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PHARMACY

19/MHS11/017

TOPIC; RAPE

In 2019 in the capital Abuja, some women who were arrested during a police raid accused officers of raping them.

They said the police accused them of being sex workers and while they were at the police station, they were repeatedly raped by officers.

The police denied the accusations and the matter is currently in court. Human rights campaigners have rallied in Nigeria's capital to raise awareness about violence against women after a series of high-profile rape cases sparked an outcry in the country. More than 200 protesters marched around police headquarters in Abuja, chanting slogans and holding banners that read "Justice for all Nigerian girls and women" and "No means no".

NEWS /NIGERIA

Nigerians take to streets to protest against sexual violence

Demonstrators in Abuja demand 'justice' after a series of high-profile rape cases sparked outrage in the country.

05 June 2020 GMT+3

Human rights campaigners have rallied in Nigeria's capital to raise awareness about violence against women after a series of high-profile rape cases sparked an outcry in the country.

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It was one of many activities planned by campaigners to call attention to the issue and urge politicians to allocate more funds to tackle sexual violence and ensure police independence.

The latest outpouring of anger has been unleashed by the cases of three women and girls who were killed or raped in incidents activists say showcase the widespread sexual violence in Nigeria.

#JusticeForUwa has been one of the hashtags trending on social media in the last week after Vera Uwaila Omosuwa, a 22-year-old student, died two days after she was reportedly raped in a church in the southern city of Benin.

"Children are dying, women are dying, enough is enough," Dorothy Njemanze, one of the protest organisers, was quoted as saying by Reuters news agency.

Njemanze said she and other campaigners were "watching every step of everything they [politicians] say and do on sexual based violence".

Nigeria's most senior policeman has ordered the immediate deployment of additional investigators to specialist gender violence desks, a police statement said on Tuesday.

"This is to strengthen and enhance the capacity of the units to respond to increasing challenges of sexual assaults and domestic/gender-based violence linked with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and other social ills within the country," it added. Two other recent cases have also prompted people to express their anger using the #JusticeForJennifer and #JusticeForTina rallying cries.

In April, an 18-year-old known only as Jennifer was allegedly attacked and raped by a gang of five men in Kaduna, a city in northern Nigeria.

The case gained attention only after her relatives - scared the accused would escape justice - released a video online of family comforting the traumatised teen that was shared tens of thousands of times.

Now, local police say two men have been arrested for the rape and three other suspects are being sought.

Meanwhile, a 16-year-old high school student called Tina Ezekwe was shot and killed after police opened fire at a bus stop in Lagos, the country's biggest city, during a nighttime coronavirus curfew. After an outcry online, the police force said two officers had been arrested and were facing disciplinary action and possible prosecution. The governors of Nigeria's 36 states have resolved to declare a state of emergency on rape following a spate of sexual violence against women, according to the Nigerian Governor's Forum (NGF).

Following its meeting this week, the Forum is calling on all states to set up a sex offenders register and to sign on to two federal laws which punish rape and violence against women and children.

The Forum has also invited the country's police heads to brief the governors on efforts they are making to tackle sexual and gender-based violence in Nigeria, NGF chair Kayode Fayemi said in the statement. The announcement comes amid outrage from women groups calling for justice following the brutal rape of two female students amid a string of violent incidents against several women in the country in recent weeks.

University student Uwaila Vera Omozuwa died a few days after she was attacked in a church in Benin city on May 27.

Her family told CNN she was raped and police said her attackers hit her with a fire

extinguisher during the assault.

Another college student Barakat Bello was raped and killed during an robbery attack in her home in Ibadan on June 1, according to human rights group Amnesty International.

Across the country, Nigerians have taken to the streets to demand urgent action on rape and justice for victims while Amnesty called on the Nigerian government to declare a "national crisis" on rape.