



BASELINE REPORT

ON THE INTERSECTION OF
CONFLICT & SGBV IN KADUNA

Baseline Research on the Intersection of
Conflict and SGBV, and its Consequences
on Access to Justice in Kaduna



BASELINE RESEARCH ON THE INTERSECTION OF CONFLICT AND SGBV, AND ITS CONSEQUENCES ON ACCESS TO JUSTICE IN KADUNA

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

CBOs	Community Based Organizations
CDC	Community Development Committee
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
FGDs	Focused Group Discussions
FCDO	United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
IDIs	In-depth Interviews
LGA	Local Government Area
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
MCAPI	Mobile Computer-Assisted Personal Interview
PwDs	People with disabilities
SARCs	Sexual Assault Referral Centres
SGBV	Sexual and gender-based violence
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
UK	United Kingdom
VAPP	Violence Against Persons Prohibition
WRO	Women's Rights Organization

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Foreword

Northern Nigeria continues to grapple with protracted insecurity driven by intercommunal tensions, banditry, ethno-religious conflict, and deep structural governance challenges. In Kaduna State, these dynamics manifest differently across communities, from intermittent communal clashes and criminal violence in Igabi and Zaria to recurrent ethno-religious conflict in Zangon Kataf. While insecurity affects entire populations, its impact is neither uniform nor gender-neutral. Women and other marginalized groups face heightened exposure to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), displacement, loss of livelihoods, and systemic barriers to justice. At the same time, weakened institutional trust and limited access to survivor-centred support services reinforce cycles of underreporting, impunity, and exclusion.

Experience has shown that security responses that exclude communities, particularly women and marginalised populations, often fail to produce sustainable outcomes. SGBV is frequently treated solely as a by-product of conflict, rather than as a factor that both reflects and reinforces instability. Without accessible justice pathways and inclusive peace structures, communities remain constrained in their ability to prevent violence, respond effectively to harm, and rebuild trust between citizens and state institutions.

It is within this context that Global Rights commissioned this baseline assessment on the intersection of conflict and SGBV and its implications for access to justice in conflict-prone communities of Kaduna State. Conducted across Rigachikun (Igabi LGA), Iyan Juma (Zaria LGA), and Zonkwa (Zangon Kataf LGA), the study employed a mixed-methods approach combining household surveys, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions with survivors, traditional and religious leaders, justice actors, and security personnel. The research provides an evidence-based understanding of how conflict dynamics shape patterns of SGBV, influence justice-seeking behaviour, and affect trust in formal and informal institutions.

The findings underscore significant gaps in awareness, institutional responsiveness, and survivor-centred support, while also revealing opportunities to strengthen community-led peace structures, improve early warning and response coordination, and expand access to justice through integrated, locally anchored mechanisms. These insights form the foundation for the Strengthening Community Resilience and SGBV Response through Inclusive Peacebuilding and Access to Justice project, which seeks to build resilient, gender-inclusive communities that actively drive their peace processes and strengthen accountability systems.

This baseline report serves as a critical reference point for measuring progress and guiding programmatic design.

We extend our sincere appreciation to the FCDO-funded SPRiNG programme, led by Tetra Tech, the research team at Nextier, the study participants, and all stakeholders whose time, expertise, and cooperation made this study possible. We hope that the evidence presented herein will inform policy, strengthen institutional practice, and contribute to more inclusive and sustainable peacebuilding efforts in Kaduna State.

Abiodun Baiyewu
Executive Director

Executive Summary

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT: This baseline research on “*The Intersection of Conflict and Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), and Its Consequences on Access to Justice in Conflict-Prone Regions of Kaduna State*” was undertaken to generate evidence on the current state of access to justice, highlighting systemic and community-level barriers, and identify gaps in existing survivor-centered response mechanisms. The study explored the intersection between conflict and SGBV in Kaduna State, examining how ongoing insecurity affects women’s safety, rights, and access to justice. The research was conducted in conflict-prone communities in three different Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Kaduna State, covering three Senatorial districts, namely, Rigachikun (Igabi LGA - Kaduna Central Senatorial District), Iyan Juma (Zaria LGA - Kaduna North Senatorial District), and Zonkwa (Zangon Kataf LGA - Kaduna South Senatorial District). These communities/LGAs were purposively selected to reflect the diversity of conflict dynamics across Northern and Southern Kaduna. While Igabi and Zaria experience intermittent communal tensions and banditry, Zangon Kataf has been affected by recurrent ethno-religious conflicts. These conflict dynamics have generated significant humanitarian and protection challenges, increasing the exposure of women and girls to SGBV. At the same time, insecurity, displacement, and weakened community and institutional structures have constrained survivors’ access to justice and protection services, reinforcing cycles of underreporting and impunity.

APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY: A mixed-methods approach was employed to collect data through community surveys, key informant interviews (KIIs), and focus group discussions (FGDs) involving survivors, traditional and religious leaders, law enforcement, and justice sector actors. A total of 113 respondents participated in the household survey, distributed as follows: Igabi (40 respondents), Zaria (37), and Zangon Kataf (36). Participants were randomly selected at the household level, ensuring a mix of gender, age, occupation, and socioeconomic background.

For the qualitative component, 21 KIIs (10 males and 11 females) were conducted, including traditional and religious leaders, justice actors, SGBV survivors, CDC/GBV chairpersons, program manager, LGA officials, women leaders, and security personnel. These interviews explored institutional and structural barriers to justice and protection. Six FGDs were held – two each in Zaria Rido, Zonkwa, and Rigachikun – engaging 40 participants (19 males and 21 females). The findings provide a foundational understanding of the prevalence, perceptions, and justice pathways related to SGBV in conflict-prone communities.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS: The key findings of the baseline research were organized into thematic sections that reflect the thematic focus areas of the study, highlighting the conflict–GBV nexus in the region, levels of awareness and understanding of GBV across the study communities, access and barriers to accessing justice with particular attention to GBV cases, perceptions and experiences of justice among survivors of GBV and other marginalized populations, including trust in institutions and willingness to report.

1. GBV – CONFLICT NEXUS

- Findings from the baseline study reveal that communities in Kaduna State continue to experience recurrent conflicts, primarily driven by ethno-religious tensions, farmer–herder

disputes, and political or resource-related disagreements. These conflicts have created an enabling environment for heightened incidents of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), particularly against women and girls. Respondents reported that insecurity, displacement, and the breakdown of traditional protection structures have increased women's vulnerability to sexual assault, domestic violence, and economic exploitation.

- The findings of the baseline assessment indicate that approximately 31.8% of surveyed respondents across the three LGAs reported that their households or communities have experienced conflicts, such as attacks, displacement, armed clashes, or raids, within the past 3 years, while 68.2% reported not having experienced conflict during the same period. Conflict exposure was reported more frequently in rural and southern LGAs such as Zangon Kataf and Igabi local government areas. Across all three surveyed LGAs, analysis of the types of conflict events revealed that the most frequently reported conflict events experienced by households and communities were banditry/raids (31.8%), kidnapping (25.9%), and forced displacement (15.3%). Other common experiences include communal/ethnic violence (8.2%) and armed clashes (5.9%).
- Findings reveal that overall, about 14% of surveyed households reported that at least one member was injured or killed due to conflict in the past three years, while 86% did not report any direct physical loss. This demonstrates the severe human toll of persistent insecurity in Southern Kaduna. The impact was most pronounced in Zangon Kataf (25.0%), followed by Igabi (13.8%), areas known for frequent bandit attacks and armed raids. In these communities, physical violence has led to widespread loss, trauma, and disruption of livelihoods.

2. AWARENESS AND KNOWLEDGE OF SGBV

- Awareness of the term “sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)” remains uneven across the surveyed communities in Kaduna State. To ensure accurate comprehension and avoid technical bias, enumerators translated and explained the concept using locally understood terminology and contextual examples during data collection. Overall, 60.9% of respondents reported that they had heard of SGBV (as described in local language), while 39.1% indicated no prior awareness. Awareness levels were highest in Igabi LGA (70.3%), closely followed by Zangon Kataf (69.4%), and were comparatively lower in Zaria (43.2%). These variations suggest differing levels of exposure to sensitization efforts and highlight the need for more targeted awareness campaigns in lower-performing LGAs. These findings indicate moderate general awareness but significant knowledge gaps, particularly in rural and conflict-affected areas. Limited exposure to structured sensitization activities and cultural reticence around discussions of sexual violence may explain these differences. While women (62.7%) show slightly higher levels of awareness than men (37.3%), both genders demonstrate varying degrees of conceptual understanding.
- Data from the baseline reveal that multiple forms of SGBV are prevalent across the targeted communities in Kaduna State. The most commonly reported forms include intimate partner violence (physical) at 61.6%, harassment at 42.4%, rape at 39.4%, and intimate partner violence (sexual) at 30.3%. These were followed by sexual assault (17.2%), early or forced marriage at 10.1%, and sexual exploitation (9.1%). The findings underscore that domestic and relational violence remains the dominant expression of SGBV, suggesting the normalization of gendered power imbalances and the influence of entrenched patriarchal norms.

- Disaggregation by LGA reveals that intimate partner violence (physical), intimate partner violence (sexual) and harassment are most prevalent in Zangon Kataf, suggesting strong links between cultural practices, gender norms, and insecurity. Zaria shows relatively higher rates of rape, physical violence, sexual assault, and harassment, possibly also tied to cultural practices, gender norms and economic hardship. Igabi LGA shows similar patterns, with physical violence, harassment and early/forced marriage being the most cited concerns.
- Knowledge of where survivors of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) can seek assistance remains uneven across the study communities. While 76.2% of respondents reported awareness of available support options, 23.8% indicated that they were unaware of any formal or informal channels for seeking help. Awareness was higher in Zaria LGA (94.4%) and Zangon Kataf (86.1%), which possibly have benefited from NGO-led sensitization and referral systems. In contrast, Igabi LGA (45.5%) recorded lower awareness, highlighting persistent information gaps, especially in rural and conflict-affected areas.
- Findings from the FGDs and KIs highlight significant knowledge gaps regarding available SGBV referral mechanisms and survivor support services. While some participants, mainly those in urban centres or who had previous NGO contact, could identify hospitals, social welfare offices, police, social welfare, human rights activists, and religious leaders, with fewer references to GBV desks, legal aid services, or psychosocial support centers as potential referral points, most rural participants were unaware of structured support pathways.

3. ACCESS AND AVAILABILITY OF JUSTICE MECHANISMS

- Analysis of justice mechanisms across the surveyed communities indicates that formal and informal institutions remain the most accessible avenues for dispute resolution. A majority of respondents identified the police (92.2%), traditional and religious courts (65.7%), and magistrate or customary courts (60.8%) as available justice mechanisms in their communities. However, access to specialized, survivor-centered services remains weak. Only 7.8% of respondents reported awareness of the presence of a GBV desk within police stations serving their communities, while fewer than one-third (21.6%) indicated access to legal aid services or NGO-supported justice mechanisms. This suggests that although general justice structures are widely recognized, dedicated SGBV-responsive services are scarce or poorly known, limiting effective access to justice for survivors. The findings indicate that although justice frameworks exist formally, their operational reach remains weak, particularly in rural or conflict-affected communities. Quantitative trends reflecting low awareness of SGBV reporting structures and low formal reporting rates are consistent with this qualitative insight.
- The limited availability and uneven distribution of formal justice mechanisms across LGAs in Kaduna have serious implications for SGBV survivors. *The predominance of community and religious courts, while locally accessible, often prioritizes reconciliation and social harmony over justice for survivors. These informal systems typically lack gender sensitivity, confidentiality protocols, and survivor-centered procedures, discouraging formal reporting of SGBV cases.* The absence of GBV desks and legal aid services further constrains survivors' access to professional support and redress, reinforcing underreporting and impunity.
- Access to formal justice institutions remains a significant challenge across the surveyed communities in Kaduna State. Findings indicate that the average travel time to the nearest police station is approximately 25 minutes. Notably, nearly 30% of respondents reported that

they live between 31 and 60 minutes away. For many community members, walking is the primary mode of transport, particularly among low-income households and in rural areas where motorized transport is either unavailable or unaffordable. This reliance on walking substantially increases the physical burden and opportunity cost of seeking justice, especially for women, elderly persons, and persons with disabilities (PWDs). The distance and transport limitations therefore pose a structural barrier to timely reporting of cases and access to formal protection services. *Particularly affected are communities in Zaria and Zangon Kataf LGAs, where some households would need to travel over an hour to reach the nearest police post. These distances create significant barriers to timely reporting of conflict incidents and gender-based violence. Survivors often face logistical, financial, and security constraints in reaching police facilities, particularly in rural settlements. The limited visibility of police services reinforces community reliance on informal and traditional mechanisms for dispute resolution.*

- The average travel time to the nearest functional court was approximately 27 minutes, with considerable variation across communities (range: 5 - 120 minutes). Nearly half of respondents (48%) reside over 45 minutes away from a functioning court, indicating significant physical barriers to accessing formal justice services.
- Zangon Kataf LGA recorded the longest average distance (34 minutes), likely due to more dispersed rural settlements, whereas Igabi had the shortest (16 minutes), reflecting proximity to semi-urban centers.
- The baseline study measured actual utilization of justice services (police/court/legal aid/traditional mediator) in the last 12 months, providing an empirical measure of access to justice beyond awareness or perception. Findings from the baseline survey indicate that justice service utilization remains low among households in Kaduna's conflict-prone LGAs. Only about one in three households (34%) reported using any justice service (such as police, courts, legal aid providers, or traditional mediators) in the last year, revealing low engagement with both formal and informal dispute resolution systems. The majority (66%) had not used any justice mechanism, suggesting barriers related to trust, cost, distance, or awareness.

4. BARRIERS TO ACCESSING JUSTICE

- The baseline findings underscore persistent barriers to accessing justice for GBV survivors in conflict-affected LGAs. Analysis of the perceived barriers to accessing formal justice mechanisms in Kaduna State reveals significant structural and social constraints that impede survivors' and community members' ability to seek redress.
- Overall, respondents rated bribery/corruption (Mean = 3.1), lack of confidentiality (Mean = 3.1), and perpetrator's power or status (Mean = 3.0) as the most severe barriers. This is followed by fear of reprisal (Mean = 2.8) and lack of knowledge on how or where to report (Mean = 2.5). These findings underscore widespread perceptions that the justice system is corrupt, lacks survivor confidentiality, unsafe and often inaccessible to vulnerable groups. Cost of service (Mean = 2.3) and distance to services (Mean = 1.9) were also cited as substantial challenges.
- Data from the FGDs and KIIs corroborated the quantitative findings by revealing that survivors of conflict-related SGBV face multiple, overlapping barriers in seeking justice. These include fear of stigma, lack of trust in formal justice institutions, limited awareness of legal processes, and the physical inaccessibility of police or courts due to insecurity. *Participants repeatedly*

emphasized that survivors often chose silence over reporting because of social pressure and the perception that justice mechanisms are ineffective.

- Across surveyed communities in Kaduna, the dominant reasons for non-reporting were lack of information (50%) suggesting accessibility and awareness issues, especially in rural LGAs. Fear of retaliation (16.7%) and shame/stigma (16.7%) underscore the persistent culture of silence and fear surrounding GBV in Kaduna's conflict-prone areas. Lack of trust in police/courts (16.7%) underscores limited faith in formal justice mechanisms – a perception likely reinforced by poor case follow-up and corruption concerns. Social and cultural barriers, including pressure to settle (16.7%), further deter reporting, indicating the influence of patriarchal norms and the prioritization of communal harmony over survivor welfare.
- The justice vacuum has led communities to depend on alternative dispute resolution methods that are often not survivor-centered. While these mechanisms provide social cohesion, they often compromise justice outcomes. Consequently, underreporting remains widespread, and conviction rates for SGBV are extremely low.

5. EXPERIENCES OF SGBV (SELF, HOUSEHOLD, AND MARGINALIZED POPULATIONS)

- Findings from the baseline survey indicate that multiple forms of violence continue to affect households across conflict-prone LGAs in Kaduna State. The most common forms of violence were physical assault (36.7%) and economic violence (23.3%), reflecting the pervasive insecurity and economic deprivation associated with recurrent conflict. Reports of sexual harassment (4.4%) and forced/early marriage (4.4%) highlight persistent gender-based vulnerabilities, particularly among women and adolescent girls. Although fewer households (4.4%) reported sexual assault/rape, this figure likely underrepresents the true prevalence, as survivors often face stigma, fear of retaliation, and limited access to survivor-centered reporting mechanisms. Forced sexual intercourse within marriage (3.3%) further underscores the normalization of intimate partner violence and the need for stronger awareness of marital consent and women's rights.
- Analysis of testimonies from FGDs and KIIs reveals that experiences of SGBV and related forms of violence remain widespread across households in Kaduna, particularly among women, girls, and other vulnerable populations. The forms of violence reported include physical assault, sexual violence (rape, attempted rape), domestic abuse, and emotional or psychological violence. Several respondents also cited cases of forced marriage and denial of economic resources as subtle but harmful expressions of gendered control. Women's FGDs especially emphasized intimate partner violence as the most common form, often justified by men as a form of discipline.
- The baseline data revealed that survivors of violence and SGBV predominantly seek help through informal support systems rather than formal justice actors. Nearly four in ten survivors (38%) did not report their experiences to anyone, due to deep social stigma, fear of retaliation, and low confidence in the justice system. Among those who reported, the most common channels were family or friends (42.0%), followed by traditional (25.0%) and religious leaders (11.4%). Only 10.2% reported incidents to the police, and 3.4% to NGOs or legal aid providers, highlighting significant barriers to accessing formal justice and protection mechanisms.

6. COMMUNITY ATTITUDES TOWARD GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

- Attitudes toward gender-based violence remain a critical determinant of community tolerance for abuse and the likelihood of reporting SGBV cases. Across Kaduna State, the majority of respondents (82%) either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement that "women should tolerate some violence to keep the family together." The overall mean score of 1.9 indicates a generally low threshold for domestic violence.
- The findings reveal that rape myths and victim-blaming attitudes persist, although a majority of respondents reject them. Across Kaduna State, 84.6% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that "if a woman is raped, it is usually because she provoked it." The overall mean score of 1.7 indicates a generally low endorsement of rape-justifying beliefs.
- Perceptions regarding the relative effectiveness of traditional leaders versus the police in protecting victims of violence vary across Kaduna State, revealing complex community trust dynamics. Across the surveyed communities, the average mean score of 3.2 indicates a neutral-to-slightly positive perception that traditional leaders offer better protection to victims than the police. While 27.5% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, a notable 42.2% agreed or strongly agreed, reflecting significant reliance on customary justice structures.
- Community trust in justice actors for addressing SGBV cases varies across the three LGAs, reflecting differing experiences with both formal and informal systems. Overall, police (41.7%) are the most trusted actors for resolving SGBV incidents, followed by traditional leaders (14.8%) and NGOs/social workers (13.9%).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this baseline research, the following strategic recommendations are proposed to strengthen SGBV prevention, response, and access to justice in conflict-prone regions of Kaduna State:

A. Strengthen Survivor-Centered Justice Systems

- Expand and operationalize GBV Desks in police stations and local courts, ensuring they are staffed with trained, gender-sensitive personnel.
- Establish mobile justice and psychosocial outreach services to reach survivors in remote, displaced, and conflict-affected communities.
- Enhance legal aid and pro bono representation through partnerships with the Legal Aid Council of Nigeria (LACON), the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), and women's rights organizations (WROs).
- Integrate trauma-informed and survivor-centered procedures into justice and law enforcement processes to uphold survivors' dignity and confidentiality.

B. Empower Traditional and Faith-Based Leaders

- Build the capacity of community and religious leaders to handle SGBV cases in accordance with the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act (VAPP, 2015).
- Orient community mediation structures to refer, rather than resolve, SGBV cases informally, linking survivors with formal justice and protection services.

- Facilitate interfaith dialogues and community pledges promoting zero tolerance for SGBV and the protection of women's rights during and after conflict.

C. Strengthen and Expand Multi-Sector Coordination

- Strengthen LGA-level SGBV coordination platforms linking police, health services, social welfare offices, civil society, and humanitarian actors.
- Introduce joint referral tracking systems to ensure survivors receive continuous support from first response to case closure.
- Facilitate regular capacity-building workshops for law enforcement, healthcare, and judicial officers to harmonize survivor-centered case management practices.

D. Integrate Gender and Peacebuilding Approaches

- Embed gender-sensitive peacebuilding components into community stabilization, reconciliation, and early warning programs.
- Strengthen the participation of women and youth in peace and security committees, ensuring that gendered perspectives inform all conflict mitigation efforts.
- Support livelihood recovery programs targeting conflict-affected and widowed women to reduce economic dependence and vulnerability to exploitation.

E. Promote Awareness, Legal Literacy, and Social Norm Change

- Roll out community sensitization campaigns using radio, schools, mosques, churches, and markets to raise awareness about SGBV laws, survivor rights, and reporting options.
- Develop behavior change communication initiatives aimed at shifting harmful norms that justify domestic violence and silence survivors.
- Integrate SGBV education into school and youth curricula, promoting gender equality and respect from an early age.
- Conduct targeted legal literacy training for women and marginalized groups to increase their confidence in seeking justice.

F. Strengthen Policy and Institutional Frameworks

- Advocate for the full implementation of the VAPP Act across all LGAs in Kaduna, with clear enforcement mechanisms and budgetary allocations.
- Institutionalize gender desks and SGBV focal units within local government administrations, security agencies, and social welfare departments.
- Develop state-wide SGBV data systems to capture, analyze, and report cases, ensuring evidence-based policymaking and accountability.
- Encourage state-level budget commitments toward SGBV prevention, survivor support, and access to justice programs.

1. Introduction, Background and Context

1.1. Introduction

Kaduna State has witnessed recurring ethno-religious and farmer–herder conflicts, particularly in the southern corridor, leading to displacement, destruction of livelihoods, and disruption of social order. Within these contexts, women and girls are disproportionately affected by SGBV, including rape, intimate partner violence, abduction, and early/forced marriage.

This baseline study sought to examine how conflict dynamics in Kaduna State intersect with Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) and influence survivors’ access to justice. The research provides an evidence base for designing interventions that strengthen survivor-centered justice systems and reduce impunity for SGBV in conflict-affected communities. The research was commissioned by Global Rights and implemented by Nextier SPD.

The rest of this report is organized into seven sections.

Section 1 presents the project background and context, the purpose of the baseline research, and the geographical coverage of the study.

Section 2 outlines the research methodology employed, including sampling approaches, data collection methods, and key limitations.

Section 3 provides an analysis of the main findings from the baseline assessment.

Section 4 offers an in-depth discussion of the findings and their implications for the intersection between conflict, SGBV, and access to justice.

Section 5 summarizes the key conclusions derived from the analysis and proposes actionable recommendations.

Sections 6 and 7 present the references and annexes, respectively.

1.2. Background and Context

Over the past decade, Nigeria has experienced a progressive escalation of insecurity, with the Northern region bearing a disproportionate share of the impact. The Northwest, in particular, has become the epicenter of these complex and overlapping conflicts, including recurrent farmer-herder disputes, intercommunal clashes, terror-related banditry, and persistent political, ethnic, and religious tensions. These crises have compounded vulnerabilities within communities, disrupted livelihoods, and destabilized local governance structures.

The state’s limited capacity to prevent, mitigate, and respond effectively to these security challenges has resulted in profound socio-economic consequences. Food production and distribution systems have been severely disrupted, contributing to rising food insecurity and accelerating inflation across the country. In addition, the persistent insecurity has deepened social fragmentation, heightened distrust between citizens and the state, and eroded public confidence in formal governance and justice institutions.

Survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) and other marginalized groups are among those most affected by this environment of insecurity. Conflict and weak justice responses have not only increased their exposure to violence but have also limited their ability to seek and obtain timely and effective redress. Despite existing legal frameworks, significant gaps remain in both the protection of survivors and the prosecution of perpetrators. Survivors often face stigma, silence, and secondary victimization when they seek redress. Many lack awareness of their rights, while others are deterred by the cost, distance, slow pace, or perceived bias of formal justice systems. Traditional and religious mechanisms, though more accessible, often fall short in addressing GBV in a rights-based and survivor-centered manner. The absence of survivor-centered and inclusive justice mechanisms perpetuates cycles of impunity and hinders broader peacebuilding and development efforts.

Against this backdrop, conducting a baseline study to assess the current level of access to justice and the barriers hindering survivors of GBV and vulnerable populations is both urgent and necessary. Such evidence will provide a foundation for designing targeted interventions that strengthen justice systems, enhance accountability, and rebuild trust between communities and state institutions in the project's target areas. This inception report provides a clear framework for conducting this baseline study.

1.3. Rationale

Global Rights is implementing a project that strengthens civic participation and peacebuilding in Northwest Nigeria, including Kaduna State. These initiatives are creating platforms for women's engagement in peace dialogues, leveraging existing structures and strategic relationships. In this context, assessing the landscape of access to justice, particularly for women and girls in Kaduna, is critical in providing insight into the broader systemic and social barriers that hinder justice delivery in conflict-prone regions.

The persistence of insecurity and weak justice delivery systems in the region underscores the urgent need for evidence-based interventions that respond to the realities faced by survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) and other vulnerable groups. Despite ongoing efforts, access to justice remains uneven, often constrained by institutional weaknesses, socio-cultural norms, economic barriers, and the climate of fear created by insecurity.

This baseline study is therefore critical to generate reliable data on the current state of justice access, highlight systemic and community-level barriers, and identify gaps in survivor-centered response mechanisms. Such evidence will not only inform the design and implementation of project interventions but also support broader policy advocacy, stakeholder engagement, and capacity-strengthening initiatives aimed at improving justice outcomes in the region.

1.4. Objectives of the Baseline

The overall objective of the baseline assessment was to assess the current level of access to justice in Kaduna and identify the key barriers that hinder timely and effective justice for survivors of gender-based violence and other vulnerable groups.

The baseline study sought to achieve the following specific objectives:

- **Map existing justice mechanisms** (formal and informal); their processes, roles, and accessibility for vulnerable groups, especially women and girls.
- **Identify barriers** – legal, institutional, socio-cultural, economic, and security-related – that hinder timely and effective delivery of justice, with particular attention to GBV cases.
- **Assess the capacity and responsiveness** of relevant justice sector actors, including police, courts, legal aid services, social welfare departments, and community-based structures.
- **Examine perceptions and experiences** of justice among community members, particularly survivors of GBV and marginalized populations.
- **Generate actionable recommendations** for strengthening access to justice and survivor-centered responses in the state.

1.5. Key Research Questions

The baseline sought to collect evidence on four (4) core guiding research questions as outlined below:

A. Conflict–SGBV Dynamics

1. What forms and patterns of SGBV are most prevalent in Kaduna and other conflict-prone areas in NW, and how do these relate to ongoing conflict dynamics?
2. In what ways has conflict contributed to the incidence, severity, and normalization of SGBV in the target locations?
3. Who are the primary perpetrators and victims of SGBV in these contexts (e.g., armed groups, community members, security actors, etc.)?
4. How do displacement, insecurity, and weakened social cohesion affect vulnerability to SGBV?

B. Access to, and Barriers of Justice for SGBV Survivors

5. What formal and informal justice mechanisms are available to survivors of SGBV across the targeted communities?
6. How effective, survivor-centered, and accessible are these mechanisms (considering cost, timeliness, confidentiality, stigma, and safety)?
7. What specific barriers – legal, institutional, socio-cultural, economic, and security-related – limit survivors’ ability to seek justice?
8. How do community perceptions of justice, conflict, and gender norms influence survivors’ willingness to report cases?
9. To what extent do justice actors (police, judiciary, traditional/religious leaders, NGOs) respond appropriately to SGBV in conflict contexts?

C. Consequences of Conflict and SGBV on Justice Access

10. How has the interaction between conflict and SGBV shaped survivors’ trust (or mistrust) in justice institutions?
11. What are the psychosocial, economic, and social consequences for survivors who are unable to access justice?
12. How do failures in justice delivery contribute to cycles of impunity, prolonged conflict, or further victimization of survivors?

13. In what ways does limited access to justice affect community cohesion, peacebuilding efforts, and broader human security?

D. Opportunities for Strengthening Justice Systems

14. What promising practices or innovations exist in conflict-prone communities that support survivors' access to justice?
15. What reforms, partnerships, or capacity gaps need to be addressed to strengthen survivor-centered justice in conflict-affected settings?
16. How can interventions better integrate conflict sensitivity and gender-responsiveness into justice service delivery?

1.6. Scope and Targeted Locations

The study focused on purposively selected conflict-affected Local Government Areas (LGAs) covering the three senatorial districts in Kaduna State to capture variation across different conflict contexts (e.g., communal violence, farmer-herder clashes, criminality). These include:

- Rigachikun (Igabi LGA)
- Iyan Jma (Zaria LGA)
- Zonkwa (Zangon Kataf LGA)

2. Methodology

This section outlines the approach and methodology used to carry out the baseline research. More specifically, it describes in detail the study design framework, data collection approaches used, sampling and stakeholder engagement, and data analysis framework. In addition, methodological limitations that affected the evaluation process, as well as mitigation strategies used, are also highlighted.

2.1. Study design

The baseline study adopted a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative research techniques to provide a comprehensive understanding of the intersection between conflict, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), and access to justice in conflict-prone areas of Kaduna State. The mixed-method design facilitated triangulation of findings, ensuring both statistical reliability and contextual depth in exploring the nexus between conflict, SGBV, and justice mechanisms.

2.2. Study Area

The research was conducted in three conflict-prone Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Kaduna State, namely, Rigachikun (Igabi LGA - Kaduna Central senatorial district), Iyan Juma (Zaria LGA - Kaduna North senatorial district), and Zonkwa (Zangon Kataf LGA - Kaduna South senatorial district). These communities/LGAs were purposively selected to reflect the diversity of conflict dynamics across Northern and Southern Kaduna as well as across the three senatorial districts. While Igabi and Zaria have experienced periodic communal tensions and banditry, Zangon Kataf has faced recurrent ethno-religious conflicts with profound humanitarian and protection implications.

2.3. Target Study Population

The target population comprised households, community members, justice sector actors, traditional and religious leaders, women's groups, and civil society organizations involved in GBV prevention and response. Within these groups, particular emphasis was placed on survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) and other marginalized populations, who are most likely to encounter barriers in accessing justice.

Specifically, the study targeted multiple stakeholders and respondents including:

- Community residents
- GBV survivors (women, girls, men/boys where relevant)
- Justice sector actors (police, judiciary, legal aid providers)
- Religious and traditional leaders
- Civil Society (CSOs, paralegals, health workers, social welfare officers)
- Government officials
- Other vulnerable groups (persons with disabilities, minority groups, displaced persons, youth).

2.4. Sampling Strategy and Study Sites

A multi-stage sampling technique was used. In the first stage, communities were purposively selected based on conflict exposure and the presence of displaced or vulnerable populations. In the second stage, systematic random sampling was employed to select households for the quantitative survey.

Three Local Government Areas (LGAs) – Igabi, Zaria, and Zangon Kataf – were purposively selected for the study based on their history of communal tension, religious diversity, and recurrent conflict incidents. Within each LGA, study communities were identified in consultation with local stakeholders to ensure inclusivity and representation of varying conflict dynamics and social structures.

2.5. Data Collection Methods

Data were collected through three primary tools:

1. **Household Survey:** The questionnaire captured quantitative data on community members' awareness, perceptions, and experiences of SGBV and justice mechanisms.
2. **Key Informant Interviews (KIIs):** Conducted with 21 individuals (10 males and 11 females), including traditional and religious leaders, justice actors, SGBV survivors, CDC/GBV Chairpersons, Head of Programs, LGA Officials, Women Leaders, and security personnel. These interviews explored institutional and structural barriers to justice and protection.
3. **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):** Six FGDs were held – two each in Zaria Rido, Zonkwa, and Rigachikun – engaging 40 participants (19 males and 21 females). The FGDs provided deeper insights into gender norms, community attitudes, and coping mechanisms.

2.6. Data Collection Mode

Data collection was conducted primarily through face-to-face interviews and facilitated group discussions using both structured and semi-structured tools. The process spanned a period of two weeks in October 2025, covering the three selected LGAs—Igabi, Zaria, and Zangon Kataf.

A team of eight trained enumerators (3 females and 5 males) and two field supervisors carried out the household surveys using digital tablets equipped with KoboCollect, allowing for real-time data capture, validation, and quality monitoring. Surveys were administered in respondents' preferred language – Hausa or English – to ensure clarity and inclusivity.

The Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were facilitated by experienced qualitative researchers, with each session conducted in person. Gender sensitivity was maintained throughout: separate FGDs were held for men and women to create safe spaces for open discussion, particularly on sensitive SGBV and justice-related issues.

All sessions were conducted in line with ethical standards – participants provided informed consent, and confidentiality was strictly observed. Where consent was granted, audio recordings were used alongside detailed note-taking to ensure accurate transcription. The research team also adhered to safety and conflict-sensitive protocols, maintaining neutrality and cultural sensitivity across all study sites.

2.7. Data Analysis

Quantitative data from the household surveys were entered and analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) Version 26. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, and means were computed to summarize respondents' demographic characteristics and perceptions related to SGBV and access to justice. Cross-tabulations were used to explore patterns and differences across gender, age groups, and locations.

Qualitative data from KIIs and FGDs were transcribed verbatim and analyzed thematically using NVivo. Thematic coding focused on identifying recurring issues around conflict-related SGBV, justice-seeking behavior, institutional response, and gender dynamics. Findings from both data sources were triangulated to enhance validity, identify convergences, and highlight contextual nuances.

2.8. Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to established ethical research standards, emphasizing the principles of confidentiality, voluntariness, and informed consent. Enumerators were trained on Do No Harm and survivor-centered approaches to interviewing. All participants were informed about the purpose of the study and their right to withdraw at any point. Survivors or respondents disclosing distressing experiences were referred to appropriate GBV service providers for psychosocial or medical support.

2.9. Study Limitations

While the baseline research generated valuable insights into the intersection of conflict, SGBV, and access to justice in Kaduna State, certain limitations should be noted.

First, the sensitive nature of SGBV-related questions may have influenced the willingness of some respondents – particularly survivors – to disclose personal experiences, resulting in potential underreporting. The research team mitigated this through confidentiality assurances, gender-sensitive facilitation, and the use of trained enumerators.

Second, insecurity and restricted access to some communities affected by conflict limited the geographic scope of data collection, potentially constraining the representativeness of findings. However, purposive selection of high-risk areas ensured that the study still captured diverse conflict and justice contexts.

Third, as a cross-sectional baseline, the findings reflect perceptions and experiences at a single point in time. Changes in conflict dynamics or governance conditions after data collection may influence future outcomes.

Despite these limitations, the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, triangulation of multiple data sources, and gender-balanced participation lends robustness and credibility to the study's findings and conclusions.

2.10. Data Quality Assurance

Several measures were implemented to ensure data quality and consistency:

- Enumerators received intensive training on questionnaire administration, ethics, and the use of digital tools.

- All instruments were pre-tested and refined prior to deployment.
- Daily field debriefings were conducted to review data completeness and resolve inconsistencies.
- Supervisors performed random spot checks and real-time data verification through the ODK server.
- Qualitative interviews were recorded (with consent), transcribed verbatim, and validated through cross-checking among field researchers.

Overall, the combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies provided a nuanced understanding of how conflict shapes the prevalence and dynamics of SGBV, and how these in turn influence access to justice across Kaduna's conflict-prone LGAs. The rigorous sampling, ethical safeguards, and triangulated analysis ensured that the findings present credible evidence to inform programming, policy, and advocacy interventions addressing SGBV and justice reform in fragile settings.

3. Key Findings

This section presents the key findings of the baseline assessment, organized into thematic subsections. The first subsection outlines the demographic characteristics of respondents, including their location, gender, age, marital status, literacy level, occupation, and religious affiliation. The subsequent sub-sections present findings across the thematic focus areas of the study, highlighting community perceptions, experiences, and institutional dynamics at the intersection of conflict, SGBV, and access to justice in Kaduna State.

3.1. Demographic Profile of Study Respondents

Understanding the demographic profile of respondents provides essential context for interpreting the findings of this baseline assessment. The survey sample comprised individuals from diverse age groups, marital statuses, educational levels, and occupations across the three target LGAs – Igabi, Zaria, and Zangon Kataf. This diversity ensured that the perspectives captured reflect the varied social, economic, and cultural realities influencing experiences of conflict, gender-based violence, and access to justice within the study communities.

The baseline sample comprised 113 respondents drawn from three LGAs in Kaduna state, comprising Igabi (40), Zaria (37), and Zangon Kataf (36). Females constituted 63.7% of the respondents, while 36.3% were male. The age distribution shows that the majority of respondents (45.3%) were within the active working age of 25 – 44 years, while 18.9% were youth aged 18 – 24 years. Only 7.5% were aged 55 years or older. This age pattern reflects a youthful population actively engaged in economic and social life within the study communities. The average age was 35.4 years, ranging from 15 to 68 years.

Table 1: Demographic profile of survey respondents

Variable	Category	Percentage
Gender	Male	36.3%
	Female	63.7%
	15 – 17 years	5.7%
	18 – 24 years	18.9%
	25 – 34 years	20.8%
	35 – 44 years	24.5%
	45 – 54 years	22.6%
	55+	7.5%
Marital Status	Single	30.9%
	Married	60.9%
	Separated	0.9%
	widowed	7.3%
Education	No formal education	15.5%
	No qualification	5.5%
	Primary	5.5%
	Secondary	46.4%
	OND/ND/NCE	12.7%
	Undergraduate/BSc/HND	12.7%
	Postgraduate (MSc, PhD)	1.8%
Religion	Christianity	34.5%

	Islam	65.5%
Urban/Rural	Urban	31.9%
	Rural	68.1%

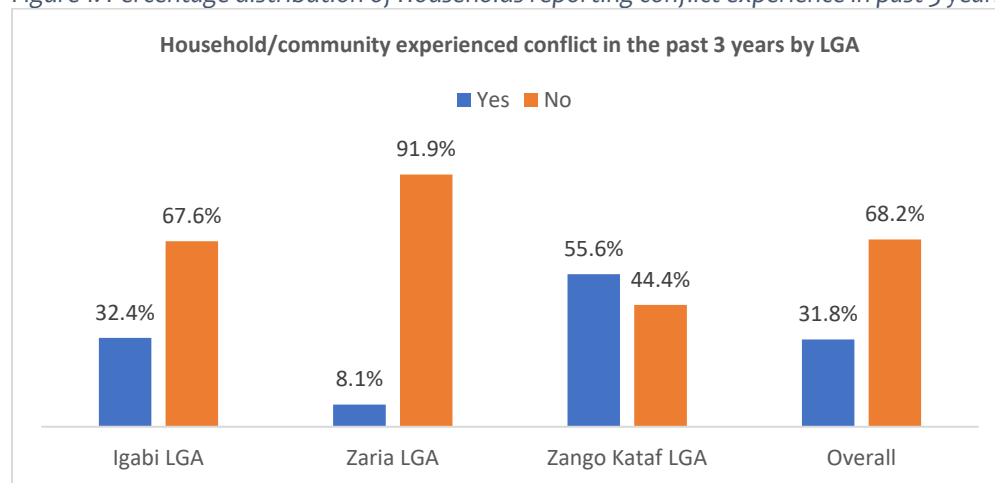
A majority (60.9%) were married, while 39.1% were single, widowed, or separated. Educational attainment varied, with 46.4% of respondents having completed at least secondary education. Occupations were primarily farming (40%) and trading (30%), reflecting the rural-agrarian nature of the study area. Respondents were unequally distributed by religious affiliation (34.5% Christianity and 65.5% Islam), consistent with Kaduna’s religious composition.

3.2. Conflict – SGBV Nexus

3.2.1. Household or Community Experience of Conflict in the Past 3 Years

Conflict remains a defining feature of community life in many parts of Kaduna State. The findings of the baseline assessment indicate that about 31.8% of surveyed respondents across the three LGAs indicated that their households or communities have experienced conflict – such as attacks, displacement, armed clashes, or raids – within the past 3 years, while 68.2% reported no such experience. Conflict exposure was reported more frequently in rural and southern LGAs such as Zangon Kataf and Igabi local government areas. The findings imply that conflict and insecurity remain prevalent in the study area (Zango Kataf and Igabi), potentially influencing other dimensions such as displacement, livelihood disruption, and exposure to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). The relatively high proportion of households experiencing conflict in those areas underscores the need for community protection mechanisms and justice system strengthening in affected communities.

Figure 1: Percentage distribution of Households reporting conflict experience in past 3 years by LGA



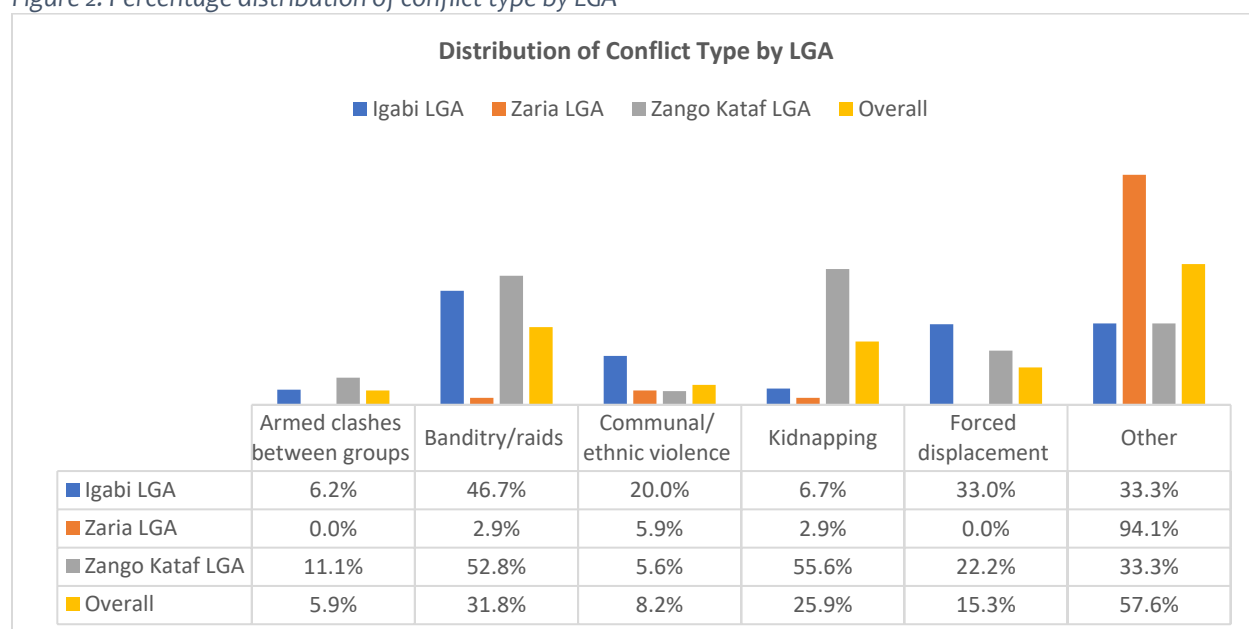
High conflict exposure (55.6% in Zango Kataf) indicates ongoing insecurity and fragility in southern Kaduna. The prevalence of violence creates conditions that heighten SGBV risk, particularly for women and displaced populations. Conflict undermines community trust and justice structures, reinforcing impunity and discouraging reporting of violations. To deal with the effects of conflict and SGBV, programs should include peacebuilding, psychosocial support, and access to justice.

Analysis of data from the FGDs and KIIs corroborates the survey findings, indicating that conflict and insecurity are widespread realities affecting many communities across Kaduna State. The qualitative insights reinforce the quantitative evidence, depicting an environment where violent incidents have become frequent and normalized. Participants from both male and female discussion groups recounted repeated attacks, raids, and armed incursions that have left families in constant fear and uncertainty. These experiences were both direct, through assaults on homes, farms, and relatives, and indirect, manifesting as psychological distress and disrupted livelihoods. As one woman during FGD explained, “We were attacked in the night; they took our animals and we fled with only the clothes we had” [001-FGD-WG-Kad-October-2025]. Another participant added, “There has been fighting around our community many times in the last two years; sometimes we hide in the bush and return after a week” [002-FGD-MYG-Kad-October-2025]. These accounts align with the survey’s quantitative findings, which show that a large proportion of households in Kaduna have experienced violence within the past three years.

3.2.2. Types of Conflict Events Experienced by Communities/Households

Across all three surveyed LGAs, analysis of the types of conflict events revealed that the most frequently reported conflict events experienced by households and communities were banditry/raids (31.8%), kidnapping (25.9%) and forced displacement (15.3%). Other common experiences include communal/ethnic violence (8.2%) and armed clashes (5.9%). These patterns of insecurity have direct implications for SGBV risks, as banditry/raids, kidnapping, displacement, and weakened community protection structures heighten vulnerability to sexual assault, exploitation, and early/forced marriage.

Figure 2: Percentage distribution of conflict type by LGA



The data reveal a strong correlation between conflict intensity and the prevalence of SGBV vulnerabilities. The LGA with the highest level of attacks (Igabi) also reported the greatest barriers to justice and lack of protection for survivor. The intersection of insecurity, social breakdown, and weak institutions perpetuates a cycle of violence, silence, and impunity.

High frequency and overlap of conflict events reflect widespread community insecurity. Recurrent displacement, raids, and abductions erode community resilience and intensify SGBV vulnerabilities. The persistence of communal and armed violence undermines justice access – survivors and witnesses may fear retaliation or lack mobility to report crimes. Targeted interventions should strengthen community protection mechanisms, mobile legal aid, and conflict-sensitive SGBV response systems.

Thematic evidence emerging from the FGDs and KIs paints a complex picture of the types of conflicts communities in Kaduna have endured. Participants described an array of violent encounters ranging from communal clashes, armed raids, and livestock theft to kidnappings, arson, and, equally disturbing, incidents of sexual violence that often accompany broader attacks. Many respondents emphasized that violence and economic predation are deeply intertwined, with aggressors targeting both human lives and livelihood assets. As one male participant lamented, “*They came to the farm and burned the granary; they also carted away many of our cows*” [004-FGD-MG-Kad-October-2025]. A religious leader interviewed noted, “*Kidnapping has increased; some people pay ransom, others are still missing*” [009-KII-RL-Kad-October-2025]. Meanwhile, a young female respondent highlighted the gendered dimension of conflict, recalling, “*During some attacks young women were taken and later we heard of sexual assaults*” [003-FGD-FYG-Kad-October-2025]. Collectively, these experiences show that communities face multi-layered threats—physical, economic, and sexual, that often occur simultaneously. The narratives complement quantitative trends showing that conflict incidents frequently combine multiple forms of harm, from abduction and theft to sexual and gender-based violence. These findings suggest that conflict in Kaduna manifests in multiple and overlapping forms, with direct consequences for household security, displacement, and social stability. The pattern of exposure underscores the urgency of strengthening early warning systems and justice responses for conflict-affected populations.

3.2.3. Human Impact of Conflict on Households

Findings reveal that overall, about 14% of surveyed households reported that at least one member was injured or killed due to conflict in the past three years, while 86% did not report any direct physical loss. This demonstrates the severe human toll of persistent insecurity in southern Kaduna. The impact was most pronounced in Zangon Kataf (25.0%), followed by Igabi (13.8%), areas known for frequent bandit attacks and armed raids. In these communities, physical violence has led to widespread loss, trauma, and disruption of livelihoods.

Table 2: Household Members Injured or Killed Due to Conflict in the Past 3 Years by LGA

Response	Igabi LGA	Zaria LGA	Zangon Kataf	Overall
Yes	13.8%	2.7%	25.0%	13.7%
No	86.2%	97.3%	75.0%	86.3%

(Source: Baseline Field Data, 2025)

The respondents reported varying estimates of family members' deaths or injuries. Qualitative interviews highlighted stories of family disintegration, psychological trauma, and heightened fear of movement, especially among women and children. Such conditions contribute to a climate of vulnerability, where SGBV risks escalate due to displacement, dependency, and weakened protection systems. Moreover, respondents reported limited access to justice for these killings and injuries, citing

fear of retaliation, lack of police presence, and ineffective legal remedies. This further entrenches impunity and mistrust in formal justice actors.

Some of the key implications of the above findings are: High levels of direct casualties (25% in Zangon Kataf) highlight that insecurity has personal and family-level consequences, not just community-level disruptions. Such experiences can cause deep psychological trauma, economic dislocation, and social fragmentation. Women and children in affected households face increased SGBV vulnerability, particularly where family protection structures are eroded. The absence of justice responses for killings and injuries fosters impunity, further discouraging survivors from seeking redress for SGBV or related crimes. Interventions should include trauma healing, legal aid, community mediation, and psychosocial support alongside security and justice reforms.

Interpretation of FGD and KII responses underscores the profound and enduring human toll of conflict on households in Kaduna. Beyond the immediate violence, participants spoke extensively about the cascading social and economic consequences that followed each attack. Families have lost loved ones, income sources, livestock, and farmland, eroding their capacity to recover. The testimonies also highlight widespread emotional distress, with many respondents reporting sleeplessness, anxiety, and feelings of hopelessness. A key informant from a women's group narrated, *"We lost two family members that day and my wife has not slept well since; our farm income is gone"* [006-KII-WL-Kad-October-2025]. Another participant explained, *"After they took our animals we had no money for school fees, the children dropped out"* [005-KII-LGO-Kad-October-2025]. Such stories reflect a cycle in which conflict triggers livelihood collapse, which in turn amplifies social and psychological stress within households. These findings align with quantitative results indicating increased poverty levels, food insecurity, and school absenteeism in areas most affected by violence.

3.2.4. Displacement and Its Gendered Implications

Displacement is one of the most visible consequences of protracted conflict in Southern Kaduna. Findings show that overall, 18.8% of households across the surveyed communities have been temporarily or permanently displaced due to violence in the past three years. The frequency of displacement underscores the widespread insecurity and instability affecting community life. Zangon Kataf LGA (30.3%) recorded the highest displacement rate, followed by Igabi (24.1%), where respondents described repeated attacks leading to loss of property, farmland, and shelter.

Table 3: Household Displacement Due to Conflict in the Past 3 Years by LGAs

Response	Igabi LGA	Zaria LGA	Zangon Kataf	Overall
Yes	24.1%	2.8%	30.3%	18.8%
No	75.9%	97.2%	69.4%	81.2%

(Source: Baseline Field Data, 2025)

Field interviews revealed that many displaced households experienced multiple displacements, moving between villages or host communities, while others were yet to return due to persistent threats. Displacement has had severe social and gendered implications on the communities. Women and girls in displacement contexts were frequently identified as more vulnerable to SGBV, including sexual exploitation, survival sex, early marriage, and harassment, particularly in informal settlements and host communities with weak protection structures. Moreover, displaced households reported

limited access to justice and humanitarian assistance, citing challenges such as distance from police posts, language barriers, and fear of reprisal when reporting incidents.

Further probe into the qualitative data from FGDs and KIIs reveals that displacement has emerged as both a coping mechanism and a source of further vulnerability, particularly for women and girls. While some displacement episodes were short-termed with families fleeing to the bush or staying temporarily with relatives—others have become protracted, creating long-term hardship. The accounts reveal strong gendered dimensions: men often stay behind to protect property or join local defense efforts, while women bear the burden of caring for children and the elderly under precarious conditions. Women’s FGDs consistently emphasized heightened exposure to sexual violence during flight and in temporary shelters, limited mobility, and restricted access to reproductive health and psychosocial support. One woman recounted, *“When we ran away, there was nowhere safe; women had to sleep in the open and some were later attacked”* [001-FGD-WG-Kad-October-2025]. Another widow shared, *“Since my husband was killed I am now responsible for everything, I have to look after the children and find food”* [012-KII-HP-Kad-October-2025]. These narratives vividly illustrate how displacement multiplies existing gender inequalities, confirming quantitative findings that displaced women and widows face the highest levels of vulnerability in conflict-affected areas of Kaduna.

3.2.5. Current displacement status of Households

This question is a follow-up question to complement the previous one and provides deeper insight into the ongoing displacement dynamics in Kaduna’s conflict-prone areas. It helps establish whether households have returned, remain displaced, or are in transition, which has direct implications for protection needs, SGBV risks, and justice accessibility. Overall, the baseline quantitative survey found that none of the households surveyed are currently displaced.

However, qualitative insights derived from the FGDs and KIIs show that while some displaced households in Kaduna have begun returning to their communities, displacement remains a persistent reality for many. The return process is often incomplete; households may physically return but continue to live in precarious conditions, with destroyed homes, lost farmlands, and little or no livelihood support. Several respondents reported that displacement has fractured families, as some members remain in safer areas while others attempt to rebuild their homes. A civil society member interviewed explained, *“Some have returned, but they have not recovered their animals; others are still in the town with relatives”* [011-KII-CSO-Kad-October-2025]. Similarly, a young woman in a focus group shared, *“We returned after three months, but the house was destroyed; we sleep in one room now”* [006-FGD-YWG-Kad-October-2025].

These findings underscore that return does not necessarily mean recovery. The partial and fragile nature of return is compounded by inadequate reconstruction support and continued insecurity, which discourages full reintegration. Quantitatively, this aligns with survey data showing a considerable proportion of “returned but vulnerable” households, those that remain economically unstable or at risk of renewed displacement due to lingering security threats. The qualitative evidence thus highlights that post-displacement recovery in Kaduna is a slow and uneven process, shaped by loss, insecurity, and the absence of sustained institutional support.

3.2.6. Impact of Insecurity on Access to Essential Services

Findings from the baseline show that 25.3% of respondents reported that insecurity had limited their ability to access essential services such as healthcare facilities, police stations, courthouses, or local markets within the past three years. Respondents across LGAs described how fear of attacks, poor road safety, and military operations restricted movement, forcing many to avoid public spaces or travel only during daylight. Access to justice institutions such as police posts and courts has been particularly affected, with many communities reporting that police outposts were abandoned or destroyed following repeated attacks. Zangon Kataf LGA (58.3%) recorded the highest level of restricted access, followed by Igabi (11.1%), underscoring the compounded effects of violence, displacement, and poor infrastructure.

Table 4: Reported Impact of Insecurity on Access to Essential Services by LGAs

Response	Igabi LGA	Zaria LGA	Zangon Kataf	Overall
Yes	11.1%	2.8%	58.3%	25.3%
No	88.9%	97.2%	41.7%	74.7%

(Source: Baseline Field Data, 2025)

Qualitative findings further reveal that women and girls face additional barriers, as insecurity has made it unsafe to travel alone to health centers, police stations, or markets. This has reduced reporting of SGBV cases, increased maternal health risks, and worsened economic dependency.

The high proportion (70%) reporting restricted access underscores how insecurity undermines state authority and service provision in conflict-affected LGAs. Justice services (police and courts) are among the most affected, exacerbating impunity for SGBV and other rights violations. Women are disproportionately affected, facing mobility restrictions and exposure to harassment or assault while seeking services. Sustained insecurity fuels a vicious cycle: weak service access deepens mistrust in government, which in turn reinforces conflict grievances. Interventions should prioritize:

- Mobile justice and police outreach in high-risk areas.
- Community-based early warning and protection systems.
- Improved security and infrastructure for service delivery in rural communities.

Evidence from the FGDs and KIIs paints a stark picture of how persistent insecurity has eroded access to essential services such as healthcare, education, markets, and justice systems in Kaduna. Participants repeatedly emphasized that fear of attacks, roadblocks, and the destruction of public infrastructure have made everyday activities risky or impossible. In several communities, health centres operate intermittently or have shut down entirely because staff fled or supplies were depleted. A woman recounted, “The clinic is far and sometimes closed; when there is fighting, we cannot go for treatment” [014-KII-WL-Kad-October-2025]. Similarly, the education sector has suffered as parents keep their children at home during crises: “School attendance drops every time there is insecurity, parents hide children at home,” explained a female youth participant [003-FGD-FYG-Kad-October-2025].

Perhaps most concerning is the impact on access to justice and SGBV response mechanisms. Both survivors and community leaders expressed widespread mistrust of formal justice institutions, citing

fear of retaliation and low confidence in police responsiveness. As one key informant working on SGBV issues noted, “Survivors do not report to the police because they fear reprisal and think nothing will be done” [019-KII-SGBVS-Kad-October-2025]. This lack of functional access to both health and justice services compounds the suffering of survivors and limits opportunities for redress. Quantitative findings showing low health service utilization and underreporting of SGBV cases are strongly corroborated by these qualitative accounts, which highlight insecurity as both a physical and psychological barrier to accessing essential services.

3.3. Awareness and Knowledge of SGBV

3.3.1. Have you heard of the term “sexual and gender-based violence” (SGBV)?

Awareness of the term “sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)” remains uneven across the surveyed communities in Kaduna State. To ensure accurate comprehension and avoid technical bias, enumerators translated and explained the concept using locally understood terminology and contextual examples during data collection. Overall, 60.9% of respondents reported that they had heard of SGBV (as described in local language), while 39.1% indicated no prior awareness. Awareness levels were highest in Igabi LGA (70.3%), closely followed by Zangon Kataf (69.4%), and were comparatively lower in Zaria (43.2%). These variations suggest differing levels of exposure to sensitization efforts and highlight the need for more targeted awareness campaigns in lower-performing LGAs. While women (62.7%) show slightly higher levels of awareness than men (37.3%), both genders demonstrate varying degrees of conceptual understanding.

Table 5: Awareness of the Term “Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV)” by LGA

Response	Igabi LGA	Zaria LGA	Zangon Kataf	Overall
Yes	70.3%	43.2%	69.4%	60.9%
No	29.7%	56.8%	30.6%	39.1%

(Source: Baseline Field Data, 2025)

Analysis of data from FGDs and KIIs indicates a mixed level of awareness of the term “sexual and gender-based violence” across communities in Kaduna. While most key informants, particularly health workers, justice actors, and CSO representatives, demonstrated a clear understanding of SGBV as encompassing rape, domestic abuse, and harmful traditional practices, community-level awareness was more fragmented. In several FGDs, participants admitted that the term “SGBV” was unfamiliar, though they could describe forms of abuse once probed further. This shows that while people understand the acts themselves, they do not necessarily identify them under the technical term. A woman in one group reflected, “We don’t call it that name, but we know when a man beats his wife or forces himself on her, it is wrong” [001-FGD-WG-Kad-October-2025]. Similarly, a youth participant explained, “I only heard of it during a training by an NGO; before then, we just said domestic problem” [003-FGD-FYG-Kad-October-2025].

Qualitative discussions further revealed that, even among those aware of the term, many associate SGBV primarily with physical assault, with little recognition of emotional, economic, or psychological forms of violence. These insights suggest that the concept of SGBV is gradually penetrating community discourse but remains largely limited to those with NGO or institutional exposure. Quantitative data showing moderate awareness levels among respondents aligns with this qualitative evidence,

underscoring a gap between experiential knowledge of abuse and formal recognition of SGBV as a rights violation. This highlights the need for targeted, context-sensitive awareness interventions that broaden community understanding of SGBV beyond physical violence and actively engage men, traditional leaders, and faith actors in prevention and response initiatives.

3.3.2. Prevalent Forms of SGBV in Kaduna Communities

Data from the baseline reveal that multiple forms of SGBV are prevalent across the targeted communities in Kaduna State. The most commonly reported forms include intimate partner violence (physical) at 61.6%, harassment at 42.4%, rape at 39.4%, and intimate partner violence (sexual) at 30.3%. These were followed by sexual assault (17.2%), rape (30%), early or forced marriage at 10.1%, and sexual exploitation (9.1%). The findings underscore that domestic and relational violence remains the dominant expression of SGBV, suggesting the normalization of gendered power imbalances and the influence of entrenched patriarchal norms. The persistence of early and forced marriage further highlights the intersection of cultural practices, economic pressure, and insecurity as drivers of SGBV.

While rape and sexual assault were less frequently mentioned, qualitative evidence indicates that these acts are severely underreported due to fear of stigma, victim-blaming, and limited access to confidential reporting mechanisms.

Table 6: Common Forms of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Reported in Kaduna by LGA

Type of SGBV	Igabi LGA	Zaria LGA	Zangon Kataf	Overall
Rape	3.7%	91.7%	13.9%	39.4%
Sexual assault	7.4%	25.0%	16.7%	17.2%
Intimate partner violence (physical)	51.9%	38.9%	91.7%	61.6%
Intimate partner violence (sexual)	18.5%	0.0%	69.4%	30.3%
Early/forced marriage	25.9%	0.0%	8.3%	10.1%
Sexual exploitation	11.1%	2.8%	13.9%	9.1%
Harassment	44.4%	22.2%	61.1%	42.4%
Other	22.2%	5.6%	8.3%	11.1%

(Source: Baseline Field Data, 2025)

Disaggregation by LGA reveals that intimate partner violence (physical), intimate partner violence (sexual) and harassment are most prevalent in Zangon Kataf, suggesting strong links between cultural practices, gender norms, and insecurity. Zaria shows relatively higher rates of rape, physical violence, sexual assault, and harassment, possibly also tied to cultural practices, gender norms and economic hardship. Igabi LGA show similar patterns, with physical violence, harassment and early/forced marriage being the most cited concerns.

These findings illustrate that SGBV in conflict-prone Kaduna is multifaceted, affecting both women and men, though disproportionately impacting women and girls. Addressing it requires multi-layered

interventions – from community sensitization and survivor-centered response services to justice system strengthening and engagement with traditional and faith leaders.

Thematic patterns from FGDs and KIIs reveal that the most prevalent forms of SGBV in Kaduna communities include domestic violence (physical and emotional abuse), early and forced marriage, sexual assault, and, increasingly, rape during conflict or displacement. Female participants emphasized that intimate partner violence and marital rape remain common yet rarely discussed due to cultural taboos. In several communities, early marriage is normalized as an economic coping mechanism amidst insecurity and poverty. One FGD participant noted, “Because of the hardship, many parents give out their daughters early so they can be cared for” [004-FGD-MG-Kad-October-2025]. Another woman recounted, “Men beat their wives and say it is discipline; nobody interferes because it is a family matter” [001-FGD-WG-Kad-October-2025].

Key informants from health and justice sectors also cited rising reports of sexual assault during community attacks, with perpetrators often escaping justice. A respondent explained, “During the attacks, some women and girls were taken and abused, but they fear speaking out when they return” [012-KII-HP-Kad-October-2025]. This qualitative evidence aligns with survey findings identifying domestic violence and child marriage as the most widespread forms of SGBV, highlighting how entrenched socio-cultural norms and insecurity sustain multiple forms of abuse.

3.3.3. Knowledge of SGBV referral pathways and survivor support services

Knowledge of where survivors of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) can seek assistance remains relatively limited across the study communities. Overall, about 76.2% of respondents across the surveyed communities know where SGBV survivors can seek help, while 23.8% indicated they were unaware of any formal or informal support channels. Awareness was notably higher in Zaria LGA (94.4%) and Zangon Kataf (86.1%), which possibly has benefited from NGO-led sensitization and referral system strengthening. In contrast, Igabi LGA (45.5%) recorded lower awareness, highlighting persistent information gaps, especially in rural and conflict-affected areas.

Table 7: Knowledge of Where SGBV Survivors Can Seek Help by LGA

Response	Igabi LGA	Zaria LGA	Zangon Kataf	Overall
Yes	45.5%	94.4%	86.1%	76.2%
No	54.5%	5.6%	13.9%	23.8%

(Source: Baseline Field Data, 2025)

This reflects a limited understanding of comprehensive survivor-centered response services. The findings point to the urgent need for enhanced community sensitization on available SGBV referral mechanisms and for strengthening multi-sectoral coordination among police, health workers, NGOs, and traditional institutions to ensure survivors can access timely and confidential support.

Findings from the FGDs and KIIs highlight significant knowledge gaps regarding available SGBV referral mechanisms and survivor support services. While some participants, mainly those in urban centres or who had previous NGO contact, could identify hospitals, social welfare offices, police, social welfare, human rights activists, and religious leaders, with fewer references to GBV desks, legal aid services, or psychosocial support centers as potential referral points, most rural participants were unaware of structured support pathways. Further analysis of the quantitative data also revealed that women and

youth groups repeatedly mentioned confusion about where survivors could seek medical, legal, or psychosocial help. As one female participant stated, “We only know to go to the hospital if injured, but we don’t know where to report rape cases” [001-FGD-WG-Kad-October-2025]. Similarly, a youth FGD participant said, “Even when people report to police, they ask for money or say it is a family issue” [003-FGD-FYG-Kad-October-2025].

Service providers interviewed during KIIs confirmed that referral systems exist on paper but are poorly coordinated, under-resourced, and often inaccessible to survivors in remote or conflict-prone areas. A health worker explained, “There is a referral directory, but many people don’t know about it; some centres lack trained staff for SGBV cases” [014-KII-WL-Kad-October-2025]. The qualitative data thus corroborate quantitative findings showing low awareness and utilization of formal SGBV services, suggesting a need for improved community sensitization, stronger referral networks, and survivor-centred outreach.

3.3.4. Perception of Safety in Reporting SGBV to Formal Justice Actors

Findings from the baseline reveal that perceptions of safety in reporting sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) to formal justice actors shows relatively high to low confidence across surveyed communities in Kaduna State. Overall, about 83% of respondents (66% “very safe” and 17% “somewhat safe”) believe it is safe for survivors to report to police or courts, while 10% perceive such reporting as unsafe. An additional 7% were uncertain. This trend suggests some degree of mistrust of formal justice mechanisms, possibly stemming from negative past experiences, weak institutional response, and social stigma associated with SGBV reporting.

Table 8: Perception of Safety in Reporting SGBV to Formal Justice Actors by LGA

Type of SGBV	Igabi LGA	Zaria LGA	Zangon Kataf	Overall
Very safe	42.9%	88.9%	61.1%	66.0%
Somewhat safe	3.6%	8.3%	36.1%	17.0%
Somewhat unsafe	0.0%	2.8%	2.8%	2.0%
Very unsafe	28.6%	0.0%	0.0%	8.0%
Don’t know	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%	7.0%

Disaggregated data show that Zaria and Zangon Kataf LGA respondents were somewhat more confident in institutional safety (97.2% respectively) compared to Igabi LGA (46.5%), where skepticism was pronounced. Overall, the results highlight the urgent need for trust-building measures between communities and formal justice actors. These should include sensitivity training for law enforcement officers, establishment of confidential survivor reporting channels, and community sensitization on survivors’ rights and protections under Nigerian law. Without these, underreporting will persist, and survivors’ access to justice will remain severely constrained.

Interpretation of participants’ responses from the FGDs and KIIs reveals pervasive fear, stigma, and mistrust surrounding the reporting of SGBV cases to formal justice actors such as the police and courts. Survivors and community members alike perceive the formal justice system as intimidating, costly, and often biased against victims, particularly women. Participants described instances of being blamed, dismissed, or asked for bribes when attempting to report. As one woman explained, “Survivors do not report to the police because they fear reprisal and think nothing will be done” [019-KII-SGBVS-Kad-

October-2025]. Another added, “If you go to the police, they may even ask you why you went out at night; people prefer to keep quiet” [001-FGD-WG-Kad-October-2025].

Traditional and religious leaders interviewed acknowledged that many community members prefer to resolve such matters privately or through traditional mechanisms, which often emphasize reconciliation rather than justice. Although some KIIs reported gradual improvements due to awareness campaigns and sensitization by NGOs and government agencies, confidence in formal justice institutions remains low. Quantitative survey data showing limited SGBV case reporting to official channels corroborate these qualitative findings, highlighting that fear of reprisal, stigma, and weak institutional response continue to pose significant barriers to justice for survivors in Kaduna. Focus group discussions further underscored that survivors often encounter victim-blaming, extortion, or a lack of follow-up when cases are reported to authorities, discouraging others from seeking justice.

3.4. Experiences of SGBV (self + household) and other marginalized populations

3.4.1. Forms of Violence Experienced by Households (Past 24 Months)

Findings from the baseline survey indicate that multiple forms of violence continue to affect households across conflict-prone LGAs in Kaduna State. The most common forms of violence were physical assault (36.7%) and economic violence (23.3%), reflecting the pervasive insecurity and economic deprivation associated with recurrent conflict. Reports of sexual harassment (4.4%) and forced/early marriage (4.4%) highlight persistent gender-based vulnerabilities, particularly among women and adolescent girls. Although fewer households (4.4%) reported sexual assault/rape, this figure likely underrepresents the true prevalence, as survivors often face stigma, fear of retaliation, and limited access to survivor-centered reporting mechanisms. Forced sexual intercourse within marriage (3.3%) further underscores the normalization of intimate partner violence and the need for stronger awareness on marital consent and women’s rights.

Table 9: Household Exposure to Violence in the Past 24 Months by LGAs

Type of Experience	Igabi LGA	Zaria LGA	Zangon Kataf	Overall
Physical assault (non-sexual)	40.0%	0.0%	69.7%	36.7%
Sexual assault/rape	4.0%	0.05	9.7%	4.4%
Forced sexual intercourse within marriage	8.0%	0.0%	3.2%	3.3%
Sexual harassment	12.0%	0.0%	3.2%	4.4%
Forced marriage or early marriage	16.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.4%
Denial of resources or	56.0%	0.0%	22.6%	23.3%

freedom (economic violence)				
Other	36.0%	100%	16.1%	53.3%

Igabi LGA shows consistently higher rates across most categories, aligning with its higher reported levels of displacement and insecurity. Zangon Kataf also reported higher rates of physical assault (non-sexual) and economic violence, reflecting the impact of prolonged ethno-religious conflict and economic disruption. These forms of violence remain closely linked to insecurity, displacement, and weakened livelihoods, disproportionately affecting women and other vulnerable groups. Qualitative interviews reinforced these findings, with respondents describing how conflict and displacement have exacerbated sexual violence risks, particularly in displacement camps and during attacks.

The findings demonstrate that SGBV intersects with broader conflict-related violence, particularly affecting women and girls. High levels of economic and physical violence erode social stability and reinforce dependence on informal coping mechanisms. Underreporting of sexual violence and marital rape indicates weak institutional trust and limited safe spaces for survivors. These dynamics collectively restrict survivors' access to justice, emphasizing the need for community-based awareness, legal aid, and survivor-centered referral pathways.

Analysis of testimonies from FGDs and KIIs reveals that experiences of SGBV and related forms of violence remain widespread across households in Kaduna, particularly among women, girls, and other vulnerable populations. The forms of violence reported include physical assault, sexual violence (rape, attempted rape), domestic abuse, and emotional or psychological violence. Several respondents also cited cases of forced marriage and denial of economic resources as subtle but harmful expressions of gendered control. Women's FGDs especially emphasized intimate partner violence as the most common form, often justified by men as a form of discipline.

One FGD participant recounted, "If a woman disobeys her husband, he beats her; people see it as normal, not as violence" [001-FGD-WG-Kad-October-2025]. A youth participant added, "Even boys face violence; some are beaten or chased away when they try to defend their sisters" [003-FGD-FYG-Kad-October-2025]. KIIs with healthcare providers and social workers confirmed that reports of physical and sexual assault have increased, especially during periods of insecurity and displacement. The narratives underscore that SGBV in Kaduna is not limited to women but disproportionately affects them due to entrenched gender norms and power dynamics.

3.4.2. Reporting Pathways Used by Survivors of Violence/SGBV and Access to Justice

The baseline data reveal that survivors of violence and SGBV predominantly seek help through informal support systems rather than formal justice actors. Nearly four in ten survivors (38%) did not report their experiences to anyone, reflecting deep social stigma, fear of retaliation, and low confidence in the justice system. Among those who reported, the most common channels were family or friends (42.0%), followed by traditional (25.0%) and religious leaders (11.4%). Only 10.2% reported incidents to the police, and 3.4% to NGOs or legal aid providers, highlighting significant barriers to accessing formal justice and protection mechanisms.

Table 10: Reporting Channels Used by Survivors of Violence/SGBV by LGA

Reporting channels	Igabi LGA	Zaria LGA	Zangon Kataf	Overall
Family/relatives	83.3%	2.9%	55.2%	42.0%
Community/traditional leader	37.5%	0.0%	44.8%	25.0%
Police	12.5%	0.0%	20.75	10.2%
Health facility	0.0%	0.0%	3.4%	1.1%
NGO/service provider	0.0%	0.0%	10.3%	3.4%
Religious leader	0.0%	0.0%	34.5%	11.4%
Did not report	8.3%	0.0%	13.8%	6.8%
Other	0.0%	97.1%	13.8%	43.2%

Igabi and Zangon Kataf LGAs show significantly higher levels of reporting to informal support systems. Across LGAs, survivors relied more on informal or community-based systems, with limited engagement of formal actors. Qualitative interviews echoed these findings: survivors described limited follow-up, secondary victimization, and pressure to settle cases privately. In several communities, survivors felt safer approaching religious or community leaders, who often mediated rather than pursued justice. These patterns suggest the urgent need for community-level sensitization, confidential reporting systems, and capacity-building for both formal and informal justice actors to handle SGBV cases ethically and effectively.

Some of the implications of the above findings are: Low formal reporting reflects systemic distrust, fear of reprisal, and limited availability of survivor-centered services. Informal pathways remain critical but often focus on reconciliation, not justice. Survivors' preference for family or traditional mediation increases the risk of impunity and secondary victimization. Strengthening police GBV desks, community referral networks, and legal aid outreach is essential for bridging the gap between survivors and formal justice systems.

Interpretive analysis of discussions across FGDs and KIIs indicates that survivors rely heavily on informal and community-based mechanisms when seeking redress for SGBV incidents. Traditional leaders, religious figures, and family elders are often the first points of contact, reflecting community trust in these structures and widespread scepticism toward formal justice institutions. Participants described how such channels prioritize reconciliation, compensation, or silence over punitive justice. A woman shared, *"When rape happens, the family talks to the man's people to settle it quietly; they fear shame if they go to the police"* [001-FGD-WG-Kad-October-2025]. Another participant added, *"If you report to elders, they tell you to forgive; if you go to police, they ask for money"* [002-FGD-MYG-Kad-October-2025]. KIIs with LGA and CSO acknowledged that while referral networks exist, most survivors do not reach formal reporting stages due to fear, stigma, and weak institutional response. Only a small fraction of survivors access hospitals or one-stop centers, typically through NGO intervention or emergency referrals. The data collectively illustrate a justice landscape dominated by informal mediation, where survivors' rights are often compromised by cultural norms that prioritize family honor over accountability.

3.4.3. Outcomes of Reported SGBV Cases

Data from the baseline survey shows that among the cases reported to formal actors, 64.5% were accepted and investigated, while 1.3% resulted in medical or psychosocial support. However, 30.3% of those reported cases ended with either informal mediation (15.8%) or no follow-up (14.5%), indicating limited institutional accountability and survivor protection. Case rejection or non-pursuit (1.3%) was frequently linked to lack of evidence, societal pressure, or perceived bias by enforcement agencies. These findings highlight deep structural barriers within Kaduna’s justice system – including inadequate investigation processes, survivor intimidation, and under-resourced SGBV desks – which undermine trust and deter future reporting.

Table 11: Outcomes of Reported Cases to Formal Actors by LGA

Reporting channels	Igabi LGA	Zaria LGA	Zangon Kataf	Overall
Case accepted and investigated	44.4%	100%	26.1%	64.5%
Case rejected / not pursued	0.0%	0.0%	4.3%	1.3%
Case mediated (informal)	0.0%	0.0%	52.2%	15.8%
Survivor received medical /psychosocial support	0.0%	0.0%	4.3%	1.3%
No follow up	50.0%	0.0%	8.7%	14.5%
Don’t know	5.6%	0.0%	4.3%	2.6%

(Source: Baseline Field Data, Kaduna, 2025)

Across all LGAs (especially Zangon Kataf and Igabi LGAs), the pattern of low prosecution and frequent informal mediation suggests systemic weaknesses in formal justice response mechanisms.

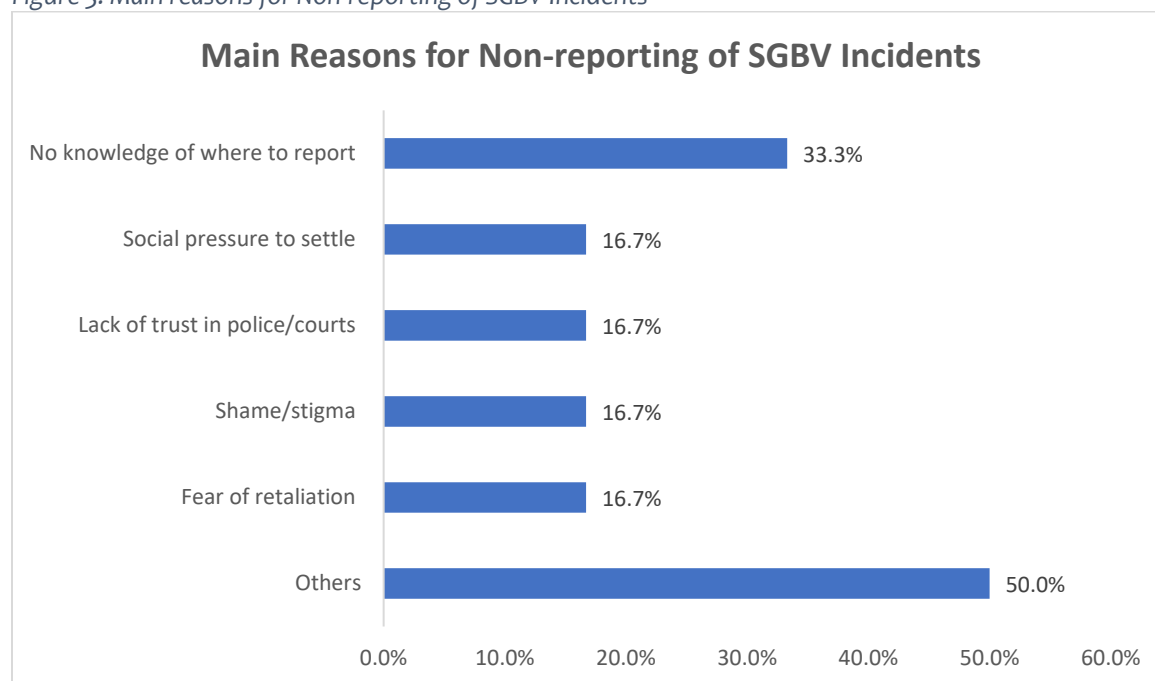
Evidence from KIIs and FGDs reveals limited positive outcomes for reported SGBV cases, with most survivors describing unresolved cases, delayed investigations, or withdrawal due to pressure from families or perpetrators. Police and court officials interviewed admitted that very few cases reach prosecution, citing inadequate evidence, survivor withdrawal, or social interference. A justice actor explained, “Most cases are settled at the community level before they reach us; even when reported, survivors are afraid to testify” [011-KII-LGA-Kad-October-2025]. Survivors who pursued formal justice often experienced intimidation or stigmatization. One FGD participant narrated, “When my neighbor reported her husband for beating her, her family told her to drop it or risk being divorced” [004-FGD-MG-Kad-October-2025]. Health workers and CSO representatives expressed frustration over the lack of coordinated case management and poor survivor follow-up, noting that few survivors receive counseling or psychosocial support. These accounts align with quantitative findings showing low prosecution rates and weak enforcement of protective laws, reflecting systemic gaps in ensuring justice for SGBV survivors.

Qualitative interviews confirmed that survivors often face pressure from family or local leaders to withdraw cases, reinforcing cycles of silence and impunity. A major implication of the above findings is that low investigation rate and high frequency of informal mediation weaken justice outcomes and promote impunity. Institutional bottlenecks – including poor coordination between police, courts, and health systems – reduce survivors’ confidence in formal mechanisms.

3.4.4. Barriers to Reporting SGBV Incidents

Across surveyed communities in Kaduna, the dominant reasons for non-reporting were lack of information (50%), suggesting accessibility and awareness issues, especially in rural LGAs. Fear of retaliation (16.7%) and shame/stigma (16.7%), highlighting the continuing culture of silence and fear surrounding SGBV in Kaduna’s conflict-prone areas. Lack of trust in police/courts (16.7%) underscores limited faith in formal justice mechanisms – a perception likely reinforced by poor case follow-up and corruption concerns. Social and cultural barriers, including pressure to settle (16.7%), further deter reporting, indicating the influence of patriarchal norms and the prioritization of communal harmony over survivor welfare. Together, these findings indicate that SGBV underreporting is driven by both structural weaknesses in the justice system and deeply entrenched socio-cultural norms that blame or silence survivors.

Figure 3: Main reasons for Non-reporting of SGBV Incidents



Key implications of the above findings to programming include: protection gaps and weak survivor safety mechanisms must be addressed to mitigate fear of retaliation. Targeted community sensitization is required to dismantle stigma and encourage early reporting. Police and court reforms, coupled with survivor-centered justice training, can rebuild trust in formal institutions.

Findings from FGDs and KIIs reveal multi-layered and intersecting barriers that prevent survivors, especially women and girls, from reporting SGBV incidents. The most recurrent obstacles include fear of stigma and shame, fear of retaliation by perpetrators, lack of trust in police and judicial systems, cultural pressure to protect family reputation, and financial constraints.

Women expressed particular fear of being blamed or disbelieved if they report sexual violence. As one participant observed, “People will ask what she was wearing or why she was there; so most women keep silent” [001-FGD-WG-Kad-October-2025]. Survivors from rural or displaced settings also highlighted physical inaccessibility of justice institutions. A community leader explained, “The nearest police station

is far; people cannot spend money on transport just to be insulted or ignored” [005-KII-LGO-Kad-October-2025]. Health workers further noted the absence of confidential spaces and trained personnel for handling survivors’ cases, compounding survivors’ reluctance to seek help.

Reflective analysis of participants’ voices underscores that silence around SGBV is both protective and punitive. Survivors and community members described how fear of community stigma, distrust of formal institutions, normalization of violence, and the prioritization of family unity over justice discourage reporting. Some women feared losing economic support or marital stability if they exposed their abusers. One respondent noted, “If you report your husband, who will feed your children? It’s better to endure” [012-KII-HP-Kad-October-2025]. Others mentioned pressure from elders to preserve family honor.

KIIs with local government and CSO representatives further revealed that weak enforcement of gender laws and the absence of functional SGBV desks at community levels discourage survivors from coming forward. Collectively, these findings demonstrate how structural, cultural, and economic vulnerabilities intersect to sustain a culture of silence, isolating survivors and perpetuating impunity.

3.5. Access to and Barriers of Justice for SGBV Survivors

3.5.1. Availability of Justice Mechanisms

The baseline survey assessed the types of justice mechanisms available across the targeted conflict-affected communities in Kaduna State. Respondents could select multiple options, including formal institutions (police, courts, legal aid services) and informal structures (traditional and religious courts). Analysis of available justice mechanisms across surveyed communities reveals that police, traditional and religious courts, and magistrate/court remain the most accessible forms of dispute resolution, reported by 92.2%, 65.7%, and 60.8% of respondents, respectively. In contrast, only 7.8% of communities have GBV desks within police stations, and less than one-third (21.6%) have access to legal aid or NGO-supported justice services.

These findings demonstrate a justice landscape characterized by limited formal institutional presence and heavy reliance on informal systems. While traditional and faith-based mechanisms offer community-level accessibility, they often lack survivor-centered procedures and enforce reconciliation over accountability.

The absence or weak visibility of formal justice institutions, including specialized GBV desks, undermines survivors’ ability to seek redress and reinforces patterns of silence and impunity. Strengthening formal justice outreach, particularly through mobile courts and legal aid partnerships, is therefore crucial for improving access to justice in conflict-affected LGAs.

Table 12: Justice Mechanisms Available in Kaduna (Multiple Response Analysis)

Justice Mechanism	Frequency	Percent of Cases
Police	94	92.2%
Magistrate/Court	62	60.8%
Mobile Court	2	2.0%
Community/Traditional Court	67	65.7%
Religious Court	18	17.6%
GBV Desk at Police	8	7.8%

Legal Aid/NGOs	22	21.6%
Don't Know	3	2.9%

(Source: Baseline Field Data, 2025)

An examination of the FGDs and KIIs shows a fragmented and under-resourced justice landscape for survivors of SGBV in Kaduna. While participants acknowledged the presence of police stations, courts, and a few specialized desks (such as Gender Desks or Human Rights units), these mechanisms are often described as inaccessible, inconsistent, or ineffective. Community leaders and women's groups expressed frustration that justice institutions are mostly urban-based and lack survivor-sensitive personnel.

A respondent in a women's FGD remarked, *"They said there is a Gender Desk, but we have never seen them in our area"* [001-FGD-WG-Kad-October-2025]. Similarly, a CSO representative noted, *"The system exists on paper; in reality, survivors still rely on family or religious leaders to mediate cases"* [011-KII-CSO-Kad-October-2025]. The findings indicate that although justice frameworks exist formally, their operational reach remains weak, particularly in rural or conflict-affected communities. Quantitative trends reflecting low awareness of SGBV reporting structures and low formal reporting rates are consistent with this qualitative insight.

Justice Mechanisms by LGA

Table 13 shows the justice landscape across Kaduna's conflict-prone LGAs, which reveals distinct patterns with critical implications for SGBV survivors. Disaggregated results reveal important geographic variations:

Igabi LGA: Justice mechanisms are largely informal, dominated by traditional and religious courts. Police and magistrate courts are distant and infrequently accessed. GBV-specific structures are virtually absent. The data show a justice system dominated by informal and semi-formal structures, with customary and religious mechanisms being more accessible than state institutions. While this may reflect strong local ownership of justice, these systems may lack survivor-centered procedures, particularly for SGBV cases.

The low presence of GBV desks and legal aid services points to significant gaps in institutional capacity to address gender-based violence within a formal justice framework.

Zaria LGA: Respondents reported better access to formal systems such as police and courts, though these institutions are often under-resourced. Mobile courts occasionally operate during periods of heightened insecurity, but are not consistent.

Zangon Kataf LGA: Justice responses are strongly community-based, with traditional and faith-based mediation widely used. Formal justice institutions are limited, and legal aid or NGO interventions are rarely available.

Table 13: Justice Mechanisms by LGA

Justice Mechanism	Igabi LGA	Zaria LGA	Zangon Kataf	Overall
Police	90.0%	100%	86.1%	92.2%
Magistrate/Court	0.0%	97.2%	75.0%	60.8%
Mobile Court	6.7%	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%

Community/Traditional Court	96.7%	94.4%	11.1%	65.7%
Religious Court	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%	17.6%
GBV Desk at Police	0.0%	0.0%	22.2%	7.8%
Legal Aid/NGOs	0.0%	0.0%	61.1%	21.6%
Don't Know	3.3%	0.0%	5.6%	2.9%

Focus group discussions indicated that community members often perceive traditional and religious leaders as more approachable and trustworthy than police or courts. However, survivors of SGBV expressed concerns about bias, confidentiality breaches, and pressure to reconcile with perpetrators. These findings highlight a trust deficit between citizens and state justice institutions.

In Zangon Kataf LGA, a mix of traditional and religious mechanisms dominate, with few visible formal justice institutions. Communities heavily rely on faith-based mediation and traditional leaders to resolve conflicts. While this fosters community cohesion, it also perpetuates norms of silence around SGBV and discourages survivors from pursuing legal justice. The lack of legal aid and weak linkage between informal and formal systems leaves survivors with minimal avenues for accountability or compensation.

In Zaria LGA, there is relatively higher access to formal institutions such as the police and magistrate courts. However, structural weaknesses – such as limited investigative capacity, slow case processing, and a lack of gender-sensitive personnel – undermine the responsiveness of these mechanisms to SGBV cases. Survivors who attempt to report often experience stigmatization and procedural delays, discouraging others from seeking redress.

In Igabi LGA, respondents overwhelmingly identified community and religious courts as the primary justice mechanisms. While these forums provide local accessibility and familiarity, they often reinforce patriarchal norms that prioritize family reconciliation over survivor protection. Survivors of sexual violence in Kajuru face cultural and social pressures to remain silent or accept mediated settlements, limiting their access to justice and psychosocial support. The near absence of GBV desks or legal aid services further compounds these challenges.

Across all LGAs, these patterns highlight a justice environment where informal institutions are more accessible but less protective, and formal institutions exist but remain distant, under-resourced, or mistrusted. This imbalance undermines survivors' confidence in the justice system and perpetuates impunity for SGBV perpetrators. Strengthening the visibility and functionality of GBV desks, expanding legal aid networks, and building gender-sensitive capacity among traditional and religious leaders are essential steps to improving survivors' access to justice in Kaduna's conflict-affected areas.

The limited availability and uneven distribution of formal justice mechanisms across LGAs in Kaduna have serious implications for SGBV survivors. The predominance of community and religious courts – while locally accessible – often prioritizes reconciliation and social harmony over justice for survivors. These informal systems typically lack gender sensitivity, confidentiality protocols, and survivor-centered procedures, discouraging formal reporting of SGBV cases. The weak presence of GBV desks and legal aid services further constrains survivors' access to professional support and redress, reinforcing underreporting and impunity. Consequently, survivors are left navigating justice environments that are informal, male-dominated, and largely unresponsive to their protection needs,

thereby perpetuating cycles of silence and secondary victimization. Strengthening institutional linkages between formal and informal justice actors, alongside expanding GBV-focused legal aid and police responsiveness, is therefore critical for improving survivors' access to justice in conflict-affected communities.

3.5.2. Proximity to Formal Justice Institutions (Police Access)

This question measures proximity to formal justice and security services, reflecting accessibility, response time, and potential barriers to SGBV reporting. Access to formal justice institutions remains a major challenge across surveyed communities in Kaduna. Findings show that the average distance to the nearest police station is approximately 25 minutes, with almost 30% of respondents residing over 31 to 60 minutes travel time away. Communities in Zaria and Zangon Kataf LGAs are particularly affected, with some households traveling more than an hour to reach the nearest police post.

These distances create significant barriers to the timely reporting of conflict incidents and gender-based violence. Survivors often face logistical, financial, and security constraints in reaching police facilities, particularly in rural settlements. The limited visibility of police services reinforces community reliance on informal and traditional mechanisms for dispute resolution.

In areas where police stations are distant or inactive, survivors of SGBV are less likely to seek formal justice due to delayed response times, fear of reprisal, and loss of evidence. Strengthening police presence through mobile units, satellite outposts, and community policing initiatives would enhance accessibility, deterrence, and survivor confidence in formal justice pathways.

Table 14: Travel Time to Nearest Police Station by LGA

Travel Time to Nearest Police Station	Igabi LGA	Zaria LGA	Zangon Kataf	Overall
Less than 15 minutes	63.6%	30.6%	36.1%	40.4%
16 – 30 minutes	22.7%	36.1%	27.8%	29.8%
31 – 60 minutes	13.6%	33.3%	33.3%	28.7%
More than 60 minutes	0.0%	0.0%	2.8%	1.1%

(Source: Baseline Field Data, 2025)

The average travel time to the nearest police station is approximately 25 minutes, with a median of 20 minutes. About 70.2% of respondents (those within 30 minutes) have relatively moderate access to police services, while 28.7% live more than 30 minutes away. The 1.1% who travel over an hour represent highly underserved or remote communities.

From participants' accounts, the question of proximity is central to accessing justice. Across FGDs, respondents emphasized that the nearest police stations are often several kilometers away, a distance made more challenging by insecurity and poor transport infrastructure. For many survivors, the cost and risk of traveling to police stations outweigh the perceived benefits of reporting. A youth participant stated, "We trek for almost two hours to reach the police; by then, people advise you to forget it" [003-FGD-FYG-Kad-October-2025]. A local official added, "Even if you get to the police, they say there is no fuel for patrol or they ask for money to write your statement" [005-KII-LGO-Kad-October-2025]. These testimonies underscore that geographic and economic distance severely constrain survivors' ability to engage the justice system.

3.5.3. Physical Access to Formal Justice Mechanisms

The average travel time to the nearest functioning court is approximately 27 minutes, with substantial variation across communities (range: 5–120 minutes). Nearly half of respondents (48%) reported residing more than 45 minutes away from a functioning court, underscoring significant physical barriers to accessing formal justice services.

Importantly, walking remains the predominant mode of transportation for many respondents, particularly in rural and low-income communities, while others rely on commercial motorcycles or informal transport services that may be irregular or costly. For those who must walk, travel time may be longer than the average reported, and the physical burden can be considerable – especially for women, elderly persons, and persons with disabilities (PWDs). These transport limitations not only increase the time and financial cost of seeking justice but may also discourage timely reporting and follow-through on legal cases.

Zangon Kataf LGA recorded the longest average distance (34 minutes), likely due to more dispersed rural settlements, whereas Igabi had the shortest (16 minutes), reflecting proximity to semi-urban centers.

Table 15: Average Travel Time to Nearest Functioning Court (in Minutes)

LGA	Mean Distance (min)	Median (min)	Minimum	Maximum
Igabi	16	12	2	60
Zaria	24	20	5	60
Zangon Kataf	34	25	8	120
Overall	27.1	20	5	120

The baseline findings reveal that access to functioning courts in Kaduna remains physically constrained. On average, households reported spending 27 minutes traveling to the nearest court facility. This distance represents a major barrier to justice, particularly for survivors of SGBV who may lack transport means or face insecurity on travel routes. The situation is most critical in Zangon Kataf LGA, where courts are sparse and residents often rely on traditional mechanisms. Conversely, Zangon Kataf communities have relatively shorter travel times, reflecting better road access and court presence. The limited spatial distribution of justice institutions reinforces dependence on informal or community-based dispute resolution which are often less favorable to SGBV survivors.

During qualitative interviews, respondents cited fear of traveling long distances, insecurity along roads, and transport costs as reasons for not seeking formal legal redress. In summary, the findings underscore the need to decentralize justice delivery through mobile courts, circuit sessions, and strengthened linkages between traditional leaders and formal justice institutions. Enhancing judicial presence in remote and conflict-affected areas will improve responsiveness, survivor confidence, and case follow-up for SGBV and related offenses.

3.5.4. Perceptions of Police Fairness in Handling SGBV Cases

The baseline study measured perceived fairness and trust in law enforcement regarding SGBV cases, which is a key indicator of justice system credibility. The baseline findings indicate moderate to low

public confidence in the fairness of police investigations into SGBV cases in Kaduna State. Overall, 75.5% of surveyed respondents believed that a woman or child survivor would likely receive a fair investigation if they reported to the police (41.5% very likely, 34.0% somewhat likely). Conversely, 18% considered such investigations unlikely to be fair, while 6.6% were uncertain.

Table 16: Perceived Likelihood of Fair Investigation by Police (SGBV Cases) by LGA

Likelihood of Fair Investigation	Igabi (%)	Zaria (%)	Zangon Kataf (%)	Overall
Very likely	33.3%	81.1%	8.3%	41.5%
Somewhat likely	15.2%	16.2%	69.4%	34.0%
Somewhat unlikely	6.1%	0.0%	11.1%	5.7%
Very unlikely	30.3%	0.0%	8.3%	12.3%
Don't know	15.2%	2.7%	2.8%	6.6%

Zaria LGA had the strongest positive perception, where 97.3% of respondents perceived it as very likely or somewhat likely. In contrast, Igabi communities were more skeptical (30.3% very unlikely, 6.1% somewhat unlikely), likely due to weaker police presence and experiences of bias or inaction.

Discussions from focus groups revealed that survivors often encounter biases, secondary victimization, and lack of female officers trained in handling GBV cases. The low trust level (particularly in Igabi) underscores a critical accountability gap in formal justice delivery. Without public confidence, reporting rates will remain low, and impunity for perpetrators will persist.

In terms of implications for programming, the findings suggest that low perceived fairness reflects deep mistrust in law enforcement and deters survivors from reporting SGBV. Police officers require gender-sensitive investigation training and monitoring mechanisms to ensure procedural fairness. Strengthening community-police engagement and establishing functional GBV desks can help rebuild trust. The visibility of fair, survivor-centered investigations can serve as a positive deterrent against future abuses.

3.5.5. Utilization of Justice Services by Households

The baseline study measured actual utilization of justice services (police/court/legal aid/traditional mediator) in the last 12 months, providing an empirical measure of access to justice beyond awareness or perception. Findings from the baseline survey indicate that justice service utilization remains low among households in Kaduna's conflict-prone LGAs. Only about one in three households (34%) reported using any justice service (such as police, courts, legal aid providers, or traditional mediators) in the last year, revealing low engagement with both formal and informal dispute resolution systems. The majority (66%) had not used any justice mechanism, suggesting barriers related to trust, cost, distance, or awareness. These figures align with broader patterns in conflict-affected contexts, where citizens rely more on community or religious leaders for mediation than on state institutions.

Table 17: Household Use of Justice Services in the Last 12 Months by LGAs

Response	Igabi (%)	Zaria (%)	Zangon Kataf (%)	Overall
Yes	57.6%	8.3%	38.2%	34.0%

No	42.4%	91.7%	61.8%	66.0%
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Communities in Igabi and Zangon Kataf LGAs showed significantly higher utilization rates, attributed to greater NGO programming and community sensitization. However, usage was still far below what would indicate equitable access to justice. Qualitative interviews revealed concerns about costs, delays, corruption, and lack of fair treatment, particularly for women and survivors of SGBV. Many households reported turning to traditional or religious leaders for dispute resolution, reinforcing the enduring role of informal systems in justice delivery – though these often fall short in addressing SGBV cases.

Overall, low usage of justice services reflects systemic barriers – including weak infrastructure, low trust, and high costs. There is a need for community-level legal awareness, accessible referral pathways, and affordable legal aid services.

3.5.6. Barriers to Access to Justice

Analysis of the perceived barriers to accessing formal justice mechanisms in Kaduna State reveals significant structural and social constraints that impede survivors' and community members' ability to seek redress.

Overall, respondents rated **bribery/corruption** (Mean = 3.1), **lack of confidentiality** (Mean = 3.1), and **perpetrator's power or status** (Mean = 3.0) as the most severe barriers. This is followed by fear of reprisal (Mean = 2.8) and lack of knowledge on how or where to report (Mean = 2.5). These findings underscore widespread perceptions that the justice system is corrupt, unsafe, information gaps on reporting behavior, and often inaccessible to vulnerable groups. Cost of service (Mean = 2.3) and distance to services (Mean = 1.9) were also cited as substantial challenges.

Table 18: Mean Perception of Barriers to Accessing Formal Justice Mechanisms by LGA

Barrier to Justice Access	Igabi (Mean)	Zaria (Mean)	Zangon Kataf (Mean)	Overall Mean
Distance to service	2.8	1.9	1.0	1.9
Cost / fees	3.2	1.4	2.4	2.3
Fear of reprisal	4.5	2.5	1.3	2.8
Lack of confidentiality	4.5	2.7	2.1	3.1
Bribery / corruption	3.3	3.0	3.0	3.1
Lack of knowledge how to report	3.4	2.8	1.2	2.5
Perpetrator's power/status	4.5	3.3	1.3	3.0
Security/insecurity en route	3.9	1.6	1.2	2.2
Overall Barrier Index	3.8	2.4	1.7	2.6

Source: Field data, Kaduna SGBV–Conflict Baseline, 2025

Disaggregated analysis by Local Government Area (LGA) reveals clear geographic disparities in perceived barriers to accessing formal justice mechanisms.

- Igabi LGA recorded the highest overall barrier index (Mean = 3.8), reflecting the area's dense population, heightened insecurity, and high cost of engaging formal systems. Perpetrator's

power/status (4.5), lack of confidentiality (4.5), and fear of reprisal (4.5) emerged as particularly severe challenges.

- In Zaria LGA, respondents rated barriers moderately (Overall Mean = 2.4). While residents have relatively better proximity to courts and police services, issues of bribery (3.0), lack of knowledge how to report (2.8%), and lack of confidentiality (2.7) remain significant.
- Zangon Kataf LGA reported the lowest barrier index (Mean = 1.7), likely linked to the stronger presence of civil society and faith-based legal aid interventions. However, bribery/corruption barriers, cost of service, and confidentiality concerns persist, especially for SGBV survivors.

Across all LGAs, corruption, and confidentiality issues consistently ranked among the top three obstacles, while distance and lack of awareness were more prominent in rural and peri-urban settlements. These findings underscore the multifaceted nature of justice access constraints – rooted in structural inequalities, socio-cultural power dynamics, and physical insecurity. For SGBV survivors, such barriers compound trauma and discourage formal reporting. Policy responses should therefore prioritize: Targeted anti-corruption and safety measures along justice access routes, as well as decentralization of justice services (e.g., mobile courts, police posts).

3.6. Community Attitudes Toward Gender-Based Violence

3.6.1. Attitudes Toward the Acceptance of Domestic Violence for Family Cohesion

Attitudes toward gender-based violence remain a critical determinant of community tolerance for abuse and the likelihood of reporting SGBV cases. Across Kaduna State, the majority of respondents (82%) either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement that “women should tolerate some violence to keep the family together.” The overall mean score of 1.9 indicates a generally low tolerance for domestic violence.

Table 19: Women should tolerate some violence to keep the family together by LGA

Response Category	Igabi (%)	Zaria (%)	Zangon Kataf (%)	Overall (%)
Strongly disagree (1)	38.9%	37.8%	86.1%	54.1%
Disagree (2)	16.7%	59.5%	5.6%	27.5%
Neutral (3)	8.3%	0.0%	0.0%	2.8%
Agree (4)	0.0%	2.7%	8.3%	3.7%
Strongly agree (5)	36.1%	0.0%	0.0%	11.9%
Mean Score	2.8	1.7	1.3	1.9

Source: Field data, Kaduna SGBV–Conflict Baseline, 2025

However, variations by LGA highlight important socio-cultural nuances:

Zangon Kataf recorded the lowest mean (1.3), reflecting stronger community-level rejection of violence against women, possibly due to ongoing awareness and faith-based GBV sensitization programs. Zaria (mean = 1.7) and Igabi (mean = 2.8) displayed slightly higher tolerance levels, suggesting that patriarchal norms remain more entrenched in those communities, possibly semi-urban Hausa-majority contexts.

Analysis of the FGDs and KIIs reveals deeply entrenched social norms that normalize certain forms of violence against women as acceptable within marriage and family life. Across multiple discussions,

both male and female participants acknowledged that many community members believe a “good woman” must endure some level of violence to preserve the family unit. This perception reflects the persistence of patriarchal power structures and moral expectations that prioritize family cohesion and male authority over women’s safety and rights.

In one women’s FGD, a participant remarked, “*They say a patient woman will endure her husband’s anger; if she reports him, she is the one who will be blamed*” [001-FGD-WG-Kad-October-2025]. Another woman added, “*When a man beats his wife, elders advise her to keep quiet for the sake of the children*” [004-FGD-MG-Kad-October-2025]. These sentiments were echoed by male participants, some of whom justified “disciplinary” violence as part of traditional marital roles. A youth participant noted, “*Sometimes men beat their wives to correct them; that is how our fathers did it*” [002-FGD-MYG-Kad-October-2025].

Key informant interviews confirmed that such beliefs are widespread and perpetuated by both cultural and religious interpretations. A religious leader interviewed explained, “*Many people still think a woman must be submissive at all times; they don’t see beating as violence unless it is too much*” [009-KII-RL-Kad-October-2025]. Likewise, a health worker observed, “*Most of the women who come to the clinic after domestic violence don’t want to report; they say they don’t want their marriage to scatter*” [012-KII-HP-Kad-October-2025].

The acceptance of “corrective” violence as a normal part of marriage not only discourages reporting but also reinforces cycles of abuse. Women internalize these norms, seeing endurance as a moral duty, while communities and institutions fail to challenge them. Quantitatively, this corresponds with findings showing high tolerance for domestic violence among respondents, a pattern that mirrors national trends captured in Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) where justification of wife-beating remains prevalent under certain conditions (e.g., disobedience or neglect of children).

Overall, while rejection of gender violence is rising, persistent cultural acceptance among segments of the population underscores the need for intensified behavior change communication and gender-transformative justice interventions across Kaduna State.

3.6.2. Attitudes Toward Victim-Blaming in Cases of Sexual Violence

The findings reveal that rape myths and victim-blaming attitudes persist, although a majority of respondents reject them. Across Kaduna State, 84.6% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that “if a woman is raped, it is usually because she provoked it.” The overall mean score of 1.7 indicates a generally low endorsement of rape-justifying beliefs.

Table 20: Perception on Whether Women Are to Blame for Rape

Response Category	Igabi (%)	Zaria (%)	Zangon Kataf (%)	Overall (%)
Strongly disagree (1)	56.8%	35.1%	80.6%	57.3%
Disagree (2)	16.2%	62.2%	2.8%	27.3%
Neutral (3)	13.5%	0.0%	1.8%	6.4%
Agree (4)	8.1%	2.7%	11.1%	7.3%
Strongly agree (5)	5.4%	0.0%	0.0%	1.8%
Mean Score	1.9	1.7	1.5	1.7

Disaggregated by LGA:

Zangon Kataf shows the lowest mean score (1.5), suggesting stronger rejection of victim-blaming narratives – likely reflecting higher GBV awareness and community sensitization in the area.

Zaria (1.7) and Igabi (1.9) present relatively higher mean scores, pointing to lingering patriarchal perceptions that may subtly excuse perpetrators or stigmatize survivors.

Qualitative feedback suggests that some respondents still associate women’s dress or behavior with sexual violence, a misconception that fuels survivor shaming and limits reporting. Such attitudes can severely hinder access to justice, as survivors may fear being blamed or disbelieved by police, courts, or even community leaders. Overall, the persistence of rape myths – though declining – signals the need for continued community education, media advocacy, and faith-based messaging to challenge gender stereotypes and promote survivor-centered justice in Kaduna State.

3.6.3. Community Attitudes Toward SGBV, Stigma, and Reporting

Perceptions of social shame associated with reporting sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) to law enforcement remain a significant attitudinal barrier to justice-seeking in Kaduna State. Overall, the majority of respondents (66.3%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that reporting SGBV to the police brings shame to the family, indicating a gradual erosion of stigma associated with SGBV disclosure. However, nearly one in four respondents (22.7%) either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement – reflecting persistent cultural sensitivities around family honor and female modesty.

Table 21: Reporting SGBV to the police brings shame to the family by LGA

Response Category	Igabi (%)	Zaria (%)	Zangon Kataf (%)	Overall (%)
Strongly disagree (1)	24.3%	21.6%	22.2%	22.7%
Disagree (2)	13.5%	51.4%	66.7%	43.6%
Neutral (3)	5.4%	16.2%	11.1%	10.9%
Agree (4)	16.2%	10.8%	0.0%	9.1%
Strongly agree (5)	40.5%	0.0%	0.0%	13.6%
Mean Score	3.4	2.2	1.9	2.5

By LGA:

Zangon Kataf had the lowest mean (1.9), suggesting greater acceptance of survivor reporting and lower stigma – likely linked to active NGO-led GBV sensitization and community dialogue initiatives.

Zaria showed moderate stigma (mean = 2.2), while Igabi displayed relatively higher agreement (mean = 3.4), indicating ongoing challenges where cultural conservatism and religious norms may still discourage open reporting.

Qualitative insights from FGDs further revealed that some respondents fear that publicizing SGBV cases could “bring disgrace” to the household or reduce marriage prospects for female survivors. This stigma perpetuates silence, informal settlements, and underreporting – undermining survivors’ access to justice and psychosocial support. The findings emphasize the importance of community-level stigma reduction efforts, particularly through faith leaders, traditional authorities, and media

engagement. Efforts should prioritize reframing reporting as a courageous act of protection and justice, rather than a source of shame.

3.6.4. Community Perceptions of Justice Actors: Traditional vs. Formal Institutions

Perceptions regarding the relative effectiveness of traditional leaders versus the police in protecting victims of violence vary across Kaduna State, revealing complex community trust dynamics. Across the surveyed communities, the average mean score of 3.2 indicates a neutral-to-slightly positive perception that traditional leaders offer better protection to victims than the police. While 27.5% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, a notable 42.2% agreed or strongly agreed, reflecting significant reliance on customary justice structures.

Table 22: Traditional leaders protect victims better than the police by LGA

Response Category	Igabi (%)	Zaria (%)	Zangon Kataf (%)	Overall (%)
Strongly disagree (1)	21.6%	0.0%	5.6%	9.2%
Disagree (2)	13.5%	5.6%	36.1%	18.3%
Neutral (3)	0.0%	55.6%	36.1%	30.3%
Agree (4)	28.7%	36.1%	22.2%	29.4%
Strongly agree (5)	35.1%	2.8%	0.0%	12.8%
Mean Score	3.4	3.4	2.8	3.2

Disaggregation by LGA shows that:

Igabi LGA (mean = 3.4) recorded the highest agreement, suggesting greater confidence in traditional leaders compared to formal justice actors – likely linked to limited police presence and delayed responses during community crises.

Zaria LGA (mean = 3.4) exhibited balanced opinions, reflecting the coexistence of traditional and formal institutions.

Zangon Kataf LGA (mean = 2.8) demonstrated a lower preference for traditional authority, consistent with previous findings of stronger engagement with NGOs and formal justice mechanisms.

Qualitative findings suggest that community trust in traditional leaders often stems from their accessibility, cultural legitimacy, and ability to mediate quickly, especially in rural areas. Conversely, perceptions of police corruption, bias, and inaction undermine faith in formal protection. However, overreliance on traditional systems can perpetuate informal settlements and limit survivors' access to legal redress – especially in SGBV cases where privacy and accountability are crucial. The results underscore the need to strengthen collaboration between traditional and formal justice actors, ensuring that community-level dispute resolution adheres to human rights and survivor-centered standards.

3.6.5. Most Trusted Actors for Resolving SGBV Cases

Community trust in justice actors for addressing SGBV cases varies across the three LGAs, reflecting differing experiences with both formal and informal systems. Overall, police (41.7%) are the most

trusted actors for resolving SGBV incidents, followed by traditional leaders (14.8%) and NGOs/Social workers (13.9%).

Table 23: Most Trusted Actors for Resolving SGBV Case by LGA

Most trusted actor	Igabi (%)	Zaria (%)	Zangon Kataf (%)	Overall (%)
Police	41.7%	83.3%	0.0%	41.7%
Court	0.0%	11.1%	16.7%	9.3%
Traditional leader	33.3%	5.6%	5.6%	14.8%
Religious leader	11.1%	0.0%	19.4%	10.2%
NGOs/Social Worker	0.0%	0.0%	41.7%	13.9%
Family/relatives	11.1%	0.0%	11.1%	7.4%
Don't know	2.8%	0.0%	5.6%	2.8%
Mode (most common response)	Traditional Leader	Police	NGOs/Social workers	Police

Source: Kaduna SGBV–Conflict Baseline Survey, 2025

By LGA:

Igabi residents express the strongest trust in traditional leaders (33.3%), consistent with rural communities' reliance on customary dispute resolution and perceived accessibility of traditional authorities.

Zaria shows relatively higher trust in police (83.3%), reflecting better exposure to formal justice institutions and urban policing structures.

Zangon Kataf stands out, where NGOs/social workers (41.7%) rival religious leaders (19.7%) – likely due to post-conflict interventions and ongoing awareness programs by humanitarian agencies.

The comparatively low trust in courts (9.3%) underscores barriers such as cost, delays, and perceived corruption, while religious leaders maintain influence as moral authorities, particularly in conservative communities. These findings highlight the importance of multi-sectoral collaboration, leveraging traditional and faith-based structures while building credibility and survivor-centered practices in formal and NGO-led response systems.

4. Discussion of Major Findings

4.1. The nexus between conflict and SGBV – implications for access to justice

The baseline study reveals a strong correlation between the prevalence of conflict events and heightened exposure to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) across Kaduna’s conflict-affected LGAs. About one in three of all surveyed households reported experiencing at least one form of conflict – such as attacks, forced displacement, or armed clashes – within the past three years. These findings underscore how persistent insecurity and communal violence continue to erode community protection structures, exacerbate vulnerabilities to SGBV, and constrain survivors’ access to justice mechanisms.

Analysis of data from the FGDs and KIIs in Kaduna State reveals a strong and complex relationship between conflict dynamics and the rise in sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), with far-reaching implications for survivors’ access to justice. Conflict has not only heightened physical insecurity but also weakened social protection structures and community mechanisms that could otherwise deter or address gender-based violations.

Participants across several FGDs described how violent clashes between farmers and herders, banditry, and communal conflicts have increased women’s exposure to sexual assault, abduction, and forced marriage. One female participant explained, *“During attacks, women are the ones that suffer most. They are raped, and no one can even report because the whole community is running for safety”* [001-FGD-WG-Kad-October-2025]. Another added, *“After bandits come, you just find out some girls are missing. People will whisper that they were taken or raped, but nobody talks openly”* [004-FGD-MG-Kad-October-2025].

From the key informant interviews, security officers and traditional leaders confirmed that such incidents are often underreported. A police officer stated, *“We hear about rape or abduction after attacks, but survivors rarely come forward. They fear stigma or believe nothing will be done”* [010-KII-POL-Kad-October-2025]. Similarly, a traditional leader remarked, *“Conflict has destroyed the respect people had for local institutions. Now, people don’t trust either us or the police”* [008-KII-TL-Kad-October-2025].

The breakdown of law enforcement presence in high-risk areas has created a vacuum where perpetrators act with impunity. FGDs with youth groups further highlighted how displacement and poverty exacerbate vulnerability to transactional sex and early marriage. One male youth participant shared, *“Because of insecurity, many families moved to the town. Some girls started going out with men for money or protection; it’s survival, but people see it as normal now”* [002-FGD-MYG-Kad-October-2025].

These dynamics illustrate that conflict has reshaped gender relations, eroding traditional moral boundaries and protection systems. SGBV has become both a weapon and a by-product of insecurity — with survivors trapped between fear of retaliation, cultural stigma, and institutional weakness. A civil society representative summarized this succinctly: *“In every community where conflict is constant, SGBV becomes a silent weapon. And justice becomes a privilege, not a right”* [013-KII-CSO-Kad-October-2025].

The implications for access to justice are profound. As displacement and fear of reprisals spread, reporting of SGBV cases has declined even as incidents rise. Communities perceive formal justice as distant and ineffective, while informal mechanisms often favour reconciliation over accountability. Consequently, many survivors remain silent or are pressured into settlements that deny them justice and dignity.

In summary, the intersection between conflict and SGBV in Kaduna reveals a vicious cycle where insecurity fuels sexual violence, weakens trust in justice institutions, and normalizes gendered harm. Strengthening survivor-centered justice mechanisms, integrating SGBV response into humanitarian interventions, and rebuilding community trust are critical to breaking this cycle and ensuring justice for survivors.

4.1.1. Understanding the Intersection

Findings from the baseline reveal that exposure to conflict remains widespread across the study LGAs, with communities in Igabi LGA (Rigachikun) and Zangon Kataf LGA (Zonkwa) particularly affected by attacks, displacement, and armed clashes. These dynamics intersect directly with heightened risks of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), as insecurity erodes protective structures, displaces populations, and normalizes violence within both public and private spaces (UN Women, 2020; International Rescue Committee [IRC], 2021).

The analysis of data from FGDs and KIIs in Kaduna State reveals that the intersection between conflict and SGBV is both structural and situational, driven by insecurity, displacement, and weakened community norms. Participants consistently describe how ongoing violence has normalized sexual and gender-based abuses, particularly against women and girls. One woman recounted, *“When the attacks started, many girls were raped, but people don’t talk because they say it’s part of what happens during war”* [001-FGD-WG-Kad-October-2025]. As local institutions collapse and survival takes precedence, acts of sexual violence often go unreported. A local government official observed that *“in conflict areas, everyone is focused on staying alive. Reporting rape or domestic violence becomes secondary because there is no one to help”* [005-KII-LGO-Kad-October-2025].

The findings also show that displacement and poverty have deepened gendered vulnerabilities, leading to transactional sex, forced marriages, and other exploitative practices. Traditional leaders acknowledged that their authority to mediate or prevent such cases has declined, with many issues *“settled quietly”* [008-KII-TL-Kad-October-2025]. Overall, conflict has intensified SGBV both directly, through sexual assault during attacks, and indirectly, by eroding the protective norms and justice mechanisms that once safeguarded women and girls. Thus, SGBV in Kaduna’s conflict-affected areas must be understood as an integral part of the conflict system itself, reflecting the gendered dimensions of power, vulnerability, and access to justice

4.1.2. Conflict Exposure as a Driver of SGBV

The high incidence of conflict across LGAs such as Igabi and Zangon Kataf has been accompanied by increased reports of sexual assault, harassment, and coercion. Displacement and destruction of livelihoods have exposed women and girls to predatory risks during movements, in temporary shelters, and while engaging in survival activities such as collecting water or firewood. This pattern aligns with global evidence showing that armed conflict disrupts community protection and increases gender-based vulnerabilities (UNFPA, 2022; UN OCHA, 2023).

Analysis of FGDs and KIIs in Kaduna State highlights that increased exposure to conflict directly fuels the incidence of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). Participants consistently linked rising insecurity, community raids, and displacement to heightened vulnerability among women and girls. In several discussions, survivors described being assaulted during or immediately after violent attacks, while others spoke of the pervasive fear of sexual assault in insecure areas. One woman recounted, *“During the attack, they took our animals and raped two girls before setting houses on fire”* [001-FGD-WG-Kad-October-2025]. Similarly, a youth participant explained, *“When conflict comes, everything breaks down, men are killed, and women become the target”* [002-FGD-MYG-Kad-October-2025]. These accounts confirm that sexual violence is often used opportunistically during conflict and displacement when law enforcement and community protection systems collapse.

Key informant interviews reinforce this link between conflict exposure and SGBV. A traditional leader stated, *“The more attacks we face, the more rape cases we hear about, but most are never reported because people are scared”* [008-KII-TL-Kad-October-2025]. Service providers and CSO representatives similarly observed that insecurity and forced migration create conditions for exploitation, including early and forced marriages among displaced populations. A CSO respondent explained, *“Conflict displaces families and destroys livelihoods. When women are hungry and homeless, they become easy prey for abuse”* [013-KII-CSO-Kad-October-2025]. Overall, the evidence demonstrates that exposure to conflict acts as a powerful driver of SGBV by dismantling social order, eroding accountability, and magnifying women’s economic and physical vulnerability, thereby deepening barriers to justice and recovery for survivors.

4.1.3. Barriers to Accessing Justice

The baseline findings underscore persistent barriers to accessing justice for SGBV survivors in conflict-affected LGAs. These include bribery/corruption, lack of confidentiality, and the perpetrator’s power or status. Other severe barriers include fear of reprisal and lack of knowledge on how or where to report. Many survivors reported that justice institutions are either too corrupt or insensitive to their needs, while others cited past experiences of dismissal or victim-blaming by officials.

The justice vacuum has led communities to depend on alternative dispute resolution methods that are not survivor-centered. While these mechanisms provide social cohesion, they often compromise justice outcomes. Consequently, underreporting remains widespread, and conviction rates for SGBV are extremely low (UNDP, 2021).

Data from the FGDs and KIIs in Kaduna State reveal that survivors of conflict-related SGBV face multiple, overlapping barriers in seeking justice. These include fear of stigma, lack of trust in formal justice institutions, limited awareness of legal processes, and the physical inaccessibility of police or courts due to insecurity. Participants repeatedly emphasized that survivors often choose silence over reporting because of social pressure and the perception that justice mechanisms are ineffective. One woman explained, *“If you report rape, people will blame you. They will say you brought shame to your family”* [001-FGD-WG-Kad-October-2025]. Another participant added, *“Even when we go to the police, they ask for money or delay the case until the person gives up”* [004-FGD-MG-Kad-October-2025]. Such sentiments highlight how deeply entrenched cultural norms and weak institutional accountability discourage survivors from pursuing formal justice pathways.

Key informant interviews reinforce these challenges. Traditional and religious leaders noted that many cases are resolved informally to “preserve family honor” or because survivors lack resources for legal follow-up. A local official explained, *“People prefer to settle SGBV cases at home or through elders because going to court takes time and money”* [005-KII-LGO-Kad-October-2025]. Service providers also pointed out logistical and safety barriers, particularly for displaced women who lack transportation or fear retaliation from perpetrators. The combined effect of these factors is a cycle of impunity, where perpetrators go unpunished and survivors lose faith in the justice system. Overall, the analysis shows that accessing justice in conflict-affected areas of Kaduna is constrained not only by insecurity and institutional weakness but also by socio-cultural barriers that silence survivors and perpetuate gendered injustice.

4.1.4. Socioeconomic and Psychosocial Consequences

The dual impact of conflict and SGBV has created long-term socioeconomic and psychological scars. Displaced women, widowed women, and women head of households, face economic marginalization and often resort to transactional sex to survive. Adolescent girls who experience violence are less likely to return to school, reinforcing gender inequality and intergenerational poverty. Survivors also exhibit signs of trauma, depression, and anxiety, with few psychosocial support services available in the affected LGAs (UNHCR, 2022). These consequences highlight the multidimensional nature of SGBV in conflict contexts – where economic vulnerability, social breakdown, and psychological trauma reinforce one another in a vicious cycle.

Analysis of data from FGDs and KIIs in Kaduna State reveals that the socioeconomic and psychosocial consequences of conflict-related SGBV are severe and long-lasting, affecting survivors, families, and entire communities. Participants described widespread economic hardship following incidents of SGBV and conflict, including the loss of livelihoods, forced displacement, and increased dependency on humanitarian assistance or menial labor. Women who experienced sexual violence or whose families were attacked often reported being unable to return to their farms or resume trading due to fear and trauma. One woman stated, *“After the attack, we lost everything. I could not go back to the market because people were talking about what happened to me”* [001-FGD-WG-Kad-October-2025]. Another participant added, *“When a woman is raped, her husband may abandon her, and she has to start struggling alone with the children”* [004-FGD-MG-Kad-October-2025]. These testimonies underscore the deep economic marginalization and social exclusion that often follow acts of SGBV.

The psychosocial consequences are equally profound. Survivors and community members reported persistent fear, anxiety, depression, and social withdrawal as common experiences. Several respondents mentioned that survivors are often isolated due to stigma or community gossip, compounding their emotional suffering. A health professional noted, *“Many survivors come with signs of trauma — they cannot sleep, they cry easily, and some refuse to talk about it because it brings shame”* [012-KII-HP-Kad-October-2025]. The breakdown of family and community support systems further limits survivors’ ability to recover and rebuild their lives. In sum, conflict-related SGBV in Kaduna has far-reaching socioeconomic and psychosocial repercussions, reinforcing cycles of poverty, exclusion, and trauma while deepening gender inequalities that hinder both individual healing and community resilience

4.2. Implications for Program Design and Policy

The baseline findings emphasize that programming in Kaduna must address the mutually reinforcing relationship between conflict, SGBV, and weak justice systems through integrated, context-responsive strategies. Evidence from FGDs, KIIs, and household surveys demonstrates that SGBV risks are highest where insecurity, displacement, and poverty converge — and where formal justice institutions remain distant, under-resourced, or mistrusted. Interventions that emphasize prevention and not just response are imperative. As traditional and religious leaders continue to play primary roles in dispute resolution, most SGBV cases are settled informally or silenced, perpetuating cycles of impunity. These realities call for holistic interventions that combine legal empowerment, survivor protection, and community peacebuilding to restore trust and accountability.

Integrated and Survivor-Centered Service Delivery: Programs must prioritize mobile legal and psychosocial support services for survivors in remote or conflict-affected areas. The evidence shows that many women cannot travel to access police, courts, or health facilities due to insecurity or stigma. Deploying mobile legal aid clinics, one-stop centers, and outreach health teams can bridge this gap and ensure timely reporting, documentation, and treatment. Linked to this is the need for trauma-informed care that addresses the long-term psychosocial consequences of violence. FGDs with survivors revealed recurring mental health distress and social isolation, underscoring the urgency of embedding psychosocial services into humanitarian and development programming.

Strengthening Local Leadership and Accountability: Given that traditional and faith-based leaders are the first point of contact for most survivors, their capacity to handle SGBV in alignment with the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act (VAPP, 2015) must be strengthened. Training these leaders on survivor-centered approaches, confidentiality, and referral pathways will help reduce harmful mediations that prioritize reconciliation over justice. The baseline shows that these actors are influential yet constrained by limited awareness of legal standards and by entrenched patriarchal norms. Structured partnerships between local justice actors, paralegals, and police GBV desks will foster more coordinated and ethical responses at the community level.

Enhancing Multi-Sector Coordination and Institutional Linkages: The data highlight severe fragmentation among justice, health, and protection actors. Survivors often fall through the cracks due to weak referral mechanisms and poor follow-up between agencies. Multi-sector coordination platforms, bringing together police, legal aid providers, health professionals, and civil society, should be institutionalized at the LGA level to enable real-time survivor tracking and response. Program design must also prioritize functional GBV desks and gender-sensitive personnel within police and courts, coupled with the expansion of legal aid networks to ensure poor and displaced women can pursue justice without prohibitive costs.

Integrating Gender-Sensitive Peacebuilding: The overlap between conflict and SGBV highlights the need for interventions that link peacebuilding with gender justice. Peace committees and early warning systems should integrate women's voices and address SGBV as a peace and security concern, not just a social issue. Conflict mitigation programs should include training on gender equality, human rights, and mediation ethics for community leaders and security actors. The evidence suggests that where women's groups and youth networks are engaged in dialogue, reporting of SGBV improves and harmful norms are more likely to be challenged.

Promoting Awareness, Legal Literacy, and Social Norm Change: Across the surveyed LGAs, most respondents displayed limited knowledge of survivor rights or formal justice procedures. Targeted community sensitization and legal literacy campaigns are therefore essential to reduce stigma, correct misconceptions about SGBV, and build public confidence in justice mechanisms. Public education, delivered through radio, schools, and religious platforms, should highlight the VAPP Act, available reporting channels, and the rights of survivors to protection and redress. Coupled with gender-transformative behavior change communication, these interventions can gradually dismantle the normalization of gender violence observed in Kaduna communities.

Policy-Level Implications: At the policy level, the findings call for systemic investment in survivor-centered justice reform. State-level justice and security agencies must prioritize the operationalization of SGBV laws, allocate resources to rural GBV desks, and strengthen coordination with civil society. Integrating SGBV response indicators into Kaduna’s peace and security architecture — including Local Government Security Committees — will ensure sustainability and accountability. Furthermore, policies should mandate the inclusion of displaced and marginalized women in local decision-making and peace processes, recognizing their dual roles as victims and agents of change.

In summary, a sustainable response to conflict-related SGBV in Kaduna requires a coordinated, multi-level approach that combines service delivery, institutional reform, and community transformation. Programs must go beyond short-term support to address structural inequalities, rebuild institutional trust, and foster social norms that uphold women’s rights and dignity even in the face of conflict.

5. Concluding Remarks and Recommendations

5.1. Summary

Conflict and SGBV are deeply interlinked in Kaduna's conflict-prone LGAs. As communities grapple with violence, displacement, and institutional collapse, women and girls remain disproportionately affected – facing both physical insecurity and systemic exclusion from justice. The baseline study demonstrates that conflict has not only increased the frequency and severity of gender-based violence but also weakened the traditional and formal systems that could protect survivors or hold perpetrators accountable.

The findings underscore that access to justice in Kaduna is constrained by a combination of factors - insecurity, poverty, cultural stigma, and limited institutional capacity. Survivors often rely on informal mechanisms that prioritize family reconciliation over justice, while fear of reprisal and social shame suppress reporting. Despite these challenges, there is evidence of emerging resilience within communities: increased awareness of SGBV, growing advocacy by women's groups, and openness among traditional and faith leaders to adopt rights-based approaches.

Overall, the baseline highlights that sustainable solutions require an integrated approach, one that addresses both the root causes of conflict and the systemic inequalities that perpetuate SGBV. Effective interventions must therefore combine peacebuilding with robust prevention and justice mechanisms that restore dignity, trust, and accountability.

5.2. Recommendations

A. Strengthen Survivor-Centered Justice Systems

- Operationalize and expand GBV Desks in police stations and local courts, ensuring they are equipped with trained, gender-sensitive personnel.
- Establish mobile justice and psychosocial outreach services to reach survivors in remote, displaced, or conflict-affected areas.
- Enhance legal aid and pro bono representation through partnerships with the Legal Aid Council, Nigerian Bar Association, and women's rights NGOs.
- Integrate trauma-informed procedures into justice and law enforcement processes to ensure that survivors' dignity and confidentiality are protected.

B. Decentralize and De-Risk Access to Justice Through Proactive Legal Literacy and Safe Referral Pathways

Baseline data show physical distance to courts and police stations, reliance on walking as transport, and uneven awareness of SGBV. These structural barriers create environments where perpetrators act with impunity because survivors face high reporting costs.

- Adopt a proactive access-to-justice prevention model that includes:

- ✓ Regular mobile legal literacy outreaches in remote communities
- ✓ Community-based paralegal volunteers trained in early identification and referral
- ✓ Conflict-sensitive safe reporting channels embedded in trusted local structures
- ✓ Transport support mechanisms for high-risk cases
- ✓ Engagement with police divisions to build preventive community trust before crises

C. Empower Traditional and Faith-Based Leaders

- Build the capacity of community and religious leaders to handle SGBV cases in accordance with the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act (VAPP, 2015).
- Support community mediation mechanisms to refer rather than resolve SGBV cases informally, linking them with formal justice and protection actors.
- Facilitate interfaith dialogues and community pledges promoting zero tolerance for SGBV and the protection of women's rights during and after conflict.

D. Expand Multi-Sector Coordination

- Establish and strengthen LGA-level SGBV coordination platforms linking police, health services, social welfare offices, civil society, and humanitarian actors.
- Introduce joint referral tracking systems to ensure survivors receive continuous support from first response to case closure.
- Facilitate regular capacity-building workshops for law enforcement, healthcare, and judicial officers to harmonize survivor-centered case management practices.

E. Integrate Gender and Peacebuilding Approaches

- Embed gender-sensitive peacebuilding components into community stabilization, reconciliation, and early warning programs.
- Strengthen the participation of women and youth in peace and security committees, ensuring that gender perspectives inform all conflict mitigation efforts.
- Support livelihood recovery programs targeting conflict-affected and widowed women to reduce economic dependence and vulnerability to exploitation.

F. Promote Awareness, Legal Literacy, and Social Norm Change

- Develop behavior change communication initiatives aimed at shifting harmful norms that justify domestic violence and silence survivors.
- Strengthen community sensitization campaigns using radio, schools, mosques, churches, and markets to raise awareness about SGBV laws, survivor rights, and reporting options.
- Integrate SGBV education into school and youth curricula, promoting gender equality and respect from an early age.
- Conduct targeted legal literacy training for women and marginalized groups to increase their confidence in seeking justice.

G. Strengthen Policy and Institutional Frameworks

- Advocate for the full implementation of the VAPP Act across all LGAs in Kaduna, with clear enforcement mechanisms and budgetary allocations.
- Institutionalize gender desks and SGBV focal units within local government administrations, security agencies, and social welfare departments.
- Develop state-wide SGBV data systems to capture, analyze, and report cases, ensuring evidence-based policymaking and accountability.
- Encourage state-level budget commitments toward SGBV prevention, survivor support, and access to justice programs.

In conclusion, addressing the intersection of conflict and SGBV in Kaduna demands sustained political commitment, community ownership, and coordinated action across justice, health, and peace sectors. Policies and programs must not only respond to violence but also transform the underlying social and structural conditions that allow it to persist. By prioritizing survivor-centered justice, inclusive peacebuilding, and behavioral change communication, Kaduna can build a more equitable and resilient pathway toward lasting peace and gender justice

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7. Annexes

Annex 1: Terms of Reference

[Attached Separately]

Annex 2: Sample List of Selected Key Informants

[Attached Separately]

Annex 3: Household Survey Questionnaire

[Attached Separately]

Annex 4: Key Informant Interview Guide

[Attached Separately]

Annex 5: Focus Group Discussion Guide

[Attached Separately]

Annex 6 Observation Checklist

[Attached Separately]

Findings from the baseline study reveal that communities in Kaduna State continue to experience recurrent conflicts, primarily driven by ethno-religious tensions, farmer–herder disputes, and political or resource-related disagreements.

