



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



With the support of
Ford Foundation



WomaniTy
INDEX
2025 Edition

invictus
AFRICA



Plateau State

Home of Peace and Tourism

Shere Hills

Plateau State

Population: 5,213,178

51.1% Female 48.9% Male

Overall Grade

57.1%

Respondents Demography (n = 1,026)

GENDER

Female Male



AREA

Rural Urban



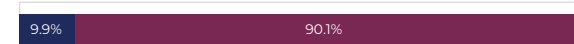
AGE

<20 20-29 30-39 40-49 50-59 60-69

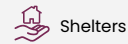


DISABILITY STATUS

Yes No



1



1

Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development

BUDGET ALLOCATION

N1.08bn

(This accounts for 0.3% of the total state budget)

BUDGET PERFORMANCE

N532.55m

(This accounts for 49.5% of total allocation to the ministry)



Capital Personnel Overhead



Per Capita Spending

N200.09

Indexes	Indicators				Total Grades
Laws and Policies	LP ₁	LP ₂	LP ₃	—	58.3%
Access to Legal Justice	ALJ ₁	ALJ ₂	ALJ ₃	ALJ ₄	75.0%
Support Services	SS ₁	SS ₂	SS ₃	SS ₄	56.3%
Information and Awareness	IA ₁	IA ₂	IA ₃	IA ₄	62.5%
Budget and Spending	BS ₁	BS ₂	BS ₃	—	33.3%

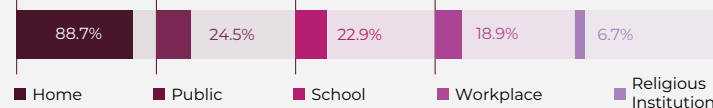
GBV Context 2025

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

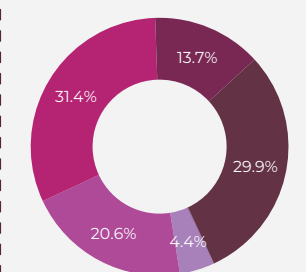
No Yes



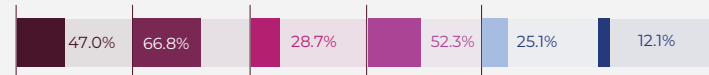
Where did you or the person experience the GBV?



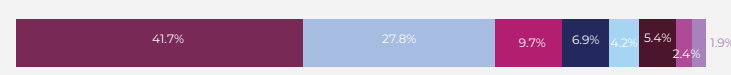
Why did you or the person choose where you sought help?



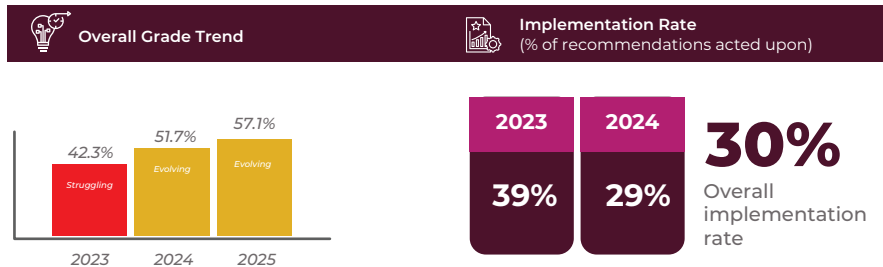
What form of GBV did you or the person experience?



Where did you or the person first seek help?



Domestic	Physical	Sexual	Mental	Economic	Cultural practices	Family/relatives	Police/law enforcement authority	Friends/neighbors	Traditional/community leader or group	Religious leader (Pastor, Ulama, Imam, Deity)	Employer/Work colleague/Labour group	I did not seek help	Lawyer	Trust	Services	Perception that they could help	Financial constraint	Proximity or accessibility
----------	----------	--------	--------	----------	--------------------	------------------	----------------------------------	-------------------	---------------------------------------	---	--------------------------------------	---------------------	--------	-------	----------	---------------------------------	----------------------	----------------------------



Index Grade Trend

Index	2023	2024	2025
Laws and Policies	LP 75.0%	-1 ▼ LP 50.0%	LP 58.3%
Access to Legal Justice	ALJ 61.3%	ALJ 68.8%	+1 ▲ ALJ 75.0%
Support Services	SS 25.0%	+1 ▲ SS 50.0%	SS 56.3%
Information and Awareness	IA 25.0%	+1 ▲ IA 56.3%	IA 62.5%
Budget and Spending	BS 25.0%	+1 ▲ BS 33.3%	BS 33.3%

What Has Changed

Positive Developments

- Trust in formal justice systems increased significantly, with 71.4% now preferring formal avenues compared to 61.4% in 2023.
- Witness safety perceptions improved markedly from 53.5% to 68.6%.
- Specialized structures established, including a dedicated gender court (2024) and gender desk officers in all police divisions.

Areas of Concern

- Knowledge of convictions fell sharply from 62% to 30.7%.
- Awareness of state-provided legal assistance declined from 49% to 40.8%. Legal aid, remains concentrated in Jos and surrounding areas, leaving rural communities underserved.
- Growing reliance on customary/religious systems (24.9% to 60.8%) may weaken formal legal structures.

Key Actions

Laws and Policies

- The Plateau State legislature passed a bill to establish a Law Reform Commission in July 2023 to update outdated laws and strengthen deterrence against GBV.
- Inaugurated a committee in October 2024 within the Ministry of Justice to spearhead law reform efforts and strengthen the state's legal framework.

Access to Legal Justice

- Established a dedicated gender court in 2024, presided over by Justice Mary Izam. Deployed gender desk officers in all police divisions across the state to facilitate survivor-friendly reporting.
- Increased the number of family courts to handle GBV cases, including five at the high court level and two at the magistrate level.
- Established the Office of the Public Defender in 2024 to, among other duties, provide legal representation to victims/survivors.

Support Services

- Provided economic assistance such as skill training to survivors through the Ministry of Women Affairs and Gender Commission.

Information and Awareness

- Launched regular radio programs in multiple local languages through the Ministry of Women Affairs and Gender Commission.
- The Gender Commission began budgeting for inclusive communication materials for persons with disabilities.

Change Spotlight

In November 2024, Plateau State established the Gender and Equal Opportunities Commission to institutionalize the fight against GBV. Headed by Bar. Olivia Dazyem, the Commission promotes gender equity, protects women's rights, and monitors GBV interventions across the state. It serves as a key coordinating body, working with government agencies, NGOs, and development partners to harmonize policy implementation and strengthen accountability. The state also established a designated GBV court and the Office of the Public Defender to provide free legal representation to survivors.

These innovations have made justice more accessible, particularly for survivors who previously faced financial barriers or family pressure. Stakeholders describe these developments as a major step forward in Plateau State's GBV response. Together, these institutions ensure that GBV prevention and response are embedded within the state's governance structures rather than left to temporary initiatives.

Plateau State GBV Assessment Survey

Overall Grade 57.1%

LAWS AND POLICIES



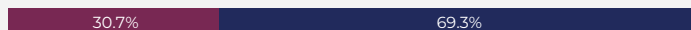
Are you aware of existing laws and/or policies that address gender-based violence (GBV) in the state? Yes ■ No ■



Do you think customary or religious laws and/or practices are sufficient in preventing and responding to GBV in the state? Yes ■ No ■



Do you know of anyone who has been convicted for GBV-related offenses? Yes ■ No ■



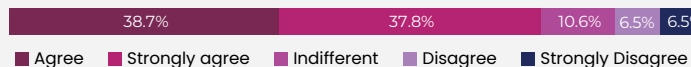
SUPPORT SERVICES



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 ■



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



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



Do you think informal support systems such as family, friends, religious centres, community groups, etc., are helpful to GBV victims/survivors? Yes ■ No ■



ACCESS TO LEGAL JUSTICE



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



■ 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?



■ 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



INFORMATION AND AWARENESS



Do you know of any GBV information and/or education programs or materials in the state? Yes ■ No ■



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



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

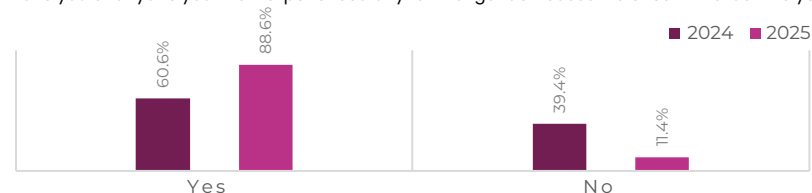


■ Audio ■ Visual ■ Sign ■ Picture ■ Simplified ■ Subtitle ■ Braille ■ None

Plateau State GBV Context Trend (2024-2025)

Overall Grade **57.1%**

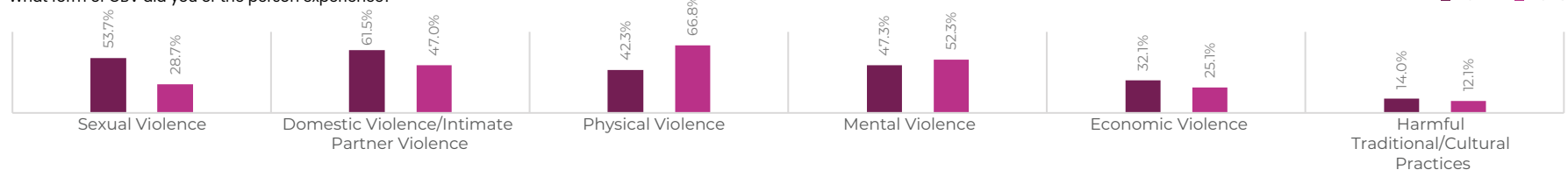
Have you or anyone you know experienced any form of gender-based violence in the last five years?



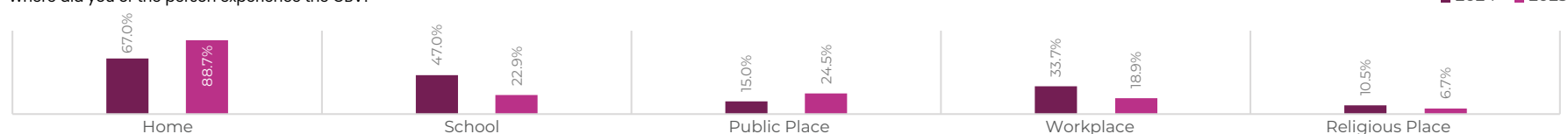
88.6%

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

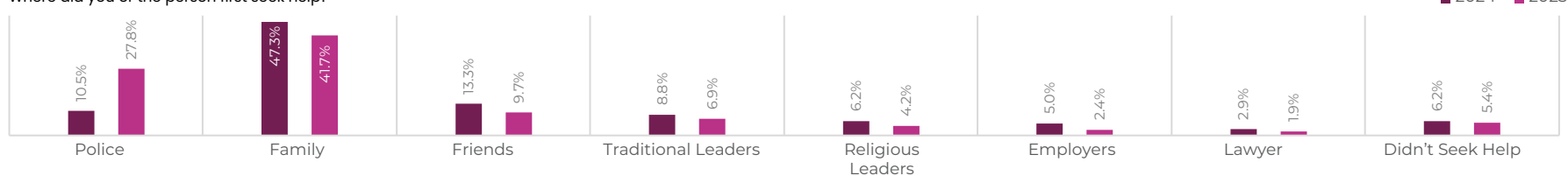
What form of GBV did you or the person experience?



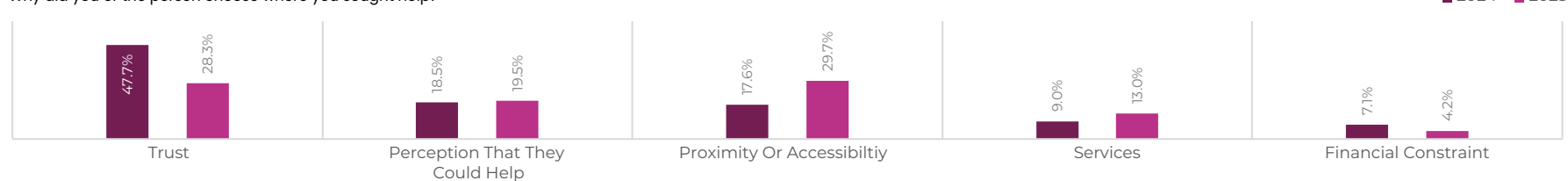
Where did you or the person experience the GBV?



Where did you or the person first seek help?



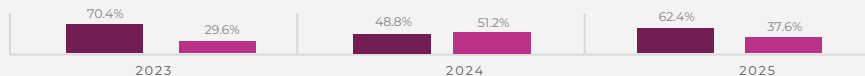
Why did you or the person choose where you sought help?



LAWS AND POLICIES

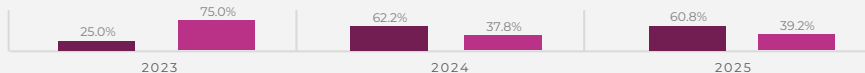
Are you aware of existing laws and/or policies that address gender-based violence (GBV) in the state?

■ Yes ■ No



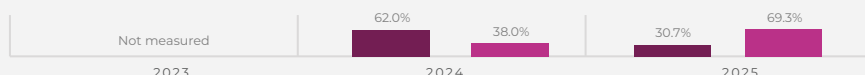
Do you think customary or religious laws and/or practices are sufficient in preventing and responding to GBV in the state?

■ Yes ■ No



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

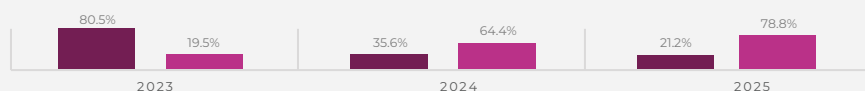
■ Yes ■ No



SUPPORT SERVICES

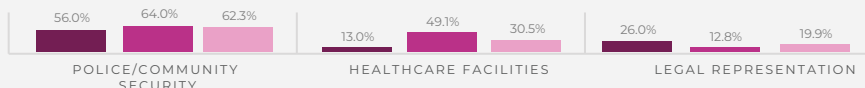
Do you know of, or have you visited, any active shelters and/or Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCs) for GBV victims/survivors in the state?

■ Yes ■ No



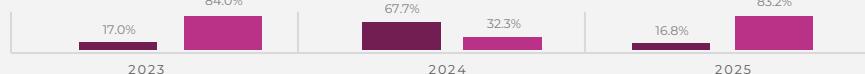
Which of these processes and procedures for reporting GBV-related incidents are you aware of? (Referral Pathways)

■ 2023 ■ 2024 ■ 2025



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

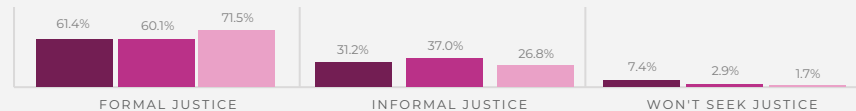
■ Yes ■ No



ACCESS TO LEGAL JUSTICE

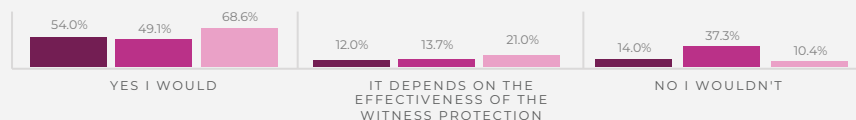
Where would you seek justice if you, or anyone you know, experience GBV?

■ 2023 ■ 2024 ■ 2025



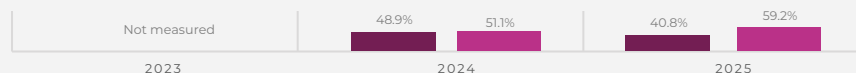
If you witness GBV, would you feel safe serving as a witness during the investigation and trial?

■ 2023 ■ 2024 ■ 2025



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

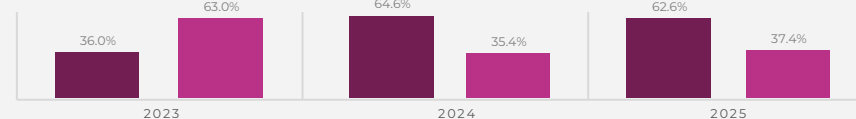
■ Yes ■ No



INFORMATION AND AWARENESS

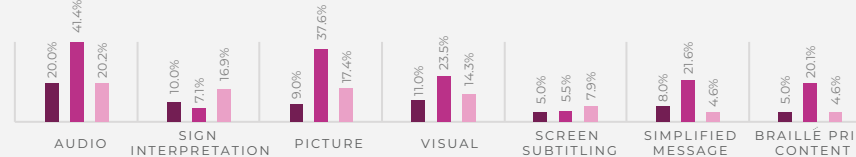
Do you know of any GBV information and/or education programs or materials in the state?

■ No ■ Yes



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

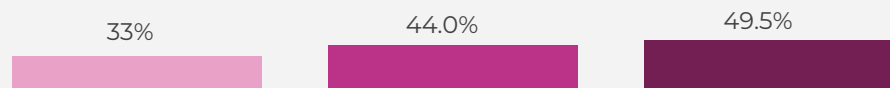
■ 2023 ■ 2024 ■ 2025



BUDGET AND SPENDING

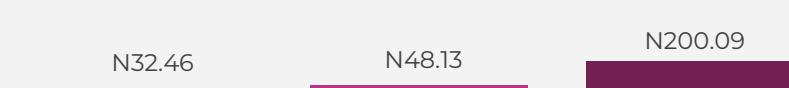
Average Budget Performance (2022-2024)

■ 2022 ■ 2023 ■ 2024



National per capita average (2022-2024)

■ 2022 ■ 2023 ■ 2024





KEY INSIGHTS

Laws and Policies

Current State in 2025

Plateau State's legal framework for addressing GBV includes the VAPP Law (2020), the Gender and Equal Opportunities Law (2018), and the Child Rights Law (2005). The state has made notable improvements to these laws, including criminalization of abandonment of family responsibilities, an offense that was previously not recognized.

Public awareness of these laws is moderate (62.4%), but confidence in their effectiveness remains divided. While a slight majority (56.1%) believe the laws are effective, a significant proportion (43.9%) remains unconvinced. Stakeholders attribute this skepticism partly to weak enforcement mechanisms and limited visibility of convictions. As noted by the Ministry of Justice, while the state has received more than 116 cases of GBV in the past year, conviction data remains poorly documented across agencies. This gap is reflected in the fact that 69.3% of respondents reported not knowing anyone who has been convicted for GBV-related offenses, suggesting limited visibility of enforcement outcomes at the community level.

Harmful traditional practices such as early marriage, wife inheritance, widowhood rites, and female disinheritance still exist in some communities. Stakeholders report that these practices are not widespread, and that progress is being made through targeted sensitization. At the same time, customary and religious systems remain influential in how GBV is addressed, with 60.8% of residents viewing them as effective. This strong reliance on non-formal systems can sometimes weaken the role of formal legal protections, especially when traditional norms clash with statutory laws.

Changes Over Time (2023–2025)

Between 2023 and 2025, public awareness of GBV-related laws declined from 70.4% to 62.4%. Similarly, knowledge of GBV-related convictions dropped from 62% in 2024 to 30.7% in 2025. This decline may reflect fragile trust in formal structures, reinforced by limited visibility of enforcement outcomes or fewer publicized convictions. Stakeholders confirmed that while convictions are occurring, the lack of centralized data management makes it difficult to track and communicate progress to the public. A civil society actor emphasized that “one of the major concerns we have in this sector is data. There’s a poor system of data management, data collection, and data analysis.” Such gaps could weaken public confidence in the justice system and discourage survivors from

seeking formal redress.

In contrast, the period saw growing confidence in customary and religious laws and practices as effective tools for preventing and responding to GBV, rising from 24.9% in 2023 to 60.8% in 2025. While this shift may reflect increased community engagement, it raises concerns about the weakening of formal legal structures if customary systems are viewed as substitutes rather than complements.

Access to Legal Justice

Current State in 2025

Although there is growing trust in customary and religious practices to address GBV, most residents (71.5%) say they would still seek justice through the formal system. Many also say they would feel safe serving as witnesses in GBV trials (68.6%), which is a positive sign. This shows a strong willingness to use official legal channels.

The state has made progress in establishing specialized structures. A dedicated gender court was established in 2024, and gender desk officers now operate in all police divisions: “from every division that you go to, we have a specialist that handles cases that has to do with family and the human rights responsibility of that person.” Additionally, five family courts at the high court level and two at the magistrate level handle child-related matters. Stakeholders noted that the reporting and prosecution process has also improved, due to better coordination between agencies and the Administration of Criminal Justice Law. Stakeholders also report on improved training and capacity building for justice sector actors. Despite this progress, witness intimidation and delays in court proceedings remain key barriers to effective prosecution.

Multiple legal aid services exist, including the Ministry of Justice, Legal Aid Council, Office of the Public Defender (established in 2024), National Human Rights Commission, FIDA, and NBA pro bono services. However, only 40.8% are aware of legal support services provided by the state. This lack of awareness may weaken the fragile trust in the formal system and limit access to justice. Stakeholders also reported that services are concentrated in urban areas: “Jos North and Jos South are the ones that are really benefiting, [while] those from the central down to the south part of the states are still underserved.”

Even with this willingness to use formal systems, many residents still turn to informal justice options. Over half (52.9%) believe these help GBV survivors get justice. This shows that informal systems remain influential, especially in areas where formal services are hard to reach. Stakeholders confirm this pattern but express concerns about informal systems perpetuating GBV, describing multiple

cases where church leaders and community members prioritized family reputation over survivor welfare, even in serious cases involving minors. The limited presence of specialized courts and legal aid in rural areas pushes people to rely on community-based solutions. Without better coordination and oversight, informal systems may continue to operate in ways that reduce accountability and protection for survivors.

Changes Over Time (2023–2025)

The period saw growing trust in institutional responses, with the proportion of respondents preferring formal avenues rising significantly from 61.4% (2023) to 71.4% (2025). Similarly, perceptions of safety among potential witnesses in GBV cases improved markedly from 53.5% in 2023 to 68.6% in 2025. These improvements align with stakeholder reports of institutional reforms.

Despite progress in justice-seeking and witness safety, public awareness of state-provided legal assistance for GBV victims declined between 2024 (49%) and 2025 (40.8%). This creates tension: people are willing to engage with formal justice, yet they lack the information needed to do so effectively. The Legal Aid Council acknowledged inadequate public awareness campaigns about available services, noting “we have not done much public awareness” due to funding constraints. This signals a potential gap in outreach or communication efforts and highlights the need for stronger visibility of legal support initiatives.

Support Services

Current State in 2025

The state operates one SARC, offering basic medical, counselling, and legal support. Located at Plateau Specialist Hospital in Jos North, this government-run facility is the only functional SARC in the state. In addition, one shelter in Bokokos LGA offers temporary accommodation for survivors. However, coverage remains limited. According to stakeholders, areas in the far southern zone, such as Langtang South, Kanam, and Wase, are still underserved.

Public awareness of these facilities and related services is very low. Only 21.2% of respondents reported knowing about or visiting the SARC, and 38% were unaware of broader support services (medical, legal, psychosocial, or economic) available to GBV survivors. This gap between available services and survivor needs weakens the overall response system and leaves many without essential care.

Where services are available, they are often comprehensive, covering medical, legal, psychosocial, and economic support. Both the Ministry of Women Affairs and the Gender Commission report offering a wide range of assistance, including shelter, counselling, mediation, and skills training. However, access to these services largely depends on successful case reporting, which remains a major barrier in rural areas.

Knowledge of referral pathways is uneven. While police channels are relatively well known (62.3%), options such as hospitals (30.5%), legal aid (19.9%), and support groups (15%) are less recognized. Stakeholders confirm that while referral pathways exist on paper, coordination remains weak. This low visibility can delay access to help and contribute to underreporting.

The limited reach of formal support services, especially in rural areas, has led many to rely on informal systems like family, friends, religious institutions, and community groups. More than half of the respondents said they believe informal support is more effective than formal systems. Although informal groups may provide emotional support or referrals, they often lack the capacity to meet survivors' full needs.

Changes Over Time (2023–2025)

Public awareness and engagement with shelters and SARCs declined significantly, from 80.5% (2023) to 21.2% (2025), indicating that outreach efforts may not have reached new or broader audiences, limiting survivors' access to the help they need. At the same time, awareness of formal referral pathways, especially through police, improved, but remains uneven across healthcare and legal channels.

Informal support systems like family, religious centres, and community groups continue to fill the gaps, reflecting ongoing dependence on community structures where formal systems are either unknown or underutilized. Perceptions of their usefulness remained consistently high, with more than half of respondents affirming their preference each year. These trends highlight the need for greater investment in both strengthening formal systems and expanding public education to ensure survivors can access comprehensive and timely GBV support.

Information and Awareness

Current State in 2025

Plateau State uses various media platforms to raise awareness about GBV, including regular radio programs and public sensitization campaigns. The Ministry of Women Affairs and the Gender Commission both run radio programs in multiple local languages to share information on GBV and related laws. The Ministry of Health also maintains a media presence through scheduled awareness broadcasts.

Despite the growth in sensitization activities across the state, including engagement in all 17 LGAs, religious centres, and during events like the 16 Days of Activism, awareness levels remain low. Only 37.4% of residents report having seen or heard any GBV-related information. The recently established Gender Commission has worked closely with religious leaders and youth groups in every LGA to deliver focused sessions, but stakeholders acknowledge that many people in rural and multi-ethnic communities are still not reached. Language barriers and limited access to media continue to hinder efforts.

Most residents (97.6%) believe GBV should be taught in schools. However, because it is not yet part of the formal curriculum, teaching depends on the initiative of individual schoolteachers. While the Ministry of Education includes related topics in subjects like Social Studies and Civic Education, it acknowledges that coverage is insufficient. Some NGOs are filling this gap through clubs and advocacy programs, though their reach is minimal.

People with disabilities also face challenges in getting information. Very few residents know about

materials like braille (4.6%), sign interpretation (16.9%), or simplified messaging (4.6%). Stakeholders confirm that braille materials and regular sign language interpretation are still largely unavailable. This shows the need for more inclusive communication so that no group is left out of awareness and prevention efforts. The Gender Commission recognizes this gap and has begun budgeting for more inclusive communication.

Changes Over Time (2023–2025)

Public awareness of GBV education programs has remained largely unchanged between 2023 and 2025, with only about 37% of residents reporting exposure to such programs. The Ministry of Women Affairs confirmed that no new materials have been developed recently, noting that jingles were produced two years ago. The Ministry of Justice highlighted that while sensitization efforts continue, the current methods need improvement. They suggested moving away from general community gatherings toward more targeted approaches.

Awareness of disability-friendly materials has been inconsistent. While sign language gained visibility in 2025, awareness of braille and simplified messages dropped compared to 2024. This points to a lack of sustained inclusion efforts and highlights the need for consistent and accessible materials that reach persons with disabilities across all formats.

Budget and Spending

2024 Budget Analysis

Plateau State's 2024 GBV budget data presents a mixed picture, notably lacking a specific GBV budget line despite allocating ₦1.08 billion (0.30% of total budget). The state achieved a 49.5% execution rate with ₦532.55 million in actual spending, resulting in a per capita expenditure of ₦200.09. While the near-50% implementation rate is neither exemplary nor catastrophic, it suggests moderate administrative capacity but insufficient momentum to fully deliver on initial commitments. The absence of a dedicated GBV budget line may contribute to implementation challenges, as funds dispersed across various ministries without clear ownership can lead to coordination difficulties and the middling performance observed.





Changes Over Time (2022–2024)

Plateau State included no gender-based violence (GBV) specific line items in its approved budgets for 2022, 2023, and 2024, contributing significantly to its low performance on this indicator. Budget performance within the Ministry of Women Affairs has remained below 50% throughout the period. In 2022, the ministry received an allocation of ₦245.40 million, with actual spending of only ₦81.86 million, representing a 33% performance rate. The allocation increased slightly to ₦280.72 million in 2023, resulting in an improved yet still modest performance rate of 44% (₦124.69 million). In 2024, the allocation rose substantially to ₦1.08 billion, but actual spending reached only ₦532.55 million, a performance rate of 49.5%. Per capita spending on GBV-related interventions remained very low, with Plateau State recording ₦200.09 in 2024, ₦48.13 in 2023, and ₦32.46 in 2022. The increase in 2024 marks a sharp rise in investment after two years of very low spending, although the pattern still reflects a very low and inconsistent commitment to GBV-related funding across the period.

Human Angle Stories

Blessing, a mother of four, endured constant physical and emotional abuse from her husband with no financial support in raising his children and taking care of their living and feeding expenses. At first, she reported it to the church, then her parents, but nothing changed. Due to lack of awareness of the right measures to take in such cases, she did not report to the police or seek legal action.

KEY GAPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Index	Key Gaps	Recommendations
 Laws and Policies	The Sokoto State VAPP Law retains most federal provisions but excludes marital rape and does not clearly define the age of a minor. Public awareness of formal GBV laws dropped from 84.9% to 75% in 2024 and 58.9% in 2025.	Review and update the VAPP law to include clearer definitions and omitted provisions like marital rape, in line with national standards, and intensify targeted public sensitization to improve legal awareness.
	Despite progress through education and training, traditional beliefs still hinder reporting. Families often avoid reporting rape due to stigma concerns and fear that victims will be unmarriedable.	Intensify community engagement programs with traditional and religious leaders to address stigma and cultural barriers to reporting. Document and disseminate success stories where formal justice led to positive outcomes.
 Access to Legal Justice	Legal aid services are available through multiple channels but remain concentrated in urban areas, with remote communities underserved due to insecurity and limited resources. Public awareness of legal aid services declined from 76% in 2024 to 59.5% in 2025.	Expand Legal Aid Council offices to establish at least three additional satellite offices in underserved zones with dedicated staff and resources. Publish contact numbers and service locations across radio and posters, in all 23 LGAs.
	The state has no specialized GBV courts, and no judges have been officially designated to handle GBV cases.	Appoint 2 – 3 designated judges across the state within the next 12 months to prioritize GBV cases and ensure balanced distribution of caseloads.
 Support Services	Sokoto has only one functional SARC (Nana Khadija Centre) serving the entire state, while the state shelter remains non-functional. Survivors from remote LGAs face access barriers such as transportation costs.	Establish at least two additional SARCs in underserved zones within the next 12 months, Rehabilitate and operationalize the state-owned shelter with trained staff and operational budgets for survivor intake and support.
	Public confidence in informal support systems dropped from 83.3% in 2023 to 73% in 2024, then 61.5% in 2025, possibly reflecting growing recognition of their limitations. However, 61.5% of residents still rely primarily on informal networks due to gaps in formal services.	Expand and intensify training of religious and traditional leaders to recognize the limits of informal mediation and encourage timely referrals to formal mechanisms. Use radio and community forums to promote awareness of available formal services.
 Information and Awareness	Public exposure to GBV information programs increased from 75.4% to 83%, then declined 60.1%.	Pending the development of formal GBV curriculum, create and distribute state-level supplementary teaching guides and train teachers on integrating GBV topics into existing subjects.
	This could be partially attributed to the lack of comprehensive government-led awareness campaigns and absence of monitoring from the state leadership.	Establish an annual calendar of GBV awareness activities led by the Governor's office and Ministry of Women Affairs, with clear targets for LGA coverage, audience reach, and message penetration.
 Budget and Spending	Sokoto State consistently fails to implement budgeted GBV programs, with a persistent 74% non-utilization rate over three years. Critical initiatives like the internet-based case management platform (allocated ₦150 million cumulatively across 2022-2024) and shelter construction (₦100 million in 2024) recorded zero implementation despite repeated budget allocations.	Establish a quarterly GBV budget tracking and accountability mechanism involving the Ministry of Women Affairs, Budget Office, and civil society organizations to identify implementation bottlenecks early and enforce expenditure of allocated funds. Prioritize completion of the shelter infrastructure and case management platform as immediate proof-of-concept projects to demonstrate commitment to GBV response.



invictus
AFRICA

Let's interact
with the directory

08033197588



www.invictusafrica.org

