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Réseau des Femmes Leaders pour le Développement
Women Leaders Network for Development



AFRICAN WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT 2026

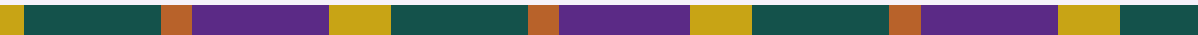
The state of women's human rights across the fifty-five member
states of the African Union

Maputo Protocol status · political participation and decision-making · the care economy ·
formal and informal work · land, property and inheritance · sexual and reproductive health
and rights · HIV · sexual and gender-based violence and harmful practices · technology-facil-
itated violence · arbitrary arrest and detention · civic space and women human rights
defenders · conflict and displacement

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Note on verification status

This report distinguishes throughout between three categories of statement, and the distinction is deliberate. Statements drawn from treaty instruments and depositary records are stated as fact and are traceable to the source cited. Statements of legal and institutional analysis are RFLD's own and are presented as analysis. Statements of quantitative fact drawn from external statistical sources are attributed to those sources with the edition specified, and where a figure has not been verified for this edition, the report carries a bracketed instruction naming the source from

which it must be drawn rather than an approximation. Where a continental figure does not exist, the report says that it does not exist rather than substituting a regional average for it.

This convention is unusual in reports of this kind and it is adopted for a reason connected to the report's own findings. A report that documents an accountability deficit cannot itself rest on numbers that cannot be traced. Readers are invited to test any figure in this document against the source given, and Annex D sets out the indicators this report identifies as requiring systematic continental compilation.

Note on terminology

This report uses "Vulnerable Groups" as its collective term for populations facing compounded discrimination, in accordance with RFLD's institutional convention and with the registration requirements applying to RFLD's legal entities in its countries of operation. Where the report reproduces the language of an external instrument, that language appears as a quotation of the source and not as RFLD's own descriptive terminology.

"Africa" in this report means the fifty-five member states of the African Union. Regional attribution follows the African Union's five-region classification: North, West, Central, East and Southern. Readers should note that the assignment of individual states to regions varies between African Union organs and between the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities, and that comparisons with sources using a different classification will not reconcile exactly. Annex A states the classification used for every state.

The Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic is included as an African Union member state. Its inclusion reflects membership of the Union and carries no position on contested questions of status.

Foreword

Twenty-three years ago in Maputo, African states adopted an instrument that went further on the rights of women than any regional treaty then in existence, and further in several respects than the global framework still goes today. Forty-six of the fifty-five member states of the African Union are now party to it.

That is a real achievement and it is not the subject of this report. This report is about the distance between the instrument and the lives it was drafted to change, and about the fact that after twenty-three years the continent cannot measure that distance from any public record. We know how many states have ratified. We do not know, in any form that can be verified state by state, how many have written the Protocol into their own law, how many have funded what their law requires, or how many have told the African Commission what they have done.

A movement cannot hold a state to a promise it cannot document. That is the argument of this report, and it is the reason RFLD has published it in a form that shows its own working, including the places where the record runs out. We have named every figure we could not verify rather than estimating it. We would rather publish a report with visible gaps than one whose confidence exceeds its evidence.

What is not in doubt is what the organisations in this network are carrying. Across 670 member organisations in more than thirty-five countries, the constraints are reported with a consistency that no longer looks like coincidence: money that arrives late, short and restricted; compliance requirements calibrated to institutions many times their size; security costs that no grant covers; and a working language that determines, before any assessment of merit, whether an organisation is visible to those funding this field at all.

Those are solvable problems. Part Six of this report sets out what solving them would require, addressed separately to the states that owe the obligation, to the Union that holds them to it, to the institutions that fund the work, and to the movement itself.

Gloria Dossi Sèkonnou AGUEH

Africa Director and Founder, RFLD

How to use this report

The report is organised so that a reader can enter at the level that matches the question being asked.

If the question is	Read
What is the legal status of the Maputo Protocol in a given state	Annex A for the summary table, and the country profile for that state in Annex C.
What does a specific article of the Protocol oblige	Annex B, which sets out the Protocol article by article with the domestication test for each.
What is the continental position on a given right	The relevant chapter in Part Three, which follows a fixed structure: treaty basis, continental picture, regional variation, what the data does not capture, and implication.
What is happening in a given region	The relevant chapter in Part Four.
What are feminist organisations reporting about their own conditions	Part Five.
What does RFLD contribute, and what does it not	Part Six, including Chapter 38 which states the limits of RFLD's capacity explicitly.
What should be done, and by whom	Part Seven, which addresses recommendations to five distinct audiences separately.
Where does a figure in this report come from	The footnote on the figure, and Annex E for the source register. Annex D sets out the indicators for which no compiled continental figure exists.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

ACDEG	African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance
ACHPR	African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights
ACRWC	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
AES	Alliance des États du Sahel
APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture
AU	African Union
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CSO	Civil society organisation
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
DONUESE	RFLD's continental open-data infrastructure
EAC	East African Community
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EmONC	Emergency obstetric and newborn care
FGM	Female genital mutilation
GBV	Gender-based violence
IDP	Internally displaced person
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MMR	Maternal mortality ratio
NCII	Non-consensual intimate images
OSEA	Online sexual exploitation and abuse
PSEAH	Protection from sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment
REC	Regional Economic Community
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADR	Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic
SGBV	Sexual and gender-based violence
SRHR	Sexual and reproductive health and rights
TFGBV	Technology-facilitated gender-based violence
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
WAFF Fund	West African Francophone Feminist Fund

ACDEG	African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance
WHRD	Woman human rights defender
WPS	Women, peace and security

Executive summary

Twenty-three years after its adoption at Maputo, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa has been ratified or acceded to by forty-six of the African Union's fifty-five member states.

That figure is the one African states prefer to cite, and it conceals the finding that organises this report. Accession has become the easy part. What has not followed at comparable pace is domestication into national law, budget allocation sufficient to give effect to domesticated law, institutional capacity to enforce it, and reporting to the African Commission that would allow anyone outside government to verify progress. The frontier is no longer ratification. It is implementation, and implementation is where the continental record thins to the point of unverifiability.

This edition extends coverage from Sub-Saharan Africa to all fifty-five member states. The extension is not cosmetic: the two states that are party to the Protocol in no form at all are both North African, and a report on African women's rights that excludes North Africa cannot account for where non-accession is concentrated or why.

The ten principal findings

One. Accession is nearly complete and its speed has been highly uneven. Forty-six states have ratified or acceded, seven have signed without ratifying, and two have done neither. Southern Africa records full ratification across all ten of its states, the only African Union region with no state outside the Protocol. The interval between signature and ratification runs from ten days in the case of Botswana to fifteen years and eight months in the case of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, which establishes that ratification pace reflects domestic political conditions rather than any continental trend. Chapter 7 sets out the full distribution.

Two. Non-accession is concentrated, and the concentration is diagnostic. Four of the seven signature-only states are in the East region, two are in Central Africa, and one is in West Africa. Both non-parties are in North Africa. The clustering correlates with protracted conflict and institutional fragility rather than with any distinct legal objection to the Protocol's content, which means accession advocacy in those states is a state-capacity problem before it is a persuasion problem.

Three. Three states became party by accession, without ever signing. Cape Verde, Malawi and Mauritania joined by a single act rather than by signature followed by ratification. This route is under-used and almost never named in advocacy, and it is the only route available in Egypt and Morocco, where there is no signature to build on. Chapter 8 develops the point.

Four. Reporting under Article 26 is the weakest link in the accountability chain. The Protocol obliges states party to indicate the legislative and other measures taken for the full realisation of the rights it recognises, in their periodic reports under Article 62 of the African Charter.¹ Compliance is low, submissions are frequently overdue by multiple reporting cycles, and the gender content of reports that are submitted is often formal rather than substantive. The consequence is structural: a continental mechanism cannot assess implementation it has never been

1. Maputo Protocol, Article 26(1); African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, Article 62. The African Commission adopted Guidelines for State Reporting under the Protocol in 2009 in order to structure this obligation.

told about, and no public tracker of reporting compliance exists from which the scale of the deficit could be established. Chapter 10 sets out the three distinct failures this produces.

Five. Domestication is patterned, and the pattern follows the redistribution of assets.

Provisions on violence against women have been domesticated most widely, because they attract political consensus and can be enacted without transferring property or power. Provisions on inheritance, matrimonial property and land have been domesticated least, because they transfer both, and because they collide with customary and religious personal law regimes that many constitutions protect. Provisions on reproductive health occupy the contested middle, with Article 14(2)(c) on medical abortion the most frequently unimplemented substantive provision in the instrument.

Six. In political participation, the operative variable is the sanction and not the quota.

Where quota legislation carries an enforceable consequence and an electoral commission applies it, representation has risen and held. Where a quota is voluntary or unenforced, gains have been limited and reversible. The distinction between a quota with a sanction and a quota without one predicts outcomes better than any other single variable in this domain.

Seven. Women's economic position is governed less by labour law than by family law and land law.

The larger share of women's work across the continent takes place in the informal economy, outside labour protection and social security, while unpaid care work absorbs a further substantial share of available hours. Where inheritance and tenure rules restrict access to land and assets, economic empowerment programming produces limited durable gain, because the constraint lies upstream of the intervention.

Eight. Civic space closure is gendered in method, not only in effect.

Anti-terrorism provisions, cybercrime statutes and foreign-agent registration requirements drafted in deliberately broad language give authorities discretion to characterise advocacy as incitement or foreign interference. Women human rights defenders face this alongside a second register of attack directed at their gender, of which the most consequential element is the campaign against a defender's moral standing, because its purpose is to remove the community protection that no international mechanism can replace.

Nine. Arbitrary arrest has become a routine and largely invisible instrument.

Detention of women activists, journalists and elected officials, frequently short, frequently without charge, and frequently followed by release without acknowledgement, functions as deterrence rather than prosecution. Because such episodes produce no charge and no judgment, they generate no court record and therefore no data. The instrument is effective in substantial part because it is invisible to the systems that would otherwise document it.

Ten. The funding architecture is structurally misaligned with the organisations it intends to serve.

Across regions, grassroots women-led organisations report the same constraints: money that arrives restricted and short, application and reporting requirements calibrated to institutions many times their size, no provision for the institutional systems donors then require them to hold, and no provision for the security costs the work generates. Francophone and lusophone organisations report these constraints more acutely, through mechanisms set out in Chapter 30.

What this report does not establish

Three limits are stated at the outset because a review that conceals them invites an objection it has not answered.

RFLD has not conducted a fifty-five state legal audit of domestication for this edition. Statements about domestication patterns are qualitative, drawn from the Maputo Protocol Hub, the West Africa Legislative Platform and the record of African Commission Concluding Observations. The instrument that would answer the domestication question properly is described in Chapter 45 and proposed as Volume II.

Quantitative claims about prevalence, coverage and incidence in Part Three are attributed to external statistical sources. Where the current edition of a source has not been consulted for this report, the figure appears as a bracketed instruction rather than as an approximation, and Annex D lists every instance.

Part Five reports what organisations in RFLD's network say about their own conditions. The verifiable fact is that they report it. Whether each constraint operates exactly as described is a separate question, and the report does not collapse the two.



PART ONE

Framework, method and the continental normative architecture

1. Introduction and rationale

The African Union's normative framework on the rights of women is, on the text, among the most advanced regional frameworks in existence. The Maputo Protocol addresses harmful practices directly, addresses the position of women in armed conflict, commits states to affirmative action in political participation, and authorises medical abortion in defined circumstances. No other regional human rights treaty does all four. The African Charter guarantees the civic freedoms on which women's organising depends, and establishes a reporting cycle through which civil society can engage the state. The African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance commits states to eliminate gender discrimination across all decision-making.

The gap this report documents is therefore not a gap in norms. It is the gap between the norms and the machinery that would give them effect, and the more specific problem that after twenty-three years the size of that gap cannot be established from any public source.

1.1 Why this edition extends to fifty-five states

The 2025 edition of this report covered Sub-Saharan Africa. Three considerations argued for extension.

1. The two states party to the Protocol in no form are Egypt and Morocco, both North African. A report that excludes them cannot explain where non-accession sits or address it.
2. North African ratification is recent and instructive. Algeria ratified in November 2016, Tunisia in August 2018 and the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic in March 2022. Three of the region's five accessions therefore fall within the last decade, from a region often assumed to be static on this instrument, and the mechanisms that produced them are relevant to advocacy elsewhere.
3. The African Commission's jurisdiction, and the Protocol itself, are continental. A civil society report that adopts a narrower geography than the mechanism it addresses concedes analytical ground without reason.

1.2 What is new in this edition

- Coverage of all fifty-five member states, with a country profile for each at Annex C.
- An article-by-article treatment of the Protocol at Annex B, with a domestication test stated for each substantive article.
- Analysis of the signature-to-ratification interval as a measure of domestic political will, computed for every state party at Annex A.
- Regional synthesis chapters covering each of the five African Union regions in Part Four.
- Two new thematic chapters, on the care economy and on technology-facilitated violence, the latter anchored in the African Commission's Resolution 522.
- A research and data agenda at Annex D, listing the indicators required to assess a Protocol obligation for which no compiled continental figure exists, and a proposed domestication index at Annex H.

2. Methodology

2.1 Scope and coverage

The report covers the fifty-five member states of the African Union from the closing date of the 2025 edition to the date of publication. Coverage is not uniform and the report does not represent it as uniform. Depth varies with the availability of verifiable data and with the density of RFLD's own network presence, which is strongest in francophone West Africa and the Sahel, substantial in anglophone West Africa, and thinner in North Africa and parts of the East region. Chapter 2.4 states what follows from that unevenness.

2.2 Hierarchy of evidence

Every substantive claim in this report is intended to be traceable to one of four tiers, and the tier determines how the claim is expressed.

Tier	Source type	Treatment in this report
Tier 1	Treaty instruments, depositary records, official state submissions, African Commission resolutions and Concluding Observations, court judgments	Cited directly and stated as fact. Reproduced without interpretation where the text is dispositive of the question.
Tier 2	United Nations agency statistics, ILO, WHO, UNAIDS, UNICEF, IPU Parline, national statistical offices, Afrobarometer	Cited with the year and edition of the source. Where two authoritative sources conflict, both are given and the discrepancy is noted rather than resolved silently.
Tier 3	Peer-reviewed literature and established civil society monitoring, including the CIVICUS Monitor and Front Line Defenders Global Analysis	Cited with attribution. Methodological limitations noted where they bear on the finding.
Tier 4	RFLD network reporting, member organisation submissions, consultation records, grantee reporting	Attributed explicitly to RFLD's network and expressed as what organisations report, not as independently verified fact.

Table 2.1 Hierarchy of evidence applied throughout this report.

Tier 4 material carries a specific and limited claim, and the limit matters. When this report states that organisations report a constraint, the verifiable fact is the report of it. Whether the constraint operates as described is a separate question. Collapsing the two is the most common failure in civil society reporting and the easiest for a hostile reader to expose.

2.3 Country classification

States are classified on two axes. The first is legal status in relation to the Protocol: ratified or acceded, signed only, or neither. This axis is Tier 1 and is fully populated at Annex A.

The second is the operating environment for women's civil society, assessed against four indicators: the existence and use of restrictive registration or foreign-funding legislation; documented reprisals against women human rights defenders; the practical availability of judicial remedy; and the state's reporting record before the African Commission. Classification on this axis is RFLD's own assessment and is stated as assessment rather than as finding. It is not populated for all fifty-five states in this edition, and the country profiles at Annex C carry the field for completion.

2.4 Limitations

1. Data availability is uneven and the unevenness is not random. States with the weakest human rights record are frequently those with the least published data, so the continental picture is systematically better documented where conditions are better. Any continental average in this report should be read with that bias in mind, and continental averages are used sparingly for that reason.
2. Short-duration arbitrary detention, harassment below the threshold of arrest, and violence inside the household are all under-recorded by the mechanisms that generate official statistics. This report treats absence of data as absence of data and not as absence of the phenomenon, and says so at each point where it matters.
3. Language shapes the evidence base. A substantial part of the documentation produced by francophone and lusophone African civil society does not enter the English-language literature on which international reporting draws. That asymmetry affects this report as it affects others, and it is the same asymmetry Chapter 30 examines in funding.
4. RFLD is not a disinterested observer of the funding architecture described in Part Five. RFLD operates re-granting facilities and competes for institutional finance. Chapter 30 states that interest openly rather than writing as though it did not exist.
5. For several indicators this report requires, no compiled continental figure exists. The report identifies those indicators rather than approximating them, and Annex D collects them as a research agenda. A reader seeking a national figure for such an indicator should consult the country-level source named at Annex E rather than infer one from this report.

2.5 Ethics and do no harm

No woman human rights defender is named in this report without documented consent. Where a case is described and the person has not consented to identification, identifying detail has been removed, including location and organisational affiliation where either would permit identification. Cases under active legal process are described only to the extent already on the public record. Where publication of a verified case would increase risk to the person concerned, the case has been withheld. This report is therefore not a complete record of what RFLD knows, and that incompleteness is a protection decision rather than an evidentiary one.

Where the report withholds a case, the country profile at Annex C records that a case has been withheld, so that the absence is visible without the content being disclosed.

2.6 Data standards

Three standards govern quantitative material in this report. A figure is attributed to the source and edition from which it is taken, so that a reader can test it. A figure is not reproduced from an earlier RFLD publication unless that publication itself cites a primary source. And where no compiled continental figure exists for an indicator the report needs, the report states that it does not exist rather than substituting a proxy, because the absence of the measure is itself a finding about the accountability architecture.

Annex D lists the indicators for which the report found no compiled continental figure. That list is a research agenda rather than a disclaimer: each item is an indicator that would be required to assess a Protocol obligation, and each is presently uncompiled.

3. The continental normative architecture

3.1 The Maputo Protocol

Adopted on 11 July 2003 and in force since 25 November 2005, the Protocol is the continental reference instrument on the rights of women. It runs to thirty-two articles and its substantive provisions extend considerably further than the global framework in four respects.

- Article 5 obliges states to prohibit and condemn harmful practices, and specifies legislative measures backed by sanctions, alongside support to victims and protection of women at risk.
- Article 9 commits states to specific positive action to ensure equal participation in political and decision-making processes, which is an affirmative-action obligation in treaty text rather than in soft law.
- Article 11 addresses the protection of women in armed conflict and obliges states to protect asylum-seeking women, refugees, returnees and internally displaced women against all forms of violence, including sexual violence, and to treat such acts as war crimes, genocide or crimes against humanity where the elements are met.
- Article 14(2)(c) obliges states party to authorise medical abortion in cases of sexual assault, rape and incest, and where continued pregnancy endangers the mental or physical health of the woman or the life of the woman or the foetus. No other regional treaty contains a comparable provision.

Annex B treats each article in turn with the domestication test for each. The point to register here is structural: the Protocol's substantive reach is not matched by its enforcement architecture.

Article 26 routes monitoring through the African Charter reporting cycle rather than establishing a dedicated treaty body with its own examination schedule. Article 27 assigns interpretation to the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, whose jurisdiction over individual complaints depends on a separate declaration under Article 34(6) of the Court's own Protocol that few member states have made. The route from a violation to a continental remedy is therefore narrow, and Chapter 11 sets out how narrow.

3.2 The African Charter and the African Commission

The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights guarantees freedom of expression in Article 9, freedom of association in Article 10 and freedom of assembly in Article 11, guarantees liberty and security of person in Article 6 and fair trial in Article 7, and establishes the state reporting cycle in Article 62. Article 18(3) obliges states to eliminate discrimination against women and to protect the rights of women as stipulated in international declarations and conventions, and it is the provision on which the Protocol builds.

The African Commission's machinery matters to this report in four distinct ways, and they are frequently conflated.

Mechanism	Function and relevance
State reporting under Article 62	The periodic examination of a state's compliance record, and the channel through which Maputo Article 26 obligations are discharged. Civil society engages it through shadow reporting.

Mechanism	Function and relevance
Concluding Observations	The Commission's findings and recommendations following examination. These are the closest available approximation to an authoritative continental assessment of a state's position, and they are under-used by national civil society.
Special Procedures	Including the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women in Africa and the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders and Focal Point on Reprisals in Africa. These generate country visits, letters of appeal and thematic reports, and they can act between sessions.
Resolutions and General Comments	Normative elaboration. General Comments on Article 14 give interpretive authority to obligations states characterise as aspirational, and Resolution 522 provides continental footing on digital violence against women.

Table 3.1 African Commission mechanisms engaged by this report.

Two Commission instruments carry particular weight for the findings that follow. Resolution 522 addresses the protection of women against digital violence in Africa and provides the normative basis for the work described in Chapter 19.

3.3 ACDEG and the governance instruments

The African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, adopted in 2007, commits states to periodic free and fair elections, separation of powers, the rule of law and the rejection of unconstitutional changes of government. Article 8 commits states to eliminate all forms of gender discrimination and to take appropriate measures to ensure the full and active participation of women in decision-making. ACDEG is the instrument most directly engaged by the sequence of unconstitutional changes of government the continent has recorded since 2020, and Article 8 is among the least invoked of its substantive provisions, including by civil society actors who invoke the rest of the instrument.

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child bears on several findings in Part Three, particularly on child marriage and on the position of adolescent girls, and its supervisory committee provides a second reporting channel that women's organisations use less than they could.

The African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, the Kampala Convention, is the instrument engaged by Chapter 22, and its obligations on displaced women sit alongside Maputo Article 11.

3.4 Agenda 2063, the Solemn Declaration and AU gender machinery

Agenda 2063 names gender equality among its aspirations and provides the frame within which African Union organs situate gender programming. The African Union Strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment provides the programmatic architecture. The Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, adopted in 2004, contains an undertaking by Heads of State to report annually on implementation, and that undertaking has produced limited compliance.

The Solemn Declaration reporting channel deserves more attention than it receives, for a reason of leverage rather than of law. It is a Heads of State commitment, it is annual rather than on a multi-year cycle, and it is politically visible in a way that technical reporting to a Commission is not. A civil society strategy that treats it as a second accountability route, parallel to Article 26,

has an instrument that engages the executive directly. Reporting under the Declaration has not been sustained at the level the undertaking implies, and the channel is accordingly both available and under-used.

3.5 Regional Economic Communities and the sub-regional courts

The Regional Economic Communities occupy an ambiguous position in this architecture. Several have adopted gender protocols with obligations that duplicate or extend the Maputo Protocol, and several operate courts with human rights jurisdiction. The most consequential for women's rights litigation has been the ECOWAS Community Court of Justice, which has admitted human rights cases without requiring the exhaustion of domestic remedies and has accordingly become a route of choice for West African litigants, including in cases concerning women's rights.

The withdrawal of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger from ECOWAS alters that route for litigants in three Sahelian states, and the consequences for pending and prospective cases are a material legal question rather than a matter of commentary. Litigants and their counsel require an authoritative statement of the position from the Community Court and from the ECOWAS Commission, and Chapter 42 recommends that one be given. Until it is, the position should not be inferred from secondary reporting.

The East African Court of Justice and the SADC Tribunal have had different trajectories, the latter having been curtailed following the litigation on land in Zimbabwe, which is itself a case study in what happens to a sub-regional court that decides against member state interests on property. Chapter 15 returns to that episode as context for the land findings.

3.6 Interaction with the global framework

The Maputo Protocol does not displace the global framework and in several respects is best used alongside it. Three interactions matter operationally.

- CEDAW reporting cycles and Maputo reporting cycles run separately, and a state's CEDAW report frequently contains material relevant to a Maputo assessment that the African Commission has not received. Civil society can use one to interrogate the other.
- The Universal Periodic Review operates on a predictable cycle with an open submission window, which makes it the most accessible international mechanism for organisations without standing before a treaty body. Chapter 44 recommends its systematic use.
- Special Procedures of the United Nations Human Rights Council and of the African Commission can be engaged in parallel on the same case, and joint engagement carries more weight than either alone.

4. The implementation chain

This report locates each finding on a five-stage chain running from accession to lived right. The frame is diagnostic rather than descriptive: its purpose is to identify at which stage a given right is failing, because the appropriate intervention differs at each stage and advocacy that misidentifies the stage prescribes a remedy the system will absorb without changing.

Stage	What it requires	Where the continental record stands
1. Accession	Signature and ratification, or accession	Nearly complete. Forty-six of fifty-five states. Verifiable from the depositary.
2. Domestication	Incorporation into national law, and repeal of conflicting provisions	Partial and patterned. Strongest on violence, weakest on inheritance, matrimonial property and land tenure. Not systematically documented.
3. Allocation	Budget lines sufficient to operate what the law requires	Weak and rarely tracked. The gap between a legislated service and a funded service is the least documented stage in the chain.
4. Enforcement	Institutions that apply the law, and remedies that function in practice	Weak. Provider capacity, police practice and judicial delay dominate the failure modes.
5. Accountability	Reporting, monitoring, and remedy accessible to the rights holder	Weakest. Article 26 reporting is intermittent and the continental remedy is narrow.

Table 4.1 The implementation chain. Each stage can fail independently, and failure at any stage nullifies progress at the stages preceding it.

Three worked illustrations show why the distinction is operational rather than academic. A state with exemplary legislation on sexual violence and no forensic capacity fails at stage four; the remedy is institutional investment and the legislative demand is already satisfied. A state with a domesticated right to maternal health services and no budget line to staff them fails at stage three; the remedy is fiscal and the instrument is budget analysis. A state that has ratified, domesticated, allocated and enforced but never reported fails at stage five; the remedy is a reporting demand, and the rights holder may be substantially protected while the continental record shows nothing.

The chain also explains a pattern that recurs through Part Three. Advocacy attention concentrates on stages one and two, because accession and legislation are visible, datable and attributable. Stages three, four and five attract less attention and account for most of the failure. Each thematic chapter in Part Three closes by naming the stage at which the domain is failing.



PART TWO

The Maputo Protocol at twenty-three years

5. Ratification status across the fifty-five member states

As at the date of this report, forty-six African Union member states have ratified or acceded to the Maputo Protocol, seven have signed without ratifying, and two are party in no form.

Status	States	Detail
Ratified or acceded	46	Full list with dates at Annex A. Three of the forty-six acceded without signing.
Signed, not ratified	7	Burundi, Chad, Eritrea, Madagascar, Niger, Somalia, Sudan.
Neither signed nor ratified	2	Egypt, Morocco.

Table 5.1 Maputo Protocol status summary. Source: African Union Treaties and Conventions Depositary, reconciled by RFLD.

5.1 The legal significance of the intermediate position

The seven signature-only states occupy a position whose legal content is limited but not empty. A signatory that has not ratified is under an obligation to refrain from acts that would defeat the object and purpose of the treaty, pending a decision on ratification, and that obligation gives advocacy a foothold that does not exist in Egypt and Morocco. In practical terms the argument available in a signature-only state is that the state has already accepted the instrument's object and is now obliged not to legislate against it. That argument is available in Burundi, Chad, Eritrea, Madagascar, Niger, Somalia and Sudan, and in none of them is it commonly made.

5.2 Twenty-three years in six moments

Year	Event
2003	Adoption at the African Union Summit in Maputo, Mozambique, on 11 July. Twenty-one states sign in the course of the year.
2005	Entry into force. Togo deposits the fifteenth instrument of ratification on 26 October and the Protocol enters into force on 25 November, two years and four months after adoption.
2012	A continental wave. Cameroon, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Eswatini and Guinea all deposit within the year, the largest single-year addition after the entry-into-force cohort.
2016–2018	North Africa moves. Algeria ratifies in November 2016 and Tunisia in August 2018, the two most recent North African accessions.
2023	Forty-six states. Botswana ratifies in October and South Sudan in February, bringing the count to its present figure.
2026	Twenty-three years. The Protocol is the continental reference and domestication is the frontier.

Table 5.2 Chronology. Source: African Union Treaties and Conventions Depositary.

5.3 The most recent accessions

The accession record has a feature that the ratification count conceals: ratification date and deposit date produce different orderings, and both are analytically relevant. Ratification is the domestic act, generally legislative. Deposit is the international act that binds the state, and the interval between them is administrative rather than political. A state may therefore appear more or less recent depending on which date is used, and reports that do not say which they are using are not comparable.

Rank	By date of ratification	By date of deposit	Observation
1	Botswana, 23 October 2023	Botswana, 1 December 2023	The most recent accession on either measure, and the fastest signature-to-ratification passage on the continent at ten days.
2	South Sudan, 24 February 2023	South Sudan, 7 June 2023	The continent's newest state, acceding ten years after signature.
3	Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, 19 March 2022	Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, 27 May 2023	The most recent North African accession, and the longest signature-to-ratification interval recorded.
4	Sao Tome and Principe, 18 April 2019	Ethiopia, 17 September 2019	The two orderings diverge here. Ethiopia ratified before Sao Tome and Principe but deposited after it.
5	Tunisia, 23 August 2018	Sao Tome and Principe, 27 June 2019	Tunisia is the fifth most recent by ratification and the sixth by deposit.
6	Ethiopia, 18 July 2018	Tunisia, 27 September 2018	Ethiopia's fourteen-month gap between ratification and deposit is among the longest administrative delays on the record.

Table 5.3 The six most recent accessions, ordered by date of ratification and by date of deposit. Computed from Annex A.

Two points follow. Botswana, South Sudan and the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic are the three most recent accessions on either measure, and no state has become party since December 2023, which is the empirical basis for the statement at Chapter 45 that the movement lacks an indicator that moves. And Ethiopia's fourteen-month interval between ratification and deposit is a reminder that a state can complete every domestic step and remain unbound for a year, which is an advocacy target distinct from ratification itself and one that requires only an administrative act.

6. Regional patterns

Disaggregating status by African Union region produces the clearest structural finding in this part. The counts below are computed from the state-level data at Annex A using the African Union five-region classification.

AU re-gion	States	Rati-fied	Out-side	Observation
South-ern	10	10	0	Full ratification. The only African Union region with no state outside the Protocol.
West	15	14	1	Niger is the sole outlier, having signed in July 2004. West Africa records the highest early-ratification density on the continent.
Cent-ral	9	7	2	Burundi and Chad have signed without ratifying, in December 2003 and December 2004 respectively.
East	14	10	4	The concentration of non-accession. Eritrea, Madagascar, Somalia and Sudan have signed without ratifying.
North	7	5	2	Both states party in no form are here. Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Tunisia and the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic have ratified or acceded.

Table 6.1 Ratification by African Union region, computed from Annex A. Regional attribution follows the African Union five-region classification; assignment of individual states varies between AU organs and sources using a different classification will not reconcile exactly.

6.1 Southern Africa and the case for regional peer effect

Full ratification across all ten Southern African states is the single most useful fact in this chapter, because it demonstrates that near-universal accession within a region is achievable and invites the question of what produced it. Three factors are identifiable and, importantly, are replicable rather than particular.

1. Sustained engagement at the level of the Regional Economic Community, in which the regional gender instrument and its reporting created a peer environment in which non-ratification was visible to neighbours.
2. National women's movements with established parliamentary access, able to table ratification as a legislative item rather than only as an advocacy demand.
3. A comparatively short interval between signature and ratification in most of the region, which prevented the accumulation of stalled files that characterises the East region.

The counterfactual is worth noting. Full ratification in Southern Africa has not produced correspondingly uniform implementation, and several of the domains in Part Three show substantial variation within the region. Ratification is a regional achievement; implementation remains national.

6.2 The East region and the fragility correlation

Four of the seven signature-only states are in the East region: Eritrea, Madagascar, Somalia and Sudan. Adding Burundi and Chad from Central Africa, six of the seven sit in a contiguous band

running from the Sahel through the Horn. The correlation is with protracted conflict, contested or interrupted constitutional order, and limited legislative throughput, rather than with any distinct legal or cultural objection to the Protocol's content.

That distinction has an operational consequence. Where non-ratification reflects objection, the intervention is persuasion, and the counterpart is the ministry or the legislature. Where it reflects capacity, the intervention is technical and the counterpart may be a transitional authority with no functioning legislature at all. Advocacy that applies the first approach to the second situation expends effort on an audience that could not deliver ratification if it agreed.

6.3 North Africa and the two non-parties

Five of the seven North African states are party. Egypt and Morocco are the only African Union member states that have neither signed nor ratified, and their position differs from that of the signature-only group in a way that matters legally: there is no signature to build on, and therefore no obligation to refrain from defeating the object of the treaty. The available route is accession, and Chapter 8 sets out why that route is more promising than it appears.

The recency of North African accession is the more useful feature of this region for advocacy purposes. Algeria ratified in 2016 after almost thirteen years, Tunisia in 2018 after three, and the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic in 2022 after fifteen years and eight months, which is the longest interval recorded anywhere on the continent. All three followed periods of domestic constitutional or political change. That pattern suggests that ratification in this region has moved when a broader constitutional moment opened rather than incrementally, and that advocacy should be positioned to be ready for such moments rather than distributed evenly across the cycle.

7. The interval between signature and ratification

The ratification record contains a variable that is rarely examined: the interval between signature and ratification. That interval measures domestic political will more precisely than the ratification date alone, because signature is generally an executive act while ratification generally requires a legislature. A long interval indicates a file that entered the domestic system and stalled there.

Annex A states the computed interval for every state party that signed before ratifying. The distribution is wide.

State	Interval	Observation
Botswana	10 days	Signed 13 October 2023 and ratified 23 October 2023. The fastest passage on the continental record.
Comoros	21 days	Signed 26 February 2004 and ratified 18 March 2004.
Angola	7 months	Signed and ratified within the same year.
Nigeria	1 yr	Ratified exactly one year after signature.
Algeria	12 yrs 10 mo	Signed December 2003 and ratified November 2016.
Sierra Leone	11 yrs 6 mo	Signed December 2003 and ratified July 2015.
Ethiopia	14 yrs 1 mo	Signed June 2004 and ratified July 2018, with deposit in September 2019.
Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic	15 yrs 8 mo	The longest interval among states party, with deposit in May 2023.

Table 7.1 Selected signature-to-ratification intervals, computed from the depositary dates at Annex A.

7.1 What the interval implies for advocacy

The seven signature-only states are not equivalent cases and should not receive an equivalent strategy. Burundi signed in December 2003 and has not ratified in more than twenty-two years. Chad signed in December 2004, Madagascar in February 2004, Niger in July 2004, Somalia in February 2006, Sudan in June 2008 and Eritrea in April 2012. A file that has been dormant for two decades presents a different problem from one that is comparatively recent, and in the older cases the original signature may predate every official currently in post, which means the institutional memory of the commitment has to be rebuilt before it can be invoked.

The Botswana case is the most instructive on the other side. Ten days between signature and ratification indicates that the domestic process had been completed before signature, and that signature was the final step rather than the first. Where ratification advocacy can be sequenced so that legislative approval precedes signature, the interval problem is eliminated rather than managed.

8. Accession without signature

Cape Verde, Malawi and Mauritania became party to the Protocol by accession, with no signature recorded in the depositary.

This route receives almost no attention in advocacy on the Protocol, and it should. Accession is a single act producing the same legal result as signature followed by ratification, and it removes the two-stage structure in which so many states have stalled. All three accessions occurred within months of one another in 2005, which suggests that the route was understood and used at the point of entry into force and has since fallen out of the advocacy vocabulary.

8.1 Why this matters for the nine states outside

For Egypt and Morocco, accession is not merely one option among several. It is the only available route, because there is no signature to ratify. Advocacy that frames the ask as "ratify the Protocol" is, in those two states, asking for something procedurally unavailable, and the framing may be one reason the ask has made little progress.

For the seven signature-only states the position is different but the lesson transfers. Where a signature has been dormant for two decades and the domestic file cannot be located or revived, accession may be procedurally cleaner than reviving a ratification process attached to a signature that predates the current constitutional order. Whether that is available in a given state is a question of that state's own treaty-making law, and it is a question worth asking rather than assuming.

Recommended action arising from this chapter.

RFLD should produce a short legal note, in English and French, setting out the accession route under the Protocol, the precedent of Cape Verde, Malawi and Mauritania, and the procedural steps in each of the nine states currently outside. The note should be addressed to national women's coalitions in those nine states rather than to the states themselves, on the reasoning that the ask has to be made domestically to be made credibly. This is a low-cost instrument with no current equivalent in the field.

9. From ratification to domestication

Ratification creates an international obligation. In most African legal systems it does not create a directly enforceable domestic right. In dualist systems the Protocol requires an incorporating statute before a national court will apply it. In monist systems it requires at minimum the repeal of conflicting provisions, and frequently implementing regulation before an administrative body will act on it. Neither has followed ratification at comparable pace anywhere on the continent.

9.1 The pattern of partial domestication

The pattern is consistent enough across states to describe, and it tracks the political cost of the provision rather than its legal complexity.

Domain	Domestication	Why
Violence against women, harmful practices	Widest	Attracts political consensus. Can be enacted without transferring property or authority. Produces visible legislative achievement at low cost to existing interests.
Political participation	Moderate	Quota legislation is common. Enforcement provisions are not, and the gap between the two is where the domain fails.
Health and reproductive rights	Contested	Article 14 is widely reflected in health policy and narrowly reflected in criminal law. Article 14(2)(c) is the most frequently unimplemented substantive provision in the instrument.
Economic rights, informal work	Narrow	Article 13 has been domesticated as formal-sector labour law where domesticated at all, leaving the majority of working women outside its protection.
Inheritance, matrimonial property, land	Narrowest	These provisions transfer assets. They collide with customary and religious personal law regimes that many constitutions protect, and the collision is generally resolved in favour of the existing regime.

Table 9.1 Domestication pattern by domain. RFLD assessment, drawn from the Maputo Protocol Hub, the West Africa Legislative Platform and the record of African Commission Concluding Observations.

9.2 Legal pluralism as the binding constraint

The mechanism that produces the pattern in Table 9.1 is legal pluralism, and it deserves to be stated precisely because it is frequently described imprecisely. Three regimes govern personal status and land across most of the continent simultaneously: statutory law, customary law, and religious personal law. Where they conflict, the question of which prevails is often resolved by constitutional provisions that expressly protect customary and personal law, sometimes with a saving clause exempting them from the constitution's own non-discrimination guarantee.

The consequence is that a state can domesticate Article 21 on inheritance in statute while leaving intact the regime under which most estates are actually distributed. Formal legal equality and substantive dispossession coexist in the same legal system without contradiction, which is why litigation in this area produces individual victories and limited systemic change, and why a legislative demand that does not address the constitutional standing of the competing regime prescribes a remedy the system can absorb.

9.3 What a domestication audit would establish

The statements in this chapter are qualitative, and they are the strongest statements the available record supports. What the record does not support is a state-by-state account of which provisions are incorporated, under which statute, with what conflicting provisions still in force.

That account is constructible. For each state party it requires the incorporating statute with its citation or a statement that none exists; the conflicting provisions still in force; the constitutional standing of customary and personal law; the budget line, if any, funding the resulting obligation; and the Article 26 reporting record. Annex C sets out that structure as a country profile template, populated with the verified accession data for all fifty-five states and carrying the remaining fields for completion. Chapter 45 makes the case for completing it as Volume II.

10. Article 26 reporting and the accountability deficit

Article 26(1) of the Protocol obliges states party to indicate, in their periodic reports submitted under Article 62 of the African Charter, the legislative and other measures taken for the full realisation of the rights the Protocol recognises. Article 26(2) obliges states to adopt all necessary measures and provide budgetary and other resources for the full and effective implementation of the rights recognised, which is one of the few treaty provisions anywhere that names budget allocation as a distinct obligation.

The African Commission adopted Guidelines for State Reporting under the Protocol in 2009 in order to structure the Article 26 obligation and to prevent it from being discharged by a general statement. The Guidelines are detailed and useful, and they are widely unmet.

10.1 Three distinct failures

1. Non-submission. A substantial number of states party are overdue on their Article 62 reports, in several cases by multiple cycles. Where no report exists, the Article 26 obligation cannot have been discharged.
2. Formal submission without substance. Where reports are submitted, the Maputo component is frequently a short recitation of legislation enacted, without the disaggregated data the Guidelines request and without the budget information Article 26(2) implies.
3. Absence of follow-up. Where the Commission issues Concluding Observations containing gender-related recommendations, there is limited systematic tracking of whether the state has acted on them by the time of the next cycle, which converts the examination into an event rather than a process.

No public tracker of Article 62 reporting compliance exists, so the scale of the deficit cannot be established from outside the Commission. The number of states party overdue, and the length of the delay in each case, is not information available to the movements that would use it. That is now the reason Chapter 41 opens with the tracker recommendation: every other accountability recommendation in this report depends on it, and none of them can be costed, sequenced or verified until the size of the gap they address is public.

10.2 Specification of the compliance tracker

The recommendation at Chapter 41 that the African Commission publish a reporting compliance tracker is easy to state and easy to ignore, because a recommendation without a specification can be met by anything. This section therefore sets out what such a tracker would contain. Everything in it is information the Commission's Secretariat already holds, which means publication is an administrative decision and not a research undertaking.

Field	Content	Why it is required
State	Member state, and whether party to the Protocol	Article 26 obligations arise only for states party, so the two records must be readable together.
Reports due	Number of Article 62 reports due since ratification	Establishes the denominator. Without it, a single submitted report can be presented as compliance.
	Number submitted, with dates	The numerator.

Field	Content	Why it is required
Reports submitted		
Cycles overdue	Reports outstanding, expressed in cycles	Converts a date into a comparable measure across states with different ratification dates.
Longest delay	Period since the last submission	Distinguishes a state one cycle late from a state that has never reported.
Maputo content	Whether the most recent report addressed Protocol obligations, and whether substantively	A report that satisfies Article 62 without addressing Article 26 discharges neither.
Disaggregated data	Whether the report included the sex-disaggregated data the Guidelines request	The Guidelines are the standard; compliance with the form without the data is not compliance.
Budget information	Whether the report addressed the resources obligation in Article 26(2)	Article 26(2) is a distinct obligation and is almost never reported against.
Examination	Session at which the report was examined, or pending	A submitted report that is never examined produces no Concluding Observations and therefore no accountability.
Concluding Observations	Date, and whether gender-related recommendations were issued	Establishes what the state was told.
Follow-up	Whether the next report addressed the prior recommendations	Converts examination from an event into a process, which is the failure identified at Chapter 10.1.
Shadow reports	Whether civil society submissions were received for the examination	Shows where the civil society channel is being used and where it is not, which is itself a capacity map.

Table 10.1 Specification for a public Article 62 and Article 26 reporting compliance tracker.

Three design points make the difference between a tracker that changes behaviour and one that does not. It must be published in both working languages, or half the continent's civil society cannot use it. It must be updated at each ordinary session rather than annually, so that it is current when advocacy needs it. And it must show the denominator, because a state that has submitted one report in twenty years can otherwise describe itself as having reported.

Until such a tracker exists, the position stated at Chapter 10.1 holds: the scale of the reporting deficit cannot be established from outside the Commission, and the movement is arguing about a gap whose size it cannot state. That is the most consequential single measurement failure documented in this report, because Article 26 is the provision through which every other obligation in the Protocol is meant to become visible.

10.3 What civil society can do inside this gap

The reporting deficit is the point in the architecture where civil society has the most direct available leverage, for a reason that is procedural rather than political: the Commission examines what it receives, and it receives shadow reports from organisations with Observer Status alongside state reports. A shadow report submitted where the state has failed to report at all makes

the state's silence visible to the Commission and puts on the record an account against which the eventual state report will be read.

This is the mechanism RFLD uses, and Chapter 37 sets out how. The constraint on wider use is not eligibility but procedural knowledge, and it appears in Chapter 29 as one of the most consistently reported gaps across the network.

11. The African Court and the Article 34(6) constraint

Article 27 of the Protocol assigns interpretation to the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights. The Court can receive cases from the African Commission, from states party and from African intergovernmental organisations. It can receive cases directly from individuals and non-governmental organisations only in respect of a state that has made the declaration under Article 34(6) of the Protocol establishing the Court, accepting that competence.

The number of member states that have made the declaration has never exceeded a small minority of the Union's membership, and it has fallen, because several states that made it subsequently withdrew it. The consequence for the Maputo Protocol is direct: the treaty's designated interpretive body is, for the great majority of African women, procedurally unreachable. A woman in a state that has ratified the Protocol but not made the Article 34(6) declaration has no route to the Court on her own initiative, whatever the merits of her case. The current list of declarations should be taken from the Court's own records, since it changes.

11.1 The available alternatives, and their limits

Route	Availability and limitation
African Commission individual communications	Available in respect of all states party to the African Charter, subject to admissibility including exhaustion of domestic remedies. Findings are recommendations rather than binding judgments, and compliance is inconsistent.
Referral by the Commission to the Court	Available and under-used. It bypasses the Article 34(6) constraint, since the Commission's standing does not depend on the state's declaration. This is the most under-exploited route in the architecture.
ECOWAS Community Court of Justice	Available to West African litigants without exhaustion of domestic remedies. Materially affected for three Sahelian states by the ECOWAS withdrawals.
East African Court of Justice	Available with limitations on human rights jurisdiction that have been the subject of litigation.
National courts	The primary route in monist systems where the Protocol is directly applicable, and dependent on an incorporating statute in dualist systems.

Table 11.1 Routes to remedy under the Protocol, and their constraints.

The second row of that table carries the most practical finding in this chapter. Referral by the Commission to the Court does not depend on the respondent state having made the Article 34(6) declaration. For a case of sufficient continental significance, a strategy that seeks Commission referral rather than direct access circumvents the constraint that otherwise closes the Court. That route requires a relationship with the Commission and an understanding of its referral practice, which is precisely the institutional position described in Chapter 37.



PART THREE

Thematic findings across eleven domains

Each chapter in this part follows a fixed structure: the treaty basis, the continental picture, the regional variation, what the available data does not capture, and the implication located on the implementation chain at Table 4.1. The fixed structure is intended to make the chapters comparable and to make the absence of evidence visible where it exists. Where a figure is required and has not been verified for this edition, a bracketed instruction names the source from which it must be drawn, and Annex D consolidates those instructions.

12. Political power and decision-making

Treaty basis: Maputo Protocol Articles 9 and 12; ACDEG Article 8; African Charter Article 13; Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa.

12.1 The obligation

Article 9(1) obliges states party to take specific positive action to promote participative governance and the equal participation of women in the political life of their countries, through affirmative action, enabling national legislation and other measures, and to ensure that women participate without discrimination in all elections, are represented equally at all levels with men in all electoral processes, and are equal partners with men at all levels of development and implementation of state policies and development programmes. Article 9(2) obliges states to ensure increased and effective representation and participation of women at all levels of decision-making.

The obligation is unusually explicit for treaty text, and the record against it is unusually easy to measure at the parliamentary level, because the composition of legislatures is published. That measurability is both an advantage and a trap, and Chapter 12.4 sets out why.

12.2 The continental picture

The continental average for women in single or lower houses of parliament sits well below parity and has risen slowly across the Protocol's lifetime. The figure is published monthly by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and should be taken from that source at the date of use rather than reproduced from any report, including this one, since it changes with every election on the continent.

The distribution around that average is extremely wide. A small number of African states rank among the highest in the world on this measure, and a larger number sit in the bottom global quartile. The practical consequence is that the continental average describes almost no individual state accurately and should not be used as an advocacy figure in a national context. Country-level figures belong in the country profiles at Annex C.

12.3 The quota finding

The variable that separates states with rising and sustained representation from states without it is not the existence of a quota. It is whether the quota carries a consequence that an institution actually applies. Three designs recur across the continent and they perform differently.

Design	Mechanism	Observed performance
Reserved seats	Constitutional or statutory seats set aside for women, filled by direct election in designated constituencies or by indirect allocation	Produces the largest and fastest gains. Also produces a distinct internal politics, in which reserved-seat members can be treated as a separate and lesser category within the chamber and can find it difficult to move into open competition.
Legislated candidate quota with sanction	Party lists must meet a threshold; non-compliant lists are rejected, or public funding is withheld	Produces durable gains where the electoral management body applies the sanction. The sanction rather than the threshold is the operative element, and a high threshold without a sanction performs worse than a modest threshold with one.

Design	Mechanism	Observed performance
Voluntary party quota	Parties adopt internal targets without statutory backing	Produces limited and reversible gains. Compliance falls in constituencies where the party is competitive, which is to say precisely where a seat would be won.

Table 12.1 Quota designs and observed performance. RFLD assessment drawn from network reporting and the legislative record in the West Africa Legislative Platform.

Two design details recur in the failure cases and are worth naming, because both are correctable by amendment rather than by fresh legislation. The first is placement: a list quota without a placement rule allows parties to satisfy the threshold by concentrating women candidates at the bottom of the list, where they will not be elected. The second is the vacancy rule: where a reserved seat vacated mid-term can be filled by a man, the quota erodes across the term without any amendment to the law.

12.4 Beyond the seat count

Presence is not influence, and the seat count is a weak proxy for what Article 9 is about. Article 9(2) refers to effective representation and participation at all levels of decision-making, which is a substantially more demanding standard than a headcount in a chamber. Three measures track it better and are far less often reported.

- **Committee authority.** Whether women chair committees with budget and oversight authority, such as finance, public accounts and defence, or are concentrated in committees on gender, social affairs and family.
- **Portfolio weight.** Whether women hold ministries with substantial budgets and executive authority, or are concentrated in ministries with small allocations and limited legislative programmes.
- **Renomination.** Whether women elected under quota provisions are renominated by their parties once the quota obligation for that cycle has been satisfied, which distinguishes an incorporated politician from a compliance instrument.

None of the three is compiled continentally. Committee chairmanships, portfolio budget weight and renomination rates exist in national parliamentary and party records and have not been assembled into any comparable dataset. The consequence is that the more demanding standard in Article 9(2) cannot presently be assessed at continental level, while the weaker standard of a seat count can, and advocacy follows the available measure. Annex H proposes the committee-authority measure as an index component for that reason.

12.5 Local government

Local government is where most decisions affecting women's daily conditions are taken: water, sanitation, markets, primary schools, health posts and land allocation at village level. It is also where women's representation is least measured, because no continental dataset covers local councils comparably across states. Where quota provisions exist at national level and not at local level, the pipeline into national politics narrows structurally, since local office is the conventional route to a parliamentary candidacy.

This asymmetry is one reason RFLD's political leadership work invests at local council level rather than concentrating on parliamentary candidates, and Chapter 33 sets out the programme architecture.

12.6 What the data does not capture

Violence against women in politics is largely absent from official statistics, and it is the most significant deterrent to women's candidacy on the continent. Women candidates across RFLD's network report campaigns conducted against their sexual reputation and their families, online harassment intensifying around nomination and polling dates, disruption of campaign events, and physical intimidation of candidates and their supporters. Almost none of this produces a police record, because reporting it invites further exposure and because the conduct frequently falls between offences.

The consequence is a measurement problem with a policy effect. Electoral assistance programming designed from official data addresses the barriers that appear in that data, which are largely procedural, and does not address the barrier that operates most strongly. A candidate register that recorded withdrawal reasons would begin to close the gap, and no African electoral management body is known to maintain one.

Implication. Failure in this domain is concentrated at stages two and four of the implementation chain. Where quota law exists without a sanction, the failure is legislative design and the remedy is amendment. Where the sanction exists and is not applied, the failure is enforcement and it sits with electoral management bodies rather than with legislatures. Where violence deters candidacy, the failure is at stage four and the responsible institution is the police service, which in most states has no protocol for the offence.

13. The care economy and unpaid work

Treaty basis: Maputo Protocol Articles 13(g), 13(h) and 19; ILO instruments on domestic work and social protection.

13.1 The obligation, and an unusual treaty provision

Article 13(h) obliges states party to take the necessary measures to recognise the economic value of the work of women in the home. That provision is unusual in treaty law, and it is almost never litigated or reported on. It converts unpaid care work from a social fact into a subject of state obligation, and it is the textual basis for every argument in this chapter.

Unpaid care work is the largest sector of the African economy that appears in no national accounts. Its distribution is the mechanism through which formal equality of opportunity produces unequal outcomes: a woman carrying several hours of daily unpaid work cannot compete for paid employment on the same terms as a man who is not, whatever the labour code provides.

13.2 Three public investments that set the volume

The volume of unpaid care work in a given household is determined substantially by public infrastructure rather than by household preference, and each determinant is a budget decision whose gendered consequence is rarely stated in the budget document.

Determinant	Mechanism
Water infrastructure	Distance to a water point sets collection time, which falls predominantly on women and girls. A borehole within the settlement converts hours of daily labour into minutes, and the conversion is measurable.
Energy access	Fuel gathering and cooking time is set by whether a household has access to a modern cooking fuel. The health consequence of biomass cooking compounds the time consequence.
Health system capacity	Care of the sick, the elderly and people with disabilities falls on households in proportion to what the health system does not provide. Every unfunded bed is a woman's unpaid day.
Early childhood provision	The availability of any form of childcare determines whether mothers of young children can enter paid work at all. This is the least provided of the four across the continent.

Table 13.1 Public determinants of unpaid care volume.

Each of the four determinants above is measurable, and the instrument that would measure them is set out at Chapter 13.3.

13.3 What an Article 13(h) assessment would require

Article 13(h) obliges states to recognise the economic value of the work of women in the home. An obligation to recognise a value presupposes that the value has been measured, which is why the absence of time-use data is not a data problem incidental to the obligation but a failure to perform its first step. This section sets out what a measurement adequate to the obligation would capture. It is deliberately narrower than a full time-use survey, because a narrower instrument is more likely to be repeated.

Domain	What is measured	Why it bears on the obligation
Water and fuel collection	Minutes per day, by sex and age, and distance to source	Directly attributable to public infrastructure decisions, and therefore the component most usable in budget advocacy.
Food preparation	Minutes per day, by sex, and cooking fuel used	Links the care burden to energy access, and carries a health consequence alongside the time consequence.
Child-care	Minutes of direct and supervisory care, by sex, and availability of any external provision	Determines whether mothers of young children can enter paid work, which is the mechanism by which formal equality of opportunity produces unequal outcomes.
Care of the sick and elderly	Minutes per day, by sex, and whether a household member has a chronic condition	Measures what the health system has transferred to households, and therefore the gendered cost of an unfunded bed.
Simultaneous activity	Whether care was performed alongside another activity	Sequential-activity diaries systematically undercount women's work, because care is frequently performed alongside paid or subsistence work rather than instead of it.
Subsistence production	Minutes on agriculture and processing for household consumption	Falls outside most definitions of employment and inside every definition of work, and is predominantly female in most member states.
Valuation basis	Replacement cost or opportunity cost, stated explicitly	Article 13(h) requires recognition of economic value, so a method of valuation must be chosen and disclosed rather than left implicit.

Table 13.2 Minimum specification for a measurement adequate to Article 13(h).

Three design requirements determine whether such an instrument produces anything usable. It must be repeated on a fixed cycle, because a single measurement establishes a level and no state can demonstrate progress against a level. It must be disaggregated by sex and by age, since the burden falls differently on adult women and on girls, and the effect on girls operates through school attendance. And its results must be published in a form that a ministry of finance will read, which in practice means expressed as a monetary equivalent alongside the time measure, however contested the valuation.

Time-use surveys exist in a minority of member states and are rarely repeated, so Article 13(h) cannot be assessed in most states and progress cannot be shown in almost any. The consequence is twofold and both parts matter. In most states the largest sector of women's work is not measured at all, so Article 13(h) cannot be assessed. And in almost every state that has measured it once, change over time cannot be established, so no state can demonstrate progress even where progress has occurred. This is the clearest case in the report of an obligation rendered unenforceable by the absence of an instrument rather than by the absence of political will.

13.4 Paid care work

Where care work is paid it is concentrated in domestic employment, which sits at the margin of labour law across most of the continent. Domestic workers are frequently excluded from minimum wage provisions, from working-time limits, from occupational safety regulation and from social security coverage. The sector is characterised by live-in arrangements that place the worker

inside the employer's household and outside any inspection regime, and by the absence of a written contract in the great majority of engagements.

Three features compound the position. Recruitment is frequently through informal intermediaries with no accountability for placement conditions. Child domestic work persists and is largely invisible, since the child appears as a household member rather than as a worker. And migrant domestic workers, including women moving within Africa and to the Gulf states, hold immigration status that is tied to the employer, which converts an employment dispute into a deportation risk.

13.5 What the data does not capture

National accounts exclude unpaid care work by construction, so the sector is invisible in the statistics on which economic policy is made. Labour force surveys that use a short reference period and a narrow definition of work undercount women's economic activity systematically. And where time-use surveys exist, they are frequently one-off rather than periodic, which means change over time cannot be established.

Implication. This domain fails at stage three. Article 13(h) has not been domesticated in any substantial sense in most states party, and the instrument that would give it effect is fiscal rather than legislative: budget allocation to water, energy, health and childcare, with the gendered consequence of allocation choices made explicit in the budget document. This is the domain where gender-responsive budgeting is most directly applicable, and Chapter 34 sets out the tool RFLD maintains for it.

14. Women in the formal and informal economy

Treaty basis: Maputo Protocol Articles 13 and 19; AfCFTA protocols on trade in goods and on women and youth in trade.

14.1 The obligation

Article 13 obliges states party to adopt and enforce legislative and other measures guaranteeing equal opportunities in work and career advancement, to promote equality of access to employment, to promote the right to equal remuneration for jobs of equal value, and specifically at Article 13(e) and (f) to create conditions to promote and support the occupations and economic activities of women, particularly in the informal sector, and to establish a system of protection and social insurance for women working in the informal sector.

Article 13(e) and (f) are the least implemented parts of the article and the most relevant to how African women actually earn. The reason is that they require the extension of social protection to a population that pays no payroll tax and holds no contract, which is an administrative undertaking of a different order from prohibiting discrimination in formal employment.

14.2 Informality as the labour market, not a transition

The larger share of women's non-agricultural employment across Africa is informal, and the share is higher for women than for men in most states for which data exists. Rates disaggregated by sex are published by the International Labour Organization and vary widely between states, so a regional figure should not be substituted for a national one in national advocacy.

The framing of informality as a transitional condition on the way to formal employment misdescribes the position for most of the women in it. For them it is the labour market, and it will remain so across a working life. Policy that treats informality as a problem to be formalised out of existence, rather than as a sector to be regulated and protected, addresses a trajectory that most workers will not follow.

14.3 What informality means concretely

- No social security coverage, which means no maternity protection, no pension and no compensation for injury. Maternity becomes a period of lost income rather than a protected interval, and the loss is frequently the point at which a woman's enterprise is decapitalised.
- No enforceable contract, which means no recourse for non-payment and no protection against arbitrary termination or arbitrary change of terms.
- Exposure to municipal authority. Women trading in public space are subject to eviction, confiscation of stock and demands for informal payment. These encounters generate no record in any institution, so their frequency cannot be established and their cost is invisible.
- Exclusion from formal credit, which pushes working capital into informal lending at high effective rates and caps enterprise growth structurally rather than incidentally.
- Absence from consultation. Where governments consult the private sector on economic policy, the counterparts are formal-sector associations, and the largest employer of women in the economy is not represented.

14.4 Cross-border trade

Small-scale cross-border trade is a substantial livelihood across African borderlands and is disproportionately conducted by women. It is also the point at which women traders encounter state authority most frequently and with least protection: customs and border officials operating with wide discretion over goods of uncertain classification, in transactions with no documentary record, at locations without oversight.

Harassment at borders, including demands for payment and sexual extortion, is reported consistently across RFLD's network in the borderlands where the network operates. The African Continental Free Trade Area's simplified trade regimes offer a formal remedy by removing discretion for consignments below a threshold, and uptake by women traders depends on documentation and literacy conditions that a substantial share of those traders do not meet. A simplified regime that requires a form the trader cannot complete transfers the benefit to traders who least need it.

14.5 The formal sector

Where women are in formal employment, three constraints recur and are amenable to enforcement rather than to legislation. Occupational segregation concentrates women in lower-paid sectors and grades, so an equal pay provision that compares like with like leaves the structure intact; the equal remuneration for work of equal value standard in Article 13(c) addresses this and is rarely the standard adopted in domestic law. Maternity provisions frequently exist and are frequently unenforced in practice, particularly where dismissal is effected on a pretext. And sexual harassment provisions, where they exist, generally lack the procedural machinery that would make a complaint survivable for the complainant.

Implication. Failure sits at stages two and four. Article 13 has been domesticated as formal-sector labour law in most states that have domesticated it at all, which leaves the majority of working women outside the protection the article was drafted to extend to them. The specific and available intervention is the extension of contributory or subsidised social protection to informal workers, which several states have piloted and few have scaled.

15. Land, property and inheritance

Treaty basis: Maputo Protocol Articles 6(j), 7(d), 15, 16, 19 and 21; Kampala Convention for displaced women.

15.1 The obligations

The Protocol addresses property in five places, and the accumulation is deliberate. Article 6(j) obliges states to ensure that a woman has the right to acquire her own property and to administer and manage it freely. Article 7(d) obliges the equitable sharing of joint property on separation, divorce or annulment. Article 15 addresses the right to food security including access to productive resources including land. Article 16 addresses the right to adequate housing. Article 19 addresses women's right to sustainable development including access to and control over productive resources. Article 21 obliges states to ensure that a widow has the right to an equitable share in the inheritance of her husband's property and the right to continue living in the matrimonial house.

Taken together these provisions are the most economically consequential in the instrument, and they are the least domesticated. Chapter 9.2 sets out why: they transfer assets, and they collide with regimes that constitutions protect.

15.2 Three regimes, one plot of land

Statutory law, customary tenure and religious personal law govern land across most of the continent simultaneously. Most land in most states is held under customary tenure and is not registered in any statutory system, which means the statutory reform of registration rules leaves the majority of holdings untouched. Where a woman's claim is recognised in statute and not in the customary system that actually allocates the land, the claim is legally sound and practically unavailable.

Registration reform is the intervention most frequently proposed and its record is mixed for a reason worth stating. Individual titling can strengthen a woman's position where she is the registered holder and weaken it where registration converts a bundle of overlapping use rights, some of which were hers, into a single title held by a man. Joint titling of matrimonial property addresses the second problem and requires the marriage to be registered, which excludes customary and religious unions that are not.

15.3 Widowhood as the moment of dispossession

Widowhood is the point at which the abstract question of tenure becomes a housing emergency. Property-grabbing by a deceased husband's relatives is reported across RFLD's network with consistency, frequently accompanied by expulsion from the matrimonial home, frequently occurring during the mourning period when the widow is least positioned to resist and least likely to reach a court, and frequently justified by reference to customary entitlements of the husband's lineage.

Article 21 addresses precisely this and is among the least invoked provisions in the instrument. Three obstacles explain the gap. The widow frequently does not know the provision exists. Where she does, the applicable succession regime may be the customary one, in which the provision has no direct operation. And the time horizon of litigation exceeds the time horizon of the emergency, since a woman expelled from her home this month cannot wait two years for a judgment.

Divorce produces a parallel exposure where matrimonial property regimes do not recognise non-monetary contribution. Where the applicable regime is separation of property and the wife's contribution took the form of unpaid domestic and agricultural labour, the division on divorce awards her nothing, which is the point at which Chapter 13 and this chapter meet.

15.4 Large-scale land acquisition and extractives

Large-scale acquisition of land for agriculture, mining and infrastructure interacts with weak women's tenure through a specific mechanism. Compensation is paid to the registered holder. Registration is predominantly male. The loss of common land removes gathering, grazing, fuel and water resources whose users are predominantly female and whose use was never registered. Compensation therefore flows to men while a substantial part of the loss is borne by women, within a process that is formally lawful at every step and that no legal challenge to the acquisition itself will correct.

Consultation requirements, where they exist, are generally satisfied by a community meeting. Where women do not speak in community meetings, or speak and are not recorded, the requirement is met and the consultation has not occurred. A consultation standard that required separately recorded women's consultation would change the record, and it is a low-cost amendment to existing procedure.

Women defending land and environmental rights against these processes are among the most exposed defenders on the continent, because they oppose interests with commercial and frequently state backing. Chapter 21 returns to their position, and the curtailment of the SADC Tribunal following its land jurisprudence is context for what happens when a sub-regional court decides against member state interests on property.

15.5 What the data does not capture

Customary transactions are unrecorded by definition, so dispossession under customary regimes does not appear in land administration data. Intra-household allocation is invisible in household survey data that records a single head. And the loss of common-property resources does not appear in compensation records, because no one held title to them.

Implication. Failure sits at stage two, and the specific failure is legal pluralism rather than absence of law. Advocacy that seeks a new statute without addressing the constitutional standing of customary and religious personal law prescribes a remedy the system will absorb. The available interventions are the removal of constitutional saving clauses that exempt personal law from non-discrimination guarantees, and procedural reform of consultation and compensation practice, which does not require constitutional change.

16. Sexual and reproductive health and rights

Treaty basis: Maputo Protocol Article 14; Abuja Declaration; ACHPR General Comments Nos. 1 and 2; ACRWC for adolescents.

16.1 The obligation

Article 14(1) establishes the right to health including sexual and reproductive health, and specifies its components: the right to control fertility; the right to decide whether to have children, the number of children and the spacing of children; the right to choose any method of contraception; the right to self-protection and to be protected against sexually transmitted infections including HIV; the right to be informed of one's health status and that of one's partner; and the right to family planning education.

Article 14(2) obliges states to take all appropriate measures to provide adequate, affordable and accessible health services including information, education and communication programmes, particularly for women in rural areas; to establish and strengthen pre-natal, delivery and post-natal services during pregnancy and while breastfeeding; and at Article 14(2)(c) to protect the reproductive rights of women by authorising medical abortion in cases of sexual assault, rape and incest, and where continued pregnancy endangers the mental or physical health of the woman or the life of the woman or the foetus.

The African Commission has issued General Comments elaborating Article 14, which give interpretive authority to obligations states frequently characterise as aspirational.

16.2 Maternal mortality as the implementation indicator

Maternal mortality remains the clearest single indicator of Article 14 implementation, because the clinical interventions that prevent most maternal deaths are established, inexpensive and not in dispute. Where women die in numbers, the failure lies in the system around the intervention rather than in the intervention itself. West and Central Africa carries a disproportionate share of the global burden, and the maternal mortality ratios recorded in several states of the sub-region are among the highest anywhere. National ratios should be taken from the UN Maternal Mortality Estimation Inter-Agency Group estimates, which are the authoritative series and are revised periodically.

The failure modes are consistent across the high-burden states and each maps to a distinct stage of the implementation chain.

Failure mode	Character and stage
Referral that does not function	No transport, no communication between facility levels, no receiving capacity at the referral facility. Stage four.
Commodity and blood unavailability	Facilities without the oxytocin, magnesium sulphate or blood required to manage haemorrhage and eclampsia. Stage three.
Staffing	Skilled birth attendants absent, unpaid or concentrated in urban facilities. Stage three.

Failure mode	Character and stage
Distance and cost	Formal fees where care is nominally free, and informal fees where formal ones have been abolished. Stage three and stage four together.
Delay in the household	Time between recognition of danger signs and departure for a facility, governed by decision-making authority inside the household. Not a state failure in the first instance, and the domain in which community mobilisation operates.
Disrespectful care	Treatment at the facility that deters return and deters others. Stage four, and among the least documented.

Table 16.1 Failure modes in maternal mortality, mapped to the implementation chain.

The first four are budget and system questions. The fifth is the reason clinical investment alone has encountered a ceiling, and the sixth is the one most often omitted from programme design despite being reported consistently by women who have used the services.

16.3 Contraception and family planning

Article 14(1)(c) establishes the right to choose any method of contraception. Three constraints recur. Third-party authorisation requirements, whether spousal or parental, operate as a prohibition for the women least able to obtain the authorisation. Method availability is frequently narrower than the range the state formally offers, because supply chains fail unevenly by method. And provider attitudes function as a rationing mechanism that appears in no policy document, particularly for unmarried women and adolescents.

16.4 Abortion

Article 14(2)(c) is the provision states are most likely to have ratified without implementing. A substantial number of states party retain criminal provisions narrower than the article requires. In several states where the law is formally compliant, the service is unavailable in practice because no provider will perform the procedure, no facility has been designated, conscientious objection operates without any obligation to refer, or the administrative requirements cannot be completed within the gestational limit the law imposes.

The gap between a legal entitlement and an available service is the operative reality for the women concerned, and it is a gap that legal reform alone does not close. Post-abortion care is a separate obligation that arises regardless of the legality of the abortion, and its denial or delay as a punitive measure is reported across the network.

The chapter therefore proceeds on two counts. The legal count records the grounds on which domestic law authorises the procedure in each state party. The service-availability count records whether a woman entitled under that law can actually obtain the service. Once the legal count and the service-availability count have been compiled, the divergence between them is the finding, because the divergence measures the distance between what states have promised on paper and what women can reach in a facility. Neither count has yet been compiled continentally, and the two require different instruments. Chapter 16.5 specifies both.

16.5 An instrument for counting Article 14(2)(c) compliance

Two counts are required in order to state where Article 14(2)(c) stands, and they are different instruments producing different numbers. The first is a legal count: in how many states party does

domestic law authorise abortion on each of the four grounds the article names. The second is an availability count: in how many of those states can a woman entitled under that law actually obtain the service. Neither has been compiled continentally. This section specifies both, so that they can be compiled.

The legal count

Article 14(2)(c) names four grounds. A state is compliant on a ground only if its law authorises the procedure on that ground; partial coverage is the norm and it is the reason a single yes or no per state loses the information that matters.

Ground	Test	Common failure mode
Sexual assault	Law authorises the procedure where pregnancy results from sexual assault	Requirement of a police report or a prosecution, which converts a health entitlement into a criminal-process outcome and defeats it within the gestational limit.
Rape	Law authorises where pregnancy results from rape	Same as above. Where the definition of rape excludes marital rape, the ground is unavailable to married women.
Incest	Law authorises where pregnancy results from incest	Requirement of proof of relationship, or of the consent of a guardian who may be the perpetrator.
Health or life endangered	Law authorises where continued pregnancy endangers the mental or physical health of the woman, or the life of the woman or the foetus	Omission of mental health, which is the most frequently omitted element of the article. Requirement of multiple physician certification.

Table 16.2 The legal count: the four Article 14(2)(c) grounds, the test for each, and the failure mode that most often defeats a formally compliant provision.

The scoring rule follows from the table. A state scores one for each ground on which its law authorises the procedure, giving a range of zero to four, and a separate flag records whether mental health is included within the fourth ground, since its omission is both common and consequential. A second flag records whether any procedural requirement in the law is capable of defeating the entitlement within the applicable gestational limit, because a provision that cannot be used in time is not an entitlement.

The availability count

The second count measures whether the law operates, and it cannot be answered from a statute book. It requires assessment at facility level against six conditions, each of which is sufficient on its own to render a lawful entitlement unavailable.

Condition	Test
Designation	Has any facility been designated to provide the service, and is the list of designated facilities public?
Provider	Is there a trained provider present at a designated facility, or has conscientious objection removed the last provider without a duty to refer?
Referral duty	Where a provider objects, does law or regulation oblige referral to a provider who does not?
Cost	Is the service free at the point of use, and are informal payments documented?

Condition	Test
Administrative feasibility	Can the required authorisations be obtained within the gestational limit, measured against the actual processing time rather than the stated one?
Post-abortion care	Is post-abortion care available irrespective of the legality of the abortion, and is it provided without delay used as a punitive measure?

Table 16.3 The availability count: six conditions, each sufficient on its own to render a lawful entitlement unavailable.

Why the divergence is the finding

The two counts will not match, and the gap between them is the substance of Article 14(2)(c) implementation. A state whose law covers all four grounds and where no facility is designated scores four on the legal count and zero on the availability count, and the woman in that state is in the same position as a woman in a state that never domesticated the provision at all. Reporting the legal count alone therefore produces a continental picture that is accurate in law and false in effect, and it is the count that states will supply if asked for one number.

The instrument above is offered so that the second count can be demanded alongside the first. Annex H includes the legal component as an index item because it is document-verifiable and can be scored annually. The availability count requires facility-level assessment and is accordingly proposed at Annex D as a research undertaking rather than an index component, since an index that depends on a survey nobody will fund will not be maintained.

16.6 Adolescents

Adolescent girls face the highest health risk from early pregnancy, the lowest contraceptive coverage and the steepest access barriers. Third-party authorisation requirements bear on them most heavily. Comprehensive sexuality education is contested in most states and, where formally adopted, is frequently not delivered because teachers have not been trained or have declined.

School exclusion of pregnant girls, and the absence of a re-entry policy, converts a health event into a permanent loss of education and therefore into a lifetime income effect. Re-entry policy is one of the few interventions in this chapter that is administratively simple, costs almost nothing, and produces a measurable result, which makes its absence in a number of states difficult to explain on resource grounds.

16.7 The financing question

The Abuja Declaration commitment of fifteen per cent of national budgets to the health sector is unmet in most member states, and the gap between the commitment and the allocation is the most direct available measure of Article 14(2) implementation, because Article 14(2) is an obligation to provide services and services require allocation. The number of member states meeting the fifteen per cent target has remained small since the commitment was made in 2001, and the allocation figures are published state by state in the WHO Global Health Expenditure Database.

External health financing volatility compounds the position. Where a service line depends substantially on external funds, a reduction transmits directly into stockouts and closures, and the community-level organisations that reach populations formal facilities do not are the least able to absorb the shock because they hold no reserves.

Implication. Failure spans stages three and four. Article 14 is among the more widely domesticated provisions in health policy and among the least funded in health budgets. The instrument

that addresses stage three is budget analysis and expenditure tracking; the instrument that addresses stage four is provider capacity and accountability at facility level.

17. HIV and women's health

Treaty basis: Maputo Protocol Articles 14(1)(d) and 14(1)(e); ACHPR General Comment No. 1; Abuja Declaration.

17.1 An obligation about conditions, not only services

Article 14(1)(d) establishes the right to self-protection and to be protected against sexually transmitted infections including HIV. Article 14(1)(e) establishes the right to be informed of one's own health status and of the health status of one's partner, particularly if affected with sexually transmitted infections including HIV, in accordance with internationally recognised standards and best practices.

These provisions are unusual in treaty law because they address the interpersonal conditions of infection rather than only the provision of services, and they are the provisions General Comment No. 1 elaborates. The obligation is not discharged by making testing and treatment available. It requires that a woman be in a position to protect herself, which is a question of power inside a relationship and a household.

17.2 The distribution of infection

Women and adolescent girls carry a disproportionate share of new HIV infections in Sub-Saharan Africa, and the disproportion is sharpest among adolescent girls and young women, among whom new infections substantially exceed those recorded among young men of the same age across the sub-region. Current figures and the sex ratio by age band are published annually by UNAIDS.

That distribution is not explained by behaviour, and framing it as a behavioural question misdirects the response. It is explained by the conditions under which the right in Article 14(1)(d) can be exercised: whether a woman can require condom use; whether she can refuse sex; whether age-disparate relationships place her with a partner at higher prevalence; whether she can access testing without a partner's knowledge; and whether disclosure of a positive result will cost her housing, income or physical safety.

17.3 Disclosure, criminalisation and the deterrent effect

Article 14(1)(e) creates a right to information about a partner's status, and its implementation in several states has taken the form of criminal provisions on transmission and non-disclosure. Those provisions bear disproportionately on women for a structural reason: women test more often, because antenatal testing is routine, and therefore know their status first and are more frequently the person on whom a disclosure obligation falls. A criminal provision that attaches to knowledge penalises the person who sought testing.

The deterrent effect runs in the wrong direction. Where non-disclosure is criminalised and disclosure carries a risk of violence or abandonment, the rational course for a woman may be not to test, which defeats the object of both provisions of Article 14(1) at once.

17.4 The financing shock

HIV programming across the continent has depended heavily on external financing, and reductions in that financing transmit directly into treatment interruption, commodity stockouts, and the closure of community-led services that reach populations formal facilities do not. Women-led com-

munity organisations occupy the part of the response most exposed to that volatility and least able to absorb it, because they hold no reserves and their staff costs are the first casualty of a disbursement delay. The external financing position moves quickly and should be read from current UNAIDS and Global Fund reporting rather than from any annual publication.

Implication. Failure sits at stages four and five. A right framed as individual self-protection cannot be exercised by a person without economic or physical autonomy, so interventions confined to commodity supply address the stated right and not its precondition. The available intervention that engages the precondition is economic: the Chapter 14 and Chapter 15 findings are the HIV findings by another route.

18. Sexual and gender-based violence and harmful practices

Treaty basis: Maputo Protocol Articles 1(j), 3, 4, 5 and 11; ACRWC; Kampala Convention.

18.1 The obligations

Article 4 establishes the right to life, integrity and security of the person, prohibits all forms of exploitation, cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment and treatment, and obliges states to enact and enforce laws prohibiting all forms of violence against women including unwanted or forced sex whether it takes place in private or in public; to identify the causes and consequences of violence and take appropriate measures to prevent and eliminate it; to punish the perpetrators and implement programmes for the rehabilitation of women victims; and to provide adequate budgetary and other resources for the implementation and monitoring of actions aimed at preventing and eradicating violence against women.

Article 5 obliges states to prohibit and condemn all forms of harmful practices, through public awareness, prohibition by legislative measures backed by sanctions, provision of support to victims, and protection of women at risk. Article 1(j) defines violence against women broadly enough to include the threat of harm and the imposition of arbitrary restrictions on liberty.

Article 4(2)(i) is worth isolating because it is a budget obligation in a violence provision. A state that has enacted comprehensive legislation and allocated nothing to implement it has not discharged Article 4.

18.2 The widest domestication and the weakest enforcement

This is the domain of widest domestication and weakest enforcement, and the divergence between those two facts is the chapter's central finding. Most states party have enacted legislation on domestic violence, sexual violence or harmful practices. Conviction rates remain low, attrition between report and prosecution remains high, and the services the legislation presupposes exist at a fraction of the scale it implies.

The attrition chain below is where the legislation fails. Each point is a distinct intervention target, and the distinction matters because a programme addressing the wrong point produces no change in outcome.

Point of failure	What happens
Disclosure	The incident is not reported, because reporting carries social cost, because the police station is distant or hostile, or because the woman depends economically on the perpetrator and reporting ends the household income.
Recording	The report is taken and not recorded as a crime, or is diverted to family mediation by officers who regard the matter as domestic and not criminal.
Evidence	Forensic examination is unavailable, delayed past the point of usefulness, or charged for. Medical certificates that the court requires cannot be obtained, or require a fee the complainant cannot pay.

Point of failure	What happens
Prosecution	The file is not advanced. The matter is settled between families. The complainant withdraws under pressure that the system does not recognise as coercion.
Adjudication	Delay exceeds the complainant's capacity to keep attending, particularly where attendance requires travel and lost income. Sentences imposed fall below the statutory range.
After-math	The complainant returns to the household or community in which the perpetrator remains, with no protection order or with an order that no institution enforces.

Table 18.1 The attrition chain in sexual and gender-based violence cases. RFLD assessment drawn from network reporting and from legal-aid partner case records.

Two structural features aggravate every point on the chain. Legal aid is unavailable in most jurisdictions for most complainants, so the complainant is unrepresented against a represented accused. And shelter capacity is a fraction of demand, which means that the advice to leave is frequently advice to become homeless.

18.3 Harmful practices

Prevalence of female genital mutilation has declined in a number of states with sustained programming, and the decline is uneven, concentrated in particular age cohorts and reversed in some settings. Two shifts complicate the record and both reduce the usefulness of national prevalence figures. Medicalisation moves the practice to health personnel, which makes it harder to detect, easier to defend as safe, and in some settings more expensive and therefore more prestigious. Cross-border movement to jurisdictions with weaker enforcement means that national prevalence measures national practice rather than national exposure.

Prevalence is published by state in the UNICEF global databases and should be read against both shifts, because a declining national prevalence figure is consistent with genuine abandonment, with displacement of the practice across a border, and with its movement into a clinic. A single national figure cannot distinguish between the three, and a programme evaluated against that figure alone can record success while the practice continues.

Child marriage responds to the same underlying variables as adolescent pregnancy. Legal minimum-age reform without economic support to households produces limited change where marriage functions as an economic transfer, and exceptions permitting marriage below the statutory minimum with parental or judicial consent are the mechanism through which reformed law continues to permit the practice it prohibits. A minimum-age statute with a consent exception is, in operation, not a minimum-age statute.

18.4 Conflict-related sexual violence

Article 11(3) obliges states to protect asylum-seeking women, refugees, returnees and internally displaced women against all forms of violence including sexual violence, and to ensure that such acts are considered war crimes, genocide or crimes against humanity and that their perpetrators are brought to justice before a competent criminal jurisdiction. Chapter 22 addresses the conflict settings in which this obligation arises. The point to register here is evidentiary: accountability requires evidence collected to a standard that the conditions of collection make difficult to reach,

and documentation capacity in conflict settings is therefore the binding constraint on the obligation in Article 11(3).

Implication. Failure sits at stage four, and it is a capacity and practice failure rather than a legal one. Further criminalisation is not the marginal intervention with the highest return in most states. Forensic capacity, police practice, legal aid, shelter provision and enforceable protection orders are, and each is a budget question that Article 4(2)(i) already obliges the state to answer.

19. Technology-facilitated violence and online sexual exploitation

Treaty basis: Maputo Protocol Articles 1(j), 3, 4 and 9; ACHPR Resolution 522; AU Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection.

19.1 The digital paradox

Digital connectivity has given African women's movements organising capacity, reach and a route around state-controlled media. It has also created a channel of attack that is cheap, anonymous, borderless and continuously available, and that reaches into the home in a way that no earlier form of harassment did. Both statements are true at once, and policy that treats connectivity as unambiguously emancipatory or unambiguously dangerous misses the mechanism.

The African Commission's Resolution 522 on the protection of women against digital violence in Africa gives continental normative footing to this domain. Article 1(j) of the Protocol defines violence against women in terms broad enough to cover conduct in digital environments, and Article 4 obliges the enactment and enforcement of laws prohibiting all forms of violence against women whether in private or in public, which on any ordinary reading includes conduct online.

19.2 The forms

Form	Character
Non-consensual distribution of intimate images	Including images obtained consensually within a relationship, images obtained by deception, and synthetic images. The harm is reputational, economic and physical, and in several contexts the exposure to family and community violence is the primary risk.
Synthetic and manipulated media	Fabricated sexual imagery attached to a real identity. The technology has moved faster than any African legal framework, and the evidentiary question of proving fabrication falls on the person depicted.
Coordinated harassment	Networked abuse directed at a target, frequently timed to a public intervention. Its purpose is to make continued public speech intolerable rather than to persuade.
Doxxing	Publication of home address, workplace, family details or movements. Converts online abuse into physical risk and is the most direct threat to defenders.
Impersonation	Fake accounts issuing statements in the target's name, which damages credibility and can create legal exposure for the person impersonated.
Stalkerware and device compromise	Monitoring of a partner's device. Overlaps with domestic violence and is largely absent from both cybercrime and domestic violence frameworks.
Online sexual exploitation and abuse	Including grooming, sextortion and the exploitation of children. Sits at the intersection of this chapter, the ACRWC and criminal law, and is the form with the strongest formal legal coverage and weakest enforcement.

Table 19.1 Forms of technology-facilitated gender-based violence documented in RFLD's network.

19.3 The legal gap, and the instrument that becomes a risk

Most states have no adequate legal route for a woman facing the conduct in Table 19.1. Where cybercrime legislation exists, it is frequently drafted for state security purposes, and its operative provisions on false news, insult and misuse of a computer system are applied against journalists and activists rather than in the service of the women Resolution 522 addresses. An instrument nominally available for protection thereby becomes an instrument of risk, and a woman reporting online abuse to a police service that uses the same statute against her peers has a reason not to report.

Three practical obstacles compound the legal gap. Platform reporting mechanisms operate poorly in African languages and in French relative to English, so the automated systems that remove content perform worst where the network is largest. Evidence preservation requires the target to document the abuse she is trying to escape, which is technically demanding and psychologically costly. And jurisdiction is frequently unclear where the perpetrator, the platform and the target are in three different states.

19.4 The gender digital divide

Access is itself gendered, and the divide compounds rather than mitigates the harms above. Where women's device ownership is lower, shared-device use is common, which removes any expectation of privacy and makes account compromise trivial inside a household. Where women's digital literacy is lower, protective measures are less available, and the security practices that would mitigate risk are concentrated among those least at risk.

Implication. Failure sits at stages two and four. Resolution 522 provides the normative basis and domestic frameworks have not followed it. The available intervention is legal reform that distinguishes protective provisions from state-security provisions, together with the practical capacity to document, preserve evidence and pursue remedy. This is the domain the RFLD Cyber Harassment Legal Toolkit was produced to address, and Chapter 34 sets out its coverage.

20. Arbitrary arrest, detention and the criminalisation of dissent

Treaty basis: African Charter Articles 6, 7 and 9; Maputo Protocol Articles 8 and 25; ACDEG; ACHPR Guidelines on Conditions of Arrest, Police Custody and Pre-Trial Detention.

20.1 The obligations

Article 6 of the African Charter guarantees liberty and security of person and prohibits arbitrary arrest and detention. Article 7 guarantees the right to have a cause heard, the presumption of innocence, defence including counsel of choice, and trial within a reasonable time. Maputo Article 8 establishes women's right of access to justice and equal protection before the law, and obliges states to ensure effective access to judicial and legal services, support to local initiatives directed at providing women with access to legal services, and the establishment of adequate educational structures with particular attention to women and to law enforcement organs. Article 25 obliges states to provide appropriate remedies to any woman whose rights have been violated.

20.2 Detention as deterrence

Arbitrary detention of women who speak publicly has become a routine instrument of political management in a number of member states, and its logic is deterrent rather than punitive. Detentions are frequently short, of hours or days. Charges are frequently absent, or are laid under provisions written for other purposes: public order, false news, cybercrime, incitement, offences against the head of state, or the administrative provisions governing assembly. Release frequently occurs without any acknowledgement that the detention took place, and without a record that the person could later produce.

Because these episodes generate no charge and no judgment, they produce no court record and therefore no data. The instrument is effective in substantial part because it is invisible to the systems that would otherwise document it, and this report accordingly offers no continental figure, since none can be supported. What it offers instead is a description of the mechanism precise enough to be recognised and documented by those in a position to do so.

20.3 The gendered consequences of custody

Detention of women carries specific consequences beyond deprivation of liberty, and they are documented in the African Commission's own guidelines on conditions of detention.

- Facilities designed for men lack provision for menstrual health, for pregnancy and for infants held with their mothers, and mixed facilities expose women detainees to risk from male detainees and from staff.
- Sexual violence in custody is reported and is rarely investigated, in part because the investigating authority and the detaining authority are the same institution.
- Reputational damage attaches differently. A detained woman is exposed to a moral narrative that a detained man is not, and that narrative reaches her family and her standing in her community, which is the mechanism Chapter 21 describes as the removal of community protection.

- Caring responsibilities create a compounded cost. Knowledge that dependants are unsupported operates as pressure toward withdrawal of complaints and toward public silence after release, and it does so without any explicit threat being made.

20.4 Legalistic repression

The instruments used are lawful in form, which is what makes them difficult to contest and easy to defend internationally. Registration statutes permit deregistration on vague grounds. Foreign-funding provisions criminalise ordinary international grant relationships or impose approval requirements that can be withheld without reasons. Anti-terrorism definitions are drafted broadly enough to cover advocacy. Assembly provisions convert a notification requirement into an authorisation requirement in practice.

The African Commission's Guidelines on Freedom of Association and Assembly in Africa provide the standard against which each of these can be assessed, and their limited use by national civil society is a capacity gap rather than an availability gap. A submission that measures a national registration statute against the Guidelines, provision by provision, is a document that the Commission is equipped to act on and that few organisations produce.

Implication. Failure sits at stage five. The remedy is documentation to an evidentiary standard on which continental mechanisms can act, which is a civil society capacity investment rather than a legislative demand. Chapter 29 identifies documentation capacity as one of the most consistently reported gaps across RFLD's network, and Chapter 44 recommends the investment.

21. Civic space and women human rights defenders

Treaty basis: African Charter Articles 9, 10, 11 and 13; ACHPR mechanisms on human rights defenders and on freedom of association and assembly.

21.1 Two registers of attack

Women human rights defenders face the general contraction of civic space and a second register of attack directed at their gender. The two operate together, and protection frameworks that address only the first leave the second unmet, which is the most consequential design failure in the current protection architecture.

Register	Method
Political	Deregistration and administrative obstruction. Prosecution under public order, cybercrime and anti-terrorism provisions. Surveillance of communications. Restriction of foreign funding. Travel restriction and passport confiscation. Tax and audit harassment.
Gendered	Sexual violence and the threat of it as political control. Campaigns targeting sexual reputation and family. Mobilisation of morality provisions and community sanction. Targeting of children and relatives. Online sexualised abuse at a volume and character distinct from that directed at male counterparts. Pressure applied through husbands, fathers and religious authority.

Table 21.1 Two registers of attack on women human rights defenders.

The second register has a specific consequence that protection programming frequently misses. An attack on a defender’s moral standing is designed to remove her community’s protection, and where it succeeds she loses the local support that relocation, legal aid and international attention cannot replace. A defender who has been discredited among her own people is exposed in a way that no external mechanism reaches, and the damage is not reversible by the means available to the protection sector.

21.2 Categories of heightened exposure

- Defenders of land and environmental rights, who oppose interests with commercial and frequently state backing, and who are the category most often subject to physical violence.
- Defenders working on sexual and reproductive rights, who face organised opposition and, in restrictive jurisdictions, direct criminal exposure for the work itself.
- Young defenders, particularly in Sahelian contexts where conflict has disrupted the intergenerational mentorship through which protective practice was transmitted.
- Defenders in unregistered movements, who fall outside every protection mechanism that requires an institutional counterpart, and who are frequently the most exposed because they are the least visible.
- Women journalists, who face both registers simultaneously and whose newsrooms rarely carry protective provisions such as pseudonymous bylines, security clauses or support after an attack.
- Defenders in rural areas, for whom every element of the protection architecture is further away and for whom anonymity is unavailable.

21.3 The protection architecture and its gaps

The available architecture comprises front-line responders offering relocation, legal aid and medical support; regional protection networks; continental advocacy through the African Commission and its Special Rapporteur; and donor emergency funds. The gaps are consistent across regions and each is structural rather than incidental.

Gap	Mechanism
Reachability	Emergency support presupposes a defender who can reach it, which excludes those without a passport, without a working language of the mechanism, or without an existing network contact.
Relocation as loss	Relocation removes a defender from the community that is her constituency and her source of legitimacy, and it is frequently declined for that reason.
Registration requirements	Mechanisms that require an institutional counterpart exclude unregistered movements, which are disproportionately led by young women and by Vulnerable Groups.
Dependants	Almost no mechanism provides for a defender's dependants, which makes acceptance of protection unaffordable for a woman with caring responsibilities.
Aftermath	Support is structured around the acute episode. Almost nothing addresses the return, in which the defender re-enters the situation that produced the threat with her security no better than before.
Wellbeing	Sustained exposure has a cumulative cost that no emergency mechanism addresses and that few funders will pay for.

Table 21.2 Structural gaps in the protection architecture for women human rights defenders.

Implication. Failure sits at stage five. RFLD's position in this domain is specific and is set out at Chapter 37: continental advocacy through the African Commission, publication of the research and tools the wider system uses, and coordinated referral to the organisations that operate front-line mechanisms. RFLD does not operate safe houses and does not present itself as an emergency response organisation, and Chapter 38 explains why stating that limit is a protection measure rather than a disclaimer.

22. Conflict, displacement and the Sahel

Treaty basis: Maputo Protocol Articles 10 and 11; Kampala Convention; ACDEG; AU Women, Peace and Security framework and UN Security Council Resolution 1325.

22.1 The obligations

Article 10 establishes women's right to a peaceful existence and to participate in the promotion and maintenance of peace, and obliges states to take all appropriate measures to ensure the increased participation of women in programmes of education for peace, in the structures and processes for conflict prevention, management and resolution at local, national, regional, continental and international levels, and in all aspects of planning, formulation and implementation of post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation. Article 10(3) obliges states to take the necessary measures to reduce military expenditure significantly in favour of spending on social development in general, and the promotion of women in particular.

Article 11 addresses protection in armed conflict, obliges respect for the rules of international humanitarian law, and obliges states to protect asylum-seeking women, refugees, returnees and internally displaced women against all forms of violence including sexual violence, and to ensure that such acts are considered war crimes, genocide or crimes against humanity with perpetrators brought before a competent criminal jurisdiction.

22.2 The central Sahel

The central Sahel presents the most acute conjunction of the conditions examined in this report: armed conflict, mass displacement, contraction of civic space, withdrawal from regional bodies, and degradation of the service infrastructure on which every right in Part Three depends. Women human rights defenders in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger operate with reduced access to regional judicial remedy following the ECOWAS withdrawals, reduced international presence, and a security environment that constrains movement, convening and communication.

Niger is additionally the one West African state that has signed the Protocol without ratifying, which means that the state in the sub-region facing the sharpest protection crisis is also the one against which the Protocol's obligations cannot be directly invoked.

22.3 Displacement and the documentation cascade

Displacement removes the documentation on which entitlement depends, and the loss compounds. A displaced woman without civil documentation cannot register a birth, claim land, enrol a child in school, access a formal health service, open an account or vote. Where a child's birth goes unregistered, the deprivation transmits to the next generation and becomes structural rather than episodic. The Kampala Convention obligations on documentation are among its least implemented provisions.

Displacement sites present their own risks. Distance to water and fuel determines exposure to attack during collection. Latrine siting and lighting determine exposure at night. Registration in the name of a male household head determines whether a woman can access assistance in her own right or must obtain it through him. Each of these is a design decision taken by a humanitarian actor, and each has a documented gendered consequence.

22.4 Conflict-related sexual violence and the evidentiary problem

Conflict-related sexual violence occurs in these settings with limited documentation and near-total impunity. Article 11(3) requires that such acts be treated as international crimes and prosecuted, and prosecution requires evidence collected to a standard that the conditions of collection make difficult to reach: chain of custody, contemporaneous recording, medical corroboration, and the security of both witness and documentation over the years that a prosecution takes.

Documentation is therefore the binding constraint on the Article 11(3) obligation, and it is a constraint that civil society can act on directly. The corollary is that documentation carried out to a lower standard than a court requires may foreclose the prosecution it was intended to enable, which makes training in evidentiary standards a protection measure and not only a technical one.

22.5 Participation in peace and transition processes

Article 10 obliges participation, and the record of women's meaningful participation in African peace and transition processes remains thin. Presence in a delegation is not influence over an agenda, and the distinction matters most in transition contexts, where the constitutional and electoral arrangements under negotiation will govern women's political participation for a generation. A transition that excludes women from drafting produces a settlement that will require a further generation of advocacy to amend.

The distinction between delegation membership and negotiating role is not recorded in most process documentation, which means the Article 10 obligation is assessed against the measure least connected to influence. Where a process publishes a delegation list, a woman's presence on it is counted; whether she held a portfolio in the negotiation, and whether the text she proposed survived, is not. Any serious measurement of Article 10 compliance would have to record the second, and no continental body currently does.

Implication. Failure spans the entire chain, because conflict disables every stage simultaneously. The two available and specific interventions are documentation for future accountability, and insistence that transitional arrangements include women in the drafting rather than in the consultation. Both are within civil society's reach and neither depends on the cooperation of the state.



PART FOUR

The state of women's human rights by region

Part Four treats each of the five African Union regions in turn. Each chapter follows the same structure: the accession position computed from Annex A; the sub-regional legal architecture, including the Regional Economic Community instruments and any sub-regional court; the accession narrative and what it reveals; the rights environment across the domains examined in Part Three; the sub-regional remedy and its record; and an assessment of what the region requires. The purpose of the fixed structure is comparability across regions rather than uniform depth within them.

A note on citation in this part.

Footnotes in this part cite instruments by name and year of adoption. Reference numbers, session numbers and official gazette citations should be taken from the register of the issuing body at the date of use, because they are recorded inconsistently across secondary sources and a wrong reference number is worse than none. Where this part describes a legal position, the position is stated from the instrument. Where it describes a pattern in the operating environment, it is stated as analysis and the reader is told so.

23. West Africa

Measure	States	Party	Outside	Detail
West region	15	14	1	Outside: Niger.

Table 23.1 Accession position, West Africa. Computed from Annex A.

23.1 The sub-regional legal architecture

West Africa has the most developed sub-regional architecture on the continent for women's rights, and the gap between that architecture and its use is the region's defining feature.

The Economic Community of West African States was established by treaty in 1975 and reconstituted by the Revised Treaty of 1993, which introduced in Article 63 an undertaking by member states to formulate, harmonise, coordinate and establish appropriate policies and mechanisms for the enhancement of the economic, social and cultural conditions of women.

The instrument that matters most is the Supplementary Act on Equal Rights between Women and Men for Sustainable Development in the ECOWAS Region, adopted in 2015. A Supplementary Act is binding on member states and enters into force on publication, which gives it a legal quality that a declaration or a policy does not have. Its substantive provisions overlap materially with the Maputo Protocol on political participation, economic rights, violence and education, and it therefore creates a second, sub-regional obligation on the same subject matter, with a separate reporting expectation.

That duplication is generally treated as a burden and should be treated as an opportunity. A state that has not reported under Maputo Article 26 may nonetheless be engaged under the Supplementary Act, and the two obligations can be used against one another: a state that reports progress to ECOWAS and nothing to the African Commission has produced a document that can be placed before the Commission.

Alongside these sit the ECOWAS Gender Policy and its implementation frameworks, the regional plan of action on trafficking in persons, the ECOWAS Child Policy, and the Protocol relating to Free Movement of Persons, Residence and Establishment, which bears directly on the position of women traders examined at Chapter 14.4 and on the position of displaced women examined at Chapter 22.3.

23.2 The ECOWAS Community Court of Justice

The Community Court of Justice is the most consequential human rights forum in Africa outside the continental mechanisms, and the reason is procedural. A Supplementary Protocol adopted in 2005 amended the Court's protocol to confer jurisdiction over applications concerning human rights violations in member states, and to permit access by individuals without the requirement to exhaust domestic remedies.

The absence of an exhaustion requirement is the single most important feature of the Court for the purposes of this report. Every other African mechanism, including the African Commission, requires an applicant to have exhausted domestic remedies, which in practice means years of litigation in a system that Chapter 20 describes as frequently unavailable. The Community Court can be approached directly, which converts it from a court of last resort into a court of first practical resort for West African litigants.

The Court's jurisprudence includes a judgment of continental significance for women's rights. In *Koraou v Niger*, decided in 2008, the Court found Niger responsible for failing to protect a woman held in slavery, and awarded damages. The judgment established both that the Court would receive a claim of this kind from an individual and that a state could be held responsible for the acts of a private party where it had failed to act against a practice its own law prohibited.

Two limitations qualify the picture. Compliance with the Court's judgments depends on member state cooperation and there is no enforcement mechanism comparable to a domestic bailiff. And the withdrawal of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger from ECOWAS raises a question about access for litigants in those three states that has not been authoritatively answered, which is the subject of the recommendation at Chapter 42.

The Niger position is particularly acute and illustrates how the layers interact. Niger is the one West African state that has signed the Maputo Protocol without ratifying it, so Protocol obligations cannot be directly invoked against it. It is also one of the three states whose access to the Community Court is now in question. A woman in Niger therefore faces the narrowest set of available remedies of any woman in the sub-region, at the same moment as the protection environment there has deteriorated most sharply.

23.3 The accession record and what it reveals

Fourteen of the region's fifteen states are party. Cape Verde acceded in 2005 without signing, one of only three states on the continent to use that route. Nigeria ratified exactly one year after signature. Mali, Senegal, The Gambia, Benin and Togo completed ratification within the first two years of the instrument, and Togo's deposit in October 2005 was the fifteenth on the continent and therefore the act that brought the Protocol into force.

The region's long intervals are Sierra Leone at eleven years and seven months and Côte d'Ivoire at seven years and seven months, both spanning periods of armed conflict or contested transition. That is consistent with the correlation identified at Chapter 6.2 between institutional fragility and accession delay, and it is the pattern that makes Niger's non-ratification legible: the file did not stall because of objection to the instrument.

23.4 The rights environment

Political participation

The region contains examples of every quota design described at Table 12.1, which makes it the most useful comparative laboratory on the continent for the finding that the sanction rather than the threshold is the operative element. It also contains states in which a quota statute has been enacted and never applied by the electoral management body, which is the stage-four failure described at Chapter 12.6 rather than a legislative gap. Both the West Africa Legislative Platform and the ACDEG Hub track the relevant legislation.

Economic rights and cross-border trade

West Africa is the region where the Chapter 14.4 findings on cross-border trade operate at greatest scale, because the ECOWAS free movement regime creates a legal right of movement that women traders exercise daily while remaining exposed to discretionary treatment at the point of crossing. The gap between the Protocol on Free Movement and the conduct of officials at a border post is a stage-four enforcement gap in a right that formally already exists, and it is measurable if anyone chose to measure it at crossings.

Land, inheritance and personal status

The region contains the full range of personal status regimes found on the continent: statutory codes of the person and the family, customary regimes with formal legal recognition, and Islamic personal law applied through statutory or customary channels depending on the state. The Chapter 15.2 analysis of legal pluralism therefore applies here in its strongest form, and the constitutional standing of the competing regime is the determinative variable in most states rather than the content of the succession statute.

Sexual and reproductive health and rights

The sub-region carries a disproportionate share of the continental maternal mortality burden, and the failure modes set out at Table 16.1 are documented across it. Benin serves as RFLD's operational hub for health work and is the state in which clinical and quality-improvement approaches are piloted before wider application, which reflects a judgement about relative institutional stability rather than about relative need.

Harmful practices

Prevalence of female genital mutilation varies across the region by an order of magnitude between states and within states between regions and ethnic groups, which is why the caution at Chapter 18.3 about national prevalence figures applies with particular force here. Cross-border movement between jurisdictions with differing enforcement is documented across the region's internal borders, and the free movement regime that benefits women traders also facilitates it, which is an uncomfortable interaction that regional policy has not addressed.

Civic space and the central Sahel

The region divides sharply on civic space. In the coastal states the pattern is the legalistic repression described at Chapter 20.4: registration statutes, foreign-funding provisions and cybercrime legislation applied to advocacy. In the central Sahel the constraint is more direct and includes the physical inaccessibility of large parts of national territory, the suspension or reconfiguration of constitutional order, and the departure of international organisations whose presence had provided an element of protection by observation.

The three central Sahel states are also the states in which the intergenerational transmission of protective practice has been most disrupted, which is the specific finding of RFLD's 2026 policy brief on young women human rights defenders in West Africa and the Sahel and the subject of Chapter 31.2.

23.5 What the region requires

1. An authoritative statement of the position on Community Court access for litigants in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. Until it is given, counsel cannot advise and cases are not filed, which is a loss of the most accessible remedy in Africa at the moment of greatest need.
2. Ratification by Niger, framed and pursued domestically. Chapter 8 sets out why the accession route should be examined alongside revival of the 2004 signature.
3. Systematic use of the ECOWAS Supplementary Act as a second reporting channel, on the reasoning at Chapter 23.1 that two overlapping obligations can be used against one another.
4. Simplified trade procedures designed for the documentation and literacy conditions of the women who conduct most small-scale cross-border trade, as recommended at Chapter 42.

5. Protection provision for young defenders in the central Sahel that does not require relocation, since relocation removes the defender from the constituency that gives her work meaning and is frequently declined for that reason.

23.6 Where the evidence is thin

RFLD's network density is highest in this region, and the report's evidence is correspondingly strongest here. Three gaps nonetheless remain and are stated so that they are not mistaken for findings. Border harassment is documented through testimony and not through any systematic instrument. The application record of quota sanctions by electoral management bodies is not compiled. And the effect of the ECOWAS withdrawals on pending cases is a legal question on which this report deliberately takes no position.

23.7 The state of women's human rights in West Africa: a country-by-country review

The sections above set out the legal architecture, the accession record and the thematic pressure points of the region. This section does what the report's method requires and what no continental average can do: it states the position of women's rights in each of the fifteen member states of the region, against the obligations the state has accepted, with the source for each verifiable statement given in the notes. The review follows the implementation chain set out at Chapter 4. For each state it asks what has been ratified, what has been legislated, what has been resourced, and what has reached women's lives, and it treats the distance between those four answers as the finding.

Three cautions govern the reading of what follows. First, the depositary record is the only authoritative source for treaty status, and every status statement in this section is taken from the African Union depositary as reproduced at Annex A.² Second, statistical claims are attributed to the compiling institution and its most recent published round, and where a current figure has not been verified for this edition the indicator is named without a number, in accordance with the verification convention stated in the front matter. Third, the country entries are deliberately unequal in length, because the evidence base is unequal, and an entry padded to uniform length would conceal exactly the documentation gap that Chapter 29 identifies.

The regional pattern restated

West Africa enters this review with the strongest ratification record of any region except Southern Africa: fourteen of fifteen states are party to the Maputo Protocol, with Niger the sole state outside, having signed in July 2004 and never ratified.³ It also enters with the continent's most consequential sub-regional court. The ECOWAS Community Court of Justice has issued the judgments that define what supranational enforcement of women's rights in Africa currently looks like: *Hadijatou Mani Koraou v Niger* in 2008, holding Niger responsible for failing to protect a woman from slavery;⁴ *Dorothy Njemanze and Others v Nigeria* in 2017, the first merits judgment

2. African Union, Treaties and Conventions Depositary, status list for the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, <https://au.int/en/treaties>. Reproduced and reconciled at Annex A of this report.

3. African Union, Treaties and Conventions Depositary, status list for the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, <https://au.int/en/treaties>. Reproduced and reconciled at Annex A of this report.

of any international court applying the Maputo Protocol, finding the arbitrary arrest and abuse of women in Abuja to violate Articles 2, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 25;⁵ and *Women Against Violence and Exploitation in Society (WAVES) v Sierra Leone* in 2019, holding the ban on pregnant girls attending school to be discriminatory and ordering its revocation, which the government carried out in March 2020.⁶

The same region contains the continent's most acute protection emergency. The withdrawal of Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger from ECOWAS, effective January 2025 following the creation of the Alliance des États du Sahel, removed roughly seventy million people from the jurisdiction of the ECOWAS Court, including the women of the three states where the displacement and conflict findings of Chapter 22 are most severe.⁷ The review below therefore describes a region moving in two directions at once: consolidating legal gains in the coastal states while losing enforcement reach in the Sahel.

Political participation

The regional spread on women's representation in national parliaments is the widest measurable gap between neighbouring states party to the same instrument anywhere on the continent. At one end, Senegal has operated a statutory parity law since 2010, Law 2010-11 requiring absolute parity on candidate lists for all fully or partially elective bodies, and has held women's representation in the National Assembly above forty per cent across three successive legislatures, a level verifiable in the Inter-Parliamentary Union's Parline database.⁸ Cape Verde adopted a parity law in 2019 and its parliament now sits among the continental leaders on the same measure.⁹ At the other end, Nigeria, the region's most populous state and the continent's largest democracy, returned women to fewer than five per cent of seats in both chambers at the 2023 general election, the lowest proportion in the region and among the lowest in the world, in the year after the National Assembly rejected five constitutional amendment bills that would have created reserved seats and eased citizenship and indigeneship discrimination.¹⁰

Between the poles, the trajectory is legislative and recent. Sierra Leone's Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Act 2022 introduced a minimum thirty per cent quota for elective and appointive public office and for private employers above a threshold, and the 2023 election that followed nearly doubled women's parliamentary presence.¹¹ Ghana adopted the Affirmative Action (Gender Equity) Act in 2024 after two decades of advocacy, and in January 2025 swore in

4. ECOWAS Community Court of Justice, *Hadijatou Mani Koraou v Republic of Niger*, ECW/CCJ/JUD/06/08, judgment of 27 October 2008, <https://www.courtecowas.org>.

5. ECOWAS Community Court of Justice, *Dorothy Njemanze and 3 Others v Federal Republic of Nigeria*, ECW/CCJ/JUD/08/17, judgment of 12 October 2017, <https://www.courtecowas.org>.

6. ECOWAS Community Court of Justice, *WAVES v Republic of Sierra Leone*, ECW/CCJ/JUD/37/19, judgment of 12 December 2019; Government of Sierra Leone, announcement of the lifting of the ban, 30 March 2020.

7. ECOWAS Commission, communiqués on the notification and effect of withdrawal by Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, January 2024 to January 2025, <https://ecowas.int>.

8. Inter-Parliamentary Union, Parline database, monthly ranking of women in national parliaments, country pages for Senegal, Ghana, Liberia and regional comparators, <https://data.ipu.org>.

9. Republic of Cape Verde, Lei da Paridade, Law 68/IX/2019; representation figures per Inter-Parliamentary Union, Parline, <https://data.ipu.org>.

10. Inter-Parliamentary Union, Parline, Nigeria country page, <https://data.ipu.org>; National Assembly of Nigeria, votes on constitutional alteration bills, March 2022, as reported in the official record.

Professor Naana Jane Opoku-Agyemang as the country's first woman Vice-President.¹² Benin's 2019 constitutional revision created twenty-four reserved seats for women, one per electoral district, and the January 2023 legislative election consequently seated the largest cohort of women in the country's parliamentary history.¹³ Togo appointed Victoire Tomegah-Dogbé as its first woman Prime Minister in 2020.¹⁴ The regional lesson matches the continental finding at Chapter 12.3: representation moves where a binding rule with a placement mechanism and a sanction is adopted, and does not move where exhortation substitutes for rule.

Economic life, land and inheritance

The region's labour market is the informal economy, in the precise sense established at Chapter 14.2, and the region's most distinctive economic rights question is the position of women cross-border traders on the corridors linking Abidjan, Accra, Lomé, Cotonou and Lagos, examined at Chapter 14.4. The ECOWAS free movement protocols confer rights that the practice of the border does not deliver, and the AES withdrawal has converted a rights-implementation problem into a rights-existence problem on the Sahel corridors.

On land, the region illustrates both directions of travel. Liberia's Land Rights Act 2018 recognised customary land ownership and required women's participation in community land governance, one of the strongest statutory formulations on the continent.¹⁵ Sierra Leone's Customary Land Rights Act 2022 prohibited discrimination against women in customary land holding and made spousal consent a condition of dealings in family land.¹⁶ Côte d'Ivoire's 2019 marriage law reform replaced the husband's sole headship of the household with joint management.¹⁷ Against these, Mali's 2011 Family Code entrenched discriminatory provisions on marriage age, obedience and inheritance, and remains the only national law on the continent that an international court has held, in *APDF and IHRDA v Republic of Mali* before the African Court in 2018, to violate the Maputo Protocol directly.¹⁸ The judgment is unimplemented at the time of writing, and the state's subsequent withdrawal of its Article 34(6) declaration and departure from ECOWAS have closed both supranational routes by which implementation might have been pursued.

Sexual and reproductive health and rights

The regional maternal mortality burden remains among the highest in the world, with the UN Maternal Mortality Estimation Inter-Agency Group's estimates placing several states of the region, Nigeria above all in absolute terms, at the centre of the global total.¹⁹ Against that burden, the re-

11. Republic of Sierra Leone, Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Act 2022; Parliament of Sierra Leone, <https://www.parliament.gov.sl>.

12. Republic of Ghana, Affirmative Action (Gender Equity) Act, 2024 (Act 1121); Parliament of Ghana, <https://www.parliament.gh>.

13. Republic of Benin, Constitutional revision law of 2019 creating reserved seats; electoral outcome per Inter-Parliamentary Union, Parline, Benin country page, <https://data.ipu.org>.

14. Republic of Togo, appointment of the Prime Minister, official record, 2020; Inter-Parliamentary Union and UN Women, Women in Politics map, <https://www.unwomen.org>.

15. Republic of Liberia, Land Rights Act 2018, <https://www.emansion.gov.lr> and the Liberia Land Authority.

16. Republic of Sierra Leone, Customary Land Rights Act 2022 and National Land Commission Act 2022.

17. Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, Law 2019-570 of 26 June 2019 on marriage.

18. African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, *APDF and IHRDA v Republic of Mali*, Application 046/2016, judgment of 11 May 2018, <https://www.african-court.org>.

gion has produced the continent's most significant recent Article 14(2)(c) reform: Benin's Law 2021-12 of December 2021, which extended lawful termination of pregnancy to circumstances in which the pregnancy is likely to aggravate or cause material, educational, professional or moral distress incompatible with the interests of the woman or the unborn child, a formulation broader than the Protocol's minimum and adopted by a state party in the region where unsafe abortion contributes measurably to maternal death.²⁰ Sierra Leone has advanced risk-reduction legislation on safe motherhood through Parliament with unanimous political support, a process whose completion should be verified against the Gazette before citation.²¹ These two cases matter for the Chapter 16.5 instrument because they will move the legal count, and the service-availability count in both states will now measure whether legal reform reaches facilities.

Violence, harmful practices and the FGM belt

Every state in the region has legislated against at least one form of gender-based violence, and the enforcement deficit described at Chapter 18.2 applies across all fifteen. Senegal's Law 2020-05 criminalised rape and paedophilia with substantially increased penalties, moving rape from a misdemeanour to a felony after national mobilisation.²² Nigeria's Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act 2015 has now been domesticated by the great majority of states of the federation, a process that took nearly a decade and remains incomplete in application.²³

The region contains the western arc of the continental FGM belt. UNICEF's global databases record prevalence among women aged fifteen to forty-nine at approximately ninety-five per cent in Guinea and around three quarters in Mali and Sierra Leone, against single figures in Ghana, Togo and Niger, a spread that confirms the Chapter 18.3 finding that the practice is ethnically and sub-nationally distributed rather than national.²⁴ The most instructive recent episode is legislative: in July 2024 the National Assembly of The Gambia rejected a bill that would have repealed the 2015 criminal prohibition of FGM, the first attempt anywhere in the world to reverse such a ban, after sustained mobilisation by Gambian women's organisations, survivors and religious allies.²⁵ The episode demonstrates both the reversibility of legal gains and the capacity of an organised national movement to defend them.

Niger records the highest child marriage prevalence in the world, with UNICEF data indicating that roughly three in four women aged twenty to twenty-four were married before eighteen, and the practice is the single most consequential rights fact in the state that has not ratified the Protocol.²⁶

19. WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, World Bank Group and UNDESA/Population Division, Trends in Maternal Mortality (UN MMEIG estimates), most recent published round, <https://www.who.int/publications>.

20. Republic of Benin, Law 2021-12 of 20 December 2021 amending Law 2003-04 on sexual and reproductive health.

21. Parliament of Sierra Leone, proceedings on the Safe Motherhood and Reproductive Health Care Bill; completion of assent to be verified against the Sierra Leone Gazette before citation, in accordance with this report's verification convention.

22. Republic of Senegal, Law 2020-05 of 10 January 2020 criminalising rape and paedophilia.

23. Federal Republic of Nigeria, Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act 2015; state-level domestication tracking per the Nigerian Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and civil society trackers.

24. UNICEF, global databases on female genital mutilation, country prevalence estimates for women aged 15 to 49, <https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-protection/female-genital-mutilation/>.

25. National Assembly of The Gambia, rejection of the Women's (Amendment) Bill 2024, 15 July 2024, official record; Women's Act (Amendment) Act 2015 establishing the prohibition.

Civic space and the Sahel emergency

The coastal states of the region maintain civic space rated narrowed but functional by the CIVICUS Monitor, while the three AES states operate under transitional military authorities with suspended constitutions, restricted assembly and prosecutions of journalists and dissenters, the pattern described at Chapter 20.4.²⁷ The Chapter 22 findings on the central Sahel fall geographically within this region: multi-million person internal displacement across Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger recorded by IDMC, with women and children the substantial majority of the displaced, and the documentation cascade of Chapter 22.3 operating at scale.²⁸

Country by country

Benin. Party since 2005. The most significant recent development is Law 2021-12 on sexual and reproductive health, described above, which places Benin among the most Article 14 compliant states on the continent on the legal count.²⁹ The 2019 constitutional revision reserved twenty-four parliamentary seats for women and the 2023 election filled them.³⁰ Law 2011-26 on the prevention and punishment of violence against women remains the framework instrument on SGBV, and the Institut National de la Femme, granted power to institute legal proceedings on behalf of victims, has become the operational centre of enforcement and is the state counterpart in the RFLD framework convention described at Chapter 39.6. The implementation gap is at facility level and in rural legal awareness, where customary practice on inheritance persists notwithstanding the Persons and Family Code of 2004.

Burkina Faso. Party since 2006. The state legislated early and well: the 1996 Penal Code prohibition of FGM was among the first on the continent and prevalence has fallen across successive survey rounds.³¹ The 2009 quota law and its 2020 revision produced modest parliamentary gains before the 2022 coups suspended the elected legislature. The rights environment is now dominated by the security emergency: IDMC has recorded internal displacement at a scale exceeding two million people at its peak, among the fastest-growing displacement crises in the world, with the gendered consequences documented at Chapter 22.³² Schools closures in insecure zones remove girls from education at scale, and the transitional authorities' restrictions on association and expression have narrowed the space in which Burkinabè women's organisations, historically among the region's strongest, operate.

Cape Verde. Party since 2005. The archipelago is the region's quiet high performer. Abortion has been lawful on request in early pregnancy since 1986, the oldest liberal regime in the region.³³ The Special Law on Gender-Based Violence of 2011 established specialised procedures and shel-

26. UNICEF, global databases on child marriage, Niger country data,

<https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-protection/child-marriage/>.

27. CIVICUS Monitor, country ratings for West Africa, <https://monitor.civicus.org>.

28. Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, Global Report on Internal Displacement, country figures for Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, <https://www.internal-displacement.org>.

29. Republic of Benin, Law 2021-12 of 20 December 2021 amending Law 2003-04 on sexual and reproductive health.

30. Republic of Benin, Constitutional revision law of 2019 creating reserved seats; electoral outcome per Inter-Parliamentary Union, Parline, Benin country page, <https://data.ipu.org>.

31. UNICEF, global databases on female genital mutilation, country prevalence estimates for women aged 15 to 49, <https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-protection/female-genital-mutilation/>.

32. Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, Global Report on Internal Displacement, country figures for Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, <https://www.internal-displacement.org>.

ters, and the 2019 parity law lifted women's parliamentary representation to among the highest on the continent.³⁴ The state reports into the CEDAW system with regularity, and its principal gaps are in the economic domain: high female unemployment and the concentration of women in informal services and domestic work.

Côte d'Ivoire. Party since 2012. The 2019 reform of the marriage law ended the husband's legal headship of the household and instituted joint management of household property, correcting a provision that had governed since 1964.³⁵ The 2019 electoral quota law requires thirty per cent women candidates but lacks a placement rule, and representation remains below the statutory ambition, which is the failure mode identified at Table 12.1. The 1998 rural land law's registration requirements interact with customary tenure to women's disadvantage in the cocoa economy, where women supply a substantial share of labour and hold a small share of registered title. Post-crisis reconciliation left conflict-era sexual violence substantially unprosecuted.

The Gambia. Party since 2005. The Women's Act 2010 domesticated significant parts of the Protocol and CEDAW directly, an unusual and instructive legislative technique.³⁶ The 2015 amendment to the Women's Act criminalised FGM, and the July 2024 parliamentary defence of that prohibition, described above, is the region's most important recent civic victory.³⁷ The Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission documented sexual violence under the former regime and its recommendations on reparations for victims remain in staged implementation. Prevalence of FGM remains high notwithstanding the law, which makes The Gambia a leading case for the Chapter 18.2 finding that domestication without enforcement leaves prevalence to social rather than legal determinants.

Ghana. Party since 2007. The Affirmative Action (Gender Equity) Act 2024 is the region's newest representation statute, adopted after some twenty years of drafting and advocacy, and sets progressive targets for public appointive bodies.³⁸ The Domestic Violence Act 2007 established the framework on SGBV, with the enforcement infrastructure, DOVVSU units within the police service, chronically under-resourced relative to caseload. The Property Rights of Spouses Bill, which would give statutory effect to constitutional Article 22 on equitable distribution, has been pending for more than a decade, leaving distribution on divorce to jurisprudence. Women's parliamentary representation remains below fifteen per cent notwithstanding the country's democratic standing, which is the clearest regional demonstration that democratic quality and women's representation are distinct variables.³⁹

Guinea. Party since 2012. UNICEF records the second highest FGM prevalence in the world, at approximately ninety-five per cent of women aged fifteen to forty-nine, essentially uniform across regions and ethnicities, and the 2019 Children's Code's prohibition has not measurably moved it.

⁴⁰ The Civil Code of 2019 raised the marriage age and reformed matrimonial provisions but pre-

33. Republic of Cape Verde, Law 9/III/86 on the voluntary interruption of pregnancy; Special Law on Gender-Based Violence, Law 84/VII/2011.

34. Republic of Cape Verde, Lei da Paridade, Law 68/IX/2019; representation figures per Inter-Parliamentary Union, Parline, <https://data.ipu.org>.

35. Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, Law 2019-570 of 26 June 2019 on marriage.

36. Republic of The Gambia, Women's Act 2010.

37. National Assembly of The Gambia, rejection of the Women's (Amendment) Bill 2024, 15 July 2024, official record; Women's Act (Amendment) Act 2015 establishing the prohibition.

38. Republic of Ghana, Affirmative Action (Gender Equity) Act, 2024 (Act 1121); Parliament of Ghana, <https://www.parliament.gh>.

39. Inter-Parliamentary Union, Parline database, monthly ranking of women in national parliaments, country pages for Senegal, Ghana, Liberia and regional comparators, <https://data.ipu.org>.

served polygyny with conditions. The political transition following the 2021 coup has proceeded with restricted assembly and prosecution of opposition figures, and Guinean women's organisations report the protection pressures described at Chapter 21 in one of the region's most constrained civic environments.⁴¹

Guinea-Bissau. Party since 2008. The 2018 parity law requires thirty-six per cent women on candidate lists, the 2011 law prohibited FGM and the 2014 law addressed domestic violence, a complete legislative frame on paper.⁴² Chronic institutional instability, with repeated dissolutions of the National Popular Assembly, has prevented consolidation of any of it, and the state has among the thinnest human rights reporting records in the region, which places it high on the Annex D data agenda.

Liberia. Party since 2007. The Land Rights Act 2018 and the Domestic Violence Act 2019 are the principal recent statutes, the former among the continent's strongest on women's customary land rights.⁴³ The legacy of Africa's first elected woman head of state has not translated into sustained representation: women hold barely a tenth of legislative seats.⁴⁴ In February 2023 the National Council of Chiefs and Elders proclaimed a ban on FGM, a traditional-authority instrument in a state where the legislature has repeatedly declined to criminalise the practice, and the durability of that proclamation is a matter for verification rather than assumption.⁴⁵ Conflict-era sexual violence remains unaddressed by any judicial mechanism, and the 2024 establishment by executive order of an office for a war and economic crimes court is the first institutional movement on that file in two decades.

Mali. Party since 2005. The 2011 Family Code, adopted after religious mobilisation defeated a more progressive 2009 draft, entrenched provisions on marriage age, wifely obedience and unequal inheritance that the African Court held in 2018 to violate Articles 2(2), 6 and 21 of the Protocol and related instruments.⁴⁶ The judgment remains unimplemented, and the state has since withdrawn from ECOWAS and operates under transitional military authority. The 2015 quota law lifted women's presence in appointed and elected bodies and survived into the transition institutions. The conflict findings of Chapter 22 apply with full force: displacement, conflict-related sexual violence documented by the UN mission before its 2023 withdrawal, and the closure of civic space for the women's organisations that carry the documentation burden.⁴⁷

Niger. Signatory only, since July 2004, and the region's sole non-party.⁴⁸ The world's highest child marriage prevalence and among its highest fertility and maternal mortality burdens sit alongside

40. UNICEF, global databases on female genital mutilation, country prevalence estimates for women aged 15 to 49, <https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-protection/female-genital-mutilation/>.

41. CIVICUS Monitor, country ratings for West Africa, <https://monitor.civicus.org>.

42. Republic of Guinea-Bissau, Parity Law 2018; Law 14/2011 prohibiting female genital mutilation; Law 6/2014 on domestic violence.

43. Republic of Liberia, Land Rights Act 2018, <https://www.emansion.gov.lr> and the Liberia Land Authority.

44. Inter-Parliamentary Union, Parline database, monthly ranking of women in national parliaments, country pages for Senegal, Ghana, Liberia and regional comparators, <https://data.ipu.org>.

45. National Council of Chiefs and Elders of Liberia, proclamation on female genital mutilation, February 2023, as reported by the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

46. African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, *APDF and IHRDA v Republic of Mali*, Application 046/2016, judgment of 11 May 2018, <https://www.african-court.org>.

47. Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, Global Report on Internal Displacement, country figures for Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, <https://www.internal-displacement.org>.

the unratified Protocol, and Chapter 23.5 sets out why a domestically framed ratification campaign is the region's single highest-value advocacy target.⁴⁹ The 2000 quota law, progressively raised, has produced steady if modest gains in representation, and Nigerien women's civil society has historically been active on it. The 2023 coup, ECOWAS withdrawal and the security emergency in the Tillabéri and Diffa regions now dominate the environment, and the departure from ECOWAS forecloses the *Hadijatou Mani* route by which a Nigerien woman once reached a supranational court.⁵⁰

Nigeria. Party since 2004. The scale of the federation makes it the region's most consequential jurisdiction and its most uneven. The Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act 2015 required state-by-state domestication that is now nearly complete on paper.⁵¹ The Child Rights Act 2003 remains undomesticated in a minority of northern states, where child marriage prevalence is the region's highest outside Niger. The March 2022 rejection by the National Assembly of five gender-related constitutional bills, on reserved seats, citizenship transmission and indigeneship, marked the sharpest recent legislative reversal in the region, and the 2023 election returned women to fewer than five per cent of federal legislative seats.⁵² The *Njemanze* judgment established the Protocol's justiciability against Nigeria and compensation was paid, yet the profiling and abuse it condemned recur.⁵³ In the northeast, the conflict with Boko Haram and its successors has produced a documented regime of abduction, forced marriage and sexual violence, with the Chibok abductions of 2014 the emblematic case and the majority of the abducted women and girls of that decade still unaccounted for in public records.⁵⁴

Senegal. Party since 2005. The 2010 parity law remains the continent's most effective list-based representation statute outside Rwanda's constitutional model, verifiable across three legislatures in Parline.⁵⁵ Law 2020-05 criminalised rape as a felony.⁵⁶ The Family Code's provisions on paternal authority and inheritance retain discriminatory elements that reform efforts have not yet carried, and the succession regime's interaction with Muslim personal law is the principal domestication frontier. Civic space narrowed measurably during the 2021 to 2024 political crisis and has reopened since the 2024 transition; the country hosts a dense feminist institutional ecology, includ-

48. African Union, Treaties and Conventions Depository, status list for the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, <https://au.int/en/treaties>. Reproduced and reconciled at Annex A of this report.

49. UNICEF, global databases on child marriage, Niger country data, <https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-protection/child-marriage/>.

50. ECOWAS Community Court of Justice, *Hadijatou Mani Koraou v Republic of Niger*, ECW/CCJ/JUD/06/08, judgment of 27 October 2008, <https://www.courtecawas.org>.

51. Federal Republic of Nigeria, Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act 2015; state-level domestication tracking per the Nigerian Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and civil society trackers.

52. Inter-Parliamentary Union, Parline, Nigeria country page, <https://data.ipu.org>; National Assembly of Nigeria, votes on constitutional alteration bills, March 2022, as reported in the official record.

53. ECOWAS Community Court of Justice, *Dorothy Njemanze and 3 Others v Federal Republic of Nigeria*, ECW/CCJ/JUD/08/17, judgment of 12 October 2017, <https://www.courtecawas.org>.

54. United Nations Security Council, reports of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence, Nigeria sections, <https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/>.

55. Inter-Parliamentary Union, Parline database, monthly ranking of women in national parliaments, country pages for Senegal, Ghana, Liberia and regional comparators, <https://data.ipu.org>.

56. Republic of Senegal, Law 2020-05 of 10 January 2020 criminalising rape and paedophilia.

ing RFLD's Dakar office inaugurated in June 2026 and the Yéego Jigéen granting programme described in Part Six.

Sierra Leone. Party since 2015. The most rapid recent mover in the region: the GEWE Act 2022 on representation and economic inclusion, the Customary Land Rights and National Land Commission Acts 2022 on tenure, and the lifting of the school ban on pregnant girls in 2020 after the ECOWAS Court's *WAVES* judgment together constitute a coherent legislative package.⁵⁷⁵⁸⁵⁹ Safe motherhood legislation has advanced with unanimous parliamentary support, as noted above.⁶⁰ FGM prevalence remains high and initiation-society dynamics make it the most socially embedded in the region after Guinea; no national criminal prohibition exists, which places Sierra Leone on the wrong side of the Article 5 domestication count even as its other indicators improve.⁶¹

Togo. Party since 2005. The Persons and Family Code as revised in 2012 and 2014 removed the husband's status as head of household and equalised significant matrimonial provisions, and the 2018 Land Code affirmed women's equal access to land including a presumption protecting spousal rights.⁶² The appointment of the region's first woman Prime Minister in 2020 stands alongside persistent low representation in the National Assembly, illustrating the appointment-versus-election distinction drawn at Chapter 12.4.⁶³ Civic space remains constrained, with the 2019 amendments to the law on public demonstrations restricting assembly, and Togolese women's organisations work within the narrowed conditions described at Chapter 21.

What this review adds to the regional findings

Read together, the fifteen entries confirm the two regional findings stated at Chapter 23.5 and add a third. Legislative motion is real and recent: of the significant statutes cited above, more than half postdate 2015. Enforcement remains the binding constraint in every state without exception. And the region's centre of legal gravity has shifted coastward: the states consolidating gains are maritime, the states in emergency are Sahelian, and the instruments of regional enforcement now reach only the former. A regional strategy that does not price that asymmetry will misallocate toward the states easiest to work in rather than the women most exposed.

57. Republic of Sierra Leone, Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Act 2022; Parliament of Sierra Leone, <https://www.parliament.gov.sl>.

58. Republic of Sierra Leone, Customary Land Rights Act 2022 and National Land Commission Act 2022.

59. ECOWAS Community Court of Justice, *WAVES v Republic of Sierra Leone*, ECW/CCJ/JUD/37/19, judgment of 12 December 2019; Government of Sierra Leone, announcement of the lifting of the ban, 30 March 2020.

60. Parliament of Sierra Leone, proceedings on the Safe Motherhood and Reproductive Health Care Bill; completion of assent to be verified against the Sierra Leone Gazette before citation, in accordance with this report's verification convention.

61. UNICEF, global databases on female genital mutilation, country prevalence estimates for women aged 15 to 49, <https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-protection/female-genital-mutilation/>.

62. Republic of Togo, Persons and Family Code as amended by Law 2012-014 and Law 2014-019; Land and Property Code, Law 2018-005.

63. Republic of Togo, appointment of the Prime Minister, official record, 2020; Inter-Parliamentary Union and UN Women, Women in Politics map, <https://www.unwomen.org>.

24. Central Africa

Measure	States	Party	Outside	Detail
Central region	9	7	2	Outside: Burundi, Chad.

Table 24.1 Accession position, Central Africa. Computed from Annex A.

24.1 The sub-regional legal architecture

Central Africa has the weakest sub-regional architecture for women's rights of any African Union region, and that weakness shapes every finding in this chapter.

The Economic Community of Central African States was established in 1983 and has adopted gender policy instruments at the level of declaration and policy rather than of binding act. The Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa operates alongside it with an economic mandate and a court whose jurisdiction is directed to community law rather than to human rights. Neither body provides a human rights forum comparable to the ECOWAS Community Court of Justice, and there is no sub-regional gender protocol with the binding quality of the ECOWAS Supplementary Act or the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development.

The practical consequence is that in Central Africa the continental mechanisms are not one option among several. They are the only supranational route available, which means the Article 34(6) constraint described at Chapter 11 bites harder here than anywhere else. A woman in a Central African state whose government has not made the declaration has the African Commission and nothing below it.

24.2 The accession record

Seven of nine states are party. The region's ratifications cluster between 2008 and 2012, later than West or Southern Africa, and São Tomé and Príncipe followed in 2019 after an interval of nine years and two months. Burundi signed in December 2003 and has not ratified in more than twenty-two years, the longest dormant signature on the continent. Chad signed in December 2004 and has likewise not ratified.

Neither Burundi nor Chad has articulated an objection to the Protocol's content, and in both the obstacle appears to be legislative throughput within a constrained institutional environment. That is a capacity problem, and Chapter 6.2 sets out why it calls for a different intervention from a persuasion problem.

24.3 The rights environment

Scale and the problem of regional averages

The Democratic Republic of Congo carries a share of the region's absolute burden on maternal and child mortality, on displacement and on conflict-related sexual violence that is disproportionate to any other single state on the continent. Any regional average for Central Africa is therefore substantially a statement about one state, and this report avoids regional averages for that reason. Findings should be read at state level here more than in any other region.

Conflict-related sexual violence

The eastern Democratic Republic of Congo is the setting in which the Article 11(3) obligation examined at Chapter 22.4 has been engaged most extensively and in which the evidentiary problem described there is most acute. Documentation has been undertaken at scale by national and international actors over two decades, and the conversion rate from documentation to prosecution has been low, which is the clearest available demonstration that documentation alone is a necessary and insufficient condition for accountability.

The specific lesson for civil society is the one stated at Chapter 22.4: documentation carried out to a standard below what a court requires can foreclose the prosecution it was intended to enable. Training in evidentiary standards, chain of custody and witness protection is therefore a protection intervention rather than a technical one.

Extractives and land

The compensation asymmetry described at Chapter 15.4 operates at scale across this region. Mineral extraction on land held under customary tenure, with compensation paid to registered holders and common-property use rights extinguished without compensation, is the standard sequence, and it is lawful at every step. The absence of a sub-regional court with human rights jurisdiction removes the forum in which that sequence might otherwise be tested, which is a concrete illustration of why the architectural weakness described at Chapter 24.1 has substantive consequences.

Civic space

The pattern across the region combines registration and authorisation requirements for associations with restrictions on assembly and, in several states, extended periods of constitutional irregularity. Women defenders working on land, extractives and conflict-related sexual violence face the two registers of attack described at Table 21.1, and the referral pathways available to them are longer because the sub-regional layer is absent.

24.4 What the region requires

1. Ratification by Burundi and Chad, pursued as a capacity and drafting undertaking rather than as a persuasion campaign.
2. A binding sub-regional gender instrument, on the model of the ECOWAS Supplementary Act, which would create a second reporting obligation where at present there is effectively one.
3. Declarations under Article 34(6) of the African Court Protocol, which matter more in this region than elsewhere because there is no sub-regional alternative.
4. Investment in documentation to evidentiary standard, given the demonstrated gap between documentation volume and prosecution outcomes.
5. Consultation and compensation reform in land acquisition, since procedural reform does not require constitutional change and is therefore available in the near term.

24.5 Where the evidence is thin

RFLD's network presence in this region is lighter than in West Africa, and lightest in the states with the most restricted civic space. The report's account of Central Africa rests more heavily on

institutional and legal analysis and less on network testimony than its account of West Africa, and readers should weight it accordingly.

24.6 The state of women's human rights in Central Africa: a country-by-country review

Central Africa is the region this report has already described as carrying the widest gap between the severity of violations and the density of documentation. This section applies the same country-by-country method used for the other regions, and it does so with a methodological statement that is itself a finding: for several states of this region, the honest entry is short, not because little is happening to women's rights but because little of what happens is recorded in a form that satisfies the report's verification convention. The brevity of an entry below should be read as a measurement of the documentation deficit identified at Chapter 24.5, and Annex D carries the corresponding data agenda.

Nine states compose the region under the African Union classification used in this report: Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and Sao Tome and Principe. Seven are party to the Maputo Protocol; Burundi and Chad have signed and not ratified, and together they account for two of the six signature-only states on the continent.⁶⁴

The regional pattern restated

Three structural facts organise the regional picture. The first is scale and its misrepresentation: the Democratic Republic of Congo contains roughly half the region's population, so any regional average is substantially a description of the DRC wearing a regional label, which is the Chapter 12.2 caution in its sharpest form. The second is conflict: the eastern DRC, the Central African Republic, the Lake Chad basin and the anglophone regions of Cameroon are active or recent theatres in which the Chapter 22 findings on displacement and conflict-related sexual violence apply with full force. The third is the weakness of the sub-regional layer: ECCAS maintains no judicial organ comparable to the ECOWAS Court and no gender instrument with binding force, so the supranational routes available to a Central African woman run only through Banjul and Arusha, with the Article 34(6) constraint of Chapter 11 closing the latter for individuals in every state of the region.⁶⁵

Political participation

The region contains one of the continent's oldest constitutional quotas and one of its newest breakthroughs at the level of executive power. Burundi's 2005 Constitution requires a minimum of thirty per cent women in the National Assembly, the Senate and the government, and successive legislatures have exceeded the floor, placing Burundi among the continental leaders on the seat count while the substantive-influence caution of Chapter 12.4 applies in a closed political system.⁶⁶ The Democratic Republic of Congo wrote parity into its 2006 Constitution at Article 14 and legislated it in 2015, and in April 2024 appointed Judith Suminwa Tuluka as the country's

64. African Union, Treaties and Conventions Depositary, status list for the Maputo Protocol, <https://au.int/en/treaties>; Annex A of this report.

65. Economic Community of Central African States, institutional framework, <https://ceeac-eccas.org>; Chapter 24.1 of this report.

66. Constitution of Burundi (2005, as revised 2018), Articles 164, 180 and 128 on minimum representation; Inter-Parliamentary Union, Parline, Burundi country page, <https://data.ipu.org>.

first woman Prime Minister; representation in the National Assembly nonetheless remains far below the constitutional ambition, the region's clearest instance of the gap between norm and rule.

⁶⁷ The Central African Republic adopted a parity law in 2016 requiring thirty-five per cent representation of women in public and private decision-making bodies, with a compliance horizon that has now passed and enforcement machinery that has not been resourced.⁶⁸

Conflict-related sexual violence and its jurisprudence

The region is where the continental jurisprudence on conflict-related sexual violence is being written, in both directions. The Democratic Republic of Congo is the state most frequently cited in the annual reports of the UN Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence, with the eastern provinces of North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri accounting for caseloads that national services cannot absorb; the escalation that brought M23 into Goma in early 2025 displaced hundreds of thousands more and was accompanied by documented mass incidents of rape, including of women detainees.⁶⁹ Against this, the region has produced convictions that matter: Congolese military courts have convicted senior officers of rape as a crime against humanity in cases arising from Kavumu and elsewhere, and the Central African Republic's Special Criminal Court, a hybrid national-international tribunal, delivered its first judgments from 2022 including convictions encompassing sexual violence, the first hybrid-court accountability for such crimes in the region.⁷⁰ The reparations infrastructure is newer still: the DRC's national reparations fund for victims of conflict-related sexual violence, FONAREV, created by law in 2022, is the continent's first standing national mechanism of its kind and its disbursement record should be tracked rather than assumed.⁷¹

Health, SRHR and the maternal burden

The region carries maternal mortality ratios among the highest measured anywhere: the UN MMEIG estimates place Chad and the Central African Republic in the highest band in the world, and the DRC's absolute numbers are among the continent's largest.⁷² Two policy movements deserve the record. The DRC launched a free maternity care policy in 2023, removing point-of-use fees for deliveries and newborn care in participating facilities, a direct engagement with the financing question posed at Chapter 16.7 whose facility-level effect is now the thing to measure.⁷³

⁶⁷. Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Congo (2006), Article 14; Law 15/013 of 2015 on the implementation of women's rights and parity; appointment of the Prime Minister, April 2024, official record; Inter-Parliamentary Union, Parline, <https://data.ipu.org>.

⁶⁸. Central African Republic, Law 16.004 of 24 November 2016 instituting parity between men and women.

⁶⁹. United Nations, reports of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence, DRC and Cameroon sections, <https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/>; OHCHR and UN Joint Human Rights Office reporting on North Kivu, 2024 to 2025, <https://www.ohchr.org>.

⁷⁰. Special Criminal Court of the Central African Republic, first-instance judgments from 2022, <https://cps-rca.cf>; DRC military justice convictions in the Kavumu and related cases as documented in OHCHR and MONUSCO reporting.

⁷¹. Democratic Republic of Congo, Law 22/065 of 26 December 2022 establishing FONAREV, the national fund for reparations to victims of conflict-related sexual violence and crimes against the peace and security of humanity.

⁷². WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, World Bank Group and UNDESA/Population Division, Trends in Maternal Mortality (UN MMEIG estimates), most recent published round, country tables for Chad, the Central African Republic and the DRC, <https://www.who.int/publications>.

And the regional legal count on Article 14(2)(c) remains among the continent's most restrictive, with most states of the region authorising termination only narrowly, so the divergence instrument of Chapter 16.5 will register this region principally on the legal count.

Country by country

Burundi. Signatory only, since 2003, one of the two regional states outside the Protocol.⁷⁴ The constitutional quota described above has kept women's formal representation high through every electoral cycle since 2005.⁷⁵ Law 1/13 of 2016 on the prevention and punishment of gender-based violence created a dedicated framework including specialised police units.⁷⁶ The structural deficit is in property: Burundi has no written law of inheritance, matrimonial regimes and gifts, leaving succession to customary rules under which daughters do not inherit land equally, a legislative absence maintained across three decades of announced drafts and the single most consequential unlegislated question in the country.⁷⁷ Civic space contracted severely after 2015 and reopens only partially; women's organisations operate under the registration burdens described at Chapter 20.4.

Cameroon. Party since 2012. The 2016 Penal Code criminalised forced marriage and preserved, at Article 297, the extinction of prosecution for abduction where the abductor marries the victim, an internal contradiction that domestication auditing of the kind proposed at Annex H is designed to surface.⁷⁸ The dual civil and customary marriage system leaves widows' property rights dependent on forum. The anglophone crisis since 2016 has produced displacement in the hundreds of thousands, documented attacks on schools with gendered effect, and conflict-related sexual violence recorded by UN human rights mechanisms, while the Lake Chad basin insurgency applies the Chapter 22 findings in the Far North.⁷⁹ Women's organisations, including the widely reported mobilisations of women leaders across the anglophone regions, have carried a visible share of the peace demand.

Central African Republic. Party since 2012. The 2016 parity law is the region's strongest representation statute on paper.⁸⁰ The Special Criminal Court's first convictions, noted above, are the state's most significant accountability development in a generation.⁸¹ Outside Bangui, state services are thin, the humanitarian caseload is proportionally among the highest in the world, and the availability of post-rape care is facility-dependent in precisely the way the Chapter 16.5

73. Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo, free maternity care programme launched September 2023 within the universal health coverage policy; implementation reporting via WHO country office, <https://www.afro.who.int>.

74. African Union, Treaties and Conventions Depository, status list for the Maputo Protocol, <https://au.int/en/treaties>; Annex A of this report.

75. Constitution of Burundi (2005, as revised 2018), Articles 164, 180 and 128 on minimum representation; Inter-Parliamentary Union, Parline, Burundi country page, <https://data.ipu.org>.

76. Republic of Burundi, Law 1/13 of 22 September 2016 on the prevention, protection of victims and punishment of gender-based violence.

77. CEDAW Committee, Concluding Observations on Burundi, successive cycles, noting the absence of a law on inheritance, matrimonial regimes and gifts, <https://www.ohchr.org>.

78. Republic of Cameroon, Penal Code, Law 2016/007, Articles 356 and 297.

79. United Nations, reports of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence, DRC and Cameroon sections, <https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/>; OHCHR and UN Joint Human Rights Office reporting on North Kivu, 2024 to 2025, <https://www.ohchr.org>.

80. Central African Republic, Law 16.004 of 24 November 2016 instituting parity between men and women.

availability count is designed to record. The 2019 political agreement and its successors have included women delegates without approaching the participation levels that Chapter 22.5 sets out.

Chad. Signatory only, since 2004.⁸² Ordinance 006/PR/2015 prohibited child marriage, raising the age to eighteen with criminal penalty, in a country whose prevalence remains among the world's highest, a compact illustration of the stage-three failure defined at Chapter 4.⁸³ Maternal mortality sits in the highest global band.⁸⁴ The post-2021 transition constitutionalised a quota ambition for women's representation, and the 2022 to 2024 transition processes seated women below every announced target. Displacement from the Sudan war has made eastern Chad host to one of the largest refugee influxes in the world, the majority women and children, with the documentation cascade of Chapter 22.3 operating at the border.⁸⁵

Congo. Party since 2011. The Mouebara Law of 2022 on combating violence against women is the region's most recent comprehensive SGBV statute, criminalising domestic violence, harassment and related acts with dedicated procedures.⁸⁶ The Family Code of 1984 retains discriminatory provisions, including on the position of the husband as head of the family, that the new statute does not touch, so the state now presents the pattern of a modern criminal frame resting on an unreformed civil one, a configuration the Annex H index would score precisely.

Democratic Republic of Congo. Party since 2008. The entries above carry the conflict, participation and health findings.⁸⁷⁸⁸⁸⁹⁹⁰ Two further points complete the national picture. The 2006 law on sexual violence remains among the continent's most complete criminal frameworks on paper, and the military justice system's convictions demonstrate that prosecution is possible where political and logistical support is assembled; the binding constraint is scale, with survivor

81. Special Criminal Court of the Central African Republic, first-instance judgments from 2022, <https://cps-rca.cf>; DRC military justice convictions in the Kavumu and related cases as documented in OHCHR and MONUSCO reporting.

82. African Union, Treaties and Conventions Depository, status list for the Maputo Protocol, <https://au.int/en/treaties>; Annex A of this report.

83. Republic of Chad, Ordinance 006/PR/2015 prohibiting the marriage of children, ratified by Law 029/PR/2015; UNICEF child marriage data, <https://data.unicef.org>.

84. WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, World Bank Group and UNDESA/Population Division, Trends in Maternal Mortality (UN MMEIG estimates), most recent published round, country tables for Chad, the Central African Republic and the DRC, <https://www.who.int/publications>.

85. UNHCR, operational data portal, Sudan situation, Chad country page, <https://data.unhcr.org>.

86. Republic of Congo, Law 19-2022 of 4 May 2022 (Loi Mouebara) on combating violence against women.

87. Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Congo (2006), Article 14; Law 15/013 of 2015 on the implementation of women's rights and parity; appointment of the Prime Minister, April 2024, official record; Inter-Parliamentary Union, Parline, <https://data.ipu.org>.

88. United Nations, reports of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence, DRC and Cameroon sections, <https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/>; OHCHR and UN Joint Human Rights Office reporting on North Kivu, 2024 to 2025, <https://www.ohchr.org>.

89. Democratic Republic of Congo, Law 22/065 of 26 December 2022 establishing FONAREV, the national fund for reparations to victims of conflict-related sexual violence and crimes against the peace and security of humanity.

90. Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo, free maternity care programme launched September 2023 within the universal health coverage policy; implementation reporting via WHO country office, <https://www.afro.who.int>.

caseloads exceeding judicial capacity by orders of magnitude.⁹¹ And the 2016 revision of the Family Code removed the requirement of marital authorisation for a wife's legal acts, a domestication gain of exactly the kind Chapter 9 counts, whose reach into practice in the provinces is the open question.

Equatorial Guinea. Party since 2009. This is the region's thinnest entry and the honesty convention requires saying so. No recent census-quality data on the report's core indicators has been published, no periodic report under Article 62 addressing the Protocol has been examined in the current cycle, and independent documentation from inside the country is scarce because the civic space conditions described at Chapter 20 apply in one of their most closed forms.⁹² What can be stated from the depositary record is ratification in 2009; what can be stated from UN sources is a persistent gap between the state's per-capita income and its social indicators, borne disproportionately by women. The entry belongs on the Annex D agenda in its entirety.

Gabon. Party since 2011. Between 2021 and 2022 the state enacted the region's most concentrated package of legal equality reforms: amendments to the Civil Code and Penal Code removing the husband's status as head of household, equalising spouses' rights in the management of property and in divorce, criminalising domestic violence through the 2021 law on the elimination of violence against women, and lifting restrictions on women's economic activity, a package registered by the World Bank's Women, Business and the Law index as among the largest single-cycle improvements recorded.⁹³ The 2023 coup placed the reforms' institutional carriers under a transition whose gender record is still being written; the transition period included the appointment of women to senior constitutional offices, and the durability question is the one Chapter 9 poses for every legislative gain.

Sao Tome and Principe. Party since 2019, the region's most recent accession.⁹⁴ The 2008 law against domestic and family violence and its successor framework, together with high routine immunisation and maternal health performance relative to the regional pattern, make the archipelago, like Cape Verde in West Africa and Seychelles in the East, a demonstration that small-state administrative reach changes what implementation looks like. Women's parliamentary representation remains modest, and the state's principal exposure is economic, with women concentrated in informal commerce and fisheries processing.

What this review adds to the regional findings

The regional chapter's conclusion stands and can now be stated with country-level precision. The region's two signature-only states, Burundi and Chad, are also states where a single legislative act, an inheritance law in one case and ratification plus enforcement of the existing child marriage prohibition in the other, would move more women's legal position than any programme intervention available to civil society. The region's jurisprudential assets, the DRC military court convictions and the Special Criminal Court, prove that accountability for conflict-related sexual

91. Special Criminal Court of the Central African Republic, first-instance judgments from 2022, <https://cps-rca.cf>; DRC military justice convictions in the Kavumu and related cases as documented in OHCHR and MONUSCO reporting.

92. CIVICUS Monitor, Equatorial Guinea country rating, <https://monitor.civicus.org>; African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, state reporting status, <https://achpr.au.int>.

93. Gabonese Republic, Law 006/2021 on the elimination of violence against women and the 2021 amendments to the Civil Code; World Bank, Women, Business and the Law, Gabon economy summary, <https://wbl.worldbank.org>.

94. African Union, Treaties and Conventions Depositary, status list for the Maputo Protocol, <https://au.int/en/treaties>; Annex A of this report.

violence is institutionally possible in this region and remove the argument of impossibility from every neighbouring state. And the region's documentation deficit is not evenly distributed: it is deepest exactly where civic space is most closed, which is why the protection findings of Chapter 21 and the data agenda of Annex D are, for Central Africa, the same agenda.

25. East Africa and the Horn

Measure	States	Party	Outside	Detail
East region	14	10	4	Outside: Eritrea, Madagascar, Somalia, Sudan.

Table 25.1 Accession position, East Africa and the Horn. Computed from Annex A.

25.1 The sub-regional legal architecture

The East region has a layered architecture in which the layers do not coincide. The East African Community, established by the Treaty of 1999, contains in Article 121 an undertaking by partner states to enhance the role of women in socio-economic development and in business, and in Article 122 an undertaking on the role of women in political and decision-making processes.

The Community subsequently adopted a gender equality and development instrument at Community level, and operates the East African Court of Justice, whose jurisdiction over human rights claims has been contested and construed narrowly relative to the ECOWAS Court. The practical position is that the East African Court is available for claims framed as breaches of the Treaty, including its good governance provisions, rather than as a general human rights forum.

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development covers the Horn with a mandate directed to drought, food security and, latterly, peace and security. It does not provide a rights forum. The consequence is that the states in the region with the most restricted rights environments are those covered by the body with the least rights mandate, which is a structural mismatch rather than an accident of drafting.

25.2 The accession record

Ten of fourteen states are party, and the region contains four of the seven signature-only states on the continent: Eritrea, Madagascar, Somalia and Sudan.

The region also shows the widest internal variation in accession pace anywhere. Comoros ratified twenty-one days after signature and Rwanda within six months. Ethiopia took fourteen years and one month from signature to ratification and a further fourteen months to deposit, and Mauritius took twelve years and five months. Sudan signed in 2008 and Eritrea in 2012, which makes them the two most recent signatures without ratification on the continent and therefore, on the analysis at Chapter 7.1, the least dormant of the seven files.

South Sudan's accession in 2023 is the region's most recent and the continent's second most recent, and it came ten years after signature in the year of the state's establishment as an African Union member.

25.3 The rights environment

Political participation: the widest spread on the continent

The region contains states with among the highest recorded proportions of women in national legislatures anywhere in the world alongside states in the bottom global quartile. It is therefore the clearest illustration of the Chapter 12.2 finding that a continental average describes no individual

state, and it is the region in which the reserved-seat design described at Table 12.1 has been applied most extensively and can be assessed over the longest period.

It is also the region in which the distinction at Chapter 12.4 between presence and influence is most testable, because high representation over multiple cycles permits the question to be asked whether committee authority and portfolio weight followed the seat count. That question has not been systematically examined, and it is the single most valuable research undertaking available in this region.

Harmful practices

Prevalence of female genital mutilation in parts of the Horn is among the highest recorded anywhere, and the most invasive forms are concentrated in the sub-region. The cross-border dimension described at Chapter 18.3 is a regional rather than a national phenomenon here, and enforcement differentials between neighbouring jurisdictions are documented. Medicalisation is also documented, which is the shift that makes prohibition harder to enforce and easier to defend.

Protracted displacement

Displacement in the Horn is protracted rather than episodic, which means the documentation cascade described at Chapter 22.3 has operated across generations. The result is a population of women and children without civil documentation at scale, for whom the absence of a birth certificate has become heritable in practical terms: an undocumented mother cannot register a birth, and the child's undocumented status then constrains schooling, movement and eventually the registration of the next generation. No African state has an administrative remedy adequate to that cascade.

Civic space

The region contains the most restrictive civic space environments on the continent alongside comparatively open ones. The mechanisms are those described at Chapter 20.4, with foreign-funding and registration provisions used most extensively, and in several states with the addition of prolonged periods of communications restriction, which bears directly on the digital protection findings at Chapter 19.

Conflict

Active armed conflict in parts of the region engages Article 11 in its entirety, including the obligation at Article 11(3) to treat conflict-related sexual violence as an international crime and to prosecute it. The evidentiary constraint described at Chapter 22.4 applies, compounded by the inaccessibility of affected territory to any documenting actor.

25.4 What the region requires

1. Ratification by Eritrea, Madagascar, Somalia and Sudan. Sudan and Eritrea are the newest files and, on the Chapter 7.1 analysis, the most tractable.
2. Clarification and, if necessary, expansion of the East African Court of Justice's human rights jurisdiction, which would create a sub-regional remedy in a region that lacks one.
3. A systematic examination of whether high women's representation in the region's legislatures has been accompanied by committee authority and portfolio weight, which would test the Article 9(2) standard rather than the seat count.

4. An administrative remedy for heritable undocumented status, which is a solvable problem requiring a registration amnesty rather than new law.
5. A cross-border approach to harmful practices, since national prohibition in a region with free or porous movement displaces rather than prevents.

25.5 Where the evidence is thin

RFLD's presence in this region is concentrated in a minority of its states, and the report's account is correspondingly institutional rather than testimonial. The states with the most restricted environments are those from which the report has the least direct evidence, which is the general bias identified at Chapter 2.4 in its sharpest form.

25.6 The state of women's human rights in East Africa and the Horn: a country-by-country review

The East region is the continent's widest spread on nearly every indicator this report tracks, and the regional chapter has already warned that its averages describe no actual country. This section therefore matters more here than anywhere else: fourteen states run from the world's leading parliament on women's representation to states in open war, from near-universal prevalence of female genital mutilation to its near absence, and from functioning constitutional litigation on women's rights to the absence of elections altogether. Each entry states the position against the state's own accepted obligations, with sources in the notes.

Fourteen states compose the region in the classification used at Annex A: Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda. Nine are party to the Maputo Protocol. Eritrea, Madagascar, Somalia and Sudan have signed and not ratified, and the region accounts for four of the six signature-only states on the continent, the concentration analysed at Chapter 6.2 in its correlation with fragility.

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The regional pattern restated

Three regional facts frame the entries. The first is the fragility correlation already established: the region's non-parties are its conflict-affected and least institutionalised states, so the women with the fewest domestic protections are also those without the Protocol. The second is jurisprudential density at the national level: the region's constitutional and apex courts have produced more litigation on women's rights, on marriage age, inheritance, customary law and representation, than any other region, which gives domestication auditing in East Africa an evidence base the other regions lack. The third is the scale of displacement: the Sudan war since April 2023 has produced the largest displacement crisis in the world, and its burden falls on this region's borders, with the gendered consequences set out at Chapter 22.⁹⁶

95. African Union, Treaties and Conventions Depositary, status list for the Maputo Protocol, <https://au.int/en/treaties>; Annex A of this report.

96. UNHCR, Sudan situation portal, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/sudansituation>; Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan, reports to the Human Rights Council from 2024, <https://www.ohchr.org>; United Nations, reports of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence, Sudan sections.

Political participation

Rwanda's Chamber of Deputies has held the highest proportion of women of any national parliament in the world continuously since 2003, above sixty per cent in recent legislatures, on the foundation of a constitutional minimum of thirty per cent and reserved-seat machinery.⁹⁷ Ethiopia seated the continent's then only woman head of state between 2018 and 2024 and reached gender parity in cabinet in 2018, appointments whose relation to durable power the Chapter 12.4 caution governs.⁹⁸ Tanzania is led by President Samia Suluhu Hassan, the region's only current elected woman head of state and government, in office since 2021.⁹⁹ At the other end, Kenya's Constitution of 2010 commands at Article 27(8) that not more than two-thirds of the members of elective public bodies shall be of the same gender, and successive parliaments and successive advisory opinions have failed to legislate the implementation mechanism, making the two-thirds gender rule the continent's most litigated unimplemented representation norm and a standing demonstration that a constitutional command without an electoral formula does not execute itself.¹⁰⁰

Harmful practices and their legal frontier

The region holds both extremes of the FGM distribution: prevalence around ninety-nine per cent in Somalia and above ninety per cent in Djibouti, against low prevalence in Uganda and effective absence in the island states.¹⁰¹ Sudan criminalised FGM in 2020, a landmark whose enforcement the subsequent war has suspended along with most of the state.¹⁰² The regional child marriage jurisprudence is the continent's reference point: *Rebeca Gyumi v Attorney General* in Tanzania (2016, upheld 2019) struck the discriminatory marriage-age provisions of the Law of Marriage Act 1971, and the legislative amendment the courts ordered remains outstanding, the region's clearest case of a judicial victory stalled at the implementation stage.¹⁰³ Uganda's Constitutional Court in *Mifumi* (2015) upheld bride price while outlawing its refund on divorce, and Kenya's Prohibition of FGM Act 2011 created a dedicated prosecutorial board whose caseload demonstrates that criminalisation with machinery prosecutes, and criminalisation without machinery does not.

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97. Constitution of Rwanda (2003, revised 2015), Article 10(4); Inter-Parliamentary Union, Parline, monthly ranking of women in national parliaments, <https://data.ipu.org>.

98. Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, official records of the election of the President by the Federal Parliamentary Assembly, October 2018, and of the 2018 cabinet appointments.

99. United Republic of Tanzania, official record of the swearing-in of the President, March 2021; Inter-Parliamentary Union and UN Women, Women in Politics map, <https://www.unwomen.org>.

100. Constitution of Kenya (2010), Articles 27(8) and 81(b); Supreme Court of Kenya, Advisory Opinion No. 2 of 2012 on the two-thirds gender rule; subsequent High Court and Court of Appeal proceedings on legislative default.

101. UNICEF, global databases on female genital mutilation, country estimates for Somalia, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda, <https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-protection/female-genital-mutilation/>.

102. Republic of the Sudan, Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2020 inserting Article 141a criminalising female genital mutilation.

103. High Court of Tanzania, *Rebeca Z. Gyumi v Attorney General*, Miscellaneous Civil Cause No. 5 of 2016, judgment of 8 July 2016; Court of Appeal of Tanzania, Civil Appeal No. 204 of 2017, judgment of 23 October 2019.

104. Constitutional Court of Uganda, *Mifumi (U) Ltd and Others v Attorney General*, Constitutional Appeal No. 2 of 2014, judgment of 6 August 2015; Republic of Kenya, Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act, No. 32 of 2011.

Conflict, displacement and the Sudan emergency

The Sudan war is the region's defining rights emergency. Since April 2023 it has displaced more people than any other conflict in the world, inside Sudan and into Chad, South Sudan, Egypt and beyond, and United Nations mechanisms, including the Fact-Finding Mission mandated by the Human Rights Council in 2023, have documented conflict-related sexual violence on a scale and with an ethnic targeting, particularly in Darfur, that the Mission has stated may amount to crimes against humanity and war crimes.¹⁰⁵ Ethiopia's northern war of 2020 to 2022 produced conflict-related sexual violence documented by the joint investigation of the OHCHR and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, with survivor services in Tigray, Amhara and Afar still far short of caseload years after the Pretoria cessation of hostilities.¹⁰⁶ Somalia and South Sudan carry protracted displacement and insurgency conditions in which the Chapter 22.3 documentation cascade determines whether a woman exists administratively at all.

Country by country

Comoros. Party since 2004, among the fastest ratifications recorded, twenty-one days from signature.¹⁰⁷ The islands' matrilineal customary order gives women a distinctive property position: the customary regime assigns the marital home to the wife, and this interaction between custom and codified law runs in women's favour, a configuration rare enough on the continent to deserve the comparative study proposed at Annex D. Representation in the Assembly of the Union remains among the region's lowest, and the 2021 family and penal frameworks retain provisions requiring domestication audit.

Djibouti. Party since 2005. FGM prevalence remains above ninety per cent notwithstanding criminalisation dating to 1995, the region's starkest case of the Chapter 18.2 finding that law without enforcement machinery leaves prevalence untouched.¹⁰⁸ The quota framework, raised over successive revisions, has lifted women's parliamentary presence to around a quarter of seats.¹⁰⁹ The state's position as host to displaced populations and as a corridor for Gulf-bound migration places migrant domestic workers, examined at Chapter 13.4, among its most exposed groups.

Eritrea. Signatory only, since 2012.¹¹⁰ Proclamation 158/2007 banned female circumcision and is credited by survey data with accelerating decline among younger cohorts, evidence that even in a closed state a clear prohibition with village-level enforcement moves practice.¹¹¹ Beyond that file,

105. UNHCR, Sudan situation portal, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/sudansituation>; Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan, reports to the Human Rights Council from 2024, <https://www.ohchr.org>; United Nations, reports of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence, Sudan sections.

106. OHCHR and Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, Report of the Joint Investigation into Alleged Violations of International Human Rights, Humanitarian and Refugee Law Committed by All Parties to the Conflict in the Tigray Region, 3 November 2021, <https://www.ohchr.org>.

107. African Union, Treaties and Conventions Depository, status list for the Maputo Protocol, <https://au.int/en/treaties>; Annex A of this report.

108. UNICEF, global databases on female genital mutilation, country estimates for Somalia, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda, <https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-protection/female-genital-mutilation/>.

109. Republic of Djibouti, Law 219/AN/18 revising the quota framework; Inter-Parliamentary Union, Parline, Djibouti country page, <https://data.ipu.org>.

110. African Union, Treaties and Conventions Depository, status list for the Maputo Protocol, <https://au.int/en/treaties>; Annex A of this report.

the environment is defined by indefinite national service, the absence of elections, an unimplemented constitution and the impossibility of independent domestic documentation; the UN Special Rapporteur on Eritrea remains the principal published source, and the state belongs with Equatorial Guinea at the top of the closed-environment documentation agenda.¹¹²

Ethiopia. Party since 2018, after the longest signature-to-ratification interval in the region.¹¹³ The 2000 Revised Family Code and the 2005 Criminal Code reforms, which expanded lawful grounds for abortion to include rape, incest, foetal impairment and the woman's age or health, remade the legal frame a generation ago and produced one of the continent's most studied reductions in deaths from unsafe abortion.¹¹⁴ The 2018 parity cabinet and the presidency of Sahle-Work Zewde marked the appointment high-water line.¹¹⁵ The northern war and its aftermath, described above, now dominate the rights record, and the post-conflict accountability architecture remains contested between national processes and the international mechanisms whose mandate lapsed.¹¹⁶

Kenya. Party since 2010. The 2010 Constitution is the region's strongest normative platform: Article 27 on equality, Article 45 on family, Article 60 on land principles including elimination of gender discrimination in customary practice. The statutory floor built on it includes the Matrimonial Property Act 2013, the Marriage Act 2014, the Protection Against Domestic Violence Act 2015 and the Prohibition of FGM Act 2011 with its Anti-FGM Board.¹¹⁷ The two-thirds gender rule remains unimplemented, as set out above.¹¹⁸ The femicide emergency broke into national politics in 2024 and 2025, with mass protests in January 2024 and again from December 2024 after successive high-visibility killings, and the presidential establishment of a task force on gender-based violence in 2025; the movement demanded and obtained the naming of femicide as a category in official discourse, an example of the recognition politics that Chapter 18 identifies as the precondition for counting.¹¹⁹

Madagascar. Signatory only, since 2004, the region's most populous non-party after Sudan.¹²⁰ Law 2019-008 on gender-based violence created the first comprehensive framework, and the land

111. State of Eritrea, Proclamation 158/2007 to Abolish Female Circumcision; survey evidence per successive EPHS rounds and UNICEF country data.

112. United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea, annual reports to the Human Rights Council, <https://www.ohchr.org>.

113. African Union, Treaties and Conventions Depository, status list for the Maputo Protocol, <https://au.int/en/treaties>; Annex A of this report.

114. Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Revised Family Code, Proclamation 213/2000; Criminal Code, Proclamation 414/2004, Articles 550 to 552.

115. Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, official records of the election of the President by the Federal Parliamentary Assembly, October 2018, and of the 2018 cabinet appointments.

116. OHCHR and Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, Report of the Joint Investigation into Alleged Violations of International Human Rights, Humanitarian and Refugee Law Committed by All Parties to the Conflict in the Tigray Region, 3 November 2021, <https://www.ohchr.org>.

117. Constitutional Court of Uganda, *Mifumi (U) Ltd and Others v Attorney General*, Constitutional Appeal No. 2 of 2014, judgment of 6 August 2015; Republic of Kenya, Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act, No. 32 of 2011.

118. Constitution of Kenya (2010), Articles 27(8) and 81(b); Supreme Court of Kenya, Advisory Opinion No. 2 of 2012 on the two-thirds gender rule; subsequent High Court and Court of Appeal proceedings on legislative default.

119. Republic of Kenya, Presidential establishment of the Technical Working Group on Gender-Based Violence including Femicide, 2025, official record; national media and police service records of the January 2024 and December 2024 mobilisations.

certification reform of the 2000s formally opened titling to women, with certification rates that remain low for both sexes.¹²¹ Ratification advocacy has repeatedly reached cabinet level without completion, and Chapter 25.4 lists Madagascar among the region's two most winnable accession files.

Mauritius. Party since 2017. The region's strongest performer on the World Bank's Women, Business and the Law index, with the Workers' Rights Act 2019 extending protections across the private sector, and among the few African states with functioning contributory maternity protection.¹²² The Criminal Code amendments of 2012 opened narrow lawful grounds for termination of pregnancy.¹²³ Representation in the National Assembly remains below the regional leaders, and the 2024 political cycle renewed debate on a statutory quota that has not yet been adopted.

Rwanda. Party since 2004. The world's leading parliament on women's representation, as stated above.¹²⁴ The land tenure regularisation programme of the 2010s registered spouses jointly on title at national scale, the continent's largest single formalisation of women's land rights, and the succession law of 1999 as revised equalised inheritance a decade before most peers.¹²⁵ The 2018 Penal Code and its 2019 ministerial order eased access to lawful abortion, including for pregnancies resulting from rape, forced marriage and incest.¹²⁶ The open question the report's method requires stating: representation and legal reform of this density coexist with a closed civic environment, and the Chapter 21 protection findings apply to independent women's voices in Rwanda as elsewhere.

Seychelles. Party since 2006. The archipelago has recorded women's parliamentary representation among the continent's highest without any statutory quota, the region's principal counter-example on mechanism, alongside consistently strong health and education indicators.¹²⁷ The gaps the state itself reports are gender-based violence services and the position of women in the informal and blue economies.

Somalia. Signatory only, since 2006.¹²⁸ The Provisional Constitution prohibits female circumcision at Article 15(4), against measured prevalence of about ninety-nine per cent, the widest norm-to-practice gap this report records anywhere.¹²⁹ The Sexual Offences Bill approved by cabin-

120. African Union, Treaties and Conventions Depository, status list for the Maputo Protocol, <https://au.int/en/treaties>; Annex A of this report.

121. Republic of Madagascar, Law 2019-008 on the fight against gender-based violence.

122. World Bank, Women, Business and the Law, Mauritius economy summary, <https://wbl.worldbank.org>; Republic of Mauritius, Workers' Rights Act 2019.

123. Republic of Mauritius, Criminal Code (Amendment) Act 2012.

124. Constitution of Rwanda (2003, revised 2015), Article 10(4); Inter-Parliamentary Union, Parline, monthly ranking of women in national parliaments, <https://data.ipu.org>.

125. Republic of Rwanda, Law 22/99 of 1999 on matrimonial regimes, liberalities and successions, as revised by Law 27/2016; land tenure regularisation programme records of the Rwanda Land Management and Use Authority.

126. Republic of Rwanda, Law 68/2018 determining offences and penalties in general, Articles 123 to 126, and Ministerial Order 002/MoH/2019.

127. Inter-Parliamentary Union, Parline, Seychelles country page, <https://data.ipu.org>.

128. African Union, Treaties and Conventions Depository, status list for the Maputo Protocol, <https://au.int/en/treaties>; Annex A of this report.

129. UNICEF, global databases on female genital mutilation, country estimates for Somalia, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda, <https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-protection/female-genital-mutilation/>.

et in 2018 has not been enacted, and a competing draft that would have weakened protections was withdrawn after national and international objection. The thirty per cent parliamentary quota for women operates as a negotiated aspiration within the clan-based indirect electoral system and has been partially achieved in successive parliaments.¹³⁰ Al-Shabaab control and the humanitarian emergency define daily exposure; women's civil society, including survivor networks operating without state protection, carries the documentation burden described at Chapter 29.

South Sudan. Party since 2023, the region's newest state party.¹³¹ The Revitalised Agreement of 2018 requires thirty-five per cent women's participation in executive institutions, a threshold met only partially in the transitional arrangements.¹³² The UN MMEIG estimates have placed the country's maternal mortality ratio among the highest in the world, and child marriage prevalence remains above half of women married before eighteen.¹³³ Conflict-related sexual violence is documented cyclically by UNMISS and the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, with accountability confined to a small number of mobile court convictions. Ratification in 2023 creates the reporting and shadow-reporting opening described at Chapter 10.3, and Chapter 25.4 places South Sudan first among the states where accession must now be converted into domestication.

Sudan. Signatory only, since 2008.¹³⁴ The transitional period after 2019 produced the criminalisation of FGM in 2020 and the repeal of the public order regime that had policed women's dress and movement, gains now suspended in war.¹³⁵ Since April 2023 the conflict between the armed forces and the Rapid Support Forces has generated the world's largest displacement crisis and mass documented conflict-related sexual violence, as set out above, with Darfur's ethnically targeted violence recalling the precedents of two decades earlier.¹³⁶ Sudanese women's resistance committees and emergency response rooms, unregistered structures of the kind Chapter 31.3 describes, are carrying frontline response and documentation under direct attack, and the protection findings of Chapter 21 apply to them in their most acute form.

Tanzania. Party since 2007. The presidency of Samia Suluhu Hassan, the special-seats system that keeps women above a third of the National Assembly, and the *Gyumi* jurisprudence on marriage age, described above, define the national picture.¹³⁷¹³⁸ The Law of Marriage Act amendment

^{130.} Federal Republic of Somalia, Provisional Constitution (2012), Article 15(4); electoral framework agreements on the thirty per cent quota, 2016 and 2021 to 2022 cycles.

^{131.} African Union, Treaties and Conventions Depositary, status list for the Maputo Protocol, <https://au.int/en/treaties>; Annex A of this report.

^{132.} Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS), September 2018, Article 1.4.4 and related provisions on the thirty-five per cent threshold.

^{133.} WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, World Bank Group and UNDESA/Population Division, Trends in Maternal Mortality, South Sudan country table, <https://www.who.int/publications>; UNICEF child marriage data, <https://data.unicef.org>.

^{134.} African Union, Treaties and Conventions Depositary, status list for the Maputo Protocol, <https://au.int/en/treaties>; Annex A of this report.

^{135.} Republic of the Sudan, Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2020 inserting Article 141a criminalising female genital mutilation.

^{136.} UNHCR, Sudan situation portal, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/sudansituation>; Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for the Sudan, reports to the Human Rights Council from 2024, <https://www.ohchr.org>; United Nations, reports of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence, Sudan sections.

^{137.} United Republic of Tanzania, official record of the swearing-in of the President, March 2021; Inter-Parliamentary Union and UN Women, Women in Politics map, <https://www.unwomen.org>.

ordered by the courts remains unenacted, and customary inheritance codified in the 1963 Local Customary Law Declaration Orders continues to subordinate widows and daughters, the specific target the domestication audit at Annex H would score. Civic space partially reopened after 2021, including the lifting of the ban on pregnant girls attending school, and the media and assembly frameworks retain the restrictive provisions adopted in the preceding decade.¹³⁹

Uganda. Party since 2010. The statutory floor is broad: the Domestic Violence Act 2010, the Prohibition of FGM Act 2010, the Succession (Amendment) Act 2022, which finally equalised significant inheritance provisions after the Law Advocacy for Women litigation struck the discriminatory sections, and the *Mifumi* bride price ruling.¹⁴⁰¹⁴¹ Women hold about a third of Parliament on the district woman member system, the region's oldest reserved-seat mechanism. Enforcement remains the constraint across every statute named, and civic space has narrowed measurably, with NGO bureau deregistrations and the prosecution of dissent affecting women's organisations within the general pattern of Chapter 20.4.¹⁴²

What this review adds to the regional findings

The regional chapter's two conclusions hold with country-level precision, and a third can now be added. The fragility correlation is exact: the region's four signature-only states are its four most conflict-affected or least institutionalised, so accession advocacy in this region is inseparable from peace and state-building agendas. The jurisprudence is the region's transferable asset: *Gyumi*, *Mifumi*, the Kenyan advisory opinions and the Ugandan succession litigation form a body of precedent that movements in other regions cite, and its principal lesson is sobering, since the region also demonstrates, in Tanzania's unamended marriage law and Kenya's unimplemented gender rule, that litigation wins convert to law only when a legislature is made to move. And the emergency tier is regional, not national: Sudan's war, Ethiopia's unfinished accountability and Somalia's and South Sudan's protracted crises share borders, caseloads and displacement routes, and a response organised state by state will always lag a crisis that is not.

^{138.} High Court of Tanzania, *Rebeca Z. Gyumi v Attorney General*, Miscellaneous Civil Cause No. 5 of 2016, judgment of 8 July 2016; Court of Appeal of Tanzania, Civil Appeal No. 204 of 2017, judgment of 23 October 2019.

^{139.} United Republic of Tanzania, circular of the Ministry of Education lifting the exclusion of pregnant students, November 2021.

^{140.} Constitutional Court of Uganda, *Mifumi (U) Ltd and Others v Attorney General*, Constitutional Appeal No. 2 of 2014, judgment of 6 August 2015; Republic of Kenya, Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act, No. 32 of 2011.

^{141.} Republic of Uganda, Succession (Amendment) Act 2022; Constitutional Court of Uganda, *Law Advocacy for Women in Uganda v Attorney General*, Constitutional Petitions Nos. 13/05 and 05/06, judgment of 5 April 2007.

^{142.} CIVICUS Monitor, Uganda country rating and updates, <https://monitor.civicus.org>.

26. Southern Africa

Measure	States	Party	Outside	Detail
Southern region	10	10	0	Complete accession.

Table 26.1 Accession position, Southern Africa. Computed from Annex A.

26.1 The sub-regional legal architecture

Southern Africa has the most substantively ambitious sub-regional gender instrument on the continent. The Southern African Development Community Protocol on Gender and Development, adopted in 2008 and subsequently revised, sets numerical targets for women's representation in political and decision-making structures and contains substantive obligations on violence, education, economic empowerment, health and access to justice.

The Protocol's representation target is more demanding than anything in the Maputo Protocol, which commits states to affirmative action without specifying a proportion. A state in this region therefore holds two overlapping obligations of different specificity, and the sub-regional one is the more easily measured. Chapter 26.4 sets out the use to which that should be put.

The region's sub-regional court is the cautionary element of its architecture. The SADC Tribunal decided against Zimbabwe in litigation concerning expropriation of agricultural land, and the Tribunal was subsequently suspended and its mandate reconstituted so as to remove access by individuals.

That sequence is the most instructive institutional episode in this report. A sub-regional court with individual access decided against a member state on property, and the member states responded by removing individual access. The lesson is not that sub-regional courts are futile; it is that their jurisdiction is politically contingent, and that litigation strategy in a sub-regional forum should account for the possibility that a victory produces the closure of the forum. It also bears directly on Chapter 15, because the subject matter was land.

26.2 The accession record: the only complete region

All ten Southern African states are party. Malawi acceded in 2005 without signing. Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa and Mozambique ratified within the first two years. Botswana completed the region in October 2023, ten days after signature, which is the fastest passage on the continental record and indicates that the domestic process had been concluded before signature rather than after it.

Chapter 6.1 identifies three factors that plausibly produced the regional result: sustained engagement at Community level creating a peer environment in which non-ratification was visible; national women's movements with established parliamentary access; and comparatively short signature-to-ratification intervals preventing the accumulation of dormant files. All three are replicable, and the Botswana sequence suggests a fourth: where legislative approval can be obtained before signature, the interval problem is eliminated rather than managed.

26.3 The rights environment

Complete accession, uneven implementation

The region provides the strongest available evidence for this report's central proposition. Accession is complete and implementation is not uniform, which establishes that the two are separate problems requiring separate strategies. Where a region has exhausted the accession agenda, the entire remaining task is domestication, allocation, enforcement and accountability, and the region's record on those four stages varies substantially between its ten states.

Customary law jurisprudence

Southern Africa has the continent's most developed body of superior court jurisprudence on the relationship between customary law and constitutional non-discrimination, including litigation on intestate succession, on the position of widows and on matrimonial property. For the purposes of Chapter 15 this makes the region the most useful comparative source available, because the arguments have been tested in court and the reasoning is published.

The jurisprudence also illustrates the limit identified at Chapter 9.2. A judgment declaring a rule of customary succession unconstitutional resolves the case and does not by itself alter the regime under which most estates are distributed, which requires implementing legislation, administrative capacity in probate registries, and public knowledge that the rule has changed. The gap between a landmark judgment and a changed practice is the enforcement gap in its clearest form.

HIV

HIV prevalence in parts of this region is among the highest globally, and the Chapter 17 analysis of the conditions under which Article 14(1)(d) can be exercised is therefore regionally central rather than thematic. The interaction identified at Chapter 17.3 between routine antenatal testing, disclosure obligations and the risk of violence on disclosure operates here at the greatest scale.

Political participation

The SADC representation target gives the region a measurable sub-regional benchmark and a mixed record against it. Because the target is numerical and the reporting is sub-regional, this is the region in which the gap between commitment and outcome is most easily stated in a form a head of government will recognise.

Civic space

The region's environments range from comparatively open to highly restricted. Where restriction operates it follows the legalistic pattern described at Chapter 20.4, with registration, funding and public order provisions predominant, and in several states with the addition of restrictions specific to assembly around elections.

26.4 What the region requires

1. Use of the SADC Protocol's numerical target as the primary advocacy instrument on representation, on the reasoning that a specific sub-regional commitment is more actionable than a general continental one.

2. Implementing legislation and probate administration capacity to give effect to the region's customary law jurisprudence, since the judgments exist and the practice has not followed.
3. Restoration of individual access to a sub-regional judicial forum, and in the interim, explicit strategy on the risk that a successful sub-regional case provokes jurisdictional closure.
4. A shift of the regional agenda from accession to the four remaining stages of the implementation chain, which the region is uniquely positioned to model for the continent.

26.5 Where the evidence is thin

RFLD's network presence is lighter in this region than in West Africa, and the report's account draws more on published jurisprudence and sub-regional instruments than on network testimony. The jurisprudential material is strong and public; the operating-environment material is thinner than the report's West African account.

26.6 The state of women's human rights in Southern Africa: a country-by-country review

Southern Africa is the only region in which every state is party to the Maputo Protocol, a position completed by Botswana's ten-day accession in October 2023, and the regional chapter has already drawn the consequence: here, and only here, the entire analytical question is implementation.¹⁴³ This section therefore reads differently from its counterparts. There is no accession advocacy to specify and no signature-only category to explain. Every gap recorded below is a gap between an obligation the state has accepted and a condition the state maintains, which is the purest form of the accountability question this report exists to pose.

Ten states compose the region in the classification at Annex A: Angola, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe. All ten are also members of SADC, whose Protocol on Gender and Development, revised in 2016 to align with continental standards, gives the region the continent's most developed sub-regional gender instrument, monitored through the SADC Gender and Development Monitor.¹⁴⁴

The regional pattern restated

Three features organise the region. The first is jurisprudence on customary law: the region's apex courts have produced the continent's defining judgments on the collision between customary norms and constitutional equality, and those judgments have travelled, cited across the continent and in this report at Chapter 15. The second is HIV: Southern Africa remains the centre of the global epidemic, with the highest national adult prevalence rates in the world in Eswatini, Lesotho, Botswana and South Africa, and the epidemic's gendered structure, adolescent girls and young women acquiring HIV at multiples of the rate of their male peers, is the region's single largest health-rights fact and the subject of Chapter 17.¹⁴⁵ The third is a representation profile achieved by party systems rather than statutes: the region's high performers reached their levels

¹⁴³ African Union, Treaties and Conventions Depository, status list for the Maputo Protocol, <https://au.int/en/treaties>; Annex A of this report.

¹⁴⁴ SADC, Protocol on Gender and Development (2008, revised 2016) and the SADC Gender and Development Monitor, <https://www.sadc.int>.

¹⁴⁵ UNAIDS, Global AIDS Update and AIDInfo country estimates for Eswatini, Lesotho, Botswana and South Africa, <https://www.unaids.org> and <https://aidsinfo.unaids.org>.

chiefly through party list practice and constitutional design rather than the quota statutes of West Africa, which matters for the mechanism analysis at Chapter 12.3.

Political participation

The region produced, in the 2024 to 2025 cycle, the continent's most significant recent executive breakthrough: Namibia elected Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah as its first woman President in the November 2024 election, inaugurated in March 2025 at the head of a government in which women simultaneously held the presidency, vice-presidency and speakership, a configuration without precedent on the continent.¹⁴⁶ South Africa's National Assembly has held women's representation in the mid-forties in per cent across recent parliaments on the strength of party list practice, and the region's median sits above the continental average, with Mozambique and Namibia long among the leaders.¹⁴⁷ The regional counter-cases are Botswana and Eswatini, where representation has remained in single figures or low double figures across cycles, demonstrating within a single region that neither wealth nor stability produces representation without a mechanism.¹⁴⁸

Customary law, property and the courts

The regional jurisprudence is the continent's casebook. Botswana's Court of Appeal in *Ramantele v Mmusi* (2013) held that a customary rule reserving the family homestead to the youngest-born son could not survive constitutional equality, confirming the High Court's declaration that had asked, in a phrase since quoted continentally, whether discrimination could be justified by custom alone.¹⁴⁹ Eswatini's High Court in *Sacolo v Sacolo* (2019) struck the common law doctrine of marital power, ending the wife's status as a legal minor under her husband's authority.¹⁵⁰ South Africa's Constitutional Court has serially rebuilt the law of customary marriage and succession, from *Bhe* (2004) on intestate succession through *Ramuhovhi* (2017) on property in polygamous marriages to *Bwanya* (2021) on the survivor of a permanent life partnership.¹⁵¹ Zimbabwe's Constitutional Court in *Mudzuru* (2016) struck child marriage from the law, and the Marriages Act 2022 eventually codified the ruling.¹⁵² The regional lesson is double-edged and Chapter 26.3 has already stated it: this region proves that customary rules can be litigated into conformity with equality, and it also proves, in the years between each judgment and its legislative absorption, that a judgment is the beginning of domestication rather than the end.

¹⁴⁶. Electoral Commission of Namibia, declaration of results of the 2024 presidential election; official record of the inauguration, 21 March 2025.

¹⁴⁷. Inter-Parliamentary Union, Parline database, country pages for South Africa, Mozambique, Namibia, Angola, Botswana and Eswatini, <https://data.ipu.org>.

¹⁴⁸. Inter-Parliamentary Union, Parline database, country pages for South Africa, Mozambique, Namibia, Angola, Botswana and Eswatini, <https://data.ipu.org>.

¹⁴⁹. Court of Appeal of Botswana, *Ramantele v Mmusi and Others*, CACGB-104-12, judgment of 3 September 2013, on appeal from *Mmusi and Others v Ramantele and Another*, High Court, MAHLB-000836-10 (2012).

¹⁵⁰. High Court of Eswatini, *Sacolo and Another v Sacolo and Others* (1403/16) [2019] SZHC 166, judgment of 30 August 2019.

¹⁵¹. Constitutional Court of South Africa, *Bhe and Others v Khayelitsha Magistrate and Others* [2004] ZACC 17; *Ramuhovhi and Others v President of the Republic of South Africa and Others* [2017] ZACC 41; *Bwanya v Master of the High Court* [2021] ZACC 51, <https://www.concourt.org.za>.

¹⁵². Constitutional Court of Zimbabwe, *Mudzuru and Another v Ministry of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs and Others* CCZ 12/2015, judgment of 20 January 2016; Marriages Act [Chapter 5:15], 2022.

Health and the epidemic

The regional HIV entries below are governed by Chapter 17 and one regional point is added here. The region is simultaneously the epidemic's centre and the global demonstration site of treatment scale-up, with several states having reached or approached the UNAIDS 95-95-95 targets; the 2025 rupture in external financing described at Chapter 17.4 therefore lands hardest here, where the largest treatment cohorts in the world depend on programmes whose funding basis changed in a single quarter.¹⁵³ On reproductive rights, the region contains the continent's oldest broad legal regime, South Africa's Choice on Termination of Pregnancy Act 1996, and one of its most instructive reforms, Mozambique's Penal Code revision permitting termination on request in early pregnancy, against which the availability count of Chapter 16.5 will measure the distance between statute and service in both states.¹⁵⁴

Country by country

Angola. Party since 2007. The 2019 Penal Code, in force from 2021, replaced the colonial-era code and modernised the criminal framework on sexual offences, while retaining a restrictive abortion regime.¹⁵⁵ Law 25/11 of 2011 against domestic violence remains the framework SGBV statute. Women hold roughly a third of the National Assembly on party list practice.¹⁵⁶ The implementation environment is shaped by the post-war economy's informality, in which the majority of women workers, including the *zungueiras* of urban street commerce, work without protection, and by civic space that the CIVICUS Monitor rates as repressed.¹⁵⁷

Botswana. Party since 2023, the continent's most recent accession and its fastest, ten days from signature to ratification.¹⁵⁸ The domestic record predates accession: the Abolition of Marital Power Act 2004 and the *Mmusi* inheritance jurisprudence placed Botswana among the region's legal reformers two decades ago.¹⁵⁹ Representation remains the region's persistent failure, in single figures after the 2024 election, and no statutory quota exists.¹⁶⁰ Accession makes Botswana the test case Chapter 26.4 names: a high-capacity administrative state, newly bound, whose first Article 62 report addressing the Protocol will show whether the reporting system can work as designed.

Eswatini. Party since 2012. The Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act 2018 created the modern criminal framework, and *Sacolo* ended marital power in 2019.¹⁶¹ The kingdom records the

¹⁵³ UNAIDS, Global AIDS Update and AIDInfo country estimates for Eswatini, Lesotho, Botswana and South Africa, <https://www.unaids.org> and <https://aidsinfo.unaids.org>.

¹⁵⁴ Republic of South Africa, Choice on Termination of Pregnancy Act 92 of 1996; Republic of Mozambique, Penal Code as revised by Law 35/2014 and Law 24/2019.

¹⁵⁵ Republic of Angola, Penal Code, Law 38/20 of 11 November 2020, in force February 2021; Law 25/11 of 14 July 2011 against domestic violence.

¹⁵⁶ Inter-Parliamentary Union, Parline database, country pages for South Africa, Mozambique, Namibia, Angola, Botswana and Eswatini, <https://data.ipu.org>.

¹⁵⁷ CIVICUS Monitor, Angola country rating, <https://monitor.civicus.org>.

¹⁵⁸ African Union, Treaties and Conventions Depository, status list for the Maputo Protocol, <https://au.int/en/treaties>; Annex A of this report.

¹⁵⁹ Court of Appeal of Botswana, *Ramantele v Mmusi and Others*, CACGB-104-12, judgment of 3 September 2013, on appeal from *Mmusi and Others v Ramantele and Another*, High Court, MAHLB-000836-10 (2012).

¹⁶⁰ Inter-Parliamentary Union, Parline database, country pages for South Africa, Mozambique, Namibia, Angola, Botswana and Eswatini, <https://data.ipu.org>.

highest adult HIV prevalence in the world, with the gendered age structure described at Chapter 17.2 in its most concentrated form.¹⁶² Women's representation in the elected chamber is minimal under the tinkhundla system, in which political parties do not contest elections, and the civic space findings of Chapter 20 apply with force since the 2021 civil unrest and its suppression.¹⁶³

Lesotho. Party since 2004. The Legal Capacity of Married Persons Act 2006 ended the minority status of women married in community of property, and the Land Act 2010 opened title to women, reforms whose reach into the chieftainship-administered countryside remains partial; the courts declined in the *Masupha* line of cases to extend equality to succession to chieftainship itself.¹⁶⁴ The garment industry makes Lesotho the region's most feminised formal manufacturing economy, and the 2019 agreements on gender-based violence and harassment in the sector, concluded between unions, brands and employers after documented abuse, are a continental reference for the workplace obligations at Chapter 14.5.¹⁶⁵

Malawi. Party since 2005. The 2017 constitutional amendment closed the child marriage loophole by raising the age to eighteen without exception, completing the Marriage, Divorce and Family Relations Act 2015, a legislative sequence driven by one of the continent's most effective national campaigns and by traditional leaders who annulled marriages in their jurisdictions.¹⁶⁶ The Customary Land Act 2016 introduced gender-balanced land committees. Prevalence of child marriage remains high notwithstanding the law, which places Malawi alongside The Gambia as a case of the enforcement gap measured in Chapter 18.

Mozambique. Party since 2005. The Family Law 2004 equalised marriage and headship a generation ago; Law 19/2019 prohibited under-eighteen marriage without exception; the Penal Code revision permitted termination of pregnancy on request in early weeks, as noted above.¹⁶⁷ Women's representation has long sat among the continental leaders on FRELIMO list practice.¹⁶⁸ The Cabo Delgado insurgency since 2017 has displaced populations at scale, with documented abduction of women and girls and the full Chapter 22 pattern, and reconstruction programming now tests whether the recovery reaches displaced women or their registrations.¹⁶⁹

Namibia. Party since 2004. The 2024 to 2025 executive breakthrough is described above.¹⁷⁰ The statutory floor includes the Combating of Domestic Violence Act 2003 and the Combating of Rape

^{161.} High Court of Eswatini, *Sacolo and Another v Sacolo and Others* (1403/16) [2019] SZHC 166, judgment of 30 August 2019.

^{162.} UNAIDS, Global AIDS Update and AIDInfo country estimates for Eswatini, Lesotho, Botswana and South Africa, <https://www.unaids.org> and <https://aidsinfo.unaids.org>.

^{163.} Kingdom of Eswatini, Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act, 2018; CIVICUS Monitor, Eswatini country rating and updates since 2021, <https://monitor.civicus.org>.

^{164.} Kingdom of Lesotho, Legal Capacity of Married Persons Act 9 of 2006; Land Act 8 of 2010; Court of Appeal of Lesotho, *Masupha v Senior Resident Magistrate for the Subordinate Court of Berea and Others*, C of A (CIV) 29/2013.

^{165.} Agreements to combat gender-based violence and harassment in Lesotho's garment industry, concluded August 2019 between Nien Hsing Textile, trade unions, women's rights organisations and apparel brands, as documented by the Solidarity Center and Workers Rights Consortium.

^{166.} Republic of Malawi, Constitution (Amendment) Act 2017 raising the age of marriage; Marriage, Divorce and Family Relations Act 2015; Customary Land Act 2016.

^{167.} Republic of South Africa, Choice on Termination of Pregnancy Act 92 of 1996; Republic of Mozambique, Penal Code as revised by Law 35/2014 and Law 24/2019.

Act 2000, long considered among the region's strongest criminal frameworks; the Communal Land Reform Act 2002 gives widows security of tenure on communal land.¹⁷¹ The 2019 revision of party list practice took the National Assembly to near parity. The gaps the movement itself names are enforcement, the backlog in gender-based violence prosecutions, and the position of women in the informal and domestic work sectors.

South Africa. Party since 2004. The constitutional and statutory architecture is the region's densest: the 1996 Constitution's equality clause, the Choice on Termination of Pregnancy Act 1996, the Domestic Violence Act 1998 as amended in 2021, the Cybercrimes Act 2020 addressing the technology-facilitated harms of Chapter 19, and the three 2022 amendment acts that rebuilt the criminal law on sexual offences, ministerially presented as the legislative answer to the femicide emergency.¹⁷² Against this stands the enforcement record: the South African Police Service's own quarterly crime statistics documenting femicide and sexual offence levels among the highest reliably measured in the world, and the National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide, with its 2024 statutory council, now the institutional test of whether a plan can move numbers that two decades of statutes have not.¹⁷³ The customary law jurisprudence described above continues to widen protection, and the country remains the region's centre for feminist litigation capacity.

Zambia. Party since 2006. The Anti-Gender-Based Violence Act 2011 built the framework of protection orders, shelters and a fund; the Gender Equity and Equality Act 2015 domesticated Protocol language directly; the 2016 constitutional revision embedded gender equity in state principles while the failed referendum left the bill of rights unrevised, a half-completed constitutionalisation with practical consequence for litigability.¹⁷⁴ The statutory and customary marriage systems continue to run in parallel with different ages and different property consequences, and it is in that dualism, rather than in the statute book's gaps, that the domestication audit of Annex H would locate Zambia's binding constraint.

Zimbabwe. Party since 2008. The 2013 Constitution's section 80 subordinated custom to women's rights in terms as strong as any on the continent; *Mudzuru* struck child marriage in 2016 and the Marriages Act 2022 codified it, also abolishing the guardianship-consent architecture of the colonial statute.¹⁷⁵ The distance backwards is measured by *Magaya v Magaya* (1999), the Supreme Court judgment that had upheld male-preference customary inheritance and

169. UNHCR and IOM, displacement tracking for northern Mozambique, <https://data.unhcr.org> and <https://dtm.iom.int>; United Nations, reports of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence, Mozambique sections.

170. Electoral Commission of Namibia, declaration of results of the 2024 presidential election; official record of the inauguration, 21 March 2025.

168. Inter-Parliamentary Union, Parline database, country pages for South Africa, Mozambique, Namibia, Angola, Botswana and Eswatini, <https://data.ipu.org>.

171. Republic of Namibia, Combating of Rape Act 8 of 2000; Combating of Domestic Violence Act 4 of 2003; Communal Land Reform Act 5 of 2002.

172. Republic of South Africa, Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act 13 of 2021, Criminal and Related Matters Amendment Act 12 of 2021 and Domestic Violence Amendment Act 14 of 2021, all commenced 2022; Cybercrimes Act 19 of 2020.

173. South African Police Service, quarterly crime statistics, <https://www.saps.gov.za>; National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide 2020 to 2030 and the National Council on GBVF Act 9 of 2024.

174. Republic of Zambia, Anti-Gender-Based Violence Act 1 of 2011; Gender Equity and Equality Act 22 of 2015; Constitution of Zambia (Amendment) Act 2 of 2016.

became the continental example of what constitutional silence permits, and which the 2013 settlement was drafted against.¹⁷⁶ Present conditions are dominated by the economy and by civic space: the Private Voluntary Organisations Amendment Act, enacted in 2025 after years of contest, imported the regulatory instruments of Chapter 20.4 into the region's most organised civil society, and women's organisations are among those re-registering under it.¹⁷⁷

What this review adds to the regional findings

Three additions to the regional chapter's conclusions. First, the region's completeness converts it into the continent's natural laboratory for the Article 26 reporting recommendations of Chapter 10: ten states party, no accession politics, high relative state capacity, so a reporting compliance experiment run here would isolate willingness from ability more cleanly than anywhere else. Second, the jurisprudence asset has a maintenance cost that the entries make visible: every landmark judgment named above waited years for legislative absorption, and two are still waiting, so the region demonstrates that litigation strategies must budget for the legislature or plan to return to court. Third, the financing shock of Chapter 17.4 is, for this region, a rights emergency in its own right: the world's largest treatment cohorts, the world's highest prevalence, and a funding model rewritten in a quarter, which is the combination that will test whether the progressive realisation language of Article 14 has any protective content when external resources withdraw.

¹⁷⁵. Constitutional Court of Zimbabwe, *Mudzuru and Another v Ministry of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs and Others* CCZ 12/2015, judgment of 20 January 2016; Marriages Act [Chapter 5:15], 2022.

¹⁷⁶. Supreme Court of Zimbabwe, *Magaya v Magaya* 1999 (1) ZLR 100 (S).

¹⁷⁷. Republic of Zimbabwe, Private Voluntary Organisations Amendment Act, 2025; CIVICUS Monitor, Zimbabwe country updates, <https://monitor.civicus.org>.

27. North Africa

Measure	States	Party	Outside	Detail
North region	7	5	2	Outside: Egypt, Morocco.

Table 27.1 Accession position, North Africa. Computed from Annex A.

27.1 The sub-regional legal architecture

North Africa has effectively no functioning sub-regional human rights architecture. The Arab Maghreb Union, established in 1989, has been largely inactive for most of its existence and provides no rights mechanism. There is no North African equivalent of the ECOWAS Community Court of Justice or of the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development.

A second normative layer nonetheless applies to most states in the region through the League of Arab States. The Arab Charter on Human Rights, adopted in 2004 and in force from 2008, contains provisions on equality and on the family, and establishes a committee to receive state reports. A statute for an Arab Court of Human Rights was adopted in 2014 and the court has not become operational.

The overlay matters for a reason specific to this region. Where a state is party to both African and Arab instruments, the two frameworks address the family and personal status differently, and a state can present the Arab framework as the applicable regional standard. Advocacy that engages only the African framework leaves that argument unanswered, and Article 31 of the Maputo Protocol, which provides that no provision derogates from more favourable provisions in other instruments, is the textual answer to it: where the African instrument is more favourable, it prevails.

27.2 The accession record

Five of seven states are party. Libya ratified in 2004 and Mauritania acceded in 2005 without signing. Algeria signed in December 2003 and ratified in November 2016, after almost thirteen years. Tunisia signed in January 2015 and ratified in August 2018, after three years and seven months. The Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic signed in June 2006 and ratified in March 2022, after fifteen years and eight months, which is the longest interval recorded among states party.

Three of the region's five accessions fall within the last decade, and the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic is the region's most recent accession. That corrects a common characterisation of North Africa as static on this instrument, but the correction must itself be stated precisely, because the most recent accessions on the continent are not North African. Botswana (October 2023, Southern region) and South Sudan (February 2023, East region) hold that position on either dating convention, and Ethiopia (July 2018, East region) also sits within the recent group. What the North African record shows, computed from Annex A, is narrower and still significant: Algeria (2016), Tunisia (2018) and the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (2022) place three North African states among the eight most recent accessions by ratification date. The region has been moving, but it is not where the newest movement is.

Egypt and Morocco have neither signed nor ratified, and are the only African Union member states in that position. The distinction from the signature-only group is legally material: with no signature there is no obligation to refrain from acts defeating the object and purpose of the treaty, and there is no domestic file to revive. Accession under Article 28 is the available route,

and Chapter 8 sets out why framing the ask as ratification asks for something procedurally unavailable.

27.3 Reservations and the personal status question

The interaction between religious personal law and the Protocol's provisions on marriage, divorce, matrimonial property and inheritance is more central to the accession question in this region than elsewhere. Reservations practice on comparable instruments is the relevant precedent: states in the region have historically entered reservations to provisions of global instruments touching personal status while acceding to the instrument as a whole.

Two observations follow, and they point in opposite directions. Accession with a reservation delivers less than accession without one, and Annex H scores it accordingly. But accession with a reservation delivers considerably more than non-accession, because it brings the state within the reporting cycle, within the Commission's examination and within the reach of Articles 2, 4, 9, 12, 13 and 14, none of which is ordinarily the subject of a personal status reservation. An advocacy position that treats reservation as defeat forgoes most of the instrument in order to protect a part of it.

The reservations and interpretive declarations entered to the Protocol are not compiled in any single accessible document, which means that what ratification has delivered in a given state cannot be read from the ratification record alone. Chapter 41 recommends that the Union remedy this, and the recommendation matters most for this region.

27.4 The rights environment

Codified personal status

The region differs from the rest of the continent in that personal status is generally codified rather than customary. That has a consequence which is often overlooked: a codified regime is amenable to legislative amendment in a way that a diffuse customary regime is not, and the reform pathway is therefore clearer here even where the political obstacle is higher. The Chapter 15.2 analysis of legal pluralism applies in a modified form, with the competing regime located inside the statute book rather than outside it.

Political participation

Several states in the region have applied list-based quota mechanisms of the kind described at Table 12.1, and the region provides comparative material on the placement-rule problem identified there, since list systems make placement decisive.

Civic space

The mechanisms are those described at Chapter 20.4, with association law, foreign-funding provisions and, in several states, provisions on the dissemination of false information used against advocacy and journalism. Chapter 19.3 applies with force, because cybercrime frameworks in the region have been applied to expression more visibly than they have been applied to the protection of women online, which is the instrument-becomes-risk inversion described there.

Migration

The region is a transit and destination context for migration from elsewhere on the continent, and migrant and asylum-seeking women fall within Article 11(3) and within the Kampala Convention

framework where displacement is internal. Their position is among the least documented in this report.

27.5 What the region requires

1. Accession by Egypt and Morocco, pursued as accession rather than as ratification, and addressed to national coalitions rather than to states. Annex I sets out the instrument, which requires an Arabic edition.
2. A published compilation of reservations to the Protocol, without which the region's accession record cannot be interpreted.
3. An articulated position on the relationship between the Maputo Protocol and the Arab regional framework, anchored in Article 31 of the Protocol.
4. Engagement with the codified personal status regimes as amendable statute, which is a different and in some respects more tractable undertaking than the constitutional pluralism question elsewhere.

27.6 Where the evidence is thin

This is the region in which RFLD's network presence is thinnest and in which this report is therefore weakest. The account above is institutional and legal rather than testimonial, and it should be read as a framework for engagement rather than as a survey of conditions. Chapter 45 identifies partnership in this region as a precondition for Volume II, and the identification is a statement of limitation rather than an aspiration.

27.7 The state of women's human rights in North Africa: a country-by-country review

North Africa closes the regional reviews because it poses the report's framing question in its most concentrated form. This is the region of the two non-parties, Egypt and Morocco, and therefore the region where the accession analysis of Chapter 8 has its largest addressable population. It is also the region where the codified personal status systems described at Chapter 27.4 make the legal position of women more legible, and more centrally contested, than anywhere else on the continent. The entries below follow the method of the preceding reviews: status against obligation, sources in the notes, and length proportional to evidence.

Seven states compose the region in the classification at Annex A: Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic and Tunisia. Five are party to the Maputo Protocol; Egypt and Morocco have neither signed nor ratified, the only member states of the Union in that position.¹⁷⁸

The regional pattern restated

Three features frame the region, and the first has just been corrected in section 27.2: the region has been moving on accession, with three states party since 2016, but it is not where the continent's newest movement is, and the correction matters because advocacy premised on regional momentum must state the momentum accurately. The second feature is codification: personal

¹⁷⁸. African Union, Treaties and Conventions Depository, status list for the Maputo Protocol, <https://au.int/en/treaties>; Annex A of this report.

status in this region lives in statutes, the Tunisian Code du Statut Personnel of 1956, the Moroccan Moudawana of 2004, the Algerian Family Code of 1984 as amended in 2005, the Egyptian personal status laws descending from 1920 and 1929, which makes reform a legislative event that can be dated, drafted against and campaigned for, in contrast to the diffuse customary regimes of Chapter 15.2. The third is the interaction between women's rights and political rupture: every significant legal gain and every significant reversal in this region in the last two decades has ridden a larger constitutional moment, which confirms the readiness finding of Chapter 6.3.

Political participation

The region's representation story is the continent's most instructive on mechanism, because it contains a controlled experiment. Algeria's 2012 organic law on women's representation lifted women to over thirty per cent of the People's National Assembly, then the highest in the Arab world; the 2021 electoral law replaced the quota with a parity requirement on candidacies without a placement or result rule, and women's representation collapsed to under ten per cent in a single cycle.¹⁷⁹ The same seats, the same electorate, a changed rule and a reversed outcome: Chapter 12.3's finding that design is destiny has no cleaner demonstration on the continent. Tunisia legislated horizontal and vertical parity for its 2014 and 2018 cycles with strong results, and its 2022 electoral law's shift to individual candidacies reduced women's presence in the current legislature.¹⁸⁰ Egypt's 2019 constitutional amendment reserved a quarter of the House of Representatives for women, the region's largest guaranteed bloc.¹⁸¹ Tunisia appointed the Arab world's first woman head of government, Najla Bouden, in 2021.¹⁸²

Personal status and its reform politics

Tunisia's Code du Statut Personnel abolished polygamy and judicial repudiation in 1956 and remains the region's reference point; the 2017 Law 58 on the elimination of violence against women is the region's most comprehensive SGBV statute, and the 2017 repeal of the circular restricting Tunisian women's marriage to non-Muslims removed one of the code's remaining discriminations, while inheritance equality, proposed by the presidential commission on individual freedoms and equality in 2018, was not enacted and remains the region's emblematic unfinished reform.¹⁸³ Morocco's 2004 Moudawana raised the marriage age, established joint family responsibility and restricted polygamy and unilateral divorce; a royal commission process opened in 2023 delivered revision proposals in 2024, and the enacted content of the current revision should be verified against the Bulletin Officiel before citation, in keeping with this report's convention.¹⁸⁴ Algeria's 2005 Family Code amendments removed the requirement of a wife's obedience and constrained the guardian's power without abolishing guardianship in marriage.¹⁸⁵ Egypt's long-an-

^{179.} People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, Organic Law 12-03 of 2012 on expanding women's representation in elected assemblies; Organic Law 21-01 of 2021 on the electoral system; Inter-Parliamentary Union, Parline, Algeria country page, <https://data.ipu.org>.

^{180.} Republic of Tunisia, Organic Law 2014-16 and the 2017 amendment on horizontal and vertical parity; Decree-Law 2022-55 amending the electoral law; Inter-Parliamentary Union, Parline, Tunisia country page, <https://data.ipu.org>.

^{181.} Arab Republic of Egypt, Constitution of 2014, Articles 11 and 102 as amended in 2019; Inter-Parliamentary Union, Parline, Egypt country page, <https://data.ipu.org>.

^{182.} Republic of Tunisia, appointment of the Head of Government, official record, October 2021.

^{183.} Republic of Tunisia, Code du Statut Personnel, 13 August 1956, as amended; Organic Law 2017-58 of 11 August 2017 on the elimination of violence against women; Decree-Law 73-2 of 1973 on termination of pregnancy; report of the Commission des Libertés Individuelles et de l'Égalité (COLIBE), 2018.

nounced unified personal status draft has not been enacted, and litigation-driven gains, including khul divorce under Law 1 of 2000, remain the operative reform channel.¹⁸⁶

Violence, harmful practices and the criminal law

The region legislated against violence in a concentrated recent wave: Algeria's 2015 Penal Code amendments criminalising spousal violence, Tunisia's Law 58 of 2017, Morocco's Law 103-13 of 2018, each a framework statute with the enforcement deficits Chapter 18.2 predicts, and each retaining gaps, notably on marital rape, that the movement in each country has named.¹⁸⁷ Egypt carries the region's harmful practices burden: FGM prevalence among the highest absolute numbers in the world, criminalised in 2008 with penalties raised in 2016 and again in 2021 after deaths of girls under medicalised cutting, and prevalence among younger cohorts now declining in survey data while remaining at a level that makes Egypt central to any continental elimination arithmetic.¹⁸⁸ The region otherwise records low FGM prevalence outside Egypt and Mauritania, and Mauritania's entry below carries its own configuration.

Country by country

Algeria. Party since 2016, with reservations and declarations on provisions touching personal status.¹⁸⁹ The representation experiment described above is the country's principal contribution to the continental evidence base.¹⁹⁰ The 2015 criminal law amendments on violence stand alongside a Family Code that, even as amended, retains guardianship and unequal inheritance.¹⁹¹ Civic space narrowed after the Hirak period, with associations, including women's organisations that were central to the Hirak's public face, subject to the dissolution and registration pressures described at Chapter 20.4.¹⁹²

Egypt. Non-party, and the largest population on the continent outside the Protocol.¹⁹³ The domestic frame is not empty: constitutional Article 11 commits the state to equality and to women's

^{184.} Kingdom of Morocco, Code de la Famille (Moudawana), Law 70-03 of 2004; royal instructions opening the revision process, September 2023, and the commission's proposals as submitted in 2024; enacted content to be verified against the Bulletin Officiel in accordance with this report's verification convention.

^{185.} People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, Family Code of 1984 as amended by Ordinance 05-02 of 2005.

^{186.} Arab Republic of Egypt, Law 1 of 2000 (khul); successive drafts of a unified personal status law, unenacted at the time of writing.

^{187.} People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, Law 15-19 of 2015 amending the Penal Code; Kingdom of Morocco, Law 103-13 on combating violence against women, in force September 2018; Republic of Tunisia, Organic Law 2017-58.

^{188.} Arab Republic of Egypt, Law 126 of 2008, Law 78 of 2016 and Law 10 of 2021 on the criminalisation of female genital mutilation; UNICEF, FGM country data for Egypt, <https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-protection/female-genital-mutilation/>.

^{189.} African Union, Treaties and Conventions Depository, status list for the Maputo Protocol, <https://au.int/en/treaties>; Annex A of this report.

^{190.} People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, Organic Law 12-03 of 2012 on expanding women's representation in elected assemblies; Organic Law 21-01 of 2021 on the electoral system; Inter-Parliamentary Union, Parline, Algeria country page, <https://data.ipu.org>.

^{191.} People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, Family Code of 1984 as amended by Ordinance 05-02 of 2005.

^{192.} CIVICUS Monitor, country ratings and updates for Algeria, Egypt and Tunisia, <https://monitor.civicus.org>.

^{193.} African Union, Treaties and Conventions Depository, status list for the Maputo Protocol, <https://au.int/en/treaties>; Annex A of this report.

representation, the 2019 amendment guarantees a quarter of the lower house, women were admitted to the State Council bench and the public prosecution from 2021, the FGM criminal framework has been progressively hardened, and the 2014 sexual harassment provisions were strengthened in 2021.¹⁹⁴¹⁹⁵¹⁹⁶ The gap is at the level of the instrument: without accession, none of this is reportable, examinable or litigable in the continental system, and Egyptian women's organisations work under an NGO law and a broader civic space regime that the Chapter 20 findings describe, several of their most prominent defenders having faced travel bans and asset freezes in the decade's foreign funding case.¹⁹⁷ Chapter 27.5 has set out why accession under Article 28, with reservations if necessary, would deliver more than the current position; the *Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights and Interights v Egypt* decision at the African Commission, finding the state responsible for mass sexual assaults on women journalists in 2005, demonstrates that the Charter route already reaches Cairo, and accession to the Protocol would complete it.¹⁹⁸

Libya. Party since 2004, among the region's earliest ratifications, with reservations.¹⁹⁹ The post-2011 fragmentation has made the formal framework largely notional: parallel authorities, militia detention systems in which UN fact-finding has documented sexual violence against women migrants and detainees, and the collapse of the protective functions the state's early ratification implied.²⁰⁰ The 2021 Government of National Unity appointed the country's first woman foreign minister, and the 17 per cent quota operated in the 2021 political dialogue structures; elections themselves remain unheld. For migrant women transiting Libya, the Chapter 22.3 documentation cascade and the trafficking findings of Chapter 19 converge in one of the continent's most dangerous corridors.²⁰¹

Mauritania. Party since 2005, by accession without signature, the route Chapter 8 documents.²⁰² The 2001 Personal Status Code codified guardianship and unequal inheritance; the criminal framework descends from a 1983 code in which zina criminalisation exposes rape complainants to prosecution risk, and a draft law on violence against women and girls has been rejected or stalled in parliament repeatedly across a decade, the region's clearest case of a named, drafted, costed reform blocked at the legislative stage.²⁰³ Slavery's legacy structures the position of harat-

194. Arab Republic of Egypt, Constitution of 2014, Articles 11 and 102 as amended in 2019; Inter-Parliamentary Union, Parline, Egypt country page, <https://data.ipu.org>.

195. Arab Republic of Egypt, Law 1 of 2000 (khul); successive drafts of a unified personal status law, unenacted at the time of writing.

196. Arab Republic of Egypt, Law 126 of 2008, Law 78 of 2016 and Law 10 of 2021 on the criminalisation of female genital mutilation; UNICEF, FGM country data for Egypt, <https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-protection/female-genital-mutilation/>.

197. CIVICUS Monitor, country ratings and updates for Algeria, Egypt and Tunisia, <https://monitor.civicus.org>.

198. African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, *Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights and Interights v Egypt*, Communication 323/06, decision of December 2011, <https://achpr.au.int>.

199. African Union, Treaties and Conventions Depository, status list for the Maputo Protocol, <https://au.int/en/treaties>; Annex A of this report.

200. Independent Fact-Finding Mission on Libya, reports to the Human Rights Council, 2021 to 2023, <https://www.ohchr.org>; United Nations, reports of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence, Libya sections.

201. Independent Fact-Finding Mission on Libya, reports to the Human Rights Council, 2021 to 2023, <https://www.ohchr.org>; United Nations, reports of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence, Libya sections.

202. African Union, Treaties and Conventions Depository, status list for the Maputo Protocol, <https://au.int/en/treaties>; Annex A of this report.

ine women, who carry compounded discrimination at the intersection of descent, gender and poverty; criminalisation of slavery was reinforced in 2015 and prosecutions remain rare relative to documented practice.²⁰⁴ FGM prevalence remains substantial and regionally concentrated.²⁰⁵

Morocco. Non-party.²⁰⁶ The Moudawana of 2004 and the current revision process are described above, and they are the reason Chapter 8 treats Morocco as the more reachable of the two non-parties: the state has an active, public, royally sponsored family law reform process, a 2011 Constitution whose Article 19 commits to equality and creates an authority for parity, Law 103-13 on violence against women, and a two-decade record of engagement with CEDAW including the lifting of reservations in 2011.²⁰⁷²⁰⁸ The soulaliyate movement's decade-long campaign won women's inclusion in the distribution of collective land revenues and titles, codified in the 2019 collective lands laws, one of the continent's most successful grassroots land rights mobilisations and a direct engagement with the Chapter 15 findings.²⁰⁹ What is missing is the instrument: none of this is examinable in Banjul, and the accession note at Annex I is drafted with Morocco's file principally in mind.

Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic. Party since 2022, the region's most recent accession after the longest signature-to-ratification interval on the record.²¹⁰ The state governs in exile and in the territory it administers, with its population substantially resident in the camps near Tindouf, where the National Union of Sahrawi Women operates one of the oldest women's mass organisations on the continent and women hold a share of administrative responsibility that visitors have long documented as high.²¹¹ The report's verification convention bears directly here: independent, current, disaggregated data meeting this report's sourcing standard is scarce for both the camps and the territory, the entry is therefore short, and the file belongs on the Annex D agenda. Ratification in 2022 creates, as it does for South Sudan, a reporting opening that did not previously exist.

Tunisia. Party since 2018, without reservations, the only state of its legal family to have acceded clean.²¹² The Code du Statut Personnel, Law 58 of 2017, the 1973 legalisation of abortion, dec-

^{203.} Islamic Republic of Mauritania, Personal Status Code, Law 2001-052; parliamentary consideration and rejection of the draft law on violence against women and girls, successive sessions since 2016, official record.

^{204.} Islamic Republic of Mauritania, Law 2015-031 criminalising slavery and slavery-like practices; African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights and CEDAW Committee consideration of related individual matters.

^{205.} UNICEF, FGM country data for Mauritania, <https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-protection/female-genital-mutilation/>.

^{206.} African Union, Treaties and Conventions Depository, status list for the Maputo Protocol, <https://au.int/en/treaties>; Annex A of this report.

^{207.} Kingdom of Morocco, Code de la Famille (Moudawana), Law 70-03 of 2004; royal instructions opening the revision process, September 2023, and the commission's proposals as submitted in 2024; enacted content to be verified against the Bulletin Officiel in accordance with this report's verification convention.

^{208.} People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, Law 15-19 of 2015 amending the Penal Code; Kingdom of Morocco, Law 103-13 on combating violence against women, in force September 2018; Republic of Tunisia, Organic Law 2017-58.

^{209.} Kingdom of Morocco, Laws 62-17, 63-17 and 64-17 of 2019 on the administrative supervision of soulaliyate collective lands and their apportionment.

^{210.} African Union, Treaties and Conventions Depository, status list for the Maputo Protocol, <https://au.int/en/treaties>; Annex A of this report.

ades ahead of most of the continent, and the parity electoral engineering of 2014 to 2018 together made Tunisia the region's normative leader.²¹³²¹⁴ The post-2021 constitutional rupture has changed the environment: the 2022 constitution rewrote the equality settlement's institutional guarantees, the 2022 electoral law reduced women's parliamentary presence, and prosecutions of opposition figures and critics, women among them, have narrowed the civic space in which the country's dense feminist movement, the region's oldest, operates.²¹⁵²¹⁶ The durable question for this report's method is whether the deep statutory floor holds through the political cycle, and the honest answer is that the floor has held so far while the machinery around it has weakened.

What this review adds to the regional findings

Three additions. First, the accession arithmetic is now precise: the two non-parties contain, between them, on the order of a third of the continent's population outside the Protocol's reach, so the marginal value of the Egyptian and Moroccan files exceeds that of every other accession file combined, and Morocco's open family law process makes it the natural first move. Second, the region supplies the continent's cleanest mechanism evidence on representation, in Algeria's natural experiment and Tunisia's rule changes, and that evidence belongs in every quota debate on the continent, which is why this report states it here rather than leaving it in regional literature. Third, codification cuts both ways and the region proves both directions: statutes made Tunisia's 1956 settlement durable through seven decades, and statutes made Algeria's representation collapse possible in one electoral cycle. The lesson for the movement is the one Chapter 9 draws continentally: what the legislature gives, the legislature can retract, and the only protections that survive political rupture are the ones embedded deeper than the ordinary statute book.

211. African Union, membership records; National Union of Sahrawi Women, institutional record; UNHCR, Tindouf camps operational reporting, <https://data.unhcr.org>.

213. Republic of Tunisia, Code du Statut Personnel, 13 August 1956, as amended; Organic Law 2017-58 of 11 August 2017 on the elimination of violence against women; Decree-Law 73-2 of 1973 on termination of pregnancy; report of the Commission des Libertés Individuelles et de l'Égalité (COLIBE), 2018.

214. Republic of Tunisia, Organic Law 2014-16 and the 2017 amendment on horizontal and vertical parity; Decree-Law 2022-55 amending the electoral law; Inter-Parliamentary Union, Parline, Tunisia country page, <https://data.ipu.org>.

215. Republic of Tunisia, Organic Law 2014-16 and the 2017 amendment on horizontal and vertical parity; Decree-Law 2022-55 amending the electoral law; Inter-Parliamentary Union, Parline, Tunisia country page, <https://data.ipu.org>.

216. CIVICUS Monitor, country ratings and updates for Algeria, Egypt and Tunisia, <https://monitor.civicus.org>.



PART FIVE

What feminist organisations say, need and lack

Method note for Part Five.

This part draws on Tier 4 evidence as defined at Table 2.1: reporting from RFLD's member organisations, grantee reporting under the West African Francophone Feminist Fund and the Africa Grant Portfolio, and consultation records. It represents what organisations report about their own conditions. It is not independently verified, and the claim made is that these are the reported constraints.

The constraints reported here recur across countries, languages and organisational sizes, and their consistency is the reason they are presented as findings rather than as anecdotes. They are not presented as measured prevalence. Where a reader requires a quantified account of the funding position of African feminist organisations, Chapter 30.2 sets out the test that would produce one and identifies who holds the data.

28. What feminist organisations are saying

28.1 On the form in which money arrives

The most consistent statement across regions is not that funding is insufficient in aggregate. It is that the form in which funding arrives does not match the shape of the work. Organisations report project money of twelve to eighteen months for problems that move on a ten-year horizon, restricted budgets that exclude the salaries, rent and systems that make delivery possible, and a cycle in which the closing months of one grant are spent writing the application for the next rather than delivering the current one.

The effect is a distinctive institutional pathology. An organisation that survives on consecutive short project grants cannot plan, cannot retain staff between grants, cannot accumulate the institutional memory that makes the second iteration of a programme better than the first, and cannot say no to a poorly designed opportunity because the alternative is closure. Its behaviour then appears opportunistic to funders, and the appearance is used as evidence against it in the next assessment.

28.2 The compliance paradox

Organisations report a paradox with a specific structure. Donors require institutional systems: financial management, safeguarding and protection from sexual exploitation, data protection, audit capacity, and results frameworks. Those requirements are legitimate. Donors fund the systems as overhead, at a percentage that will not build them. The organisation is then assessed against systems it was never resourced to construct, and the assessment becomes the documented reason for the next refusal.

The paradox resolves in only two ways. Either the organisation diverts programme money to build systems, which is a compliance breach, or it does not build them, which is a capacity finding. Both outcomes are then attributed to the organisation rather than to the funding design that produced them.

28.3 On protection as an unfunded cost

Organisations report that protection is treated as an optional extra rather than as a cost of operation in the environments described in Part Three. Security assessments, encrypted communications, secure premises, insurance and psychosocial support are rarely budgeted, and where they appear in a proposal they are among the first items removed in negotiation, on the reasoning that they are not programme costs.

Defenders report that the emergency mechanisms nominally available presuppose conditions many do not meet: a passport, a working language of the mechanism, an existing relationship with an international organisation, and the capacity to describe a threat in the register that an application form expects. A defender in acute danger is being asked to perform an administrative task under precisely the conditions that make administrative tasks impossible.

28.4 On language

Francophone and lusophone organisations report exclusion that operates through language rather than through any stated policy. Calls for proposals are published in English on timelines too short to permit translation and drafting. Reporting templates are English-only. Convenings

provide interpretation for plenary sessions and not for the margins, where relationships are formed and where the informal signalling that precedes most institutional grants takes place.

The consequence is that organisations doing comparable work reach funders on unequal terms, and the inequality is invisible to the funder because it operates upstream of the application. An organisation that did not apply does not appear in the applicant pool, and its absence is not recorded as a barrier.

28.5 On donor practice

Recurring statements, reported here as reported.

- Due diligence is duplicated. Each donor requires the same documents in a different format, and the cumulative cost falls on organisations with no dedicated grants staff. A shared assessment recognised across donors would remove the duplication at no cost to rigour.
- Consultation is extractive. Organisations are asked to contribute analysis to strategy processes, are not funded for the time, and do not see the resulting document. Several report having recognised their own submissions in published strategies without attribution.
- Localisation commitments have altered the language of calls for proposals more than the destination of money. Intermediaries have multiplied without the terms at the end of the chain improving, and in some cases an additional intermediary layer has reduced the proportion reaching the frontline.
- Reporting requirements are calibrated to institutional capacity that the grant size does not support. Narrative templates request attribution claims that the intervention design cannot sustain, which pressures organisations toward overstatement and then penalises the overstatement.
- Risk is transferred downward. Where a funder is uncertain about a context, the uncertainty is managed by shifting compliance and reputational risk to the local organisation, which holds none of the reserves that would allow it to absorb a problem.

29. What they need and what they lack

Do-main	What is lacking	What is asked for
Finan-cing form	Unrestricted and multi-year money. Reserves. Bridge funding between grants.	Core support of at least three years with an unrestricted component, and no requirement to re-justify institutional existence annually.
Institu-tional sys-tems	Financial management systems, safeguarding and PSEAH frameworks, audit readiness, data protection compliance.	Funding to build systems as a deliverable in its own right rather than as unfunded overhead assumed to exist.
Protec-tion	Budgeted security. Digital protection capacity. Insurance. Psychosocial support for staff and for defenders accompanied.	Security as a standing budget line set by threat assessment rather than by an overhead percentage.
Docu-menta-tion and evid-ence	Capacity to document violations to a standard continental mechanisms can act on. Case management systems. Secure storage. Chain of custody practice.	Training and equipment for documentation, and accompaniment into the mechanisms once the documentation exists.
Lan-guage justice	Translation. Interpretation beyond plenary. Templates and reporting formats in working languages.	Calls, templates and reporting available in French and Portuguese, and timelines that account for translation.
Well-being	Recognition that sustained exposure to violence has an institutional cost. Rest. Cover during absence. Support after an incident.	Funded provision for staff wellbeing, treated as a programme cost.
Access to mech-anisms	Procedural knowledge of ACHPR submission, sub-regional court access, UPR timetables, shadow reporting.	Accompaniment through a first submission rather than a manual describing the procedure.
Fiscal inter-mediation	A route to receive institutional money where the movement is unregistered or where registration is legally constrained.	Fiscal sponsorship arrangements, and funder acceptance of them.
Gener-ational trans-ition	Second-line leadership. Succession planning. Transmission of protective practice to younger defenders.	Funding for leadership development that is not contingent on a programme deliverable.

Table 29.1 Reported gaps and requests across RFLD's network. Tier 4 evidence.

One observation cuts across the table. Most of what is lacking is institutional rather than programmatic. Organisations are not principally asking for more activities. They are asking for the conditions under which the activities they already run can continue past the end of the current grant, which is a different request and one that most funding instruments are not designed to answer.

30. Structural funding disparity between francophone and anglophone Africa

Statement of interest. RFLD operates a re-granting facility for francophone West African feminist organisations and competes for institutional finance. This chapter concerns a disparity RFLD has an interest in seeing corrected. Readers should weigh it accordingly. The chapter is written to be assessed rather than accepted, and it proposes a test that would settle the question either way.

The disparity is reported consistently by francophone organisations and is difficult to establish quantitatively, because donor data is rarely published in a form that permits disaggregation by the working language of the recipient. That evidentiary difficulty is itself part of the problem: a disparity that cannot be measured cannot be managed, and the absence of measurement is not evidence of absence.

30.1 Five mechanisms

1. Language of solicitation. Calls published in English with short deadlines filter out organisations without an English-writing staff member before any assessment of merit begins. The filter operates at the application stage and therefore leaves no trace in the applicant pool.
2. Location of decision-making. Regional donor offices for Africa are concentrated in anglophone capitals. Proximity generates the informal contact that precedes most institutional grants, and francophone organisations are structurally further from it.
3. Intermediary geography. Where donors fund through intermediaries, those intermediaries are predominantly anglophone-headquartered, and their networks reproduce their working language. Adding an intermediary layer therefore does not correct the disparity and may entrench it.
4. Evidence asymmetry. Research, evaluation and case documentation produced in French enters the English-language evidence base slowly or not at all, so francophone track record is less visible at appraisal and appears thinner than it is.
5. Compliance vocabulary. The terminology of safeguarding, results frameworks and theories of change is transmitted through English-language sector spaces. Organisations outside those spaces are assessed as lacking capacity when what they lack is the vocabulary in which capacity is currently described.

30.2 The proposed test

This chapter states a testable proposition rather than an assertion. If donors published grant data disaggregated by the primary working language of the recipient organisation, over a five-year period and controlling for grant size and thematic area, the proposition would be confirmed or refuted. The data required already exists in every grant management system. Publishing it is an administrative decision rather than a research undertaking.

RFLD proposes that test, would participate in it, and would publish the result whichever direction it ran. Until it is conducted, the disparity remains a consistent report from those affected and an unexamined question for those funding, which is an unsatisfactory position for both.

30.3 What would count as evidence

The proposition in this chapter is not established by RFLD's own grantmaking record, and this edition does not offer it as though it were. A single intermediary's portfolio cannot demonstrate a continental disparity, and an organisation that both alleges the disparity and profits from its correction is the least suitable source of proof.

What would count as evidence is set out at Chapter 30.2 and requires data that only funders hold. Three further sources would strengthen or refute the proposition independently of RFLD. Applicant-pool composition by working language, which funders hold and do not publish, would show whether the filter operates at application or at assessment. Success rates by language within a single call, controlling for grant size and thematic area, would isolate the assessment stage. And the language of the intermediary layer, where funding is channelled through intermediaries, would show whether that layer corrects the disparity or reproduces it.

Until one of those is produced, the disparity remains what this chapter has described it as: a constraint reported consistently by the organisations affected, with a plausible mechanism and no continental measurement. RFLD's position is that the measurement should be produced by those who hold the data, and that its absence should not be treated as evidence that the constraint does not operate.

31. Movement sustainability, wellbeing and generational transition

31.1 The cost of the work

Sustained exposure to accounts of violence, and to violence directed at the organisation itself, has a cumulative cost that appears in no results framework. Organisations report staff departure, illness and withdrawal from the sector at rates that they attribute to that exposure, and they report having no funded means of addressing it. Where wellbeing appears in a budget it is generally the item that a funder queries first.

The institutional consequence is a loss of the most experienced people at the point where their experience is most valuable, and the replacement cost is borne by the organisation and by the constituency it serves. Treating wellbeing as a luxury produces an outcome that is expensive by any measure a funder would recognise, and the expense is simply not attributed.

31.2 Generational transition

A substantial part of African feminist organisational leadership is held by founders. Where an institution has not built a second line, the departure of a founder is an institutional event rather than a staffing one, and RFLD's own resilience work treats succession planning as protection work for that reason, as Chapter 36 sets out.

In Sahelian contexts the transition problem takes a specific form. Conflict has disrupted the convenings, mentorship relationships and physical proximity through which protective practice was transmitted from experienced to younger defenders. The result is a cohort of young women defenders operating with high exposure and without the accumulated tacit knowledge that reduces risk, which is the subject of RFLD's 2026 policy brief on young women human rights defenders in West Africa and the Sahel.

31.3 Unregistered movements

The organisations least visible to this report and to every funding instrument are unregistered movements, which are disproportionately led by young women and by Vulnerable Groups, and which are unregistered in many cases because registration is legally constrained rather than because they have declined it. Every mechanism requiring an institutional counterpart excludes them: grants, protection support, capacity building and formal consultation.

Fiscal sponsorship is the only route by which institutional money reaches them, and its use depends on funder acceptance of the arrangement. Chapter 35 sets out RFLD's practice, and Chapter 43 recommends that funders state explicitly whether they accept fiscally sponsored applications, since the current ambiguity operates as a refusal.



PART SIX

What the RFLD ecosystem brings

This part sets out what RFLD contributes to the conditions described in Parts Three and Five. It is written to the same evidentiary standard as the rest of the report, which means it states what RFLD does not do as plainly as what it does. A report documenting a funding architecture that rewards overstatement should not overstate, and Chapter 38 explains why the limits are stated in a published report rather than kept internal.

32. Institutional position

Element	Detail
Legal form	Pan-African feminist network. Founded 2013. Registered legal entities in Benin, Ghana, Senegal and The Gambia.
Network	670 member organisations across more than thirty-five countries.
Offices	Porto-Novo, Benin (headquarters); Accra, Ghana; Dakar, Senegal (inaugurated June 2026); Banjul, The Gambia.
Continental status	ACHPR Observer Status No. 553/2017. Member of the Working Group of the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders and Focal Point on Reprisals in Africa.
United States tax status	NGOsource 501(c)(3) Equivalency Determination, enabling direct grants from United States foundations without expenditure responsibility.
Convening role	Co-Chair, SEA-T Programme Advisory Council 2026, mandated to ensure that programme direction, priorities and resources are aligned with the visions of Afro-feminist civil society. The SEA-T Programme is funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit.
Institutional partners	GIZ and BMZ; Sida; AmplifyChange; the Packard Foundation; the Foundation for a Just Society; Expertise France; and others.
Strategic period	Strategy 2023 to 2028.
Governance	Governing Board with strategic oversight. Executive management under the Africa Director. Operational units covering programmes and advocacy, administration and finance, regional hubs and partnerships, monitoring and evaluation, communications, grants, and logistics.

Table 32.1 RFLD institutional profile. The figures in this table state the position at the date of publication and supersede those in the 2025 edition of this report, which recorded a founding year of 2012 and three registered entities.

32.1 Why the institutional position matters to the findings

Three elements of the profile above bear directly on findings in this report rather than being institutional description.

Observer Status and the Working Group seat place RFLD inside the continental mechanism that Chapter 10 identifies as the weakest link in the accountability chain. An organisation with standing before the African Commission can submit shadow reports where a state has not reported, which is the specific intervention the Article 26 deficit calls for.

The four registered entities and four offices matter because they determine what RFLD can receive and where. Registration in four jurisdictions allows the network to hold funds and employ staff across the sub-region rather than through a single national vehicle, and the NGOsource determination allows direct receipt from United States foundations, which is the constraint that most frequently closes that source to African organisations.

The francophone character of the network is the element most relevant to Chapter 30. RFLD's density is greatest in the linguistic constituency that chapter identifies as structurally disadvantaged, which is both the source of the report's evidence on that question and the reason the interest declared at Chapter 30 exists.

33. Fields of intervention and flagship programmes

RFLD organises its work into fields of intervention, each with a flagship programme. The mapping below states which chapter of this report each field addresses, so that the programmatic architecture and the analytical findings can be read against one another.

33.1 Participatory Governance, and the PAWELE flagship

PAWELE, the Programme for African Women's Empowerment, Leadership and Equality, is the flagship of this field and is anchored in Maputo Article 9, ACDEG Article 8, and Maputo Articles 13 and 17. It operates through four pillars, on the reasoning that durable change in women's political participation requires simultaneous work at the level of the individual, the community, the institution and the evidence base.

Pillar	Content
Leadership development	Training on rights, leadership, civic engagement and advocacy. Functional literacy for women in under-served contexts. Mentoring of high-potential girls including school re-entry support. Social entrepreneurship and economic resilience accompaniment. Intergenerational dialogue between expert women and young activists. Annual regional forums on women's leadership in local and national governance.
Community engagement	Community dialogues with religious and traditional authorities. Engagement with men and boys on harmful norms through mixed educational forums rather than external instruction. Arts-based mobile awareness convening. Networks of male advocates publicly supporting women's leadership. Income-generating activity and cooperatives for economic autonomy.
Institutional advocacy	Training of law enforcement and judicial actors on women's rights and GBV protocols. Development of GBV reference protocols across health, police and legal-aid structures. Training for traditional chiefs, religious leaders and municipal officials. Gender-responsive media training for television, community radio and online press. Parliamentary advocacy through the West Africa Legislative Platform. Engagement with African Commission mechanisms.
Evidence and research	Action research on cultural, security and economic barriers to participation. Open data through the DONÜESE Data Center. Regional competitions rewarding gender-sensitive media production. Publication with African academic institutions.

Table 33.1 The four pillars of PAWELE. Addresses the findings at Chapter 12.

Two features of the design respond directly to findings in Part Three. The programme invests at local council level as well as at parliamentary level, which addresses the pipeline asymmetry identified at Chapter 12.5. And its institutional advocacy pillar trains police and judicial actors, which addresses the stage-four enforcement failure identified at Chapters 12.6 and 18.2 rather than adding to the legislative demand that is already satisfied in most states.

33.2 Sexual and reproductive health and rights, and the BRAVE flagship

BRAVE, Bodily Rights and Violence Eradication, is RFLD's flagship on sexual and reproductive health and rights, organised across six thematic areas each anchored to a specific article of the Maputo Protocol.

- Safe abortion and reproductive choice, anchored in Article 14(2)(c). Addresses Chapter 16.4.
- Ending female genital mutilation, anchored in Article 5. Addresses Chapter 18.3.
- Gender-based violence including conflict-related sexual violence, anchored in Articles 4 and 11. Addresses Chapters 18 and 22.4.
- Trafficking and sexual exploitation, with ECOWAS-level coordination, anchored in Article 4(2)(g). Addresses Chapter 18.
- Family planning and contraception, anchored in Article 14(1)(c). Addresses Chapter 16.3.
- Inclusion and non-discrimination, covering women with disabilities under Article 23, adolescents, humanitarian settings, and women living with HIV under Article 14(1)(d). Addresses Chapters 16.5 and 17.

33.3 Health in Francophone Africa

The Health programme is anchored in Maputo Article 14 and the Abuja Declaration, and its design reflects an explicit division of labour. RFLD implements community mobilisation, advocacy on health rights and financing, operational research on care-seeking behaviour, and re-granting. Clinical service delivery is the work of ministries of health, WHO, UNFPA, UNICEF and clinical implementing partners.

That division is a considered position rather than a limitation of ambition, and it follows the analysis at Chapter 16.2. The clinical interventions that would prevent most maternal and malaria deaths exist and are inexpensive. What is missing is the system around them: demand, financing, accountability and the agency of the women whose lives depend on access. Clinical efficacy without community demand is unused capacity, and the work above that ceiling is the work RFLD is built to do.

The programme's four pillars are community mobilisation through the member network; advocacy on Maputo Article 14 domestication, the Abuja fifteen per cent target and domestic health financing; operational research on the behavioural and systemic barriers that stop clinical interventions reaching women; and re-granting through the WAFF Fund.

33.4 Civic space and human rights protection

This field addresses Chapters 19, 20, 21 and 22, and operates through continental advocacy at the African Commission, publication of protection tools and research, coordinated referral, and protection-focused capacity building across the member network. Chapter 37 sets out the advocacy channel and Chapter 38 states the limits.

33.5 Climate and economic justice

This field addresses Chapters 14, 15 and 18 of the Protocol's economic provisions, covering land and resource rights, the economic conditions of women's autonomy, and the gendered consequences of environmental degradation and large-scale land acquisition.

33.6 Digital rights

NAFASI is RFLD's consortium programme on digital rights and shrinking digital civic space, implemented with Magamba Network and DefendDefenders. Within the consortium, sub-grant disbursement is handled by Magamba Network; RFLD manages identification, supervision and reporting. The programme addresses Chapter 19 and the digital dimension of Chapter 21.

34. The DONUESÈ Data Center

The DONUESÈ Data Center is RFLD's continental open-data infrastructure: twelve open-access tools, bilingual in French and English, producing gender-disaggregated compliance data across Africa. Its relationship to this report is direct. The report's evidentiary base is substantially the infrastructure's output, and the gaps the report identifies constitute the infrastructure's forward work programme.

Tool	Function, and the chapter it serves
Maputo Protocol Hub	Ratification and implementation tracking across all fifty-five member states. Primary source for Part Two and Annex A.
Maputo Barometer	Annual measurement of Protocol implementation across member states, published in English and French. The instrument closest to answering the domestication question posed at Chapter 9.3.
West Africa Legislative Platform	Consolidated record of women's rights legislation across the ECOWAS region with cross-country comparison. Source for Chapters 12, 15 and 18.
Legislative Database	The underlying statute-level record supporting the Platform.
ACDEG Hub	State compliance with the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, including ratification, reporting and implementation gaps. Source for Chapters 12 and 20.
AU Mechanisms Demystified	Plain-language guides to African Commission Special Procedures, the African Court, the Peace and Security Council and the AU Commission, with step-by-step submission guidance. Addresses the access gap at Table 29.1 and the Article 34(6) constraint at Chapter 11.
African Digital Safety Compendium	Operational security protocols for defenders and organisations, covering encrypted communications, account hardening and response to coordinated harassment. Addresses the protection gap at Table 29.1.
Cyber Harassment Legal Toolkit 2026	Legal frameworks, jurisdiction-specific recourse pathways and evidence-collection guidance on online violence. Primary instrument for Chapter 19.
Gender-Responsive Budgeting tool	Budget analysis through a gender lens, with public expenditure tracking methodology. The instrument for the stage-three failures identified at Chapters 13 and 16.
Maternal Health Tracker	Maternal, newborn and child health data across francophone Africa with intervention mapping. Source for Chapter 16.
Ending Malaria platform	Malaria prevention, IPTp coverage and last-mile delivery data.
	Francophone SRHR resource hub for community organisers, peer educators and grassroots health workers.

Tool	Function, and the chapter it serves
My Health, My Right	
Franco-phone Human Rights MOOC	Open training in the language of the constituency least served by existing provision. Addresses the language gap at Chapter 30.

Table 34.1 Dɔ̀NùÈSɛ̀ tools mapped to the findings of this report.

The bilingual character of the infrastructure is its principal differentiator and follows from the Chapter 30 analysis. Continental gender data infrastructure is overwhelmingly anglophone. A bilingual continental instrument operated by an African feminist network addresses a constituency that existing provision reaches least well, and it does so in the language in which that constituency conducts its advocacy.

35. The re-granting architecture

RFLD operates two re-granting instruments: the West African Francophone Feminist Fund and the Africa Grant Portfolio. Their function is to resolve the contradiction described at Chapter 28.2.

Institutional compliance requirements are real and grassroots organisations cannot meet them at the scale institutional funders require. Rather than asking funders to lower the standard or asking grantees to meet it unaided, RFLD takes the compliance burden onto itself: equivalency determination for direct United States grantmaking, audited financial systems, safeguarding and PSEAH standards, and a single point of accountability for funds flowing to dozens of organisations. Grantees are accompanied through the grant rather than only disbursed to.

35.1 What the model offers a funder

- A single accountability relationship in place of dozens of small ones, with the due diligence performed once.
- Receipt of funds from United States foundations without expenditure responsibility, by virtue of the NGOsource determination.
- Independent annual audit available to institutional partners.
- Accompaniment rather than disbursement, which improves grantee capacity and therefore the durability of the outcome.
- Learning from the network on what works in francophone contexts, which is the evidence base Chapter 30 identifies as thin.

35.2 Fiscal sponsorship

The instrument that matters most for the organisations described at Chapter 31.3 is fiscal sponsorship for movements led by Vulnerable Groups where local registration is legally constrained. Those movements fall outside every mechanism requiring an institutional counterpart, and a sponsorship arrangement is the only route by which institutional money reaches them at all. Its use depends on funder acceptance, which is the subject of a recommendation at Chapter 43.

36. Organisational resilience

RFLD treats institutional strengthening as protection work rather than as administration, on the reasoning that an organisation which cannot survive its first audit, its first security incident or its first leadership transition cannot protect anyone. The work is organised in four pillars and answers the second, third, sixth and ninth rows of Table 29.1 directly.

Pillar	Content
Institutional policy architecture	Adaptable policy templates with accompaniment through adoption and first implementation review: data protection, child protection, safeguarding and PSEAH frameworks scaled to organisations of any size, codes of conduct, conflict-of-interest and whistleblowing procedures.
Financial systems and donor compliance	Basic financial management for first-time grantees. Budget development, burn-rate tracking and financial reporting. Procurement, documentation and audit-readiness practice. Donor compliance requirements demystified. Fiscal sponsorship pathways.
Digital and physical security	Organisational security assessment and threat modelling. Encrypted communications and secure data handling. Account hardening and response to coordinated harassment. Physical security planning for offices, events and field work. Incident response in the first twenty-four hours after an attack.
Continuity, governance and leadership	Board development appropriate to size and context. Succession and leadership-transition planning. Continuity planning for civic-space shocks including closure threats, deregistration and relocation. Second-line leadership development including for young defenders. Peer exchange across the network so that no organisation faces a crisis without precedent.

Table 36.1 The four pillars of organisational resilience. Addresses Chapters 28.2, 28.3 and 31.

37. Continental advocacy and the African Commission channel

RFLD's Observer Status and its seat on the Working Group of the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders and Focal Point on Reprisals in Africa give the network a channel into a continental protection conversation that has historically over-represented anglophone organisations. The channel is used in four ways.

1. Oral statements at ordinary sessions of the African Commission on civic-space trends and on the situation of women human rights defenders.
2. Shadow reports for state periodic reviews under Article 62, which is the mechanism by which a state's silence under Maputo Article 26 can be made visible to the Commission. Chapter 10.3 sets out why this is the point of maximum available leverage.
3. Bilateral engagement with Special Rapporteurs, including on the rights of women, on human rights defenders, on freedom of expression, and on refugees and migrants.
4. Accompaniment of individual cases through the Working Group, and strategic escalation to continental and global mechanisms where the case supports it.

Chapter 11.1 identifies referral by the Commission to the African Court as the most under-exploited route in the architecture, because it does not depend on the respondent state having made the Article 34(6) declaration. Pursuing that route requires a working relationship with the Commission and an understanding of its referral practice, and it is the specific advocacy opportunity that RFLD's institutional position creates.

38. What RFLD does not do

RFLD does not operate safe houses and is not a twenty-four-hour emergency response organisation. It does not deliver clinical services; that is the work of ministries of health and of the clinical actors named at Chapter 33.3. It does not conduct strategic litigation as a primary activity. It does not have uniform presence across all fifty-five member states, and network density is concentrated in francophone West Africa and the Sahel and thinnest in North Africa.

These statements appear in a published report rather than in an internal document for a reason connected to the report's own findings. Part Five documents a funding architecture that rewards organisations for claiming operational footprint they do not have. The resulting capacity claims fail at implementation, and the failure is then attributed to the sector rather than to the incentive that produced it.

The consequence is not only reputational. A defender at acute risk who is referred to an organisation that cannot help her has been harmed by that overstatement, and the harm falls on the person the system exists to protect. RFLD accordingly coordinates referral to specialist front-line partners including Front Line Defenders, ProtectDefenders.eu and the African Women's Development Fund, and states the limit of its own capacity as a matter of protection practice rather than as a disclaimer.

39. Case studies

Six cases from RFLD's 2025 to 2026 record, selected because each illustrates a mechanism analysed elsewhere in this report rather than because each was a success. Individuals are named only where their participation is a matter of public record or institutional position. Women human rights defenders are not named, in accordance with Chapter 2.5.

39.1 The inauguration of RFLD-Dakar and the regional convening on women human rights defenders

Held on 16 June 2026 at RFLD's Dakar premises at Cité Keur Gorgui, under document reference RFLD/DOL.2026/CN.1. The event was structured as a regional convening on women human rights defenders in West Africa, on the occasion of the office launch, rather than as a ceremonial opening. That structure was a deliberate choice and it is the reason the convening generated substantive material.

The institutions convened included the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, represented by Hon. Prof. Rémy Ngoy Lumbu, Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders and Focal Point on Reprisals in Africa and former Chairperson of the Commission, together with the Commission's legal department; the Government of Senegal, through the Ministry of Family and Solidarities, the Ministry of Justice, a judge of the Pool Judiciaire Financier and the Gender Directorate of the National Police; bilateral cooperation partners including the Embassy of Sweden, whose Ambassador delivered opening remarks, and GIZ Senegal at Country Director and Programme Director level; United Nations agencies; senior independent experts including Mme Hannah Forster of the African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies in Banjul and Prof Mabassa Fall; Senegalese civil society including the Association des Juristes Sénégalaises and the Collectif des Féministes du Sénégal; ActionAid Senegal; Avocats Sans Frontières Canada; and three women human rights defenders from Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger. Senegalese national media attended.

Three thematic sessions were held: the state of civic space in francophone West Africa and the role of regional human rights mechanisms in protecting it; the operational architecture of African intermediary re-granting infrastructure in West Africa; and the institutional partnerships required to make human rights, peace and security, and economic justice work function together. RFLD was represented by Mr Bathor Seck, Country Focal Point for Senegal, who delivered the opening welcome and the closing synthesis.

What this case illustrates. The presence of the Special Rapporteur in the same room as defenders from the three central Sahel states is the institutional channel described at Chapter 37 operating in practice, and it is the source of several of the observations at Chapter 22. It also illustrates a point Chapter 21.3 makes about reachability: the three defenders were reached because RFLD holds relationships in those states, and a mechanism without such relationships would not have found them.

39.2 The West Africa Feminist Data Summit

Held from 28 to 30 July 2026 at Hôtel Les Oliviers, Porto-Novo, convening member organisations and partners around the DONÜESE infrastructure. Coordination was led by Florence Eniayehou with logistics by Jeovani Kotounou, and Hon. Prof. Rémy Ngoy Lumbu participated. Outputs in-

cluded the summit record and a video archive, and post-summit communications were issued to the network in English and French.

What this case illustrates. The summit is the point at which the data infrastructure at Chapter 34 was presented to and interrogated by the constituency that uses it. It is also the practical answer to a problem stated at Chapter 30.1: a convening held in Porto-Novo in French reaches organisations that a convening held in an anglophone capital in English does not, and the difference is not a matter of preference but of who is able to attend and to speak.

39.3 The Africa Grant Portfolio and the WAFF Fund

RFLD operates two re-granting instruments through which institutional funds reach grassroots feminist organisations across francophone West Africa. The operational question they were built to answer is the one set out at Chapter 28.2: institutional compliance requirements are legitimate and grassroots organisations cannot meet them at the scale funders require, so somebody has to carry the difference.

The model places the compliance burden on the intermediary rather than on the grantee. RFLD holds the equivalency determination, the audited financial systems and the safeguarding standards, and presents a single accountability relationship to the funder in place of dozens of small ones. Grantees are accompanied through the grant cycle rather than only disbursed to, which is the element that distinguishes re-granting from pass-through and the element most often omitted when a funder costs the model.

What this case illustrates. The re-granting architecture at Chapter 35 in operation, and the limit of what an intermediary can demonstrate. An intermediary can show that organisations previously unable to reach institutional finance directly can absorb and account for funds once the language and process barriers are removed. It cannot show, from its own portfolio, that those barriers operate across the continent, and Chapter 30.3 states why RFLD is not the right source for that proof.

39.4 The Maputo Barometer 2026

Published in English and French, the Barometer measures Maputo Protocol implementation across African Union member states rather than ratification, tracking whether ratification has become domestication, whether domestication has become policy, and whether policy has reached women's lives.

What this case illustrates. The Barometer is the closest existing answer to the domestication question posed at Chapter 9.3, and its existence is the reason Volume II is a feasible undertaking rather than a proposal from nothing. The index specification at Annex H is designed to build on the Barometer's method rather than to replace it. The case also illustrates the language point: an implementation instrument published in both working languages of the continent is usable by the francophone constituency that the Chapter 30 analysis identifies as least served.

39.5 The NAFASI consortium on digital rights

NAFASI addresses digital rights and the contraction of digital civic space, implemented with Magamba Network and DefendDefenders. Within the consortium, sub-grant disbursement is handled by Magamba Network; RFLD manages identification of sub-grantees, supervision and reporting.

What this case illustrates. Two things. It is the programmatic vehicle for the Chapter 19 findings on technology-facilitated violence and the digital dimension of Chapter 21. And the division of labour inside the consortium illustrates the principle stated at Chapter 38: each partner performs the function it is actually equipped for, and RFLD does not hold the disbursement function in a consortium where another partner is better placed to hold it. A consortium designed on the opposite principle, in which each partner claims every function, is the design that fails at implementation.

39.6 The framework convention with the Institut National de la Femme, Benin

A quadrennial framework convention for the period 2026 to 2029 between RFLD and the Institut National de la Femme, the national women's institution in Benin, with an accompanying memorandum of understanding and programme documentation.

What this case illustrates. A route into the domestication problem that runs through a state body rather than against one. Chapter 9 identifies domestication as the stage at which the continental record thins, and a standing relationship with the national women's institution is the mechanism through which a civil society organisation can engage the drafting rather than only the outcome. The case also illustrates the limit of the approach: a national institution can convene and can draft, and it cannot appropriate a budget, so a partnership at this level addresses stage two of the implementation chain and not stage three.



PART SEVEN

Recommendations and conclusion

Recommendations are addressed to five audiences separately, because the same finding requires a different action from a state, from the Union, from a Regional Economic Community, from a funder and from a movement. Each recommendation names the chapter from which it arises.

40. To African Union member states

1. The nine states outside the Protocol should become party. For Egypt and Morocco, where no signature exists, accession is the only available route, as the practice of Cape Verde, Malawi and Mauritania demonstrates. For the seven signature-only states, ratification should be tabled in the current legislative session. (Chapters 5, 8.)
2. States party should complete domestication in the areas where it lags: inheritance, matrimonial property and land tenure. Domestication should include the repeal of conflicting provisions and should address the constitutional standing of customary and religious personal law rather than legislating alongside it. (Chapters 9, 15.)
3. States party should meet the Article 26 reporting obligation, including the disaggregated data the Commission's Guidelines request and the budget information Article 26(2) implies. (Chapter 10.)
4. Quota provisions should carry enforcement consequences, should include placement rules preventing concentration of women candidates in unwinnable list positions, and should include vacancy rules preventing erosion across a term. Electoral management bodies should be mandated and resourced to apply the sanction. (Chapter 12.)
5. Quota provisions should extend to local government, since national quotas without local ones narrow the pipeline into national politics structurally. (Chapter 12.5.)
6. Budget documents should carry gender-disaggregated allocation analysis, so that the stage-three failures identified in this report become visible in the instrument that produces them. Article 4(2)(i) and Article 26(2) already oblige budgetary provision. (Chapters 13, 16, 18.)
7. States should conduct and publish periodic time-use surveys, and should publish sex- and age-disaggregated statistics across the domains covered in Part Three. Where the data does not exist the obligation cannot be assessed, and several states are presently unassessable on their own record. (Chapters 2.4, 13.2.)
8. Legislation restricting association, assembly and foreign funding should be reviewed against the African Commission's Guidelines on Freedom of Association and Assembly in Africa, provision by provision. (Chapters 20.4, 21.)
9. Adolescent school re-entry policies should be adopted where absent. The intervention is administratively simple, costs almost nothing, and produces a measurable result. (Chapter 16.5.)
10. Consultation requirements in land acquisition should require separately recorded consultation with women, since a community meeting at which women do not speak satisfies the current requirement without the consultation having occurred. (Chapter 15.4.)
11. States that have not made the declaration under Article 34(6) of the African Court Protocol should make it, since without it the treaty's designated interpretive body is procedurally unreachable for the individuals the Protocol protects. (Chapter 11.)

41. To the African Union and the African Commission

1. The Commission should publish the Article 26 and Article 62 reporting compliance record in a form permitting public tracking of which states are overdue and by how many cycles. The absence of a public tracker is itself a constraint on accountability. (Chapter 10.)
2. The Commission should use its power of referral to the African Court more actively in cases of continental significance, since referral does not depend on the respondent state having made the Article 34(6) declaration and therefore reaches states that individuals cannot reach. (Chapter 11.1.)
3. The Commission should establish systematic follow-up on the gender-related recommendations in its Concluding Observations, so that examination becomes a process rather than an event. (Chapter 10.1.)
4. The Commission should sustain implementation of Resolution 522 on digital violence, including guidance distinguishing protective provisions from state-security provisions in cybercrime legislation, since the same statutes are currently used against defenders. (Chapter 19.3.)
5. Francophone and lusophone civil society participation in Commission sessions and Special Procedure engagement should be resourced, including interpretation beyond plenary and documentation in working languages. (Chapters 28.4, 30.)
6. The African Union should strengthen reporting under the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, which is an annual Heads of State commitment and therefore a politically visible accountability route parallel to Article 26. (Chapter 3.4.)
7. The African Union should compile and publish the reservations and interpretive declarations entered to the Protocol in a single accessible document, since reservations practice materially affects what ratification means in a given state and is not currently visible in one place. (Chapter 27.2, Annex D.)

42. To Regional Economic Communities

1. RECs should use peer mechanisms on accession, following the Southern African record where sustained regional engagement contributed to complete ratification. The mechanism is replicable and the three factors that produced it are identified at Chapter 6.1.
2. The legal consequences of the withdrawal of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger from ECOWAS for access to the Community Court of Justice should be clarified publicly, so that litigants and counsel are not required to infer the position from secondary reporting. (Chapters 3.5, 23.2.)
3. Simplified trade regimes under the African Continental Free Trade Area should be designed for the documentation and literacy conditions of the women traders who conduct the majority of small-scale cross-border trade, rather than for formal-sector operators who least need them. (Chapter 14.4.)
4. RECs with gender protocols should align their reporting cycles with the African Commission's, so that a single national reporting effort discharges both obligations and the marginal cost of compliance falls. (Chapter 10.)

43. To donors and philanthropic institutions

1. Publish grant data disaggregated by the primary working language of the recipient organisation. This is the test proposed at Chapter 30.2. The data already exists in every grant management system, and publishing it would settle a question that is currently contested only because it is unmeasured.
2. Fund institutional systems as a deliverable. Requiring grassroots organisations to hold financial management, safeguarding and audit capacity is legitimate; funding that capacity at an overhead percentage which cannot build it is not, and the resulting failure is then attributed to the organisation. (Chapter 28.2.)
3. Budget security at the level indicated by threat assessment rather than as a percentage of programme cost. Where security is treated as overhead it is cut in negotiation, and the organisation absorbs the risk the funder declined to fund. (Chapter 28.3.)
4. Move to multi-year core support with an unrestricted component for organisations with demonstrated delivery, and cease requiring annual re-justification of institutional existence. (Chapter 28.1.)
5. Publish calls, templates and reporting formats in French and Portuguese, on timelines that account for translation. The current practice filters applicants before any assessment of merit. (Chapters 28.4, 30.1.)
6. Harmonise due diligence. A shared assessment recognised across funders would remove a duplicated cost borne entirely by organisations without dedicated grants staff, at no cost to rigour. (Chapter 28.5.)
7. State explicitly whether fiscally sponsored applications are accepted. The current ambiguity operates as a refusal and excludes the unregistered movements identified at Chapter 31.3 as the most exposed and least reached.
8. Pay for consultation. Where analysis is sought from African feminist organisations for a strategy process, fund the time and share the resulting document. (Chapter 28.5.)
9. Fund wellbeing provision as a programme cost. The alternative is the loss of the most experienced people in the sector at the point where their experience is most valuable, which is expensive by any measure a funder would recognise. (Chapter 31.1.)

44. To feminist movements and networks

1. Invest in documentation to an evidentiary standard on which continental mechanisms can act. This is the principal constraint on accountability for arbitrary detention and for conflict-related sexual violence, and unlike most constraints in this report it is one that movements can close without state cooperation. (Chapters 20.2, 22.4.)
2. Use the continental mechanisms. Shadow reporting under Article 62, individual communications, sub-regional court access and Universal Periodic Review submissions are available and under-used, and the binding constraint is procedural knowledge rather than eligibility. (Chapters 10.2, 11.1.)
3. Pursue Commission referral to the African Court in cases of continental significance, rather than treating the Article 34(6) constraint as closing the Court. (Chapter 11.1.)
4. Make the accession argument domestically in the nine states outside the Protocol, and make it as an accession argument rather than a ratification argument where no signature exists. (Chapter 8.)
5. Build second-line leadership and succession, particularly where conflict has disrupted the intergenerational transmission of protective practice. (Chapter 31.2.)
6. Treat wellbeing as an operational requirement rather than a personal matter. Organisations that do not plan for the cumulative cost of the work lose the people who carry it. (Chapter 31.1.)
7. Work across the language divide deliberately. The asymmetry described at Chapter 30 is reproduced within the movement as well as by funders, and correcting it internally is a precondition for demanding that funders correct it. (Chapter 30.)
8. Measure and report what quotas actually deliver, including committee authority, portfolio weight and renomination, rather than seat counts alone. The seat count is the figure states prefer to cite and it is the weakest available proxy for Article 9(2). (Chapter 12.4.)

45. Conclusion, and the case for Volume II

Twenty-three years after Maputo, the continental legal framework for African women's rights is close to universal and its implementation cannot be assessed from the public record. That is this report's finding and its limitation at once. Forty-six ratifications are verifiable from a depositary and are verified at Annex A. What those ratifications have produced in domestic statute, budget allocation, institutional practice and remedy is not verifiable from any comparable source, because no such source exists.

The instrument that would answer the question is a fifty-five state domestication audit. For each state party it requires the incorporating statute with its citation or a statement that none exists; the conflicting provisions still in force; the constitutional standing of customary and religious personal law; the budget line, if any, funding the resulting obligation; and the Article 26 reporting record. Annex C sets out that structure, populated with the verified accession data for all fifty-five states and carrying the remaining fields for completion.

The argument for producing it is that every recommendation in Part Seven is presently addressed to a record that cannot verify compliance. Until the domestication position is documented state by state, advocacy is obliged to argue from ratification counts, which African states are content to cite because they reflect well on them, and from what organisations report, which states are free to dispute because it is testimony. The audit would change the terms of that argument, and it would do so using material that already exists in fragments across the Maputo Protocol Hub, the Legislative Database and the member network in the states concerned.

RFLD is positioned to conduct it and states two limitations candidly. Network density is thinnest in North Africa, which is where the two non-parties are, so the audit would require partnership in that region rather than reliance on existing presence. And an audit of this scale is a research undertaking rather than an advocacy product, which means it requires research funding of a kind rarely available to African civil society organisations, a point that returns the argument to Chapter 30.

What Volume II would contain.

Fifty-five state chapters, each carrying the fields set out at Annex C, with statute citations. A comparative analysis of domestication by Protocol article rather than by state. A reservations and declarations compilation. An Article 26 reporting compliance record. A budget allocation analysis for the health and violence provisions, using the gender-responsive budgeting methodology at Chapter 34. And a domestication index permitting year-on-year comparison, which would give the movement the instrument it currently lacks: a number that moves when a state does something, rather than a ratification count that has barely moved since 2023.

ANNEXES

Data, commentary, country profiles and verification

Annex A. Maputo Protocol status, all fifty-five member states

Source: African Union Treaties and Conventions Depositary, as reproduced in RFLD's Maputo Protocol Hub and reconciled by RFLD. For the canonical record, consult the depositary directly. "n/a" indicates no date recorded. Status: R ratified or acceded; S signed only; N neither signed nor ratified. The interval column is computed from the signature and ratification dates and is not part of the depositary record.

Member state	Region	Signature	Ratification / accession	Deposited	Interval
Algeria	North	29 Dec 2003	20 Nov 2016	10 Jan 2017	12 yrs 10 mo
Angola	South- ern	22 Jan 2007	30 Aug 2007	9 Nov 2007	7 months
Benin	West	11 Feb 2004	30 Sep 2005	13 Oct 2005	1 yr 7 mo
Botswana	South- ern	13 Oct 2023	23 Oct 2023	1 Dec 2023	10 days
Burkina Faso	West	26 Feb 2004	9 Jun 2006	9 Aug 2006	2 yrs 3 mo
Burundi	Central	3 Dec 2003	n/a	n/a	not rati- fied
Cameroon	Central	25 Jul 2006	13 Sep 2012	28 Dec 2012	6 yrs 1 mo
Cape Verde	West	n/a	21 Jun 2005	22 Jul 2005	n/a
Central African Republic	Central	17 Jun 2008	10 May 2012	17 Jul 2012	3 yrs 10 mo
Chad	Central	6 Dec 2004	n/a	n/a	not rati- fied
Comoros	East	26 Feb 2004	18 Mar 2004	16 Apr 2004	21 days
Congo	Central	27 Feb 2004	14 Dec 2011	6 Aug 2012	7 yrs 9 mo
Côte d'Ivoire	West	27 Feb 2004	5 Oct 2011	9 Mar 2012	7 yrs 7 mo
Democratic Republic of Congo	Central	5 Dec 2003	9 Jun 2008	9 Feb 2009	4 yrs 6 mo
Djibouti	East	18 Dec 2003	2 Feb 2005	4 Feb 2005	1 yr 1 mo
Egypt	North	n/a	n/a	n/a	not party
Equatorial Guinea	Central	30 Jan 2005	27 Oct 2009	29 Jun 2011	4 yrs 8 mo
Eritrea	East	25 Apr 2012	n/a	n/a	not rati- fied

Member state	Region	Signature	Ratification / accession	Deposited	Interval
Eswatini	South- ern	7 Dec 2004	5 Oct 2012	6 Nov 2012	7 yrs 9 mo
Ethiopia	East	1 Jun 2004	18 Jul 2018	17 Sep 2019	14 yrs 1 mo
Gabon	Central	27 Jan 2005	10 Jan 2011	10 Feb 2011	5 yrs 11 mo
Gambia	West	11 Sep 2003	25 May 2005	6 Sep 2005	1 yr 8 mo
Ghana	West	31 Oct 2003	13 Jun 2007	20 Jul 2007	3 yrs 7 mo
Guinea	West	16 Dec 2003	16 Apr 2012	17 Sep 2012	8 yrs 4 mo
Guinea-Bissau	West	8 Mar 2005	19 Jun 2008	14 Oct 2008	3 yrs 3 mo
Kenya	East	17 Dec 2003	6 Oct 2010	13 Oct 2010	6 yrs 9 mo
Lesotho	South- ern	27 Feb 2004	26 Oct 2004	5 Nov 2004	7 months
Liberia	West	16 Dec 2003	14 Dec 2007	15 Jul 2008	3 yrs 11 mo
Libya	North	5 Nov 2003	23 May 2004	30 Jun 2004	6 months
Madagascar	East	28 Feb 2004	n/a	n/a	not rati- fied
Malawi	South- ern	n/a	20 May 2005	29 Jun 2005	n/a
Mali	West	9 Dec 2003	13 Jan 2005	3 Feb 2005	1 yr 1 mo
Mauritania	North	n/a	21 Sep 2005	14 Dec 2005	n/a
Mauritius	East	29 Jan 2005	16 Jun 2017	23 Jun 2017	12 yrs 4 mo
Morocco	North	n/a	n/a	n/a	not party
Mozambique	South- ern	15 Dec 2003	9 Dec 2005	30 Dec 2005	1 yr 11 mo
Namibia	South- ern	9 Dec 2003	11 Aug 2004	26 Aug 2004	8 months
Niger	West	6 Jul 2004	n/a	n/a	not rati- fied
Nigeria	West	16 Dec 2003	16 Dec 2004	18 Feb 2005	1 yr
Rwanda	East	19 Dec 2003	25 Jun 2004	1 Jul 2004	6 months

Member state	Region	Signature	Ratification / accession	Deposited	Interval
Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic	North	20 Jun 2006	19 Mar 2022	27 May 2023	15 yrs 8 mo
Sao Tome and Principe	Central	1 Feb 2010	18 Apr 2019	27 Jun 2019	9 yrs 2 mo
Senegal	West	26 Dec 2003	27 Dec 2004	30 Jan 2005	1 yr
Seychelles	East	24 Jan 2006	9 Mar 2006	25 Apr 2006	1 month
Sierra Leone	West	9 Dec 2003	3 Jul 2015	30 Oct 2015	11 yrs 6 mo
Somalia	East	23 Feb 2006	n/a	n/a	not ratified
South Africa	South- ern	16 Mar 2004	17 Dec 2004	14 Jan 2005	9 months
South Sudan	East	24 Jan 2013	24 Feb 2023	7 Jun 2023	10 yrs 1 mo
Sudan	East	30 Jun 2008	n/a	n/a	not ratified
Tanzania	East	5 Nov 2003	3 Mar 2007	7 May 2007	3 yrs 3 mo
Togo	West	30 Dec 2003	12 Oct 2005	26 Oct 2005	1 yr 9 mo
Tunisia	North	30 Jan 2015	23 Aug 2018	27 Sep 2018	3 yrs 6 mo
Uganda	East	18 Dec 2003	22 Jul 2010	22 Jul 2010	6 yrs 7 mo
Zambia	South- ern	3 Aug 2005	2 May 2006	7 Jun 2006	8 months
Zimbabwe	South- ern	18 Nov 2003	15 Apr 2008	5 Sep 2008	4 yrs 4 mo

Table A.1 Maputo Protocol status, fifty-five African Union member states. Forty-six ratified or acceded, seven signed only, two neither. Shaded rows are states not party.

Region	States	Ratified	Signed only	Neither	Share ratified
North	7	5	0	2	71%
West	15	14	1	0	93%
Central	9	7	2	0	78%
East	14	10	4	0	71%
Southern	10	10	0	0	100%
All	55	46	7	2	84%

Table A.2 Status by African Union region, computed from Table A.1.

Annex B. The Maputo Protocol article by article

This annex states, for each article, what the provision obliges and the test by which domestication can be assessed. The obligations are summarised rather than reproduced verbatim; the authoritative text is the Protocol itself. The domestication test column is RFLD's own and is offered as a working instrument for the audit described at Chapter 45.

Art.	Subject	What it obliges	Domestication test
1	Definitions	Defines discrimination against women, harmful practices and violence against women. The definition of violence at Article 1(j) extends to threats and to arbitrary restrictions of liberty, and is broad enough to cover conduct in digital environments.	Does domestic law adopt definitions at least as broad, particularly on violence and harmful practices?
2	Elimination of discrimination against women	Obliges states to combat discrimination through legislative, institutional and other measures, to include gender equality in constitutions and legislation, to take corrective and positive action where discrimination persists, and to modify social and cultural patterns based on the idea of the inferiority or superiority of either sex.	Is there a constitutional equality guarantee, and does any saving clause exempt customary or personal law from it?
3	Right to dignity	Obliges respect for dignity and for the free development of personality, and protection from all forms of violence, particularly sexual and verbal violence, and from exploitation and degradation.	Do criminal and civil provisions cover sexual and verbal violence and exploitation, including in private settings?
4	Rights to life, integrity and security of the person	Prohibits all exploitation and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. Obliges enactment and enforcement of laws prohibiting all forms of violence including unwanted or forced sex whether in private or in public; identification of causes and consequences; punishment of perpetrators; rehabilitation programmes; prevention of trafficking; and at Article 4(2)(i) adequate budgetary and other resources for implementation and monitoring.	Is marital rape criminalised? Is there a costed national action plan with an allocated budget line, as Article 4(2)(i) requires?
5	Elimination of harmful practices	Obliges prohibition and condemnation of all harmful practices, through public awareness, prohibition by legislative measures backed by sanctions, provision of support to victims including health and legal services and vocational training, and protection of women at risk.	Is there prohibition with sanctions, and does provision exist for support to victims and protection of those at risk, or prohibition alone?
6	Marriage	Obliges that no marriage take place without the free and full consent of both parties, that the minimum age of marriage for women be eighteen years, that monogamy be encouraged and the rights of women in existing polygamous marriages be protected, that marriage be registered, and at Article 6(j) that a woman have the right to acquire and freely administer her own property.	Is the minimum age eighteen without exception? Are consent exceptions permitting earlier marriage in force? Is registration required for customary and religious unions?
7	Separation, divorce and annulment	Obliges equal rights in separation, divorce and annulment, including at Article 7(d) the equitable sharing of joint property.	Does the matrimonial property regime recognise non-monetary contribution, including un-

Art.	Subject	What it obliges	Domestication test
	nul- ment		paid domestic and agri- cultural labour?
8	Access to justice and equal protection before the law	Obliges effective access to judicial and legal services, support for local initiatives providing legal services to women, establishment of educational structures with attention to law enforcement organs, equal representation of women in the judiciary and law enforcement, and reform of discriminatory laws and practices.	Is legal aid available in practice for the offences in Articles 4 and 5? What is the proportion of women in the judiciary and in senior police ranks?
9	Right to participation in the political and decision-making process	Obliges specific positive action to promote participative governance and equal participation, including affirmative action and enabling legislation, participation without discrimination in all elections, equal representation at all levels of electoral processes, and increased and effective representation and participation at all levels of decision-making.	Does quota legislation carry a sanction, a placement rule and a vacancy rule? Does it extend to local government? What proportion of committees with budget authority are chaired by women?
10	Right to peace	Obliges increased participation of women in education for peace, in structures and processes for conflict prevention, management and resolution at every level, and in post-conflict reconstruction, and at Article 10(3) significant reduction of military expenditure in favour of social development and the promotion of women.	Is there a national action plan on women, peace and security with a budget? Were women in a negotiating role, as distinct from delegation membership, in any transitional process?
11	Protection of women in armed conflicts	Obliges respect for international humanitarian law, protection of asylum-seeking women, refugees, returnees and internally displaced women against all forms of violence including sexual violence, treatment of such acts as war crimes, genocide or crimes against humanity with prosecution before a competent jurisdiction, and protection of children from participation in hostilities.	Are international crimes incorporated in domestic criminal law? Is there any prosecution record for conflict-related sexual violence?
12	Right to education and training	Obliges elimination of discrimination in education, elimination of stereotypes in textbooks and curricula, protection of women and girls from all forms of abuse including sexual harassment in schools, provision for sanctions against perpetrators, and provision for retention of girls and for the education of women who leave school prematurely.	Is there a school re-entry policy for pregnant girls and adolescent mothers? Is there a school-based sexual harassment procedure with sanctions?
13	Economic and social welfare rights	Obliges equal opportunities in work and career advancement, promotion of equality of access to employment, the right to equal remuneration for work of equal value, transparency in recruitment and promotion, at Article 13(e) and (f) conditions to support women's economic activity in the informal sector and a system of protection and social insurance for informal workers, adequate maternity leave, prohibition of sexual harassment in the workplace, and at Article 13(h) recognition of the economic value of the work of women in the home.	Does labour law extend to domestic and informal workers? Is the standard equal pay for work of equal value, or equal pay for the same work? Is there any measure recognising unpaid domestic work?
14			

Art.	Subject	What it obliges	Domestication test
	Health and reproductive rights	Establishes the right to health including sexual and reproductive health, control of fertility, decision on whether and when to have children, choice of contraceptive method, self-protection against sexually transmitted infections including HIV, the right to be informed of one's own and a partner's status, and family planning education. Obliges provision of adequate, affordable and accessible services particularly in rural areas, pre-natal, delivery and post-natal services, nutrition for pregnant and breastfeeding women, and at Article 14(2)(c) authorisation of medical abortion in cases of sexual assault, rape and incest and where continued pregnancy endangers the mental or physical health of the woman or the life of the woman or the foetus.	Does criminal law permit abortion on all four Article 14(2)(c) grounds? Is the service available in practice? Is there a third-party authorisation requirement for contraception? What share of the national budget is allocated to health against the Abuja fifteen per cent commitment?
15	Right to food security	Obliges provision of access to clean drinking water, sources of domestic fuel, land and the means of producing nutritious food, and establishment of adequate systems of supply and storage.	Do statutory land and water regimes recognise women as holders in their own right?
16	Right to adequate housing	Obliges equal access to adequate housing and to acceptable living conditions in a healthy environment, and access to adequate housing irrespective of marital status.	Can a woman hold tenure irrespective of marital status? Is a widow protected from expulsion from the matrimonial home?
17	Right to positive cultural context	Establishes the right to live in a positive cultural context and to participate at all levels in the determination of cultural policies.	Are women represented in the bodies that determine cultural and customary policy, including traditional authorities with legal functions?
18	Right to a healthy and sustainable environment	Obliges the right to live in a healthy and sustainable environment, and requires states to ensure greater participation of women in the planning and management of the environment, and to regulate the management and disposal of waste.	Is women's participation required in environmental and extractive impact assessment and in consultation on land acquisition?
19	Right to sustainable development	Obliges gender perspectives in national development planning, participation at all levels in the conceptualisation and implementation of development policies, access to and control over productive resources including land and the right to property, access to credit, training and extension services, and reduction of the negative effects of globalisation and of the implementation of trade and economic policies.	Do women hold registered title, and in what proportion? Do national development plans carry gender-disaggregated indicators and allocations?
20	Widows' rights	Obliges that widows not be subjected to inhuman, humiliating or degrading treatment, that a widow automatically become guardian and custodian of her children after her husband's death unless contrary to the interests and welfare of the children, and that a widow have the right to remarry a person of her choice.	Is there a prohibition on harmful widowhood practices with a sanction? Is automatic guardianship the default in law?
21	Right to inheritance	Obliges that a widow have the right to an equitable share in the inheritance of her husband's property and the right to continue	Does the succession regime applying to most

Art.	Sub-ject	What it obliges	Domestication test
	herit-ance	living in the matrimonial house, and that women and men have the right to inherit their parents' property in equitable shares.	estates in practice, including the customary and religious regimes, provide an equitable share? Is intestate suc-cession governed by statute or by personal law?
22	Special protec-tion of elderly women	Obliges protection of elderly women, provision for their access to employment and vocational training, and freedom from violence including sexual abuse and from discrimination on the basis of age.	Is there protection against accusations and violence directed at elderly women, and any social protection floor?
23	Special protec-tion of women with disabili-ties	Obliges facilitation of access to employment, training and parti-cipation in decision-making, and protection from violence includ-ing sexual abuse and from discrimination on the basis of disabili-ty.	Are health, justice and shelter services access-ible in practice? Are disability and gender addressed together in any national instru-ment?
24	Special protec-tion of women in dis-tress	Obliges protection of poor women and women heads of family in-cluding those from marginalised population groups, provision of an environment suited to their condition and special needs, and protection of pregnant or nursing women and women in detention by providing an environment suited to their condition.	Do custodial facilities provide for menstrual health, pregnancy and infants held with their mothers?
25	Remed-ies	Obliges states to provide appropriate remedies to any woman whose rights or freedoms have been violated, and to ensure that such remedies are determined by competent judicial, administrat-ive or legislative authorities or by any other competent authority provided for by law.	Is a remedy available in practice, within a period usable by the complainant, and at a cost she can bear?
26	Imple-menta-tion and monit-oring	Obliges states to indicate in their Article 62 periodic reports the legislative and other measures taken for the full realisation of the rights recognised, and at Article 26(2) to adopt all necessary measures and provide budgetary and other resources for full and effective implementation.	Has the state reported? How many cycles over-due? Did the report ad-dress Maputo obliga-tions substantively and include budget inform-ation?
27	Inter-pretation	Assigns interpretation of the Protocol to the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights.	Has the state made the declaration under Art-icle 34(6) of the Court's Protocol permitting di-rect access by individu-als and non-govern-mental organisations?
28	Signa-ture, ratific-ation and ac-cession	Provides for signature, ratification and accession, and provides that instruments be deposited with the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union.	Verified for all fifty-five states at Annex A.
29			Entered into force 25 November 2005.

Art.	Sub- ject	What it obliges	Domestication test
	Entry into force	Provides for entry into force thirty days after deposit of the fifteenth instrument of ratification, and for entry into force for later states on the date of deposit.	
30	Amendment and revision	Provides the procedure for amendment or revision by written request to the Chairperson.	No amendment has been adopted.
31	Status of the present Protocol	Provides that no provision derogate from more favourable provisions in other regional, continental or international instruments.	Where domestic or other treaty provisions are more favourable, they prevail. Relevant where CEDAW provisions exceed the Protocol.
32	Transitional provisions	Provides that pending establishment of the African Court, the African Commission is seized with matters of interpretation arising from the application or implementation of the Protocol.	Historic. The Court is established, and Chapter 11 addresses the resulting access position.

Table B.1 The Maputo Protocol article by article, with a working domestication test for each. Obligations are summarised; the authoritative text is the Protocol.

Annex C. Country profiles, all fifty-five member states

One profile per member state. The accession block in each profile is verified Tier 1 data drawn from the depositary and reproduced from Annex A. The second block lists the fields required for the domestication audit described at Chapter 45, which is the work programme for Volume II. No field is to be completed by inference, and the source for each is stated once at Table C.1 rather than repeated in every profile.

Field for completion	Source
Reservations and declarations	African Union Treaties and Conventions Depositary
Incorporating statute, or none	National gazette; RFLD Legislative Database for ECOWAS states
Conflicting provisions in force	National law; constitutional saving clauses
Article 34(6) declaration	African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights records
Article 62 reporting record	ACHPR State Reporting status table
Concluding Observations, gender recommendations	ACHPR session documents
Women in parliament, cabinet, committee chairs; quota type and sanction	IPU Parline; national electoral commission
Informality rate by sex; legal position of domestic work	ILO
Inheritance and matrimonial property position	National law; FAO Gender and Land Rights Database
MMR; skilled birth attendance; abortion law and practical availability; school re-entry policy	UN MMEIG; DHS or MICS; WHO; national policy
HIV prevalence and incidence by sex and age	UNAIDS
GBV legislation; FGM and child marriage prevalence; service availability	National law; DHS or MICS; UNICEF
Civic space: registration and funding law; documented reprisals; monitor rating and date	National law; CIVICUS Monitor; Front Line Defenders
Documented arbitrary detention of women activists, journalists or elected officials	Case documentation. Cases withheld for protection reasons to be recorded as withheld under Chapter 2.5.
RFLD presence: member organisations, grants, programme activity	RFLD internal records

Table C.1 Fields to be populated for every country profile in Volume II, with the source for each.

1. Algeria

AU region	North	Protocol status	Party (ratified or acceded)
Signature	29 Dec 2003	Ratification / accession	20 Nov 2016
Deposited	10 Jan 2017	Signature to ratification	12 yrs 10 mo

AU region	North	Protocol status	Party (ratified or acceded)
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1.	Notes	

Legal and institutional position. The Family Code of 1984, as amended in 2005, removed the wife's duty of obedience and constrained the marriage guardian without abolishing guardianship, and it retains unequal inheritance. The 2015 penal code amendments criminalised conjugal violence. Ratification in 2016 carried reservations and interpretative declarations on personal status, so what accession delivered here cannot be read from the ratification record alone.

Representation. The 2012 organic law lifted women above thirty per cent of the People's National Assembly, then the highest in the Arab world; the 2021 electoral law replaced the quota with a candidacy parity requirement carrying no placement or outcome rule, and representation collapsed below ten per cent in a single cycle. Same seats, same electorate, rule changed, result reversed.

What the record shows. The Algerian sequence is the continent's cleanest demonstration that quota design, not the numeric threshold, is the operative variable. Civic space narrowed after the Hirak period, with women's associations central to its public face under dissolution and registration pressure.

Volume II priority. Compile the reservations and interpretative declarations lodged at accession, without which what the 2016 ratification delivered cannot be read.

2. Angola

AU region	Southern	Protocol status	Party (ratified or acceded)
Signature	22 Jan 2007	Ratification / accession	30 Aug 2007
Deposited	9 Nov 2007	Signature to ratification	7 months
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1.	Notes	

Legal and institutional position. The penal code of 2020, in force from 2021, replaced the colonial-era code and modernised the framework on sexual offences while retaining a restrictive abortion regime. Law 25/11 of 2011 against domestic violence remains the framework GBV instrument.

Representation and economy. Women hold roughly a third of the National Assembly on party-list practice. The implementation environment is shaped by the informality of the post-war economy, in which the majority of working women, including the urban street traders known as *zungueiras*, work without protection.

What the record shows. Angola presents strong representation counts against weak economic protection and a civic space the CIVICUS Monitor assesses as repressed, which places the binding constraint at enforcement and at economic rights rather than at the statute book.

Volume II priority. Populate the informality and civic-space fields, where the binding constraint sits, rather than the representation count, which the record already carries.

3. Benin

AU region	West	Protocol status	Party (ratified or acceded)
Signature	11 Feb 2004	Ratification / accession	30 Sep 2005
Deposited	13 Oct 2005	Signature to ratification	1 yr 7 mo
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1. Notes		

Legal and institutional position. Law 2021-12 on sexual and reproductive health extended lawful termination to circumstances of material, educational, occupational or moral distress, wording broader than the Protocol minimum and among the most Article 14 compliant reforms on the continent. Law 2011-26 remains the framework instrument on violence, and the National Institute for Women, empowered to litigate on victims' behalf, is the operational centre of enforcement and the state counterpart in RFLD's framework convention at Chapter 39.6.

Representation. The 2019 constitutional revision reserved twenty-four parliamentary seats for women, one per electoral district, and the 2023 election filled them, installing the largest cohort in the country's parliamentary history.

What the record shows. The implementation gap sits at facility level and in rural legal knowledge, where customary practice on inheritance persists notwithstanding the 2004 Persons and Family Code. Benin serves as RFLD's operational hub for health work.

Volume II priority. Document facility-level availability of the services the 2021-12 reform authorised, and the survival of customary inheritance against the 2004 code.

4. Botswana

AU region	Southern	Protocol status	Party (ratified or acceded)
Signature	13 Oct 2023	Ratification / accession	23 Oct 2023
Deposited	1 Dec 2023	Signature to ratification	10 days
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1. Notes		

Legal and institutional position. The internal record precedes accession. The Abolition of Marital Power Act of 2004 and the Mmusi succession jurisprudence placed Botswana among the region's legal reformers two decades ago.

Representation. Representation remains the region's persistent failure, in single digits after the 2024 election, and no statutory quota exists, which shows within a high-capacity state that neither wealth nor stability produces representation without a mechanism.

What the record shows. Accession in October 2023, ten days from signature, makes Botswana the test case named at Chapter 26.4: a high-capacity administrative state, newly bound, whose first report addressing the Protocol will show whether the reporting system can function as designed.

Volume II priority. Track the first Article 62 report addressing the Protocol as the test of whether the reporting system functions as designed.

5. Burkina Faso

AU region	West	Protocol status	Party (ratified or acceded)
Signature	26 Feb 2004	Ratification / accession	9 Jun 2006
Deposited	9 Aug 2006	Signature to ratification	2 yrs 3 mo
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1. Notes		

Legal and institutional position. The state legislated early and well. The 1996 penal code ban on female genital mutilation was among the continent's earliest and prevalence fell across successive survey rounds. The 2009 quota and its 2020 revision produced modest parliamentary gains before the 2022 coups suspended the elected legislature.

Conflict and displacement. The rights environment is now dominated by the security emergency. The IDMC recorded internal displacement exceeding two million at its peak, among the fastest-growing crises in the world, with the gendered consequences documented at Chapter 22.

What the record shows. School closures in insecure zones remove girls from education at scale, and transitional restrictions on association and expression have narrowed the space in which Burkinabè women's organisations, historically among the region's strongest, operate.

Volume II priority. Record the gendered effect of school closures and of transitional restrictions on the women's organisations the security emergency has constrained.

6. Burundi

AU region	Central	Protocol status	Signed, not ratified
Signature	3 Dec 2003	Ratification / accession	n/a
Deposited	n/a	Signature to ratification	not ratified
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1.	Notes	Bound to refrain from acts defeating the object and purpose of the Protocol. See Chapter 5.1.

Legal and institutional position. Law 1/13 of 2016 created a dedicated framework on gender-based violence including specialised police units. The structural deficit is in property: Burundi has no written law of succession, matrimonial regimes and gifts, leaving inheritance to customary rules under which daughters do not inherit land equally, an absence maintained across three decades of announced drafts and the country's most consequential unlegislated question.

Representation. The 2005 constitution requires a thirty per cent minimum for women in the National Assembly, Senate and government, and successive legislatures have exceeded the floor, placing Burundi among continental leaders on the seat count while the caveat on substantive influence at Chapter 12.4 applies within a closed political system.

What the record shows. Signature dates to 2003 and ratification has not followed in over twenty-two years, the longest dormant signature on the continent, and civic space contracted severely after 2015 and reopens only partially.

Volume II priority. The single highest-value legislative act is a written law of succession, matrimonial regimes and gifts, absent for three decades.

7. Cameroon

AU region	Central	Protocol status	Party (ratified or acceded)
Signature	25 Jul 2006	Ratification / accession	13 Sep 2012
Deposited	28 Dec 2012	Signature to ratification	6 yrs 1 mo
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1.		Notes

Legal and institutional position. The penal code of 2016 criminalised forced marriage and preserved, at Article 297, the extinction of prosecution for abduction where the abductor marries the victim, an internal contradiction the domestication audit at Annex H is designed to surface. The dual civil and customary marriage system leaves widows' property rights forum-dependent.

Conflict. The Anglophone crisis since 2016 has produced displacement of several hundred thousand, documented attacks on schools with gendered effect, and conflict-related sexual violence recorded by UN human rights mechanisms, while the Lake Chad Basin insurgency applies the Chapter 22 findings in the Far North.

What the record shows. Women's organisations, including the widely reported mobilisations of women leaders across the Anglophone regions, have carried a visible share of the demand for peace, against a state framework rendered partly notional by the two active conflicts.

Volume II priority. Flag the Article 297 contradiction and document the Anglophone-crisis and Lake Chad conflict findings the state framework does not reach.

8. Cape Verde

AU region	West	Protocol status	Party (ratified or acceded)
Signature	n/a	Ratification / accession	21 Jun 2005
Deposited	22 Jul 2005	Signature to ratification	n/a
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1.		Notes
			Acceded without signature.

Legal and institutional position. The archipelago is the region's quiet high performer. Abortion has been legal on request in early pregnancy since 1986, the region's oldest liberal regime. The 2011 special law on gender-based violence established dedicated procedures and shelters.

Representation. The 2019 parity law raised women's parliamentary representation among the highest on the continent, and the state reports regularly under the CEDAW system.

What the record shows. The principal gaps are economic: high female unemployment and the concentration of women in informal services and domestic work, which places the binding constraint on economic rather than legal rights.

Volume II priority. Populate the economic fields, where female unemployment and informal-sector concentration are the binding constraint behind a strong legal record.

9. Central African Republic

AU region	Central	Protocol status	Party (ratified or acceded)
Signature	17 Jun 2008	Ratification / accession	10 May 2012
Deposited	17 Jul 2012	Signature to ratification	3 yrs 10 mo
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1. Notes		

Legal and institutional position. The 2016 parity law requiring thirty-five per cent representation of women in public and private decision-making bodies is the region's strongest representation law on paper, with a compliance horizon now passed and enforcement machinery that was not resourced.

Accountability. The Special Criminal Court, a hybrid national-international tribunal, delivered its first judgments from 2022 including convictions encompassing sexual violence, the first hybrid-court accountability for such crimes in the region.

What the record shows. Outside Bangui, state services are thin, the humanitarian caseload is proportionally among the highest in the world, and the availability of post-rape care is facility-dependent exactly in the way the availability count at Chapter 16.5 is designed to record. The 2019 peace agreement and its successors included women delegates without approaching the participation levels set out at Chapter 22.5.

Volume II priority. Track the Special Criminal Court's sexual-violence convictions and the facility-dependence of post-rape care outside Bangui.

10. Chad

AU region	Central	Protocol status	Signed, not ratified
Signature	6 Dec 2004	Ratification / accession	n/a
Deposited	n/a	Signature to ratification	not ratified
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1.	Notes	Bound to refrain from acts defeating the object and purpose of the Protocol. See Chapter 5.1.

Legal and institutional position. Ordinance 006/PR/2015 banned child marriage, raising the age to eighteen with criminal sanction, in a country whose prevalence remains among the highest in the world, a compact illustration of the step-three failure defined at Chapter 4. Maternal mortality sits in the highest global band.

Representation. The post-2021 transition constitutionalised a quota ambition for women's representation, and the transitional processes of 2022 to 2024 installed women below every announced target.

What the record shows. Signature dates to 2004 and ratification has not followed. Displacement from the war in Sudan has made eastern Chad host to one of the largest refugee influxes in the world, majority women and children, with the documentary cascade of Chapter 22.3 operating at the border.

Volume II priority. Ratification is the first move, paired with enforcement of the existing 2015 child-marriage ban against a prevalence among the world's highest.

11. Comoros

AU region	East	Protocol status	Party (ratified or acceded)
Signature	26 Feb 2004	Ratification / accession	18 Mar 2004
Deposited	16 Apr 2004	Signature to ratification	21 days
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1. Notes		

Legal and institutional position. The matrilineal customary order of the islands gives women a distinctive property position: the customary regime assigns the marital home to the wife, and this interaction between custom and codified law runs in women's favour, a configuration rare enough on the continent to merit the comparative study proposed at Annex D.

Representation. Representation in the Union Assembly remains among the region's lowest, and the 2021 family and penal frameworks retain provisions requiring a domestication audit.

What the record shows. Ratification in 2004 came twenty-one days after signature, among the fastest recorded, so the constraint here is not accession but the distance between a favourable customary starting point and codified provisions that have not been fully aligned to it.

Volume II priority. Document the favourable customary property position for comparative study, and audit the 2021 family and penal frameworks against it.

12. Congo

AU region	Central	Protocol status	Party (ratified or acceded)
Signature	27 Feb 2004	Ratification / accession	14 Dec 2011
Deposited	6 Aug 2012	Signature to ratification	7 yrs 9 mo
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1. Notes		

Legal and institutional position. The Mouebara law of 2022 on combating violence against women is the region's most recent comprehensive GBV law, criminalising domestic violence, harassment and related acts with dedicated procedures. The Family Code of 1984 retains discriminatory provisions, including the position of the husband as head of the family, that the new law does not touch.

What the record shows. The state now presents the pattern of a modern penal framework resting on an unreformed civil framework, a configuration the Annex H index would score precisely, and which locates the binding constraint in the coexistence of two bodies of law rather than in any single gap.

Volume II priority. The Annex H target is the unreformed 1984 Family Code beneath the modern 2022 penal framework.

13. Côte d'Ivoire

AU region	West	Protocol status	Party (ratified or acceded)
Signature	27 Feb 2004	Ratification / accession	5 Oct 2011
Deposited	9 Mar 2012	Signature to ratification	7 yrs 7 mo
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1. Notes		

Legal and institutional position. The 2019 reform of the marriage law ended the husband's legal headship of the household and instituted joint management of household property, correcting a provision that had governed since 1964. The 2019 electoral quota requires thirty per cent women candidates but lacks a placement rule, and representation remains below the statutory ambition, the failure mode identified at Table 12.1.

Land and economy. The registration requirements of the 1998 rural land law interact with customary tenure to women's disadvantage in the cocoa economy, where women supply a substantial share of labour and hold a small share of registered titles.

What the record shows. Post-crisis reconciliation left conflict-era sexual violence substantially unprosecuted, and the binding constraints sit at placement in representation and at enforcement in land, both downstream of the statute book.

Volume II priority. Record placement failure in the 2019 quota and the registration disadvantage women face in the cocoa land economy.

14. Democratic Republic of Congo

AU region	Central	Protocol status	Party (ratified or acceded)
Signature	5 Dec 2003	Ratification / accession	9 Jun 2008
Deposited	9 Feb 2009	Signature to ratification	4 yrs 6 mo
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1. Notes		

Legal and institutional position. The 2006 constitution entrenched parity at Article 14 and the 2015 law gave it statutory effect; the April 2024 appointment of Judith Suminwa Tuluka as first woman Prime Minister sits against National Assembly representation well below the constitutional ambition, the region's clearest gap between norm and rule. The 2016 Family Code revision removed the marital-authorisation requirement for a wife's legal acts.

Conflict and accountability. Eastern DRC is the epicentre of conflict-related sexual violence, and the 2006 sexual violence law is among the most comprehensive penal frameworks on paper; military-court convictions prove prosecution possible, and the constraint is scale, with survivor volumes exceeding judicial capacity by orders of magnitude. FONAREV, created in 2022, is the continent's first permanent national reparations mechanism.

What the record shows. The M23 escalation into Goma in early 2025 displaced hundreds of thousands more with documented mass rape, and the 2023 free maternity care policy engages the financing question of Chapter 16.7 whose facility-level effect is now the thing to measure.

Volume II priority. Document judicial capacity against survivor volume in the east and the facility-level effect of the 2023 free maternity policy.

15. Djibouti

AU region	East	Protocol status	Party (ratified or acceded)
Signature	18 Dec 2003	Ratification / accession	2 Feb 2005
Deposited	4 Feb 2005	Signature to ratification	1 yr 1 mo
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1. Notes		

Legal and institutional position. Female genital mutilation prevalence remains above ninety per cent notwithstanding criminalisation dating to 1995, the region's rawest instance of the Chapter 18.2 finding that law without enforcement machinery leaves prevalence untouched.

Representation. The quota framework, raised across successive revisions, has lifted women's parliamentary presence to roughly a quarter of seats.

What the record shows. The state's position as host to displaced populations and as a corridor for migration to the Gulf places migrant domestic workers, examined at Chapter 13.4, among its most exposed groups.

Volume II priority. The binding constraint is enforcement of the 1995 FGM ban against a prevalence above ninety per cent, and the exposure of migrant domestic workers.

16. Egypt

AU region	North	Protocol status	Neither signed nor ratified
Signature	n/a	Ratification / accession	n/a
Deposited	n/a	Signature to ratification	not applicable
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1.	Notes	Accession is the only available route. See Chapter 8.1.

Legal and institutional position. The internal framework is not empty: Article 11 of the constitution commits the state to equality and to women's representation, the 2019 amendment guarantees a quarter of the lower house, women were admitted to the Council of State bench and the prosecution from 2021, the FGM penal framework has been progressively hardened, and the 2014 sexual-harassment provisions were strengthened in 2021.

The instrument gap. Without accession none of this is reportable, reviewable or justiciable in the continental system, and Egyptian women's organisations work under an NGO law and a wider civic-space regime the Chapter 20 findings describe, several of their most prominent defenders having faced travel bans and asset freezes in the foreign-funding case of the decade.

What the record shows. The decision in Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights and Interights v Egypt at the African Commission, holding the state responsible for mass sexual assaults on women journalists in 2005, demonstrates that the Charter route already reaches Cairo, and accession to the Protocol, with reservations if necessary, would complement it.

Volume II priority. Accession under Article 28, with reservations if necessary, would make the existing internal framework reportable and justiciable in the continental system.

17. Equatorial Guinea

AU region	Central	Protocol status	Party (ratified or acceded)
Signature	30 Jan 2005	Ratification / accession	27 Oct 2009
Deposited	29 Jun 2011	Signature to ratification	4 yrs 8 mo
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1. Notes		

Legal and institutional position. This is the region's thinnest entry and the honesty convention requires saying so. No recent census-quality data on the report's core indicators has been published, no periodic report under Article 62 addressing the Protocol has been examined in the current cycle, and independent documentation from inside the country is scarce because the civic-space conditions of Chapter 20 apply in one of their most closed forms.

What the record shows. What can be stated from the depositary is ratification in 2009; what can be stated from UN sources is a persistent gap between the state's per-capita income and its social indicators, borne disproportionately by women. The entry belongs to the Annex D agenda in its entirety.

Volume II priority. The entire profile belongs to the Annex D data agenda; no core indicator can currently be stated to the report's standard.

18. Eritrea

AU region	East	Protocol status	Signed, not ratified
Signature	25 Apr 2012	Ratification / accession	n/a
Deposited	n/a	Signature to ratification	not ratified
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1.	Notes	Bound to refrain from acts defeating the object and purpose of the Protocol. See Chapter 5.1.

Legal and institutional position. Proclamation 158/2007 banned female circumcision and is credited by survey data with accelerating decline among younger cohorts, evidence that even in a closed state a clear ban with village-level enforcement moves practice.

What the record shows. Beyond that file the environment is defined by indefinite national service, the absence of elections, an unimplemented constitution and the impossibility of independent internal documentation; the UN Special Rapporteur remains the principal published source, and the state belongs with Equatorial Guinea at the top of the closed-environment documentation agenda.

Volume II priority. Beyond the FGM proclamation, the file is a documentation problem; it belongs with the closed-environment agenda of Annex D.

19. Eswatini

AU region	Southern	Protocol status	Party (ratified or acceded)
Signature	7 Dec 2004	Ratification / accession	5 Oct 2012
Deposited	6 Nov 2012	Signature to ratification	7 yrs 9 mo
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1. Notes		

Legal and institutional position. The Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act of 2018 created the modern penal framework, and Sacolo ended marital power in 2019. The kingdom records the highest adult HIV prevalence in the world, with the gendered age structure described at Chapter 17.2 in its most concentrated form.

Representation. Representation of women in the elected chamber is minimal under the tinkhundla system, in which political parties do not contest elections.

What the record shows. The civic-space findings of Chapter 20 apply forcefully since the 2021 civil unrest and its repression, so the binding constraints are the political system's design and the epidemic's gendered burden rather than any recent gap in the penal code.

Volume II priority. The binding constraints are the electoral system's design and the world's highest gendered HIV burden, not the 2018 penal framework.

20. Ethiopia

AU region	East	Protocol status	Party (ratified or acceded)
Signature	1 Jun 2004	Ratification / accession	18 Jul 2018
Deposited	17 Sep 2019	Signature to ratification	14 yrs 1 mo
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1. Notes		

Legal and institutional position. The revised Family Code of 2000 and the penal code reforms of 2005, which broadened the lawful grounds for abortion to include rape, incest, foetal malformation and the woman's age or health, remade the legal framework a generation ago and produced one of the continent's most-studied reductions in deaths from unsafe abortion. The 2018 gender-parity cabinet and the Sahle-Work Zewde presidency marked the high point of appointments.

Conflict. The Northern War of 2020 to 2022 produced conflict-related sexual violence documented by the joint OHCHR and Ethiopian Human Rights Commission investigation, with services to survivors in Tigray, Amhara and Afar still far below the caseload years after the Pretoria cessation of hostilities.

What the record shows. Post-conflict accountability architecture remains contested between national processes and international mechanisms whose mandate has expired, which leaves the Article 11(3) obligation substantially unmet at the very moment the legal framework on other fronts is among the region's oldest and strongest.

Volume II priority. Track post-conflict accountability and the gap between the survivor caseload and services in Tigray, Amhara and Afar.

21. Gabon

AU region	Central	Protocol status	Party (ratified or acceded)
Signature	27 Jan 2005	Ratification / accession	10 Jan 2011
Deposited	10 Feb 2011	Signature to ratification	5 yrs 11 mo
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1. Notes		

Legal and institutional position. Between 2021 and 2022 the state adopted the region's most concentrated set of legal-equality reforms: amendments to the Civil and Penal Codes removing the husband's head-of-household status, equalising spousal rights in property management and in divorce, criminalising domestic violence through the 2021 law, and lifting restrictions on women's economic activity, a set the World Bank's Women, Business and the Law index recorded among the largest single-cycle improvements.

What the record shows. The 2023 coup placed the reforms' institutional carriers under a transition whose gender record is still being written; the transitional period included the appointment of women to high constitutional office, and the question of durability is the one Chapter 9 poses for every legislative gain.

Volume II priority. The open question is whether the 2021-22 equal-rights reforms survive the post-2023 transition intact.

22. Gambia

AU region	West	Protocol status	Party (ratified or acceded)
Signature	11 Sep 2003	Ratification / accession	25 May 2005
Deposited	6 Sep 2005	Signature to ratification	1 yr 8 mo
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1. Notes		

Legal and institutional position. The Women's Act of 2010 domesticated significant parts of the Protocol and of CEDAW directly, an unusual and instructive legislative technique. The 2015 amendment criminalised female genital mutilation.

A defended gain. The parliamentary defence of that ban in July 2024, the first attempt anywhere in the world to reverse such a ban, is the region's most important civic victory, after sustained mobilisation by Gambian women's organisations, survivors and religious allies.

What the record shows. The Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission documented sexual violence under the former regime and its reparations recommendations remain in staged implementation, and FGM prevalence remains high notwithstanding the law, which makes the Gambia a leading case for the Chapter 18.2 finding that domestication without enforcement leaves prevalence to social rather than legal determinants.

Volume II priority. Document why the 2024 defence of the FGM ban held, as a transferable case, and why prevalence persists notwithstanding the law.

23. Ghana

AU region	West	Protocol status	Party (ratified or acceded)
Signature	31 Oct 2003	Ratification / accession	13 Jun 2007
Deposited	20 Jul 2007	Signature to ratification	3 yrs 7 mo
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1. Notes		

Legal and institutional position. The Affirmative Action (Gender Equity) Act of 2024 is the region's most recent representation law, passed after some twenty years of drafting and advocacy, and sets progressive targets for appointive public bodies. The Domestic Violence Act of 2007 established the GBV framework, with an enforcement infrastructure, the DOVVSU units within the police service, chronically under-resourced relative to caseload.

Representation. In January 2025 Professor Naana Jane Opoku-Agyemang was sworn in as the country's first woman Vice-President. Women's parliamentary representation nonetheless remains below fifteen per cent notwithstanding the country's democratic standing.

What the record shows. The Property Rights of Spouses Bill, which would give statutory effect to constitutional Article 22 on equitable distribution, has been pending for over a decade, and Ghana is the region's cleanest demonstration that democratic quality and women's representation are distinct variables.

Volume II priority. The Property Rights of Spouses Bill, pending over a decade, is the highest-value legislative gap behind a strong constitutional text.

24. Guinea

AU region	West	Protocol status	Party (ratified or acceded)
Signature	16 Dec 2003	Ratification / accession	16 Apr 2012
Deposited	17 Sep 2012	Signature to ratification	8 yrs 4 mo
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1. Notes		

Legal and institutional position. UNICEF records the second-highest FGM prevalence in the world, at around ninety-five per cent of women aged fifteen to forty-nine, essentially uniform across regions and ethnicities, and the 2019 Children's Code ban has not measurably moved it. The 2019 Civil Code raised the marriage age and reformed matrimonial provisions but preserved polygyny subject to conditions.

What the record shows. The political transition following the 2021 coup proceeded with restricted assembly and the prosecution of opposition figures, and Guinean women's organisations report the protection pressures described at Chapter 21 in one of the region's most constrained civic environments.

Volume II priority. The binding constraint is enforcement against a near-universal FGM prevalence the 2019 ban has not moved, within a constrained civic space.

25. Guinea-Bissau

AU region	West	Protocol status	Party (ratified or acceded)
Signature	8 Mar 2005	Ratification / accession	19 Jun 2008
Deposited	14 Oct 2008	Signature to ratification	3 yrs 3 mo
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1. Notes		

Legal and institutional position. The 2018 parity law requires thirty-six per cent women on candidacy lists, the 2011 law banned female genital mutilation and the 2014 law addressed domestic violence, a complete legislative framework on paper.

What the record shows. Chronic institutional instability, with repeated dissolutions of the People's National Assembly, has prevented consolidation of any of it, and the state has one of the thinnest human-rights reporting records in the region, which places it high on the Annex D agenda.

Volume II priority. The complete legislative framework awaits the institutional stability to consolidate it; the reporting record is the immediate gap.

26. Kenya

AU region	East	Protocol status	Party (ratified or acceded)
Signature	17 Dec 2003	Ratification / accession	6 Oct 2010
Deposited	13 Oct 2010	Signature to ratification	6 yrs 9 mo
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1. Notes		

Legal and institutional position. The 2010 constitution is the strongest normative platform in the region: Article 27 on equality, Article 45 on the family, Article 60 on land principles including the elimination of gender discrimination in customary practice. The statutory floor built on it includes the Matrimonial Property Act 2013, the Marriage Act 2014, the Protection Against Domestic Violence Act 2015 and the Prohibition of FGM Act 2011 with its Anti-FGM Board.

Representation. The two-thirds gender rule remains unimplemented, successive parliaments and advisory opinions having failed to legislate the delivery mechanism, the continent's most contentious unenforced norm.

What the record shows. The femicide emergency erupted into national politics in 2024 and 2025, with mass protests and the presidential establishment of a GBV taskforce in 2025, an example of the politics of recognition Chapter 18 identifies as the precondition of the count.

Volume II priority. The two-thirds gender rule is the highest-value unenforced norm, and the femicide count is the emerging documentation frontier.

27. Lesotho

AU region	Southern	Protocol status	Party (ratified or acceded)
Signature	27 Feb 2004	Ratification / accession	26 Oct 2004

AU region	Southern	Protocol status	Party (ratified or acceded)
Deposited	5 Nov 2004	Signature to ratification	7 months
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1.	Notes	

Legal and institutional position. The Legal Capacity of Married Persons Act of 2006 ended the minority status of women married in community of property, and the Land Act of 2010 opened title to women, reforms whose reach in chieftaincy-administered countryside remains partial; the courts declined in the Masupha line to extend equality to succession to chieftaincy itself.

Economy. The garment industry makes Lesotho the region's most feminised formal manufacturing economy, and the 2019 sector agreements on gender-based violence and harassment, concluded between unions, brands and employers after documented abuse, are a continental benchmark for the workplace obligations of Chapter 14.5.

What the record shows. The binding constraint sits between statutory reform and its reach into customary administration, exactly the gap Chapter 9.2 describes, with the notable exception of the collectively bargained sector agreements.

Volume II priority. Record the reach of the 2006 and 2010 reforms into chieftaincy-administered land, and the sector GBVH agreements as a workplace benchmark.

28. Liberia

AU region	West	Protocol status	Party (ratified or acceded)
Signature	16 Dec 2003	Ratification / accession	14 Dec 2007
Deposited	15 Jul 2008	Signature to ratification	3 yrs 11 mo
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1.	Notes	

Legal and institutional position. The Land Rights Act of 2018 and the Domestic Violence Act of 2019 are the principal recent laws, the former among the strongest on the continent on women's customary land rights. In February 2023 the National Council of Chiefs and Elders proclaimed a ban on female genital mutilation, a traditional-authority instrument in a state whose legislature has repeatedly declined to criminalise the practice, and the sustainability of that proclamation is a matter for verification.

Representation. The legacy of Africa's first elected woman head of state did not translate into sustained representation: women hold barely a tenth of legislative seats.

What the record shows. Conflict-era sexual violence remains untreated by any judicial mechanism, and the 2024 establishment by executive order of an office for a war and economic crimes court is the first institutional move on that record in two decades.

Volume II priority. Test the sustainability of the 2023 traditional-authority FGM ban and track the war-crimes court office as the first accountability move in two decades.

29. Libya

AU region	North	Protocol status	Party (ratified or acceded)
Signature	5 Nov 2003	Ratification / accession	23 May 2004
Deposited	30 Jun 2004	Signature to ratification	6 months
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1. Notes		

Legal and institutional position. Post-2011 fragmentation rendered the formal framework largely notional: parallel authorities, militia detention systems in which UN fact-finding documented sexual violence against migrant and detained women, and the collapse of the protective functions the state's early ratification implied.

Representation. The 2021 Government of National Unity appointed the country's first woman foreign minister and the seventeen per cent quota functioned in the political-dialogue structures; the elections themselves remain unheld.

What the record shows. For migrant women transiting Libya the documentary cascade of Chapter 22.3 and the trafficking findings of Chapter 19 converge in one of the most dangerous corridors on the continent, and the early ratification of 2004 now describes obligations the state's fragmentation prevents it from meeting.

Volume II priority. Document the migrant-women corridor, where the documentary cascade and trafficking findings converge, against an early ratification the state cannot meet.

30. Madagascar

AU region	East	Protocol status	Signed, not ratified
Signature	28 Feb 2004	Ratification / accession	n/a
Deposited	n/a	Signature to ratification	not ratified
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1.	Notes	Bound to refrain from acts defeating the object and purpose of the Protocol. See Chapter 5.1.

Legal and institutional position. Law 2019-008 on gender-based violence created the first comprehensive framework, and the land-certification reform of the 2000s formally opened titling to women, with certification rates that remain low for both sexes.

What the record shows. Ratification advocacy has reached cabinet level repeatedly without completion, and Chapter 25.4 places Madagascar among the two most winnable accession files in the region, its status as signatory only, since 2004, making it the most populous non-party in the region after Sudan.

Volume II priority. Accession is the highest-value move; the file has reached cabinet repeatedly and is among the region's two most winnable.

31. Malawi

AU region	Southern	Protocol status	Party (ratified or acceded)
Signature	n/a	Ratification / accession	20 May 2005
Deposited	29 Jun 2005	Signature to ratification	n/a
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1.	Notes	Acceded without signature.

Legal and institutional position. The 2017 constitutional amendment closed the child-marriage loophole by raising the age to eighteen without exception, completing the Marriage, Divorce and Family Relations Act of 2015, a legislative sequence carried by one of the continent's most effective national campaigns and by traditional chiefs who annulled marriages in their jurisdictions. The Customary Land Act of 2016 introduced gender-balanced land committees.

What the record shows. Child-marriage prevalence remains high notwithstanding the law, which places Malawi alongside the Gambia as a case of the enforcement gap measured at Chapter 18, and locates the binding constraint at the distance between an exemplary statute and the practice it was meant to change.

Volume II priority. The binding constraint is the distance between an exemplary child-marriage statute and a prevalence that remains high.

32. Mali

AU region	West	Protocol status	Party (ratified or acceded)
Signature	9 Dec 2003	Ratification / accession	13 Jan 2005
Deposited	3 Feb 2005	Signature to ratification	1 yr 1 mo
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1.	Notes	

Legal and institutional position. The Family Code of 2011, adopted after a religious mobilisation defeated a more progressive 2009 draft, entrenched provisions on marriage age, spousal obedience and unequal inheritance that the African Court held in 2018 to violate Articles 2(2), 6 and 21 of the Protocol and related instruments. The judgment remains unenforced, and the state has since withdrawn from ECOWAS and operates under a military transition.

Representation. The 2015 quota law raised women's presence in appointive and elective bodies and survived into the institutions of the transition.

What the record shows. The Chapter 22 conflict findings apply with full force: displacement, conflict-related sexual violence documented by the UN mission before its 2023 withdrawal, and the closure of civic space for the women's organisations that carry the documentation burden, while the withdrawal of the Article 34(6) declaration closed the supranational route through which the 2018 judgment might have been enforced.

Volume II priority. Enforcement of the unenforced 2018 African Court judgment on the Family Code is the file, now that both supranational routes are closed.

33. Mauritania

AU region	North	Protocol status	Party (ratified or acceded)
Signature	n/a	Ratification / accession	21 Sep 2005
Deposited	14 Dec 2005	Signature to ratification	n/a
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1.	Notes	Acceded without signature.

Legal and institutional position. The 2001 personal-status code codified guardianship and unequal inheritance; the penal framework descends from a 1983 code in which the criminalisation of zina exposes rape complainants to a risk of prosecution, and a bill on violence against women and girls has been rejected or stalled in parliament repeatedly over a decade, the region's clearest case of a reform named, drafted and costed blocked at the legislative stage.

Slavery legacy. The legacy of slavery structures the position of Haratine women, who carry compounded discrimination at the intersection of descent, gender and poverty; the criminalisation of slavery was strengthened in 2015 and prosecutions remain rare relative to documented practice.

What the record shows. FGM prevalence remains substantial and regionally concentrated, and accession without signature in 2005 places Mauritania in the small group the Chapter 8 analysis documents, in which the accession route was used rather than signature followed by ratification.

Volume II priority. The named, drafted, costed VAWG bill blocked at the legislative stage is the single highest-value legislative target.

34. Mauritius

AU region	East	Protocol status	Party (ratified or acceded)
Signature	29 Jan 2005	Ratification / accession	16 Jun 2017
Deposited	23 Jun 2017	Signature to ratification	12 yrs 4 mo
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1.	Notes	

Legal and institutional position. Mauritius is the region's strongest performer on the World Bank's Women, Business and the Law index, with the Workers' Rights Act of 2019 extending protections across the private sector, and is among the few African states with functioning contributory maternity protection. The 2012 penal code amendments opened narrow legal grounds for termination of pregnancy.

What the record shows. Representation in the National Assembly remains below the regional leaders, and the 2024 cycle renewed debate on a statutory quota that has not yet been adopted, which places the binding constraint on representation while economic and health indicators lead the region.

Volume II priority. The binding constraint is representation, where a statutory quota debated in 2024 has not been adopted, against strong economic and health indicators.

35. Morocco

AU region	North	Protocol status	Neither signed nor ratified
Signature	n/a	Ratification / accession	n/a
Deposited	n/a	Signature to ratification	not applicable
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1.	Notes	Accession is the only available route. See Chapter 8.1.

Legal and institutional position. The 2004 Moudawana raised the marriage age, established joint family responsibility and restricted polygamy and unilateral divorce; a royal-commission process opened in 2023 delivered revision proposals in 2024, and the adopted content of the current revision should be verified in the Bulletin Officiel before citation. The 2011 constitution's Article 19 commits to equality and creates a parity authority, and law 103-13 addresses violence against women.

Land mobilisation. The decade-long campaign of the soulaliyate movement won women's inclusion in the distribution of collective-land revenue and titles, codified in the collective-land laws of 2019, among the continent's most successful grassroots land-rights mobilisations and a direct engagement with the Chapter 15 findings.

What the record shows. The missing element is the instrument: none of this is reviewable at Banjul, and the accession note of Annex I is drafted with Morocco's file principally in mind, which makes it the more reachable of the two non-parties.

Volume II priority. Accession is the missing element; the active family-law reform makes Morocco the more reachable of the two non-parties.

36. Mozambique

AU region	Southern	Protocol status	Party (ratified or acceded)
Signature	15 Dec 2003	Ratification / accession	9 Dec 2005
Deposited	30 Dec 2005	Signature to ratification	1 yr 11 mo
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1.	Notes	

Legal and institutional position. The Family Law of 2004 equalised marriage and household headship a generation ago; law 19/2019 banned marriage under eighteen without exception; the penal revision allowed termination on request in early weeks. Representation has long stood among continental leaders on FRELIMO list practice.

Conflict. The Cabo Delgado insurgency since 2017 has displaced populations at scale, with documented abductions of women and girls and the full Chapter 22 pattern, and reconstruction programming now tests whether recovery reaches displaced women or their registrations.

What the record shows. Mozambique pairs an early and comprehensive statutory framework with an active conflict that disables that framework in the affected north, so the binding constraint is geographic and operational rather than legislative.

Volume II priority. Test whether Cabo Delgado reconstruction reaches displaced women or only their registrations, against an early and comprehensive framework.

37. Namibia

AU region	Southern	Protocol status	Party (ratified or acceded)
Signature	9 Dec 2003	Ratification / accession	11 Aug 2004
Deposited	26 Aug 2004	Signature to ratification	8 months
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1.	Notes	

Legal and institutional position. The statutory floor includes the Combating of Domestic Violence Act of 2003, the Combating of Rape Act of 2000, long regarded among the region's strongest penal frameworks, and the Communal Land Reform Act of 2002, which gives widows security of tenure on communal land.

Representation. The 2024 to 2025 executive breakthrough is the most significant on the continent: Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah was elected first woman president and inaugurated at the head of a government in which women simultaneously held the presidency, the vice-presidency and the speakership, a configuration without continental precedent, and the 2019 revision of party-list practice brought the National Assembly to near-parity.

What the record shows. The gaps the movement itself names are enforcement, the backlog of gender-based violence prosecutions, and the position of women in the informal and domestic-work sectors, which places the binding constraint downstream of both law and representation.

Volume II priority. The gaps the movement names, enforcement and the GBV-prosecution backlog, are the priority behind a landmark representation record.

38. Niger

AU region	West	Protocol status	Signed, not ratified
Signature	6 Jul 2004	Ratification / accession	n/a
Deposited	n/a	Signature to ratification	not ratified
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1.	Notes	Bound to refrain from acts defeating the object and purpose of the Protocol. See Chapter 5.1.

Legal and institutional position. The highest child-marriage prevalence in the world and among its heaviest fertility and maternal-mortality burdens sit alongside the unratified Protocol, and Chapter 23.5 sets out why a nationally framed ratification campaign is the region's highest-value advocacy target. The 2000 quota, progressively raised, has produced steady if modest gains in representation.

What the record shows. Signatory only, since July 2004, and the region's only non-party. The 2023 coup, the ECOWAS withdrawal and the security emergency in the Tillabéri and Diffa regions now dominate the environment, and the departure from ECOWAS forecloses the Hadijatou Mani route by which a Nigerien woman once reached a supranational court.

Volume II priority. Ratification is the region's highest-value advocacy target, against the world's highest child-marriage prevalence.

39. Nigeria

AU region	West	Protocol status	Party (ratified or acceded)
Signature	16 Dec 2003	Ratification / accession	16 Dec 2004
Deposited	18 Feb 2005	Signature to ratification	1 yr
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1. Notes		

Legal and institutional position. The scale of the federation makes it the region's most consequential and most uneven jurisdiction. The Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act of 2015 required state-by-state domestication now almost complete on paper; the Child Rights Act of 2003 remains undomesticated in a minority of northern states, where child-marriage prevalence is the highest in the region outside Niger.

Representation. The March 2022 rejection by the National Assembly of five gender-related constitutional bills, on reserved seats, citizenship transmission and indigeneity, marked the sharpest recent legislative reversal, and the 2023 election returned women to under five per cent of federal legislative seats.

What the record shows. The Njemanze judgment established the justiciability of the Protocol against Nigeria and compensation was paid, yet the profiling and abuse it condemned recur. In the northeast, conflict with Boko Haram and its successors has produced a documented pattern of abduction, forced marriage and sexual violence, with the 2014 Chibok abductions the emblematic case and most abducted women and girls of that decade still unaccounted for in the public record.

Volume II priority. Track state-by-state domestication of the VAPP and Child Rights Acts and the northeast conflict record against the federation's uneven scale.

40. Rwanda

AU region	East	Protocol status	Party (ratified or acceded)
Signature	19 Dec 2003	Ratification / accession	25 Jun 2004
Deposited	1 Jul 2004	Signature to ratification	6 months
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1. Notes		

Legal and institutional position. The 2010s land-tenure regularisation programme registered spouses jointly on title nationwide, the continent's largest single formalisation of women's land rights, and the 1999 succession law as revised equalised inheritance a decade before most peers. The 2018 penal code and its 2019 ministerial order eased access to legal abortion, including for pregnancies resulting from rape, forced marriage and incest.

Representation. The Chamber of Deputies has held the highest proportion of women of any national parliament in the world continuously since 2003, above sixty per cent in recent legislatures, on a thirty per cent constitutional minimum and reserved-seat machinery.

What the record shows. The open question the method requires stating: representation and legal reform of this density coexist with a closed civic environment, and the protection findings of Chapter 21 apply to independent women's voices in Rwanda as elsewhere.

Volume II priority. The open question the method requires stating is whether protection findings apply to independent women's voices within a closed civic space.

41. Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic

AU region	North	Protocol status	Party (ratified or acceded)
Signature	20 Jun 2006	Ratification / accession	19 Mar 2022
Deposited	27 May 2023	Signature to ratification	15 yrs 8 mo
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1.	Notes	

Legal and institutional position. The state governs in exile and in the territory it administers, its population residing substantially in the camps near Tindouf, where the National Union of Sahrawi Women operates one of the oldest mass women's organisations on the continent and where women hold a share of administrative responsibility visitors have long documented as high.

What the record shows. The verification convention bears directly here: independent, current, disaggregated data meeting the report's sourcing standard is scarce for both the camps and the territory, the entry is therefore short, and the file belongs to the Annex D agenda. Ratification in 2022, after the longest signature-to-ratification interval on the register, creates a reporting opening that did not exist before.

Volume II priority. The file belongs to the Annex D agenda; independent disaggregated data is scarce, and the 2022 ratification creates a reporting opening.

42. Sao Tome and Principe

AU region	Central	Protocol status	Party (ratified or acceded)
Signature	1 Feb 2010	Ratification / accession	18 Apr 2019
Deposited	27 Jun 2019	Signature to ratification	9 yrs 2 mo
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1.	Notes	

Legal and institutional position. The 2008 domestic and family violence law and its successor framework, with high routine vaccination coverage and maternal-health performance relative to the regional pattern, make the archipelago, like Cape Verde in West Africa and Seychelles in the East, a demonstration that the administrative reach of a small state changes what implementation looks like.

What the record shows. Women's parliamentary representation remains modest, and the state's principal exposure is economic, with women concentrated in informal trade and fish processing, which places the binding constraint on economic rather than legal rights.

Volume II priority. Populate the economic fields, where women in informal trade and fish processing carry the principal exposure.

43. Senegal

AU region	West	Protocol status	Party (ratified or acceded)
Signature	26 Dec 2003	Ratification / accession	27 Dec 2004
Deposited	30 Jan 2005	Signature to ratification	1 yr
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1. Notes		

Legal and institutional position. The 2010 parity law remains the most effective list-based representation law on the continent bar Rwanda's constitutional model, verifiable across three legislatures in Parline, and law 2020-05 criminalised rape as a crime. The Family Code's provisions on paternal authority and inheritance retain discriminatory elements that reform efforts have not yet carried, and the interaction of the succession regime with Muslim personal law is the principal domestication frontier.

What the record shows. Civic space narrowed measurably during the political crisis of 2021 to 2024 and has reopened since the 2024 transition; the country hosts a dense feminist institutional ecology, including RFLD's Dakar office opened in June 2026 and the Yeego Jigeen grant programme described in Part Six.

Volume II priority. The succession regime's interaction with Muslim personal law is the principal domestication frontier behind an effective parity law.

44. Seychelles

AU region	East	Protocol status	Party (ratified or acceded)
Signature	24 Jan 2006	Ratification / accession	9 Mar 2006
Deposited	25 Apr 2006	Signature to ratification	1 month
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1. Notes		

Legal and institutional position. The archipelago has recorded women's parliamentary representation among the highest on the continent without any statutory quota, the region's principal counter-example on mechanism, alongside consistently strong health and education indicators.

What the record shows. The gaps the state itself reports are gender-based violence services and the position of women in the informal and blue economy, which places the binding constraint on service delivery rather than on law or representation.

Volume II priority. The binding constraint is GBV services and women's position in the informal and blue economy, not law or representation.

45. Sierra Leone

AU region	West	Protocol status	Party (ratified or acceded)
Signature	9 Dec 2003	Ratification / accession	3 Jul 2015
Deposited	30 Oct 2015	Signature to ratification	11 yrs 6 mo
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1. Notes		

Legal and institutional position. The region's fastest recent movement: the GEWE Act of 2022 on representation and economic inclusion, the Customary Land Rights and National Land Commission Acts of 2022 on tenure, and the 2020 lifting of the school ban on pregnant girls after the WAVES judgment of the ECOWAS Court form a coherent legislative set. Safe-motherhood legislation advanced with unanimous parliamentary support.

What the record shows. FGM prevalence remains high and initiation-society dynamics make it the most socially entrenched in the region after Guinea; no national criminal ban exists, which places Sierra Leone on the wrong side of the Article 5 domestication count even as its other indicators improve.

Volume II priority. A national criminal FGM ban is the outstanding Article 5 gap even as the state's other indicators improve fastest in the region.

46. Somalia

AU re- gion	East	Protocol status	Signed, not ratified
Signature	23 Feb 2006	Ratification / accession	n/a
Depos- ited	n/a	Signature to ratification	not ratified
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1.	Notes	Bound to refrain from acts defeating the object and purpose of the Protocol. See Chapter 5.1.

Legal and institutional position. The Provisional Constitution bans female circumcision at Article 15(4), against a measured prevalence of around ninety-nine per cent, the widest norm-practice gap the report records anywhere. The Sexual Offences Bill approved by cabinet in 2018 was not passed, and a competing draft that would have weakened protections was withdrawn after national and international objection.

Representation. The thirty per cent parliamentary quota operates as a negotiated aspiration within the clan-based indirect electoral system and has been partially met in successive parliaments.

What the record shows. Al-Shabaab control and the humanitarian emergency define daily exposure; women's civil society, including survivor networks operating without state protection, carries the documentation burden described at Chapter 29.

Volume II priority. Passage of the stalled Sexual Offences Bill and the widest norm-practice gap on FGM define the file, under conditions of emergency.

47. South Africa

AU region	Southern	Protocol status	Party (ratified or ac- ceded)
Signature	16 Mar 2004	Ratification / accession	17 Dec 2004
Deposited	14 Jan 2005	Signature to ratification	9 months
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1.	Notes	

Legal and institutional position. The constitutional and statutory architecture is the densest in the region: the 1996 equality clause, the Choice on Termination of Pregnancy Act 1996, the Domestic Violence Act 1998 as amended in 2021, the Cybercrimes Act 2020 addressing the technology-facilitated harms of Chapter 19, and the three 2022 amendment acts that rebuilt the criminal law on sexual offences, presented ministerially as the legislative response to the femicide emergency.

Enforcement record. Against that stands the enforcement record: the South African Police Service's own quarterly crime statistics documenting femicide and sexual-offence levels among the highest reliably measured in the world, and the National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide, with its 2024 statutory council, now the institutional test of whether a plan can move numbers that two decades of laws have not.

What the record shows. The customary-law jurisprudence continues to widen protection, and the country remains the region's centre for feminist litigation capacity, so the binding constraint is enforcement rather than the statute book.

Volume II priority. The test is whether the National Strategic Plan and its 2024 council can move femicide numbers two decades of laws have not.

48. South Sudan

AU region	East	Protocol status	Party (ratified or acceded)
Signature	24 Jan 2013	Ratification / accession	24 Feb 2023
Deposited	7 Jun 2023	Signature to ratification	10 yrs 1 mo
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1. Notes		

Legal and institutional position. The Revitalised Agreement of 2018 requires thirty-five per cent women's participation in executive institutions, a threshold met only partially in the transitional arrangements. UN MMEIG estimates placed the maternal mortality ratio among the highest in the world, and child-marriage prevalence remains above half of women married before eighteen.

What the record shows. Conflict-related sexual violence is documented cyclically by UNMISS and the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, with accountability confined to a small number of mobile-court convictions. Ratification in 2023 creates the reporting and shadow-reporting opening described at Chapter 10.3, and Chapter 25.4 places South Sudan first among the states where accession must now be converted into domestication.

Volume II priority. Accession must now be converted into domestication; it is first among the region's states at that stage.

49. Sudan

AU region	East	Protocol status	Signed, not ratified
Signature	30 Jun 2008	Ratification / accession	n/a
Deposited	n/a	Signature to ratification	not ratified

AU re- gion	East	Protocol status	Signed, not ratified
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1.	Notes	Bound to refrain from acts defeating the object and purpose of the Protocol. See Chapter 5.1.

Legal and institutional position. The transitional period after 2019 produced the criminalisation of FGM in 2020 and the repeal of the public-order regime that had policed women's dress and movement, gains now suspended by the war.

Conflict. Since April 2023 the conflict between the armed forces and the Rapid Support Forces has generated the largest displacement crisis in the world and mass-documented conflict-related sexual violence, the ethnically targeted violence in Darfur echoing precedents of two decades earlier.

What the record shows. Sudanese women's resistance committees and emergency response rooms, the unregistered structures Chapter 31.3 describes, carry the frontline response and documentation under direct attack, and the protection findings of Chapter 21 apply to them in their most acute form.

Volume II priority. Protection of the unregistered women's resistance and response structures carrying documentation under attack is the acute priority.

50. Tanzania

AU region	East	Protocol status	Party (ratified or ac- ceded)
Signature	5 Nov 2003	Ratification / accession	3 Mar 2007
Deposited	7 May 2007	Signature to ratification	3 yrs 3 mo
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1.	Notes	

Legal and institutional position. The special-seats system keeps women above a third of the National Assembly, and the Gyumi jurisprudence on marriage age is a continental point of reference. The court-ordered amendment to the Law of Marriage Act remains unpassed, and customary inheritance codified in the 1963 Local Customary Law Declaration Orders continues to subordinate widows and daughters, the specific target an Annex H domestication audit would flag.

What the record shows. The presidency of Samia Suluhu Hassan sits alongside a civic space partly reopened after 2021, including the lifting of the school ban on pregnant girls, while the media and assembly frameworks retain the restrictive provisions adopted in the preceding decade.

Volume II priority. The court-ordered Law of Marriage Act amendment and the 1963 customary inheritance orders are the Annex H targets.

51. Togo

AU region	West	Protocol status	Party (ratified or ac- ceded)
Signature	30 Dec 2003	Ratification / accession	12 Oct 2005
Deposited	26 Oct 2005	Signature to ratification	1 yr 9 mo

AU region	West	Protocol status	Party (ratified or acceded)
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1.	Notes	

Legal and institutional position. The Persons and Family Code as revised in 2012 and 2014 removed the husband's head-of-household status and equalised significant matrimonial provisions, and the 2018 Land Code affirmed women's equal access to land including a presumption protecting spousal rights.

Representation. The appointment of the region's first woman Prime Minister in 2020 sits alongside persistently low representation in the National Assembly, illustrating the nomination-election distinction drawn at Chapter 12.4.

What the record shows. Civic space remains constrained, the 2019 amendments to the public-demonstration law restricting assembly, and Togolese women's organisations work in the narrowed conditions described at Chapter 21.

Volume II priority. Representation is the priority behind reformed family and land codes, given the nomination-election gap the record shows.

52. Tunisia

AU region	North	Protocol status	Party (ratified or acceded)
Signature	30 Jan 2015	Ratification / accession	23 Aug 2018
Deposited	27 Sep 2018	Signature to ratification	3 yrs 6 mo
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1.	Notes	

Legal and institutional position. The Code du Statut Personnel abolished polygamy and judicial repudiation in 1956 and remains the region's point of reference; law 58 of 2017 on the elimination of violence against women is the most comprehensive regional VAW law, the 1973 abortion legalisation is decades ahead of most of the continent, and the 2014 to 2018 parity electoral engineering delivered strong results. Tunisia acceded in 2018 without reservation, the only state in its legal family to do so.

What the record shows. The post-2021 constitutional rupture changed the environment: the 2022 constitution rewrote the institutional guarantees of the equality settlement, the 2022 electoral law reduced women's parliamentary presence, and prosecutions of opposition figures and critics, women among them, narrowed the civic space in which the country's dense feminist movement operates. The durable question is whether the deep statutory floor holds through the political cycle, and the honest answer is that the floor has held so far while the machinery around it has weakened.

Volume II priority. The durable question is whether the deep statutory floor holds through the post-2021 cycle as the machinery around it weakens.

53. Uganda

AU region	East	Protocol status	Party (ratified or acceded)
Signature	18 Dec 2003	Ratification / accession	22 Jul 2010

AU region	East	Protocol status	Party (ratified or acceded)
Deposited	22 Jul 2010	Signature to ratification	6 yrs 7 mo
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1.	Notes	

Legal and institutional position. The statutory floor is broad: the Domestic Violence Act of 2010, the Prohibition of FGM Act of 2010, the Succession (Amendment) Act of 2022, which finally equalised significant inheritance provisions after the Law Advocacy for Women litigation struck down the discriminatory sections, and the Mifumi judgment on bride price. Women hold about a third of Parliament on the district-woman-representative system, the region's oldest reserved-seat mechanism.

What the record shows. Enforcement remains the constraint across every named law, and civic space has narrowed measurably, with NGO-bureau deregistrations and the prosecution of dissent affecting women's organisations within the general pattern of Chapter 20.4.

Volume II priority. Enforcement is the constraint across every named law, and the narrowing of civic space is the emerging risk to women's organisations.

54. Zambia

AU region	Southern	Protocol status	Party (ratified or acceded)
Signature	3 Aug 2005	Ratification / accession	2 May 2006
Deposited	7 Jun 2006	Signature to ratification	8 months
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1.	Notes	

Legal and institutional position. The Anti-Gender-Based Violence Act of 2011 built the framework of protection orders, shelters and a fund; the Gender Equity and Equality Act of 2015 domesticated Protocol language directly; the 2016 constitutional revision embedded gender equity in the principles of the state while the failed referendum left the bill of rights unrevised, a half-completed constitutionalisation with practical consequences for justiciability.

What the record shows. Statutory and customary marriage systems continue to run in parallel with different ages and different property consequences, and it is in that dualism, rather than in gaps in the statute book, that the Annex H domestication audit would locate Zambia's binding constraint.

Volume II priority. The binding constraint is the statutory and customary marriage dualism, not the statute book, per the Annex H audit.

55. Zimbabwe

AU region	Southern	Protocol status	Party (ratified or acceded)
Signature	18 Nov 2003	Ratification / accession	15 Apr 2008
Deposited	5 Sep 2008	Signature to ratification	4 yrs 4 mo
Volume II fields	To be populated per Table C.1.	Notes	

Legal and institutional position. Article 80 of the 2013 constitution subordinated custom to women's rights in terms as strong as anywhere on the continent; Mudzuru removed child marriage in 2016 and the Marriages Act of 2022 codified it, also abolishing the guardianship and consent architecture of the colonial law. The distance travelled back is measured by *Magaya v Magaya* (1999), the Supreme Court judgment that upheld male-preference customary inheritance and became the continental example of what constitutional silence permits, and against which the 2013 settlement was written.

What the record shows. Present conditions are dominated by the economy and by civic space: the Private Voluntary Organisations Amendment Act, passed in 2025 after years of contestation, imported the regulatory instruments of Chapter 20.4 into the region's most organised civil society, and women's organisations are among those re-registering under it.

Volume II priority. Track the effect of the 2025 PVO Amendment Act on the women's organisations re-registering under it, against a strong 2013 constitutional text.

Annex D. Research and data agenda

This annex lists the indicators required in order to assess a Maputo Protocol obligation for which this report found no compiled continental figure. Each entry names the obligation engaged, the indicator, and the body that holds or would have to generate the data. The list is a research agenda and a set of demands, not a set of gaps in this report: in every case the underlying information exists somewhere in national or institutional records and has not been assembled into a form in which a continental obligation can be assessed.

The list is also the clearest single statement of the report's central finding. Twenty-three years after Maputo, most of what would be needed to measure implementation has never been compiled, and the absence is not accidental. A measure that does not exist cannot be used to hold a state to account.

Obligation	Indicator required	Why it is not available	Holder
Art. 26; Charter Art. 62	States party overdue on reporting, and length of delay in each case	No public tracker is maintained. Chapter 41 recommends one.	African Commission Secretariat
Art. 27; Court Protocol Art. 34(6)	Declarations in force, and withdrawals	Published but not consolidated with Protocol ratification data, so the combined access position per state is not visible.	African Court
Art. 9(2)	Committee chairmanships held by women, by committee budget authority	Exists in national parliamentary records. Never compiled comparably.	National parliaments; IPU
Art. 9(2)	Renomination rate of women elected under quota provisions	Requires party records across two electoral cycles. Not collected anywhere.	Political parties; electoral commissions
Art. 9	Withdrawal of women candidates, and stated reason	No electoral management body maintains a candidate withdrawal register. This is why violence against women in politics is unmeasured.	Electoral commissions
Art. 13(h)	Time-use data, periodic rather than one-off	Conducted in a minority of member states and rarely repeated, so change cannot be established.	National statistical offices
Art. 13(e), (f)	Informality by sex, and social protection coverage of informal workers	Regional rates published; coverage of informal workers by social protection rarely disaggregated by sex.	ILO; national social security institutions
Art. 14(2)(c)	States whose law aligns with all four grounds	Requires a legal review of criminal codes. Not conducted continentally.	Research institutions; national law
Art. 14(2)(c)	States where the service is available in practice	Requires facility-level assessment. No continental body conducts one.	Ministries of health
Art. 14(2); Abuja	Health allocation against the fifteen per cent commitment, tracked annually	Expenditure data published; allocation against the commitment not tracked as a compliance measure.	WHO; ministries of finance

Obligation	Indicator required	Why it is not available	Holder
Art. 4(2) (i)	Budget line funding the national action plan on violence	Plans are published; the allocation behind them frequently is not, which is the stage-three failure in Chapter 18.	Ministries of finance
Art. 4; Art. 5	Attrition between report, prosecution and conviction in violence cases	Requires linked police, prosecution and court data. Almost no African jurisdiction publishes the linkage.	Police; prosecution services; courts
Art. 5	Prevalence of harmful practices distinguishing abandonment from displacement and medicalisation	National prevalence surveys cannot distinguish the three. Chapter 18.3 sets out the consequence.	UNICEF; national surveys
Art. 6; Art. 21	Share of estates and matrimonial property actually governed by statutory rather than customary or personal law	The determinant of whether domestication reaches most women. Not measured in any state.	National land and probate registries
Art. 19	Registered land title by sex, and by form of tenure	Partially available. Common-property use rights, which are predominantly women's, are unregistered by definition.	Land administrations; FAO
Art. 10	Women in a negotiating role in peace and transition processes, as distinct from delegation membership	Delegation lists are published; portfolios within a negotiation are not.	AU Peace and Security Council; mediation teams
Charter Arts. 6, 7	Short-duration arbitrary detention of women activists, journalists and elected officials	Produces no charge and no judgment, therefore no court record. Chapter 20.2 explains why the instrument works.	Civil society documentation
Art. 26; all articles	Reservations and interpretive declarations, consolidated	Held by the depositary and not published in one accessible document, so what ratification delivers per state is not readable.	AU Treaties Depositary
Cross-cutting	Donor grant data disaggregated by the working language of the recipient	Held in every grant management system and published by none. Chapter 30.2 sets out the test.	Institutional donors

Table D.1 Indicators required to assess Protocol obligations for which no compiled continental figure exists.

Annex H converts the tractable items in this table into a scored index. Items that require a survey rather than a document are deliberately excluded from that index, on the principle stated at Annex H.1 that an index which cannot be updated annually by a civil society organisation will not be updated at all.

Annex E. Source register

Instruments and datasets on which this report relies, and those from which the indicators listed at Annex D would be drawn.

Treaty instruments and continental law

- Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, adopted 11 July 2003, in force 25 November 2005.
- African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, adopted 1981, in force 1986.
- Protocol to the African Charter on the Establishment of an African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights.
- African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, adopted 2007.
- African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, adopted 1990.
- African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention), adopted 2009.
- African Union Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection, adopted 2014.
- Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, adopted 2004.
- Abuja Declaration on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Other Related Infectious Diseases, adopted 2001.
- African Union Treaties and Conventions Depository, ratification and reservation records.
- Agenda 2063; African Union Strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.

African Commission instruments and practice

- General Comment No. 1 on Article 14(1)(d) and (e) of the Protocol.
- General Comment No. 2 on Article 14(1)(a), (b), (c) and (f) and Article 14(2)(a) and (c) of the Protocol.
- Resolution on the protection of women against digital violence in Africa.
- Guidelines on Freedom of Association and Assembly in Africa.
- Guidelines on the Conditions of Arrest, Police Custody and Pre-Trial Detention in Africa.
- Guidelines for State Reporting under the Protocol, 2009.
- Concluding Observations on state periodic reports, by state and session.
- Reports of the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women in Africa, and of the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders and Focal Point on Reprisals in Africa.

Statistical and monitoring sources

- Inter-Parliamentary Union, Parline database and monthly ranking of women in national parliaments; IPU and UN Women, Women in Politics map.

- International Labour Organization, Women and Men in the Informal Economy; instruments on domestic work and social protection floors.
- UN Maternal Mortality Estimation Inter-Agency Group, maternal mortality estimates.
- UNAIDS, Global AIDS Update; Global Fund reporting.
- World Health Organization, Global Health Expenditure Database and World Malaria Report.
- UNICEF, West and Central Africa Snapshot on maternal, newborn and child mortality; global databases on FGM and child marriage.
- UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation.
- FAO, Gender and Land Rights Database.
- Demographic and Health Surveys and Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys, by country and round.
- UN Statistics Division, time-use data holdings.
- Afrobarometer.
- CIVICUS Monitor.
- Front Line Defenders, Global Analysis.
- African Union and UNECA, Report of the High Level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa.

RFLD sources

- RFLD, Women Human Rights Report in Sub-Saharan Africa, October 2025.
- RFLD, Maputo Barometer 2026, English and French editions.
- RFLD, African Digital Safety Compendium.
- RFLD, Cyber Harassment Legal Toolkit, 2026.
- RFLD, Young Women Human Rights Defenders in West Africa and the Sahel, policy brief, 2026.
- RFLD, Maputo Protocol Hub; ACDEG Hub; West Africa Legislative Platform; Legislative Database; Gender-Responsive Budgeting tool.
- RFLD, Strategy 2023 to 2028.
- RFLD, West African Francophone Feminist Fund and Africa Grant Portfolio grants registers.
- RFLD, concept note and record of the regional convening on women human rights defenders in West Africa, Dakar, June 2026.
- RFLD, West Africa Feminist Data Summit, Porto-Novo, July 2026, agenda and outputs.

Canonical online portals used for verification

The links below are the canonical institutional portals against which the citations in this report, including the notes to the regional reviews at sections 23.7, 24.6, 25.6, 26.6 and 27.7, can be

checked. Institutional URLs are stable at the domain level; deep links change, and readers should navigate from the portal where a deep link has moved.

- African Union, Treaties and Conventions Depository: <https://au.int/en/treaties>
- African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights: <https://achpr.au.int>
- African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights: <https://www.african-court.org>
- ECOWAS Community Court of Justice: <https://www.courtecowas.org>
- Inter-Parliamentary Union, Parline: <https://data.ipu.org>
- UN Women, Women in Politics: <https://www.unwomen.org>
- WHO publications, including the UN MMEIG maternal mortality series: <https://www.who.int/publications>
- UNAIDS data: <https://www.unaids.org> and <https://aidsinfo.unaids.org>
- UNICEF global databases on FGM and child marriage: <https://data.unicef.org>
- UNFPA: <https://www.unfpa.org>
- UNHCR operational data: <https://data.unhcr.org> and <https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics>
- Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre: <https://www.internal-displacement.org>
- World Bank, Women, Business and the Law: <https://wbl.worldbank.org>
- ILO and ILOSTAT: <https://www.ilo.org> and <https://ilostat.ilo.org>
- OHCHR: <https://www.ohchr.org>
- CIVICUS Monitor: <https://monitor.civicus.org>
- Afrobarometer: <https://www.afrobarometer.org>
- RFLD, including the Maputo Protocol Hub and the DONUÈSÈ Data Center: <https://www.rflgd.org>

Annex F. Contact

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Programme enquiries	programs@rflgd.org
Data corrections and continental operations	admin@rflgd.org
Safeguarding and integrity, confidential channel	integrity@rflgd.org
General	www.rflgd.org. Porto-Novo, Accra, Dakar, Banjul.

Women human rights defenders requiring immediate emergency support should contact a specialist front-line protection partner: Front Line Defenders, ProtectDefenders.eu, or their regional protection network. RFLD coordinates referral and is not a twenty-four-hour emergency response organisation.

Corrections to any data in this report are welcomed and will be published. Readers identifying an error should write to admin@rflgd.org with the source supporting the correction.

Annex G. Shadow reporting template under Article 62

Chapter 10.3 identifies shadow reporting as the point of maximum available leverage on the Article 26 accountability deficit, and Table 29.1 identifies procedural knowledge as the binding constraint on its use. This annex sets out a working template. It is drafted so that an organisation with no prior experience of the African Commission can produce a usable submission, and it is deliberately short: a focused submission of fifteen pages on four articles is more useful to the Commission than a comprehensive one of eighty.

G.1 Before drafting

1. Establish whether the state has submitted a report and when. If the state is overdue, the submission should say so in its opening paragraph, because the fact of non-reporting is itself the first finding.
2. Obtain the most recent Concluding Observations for the state. A submission that tracks the Commission's own previous recommendations, stating what has and has not been done, carries more weight than one that raises new issues, because it engages the Commission's existing position.
3. Select no more than four or five articles. Depth on a small number of provisions is more useful than coverage of all thirty-two.
4. Establish the session date and the submission deadline, and confirm the format the Secretariat requires.
5. Decide the consent position on every case referred to, applying Chapter 2.5. Where consent is not documented, the case does not go in.

G.2 Structure

Section	Content
1. Submitting organisation	Legal name, country of registration, Observer Status number if held, mandate in two sentences, and contact person. Where the submission is joint, list all organisations and state which is corresponding.
2. Scope and method	The articles addressed, the period covered, the sources used, and the method by which the information was gathered. State the limitations. A submission that states its limits is harder to dismiss than one that does not.
3. Reporting status	Whether the state has reported, when, and how many cycles are outstanding. Where a report exists, whether it addressed Maputo obligations substantively and whether it included the budget information Article 26(2) implies.
4. Article-by-article findings	For each article selected: the obligation, the legal position in domestic law, the position in practice, the gap, and the evidence. Use the domestication tests at Annex B as the assessment framework.
5. Follow-up on previous Concluding Observations	Each prior recommendation, and whether it has been implemented, partially implemented or not implemented, with the evidence for the assessment.

Section	Content
6. Recommendations	Specific, addressed to a named institution, and capable of being verified at the next cycle. Avoid recommendations that ask the state to "strengthen" or "consider" anything.
7. Annexes	Statute citations, budget extracts, case documentation where consent permits, and any correspondence with the state.

Table G.1 Structure of an Article 62 shadow submission.

G.3 The finding format

Each finding should follow the same five-part structure, which mirrors the implementation chain at Table 4.1 and makes the diagnosis explicit rather than implied.

Element	What to state
Obligation	The article and subsection, with the obligation stated in the treaty's own terms.
Legal position	The domestic provision that gives effect to it, with its citation, or the statement that none exists. Where a conflicting provision remains in force, cite it.
Position in practice	What happens. Service availability, enforcement record, budget allocation. Distinguish what is documented from what is reported.
Stage of failure	Accession, domestication, allocation, enforcement or accountability. Naming the stage tells the Commission which institution to address.
Evidence	Source for every factual assertion. Where the evidence is testimony from the submitting organisation's network, say so.

Table G.2 The finding format.

Two drafting cautions. A submission that overstates will be checked, and a single unsupported figure will be used to set aside the rest. And a submission that does not distinguish between the absence of data and the absence of the problem invites the state to reply that no problem has been demonstrated, which is a reply the drafter can pre-empt by stating the measurement gap as a finding in its own right.

Annex H. A proposed domestication index

Chapter 45 argues that the movement lacks a number that moves when a state does something, and has instead a ratification count that has barely changed since 2023. This annex sets out a working specification for such an index, offered for comment rather than as a finished instrument.

H.1 Design principles

1. The index measures state action, not outcomes. Outcomes depend on factors outside state control and move too slowly to give a state credit for a reform or to hold it to account within a reporting cycle.
2. Every component is verifiable from a public document. A component that requires a survey cannot be scored annually by a civil society organisation, and an index that cannot be updated annually will not be updated at all.
3. The index is transparent and reproducible. The scoring rule for each component is published, so that a state disputing its score must dispute a document rather than a judgement.
4. The index does not aggregate to a single ranking. Rankings invite dispute about method and distract from the components, which are where the advocacy value lies. It aggregates to a profile across the five stages of the implementation chain.

H.2 Component structure

Stage	Component	Scoring rule	Source
Accession	Party status	2 party; 1 signed only; 0 neither	Depositary
Accession	Reservations	1 no reservation affecting substantive articles; 0 otherwise	Depositary
Accession	Article 34(6) declaration	1 made and in force; 0 not made or withdrawn	African Court records
Domestication	Constitutional equality guarantee without a saving clause exempting personal law	2 no saving clause; 1 saving clause limited; 0 general saving clause	Constitution
Domestication	Violence: comprehensive statute in force	2 comprehensive; 1 partial; 0 none	National law
Domestication	Marriage: minimum age eighteen without exception	2 no exception; 1 judicial or parental exception; 0 below eighteen	National law
Domestication	Inheritance: statutory equitable share applying to the regime that governs most estates	2 applies generally; 1 applies to statutory estates only; 0 none	National law
Domestication	Article 14(2)(c): all four grounds in law	2 all four; 1 some; 0 none	National law
			Electoral law

Stage	Component	Scoring rule	Source
Domestication	Quota with sanction, placement rule and vacancy rule	3 all three; 2 sanction and one other; 1 quota without sanction; 0 none	
Domestication	Labour protection extending to domestic and informal workers	2 both; 1 one; 0 neither	Labour law
Allocation	Costed national action plan on violence with a budget line	2 costed and funded; 1 plan without budget; 0 none	Budget documents
Allocation	Health allocation against the Abuja fifteen per cent commitment	2 at or above 15%; 1 within 5 points; 0 below	Budget; WHO
Allocation	Gender-disaggregated allocation analysis published with the budget	1 published; 0 not	Budget documents
Enforcement	Legal aid available for the offences in Articles 4 and 5	2 statutory scheme funded; 1 partial; 0 none	National law; budget
Enforcement	Forensic examination available without charge to the complainant	1 available; 0 not	National policy
Enforcement	School re-entry policy for pregnant girls and adolescent mothers	1 in force; 0 none	Education policy
Enforcement	Association and assembly law consistent with the ACHPR Guidelines	2 consistent; 1 partially; 0 inconsistent	National law; ACHPR Guidelines
Accountability	Article 62 report current	2 current; 1 one cycle overdue; 0 more	ACHPR
Accountability	Maputo content in the most recent report	2 substantive with data; 1 formal; 0 absent	State report
Accountability	Action on prior gender-related Concluding Observations	2 majority implemented; 1 some; 0 none	ACHPR; national records
Accountability	Sex- and age-disaggregated statistics published across the Part Three domains	2 most domains; 1 some; 0 few	National statistical office

Table H.1 Proposed component structure for a domestication index. Twenty-one components across the five stages of the implementation chain.

H.3 What the index would make possible

- Year-on-year comparison for a single state, which converts advocacy from a general demand into a specific claim that a named score has not moved.
- Comparison across states within a region, which reintroduces the peer effect that Chapter 6.1 identifies as having contributed to complete ratification in Southern Africa.

- Comparison by stage, which identifies whether a state's failure is legislative, fiscal, institutional or informational, and therefore which ministry to address.
- Comparison by article, which shows the continental pattern in Table 9.1 quantitatively rather than qualitatively.
- A defensible basis for the claim that ratification and implementation have diverged, which is the report's central finding and is currently supported by argument rather than by measurement.

The index is not proposed as an RFLD product alone. An index published by one organisation is contestable in a way that an index published by a coalition is not, and Chapter 45 accordingly frames Volume II as a partnership undertaking, particularly in North Africa where RFLD's presence is thinnest.

Annex I. Outline of the accession legal note

Chapter 8 recommends a short legal note on the accession route, addressed to national women's coalitions in the nine states currently outside the Protocol. This annex sets out its structure so that the note can be commissioned rather than designed.

Section	Content
1. The two routes	Signature followed by ratification, and accession. That both produce identical legal effect, with Article 28 of the Protocol as the basis.
2. The precedent	Cape Verde, Malawi and Mauritania, with dates from Annex A. That all three acceded within the first year of entry into force, and that the route has since fallen out of use rather than out of availability.
3. Why it matters where there is no signature	That in Egypt and Morocco there is no signature to ratify, so a call to ratify asks for something procedurally unavailable, and the ask should be reframed.
4. Why it may matter where a signature is dormant	That where a signature predates the current constitutional order and the domestic file cannot be located, accession may be procedurally cleaner than reviving ratification. Whether it is available is a question of the state's own treaty-making law.
5. The domestic steps	For each of the nine states: which organ has treaty-making power, whether legislative approval is required, and what instrument must be deposited with the Chairperson of the AU Commission.
6. Anticipated objections	Reservations practice as a route through objections based on personal law, with the limits of that route stated: a reservation to a substantive article reduces what accession delivers, and Annex H scores it accordingly.
7. Who to address	The ministry holding the file, the parliamentary committee, and the national human rights institution. The note is addressed to coalitions rather than to states, because the ask has to be made domestically to be made credibly.

Table I.1 Structure of the accession legal note. To be produced in English, French and Arabic.

The Arabic requirement follows from the geography. Two of the nine states outside the Protocol are Arabic-speaking North African states, and three further signature-only states use Arabic as a working language. A note produced only in English and French does not reach the constituency it is written for, which would reproduce inside this recommendation the failure Chapter 30 documents.

Annex J. Glossary

Term	Meaning as used in this report
Accession	Becoming party to a treaty by a single act, without prior signature. Produces the same legal effect as ratification.
Attrition chain	The sequence of points at which a violence case fails between incident and conviction. Set out at Table 18.1.
Concluding Observations	The African Commission's findings and recommendations following examination of a state periodic report.
Deposit	Lodging of the instrument of ratification or accession with the Chairperson of the AU Commission. The date from which the treaty binds the state.
Domestication	Incorporation of a treaty obligation into national law such that it is enforceable domestically. Distinct from ratification.
Dualist system	A legal system in which a treaty requires an incorporating statute before a national court will apply it.
Implementation chain	The five-stage frame used in this report: accession, domestication, allocation, enforcement, accountability. Table 4.1.
Legal pluralism	The simultaneous operation of statutory, customary and religious personal law regimes over the same subject matter.
Monist system	A legal system in which a ratified treaty forms part of domestic law without a separate incorporating statute.
Re-granting	Onward grantmaking by an intermediary organisation to smaller organisations, with the intermediary carrying the compliance burden.
Reservation	A unilateral statement by which a state excludes or modifies the legal effect of a treaty provision in its application to that state.
Saving clause	A constitutional provision exempting customary or religious personal law from the constitution's non-discrimination guarantee.
Shadow report	A civil society submission to a treaty body, presented alongside or in the absence of a state report.
Signature-only state	A state that has signed the Protocol without ratifying. Obligated to refrain from acts defeating the object and purpose of the treaty.
Stage of failure	The point on the implementation chain at which a given right is failing. Named at the end of each Part Three chapter.
TFGBV	Technology-facilitated gender-based violence. The forms are set out at Table 19.1.
Tier 1 to Tier 4	The hierarchy of evidence used in this report. Table 2.1.
Vulnerable Groups	RFLD's collective term for populations facing compounded discrimination. See the note on terminology.

Annex K. Accession chronology, 2003 to 2026

The forty-six states party ordered by date of ratification or accession, computed from Annex A. The chronology shows the shape of accession over the instrument's lifetime and identifies the cohorts referred to at Chapter 5.2.

Year	States	Ratified or acceded
2004	8	Comoros (East, 18 Mar 2004); Libya (North, 23 May 2004); Rwanda (East, 25 Jun 2004); Namibia (Southern, 11 Aug 2004); Lesotho (Southern, 26 Oct 2004); Nigeria (West, 16 Dec 2004); South Africa (Southern, 17 Dec 2004); Senegal (West, 27 Dec 2004)
2005	9	Mali (West, 13 Jan 2005); Djibouti (East, 2 Feb 2005); Malawi (Southern, 20 May 2005); Gambia (West, 25 May 2005); Cape Verde (West, 21 Jun 2005); Mauritania (North, 21 Sep 2005); Benin (West, 30 Sep 2005); Togo (West, 12 Oct 2005); Mozambique (Southern, 9 Dec 2005)
2006	3	Seychelles (East, 9 Mar 2006); Zambia (Southern, 2 May 2006); Burkina Faso (West, 9 Jun 2006)
2007	4	Tanzania (East, 3 Mar 2007); Ghana (West, 13 Jun 2007); Angola (Southern, 30 Aug 2007); Liberia (West, 14 Dec 2007)
2008	3	Zimbabwe (Southern, 15 Apr 2008); Democratic Republic of Congo (Central, 9 Jun 2008); Guinea-Bissau (West, 19 Jun 2008)
2009	1	Equatorial Guinea (Central, 27 Oct 2009)
2010	2	Uganda (East, 22 Jul 2010); Kenya (East, 6 Oct 2010)
2011	3	Gabon (Central, 10 Jan 2011); Côte d'Ivoire (West, 5 Oct 2011); Congo (Central, 14 Dec 2011)
2012	4	Guinea (West, 16 Apr 2012); Central African Republic (Central, 10 May 2012); Cameroon (Central, 13 Sep 2012); Eswatini (Southern, 5 Oct 2012)
2015	1	Sierra Leone (West, 3 Jul 2015)
2016	1	Algeria (North, 20 Nov 2016)
2017	1	Mauritius (East, 16 Jun 2017)
2018	2	Ethiopia (East, 18 Jul 2018); Tunisia (North, 23 Aug 2018)
2019	1	Sao Tome and Principe (Central, 18 Apr 2019)
2022	1	Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (North, 19 Mar 2022)
2023	2	South Sudan (East, 24 Feb 2023); Botswana (Southern, 23 Oct 2023)

Table L.1 Accession by year, forty-six states party. Region shown in parentheses.

K.1 What the chronology shows

Four features are visible in the distribution and none of them appears in the headline ratification figure.

- The entry-into-force cohort of 2004 and 2005 is by far the largest, which reflects the concentrated diplomatic effort required to reach the fifteenth ratification and the momentum that effort generated. Nothing comparable has been mounted since.

- Accession slowed sharply after 2005 and has proceeded in small annual increments, with the 2012 cluster the only subsequent grouping of any size.
- The most recent additions are from regions conventionally assumed to be static on this instrument: North Africa in 2016 and 2018, and the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic in 2022. The assumption is not supported by the record.
- No state has become party since 2023. The count has been static for three years, which is the empirical basis for the report's statement at Chapter 45 that the movement lacks a number that moves.

The strategic reading is that accession has historically responded to concentrated, time-bound diplomatic effort rather than to continuous advocacy, and that no such effort has been mounted for the remaining nine states. Chapter 8 and Annex I set out the instrument that a renewed effort would require.

Annex L. Concordance of Protocol articles to report chapters

For readers approaching the report from a specific treaty provision. Chapter references are to this volume; Annex B gives the obligation and the domestication test for each article.

Art.	Subject	Principal chapter	Also treated at
1	Definitions	Chapter 3.1	Chapters 18.1, 19.1
2	Elimination of discrimination	Chapter 9.2	Chapters 3.1, 15.2
3	Right to dignity	Chapter 18.1	Chapter 19
4	Life, integrity and security	Chapter 18	Chapters 19, 22.4, 40
5	Harmful practices	Chapter 18.3	Chapters 9.1, 33.2
6	Marriage	Chapter 18.3	Chapters 15.1, 40
7	Separation, divorce and annulment	Chapter 15.3	Chapter 13.4
8	Access to justice	Chapter 20.1	Chapters 18.2, 21
9	Political participation	Chapter 12	Chapters 33.1, 40, 44
10	Right to peace	Chapter 22.5	Chapter 22.1
11	Women in armed conflict	Chapter 22	Chapters 18.4, 33.2
12	Education and training	Chapter 16.5	Chapter 40
13	Economic and social welfare	Chapter 14	Chapters 13, 15.1
14	Health and reproductive rights	Chapter 16	Chapters 17, 33.2, 33.3
15	Food security	Chapter 15.1	Chapter 13.2
16	Adequate housing	Chapter 15.3	Chapter 22.3
17	Positive cultural context	Chapter 9.2	Chapter 33.1
18	Healthy and sustainable environment	Chapter 15.4	Chapter 33.5
19	Sustainable development	Chapter 15	Chapters 13.1, 14.1
20	Widows' rights	Chapter 15.3	Annex B
21	Right to inheritance	Chapter 15.3	Chapters 9.1, 40
22	Elderly women	Annex B	Chapter 2.3
23	Women with disabilities	Chapter 33.2	Annex B
24	Women in distress, women in detention	Chapter 20.3	Chapter 22.3
25	Remedies	Chapter 11	Chapter 20.1
26	Implementation and monitoring	Chapter 10	Chapters 40, 41, Annex G
27	Interpretation	Chapter 11	Chapter 41
28	Signature, ratification and accession	Chapters 5, 8	Annexes A, I
29	Entry into force	Chapter 5.2	Annex K

Art.	Subject	Principal chapter	Also treated at
30	Amendment and revision	Annex B	
31	Status of the Protocol	Chapter 3.6	Annex B
32	Transitional provisions	Chapter 11	Annex B

Table M.1 Concordance of Protocol articles to report chapters.

Annex M. Recommendations tracking matrix

The recommendations in Part Seven are reproduced here in a form permitting year-on-year tracking, so that the 2027 edition can report on movement rather than restate the demand. The verification column states how each recommendation would be assessed, and the instrument column states what document would evidence it. A recommendation that cannot be verified has been reformulated or removed.

Ref.	Recommendation	How verified	Evidencing instrument
40.1	The nine states outside become party	Depositary record shows deposit	AU depositary
40.2	Domestication of inheritance, matrimonial property and land provisions	Statute enacted, conflicting provisions repealed	National gazette
40.3	Article 26 reporting met	Report submitted with substantive Maputo content and budget information	ACHPR state reporting record
40.4	Quota carries sanction, placement and vacancy rules	Electoral law text	Electoral law; commission practice
40.5	Quota extended to local government	Local government electoral law text	National gazette
40.6	Gender-disaggregated allocation analysis published with the budget	Presence of the analysis in the budget document	Published budget
40.7	Time-use survey conducted and published	Survey published	National statistical office
40.8	Association and assembly law reviewed against ACHPR Guidelines	Amendment enacted or review published	National gazette
40.9	School re-entry policy adopted	Policy in force	Education ministry circular
40.10	Separately recorded women's consultation in land acquisition	Procedural requirement in force	Land law or regulation
40.11	Article 34(6) declaration made	Declaration lodged	African Court records
41.1	Commission publishes a reporting compliance tracker	Tracker published and updated	ACHPR website
41.2	Commission refers cases to the Court	Referral filed	African Court docket
41.3	Systematic follow-up on Concluding Observations	Follow-up procedure adopted	ACHPR session documents
41.4	Guidance distinguishing protective from state-security cyber provisions	Guidance adopted	ACHPR resolutions register
41.5	Francophone and lusophone participation resourced	Interpretation beyond plenary; documents in working languages	Session records
41.6	Solemn Declaration reporting strengthened	Reporting rate published	AU Women, Gender and Youth Directorate
41.7	Reservations compilation published	Single accessible document	AU depositary

Ref.	Recommendation	How verified	Evidencing instrument
42.2	ECOWAS clarifies Court access after withdrawals	Public legal statement	ECOWAS Commission; Court
42.3	AfCFTA simplified regimes re-designed for women traders	Revised procedure published	AfCFTA Secretariat
43.1	Grant data published disaggregated by recipient working language	Dataset published	Funder transparency portal
43.2	Institutional systems funded as a deliverable	Call documents permit systems as a budget line	Published calls
43.3	Security budgeted at threat-assessed level	Call documents permit security as a standing line	Published calls
43.4	Multi-year core support with unrestricted component	Grant terms	Published grant terms
43.5	Calls and templates in French and Portuguese	Documents published in those languages	Published calls
43.6	Due diligence harmonised	Shared assessment recognised by two or more funders	Funder statements
43.7	Position on fiscally sponsored applications stated	Explicit statement in eligibility criteria	Published calls
44.1	Documentation capacity built	Submissions accepted by continental mechanisms	ACHPR records
44.2	Continental mechanisms used	Number of shadow reports and communications filed	ACHPR records
44.8	Quota outcomes reported beyond seat counts	Published analysis of committee authority and renomination	Civil society publications

Table N.1 Recommendations tracking matrix. Twenty-nine of the recommendations in Part Seven are independently verifiable; the remainder are addressed to internal movement practice and are tracked through RFLD network reporting.

Annex N. List of tables

Table	Title
2.1	Hierarchy of evidence applied throughout this report
3.1	African Commission mechanisms engaged by this report
4.1	The implementation chain
5.1	Maputo Protocol status summary
5.2	Chronology: twenty-three years in six moments
6.1	Ratification by African Union region
7.1	Selected signature-to-ratification intervals
9.1	Domestication pattern by domain
11.1	Routes to remedy under the Protocol, and their constraints
12.1	Quota designs and observed performance
13.1	Public determinants of unpaid care volume
16.1	Failure modes in maternal mortality, mapped to the implementation chain
18.1	The attrition chain in sexual and gender-based violence cases
19.1	Forms of technology-facilitated gender-based violence
21.1	Two registers of attack on women human rights defenders
21.2	Structural gaps in the protection architecture
29.1	Reported gaps and requests across RFLD's network
32.1	RFLD institutional profile
33.1	The four pillars of PAWELE
34.1	DONÜESÈ tools mapped to the findings of this report
36.1	The four pillars of organisational resilience
39.1	Case study slots with completion criteria
A.1	Maputo Protocol status, fifty-five African Union member states
A.2	Status by African Union region
B.1	The Maputo Protocol article by article, with domestication tests
C.1	Fields for completion in every country profile
D.1	Indicators required to assess Protocol obligations for which no compiled continental figure exists
G.1	Structure of an Article 62 shadow submission
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H.1	Proposed component structure for a domestication index
I.1	Structure of the accession legal note

Table	Title
L.1	Accession by year, forty-six states party
M.1	Concordance of Protocol articles to report chapters
N.1	Recommendations tracking matrix

End of Volume I.

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