



# SURVIVOR'S WATCH

**MAY 2023**

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# ABOUT WACOL

WACOL is an independent, non-political, non-governmental and non-profit organization and registered in 2000 as a company limited by guarantee, i.e. as a charitable organization (RC: 388132) with the Corporate Affairs of Commission (CAC), Nigeria. WACOL's vision is democratic society free from violence and abuse, where human rights of all, in particular women and young people, are recognized in law and practice.

Its mission is to assist in the education, social, economic and political development of women and young people through a wide range of services: training, research, advocacy, shelter, free legal and financial aid, intra-familial/ community conflict resolution, and information and library services.

WACOL works throughout Nigeria and beyond. WACOL has established itself as a credible and committed organization whose work is well recognized beyond the shores of Nigeria. It has an observer status with the African Union, African Commission on Human Rights (since 2001) and it also has an NGO Special Consultative status with the United Nations (approved in 2010 by ECOSOC). WACOL is a formidable organization that can boast of institutional capacity for sustainable work in the field of advancing human rights, gender equality, democracy and good governance.

WACOL in general works in four thematic areas, which are gender/human rights, peace advocacy/conflict resolution, democracy/good governance and reproductive health rights. It has also done some work in the area of STEM and climate change.



# Editor's Statement

The survivors' watch is a platform created by WACOL to promote a safe space for victims and survivors of Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) to share their stories without any bias, conflict, intimidation, fear or threat. The survivors' watch seeks to capture the delicate and unique stories of survivors and victims, while empowering them with the strength of anonymity to own their truth and vocalise their lived experiences.

We understand the importance of supporting survivors and victims to tell their story at their

own time, giving them the opportunity to choose what aspect of their

story they wish to share. The survivors watch provides the

community and safe space for survivors and victims to not only express themselves but also trust that they will be respected while inspiring others to own their story and speak their truth.

This newsletter provides useful information about the issues survivors and victims of abuse experience in the society including emerging areas and trends. The survivors' watch further spotlights anti-SGBV tips and information. Discourse in the survivors' watch negates harmful bias/stereotypes, and promotes healthy practices to enable a safe environment for women and girls to flourish.



**Prof Joy Ngozi Ezeilo (SAN, OON)**  
**Executive Director of WACOL**

OBINNA BANKS



# A Collective Commitment to Preserve Justice

By Ugochukwu Ogoke

It is all too easy to point fingers at societal problems without looking inward at our own role. We see injustice in the world and quickly blame others for failing to uphold their duties and responsibilities. However, true justice requires reflection on how each individual contributes, through both action and inaction, to the issues facing our community.

When harms are done, be it to a spouse or child through neglect or violence, the instinct is to find excuses or lay blame elsewhere by claiming we were "pushed" into wrongdoing. But we must acknowledge that we alone control our own behaviors and choices. Maintaining a just society demands taking responsibility not just for our deliberate wrongs, but also our passive attitudes that allow injustice to persist. The key to building an ideal community based on fairness and equality lies in

accepting that change starts from within. Each person needs to understand that we all play a part, through both adherence to and lapses in our social contracts with one another. Real justice emerges from individuals committing to self-improvement and recognizing how our own shortcomings detract from justice, even in small ways. Only by looking inward and committing to better fulfill our duties to one another can we make progress on a collective scale. A truly just world will be achieved through millions of individual acts of responsibility and compassion, not blaming others from the sidelines. The future of justice is in each person deciding that the work begins from their own conduct outward. With a shared commitment to constant self-reflection and growth, we can preserve justice for all.

# SUCCESS STORIES

\*NAMES HAVE BEEN CHANGED TO PROTECT SURVIVORS

## FORCED MISCARRIAGE AND THREAT TO LIFE

**U**pon being heavily pregnant, her husband beat her mercilessly and tidied her on her tummy. Mrs. Chika had a miscarriage in her third trimester. Before now, there has been incidences

hospital by neighbours. Her husband refused to come see her at the hospital or even foot the hospital bills.

Frustrated, Mrs. Chika came into WACOL bleeding and complaining that her husband beat her up after which she had a miscarriage and has been bleeding even a week after the beating. She also complained that the hospital needed to do an evacuation immediately to save her life and stop the bleeding but she had no money to even pay for the services already rendered. Mr. Ugo was invited to WACOL but he refused to honour the invitation. WACOL therefore intervened by writing the police. Again, he evaded arrest several times while his wife's life was in serious danger.

WACOL was faced with a dilemma of having to choose between waiting for Mr. Ugo to be arrested so that he can pay the bills and intervening to save Mrs. Chika's life which was seriously in danger if the evacuation was not carried out. At this point, WACOL chose to save her life by offsetting part of the accumulated bills and an evacuation was immediately carried out. Mr. Ugo was eventually arrested after the evacuation with the help of neighbours who helped lay seige. WACOL also helped Chika by paying the medical bills. Chika was also rendered psychological help at WACOL office

of domestic violence where her husband Mr. Ugo beats her to stupor. Mr. Ugo left her to bleed after this last incidence without rendering any form of help. Mrs. Chika was rushed to the



## **JUSTICE FOR SOPHIA FROM EXTORTION IN THE HANDS OF HER LAWYER**

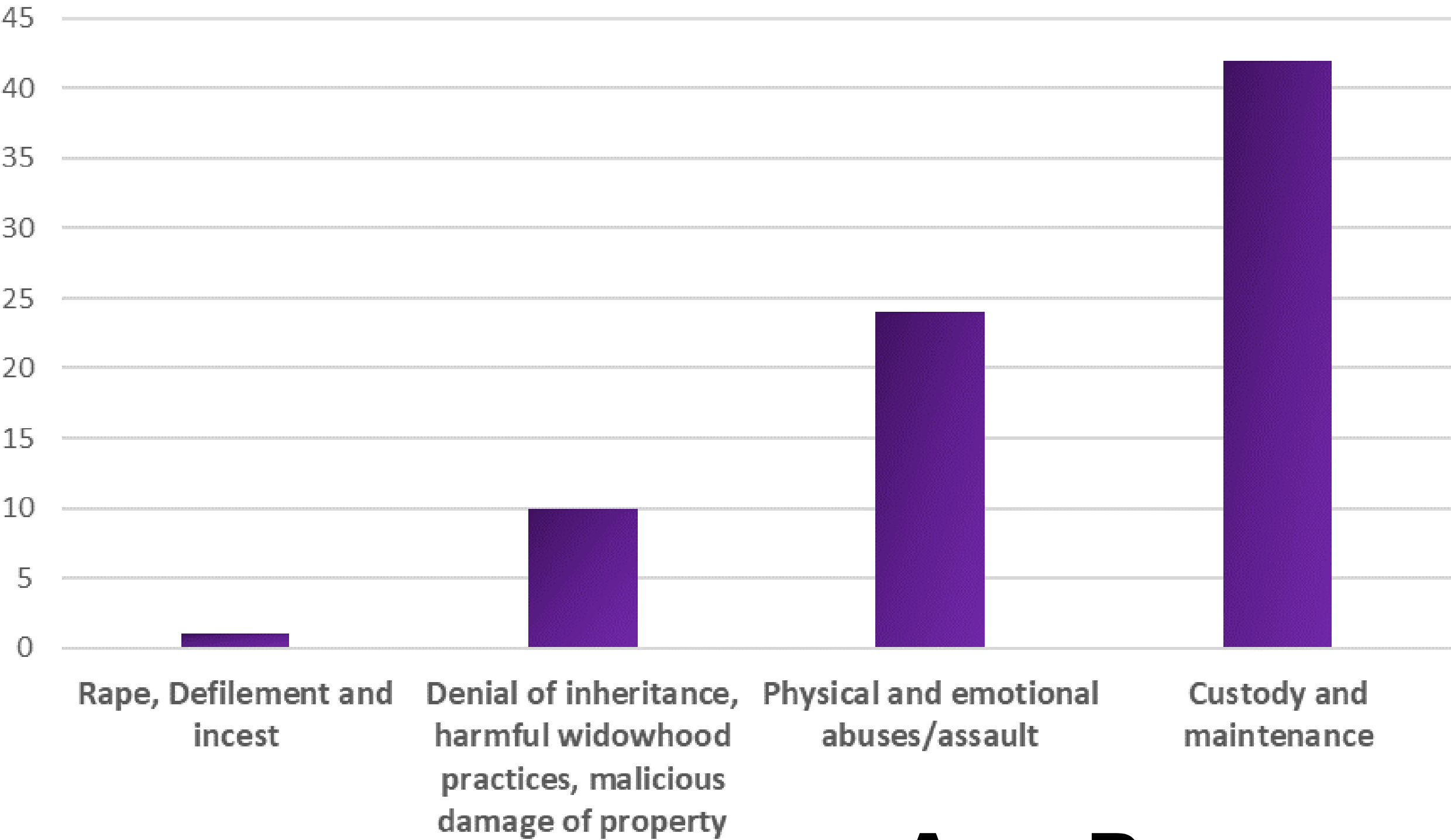
Sophia is a widow who lost her husband to the cold hands of death. Her husband left her with three children who were still tender and a lot of properties. Having no trust on her brothers and sisters, she turned to a lawyer introduced to her by her husband's trusted friend. The lawyer took some amount of money from her to help sell some parcels of land for her to cater for her young children and also with the letters of Administration of estate of her husband. Out of trust for the lawyer who she thought was helping her, she paid in the proceeds from sale of one of the lands to his account. She found out later on that the lawyer only extorted her by charging outrageous fee and refused to send her the balance of the money nor complete any of the services paid for for more than a year. She came to

WACOL frustrated and helpless.

WACOL invited the lawyer for several meetings which he honoured. He however defended his actions and stated that he was only helping her. He said he had bought some building materials and paid some contractors to roof the widow's house for over some months which was never done. When asked to return the balance, he refused because he had used the fund for some personal needs without prior information to the widow. He was adamant and unwilling to give the widow her money. Here was a woman whose children were almost out of school and the last child was terribly sick with no money to cater for these needs while a man is owing her. Seeing the plight of the widow whose husband left enough to take care of his family after his demise, WACOL wrote to some persons and he proved to be above them. Then, WACOL wrote to the EFCC as a last resort and facilitated his arrest. He was arrested and is presently in their custody for interrogation and possible recovery of all the monies in his custody.

# CASE BREAKDOWN

for May 2023



## Gender Disaggregated data



Female complainants total: 70



Male complainants total: 7



Overall total: 77 cases.

## Age Range

Under 18: 2

18-24: 6

25-34: 25

35-44: 30

45-59: 8

60 and above: 1

Unknown: 7





## CONTRIBUTORS

**Prof. Joy Ngozi Ezeilo (SAN, OON)** is the founding director of Women's Aid Collective (WACOL), she is the Emeritus Dean Faculty of Law, University of Nigeria and Former United Nations Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons.

**Nkechi Igwe** is the Head of Programme and Administration at WACOL, a gender consultant and the pioneer Centre Manager Tamar Sexual Assault Referral Centre (Tamar SARC).

**Ibangah Esemé Goodness Esq.** is a Communicator, Women Human Rights Defender and Digital Enthusiast. She is the program manager of WACOL GirlsWill Initiative.

**Efemena Obialunamma Omeke** is a digital artist and writer passionate about creating stories that explore identities, cultures, and experiences. She is an intern at WACOL and GirlsWill.

**Ugochukwu Ogoke** is a graphics designer, web developer and Program associate at WACOL.

**Martha Akhere Aikhomun Esq** is a lawyer and an Associate, Chartered Mediators and Conciliators (AICMC). She's a Legal Officer (NYSC) at the Legal Unit of WACOL who is passionate about human rights.



# ADVERTISEMENT & UPCOMING EVENTS

To Report any threat or human rights violation call our hotlines:  
(1) +2349060002128; (2) 09091333000; (3) 09092777000.



**WACOL Women House (Ulo Umunwanyi)**  
**No 9 Dr. Mathias Ilo Avenue, New Haven Extension.**



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