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Gender Minister Indicts Judges

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By C. Emmanuel Johnson

Monrovia

Gender and Development Minister Varbah Gayflor has accused judges of paying less attention to cases arising out of gender based violence (GBV).

She said whenever GBV cases were taken to court judges would rather defend the perpetrators instead of victims by asking critical questions.

Minister Gayflor made the assertion Monday at the opening of a week-long Training of Trainers (TOT) workshop for "Health Care Providers on Consensus Building for Medical Report Writing Form For Gender-Based Violence and Sexually Gender-based violence survivors."

She said as a result of the lack of interest in the rights of victims by judges, women should always strive to put together the necessary documentations to enhance speedy and successful prosecution of perpetrators of GBV thereby preventing victims from being denied justice.

She recalled that there were times in the Liberian society when women's rights were widely respected but noted that the war infused all sorts of negative attitudes in the minds of many people including the regular abuse of young girls and women.

For his part, Assistant Health Minister for Curative Service, Moses Pewu said the training of health workers to report on GBV cases was timely, and noted, "The workshop came at a time when lots of attention is not being given GBV cases."

Dr. Pewu suggested that GBV cases when reported should be accompanied by documentary evidence signed by health practitioners and not verbal statements.

He also called on community members to immediately report to the police and health center any suspected act of GBV, adding "any delay may lead to the denial of justice."

In addition, he noted that a delay to report to the police and health center would erase some very important evidence that could have been used in helping the court prosecute the case.

He also urged family members to avoid settling GBV cases outside of the court because the act is a crime against womanhood and the state which can not be condoned.

Suspects of said crime should be prosecuted and if found guilty, punished according to the law," Dr. Pewu noted.

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