



**Rwanda's Compliance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of  
Discrimination Against Women  
Suggested List of Issues Related to Women's Rights**

**Submitted by The Advocates for Human Rights,**  
a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with ECOSOC since 1996

for the 84th Session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women  
4 July – 8 July 2022

Submitted 6 June 2022

Founded in 1983, **The Advocates for Human Rights** (“The Advocates”) is a volunteer-based non-governmental organization committed to the impartial promotion and protection of international human rights standards and the rule of law. The Advocates conducts a range of programs to promote human rights in the United States and around the world, including monitoring and fact finding, direct legal representation, education and training, and publication. The Advocates is the primary provider of legal services to low-income asylum seekers in the Upper Midwest region of the United States.

The Advocates is committed to ensuring human rights protection for women around the world. The Advocates has published more than 25 reports on violence against women as a human rights issue, provided consultation and commentary of draft laws on domestic violence, and trained lawyers, police, prosecutors, judges, and other law enforcement personnel to effectively implement new and existing laws on domestic violence.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Rwanda has made some significant progress on women’s rights over the last decade. Rwanda continues to rank in the Top Ten in the Global Gender Gap Report, as measured by the World Economic Forum.<sup>1</sup> Despite this progress, however, there is still some room for improvement.
2. The **2012 NGO law** continues to include burdensome operational requirements.<sup>2</sup> In its 2017 Concluding Observations, the Committee expressed concern about the significant obstacles faced by non-governmental organizations, including cumbersome registration requirements and operational restrictions codified in two 2012 laws (Law No. 04/2012 and 05/2012). The Committee also cited interference by the Rwanda Government Board in the appointment of leadership positions.<sup>3</sup> In its 2021 State Party Report, Rwanda stated that there is no interference with internal functioning of NGOs and cites an on-going review of existing laws and procedures to create efficiency in the registration process. Credible third-party sources continue to cite the use of ministerial discretion in the interpretations of the statutes as well as overly burdensome data requirements for successful registration.<sup>4</sup>
3. **Gender-based violence** against women continues to be a serious problem in Rwanda.<sup>5</sup> While a commendable number of social outreach programs have been implemented with the goal of changing public perception on domestic and sexual violence and the **stereotypes** that perpetuate it, a recent government survey found that over half of the adult population believed that there are a number of circumstances where domestic violence is justified.<sup>6</sup> This statistic underscores the urgency of enhancing services available for victims, and also measuring the efficacy of the efforts underway to eliminate stereotypes that lead to gender-based violence.
4. Additionally, long-term shelter availability for victims is inadequate. In response to the Committee’s concern about the “lack of information on long-term shelters and relocation schemes for victims of gender-based violence,”<sup>7</sup> the State Party’s response cited very limited information, stating that four temporary shelters have been established with no information as to the number of beds this represents.<sup>8</sup> Recommended standards require an estimated 1,350

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<sup>1</sup> World Economic Forum, *Global Gender Gap Report 2020*, (Geneva, Switzerland: World Economic Forum, December 2019) pg. 299, [https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_GGGR\\_2020.pdf](https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2020.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, “Civic Freedom Monitor: Rwanda,” (accessed May 2022). <https://www.icnl.org/resources/civic-freedom-monitor/rwanda>.

<sup>3</sup> Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, *Concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda*, (March 9 2017), U.N. Doc CEDAW/C/RWA/CO/7-9, ¶16.

<sup>4</sup> K4D, *HelpDesk Report: Legislation on non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Rwanda and England and Wales*, by Luke Kelly (August 2019) pg. 10, <https://reliefweb.int/report/ethiopia/helpdesk-report-k4d-legislation-non-governmental-organisations-ngos-tanzania-kenya>; Freedom House, “Freedom in the World 2022: Rwanda, Associational and Organizational Rights (E2),” (accessed May 2022) <https://freedomhouse.org/country/rwanda/freedom-world/2022>.

<sup>5</sup> National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR) [Rwanda], Ministry of Health (MOH) [Rwanda] and ICF, 2019-20 Demographic and Health Survey Summary Report, (Kigali, Rwanda, and Rockville, Maryland, USA: NISR and ICF, 2021) pg. 15, <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/SR271/SR271.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, *Concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda*, (March 9 2017), U.N. Doc CEDAW/C/RWA/CO/7-9, ¶22(e), 23(d).

<sup>8</sup> Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Tenth periodic report submitted by Rwanda under article 18 of the Convention, due in 2021, (October 2 2021), U.N. Doc CEDAW/C/RWA/10, ¶ 82.

shelter beds be accessible for a population of 13.5 million.<sup>9</sup>

5. The longstanding issue of the State failing to investigate **violence against women in conflict** remains unaddressed. The reports of sexual violence and other human rights violations committed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (1993-2003) and reported by the OHCHR in 2010 remain a critical concern for both victims and civil society.<sup>10</sup> Failure to address this topic by the State Party, regardless of time lapse, reinforces a culture of silence and impunity and dismisses the violence and the need for justice for the victims.<sup>11</sup>

### **Rwanda fails to uphold its obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)**

6. As a State Party to the CEDAW, Rwanda is obligated to treat women and men equally before the law and ensure “effective protection of women” through the courts and institutions under Article 2 of CEDAW. CEDAW recognizes violence against women as a form of discrimination. Under Article 8, CEDAW also ensures the right to participate in non-governmental organizations concerned with the public and political life of the country.

#### **I. Non-governmental Organizations (Concluding Observations paragraph 16)**

7. In its 2017 Concluding Observations, the Committee expressed concern about significant obstacles faced by non-governmental organizations, including cumbersome registration requirements and operational restrictions introduced with two 2012 laws (Law No. 04/2012 of 17 February 2012 and Law 05/2012 of 17 February 2012). The Committee also cited interference by the Rwanda Government Board (RGB) in the appointment of leadership positions. The Committee recommended that Rwanda review registration requirements for non-governmental organizations to assure that the establishment and functioning of non-governmental organizations operate without undue restrictions. Additionally, the Committee recommended that the role of the Board is affirmed to be purely regulatory.<sup>12</sup>
8. In its 2021 State Party Report, Rwanda stated that there is no interference with internal functioning of NGOs, citing a recent significant increase in the number of NGOs operations as proof. It also cited an ongoing review to improve the efficiency of the registration process, including the development of a new system to facilitate efficiency in the process.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Council of Europe, Combating violence against women: minimum standards for support services, by Liz Kelly and Lorna Dubois, (Strasbourg: Directorate General of Human Rights and Legal Affairs, Council of Europe, September 2008) pg. 18, [https://www.coe.int/t/dg2/equality/domesticviolencecampaign/Source/EG-VAW-CONF\(2007\)Study%20rev.en.pdf](https://www.coe.int/t/dg2/equality/domesticviolencecampaign/Source/EG-VAW-CONF(2007)Study%20rev.en.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, DRC: Mapping human rights violations 1993-2003: Report of the Mapping Exercise documenting the most serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed within the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo between March 1993 and June 2003, (August 2010) <https://www.ohchr.org/en/countries/africa/2010-drc-mapping-report>.

<sup>11</sup> Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, *Concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda*, (March 9 2017), U.N. Doc CEDAW/C/RWA/CO/7-9, ¶24-25.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, ¶16.

<sup>13</sup> Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Tenth periodic report submitted by Rwanda under article 18 of the Convention, due in 2021, (October 2 2021), U.N. Doc CEDAW/C/RWA/10, ¶44-47.

9. The **2012 NGO law continues to include burdensome registration and operational requirements**. Credible secondary sources confirm that “registration and reporting requirements for both domestic and foreign nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are onerous, and activities that the government defines as divisive are prohibited.”<sup>14</sup> International NGOs have even broader requirements than NGOs and must establish who will continue their work after the programs end and provide “all information relating its geographical establishment throughout the world.”<sup>15</sup>
10. The RGB has broad discretion (versus concise criteria) as to whether an NGO can be registered. A refusal of registration by the RGB may cite the NGO as a threat to “security, public order, health, morals, and human rights.”<sup>16</sup> The RGB may also de-register an NGO based on the same discretionary assessments.<sup>17</sup>
11. Additionally, NGO independence can be compromised by the RGB’s business practices. One report found that “Many organizations receive funds from the RGB which challenges their independence. Several NGOs have been banned in recent years, leading others to self-censor. The government has been accused of employing infiltration tactics against human rights organizations.”<sup>18</sup> These restrictions in Rwanda’s law impede the work of civil society, including NGOs working to protect women’s rights.
12. **Suggested questions relating to interference in Non-Governmental Organizations:**
  - What specific changes to the law (Law No. 04/2012 and 05/2012) has Rwanda considered enacting? How will these changes address the existing barriers that NGOs face in delivering services in Rwanda?
  - What governmental mechanisms, if any, are in place to assure that individual NGOs can operate autonomously and enjoy freedom of assembly and association as guaranteed by international law?

## II. Stereotypes (Concluding Observations paragraph 21)

13. In its 2017 Concluding Observations, the Committee expressed concern about insufficient measures used to address the patriarchal attitudes and stereotypes in Rwanda, leading to subordination of women. These stereotypes undermine equality and impede autonomy, social status, and educational and professional opportunities. They also constitute an underlying

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<sup>14</sup> Freedom House, “Freedom in the World 2022: Rwanda, Associational and Organizational Rights (E2),” (accessed May 2022) <https://freedomhouse.org/country/rwanda/freedom-world/2022>.

<sup>15</sup> International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, “Civic Freedom Monitor: Rwanda, Legal Analysis, Barriers to Entry,” (accessed May 2022). <https://www.icnl.org/resources/civic-freedom-monitor/rwanda>.

<sup>16</sup> International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, “Civic Freedom Monitor: Rwanda, Legal Analysis, Barriers to Operational Activity,” (accessed May 2022). <https://www.icnl.org/resources/civic-freedom-monitor/rwanda>

<sup>17</sup> K4D, *HelpDesk Report: Legislation on non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Rwanda and England and Wales*, by Luke Kelly (August 2019) pg. 10, <https://reliefweb.int/report/ethiopia/helpdesk-report-k4d-legislation-non-governmental-organisations-ngos-tanzania-kenya>.

<sup>18</sup> Freedom House, “Freedom in the World 2022: Rwanda, Associational and Organizational Rights (E2),” (accessed May 2022) <https://freedomhouse.org/country/rwanda/freedom-world/2022>.

cause for gender-based violence.<sup>19</sup> The Committee recommended that Rwanda engage in a whole-of-society effort to raise awareness and enhance education about gender equality. Additionally, it recommended a baseline measurement system and progress reporting for each initiative.<sup>20</sup>

14. In its 2021 State Party Report, Rwanda shared several initiatives including formal education in schools, community and State events, media programs, a youth organization, and initiatives with NGOs, all dedicated to gender equality and combatting stereotypes. Over 3,400 men and women have been trained to handle lead roles in these initiatives.<sup>21</sup> While the report shares information about systems designed to collect data on gender-based violence and other statistics,<sup>22</sup> it did not include information about the baselines used nor progress measurement tools.<sup>23</sup>

15. As a baseline to assess the overall challenges facing Rwanda regarding stereotypes, the recently published 2019-20 Rwanda Demographic and Health Survey (2019-20 RDHS) described attitudes toward domestic violence and “wife beating” in Rwanda: 65% of women and 39% of men believe a husband is justified in beating his wife for at least one of the following reasons: if she burns the food, argues with him, goes out without telling him, neglects the children, refuses to have sex with him, has sex with someone else, or looks in his phone. Both women and men are most likely to agree that wife beating is justified if the wife has sex with someone else (61% and 36%, respectively).<sup>24</sup> This recent survey reflects the challenge the state faces to overcome harmful public attitudes that perceive domestic violence to be justified in certain cases.

#### 16. Suggested questions relating to stereotypes:

- What are the criteria being considered to establish both a baseline and periodic reporting for measuring the effectiveness of initiatives? Please reply with respect to:
  - Annual events

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<sup>19</sup> Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, *Concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda*, (March 9 2017), U.N. Doc CEDAW/C/RWA/CO/7-9, ¶20.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, ¶21(a)(b)(c).

<sup>21</sup> Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Tenth periodic report submitted by Rwanda under article 18 of the Convention, due in 2021, (October 2 2021), U.N. Doc CEDAW/C/RWA/10, ¶79-90.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, ¶74-78.

<sup>23</sup> Societal change is mainly demonstrated using valid data to thwart both anecdotal evidence and adjust for inevitable variables. Revisiting this data to collect subset measurements (i.e., age, urban vs. rural, level of education, etc.) would provide actionable baseline measures to tackle this formidable challenge. Data collection will inform causation, but it is also critical that the in-force programs are subject to frequent measurements that justify the effectiveness of the programs per se. Input from both program participants and those who choose not to participate is important. Reliable data allows for rapid and informed changes to programs, if warranted. The Rwanda Gender Monitoring Office appears to be a good compilation point for the collection of both hard and soft data with respect to these programs, potentially using their new gender management information system (GMIS) to collect and produce data on the benchmarked progress of these programs.

<sup>24</sup> National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR) [Rwanda], Ministry of Health (MOH) [Rwanda] and ICF, 2019-20 Demographic and Health Survey Summary Report, (Kigali, Rwanda, and Rockville, Maryland, USA: NISR and ICF, 2021) pg. 15, <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/SR271/SR271.pdf>.

- Use of media including radio and television
  - Community discussion programs
  - Public school education
  - Global programs including HeForShe
- What whole-of-government measures are in place on a long-term, even generational, basis to dispel the stereotypes represented in the 2019-20 RDHS survey and otherwise held by the public? To what extent is this issue addressed in the visionary goals for 2030 and 2050 that Rwanda has endorsed?
  - What role, if any, has the Rwanda Gender Monitoring Office and their new gender management information system (GMIS) played in collecting soft data with respect to these programs, potentially using and producing data on the benchmarked progress of programs reported by the State?
  - How is the state engaging with or involving NGOs that serve women victims of violence to raise public awareness of the issue and dispel harmful stereotypes?

### **III. Gender-based Violence (Concluding Observations, paragraphs 22 and 23)**

17. In its 2017 Concluding Observations, the Committee expressed concern about the inadequate number of long-term shelters available to victims of domestic violence and the general lack of published information about this critical service. Additionally, the Committee recommended that a system of standardized collection and analysis of gender-based violence data be established to allow comprehensive measures and targeted intervention.<sup>25</sup>
18. In response in its 2021 State Party Report regarding shelters, Rwanda stated that four temporary shelters were set up in Rwanda for victims who may need “lengthy protection from suffering further violence.”<sup>26</sup> Regarding data collection, Rwanda stated that their new Gender Management Information System (GMIS), launched in 2019, would play a major role in decision making.<sup>27</sup>
19. Despite Rwanda's numerous initiatives to combat gender-based violence against women, many women are not informed about the availability of and accessing services. In particular, women in rural areas, women with lower levels of education, and women in vulnerable groups do not receive accurate information about reporting violence and accessing services.<sup>28</sup>
20. Access to shelters is crucial for protection of victims of domestic violence. In addition to providing safety and basic services, they also enhance the ability to enforce protective orders and establish future support and permanent housing. In accordance with recommended standards, an estimated 1,350 shelter beds are required to serve Rwanda’s population of 13.5

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<sup>25</sup> Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, *Concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda*, (March 9 2017), U.N. Doc CEDAW/C/RWA/CO/7-9, ¶22(e), 23(d)

<sup>26</sup> Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Tenth periodic report submitted by Rwanda under article 18 of the Convention, due in 2021, (October 2 2021), U.N. Doc CEDAW/C/RWA/10, ¶82.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, ¶101.

<sup>28</sup> Written communication from Rwandan human rights defender, 2 June 2022.

million.<sup>29</sup> Rwanda has increased the number of Isange One Stop Centre (IOSC) locations to a total of 44 as of 2020 and over 49,000 victims of gender-based violence received assistance from the IOSC from 2015 to 2018. Such efforts to provide safe shelter and services to victims are welcome, and the state should continue to provide adequate support and resources to these centers.<sup>30</sup>

21. Nonetheless, it appears that IOSCs offer only temporary shelter beds. The number of IOSC beds and duration of stay is unknown. It is also unclear if the IOSC makes a referral of the victim to a shelter network beyond the temporary shelter facilities recently built in four hospitals and referenced in the State Party Report.<sup>31</sup> These shelters are geographically located in the central, southern, eastern, and western areas of the country.<sup>32</sup> Kigali alone (population 1.2 million), however, should have at least 125 shelter beds available. Information on this topic (temporary vs long-term shelters and number and locations of beds) continues to be scarce. A robust program of shelter management, operated using a victim-centered approach, including the compiling of data with respect to the number of beds in accessible locations continues to be a key criterion in combatting gender-based violence against women.

#### *Data on Gender-based Violence*

22. The 2017 Concluding Observations stressed the importance of standardized collection of data to analyze magnitude/trends and support effective interventions.<sup>33</sup>
23. The 2021 State Party Report discussed the Gender Based Violence Management Information System (GBV MIS) used by the Rwanda Investigation Bureau (RIB), and also discussed the 2019 launch of the Gender Management Information System (GMIS) by the Gender Monitoring Office (GMO). The latter system is expected to play a major role in comprehensive data analysis to support decision making.<sup>34</sup>
24. The statistics, published in 2021 by the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR) for the period of 2019-20, show that 37% of Rwandan women over age 15 have experienced physical violence; 16% of women have experienced physical violence in the prior 12 months.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> UN Women, *Handbook for Legislation on Violence against Women*, (New York: UN Women, 2012) pg. 29 [https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2012/12/UN\\_W\\_Legislation-Handbook%20pdf.pdf](https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2012/12/UN_W_Legislation-Handbook%20pdf.pdf).

<sup>30</sup> United Nations Rwanda and UN Women, “Rwanda’s Holistic Approach to Tackling the Different Faces of Gender-Based Violence (GBV)” accessed June 3 2022, ¶4 <https://rwanda.un.org/en/15872-rwandas-holistic-approach-tackling-different-faces-gender-based-violence-gbv>.

<sup>31</sup> Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Tenth periodic report submitted by Rwanda under article 18 of the Convention, due in 2021, (October 2 2021), U.N. Doc CEDAW/C/RWA/10, ¶82.

<sup>32</sup> Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, *Information received from Rwanda on follow-up to the concluding observations on its combined seventh to ninth periodic reports*, (March 31 2020), U. N. Doc CEDAW/C/RWA/FCO/7-9, ¶4.

<sup>33</sup> Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, *Concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda*, (March 9 2017), U.N. Doc CEDAW/C/RWA/CO/7-9, ¶23(h).

<sup>34</sup> Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Tenth periodic report submitted by Rwanda under article 18 of the Convention, due in 2021, (October 2 2021), U.N. Doc CEDAW/C/RWA/10, ¶100-101.

<sup>35</sup> National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR) [Rwanda], Ministry of Health (MOH) [Rwanda] and ICF, 2019-20 Demographic and Health Survey Summary Report, (Kigali, Rwanda, and Rockville, Maryland, USA: NISR and ICF, 2021) pg. 15, <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/SR271/SR271.pdf>.

60% of that physical violence (among ever-married women) was perpetrated by their current husband/partner and 27% by a former husband/partner.<sup>36</sup> Spousal violence was reported by 46% of ever-married women (age 15-49), whether physical, sexual, or emotional.<sup>37</sup> The most common form of spousal violence among ever-married women is physical violence (36%).<sup>38</sup> These data may not reflect the actual number of women who have experienced abuse, however, as most abuse that is reported is physical, while psychological or emotional abuse goes largely unreported.<sup>39</sup> These numbers have increased since the 2014-15 report when the same demographic group experienced physical violence at a rate of 35% (for Rwandan women over age 15) and 14% (in the prior 12 months).<sup>40</sup> These recent statistics demonstrate the urgent need to produce detailed analysis and conclusive reports for staff and stakeholders working to address this issue.

## 25. Suggested questions relating to gender-based violence:

- What awareness-raising campaigns has Rwanda conducted to increase access to services for all women, and particularly for women in rural areas, women with lower levels of education, and women in vulnerable groups?
- How many shelter beds are there currently in Rwanda and what is the number of temporary vs long-term beds? How are “temporary” and “long-term” defined with respect to length of stay?
- What are the short-and-long term plans to develop adequate shelter facilities to properly serve domestic violence victims and with a victim-centered approach?
- What data can the state report on the number of cases of domestic violence and the number of protection orders issued by the Court?
- What factors are contributing to the apparent increase in gender-based violence against women, whether it is a rise in prevalence or in reporting? What goals and measurements have been established for both short-term and long-term improvement in collection of these statistics?
- Please provide specifics on the type of data collected in the newly launched GMIS system and how the data is disaggregated. What type of sample reports are available?
- Please provide data about cases of gender-based violence against women, disaggregated

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<sup>36</sup> National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR) [Rwanda], Ministry of Health (MOH) [Rwanda] and ICF, 2019-20 Demographic and Health Survey Summary Report, (Kigali, Rwanda, and Rockville, Maryland, USA: NISR and ICF, 2021) pg. 15, <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/SR271/SR271.pdf>.

<sup>37</sup> National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR) [Rwanda], Ministry of Health (MOH) [Rwanda] and ICF, 2019-20 Demographic and Health Survey Summary Report, (Kigali, Rwanda, and Rockville, Maryland, USA: NISR and ICF, 2021) pg. 15, <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/SR271/SR271.pdf>.

<sup>38</sup> National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR) [Rwanda], Ministry of Health (MOH) [Rwanda] and ICF, 2019-20 Demographic and Health Survey Summary Report, (Kigali, Rwanda, and Rockville, Maryland, USA: NISR and ICF, 2021) pg. 15, <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/SR271/SR271.pdf>.

<sup>39</sup> Written communication from Rwandan human rights defender, 2 June 2022.

<sup>40</sup> National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR) [Rwanda], Ministry of Health (MOH) [Rwanda], and ICF International. Rwanda Demographic and Health Survey 2014-15, (Rockville, Maryland, USA: NISR, MOH, and ICF International, 2015) pg. 267. <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR316/FR316.pdf>.



by age, education level, employment, rural vs urban/geographic location and relationship status of both the victim and the offender. How does the government intend to use this data be used to target interventions and support funding for future prevention measures?

- Please provide information on the number of cases of psychological, emotional, or economic abuse, disaggregated by age, education level, employment, rural vs urban/geographic location and relationship status of both the victim and the offender.

#### **IV. Gender-based Violence Against Women in Conflict Situations (Concluding Observations paragraphs 24 and 25)**

26. The 2017 Concluding Observations suggest that action still needs to be taken to investigate the Rwandan military and other State actors regarding all allegations of rape and other atrocities that were committed in the DRC between 1993 and 2003. The Committee makes a persuasive case as to why this should be done, stating that “passive acquiescence to past violence reinforces the culture of silence, impunity and stigmatization,” and reminds Rwanda of its obligations under the Convention.<sup>41</sup>
27. In the State Party’s 2017 response, Rwanda restates the issue and then states, “Noting the above, the Government wished to remind the Committee that it has categorically rejected the report, and this remains the position.”<sup>42</sup>
28. Resolution 1960 (2010) of the UN Security Council states that “ending impunity is essential if a society in conflict or recovering from conflict is to come to terms with past abuses committed against civilians affected by armed conflict and to prevent future such abuses.”<sup>43</sup> CEDAW’s General recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations is also clear on the Convention’s obligations and provides “authoritative guidance to States parties on legislative, policy and other appropriate measures to ensure full compliance with their obligations under the Convention to protect, respect and fulfill women’s human rights.”<sup>44</sup>
29. Rwanda has developed many effective tools to investigate gender-based violence against women. It is unknown to what extent these tools have been adapted by law enforcement to conduct an investigation into the outstanding allegations of crimes committed in the DRC.

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<sup>41</sup> Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, *Concluding observations on the combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda*, (March 9 2017), U.N. Doc CEDAW/C/RWA/CO/7-9, ¶24 & 25(a).

<sup>42</sup> Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Tenth periodic report submitted by Rwanda under article 18 of the Convention, due in 2021, (October 2 2021), U.N. Doc CEDAW/C/RWA/10, ¶104.

<sup>43</sup> United Nations Security Council Resolution 1960, Page 2, U.N. Doc S/RES/1960 (December 16 2010). Also available online at

[https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=S%2FRES%2F1960\(2010\)&Language=E&DeviceType=Desktop&LangRequested=False](https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=S%2FRES%2F1960(2010)&Language=E&DeviceType=Desktop&LangRequested=False).

<sup>44</sup> Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, *General recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations*, (November 1 2013), U.N. Doc CEDAW/C/GC/30, ¶1 <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5268d2064.html>.

**30. Suggested question relative to violence against women in conflict situations:**

- To what extent has Rwanda used the tools that it has developed (law enforcement training on investigating sexual violence, gender desks in law enforcement facilities, psychological services, assistance with self-support, etc.) to facilitate investigations into the allegations arising from the UN published 2010 report?
- How, or to what extent, have these same competencies been used to assist the victims of sexual violence during the conflict in the DRC?
- What steps is Rwanda taking to address the needs of survivors of rape from the conflict, including reparations?