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## **SSLS trains police officers, prosecutors on gender-sensitive response**

April 11, 2022 (JUBA) – Police officers need a holistic approach to gender-based violence (GBV) related cases in South Sudan, George Maluoc, a public prosecution attorney said.

He was speaking at the end of a two-day training for justice actors on women rights, child rights and gender-sensitive police response and reform held in the capital, Juba on Friday.

The two-day training was organized by South Sudan Law Society with support from GIZ.

“We need holistic approaches in the fight against gender-based violence cases which are rampant in our society today. Such a training should also be extended to police officers and prosecutors all over South Sudan,” said Maluoc.

Maluoc said prosecutors should freely interact with police officers and the community.

Understanding South Sudan legal frameworks on women rights, child rights, gender-based violence victim protection, restorative justice and the security sector reforms under chapter II of the September 2018 revitalized peace agreement were some of the topics discussed.

Oliver Taban from South Sudan Law Society said restorative justice enables victims or communities impacted by crime to express ways in which the crime has harmed them.

“One of the aims of restorative justice is to promote reconciliation between child and victim or community affected by the harm caused,” he remarked.

According to Section 153 of South Sudan’s Child Act 2008, children who commit crimes must be dealt with in accordance with restorative justice.

Poverty, lack of money, alcoholism, abuses of power, corruption, culture, susceptibility, and gender norms were cited as some of the major causes of GBV cases in South Sudan.

Counsel Gasper Amule said female police officers are essential in handling GBV cases.

“Female officers are particularly important in interviewing victims, witnesses and suspects, especially women and children. The ability for a victim or survivor to speak to a person of their own gender will ensure best evidence are obtained and victims supported,” he said.

Adriana Tsungu, a police officer at the workshop, warned law enforcers over extortion practices.

“Police officers should protect civilians, but not extort money from the public,” he said.

For his part, Joseph Sebit said such trainings strengthen police on procedural requirements.

Health authorities in South Sudan said they responded to approximately 330 cases of rape, physical violence and issues related to gender-based violence in 2021.

The laws of South Sudan provide for the protection of women and girls against discrimination, forced marriage and gender-based violence. However, while legal provisions are important, they are often misinterpreted or largely ignored.

**Note to the editors:**

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