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PRESS STATEMENT

CHRICED Berates Police, Calls For Justice For Rape Victim, Maryam Yusuf

The Resource Centre for Human Rights & Civic Education (CHRICED) strongly condemns the conspiratorial and lethargic attitude of the Nigeria Police Force in a rape case involving one of its MOPOL officers, Corporal Barau Garba (Police Service Number: 275601). Credible reports reaching us indicate that the said Corporal Garba, abducted a 14-year-old girl, Maryam Yusuf, held her against her will, and raped her repeatedly. According to information reaching us, the young Maryam, who lives with her parents at the Hausa Quarters in Asaba, Delta State, traveled to Onitsha to buy some items for her father.

Unfortunately, Maryam lost the money for the items she was meant to purchase. It was while frantically searching for the vehicle she boarded in a bid to recover the money that Officer Garba approached her. Officer Garba promised to help her find the money and show her the way back home. In desperation for help, and seeing that the person offering help was a Police Officer, the young Maryam accepted the offer of assistance. The Officer was said to have used his motorcycle to convey Maryam to his room at the Police Base, locked her up, and repeatedly raped her for days. Pleas by the young girl to Officer Garba to take her home to her parents fell on deaf ears. The bubble busted when the young girl was able to take her captor's phone while he was asleep, and placed a call to her father to come and rescue her. Hospital tests subsequently show that Maryam was raped with all brutality, and her vagina had been ruptured as a result of this dastardly act by a supposed officer of the law. Regrettably, despite the seriousness of this infraction by the officer, fellow police officers in Okpoko Division of the Nigeria Police have been trying to cover up the bestial act of their colleague.

The case of Maryam is one in a long list of cases of young girls who have been criminally violated, with the police always demonstrating a clear unwillingness to ensure justice is done. This posture of the supposed enforcers of the law is highly condemnable. It is strange that the Police, which is meant to uphold the law, and protect the weak from the strong would either connive to ensure perpetrators of crimes like this escape justice. It is therefore not surprising that rapists across the country are getting bolder by the day, especially as they can see that no effective steps are being taken to bring previous perpetrators to book.

CHRICED therefore sounds a note of warning to the Police handling the case of Maryam Yusuf, not to make further attempts to sweep this matter under the carpet. We call on the Inspector-General of Police to wade in and ensure a transparent investigation, and the prosecution of the officer involved in this dastard act. We also call on the Police to stop shirking its responsibilities, especially when it comes to investigating and prosecuting rape cases. It is not tenable that the nation's law enforcement institution has to wait to be pressured before taking action over cases like Maryam Yusuf's. The case offers an opportunity for the Police to prove its critics wrong; the public will be watching to see its next steps.

Signed:

Comrade Dr. Ibrahim M. Zikirullahi
Executive Director