

NBA-HRI Commences 16 Days Activism on Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls

In observance of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on November 25, 2023, the Human Rights Institute of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA-HRI) launches a fervent call for the comprehensive implementation of the Violence against Persons (Prohibition) Act 2015. This call aims to address and prevent all forms of violence against women and children.

As the world embarks on the 16 Days Activism against Gender-Based Violence, culminating on International Human Rights Day on December 10, 2023, NBA-HRI urges federal and state governments to prioritize and adopt the provisions of the VAPP Act. The Institute emphasizes the crucial need for a unified effort to curb gender-based violence and eliminate discriminatory practices.

The VAPP Act, enacted eight years ago, serves as a legislative tool against gender-based violence, encompassing domestic/spousal violence, harmful traditional practices like female genital mutilation, child marriages, rape, sexual assaults, workplace and school-related sexual harassment, gender discrimination in employment, remuneration, and public spaces, and harmful widowhood practices.

Despite the passage of the VAPP Act, only a few states have fully adopted its provisions, and none have established the necessary infrastructure for its complete implementation. NBA-HRI stresses that this vital legislation should be a top priority for all levels of government, as well as law enforcement and prosecution agencies.

NBA-HRI underlines the significance of the Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill, urging the National Assembly for its prompt enactment to domesticate the UN convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.

Highlighting the concerning statistics from the 2023 elections, where fewer women were elected or appointed compared to previous cycles, NBA-HRI emphasizes the detrimental impact of gender discrimination on Nigeria's growth. The Institute calls on the Nigerian government to take deliberate actions to prevent violence against women and address all forms of discrimination.

NBA-HRI specifically calls on ministries of justice at federal and state levels to establish specialized departments for prosecuting sexual and gender-based crimes. It urges all police divisions to set up specialized desks for investigating SGBV, and both federal and state judiciaries to establish specialized courts for expeditiously handling SGBV cases.

NBA-HRI expresses readiness to provide necessary support to state institutions to reduce impunity and eliminate violence against women and girls in Nigeria.

Dated 25th November 2023

Chino Obiagwu SAN
Chair NBA-HRI

Rashidat Muhammad
Secretary NBA-HRI