

Sender:

His Excellency Sullivan Chime  
Governor of Enugu State  
Abuja Building, Government House  
Enugu

**NIGERIA**

Date:

Your Excellency,

amnesty international has recently published the report "Rape –The Silent Weapon"(AI Index: AFR 44/020/2006). In this regard, I would like to emphasize that violence against women and girls, including rape, is a crime and a human rights violation. Especially when committed by members of the security forces, rape may amount to torture.

I share amnesty international's concern regarding the low level at which rape is reported by women in Nigeria, which is due to women's distrust in the judicial process. Authorities must ensure that victims of rape can report without obstacles and fear of repercussions and that the police acts in a professional manner without discriminatory attitudes towards the victims.

In this context, let me remind you of the case of two students. aged 17 and 18 years at the time, who in 2004 were abducted and repeatedly raped by three police officers, including a Deputy Superintendent, in Enugu State. They were threatened with arrest on trumped-up charges, and were forced to go with the police officers to the police detective college. From there, they were moved to the home of one of the men, where they were repeatedly raped. In January 2006, the two women told an amnesty international delegation about all these crimes.

The three police officers were first charged with rape and abduction by a magistrate's court in Enugu, but later the families of the victims were subjected to intimidation, including anonymous death threats, to coerce them into withdrawing the case. A senior police officer offered a bribe.

I therefore strongly support demands by amnesty international that:

1. state authorities collect systematic and comprehensive data on violence against women and make this information public, in order to gain knowledge of the extent of the problem and to be able to set targets to reduce it;
2. measures by state authorities be taken to ensure that victims of sexual violence and rape perpetrated by state actors have access to redress, including compensation and rehabilitation, and that sufficient resources be made available for shelters for victims of sexual violence;
3. a public education campaign about rape be initiated to challenge attitudes towards violence against women. This campaign should include the dissemination and display of advice in hospitals, primary health care centres, pharmacies, community centres, courts and relevant websites on how to report rape;
4. State authorities provide adequate funding for all health care facilities for treatment of victims of rape, including training of medical students and practitioners. In this context, the WHO Guidelines for medico-legal care of victims of sexual violence could be used.

I would appreciate if I could be informed about the measures your government has taken in order to combat violence against women and girls and to ensure assistance to its victims.

Yours sincerely,