




# Socio- spiritual approaches towards rehabilitation of the victims of sexual molestation in Zimbabwe: An African pastoral care perspective

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## Abstract

Sexual molestation is a common phenomenon in communities globally, particularly in situations of family disintegration and periods of political violence and economic instability that cause migration and displacement. Molestation comes in various forms including sexual harassment, fondling, oral-genital contact, penetration and intercourse which is dehumanizing. This causes the victims to suffer physical, psychological and spiritual problems. Therefore, there is a need to provide a holistic pastoral care approaches that address the problems resulting from molestation. This paper seeks to explore ways in which the victims of sexual molestation in Zimbabwe may be healed spiritually and psychologically and their dignity be restored. It will begin by discussing the challenges that arise due to sexual molestation and propose some pastoral care approaches that promote holistic healing and restoration of the victims. The paper utilizes the theoretical framework of the *ubuntu* theology of the Nobel laureate the late Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa. His theory helps in the understanding of the role of pastoral care for the victims of sexual molestation in the Zimbabwean context. This is a non-empirical research based on analysing secondary sources of data through a desk-top study approach. The paper contributes to insights on how *ubuntu*-informed pastoral care practices can promote the restoration of the dignity of the victims of sexual molestation.

**Keywords:** Socio-spiritual, *ubuntu*, molestation, Pastoral care, Zimbabwe.

## Introduction

Molestation is done by both men and women to men, women, girls, and boys. Women and girls are more vulnerable. According to Fromuth and Conn's research, some women molested many kids as a result of having child-related sexual fantasies (1997:463), against the popular belief that males are the molesters. In Zimbabwe sexual molestation is prevalent due to family disintegration because of the socio-economic and political instability in that country. Victims of sexual molestation experience inter alia, humiliation, physical, psychological, social, and spiritual challenges that affect them after their molestation. Rehabilitation of the victims of sexual molestation is not an easy task. This non-empirical qualitative study discusses the impact of sexual molestation and explores various social and pastoral care approaches to facilitate healing and restoration of human dignity among the victims. It begins by assessing the causes and effects of sexual molestation to determine how pastoral caregivers can assist in eliminating the problems that victims of sexual molestation face in the Zimbabwean context. Using Desmond Tutu's *ubuntu* theology the paper discusses the role of pastoral care in the context of sexual molestation. The study was purely a desktop research initiative consulting relevant journal papers, books, and other secondary documents.



## Methodology

Data for this paper was generated from documentary data accessed from published books, accredited journal articles, unpublished dissertations, newspapers, and internet webs. The data generated from the above-mentioned sources was analysed in content.

## Sketching sexual molestation in Zimbabwe

Sexual molestation is a combination sexual violence, sexual abuse and sexual assault (Sarrel & Masters, 1982). Making any improper and unwanted sexual acts forms part of sexual molestation. Sexual molestation varies with levels depending on circumstances. According to Kennedy (2003:227) "Some are clearly criminal offences of sexual assault, others more subtle exploitation". Family structure either promotes or prevents sexual molestation. Research demonstrates that children who live with single parents, stepparents and foster parents are "20 times more likely to be victims of child sexual abuse than children living with both biological parents" (Sedlak et al., 2010). The vice of sexual molestation is hidden within people who can be trusted to be the guardians or protectors. Fromuth and Conn (1997:459) buttress that the "majority of the victims of sexual abuse or sexual molestation are family members, siblings, relatives and friends". Despite being exposed to abusive relatives, they are also exposed to live-in partners who are not their relatives thereby making them more vulnerable (Mashiri 2013).

Economic conditions have left most women and children vulnerable to molestation and sexual violence. Parents entrust their children to people who are closer to them as they go out to work and business. In the case of Zimbabwe, this is exacerbated by long-distance trading that involves both intercity and cross border. Mashiri (2013:99) avers that "Women, mostly leave their children with relatives, friends or their sexual partners as they cross the borders to Botswana and South Africa or any other neighbouring countries". This increases the vulnerability of children under the custody of other people in the absence of their parents. Some women are caught in sexual violence as they illegally cross the border into South Africa and meet strangers along the way. Yet others are molested besides being legally in the neighbouring countries as migrants and strangers (Murenje 2019).

The times of political violence are common scenes of sexual molestation. "In 2008 the primary victims of sexual violence carried out by youth gangs, war veterans, state security agents and supporters of the ZANU-PF were perceived as MDC-T supporters" (Hodzi, 2012:3). Literature shows that in conflict zones women bear the brunt of sexual abuse physical and emotional violence (Manyonganise, 2016:46). Thomas (2013:527) indicates that many women who were victims of abuse during the political violence of 2008 in Zimbabwe continued to live with the perpetrators in the same neighbourhoods with flagrant impunity. Sexual molestation becomes part of the weapons of violence or punishment.

Research has shown that men are also victims of rape and molestation. In African society, men are considered more powerful and aggressive than women in such a way that it is unimaginable that they are also raped by women. In Zimbabwe, studies revealed that "thirty-three percent of females and 9% of males aged 18 to 24 reported having been the victims of sexual violence before the age of 18" (Marufu, 2020:18). Machingura et al. (2022:170), in their research in Zimbabwean context found that men are raped for ritual sperm harvest meant for generating wealth in the life of the perpetrator. Male victims are highjacked at gun point by female gangs who forces them to drink some concoctions to induce forced sperm donation. It is further argued that some men suffer sexual assault and molestation under other men who would want them to engage in non-consensual sexual acts which is a crime in Zimbabwe (Marufu, 2020:3). Machingura et al. (2022) also argue that men become self-persecuting and injured due to loss of respect and dignity during post-traumatic rape and molestation. The challenge is that molestation of men is underreported, and male victims try to recover their dignity through silence and non-disclosure.



The impact of sexual molestation goes beyond the unwanted and dehumanizing contact of the victims. Victims of such sexual molestation often experience deteriorated physical, emotional, and sexual health challenges. Among other physical and health problems, female victims reportedly include irritable bowel syndrome, persistent abdominal pain, gonorrhoea infections, and hepatitis (Payne, 2023:201-202). Some of the long-term negative effects on the life of the victim are contracting sexually transmitted diseases including chronic pelvic inflammation, infertility and cancers (Mashiri, 2013:96). This affects one's sexual functions in the future.

Besides contracting diseases female victims of sexual molestation may get forced pregnancy. These are traumatic and haunting experiences that may follow the victim for the rest of her life. Whether the unwanted pregnancy is terminated or not it will remain a permanent scar for the victim. Furthermore, Sarrel and Masters (1982:118) posits that what has not been fully appreciated is the possibility that male sexual abuse can lead to future sexual dysfunction or disorder. Molested people tend to separate themselves from others and are inclined to feel lonely. Consequently, stigmatized, marginalized and isolated as defiled and unclean in society (Mutanana & Gasva, 2015:18). The difficulties of sexual molestation, in other words, the individual feels unworthy and stigmatized (Baloyi, 2010:732). Furthermore, in Zimbabwe, adult victims of political and sexual violence and molestation found themselves marginalized from the transitional justice process as the police and the courts failed to help them in their crisis (Hodzi, 2014). Mugabe (2021:3) also argues that sexual molestation makes girls feel undervalued as they were "to be feasted upon and enjoyed by men", leading to their low self-esteem. The feelings of shame and guilt that may lead to suicidal thoughts and actions such as withdrawal from society. The disconnection means that there is a lack of trust in God and humanity. Therefore, there is a need to understand the different challenges caused by this vice before we explore ways of helping the victims.

### Theoretical framework

This study utilizes theology of *ubuntu* as theoretical lens. The exponent of the theology of *ubuntu* is the Archbishop Desmond Tutu the South African Anglican cleric who in 1984 received the Nobel Prize for Peace. For him, *ubuntu* means, "a person is a person through other people" (Tutu, 1999:34). Theology of *ubuntu* encompasses all the aspects of the African ethic of *ubuntu*. The theology of *ubuntu* invokes the spirit of communalism, love, unity, empathy and support for one another especially those who are in need. *Ubuntu* refers to "humanism or humaneness" (Mnyaka & Motlhabi, 2009:63). It is humanization, the "concept which defines *umuntu* as a person who behaves in a human manner—*ubuntu*—and treats other people with the respect befitting their station as human beings—*abantu*—created in the image of God" (Ndlovu, 1999:132). Mnyaka and Motlhabi (2009:74) also assert that *ubuntu* "is best realised in deeds of kindness, compassion, caring, sharing, solidarity and sacrifice". *Ubuntu* is where Africans think of living, working together and treating each other humanely.

Tutu's theology of *ubuntu* recognizes human interdependence and celebration of diversity of identities (Breed, 2015:3). Tutu's *ubuntu* theology emphasizes that: "No real human being... can be self-sufficient. Such a person would be subhuman. We belong therefore in a network of delicate relationships of interdependence. It is marvelous to know that one who has been nurtured in a living, affirming, accepting family tends to be loving, affirming and accepting of others in his or her turn." (Tutu, 1999:42)

According to Tutu, *ubuntu* is a type of relational spirituality that emphasizes the inherent interconnectedness of all people (Battle, 2000). Tutu emphasized that "the central work of Jesus was to effect reconciliation between God and us and also between man and man" (Tutu, 1984:155). Tutu's understanding of the *imago Dei* as human interconnectedness and interdependence established his theology of *ubuntu* (Battle, 1995). *Ubuntu* connects well with the *imago Dei* theology that affirms the inherent dignity of humanity. Being created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27) means a human being is sacred and needs to be respected despite their situation. This is a theology of reconstruction, inclusivity, and reconstruction of a united



society. For that reason, human beings are bound together in this relationship with God and one another. Consequently, there is no room for marginalization no matter the challenges faced.

In the context of pastoral care seeking the rehabilitation of victims of sexual molestation, the theology of *ubuntu* draws from biblical insights of carrying each other's burden. Paul encouraged the church to be committed to pastoral care when he said, "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way, you will fulfil the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2). Carrying each other's burdens of sin and suffering is acting like Christ who bore our shame on the cross so that we can also bear with one another in moments of crisis. "Tutu's theology of ubuntu generates an ethic of forgiveness" (Haws, 2009:484), and unconditional acceptance the victims of the victims and perpetrators of sexual molestation. The theology of *Ubuntu* by Desmond Tutu is both grounded in human belongingness which is the basis for African communal life and biblical perspective of being created in the image of God. This calls for fellow- feeling and empathy in situations of pain and suffering.

Driven by *ubuntu*, African pastoral care approaches are done holistically because it emphasizes on universal vulnerability of humanity. The church provides its pastoral care services with the understanding of *ubuntu* and the sacredness of humanity created in the image of God- the *imago Dei*. There is no pastoral care ministry in African context that can be of benefit if it is not connected to the roots of Africa while it remains consistent with the Bible. In the context of sexual molestation *ubuntu*- centred pastoral care prevents societal marginalization and stigma of the victims.

### **Social approaches to rehabilitation of victims of sexual molestation**

Socio-spiritual dimension of pastoral care is grounded on ubuntu theology. "This dimension also covers emotional support and assisting in practicalities, such as financial help, material, behavioural support, informational support, and affectionate support" (Sherbourne & Stewart, 1991:707). It also encompasses social relationships, that give the victims a sense of identity, companionship, and belonging and provide happiness and meaningful life (Helgeson, 2003). Social connections, relationships and support give victims a reason to live. Social solutions need to be used in conjunction with the pastoral care approaches.

The role of the family becomes critical in providing the necessary support that the victims of molestation need, whether as an adult male or female. The spirit of *ubuntu* urges everyone in the community to take part in caring activities regardless of gender (Chisale, 2018). Sexual molestation is a form of "sexual violence, which is both physical and psychological in nature, and has had a devastating impact on the victims" (Agbaje, 2020:8). Consequently, it needs physical, and socio-spiritual support from the family, community and the church. In their families, victims are fairly embraced without a judgemental attitude because they belong. In the process, they get words of acceptance and encouragement. Such communal caring provides the social connection needed by victims of molestation. O'Connor (2014:200) argues that social connection is expressed as a demand for relationships, resources, and other people.

Victims who suffer physical, sexual or psychological harm need medical and counselling services which call for financial support towards their healing and rehabilitation (Mashiri 2013:97). The family members contribute towards these needs as they support the victim and their loved one in a time of need. Mantula and Saloojee (2016:874) admit that in the parents are the closet support of their children in times of crisis like sexual molestation. Although they may be labelled and marginalized outside their family, they find comfort, consolation and support from their parents, siblings and close relatives who are prepared to walk with them all the way. The family forms the backbone support of victims of sexual molestation. Pastoral care rooted in *ubuntu* will always emphasize the role of family relations and support, hence pastoral care gives help the victims to remain connected to their families for the necessary family support.



Besides the family, communities need social education that will help in understanding the scourge of molestation so that they provide social safety nets for the victims through acceptance, accommodation and support. Education enables the community to take seriously cases of males being victims who need community support and being journeyed with in crises like these. “Traditional and community leaders have the mandate to advocate for the prevention of and appropriate response to CSA in their communities through community awareness” (Mantula & Saloojee, 2016:874). Advocacy against molestation is a way of promoting *ubuntu* in the community. To embrace and support every victim of molestation, members of the community need education, awareness and socialization that bring them an understanding of the challenge of molestation and its effects as well as the ways of supporting the victims for rehabilitation. Pastoral care is done through social education that enables the community to embrace *ubuntu* and be actively involved in care and rehabilitation of victims of molestation. Community education in these issues should be a collaborative work including other stakeholders such as schools, health care facilities and community leaders in the villages.

It is within the community that the victims may form support groups with the help of pastoral caregivers to help one another cope with their plight. As part of the community, local churches can establish support groups of such victims so that they strengthened in their unique circumstances (Baloyi, 2010). These are empowering community resources needed in situations of sexual molestation. Support groups provide socio-spiritual support and safe spaces for victims of sexual molestation. They can share their experiences and coping mechanisms that may help and sustain them during their crisis. It is not easy for males to disclose their ordeal to females or for females to share their molestation experiences with their male counterparts.

### **Spiritual dimensions in the rehabilitation of the victims of molestation**

#### **Pastoral accompaniment of victims through listening**

Pastoral care is a means of healing and restoration in times of crisis such as sexual molestation. It reconnects the victim with self, God and others to find the meaning of life again. “Pastoral care is the art and skill of helping individuals and groups to understand themselves better and can relate to fellow human beings (village) in a mature and healthy manner” (Waruta & Kinoti, 2005:2). In African context pastoral care restores and reconnects the victim with the community and the creator. It is done at the backdrop of *ubuntu*. “Pastoral care in a context of *ubuntu* is less about therapy but more of an action, where people practically and physically interdepend on each other” (Chisale, 2018:8). The challenge of sexual molestation would need action-oriented solutions whereby pastoral caregivers take initiatives and reach out to seek to embrace and support the victims. It reduces the demonization and marginalization of victims of sexual molestation despite their age race and gender. Masango (2013:746) avers that: “Pastoral care in this case considers the life of villagers to be sacred; therefore, it must be preserved, defended, supported and enhanced as a matter of priority above everything else. Protection of life is extremely important in this day and age, where violence is the order of the day.”

Every victim is listened to without judging them. “Thus, *ubuntu* is a principle of pastoral care that has biblical references; from Genesis to Revelations, humanity is constantly reminded of fairness, love, compassion, hospitality, generosity, harmony and sympathy” (Chisale, 2018:4). This theology of *ubuntu* informs pastoral caregivers to show unconditional love, compassion and hospitality to the victims. In most cases there are fewer listeners than those who would like to talk to the victims hence pastoral caregivers become more valuable in the context of attending to victims of sexual molestation.

#### **The church’s pastoral care rituals and rehabilitation**



The church has spiritual tools for pastoral care in the context of sexual molestation. These are the pastoral care rituals such as prayer, confession and absolution, and holy communion brings people into communion with the saints and the Divine. Any form of African pastoral care ritual is meant to address the imbalance of relationships and life in the individual, community and the world. Church rituals bring the transformation of relationship with God and one another, family and community (Hove, 2020). Rituals promote communal lifestyle based on the spirit of *ubuntu* that bind humanity together with a sense of belonging and provide healing and restoration.

### **Prayer as a ritual of healing and rehabilitation**

Prayer is one of the most important rituals in pastoral care. Pastoral Care is indeed an important ministry. The victims of whatever evil, feels a “presence”, based on faith, and is provided support and love. It is a shared journey with a victim of molestation and the journey is significant in the lives of both the carer and victim and of course God. The Pastoral Carer is not intended to “fix” a situation, provide advice or provide solutions to problems, although they may do so, it is primarily to pray for and be available for another human being in a time of crisis. It is both a private and corporate ritual done in public and private spaces by individuals and groups of people. Therefore, the victim, the family, and the church can offer prayers for the rehabilitation of the victim. Prayer is a means of coping with challenges such as sexual molestation. Redmond (2014:4) puts it succinctly when he says pastoral care include “the use of spiritual tools such as prayer, meditation, scripture reading, forgiveness and ministering to others...”. Prayer connects the victim with the loving God who strengthens and comforts the victim. Stahl (2020:166) argues that it should be possible for the church to reinvent healing and wholeness services to accurately reflect the diverse molestation-related experiences. Weaver and Flannely (2004:97) assert that prayer also helps in decreasing negative emotions such as anger, depression, and fear associated with a range of challenges in life. Sharing prayers with the victims is a moment of sharing the pain with God who heals and comforts his people.

The ritual of prayer gives assurance of God’s presence like the Psalms would say “Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me” (Psalms 23:4). These are moments of hopelessness clouded by thoughts of suicide due to trauma and shame. Based on the theology of *ubuntu* pastoral presence and praying together with the victim enhance the spirit of courage to face the future with God and one another despite the crisis of sexual molestation. James calls Christians to pray for the sick and anoint them for their healing (James 5:14-15). The needs of the person seeking healing should always take precedence over the needs of the caregivers (Stahl, 2020). Prayer involves listening that does not muzzle but allows the victims to lament due to their pain.

### **Confession and absolution as a ritual of rehabilitation**

The ritual of confession and absolution is needed by both the victim and perpetrator. This is a process of seeking forgiveness from God and humanity. Sexual molestation is not just a social and physical act but a sin that violates the victim’s dignity and spiritually harms him/her and the loved ones. According to van Klinken and Phiri (2016:49) “It causes them to fall into anger, hatred and bitterness that need forgiveness and healing”. On the one hand, the victim needs confession to God so that he/she is released from anger and bitterness. On the other hand, the perpetrator needs forgiveness from God, the victim and other members of society because of the evil did of molesting the other person. Both the theology of *ubuntu* and the *imago Dei* motif call us to live by the principle of forgiveness. The church provides a safe space for confession and forgiveness of sin as a way of healing. Healing should also follow Christ’s formula of forgiveness of sin and healing. In the New Testament, Jesus healed by announcing the forgiveness of sin (Luke 7:48) or warns that the victim should sin no more (John 5:14). Sin causes brokenness of the body and human relationship. Therefore, when one confesses his/her sin absolution is pronounced so that the healing process takes place.



In the heart of confession and absolution is the significance of God and human forgiveness. It is not given the necessary attention, especially in the context of sexual molestation. Those who have gone through sexual molestation need healing even if they do not contract any kind of physical sickness. They need social and spiritual healing through forgiveness. Redmond (2014:7) argues that: “The second potential failure is for clinicians to equate forgiveness as a religious practice instead of a universal process of letting go of offenses. Forgiveness is a useful tool in life satisfaction post-abuse trauma, there may be two possible failures by these practitioners. People, both religious and non-religious, regularly process offenses using the concept of forgiveness and the failure to use this valuable tool in treating trauma clients may have negative impacts on the client.”

Forgiveness is vital for one’s health, especially the victims of molestation. It is not easier for the victim to forgive the offender because of the pain and trauma one has gone through. What makes it more difficult is that rarely would the victim and offender meet and engage in processes of forgiveness after sexual molestation. It can be a negotiated and facilitated process of pastoral care. While the perpetrator may be helped to repent, the victim needs to be helped to engage in a painful process of forgiving the abuser. This is both an African cultural and Christian heritage that brings reconciliation among people. *Ubuntu* “propels the idea of forgiveness and, moreover with its social value of compassion, helps one not to engage in any form of revenge” (Breed, 2015:5).

Forgiveness affirms the *imago Dei* in every human being. Being made in the image of God enables human beings to forgive to restore permanent relationship with God and humanity as a brother and sister in Christ. It is passing on the forgiveness of God to the other. Through confession and absolution, the church provide space for confession and forgiveness that brings healing and reconciliation. The words of absolution give assurance that one is unconditionally accepted and accommodated before God and the community of faith.

### **Holy Communion as a ritual of pastoral care**

Communion means *koinonia*, being connected in the community of believers, sharing in joy and suffering. Studies demonstrate a positive correlation between attending church and improved mental health, as well as a reduced risk for substance abuse or suicide (Bledsoe et al., 2013). Furthermore, research indicates that the combination of psychological and spiritual interventions provides an effective context in which survivors can recover and thrive (Payne, 2023:93). It involves carrying one another’s burden as Christ went to the cross shedding his blood to carry the burden of human sins. “The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29). Christ did not only carry sin to the cross but took it away meaning removal of the burden from humanity and setting them free. The church should be ready not only to carry the burden of sin but the suffering of its members. Holy Communion is a means of grace that brings believers together and sends them away to serve one another in world.

The ritual of Holy Communion is believed to provide healthy healing of both the body and soul. Prince (2009:2) advances that “And when you partake, you celebrate and release your faith to receive His health and wholeness in exchange for your sicknesses and diseases”. Therefore, the unconditional commitment he made to be with us in the Eucharist —Emmanuel, or “God with us”—He repeatedly heals and restores his Body. Church ritual such as the Holy Communion brings one into communion with Christ who gives his body and blood to his followers. As one partakes in the sacrament of the body and blood one is renewed not only in faith but receives healing and comfort. Thesnaar (2010:271) argues “Serving Holy Communion is a therapeutic event, which provides comfort amid disruption and crisis”. Participation in the Eucharist is transformative. It transforms both the congregation and victims of molestation, hence the need for the church to continually participate at the Lord’s table. The souls of the victims receive healing through the Holy Communion.



Pastoral care through the Holy Communion brings the victims of sexual molestation closer to God and the church of Christ. They are restored to the community to participate in the church and its functions. Victims of sexual molestation struggle with guilt and shame that even disconnect them from their true selves. They need accompaniment and assurance that the church through its pastoral care activities expresses the genuine presence of the lamb of God Jesus Christ, and the community of faith that carries the burdens away. Holy Communion as a ritual of pastoral care brings one closer to God and the community of faith and breaking the feelings of loneliness and hopelessness. Church rituals such as prayer and the Eucharist bind people together for one another and for mission hence even the victims of molestation become partakers in the ritual and mission of God.

### **Referrals as a tool of pastoral care**

Lormans et al. (2021:1094) argue that “the socio-spiritual approach facilitates and demands interdisciplinary teamwork to combine healthcare professionals’ expertise to decide which discipline is best suited to meet the needs”. Consequently, referrals become key in attending to the victims of sexual molestation. Both the molester and the victim need the necessary therapy for emotional and spiritual health that provides rehabilitation. In most instances, medical practitioners are needed to attend to the health needs of the victims of molestation. These practitioners may be found in private or public healthcare sectors depending on the economic status of the victim and those who can provide financial support. For holistic restoration and rehabilitation, an all-inclusive approach is needed so that they are fully attended to. Payne (2023:92) insists that: “When providing care for sexual abuse victims, ministers should also refer abusers who remain free of incarceration to a professional therapist. Each abuser must pursue therapy for spiritual and emotional health; the goal cannot be to restore the relationship with the abuse survivor.”

From an African pastoral care perspective, referral is not a weakness but a strength. It is an admission that we are limited but others have the necessary tools and skills meant to help the victims. It is one of the means and skills of pastoral care using the care networks. Referral is the process of wider collegiality and collaboration between the pastoral caregivers, other professionals and the family. There is social, spiritual and medical care networking to bring healing, restoration and rehabilitation of the victims of sexual molestation. Pastoral referrals promote the sharing of knowledge and skills in pastoral care and medical care as well as forming a collaboration with social workers (Lormans et al., 2021:1094). Caregiving is thus the core characteristic of *ubuntu* among the African communities.

### **Conclusion**

The literature reviewed for this article confirmed that sexual molestation is common in Southern Africa, particularly in Zimbabwe and South Africa. Literature reveals that there socio-economic and political reasons for sexual molestation. These circumstances leave people of all ages and both sexes vulnerable. Men become vulnerable to molestation when they are economically disadvantaged than their spouses or sexual partners, while women suffer sexual molestation due to their lower social- economic statuses as well as being exposed to political violence. Children of both sexes tend to be victims and suffer from sexual molestation from irresponsible parents and guardians. In the abovementioned circumstances, there is a need for *ubuntu*-centred pastoral care interventions. This must be done through family and community involvement, church pastoral care approaches and referrals to other specialized professionals and organizations who attend to sexual violence issues and rehabilitation of victims of sexual molestation.

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