



ORAL STATEMENT

**81st Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights
17 October – 6 November 2024,
Banjul, The Gambia**

Agenda Item 5(v): Activity Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women in Africa

Honourable Special Rapporteur,

Amnesty International welcomes the recent adoption of the African Commission's Model Law on the implementation and domestication of the Maputo Protocol and the [Resolution to study digital violence against women's rights in Africa](#). Our research in Uganda highlights technology-facilitated gender-based violence, particularly targeting marginalized communities, including LGBTQ persons. It documents cases of doxing, outing, threats of violence, blackmailing, impersonation, hacking and disinformation — further marginalizing LGBTQ people, especially those from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. Uganda's legal framework and actions are enabling online violence. We urge the Special Rapporteurs overseeing this study to ensure it captures the diverse experiences of women and girls across all backgrounds, providing a foundation for inclusive and effective local and national policies.

In Burundi, [our analysis of the 2016 gender-based violence law](#) reveals that, despite bringing significant improvements such as the clear consent-based definition of rape, the delivery of justice for victims and survivors is undermined by inconsistencies in other legislation. We urgently call on Burundian authorities to harmonize related legislation to ensure effective implementation. Additionally, we call for the amendment of this law to repeal provisions criminalizing cohabitation and consensual private sexual acts between adults, which violate the rights to privacy, family life, equality, and non-discrimination guaranteed under the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and its Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa.

Honourable Special Rapporteur

Conflict-related sexual violence remains a grave issue, disproportionately affecting women and girls. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Médecins Sans Frontières reported treating over 25,000 survivors of sexual violence in 2023. This aligns with Amnesty International's findings, including our documentation [of rape by the M23 armed group in Kishishe](#), North Kivu. Sexual violence is rampant in and around Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps. We call on DRC authorities to intensify efforts toward justice, accountability, and the guarantee of non-repetition for survivors.

In Ethiopia, victims of rape, sexual enslavement, and other forms of sexual violence in conflict settings continue to be denied justice. Due to the successful isolation of areas impacted by the ongoing armed conflicts in the Amhara and Oromia regions, we are far from understanding the full picture of the impact these conflicts have on women and girls. We call on you and other relevant special mechanisms of this Commission to request access to the country and to enable scrutiny of the ongoing human rights crisis, as the national government has failed in its duty to protect its citizens.



In Sudan, we have documented heinous violations, including the [abduction and gang rape of 24 women and girls by the Rapid Support Forces in Nyala](#). Victims and survivors lack access to essential medical and psycho-social support. We call on warring state and non-state actors to put an end to all forms of sexual and gender-based violence in Sudan and ensure those committing these violations are held accountable.

In Southern African region, our report, [“Cross-Border is Our Livelihood. It is our Job”](#), highlights the urgent need for targeted interventions by the governments of Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe to the multifaceted human rights challenges faced by women engaged in informal cross-border trade in Southern Africa. These challenges are deeply rooted in historical, structural, and gendered dynamics. The report underscores severe human rights violations, including the failure to protect against gender-based violence and the inadequacy in fulfilling the right to social security. Furthermore, the report emphasizes the significance of social protection deficits which manifest in excessive time poverty, work-related health challenges, and the care burden endured by women in this sector.

The lack of comprehensive social protection measures perpetuates economic disparities and violates the human rights of women in informal cross-border trade. We call on all member states to expedite the ratification of the Protocol to the African Charter on Social Protection and Social Security which is vital to strengthening social protection for women in the informal economy.

Thank you.