as appropriate.

