



AFRICAN WOMEN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION (AWLA), NIGERIA CHAPTER

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PRESS STATEMENT

AFRICAN WOMEN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION (AWLA) NIGERIA CHAPTER.

AWLA CONDEMNS THE EGREGIOUS ABUSE OF 14-YEAR-OLD DOMESTIC WORKER AND THE STEP CHILDREN OF THE ALLEGED PERPETRATOR.

The African Women Lawyers Association (AWLA) Nigeria Chapter as an organisation is not only outraged but appalled by the recent case involving not only Bashirayya, a 14-year-old girl but also the step children of the alleged perpetrator, the wife of a sitting Sokoto High Court Judge who allegedly subjected these children to the most heinous and severe physical abuse. All these happened while 14 years old Bashirayya was working as a domestic worker in their home. It is both disturbing and disheartening that such a gross violation of child rights and human dignity occurred under the roof of a sitting judge, someone entrusted with interpreting and upholding the law. As an organization we have noted the following concerns:

1. Child Labour Violation.

The employment of a 14-year-old as a domestic worker is a clear breach of Nigeria's child labour laws, the Child Rights Act and all international treaties on the protection of a child. It is particularly egregious that this occurred not only in the home of a judicial officer, someone charged with interpreting and upholding these very laws but by his wife

2. Grave Physical Abuse

The extent of the physical harm inflicted upon Bashirayya and the other children is deeply troubling and underscores a pattern of abuse that must not be ignored. The little girl is not only traumatised but is said by some reports to be hallucinating. The law must take its full course to address such cruelty.

3. Culture of Impunity.

That the alleged abuser is the wife of a serving judge raises serious concerns about potential attempts to shield the perpetrator from justice. And the report that the alleged perpetrator has allegedly made comments that nothing will happen to her is not only preposterous but greatly misleading as no one, absolutely no one is above the law. Therefore, this case must not be treated with kid gloves nor swept under the carpet.

We therefore demand:

In light of the above, the:

1. Immediate and Impartial Investigation of this case.

A thorough, independent investigation into the circumstances of Bashirayya and other children's abuse, with no interference or preferential treatment for any party involved.

2. Justice and Accountability.

Full legal accountability for the perpetrator, regardless of status or connections. The law must be seen to be fair and effective.

3. Victim Protection and Rehabilitation

Immediate steps to guarantee the safety, medical care, psychological support, and long-term rehabilitation of Bashirayya and the other victims who were found in similar conditions.

We also call on:

The police, other relevant law enforcement agencies and Child Protection Agencies to act swiftly and decisively.

We call on like-minded Civil Society Organizations to unite in condemning this heinous abuse and amplify calls for justice.

We also urge the general public to remain vigilant and continue advocating for the protection of children across Nigeria. We especially thank the

neighbours who rushed Bashirayya to the hospital after she was dumped at her father's house by the alleged perpetrator.

This case must serve as a turning point in the fight against child abuse, exploitation, and the misuse of power.

Justice must be served. The rights of every child must be protected.

Together, let's demand accountability and uphold the dignity of every Nigerian child.

Signed,

AWLA NIGERIA CHAPTER



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African Women Lawyers Association (AWLA) Nigeria Chapter



AWLAN Oluwatoyin Ndidi Taiwo-ojo

Secretary

AWLA NIGERIA CHAPTER