



## CENTRE FOR AFRICAN JUSTICE, PEACE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

### Testimonial of Mr Kenechukwu Okenyi Founder of #Savedfromabuse

Presented by him, on the request of Centre for African Justice Peace and Human Rights at the 2018 EMR1 WIM Conference in Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

Date: 17 February 2018.

My name is Kenechukwu Okenyi, there is this woman that lives in our area. She would come to our house and tell my mother to allow me to go and play with her children. I was barely 8 and I was in primary 3 or so. She would buy biscuits and sweet for me. Once we got to her house, she would lure me to her room, spread her legs and ask me to start sucking her vagina. It went on for days and she told me that anytime I tried telling anyone, that my navel will dry up. My mother would never imagine that I was doing the work of her husband for her.

I caught infections on my lips. My mother took me to a clinic. After examining me, they told my mother to take me to the Specialist hospital. My father was away, for months. The doctor, I was made to understand, told my mother that such infections could only be gotten through oral sex and with tears in my mother's eyes, I had to tell her everything.

My mother confronted the woman. We both worshipped in the same church. She denied and said that I was lying against her. That she took me as her own child and would never do such a thing to me. Some people heard about it and took sides with the woman and believed her while others closed their ears. Her husband was wealthy and they were prominent personalities in our local church, known for their big donations.

People, mothers, fathers said I was accusing her falsely. I wondered how I could have made up such a gory tale as at that age and so, I was heckled, laughed at and made fun of. I stopped going to school for a while when I couldn't bear the sneers from people I knew as fellow church members or friends. My mother was helpless. She did the best she could but they told her to forgive and leave everything to God. She took me to church, they prayed for me and told her not to allow me go to school on my own for a while. My elder brother became my bodyguard to school. The first day I resumed school, one boy tried to make fun of me. I kicked him in the stomach and he collapsed. I just became violent.

When my father got back, he heard about it, he wanted to act and they told him not to open healed wounds and he too, handed everything to God. 1997 was the year, and I have lived with that scar ever since. My abuser escaped justice from the society, the church and the law. Not even a strand of her hair was removed. I still see her wrinkled face anytime I visit home.

One day, a childhood friend whom I didn't know still remembered how the whole incident happened, called me about 5 years ago and asked if I could meet with some specialists that help people like me who were abused at younger age. I accepted the suggestion and went. When I was giving them the history of my abuse, one of the so-called specialists said something equivalent to "did you enjoy it?" I left the place almost immediately, went back to my Friend's house and felt suicidal for days. Those who have never been dealt with psychologically may not understand.

There was no 'menist' group that have stood up for people like myself. Maybe because I am a boy and boys don't bleed when they are sexually abused or because we are just expendables. And so, we carry our baggage ourselves and try whichever method will heal us faster. If we succeed, we live to tell the story. If we don't, we die with our painful story.



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Those dark days, I dreaded going to church and will always walk behind my mother. My younger brother was just 2 then and he took the whole attention. I was at the mercy of my older siblings who had little understanding of what I was passing through. I was seen as a small devil who could accuse one of the holiest women in church then of such a crime. The society failed me and it has continued to fail vulnerable children who are victims of abuse.

In a small group I joined during my undergraduate days, Peer Educators, firsthand stories abound of people, broken men and women abused by their older siblings, house helps, pastors, clergymen, family friends and random people who drugged young girls and raped them, young boys sodomized or raped through the anus. 90 percent of their abusers escaped justice.

So, what are you doing to ensure the safety of your children, of your younger siblings and all the vulnerable children around? Pedophiles abound, looking for young preys to devour. Some of us survived the psychological damage and have moved on with our lives. However, you need to hear our stories so you can understand that a child needs to be protected no matter the gender. I would teach my children to report any form of abuse the first day it happens. It is our problem and we can solve it.

Thank you

For questions and comments please feel free to contact us using the contact information on this document.

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