LAGOS STATE SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION POLICY



SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION POLICY

A Multi-sectoral Survivor-centered Approach to Tackling SGBV In Lagos State

2026

Developed by

LAGOS STATE DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGENCY

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COMMITMENT STATEMENT

PREAMBLE

Guided by the vision, aspirations and hopes of the founding fathers of Lagos State, which are underpinned by justice and progress for all and recalling that all residents of Lagos State (regardless of gender, creed or economic status) have certain universal, indivisible and inalienable human rights:

1. We acknowledge that all residents of Lagos State, including women and girls, have the right to thrive and harness their full potentials without the fear or threat of any form of sexual and gender-based violence;

2. The incidences of rape, sexual assault, domestic abuse and child abuse among other forms of sexual and gender-based violence perpetuated across Lagos State are appalling;

3. Being the Executive Arm of Government, we are aware of our role in maintaining a Zero Tolerance stance on sexual and gender-based violence towards creating a safer and more prosperous Lagos State for all;

4. We are convinced that the total commitment of the Lagos State Government is critical for transforming social norms that, enable sexual and gender-based violence, perpetuate inequality and clog the wheel of justice.

I, BABAJIDE O. SANWO-OLU hereby restate my commitment to the eradication of sexual and domestic violence in Lagos State. As an integral part of the Lagos State Executive Council, I commit to using the powers and privileges of my office as GOVERNOR OF LAGOS-STATE (within the ambit of the law) to end sexual and gender-based violence within the State. I further commit to actively collaborate with and support all relevant agencies towards engaging in strategic policy advocacy, sustaining preventive interventions, providing medical and psycho-social support and seeking justice for the survivors of sexual and gender-based violence.

This I pledge solemnly and freely on this **26th day of November 2019** at LAGOS

(Name and Signature of Committer)

Babajide Olusola Sanwo-Olu
Governor of Lagos State
Lagos House, Secretariat, Alausa, Ikeja, Lagos. Tel: 09017077777
E-mail: bosgov@lagosstate.gov.ng

Foreword

01

The true measure of a just and progressive society lies not merely in the laws it makes, but in its capacity to protect the dignity, safety and fundamental rights of every person. Justice is not confined to the resolution of disputes or the punishment of offenders. At its highest expression, justice seeks to prevent harm, protect the vulnerable and create an environment in which every individual can live with dignity, security and freedom from violence and discrimination.

It is this conviction that underpins the Lagos State Gender Based Violence Prevention Policy. Lagos State has, over the years, demonstrated strong leadership in the fight against Gender Based Violence through progressive legislation, institutional development and survivor centred interventions. The enactment and implementation of relevant laws, including the Domestic and Sexual Violence-related legislation, the Criminal Law of Lagos State and the Child Rights Law, together with the establishment of the Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency, have significantly strengthened the State's legal and institutional response to Gender Based Violence.

These measures have enhanced our capacity to protect victims and survivors, hold perpetrators accountable and facilitate access to justice. However, our experience has also taught us an important lesson: a justice system that responds effectively after violence has occurred is necessary, but a society that prevents violence from occurring in the first place is even more desirable.

The adoption of this Policy therefore represents an important evolution in our collective response to Gender Based Violence. It marks a deliberate movement beyond a predominantly reactive approach towards a comprehensive and preventive framework that addresses the social, cultural, economic and institutional conditions that allow violence to occur and persist.

Prevention cannot be the responsibility of the justice sector alone. It is a shared responsibility. It requires the commitment of government institutions, families, schools, communities, traditional and religious institutions, healthcare providers, workplaces, the media, civil society organisations, the private sector and, most importantly, every citizen.

The Lagos State Gender Based Violence Prevention Policy provides a strategic framework for embedding prevention across all sectors of society. It seeks to promote coordinated and sustained action towards building a culture in which respect, equality, dignity, safety and nonviolence are not merely stated ideals, but values that are reflected in our homes, schools, workplaces and communities.

The Ministry of Justice remains firmly committed to supporting the effective implementation of this Policy. We will continue to strengthen the legal framework, promote institutional collaboration, support effective enforcement and ensure that the justice system remains accessible, responsive, fair and survivor centered.

Mr. Lawal Pedro, SAN

The Honourable Attorney-General
and Commissioner for Justice, Lagos State

Foreword

01

We recognise, however, that legal intervention alone cannot eliminate Gender Based Violence. Sustainable prevention requires a broader societal transformation.

It requires us to challenge harmful social norms, strengthen families, empower young people, promote responsible relationships and ensure that every individual understands that violence, abuse and discrimination have no place in a modern and just society.

As Attorney-General, I firmly believe that the rule of law achieves its highest purpose when it protects the vulnerable, safeguards human dignity and creates the conditions in which every individual can fulfil his or her potential. This Policy advances that vision by placing prevention at the heart of our collective response and by giving every sector of society a defined role in creating a safer Lagos.

I commend the Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency for its leadership in the development of this important Policy. I equally acknowledge the contributions of the various Ministries, Departments and Agencies, development partners, civil society organisations, professional bodies, traditional and religious institutions, academia, youth representatives, community leaders and other stakeholders whose expertise and commitment have contributed to this document. The success of this Policy will depend on our collective determination to translate its commitments into concrete action.

Government cannot do this alone.

Our ambition must therefore be clear: to build a Lagos where every person is protected from Gender Based Violence, where survivors receive justice and support, where perpetrators are held accountable, and where, through effective prevention, many never have to experience violence in the first place.

Together, let us build a Lagos where justice is not only done, but where prevention becomes the first and most enduring form of justice.

Mr. Lawal Pedro, SAN

The Honourable Attorney-General
and Commissioner for Justice, Lagos State

Commitment Statement

By the Honorable Chief Judge of Lagos State

02

It is with profound conviction that I endorse the Lagos State Gender Based Violence Prevention Policy. A practical framework is long overdue, reflecting our shared commitment to protecting the dignity, rights and safety of every resident of Lagos State.

The Lagos State Judiciary is entrusted with upholding the Constitution, protecting fundamental rights, interpreting the law without fear or favour, and ensuring that justice remains accessible to all, particularly the vulnerable. Every day, our courts bear witness to the devastating consequences of Gender Based Violence. Behind every case file is a life interrupted. Behind every exhibit is a story of pain. Behind every judgment is a survivor seeking not only legal redress, but the restoration of dignity, safety and hope.

The Lagos State Judiciary remains steadfast in ensuring that perpetrators of crime are held accountable in accordance with the law. Experience has taught us that justice cannot begin only after violence has occurred. The greatest achievement of any justice system is not measured solely by the number of convictions secured, but by the number of lives protected from harm through effective prevention.

Gender Based Violence Offences before our Court are overwhelming. Violence leaves scars that extend far beyond the courtrooms. It fractures families, disrupts education, affects economic productivity and undermines the social cohesion upon which peaceful societies depend. For these reasons, prevention must become a central pillar of our collective response.

The Lagos State Gender Based Violence Prevention Policy reflects a progressive and forward-looking vision. It acknowledges that preventing violence requires more than legislation alone. It demands stronger families, informed communities, responsive institutions, effective safeguarding systems and sustained collaboration across every sector of society.

The Lagos State Judiciary has consistently demonstrated its commitment to ensuring timely access to justice for survivors through specialized courts, continuous judicial education, improved case management and close collaboration with justice sector institutions. The Lagos State Judiciary has since 2018 set-up specialized Courts at the High Court level for Sexual Violence Offences. Also, Specialized Family Courts and Courts for Domestic Violence at the Magistrate Courts level.

As a corollary to the above, the Lagos State Judiciary has put in place a Practice Direction for Protection Order Against Domestic Violence since 2019. The various Specialized Courts in Lagos State have recorded various convictions of those found guilty of Domestic and Sexual Violence Offences.

We remain committed to strengthening these efforts while supporting initiatives that reduce the incidence of violence and promote respect for the rule of law. Its successful implementation will require continued partnership, mutual accountability and an unwavering commitment to the principles of justice, equality and human dignity.

Hon. Justice Kazeem Olanrewaju Alogba

Chief Judge of Lagos State

JOINT LEGISLATIVE COMMITMENT TO THE PREVENTION OF SEXUAL AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE IN LAGOS STATE



By the Chairmen, House Committees on Judiciary, Human Rights, Public Petitions and LASIEC; and Women Affairs, Poverty Alleviation and Job Creation, 10th Assembly, Lagos State House of Assembly

The Lagos State House of Assembly recognises that the prevention of Gender Based Violence is fundamental to the protection of human dignity, the wellbeing of families and communities, and the sustainable development of Lagos State.

As legislators and representatives of the people, we recognise that our responsibility extends beyond responding to violence after it has occurred. We have a duty to help create the legal, institutional and social conditions that make violence less likely to occur in the first place.

The Lagos State Gender Based Violence Prevention Policy represents an important step in that direction. It provides an opportunity to strengthen the State's approach by placing prevention alongside protection, response, access to justice and survivor support.

We therefore welcome and endorse the Policy and commit to supporting its effective implementation within the constitutional and legislative responsibilities of the Lagos State House of Assembly.

We recognise that laws are essential, but laws alone cannot change society.

A law can prohibit violence, prescribe sanctions and establish institutions. However, sustainable prevention also requires changes in attitudes, behaviours, systems and social norms. It requires families, schools, communities, workplaces, religious and traditional institutions, civil society, Government and citizens to understand that violence must never be normalised, excused or concealed.

As Chairmen of the relevant Committees of the Lagos State House of Assembly, we jointly commit to providing legislative leadership in support of this prevention agenda. We will continue to support a strong and responsive legal framework for the prevention of and response to Gender Based Violence, while identifying and addressing legislative gaps that may impede the protection of women, children and other persons vulnerable to abuse.

We will use our oversight responsibilities to encourage effective implementation of relevant laws, policies and programmes and to promote accountability among institutions entrusted with prevention, protection, investigation, prosecution, social support and access to justice.

We recognise that policy commitments must also be matched by resources. We will therefore advocate, within the legislative and appropriation processes of the House, for sustainable and appropriate investment in prevention and response, including interventions that strengthen community engagement, safeguarding, survivor support, access to justice, behavioural change and institutional capacity.

We will continue to champion the rights, safety and dignity of women and girls while supporting prevention approaches that meaningfully engage men and boys as partners in changing harmful attitudes and behaviours.

We will also use our positions as representatives of the people to take the prevention conversation beyond the walls of the House of Assembly and into our constituencies. Communities must understand the law, know where to seek help, recognise early warning signs and reject the culture of silence that allows violence to persist.

We therefore commit to strengthening collaboration with the Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency, relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies, the Judiciary, law enforcement agencies, civil society organisations, development partners, traditional and religious institutions, professional bodies, communities and, importantly, survivors and survivor advocates.

We also recognise the importance of data and evidence. As implementation progresses, we encourage clear indicators, transparent reporting and periodic assessment of outcomes so that Lagos State can understand what is working, identify gaps and continuously improve its prevention interventions.

The publication of this Policy must not represent the end of a policy development process. It must mark the beginning of sustained action. We therefore pledge to use the instruments available to us as legislators, including legislation, oversight, appropriation, advocacy and representation, to support the implementation and sustainability of the Lagos State Gender Based Violence Prevention Policy.

Our aspiration is a Lagos where a woman does not have to live in fear within her own home. Where a child can grow and learn without abuse. Where a male survivor is not stigmatised for speaking out against abuse. Where perpetrators understand that violence has consequences. Where communities intervene rather than look away.

And ultimately, where prevention becomes a responsibility shared by every institution and every resident. The true measure of our commitment will not be the policies we endorse or the laws we pass. It will be the lives made safer because we acted.

On behalf of the relevant Committees of the Lagos State House of Assembly, we affirm our commitment to working towards a Lagos where safety is a right, dignity is protected, accountability is assured, and violence has no place to hide.

Hon. Ladi Ajomale
Chairman
House Committee on
Judiciary, Human Rights,
Public Petitions and LASIEC

Hon. (Dr.) Princess Omolora Oyekan-Olumegbon
Chairman
House Committee on Women Affairs, Poverty Alleviation and Job Creation

For and on behalf of the Lagos State House of Assembly

Commitment Statement

03

By the Honorable Commissioner, Ministry of Women Affairs and Poverty Alleviation

It gives me immense pleasure to endorse the Lagos State Gender Based Violence Prevention Policy, a landmark document that reflects our unwavering commitment to building a Lagos where every woman, man, girl and boy can live free from violence, fear and discrimination.

Gender Based Violence is not merely a violation of human rights; it is a threat to the wellbeing of families, the stability of communities and the sustainable development of our society. Its consequences extend far beyond individual survivors, affecting public health, education, economic productivity and social cohesion.

Addressing this challenge therefore requires more than reactive interventions. It requires deliberate, coordinated and sustained efforts to prevent violence before it occurs.

This Policy marks an important shift in our approach. While Lagos State has made remarkable progress in strengthening survivor support services, improving access to justice and enhancing institutional responses, we recognize that our greatest success will be measured not only by the cases we respond to, but by the violence we prevent.

The Prevention Policy reflects the understanding that preventing Gender Based Violence is a shared responsibility. Government alone cannot achieve this goal. Families, schools, workplaces, faith-based organizations, community leaders, civil society, the private sector and every resident of Lagos have a vital role to play in challenging harmful norms, promoting respectful relationships and creating safe environments where everyone can thrive.

As the Ministry charged with advancing the welfare, empowerment and protection of women and vulnerable groups, we remain steadfast in our commitment to championing policies and programs that strengthen families, promote gender equality and protect the dignity of every resident.

I commend all Ministries, Departments and Agencies, civil society organizations, professional bodies and all stakeholders whose expertise, dedication and collaborative spirit have culminated in the development of this Policy.

Your collective contributions demonstrate what can be achieved when we unite around a common purpose.

As we commence implementation, I encourage every stakeholder to embrace this Policy not merely as a government document, but as a collective pledge to future generations. Let us continue to foster a culture where respect, empathy and nonviolence become the norm, and where every child, every woman and every man can realize their full potential in safety and dignity.

I look forward to a Lagos where prevention is prioritized, protection is guaranteed and violence has no place in our homes, our communities or our future. Violence is not inevitable, and Lagos does not have to wait for the next case to prove it. Prevention starts now, and it starts with each one of us.

Hon. (Mrs.) Bolaji Cecilia Dada

Honourable Commissioner
Ministry of Women Affairs and Poverty Alleviation
Lagos State

Commitment Statement

04

By the Honorable Commissioner, Ministry of Youth and Social Development

It is with a deep sense of responsibility and optimism that I endorse the Lagos State Gender Based Violence Prevention Policy, a timely and necessary framework that reflects our collective resolve to build a society where every child, young person and family can thrive in safety, dignity and hope.

Gender Based Violence is not only a violation of human rights; it is a significant barrier to social development and the attainment of our collective aspirations as a State. It disrupts childhood, weakens families, limits educational attainment, undermines economic productivity and erodes the social fabric upon which resilient communities are built.

Globally, the evidence is compelling. The United Nations Children's Fund estimates that more than one billion children between the ages of 2 and 17 experience some form of violence each year. That is not a distant statistic; it is a warning about the world we are shaping for the next generation, and a reminder that this is a preventable challenge that demands coordinated action.

For young people, the consequences are particularly profound. Exposure to violence is associated with poorer educational outcomes, mental health challenges, substance misuse, risky behaviors, unemployment and an increased likelihood of either experiencing or perpetrating violence later in life. Left unaddressed, these outcomes undermine not only individual potential but also the long-term social and economic development of our communities.

As the Ministry responsible for youth development, child welfare and social services, we recognize that prevention begins long before violence occurs. It begins with strengthening families, empowering parents and caregivers, supporting vulnerable children, creating safe spaces for young people, promoting positive social norms and ensuring that every child grows up in an environment where respect, empathy and non-violence are modelled and reinforced.

This administration has backed that commitment with investment: in child protection systems, expanded social welfare services, stronger alternative care arrangements, support for vulnerable families, and closer collaboration with sister Ministries, Departments and Agencies to provide coordinated support for those at risk.

The Lagos State Gender Based Violence Prevention Policy provides an important framework to deepen these efforts. It recognizes that preventing violence requires sustained investment in young people, stronger community-based interventions and coordinated social protection systems that address the underlying drivers of vulnerability before harm occurs.

Its successful implementation will depend on our continued willingness to work together across sectors and disciplines, recognizing that no single institution can prevent Gender Based Violence alone.

As we move forward, let us recommit ourselves to building a Lagos where every child is protected, every young person is empowered and every family is strengthened. Because when we invest in the safety and wellbeing of our young people, we are investing in the future prosperity, stability and resilience of our State.

Roads and buildings can wait a budget cycle. Children cannot wait for their childhood back. Protect our children, strengthen our families, empower our youth today, and opportunity will take the place violence used to occupy.

Hon. Mobolaji Abubakre Ogunlende

Honourable Commissioner
Ministry of Youth and Social Development
Lagos State

Commitment Statement

05

By the Commissioner of Police, Lagos State Police Command

It is my pleasure to endorse the Lagos State Gender Based Violence Prevention Policy, an important milestone in our collective efforts to build a safer Lagos where every resident can live free from violence, fear and intimidation.

As law enforcement officers, we are entrusted with protecting lives, preserving public order and ensuring that offenders are brought to justice. Yet, experience has consistently shown us that while effective investigation and prosecution remain indispensable, our greatest success will always be measured by the crimes that never occur.

Gender Based Violence remains one of the most pervasive crimes affecting individuals, families and communities across the world. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, approximately 85,000 women and girls were intentionally killed globally in 2023, with around 60 per cent of these deaths committed by intimate partners or other family members.

The World Health Organization further estimates that one in three women worldwide experience physical or sexual violence during their lifetime. These figures remind us that violence often occurs in places where people should feel safest—the home, the family and trusted relationships.

For the Police, every report of Gender Based Violence represents more than a criminal complaint. It is often the culmination of repeated abuse, fear, intimidation and missed opportunities for earlier intervention.

This is why prevention must become everyone's business. The Lagos State Police Command has, over the years, strengthened its response through the expansion of Family Support Units, specialized training for investigators, closer collaboration with prosecutors, healthcare providers, social welfare professionals and the Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency. These partnerships have significantly improved survivor support, investigations, evidence management and access to justice.

However, policing alone cannot eliminate Gender Based Violence. No police officer is present in every home. No patrol vehicle can monitor every relationship. No criminal investigation can undo the lifelong trauma experienced by a survivor.

The most effective policing therefore begins long before an offence is committed. It begins in homes where respect is taught, in schools where positive values are nurtured, in communities where abuse is reported without fear, and in institutions that refuse to tolerate violence in any form.

The Lagos State Gender Based Violence Prevention Policy provides a framework for precisely this kind of whole-of-society response. It recognizes that preventing violence requires strong institutions, informed communities, effective safeguarding systems, early reporting mechanisms and sustained collaboration across government, civil society, the private sector and citizens.

The Lagos State Police Command remains fully committed to implementing this Policy and to working with all stakeholders to strengthen prevention, encourage timely reporting, improve investigative outcomes and ensure that perpetrators are held accountable in accordance with the law.

I commend the Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency, the Ministry of Women Affairs and Poverty Alleviation, our sister Ministries, Departments and Agencies, development partners and every stakeholder whose dedication and expertise have contributed to the development of this Policy.

As we move into implementation, let us remember that safety is not created by law enforcement alone. It is created when communities reject violence, when institutions work together, and when every citizen understands that protecting the vulnerable is a shared responsibility.

That is the Lagos the Command is working to build: swift justice, supported survivors, accountable offenders, and violence stopped before it starts. Arrest numbers will always matter to this Command. But they are a record of what already went wrong. The truer measure is the crime report that never gets filed, because someone was protected before it happened.

CP Tijani Fatai
Honourable Commissioner of Police
Lagos State Police Command

Commitment Statement

06

By the Honourable Commissioner, Ministry of Health

It is with great conviction that I endorse the Lagos State Gender Based Violence Prevention Policy, a landmark framework that reinforces our collective commitment to safeguarding the health, dignity and wellbeing of every resident of Lagos State.

As healthcare professionals, we often encounter the consequences of Gender Based Violence long before they become court cases or media headlines.

We see them in emergency rooms, maternity wards, pediatrics clinics, mental health facilities and primary healthcare centers.

We see them in women living with life-threatening injuries inflicted by intimate partners; children carrying physical and emotional scars of abuse; survivors struggling with depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress; and families whose health and wellbeing have been profoundly affected by violence.

The evidence is clear. The World Health Organization estimates that approximately one in three women worldwide experiences physical and/or sexual violence during her lifetime, making Gender Based Violence one of the most pervasive public health challenges of our time. Violence contributes significantly to maternal health complications, unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections, chronic illnesses, poor mental health outcomes and preventable deaths.

Children exposed to violence, whether as victims or witnesses, are also more likely to experience developmental delays, behavioral challenges, poor educational outcomes and long-term health conditions that can persist well into adulthood. These are not simply individual tragedies. They represent a substantial burden on healthcare systems, economic productivity and national development.

For this reason, prevention is not only a moral imperative; it is a public health necessity.

In recent years, Lagos State has strengthened survivor-centered healthcare services, expanded access to Sexual Assault Referral Centers, improved forensic medical capacity, integrated psychosocial support into healthcare delivery and deepened collaboration between the health sector, law enforcement, social welfare and justice institutions.

This Policy represents the next evolution of that commitment.

It recognizes that while quality healthcare is essential in helping survivors recover, the greatest measure of success is preventing violence from occurring in the first place.

The Ministry of Health fully supports this shift towards prevention through stronger community engagement, early identification of risk factors, health promotion, public education, trauma-informed care and integrated service delivery.

Healthcare workers are often among the first professionals to encounter survivors. We therefore have a unique responsibility not only to treat injuries, but also to identify abuse, provide compassionate care, document evidence appropriately, facilitate timely referrals and contribute to broader prevention efforts.

My appreciation goes to our sister Ministries, Departments and Agencies, development partners, healthcare professionals, civil society organizations and all stakeholders whose collaboration has culminated in this important Policy.

Its successful implementation will require the continued commitment of every sector.

A health system that only treats the consequences of violence has already failed half its mandate. Ours must also work to prevent it.

Every health facility in this State can become a place of safety, hope and healing, if we commit to that standard together.

Healthier families build healthier communities, and healthier communities build a stronger State. That is the outcome the Ministry of Health is working toward.

A strong health system treats the wounds violence leaves behind. The strongest health system stops those wounds from happening in the first place.

Prof. Akin Abayomi, CON

Honourable Commissioner for Health, Lagos State

Commitment Statement

07

By the Honourable Commissioner for Economic Planning and Budget, Lagos State

The Lagos State Government has consistently demonstrated that sustainable development is achieved when economic growth is matched by deliberate investments in the wellbeing, dignity and protection of its people. As the State continues to pursue inclusive growth and long-term prosperity, we recognise that Gender Based Violence (GBV) remains a significant social and economic challenge with far-reaching consequences for individuals, families, communities and the overall development of our State.

Beyond its devastating human impact, Gender Based Violence undermines productivity, weakens human capital, increases healthcare and justice sector costs, disrupts educational attainment and constrains the economic participation of women, girls and other vulnerable groups. A society cannot attain its full development potential when violence limits the opportunities, safety and wellbeing of its people.

The Lagos State Gender Based Violence Prevention Policy reflects our collective determination to address these challenges by placing prevention at the centre of our response. This Policy acknowledges that preventing violence is not solely a social responsibility but also a strategic development priority that contributes directly to stronger institutions, healthier communities, improved educational outcomes and inclusive economic growth.

The Ministry of Economic Planning and Budget is proud to support this Policy as part of our commitment to ensuring that development planning across Lagos State remains people-centred, evidence-driven and inclusive. We recognise that effective prevention requires coordinated planning, sustainable financing and the integration of GBV prevention priorities into sectoral policies, programmes and budgets.

Accordingly, the Ministry is committed to supporting the implementation of this Policy by:

- Integrating Gender Based Violence prevention priorities into the State's development planning and medium-term strategic frameworks.
- Promoting evidence-based planning through the use of reliable data, research and performance monitoring to inform policy decisions and resource allocation.
- Supporting the mainstreaming of GBV prevention considerations across Ministries, Departments and Agencies to strengthen a coordinated whole-ofgovernment response.
- Encouraging the incorporation of prevention-focused interventions into sector plans, annual work programmes and budget processes, in line with the State's development priorities.
- Strengthening monitoring and evaluation systems to track implementation progress, measure impact and support continuous policy improvement.
- Facilitating strategic partnerships with development partners, civil society organisations, the private sector and other stakeholders to mobilise technical expertise and resources for sustainable implementation.

Mr. Ope George

Honourable Commissioner
Lagos State Ministry of Economic Planning and Budget

Commitment Statement

By the Honourable Commissioner for Economic Planning and Budget, Lagos State

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The successful implementation of this Policy will require more than financial investment. It will require sustained political commitment, institutional collaboration, innovation and shared accountability. Every Ministry, Department and Agency has a role to play in ensuring that prevention becomes embedded within our planning processes, service delivery systems and community engagement efforts.

As we look towards the future, we remain committed to building a Lagos where every resident can live free from violence, where women and girls can realise their full potential, where families flourish and where communities are strengthened through peace, dignity and mutual respect.

The Lagos State Gender Based Violence Prevention Policy represents an important investment in our people and in the future of our State. By working together to prevent violence before it occurs, we are strengthening the foundations of inclusive development and creating an environment where every individual has the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to the continued progress and prosperity of Lagos State.

The Ministry of Economic Planning and Budget reaffirms its unwavering commitment to supporting the successful implementation of this Policy. Together, through strategic planning, responsible stewardship of public resources and collective action, we can build a safer, more equitable and more prosperous Lagos for this generation and those yet to come.

Mr. Ope George

Honourable Commissioner
Lagos State Ministry of Economic Planning and Budget

Commitment Statement

08

By the Honorable Commissioner for Tertiary Education, Lagos State

Education has always been recognized as one of the most powerful instruments for shaping societies, transforming lives and securing sustainable development. Within our tertiary institutions, we nurture future leaders, professionals, innovators and change makers whose values and actions will influence generations to come. It is therefore imperative that these institutions remain environments where every student, lecturer and member of staff is treated with dignity, respect and fairness, and where violence in all its forms has no place.

The Lagos State Gender Based Violence Prevention Policy reflects a bold and forward-looking commitment by the Lagos State Government to move beyond responding to incidents of Gender Based Violence towards creating systems that prevent violence before it occurs. This preventive approach recognises that institutions of higher learning occupy a unique position in shaping attitudes, challenging harmful social norms and promoting cultures of equality, respect and accountability.

Our universities, polytechnics, colleges of education and other tertiary institutions are not only centres of academic excellence but also communities where young adults develop lifelong values, relationships and leadership skills. They therefore have a critical responsibility to cultivate learning environments that uphold human dignity, promote inclusion and empower students to become advocates for positive social change.

The Ministry of Tertiary Education fully aligns with the vision and aspirations of this Policy and reaffirms its unwavering commitment to ensuring that Gender Based Violence prevention becomes an integral component of institutional governance, student welfare and campus life across all State-owned tertiary institutions.

Accordingly, the Ministry is committed to:

- Mainstreaming Gender Based Violence prevention into policies, governance frameworks and student support systems across all State-owned tertiary institutions.
- Promoting safe, inclusive and respectful learning environments where every student and member of staff can learn, teach and work free from violence, harassment, intimidation and discrimination.
- Strengthening institutional capacity through continuous training for academic and nonacademic staff, student affairs professionals, counsellors and institutional leaders on prevention, safeguarding and appropriate response mechanisms.
- Encouraging the integration of Gender Based Violence prevention, healthy relationships, consent, digital safety, respect and responsible citizenship into orientation programmes, leadership development initiatives and relevant co-curricular activities.
- Supporting the establishment and strengthening of accessible reporting mechanisms, counselling services and referral pathways that are survivor-centred, confidential and responsive.
- Promoting student-led advocacy, peer education and campus-wide awareness initiatives that foster positive behaviours and challenge harmful stereotypes and social norms.
- Collaborating with the Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency, other Ministries, Departments and Agencies, development partners, student associations and civil society organisations to strengthen prevention efforts and share good practice.
- Supporting research, innovation and evidence generation on Gender Based Violence prevention to inform institutional policy and continuous improvement.

Hon. Tolani Sule Akibu

Honourable Commissioner
Lagos State Ministry of Tertiary Education

Commitment Statement

08

By the Honorable Commissioner for Tertiary Education, Lagos State

The Ministry recognises that creating violence-free campuses requires more than policies and procedures. It requires leadership that models integrity, institutions that prioritise student wellbeing and campus communities that collectively reject all forms of abuse, exploitation and discrimination. It also requires young people to recognise their shared responsibility in building relationships founded on mutual respect, equality and accountability.

As centres of knowledge and innovation, our tertiary institutions have an opportunity to lead societal transformation by producing graduates who are not only academically accomplished but also socially responsible, ethically grounded and committed to advancing justice and human dignity.

The implementation of this Policy provides an opportunity to strengthen that legacy. By embedding prevention within our institutions today, we are equipping future leaders with the values, knowledge and confidence to create safer workplaces, healthier families and stronger communities tomorrow.

The Ministry of Tertiary Education therefore pledges its full support for the successful implementation of the Lagos State Gender Based Violence Prevention Policy. We remain committed to working collaboratively with all stakeholders to ensure that every tertiary institution in Lagos State becomes a model of safety, inclusion, respect and excellence.

Together, we can build campuses where learning flourishes without fear, leadership is guided by integrity, and every student is empowered to fulfil their potential in an environment defined by dignity, opportunity and hope.

Hon. Tolani Sule Akibu

Honourable Commissioner
Lagos State Ministry of Tertiary Education

Commitment Statement

09

By the Honorable Commissioner for Tertiary Education, Lagos State

It is with great pleasure that I endorse the Lagos State Gender Based Violence Prevention Policy, a forward-looking framework that reflects our collective determination to build a safer, more inclusive and more compassionate Lagos for every child and every resident.

Education is about far more than literacy and academic achievement. It is about shaping values, developing character and preparing young people to become responsible citizens who contribute positively to society.

The classroom is often the first place where children learn about respect, empathy, equality, personal responsibility and healthy relationships. It is also one of the earliest environments where signs of abuse, neglect and violence may become visible. This places our schools and educators at the very heart of prevention.

Research consistently demonstrates that children who learn in safe, inclusive and supportive environments are more likely to achieve better educational outcomes, enjoy improved mental wellbeing and develop the social and emotional skills that reduce the likelihood of violence later in life. Conversely, exposure to violence can undermine learning, diminish self-esteem, increase absenteeism, affect behavior and compromise a child's ability to reach their full potential.

For these reasons, safeguarding learners is not an activity that exists alongside education; it is fundamental to the delivery of quality education itself.

Within our schools, real progress has been made on child protection: safeguarding initiatives, awareness programmes, teacher capacity building and stronger collaboration between the education sector and child protection agencies. These efforts have reinforced our belief that schools must remain places where every learner feels safe, valued and protected.

The Gender Based Violence Prevention Policy builds upon this foundation by recognizing education as one of the most effective vehicles for prevention. It challenges us to nurture a generation that rejects violence, embraces mutual respect and understands that dignity and equality are values to be practiced every day.

The Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education remains committed to working with school administrators, teachers, counsellors, parents, development partners and communities to strengthen safeguarding systems, promote positive behavioural change and ensure that our schools continue to provide environments where children can learn without fear.

As we move into implementation, let us remember that every lesson taught with compassion, every child protected from harm and every school that embraces safeguarding contributes to building a stronger Lagos. Because when we protect our children, we protect their future. And when we protect their future, we strengthen the future of our State.

Years from now, what our schools taught will matter less than who our students became. A generation raised in safety, and taught to build safety for others, is the legacy we owe them.

Hon. Jamiu Tolani Alli-Balogun

Honourable Commissioner
Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education
Lagos State

Commitment Statement

10

By Women's Rights & Health Project,
Representing Non-Governmental Organisations
and Civil Society Organisations

The adoption of the Lagos State Gender Based Violence Prevention Policy represents an important milestone in our collective effort to build a society where every person can live with dignity, safety and freedom from violence.

For civil society organisations, this commitment is deeply rooted in the realities we encounter every day. We work within communities. We listen to survivors. We support families in crisis. We encounter women, men, girls and boys whose lives have been altered by violence. We see the consequences of harmful social norms, inequality, silence and stigma. We also witness the extraordinary courage of survivors who choose to speak, seek help, rebuild their lives and, in many cases, become advocates for others.

These experiences have taught us an important lesson: we cannot wait until violence occurs before we act.

While strong laws, effective institutions, access to justice and quality survivor services remain indispensable, the sustainable reduction of Gender Based Violence requires us to address the conditions that allow violence to take root. We must challenge harmful norms, strengthen families, educate young people, engage men and boys, empower women and girls, and build communities that refuse to tolerate abuse.

The Lagos State Gender Based Violence Prevention Policy provides an important framework for achieving this. Its emphasis on prevention recognises that Gender Based Violence is neither a private matter nor the responsibility of one government institution. It is a societal challenge that demands a whole of government and whole of society response.

As representatives of civil society and non governmental organisations, we welcome this approach and affirm our commitment to its successful implementation.

We commit to working alongside Government, communities and other stakeholders to:

- deepen community based prevention interventions that address the underlying drivers of Gender Based Violence;
- continue to amplify the voices and lived experiences of survivors and ensure that their dignity, safety, choices and agency remain central to prevention and response efforts;
- strengthen public awareness and community education on Gender Based Violence, healthy relationships, equality, consent, respect and available support services;
- engage women and girls as active participants in shaping solutions that affect their safety, wellbeing and economic independence;
- intentionally engage men and boys as partners in prevention and promote positive models of masculinity founded on respect, responsibility and non violence;
- work with children and young people to challenge harmful stereotypes early and equip a new generation with the values and skills required to build healthy and respectful relationships;
- strengthen partnerships with traditional institutions, religious organisations, community leaders, market and trade associations, professional groups and grassroots networks to ensure that prevention reaches people where they live, learn, work and worship;
- provide technical expertise, research, evidence and community level insights to support effective implementation and continuous improvement of the Policy;
- strengthen referral pathways and collaboration between community organisations and government institutions so that persons requiring support can access appropriate services promptly and safely;

Mrs. Bose Ironsi
Founder
Women's Rights and Health Project/ Ireti Resource Centre

Commitment Statement

10

By Women's Rights & Health Project,
Representing Non-Governmental Organisations
and Civil Society Organisations

- advocate for adequate and sustainable resources for Gender Based Violence prevention and survivor support; and
- continue to play our essential role as independent advocates and accountability partners, constructively engaging Government and other institutions to ensure that the commitments contained in this Policy translate into meaningful action.

Our commitment to partnership does not diminish the important responsibility of civil society to ask difficult questions, identify gaps and advocate for those whose voices may otherwise go unheard. Rather, genuine partnership must create space for constructive challenge, transparency and shared learning.

We therefore commit ourselves not only to supporting the implementation of this Policy, but also to helping ensure that its impact is felt beyond conference rooms, policy documents and institutional reports. Its impact must reach the woman experiencing violence behind closed doors.

It must reach the child growing up in a home where abuse has become normalised.

It must reach the young person learning what love and relationships should look like.

It must reach communities where harmful practices have endured for generations.

And it must reach survivors who need to know that they are seen, believed, supported and never alone.

The development of this Policy also reminds us of the power of collaboration. Government brings institutional authority and resources. Civil society brings grassroots experience, innovation, advocacy and proximity to communities. Development partners bring technical expertise and support. Communities bring local knowledge and ownership. Survivors bring lived experience that must continue to inform our interventions.

None of us can end Gender Based Violence alone. Together, however, we can change the conditions that allow it to thrive. On behalf of civil society organisations and non governmental organisations working across Lagos State, I commend the Lagos State Government and the Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency for creating a platform through which prevention can become a shared and coordinated responsibility.

We pledge to remain active partners in this journey. We will continue to speak.

We will continue to serve. We will continue to challenge harmful norms. We will continue to stand with survivors.

And we will continue to work towards a Lagos where preventing Gender Based Violence is embedded not only in Government policy, but in the values, behaviours and everyday choices of our communities.

The success of this Policy will ultimately be measured by what changes in people's lives. When homes become safer, when communities no longer protect perpetrators with silence, when young people choose respect over violence, and when survivors can seek help without fear or shame, then we will know that our collective commitment has become collective impact. Civil society stands ready to play its part.

Mrs. Bose Ironsi
Founder
Women's Rights and Health Project/ Ireti Resource Centre

Acknowledgements

The development of the Lagos State Gender Based Violence Prevention Policy represents the culmination of extensive consultation, technical expertise, institutional collaboration and a shared determination to build a Lagos where every individual can live free from violence, abuse and fear.

This Policy is, therefore, much more than the work of any single institution. It is the product of many voices, perspectives and experiences brought together by one common purpose: to move beyond responding to Gender Based Violence after it occurs and build a society that intentionally works to prevent it.

We express our profound gratitude to the Executive Governor of Lagos State, Mr. Babajide Olusola Sanwo-Olu, for his leadership and unwavering commitment to the safety, dignity and wellbeing of all residents of Lagos State. Under his administration, the State has continued to demonstrate strong political will in addressing Sexual and Gender Based Violence and strengthening the institutions responsible for prevention, protection, response and access to justice.

We acknowledge with deep appreciation the contributions of the various Ministries, Departments and Agencies whose expertise and institutional commitments have shaped the direction and substance of this Policy.

Particular recognition is accorded to the Honourable Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice, Mr. Lawal Pedro, SAN for providing strategic leadership within the justice sector and strengthening the legal and institutional foundations necessary for the effective prevention of and response to Gender Based Violence.

We equally acknowledge the Honourable Commissioner for Women Affairs and Poverty Alleviation, Hon. (Mrs.) Bolaji Cecelia Dada for the Ministry's continued leadership in strengthening families, advancing women's empowerment and promoting community based interventions that address vulnerabilities and contribute to the prevention of violence.

Our sincere appreciation goes to the Lagos State Judiciary, under the leadership of the Honourable Chief Judge of Lagos State, Hon. Justice Kazeem Alogba for its steadfast commitment to strengthening access to justice and supporting measures aimed at ensuring the effective and timely administration of justice in Sexual and Gender Based Violence matters.

We commend the Lagos State Police Command, particularly officers working through the Gender Desk and other relevant formations, whose frontline responsibilities remain critical to survivor centred law enforcement, protection and accountability.

We also recognise the invaluable contribution of the education sector and its leadership. Prevention must begin early, and our schools represent one of the most powerful environments for shaping values, challenging harmful norms and nurturing generations of young people who understand dignity, equality, respect, healthy relationships and peaceful coexistence.

The sector's commitment to creating safe and secure learning environments remains fundamental to the long term success of this Policy.

Special appreciation is extended to the Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency (DSVA) for providing the institutional leadership, coordination and technical direction required to bring this Policy to fruition. The Agency's commitment to moving the conversation from response to prevention has been instrumental in convening stakeholders, facilitating consultations and translating diverse perspectives into a coherent framework for action.

Titilola Vivour-Adeniyi

Executive Secretary
Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency

Acknowledgements

We acknowledge with profound gratitude the Lead Consultant, Professor Funmilayo Bammeke, whose expertise, scholarship and guidance contributed immensely to the conceptualisation and drafting of this Policy. We equally recognise Ms. Ann Onyechefula, for her dedicated contribution to the drafting process and the painstaking work required to translate stakeholder perspectives and technical considerations into this comprehensive document.

We also extend our heartfelt appreciation to the administrative and technical support teams whose diligence, coordination and tireless work behind the scenes made the consultation, drafting and validation processes possible. Their contribution, though often unseen, has been indispensable.

The development of this Policy also benefited immensely from the technical and financial support of our development partners. We express our particular gratitude to the Ford Foundation for its invaluable partnership and support throughout the development of the Policy. Such partnerships demonstrate the power of collective investment in building institutions and systems capable of creating sustainable social change.

We also acknowledge the various stakeholders who gave generously of their time, knowledge and lived experience throughout the consultation and validation processes. Our profound appreciation goes to civil society organisations, community and traditional leaders, faith based organisations, trade and professional associations, clinical psychologists, social workers, academia, young people, survivor advocates and other stakeholders whose perspectives challenged us, enriched the conversations and strengthened this Policy.

Every contribution mattered. Every perspective helped us see the challenge more clearly. Every difficult conversation brought us closer to a Policy that reflects the realities of the people it is intended to serve. It is because of these collective contributions that this Policy must never be regarded merely as a Government document. It is a shared commitment and a collective responsibility.

The true value of this Policy will ultimately be determined not by the strength of the words contained within its pages, but by the actions they inspire. Its success will be seen in homes where dignity is protected, schools where respect is nurtured, workplaces where harassment is rejected, communities where harmful norms are challenged, institutions that act decisively, and residents who understand that preventing Gender Based Violence is everyone's responsibility.

To every individual and institution that contributed to this journey, we say thank you. You have helped us move from consultation to commitment, and from commitment towards collective action. As we transition from policy development to implementation, may the same spirit of partnership that brought us this far sustain us in the work ahead.

Because the Lagos we seek to build is one where safety is not a privilege, dignity is not negotiable, and preventing violence is a responsibility we all share.

Titilola Vivour-Adeniyi

Executive Secretary
Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency

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Executive Summary

Dear Esteemed Partners, Stakeholders,
and Residents of Lagos State,

Lagos State, as Nigeria's economic hub and most populous cosmopolitan state, faces unique challenges regarding Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV). Despite progressive legal milestones, including the landmark Protection Against Domestic Violence Law (PADVL) and the establishment of the Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency (DSVA), the manifestation of SGBV continues to adapt, expanding from physical and domestic environments into corporate spaces, educational institutions, and rapidly evolving digital terrains via Technology-Facilitated SGBV (TF-SGBV).

In direct response to these mutating threats, this Policy Framework operationalizes the Lagos Declaration of Zero Tolerance for All Forms of SGBV. It represents a proactive, structural shift from a purely reactive, response-centric model to an institutionalized, prevention-first strategy.

Backed by the highest level of political will, it fulfils the state's Sovereign Commitment:

"Let it be known that in Lagos State, a home cannot be a sanctuary for abusers, a school cannot be a hunting ground for predators, and a digital screen is not a shield for online extortionists. We will remain relentless in prevention, swift in protection, and uncompromising in prosecution."

By establishing the zero-tolerance mandate, the policy provides clear, actionable parameters to shatter the culture of silence, dismantle root drivers of socioeconomic vulnerabilities, and transform the cultural norms that perpetuate violence across the state's 20 Local Government Areas (LGAs) and 37 Local Council Development Areas (LCDAs).

Core Pillars of the Policy

To translate the zero-tolerance stance into standard institutional practice, the policy functions through four interconnected operational pillars:

- **Pillar 1: Primary Prevention (Education and Awareness):** Focuses on raising awareness of the public on Lagos State's zero tolerance against all forms of Sexual and Gender Based Violence rather than waiting for incidents to occur. It targets institutions where mindsets are formed, such as schools, religious centres, media spaces, and traditional communities across Lagos, to build a foundation of consent, bodily autonomy, and digital safety before violence can take root.
- **Pillar 2: Secondary Prevention (Strengthening Legal and Policy Frameworks):** Targets "at-risk" environments and ensures that when violence occurs, the state's legal apparatus intercepts it instantly. By streamlining Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for law enforcement and leveraging tools like the Lagos State Sex Offenders Register, this pillar ensures swift accountability and prevents re-traumatization, retaliation, or escalation.
- **Pillar 3: Tertiary Prevention (Survivor-centred Services):** Shifts the focus entirely to the long-term well-being, healing, and rehabilitation of the survivor. A strictly survivor-centred approach means that every medical, legal, and psychosocial decision respects the survivor's rights, choices, dignity, and privacy, while providing economic empowerment to break cycles of dependency.
- **Pillar 4: Capacity Building of First Responders:** The state's multi-sectoral SGBV policy depends entirely on the technical competence of its service providers, including doctors, nurses, legal officers, educators, and community-based social workers.

Implementation and Governance

The implementation of this policy is overseen by a multi-sectoral Technical Working Group (TWG) anchored by the DSVA, in direct collaboration with relevant MDAs including, the Ministry of Women Affairs and Poverty Alleviation (WAPA), Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Youth and Social Development, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Lagos State Judiciary, Law enforcement and civil society partners.

Progress will be rigorously measured through localized data indicators, heat-mapping, mandatory quarterly reviews, and public reporting. This ensures that the policy dynamically adapts to emerging societal trends, swiftly reallocates resources to digital and physical hot spots, and remains fully transparent and accountable to the people of Lagos State under its zero-tolerance pledge.

Titilola Vivour-Adeniyi
Executive Secretary, Lagos State Domestic
and Sexual Violence Agency

SECTION A: SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS AND MANIFESTATION MODES



Definition of Terms

- **Physical Violence:** Acts causing bodily harm such as hitting, beating, burning, or assault.
- **Emotional and Psychological Abuse:** Acts that erode a person's self-confidence. These include intimidation, humiliation, threats, gaslighting, isolation, and verbal abuse.
- **Economic Abuse:** Controlling access to financial resources, employment, or education.
- **Sexual Violence:** Includes rape, attempted rape, sexual assault, statutory rape, and sexual coercion.
- **Sexual harassment:** Sexual harassment refers to unwanted sexual behavior in workplaces, schools, or public spaces.
- **Harmful traditional practices:** These are cultural or traditional practices that harm the health, dignity, or rights of individuals, especially women and girls.
- **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM):** The removal of part or the whole of the external female genitalia for non-medical reasons, e.g. a girl in a rural Lagos community is cut as part of cultural rites of passage.
- **Child Marriage:** A person below the age of 18 is forced to marry.
- **Widowhood Practice:** Any harmful practice forced upon a widow to 'prove her innocence', e.g. drinking water used to wash her husband's corpse.
- **Denial of Inheritance:** A situation in which a daughter is denied her father's property because "only sons inherit land."
- **Technology-Facilitated Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (TF-SGBV):** non-physical, digital harms, such as online harassment, cyberstalking, and the non-consensual sharing of intimate images, that must be anchored into state legislation.
- **Protection Order:** A legally binding, court-issued directive restraining a perpetrator from contacting or approaching a survivor, managed through specialized family or high courts.
- **Chain of Custody:** The unbroken, legally verifiable chronological log documenting the seizure, custody, control, transfer, and analysis of physical or digital evidence.
- **Survivor-Centered Approach:** An institutional response model that prioritizes the safety, rights, privacy, and expressed wishes of the affected individual, ensuring they remain the primary driver of their own healing and justice process.
- **Trauma-Informed Care (TIC):** An organizational framework that recognizes the physical, psychological, and emotional impacts of trauma, training responders to avoid re-traumatization by adjusting physical environments and interviewing techniques.
- **Multi-Sectoral Support Hubs / One-Stop Centers:** Co-located facility networks (such as Sexual Assault Referral Centers) that provide integrated medical care, psychological aid, and legal advocacy under a single roof.
- **Autonomous Choice / Self-Determination:** The operational principle stating that a survivor retains the right to dictate the pace and direction of any state intervention, including whether or not to pursue formal legal action.
- **Frontline Workers / First Responders:** The specific cadre of personnel, including emergency helpline operators, specialized police gender desk officers, and SARC triage nurses, who handle initial case disclosure and intake.
- **Cognitive Interviewing:** A trauma-informed interrogation technique that relies on sensory and somatic memory cues rather than strict chronological timelines to gather reliable evidence from individuals in crisis.
- **Medical Cold Chain:** The continuous temperature-controlled supply chain required to preserve biological evidence, strictly defined as keeping liquid samples between 2°C and 4°C and extracted DNA at or below -20°C.
- **Secondary Trauma / Compassion Fatigue:** The psychological stress and burnout experienced by service providers resulting from regular, vicarious exposure to graphic trauma and crisis disclosures.

- **Closed-Loop Referral:** A strict inter-agency protocol requiring a receiving facility to formally acknowledge and confirm the receipt of a referred survivor to the originating agency within a mandated 24-to-72-hour window, ensuring no individual drops out of care.
- **Anonymized Data / De-identified Information:** Case management data that has been completely stripped of personally identifiable information (PII) to ensure absolute confidentiality during public trend reporting and budget realignments.
- **Technical Working Group (TWG):** The multi-sectoral operational governing body composed of designated focal points from relevant ministries (Health, Justice, Education, Social Development) and civil society tasked with cross-sectoral coordination and quality assurance audits.
- **Community-Based Prevention Structures:** Grassroots committees, peer support networks and traditional or faith-based leadership structures formally integrated into the state's early-warning and reporting channel

1.1 Background/ Problem Statement

Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) in Nigeria is a major human rights, public health, and social development issue that affects women, girls, children, and also, men and boys. SGBV refers to harmful acts directed against individuals based on their gender, sex, or unequal power relations, and it includes rape, domestic violence, sexual assault, emotional abuse, child marriage, female genital mutilation, trafficking, economic deprivation, and other harmful practices.

In Nigeria, the roots of SGBV are deeply connected to patriarchal cultural systems, gender inequality, poverty, weak legal enforcement, and societal norms that often place women and girls in subordinate positions.

Historically, violence against women was widely regarded as a private family matter rather than a criminal offense, which contributed to the normalization of abuse within homes and communities. Cultural beliefs in many parts of the country encourage male dominance and discourage women from speaking out against abuse. Survivors of rape and domestic violence often face stigma, victim-blaming, fear of retaliation, and rejection by family or society, which leads to widespread underreporting of cases.

Women who are financially dependent on abusive partners may remain in violent relationships because they lack economic support or alternative shelter. In addition, armed conflict, insurgency, and displacement in some regions of Nigeria have increased the vulnerability of women and girls to sexual exploitation, trafficking, forced marriage, and rape.

Although awareness has increased in recent years, many survivors still avoid reporting incidents because of fear, shame, family pressure, and distrust of law enforcement agencies. Sexual violence is widespread across the country, with increasing reports of rape, gang rape, incest, defilement, and abuse of children.

During the COVID-19 lockdown period, Nigeria experienced a sharp rise in cases of rape and domestic violence, drawing national attention to the seriousness of the problem. Child marriage and female genital mutilation remain persistent harmful practices in several regions, especially in northern and southern communities where traditional customs continue to influence family decisions regarding girls and women.

The Nigerian government has introduced legal and policy frameworks to address SGBV. One of the most important laws is the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act of 2015, commonly known as the VAPP Act, which criminalizes rape, domestic violence, female genital mutilation, emotional abuse, harmful widowhood practices, and other forms of violence.

Nigeria also has the Child Rights Act and the National Gender Policy aimed at protecting women and children from abuse and discrimination. However, implementation remains weak in many states because of poor enforcement, corruption, slow judicial processes, inadequate survivor support services, and low prosecution rates.

In Lagos State, SGBV has become a major concern especially in view of the state’s large population, rapid urbanization, economic inequality, migration, and overcrowded living conditions. Lagos records some of the highest numbers of reported SGBV cases in Nigeria. At the same time, the state is considered one of the most proactive in responding to gender-based violence through institutional reforms, survivor support programs, and public awareness campaigns.

Reports indicate that Lagos recorded thousands of cases of domestic violence, rape, child abuse, and sexual assault between 2019 and 2025, with domestic violence consistently ranking as the most reported form of abuse. The increase in reported cases reflects both a rise in violence and improved awareness and reporting mechanisms.

Women, girls, children, domestic workers, persons with disabilities, and low-income residents in informal settlements are among the most vulnerable groups in Lagos State. Children are particularly exposed to defilement, incest, exploitation, and abuse within homes and communities. The consequences of SGBV in Lagos and Nigeria are severe and include physical injuries, sexually transmitted infections, unwanted pregnancies, depression, anxiety, trauma, school dropout, economic hardship, and even death. Survivors often suffer long-term psychological effects such as post-traumatic stress disorder, low self-esteem, and social isolation.

Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) in Nigeria is a major human rights, public health, and social development issue that affects women, girls, children, and also, men and boys. SGBV refers to harmful acts directed against individuals based on their gender, sex, or unequal power relations, and it includes rape, domestic violence, sexual assault, emotional abuse, child marriage, female genital mutilation, trafficking, economic deprivation, and other harmful practices.

In Nigeria, the roots of SGBV are deeply connected to patriarchal cultural systems, gender inequality, poverty, weak legal enforcement, and societal norms that often place women and girls in subordinate positions.

Historically, violence against women was widely regarded as a private family matter rather than a criminal offense, which contributed to the normalization of abuse within homes and communities. Cultural beliefs in many parts of the country encourage male dominance and discourage women from speaking out against abuse. Survivors of rape and domestic violence often face stigma, victim-blaming, fear of retaliation, and rejection by family or society, which leads to widespread underreporting of cases.

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To address the growing problem, Lagos State established the Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency (DSVA) to coordinate prevention and response efforts. The agency provides counseling, legal referrals, medical support, shelters, public education campaigns, and survivor-centered services. Lagos also operates sexual assault referral centers, family support units, and gender desks in some police stations to improve reporting and ensure access to justice.

Despite these efforts, significant challenges remain, including underreporting, weak prosecution of offenders, cultural attitudes that blame survivors, and inadequate resources for support services.

Civil society organizations, women's rights groups, international agencies, religious institutions, and the media continue to advocate stronger measures to combat SGBV in Nigeria and Lagos State. Advocacy efforts focus on strengthening laws, improving law enforcement, increasing public awareness, supporting survivors, empowering women economically, and changing harmful social norms that tolerate violence.

Overall, SGBV remains a critical challenge in Nigeria and Lagos State, requiring coordinated action from government, communities, families, and organizations to protect survivors, prevent abuse, and promote gender equality and human dignity.

This policy guideline therefore provides a comprehensive framework for preventing SGBV in Lagos State.

Situational Analysis of SGBV Manifestation In Lagos State

Lagos State operates the most active reporting and response system for sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in the region, with the Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency (DSVA) providing clinical, psychological, and legal services to approximately 8,692 survivors annually. Children represent a significant proportion of these cases, accounting for 3,629 survivors, of whom 60% (2,213) are girls, while 40% are boys who have experienced physical, sexual, emotional, or severe neglect-related abuse.

Although women remain the majority of individuals seeking state protection, there has been a noticeable increase in male reporting, with 920 male survivors documented in Year 2025, including 437 cases involving severe domestic violence, as well as incidents related to resource deprivation, sexual harassment, and threats to life, reflecting a gradual decline in the stigma surrounding male vulnerability.

The geographic distribution of SGBV cases across Lagos is closely associated with population density, infrastructural limitations, and overcrowded housing conditions. Alimosho Local Government Area (LGA) consistently records the highest concentration of both adult and child SGBV incidents in the state.

Similar prevalence patterns are observed in densely populated urban communities such as Mushin, Ajegunle, and parts of Ikorodu, where overcrowded “Face-Me-I-Face-You” tenement housing arrangements create unsafe and poorly monitored communal spaces, including shared bathrooms, kitchens, and unlit corridors, that increase the vulnerability of women and children to abuse and molestation.

Despite extensive public awareness campaigns, socio-cultural barriers continue to hinder timely reporting and access to justice. Operational data indicates that nearly 50% of domestic violence reports are made only after ten years of sustained abuse within a marriage or relationship.

This prolonged silence is largely driven by economic dependency, particularly the fear of losing financial support from an abusive partner, as well as entrenched cultural norms that encourage victims to preserve the perceived sanctity of marriage, discourage public disclosure of “family matters,” and perpetuate victim-blaming attitudes within families and communities.

Furthermore, Lagos State’s position as Africa’s leading technology and economic hub has also contributed to the emergence of Technology-Facilitated Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (TF-SGBV). Digital platforms are increasingly exploited for cyberstalking, online grooming of minors, digital blackmail and extortion, and the non-consensual distribution of intimate images, commonly referred to as revenge pornography.

In response to these growing threats, Lagos State has developed a specialized policy framework on Technology-Facilitated SGBV, bringing together technology hubs, civic-tech organizations, and digital forensic police units to improve electronic evidence management and strengthen the identification and prosecution of anonymous online offenders.

Although Lagos State maintains one of the most comprehensive institutional frameworks for addressing SGBV in Nigeria, significant implementation challenges remain.

The state has established specialized Domestic and Sexual Violence Courts, Family Support Units (FSUs) within police divisions, emergency shelters, and notable Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) such as the Mirabel Centre and WARIF, however, there remains a substantial gap between the volume of reported cases and the number of successful criminal convictions secured through the judicial system.

Delayed court processes, under-resourced forensic services, and frequent family interference leading to out-of-court settlements continue to undermine prosecution efforts.

Overall, the situation in Lagos reflects not a lack of policy or institutional structures, but rather persistent implementation strain. While high reporting levels demonstrate growing public trust in institutions, achieving meaningful prevention will require stronger interventions targeting unsafe housing conditions, digital vulnerabilities, economic dependency, and inefficiencies within the justice system.

Demographic and Urban Context of Lagos State

Lagos State is Nigeria’s economic and commercial hub and one of the fastest-growing urban centers in Africa. With an estimated metropolitan population of between 20 and 21 million residents, Lagos is characterized by rapid urbanization, high population density, and intense rural-to-urban migration driven by economic opportunities and industrial growth. The state serves as the financial, technological, transportation, and entertainment center of Nigeria, attracting people from diverse ethnic, cultural, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds. This diversity contributes to the vibrancy of Lagos but also creates complex social dynamics that influence vulnerability to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV).

Demographic and Urban Context of Lagos State Contd.

Geographically, Lagos is the smallest state in Nigeria by landmass but one of the most densely populated, resulting in overcrowded residential settlements, housing deficits, transportation pressures, and infrastructural strain. Rapid urban expansion has led to the growth of informal settlements and densely populated communities where poverty, unemployment, weak social protection systems, and inadequate security structures heighten the risks of violence, exploitation, and abuse. Economic inequality remains highly visible across the state, with affluent urban districts existing alongside underserved low-income communities and informal settlements.

The state's fast-paced socioeconomic environment, coupled with rising digital connectivity and internet penetration, has transformed both social interactions and exposure to risk. Increasing reliance on digital platforms for communication, employment, education, and commerce has expanded opportunities for cyber-enabled abuse, online harassment, exploitation, and Technology-Facilitated Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (TF-SGBV). At the same time, migration, youth unemployment, family instability, substance abuse, and social dislocation continue to create conditions that may exacerbate domestic violence, child abuse, and sexual exploitation.

Lagos State also experiences significant mobility and population fluidity, with millions of residents commuting daily across local government areas for work, education, and commercial activities. This urban complexity places substantial pressure on healthcare systems, law enforcement agencies, judicial institutions, social welfare structures, and community protection mechanisms. Consequently, the demographic and urban realities of Lagos State require a comprehensive, prevention-focused, and multi-sectoral response to effectively address Sexual and Gender-Based Violence within both physical and digital environments.

Trends and Patterns Of SGBV In Lagos State

Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) in Lagos State remains a significant public health, human rights, and development challenge affecting individuals across all age groups, genders, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Reports from the Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency (DSVA) indicate a consistent increase in reported cases over recent years, reflecting both the growing prevalence of violence and improved public awareness and reporting systems.

Between August 2024 and July 2025 alone, the DSVA recorded approximately 8,692 cases of domestic and sexual violence through physical reporting channels and the Virtual Referral and Response Service (VRRS).

Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) remains the most prevalent category of reported abuse in Lagos State. Cases commonly involve physical assault, emotional and psychological abuse, coercive control, economic deprivation, and marital violence occurring within homes and intimate relationships. These incidents cut across all socioeconomic classes and geographical locations, affecting both affluent and low-income communities alike.

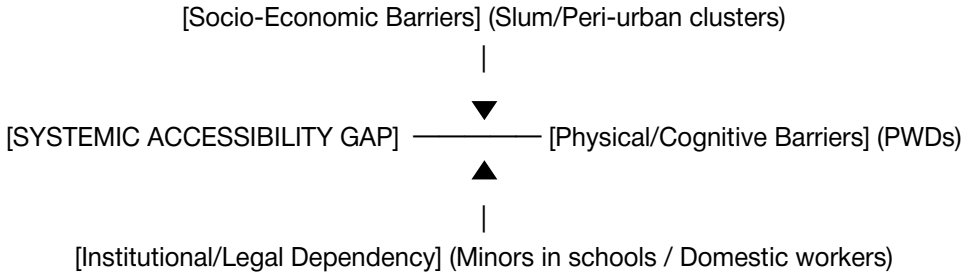
Sexual assault, rape, incest, and child defilement also continue to pose severe threats, particularly affecting women, adolescents, and children. Reports indicate that minors remain disproportionately vulnerable to abuse within homes, schools, neighbourhoods, and informal environments. The persistence of child sexual abuse highlights significant safeguarding gaps, weak protective structures, and ongoing barriers to early reporting and intervention.

Workplace harassment and economic exploitation have also emerged as persistent concerns across formal and informal sectors. Unequal power dynamics within employment settings, markets, domestic work arrangements, and commercial activities are frequently exploited to demand sexual favours in exchange for employment opportunities, promotions, financial support, or access to services. Such abuses are often underreported due to fear of retaliation, victim-blaming, and economic dependency.

Furthermore, the rapid expansion of digital technology and internet access has further contributed to the rise of Technology-Facilitated Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (TF-SGBV). Survivors increasingly experience cyberstalking, online harassment, sextortion, non-consensual sharing of intimate images, online grooming, impersonation, and digital blackmail through social media platforms, messaging applications, and other online channels. Existing legal and institutional systems continue to face challenges in adequately responding to these emerging forms of abuse.

Vulnerable High-Risk Population

An effective safeguarding framework must recognize that SGBV risk is unevenly distributed. Specific demographics within Lagos State face layered vulnerabilities due to physical, economic, institutional, or digital dependencies.



I. Children and Minors (K-12 Systems)

- Vulnerability Profile: Absolute systemic dependency on adult authority figures, limited legal autonomy, and susceptibility to institutional grooming.
- High-Risk Triggers: Closed door administrative/academic environments, lack of body-safety literacy, and structural intimidation that prevents reporting to parental or external authorities.

II. Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)

- Vulnerability Profile: Heightened physical, communication, or cognitive vulnerabilities coupled with pervasive institutional neglect.
- High-Risk Triggers: Lack of accessible, multi-modal reporting options (such as visual aid materials or physical ramps at local help desks), reliance on primary caretakers who may themselves be abusers, and systematic exclusion from generic public safety information campaigns.

III. Informal and Migrant Workers / Domestic Staff

- Vulnerability Profile: Economic isolation, lack of formal employment contracts, and direct cohabitation with employers (in the case of live-in domestic workers).
- High-Risk Triggers: Under-regulated private domestic spaces across urban clusters, threats of arbitrary dismissal or deportation/eviction, and non-existent integration into corporate Human Resource frameworks.

IV. Digital Users Facing Targeted Harms (TF-SGBV)

- Vulnerability Profile: Professionals, public-facing women, and tech-dependent youth vulnerable to boundary violations that transcend physical geography.
- High-Risk Triggers: Rapid digitization across Lagos, lack of specialized localized support desks, and the viral velocity of Technology-Facilitated SGBV (TF-SGBV) including deepfakes, online extortion, and doxxing.

Trends Showing Total Cases Reported From 2019 – July 2025

Lagos State possesses a multi-layered frontline infrastructure designed to intercept, document, and manage SGBV incidents. The current ecosystem relies on coordinated transitions between emergency intake and medical/legal centers.

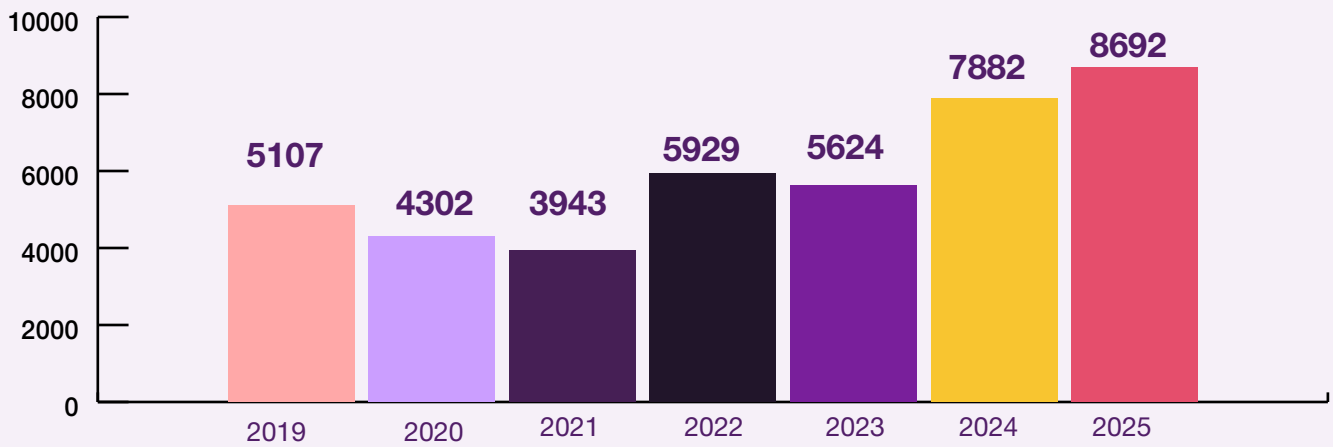


Fig. 1: Cases of SGBV in Lagos State between 2019 and 2025

LGA Rankings Of SGBV Prevalence

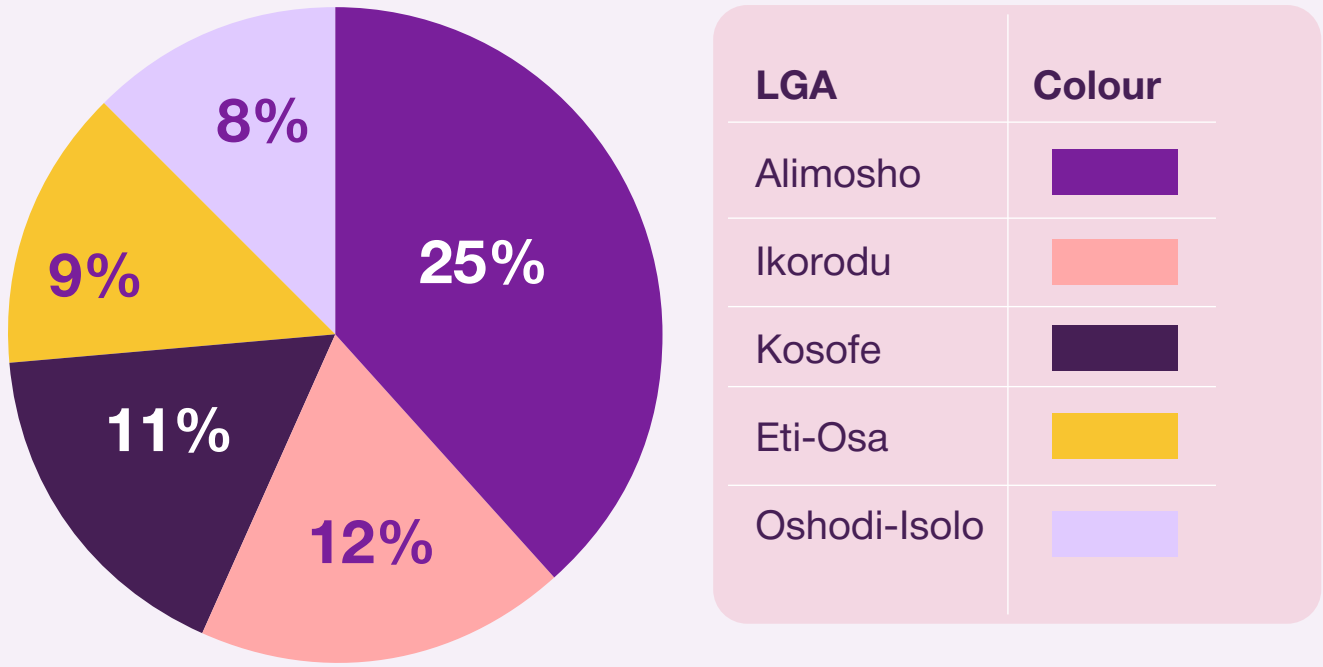


Fig. 2: LGA rankings of SGBV prevalence in Lagos State

Key Geographical Patterns:

Alimosho ranks #1 across all categories. This is driven by its massive geographical size, high population density, and a high concentration of informal/tenement housing layouts, which increases vulnerabilities.

Ikorodu ranks #2. This functions as a massive, rapidly developing peri-urban hub situated on the outskirts of metropolitan Lagos. Rapid urban migration paired with vast, newly developing geographic areas often creates spaces where formal law enforcement presence is stretched thin.

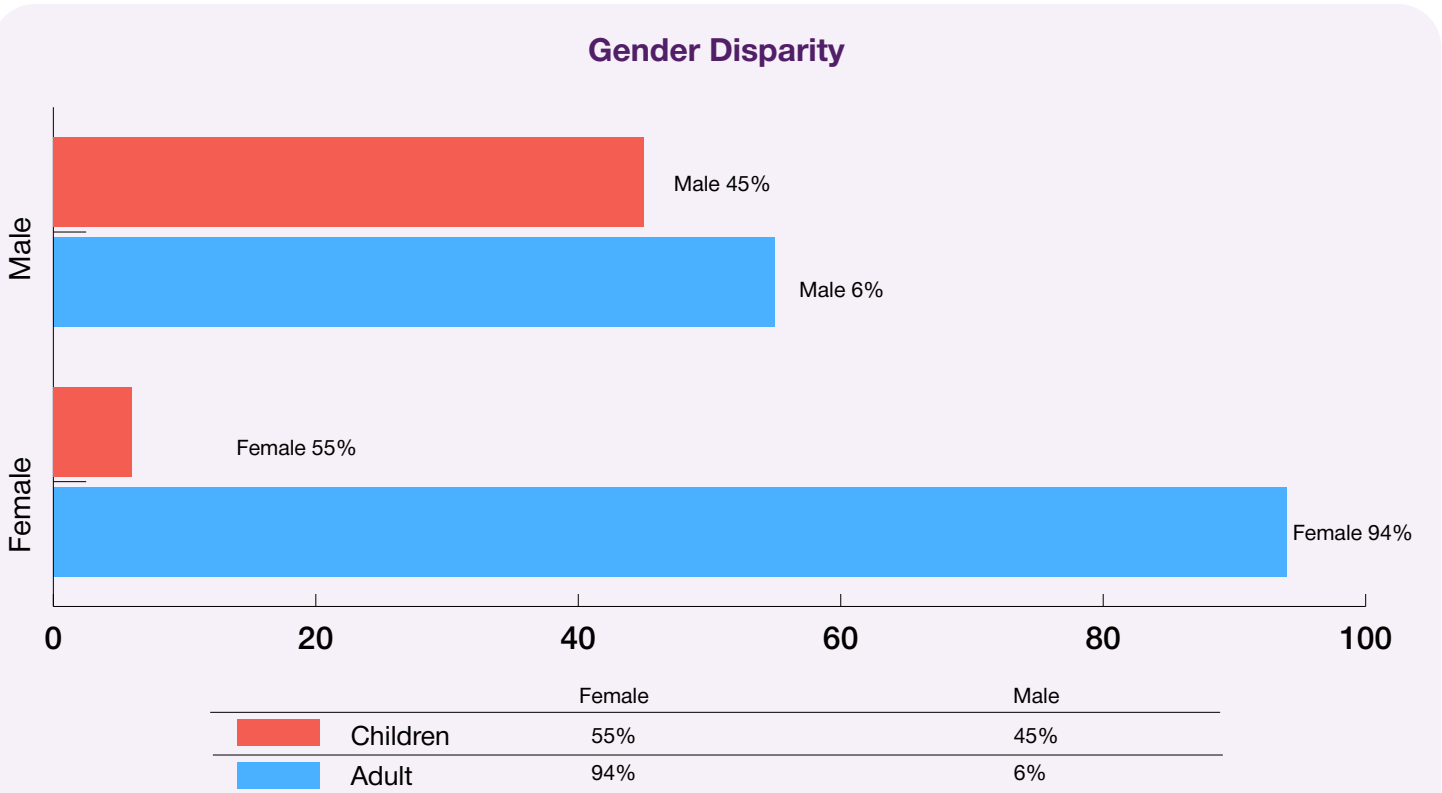
Kosofe ranks #3. Kosofe is a highly strategic, central gateway LGA characterized by dense commercial activity, critical transit hubs, and a highly mixed-income population (ranging from affluent estates to dense, low-income informal settlements). High-density transit zones and sharp socioeconomic stratification within the same geographic boundary create distinct safety vulnerabilities, particularly regarding public space harassment and domestic friction.

Eti-Osa ranks #4. Eti-Osa represents a unique data paradox. While physical SGBV occurs across all demographics, the high rank in Eti-Osa is heavily driven by reporting access and digital literacy. Survivors in this zone often possess higher awareness of state helplines, digital reporting pathways, and specialized support networks

Oshodi-Isolo ranks #5. Oshodi-Isolo is one of the primary commercial, industrial, and transport nerve centers of Lagos State. The daily influx of millions of transient traders, commuters, and informal workers creates intense environmental congestion. High-density commercial and transport grids inherently elevate the risk of opportunistic violence, public space harassment, and workplace-related exploitation.

Vulnerability dynamics (Adult and Children Survivors)

SGBV in Lagos State is overwhelmingly driven by Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). Reported cases are by approximately 94% female and 6% male. While women face structural and financial dependency issues that delay reporting, male adult survivors face extreme underreporting due to intense societal stigma, fear of mockery, and deeply entrenched patriarchal norms that discourage men from revealing victimization.



	Female	Male
Children	55%	45%
Adult	94%	6%

Existing Reporting and Intervention Mechanisms

Lagos State possesses a multi-layered frontline infrastructure designed to intercept, document, and manage SGBV incidents. The current ecosystem relies on coordinated transitions between emergency intake and medical/legal centers.

[Helpline / Community Report] ——> [DSVA/ WAPA/BPD/MYSD/Police Intake Unit] ——> [GH/ PHC/ SARC: Forensics & Care] ——> [CSO /Legal Aid]

I. The Lagos State's Emergency Infrastructure

- **Operational Core:** The centralized 24/7 toll-free emergency helpline (08000-333-333) and the State's Emergency lines-767 and 112 serve as the primary gateway for immediate distress call interception, psychological first aid, and rapid dispatch coordination.
- **Local Level Units:** Family Support Units (FSUs) embedded within designated divisional police headquarters, are specifically staffed to process domestic and sexual violence complaints away from general charge counters.

II. Medical and Clinical Intervention

General Hospitals, Comprehensive Primary Health Care Centres as well as Sexual Assault Referral Centers (SARCs) specialized medical facilities, including the pioneering Mirabel Centre, provides completely free, confidential forensic medical examinations, emergency contraception, prophylactic treatments for sexually transmitted infections, and acute trauma counseling.

III. Civil Society and Pro-Bono Legal Response

Advocacy Alliances: Non-governmental organizations and specialized legal coalitions help bridge the gap between state capacity and community reality, providing emergency shelter placements, alternative living arrangements, and sustained pro-bono legal representation in specialized courts.

Systemic and Institutional Challenges

Lagos State possesses the political will and the required statutory frameworks to fight SGBV. However, until these structural bottlenecks, specifically funding, decentralized access, rigorous data centralization, and aggressive judicial speed are addressed, the implementation of these progressive laws will continue to hit a wall.

1. Weak Enforcement of Laws and Policies

While Lagos State is a national leader in legislation, having enacted the Protection Against Domestic Violence Law (PADVL) and established the specialized Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency (DSVA), a massive gap persists between the law on paper and enforcement on the street.

- **Judicial Bottlenecks:** The Lagos State Judiciary features specialized family and sexual offenses courts, but their dockets are severely overwhelmed. A single case can linger for years due to frequent court adjournments, missing witnesses, or slow forensic processing, causing "trial fatigue" for survivors.
- **The "Compounding" Culture:** At the grassroots level, local police stations or traditional rulers sometimes attempt to "settle" criminal sexual offenses out of court, treating felony assault or rape as a domestic dispute to be mediated upon.
- **Perpetrator Impunity:** When high-profile or wealthy perpetrators successfully use legal delays or financial settlements to escape conviction, it reinforces a culture of impunity and signals to potential repeat offenders that the rule of law can be subverted.

2. Underreporting of SGBV Cases

The official numbers captured by agencies like the DSVA represent only a small fraction of the actual occurrences in Lagos.

- **Social Stigma and Shaming:** In many Lagos communities, a survivor who speaks out is often blamed for "provocative" behavior, clothing, or choices. The fear of being socially ostracized or labelled a "damaged" individual prevents many from coming forward.
- **Religious and Family Interventions:** Deeply religious societal structures heavily influence Lagos. Survivors are frequently pressured by pastors, imams, or family elders to "pray over it", forgive the abuser, or protect the family's public reputation at all costs.
- **Economic Retaliation:** Because many survivors are financially dependent on their abusers (especially in domestic violence cases), reporting the breadwinner threatens the immediate survival of the victim and their children.

3. Inadequate Funding and Resources

SGBV response requires heavy, consistent capital investment, but budgeting processes face immense competition from Lagos State's massive infrastructural needs (transport, flooding, roads).

- **Deficits in Safe Housing:** For a population exceeding 20 million, Lagos has a severe shortage of state-run emergency shelters and transition homes. Survivors frequently have no choice but to return to the home of their abuser because of their inability to secure alternative shelter.
- **Underfunded Public Awareness:** Grassroots awareness campaigns are often reliant on short-term international donor funding rather than sustained state budgetary allocations. When donor cycles end, vital community education programs collapse.

4. Limited Capacity of Service Providers

Frontline responders are often highly motivated but lack the specific tools, psychological support, and institutional backing required to manage complex trauma cases.

- **Police Desks Overlap:** While some police commands feature specialized Human Rights or Gender Desks, officers are routinely reassigned. A desk may suddenly be manned by an officer who lacks basic training in trauma-informed care, leading to secondary victimization.
- **Medical Forensics Shortages:** Designated health facilities are often short on "rape kits" and specialized forensic medical examiners. The cost of securing forensic evidence or medical reports is sometimes subtly passed down to the survivor, creating an immediate barrier to justice.
- **Burnout and Turnover:** High caseloads coupled with poor mental health support for social workers and counsellors lead to severe institutional burnout, lowering the quality of care provided.

5. Coordination Gaps Among Stakeholders

Whilst Lagos features an energetic ecosystem of actors, efforts however can resemble parallel tracks rather than an integrated web.

- **Fragmented Referrals:** A survivor might report to an NGO, receive medical care at a separate facility, and then face a completely disconnected process at a police station. Without a standardized, fully digitized tracking system, survivors are forced to retell their traumatic stories to multiple agencies.
- **Jurisdictional Friction:** Friction between federal institutions and state agencies can occasionally stall urgent interventions, especially regarding who has the immediate authority to detain or rescue.

6. Harmful Gender Norms and Social Attitudes

Structural patriarchy remains heavily embedded in everyday language, media, and institutional cultures across Lagos.

- **Normalization of Violence:** Phrases like "it's just a domestic misunderstanding" or the belief that physical discipline is an acceptable expression of male authority are still quietly tolerated across various socio-economic classes.
- **Institutional Bias:** Responders themselves are products of this society. Stakeholders may unconsciously hold biased beliefs about gender roles, which subtly influences how such cases are investigated, treated, or adjudicated upon.

7. Insufficient Data and Evidence Systems

Effective policy requires hyper-accurate data, but Lagos faces a data fragmentation crisis in this sector.

- **Siloed Registries:** Whilst efforts by the state are channelled towards ensuring a coordinated GBV data bank, some hospitals, police commands, civil society organizations, and state ministries still maintain separate, non-communicating databases.
- **Anonymity vs. Tracking:** Striking a balance between protecting survivor confidentiality and gathering deep epidemiological data is an ongoing struggle. Without centralized, disaggregated data (by age, exact location, weapon used, relationship to abuser), the state cannot effectively deploy targeted prevention resources to specific high-risk local government areas (LGAs).

8. Barriers to Accessing Support Services

Even when services exist in Lagos, navigating the megacity to access them presents a massive hurdle for the average resident.

- **The Geography of Care:** Major specialized response centers, forensic labs, and high-quality shelters are overwhelmingly concentrated in urban nodes like Ikeja, Lagos Island, and Surulere. A survivor living in peripheral or rural areas like Badagry, Ikorodu, or Epe faces long, expensive journeys just to seek help.
- **Gridlock and Transport Costs:** Infamous Lagos traffic gridlock, combined with high transport fares, makes multiple trips to court, hospitals, and police stations financially impossible for lower-income survivors.

9. Urbanization and Population Pressures

Lagos's status as a hyper-dense megacity directly compounds the complexity of SGBV prevention.

- **The Informal Settlement Blindspot:** Densely populated, informal settlements (slums) like Makoko, Ajegunle, or Mushin feature poor lighting, lack of sanitation facilities (communal toilets leave women and girls highly vulnerable at night), and a minimal formal police presence.
- **Overstretched Monitoring:** The sheer volume of people moving into Lagos daily outpaces the state's capacity to scale up social welfare monitoring, making it incredibly easy for abusers to disappear into the dense urban fabric or move across state lines to evade justice.

10. Digital and Online Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV)

As smartphone penetration and internet access have exploded in Lagos, a new frontier of violence has emerged that the state's legal infrastructure is scrambling to contain.

- **Non-Consensual Intimate Image Sharing ("Revenge Porn"):** The internet is frequently weaponized to blackmail, humiliate, and silence women. Survivors face severe reputational damage, job losses, and psychological trauma.
- **Enforcement Blindspots:** While the federal Cybercrimes Act exists, local Lagos police divisions frequently lack the digital forensics capabilities, training, and equipment to track IP addresses, trace online harassers, or compel tech platforms to bring down abusive content quickly.

1.2 Definition of Foundational Concepts

Understanding Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) refers to any harmful act committed against an individual because of their sex, gender, gender identity, or perceived gender roles. It is a violation of fundamental human rights and a significant public health and social justice issue that affects individuals, families, communities, and societies worldwide. Although anyone can experience SGBV, women and girls are disproportionately affected due to persistent gender inequalities and unequal power relations that exist in many societies.

The United Nations used the term gender-based to emphasize that the violence is connected to gender norms and unequal power structures that reinforce gender stereotypes. It occurs when individuals use power, control, or coercion to harm, intimidate, exploit, or dominate others based on gender. The violence may take place in homes, schools, workplaces, communities, institutions, or online spaces and can occur during both peacetime and humanitarian emergencies such as conflicts, disasters, and displacement.

The underlying causes of SGBV are complex and interconnected. Gender inequality remains one of the primary drivers, as societal beliefs that place one gender in a position of superiority over another can contribute to abusive behaviours and attitudes.

The impact of SGBV is often severe and long-lasting. Survivors may experience physical injuries, emotional trauma, psychological distress, and social isolation. Many face challenges such as fear, anxiety, depression, loss of self-esteem, and difficulties in maintaining relationships and participating fully in education, employment, and community life. The effects may extend beyond the individual survivor, influencing families and communities and contributing to broader social and economic challenges.

Poverty, economic dependence, lack of education, weak legal protections, and cultural practices that tolerate violence can further increase vulnerability and limit the ability of survivors to seek protection and support.

Forms Of SGBV

SGBV includes but is not limited to:

1. Domestic violence
2. Sexual Violence
3. Physical Abuse
4. Child abuse
5. Intimate Partner Violence
6. Emotional and Psychological Abuse
7. Harmful Traditional Practices
8. Economic Deprivation
9. Human Trafficking
10. Online Gender-Based Violence and Cyber Harassment
11. Forced Marriage
12. Workplace Sexual Harassment
13. Stalking
14. Coercive Control.

Forms Of SGBV Explained With Global Statistics

To drive absolute structural prevention, a comprehensive framework must expand past surface definitions and map the systemic, operational sub-types of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence. Each form of abuse relies on specific tactical mechanisms to exploit a survivor's vulnerability.

1. Domestic violence

Domestic Violence (DV), or domestic abuse, is a systematic, escalating pattern of coercive, threatening, or violent behaviours used by one person to gain and maintain absolute power and control over an intimate partner, spouse, or household member. It operates primarily through two structural mechanisms:

- **Systemic Coercion:** Utilizing structural or familial authority to enforce complete obedience, dictate movement, and restrict interaction with outside support networks.
- **Cyclical Intimidation:** Generating an atmosphere of constant fear through unpredictable outbursts, property damage, or threats of severe violence to suppress any form of resistance.

The Preventive Control: Heavily regulated under the Lagos State Protection Against Domestic Violence Law (PADVL), 2015. True prevention requires local government areas to deploy standardized, community-led mediation protocols and establish decentralized "Sunrise" peer-support networks that identify early relational strain before it escalates.

Lifetime Prevalence: Roughly 1 in 4 women (25%) and 1 in 7 men (14%) experience severe physical domestic violence globally.

Annual Impact: Over 10 million people are affected by domestic violence each year in regions like the United States alone.

2. Sexual Violence

Sexual violence is defined by the absolute absence of informed, uncoerced consent. It is driven by power imbalances and structural vulnerabilities, manifesting in distinct institutional and domestic sub-forms:

i. ***Forms of sexual assault include:*** Attempted rape, fondling or unwanted sexual touching, forcing a victim to perform sexual acts, such as oral sex or penetrating the perpetrator's body, penetration of the person's body, rape and forced exposure to pornography.

ii. ***Sexual Exploitation:*** The abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes. This includes transactional sex or forced prostitution where a perpetrator leverages a survivor's lack of basic human resources (food, shelter, safety) to demand sexual compliance.

iii. ***Incest:*** Sexual abuse perpetrated against a minor or vulnerable individual by a family member or person within a domestic relationship. This represents a catastrophic failure of domestic safeguarding, often hidden due to intense familial collusion.

Lack of consent; the use of physical force, coercion, deception or threat; and/or the involvement of a victim that is mentally incapacitated or physically impaired (due to voluntary or involuntary alcohol or drug consumption), asleep or unconscious

The Preventive Control: Severely criminalized under the Criminal Law of Lagos State, 2011, which mandates strict prison terms for offenders. True prevention requires the mandatory adoption of audited, institutional safeguarding policies across all corporate and academic sectors, backed by continuous public safety visual mapping to eliminate high-risk physical spaces.

Global Scope: Approximately 30% of women worldwide have suffered physical or sexual violence from an intimate partner or a non-partner.

Rape Statistics: About 1 in 5 women (20%) and 1 in 50 men (2%) have experienced completed or attempted rape in their lifetimes.

3. Physical Violence

Physical violence is the intentional use of force to inflict pain, injury, or severe bodily harm, utilizing physical dominance to restrict freedom of movement and enforce total compliance.

i. ***Spousal Battery:*** A recurring, escalating pattern of physical assault (hitting, kicking, slapping, shoving, choking, or weapon use) directed at an intimate partner to enforce subordination within the domestic sphere or locking an individual inside a room to prevent them from seeking external help.

ii. ***Hazardous Substance and Chemical Attacks:*** The targeted use of corrosive chemicals, acids, or scalding liquids to inflict permanent disfigurement, blindness, or death. These attacks are typically motivated by toxic possessiveness or patriarchal retaliation.

iii. ***Child Abandonment and Severe Neglect:*** The deliberate, malicious desertion of children or dependents, leaving them destitute and completely without means of subsistence. This exposes minors to immediate physical danger, exploitation, and street-level vulnerabilities.

The Preventive Control: Heavily penalized under the assault and battery provisions of the Criminal Law of Lagos State, 2011. True prevention requires building the capacity of first responders, community leaders, and local security groups to run active community surveillance and execute immediate intervention protocols when early physical red flags are detected.

Prevalence Rates: Nearly 1 in 3 women undergo physical violence starting as young as age 15.

Workplace Impact: Globally, 8.5% of all employed individuals have experienced physical violence and harassment during their career.

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4. Emotional and Psychological Violence

Psychological violence involves non-physical behaviours designed to systematically erode an individual's self-worth, mental stability, and independence, trapping them within a state of constant psychological confinement.

i. ***Gaslighting and Reality Distortion:*** A continuous pattern of psychological manipulation where an abuser denies facts, distorts events, and fabricates narratives to force a partner into questioning their own memory, perception, and sanity.

ii. Constantly accusing a partner of infidelity without basis, hurling insults about their appearance, or convincing them that they are entirely responsible for the abuse.

iii. ***Forced Isolation:*** Systematically cutting an individual off from their external safety net, including family members, close friends, coworkers, and community support. By trapping the survivor in an informational vacuum, the abuser ensures total dependency.

iv. ***Stalking and Persistent Intimidation:*** A pattern of menacing behaviour involving obsessive tracking, unwanted physical presence, and implicit or explicit threats of violence. This instils a persistent fear of imminent harm or death in the survivor.

The Preventive Control: Recognized as an actionable component of abuse under the PADVL, 2015. True prevention requires integrating standardized mental health and psychological distress screenings into primary healthcare and antenatal visits at the LGA level to catch early signs of cognitive trauma.

Partner Abuse: Roughly 23% of women and 14% of men experience severe emotional abuse by a current or former partner.

Workplace Metrics: It represents the most common form of workplace abuse, affecting 17.9% of the global workforce.

5. Economic Abuse and Resource Denial

Economic abuse manipulates financial assets, employment opportunities, and essential resources to enforce inescapable financial dependency.

i. ***Forced Financial Dependence:*** Strictly forbidding a partner from pursuing formal education, accessing vocational training, or seeking gainful employment. If the partner does work, it involves forcing the absolute surrender of their independently earned income or forbidding a partner from taking a job or attending interviews, seizing salaries or monthly allowances, withholding funds for essential childcare, or deliberately damaging professional equipment to hinder income generation.

ii. ***Destitution Framing:*** Intentionally withholding basic household maintenance funds, health insurance, or essential survival resources from dependents as a punitive measure to enforce absolute obedience.

iii. ***Dispossession of Property and Inheritance Rights:*** The systematic, culturally or family-driven stripping of land, assets, and ancestral inheritance from widows and women purely based on their gender status.

The Preventive Control: Heavily recognized as a critical form of domestic violence under the Lagos State Protection Against Domestic Violence Law (PADVL), 2015, which empowers magistrates and judges to issue protection orders restraining abusers from disposing of shared material assets.

True prevention requires the Lagos State Government to partner with financial institutions and the private sector to deploy localized economic empowerment initiatives, establish independent survivor safety nets, and train microfinance banks to identify signs of coerced debt and financial control at the local government level.

Partner Abuse Rates: About 16% of women and 7.8% of men experience economic abuse or resource denial by a partner.

Legal Protections: An estimated 1.4 billion women live in nations that fail to legally recognize or criminalize economic violence.

6. Technology-Facilitated SGBV (TF-SGBV)

TF-SGBV uses internet connectivity, hardware platforms, and digital communication networks to execute scalable, permanent, and boundary-less gender-based harm.

i. ***Image-Based Sexual Abuse (IBSA):*** The non-consensual creation, distribution, or threat of dissemination of intimate, explicit media. This is executed to destroy the survivor's professional career, familial relations, and social status.

ii. ***Digital Sextortion and Cyber-Blackmail:*** The weaponization of compromised personal data, confidential chat histories, or private images to extort financial payouts or force sexual compliance from a victim.

iii. ***Doxxing and Targeted Digital Swarming:*** Mass-publishing of highly private, identifying data (such as home addresses, personal phone numbers, or exact workplace coordinates) across public digital forums to incite coordinated online harassment or physical tracking.

The Preventive Control: Heavily penalized under Section 24 of the Cybercrimes (Prohibition, Prevention, etc.) Act, enforceable within Lagos State, and structurally integrated into the Lagos State Protection Against Domestic Violence Law (PADVL), Criminal Law of Lagos State, and modern Technology-Facilitated SGBV (TF-SGBV) policies.

True prevention requires the Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency (DSVA) to collaborate with major telecommunications networks and tech platforms to establish rapid-response take-down mechanisms for non-consensual intimate media, alongside implementing digital safety literacy programs that educate users on encryption, device security, and evidence preservation.

Global Internet Exposure: About 85% of women online have witnessed digital violence against other women, and 38% have experienced it personally.

Targeted Professions: At least 1 in 4 women journalists (25%) face direct online threats of physical violence or death.

7. Harmful Traditional and Customary Practices

These are culturally or traditionally sanctioned actions that inflict physical, sexual, or psychological trauma under the guise of customary enforcement.

i. ***Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C):*** All procedures involving the partial or total removal of female external genitalia for non-medical reasons. It inflicts lifetime physical trauma, chronic obstetric complications, and deep psychological scars.

ii. ***Child, Early, and Forced Marriage (CEFM):*** Coercing a child under the age of 18 into a marital union. This completely truncates their educational development, subjects them to premature reproductive hazards, and embeds them in a lifetime dependency trap.

iii. ***Harmful Widowhood Practices:*** Forcing grieving widows to undergo degrading customary rituals, including forced isolation, unhygienic confinements, or compulsory marriage to a deceased husband's relative (wife inheritance), stripping them of bodily and legal autonomy.

The Preventive Control: Strictly criminalized under both the Criminal Law of Lagos State, 2011, and the Lagos State Child Rights Law, 2015. True prevention requires creating strategic coalitions with the Lagos State Council of Obas and Chiefs to replace these practices with human-rights-compliant alternative rites of passage, alongside embedding strict monitoring networks within local birth attendance systems.

Child Marriage: Globally, around 12 million girls are married before reaching the age of 18 every single year.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM): More than 230 million girls and women alive today have undergone FGM across Africa, the Middle East, and Asia.

8. Coercive Control (The Behavioural Foundation)

These non-physical infractions serve as the primary psychological infrastructure used to strip a survivor of their autonomy, often preceding catastrophic physical escalation.

Coercive control is a continuous, strategic pattern of behaviour involving psychological manipulation, forced isolation, degradation, and micro-regulation of a partner's daily life. It shifts the definition of domestic abuse from isolated physical altercations to an ongoing state of systemic hostage-taking.



H***ow it Manifests:*** An abuser systematically monitors financial expenditures, restricts contact with close family or friends, dictates what a partner wears, and utilizes continuous gaslighting to erode the survivor's confidence and independent decision-making capacity.

The Preventive Control: Under the Lagos State Protection Against Domestic Violence Law, coercive control provides valid legal grounds for a restraining order.

Domestic Domination: Up to 25% of women suffer from sustained coercive control and systematic emotional dominance in relationships.

Link to Homicide: In domestic homicide reviews, up to 82% of male abusers who killed their female partners exhibited intense coercive and psychological abuse before the crime.

9. Workplace Sexual Harassment (The Institutional Dimension)

Workplace harassment transforms corporate or formal environments into hostile spaces, weaponizing professional dependency against human dignity.

This involves unwelcome visual, verbal, non-verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature within a professional setting. It operates primarily through two structural mechanisms:

- Quid Pro Quo: Demanding sexual compliance as an explicit or implicit condition for hiring, promotion, salary increments, or preventing wrongful termination.
- Hostile Work Environment: Pervasive, humiliating, sexist commentary, catcalling, or deliberate physical boundary violations that severely impede professional productivity.

How it Manifests: Inappropriate text messages sent outside working hours, suggestive remarks regarding physical appearance, or professional retaliation following the rejection of romantic advances.

The Preventive Control: Regulated heavily under Section 262 of the Criminal Law of Lagos State (which carries a 3-year prison sentence) and anchored by the Lagos State Guidelines for Preventing and Addressing Sexual Harassment in the Workplace. True prevention requires organizations to institute fully independent, third-party managed whistleblower lines that insulate complainants from executive retaliation.

Global Employment: Approximately 6.3% to 8.2% of employed women report facing sexual harassment during their career life.

Regional Surges: In specific zones like the European Union, lifetime workplace sexual harassment affects up to 30.8% of women.

10. Forced Marriage & Child Marriage (The Customary Frontier)

Forced marriage is the union of two individuals where one or both parties cannot, or do not, express free, informed consent due to duress or physical threat. Child marriage specifically refers to any union where at least one party is under the age of 18, representing a strict violation of child protection laws, regardless of parental or cultural approval.

How it Manifests: Familial coercion driven by economic stressors, using ancestral or religious guilt to trap a young girl in a union with an older man, or pulling a minor out of formal secondary education to fulfil traditional marital expectations.

The Preventive Control: Heavily prosecuted under the Child Rights Law of Lagos State. Prevention is achieved through the establishment of community surveillance networks and School Safeguarding Clubs (such as King's and Queen's Clubs), which give minors the reporting channels needed to flag early family pressure to school authorities before the marriage is solemnized.

Global Burden: Over 22 million people are trapped living in a forced marriage at any given moment.

Demographics: Females bear the brunt of this practice, making up 68% of all individuals subjected to forced marriages.

11. Human Trafficking (The Exploitative System)

The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of persons through the use of force, abduction, fraud, deception, or the abuse of power for exploitative purposes.

How it Manifests: Vulnerable individuals from rural areas or low-income urban settlements are lured with false promises of formal employment, domestic tailoring apprenticeships, or hospitality jobs in metropolitan centres, only to be stripped of their identification documents and forced into commercial sexual exploitation or involuntary domestic servitude.

The Preventive Control: Coordinated via the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) alongside sub-national task forces, prevention requires embedding strict anti-trafficking checkpoints across inter-state transport hubs and working directly with transport unions to flag unusual movements of unaccompanied minors.

Gender Demographics: Women and girls account for 46% of all victims of trafficking, while 91% of those trafficked for sexual exploitation are female.

Forced Labour: Females represent approximately 35% of those trafficked into forced labour systems worldwide

12. Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

Any behaviour within an intimate, marital, or cohabiting relationship that causes physical, psychological, or sexual harm to those inside the union.

How it Manifests: Recurring episodes of severe spousal battery, sexual abuse, threat of life, or forceful domestic ejection (expelling a partner and children into homelessness). Recent data from the DSVA highlights the broad impact of IPV, showing that even male visibility is rising, with 920 male survivors formally reporting domestic harm or resource denial over a recent 12-month cycle.

The Preventive Control: Enforced through specialized Fast-Track Domestic Violence Courts. Long-term prevention is anchored by scaling up decentralized Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) and secure shelters to provide immediate safety, while legally integrating mandatory perpetrator rehabilitation and anger management therapy into judicial sentencing guidelines to break the cycle of domestic trauma.

Widespread Reach: Almost 27% of women aged 15–49 who have been in a relationship report being subjected to physical or sexual IPV.

Fatal Outcomes: Up to 38% of all murders of women globally are committed by their intimate partners.

13. Child Abuse

Any act of commission or omission by a parent, caregiver, or institutional guardian that results in actual or potential harm, threat to survival, or violation of a child's inherent dignity.

How it Manifests: Severe physical battery under the guise of corporal punishment, commercial child labour, child sexual defilement, or chronic emotional neglect. DSVA metrics confirm the urgency of this domain, noting that out of over 8,000 processed survivors annually, 3,629 are children (with girls constituting 60% of this vulnerable demographic).

The Preventive Control: Operationalized through the Lagos State Child Sexual Abuse Investigative and Interview Protocol. Systemic prevention is driven by enacting a strict Mandated Reporter Policy across public education and healthcare sectors, legally obligating teachers and paediatric workers to confidently report early indicators of trauma directly to state protective custody lines.

Global Exposure: An estimated 1 billion children aged 2 to 17 face physical, sexual, or emotional violence annually.

Child Trafficking: Approximately 1 in 3 victims of human trafficking identified globally is a child.

14. Stalking

Stalking is a malicious pattern of persistent, unwanted tracking, surveillance, and communication that instils a continuous fear of imminent physical injury or death.

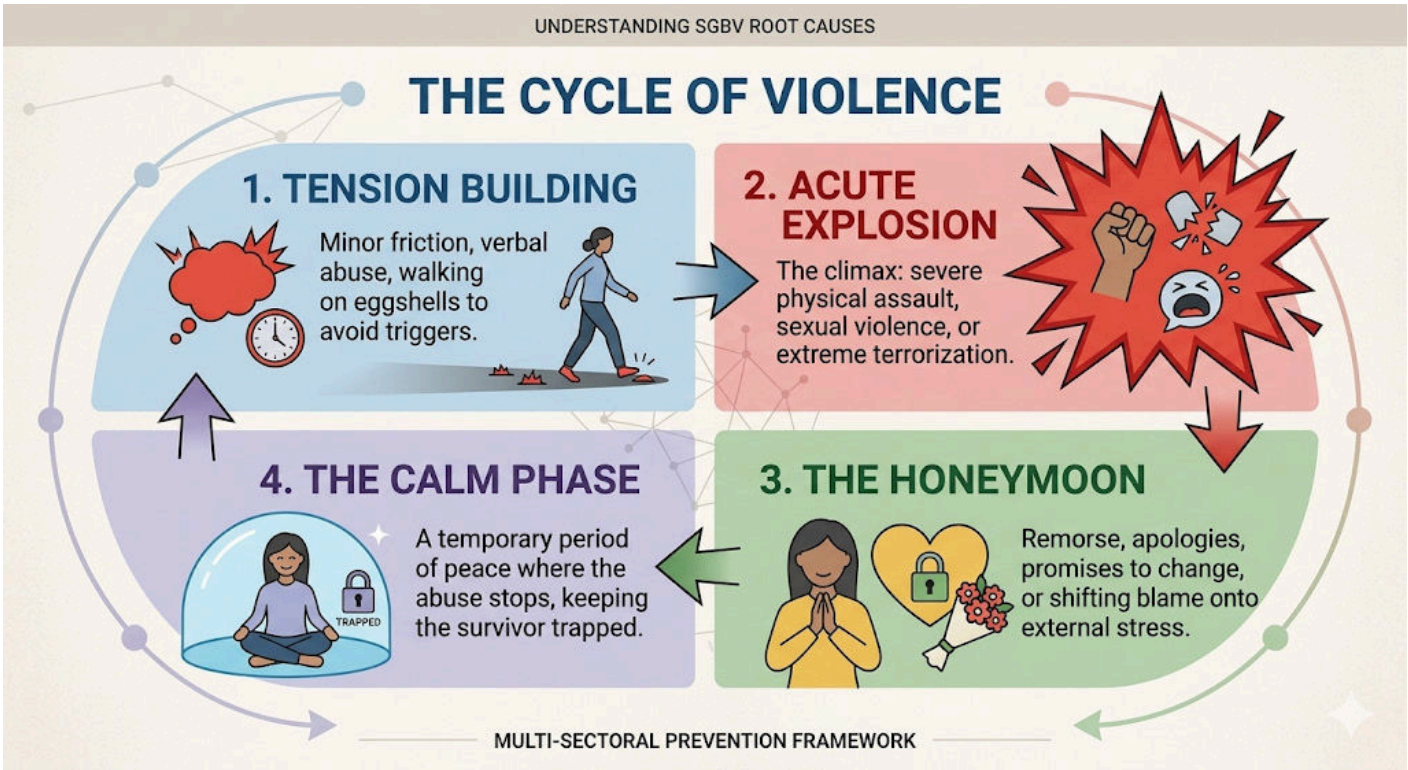
How it Manifests: This includes loitering near a victim's home or workplace, sending unsolicited gifts or letters, and utilizing digital tools (such as Apple AirTags, spyware, or constant WhatsApp monitoring) to shadow a victim's movements.

The Preventive Control: Handled jointly under the Criminal Law of Lagos State and modern Technology-Facilitated SGBV (TF-SGBV) policies. Digital literacy campaigns educate the public on cyber-hygiene, while tech-hubs assist law enforcement in tracing digital footprints to secure airtight evidence for prosecution.

Lifetime Rates: Roughly 1 in 6 women (16.6%) and 1 in 19 men (5.2%) undergo stalking during their lifetime.

Perpetrator Connection: The vast majority (60% of female victims) are stalked by someone they know, typically a current or former intimate partner.

Understanding The Cycle of Violence



The fundamental cycle that traps survivors in abusive relationships, keeping them in a state of constant fear while preventing their easy escape, consists of four primary, recurring phases:

i. Phase One: Tension Building (Worsening behaviour, feeling of imminent danger)
ii. Phase Two: Acute Explosion (Severe violent outburst, the apex of danger)
iii. Phase Three: The Honeymoon (Apologies, remorse, false hope)
iv. Phase Four: The Calm Phase (A temporary pause in abuse, institutionalizing dependency)

The Four Phases of Abuse Explained

Phase 1: Tension Building

This phase is characterized by a strategic, escalating pattern of subtle degradation and control. It is designed to maximize the survivor's fear, keeping them off-balance, isolated, and preoccupied with placating the abuser to avoid a catastrophic trigger.

How it Manifests: Minor incidents of verbal abuse, forceful micromanagement of daily life, public humiliation, and forceful domestic ejection (threatening sudden homelessness to enforce compliance). The survivor describes this phase as continuously "walking on eggshells," hyper-vigilant of the abuser's shifting moods.

Phase 2: Acute Explosion

This is the unpredictable, brutal apex of the cycle. It is the phase that inflicts the most visible trauma, utilizing extreme force, terror, or physical violations to break any remaining resistance and enforce total subordination.

How it Manifests: Severe physical assault (battery, strangulation, weapon use), marital rape, and extreme terrorization (threats of child abduction or intimate partner femicide). The explosion is intentional, using catastrophic violence to redefine the power relationship within the home.

Phase 3: The Honeymoon

After the violence, the perpetrator utilizes manipulative behaviours to shift blame away from their actions and instil a powerful sense of false hope in the survivor. This phase is critical to preventing immediate escape.

How it Manifests: The abuser offers tearful apologies, pledges to change, makes grand gestures of affection, and engages in "shifting blame onto external stress", such as blaming job loss, substance use, or the survivor's perceived failure as a trigger for the violence. It confuses the survivor and halts legal or social service seeking.

Phase 4: The Calm Phase

The abuser stops the active violence and provides a period of temporary peace, allowing the household to establish a sense of false normalcy. This phase is insidious because it reinforces the survivor's economic and logistical dependencies.

How it Manifests: During this time, the household may feel functional, even cooperative. However, the perpetrator uses this quiet period to strengthen other structural controls, such as implementing strict economic dependency (limiting access to finances) and digital isolation (monitoring communication to block escape paths). The primary purpose of this phase is to make the survivor believe that life can continue and that escape is unnecessary, keeping them trapped for the next unavoidable loop.

The Systemic Cascade: Domestic violence operates through this infinite loop. As time progresses, The Honeymoon (3) and The Calm Phase (4) grow exponentially shorter or disappear, leaving the survivor caught in a continuous, dangerous cycle of Tension Building (1) and Acute Explosion (2). True prevention is achieved when multi-sectoral protocols target each specific phase: specialized courts eliminating the legal delays abusers exploit in Phase 1, Health care facilities capture Phase 2 evidence, and economic empowerment programs dissolving the dependencies strengthened in Phase 4.

Impact of SGBV

Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) has serious and far-reaching effects on both:

A. The survivor, and

B. Society at large.

The impacts may be immediate or long-term, visible or invisible, and they often affect multiple areas of life at the same time.

A. IMPACTS OF SGBV ON THE SURVIVOR

SGBV affects survivors physically, emotionally, socially, economically, psychologically, and legally.

i. Physical Health Impacts: Survivors may suffer injuries or long-term health problems resulting from violence. Common Effects include bruises and cuts, fractures and internal injuries, chronic pain, disabilities, sleep disturbances, fatigue, and headaches. e.g., A survivor of domestic violence develops long-term spinal pain after repeated physical assaults.

ii. Psychological and Emotional Impacts: Trauma from violence can deeply affect mental and emotional well-being, which includes fear, anxiety, depression, shame and guilt, low self-esteem, PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder), panic attacks, emotional numbness, and suicidal thoughts. e.g., A student who experienced sexual assault becomes withdrawn and struggles with severe anxiety.

iii. Reproductive and Sexual Health Impacts: Sexual violence can damage reproductive and sexual health, leading to Sexually transmitted infections (STIs), HIV infection, unwanted pregnancy, miscarriage, infertility, genital injuries, menstrual complications, and sexual dysfunction. e.g., A survivor of rape contracts an STI but delays treatment because of fear and stigma.

iv. Social Impacts: SGBV can affect relationships and social participation.

Common effects include isolation from friends and family, victim-blaming, stigma and shame, loss of trust in others, relationship breakdown, and fear of social interaction. e.g., A woman who reports abuse and is rejected by relatives who accuse her of bringing shame to the family.

v. Educational Impacts: Violence can interfere with learning and academic progress, leading to poor concentration, school absenteeism, low academic performance, school dropout, and reduced educational opportunities. e.g., A girl experiencing harassment on her way to school eventually stops attending classes.

vi. Economic Impacts: SGBV can reduce a survivor's financial stability and independence.

Common effects include loss of employment, reduced productivity, medical expenses, legal costs, financial dependence on abusers, and housing instability. e.g., A survivor leaves an abusive partner and struggles to provide for her children due to unemployment.

vii. Legal and Security Impacts: Survivors may face ongoing safety concerns and barriers to justice.

Common effects include fear of retaliation, stalking or threats, lack of legal protection, distrust of police or courts, and difficulty accessing justice. e.g., A survivor withdraws a court case after receiving threats from the perpetrator.

viii. Digital and Online Impacts: Technology can extend abuse beyond physical spaces.

Common effects include cyberstalking, online harassment, non-consensual sharing of images, public humiliation, and fear of social media use. e.g., A survivor's private photos are shared online, leading to emotional distress and social withdrawal.

ix. Loss of Confidence and Personal Development: SGBV can affect a survivor's identity, confidence, and future goals. Common effects include reduced self-worth, fear of relationships, difficulty trusting others, reduced participation in opportunities, and loss of independence. e.g., A talented employee avoids leadership roles after prolonged workplace harassment damaged her confidence.

x. Increased Risk of Repeated Victimization: Without protection and support, survivors may remain vulnerable to further abuse. e.g., A survivor trapped in financial dependence returns to an abusive environment because there are no safe alternatives.

B. IMPACTS OF SGBV ON SOCIETY AT LARGE

SGBV not only affects individuals. It also weakens families, institutions, economies, and communities.

i. Increased Healthcare Burden: Hospitals may experience rising demand for trauma counselling and post-rape medical care. This increases pressure on already limited healthcare resources for emergency treatment, mental health services, reproductive health services, and long-term medical conditions.

ii. Reduced Economic Productivity: SGBV reduces workforce participation and productivity. Workers experiencing abuse may struggle to maintain consistent employment. Effects include missed workdays, unemployment, reduced performance, and long-term disability.

iii. Increased Poverty and Economic Inequality: Violence can trap families in cycles of poverty. Children in violent homes may lose educational opportunities, reducing future earning potential. Possible effects include loss of income, interrupted education, unstable household, and financial dependence.

iv. Breakdown of Families and Relationships: SGBV can destabilize family structures and caregiving systems. Separation, divorce, family conflict, child neglect, intergenerational trauma, and repeated domestic violence may develop emotional and behavioural difficulties.

v. Negative Impact on Children: Children exposed to violence may experience long-term developmental harm, leaving lasting emotional and behavioural impacts such as anxiety, aggression, depression, poor school performance, trauma, and normalization of violence. Some children may repeat abusive behaviours or go into abusive relationships.

vi. Reduced Educational Development: SGBV affects school attendance and educational achievement.

Lower educational attainment weakens national development and workforce quality. Girls forced into early marriage or affected by sexual violence may drop out permanently.

vii. Reinforcement of Gender Inequality: SGBV reinforces unequal power structures between genders. Women may avoid political or professional spaces due to fear of harassment or abuse. Effects include discrimination, reduced participation of women in leadership, limited economic empowerment, and restricted freedoms.

viii. Weakening of Social Cohesion: High levels of violence reduce trust and community safety. Communities where violence is tolerated may discourage survivors from reporting abuse, leading to fear, silence, mistrust, normalization of abuse, and reduced community cooperation.

ix. Increased Crime and Insecurity: Unchecked violence contributes to broader insecurity and criminal behaviour. Conflict zones with widespread sexual violence may experience prolonged instability and displacement. Also, normalization of aggression, gang violence, trafficking, exploitation, and community instability.

x. Burden on Legal and Social Systems: SGBV increases pressure on the police, courts, shelters, child protection systems, and social welfare services. Weak systems may become overwhelmed, reducing access to justice.

xi. Damage to Human Rights and Development: SGBV undermines dignity, equality, freedom, safety, and human rights. It also slows progress toward education, health, economic growth, gender equality, and sustainable development.

xii. Harmful Cultural Normalization exists when violence is tolerated. Communities that excuse domestic violence may unintentionally protect perpetrators, increase victim blaming, and reduce accountability.

Summary Table

Impact on Survivors	Impact on Society
Physical injuries	Increased healthcare burden
Trauma and mental health problems	Reduced economic productivity
Social isolation	Increased poverty
Educational disruption	Weakening of families
Financial hardship	Harm to children
Reproductive health problems	Reduced educational development
Fear and insecurity	Reinforcement of inequality
Online harassment	Community instability
Reduced self-esteem	Strain on legal/social systems
Repeated victimization	Slower national development

Final Insight

SGBV is not a “private issue” affecting only individuals. Its effects spread across families, schools, workplaces, healthcare systems, economies, and entire communities.

Root Causes Of SGBV in Lagos State

SGBV does not occur in isolation; it is driven by social, economic, cultural, political, and institutional factors that reinforce inequality and abuse of power. Understanding the root causes of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), therefore, requires looking at the intersection of cultural traditions, intense economic pressures, and social norms.

The core root causes can be broken down across multiple primary levels:

1. Socio-Cultural and Ideological Roots

At the absolute base of SGBV are deeply entrenched social norms that dictate power dynamics between genders.

a. **The Norm of Male Superiority:** Studies and local assessments consistently show that a belief in male dominance and female submissiveness is a major driver. This ideology frames women and children as dependents or property rather than autonomous individuals with equal rights.

b. **The "Culture of Silence" and Victim-Blaming:** When sexual assault or domestic violence occurs, community and familial systems often prioritize "family reputation" over justice. Survivors face heavy social stigma, are often blamed for the abuse (e.g., criticized for their clothing or behaviour), or are pressured by family and religious structures to "endure" marital abuse.

c. **Harmful Traditional Practices:** While less common in urban centres than in rural areas, practices like child marriage, female genital mutilation (FGM), and harmful widowhood rites persist within various communities across the state.

2. Economic Stressors and Financial Dependency

Lagos is Nigeria's economic powerhouse, but it also harbours stark wealth disparities. Financial instability acts as both a trigger for violence and a safety barrier.

a. **Extreme Financial Dependency:** A substantial number of adult survivors delay reporting abuse (sometimes for over a decade) because they are entirely financially dependent on their abuser. Without independent income or accessible financial safety nets, leaving an abusive partner means facing immediate destitution or loss of shelter.

b. **Unemployment and Poverty Frustration:** High unemployment rates and inflation create severe, prolonged psychological stress within households. While poverty does not cause a person to become an abuser, the intense frustration associated with economic hardship frequently acts as a destabilizing trigger that escalates into physical or emotional abuse.

3. Megacity Dynamics and Urbanization

The unique environment of Lagos as a high-density urban hub creates structural vulnerabilities that exacerbate SGBV risks.

a. **Severe Overcrowding and Lack of Spatial Privacy:** In highly populated, low-income areas (such as parts of Alimosho, which consistently records some of the highest incident rates in the state), multiple families often share tight living quarters. This lack of privacy significantly increases the vulnerability of minors to defilement and physical abuse by neighbours, co-tenants, or relatives.

b. **Unsafe Public and Communal Spaces:** Poorly lit streets, blind corners, and crowded public transport hubs create physical environments where sexual harassment and opportunist assaults can occur with minimal threat of immediate intervention.

c. **The Digital Landscape:** As Africa's tech hub, Lagos has seen a significant surge in Technology-Facilitated SGBV (TFSGBV). Cyber harassment, non-consensual sharing of intimate images (revenge pornography), and online grooming are growing rapidly, catching existing legal frameworks off-balance.

4. Institutional and Systemic Weaknesses

When accountability mechanisms are weak, perpetrators operate with a sense of impunity, which directly perpetuates the cycle of violence.

a. **Intergenerational Cycles of Violence:** A major psychological root cause is the normalization of trauma. A significant portion of perpetrators grew up witnessing or experiencing violence in their childhood homes, effectively learning violence as a standard method for conflict resolution.

b. **Fear of Systemic Failures:** Many survivors choose not to report incidents due to a historic distrust of law enforcement. Concerns about being re-traumatized by insensitive questioning, corruption, or prolonged delay in the judicial system heavily discourage legal reporting.

c. **Concealment of Minors' Abuse:** There remains a critical challenge where parents or guardians actively conceal sexual abuse involving minors, opting for informal family settlements instead of state-backed prosecution, which leaves child victims highly vulnerable to repeated harm.

5. Systemic Infrastructure and Spatial Planning Deficits

The physical design and exponential growth of Lagos directly impact safety.

a. **The "Face-Me-I-Face-You" Housing Paradox:** In dense settlements across local government areas like Alimosho, Mushin, or Ajegunle, low-income tenement housing forces multiple families to share singular, communal facilities (bathrooms, kitchens, corridors). This acute lack of physical and spatial privacy structurally exposes vulnerable individuals, particularly children and young girls, to a high risk of domestic defilement, molestation, and abuse by co-tenants or neighbours.

b. **Transit Vulnerabilities:** For the millions of Lagosians relying on public transportation, the daily commute introduces high risks. Overcrowded danfos (commercial buses), unmanaged BRT queues during peak hours, and poorly monitored water transport hubs create physically compressed environments where sexual harassment and opportunistic assaults may occur.

6. Institutional Friction and Legal Execution Gaps

Lagos State boasts some of the most progressive laws in Nigeria (including the early adoption of the Protection Against Domestic Violence Law), but structural friction slows down their impact.

a. **The Judicial Bottleneck:** Extended timelines in the traditional court system create a secondary crisis. When an SGBV case takes years to resolve due to clogged dockets, survivors experience severe emotional exhaustion. This prolonged delay frequently forces families to drop charges or succumb to out-of-court pressure from the perpetrator's networks.

b. **Inconsistent Forensic and Back-End Infrastructure:** Lagos State has important survivor-support and forensic institutions, including the Mirabel Centre, which identifies itself as Nigeria’s first Sexual Assault Referral Centre, and the Lagos State DNA and Forensic Center. However, access to timely forensic medical examination and forensic processing remains a critical policy concern in a large, densely populated State like Lagos. Delays or limited decentralised access to forensic services may affect the quality, preservation and evidential value of materials required for effective investigation and prosecution.

7. Substance Abuse and the Night Economy

The intersection of substance dependence and the rapid urbanization of the state creates acute flashpoints for violence.

• **Unregulated Local Substance Hubs:** The widespread availability of cheap, unregulated substances, such as locally formulated chemical mixtures, synthetic drugs, and codeine, at informal commercial hubs (paragas or motor parks) acts as a severe behavioural destabilizer. While substance abuse is a contributing trigger rather than the absolute origin of violence, data consistently correlates high substance abuse rates with increased severity and frequency of intimate partner violence and physical assaults.

8. The Digital Divide and Modern Vulnerabilities

As a leading African technological hub, the shift toward a digital lifestyle has created a brand-new frontier for violence.

a. **Anonymity and Impunity in Technology-Facilitated SGBV (TFSGBV):** The explosion of internet penetration and smartphone usage has birthed a massive wave of digital violence. Cyberstalking, non-consensual sharing of intimate images (image-based sexual abuse), digital blackmail (sextortion), and online grooming are growing exponentially.

b. **Lagging Digital Enforcement:** Traditional law enforcement units are often under-equipped or insufficiently trained to handle digital evidence or track anonymous online perpetrators. This creates a digital environment of impunity where bad actors believe online harassment carries zero real-world legal consequences.

9. Educational Disparities and School-Level Determinants

Recent localized data mapping SGBV across public and private secondary educational landscapes in Lagos shows distinct risk variations.

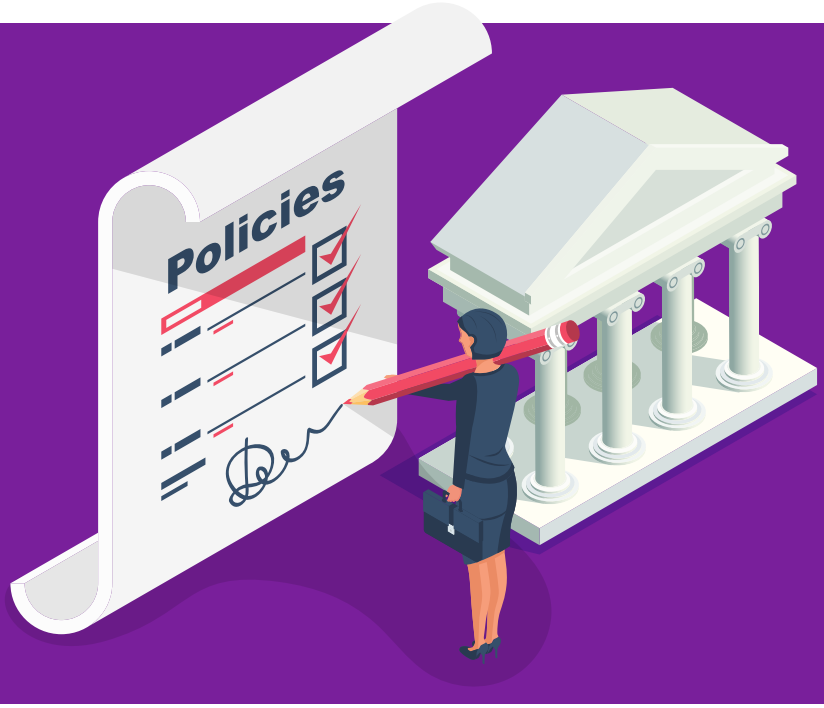
• **The Private vs. Public School Safety Split:** Structural differences in school ecosystems alter how SGBV manifests among youth. Public schools, often facing lower teacher-to-student ratios, experience higher recorded rates of physical maltreatment.

Conversely, private school environments, despite generally having higher baseline knowledge of SGBV, report higher incidences of forced or coerced sexual interactions. This points to a core gap: intellectual awareness of rights does not automatically translate to a protective environment if peer group dynamics and internal institutional accountability mechanisms remain weak.

The Structural Reality: When these factors are mapped alongside the core socio-cultural and economic drivers, it becomes clear that SGBV in Lagos is highly spatial and structural. Mitigating it requires moving past generic awareness campaigns to actively address tenement housing regulations, urban lighting, digital crime forensics, and specialized judicial fast-tracking.

The Interconnected Impact: Data from the DSVA highlights how these root causes create compounding trauma. For instance, in thousands of documented adult domestic violence cases, thousands of children are simultaneously exposed to severe emotional violence simply by witnessing the abuse at home. This exposure seeds the next generation's socio-cultural norms, proving that SGBV cannot be solved by criminal prosecution alone; it requires structural, economic, and cultural transformation.

SECTION B: THE POLICY



Policy Rationale

SGBV has become a significant social, economic, health, legal, and human rights problem affecting individuals, families, communities, and institutions across the state.

Despite existing interventions and institutional structures, the prevalence of domestic violence, rape, sexual assault, child abuse, emotional violence, harmful practices, and technology-facilitated abuse continues to rise, demonstrating the need for a more coordinated, preventive, and sustainable policy response.

Lagos State, as Nigeria's commercial and most populous state, experiences unique social and economic pressures that increase vulnerability to SGBV. Rapid urbanization, population growth, unemployment, migration, overcrowding, poverty, inequality, and weak community support systems contribute to increased exposure to violence and exploitation.

The state's diverse and densely populated environment creates challenges for law enforcement, social protection systems, and survivor support services, making it essential to establish a comprehensive framework to address the problem's complexity and scale.

The rationale for this framework is also based on the recognition that SGBV is not merely a private or domestic issue but a serious violation of fundamental human rights and dignity. Violence against women, girls, boys, men, and vulnerable persons including Persons with Disabilities undermines constitutional rights to life, freedom, security, equality, health, education, and protection from discrimination.

Another major rationale for the framework is the growing prevalence and reporting of SGBV cases in Lagos State. Reports from government agencies and civil society organizations indicate increasing cases of domestic violence, rape, child defilement, sexual harassment, incest, intimate partner violence, and online abuse across the state. According to reports, Lagos recorded 41,479 cases of SGBV between 2019 and 2025, with domestic violence consistently ranking among the most reported forms of abuse.

These statistics reveal both the magnitude of the problem and the urgent need for stronger preventive and institutional measures.

Survivors often experience physical injuries, sexually transmitted infections, unwanted pregnancies, reproductive health complications, trauma, depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, social isolation, and loss of self-esteem. Many survivors also face educational disruption, reduced productivity, unemployment, homelessness, family breakdown, and long-term economic hardship.

The cumulative impact of these consequences affects not only individuals but also families, communities, healthcare systems, social welfare structures, and the overall development of Lagos State.

Although Lagos State has made progress through the establishment of the Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency (DSVA) and other support structures, challenges remain in coordination among law enforcement agencies, healthcare providers, courts, schools, social welfare institutions, and civil society organizations. Survivors frequently encounter delays in accessing justice, inadequate psychosocial support, insufficient shelter services, poor investigation procedures, and secondary victimization during reporting and prosecution processes.

The rationale for the policy framework is further strengthened by the persistence of harmful social and cultural norms that normalize violence and discourage reporting. In many communities, patriarchal beliefs and gender stereotypes continue to reinforce unequal power relations between men and women, promote male dominance, and justify violence within homes and relationships. Victim-blaming attitudes, stigma, fear of shame, and pressure from families or religious institutions often prevent survivors from seeking help.

Another important rationale is the vulnerability of children, adolescents, persons with disabilities, domestic workers, migrants, and economically disadvantaged populations to exploitation and abuse. Many children in Lagos State experience defilement, neglect, child labour, trafficking, online exploitation, and abuse within homes, schools, and communities. Women and girls living in informal settlements or low-income communities are particularly vulnerable because of poverty, insecurity, overcrowding, and limited access to support services.

The rise of Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence also provides a strong rationale for policy reform. Increased use of digital platforms and social media has created new forms of abuse, including cyberstalking, online harassment, revenge pornography, sextortion, cyberbullying, online grooming, and non-consensual sharing of intimate images. These emerging forms of violence are often inadequately addressed within traditional legal and institutional systems. Lagos State has already begun responding through initiatives addressing technology-facilitated SGBV. A comprehensive framework is therefore needed to integrate digital safety, cybercrime prevention, and online protection mechanisms into existing SGBV prevention strategies.

Although laws such as the Criminal Law of Lagos State, the Child Rights Law, the Protection Against Domestic Violence Law, and the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act provide legal protections against abuse, enforcement remains inconsistent due to weak investigations, inadequate training, corruption, judicial delays, poor evidence management, and low prosecution rates.

Many perpetrators evade accountability, which contributes to a culture of impunity and discourages survivors from reporting cases. A comprehensive framework would strengthen institutional capacity, establish survivor-centered justice systems, improve prosecution procedures, and promote accountability across all relevant institutions.

The framework is also important for achieving national and international development goals related to gender equality, human rights, health, education, and sustainable development.

Nigeria is a signatory to several international and regional instruments, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Maputo Protocol, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 5 on gender equality and the elimination of violence against women and girls. Developing a comprehensive SGBV prevention framework in Lagos State would support compliance with these obligations and demonstrate commitment to protecting vulnerable populations.

Economic considerations also justify the need for a comprehensive policy framework. SGBV imposes high economic costs on survivors, families, employers, healthcare systems, and government institutions through medical expenses, productivity losses, legal costs, absenteeism, social welfare burdens, and long-term rehabilitation needs.

Women trapped in abusive relationships may lose employment opportunities or financial independence, while children affected by violence may experience reduced educational attainment and future earning capacity. Preventing violence and supporting survivors would therefore contribute to economic stability, workforce productivity, poverty reduction, and social development within Lagos State.

The rationale for the framework further rests on the need to improve data collection, research, and evidence-based decision-making. Reliable and comprehensive data on SGBV remains limited because many incidents go unreported, and reporting systems are fragmented across institutions. Without accurate data, it becomes difficult to design targeted interventions, allocate resources effectively, or evaluate policy outcomes. A comprehensive framework would establish centralized databases, standardized reporting procedures, monitoring systems, and research mechanisms to support informed planning and accountability.

Finally, the framework is necessary to ensure sustainability, coordination, and long-term societal transformation. Addressing SGBV requires more than emergency responses to incidents of violence; it requires structural reforms that promote gender equality, social justice, economic empowerment, institutional accountability, and cultural transformation.

A comprehensive framework would provide a long-term roadmap for prevention, protection, prosecution, rehabilitation, and partnership among government agencies, civil society organizations, schools, healthcare institutions, religious bodies, traditional leaders, media organizations, and development partners.

In conclusion, establishing a comprehensive policy framework for preventing Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Lagos State is grounded in the urgent need to address the increasing prevalence of violence, protect human rights, strengthen institutional coordination, improve access to justice, challenge harmful social norms, support survivors, and promote sustainable social development. This framework is essential for creating a safer, more inclusive, and equitable Lagos State where all individuals can live free from violence, fear, discrimination, and abuse.

Policy Purpose, Vision, Goals, Objectives, and Statement

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy Framework is to provide a coordinated, inclusive, survivor-centred, and rights-based approach for preventing, responding to, and eliminating all forms of sexual and gender-based violence within the state. The framework is intended to strengthen institutional systems, improve access to justice and support services, promote gender equality, protect vulnerable populations, and create safer communities where all individuals can live free from violence, abuse, discrimination, and exploitation.

The policy framework also seeks to establish clear guidelines and responsibilities for government ministries, departments, agencies, law enforcement institutions, healthcare providers, educational institutions, civil society organizations, community leaders, religious bodies, private sector organizations, and development partners involved in preventing and responding to SGBV. It is designed to ensure effective coordination, accountability, data management, awareness creation, survivor protection, and sustainable prevention strategies across Lagos State.

In addition, the framework aims to address the root causes of SGBV, including gender inequality, harmful social norms, poverty, discrimination, unequal power relations, and weak institutional responses, while promoting behavioural and cultural transformation throughout society.

VISION

The vision of the policy framework is to build by 2031, a safe, inclusive, equitable, and violence-free Lagos State where women, girls, men, boys, and vulnerable populations are protected from all forms of sexual and gender-based violence, as well as Technology-Facilitated Sexual and Gender-Based Violence and can enjoy their fundamental human rights, dignity, security, equality, and freedom without fear of abuse, discrimination, coercion, or exploitation. The vision is also to improve and strengthen public trust in institutions through enhancing quality services across all relevant agencies and stakeholders.

The vision further seeks to create a society where:

- Gender equality and mutual respect are promoted;
- Survivors of violence receive timely, confidential, and comprehensive support services;
- Communities actively reject harmful cultural practices and violence;
- Institutions effectively prevent and respond to SGBV;
- Perpetrators are held accountable under the law; and
- Residents of Lagos State are empowered to contribute to peaceful, healthy, and socially just communities.

GOALS

The primary goal of this Policy Framework is to prevent the occurrence of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Lagos State by addressing its root causes, strengthening awareness and education, promoting safe environments, and implementing proactive measures that reduce vulnerability and discourage all forms of abuse. It is also to improve prompt response in the eventuality that SGBV has occurred.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Lagos State Government adopts a zero-tolerance policy on all forms of SGBV. All acts of violence, abuse, exploitation, and harassment are prohibited and punishable under Lagos State laws and applicable federal legislation.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

This policy seeks to reduce the occurrence of SGBV in Lagos State by addressing root causes, strengthening protective systems, increasing community accountability, and embedding prevention into education, governance, workplaces, public spaces, and digital environments.

It seeks to increase community accountability through community awareness, knowledge, and capacity through sustained education, advocacy, and engagement, with a focus on vulnerable populations and high-risk areas

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Lagos State Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) Prevention Policy establishes the ethical, legal, and operational boundaries that govern all sub-national interventions. These principles ensure that state actors, civil society, and institutional partners operate with a unified, strategic direction.

This policy framework is therefore anchored on the following six guiding principles:

a. Prevention and Early Intervention

- Core Logic: Shift the institutional paradigm from a purely reactive, post-incident response to a proactive, prevention-focused strategy.
- What is expected: Prioritize public education, continuous capacity building for community gatekeepers, and targeted awareness campaigns. This includes embedding age-appropriate safeguarding education into school curricula and implementing early warning systems to disrupt cycles of abuse before they escalate.

b. Multi-Sectoral and Inter-Agency Collaboration

- Core Logic: Recognize that SGBV is a multifaceted public safety issue that cannot be solved by any single agency in isolation.
- What is expected: Establish seamless operational linkages between law enforcement, healthcare providers, legal aid services, social workers, and judicial bodies. Interventions must break down bureaucratic silos to ensure that a survivor's transition through the reporting, medical, and legal pipelines is coordinated, efficient, and cohesive.

c Survivor-Centred and Trauma-Informed Approach

- **Core Logic:** Place the safety, dignity, rights, and psychological well-being of the survivor at the centre of every institutional action.
- **What is expected:** Ensure that all frontline responders, from emergency hotlines to counselling units, are trained in trauma-informed care. This guarantees that protocols actively minimize re-traumatization, maintain absolute confidentiality, and respect the survivor's autonomy throughout the legal and recovery processes.

d. Digital-Age Adaptability (Inclusion of TF-SGBV)

- ***Core Logic:*** Acknowledge that modern violence transcends physical borders, frequently manifesting across digital platforms.
- ***What is expected:*** Ensure the policy framework actively addresses Technology-Facilitated SGBV (TF-SGBV), including online harassment, non-consensual sharing of intimate images, and digital stalking. Policy implementation must continuously update its technical and legal definitions to effectively regulate and respond to harms occurring in virtual spaces.

e. Inclusivity and Vulnerability Safeguarding

- **Core Logic:** Ensure equal protection under the law, recognizing that specific demographics face heightened risks and unique barriers to reporting.
- **What is expected:** Design interventions that are universally accessible, removing systemic barriers for marginalized or vulnerable populations, including children, individuals with disabilities, and low-income community members. Protection mechanisms must be physically, linguistically, and operationally accessible across all local government areas (LGAs).

f. Data-Driven Accountability and Evidence-Based Response

- ***Core Logic:*** Ground policy shifts, institutional funding, and geographic resource allocation in objective, verified metrics.
- ***What is expected:*** Maintain rigorous Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) frameworks. Ensure regional participation tracking, incident reporting, and case completion rates are systematically documented and analysed. Data must directly inform iterative policy adjustments, ensuring that state interventions remain highly responsive to localized trends.

POLICY SCOPE

The Scope and Application section establishes the precise boundaries of the policy. It dictates exactly who is protected, where the policy enforces jurisdiction, and which institutions are legally and operationally bound to implement it across Lagos State.

Policy Scope (The "Where" and "What")

This policy applies universally to all spaces where human interactions occur within the geographical boundaries of Lagos State, recognizing that modern violence transitions fluidly between physical and virtual environments.

a. Physical Spaces & Jurisdictions

The policy enforces compliance across all formal and informal settings within the 20 Local Government Areas (LGAs) and 37 Local Council Development Areas (LCDAs), including:

- **The Domestic Domain:** Private residences, familial setups, and intimate partnerships (regardless of marital status under statutory, customary, or religion).
- **Educational Institutions:** All public and private tiers, including crèches, primary and secondary schools, vocational centres, and tertiary institutions.
- **The Workplace & Corporate Spaces:** All public civil service ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs), alongside formal private corporations, small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs), and the informal trade sectors (markets, transport hubs, and artisan unions).
- **Public & Community Spaces:** Healthcare facilities, recreational centres, religious institutions, IDP camps, and transit systems.

b. Digital Spaces & Virtual Terrains (TF-SGBV Scope)

In line with the Lagos State Policy Framework on Technology-Facilitated SGBV, the scope extends explicitly to the digital realm. The policy applies to any act of violence initiated, executed, or amplified via digital technology against a resident of Lagos State, including:

- Social media platforms, messaging applications, and internet forums.
- The use of mobile devices, emails, and cloud storage to execute cyberstalking, digital extortion, online grooming, or the non-consensual sharing of intimate images.

POLICY APPLICATION

The application of this framework is split into two categories: those whom the policy protects (Right-holders) and those whom the policy binds to take action (Duty-bearers).

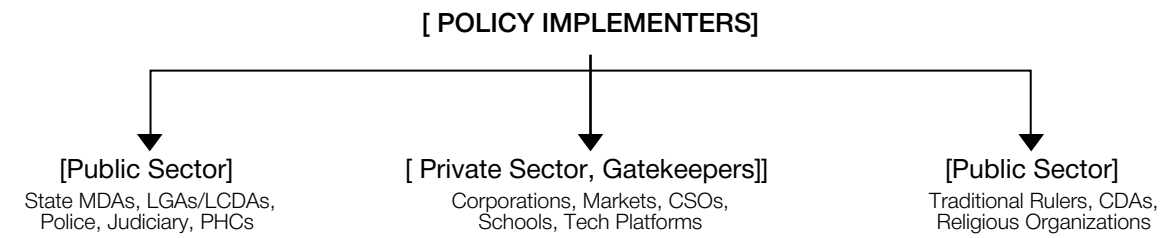
a. Target Beneficiaries (Who is Protected)

This policy applies without discrimination to all individuals residing, working, studying, or transiting through Lagos State.

- **Universal Protection:** It applies regardless of gender, age, religion, ethnicity, socio- economic status, physical ability, or civil status.
- **Vulnerable Cohorts:** While protecting everyone, it mandates specialized, high-priority safeguarding protocols for disproportionately targeted demographics, specifically elderly persons, women, adolescent girls and boys, children (in line with the Lagos State Child's Rights Law), and persons with disabilities (Special People's Law).

b. Mandated Implementers (Who is Bound)

This policy is an institutional mandate. The following entities are legally and operationally bound to enforce its preventive guidelines, reporting paths, and standard operating procedures (SOPs):



a. Public Sector & Law Enforcement: All Lagos State MDAs, the High Courts and Magistrates' Courts (specifically Special Sexual Offences Courts), the Lagos State Police Command (Gender Desks and Family Support Units), and all state-managed healthcare institutions.

b Educational and Child-centred Bodies: All school administrators, management boards, and safeguarding officers are bound by the Lagos State Executive Order on Sex Offenders Register and Mandated Reporting to act as Mandated Reporters for suspected or disclosed abuse.

c The Private Sector & Employer Unions: All registered corporate entities and informal trade unions operating in Lagos are required to internalize and deploy internal anti-sexual harassment guidelines and workplace safety codes.

d Civil Society & Community Structures: Community Development Associations (CDAs), non-governmental organizations, faith-based leaders, and traditional institutions are bound to implement localized behavioural-change programs and channel reports through the state's reporting channels.

e. Extraterritorial Clause: This policy applies to cross-border infractions where the perpetrator is based outside Lagos State but uses digital infrastructure or technology-facilitated tools to harass, abuse, or extort a victim residing inside Lagos State. In such instances, the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Science & Technology, Lagos State Police Command and the DSVA will collaborate with federal law enforcement apparatuses to enforce justice.

Legal and Policy Frameworks

The United Nations (UN) recognizes Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) not merely as a social problem or domestic issue, but as a severe violation of fundamental human rights and a critical barrier to global peace, security, and sustainable development.

The UN's recognition of SGBV establishes global standards and aligns with international treaties ratified by Nigeria, federal statutes, and pioneering sub-national laws enacted specifically by Lagos State.

1. International and Regional Frameworks

Nigeria is a signatory to several international instruments that mandate state parties to deploy systemic preventative and responsive protocols against gender-based violence. This policy integrates these global benchmarks:

- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW): Mandates the elimination of all cultural and systemic barriers that undermine the physical, social, and economic safety of women and girls.
- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC): Binds states to protect children from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury, abuse, neglect, maltreatment, or exploitation.
- The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (The Maputo Protocol): The most progressive regional instrument for women's rights in Africa, explicitly demanding the prohibition and eradication of all forms of SGBV, both in public and private spaces.
- The Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime (Budapest Convention, 2001) and the Istanbul Convention (2011) provide standards for addressing cyber-enabled crimes and violence against women.

2. National (Federal) Legal Frameworks

At the federal level, these statutory anchors provide the constitutional legitimacy and baseline penal parameters for addressing interpersonal violence across Nigeria:

- **The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended):** Section 34 guarantees the Right to Respect for the Dignity of the Person, prohibiting torture, cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment.
- **The Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act (VAPP Act), 2015:** The principal national piece of legislation designed to eliminate violence in private and public life. It criminalizes a broad array of infractions, including spousal battery, forceful eviction, emotional/psychological abuse, female genital mutilation, and harmful traditional practices.
- **The Child's Rights Act (CRA), 2003:** Criminalizes child marriage, child trafficking, and the sexual exploitation of minors, setting the statutory age of adulthood at 18.
- **The Cybercrimes (Prohibition, Prevention, etc.) Act:** Serves as the primary federal statutory link to address digital harassment, stalking, and cyber-bullying, providing the tracking and enforcement mechanisms required to pursue online predators.
- **The Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act, 2015:** Treats trafficking as a severe violation of rights closely related to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). The Law is intertwined with SGBV prevention as human trafficking is both a primary driver of and a severe form of SGBV.

3. Sub-National (Lagos State) Legal Frameworks

Lagos State does not rely solely on federal laws; it has established a comprehensive, specialized suite of sub-national legislations that are directly enforceable within state boundaries. These laws provide the operational teeth for this policy:

- **The Protection Against Domestic Violence Law (PADVL), 2015:** A landmark sub-national statute that enables survivors to seek Interim Protection Orders (restraining orders) directly from magistrates and judges without requiring a lengthy, finalized criminal trial. It also empowers police officers to make warrantless arrests at active domestic violence scenes.
- **The Criminal Law of Lagos State, 2015:** Contains strict, unyielding penal codes. Section 256 ensures life imprisonment for rape and defilement of children, while explicitly outlining clear custodial sentences for sexual harassment and stalking.
- **The Lagos Executive Orders on Sex Offenders Register and Mandated Reporting, 2014** as well as the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, 2016: Legally designates all educational, healthcare, and recreational administrators as Mandated Reporters, obligating them to report any suspicion or disclosure of child abuse or neglect to the state within 24 hours.
- **The Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency (DSVA) Law, 2021:** The explicit statutory framework that establishes the DSVA as an independent, fully empowered agency. It legally mandates the creation of Gender-Based Violence Desks across all local government councils, codifies the state's Sex Offenders Register, and creates the Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Trust Fund to finance police investigations and emergency survivor care.
- **The Lagos State Workplace Sexual Harassment Policy, 2025:** Aims to foster a safe, respected and inclusive workplace by preventing, recognizing and addressing all forms of sexual harassment.
- Lagos State Policy Framework on Technology-Facilitated SGBV (TF-SGBV), 2025: The specialized policy instrument addressing modern digital harms, mapping out the state's multi-sectoral approach to tracking, identifying, and prosecuting perpetrators who use digital media to execute extortion, non-consensual sharing of intimate images, and cyber-stalking.
- Lagos State Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (SEAH) Policy, 2025: This is a framework for tertiary educational institutions to ensure zero tolerance for all forms of sexual and gender-based violence. It establishes clear reporting mechanisms, survivor-centred support systems, and strict sanctions to safeguard students and staff across the state.
- Lagos State Health Insurance Scheme 2021: This provides for the establishment of the Domestic and Sexual Violence Fund to ensure access to medical care for survivors of domestic and sexual violence at any of the Primary Health Care Centres and General Hospitals at no cost.

SECTION C: STRATEGIC PILLARS OF PREVENTION



SGBV remains a major human rights, public health, and social justice issue that undermines dignity, safety, equality, and sustainable development. According to UN Women, nearly 1 in 3 women globally have experienced physical and/or sexual violence at least once in their lifetime, while approximately 840 million women and girls have been subjected to intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence.

These alarming statistics demonstrate the urgent need for strong prevention and response systems that protect survivors, hold perpetrators accountable, and address the root causes of violence, such as gender inequality, discrimination, abuse of power, harmful cultural norms, and lack of awareness.

The Lagos State Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) Prevention Policy is built on a fundamental shift in governance: transitioning from a primarily reactive crisis-management system to a proactive, institutionalized, and multisectoral strategy of absolute prevention. While the state has made significant strides in rescuing survivors and prosecuting offenders, sustainable safety across our mega-city demands that we dismantle the root causes of violence before it manifests.

To achieve this, the policy abandons fragmented interventions in favour of a synchronized, structural framework. Recognizing that SGBV is an intersectional crisis driven by cultural norms, institutional bottlenecks, economic vulnerabilities, and emerging digital frontiers, the state's strategic response is organized into distinct, mutually reinforcing operational pillars.

The pillars are designed to strengthen prevention mechanisms, improve access to survivor-centred services, promote justice and accountability, and encourage long-term social and behavioural change.

It therefore serves as the guiding foundation for coordinated action, ensuring that institutions, governments, organizations, and communities work together to prevent SGBV and promote safe, inclusive, and respectful environments for all persons.

It also supports the creation of effective systems for monitoring, partnership, advocacy, and capacity development. Through these pillars, the policy moves beyond statements of commitment into practical interventions aimed at reducing the prevalence and impact of SGBV across all sectors of society.

Pillar 1: Primary Prevention

Public Awareness and Social Mobilization

This pillar focuses on preventing Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) before it occurs by increasing public knowledge, changing harmful social norms, promoting gender equality, and equipping individuals with the skills to recognize, prevent, and report violence. It emphasizes education, community engagement, and behaviour change as key tools for long-term prevention.

The operational blueprint mapping the root causes directly to a structural prevention strategy designed to work within the reality of Lagos State is as stated below:-.

Policy Actions

1. Confronting Socio-Cultural & Ideological Roots

Objective: To address and transform the harmful social, cultural, and ideological beliefs, attitudes, and practices that perpetuate Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) in Lagos State by promoting gender equality, respect for human rights, positive social norms, and non-violent relationships within families, communities, institutions, and society at large.

3. Education System Prevention

Objective: Prevent SGBV through institutionalized behavioural tracking, curriculum integration, and mandatory safeguarding certifications within primary, secondary, and tertiary learning systems.

Key Actions:

Curricular Integration: Deploy an age-appropriate, state-standardized Family Life and Education (FLE) and consent curriculum into primary and secondary civic education courses. Introduce mandatory digital safety modules tracking online grooming and cyber-bullying.

Anti-Harassment Protocols: Enact and paste zero-tolerance codes of conduct across all public and private schools. Establish independent, non-academic disciplinary tribunals to process student and teacher misconduct.

Teacher Safeguarding Certification: Make annual background checks against the Lagos State Sexual Offender Register and trauma-informed safeguarding training mandatory for all teaching and non-teaching staff before licence renewal by TESCOM, Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria or private boards.

Peer Prevention & Support Clubs: Fund and scale student-led peer advocacy networks (e.g., "Kings Club/ Queens Club/ Safety Champions") to socialize consent, body autonomy, and clear bystander intervention steps.

Anonymous Climate Feedback Loops: Deploy encrypted, digital drop-boxes and USSD-based school climate reporting systems managed directly by independent child protection monitors rather than school principals.

Parent-Teacher Safeguarding Forums: Integrate mandatory termly safe-parenting and early sign detection workshops into existing Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) calendars.

Mandatory Safeguarding Officers: Require every primary and secondary school in Lagos (both public and private) to appoint and train a dedicated Safeguarding Officer who is independent of the school's management and acts as a safe, trusted contact for students to report abuse.

Institutionalize Kings & Queens Clubs: Make these student clubs a mandatory part of the extracurricular curriculum across all education districts. The Safeguarding the Rights of A Child (STRACT) workshop using the "P.R.I.V.A.T.E." School Safety and Body Autonomy Framework: These spaces use structured peer mentorship to teach boys emotional intelligence and positive expressions of masculinity, while empowering girls with safety skills and body autonomy.

4. Curbing Substance Abuse & The Night Economy

Objectives: While substance abuse does not excuse violence, it acts as a volatile accelerant that must be tightly regulated to reduce the occurrence of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in the State.

Key actions:

- **Targeted Multisectoral Compliance and Safety Monitoring:** Strengthen collaboration among relevant law enforcement, health, social welfare, local government and community stakeholders to identify and respond to high-risk locations where substance abuse, exploitation, violence or unsafe commercial activities may increase vulnerability to SGBV. Interventions should prioritise risk assessment, community intelligence, regulatory compliance checks, referral for treatment and rehabilitation, protection of vulnerable persons, and lawful enforcement against criminal activity where necessary.
- **Mandatory Rehabilitation Integration:** Update judicial sentencing guidelines for individuals convicted of minor domestic disturbances or substance-fuelled assaults to mandate state-funded substance abuse counselling and anger management therapy. This will address underlying chemical addictions alongside standard criminal penalties.
- Improve safety measures in entertainment districts and nightlife hubs. Establish and strengthen partnerships with regulators and service providers with a view to maintaining and ensuring safety across all entertainment hubs in Lagos State.
- Engage youth groups, community leaders, and private sector stakeholders in prevention efforts.

5. Community & Religious Engagement

Objective: Shift deeply entrenched harmful gender norms and strengthen community-led accountability structures to eliminate social cover for perpetrators.

Key Actions:

Structured Community Dialogues: Facilitate quarterly town halls using localized storytelling formats to deconstruct toxic cultural practices and toxic relationship models.

Faith-Based Prevention Pledges: Partner with relevant religious institutions to co-create SGBV preaching guides. Secure formal written pledges from senior clergy to refuse internal arbitration of felony sexual crimes.

Traditional Ruler Alliances: Engage the Council of Obas and Chiefs to institutionalize customary declarations, ensuring traditional community structures banish offenders rather than forcing survivors into compromise marriages.

Ward-Level Prevention Committees: Formalize local protection clusters tasked with monitoring high-risk households, supporting vulnerable minors, and acting as immediate bridges to the state response teams.

Pre-Marital & Parenting Education: Embed the standardized Lagos State Pre-Marital Counselling Curriculum Modules into the mandatory faith-based and registry pre-marital counselling processes.

Community Structures: Community Development Associations (CDAs), Traditional Councils, Market Men and Women Associations (Iyaloja/Babaloja networks), Interfaith Coalitions, Local Youth Councils.

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6. Media & Digital Prevention

Objective: Reduce the normalization of violence, challenge misogynistic digital cultures, and raise literacy on cyber-harassment and online exploitation.

Key Actions:

Statewide Mass Media Strategy: Produce and air high-production-value radio dramas and TV spots across prime-time slots, focusing on bystander accountability and debunking survivor-blaming myths.

Influencer & Creator Coalitions: Onboard, brief, and equip digital content creators and macro-influencers on TikTok, Instagram, X and other social media platforms to naturally embed positive masculinity and digital safety principles into viral content.

Youth-Led Digital Protection Campaigns: Fund youth digital agencies to run peer-to-peer campaigns targeting non-consensual image sharing and digital gaslighting.

Misinformation & Hate Speech Monitoring: Partner with tech platforms and civil society organizations (CSOs) to actively scan local digital trends for targeted gender-based harassment and coordinated online abuse campaigns.

Ethical Media Reporting Standards: Train editors and journalists on survivor-centred reporting protocols to prevent media secondary trauma and eliminate sensationalized or victim-blaming headlines.

Channels: Terrestrial Radio (multi-dialect), Television, TikTok, Instagram, X, Local Language Community Newsletters, Transport Hub Outdoor Signage (BRT branding).

7. Workplace Prevention

Objective: Eliminate sexual harassment, transactional exploitation, and hostile climates within both formal corporate entities and informal market environments.

Key Actions:

- **Mandatory Corporate SGBV Policies:** Require all registered businesses in the state to maintain a clear, publicized anti-sexual harassment policy featuring non-retaliation protections for whistleblowers.
- **Institutionalized Anti-Harassment Training:** Roll out mandatory onboarding and annual refresher modules for public and private sector employees covering boundary setting, microaggressions, and formal reporting channels.
- **Supply-Chain Safeguarding Compliance:** Integrate strict safeguarding compliance clauses into state procurement guidelines; vendors with open, unresolved institutional sexual harassment indictments face blacklisting.
- **Informal Sector Market Sensitization:** Conduct targeted outreach campaigns within major market hubs, empowering market unions to penalize verbal harassment, physical assault, and economic intimidation of female traders.

8. Public Space Safety

Objective: Systematically reduce spatial, structural, and environmental vulnerabilities that expose commuters, traders, and residents to SGBV.

Key Actions:

- **Targeted Infrastructure Lighting:** Execute an evidence-driven lighting initiative focused on high-risk transport corridors, underpasses, dark alleyways, and peripheral market zones.
- **Safe Transit Protocols:** Train Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and commercial transport operators on rapid incident containment, survivor protection, and instant handoff to emergency security services.
- **CCTV Integration and Expansion:** Expand municipal surveillance camera coverage at high-density transit hubs, motor parks, and public plazas with direct feeds to state security command centres.
- **Gender-Responsive Urban Design:** Mandate that all future developments for public parks, pedestrian bridges, and sanitary complexes undergo safety and visibility audits prior to approval.
- **Nightlife & Market Safety Pacts:** Establish mandatory security and safety compliance protocols for nightlife venues, bars, and open-air markets, including well-lit perimeter pathways and trained security stewards.

9. Male Engagement Programs

Objective: Cultivate healthy models of masculinity, counter peer reinforcement of violence, and mobilize men and boys as proactive prevention allies.

Key Actions:

- Intergenerational Male Mentorship: Establish community-based "Father-to-Son" and mentor networks to discuss emotional regulation, shared domestic partnership, and the rejection of violence.
- Boys' Leadership Academies: Launch structural extra-curricular programs in secondary schools explicitly teaching emotional intelligence, boundary respect, and positive conflict navigation.
- Sports-Led Advocacy Platforms: Partner with local football leagues and grassroot sports academies to embed quick, high-impact prevention messaging, consent coaching, and peer accountability into sports training.
- Campus Ally Networks: Build robust, self-sustaining male ally coalitions across state tertiary institutions to systematically dismantle campus cultist violence and predatory fraternity cultures.
- Positive Fatherhood Campaigns: Run targeted media initiatives showcasing equitable caregiving, shared domestic labour, and non-violent household conflict resolution.

10. Child Protection & Parenting Support

Objective: Break the intergenerational cycle of abuse by mitigating childhood exposure to violence, strengthening parenting skills, and normalizing safety in the home.

Key Actions:

- **Positive Parenting Curricula:** Deploy community-wide evidence-based parenting classes focusing on non-violent discipline, emotional connection, and creating stress-resilient homes.
- **Child Digital Safety Toolkits:** Create and distribute clear, accessible guides for parents on monitoring online activity, setting parental locks, and talking to children about digital boundaries.
- **Early Childhood Safeguarding Standards:** Institute and enforce strict, mandatory child-protection guidelines, background-check loops, and monitoring routines across all crèches, daycares, and nursery facilities.
- **Vulnerability-Focused School Retention:** Provide targeted educational stipends and material support to girls and high-risk children at risk of dropping out, directly mitigating their vulnerability to child labour and early exploitation.
- **Social Welfare Preventive Outreach:** Reposition social workers from reactive case handlers to proactive community assets who conduct risk-mapping visits to highly stressed families.

11. Economic & Social Risk Reduction

Objective: Address the underlying economic dependency and structural poverty that force vulnerable populations into transactional sex or abusive environments.

Key Actions:

- **Targeted Youth Employment Funnels:** Create direct links between youth in high-risk locations and digital livelihood training, formal apprenticeships, and job placement initiatives.
- **Economic Empowerment for At-Risk Women:** Provide conditional cash transfers, micro-endowments, and business management training directly to female-headed households and survivors of violence to ensure long-term independence.
- **Safe Migration and Trafficking Awareness:** Deploy community-level educational campaigns detailing the realities of irregular migration, predatory domestic-worker placement schemes, and forced labour traps.
- **Grassroots Mutual Support Collectives:** Setup and fund community savings and loans groups linked with localized safe spaces, providing women with a financial safety net during emergencies.

12. Community Monitoring & Early Warning Systems

Objective: To identify, track, and mitigate emerging environmental, digital, and domestic risk factors before they escalate into acute violence or systemic exploitation.

Key Actions:

- **Trend-Focused Anonymous Hotlines:** Expand existing helplines to capture community-level risk signals (e.g., specific unsafe transport routes, neighbourhoods with rising domestic tension) rather than just processing active crisis cases.
- **Institutional Risk-Signal Capture:** Set up secure, non-punitive digital reporting mechanisms within schools and primary health centres to track spikes in student truancy or unverified child injuries.
- **Crowdsourced Public Safety Auditing:** Deploy an accessible mobile app enabling citizens to geo-tag unlit public areas, broken infrastructure, or locations experiencing systemic public harassment.
- **Digital Exploitation Tracking Arrays:** Partner with localized cyber-safety watchdogs to continuously scan open online forums for emerging grooming tactics, localized sextortion rings, or cyber-bullying hotspots.
- **Community Volunteer Observer Networks:** Train and station trusted community volunteers equipped with simple mobile reporting tools to flag household distress and localized safety risks within their immediate blocks.

Pillar 2: Secondary Prevention

Strengthening Legal and Policy Frameworks

This pillar focuses on establishing and enforcing strong laws, policies, and justice systems to prevent SGBV, protect survivors, and ensure accountability for perpetrators. Effective legal and policy frameworks create deterrence, reduce impunity, and strengthen public confidence in justice institutions.

The pillar also promotes alignment with international human rights standards and ensures that legal responses remain survivor-centred, accessible, and gender-sensitive.

Policy Actions

A policy cannot protect anyone if its legal foundations allow perpetrators to exploit procedural loopholes or slip between the cracks of outdated laws. This pillar focuses on airtight sub-national legal framework that transitions Lagos State from a reactive prosecution model to a modern system of fast-tracked justice and digital-age accountability.

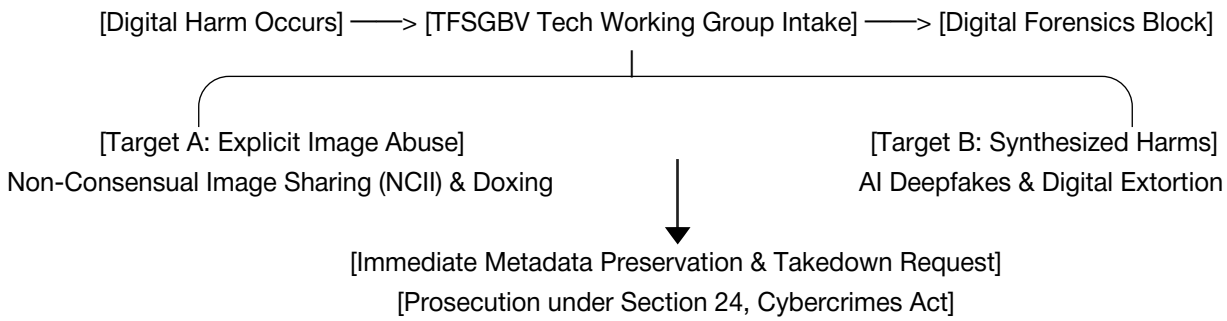
1. Legislative Alignment and Applicable Legal Frameworks

Lagos State's SGBV prevention and response framework is anchored primarily in State legislation, while also operating within applicable federal laws that govern evidence, cyber-related offences and constitutional protections. Accordingly, this policy distinguishes between Lagos State legal instruments and federal legal instruments applicable to SGBV prevention, reporting, investigation, prosecution, survivor protection and institutional accountability.

- ***The Criminal Law of Lagos State:*** Standardizing the prosecution of physical and sexual assault. Under this framework, the requirement of medical reports for adult survivors of sexual abuse cases are no longer treated as mandatory prerequisites for sexual offense trials if corroborating physical or behavioural indicators are present, permanently neutralizing a major historic bottleneck.
- ***The Child's Rights Law of Lagos State:*** Restructuring juvenile justice to enforce an absolute child-safe environment. This law criminalizes the creation, distribution, or monetization of online content that sexualizes or exploits minors, holding content creators and digital media producers strictly accountable.
- ***The Cybercrimes Act Alignment:*** Applicable Federal Cybercrime Framework: Where SGBV is committed, threatened or amplified through digital technology, the response should be aligned with applicable federal cybercrime provisions, including offences relating to unlawful access, unlawful interception, identity theft, child sexual exploitation material, cyberstalking, online threats, digital blackmail and other technology-enabled abuse..

2. Digital-Age Enforcement

As internet access and digital communication scale across Lagos, violence has expanded into virtual spaces. This pillar introduces a dedicated, statutory framework to confront Technology-Facilitated SGBV (TF-SGBV), closing the gap where traditional laws fail to address borderless digital harms.



- ***Criminalization of Image-Based Abuse:*** Explicitly outlawing Non-Consensual Image Sharing (NCII), doxing (the malicious publishing of private identifying information), and digital blackmail/sextortion.
- ***Regulation of Synthesized Harms:*** Extending legal definitions to cover the creation and viral distribution of AI-generated deepfake pornography or any digital medium designed to manipulate a survivor's likeness to inflict psychological or reputational ruin.
- ***The TF-SGBV Technical Working Group (TWG):*** Inaugurating a specialized, multi-sectoral enforcement team comprising the DSVA, other relevant MDAs, including the Ministry of Science & Technology, tech platform representatives, Law enforcement, regulators, civil society organisations and cyber-forensic experts. The TWG is mandated to manage digital evidence preservation and issue rapid takedown notices to web hosts to minimize viral velocity.

3. Eliminating Judicial Bottlenecks and Trial Continuances

To protect survivors from extended trial timelines that exhaust their psychological resilience, Lagos State mandates explicit operational shifts within the judiciary.

- Strict Adherence to ACJL Requirements: Enforce Section 9 of the Administration of Criminal Justice Law of Lagos State, as amended, by ensuring that confessional statements are properly documented, including through video or other audiovisual recording where applicable, or taken in writing in the presence of a legal practitioner or other acceptable representative. This will strengthen the integrity of investigations, reduce avoidable trial-within-trial objections, and improve prosecution readiness in SGBV cases.
- Specialized Sexual Offences Courts: Bypassing general court backlogs by prioritizing the assignment of all SGBV cases to the specialized Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Courts. These courts operate under strict management rules designed to resolve cases within 180 days of arraignment.
- Protection Orders with Statutory Teeth: Streamlining the issuance of Emergency Protection Orders within 24 hours of a filed complaint.

4. Statutory Anti-Retaliation & Whistleblower Integrity Firewalls

To break the culture of silence across schools, public offices, and corporations, this pillar codifies absolute statutory protection for those who report abuse.

Therefore, any educational institution, private enterprise, or Government MDA that implements punitive grading, vindictive lateral transfers, demotions, or professional blacklisting against a survivor or whistleblower will face immediate statutory penalties.

The PIC is legally empowered to enforce the immediate suspension of the institution's state compliance certificate or recommend the direct criminal prosecution of executive leadership for institutional concealment.

5. Advanced Rules of Evidence & Trauma-Informed Trial Management

To dismantle the historic legal bottlenecks that often cause SGBV cases to stall during trial, the state's judicial framework introduces strict adjustments to evidence handling, protecting survivors from defensive technical manoeuvres while preserving the constitutional right to a fair trial.

I. Re-Traumatization Mitigation & Shielding Mandates

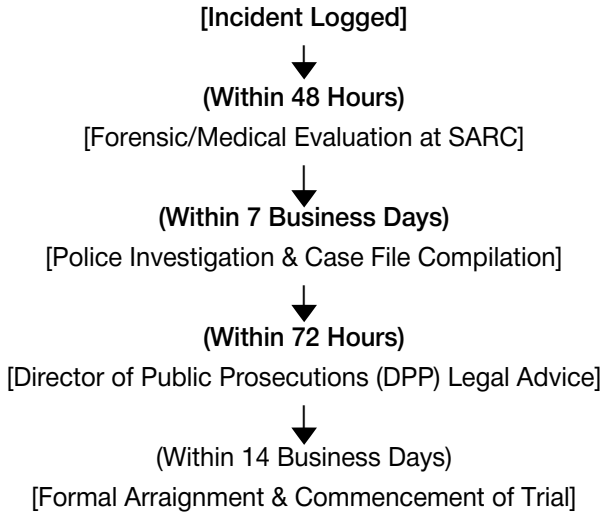
- ***The Physical Screen Protocol:*** In all sexual offense trials involving minors or vulnerable survivors, courts are encouraged to use specialized two-way physical screens, video-conferencing relays, or closed-circuit television (CCTV) loops. The survivor should never be forced to make direct eye contact with the defendant during testimony.
- ***Mandatory In-Camera Proceedings:*** For all cases involving sensitive digital metadata, Technology-Facilitated SGBV (TF-SGBV), or minor victims, the courtroom must be cleared of the general public and press. Media houses are strictly barred from publishing any identifying details of the survivor, including their name, school, employment venue, or Local Government Area (LGA) of residence.

ii. Re-assessment of Evidentiary Requirements

- ***Corroboration and Survivor Testimony:*** The policy recognizes that SGBV prosecutions should not be defeated solely because medical or independent circumstantial evidence is unavailable. Subject to the Evidence Act and applicable rules on child testimony, a court may rely on the credible, consistent and compelling testimony of a survivor where it proves the ingredients of the offence beyond reasonable doubt. Investigators and prosecutors should nevertheless continue to preserve all available supporting evidence, including medical, forensic, digital, witness and circumstantial evidence, to strengthen prosecution and reduce avoidable evidential challenges.
- ***The Rape Shield Doctrine:*** A survivor's past sexual history, moral character, or lifestyle choices are strictly inadmissible during cross-examination. Defense counsel should be barred from introducing evidence or asking questions regarding past consensual behaviour to imply consent in the current case.

6. Strict Timelines for the Investigative and Prosecutorial Pipeline

To ensure the "180 days to case disposition" target is met, the pipeline is divided into clear, non-negotiable statutory windows. Every transition between agencies is tracked on the DSVA Central Data Dashboard.



- **The 72-Hour DPP Legal Advice Service Standard:** To reduce delay and improve prosecution readiness in SGBV cases, the DPP should adopt a 72-hour internal review standard for completed investigation files submitted by Police Family Support Units. Where the file is sufficient, formal legal advice should be issued within the stipulated period. Where the file is incomplete, the DPP should issue a written further-investigation directive within 48 hours, clearly identifying the specific evidential gaps to be addressed, including medical, forensic, digital, witness or documentary evidence gaps.
- **Case Management and Limitation of Avoidable Adjournments:** To promote timely justice in SGBV cases, courts handling SGBV-related matters should adopt strict case-management measures to discourage unnecessary adjournments and ensure continuous trial where practicable. Requests for adjournment should be granted only for compelling reasons, recorded by the court, and limited to the shortest reasonable period necessary in the circumstances. Parties should be required to explain the basis for any adjournment request, while judges and magistrates should actively manage proceedings to prevent delay, witness fatigue, survivor re-traumatisation and loss of evidential quality.

7. Statutory Matrix for Private and Public Sector Enforcement

To operationalize the Institutional Anti-Retaliation Firewall, the Policy Implementation Committee (PIC) applies a tiered enforcement framework to handle non-compliance, concealment, or structural pushback.

Infraction / Statutory Violation	Investigative Trigger	Immediate Interim Action
Institutional Concealment (e.g., a school or corporation attempting an informal out-of-court settlement for a minor or criminal assault case).	Direct survivor escalation to DSVA. Whistleblower metadata drop via the secure portal.	Immediate suspension of the institution's state tax clearance or operating license. Mandatory freeze on internal disciplinary proceedings.
Whistleblower Retaliation (e.g., punitive grading for students, forced lateral transfers or demotions for civil servants/employees).	Automated alert on the DSV dashboard. Independent audit review.	Immediate legal reversal of the administrative action (reinstatement of grade/position).
Failure to Deploy Safeguarding Infrastructures (e.g., absence of a Designated Safeguarding Officer, no anonymous intake portal, or failing to declare power-asymmetry relationships).	Quarterly random field spot checks. Bi-annual compliance log review.	Protection order issued to bar the supervisor from entering the workplace. Official "Notice of Default" issued with a mandatory 14-day correction window.

8. Legal Mechanisms for Digital Asset Seizure & Forensic Recovery in TF-SGBV Cases

As a result of the fact that Technology-Facilitated SGBV relies on hardware and cloud data networks, the legal framework provides law enforcement with advanced tools to freeze digital threats before they spread.

- **Ex-Parte Digital Seizure Warrants:** Investigators can apply for a specialized digital search and seizure warrant without prior notification to the suspect. This allows the law enforcement to immediately seize smartphones, laptops, servers, and external hard drives to prevent the remote deletion of evidence or automated image distribution scripts.
- **The Mandatory Mirroring Protocol:** Upon device seizure, cyber-forensic analysts must create a bit-stream image (an exact digital mirror) of the storage media, generating a verified cryptographic hash value (e.g., SHA-256). This hash value acts as a digital fingerprint, ensuring the chain of custody remains untampered with and fully admissible under Section 84 of the Evidence Act.

Pillar 3: Tertiary Prevention

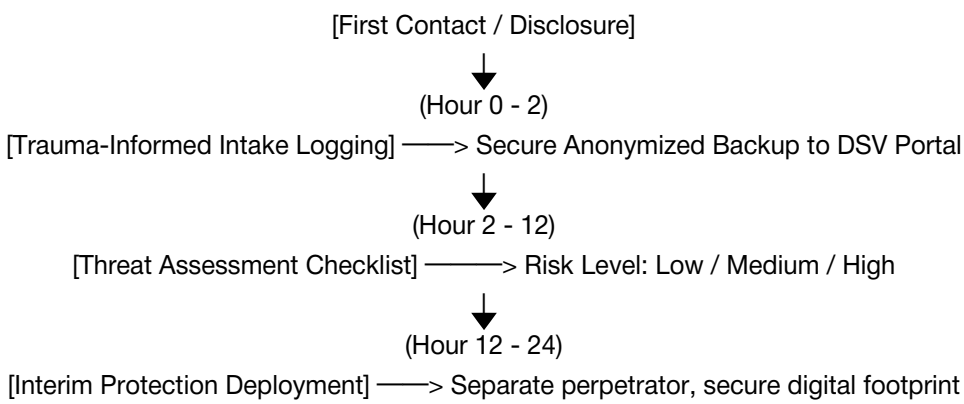
A survivor-centred framework requires that every institutional touchpoint, from the initial disclosure of harm to long-term reintegration, prioritizes the safety, dignity, and agency of the individual. This pillar outlines the rigorous operational protocols, immediate protection mechanisms, and clinical support networks mandated across Lagos State.

It further codifies the granular, step-by-step technical criteria for risk diagnostic tools, forensic integrity, and digital harm interventions.

Policy Actions

1. The 24-Hour Crisis Intake & Immediate Safety Protocol

To ensure a report is handled with absolute confidentiality and prompt protective action, all public, private, and educational institutions must follow a standardized intake process within the first 24 hours of a reported incident.



a. Protocol Requirements for Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSOs)

- The Single-Story Rule: Survivors shall not be subjected to repetitive interviews by multiple administrative layers. The DSO conducts a single, structured intake session, capturing critical data while providing psychological first aid.
- Absolute Digital Firewalls: Intake documentation must be processed on a dedicated, encrypted device. Incident logs must bypass general corporate or school databases and route directly to a secure cloud folder linked to the DSVCMS to prevent internal file tampering or deletion.

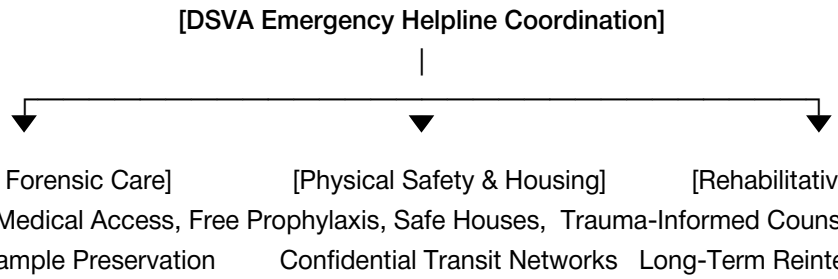
b. Rapid Threat Assessment (RTA)

Within 12 hours of intake, the DSO must administer a standardized threat assessment to determine the immediate physical, emotional, and digital risk level:

- High-Risk Triggers: Presence of weapons, explicit death threats, severe physical injury, minor victims, or active threats of Technology-Facilitated SGBV (such as blackmail involving the immediate release of non-consensual intimate imagery).
- Mandated Action: High-risk tracking triggers an immediate escalation to emergency rescue services, physical extraction to a state shelter, and the deployment of a 24-hour interim no-contact directive.

2. Comprehensive Support Infrastructure: Health, Shelter, & Psychosocial Care

The state's intervention framework guarantees immediate access to a unified network of clinical and social support services, funded directly through the Ring-Fenced SGBV Fund.



a. Clinical and Forensic Care (Designated medical facilities)

Survivors must be routed immediately to the nearest Designated Health Facility such as the General Hospitals, Comprehensive Primary Health Care Centres and SARCs including Mirabel Centre, WARIF and IDERA which provide completely free, multi-disciplinary medical care:

- Emergency Medical Protocols: Provision of post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) for HIV prevention within the critical 72-hour window, emergency contraception within 120 hours, and specialized treatment for physical trauma.
- Evidentiary Integrity: Medical professionals conduct non-invasive forensic examinations using standardized sexual assault evidence kits (rape kits). Swabs, clothing, and DNA extracts are sealed with tamper-evident seals to ensure they are fully admissible under Section 84 of the Evidence Act.

b. Emergency Shelter and Housing Framework

- Confidential Safe Houses: Lagos State maintains a network of secure, undisclosed shelters for high-risk survivors and their children. Shelter locations are strictly hidden from public records and connected directly to police emergency response teams.
- Emergency Transit Services: Dedicated police patrol vehicles are stationed across high-volume Local Government Areas (LGAs), including Alimosho, Ikorodu, and Kosofe, to provide immediate rescue intervention for survivors escaping dangerous domestic environments.

c. Long-Term Psychosocial Rehabilitation

- Trauma-Informed Therapy: Shifting from short-term crisis counselling to a mandatory minimum of six months of structured, state-funded psychological support. This protocol focuses on treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, and depression.
- Economic Empowerment Links: Recognizing that financial dependence is a primary cause of reporting delays and case attrition, adult survivors in shelters should gain direct access to vocational upskilling and small-business grants through the various State Government schemes provided by relevant MDAs including Ministry of Women Affairs and Poverty Alleviation (WAPA), Ministry of Wealth Creation, Lagos State Employment Trust Fund, etcetera.

3. The 48-Hour Mandatory Statutory Escalation Pipeline

To prevent institutions from suppressing, mismanaging, or informally settling criminal SGBV cases internally, a strict statutory escalation mandate is enforced across all sectors.

[Local Institution Log] ——(Mandated < 48 Hours)——> [Lagos State DSVA Central Unit] ——> [Specialized Police FSU / MoJ Prosecution]

- **The Escalation Window:** Every covered organization, whether a public MDA, a private enterprise, or an educational institution, must report any instance of sexual assault, defilement, severe physical domestic violence, or minor abuse to the DSVA central unit within 48 hours of intake.
- **The Criminalization of Informal Settlements:** Any attempt by a school principal, corporate executive, community leader, or family member to resolve a criminal SGBV offense through a private financial payout, traditional apology, or internal administrative dismissal without state escalation is a severe statutory offense. This action triggers immediate prosecution under the Criminal Law of Lagos State for obstruction of justice and concealment of felony as well as the Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency Law.

4. Sector-Specific Service Deployment Rules

Sector	Interim Protection Mandate (Within 24 Hours)	Service Linkage Responsibility
Educational Institutions (Schools & Universities)	Immediate academic separation. Transfer student to alternative class sections and examiners. Enforce absolute no-contact rules on campus.	Provide direct access to the school's certified guidance counsellor. Facilitate immediate, escorted transport to a designated health facility for forensic evaluation.
The Private Sector (Corporations & SMEs)	Restructure reporting lines immediately. Place the alleged abuser on paid administrative leave during investigation. Revoke the abuser's access to shared corporate digital workspaces.	Provide covered mental health days and external counselling services via Corporate Health Insurance (HMO). Ensure secure corporate transport for safe commuting if late shifts are required.
The Public Sector (Government MDAs)	Issue a 24-hour administrative separation order. Transfer the accused officer to a separate agency branch or deploy a work-from-home mandate. Freeze the accused officer's performance evaluation authority over the reporter.	Route the complaint to the Lagos State Public Service disciplinary authority, in line with the Public Service Rules. Connect the civil servant with the state's employee wellness and mental health units.

5. The Rapid Threat Assessment (RTA) Matrix and Scoring System

To eliminate subjectivity during intake, the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) must complete this diagnostic matrix within 12 hours of first contact. The cumulative score dictates the mandatory emergency deployment path, completely bypassing standard administrative approvals.

a. Risk Indicator Scoring Sheet

Risk Dimension	Diagnostic Indicators	Risk Points
Physical Weapons	Defendant has access to firearms, cutting implements, or has used weapons in past domestic or workplace altercations.	4 Points
Strangulation / Extreme Physical Force	Survivor reports being choked, suffocated, or subjected to physical confinement/hostage situations.	4 Points
Escalation Velocity	Frequency or severity of physical, psychological, or digital abuse has visibly increased over the past 30 days.	3 Points
Minor / Vulnerable Status	Survivor is under 18 years of age, is a Person with a Disability (PWD), or is economically/residentially dependent on the abuser.	4 Points
TF-SGBV Virality Threat	Defendant possesses explicit digital metadata, intimate imagery, or has initiated digital extortion, deepfake generation, or doxxing scripts.	3 Points
Stalking & Monitoring	Defendant tracks the survivor's physical movements, monitors digital devices, or repeatedly breaches existing institutional boundaries.	2 Points

a. Mandatory Action Thresholds

[Cumulative RTA Score]

| —> (11+ Points) ——> [CRITICAL RISK] ——> Immediate physical extraction, police rescue, shelter placement < 6 Hours

| —> (6 - 10 Points) —> [HIGH RISK] ———> 24-Hour Interim Separation, immediate SARC routing, legal protective filings

| └——> (1 - 5 Points) —> [EVALUATION] —> Internal administrative firewall deployment, weekly DSO monitoring check-ins

- **Critical Risk Action Mandate (Score 11+):** Triggers immediate coordination with the nearest police Family Support Unit (FSU). The survivor and any dependent children must be physically extracted from the high-risk environment and placed in an undisclosed state safe house within six hours.
- **High Risk Action Mandate (Score 6–10):** Enforces mandatory routing to a designated health facility for clinical care and the immediate deployment of an institutional Academic or Corporate Protection Firewall within 12 hours.

6. The Digital Intake Protocol for Technology-Facilitated SGBV (TF-SGBV)

As digital evidence is highly volatile and susceptible to destruction or remote erasure, the intake sequence for TF-SGBV must follow strict technical preservation parameters during the first contact window.

[Digital Disclosure Filed]

↓

(Within Hour 0 - 2)

[Cryptographic Metadata Preservation] ——> Capture full URL strings, IP routing headers, raw text logs

↓

(Within Hour 2 - 4)

[Cryptographic Mirroring & Hashing] ———> Generate SHA-256 hash signatures to lock chain of custody

↓

(Within Hour 4 - 12)

[Automated Platform Escalation] ————————> Deploy formal DMCA / Takedown API requests to hosts

- ***Metadata Preservation Requirement:*** DSOs are strictly barred from taking simple, unvetted smartphone photos of digital screens. The intake officer must preserve the raw digital material, including full Uniform Resource Locator (URL) strings, media metadata tags, time-stamp logs synchronized with Network Time Protocol (NTP) servers, and Internet Protocol (IP) routing headers where available.
- ***The Forensic Imaging Mandate:*** All digital evidence collected must be immediately mirrored onto a write-blocked storage device. The resulting file must be cryptographically hashed using the SHA-256 algorithm. This digital fingerprint must be uploaded alongside the case entry to the DSVCMS, ensuring the evidence complies with Section 84 of the Evidence Act.
- ***Emergency Takedown Coordination:*** Upon completing cryptographic preservation, law enforcement must immediately issue automated takedown API requests and formal legal demand letters to hosting platforms and search engines to freeze, de-index, and delete the non-consensual intimate imagery (NCII) or deepfake media.

7. Clinical and Forensic Protocol for Designated medical facilities

When a survivor is routed to a designated medical facility, the medical-legal pipeline must operate under strict forensic standards to ensure all biological material collected remains completely viable for prosecution.

- ***Chain of Custody Enforcement:*** The processing medical officer must document every single transfer of the Sexual Assault Evidence Kit (SAEK) on a paper and digital ledger. The kit must be sealed using unique, numbered, tamper-evident polymer strips. The serial numbers on these seals must be verified and logged at every stage—from the examining room to the specialized forensic storage lab.
- ***Biological Evidence Processing Standards:*** All swabs collected (oral, vaginal, anal, or skin surface) must be thoroughly air-dried at room temperature in a secure environment before packaging to prevent microbial degradation. Liquid biological samples must be preserved under continuous refrigeration between 2°C and 4°C (35.6°F to 39.2°F), while long-term DNA evidence extracts must be stored in specialized freezers maintained at or below -20°C (-4°F)

8. Institutional Reintegration and Non-Retaliation Protocol

The protection framework does not terminate once crisis counselling concludes. Long-term survivor-centred care requires structured institutional reintegration to prevent economic or academic displacement.

The Reintegration Guarantee: Educational institutions and workplaces must guarantee the seamless restoration of a survivor's status. For students, this includes the provision of retroactively adjusted examination timelines, tuition fee freezes during periods of medical/psychological leave, and the removal of any disciplinary or attendance citations stemming directly from the recorded abuse. For employees, it guarantees the full preservation of seniority, promotional paths, and benefit accrual throughout their rehabilitation period.

Pillar 4: Quaternary Prevention

CAPACITY BUILDING and Institutional Strengthening

The state's multi-sectoral SGBV policy depends entirely on the technical competence of its service providers, including clinical doctors, nurses, legal officers, educators, and community-based social workers. Significant capacity gaps regarding current forensic preservation protocols, clinical management of sexual violence cases, and child safeguarding laws lead to compromised evidence and poor case management.

Professionalizing this workforce demands systematic, institutionalized training pipelines that transform generic care workers into specialized, legally aware, and operationally competent mandated reporters.

The matrix below outlines the comprehensive capacity building framework, detailing exactly who requires training, the specific technical curricula required, the responsible entities, and the expected operational outcomes across the State.

1. Healthcare & Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) Personnel

Who Should Be Trained: Clinical doctors, triage nurses, lab technicians, and centre-based gynaecologists.

Curriculum Focus:

- Clinical management of acute sexual assault and forensic medical examination protocols.
- Paediatric forensic swabbing techniques and age-appropriate medical intake.
- Strict preservation of the medical "cold chain"
- Administration of Emergency Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) within the critical 72-hour window.

Who is Responsible: Ministry of Health, Primary Health Care Board, Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency, in coordination with specialized SARC Centre Managers and primary regulatory medical boards.

Expected Outcomes: 100% compliance with forensic medical evidence collection standards; zero sample contamination or chain-of-custody failures due to thermal degradation; increased survival-centred clinical care delivery within 72 hours of an incident.

2. Law Enforcement & Specialized Police Desks

Who Should Be Trained: Officers attached to specialized gender and Family Support desks, divisional police station desk officers, and criminal investigators

Curriculum Focus:

- Trauma-informed interrogation and cognitive interviewing techniques (shifting from adversarial questioning to sensory/somatic memory retrieval).
- Digital forensic evidence preservation and data logging for Technology-Facilitated SGBV (TF-SGBV), including securing digital footprints and tracking online harassment.
- Statutory requirements for processing, filing, and enforcing emergency protection orders.
- Inter-agency referral activation using standardized forms instead of ad-hoc processing.

Who is Responsible: Lagos state Police Command, Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency, Ministry of Justice, and the Technical Working Group (TWG) Legal Directorate.

Expected Outcomes: Elimination of survivor re-traumatization during statements; faster processing and collection of legally admissible digital and physical evidence; an increase in successfully issued protection orders and a reduction in average case duration.

3. Judiciary, Prosecutors, and Court Registrars

Who Should Be Trained: State prosecutors (Ministry of Justice), Family Court Judges, Magistrates, and designated Court Registrars.

Curriculum Focus:

- Admissibility and presentation of complex forensic DNA evidence and digital forensics in SGBV prosecutions.
- Trauma-informed courtroom management (minimizing face-to-face confrontation with perpetrators where legally permissible, managing vulnerable witnesses, and ensuring acoustic privacy).
- Application of specialized state criminal laws and modern statutory definitions of non-physical or technology-driven harms.

Who is Responsible: Lagos State Domestic & Sexual Violence Agency, Ministry of Justice (MoJ) Prosecution Tracking Desk, Lagos State Judiciary and the Judicial Service Commission.

Expected Outcomes: Increased conviction rates for SGBV-related offenses; a reduction in the time elapsed from case filing to final judgment; standardized, predictable application of protection orders and statutory punishments.

4. Social Workers, Case Managers, and Counsellors

Who Should Be Trained: social workers, institutional case managers, telephone helpline operators, and community-recognized professional counsellors.

Curriculum Focus:

- Psychological First Aid (PFA), crisis de-escalation, and trauma-informed counselling models.
- Ethical intake management, strict data security protocols, and enforcing absolute client confidentiality.
- "Closed-Loop" referral tracking protocols to ensure survivors transition smoothly between medical, legal, and rehabilitation sectors.
- Managing secondary trauma, compassion fatigue, and operating within mandatory case-load limits.

Who is Responsible: Ministry of Youth and Social Development, Lagos State Health Service Commission, Lagos State Command Control Centre, Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency and professional counselling regulatory bodies.

Expected Outcomes: 100% of reported cases routed through the Centralized Case Management System (CCMS) with complete data protection; zero survivors falling through institutional gaps due to unverified referrals; stable, resilient workforce retention at frontline crisis desks.

5. Education Sector Administrators & School Safeguarding Leads

Who Should Be Trained: School principals, designated safeguarding/child protection focal persons, guidance counsellors, school social workers, health educators and teachers.

Curriculum Focus:

- Implementation of body safety rules, personal autonomy guidelines, and digital safety principles within school curricula.
- Recognizing behavioural, physical, and emotional red flags of abuse or trauma in children and adolescents.
- Operating secure, anonymous internal reporting pathways within educational facilities.
- Mandatory reporting duties and legal pathways for escalating disclosures directly to state protection agencies.

6. Grassroots and Community Leaders

Who Should Be Trained: Traditional rulers, local religious leaders (faith-based institutions), and leaders of community-based prevention structures.

Curriculum Focus:

- Sensitization on the legal definitions of SGBV, harmful traditional practices, and human rights standards.
- De-stigmatization of survivors and advocacy messaging for community spaces.
- Mapping local entry points to state-approved referral pathways and utilization of emergency helpline channels.

Who is Responsible: Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Chieftaincy Affairs, Ministry of Home Affairs & Culture, Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency, Ministry of Women Affairs & Poverty Alleviation, Faith-Based & Traditional Institutions.

Expected Outcomes: Shift in community norms away from harmful traditional practices; reduction in community-forced mediation or cover-ups; an increase in cases safely and swiftly directed from community structures to formal state support hubs.



SECTION D: ROLE OF STATE ACTORS IN PREVENTING SGBV

To scale up existing efforts and transition the state from a highly effective ***crisis responder*** to a world-class ***prevention leader,*** state actors must implement deep, structural reforms.

The following actionable blueprint outlines the exact interventions specific government ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) must deploy, along with the precise operational steps required to execute them.

1. Mainstreaming School Safeguarding & Peer Networks

Lead Actor: Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education (MBSE)

The Goal: Standardize preventative behaviour early to break the intergenerational cycle of normalized violence.

Intervention: Mandatory Safeguarding Infrastructure Across All Education Districts

- **Step 1:** Mandate the formal deployment of a trained, independent Safeguarding Officer in every public and private secondary school who answers to an external board, not the school management.
- **Step 2:** Formally integrate a standardized, age-appropriate digital safety and body autonomy curriculum into the Lagos State unified school scheme.
- **Step 3:** Institutionalize the King's Clubs and Queen's Clubs across all public schools. Allocate dedicated state funding for these clubs to run weekly peer-led mentorship sessions on positive masculinity, consent, and healthy relationship boundaries.

1. Digital Safety & TFSGBV Prevention

Lead Actor: Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency (DSVA) + Ministry of Justice (MoJ)

The Goal: Build sub-national defense systems to proactively crush Technology-Facilitated SGBV (online blackmail, non-consensual image sharing, digital stalking).

Intervention: Establish a Specialized Digital Forensics & Cyber-SGBV Unit

- **Step 1:** Partner with international cybersecurity firms to train the MoJ's Directorate of Public Prosecutions (DPP) and specialized police investigators on advanced digital evidence tracking.
- **Step 2:** Issue a standardized, legally binding Digital Evidence Preservation Guide for survivors and local paralegals, showing exactly how to capture court-admissible metadata and certified screenshots under the Evidence Act.
- **Step 3:** Leverage Lagos State's position as Africa's tech hub to create an automated, direct fast-track reporting channel with major tech platforms (Meta, X, TikTok, Google) to ensure swift take-downs of non-consensual intimate media targeting Lagos residents

2. Economic Safety Nets & Targeted Social Protection

Lead Actor: Ministry of Women Affairs and Poverty Alleviation (WAPA) + Lagos State Employment Trust Fund (LSETF)

The Goal: Provide immediate economic autonomy to vulnerable individuals, breaking the financial dependency trap that forces survivors to remain with abusers.

Intervention: Launch the "Safe Haven" Economic Independence Fund

- Step 1: Establish a specialized, ring-fenced micro-grant and soft loan scheme under the LSETF earmarked specifically for women verified by social workers to be in high-risk domestic situations.
- Step 2: Expand the state's vocational and digital skill acquisition centers into rural and high-density informal settlements, providing free training alongside basic childcare stipends so vulnerable mothers can attend.
- Step 3: Build out a robust transitional housing program ("Halfway Houses") where shelter graduates receive temporary housing and employment placement assistance for up to 12 months to guarantee long-term financial independence.

3. Judicial Fast-Tracking & Systemic Transparency

Lead Actor: Lagos State Judiciary + Lagos State Ministry of Justice, Lagos State Police Command

The Goal: Eliminate the extreme delays in court cases that lead to out-of-court intimidation, survivor exhaustion, and a cultural sense of perpetrator impunity.

Intervention: Institutionalize Specialized SGBV Fast-Track Courts & Digital Case Tracking

- **Step 1:** Dedicate specific Magistrate and High Court dockets exclusively to SGBV and child defilement, legally binding them to conclude cases and issue verdicts within a strict 6-month window.
- **Step 2:** Ensure the Lagos Criminal Information System (LCIS) is up to date and able to track case files, preventing files from being "lost" or tampered with due to familial pressure.
- **Step 3:** Scale up mini forensic evidence-gathering labs across General Hospitals in all five administrative divisions (Ikorodu, Badagry, Ikeja, Lagos Island, Epe) so critical medical evidence is collected cleanly within the vital 72-hour window without logistical delay.

4. Infrastructure & Spatial Planning Safety

Lead Actor: Lagos State Building Control Agency (LASBCA) + Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources + LAMATA

The Goal: Eliminate physical vulnerabilities in public transit and high-density "Face-Me-I-Face-You" tenement housing that expose minors and women to opportunistic abuse.

Intervention: Implement Safety-Conscious Building and Transit Security Codes

- **Step 1 (LASBCA):** Amend state tenancy and building regulations to mandate that high-density communal compounds feature well-lit walkways, secure separate locking mechanisms on shared toilets, and zero blind corridors. Deny occupancy certificates to properties failing these spatial safety checks.
- **Step 2 (LAMATA & Ministry of Energy):** Deploy a continuous "Light Up Lagos" solar grid specifically covering high-risk transit hubs, pedestrian bridges, and dark alleys across local governments like Alimosho, Mushin, and Ikorodu.
- **Step 3:** Integrate 24/7 smart CCTV surveillance networks at major BRT terminals and train stations, station plainclothes, as well as Lagos State Neighbourhood Corps to intervene in public harassment instances.

7. Localized Grassroots Governance & Community Ownership

Lead Actor: Ministry of Local Government, Chieftaincy Affairs and Rural Development

The Goal: Shift monitoring and early prevention completely to local community leaders, moving past top-down state enforcement.

Intervention: Legally Institutionalize Local Government SGBV Response Committees

- **Step 1:** Formally mandate the creation of funded SGBV Response Sub-Committees within the executive architecture of all Community Development Associations (CDAs) and Community Development Councils (CDCs).
- **Step 2:** Train local market headers (Iyaloja / Babaloja), traditional rulers, and youth leaders to act as an early-warning neighbourhood network, identifying domestic escalation and immediately routing cases to the state's toll-free helpline.
- **Step 3:** Establish neighbourhood-level "Sanctuary Spaces" in existing local government town halls or public libraries, giving individuals a secure place to seek temporary refuge while local committees coordinate emergency rescues with the DSVA.

Conclusion: Prevention is achieved when these steps operate as a synchronized web. When a LASBCA housing regulation leaves no dark spaces for abuse, a WAPA grant provides financial freedom, and a Fast-Track Court docket delivers swift justice within months, the entire environment shifts from a reactive system to an aggressively proactive, protective shield.

Role of Civil Society Organizations (CSOS) & NGOS

In order to ensure complete neutrality and focus entirely on structural design, the civil society and corporate sectors can achieve long-term prevention through their distinct operational models, methodologies, and systemic approaches.

1. Dismantling Socio-Cultural Roots & Victim-Blaming

- Community Paralegalism & Grassroots Governance Civil society operates directly at the community level to dismantle the culture of silence and victim-blaming. Rather than deploying top-down messaging, they establish hyper-local governance structures within high-density residential wards. They recruit and train local market leaders, traditional neighbourhood authorities, and tenement association executives to act as community paralegals and first-line watchdogs.

How it Achieves Prevention: By building capacity among trusted, everyday neighbourhood figures, civil society systematically alters the narrative that domestic violence is a "private family matter." These trained leaders act as social norm transformers, vocally denouncing the pressure to settle child abuse or domestic assault through informal, out-of-court family negotiations. This destroys the community level of impunity that allows low-level domestic friction to escalate into severe harm.

- **Standardized Extracurricular Peer Networks.** Civil society utilizes the primary and secondary educational ecosystem to disrupt the intergenerational transmission of violent behavioural norms. They design, fund, and facilitate structured, extracurricular student advocacy networks, operating within both public and low-cost private institutions.

How it Achieves Prevention: they support the development of structured curricula focusing on emotional intelligence, non-violent conflict resolution, and healthy expressions of masculinity. Concurrently, they equip young girls and boys with concrete tools regarding physical boundaries and digital safety. This early-stage behavioural intervention ensures that adolescents actively unlearn normalized patriarchal biases, creating a safer school climate and building long-term generational resistance

- **Decentralized Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs**) Civil society pioneered and continues to sustain specialized, independent Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) embedded within or adjacent to public healthcare facilities. These hubs provide comprehensive, post-assault response packages, including emergency medical treatment, post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) for HIV prevention, trauma counselling, and expert forensic evidence collection.

How it Achieves Prevention: SGBV cases frequently fracture in court because early, critical physical evidence is lost, contaminated, or poorly documented. By ensuring that forensic evidence is collected by trained medical professionals within the critical 72-hour window, civil society provides state prosecutors with airtight evidence. This drastically increases conviction rates, turning successful prosecution into an institutional deterrent that prevents future offenses by signalling that SGBV carries guaranteed legal consequences.

- **Internal Regulatory Compliance Frameworks.** The formal corporate sector plays a vital role in preventing adult exploitation by standardizing safety across professional environments. Private enterprises accomplish this by formally integrating comprehensive, legally binding anti-sexual harassment guidelines into their internal human resource policies, corporate bylaws, and employee handbooks.

How it Achieves Prevention: This structural change shifts accountability from a vague moral expectation to a strict condition of employment. Corporate architectures enforce this by instituting mandatory, annual anti-harassment training for all tiers of staff, establishing fully independent, anonymous whistleblower channels for reporting misconduct, and strictly prohibiting professional retaliation or career victimization. By removing the power imbalances that allow superiors to exploit subordinates, the private sector prevents workplace harassment from flourishing.

- **Strategic Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)** Private corporations, particularly those in the banking, insurance, and telecommunications sectors, leverage their financial resources by shifting corporate social investments away from generic philanthropic projects toward targeted, multi-year SGBV prevention strategies.

How it Achieves Prevention: Corporate capital directly scales the operational reach of prevention campaigns. Private funding pays for the mass deployment of door-to-door community sensitization sweeps, the publication of localized safety educational materials in multiple languages, and the broad promotion of state-managed toll-free crisis hotlines. By maximizing the visibility of available reporting channels through corporate financing, they ensure that early signs of domestic distress are flagged and routed to safety before escalating into catastrophic physical violence.

- **FinTech and Women-Centered Financial Inclusion** The private financial sector, particularly financial technology (FinTech) firms and inclusive banking networks, designs specialized financial products, savings tracks, and micro-credit solutions tailored specifically to low-income or vulnerable populations.

How it Achieves Prevention: Because absolute financial dependency is a primary structural barrier that prevents survivors from leaving dangerous domestic environments, financial inclusion acts as an economic shield. By providing vulnerable individuals with independent, secure mobile banking accounts and access to business seed capital—which abusive partners cannot easily monitor, access, or control, the private sector dissolves the economic leverage abusers hold, preventing prolonged entrapment and systemic abuse.

- **The Systemic Prevention Web:** This non-state framework operates as an interactive cycle. Private financial tools build economic resilience, grassroots civil society networks manage local monitoring and norm transformation, and specialized clinical centres secure the necessary forensic evidence. Together, they create a protective infrastructure that addresses the physical, social, and financial root causes of violence simultaneously.

The Global-To-Local Prevention Loop

To complete the tripartite preventative ecosystem alongside State Actors and civil society, International Organizations, including United Nations Agencies, multilateral development banks, and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), act as the foundational framework builders.

Rather than executing everyday local rescues, their role is to provide the global expertise, large-scale funding, data frameworks, and diplomatic pressure required to sustain long-term structural prevention.

1. Technical Framework Standardization & Policy Advisory

The Preventive Model: Domesticating Global Protection Conventions. International bodies ensure that local prevention frameworks align with proven global standards. They provide technical advisory services to help state legislatures and ministries adapt international conventions, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), into practical, sub-national laws and policies.

How it Achieves Prevention: This structural guidance closes legal loopholes that perpetrators exploit. By helping draft comprehensive frameworks like the Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Act, international organizations ensure that modern threats like Technology-Facilitated SGBV (TFSGBV) and psychological abuse are legally recognized and penalized, creating an institutional environment where violence cannot hide behind outdated legal gaps.

2. Strategic Multi-Sectoral Funding & Program Scaling

The Preventive Model: Basket Funding and Development Grants: Preventing SGBV across a megacity of over 20 million people requires immense financial resources that local budgets cannot always cover alone. International organizations pool funds into large-scale development programs, such as the global EU-UN Spotlight Initiative, to provide long-term financial backing to both state actors and grassroots civil society.

How it Achieves Prevention: This funding goes directly toward scaling up critical infrastructure that stops violence before it happens. It finances the rollout of mandatory school safeguarding programs, pays for the installation of solar-powered lighting systems in high-risk transit corridors, and funds the establishment of specialized fast-track courts, transforming small, isolated safety projects into sustainable, city-wide systems.

3. Data Systems, Research, & Evidence-Based Mapping

The Preventive Model: Unified Information Management Systems. Effective prevention is impossible without accurate data. International organizations deploy advanced data-gathering and analytics tools, such as the Gender-Based Violence Information Management System (GBVIMS), to help local agencies collect, analyse, and store incident data ethically and safely.

How it Achieves Prevention: By mapping anonymized data, these organizations help local governments identify high-incidence zones, recurring behavioural triggers, and emerging digital threat patterns. This shifts the prevention response from guesswork to precision, allowing state actors to deploy security marshals, fund vocational micro-grants, and launch door-to-door community campaigns exactly where they are needed most.

4. Institutional Capacity Building & Systemic Upskilling

The Preventive Model: Training-of-Trainers (ToT) Frameworks. International agencies work to build the internal capacity of local institutions, ensuring that frontline workers possess the skills required to handle SGBV with the highest level of professional care. They design and fund advanced training models for police gender units, social workers, healthcare practitioners, and judicial officers.

How it Achieves Prevention: They institutionalize trauma-informed care and survivor-centred approaches across the justice system. When a police officer or magistrate is properly trained, survivors are protected from re-traumatization during reporting and trials. This builds deep public trust in formal institutions, encouraging communities to break the culture of silence and report early-warning signs of domestic escalation before they turn catastrophic.

5. Diplomatic Accountability & Independent Oversight

The Preventive Model: Periodic Progress Monitoring & Shadow Reporting. International organizations maintain a continuous loop of institutional accountability by monitoring how effectively a country or state is implementing its own protection laws. They facilitate independent shadow reporting, peer-review mechanisms, and global scorecard tracking to evaluate state performance against international human rights commitments.

How it Achieves Prevention: This independent monitoring applies healthy diplomatic and political pressure on local governments to keep SGBV prevention at the top of the legislative agenda. It ensures that funding remains transparently allocated, state agencies remain accountable to their mandates, and protective policies are consistently enforced rather than being sidelined by changing political administrations.

Conclusion: International organizations complete the structural web. They supply the global funding and standardized data frameworks (International) that empower government ministries to enforce legal and spatial rules (State), which in turn allows grassroots paralegals and safe clinics to protect communities on the ground (Civil Society).

General Recommendations

To ensure that this Prevention Policy moves successfully from a high-level strategic document to an enforceable, daily reality across all 20 Local Government Areas (LGAs) and 37 Local Council Development Areas (LCDAs), the following six overarching recommendations should be integrated into its final executive sign-off and implementation decree.

1. Codify Mandatory Funding via a Dedicated Trust Fund

Relying strictly on annual budgetary allocations creates operational vulnerability during political transitions or fiscal downturns. SGBV response requires immediate, liquid capital for emergency shelter maintenance, rapid transport, and forensic medical kits.

Action: Establish a Lagos State SGBV Prevention Trust Fund, structured similarly to the Lagos State Security Trust Fund (LSSTF). This framework should legally mandate a fixed statutory contribution from the state's Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) alongside a clean window for private sector and philanthropic tax-deductible endowments.

2. Institutionalize the "Zero-Settlement" Legal Directive

The greatest structural bottleneck to justice in Lagos remains informal, out-of-court settlements ("family matters") brokered by traditional, religious, or community leaders, particularly in cases of domestic battery and child defilement.

Action: Ensure full implementation of Sections 26 and 30 of the DSVA Law which criminalizes the intentional concealment or informal mediation of indictable SGBV offenses by community authorities.

3. Establish Cross-Border Jurisdictional Reciprocity

Perpetrators often exploit the administrative boundaries of the Lagos-Ogun interstate corridor (e.g., moving between Berger, Ibafo, Mowe, or Akute) to evade arrest, manipulate evidence, or bypass emergency protection orders.

Action: Formally insert a Cross-Border Enforcement Protocol within the policy. This mandates the Ministry of Justice and the Lagos State Police Command to establish a fast-track operational alliance with neighbouring Ogun State to guarantee seamless tracking, evidence preservation, and the mutual enforcement of restraining and protection orders.

4. Mandate Automated Inter-Agency Data Integration

Currently, different agencies (Ministry of Women Affairs & Poverty Alleviation, SARCs, the Police, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, and DSVA) maintain separate, disconnected intake logs. This lack of integration leads to fragmented case management and forces survivors to retell their trauma multiple times.

Action: Mandate the deployment of a centralized, secure, and end-to-end encrypted SGBV Case Management Information System (CMIS). The policy must require all implementing ministries to feed data into this singular dashboard in real time, triggering automated referral notifications across sectors while enforcing strict anonymization protocols to protect survivor privacy.

5. Standardize TF-SGBV Digital Forensic Capabilities

With the sharp rise in technology-facilitated violence (sextortion, AI-generated deepfakes, and non-consensual image sharing), traditional police gender desks are often unequipped to preserve the highly volatile digital evidence required for successful prosecution under the Cybercrimes Act.

Action: Legally embed a Digital Evidence Preservation Protocol within the policy. Every specialized SGBV response unit and SARC must have direct, 24/7 access to a certified digital forensic officer trained in cryptographic hash mirroring and volatile memory capture, ensuring that screenshots, IP logs, and deleted media are preserved to strict judicial standards immediately upon intake.

6. Decentralize Accountability to the LGA/LCDA Level

State-level mandates often lose momentum before they reach grassroots communities. True prevention relies heavily on local implementation where real-world incidents actually unfold.

Action: Ensure monitoring and supervision of the localized LGA SGBV Response Committee. Each local government or council must be required to submit monthly compliance scorecards tracking the status of their local referral pathways, community safe spaces, and the training levels of their local market, transport, and community unions.

Conclusion

The Lagos State Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) Prevention Policy represents a significant milestone in the state's commitment to protecting human rights, promoting gender equality, and ensuring the safety and well-being of all residents.

Through the leadership of the Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency (DSVA) and the collaborative efforts of government ministries, law enforcement agencies, civil society organizations, development partners, and community stakeholders, Lagos State has established a comprehensive framework for preventing and responding to SGBV.

The policy recognizes that SGBV is not merely a private or domestic issue but a serious public health, social, and human rights concern that requires coordinated and sustained action. By prioritizing prevention, survivor-centred services, community engagement, institutional strengthening, and accountability, the policy provides a structured approach to addressing the root causes and consequences of violence.

The success of the policy will however ultimately depend on the ability of all stakeholders to translate policy commitments into practical actions that deliver measurable outcomes for survivors and communities. Sustained political will, adequate funding, strong institutional coordination, and active community participation are therefore essential to achieving the policy's objectives.

Way Forward

To strengthen the implementation and impact of the Lagos State Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) Prevention Policy, a number of strategic actions should be prioritized. First, greater emphasis should be placed on prevention through sustained community engagement and behavioural change initiatives.

Addressing the underlying social and cultural norms that perpetuate violence requires continuous public awareness campaigns, community dialogues, and educational interventions that promote gender equality, mutual respect, and non-violent relationships. Traditional rulers, religious leaders, youth groups, women's organizations, and Community Development Associations (CDAs) should be actively engaged as key partners in challenging harmful beliefs and practices and fostering positive social change.

The state should also expand survivor-centred services by increasing investment in shelters, psychosocial support, medical care, legal assistance, and rehabilitation programs. These services should be accessible across all Local Government Areas (LGAs) to ensure that survivors receive timely, comprehensive, and quality support regardless of their location. Particular attention should be given to vulnerable populations, including children, persons with disabilities, and economically disadvantaged individuals who may face additional barriers to accessing services.

Enhancing access to justice remains critical for ensuring accountability and strengthening public confidence in the response system. Efforts should focus on reducing delays in the investigation and prosecution of SGBV cases, improving survivor protection measures, strengthening specialized courts, and expanding access to legal aid services. Continuous capacity-building initiatives should also be provided for judicial officers, prosecutors, and law enforcement personnel to promote survivor-centred, gender-sensitive, and trauma-informed approaches throughout the justice process.

Building institutional capacity across all sectors is equally important for effective implementation. Healthcare workers, social workers, educators, law enforcement officers, and other frontline responders should receive ongoing training in case management, trauma-informed care, safeguarding principles, evidence collection, referral mechanisms, and emerging trends in SGBV prevention and response. Such investments will strengthen service delivery and improve outcomes for survivors.

As digital technologies continue to transform social interactions, Lagos State must also strengthen its response to Technology-Facilitated Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (TF-SGBV). Forms of abuse such as cyberstalking, online harassment, cyberbullying, and the non-consensual sharing of intimate images require innovative and technology-driven responses. This can be achieved through digital literacy campaigns, enhanced cybercrime investigation capacities, stronger collaboration with technology companies and social media platforms, and the development of clear protocols for managing and preserving digital evidence.

Furthermore, effective implementation of the policy depends on strong coordination and partnerships among government institutions, civil society organizations, development partners, the private sector, and community stakeholders. Existing inter-agency coordination mechanisms, referral pathways, and information-sharing systems should be strengthened to ensure a seamless, integrated, and survivor-centred response across all sectors.

The state should also prioritize improving data management, research, and monitoring systems. The establishment of a centralized and integrated SGBV database will facilitate accurate data collection, evidence-based planning, resource allocation, policy review, and performance monitoring. Regular research and assessments should be conducted to identify emerging trends, evaluate the effectiveness of interventions, and generate knowledge that informs future programming and policy decisions.

Finally, sustainable financing is essential to ensuring the long-term success of the policy. The Lagos State Government should strengthen budgetary allocations for SGBV prevention and response interventions while exploring partnerships with development agencies, the private sector, philanthropic organizations, and other stakeholders to mobilize additional resources and support implementation efforts.

In conclusion, the Lagos State SGBV Prevention Policy provides a strong foundation for creating a safer, more inclusive, and more equitable society. However, legislation and policy frameworks alone are insufficient to eliminate violence. Achieving meaningful and sustainable change requires collective action, sustained investment, institutional accountability, effective partnerships, and a shared commitment to protecting the rights, dignity, and well-being of all individuals.

By strengthening prevention efforts, expanding survivor support services, improving access to justice, addressing emerging digital threats, and ensuring evidence-based implementation, Lagos State can further consolidate its leadership in SGBV prevention and response and move closer to a future free from sexual and gender-based violence.

ANNEXES



Annex A: Guiding Principles For Implementation

The Guiding Principles form the ethical and operational compass of this SGBV Prevention Policy. Every intervention, legislative enforcement, and community program executed under this framework must strictly adhere to these core values to ensure safety, institutional integrity, and dignity.

1. Zero Tolerance for Impunity

The state operates on an absolute, unyielding stance that no form of SGBV, whether physical, emotional, economic, or technology-facilitated, can be excused, minimized, or tolerated under any circumstances. This principle criminalizes and rejects informal or traditional "out-of-court settlements" for sexual offenses. It mandates that all state institutions, traditional gatekeepers, and law enforcement agencies act decisively to hold perpetrators accountable, shifting the burden of shame entirely from the survivor to the offender.

2. A Survivor-Centred and Trauma-Informed Approach

Every administrative, medical, psychosocial, and judicial process must prioritize the rights, choices, privacy, and well-being of the survivor. All first responders and policy implementers are mandated to utilize trauma-informed protocols that eliminate secondary victimization or institutional stigmatization. Survivors shall be treated with maximum empathy, and their explicit, informed consent must remain the bedrock of all supportive interventions.

3. Best Interest of the Child

In all prevention and response actions involving minors under the age of 18, the absolute safety, psychological health, and developmental well-being of the child shall be the primary and overriding consideration. This principle aligns directly with the Lagos State Child Rights Law and mandates immediate, specialized safeguarding interventions by School Safeguarding Officers and Child Protection Networks to shield children from harm, exploitation, and institutional secondary trauma.

4. Non-Discrimination and Intersectionality

Access to safety, protection, and justice under this policy is a universal right extended to all residents, visitors, or individuals transiting through Lagos State, completely free from discrimination. The policy explicitly recognizes that SGBV intersects with other vulnerabilities, such as age, physical or mental disability, economic status, and literacy levels. Implementers must provide specialized, accessible, and inclusive support structures that cater to the unique barriers faced by disproportionately vulnerable cohorts.

5. Multi-Sectoral Collaboration and Shared Responsibility

Because SGBV is not only a complex public health and criminal issue, but also a grave social concern, its prevention cannot be achieved by any single agency. This policy binds ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs), local government councils (LGAs/LCDAs), law enforcement, civil society organizations, CBOs, CDAs, CDCs, the private sector, and traditional or religious institutions into a synchronized operational network. Eradicating violence is established as a shared civic responsibility requiring collective action across all strata of Lagos society. The DSVA should strengthen its partnerships across the various responder agencies this respect.

6. Confidentiality, Privacy, and Data Security

The right to privacy and anonymity for all survivors is absolute and legally protected. Any data collected across physical desks or digital servers, including the Integrated Survivor Case Management System (ISCMS), must be heavily encrypted, strictly controlled, and stripped of personally identifiable information before public reporting. Media houses, institutional reporters, and digital platforms are legally bound to prevent the unauthorized disclosure of survivor identities or sensitive case details.

7. Agility and Adaptability to Emerging Harms

As technology and societal structures evolve, the manifestations of violence mutate. This policy commits the state to an agile governance model that utilizes continuous data tracking, heat-mapping, and bi-annual legislative updates. This ensures that preventative mechanisms remain highly responsive to new frontiers of abuse, particularly the rapidly expanding digital landscape of Technology-Facilitated SGBV (TF-SGBV).

Annex A: Guiding Principles For Implementation

The implementation of the Lagos State Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) Prevention Policy requires a coordinated, multi-sectoral, and results-oriented approach involving government institutions, civil society organizations (CSOs), development partners, community structures, and the private sector.

This implementation plan provides an operational blueprint for translating high-level policy objectives into concrete, measurable actions. By defining clear institutional responsibilities, statutory workflows, and strict timelines, this framework ensures effective prevention, protection, response, accountability, and monitoring mechanisms across the 20 Local Government Areas (LGAs) and 37 Local Council Development Areas (LCDAs) of Lagos State.

Goal

To prevent, significantly reduce, and ultimately eliminate the incidence of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Lagos State. This will be achieved through system-driven, survivor-centered interventions that strengthen institutional capacity, guarantee access to rapid justice, stabilize survivors, secure digital spaces, and foster absolute community ownership under a zero-tolerance mandate. Sign language interpreters should be included at every stage to ensure inclusivity.

Strategic Objective	Key Activities & Granular Worksteps	Lead & Collaborating Agencies	Timeline	Expected Outcomes & Deliverables
1. Strengthen Prevention and Community Awareness	a. Deploy targeted mass media and behavior change campaigns. b. Produce and distribute multi-lingual IEC materials (Yoruba, Egun, Pidgin, English). c. Mobilize transit hubs (Turn Motor Parks Purple) and market networks. d. Engage traditional rulers and faith-based institutions as prevention allies. e. Institutionalize school-based safeguarding and body autonomy training.	Lead: DSVA Collaborating: Ministry of Information and Strategy; Ministry of Women Affairs Poverty Alleviation; Ministry of Education; Ministry of Local Government & Chieftaincy Affairs; LGAs/LCDAs; CSOs.	Continuous implementation throughout the policy framework lifecycle (Years 1–5).	i. Increased public awareness of consent and rights. ii. Proactive tracking and reporting of child vulnerability. iii. Reduced community tolerance for coercive gender norms.
2. Strengthen Survivor-Centred Support Services	a. Expand secure emergency safe houses (Eko Haven) via PPPs. b. Deploy psychologists across PHCs and general hospitals. c. Guarantee free medical emergency and forensic services (SARCs). d. Decentralize case management and legal aid to local government hubs.			

Strategic Objective	Key Activities & Granular Worksteps	Lead & Collaborating Agencies	Timeline	Expected Outcomes & Deliverables
2. Strengthen Survivor-Centred Support Services	e.Link survivors to vocational training and LSETF micro-credit lines before they exit the shelter. f.Link survivors to existing Direct Cash Transfer Programs provided by the State, coordinated by the Social Protection Coordinating Department (SCPD) of the Ministry of Economic Planning and Budget	Lead: DSVA; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Women Affairs and Poverty Alleviation (WAPA) Collaborating: Ministry of Youth & Social Development; OPD; LSETF; MEPB; SARCs; Private Shelters.	Short- to Medium-Term phased expansion; safe house and economic tracks fully running within Years 1–3.	i. Universal, immediate survivor access to safe housing and medical care. ii. Elimination of out-of-pocket expenses for forensic care. iii. Financial independence for survivors exiting shelters.
3. Improve Access to Justice and Accountability	a. Streamline case-management and enforce timelines in specialized SGBV courts. b. Conduct continuous trauma-informed interrogation training for police and prosecutors. c. Simplify and fast-track the issuance of protection and restraining orders. d. Publicize convicted offenders on the Lagos State Sexual Offenders Register. e. Conduct legal literacy clinics on statutory rights at the grassroots level.	Lead: Ministry of Justice (MoJ); Lagos State Judiciary; Nigeria Police Force (Lagos Command) Collaborating: BPD; Nigerian Bar Association (NBA); DSVA; Legal Aid Council.	Continuous enforcement and system-wide modernization across all judicial cycles.	i. Reduced average duration of SGBV prosecutions from arraignment to judgment. ii. Increased conviction rates for SGBV offenses. iii. Elevated public confidence in the formal justice system.
4. Build Capacity of Frontline Responders	a. Institutionalize uniform SGBV training modules for distinct professions. b. Execute quarterly training on trauma care and child-friendly disclosures. c. Train medical and police first-responders on forensic chain-of-custody protocols. d. Establish a DSVA-managed technical oversight and mentorship framework.	Lead: DSVA; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Education Collaborating: Ministry of Women Affairs & Poverty Alleviation; Ministry of Youth & Social Development; Police Command; Primary Health Care Board; AGPMPN.	Annual, recurring capacity-building cycles executed across rotating senatorial districts.	i. Standardized survivor reception protocols at public facilities. ii. Complete elimination of secondary victimization during case filing. iii. Seamless execution of inter-agency referral pathways.

Strategic Objective	Key Activities & Granular Worksteps	Lead & Collaborating Agencies	Timeline	Expected Outcomes & Deliverables
5. Address Technology-Facilitated SGBV (TF-SGBV)	a. Deploy advanced digital forensic tools within law enforcement cyber-units. b. Formalize rapid data-sharing and image takedown protocols with tech platforms. c. Launch general digital safety and cyber-hygiene campaigns to ensure widespread awareness. d. Expand and optimize discreet online reporting channels (DSVCMS / Ask INU).	Lead: DSVA; Ministry of Innovation, Science and Technology (MIST); Law Enforcement Cybercrime Units Collaborating: Ministry of Justice; Ministry of Information; NITDA; Digital Rights CSOs.	Medium-Term operational integration; forensics and platform links established in Years 1–3.	i. Rapid turnaround time for removing non-consensual intimate imagery online. ii. Increased tracking and prosecution of digital stalkers and blackmailers. iii. Widespread digital safety and reporting awareness.
6. Strengthen Coordination and Partnerships	a. Institutionalize a high-level, inter-agency steering committee chaired by DSVA. b. Convene mandatory quarterly alignment reviews with MDAs, CSOs, and donors. c. Review and update the state's central referral directories annually. d. Partner with corporate bodies to integrate SGBV support into private CSR budgets.	Lead: DSVA; Ministry of Economic Planning and Budget Collaborating: Ministry of Justice; Ministry of Health; Ministry of WAPA; CSO Coalitions; International Donors.	Ongoing operational routines with coordination checkpoints embedded permanently.	i. Total elimination of duplication and conflicting agency mandates. ii. Highly synchronized network of multi-sectoral first responders. iii. Increased private-sector financial co-investment.
7. Strengthen Data Management, M&E	a. Upgrade the DSVCMS database to link inputs from hospitals, SARCs, and courts. b. Enforce standardized, anonymized electronic data intake tools across sectors. c. Commission annual geographical hotspot and prevalence mapping studies via LBS. d. Formulate a rigid monitoring framework for response speed and shelter occupancy.	Lead: DSVA; Ministry of Economic Planning and Budget; Lagos Bureau of Statistics (LBS) Collaborating: Ministry of Health; Ministry of Women Affairs & Poverty alleviation; Ministry of Youth and Social Development; Ministry of Justice; Lagos State Judiciary; Partner CSOs; Research Institutions.	Continuous technical implementation, real-time mapping, and statutory annual releases.	i. Complete integration of reporting streams into one digital dashboard. ii. Real-time data availability on crime trends and hotspots. iii. System-wide transparency regarding judicial timelines and convictions.

Strategic Objective	Key Activities & Granular Worksteps	Lead & Collaborating Agencies	Timeline	Expected Outcomes & Deliverables
8. Ensure Sustainable Financing	a. Secure incremental annual budgetary appropriations for SGBV programs. b. Co-design long-term project proposals with international development partners. c. Launch the Lagos SGBV Private Sector Trust Fund managed by an independent board. d. Create a protected state fund explicitly for	Lead: Ministry of Economic Planning and Budget; Lagos State House of Assembly; Ministry of Finance; DSVA Collaborating: Ministry of WAPA; Private Sector Coalitions; Corporate Foundations; Donor Organizations.	Annual budgeting cycle alignment coupled with ongoing fund mobilization.	i. Stable, protected, and fully funded annual budget allocation. ii. Operationalization of a multi-sectoral private sector trust fund. iii. Structural and financial continuity for shelter and referral installations.

Annex C: Funding for Implementation

To ensure the Lagos State SGBV Prevention Policy does not become an unfunded mandate, its implementation must be backed by a resilient, multi-stream financing model. Relying solely on standard line-ministry budgetary allocations is structurally insufficient for crisis response, which demands immediate, flexible, and consistent capital.

The following Sustainable Financing Architecture outlines how the policy will be funded, managed, and safeguarded against political or economic shifts while ensuring that the fund is accessible by all who need it.

1. The Lagos State SGBV Response Trust Fund (LSSTF-SGBV)

Modelled after the highly successful Lagos State Security Trust Fund (LSSTF), this statutory fund creates a public-private partnership framework to pool resources for high-impact interventions.

Statutory IGR Deduction: A legally mandated carve-out of 0.5% of Lagos State's annual Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) will be automatically swept into the Trust Fund at the beginning of each fiscal year. This ensures a predictable, baseline operational budget.

Private Sector & Philanthropic Window: The fund will establish a dedicated pathway for corporate contributions. To incentivize participation, the Lagos State Internal Revenue Service (LIRS) will grant 100% tax-deductible status to all corporate financial endowments made directly to the SGBV Trust Fund.

2. Dynamic "Prevalence-to-Pocket" Allocation

Rather than distributing funds evenly or politically across all 20 Local Government Areas (LGAs), funding distributions will be directly tied to live data from the centralized Case Management Information System (CMIS).

LGA Prevalence Rankings: 40% of the active operational fund will be dynamically shifted toward the top five highest-risk LGAs based on real-time hot-spot mapping and incident reporting volumes.

Operational Sprints: Funding will follow the data. If a specific region (e.g., Alimosho or Ikorodu) shows a sharp rise in cases or acute shelter shortages, emergency funding is automatically unlocked to scale up local frontline desks and rapid response units.

3. Innovative Alternative Financing Mechanisms

To further expand the financial base without overburdening the state's direct budget, the policy introduces three specific alternative mechanisms:

- ***Asset Forfeiture Ingestion:*** 100% of the cash assets, fines, and liquidated properties seized from convicted human traffickers, sexual predators, and corporate entities violating safeguarding laws within Lagos State will be legally funnelled directly back into the SGBV Trust Fund.
- ***The SGBV Impact Bond:*** Partnering with international development banks (e.g., African Development Bank, World Bank) to issue a results-based Social Impact Bond. Institutional investors provide upfront capital to scale up prevention interventions, and the state pays returns only when independent metrics verify a distinct reduction in SGBV prevalence and an acceleration in judicial turnaround times.
- ***The Corporate Safeguarding Levy:*** A micro-levy (e.g., ₦1,000 per registration) embedded into the licensing and annual renewal fees of all private domestic staff and caregiving agencies operating within Lagos State, directly funding their mandatory background vetting and safeguarding training.

4. Strict Fiduciary Safeguards & Anti-Corruption Firewalls

To prevent the mismanagement of funds and ensure absolute transparent accountability, the architecture includes the following structural clauses:

Independent Fund Board

The Trust Fund will not be managed by political line ministries. It will be governed by an independent, multi-sectoral Board of Trustees comprising reputable civil society leaders, private sector corporate executives, representatives from international development partners, and the DSVA Executive Secretary.

- ***The 5% Administrative Cap:*** A strict statutory ceiling ensures that no more than 5% of the total Trust Fund capital can be spent on administrative overhead (salaries, meetings, travel). The remaining 95% must go directly to program implementation and survivor services.
- ***Live Public Dashboard:*** The Policy Implementation Committee (PIC) will maintain a public-facing, real-time financial tracking dashboard showing every incoming endowment and outgoing disbursement down to the LGA level, ensuring absolute fiscal transparency.

Annex D: Implementation Committee

To transition this framework from a statutory model into an active, operational force across Lagos State, a dedicated, high-level Policy Implementation Committee (PIC) must be inaugurated. This committee provides the political will, multi-sectoral authority, and technical expertise required to enforce compliance, deploy ring-fenced funds, and break through inter-agency bottlenecks.

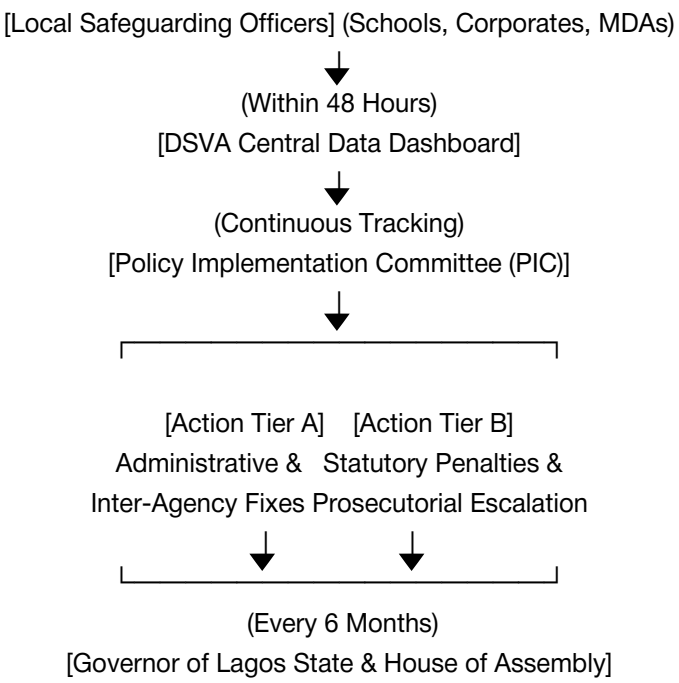
1. Committee Composition & Multi-Sectoral Structure

To ensure the committee possesses both legislative teeth and operational agility, it is structured as a tripartite body combining state executioners, technical experts, and independent civil society auditors.

Sector/Representation	Designated Institutional Role	Mandated Core Responsibility
State Executive & Law Enforcement (Co-Chairs)	Attorney-General & Commissioner for Justice, Lagos State Executive Secretary, Lagos State DSVA	Overall statutory execution and inter-agency coordination. Prosecutorial alignment and legal enforcement of non-compliance penalties.
Frontline Operational Leads	Commissioner of Police, Lagos State Command (FSU lead) Commissioner for Ministry of Women Affairs & Poverty Alleviation Commissioner for Education, Lagos State Head of Service	Enforcing police response times and tracking precinct-level compliance. Ensure mainstreaming of Women empowerment initiatives across the various sectors Deploying academic protection firewalls across K-12 and tertiary schools. Mandating private sector compliance and civil service whistleblower shields.
Technical & Medical Experts	Ministry of Health, Primary Health Care Board, Lagos DNA Forensic Centre, SARCs Hon. Commissioner Lagos State Ministry of Science & Technology	Standardizing trauma-informed medical response and forensic collection. Overseeing the central data dashboard and digital TF-SGBV infrastructure.
Independent Oversight & Audit	Representatives from Accredited CSOs (e.g., Mirabel Centre, Women's Rights Organizations)*. Representative, Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), Lagos Branches, FIDA, AWLA	Conducting unannounced quarterly field audits and spot checks. Ensuring absolute independent review transparency and victim advocacy.

2. Institutional Reporting and Escalation Flow

The Implementation Committee does not operate in a vacuum. It acts as the critical operational hub connecting localized institutional reporting directly to the highest levels of state accountability.



3. Terms of Reference & Statutory Mandates

The Policy Implementation Committee is legally empowered with specific, non-negotiable operational mandates:

- **Fund Management and Disbursal Oversight:** The committee has direct, joint signatory oversight over the Ring-Fenced SGBV Prevention and Response Fund. It ensures unhindered, monthly allocations to emergency helplines, frontline responder upskilling programs, and state-supported shelters, completely bypassing standard bureaucratic delays.
- ***Subpoena and Institutional Audit Authority:*** The committee possesses the statutory power to summon heads of schools, private corporations, and public MDAs to account for compliance failures, high helpline abandonment rates, or documented instances of whistleblower retaliation.
- ***Inter-Agency Conflict Resolution:*** The PIC serves as the ultimate clearinghouse to eliminate bottlenecks between agencies, specifically managing the friction point where police investigations transition into active prosecution by the Ministry of Justice.

4. The First 180-Day Operational Roadmap

To ensure immediate momentum upon inauguration, the committee's initial operations are divided into tight, consecutive 60-day sprint phases.

Phase 1: Digital Deployment & Baseline Alignment (Days 1–60)

- **Action:** Formally inaugurate the committee and deploy the standardized, encrypted DSVA reporting plug-in to all tier-1 educational and public sector institutions.
- **Deliverable:** Establish the live Central Data Dashboard at the DSVA headquarters and issue the official compliance guidelines to the private sector via the Ministry of Establishments.

Phase 2: Operational Scale-Up & Capacity Building (Days 61–120)

- **Action:** Roll out the first statewide, mandatory trauma-informed training sweep for Family Support Units (FSUs) and specialized magistrates.
- **Deliverable:** Allocate the initial wave of ring-fenced funds to expand 24/7 multilingual helpline operations and secure dedicated emergency transit vehicles for high-risk LGAs.

Phase 3: Active Auditing & Enforcement (Days 121–180)

- **Action:** Launch the first cycle of independent quarterly spot checks and field audits led by civil society representatives on the committee.
- **Deliverable:** Compile and publish the first semi-annual implementation index, publicly naming non-compliant institutions and triggering statutory financial penalties for default organizations.

Committee Accountability Clause: To prevent institutional lethargy within the committee itself, the PIC is legally mandated to present a bi-annual progress and compliance report directly to the Governor of Lagos State and the House of Assembly. Failure to meet at least 85% of the policy's systemic targets (such as target police response times and shelter placements) triggers an automatic, mandatory structural audit of the committee's leadership.

Annex E: Policy Statutory Compliance Model

Applicability: Public Sector Institutions, Private Corporations, and Educational Institutions (From Pre-K to Tertiary)

Governing Authority: Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency (DSVA)

1. Commitment:

[Lagos State] is committed to ensuring a safe, secure, and dignified environment for all employees across spaces. This policy establishes a zero-tolerance stance toward all forms of physical, psychological, and Technology-Facilitated Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (TF-SGBV).

2. Core Pillars Across Sectors

Sector i: Educational Institutions (Schools & Universities)

Schools owe a strict duty of care to students. Safeguarding in educational environments must decouple reporting from academic victimization.

- The "Four-Eye" Physical Principle: No adult is permitted to be alone with a student in a closed, un-windowed, or unmonitored room. Counselling sessions, private lessons, and disciplinary meetings must occur in spaces with clear visual visibility.
- Academic Protection Firewalls: If a student reports abuse or harassment by an educator or faculty member, the student must be immediately transferred to an alternative examiner or class section. Their academic grading and assessments must be handled by an independent department review board to prevent punitive grading.
- Peer-to-Peer & TF-SGBV Monitoring: Schools must explicitly prohibit cyberbullying, non-consensual sharing of intimate images, and online harassment in classes, departments, faculties, on school networks or devices. Digital safety modules must be integrated into the quarterly orientation for student.

Sector ii: The Private Sector (Corporations & SMEs)

Corporate environments must safeguard employees from predatory power dynamics, hostile work environments, and career-sabotaging retaliation.

- ***Power-Asymmetry Safeguards:*** Any romantic or sexual relationship between a supervisor/manager and a direct or indirect subordinate must be formally declared to Human Resources. HR must immediately restructure reporting lines to eliminate conflict of interest, performance evaluation biases, and career exploitation.
- ***Safe Commuting & Late-Shift Mandates:*** Organizations requiring employees to work late hours (past 8:00 PM) must provide verified, secure corporate transport or subsidized point-to-point transit to guarantee physical safety during commutes.
- ***Vendor and Third-Party Compliance:*** The corporate code of conduct applies to contractors, clients, and vendors. Employees are protected from harassment by third parties, and corporations must terminate vendor contracts if third-party personnel violate this policy.

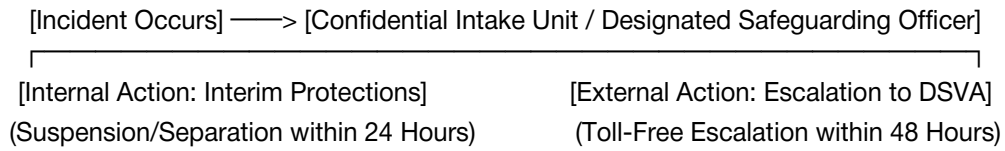
Sector iii: The Public Sector (Ministries, Departments, & Agencies - MDAs)

Public institutions must model transparency, eliminating the exploitation of citizens seeking public services and safeguarding civil servants.

- ***Public-Facing Operational Transparency:*** All public desks, licensing offices, and citizen-interaction points must be open-plan or equipped with operational monitoring systems. Services must never be conditioned upon personal favours or social engagements.
- ***Whistleblower Integrity Shield:*** Civil servants who report systemic harassment or exploitation within an MDA are legally protected from forced transfers, demotions, or vindictive performance reviews. Reports bypass internal ministry bottlenecks and go directly to an independent civil service oversight board.

3. The Universal Reporting & Accountability Protocol

To ensure a report never depends on the discretion of a single manager or principal, all sectors must implement the following standardized three-tiered reporting system.



Step i: Confidential Intake and Immediate Safety (Within 24 Hours)

Every institution must designate a trained Safeguarding Officer or an independent, external intake channel (such as a secure anonymous portal or dedicated internal helpline).

Upon receiving a complaint, the institution must immediately issue an Interim Protection Order. This separates the alleged perpetrator from the survivor (via administrative leave, suspension, or temporary reassignment) without prejudice, ensuring zero interaction during the investigation.

Step ii: Statutory Escalation (Within 48 Hours)

- If the report involves criminal conduct, sexual assault, or minor victims, the institution must escalate the incident to the Lagos State DSVA via the official toll-free helpline (08000333333) within 48 hours.
- Concealing an incident or attempting to resolve an assault through informal "internal settlements" or family interventions constitutes a severe statutory violation and will result in institutional sanctions, loss of operating licenses, or criminal prosecution of the leadership.

Step iii: Independent Investigation and Resolution (Within 30 Days)

- Internal disciplinary panels must include at least one external, independent safeguarding expert or legal representative to ensure impartiality.
- Investigations must conclude within 30 days, resulting in clear, documented outcomes: termination of employment, expulsion, permanent blacklisting, and full cooperation with law enforcement agencies for prosecution.

4. Implementation, Funding, and Enforcement

A protection policy is only functional if it is adequately resourced and independently audited.

- ***Ring-Fenced Internal Funding:*** Every institution must allocate a distinct, non-fungible percentage of its operating budget specifically for safeguarding infrastructure. This fund covers the continuous training of responders, maintenance of reporting portals, and provision of immediate emergency psychosocial or medical referrals.
- ***Mandatory Bi-Annual Compliance Audits:*** Organizations must submit anonymous, aggregated data logs to the DSVA every six months. These logs must detail:

1.Total number of reports received (categorized by physical, mental, and digital harms).

2.Average response time to implement interim protection measures.

3.Final case disposition rates.

Non-Compliance Penalties: Failure to implement this policy, maintain reporting channels, or report incidents involving minors will result in the immediate revocation of regulatory compliance certificates and public publication of non-compliant institutions.

Annex F: Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (Meal)

Fi. Monitoring:

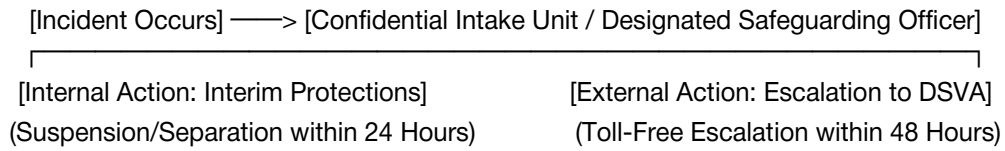
A policy is only as effective as its implementation tracking. A robust M&E framework moves the state away from reactive crisis management and toward data-driven prevention.

Establish Key Performance Indicators (KPIs): To accurately measure progress, the State must implement specific, quantifiable metrics divided into structural, process, and outcome indicators:

- ***Response Time:*** Average time taken by the Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency (DSVA), Lagos State Command Control Centre or the Police to respond to an emergency call (Target: Under one hour in urban/rural areas).
- ***Judicial Efficiency:*** The ratio of SGBV cases filed in the Special Sexual Offences Courts to final judgments delivered within six months.
- ***Service Capacity:*** Total number of operational, state-funded shelter beds available per 100,000 citizens.
- ***Training Saturation:*** Percentage of frontline health workers and police personnel who have completed certified, trauma-informed survivor care modules.

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Conduct Periodic Reviews and Audits:

- ***Bi-Annual Operational Reviews:*** Independent mid-year evaluations of service delivery across all 20 Local Government Areas (LGAs) and 37 Local Council Development Areas (LCDAs) to identify geographic blind spots.
- ***Financial & Forensic Audits:*** Publicly accessible tracking of budgetary allocations to ensure funds meant for survivor rehabilitation, medical kits, and legal aid are not diverted into administrative overhead. These audits should take place annually.

Fii. Accountability & Learning Mechanisms

To prevent this MEAL framework from becoming a one-way data dump, the state must institutionalize closed-loop systems that use the data to actively adapt operations.

The Survivor & Community Feedback Loop

- Anonymized Firewalls: Survivors are automatically issued an anonymous, third-party managed digital survey (via SMS or secure IVR) 30 days after their case closes. This survey explicitly rates their experience regarding dignity, safety, and systemic secondary victimization.
- Grassroots Redress: If an LGA's Survivor Service Satisfaction Index drops below 80% for two consecutive quarters, it triggers an automatic operational freeze and an immediate administrative review of that area's frontline response desk.

Data-Driven Budgetary Reallocation

- Prevalence-to-Pocket Alignment: Annual budgetary distributions for shelter management, medical supplies, and legal aid are legally bound to the localized hot-spot mapping generated by the CMIS.
- Dynamic Funding Shift: Resources are dynamically shifted toward independent bodies showing sudden spikes in reporting or severe gaps in service capacity, removing political favouritism from the fiscal funding model.

The Ring-Fencing Mandate:

SGBV allocations must be treated as statutory first-line charges on the state budget, meaning they cannot be reduced or reallocated to other sectors during fiscal shortfalls.

- **Infrastructure Investment:** Dedicated Capital Expenditure (CapEx) specifically allocated to building and maintaining a network of regional emergency shelters, specialized forensic laboratories, and trauma rehabilitation centres evenly distributed across the three senatorial districts (Lagos West, East, and Central).
- **Personnel and Training:** Funding to provide competitive salaries and psychological hazard allowances for specialized social workers and counsellors to curb institutional burnout. This includes sustained funding for the mandatory, continuous training of state judicial and law enforcement officers.
- **Service Delivery (The Survivor Fund):** A dedicated, liquid operational fund to ensure that medical treatments, emergency contraception, HIV post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP), mental health counselling, and legal aid are 100% free at the point of access for all survivors, eliminating the financial barriers that stall justice.
- **Public-Private Partnerships (PPP):** Institutionalizing structures that allow the Lagos State private sector (corporate foundations, banking conglomerates) to contribute tax-deductible grants to the state's SGBV response fund, reducing total reliance on the state treasury.

Institutional Learning and Adaptation

- The Biennial Systems Audit: Every 24 months, an independent, non-state evaluation body (comprising CSOs and academic researchers) conducts a comprehensive system-wide audit.
- Corrective Action Plans: Line ministries falling below a 90% compliance rating on the Inter-Agency Sectoral SOP Scorecard are legally mandated to implement formal Corrective Action Plans within 14 working days, with progress tracked directly by the Policy Implementation Committee (PIC).

Fiii. Sanctions

To ensure the Lagos State SGBV Prevention Policy maintains its legal weight, the operational guidelines must move past simple warnings. Failing to uphold prevention, reporting, or evidence-preservation standards must carry clear administrative, civil, and criminal penalties for all institutional duty-bearers.

The following enforcement matrix outlines the specific sanctions for non-compliance, organized by sector and level of infraction.

1. Traditional, Religious, and Community Leadership

This sanction targets the biggest structural bottleneck to justice in Lagos: unauthorized out-of-court settlements ("family matters") brokered by community leaders, which actively shield perpetrators and silence survivors.

Infraction: Intentional concealment, unauthorized mediation, or forcing a survivor into an out-of-court settlement for an indictable SGBV offense (e.g., defilement, rape, severe spousal battery).

Sanctions Tier:

Criminal prosecution for Compounding an Offense and Accessory After the Fact under the Criminal Law of Lagos State, carrying a penalty of up to 3 years imprisonment. For parents, community service will be recommended.

2. Frontline Law Enforcement and Justice Personnel

These penalties address institutional negligence, secondary victimization (victim-blaming), and poor handling of evidence by mandated responders.

Infraction: Refusing to log an SGBV report, demanding payment from a survivor for fuel or investigation logistics, compromising forensic/digital evidence chains, or deliberately delaying the execution of a 24-Hour Emergency Protection Order.

Sanctions Tier:

- **First Instance:** Immediate removal from specialized SGBV/Gender Desks and reassignment to non-public roles, alongside a formal query entered into their permanent civil service or police file.
- **Criminal Liability:** If evidence is intentionally altered, deleted, or leaked (such as volatile digital forensics in TF-SGBV cases), personnel will face criminal prosecution for Perversion of Justice, carrying a penalty of up to 7 years imprisonment.

3. Educational Institutions (Public and Private)

This framework penalizes schools that try to protect their reputation by burying incidents of abuse or failing to implement student safety frameworks.

Infraction: Failing to execute the mandatory "P.R.I.V.A.T.E" School Safety Framework, covering up student-on-student or teacher-on-student sexual abuse, or failing to report an incident to the DSVA within the mandated 24hour window.

Sanctions Tier:

- **Private Schools:** The relevant education regulatory authority may issue a compliance warning, require a corrective action plan, conduct a safeguarding audit, impose administrative penalties where applicable, or recommend temporary suspension of approval/operating licence in serious or repeated cases, subject to due process.
- **Public Schools:** The matter should be referred to the appropriate education authority and public service disciplinary channel for administrative review. Where negligence, concealment or misconduct is established, disciplinary measures may include written warning, redeployment, suspension, demotion or recommendation for dismissal in accordance with applicable Public Service Rules and due process.
- **Individual Educators/Staff:** Any staff found to have concealed, enabled, intimidated a complainant, interfered with evidence, failed to report, or otherwise acted in breach of safeguarding obligations may be subjected to internal disciplinary action, referral to relevant professional bodies such as TRCN where applicable, and referral to law enforcement where the conduct discloses a criminal offence.

4. Healthcare Facilities and SARC Centres

These sanctions focus on protecting the medical evidence chain and ensuring survivors are never turned away during a crisis.

Infraction: Demanding upfront payment before administering emergency medical care to an SGBV survivor, failing to maintain the DNA medical cold chain, or leaking confidential survivor records.

Sanctions Tier:

- Medical Personnel: may be subjected to internal disciplinary action, suspension from SGBV case handling duties, and referral to the relevant professional regulatory body, including the Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria or the Nursing and Midwifery Council of Nigeria, where professional misconduct is disclosed.
- Institutional Facility: may be required to submit a corrective action plan, undergo compliance monitoring, and implement mandatory staff training. In serious or repeated cases, the matter may be referred to the Health Facility Monitoring and Accreditation Agency for appropriate regulatory action, including warning, administrative sanctions, restriction of services, suspension of approval, or other measures permitted by law.

5. Corporate and Public Sector Workplaces

This tier holds employers accountable for ignoring workplace harassment or failing to protect whistleblowers.

Infraction: Failing to maintain an operational, independent third-party sexual harassment reporting system, or retaliating against an employee who files a good-faith SGBV report.

Sanctions Tier:

- Companies that fail to comply with workplace SGBV prevention and reporting obligations may be required to undertake corrective action, staff training, policy review and compliance monitoring. Serious or repeated breaches may attract administrative sanctions or procurement-related consequences, subject to applicable law and due process.
- Leadership Liability: Individual directors or HR managers found complicit in hiding systemic harassment or victimizing a whistleblower can be sued for civil damages and prosecuted for Criminal Coercion.

6. Local Government Structures (LGAs/LCDAs)

This mechanism ensures accountability trickles down to the local level by targeting local governance funding.

Infraction: Failing to establish or fund the localized LGA SGBV Response Committee, or failing to submit monthly compliance scorecards to the state Policy Implementation Committee (PIC).

Sanctions Tier:

Administrative Sanctions: Non-compliant LGAs/LCDAs should first receive a compliance notice, technical support and a corrective action timeline. Persistent non-compliance may affect access to discretionary or performance-based State support, subject to due process and applicable procedures.

7. Institutional Enforcement Claws

To keep these sanctions from being buried by political influence, the policy establishes two automatic triggers:

The Automatic Trigger System

1.The Policy Implementation Committee may request relevant reports, records and compliance updates from participating institutions through the appropriate supervisory ministry, department or agency. Where an institution fails to respond or cooperate, the matter may be escalated to the relevant oversight authority for administrative action in line with due process.

2.State agencies and LGAs/LCDAs should be periodically reviewed for compliance with SGBV prevention and response obligations. Persistent failure to address reported infractions may be documented and may inform corrective action, technical support, performance review and future resource-allocation decisions, subject to due process.

iv. FUNDING

To ensure the Lagos State SGBV Prevention Policy does not become an unfunded mandate, its implementation must be backed by a resilient, multi-stream financing model. Relying solely on standard line-ministry budgetary allocations is structurally insufficient for crisis response, which demands immediate, flexible, and consistent capital.

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Modelled after the highly successful Lagos State Security Trust Fund (LSSTF), this statutory fund creates a public-private partnership framework to pool resources for high-impact interventions.

- Statutory IGR Deduction: A legally mandated carve-out of 0.5% of Lagos State's annual Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) will be automatically swept into the Trust Fund at the beginning of each fiscal year. This ensures a predictable, baseline operational budget.
- Private Sector & Philanthropic Window: The fund will establish a dedicated pathway for corporate contributions. To incentivize participation, the Lagos State Internal Revenue Service (LIRS) will grant 100% tax-deductible status to all corporate financial endowments made directly to the SGBV Trust Fund.

2. Dynamic "Prevalence-to-Pocket" Allocation

Rather than distributing funds evenly or politically across all 20 Local Government Areas (LGAs), funding distributions will be directly tied to live data from the centralized Case Management Information System (CMIS).

- LGA Prevalence Rankings: 40% of the active operational fund will be dynamically shifted toward the top five highest-risk LGAs based on real-time hot-spot mapping and incident reporting volumes.
- Operational Sprints: Funding will follow the data. If a specific region (e.g., Alimosho or Ikorodu) shows a sharp rise in cases or acute shelter shortages, emergency funding is automatically unlocked to scale up local frontline desks and rapid response units.

3. Innovative Alternative Financing Mechanisms

To further expand the financial base without overburdening the state's direct budget, the policy introduces three specific alternative mechanisms:

- **Asset Forfeiture Ingestion:** 100% of the cash assets, fines, and liquidated properties seized from convicted human traffickers, sexual predators, and corporate entities violating safeguarding laws within Lagos State will be legally funnelled directly back into the SGBV Trust Fund.
- **The SGBV Impact Bond:** Partnering with international development banks (e.g., African Development Bank, World Bank) to issue a results-based Social Impact Bond. Institutional investors provide upfront capital to scale up prevention interventions, and the state pays returns only when independent metrics verify a distinct reduction in SGBV prevalence and an acceleration in judicial turnaround times.
- **The Corporate Safeguarding Levy:** A micro-levy (e.g., ₦1,000 per registration) embedded into the licensing and annual renewal fees of all private domestic staff and caregiving agencies operating within Lagos State, directly funding their mandatory background vetting and safeguarding training.

4. Strict Fiduciary Safeguards & Anti-Corruption Firewalls

To prevent the mismanagement of funds and ensure absolute transparent accountability, the architecture includes the following structural clauses:

Independent Fund Board

The Trust Fund will not be managed by political line ministries. It will be governed by an independent, multi-sectoral Board of Trustees comprising reputable civil society leaders, private sector corporate executives, representatives from international development partners, and the DSVA Executive Secretary.

- The 5% Administrative Cap: A strict statutory ceiling ensures that no more than 5% of the total Trust Fund capital can be spent on administrative overhead (salaries, meetings, travel). The remaining 95% must go directly to program implementation and survivor services.
- Live Public Dashboard: The Policy Implementation Committee (PIC) will maintain a public-facing, real-time financial tracking dashboard showing every incoming endowment and outgoing disbursement down to the LGA level, ensuring absolute fiscal transparency.

Annex Fv: IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

Societies, technologies, and criminal patterns evolve rapidly. This clause guarantees that the policy remains a living, agile document rather than an obsolete administrative text.

Immediate Effectivity: The policy carries full legal weight immediately upon executive approval, requiring all relevant Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs), including the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Youth and Social Development, and Ministry of Health.

The 5-Year Mandate and Emerging Trends Review: While a comprehensive structural review is mandated every five years, the phrase "or as necessary" provides the legal flexibility to issue supplementary regulations or amendments ahead of schedule to tackle rapidly changing structural threats, such as:

- Technology-Facilitated SGBV: Updating definitions and enforcement tools to combat AI-driven deepfakes, online doxxing, and digital blackmail targeting women and girls.
- Demographic Shifts: Adjusting resource distribution as rapid urbanization creates new, highly dense informal settlements that require unique, decentralized community policing and protection models.

Monitoring and Evaluation Indicator Tools

To move from static metrics to operational tools, each section includes an Indicator Reference Sheet (IRS) matrix, a Data Collection Instrument Template, and an Operational Verification Protocol to ensure systematic tracking across the State.

1. Prevention and Awareness Indicator Tools

A. Indicator Reference Sheet (IRS) Matrix

KPI	Data Source & Collection Tool	Collection Frequency	Responsible Agency / Desk
Campaigns conducted	Campaign Activity Logs; Social Media Analytics Dashboards	Quarterly	Agency Communications Unit
% Increase in public awareness	Annual State Household Survey; Post-Campaign Digital Polling	Annually	External M&E Consultants / Bureau of Statistics
Schools implementing prevention	School Safeguarding Compliance Checklist; Ministry of Education Audits	Termly (Thrice/Year)	Ministry of Education / Agency School Safeguarding Unit
Community sensitization programmes	Local Government Area (LGA) Town Hall Registries; Event Attendance Sheets	Monthly	Community Engagement Department

B. Tool Template: School Safeguarding Compliance Checklist

Purpose: To verify implementation of SGBV prevention education under KPI 1.3.

- **School Name:** _____ LGA: _____
- **Reporting Period:** Term ____, 2026
- **Target Population:** [ ] Primary [ ] Junior Secondary [ ] Senior Secondary

Verification Checklist Questions	Yes	No	Evidence Required / Notes
1. Has the approved body safety and protection guidelines been integrated into the current term's lesson plans?	[ ]	[ ]	Copy of curriculum/lesson notes
2. Are school-based child protection and digital safety rules visibly posted in common areas?	[ ]	[ ]	Physical/photographic verification
3. Have teachers and school administrators completed the mandated safeguarding orientation this academic year?	[ ]	[ ]	Training attendance roster
4. Is there an active, anonymous internal reporting pathway for students to flag safety concerns?	[ ]	[ ]	Description of box/channel

2. Reporting and Response Indicator Tools

A. Indicator Reference Sheet (IRS) Matrix

KPI	Data Source & Collection Tool	Collection Frequency	Responsible Agency / Desk
Total reported cases	Centralized Case Management System (CCMS)	Real-time / Monthly	Data Management & Analytics Unit
Average response time	Time-stamped Intake Logs to First Responder Deployment Sheets	Monthly	Helpline Emergency Response Desk
% Cases receiving service (24–72hrs)	CCMS Referral Completion Stamps; Case Worker Verification Notes	Monthly	Case Management Supervisor
Functional referral pathways activated	Inter-agency Referral Forms; Service Provider Acknowledgement Receipts	Quarterly	Inter-Sectoral Coordination Secretariat

B. Tool Template: Multi-Sectoral Case Log & Response Time Tracker

Purpose: Source tool for extracting KPIs 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3. Must be updated for every unique incident reported.

- Unique Case ID: _____
- Incident Location (LGA): _____
- Survivor Demographics: Age: _____ | Sex: [ ] F [ ] M [ ] NB

[Incident Timestamped Flow-Log]

Incident Reported ——> Intake Completed ——> First Responder Assigned ——> Services Dispatched

Date: __/__/__ Date: __/__/__ Date: __/__/__ Date: __/__/__

Time: __:__ (24hr) Time: __:__ (24hr) Time: __:__ (24hr) Time: __:__ (24hr)

Service Provision Verification Checklist (Target: 24–72 Hours Window):

- [ ] Medical Referral: Activated on (Date/Time): _____
- [ ] Psychosocial Referral: Activated on (Date/Time): _____
- [ ] Legal/Rescue Referral: Activated on (Date/Time): _____

3. Justice and Legal Outcomes Indicator Tools

A. Indicator Reference Sheet (IRS) Matrix

KPI	Data Source & Collection Tool	Collection Frequency	Responsible Agency / Desk
Cases investigated & prosecuted	Police Liaison Case Files; Ministry of Justice (MoJ) Prosecution Logs	Quarterly	Legal Directorate / Police Liaison
Conviction rate	High Court / Specialized Court Judgment Registers	Semi-Annually	MoJ Prosecution Tracking Desk
Protection orders issued	Family Court / High Court Order Archives	Monthly	Court Liaison Officer
Average duration of resolution	Case Filing-to-Judgment Timeline Matrix	Annually	Legal Policy & Research Unit

B. Tool Template: Judicial Case Tracker Matrix

Purpose: Maintained by the Court Liaison to feed directly into the calculation of conviction rates and case duration averages.

Unique Case ID	Date Charges Filed	Charge Sections (Criminal Law)	Protection Order Requested? (Y/N)	Date Protection Order Issued	Final Case Status (Conviction/ Acquittal/ Struck Out)	Date of Final Judgment	Total Duration (Days)
SGBV-2026-001	12/01/2026	Sec 137 (Sexual Assault)	Y	15/01/2026	Conviction	136 Days	136 Days

4. Health and Psychosocial Services Indicator Tools

A. Indicator Reference Sheet (IRS) Matrix

KPI	Data Source & Collection Tool	Collection Frequency	Responsible Agency / Desk
Medical treatment within 72 hours	Clinical Intake Records; Emergency Care Logs (Designated health facilities)	Monthly	SARC Centre Managers / Ministry of Health
Accessing psychosocial counselling	Counsellor Session Rosters; Clinical Case Management Files	Monthly	Psychosocial Support Unit Head
Availability of trained personnel	Facility Human Resource Audits; Capacity Rosters	Bi-Annually	Ministry of Health HR Desk
Facilities providing integrated services	One-Stop-Centre Accreditation Registry; Spot-Check Audits	Annually	Institutional Monitoring Unit

B. Tool Template: Integrated Service Provider Monthly Summary Return

Purpose: Completed by Centre Managers to aggregate clinical and therapeutic compliance data.

Facility Name: _____ Reporting Month/Year: _____

1. Total New SGBV Presentations: _____
2. Clinical Direct Care Metrics:
   - o Number of survivors presenting within the 72-hour window of assault: _____
   - o Number of survivors within the 72-hour window who successfully received emergency post-exposure medical prophylaxis/care: _____
3. Mental Health & Therapeutic Metrics:
   - o Number of survivors referred to trauma-informed counselling: _____
   - o Number of survivors who completed at least their initial intake session: _____
4. Staffing Dashboard Status:
   - o Number of designated, active trained caseworkers/counsellors on site: _____
   - o Number of designated clinical doctors/nurses on shift rotation: _____

5. Institutional Capacity Indicator Tools

A. Indicator Reference Sheet (IRS) Matrix

KPI	Data Source & Collection Tool	Collection Frequency	Responsible Agency / Desk
MDAs with focal persons/units	State Civil Service Desk Directory; Institutional Mapping Surveys	Annually	Head of Service Liaison Office
Frontline workers trained	Post-Training Evaluation Database; Participant Verification Certificates	Quarterly	Capacity Building & Training Unit
Availability of operational SOPs	Desk-to-Desk Policy Compliance Audits	Semi-Annually	Quality Assurance Unit
Level of compliance with protocols	Inter-agency Referral Audit Case Reviews (Sampling 10% of files)	Semi-Annually	Independent M&E Panel

B. Tool Template: Inter-Agency Sectoral SOP Compliance Scorecard

Purpose: Used during institutional peer reviews to evaluate compliance with multi-sectoral protocols.

- Target Ministry/Department/Agency (MDA): _____
- Assessor Name: _____ Date of Audit: ___/___/_____

Assessment Criteria	Score (0-2)	Documented Objective Evidence / Observation
1. Dedicated Focal Person Presence: MDA has an officially designated, trained, and accessible SGBV focal point.	_____	Official appointment letter / Desk observation
2. Active SOP Usage: Formal cross-sectoral referral pathways and operational SOP manuals are physically/digitally available at the desk level.	_____	Verification of physical manual presence
3. Record Keeping & Protocol Compliance: Referral forms are filled out correctly, completely, and securely archived in line with privacy policies.	_____	Review of 5 sampled past referral files

Scoring Key: 0 = Non-Compliant; 1 = Partially Compliant (Needs Improvement); 2 = Fully Compliant.

6. Community Engagement Indicator Tools

A. Indicator Reference Sheet (IRS) Matrix

KPI	Data Source & Collection Tool	Collection Frequency	Responsible Agency / Desk
Active community structures	Community-Based Protection Group Registration Portals	Semi-Annually	Civil Society Coordination Unit
Leaders engaged in prevention	Traditional/Religious Leaders Engagement Rosters & Advocacy Logs	Quarterly	Faith-Based & Traditional Institutions Desk
Reduction in harmful practices	LGA Trend Analysis Focus Groups; Community Infraction Incident Logs	Annually	Research and Policy Development Unit
Survivor support groups	Peer Support Network Registers (e.g., Sunrise Voices network tools)	Quarterly	Support Group Coordination Focal Point

B. Tool Template: Traditional & Religious Leaders Engagement & Action Log

Purpose: Monitors the specific actions taken by influential local stakeholders to drive structural prevention.

- LGA / Community: _____
- Leader Name & Title: _____
- Affiliation: [ ] Traditional Council [ ] Islamic Faith [ ] Christian Faith [ ] Other

Date of Engagement	Type of Intervention / Advocacy Action Taken	Target Audience Estimated Size	Tangible Policy/Action Outcome Achieved
14/03/2026	Sermon on reporting channels during community religious assembly	~350	Distributed 200 leaflets detailing state referral helpline numbers

Summary Action Matrix for Section

Accountability Component	Immediate Action Tool	Institutional Lead	Expected Systemic Outcome
Findings Inform Budget	Annual KPI-to-Budget Alignment Matrix	Ministry of Economic Planning & Budget / Lead Agency	100% of strategic prevention funding is data-driven.
Survivor/Community Feedback	Anonymized Scorecards & Sunrise Voices Consultations	External M&E Consultants / Community Engagement Desk	Response services adapt to prioritize survivor dignity and autonomy
Independent Evaluations	Biennial Systems Audit & Public Performance Report	Independent Evaluation Panel / Auditor General	Unbiased verification of reporting data and inter-agency compliance.
Continuous Capacity Improvement	Adaptive Training Curriculum Retooling	TWG Capacity Building Directorate	Immediate remediation of institutional skill gaps and processing bottlenecks.

LIST OF SGBV RESPONDER ORGANIZATIONS IN LAGOS STATE

The following table consolidates key government agencies, specialized clinics, and front-line civil society organizations actively managing SGBV prevention, rescue, and response within Lagos State:

Organization Name	Physical Address / Hub Location	Primary Services Provided	Contact Information / Helplines

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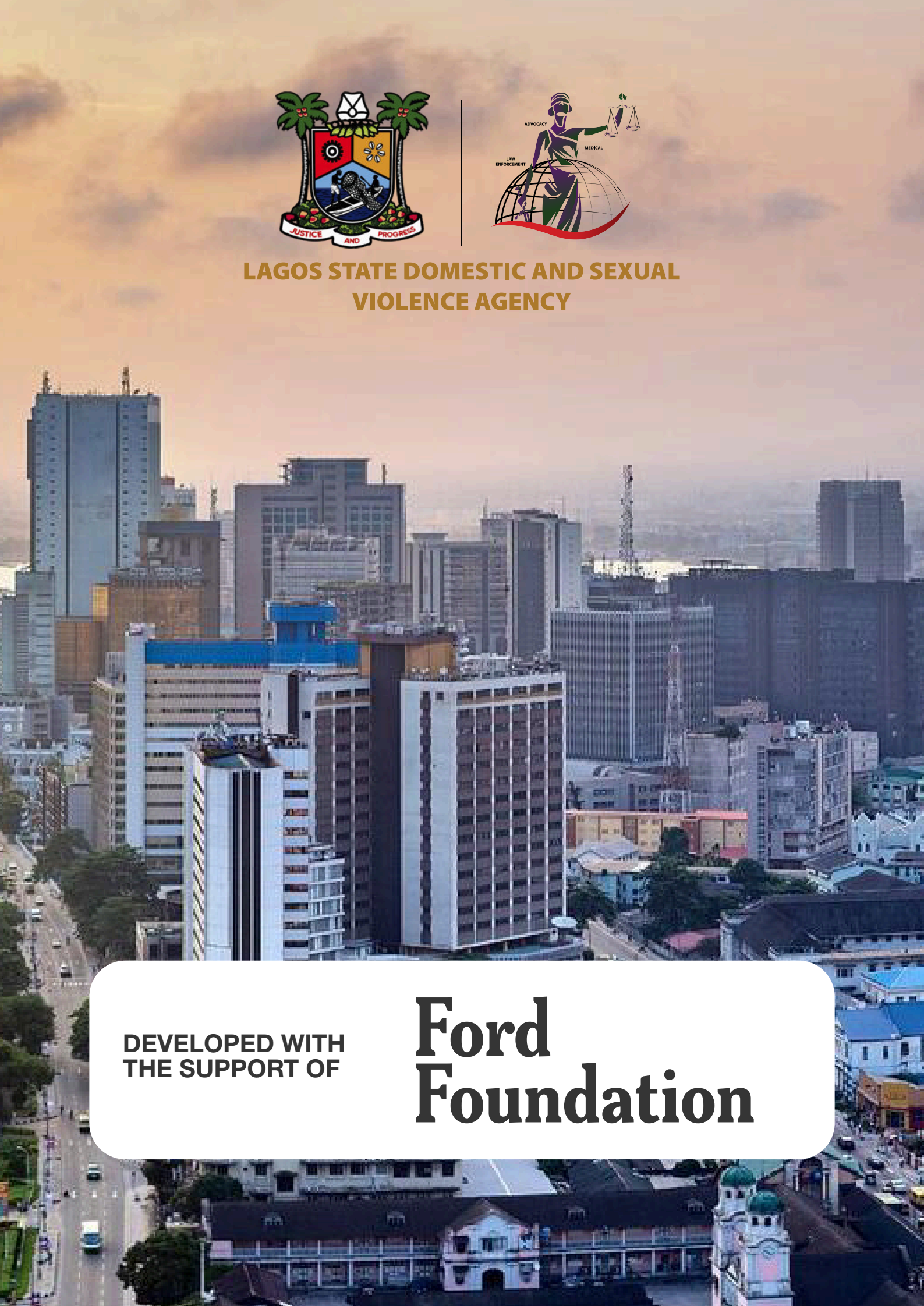
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