

Child's Right to Life Handbook

By

Taiwo Akinlami

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Dedication

This handbook is dedicated to the blessed memory of least 65 secondary school children...The children were students from a Catholic secondary school in Abuja, who returning home for the holidays died in the Sosoliso avoidable plane crash on November 10, 2005.

Contents

First Word	4
The Foundation	6
A Clarion Call to Immediate Action	7
Kehinde Awolesi: A Case Study Before The Fact	8
Facts Sheet	10
Agenda for Action	20

First Word

Who is a Child?

Under the Child's Rights Act 2003 (Section 277), the OAU Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (Article II) and United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 1) a child is every human being below the age of 18 years.

Child Right to life: Thus Says the Law

Every child has a right to survival and development- Section 4 Child Rights Act, 2003

Every person has a right to life, and no one shall be deprived intentionally of his life, save in execution of the sentence of a court in respect of a criminal offence of which he has been found guilty in Nigeria.

Section -33. (1) 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

Every child has an inherent right to life. This right shall be protected by law. State parties to the present Charter shall ensure, to the maximum extent possible, the survival, protection and development of the child. –

Article 5 (1) & (2) African Charter on the Right and Welfare of the Child

States Parties recognize that every child has the inherent right to life. States Parties shall ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child - Article 6 (1) & (2) Convention on the Rights of the Child

Child's Rights to life: Thus says the sages

"A child is a person who is going to carry on what you have started. He is going to sit where you're sitting, and when you're gone; attend to those things, which are important. You may adopt all the policies you please, but how they are carried out depends on him. He will assume control of your Cities, States, and Nation. He is going to move in and take over your churches, schools, universities and corporations. The fate of humanity is in his hands"

- *Abraham Lincoln*

"We have seen too much change to simply accept the way children are living. We have too much hope in the potential of children to leave things as truly are, and we have too much faith in our fellow human beings not to know that the Global Movement we are Calling for can Happen"

- Dr Nelson Mandela and Graça Machel

“THE CHILD’S NAME IS TODAY

We are guilty of many errors and faults
But our worst crime is abandoning the children
Neglecting the fountain of life
Many of the things we do can wait
The child cannot
Right now is the time his bones are being formed
His blood is being made and his sense are being developed
To him we cannot answer, ‘Tomorrow’
His name is TODAY.”

- Gabriel Mistrel

Nobel Prize winning poet from Chile

The Foundation

The campaign for the right of the child to life becomes very imperative because this right is the foundation of every other right the child has. In fact every other right of the child is fulfilled in the protection of his right to life. Thus when the child's right to life is breached with impunity, every right is breached.

Right to life and the Nigerian Child:

I make bold to say today that contrary to what many may think, the right of the child to life is the most breached in Nigeria. The catalogues of unbridled attacks, which are hosted on the Facts Page of this website, bear eloquent testimony to that. The Facts Page reveals the pathetic tales of woes that the Nigerian child has to tell when it comes to the breach of his right to life.

Background to the threat to the Child's Right to life:

One major reason why the Nigerian child has become cheaply vulnerable is that we live in a society where the hands of the law are too short to catch up with those who have ganged up against his right to life. Now one thing that shortens the hand of the law is the failure of the society to see the child as Abraham Lincoln aptly described him, "the state of humanity is in his hand." If our society is aware that the child is the future and it respects its future then it will not allow anything to hurt him not to talk of simply refusing to bring to book those, who derive inordinate pleasure from hurting his innocuous and innocent soul.

A Clarion Call to Immediate and Concrete Action

We cannot all fold our arms and watch the child driven into extinction. Though the facts at my disposal are not only intimidating but also hopeless, but with men and women of good conscience the situation can still be turned around for the Nigerian child.

I have Faith-Victory is Sure

- I have absolute faith in God, who is interested in the future of our nation whom the child represents to crown this mustard-seed effort to draw attention to the right of the child to life with resounding victory.
- I have faith in the words of an uncommon lover of the Nigerian child, Pastor Abimbola Odukoya, the late co-pastor, the Fountain of Life Church, who said: 'there are no hopeless situations, there are only hopeless people.' By her teaching I have come to understand that no situation is hopeless until declared so by the people in it.
- I have faith in you, reader that as you come here today you will enlist yourself in the good book of history and give urgent and concrete expression to the agenda listed for action on the '**Agenda for Action**' page.
- I have faith in credible organizations that will lend their voices and hands to the quest of the Nigerian Child to live by collaborating with the vision of this project.
- I have faith in the press (print and electronic media) that it will not disappoint posterity in providing a platform of unfettered communication for the vision to bring to the very first burner of public consciousness the protection of the right of the Nigerian child to life.
- I have faith in the Nigerian child, who is determined to live despite a barrage of uncivilized attacks on his rights to life by an insensitive society. Reading the mind of the Nigerian child I can hear him say: 'since men have learnt to shoot and not to miss, we have learnt to fly and **not** to perch.' This group of resilient beings needs our support in their quest to live.

Kehinde Awolesi: A Case study Before the Facts

“Every child has an inherent right to life. This right shall be protected by law. States Parties to the present Charter shall ensure, to the maximum extent possible, the survival, protection and development of the child.”

- Article 5 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

I am sorry to say that we live in a society that bears striking similarities with it the dreaded Stone Age as depicted by Thomas Hobbes. In a State where the ugly vestiges of the Stone Age have completely obliterated, the right of a citizen to life is not only considered sacrosanct but also jealously guarded. This is because the right to life is the foundation of every other right a man has. It is a known truth that a living ant is better than a dead lion.

One of the major features of a sane society is the responsibility of the State to protect the lives of its citizens. Now where the State fails it becomes the unfortunate responsibility of the citizens to protect themselves at least against foreseeable dangers. This explains why in the last one decade in Nigeria the people have not been confident enough to leave their safety to the State. They have continued to seek refuge in personal or communal security arrangements.

As unfortunate as the situation is, it still generates a pinch of hope as long as the danger to life is foreseeable. At least, it helps the citizens to know what to avoid and where to channel their collective energy in their quest to survive. But all hope is where the circumstances that endanger a citizen’s life are ludicrously unforeseeable.

Kehinde Awolesi was a pupil of Remo Secondary School, Shagamu. According to a report in The Guardian, Friday, April 2, 2004, “the unexpected happened at 3.00 p.m. on March 15, as a strange storm took over the school campus...The storm caused an object to hit Kehinde’s head. The head injury he received as a result of the led to his eventual death...”

The following other facts were contained the report under reference:

1. The deceased was a day student.
2. Remo Secondary School, Shagamu is 58 years old
3. The principal of the School, Mr. Daniel Olubiyi revealed that “the deceased went to fetch water and on his way back to the classroom; the storm began so he sought

refuge under the shed on the campus. The shed was said to have collapsed on his head, resulting in the head injury”

4. Whilst many other pupils sustained various degrees of injuries as a result of the incident, only Kehinde died.
5. Kehinde died four days after he suffered the head injury.

Now while the unwary may attribute the death of this innocent child to fate, like his poor parents were made to conclude, I choose to sharply differ. I submit that his death was another brazen breach of the rights of the Nigerian child to life as protected by Section 33 (1) & (2) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Article 5 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and Article 6 of the Child’s Rights Convention.

The following are the basis of the foregoing Submission:

1. The first issue that catches my attention is the fact that Remo Secondary School Sagamu is 58 years old. The questions are:
 - i. What kind of maintenance did the 13 buildings in the school enjoy?
 - ii. When last were major or minor renovation works carried out on the school buildings?
2. It is noteworthy that Kehinde did not sustain the injury that eventually claimed his life whilst in the classroom. He had gone to fetch water. Being the only one who lost his life to the storm despite the fact that many pupils sustained different degrees of injuries, there was every probability that he might not have sustained the kind of severe injury that claimed his life if he had remained in the classroom.

The questions are:

- i. Who sent Kehinde to fetch water?
 - ii. As a day student, was it part of his routine to fetch water?
 - iii. If the deceased had gone to fetch water on his own volition how effective then was the school authority in instilling discipline among the pupils?
3. Considering the epileptic nature of our health care delivery system, can it be categorically said that the deceased received the best treatment in the circumstance of his case?

Until the School authority and the Ogun State Government give these fundamental questions satisfactory answers, to commit the incident to fate is to deliberately deny the right of the Nigerian Child to life. Few weeks ago it was the pupils of Oke-Ira Grammar School, whose lives were endangered (see this Column of Thursday, April 8, 2004). Today it is Kehinde Awolesi. Who knows who is next? Now is the time to speak for the child’s rights of the Nigerian Child to life.

Fact Sheet

Those corpses of young men, those martyrs that hang from the gibbets—those hearts pierc'd by the gray lead, cold and motionless as they seem, live elsewhere with unslaughter'd vitality. They live in other young men, O kings! They live in brothers, again ready to defy you! They were purified by death—they were taught and exalted. Not a grave of the murder'd for freedom, but grows seed for freedom, in its turn to bear seed, which the winds carry afar and re-sow, and the rains and the snows nourish..."-Walt Whitman

Abortion

- 50% of deaths attributed to pregnancy related causes are accounted for by induced abortion particularly among girls under 19 years old- Olikoye Ransome-Kuti (The Guardian, Friday, December 4, 1998)
- At the public presentation of findings of studies on induced abortion in Nigeria, held in January, 1999 by the Campaign Against Unwanted Pregnancy (CAUP) and the Alan Guttmacher Institute (AGI), New York, reported in Guardian on Sunday of February 7, 1999 at page 21, it was submitted that "no fewer than 610,000 Nigerian women procure abortion every year, most of them are school girls between 15 – 29 years"

Health

- "United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has said that Nigeria records infant mortality of 187 per 1000 live births and that mortality of children under five years was still as high as 112 per 1000 live births." (This **Day**, The Sunday Newspaper, July 25, 2004)
- A 2004 report released by World Health Organization, Nigeria reveals, "**In Nigeria, malaria is responsible for the deaths of close to 300,000 children annually as it causes 30% of the deaths in under-fives, 28% of the deaths in infants and one out of ten deaths in pregnant women. It has devastated families, made the poor poorer and costs the nation about =N=132 billion (about USD977 million) annually. "**
- "UNICEF said 200,000 Nigerian children die every year from malaria, diarrhoea,

respiratory infection, measles, tetanus, malnutrition and exploitation ...47 percent of those below age one don't ever get immunized. (**This Day**, Sunday, May 25 1997).

Public Violence

Public Execution

- Chidiebore Onuoha, aged 17, was executed on 31 July 1997. He was 15 years old at the time of the armed robbery for which he was executed. (**CHILDREN AND THE DEATH PENALTY-Executions Worldwide since 1990** by *Amnesty International, International Secretariat, 1 Easton Street, WC1X 0DW, London, United Kingdom*)

Jungle Justice

- On October 17, (2005), Channels Television showed the gory report of how a young 11 year old boy, in broad daylight, on the streets of Lagos, was accused of child kidnapping. He was interrogated by his adult tormentors, tortured and brutalized, someone brought a tire, another person brought petrol, other Nigerians watched askance, and the boy was set ablaze, murdered as the Channels team of reporters recorded everything.

A few metres away stood a police station but nobody came to the poor boy's rescue and he burned as he kept screaming that he was innocent. It does not matter what the boy did, his killers committed murder in the full view of television cameras. There has been some tepid appeal from the police that the people should not take the laws into their own hands. But this is a case of the police sounding like the priesthood- Dr. Reuben Abati, Chairman Editorial Board, The Guardian Newspaper, Nigeria.

NEPA-Related

- "According to report: NEPA officials allegedly carried out mass disconnection exercise in Keke Agege area of Lagos and left disconnected cables, 10 year old Ifebuchi Okoro, playfully touched one of the live cables and was instantly electrocuted. (The editorial comment of **This Day**, Wednesday May 31, 2000)
- In a related development in another area, live cables severed the previous day by NEPA officials electrocuted Shiatu Rasheed and Tobi Oyekanmi. (The editorial comment of **This Day**, Wednesday May 31, 2000)
- Power outage causes infections in children
"...At the family level, many parents are contending with heat rashes and boils on their children; and school teachers and nursing hands at day-care centre are having hectic time pampering the little ones to soothe their skin.

This is occasioned by the season. However, it is worsened by nights of blackout and resulting heat, which is not likely to go away until the rain return, to tame the overhauling humidity that increases the feeling of high temperatures. (The Guardian, Sunday, February 27, 2005)

Child Trafficking/Labour

- The other day, the police in Lagos arrested a truck loaded with 67 children said to have been brought into the city from the northern parts of the country. The children, aged mostly between 10 and 15 years were escorted by some grown-up ladies...We are shocked that children could be packed in an unventilated truck in the manner the 67 kids were reportedly done...(Editorial, This Day, Tuesday, March 15, 2005)
- Containerised Kids: The Police in Lagos are working tooth and nail to unravel how 57 children were crammed like sardine and transported from Niger to Lagos. ((PM News, Monday, 7 March, 2005)

Armed-Robbery-Related

- Adeife and Akinola Akindeko (from the same parents) were killed at Ibogun, Ifo Ogun State by yet to be identified gunmen on April 20, 2003 (Daily independent, Thursday, April 22, 2004, page B7).
- Robbers kill 3, Cut off Child's Leg
"...notorious armed bandits stormed Ibafo village bordering Lagos and Ogun States in the early hours of yesterday (Wednesday, 31 March, 2005) and left blood in their trail...a child whose parents could not offer tangible item to the bandits lost one of his legs which was reportedly cut off by the robbers to teach his parents lessons on materials" (PM News, March 31 March, 2005)

Police Brutality Against the Child

- Taiwo Ilesanmi, 16, was a Junior Secondary School student, killed by police officers, who teamed up with armed robbers. Robbers attacked Taiwo and his friends. They escaped and later found some police officers to whom they reported their plight. To their shock the police teamed up with the robbers to open fire on them. Others escaped but Taiwo was unlucky. He was killed and his corpse dumped on the express road to make it appear as if a vehicle knocked him down. (Sunday Punch, March 28, 2004, Pages 7-9)
- What we consider the most bizarre and uncivilised breach of the right of a Nigerian child was reported in The Punch May 25, 2000 in a story captioned 'Five

Months old baby arrested in place of mother” the report has it that “security agents suspected to be men of the State Security Services (SSS) last Monday in Ibadan seized a five month old baby, Kehinde Shodeinde; for seven (7) hours when they could not get the mother, who was away at work...The baby is now being treated for shock due to the stress”

Training Ground as Killing Ground

- Kehinde Awolesi, the only son of his middle-aged parents was a pupil of Remo Secondary School, Shagamu, in Ogun State. “The unexpected happened at 3.00 p.m. on March 15, as a strange storm took over the school campus...The storm caused an object to hit Kehinde’s head. The head injury he received as a result of the led to his eventual death...” (The Guardian, Friday, April 2, 2004)
- 11 pupils of Class 1(c) Okera Grammar School, Ogba, were seriously injured when their classroom collapsed on March 22, 2004. Masters Abdulsallam and Alexander were the most affected. Abdulsallam had a deep cut on his forehead, which defiled doctor’s plasters. Alexander also had a deep cut which nearly, cut off his left eye with another cut at the back of his head. His left hand was also severely fractured (The Punch, Tuesday, March 23, 2004)
- **Teacher beats student to death over N20 levy...School closed down:** Tragedy recently befell Owode-Egba Grammar School in Owode Local Government area of Ogun State when a teacher beats a Senior Secondary School (SS3) student, Master Kehinde Jakede to death. The offence of the deceased was that he refused to contribute N20 meant for send-**forth** party for a member of the National Service Corps (NYSC) in the school... this year, none of the final year students complied with the payment of the send-off party levy as directed by the school authority. This development, it was learnt, angered the school authority, which ordered that all the SS3 students be flogged in the assembly hall...When it was the turn of Kehinde Jakede to be flogged he complained that he was sick and as such could not withstand the beating... The boy’s complaint, it was gathered, was later communicated to the principal of the school who happens to be a woman. The principal was furious and ordered that the boy be flogged like others. Reports said based on the principal’s order, Master Kehinde was invited to the staff room where he was thoroughly canned by one of the school teachers identified as Mr. Lasisi. The bodily wounds inflicted on the boy as a result of the beating, it was gathered, aggravated the ill health. He was said to have immediately rushed home where he reported the matter to his father... The father on seeing the worsening health condition of his son immediately took the son to a private hospital at Owode. After being admitted for barely three hours, the hospital management referred him to Lantoro General Hospital, Abeokuta. But the boy died on the way to the hospital. **(Daily**

Independent Breaking News Monday, March 21, 2005, page 5)

- Tragedy in Kaduna school: The recent incident involving twenty-two pupils of 'All Saints International College', Kaduna whose young lives were brutally terminated in a stampede occasioned by a false fire alarm in their school qualifies as a national tragedy... According to reports, thick smoke produced by sawdust being burnt in a nearby carpenter's workshop had enveloped the classroom blocks and created this panic, as the pupils thought their school buildings had caught fire. These twenty-two students had jumped to their deaths while trying to escape. Several others were badly wounded.**(Editorial, Daily Independent, Monday, November 28, 2005)**

When a wolf masqueraded as a good Samaritan

- Good Shepherd Orphanage located at Okota, a suburb of Lagos...A thorough search of the compound revealed that instead of Mrs. John running an orphanage as approved by the authorities ...she had put a house of horror where she coordinated the activities of **her child-trafficking ring**. The ring included a detention centre for pregnant teenage girls, a slaughter slab called a delivery room for carrying out Caesarian Section and the ultimate sale of human parts through which money keep rolling in.
- Gift John has **since** been arrested by the police and is currently being investigated for the alleged use of children for nefarious purposes, which include rituals...She housed many children and teenagers, mostly female, in a compound **at** about sixty rooms...Alleged to have used the female teenagers in her care as sex slaves who were sexually abused by men she allegedly hired to impregnate them. And after the girls had given birth the...operator of the orphanage allegedly sold off the babies for ritual purposes. (Sunday Independent March 6, 2005)
- Baby Sold for N70, 000.00(seventy thousand Naira): The Lagos Police command spokesman...confirmed to P.M. News the arrest of the medical director and the matron of a hospital based in Ayobo, Ipaja , Lagos State (names withheld) for their role in the sale of a baby to...Gift John, the proprietor of The Good Shepherd Orphanage, to the tune of N70,000.00. (P. M News, Thursday, 17 March, 2005)

Ritual Killing

- Emeka Ikeora, 8 a Pupil of Gwagwalada Primary School was found dead in a sack with his eyes plucked out. "He is one of many victims of ritual murderers, who seem to be running riot in Yola, with their eyes on young male children."

(Saturday Sun, July 3, 2004, page 10)

- The headless and limbless torso of a Nigerian Child (Adam) was found floating in the river Thames, London's Tower Bridge in September 2001. (Yahoo News, www.yahoo.com)
- “ A kidnapper in Lagos has been caught while trying to steal a six-month old baby from the parents’ home in Bariga” (The Sun, Thursday, July15, 2004, Page 18)
- Prophetess Arrested for Child theft: The Police in Lagos have arrested a prophetess...for allegedly stealing a six-day old baby...When PM News spoke to Sola, the...mother of the child, she said ‘...My dear brother, I saw hell before I delivered the child. I went to five hospitals before I finally delivered through fervent prayers. Maybe she took my baby away for money making rituals. (P.M. News Monday, 4, July 2005)
- Incredible! Just for N1,000, man lured kids for ritualists, who plucked their eyeballs: Usually our victims were hit very, very hard; most times, our leader would do it once, very hard, and our victims normally died immediately...Very important people in the society from major towns, especially Lagos, Ibadan and other places often visited ...for the purchase of human parts. (Sunday Punch May 1, 2005)
- Body of child found in shallow grave: it was a bizarre sight. The incident was mind boggling at the Umuagwu Ebikoro in Uzoagba Local Government, Imo State when the corpse of a two-year-old child was found in a shallow grave. Her remains were reportedly found when dogs accompanying their owners to the farm dug her up...Her private part, kidney and eyes had been removed. (Daily Independent, Tuesday, February 22, 2005.

Air Mishap

Loyola Children

Officials in Nigeria say they are investigating the cause of a passenger plane crash that killed 107 people, including at least 65 secondary school children...The children were students from a Catholic secondary school in Abuja, who returning home for the holidays, according to The Rev. Felix Femi Ajakaye, spokesman for the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria in the nation's capital, Abuja (CNN).

A Catholic Archbishop, John Onaiyekan of Abuja, said 71 pupils from Abuja's Ignatius Loyola Jesuit College died in the crash.

They had been on their way home for the Christmas holidays.

Many of the pupils' families had been at Port Harcourt's airport to **pick** their children **up** and witnessed the crash in the capital of Nigeria's main oil-producing region.

"We watched it happen. It was terrible. We just watched our children burning without being able to help," said Ngozi Ugochukwu, who lost her 13-year-old son in the crash, is quoted by Reuters as saying. (BBC News)

Road Accident-Related

Smuggler crushes 9-yr-old girl

'A poultry smuggler recently sent a nine-year-old girl to an untimely grave when he rammed his vehicle into a shop where she was, in a bid to escape from policemen on patrol.' (Daily SUN, Thursday, January 8, 2004)

"No fewer than 11 children to death while about seven others were critically injured during a procession...to mark eclipse of the moon at Muduru, near Katsina." The report further has it that the vehicle ran into the procession due to brake failure. (The Sun, Monday, May 10, 2004)

"A driver has given parents in a Delta State community a taste of terror, as he ran his car over 10 children, killing three, inside their school compound. The driver however blamed the accident on brake failure. (The Sun, Tuesday, July 6, 2004, Pages 1&6)

Road Accident claim 560 children in 1 year

No fewer than 560 children were killed by road accidents across the country within one year, the Federal Road Safety Commission has said.

Major-General Toni Hananiya (RTD), made this revelation in Lagos recently while flagging off the Road Safety Campaign for children initiated by Total Nigeria Plc, adding that many more are children were seriously injured in most cases resulting to permanent disability

"... Between January and December 2003, over 560 children were recorded killed in road traffic accidents in the country.

Many more were permanently disabled through injuries received while walking, cycling or hawking goods on the streets close to their homes," the FRSC boss said

The corps marshal who was disturbed by the ugly development disclosed that on March 2001, a total of 25 children engaged in hawking foodstuff and sundry products near bridgehead, **Onitsha** were roasted alive when an oil tanker crashed and spilled its content on the street.

He said the avoidable child fatality rate occasioned by motor accident was unacceptable to FRSC and added that in line with the step of the international community in this regard, the commission will not fold its arms and allow children who are the future of the Nation get depleted (**Business Times November 8-14, 2004**)

- Five students crushed to death in Owerri

Tragedy struck yesterday in the Imo State capital as five students of Owerri Girl's Secondary School were crushed to death by a trailer... Six others, who were critically injured and were in coma were transferred to the emergency ward of the hospital (Federal Medical Center, Owerri).

The accident was caused by a group of touts, who were trying to extort money from the driver of the trailer.

(The Guardian, Saturday, March 5, 2005)

Two kids of same parents crushed to death: "two kids of the same parents suffered a cruel fate on Tuesday (March 1, 2005) morning as they got crushed to death by trailer truck on their way to school. The tragic fate befell Uche Vincent Erondu, 11, and Naomi Vincent Erondu, 8, pupils of Stephens Nursery and Primary School, Dopemu, Lagos. Daniel Vincent Erondu, aged 3, brother to the tragic kids, however, luckily escaped death. He only suffered a cut on the forehead." (**Daily Sun, Wednesday, March 2, 2005, pages 1 & 4**)

Bus Kills Siblings after New Year Service

The incident occurred at Ilepo bus stop, Oke-Odo, Lagos –Abeokuta Expressway...when a Volkswagen Faragon commercial bus driven by one Niyi Shonubi knocked down the two children, Blessing Ashinyanbi, 16 and nine-year-old Damilola Ashinyanbi, in the presence of their parents (**Daily Independent, Monday, January 2, 2006**)

Domestic Violence

- The case was reported of a child who was chained for two or three months by her supposed guardian. For two or three months and nobody reported her until someone took the case to the News (NTA). (The Punch Wednesday, January 5, 2000 page 27).

- Wasiu Raimi, a year four pupil of Alapere Primary School, Ketu (a Lagos suburb) was with a horsewhip beaten by his guardian to an inch of his life and his head were left with several cuts. "...He was tattered, unkempt and very weak. Marks of fresh wounds inflicted on him by the beating were very visible" (Daily Sun, Thursday, January 8, 2004, page 13)
- "After using hot knife to inflict multiple deep cuts on the body of her niece, a 22-year-old house wife says she did it to teach the little girl a bitter lesson." (The Sun, Saturday, June 26, 2004, Pages 1, 8 & 33).
- "Merciless mistress, Ms Unuoma in a fit of anger pounced on her seven-year old maid, Ijeoma, and left the girl with badly lacerated body, bloodshot eyes and bloody buttocks. And she refused to give reasons for her action. (The Sun, Wednesday, July 21 2004, Page 3)
- In a story capture "a man's inhumanity to a girl" The Guardian, Friday February 18, 2000 told the gory tale of a 13 year old Chinaza Obom, who was subjected to criminal cruelty in the ands of her brother-in-law, hear her "whenever he wants to beat me, he waits till mid night he will remove my dress, lock the door and put my hands to the back before he starts to beat me. This he does with any object he lays his hand upon...it was the iron rod he used on me that broke my hand."
- Six year old boy electrocuted in neighbour's house.
Parents of a six-year-old, simply identify as Tosin, are now on war path with one of their neighbours over the death of their child in the living room of the neighbours... The unfortunate incident happened on Monday at 36, Akande Street, Pipeline, Oke-ado, Lagos, when the victim allegedly touched the metal anchor of a television antenna and got electrocuted. **The Punch, Thursday, March 3, 2005**
- Why I Want My Son Dead: A Lagos commercial bus driver, who tried **to kill his son by** dumping him in a canal, says he did that because he was tired of the boy's chronic illness. According to Sunday Oladiran, the boy is suffering from chronic pile, which has taken all his resources. (The Sun, Monday, 4, July 2005)

Death by Abandonment

- A day old baby was found in a refuse dump by scavengers somewhere in Lagos at about 7.00 A.M on October 1, 2003. Residents of the area testified in that report stated that the incident had become a normal occurrence. (Saturday

Punch, October 4, 2003, Page 5)

- One-month-old baby's **corpse** was found in a polythene bag along a major road at **Surulere** (A Lagos Suburb). (City Post, Wednesday, May 26,2004)
- **Abandoned Babies Litter Ibadan Street:** "Residents of Ibadan, the capital of Oyo State at the weekend were shocked when they discovered five abandoned babies in various parts of the city, a sign many see as a signal of the worsening economic situation in the country. The babies were found in Idiayunre, Olomi, Agbukajo, New Ife Road and Murtala areas of Ibadan...Three of the abandoned babies were however, not lucky as they were found dead, while two were found alive. The abandoned baby at Idiayunre's case was however, pathetic as she was removed by passers-by from the midst of pigs, who had feasted on her." (**P.M. News, Wednesday, 15 December, 2004**).
- **Abandoned Dead:** "this baby was found abandoned this morning in front of Oando Petrol Station along Abeokuta expressway, Pen Cinema, Agege. Before help could come the baby's way it had died. Lagosians at the scene wept uncontrollably and rained curses on the fellow responsible **for this cruel.**" (**P.M. News, Wednesday 30 March, 2005**)

HIV/AIDS

- As it stands today 5.6 million Nigeria are infected with AIDS, according to Alhaji Abdullahi Maiwada, the regional coordinator of the "society for Family Health," in a report published in The Punch of Wednesday, September 29th, 1999 at page 9. "The most annoying thing about the deadly disease is that the category of the victims involved are mostly productive category between the ages of 15 – 40", report National Concord, Friday, November 19, at page W5.

Sexual Abuse

Girl, 3, raped to death:

Two able bodied pedophiles, Aminu Abdulhamid and Shuaibu Yusuf, in their late twenties raped a three year old girl to death in Saunar Kawaji within metropolitan Kano, Monday.

Saturday Sun gathered that on that fateful day, little, playful Zainab, daughter of Abdulhamid Dogo, Mai Shayi (not relation of the suspect) was unusually absent from the house till dusk, causing panic in the neighbourhood. It was gathered that when she could not be found, an emergency meeting was summoned and that a search party was organized and there and then, not far from her house, the lifeless body of the little child was discovered in a dustbin. As soon as the

discovery was made, an eyewitness account said, Aminu, an alleged notorious **pedophile** and the alleged arrow head of the crime, since the body of the girl had been discovered, they should just offer prayers for her soul and bury her without any investigation. This was said to have aroused the curiosity of the people present who immediately invited the police to question him.

- Dr. Biodun Ogunyemi, a lecturer at the Ogun State University, Ago Iwoye wrote in the *Guardian*, Friday October 22, 1999 as follows: “the case of action against child sexual abuse (CSAO cannot be made too strongly. If you are in doubt, consider these: “Raped girl, 16 jumps into river (Saturday Punch, July 5 1997) “Policeman kills daughter, after raping her: (Sunday Concord, July 27, 1997) “Nigerian jailed in London for selling small girls as sex slaves in Rome” (Weekend Concord: September 19, 1998) “Incest: man rapes daughter” (Tribune on Saturday October 31, 1998) Assaulted eight-year old still in pain (four years after)” The *Guardian* November 2, 1998).

Dr. Ogunyemi concluded thus “The fall-out from abuse situation like these are well documented; life long psychological traumas; damage to reproductive organs; infection with diseases including the killer AIDS; lack of capacity to negotiate sex, initiation into prostitution and sundry secondary manifestations of a damaged personality.

- The P.M. News, Thursday, January 20, 2000 carried a report titled The Juvenile Brothel of Egan “The Report has it thus: “Prostitution has been an age long profession, but at Egan, on the outskirts settlement of Lagos, a **brothel** exclusively meant for teenagers operates undisturbed. What makes the place notorious is a **brothel** situated there, with girls as young as 13 years old made available to men for illicit sex.”
- Good Riddance...Two men, 36 and 25 years old, jailed for sexually assaulting a 4-year-old girl. For their inability to control their morbid sexual desire for four-year old, the duo of Charles Ofoedu (36) and Ububechukwu Nwosu (25) will remain in jail for the next three years. (Saturday Punch, June 4, 2005)

Agenda for Action

Thanks for visiting this page of this site. In fact it is the most important page. It is the action page and the life of every **crusade** is action. It is our collective and genuine actions that will bring to the very first burner of public consciousness, the protection of the right of the Nigerian child to life.

Without mincing words, this page is dedicated to recruiting you into the noble army of men and women, who are ready to defend the future of our nation Nigeria. That you are visiting this page is not an accident. It is the assurance that I have in my mind that you are going to stand up from here and say something for the Nigerian Child. It does not matter to whom it is said. It might even be to a friend, neighbor, spouse, boss, subordinate or co-worker; you may also decide to reach for your pen and paper or computer system and send a letter to a national daily. You may choose to employ the platform of the electronic media to push for the protection of the Right of the Child to life. My interest is to see you making an effort and as far as I am concerned, no effort is too small, at least for history and posterity to take note of.

Why should I speak for the right of the Nigerian Child to life? You may ask. I will give two major reasons:

1. God ordained us the caretakers of the child. To watch the most fundamental right of the child trampled upon or participate in denying them of this right is to fail the **Author of life**.
2. The child is watching to see where you stand in this time of moral crisis where his God-ordained right to life is trampled upon by the same people, who are suppose to be the custodians of this right. The child watches with keen interest because he knows that that there is no consent more resounding that silence.

I charge you today; make the contents of this page, the Bible of your crusade for the right of the child to life. Chew it, digest it and translate it to concrete and consistent actions aimed at bringing the protection of the right of the child to life to the very front burner of public consciousness. It is only this that is capable of justifying the time you will spend on this site both now and before the impartial throne of your conscience, history and posterity.

Dear stakeholder, it is time to participate an Agenda for Action:

This page is divided into two:

- **Specific Agenda for Action**
- **General Agenda for Action**
- Specific Agenda for Action calls for actions on the specific areas of the breaches of the right of the child to life as outlined in the **Facts Sheet** of this site.
- General Agenda for Action simply envisages actions outside those outlined in the **Facts Page**.
- **Specific Agenda for Action**

Abortion

- Start a campaign against abortion both in your neighborhood and in the print and electronic media. Our campaign against abortion must address the disturbing level of promiscuity that is today common among young people in our nation. The beginning of abortion in most cases is presence of 'unwanted pregnancies.' It is also important that we focus on family planning.
- Report every suspect
- Ensure that reported suspects are investigated and prosecuted.

Health

- Embark on tangible and effective activities that will highlight the plight of the child with respect to his right to health with a view to finding lasting solutions to the present state of things. Our starting point is our areas of influence (home, offices, local government areas, churches, clubs etc.) Our campaign must also extend to the State and Federal Governments.

Domestic Violence

- Start a campaign against domestic violence against the child in your areas of influence (workplace, places of worship, social clubs, professional bodies etc.)
- Be your brother's keeper. Keep an eye on your neighbours and counsel against cruelty against the child. Take a step further not to only report erring guardians or parents to the appropriate authorities but also ensure that enough pressure is exerted on the authorities to act immediately.
- Create public awareness against domestic violence against children through leaflets, stickers, seminars for parents, newspaper articles, and messages on T-shirts and face cap etc.

Killing in Schools

- Campaign that the perpetrators of the cruel acts outline in our **Facts Page** are brought to book to the full knowledge of the generality of the public.
- Campaign for the renovation of our public schools. They are today nothing but death traps to children.
- Propose to the government of your state the reorientation of teachers on the purpose of a school.

Unresolved Assassination

- Embark on a vigorous campaign that the killers of Adeife and Akinola be brought to book. This we should all do with due diligence through newspaper adverts, stickers, leaflets, public lectures etc.

- **General Agenda for Action**

- Pay close attention to the safety of your child
- Start an independent justice for the child campaign in your community. The focus of this is that all the people that have perpetrated an injustice against the child must be brought to book. You can begin such campaign with collection of signatures in your area, which will be presented to your Local Government with the knowledge of the press.
- In May, 2007, a compilation of comments from Nigerian men and women of conscience titled: 'United for the right of the child to life' will be published. Please send your comments on the need for the protection of right of the child to life to info@childsrighttolife.com.
- Make it a point of duty to begin every meeting no matter the nature with a word for the right of the child to life. This is informed by the urgency of the situation and the need to put the right of the child to life first in all things. **Mandela and Gracia** paved the way with the following words, "*For every conversation we have had, we will have ten more about children, No matter what is first on a meeting agenda, or what reason we have been invited to a place, we will talk about children, their rights for healthy and nurturing families, basic health services, a quality education and the opportunities to be active participants in their communities .we would talk about their place as the pivotal link in the process of human development*"
- Make or sponsor car stickers with slogans like: 'I am for the right of the child for life', 'protect child's right to life', 'save the child, save the future', 'Child's Right to life is now' etc.
- Write articles in community and national newspapers and magazines.