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Nigeria: violence against women must stop

Women and girls in Nigeria are subjected to violence by members of their families and their communities. Please call on the Governor of Lagos State to support a bill against domestic violence and to publicly condemn violence against women.

It was "Folake" who was jailed after she accused a man of rape. A domestic worker, she said her employer's husband had forced her into his bedroom and made her watch a violent videotape before forcing her to have sex. A medical examination supported her allegation. Yet she was the one brought to court, charged with slander for making the accusation, and remanded in prison until her family could raise the bail money to have her released. The material evidence of the crime, handed over to the police, was later said to have disappeared. No charges were brought against the man she accused.

Women and girls in Nigeria are subjected to violence by members of their families and their communities. Husbands, partners and fathers are responsible for most of the violence against women. Such violence is all too frequently excused and tolerated, not denounced, and the Nigerian government fails to investigate and punish.

The violence persists because discriminatory laws condone and even legalize certain forms of violence against women. Dismissive attitudes within the police and an inaccessible justice system compound the failures of the state to protect women's rights.

The Lagos State House of Assembly is currently considering a state-level bill in Nigeria on violence in the family, which provides remedies under civil and criminal law. Lagos State is Nigeria's most populous state, containing within its borders the nation's economic capital. Moves to confront violence against women in Lagos are likely to have a major impact elsewhere in Nigeria.

Take Action!

Write to the Governor of Lagos urging him to support the state-level bill on violence in the family and to publicly condemn violence against women.

Sample letter

Dear Governor,

I welcome the current discussion of a "Domestic Violence and Other Related Matters Bill" by the Lagos House of Assembly.

In Nigeria, women suffer from violence in the family: they get 'punished' for supposed transgression, beaten, raped, or murdered.

If the Bill is passed, it will help to protect those women who face violence in the family.

The government of Lagos State, along with the federal government of Nigeria, have obligations under international human rights law to prevent violence against women and to assist women in escaping violence. Perpetrators must be prosecuted, and victims of violence given full support.

As the Governor of Lagos State, you have the power to make a difference for these women.

I urgently ask you to voice your support for the “Domestic Violence and Other Related Matters Bill” and undertake a thorough public education campaign on this issue. I urge you to publicly condemn violence against women: say it is never normal, legal or acceptable and that it is a human right abuse.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

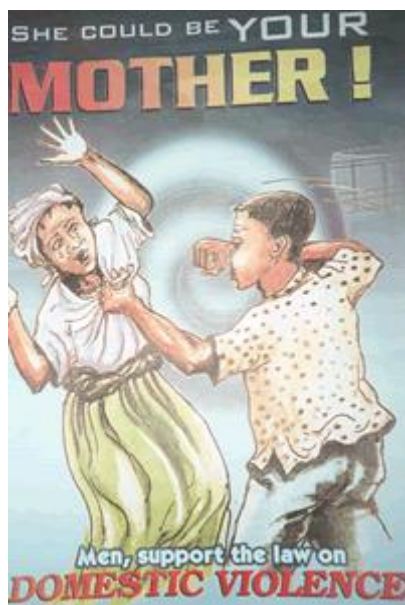
Yours sincerely,

Target contact details

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