

*Women Against Rape, Sexual Harassment and Sexual
Exploitation
(WARSHE)*

PRESS RELEASE ON CASES OF RAPE IN LAUTECH COMMUNITY

In recent weeks, the Nigerian media has been awash with reports of the dastardly activities of a notorious rape gang that has taken over the environs of the Ladoke Akintola University of Technology (LAUTECH) engaging in serial cases of rape, sexual assault and other forms of sexual violence. According to reports, this group has been going round the University community, moving from hostel to hostel, where through the instrumentality of force and intimidation, they ask the male occupants of these hostels to have forced sexual intercourse with the female occupants, thereby committing the offence of rape. These bandits have been very brazen in their brutal violation of the dignity of many of the girls of this University.

WARSHE condemns in the strongest terms, this brutal act of cowardice, reckless use of male power and the violation of rights of innocent girls, whose “offence” appears to be aspiring to reach their full potential through higher education. For the avoidance of doubt, the principal law of the land, the Nigerian Constitution, and all other extant criminal laws, frowns seriously at the offence of rape, imposing the heavy sentence of life imprisonment for anyone found culpable, a punishment that is the equivalent of the penalty for attempted murder. This goes to show how much even the law considers the act of rape to be evil and cruel. It is based on this that WARSHE thereby considers this latest act of the LAUTECH rapists, as highly barbaric, inhuman and despicable, particularly in this day and age, when the global community through several International conventions and treaties such as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), is united against sexual violence and other forms of assault against women. It is sad that this will be happening now.

WARSHE therefore calls on all relevant authorities, particularly the Oyo State Government, the Local Government Council which superintends over Ogbomosho and its environs, and security agencies to rise up to live up to their responsibility, and stem the activities of this nefarious group and help secure the lives and dignity of these female students. They also need to stem the dehumanization of the male students who are being forced to rape their colleagues. It is only trite to say that under the Nigerian Constitution, the principal responsibility of government is the protection of lives and property and protection in this instance must also include the protection of the lives of these female students and the protection of the sanctity of their bodies, upon which they alone can exercise property rights. WARSHE equally calls on all well-meaning Nigerians, Civil Society and other Stakeholders to raise the advocacy on the menace of rapists around Higher Institutions of learning in the country.

Finally, WARSHE calls on key stakeholders in Ogbomoso Community where the students hostels are located to openly **say NO** to the violation of the young women who implicitly trusted the community to protect them when they chose to attend LAUTECH.

Signed

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