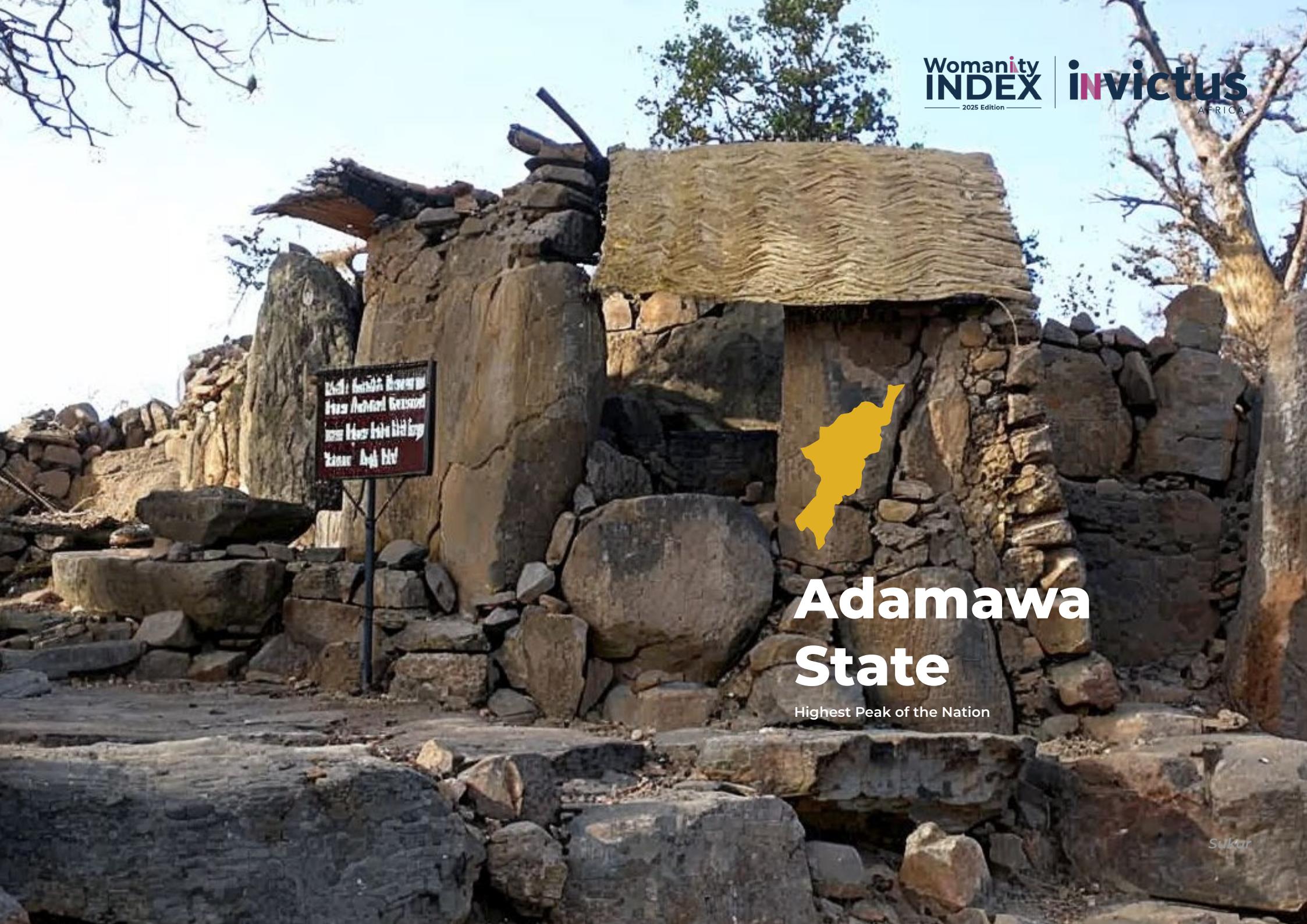




Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response: **What Has Changed?**



With the support of
Ford Foundation



A stone structure with a thatched roof and a signpost in the foreground.

This is the highest peak of the nation.
It is called Gashaka.
It is the highest peak in
North East Nigeria.



Adamawa State

Highest Peak of the Nation

Adamawa State

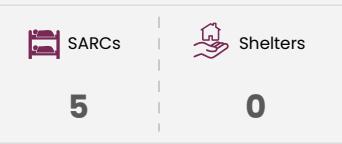
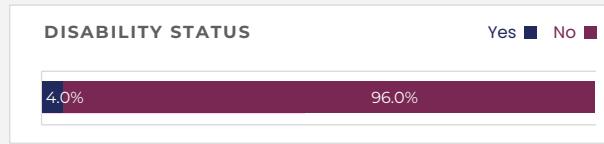
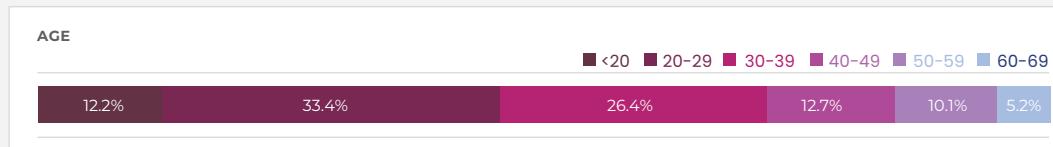
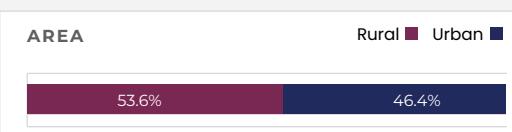
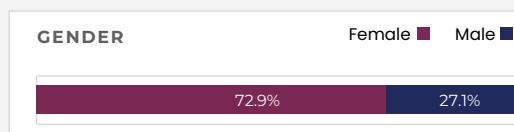
Population: 5,357,787

50% Female 50% Male

Overall Grade

58.8%

Respondents Demography (n = 1,179)



Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development

BUDGET ALLOCATION

₦4.47bn

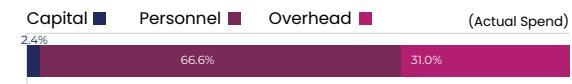
(This accounts for 1.6% of the total state budget)

BUDGET PERFORMANCE

₦217.99m

(This accounts for 4.9% of total allocation to the ministry)

4.9%



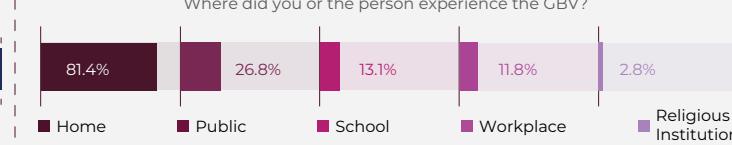
Indexes	Indicators	Total Grades
Laws and Policies	LP ₁ LP ₂ LP ₃	—
Access to Legal Justice	ALJ ₁ ALJ ₂ ALJ ₃	ALJ ₄
Support Services	SS ₁ SS ₂ SS ₃	SS ₄
Information and Awareness	IA ₁ IA ₂ IA ₃	IA ₄
Budget and Spending	BS ₁ BS ₂	BS ₃

GBV Context 2025

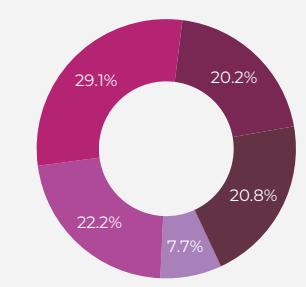
Have you or anyone you know experienced any form of gender-based violence in the last five years?



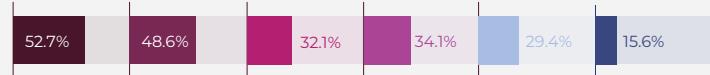
Where did you or the person experience the GBV?



Why did you or the person choose where you sought help?



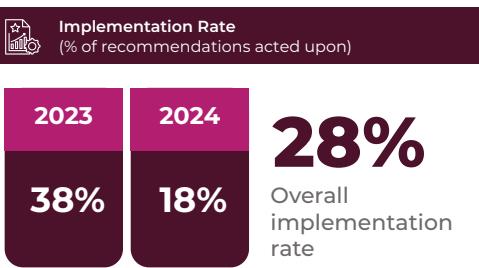
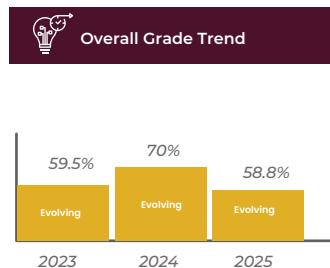
What form of GBV did you or the person experience?



■ Domestic ■ Physical ■ Sexual ■ Mental ■ Economic ■ Cultural practices

■ Family/relatives ■ Religious leader (Pastor, Ulama, Imam, Deity) ■ Employer/Work colleague/Labour group ■ Friends/neighbors ■ I did not seek help ■ Traditional/community leader or group ■ Lawyer

■ Financial constraint ■ Perception that they could help ■ Proximity or accessibility ■ Services ■ Trust



 Index Grade Trend

Index	2023	2024	2025
Laws and Policies	LP 75.0%	-1 ▼ LP 58.3%	-1 ▼ LP 50.0%
Access to Legal Justice	ALJ 86.3%	ALJ 75.0%	-1 ▼ ALJ 50.0%
Support Services	SS 86.3%	SS 87.5%	-1 ▼ SS 56.3%
Information and Awareness	IA 25.0%	+1 ▲ IA 62.5%	+1 ▲ IA 87.5%
Budget and Spending	BS 25.0%	+2 ▲ BS 66.7%	-1 ▼ BS 50.0%

What Has Changed

Positive Developments

- In 2025, 70.4% are willing to report GBV to police or courts, with consistent confidence (approximately 90%) in state laws from 2023-2025.
- Five operational Hope Centers/SARCs now offer free medical care, legal aid, psychosocial support, shelter, and economic empowerment with startup kits.
- Established four designated high courts; Family Support Units at the State CID and Area Commands; gender desks in divisional police stations; and a forensic laboratory at FUTY.

Areas of Concern

- Public awareness of GBV convictions dropped sharply from 84% in 2024 to 42.8% in 2025.
- Prosecutors still rely on the Penal Code, with fewer than five VAPP-based convictions since 2021.
- Legal aid is available in only 3 of 21 LGAs; SARCs cover all LGAs but leave the southern zone underserved.
- No formalized referral pathway, causing coordination gaps with service providers relying on informal contacts.
- Heavy reliance on external funding from international partners like UNFPA threatens sustainability of support services.



Key Actions



Laws and Policies

- Adamawa State has trained law enforcement agencies, strengthening Family Support Units to effectively handle GBV and child abuse cases..

Access to Legal Justice



Adamawa State GBV Assessment Survey

Overall Grade

58.8%

LAWS AND POLICIES



Are you aware of existing laws and/or policies that address gender-based violence (GBV) in the state?

Yes ■ No ■

65.2% 34.8%



Do you think customary or religious laws and/or practices are sufficient in preventing and responding to GBV in the state?

Yes ■ No ■

59.9% 40.1%



Do you know of anyone who has been convicted for GBV-related offenses?

Yes ■ No ■

42.8% 57.2%

SUPPORT SERVICES



Do you know of, or have you visited, any active shelters and/or Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) for GBV victims/survivors in the state?

Yes ■ No ■

10.2% 89.8%



Do you believe that these shelters and/or SARCs are effectively functional, adequately equipped, properly maintained, and sustainable over time?

Yes ■ No ■

61.7% 27.5% 9.2% 0%

■ Agree ■ Strongly agree ■ Indifferent ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree



Which of these processes and procedures for reporting GBV-related incidents are you aware of? (Referral Pathways)

Yes ■ No ■

80.3% 31.6% 17.1% 17.4% 12%

■ Police ■ Hospital ■ Support group ■ Legal ■ None



Do you think informal support systems such as family, friends, religious centres, community groups, etc., are helpful to GBV victims/survivors?

Yes ■ No ■

18.5% 81.5%

ACCESS TO LEGAL JUSTICE



Where would you seek justice if you, or anyone you know, experience GBV?

70.4% 26.1% 3.5%

■ Formal justice: e.g., police, courts, etc.
■ Informal justice: e.g., traditional or religious heads, community groups, etc.
■ I will not seek justice



If you witness GBV, would you feel safe serving as a witness during the investigation and trial?

72.4% 17.5% 10.1%

■ Yes, I would
■ It depends on the robustness and effectiveness of the witness protection program
■ No, I would not



Are you aware of legal assistance and services provided by the State to GBV victim/survivors?

■ Yes ■ No

42.6% 57.4%

INFORMATION AND AWARENESS



Do you know of any GBV information and/or education programs or materials in the state?

■ Yes ■ No

33.1% 66.9%



How useful is/was the content of the GBV awareness material in educating you on GBV?

■ Mostly useful ■ Completely useful ■ A little bit useful ■ Not useful at all

39.2% 55.9% 4.4% 0.5%



Which GBV information and education materials are you aware of for persons with disabilities?

12.2% 6.3% 7.7% 4.1% 7.5% 4.2% 1.8% 79.3%

■ Audio ■ Visual ■ Sign ■ Picture ■ Simplified ■ Subtitle ■ Braille ■ None

Adamawa State GBV Context Trend (2024-2025)

Overall Grade

58.8%

Have you or anyone you know experienced any form of gender-based violence in the last five years?



60.2%

of Adamawa State population have either experienced GBV or knows someone who have experienced GBV

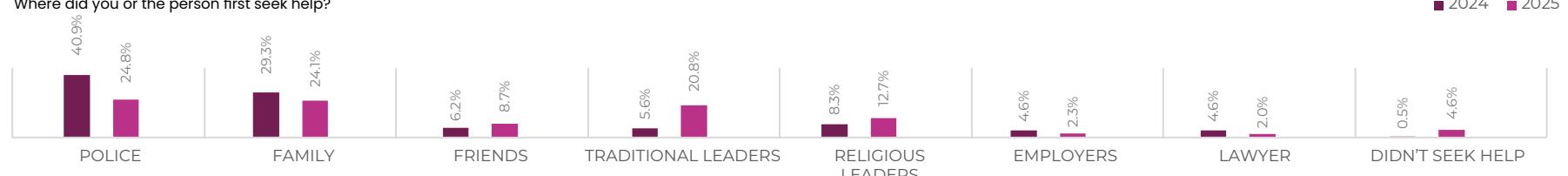
What form of GBV did you or the person experience?



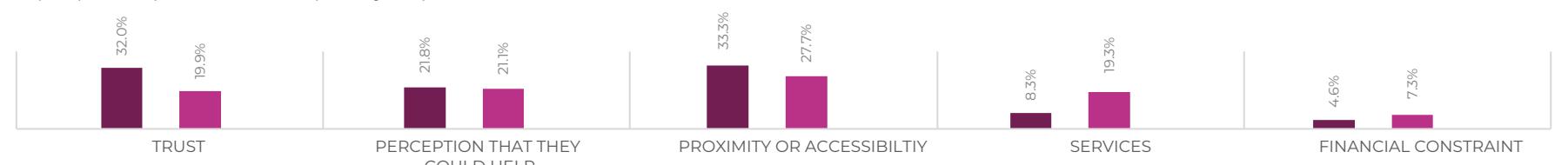
Where did you or the person experience the GBV?



Where did you or the person first seek help?



Why did you or the person choose where you sought help?



State Data Trend (2023-2025)

Overall Grade 58.8%





KEY INSIGHTS

Laws and Policies

Current State in 2025

Adamawa State domesticated the Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Act in 2021, with the law mirroring most provisions of the federal VAPP Act of 2015. The state introduced additional clauses to strengthen penalties and the Ministry of Justice confirmed that the Penal Code law was amended again concerning the rape of a child. The state has shown meaningful progress in establishing and promoting laws that criminalize GBV, reflected in the relatively high awareness level of 65.2% among respondents. The majority (90.2%) perceive these laws as effective and sufficient, indicating general trust in the formal legal system.

However, only 42.8% of respondents are aware of any convictions for GBV offenses highlighting a key enforcement gap. Stakeholders could not provide specific conviction numbers, indicating that the VAPP law, though enacted four years ago, remains underutilized in actual prosecutions.

Customary and religious systems also play a major role, with 85.1% of respondents aware of such frameworks and 59.9% believing they help prevent or respond to GBV. While these norms can complement state laws, they sometimes conflict with them, especially where cultural practices, such as inheritance restrictions against women, persist despite formal legal reforms like the 2012 Inheritance Law. The Ministry of Justice identified specific local governments in the southern zone (Guyuk, Numan, Shelleng) where "cultural practices prevent women and children from inheriting." FIDA documented additional harmful practices including "early marriage, forced marriage, keeping children out of school, and making children hawk or beg on the street, and giving tribal marks." The NGO representative noted that "religion has influenced or affected the view that one gender is superior to another" while the court official observed that "people tend to hide GBV cases because they believe that it is taboo to reveal them, or the lady will be unmarried if the case is exposed."

Changes Over Time (2023–2025)

Public awareness of GBV laws remained relatively stable but stagnant between 2023 and 2025, hovering around 65-68%. While perception of the effectiveness of customary and religious mechanisms in addressing GBV increased significantly from 33.3% in 2023 to 60% by 2024-2025, awareness of actual GBV convictions plummeted dramatically from 84% in 2024 to just 42.8% in 2025. This sharp decline suggests weakening enforcement and reduced visibility of prosecutions,

potentially undermining public confidence in the justice system's ability to hold perpetrators accountable.

Stakeholders revealed a critical implementation gap, noting that despite the existence of comprehensive laws like the 2021 VAPP Law and Child Protection Law, many citizens remain unaware of these frameworks, and prosecuting agencies continue to rely on outdated legislation such as the Penal Code rather than newer, more detailed statutes. This institutional inertia and lack of capacity among legal practitioners to effectively charge offenders under new laws directly correlates with the quantitative finding of declining conviction awareness. The evidence points to a systemic failure where robust legal frameworks exist on paper but fail to translate into consistent enforcement, visible justice outcomes, or meaningful deterrence in practice, highlighting an urgent need for both legal awareness campaigns and capacity building within the justice system.

Access to Legal Justice

Current State in 2025

Access to legal assistance in Adamawa State is limited, with only 42.6% of respondents aware of relevant services. The legal aid office is currently only available in three LGAs (Yola North, Yola South, and Girei), leaving 18 out of 21 LGAs without regular coverage. Plans for expansion to major towns like Mubi, Ganye, and Numan have been mentioned, but no expansion has occurred in years.

There is a promising shift toward reliance on formal justice systems, with 70.4% of respondents indicating they would report GBV cases to the police or courts. The state has established a specialized infrastructure to handle GBV cases, including a "family unit" at the State CID, family units in four Area Commands, Juvenile Welfare Centre offices in each division overseen by female officers, four designated high courts for GBV cases, and magistrates mandated to handle such cases. The police have improved reporting systems, including through social media and WhatsApp, and implemented community policing strategies to increase accessibility.

However, 26.1% still prefer informal systems, often driven by cultural or religious beliefs, including 29.3% who see "God as the ultimate dispenser of justice." These beliefs, coupled with reports that traditional and religious authorities sometimes treat GBV as "minor issues," continue to undermine formal prosecution and reinforce impunity. Multiple stakeholders confirmed that informal settlement practices obstruct justice.

About 72.4% of respondents are willing to serve as witnesses in GBV cases, showing strong

community support. The state covers witness expenses and pays transportation allowances. Nonetheless, NGOs still face challenges, such as police requiring payments from survivors, which can lead to cases being dropped.

Changes Over Time (2023–2025)

Over the three years, formal justice channels remained the preferred option for Adamawa residents in cases of gender-based violence (GBV), with over 70% expressing this preference: 79.2% in 2023, 75% in 2024, and 70.4% in 2025. This sustained confidence in formal systems is echoed in the growing percentage of people who feel safe serving as witnesses in GBV cases, rising from 67.5% in 2023 and 65% in 2024 to 72.4% in 2025, the highest level recorded during the period. The consistently low share of those who feel outright unsafe is encouraging, but further strengthening of witness protection could help turn conditional willingness into full participation.

Awareness of state-provided legal assistance for GBV victims declined sharply, from 60% in 2024 to just 42.6% in 2025. This drop is concerning, especially as the proportion of those unaware of such services rose to 57.4%. Reversing this trend should be a priority, as awareness is a critical first step toward accessing legal protections and support.

Support Services

Current State in 2025

Adamawa state operates five Hope Centres/SARCs across its 21 local governments. The Ministry of Women Affairs' Gender Officer detailed their locations: "We have one Hope Centre here at the Women's Development Centre, Hope Centre Yola at the Specialist Hospital, Hope Centre Numan at the General Hospital in Numan, Hope Centre Mubi at the General Hospital in Mubi, and one in Gulak, in Madagali Local Government." However, awareness and accessibility remain critically low with only 10.2% of respondents aware of any functional SARC or shelter, while 89.8% are unaware. Yet, among those who are aware, a strong 89.2% (27.5% strongly agree, 61.7% agree) believe these facilities are functional, adequately equipped, and sustainable, indicating that existing centres perform well but are poorly publicized and unevenly distributed.

A critical structural gap undermines service coordination: Adamawa State currently has no formalized GBV Reporting and Referral Pathway. The NGO representative stated explicitly, "Currently, there is not even a referral pathway in Adamawa State, and this presents a significant challenge for us working on GBV." The SARC Administrator confirmed informal arrangements exists, but assessment showed referral awareness is skewed toward security services, with 80.3% familiar with police pathways, but far fewer are aware of health (31.6%), legal (17.4%), or psychosocial support (17.1%) options.

Where services exist, they provide relatively holistic support. The Ministry of Women Affairs emphasized, "All the services including medical, legal, psychosocial, and economic are provided for survivors. Our aim is that if a survivor comes into this place, they can access all the services free of charge." Noteworthily, 81.5% of respondents trust formal support systems over informal ones, showing readiness to use official services if access improves. Informal support structures remain weak. The Ministry of Health explained this stems from cultural attitudes: "Nobody supports gender-

based violence among families, religion, or any other group." .

Changes Over Time (2023–2025)

Adamawa State made uneven progress in GBV support services between 2023 and 2025. Awareness of SARC/shelters rose from 25.8% in 2023 to 41% in 2024, but dropped sharply to 10.2% in 2025, showing a serious decline in outreach. Awareness of referral pathways was heavily skewed toward police/security, which increased from 49.2% in 2023 to 80.3% in 2025, while healthcare pathway awareness fluctuated (32.5% in 2023, 43.4% in 2024, 31.6% in 2025) and legal pathway awareness remained low and declining (22.5% in 2023 to 17.4% in 2025). Public trust shifted dramatically from informal to formal support systems. Belief that informal systems were more helpful dropped from 82.5% in 2023 to 70% in 2024, then plummeted to just 18.5% in 2025, showing people now prefer formal services.

Information and Awareness

Current State in 2025

Adamawa State uses various channels to disseminate information, including television stations, jingles, and partnerships with NGOs, to raise awareness about GBV. The Ministries of Women Affairs and Education produce and distribute diverse materials such as fliers, banners, and billboards across all 21 LGAs, including in local languages like Fulani and Hausa. A toll-free hotline is also available, and sensitization sessions are conducted in localities, including during crisis situations like the recent flood in Yola South where psychosocial support was also provided. However, only 33.1% of respondents are aware of such initiatives. Despite this low reach, the vast majority of those exposed (95.1%) found the information useful, showing that when GBV messages reach people, they are clear, relevant, and impactful.

NGOs (58.2%) and religious centers (44.6%) are the leading sources of information, while formal institutions such as schools, workplaces, and government channels contribute minimally. The NGO representative detailed grassroots engagement: "In May, we launched the Rape Survivor Support Project, where 22 survivors are undergoing their healing process. Currently, we are conducting a sensitization program in Bachure, where we discuss the GBV reporting system. Coverage extends across Yola North, Yola South, Fufure, and Girei. A major annual campaign is the 16 Days of Activism, and the Ministry of Women Affairs explained: "From November to December, every day there must be awareness in almost every LGA in Adamawa State during the 16 days of activism."

Encouragingly, there is overwhelming public support (93.6%) for integrating GBV and child sexual abuse education into school curricula, signaling strong community demand for early and continuous awareness through the education system. The Ministry of Education has integrated GBV and sexual abuse education into the national curriculum, developed by the Federal Ministry of Education and NERDC. However, implementation is limited, with GBV topics taught as extracurricular activities, mainly in secondary schools.

The Ministry of Women Affairs supplements this effort by partnering with schools to establish GBV clubs and training teachers. Challenges include lack of privacy, insufficient stakeholder support, and absence of designated GBV officers in schools to handle cases. However, information dissemination remains neither inclusive nor fully accessible. Communication formats for persons with disabilities

are grossly inadequate, as only 12.2% use audio formats, 7.7% include sign interpretation, and a mere 1.8% employ braille..

Changes Over Time (2023–2025)

Between 2023 and 2025, public awareness of GBV information and materials declined sharply. Awareness dropped from 64.2% in 2023 to 62% in 2024, then plummeted to just 33.1% in 2025, suggesting a major erosion in the reach and effectiveness of information campaigns. However, perceived usefulness of materials fluctuated – 71% found them useful in 2023, dropping to 64% in 2024, then rising sharply to 95.1% in 2025, thus raising questions about whether messages were properly tailored to audience needs.

Awareness of disability-inclusive GBV materials showed consistent collapse across all formats by 2025, despite temporary improvements in 2024. Audio/spoken messages awareness rose from 49.2% in 2023 to 57.8% in 2024, then crashed to 12.2% in 2025. Similar dramatic declines occurred across all formats: visual content (22.5% → 26.5% → 6.3%), sign interpretation (16.7% → 25.5% → 7.7%), braille (18.3% → 13.25% → 1.8%), picture-based messages (20.4% → 43% → 4.1%), screen subtitles (13.3% → 9.8% → 4.2%), and simplified messages (15% → 29.9% → 7.5%). This regression suggests disability-inclusive communication lost priority or was not sustained in 2025, highlighting the urgent need for consistent investment in accessible GBV information for persons with disabilities. .

Budget and Spending

Budget Analysis in 2024

Adamawa State allocated ₦4.5 billion to GBV programs in 2024, representing 1.60% of its total state budget. This is among the highest budget allocations for GBV interventions across Nigerian states. However, the state spent only ₦218 million of the allocated amount, achieving a mere 4.9% implementation rate. The actual GBV expenditure constituted just 0.10% of the state's total spending, far below the 1.60% budget allocation. On a per capita basis, Adamawa State spent approximately ₦81.52 per female inhabitant on GBV-related programs.

Changes Over Time (2022–2024)

Adamawa State's budget performance decreased from 74.0% in 2023 to 29.0% in 2024. Gender-based violence-related programs received allocations of ₦495.08 million, ₦260.26 million, and ₦4.47 billion in 2022, 2023, and 2024 respectively. Actual expenditure, however, amounted to only ₦143.67 million, ₦191.85 million, and ₦217.99 million – that is, 29.0%, 73.7%, and 4.9%, respectively across the same period.

Although the state includes a limited number of GBV-specific line items in its budget, implementation continues to lag. One recurring line item, "Procurement of Banners and Billboards for the 16 Days of Activism for GBV Commemoration," appeared in both 2023 and 2024 with allocations of ₦10 million and ₦10.4 million, which achieved budget performance rates of 18.0% and 50.8% respectively. Per capita spending was ₦81.52 in 2024, ₦73.85 in 2023, and ₦56.93 in 2022, showing gradual increases over the three-year period. This steady upward trend suggests incremental improvement but still reflects relatively modest growth in investment levels year-on-year.

Human Angle Stories

Hauwa, a widow from Michika, first learned about the Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Law through a radio program. Having endured years of abuse in her marriage, she was encouraged to seek help. However, her case was dismissed as a "family matter." As Hauwa reflected, "The law is incomplete. It looks good on paper, but when you go to use it, you find it is not for the poor woman." Her experience illustrates the disconnect between legal frameworks and survivors' ability to access protection, despite legislative progress.

KEY GAPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Index	Key Gaps	Recommendations
Laws and Policies	65.2% of respondents are aware of GBV laws, but confidence in enforcement is low.	Mandate continuous training for police, prosecutors, and judges on the VAPP Law, survivor-centred justice, and forensic handling to strengthen enforcement.
	Stakeholders describe laws as "incomplete" or not effectively implemented.	Review and amend state GBV-related laws to close gaps, harmonize them with the VAPP Act, and ensure clear enforcement guidelines.
	Cultural/religious settlements continue to undermine deterrence.	Institutionalize legal oversight of alternative dispute resolution by requiring mandatory referrals of GBV cases (especially sexual violence) to the formal justice system.
Access to Legal Justice	70.4% of respondents prefer to seek formal justice, while 26.1% still prefer informal mechanisms.	Create formal referral protocols requiring collaboration between informal leaders and formal justice actors to ensure all GBV cases reach courts.
	Only 2 convictions recorded out of 113 GBV cases in 2024 (NSCDC data).	Establish and operationalize specialized GBV prosecution units within existing courts to fast-track cases and improve conviction rates within one year.
	Lack of affordable or available legal representation that leads to case withdrawals, delays, or non-prosecution.	Scale up legal aid and pro-bono services by expanding Legal Aid Council presence across all 21 LGAs and incentivizing private lawyers to take GBV cases.
	Survivors report that cases "just disappeared" without resolution.	Establish a digital GBV case-tracking system to monitor progress from report to prosecution and ensure accountability for missing or delayed cases.
Support Services	Only 10.2% of respondents are aware of SARCs or shelters in the state.	Expand awareness of SARCs and shelters through state-backed campaigns, ensuring survivors know where to find help.
	Facilities exist but are often under-resourced ("no counsellors, no medicines").	Increase funding and staffing of SARCs/shelters, ensuring availability of trained counsellors, medicines, and psychosocial support.
	Services concentrated in Yola North, Yola South, and Girei, leaving rural LGAs underserved.	Decentralize GBV services by establishing satellite support units in rural LGAs and integrating more disability-inclusive survivor services.
Information and Awareness	33.1% of respondents are aware of GBV sensitization programs or materials; 66.9% are not.	Expand GBV awareness campaigns through radio, schools, and grassroots dialogues to reach underserved populations.
	93.6% support teaching GBV/CSA prevention in schools.	Scale up school-based GBV education as extracurricular content across all LGAs, with trained teachers delivering age-appropriate modules.
	Over 80% report no access to disability-friendly awareness materials.	Produce and distribute disability-inclusive IEC materials in braille, audio, sign language, and local languages to improve accessibility.
Budget and Spending	Budget performance collapsed from 73.7% to 4.9%, indicating the state allocated funds far beyond its capacity to implement projects. This unrealistic budgeting leaves GBV programs underfunded in practice.	Require the Ministry of Women Affairs to submit quarterly expenditure reports, and use these to improve planning, track fund utilization, and address barriers preventing funds from reaching GBV programs and survivors.

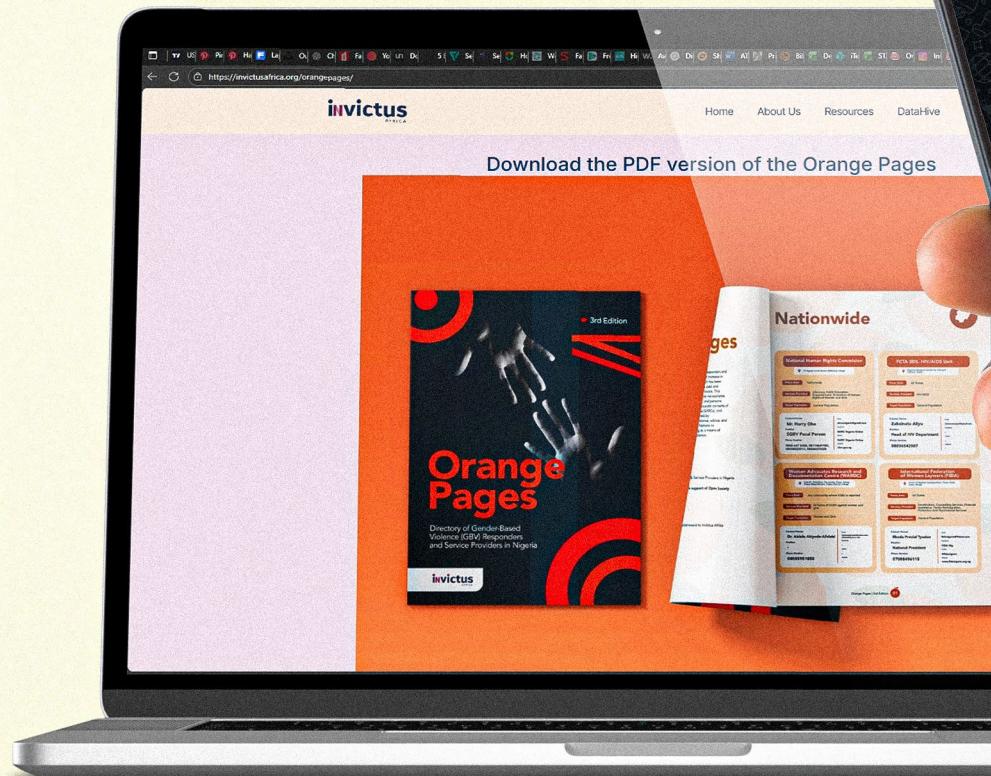


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