

# Worrisome rate of domestic violence against women in Adamawa

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By **Billy Graham Abel**, Yola

**On July 22, 2021, a 41-year-old man, Usman Hammawa, found himself in police custody for allegedly killing his wife over N1,000 in Adamawa State.**

Hammawa, a resident of Jada ward in Ganye Local Government Area of the state, was nabbed by police for allegedly brutalizing his wife over N1,000.

The police statement explaining the debacle read: “The Adamawa State Police Command, on July 22, 2021, apprehended a 41-year-old man, Usman Hammawa, for beating his 36-year-old wife to death.

“The suspect, Usman Hammawa, resident of Jada ward in Ganye LGA, engaged his late wife, Rabiyatu Usman, in a fight following a little argument that ensued between them when the deceased demanded the refund of her N1,000 from the accused.

“Angered by her action, the suspect applied force on his late wife by hitting her head on the wall, as a result of which she fell down unconscious and was rushed to the hospital, where she was confirmed dead.

"The suspect was apprehended by the police in Ganye LGA following a report received from a relative of the deceased and a Good Samaritan.

"Investigation reveals that the suspect is a civil servant with Ganye Local Government Council and had five children with the deceased after 16 years of marriage."

Again, on July 1, an 18-year-old woman, Aisha Mohammed, allegedly tortured her five-year-old stepdaughter by burning her private part for bedwetting at night.

The suspect, a resident of Wuro Patuji village, in Mubi South LGA, is said to have tortured and molested the girl under her care by using a hot electric iron on the private parts of minor because she wet her bed at night.

Aisha, the victim's stepmother, was arrested by the police following a report from Aisha Abdullahi (mother of the victim ) and Khadija Nasir, a female lawyer.

As if that was not enough, on July 4, the state police command also arrested another man, Robert Mede, for the alleged murder of his pregnant wife.

Police report explained that "Mede was said to have tasked a friend, Mustapha, to help in persuading his wife to return home after she abandoned her matrimonial home for her parent's residence after some misunderstanding in her home on July 4.

"The suspect, a resident of Bodere village, in Fufore LGA, claimed that his wife returned home about 8pm and grabbed his neck, accusing him of cheating.

"He claimed that, while fighting back, he used a stick to smack her on the waist. She was rushed to the hospital, but her condition deteriorated, leading to her death on July 9."

Speaking to Daily Sun, on the upsurge in domestic violence in the state, the police public relations officer, Suleiman Nguroje, said the command has noted the situation with concern and has deployed personnel and resources to curb the menace.

He said, based on the instructions of the state commissioner of police, Aliyu Adamu Alhaji, the command is working round the clock to address the rising trend of brutality.

Nguroje said: "The commissioner of police here in Adamawa State is not leaving any stone unturned. He has ordered all divisional police officers in the state to conduct training and seminar for personnel across the state to deal with every act of violence against women as acts that could land anyone in jail.

"The problem we have is that even the victims don't want to come forward and lay their complaints, but that is changing and we are calling on the public, whether it is in their home or their neighbourhood, to report such acts of barbarism to our police officers, and in good time too.

"We are poised and ready to clamp down on any of these senseless acts of violence.

"Just because a woman is married to you or a child is under your care does not give you the right to abuse or inflict injury on them or take their lives."

The chairperson of the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) in the state, Shanti Sashi, told Daily Sun that there were signs of progress in addressing violence against women and persons comprehensively.

Shanti said: "The Adamawa State House of Assembly has passed the bill on Violence Against Person into law; we are now waiting for assent to the law by the governor.

"The law, when assented to, will cover a wide range of issues, including violence against women, rape and child abuse, among other issues.

"And it is not only about women but violence against anyone, including men and children who have been subject of violence and abuse these days.

"We have been on advocacy visits to various stakeholders in order to fast-track the assent to the law."

Shanti added that "Legal practitioners have been frustrated with lack of a legal framework to prosecute issues of domestic violence but when this law is assented to, we would now have the legal backing to take action against offenders and claim the rights for the victims.

"Meanwhile, we want the public to know that FIDA is offering pro-bono services for women who are victims of violence and abuse and our doors are open to take up their cases at no charge."

Speaking on the situation, the head of the Department of Mass Communication, Adamawa State Polytechnic, Yola, Bashir Usman Mayo, condemned the behaviour. Mayo said the culture of brutality against women and children has been in Nigerian society for a very long time and has been going on in silence and the culture must be stopped.

Mayo said: "It is the non-governmental organisations and other relevant bodies that are gradually bringing this issue to the fore.

"Some of our people don't even know that it is an offense to brutalise a woman or a child. Thank God, the situation is now changing, but the media has to do more by sensitizing the public on it.

"But we must also insist that the law takes its course in addressing this menace and unless this is done, others will not learn their lessons and the barbaric culture will continue to thrive.

"This culture of silence, where communities try to keep it quiet and say 'this is that person's son or daughter, the matter must not be allowed to go to the public,' must be thrown aside and everyone involved in this crude behaviour must be made to pay for it."

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