

Rwanda Investigation Bureau (RIB) on Monday warned against public commentary that minimizes child sexual abuse cases, saying emotional interpretations of the law could discourage victims from reporting abuse.

The warning was issued during a media discussion in Kigali on the role of journalists in preventing child sexual abuse and teenage pregnancies.

RIB spokesperson Dr. Thierry Murangira said some commentators, particularly in cases involving celebrities or prominent figures, attempt to justify suspects' actions instead of focusing on the law.

"I sometimes hear people asking who committed the greater offense between someone who impregnated a girl and abandoned her and another person who later took her into his home out of sympathy," Murangira said. "The law has reasons and principles behind it. People should explain it in that context instead of minimizing its seriousness."

He said such narratives risk silencing victims who fear public ridicule, especially on social media.

Authorities also urged parents to pay closer attention to their children's interactions with adults. According to RIB research, neighbors and family acquaintances are among the leading perpetrators of child sexual abuse, often using gifts or favors to gain children's trust.

"You may see someone acting generous by giving a child rides to school every day," Murangira said. "If a child receives gifts, parents should ask who gave them and, if necessary, confront that person."

RIB statistics show the agency received 4,138 child sexual abuse complaints between 2024 and 2025, with the Eastern Province accounting for 34% of reported cases. Girls represented more than 95% of victims, according to the agency.

The Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion is expected to launch a nationwide awareness campaign Tuesday in Gicumbi District.