



**Statement by Alliances for Africa at the
79th Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights
Observer Status Number 235**

Honorable Chairperson of the ACHPR,

Alliances for Africa is an international African-led non-governmental human rights, peace, and sustainable development organization. AfA works with partners in, around, and beyond the continent of Africa. Alliances for Africa is a member of the Solidarity for African Women's Rights Coalition (SOAWR), a Coalition of over 70 organizations working on women's rights in 33 countries in Africa. SOAWR was formed with the principal objective of advocating for the ratification, domestication, and implementation of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (the Maputo Protocol), adopted 20 years ago.

1. The Status of Ratification of the Maputo Protocol

Honorable Chairperson, we congratulate the Government of Botswana for ratifying the Maputo Protocol in December 2023. We additionally commend all the 45 Member States of the African Union who have ratified the Maputo Protocol. We, however, are concerned about the 10 Member States who have not ratified the Maputo Protocol. **We call upon the African Commission to urge Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Egypt, Eritrea, Madagascar, Morocco, Niger, Somalia, and Sudan to ratify the Protocol.** We further **call upon the African Commission to urge Member States who have placed reservations on the Protocol to forthwith lift the reservations to ensure that African women fully realize all the rights enshrined in the Protocol.**

2. Impact of Climate Change on African Women

Honorable chairperson, climate change is a human rights and women's rights issue as across the continent, women are disproportionately affected by its impacts. For example, in Ethiopia, as a result of the most severe drought in 40 years, girls have been forced to drop out of school to support the increased burden of household and farm chores, as men and adolescent boys migrate to urban centers looking for work. We decry the fact that the Inaugural African Summit Nairobi Declaration on Climate Change and Call to Action is gender-blind, as [pointed](#) out by several SOAWR Members. How can women be expected to plant trees on land they don't own? How will African women be expected to stop using charcoal and fossil fuels when they can't afford alternative clean energy due to poverty? **We call upon the African Commission to urge Member States to ensure that the 2024 summit should not be merely gender inclusive at the level of participation; its outcome document should be gender responsive and transformative. We also recommend that the forthcoming African Commission's [Study](#) on the Impact of Climate Change on Human and Peoples' Rights in Africa acknowledges the pivotal role of women as frontline climate defenders.**

3. Heightened Gender-Based Violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, the increased violence witnessed last year resulted in an influx of displaced persons. According to the International Rescue Committee, as of November, there were 6.7 million displaced people in DRC. In the province of North Kivu, 200,000 people were forced to flee their homes since the beginning of October 2023. The conflict and ensuing displacement have resulted in an increase in GBV cases in the affected regions. The World Food Programme reports that between January and August 2023, some 46,000 cases were reported across Ituri and North and South Kivu provinces. Moreover, women and girls report resorting to forced prostitution to survive. **We call upon the Commission to urge the Government of DRC to ensure that women and children who are disproportionately affected have access to all mechanisms and services for their protection and that all perpetrators of sexual and gender-based violence are prosecuted and sentenced for their crimes¹.**

4. Call on the New Government of Senegal to ensure substantive inclusion of women

Honourable Chairperson, we congratulate the People and the Government of Senegal for the successful democratic transition of power. We are, however, deeply disappointed that the newly elected government has named only four women on a list of 25 ministers and no women on a list of five secretaries of state. We are further alarmed by the removal of the word 'women' from

¹<https://www.rescue.org/press-release/drc-women-and-children-most-risk-following-recent-escalation-violence-warns-irc>

the Ministry of Women, Family, Equity and Community Development which has been renamed as the Ministry of Family and Solidarity².

We call upon the African Commission to urge the Government of Senegal to guarantee gender equality in the establishment and functioning of its new administration in accordance with its Constitution and the Maputo Protocol, which it has ratified without reservations.

5. Pushback against gains made in ending FGM in the Gambia

The Solidarity for African Women's Rights Coalition (SOAWR) is concerned about attempts being made in The Gambia to repeal the legal provisions within the Women's (Amendment) Act of 2015, which prohibit and criminalise FGM. While we welcome the [joint statement](#) issued by the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) and the African Commission, we urge this Commission to proactively engage the Government of The Gambia to prevent the situation from deteriorating further and ensure that it complies with its human rights obligations, including under Article 5 of the Maputo Protocol by maintaining the FGM provisions within the Women's (Amendment) Act of 2015 in place.

I thank you.

The SOAWR Coalition is comprised of:

1. Action for Development (ACFODE)
2. African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (ACDHRS)
3. African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET)
4. Akina Mama wa Afrika
5. Alliances for Africa
6. Association de Promotion de la Culture Environnementale (APCE)
7. Association des Juristes Maliennes (AJM)
8. Association des Juristes Sénégalaises (AJS)
9. Association of Egyptian Female Lawyers (AEFL)
10. Atwar Organization for Research and Social Development (Atwar)
11. BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights

² <https://walf-groupe.com/blog/2024/04/06/le-reseau-des-feministes-du-senegal-se-dit-consterne-par-le-faible-pourcentage-des-femmes-dans-le-nouveau-gouvernement/#:~:text=Ce%20que%20fustige%20le%20R%C3%A9seau,et%205%20secr%C3%A9taires%20d%27Etat>

12. Cellule de Coordination sur les Pratiques Traditionnelle Affectant la Sante des Femmes et des Enfants (CPTAFE)
13. Center for Health Human Rights and Development (CEHURD)
14. Center for Human Rights – University of Pretoria
15. Center for Reproductive Rights
16. Centre for Rights Education and Awareness (CREAW)
17. Centre for Justice Studies and Innovation (CJSI)
18. Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR)
19. Coalition on Violence Against Women (COVAW)
20. Collectif des Associations et ONGs Féminines du Burundi (CAFOB)
21. Communication Techniques for Development (ACT)
22. Eastern African Sub-regional Support Initiative for the Advancement of Women(EASSI)
23. Equality Now
24. Federation of Women Lawyers Kenya
25. Fondation Pour l’Egalité/ CIDDEF
26. Forum Mulher
27. Forum for Development and Human Rights Dialogue (FDHRD)
28. Great Lakes Initiative for Human Rights and Development (GLIHD)
29. Haki Nawiri Africa
30. HelpAge International
31. Her Voice Liberia
32. Human Rights Law Service (HURILAWS)
33. IGED Africa
34. ICJ Kenya
35. Inter-African Committee (IAC) on Harmful Traditional Practices
36. Inter-African Network for Women, Media, Gender Equity and Development (FAMEDEV)
37. Ipas Africa Alliance for Women’s Reproductive Health and Rights
38. Jossour
39. Journal Féministe Algérien
40. KADIRAT
41. Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC)
42. Make Every Woman Count
43. Malawi Human Rights Resource Centre
44. MPOWER
45. National Association for the Defense of Rights and Freedoms (NADRF)
46. Network Against Female Genital Mutilation (NAFGEM)
47. NGO Gender Coordination Network
48. Oxfam GB

49. People Opposing Women Abuse (POWA)
50. Question de Femmes
51. Réseau des Femmes Leaders pour le Développement (RFLD)
52. Sister Namibia
53. Source of Peace Organization (SPO)
54. STEWARD Women
55. Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA)
56. The New Generation Girls and Women Development Initiative (NIGAWD)
57. Tomorrow's Child Initiative
58. Tshwaranang Legal Advocacy Centre (TLAC)
59. Uganda Women Network (UWONET)
60. Union Nationale Des Femmes Djiboutiennes
61. Voix de Femmes
62. Women's Advocacy and Communication Network (WANET)
63. Well Being Africa
64. Women and the Law Southern Africa(WLSA Zambia)
65. Women and the Law Southern Africa (WLSA Zimbabwe)
66. Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF)
67. Women Lead Movement (WLM)
68. Women's NGO Secretariat of Liberia (WONGOSOL)
69. Women of Liberia Peace Network (WOLPNET)
70. Women on the Watch (WOW) Society Initiative
71. Women Peace Initiatives Association
72. Women's Advocacy and Communication Network
73. Women's Counseling and Information Centre (WCIC)
74. Women For Justice and Equality (WOJE)
75. Women's Rights Advancement & Protection Alternative (WRAPA)
76. Young Liberian Women Organization for Improvement (WOFIM)
77. Y-PEER PETRI