



Journal

4th Edition

SOLIDARITY FOR
AFRICAN WOMEN'S RIGHTS

A force for freedom



MOUVEMENT DE SOLIDARITÉ
POUR LES DROITS
DES FEMMES AFRICAINES

Une force pour la liberté



Acknowledgments

Compiled and edited by Grace Marwa-Pattison of Make Every Woman Count with support from Elizabeth Alukudo, Esther Waweru and Jamila Sambuli of Equality Now.



This activity has been financially supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency through Equality Now.



Foreword

It is my absolute pleasure and joy to present to you our 4th edition of the SOAWR Journal, a collection of various moments from 2023 and our continued spirited fight for the rights of women and girls. In 2023 we were able to celebrate twenty years of one of the world's progressive women's rights treaties and publish a [report](#) that provides an overview of where we are 20 years later.

SOAWR continues to steer the narrative of ensuring gender equality and that our women and girls can safely enjoy their guaranteed rights as provided under the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (the Maputo Protocol). Since its inception, SOAWR has worked tirelessly to protect the rights of women and girls. Through this Journal, we get to share the experiences of some of the work the Coalition members have done and to celebrate their achievements.

2023 was an exciting year for the SOAWR Coalition as we marked the 20th Anniversary of the adoption of the Maputo Protocol. The colourful celebrations in Nairobi, Kenya in July 2023 were a culmination and celebration of over two decades of the hard work of SOAWR

members, AU Member States, the African Union Commission, and development partners in positively impacting the lived realities of millions of African women and girls through the Maputo Protocol.

A big thank you to our amazing partner, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, and other partners who have walked with us on this journey of working to ensure the protection of the rights of women and girls in Africa for the last four years. It is my delight to welcome you to read this Journal, which is a milestone in the advancement of our purpose. With each turn of the page, we invite you to reflect on the momentous journey of the Coalition in 2023 and invite you to join us in advocating for the universal ratification, domestication, implementation, and accountability of the Maputo Protocol. It is our time to reshape society, invest in a better and stronger future, and champion gender equality.

Faiza Jama Mohamed,

Director - Africa Office, Equality Now
SOAWR Secretariat



Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	i
Foreword	1
Acronyms	2
About SOAWR	4
SOAWR's 2023 Highlights	5
○ Capacity Building: State Reporting on the Maputo Protocol in Tunisia	5
○ SOAWR Annual General Meeting – Nairobi, Kenya	6
○ Celebrating Maputo at 20	8
○ Pan-African Women's Day	18
○ Advocacy on Article 14 of the Maputo Protocol: Health and Reproductive Rights	19
i) Advocacy Events at Women Deliver Conference, Rwanda	19
ii) Global Day of Action for Access to Safe and Legal Abortion	21
iii) Reviewing the Draft Kenyan National Action Plan	21
○ ACHPR 77 th Ordinary Session	22
○ Launch of the Egyptian Feminist Forum for Young Women Leaders	23
○ Pan-African Feminist Peace Conference on Sudan	24
○ Reflection on lessons learned: All for Maputo Protocol Initiative (AMPI)	24
○ Call to Action and Accountability	25
○ Ratification Missions to Burundi and Permanent Representatives of Non-Ratified Countries in Addis Ababa	27
African Women's Rights Issues: An Overview of Some Achievements and Challenges Throughout 2023..	29
○ Security Forces Violently Target Women in Angola	29
○ #AfricaDisruptCSW67	29
○ SGBV in Senegalese Schools	29
○ Restrictions to Libyan Women's Freedom of Movement	29
○ Women Deliver Conference – Rwanda	30
○ Violence Against Women and Girls in Sudanese Civil War	30
○ Launch of AWLN – Private Sector Coalition	30
○ African Women in Leadership Positions	31
Overview of the Implementation of the Maputo Protocol	32
2023 SOAWR/Sida Sub-grantees	35
○ Member Activities	35
○ Cluster Activities	38
2024 Plans	40

Acronyms

ACDHRS	African Center for Democracy and Human Rights Studies
ACHPR	African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights
AEFL	Association of Egyptian Female Lawyers
AGM	Annual General Meeting
AMPI	All for Maputo Protocol Initiative
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
AU-WGYD	African Union Women, Gender and Youth Directorate
AWLN	African Women Leaders Network
CAR	Central African Republic
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CCW	Community Care Workers
CHR	Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria
COVAW	Coalition on Violence Against Women
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
FEMNET	The African Women's Development and Communications Network
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GLIHD	Great Lakes Initiative for Human Rights and Development
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KBC	Kenya Broadcasting Corporation
KTN	Kenya Television Network
MEKI	Monitoring, Evaluation, Knowledge, and Information
MEWC	Make Every Woman Count
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NTV	Nation TV
SGBV	Sexual and Gender- Based Violence
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SIHA Network	The Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa Network
SOAWR	Solidarity for African Women's Rights
SRHR	Sexual Reproductive Health Rights
SR RWA	Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women in Africa
UN	United Nations
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund



About SOAWR

The Solidarity for African Women's Rights (SOAWR) Coalition is a regional membership-based network of more than 70 organisations in over 30 countries working to advance women's rights in Africa. SOAWR works to ensure that African States ratify, domesticate, and implement the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol). SOAWR's strategic goals are:

- i) Domestication and implementation of the Maputo Protocol by states in order to transform women's lived realities in Africa.
- ii) Ratification of the Maputo Protocol in remaining African states thereby ensuring universal ratification.
- iii) Enhanced state accountability to ensure fulfilment of state obligations under the Maputo Protocol.

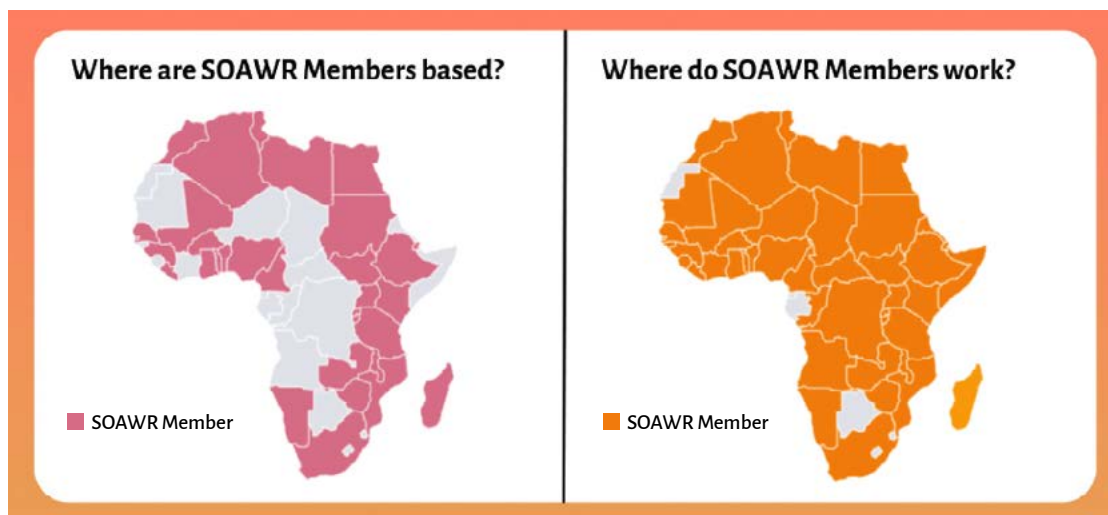
- iv) Popularisation and utilisation of the Maputo Protocol.
- v) Strengthened SOAWR Coalition.

SOAWR Vision

African women fully enjoy their rights as provided for under the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa.

SOAWR Mission

Hold African Union Member States accountable and enhance partnership to fulfil their obligations under the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa; and encourage other stakeholders to actively apply the Protocol for the promotion and protection of the rights of women.



SOAWR's 2023 Highlights

July 11 2023 marked the significant 20th Anniversary of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, also known as the Maputo Protocol. In addition to the high-level meetings and in-person celebrations held in July in Nairobi, much of SOAWR's activities, communications and time revolved around the momentous milestone throughout the year, as observed throughout this 4th Edition of our Journal.

Capacity Building: State Reporting on the Maputo Protocol in Tunisia

From the 15th–17th of June 2023, SOAWR Members Kadirat and the Centre for Human Rights (CHR)–University of Pretoria conducted a training workshop with Tunisian Government Ministries and stakeholders on State Reporting on the Maputo Protocol. Samia Melki Fessi, the founder of Kadirat, stated that “what made this great partnership with CHR a reality is the SOAWR network.”

The training was reported on by the Tunisian publication [Leaders \(available in French and Arabic\)](#), concluding:

“Combining theoretical learning with the practical aspect, this workshop was an opportunity to discuss the obligations incumbent on the Tunisian State, by virtue of the ratification of the treaties in question. It was also an opportunity to gather the necessary material for the drafting of the pending reports that Tunisia should submit to the Banjul Commission. The representatives of the competent authorities present during this workshop, an essential target of this workshop, were able to benefit from the expertise of all the participants, with a view to starting the drafting work. Promises have been made to move on to the next steps.”



Image source: Kadirat

SOAWR Annual General Meeting Nairobi, Kenya

During the 20th Anniversary of the Maputo Protocol celebrations in Nairobi, the SOAWR Steering Committee conducted a meeting on the 8th of July 2023 where the outgoing Steering Committee members shared updates and reflected on the past three years. The SOAWR Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held on the 9th of July 2023 and included cluster meetings and elections of the SOAWR Steering Committee Members to foresee SOAWR activities from 2024-2027:

1. **Secretariat:** Equality Now
2. **Communications Secretariat:** Make Every Woman Count (MEWC)
3. **Central African Cluster Lead:** Women Counselling and Information Centre (WCIC)
4. **Eastern African Cluster Lead:** co-convened by Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA) Network and Great Lakes Initiative for Human Rights and Development (GLIHD)
5. **Northern African Cluster Lead:** Kadirat
6. **Southern African Cluster Lead:** WILDAF - Women in Law and Development Africa, Zambia
7. **Anglophone Western African Cluster Lead:** BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights (BAOBAB)
8. **Francophone Western African Cluster Lead:** Association des Juristes Sénégalaises (AJS)
9. **Regional African Cluster Lead:** co-convened by African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (ACDHRS), Akina Mama wa Afrika (AMWA) & Centre for Human Rights - University of Pretoria (CHR)

77% of the SOAWR Coalition was represented at the in-person AGM with a total of 104 individuals in attendance. In addition to the Cluster elections, another key outcome was the development of regional action plans. Reflecting on the AGM via an anonymous survey, members were in consensus that the AGM was unifying and re-energising on both individual and collective spheres.



SOAWR AGM

“

What were your key takeaways?

The importance of movement building

As a new member of SOAWR, the event allowed us to get to know others more closely and better exchange our experiences in our countries.

The fact that I stood shoulder to shoulder with the pioneers of the struggle, it was so encouraging and energising to me

Getting to know many friends on the continent and learning about feminist activities in other countries

That we can work together despite our cultural and social differences

The creativity and the convergence of advocates of like passion across Africa and the intergenerational outlook of participants.

”

Members' reflections on the SOAWR AGM 2023

Celebrating Maputo at 20

In collaboration with the Government of Kenya and the African Union Commission, SOAWR convened more than 400 gallant women's rights actors from all over the world for the 20th anniversary of the Maputo Protocol in Nairobi, Kenya from the 10th-11th of July 2023. The celebrations were hosted by Kenya's Cabinet Secretary in charge of Gender, Culture, the Arts & Heritage, Hon. Aisha Jumwa Katana, and attended by notable personalities including Kenya's Second Lady H.E. Pastor Dr. Dorcas Gachagua, Kenya's Deputy Chief Justice Philomena Mwilu, Kenya's Health Cabinet Secretary Hon. Susan Nakhumicha, Kenya's Cabinet Secretary of Water, Sanitation, and Irrigation Hon. Alice Wahome, Gender Principal Secretary Veronica Nduva and her counterparts, alongside H.E. Dr. Monique Nsanzabaganwa, Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Hon. Janet Ramatoulie Sallah-Njie, Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women in Africa, Awa Ndiaye Seck - UN Women Special Representative to the African Union and UNECA, Judge Navanethem Pillay, former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and co-founder of Equality Now, and Equality Now's Global Executive Director Mona Sinha and Africa Office Director Faiza Mohamed.



Opening Ceremony, Panels & Parallel Sessions

The opening ceremony took place on July 10, 2023, and was graced by Hon. Aisha Jumwa alongside Ms. Ndiaye Seck, Hon. Sallah-Njie, Ms. Mohamed on behalf of SOAWR, and Chantal Kalumbu Dynamique Nationale des Femmes Candidates (DYNAFEC), DR Congo (Young Women Representative). Other speakers were Hon. Alice Wahome, Deputy Chief Justice Philomena Mwilu, and PS Veronica Nduva from Kenya.



Besides the opening ceremony, other unforgettable events that took place during the main plenary sessions on July 10 and 11 were high-level panel discussions including a panel on SOAWR's reflections on the Maputo Protocol's journey over the past 20 years. Among the notable personalities who attended this panel discussion on July 11, 2023, was Kenya's Second Lady Pastor Dorcas Gachagua. Additionally, there were parallel sessions and exhibitions by SOAWR members:

1. FEMNET and Marie Stopes jointly ran 'Amplifying voices of SRHR in Africa'
2. HelpAge International ran 'Age and intersectionality: A dialogue across the divides'
3. Young Women for Awareness, Agency, Advocacy and Accountability (YW4A) ran 'The experiences of young women as change makers'
4. Faith to Action ran 'The role of interfaith action towards the implementation of the Maputo Protocol'
5. Care International, IDEA International and FEMNET jointly ran 'Intergenerational experiences of women's voices in leadership in Africa'
6. Oxfam, FEMNET and the University of Nairobi jointly ran 'Valuing women's unpaid work (Article 13)'
7. Equality Now and World Policy Analysis Centre jointly ran 'Effectiveness of data for advocacy'
8. Oxfam and Women International Peace Centre jointly ran 'Implementing the Maputo Protocol towards women's peace and security'
9. IPAS ran a session on Article 14 of the Maputo Protocol on Reproductive and Health Rights



Ratification Missions

During the events in Nairobi for the Maputo at 20 celebrations, SOAWR members attempted to meet with non-ratifying member states but only managed to meet with the ambassadors of the Kingdom of Morocco and the Federal Republic of Somalia. The SOAWR delegation led by Kadirat (Tunisia) and composed of Jossour FFM (Morocco), AJS (Senegal) and FEMNET (representing Mali) met with his excellency Abderazzak Laasel, ambassador of the Kingdom of Morocco in Kenya. After a presentation about SOAWR's advocacy efforts in Morocco, especially about the previous ratification mission led by representatives of SOAWR and the African Union in Rabat and the different meetings with the government officials, parliamentary groups, the National Human Rights Council as well as the civil society, the members of the delegation took turns to stress the importance of the signing and ratifying both the African Charter and the Maputo Protocol.

Members of the delegation also explained to the ambassador the gains that Moroccan women can enjoy, giving examples of countries in the region that have ratified the Protocol and that are in the process of domesticating it, implementing it and putting in place the adequate mechanisms that will enhance women's and girls' rights.

The ambassador assured the SOAWR delegation that there is a strong political will in Morocco to ratify international and regional conventions and treaties and that Morocco has ratified most of the international treaties, yet he explained that before ratifying the African Charter and the Maputo Protocol, Morocco wishes to harmonise its national laws with the articles of the African conventions. He assured the members of the delegation that he will follow up the matter.



The SOAWR delegation with His Excellency Abderazzak Laasel, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Morocco to Kenya

The second delegation of SOAWR who met with Somali Ambassador H.E. Mohamud Ahmed Nur was led by Justice FonAchu Helen, Women Counselling and Information Center (Cameroon) and included UNFD (Djibouti), FAMEDEV (Senegal) and a young woman from South Sudan Dusman Florence, ALP South Sudan. The Ambassador admitted that he was unaware of the Maputo Protocol but underlined his country's commitment to advance the rights of women and committed to follow up on the matter with relevant ministries back in the capital.



SOAWR members meeting with Somali Ambassador His Excellency Mohamud Ahmed Nur

Gala Dinner

The apex of the celebrations was on the evening of July 11, 2023, at a gala dinner that was hosted by the SOAWR Coalition. The dinner was attended by Kenya's Cabinet Secretary Hon. Aisha Jumwa and her health counterpart Ms. Susan Nakhumicha, Equality Now's Global Executive Director Mona Sinha, Kenya's Permanent Secretary Veronica Nduva, Hon. Sallah-Njie, members of the diplomatic corps, civil society representatives, and development partners. It culminated in the launch of SOAWR's progress report on the Maputo Protocol and the fitting recognition of 18 women's rights actors from Africa that have made significant contributions towards the uptake of the Protocol. Before the dinner, participants were welcomed to a gallery walk that took them through the journey of the Maputo Protocol since its adoption in 2003 through meticulously designed [maps](#) as well as offering a chance to read quotes from 12 young women from the Continent on the best features of the Protocol and [reflections](#) from Heads of State and Ministers from the first 20 African countries that ratified the Protocol.



Launch of the Progress Report

SOAWR's '20 Years of the Maputo Protocol: Where are we now?' Report was launched at the gala dinner. It summarises the progress that has been made in Africa toward the ratification, domestication, and implementation of the Maputo Protocol from 2003 to 2023. Before its launch, Make Every Woman Count's Executive Director Rainatou Sow shared some highlights of the Report, illustrating key achievements and challenges. She presented these alongside recommendations to support States in their continued efforts towards advancing gender equality on the Continent. You can read the full report and its key findings in English, French and Portuguese [here](#).



20 for 20 Solidarity Awards

The 20 for 20 Solidarity Awards were launched by the SOAWR Coalition on May 25, 2023 (Africa Day) as part of the 20th anniversary of the Maputo Protocol. Members of the public across the world were invited to nominate state and non-state actors whom they truly believed had outstandingly contributed towards the advancement of gender equality as espoused by the Protocol under nine categories. Close to 500 nominations were received and a panel ultimately [awarded](#) the following:



NORMATIVE CHANGE CATEGORY

The Normative Change Category recognized Women's rights activists who were instrumental in the adoption of the Maputo Protocol, including the drafting and negotiation of the treaty, have contributed to the ratification and accession of the Maputo Protocol by one or more AU Member States, and have led or contributed to the actual lifting of reservations by governments, and to law reform and enforcement, nationally or regionally.

Josephine Chandiru Drama (South Sudan) won in this category with Rabha Fathi (Egypt) coming in as the runners-up. Rabha's certificate was received by her colleague, Osman Mosa Osman.



ACCESS TO JUSTICE CATEGORY

This category recognized women's rights activists who have contributed through the legal representation of women and girls on the rights under the Maputo Protocol with notable progressive decisions from national, regional, and continental judicial and quasi-judicial bodies, contributing to the advancement of the rights enumerated under the substantive Articles 2 through to 24 of the Maputo Protocol.

The nominees were Madame Doumbia Mama Koite (Mali) and Women's Legal Aid Centre (Republic of Tanzania). The winner of this category was Madame Doumbia Mama Koite (Mali) with the Women's Legal Aid Centre (WLAC) coming in as the runners-up. Its certificate was received by NAFGEM's Francis Selasini.

THE WOMEN'S POLITICAL RIGHTS CATEGORY

This category recognized Women's rights champions who have demonstrated significant and tangible contributions towards the advancement of women's right to participate in political and decision-making processes including Equal participation of women in political processes (Article 9), Right to Peace (Article 10), and Right of women to participate in the determination and formulation of cultural policies (Article 17).

The nominees were: Gender Center for Empowering Development- GenCED (Ghana): and Florence Ikuvbogie Cbinigie (Nigeria). Gender Center for Empowering Development - GenCED (Ghana) bagged this win, with Ms. Florence coming in as the runners-up. Her certificate was awarded to her in absentia.



SEXUAL HEALTH AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS CATEGORY

This category recognized Women's rights champions who have demonstrated significant and tangible contributions towards the advancement of women's sexual and reproductive health and rights as enshrined in Article 14 of the Protocol.

The nominees were: Ingabire Divine (Rwanda) who is the founder and Executive Director of I Matter - an organization that has been actively working to combat period poverty and menstrual shame in Rwanda and Tanzania Women Lawyers Association- TAWLA (Republic of Tanzania). The Tanzania Women Lawyers Association (TAWLA) is a Non-Governmental Organization dedicated to advocating for gender equality, human dignity, and gender justice through policy, legal reforms, community action, and media engagement. TAWLA formed the Coalition to Address Maternal Morbidity and Mortality caused by unsafe Abortion and its complications.

Ms. Ingabire won in this category with TAWLA emerging as the runners-up.



GBV, VAWG, EHP CATEGORY

The GBV, VAWG, and EHP Category sought to celebrate champions who have gone over and above in ensuring that women and girls in Africa were protected from all forms of violence.

The nominees were the Gambia Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children (The Gambia) and Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda (Zimbabwe).

The winner, Dr. Nyaradzayi, was involved in the advocacy for the development of the Protocol and used it as a critical reference point for the prohibition of child marriage whilst serving as the African Union Goodwill Ambassador on ending Child Marriage. She has also made notable contributions to the elimination of other forms of violence against women.

The Gambia Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children was the runners-up and was celebrated in absentia.

THE WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT CATEGORY

This category celebrated women's rights champions who have demonstrated significant and tangible contributions towards the advancement of women's economic, social, and cultural rights including the promotion or advancement of the rights under Article 12 – Right to Education, Article 13 – Economic, Social Welfare Rights which include Women's financial and economic empowerment and inclusion, Article 15 – Right to Food Security, Article 16 – Right to Adequate Housing, Article 18 – Right to a Health and Sustainable Environment, and Article 19 – Right to Sustainable Development.

The nominees were: the Association of Women in Agriculture- Kenya which has successfully equipped more than 5000 women with skills in urban farming, baking, briquette making, business development, and mental health support, creating a transformative impact on their lives, among other things, and Monica Yator (Kenya) who is the Founder and Executive Director of Indigenous Women and Girls Initiative, a community-based organisation advocating for the rights of Indigenous women and girls in Baringo County (Kenya) and beyond.

The Association of Women in Agriculture - Kenya won in this category with Ms. Yator emerging as the runners-up.



YOUNG WOMEN FOR MAPUTO PROTOCOL CATEGORY

This category recognized young and upcoming women under the age of 35 years who have made demonstrable contributions towards the advancement of the Maputo Protocol, and those who have consistently contributed to the advancement of the Maputo Protocol at national, regional and /or continental levels.

The nominees were Oluwadamilola Dorcas Akintewe (Nigeria) and Aya Chebi (Tunisia). Ms. Aya won in this category with Ms. Akintewe emerging as the runners-up.

Ms. Aya is a Pan-African feminist and diplomat whose mission is the liberation of African women and girls. She rose to prominence as a voice for democracy during 2010/2011 Tunisia's peaceful Revolution and then served as the first-ever African Union Special Envoy on Youth and the youngest diplomat at the Chairperson's Cabinet (2018 – 2021) among other incredible achievements.

INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY CATEGORY

This category recognized changemakers who have contributed to education, disability rights, SOGIE, women with special needs. It looked at persons who have championed the rights of women in special or marginalized groups or communities including the Rights of Elderly Women (Article 22), the Rights of Women with Disabilities (Article 23), the Rights of Women in Distress (Article 24), the Right to Education e.g. for adolescent mothers, girls with special needs, and the Rights of Women within ethnic minority groups and communities.

The nominees were the Coalition on Violence Against Women (COVAW) and Hon. Caroline Awour Agwanda (Kenya). COVAW bagged this win with Ms. Agwanda coming in as the runners-up. COVAW has actively litigated cases including one that sought the repeal of Section 146 of the Penal Code and Section 125(2) of the Evidence Act of Kenya that discriminates against persons with intellectual challenges by referring to them as idiots and imbeciles. It also led a consortium of organisations in filing a constitutional petition seeking reparations for SGBV victims during the 2007/2008 post-election violence. 13 years later, in December 2020, the High Court of Kenya passed judgment in favour of the petition, awarding compensation to some of the victims.



RESILIENCE CATEGORY



This category celebrated the long-standing contribution and work of women's rights activists that have worked on the advancement of the Maputo Protocol, consistently contributing to its advancement at national, regional, and continental levels.

The nominees were the African Centre for Democracy on Human Rights Studies (ACDHRS) (The Gambia) and Dr. Zoneziwoh Mbongulo-Wondieh (Cameroon). ACDHRS won in this category for contributing significantly to policy changes that advance gender equality in Africa by focusing on gender mainstreaming, women's political participation, legal reforms, combatting GBV, and women's economic empowerment.

Over the years, ACDHRS has played a significant role in advocating for the ratification and implementation of key human rights instruments at the national level. This includes encouraging African countries to ratify international human rights treaties such as the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the Maputo Protocol.

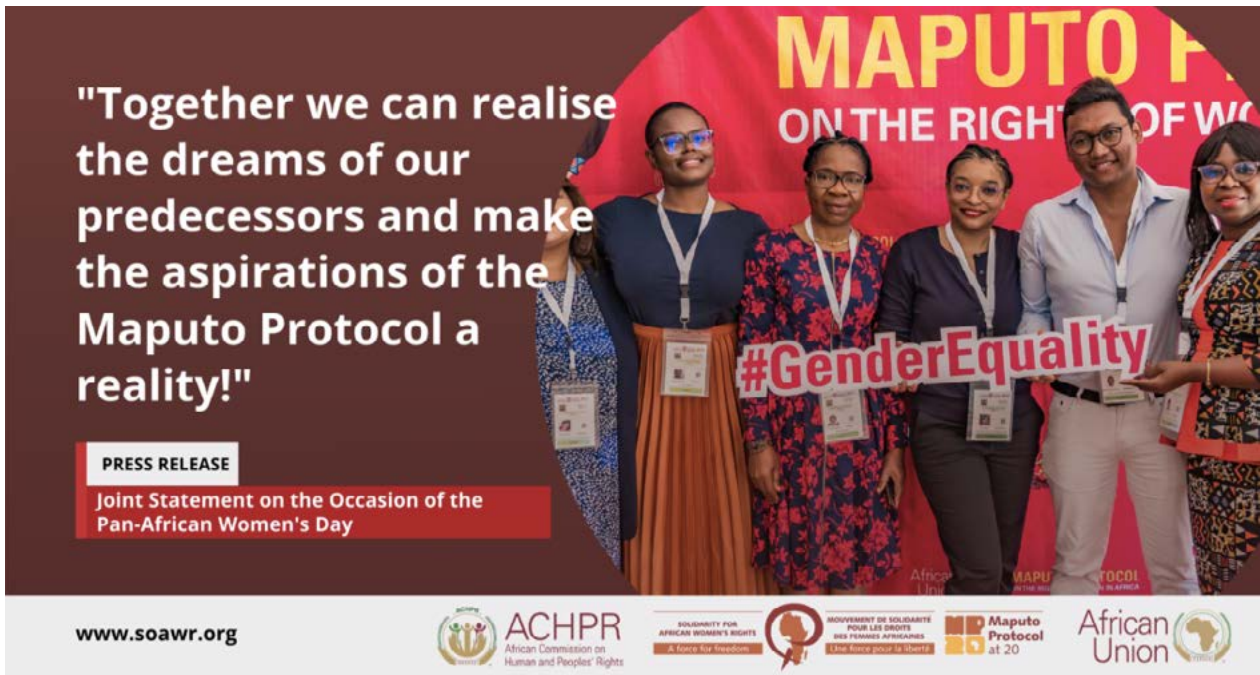
Dr. Zoneziwoh was the runners-up.



Confetti, song, dance, and cake followed the presentation of the awards, bringing the 20th anniversary celebrations to an end.

Pan-African Women's Day

To mark the celebratory day held annually on the 31st of July 2023 SOAWR, the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women in Africa, of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (the Commission), and the Women, Gender and Youth Directorate of the African Union Commission publish a [Joint Statement](#). The statement reflected on the "valiant efforts" of "brave women who paved the way for the protection of women's rights" and the progress made by various countries in areas such as GBV reduction and increasing women's political participation. In the context of the 20th year of the Maputo Protocol, the statement was a poignant opportunity to also summarise persisting challenges to women's enjoyment of their enshrined rights and call on Member states to scale-up their efforts regarding ratification, domestication, implementation and capacity building.



Advocacy on Article 14 of the Maputo Protocol: Health and Reproductive Rights

i. Advocacy Events at Women Deliver Conference, Rwanda

SOAWR Members convened two side-events at the Women Deliver Conference in late July in Kigali:

1. *Strategic litigation as a tool for safeguarding women and girls' sexual and reproductive health and rights in Africa* (run by GLIHD in collaboration with the Centre for Reproductive Rights). The side event focused on sharing experience on the use of courts as a tool for SRHR advocacy, challenges and opportunities.
2. *Rwanda's journey to lifting reservations on Article 14 of the Maputo Protocol and the steps taken thereafter to ensure access to SRHR and abortion services* (jointly run by Equality Now and GLIHD). This side event highlighted and showcased the strides and achievements that have been made by Rwanda in the realisation of available and accessible SRHR services for women and girls in Rwanda. The event was attended by more than 60 participants.



GLIHD & Centre for Reproductive Rights' Women Deliver Side Event. Image Source: GLIHD Newsletter 2023



William Ndengeyinka, State Attorney/Rwandan Ministry of Justice speaking at Equality Now & GLIHD's Women Deliver Side Event - Image Source: Equality Now.



Equality Now & GLIHD Side Event Participants - Image Source: Equality Now.

ii. Global Day of Action for Access to Safe and Legal Abortion

The SOAWR Coalition, alongside the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women in Africa of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights; and the African Union Commission's Women, Gender and Youth Directorate published a Joint Statement on the 28th of September to mark the Global Day of Action for Access to Safe and Legal Abortion. Lamenting that the prevalence of maternal mortality resulting from unsafe abortion remains a pressing but regrettably neglected concern across the continent, we called upon AU Member States to urgently remove reservations and implement Article 14(2) (c) of the Maputo Protocol and increase resourcing in this area. The [Joint Statement](#) is available in four languages: Arabic, English, French and Portuguese.



iii. Reviewing the Draft Kenyan National Action Plan

In December, COVAW led a crucial meeting to review the draft Kenyan National Action Plan towards lifting the reservation placed under Article 14(2)(c) of the Maputo Protocol. It was demonstrated that the current domestic legal framework, including the Health Act, Penal Code, and Article 26(4) of the Kenyan Constitution, lacks coherence



Image source: COVAW

with the Maputo Protocol's objectives. This inconsistency affects permissible abortion circumstances. However, the meeting concluded on a hopeful note: "Together we can make a significant impact on women's reproductive rights. Join COVAW, in advocating for more coherent legal frameworks aligning with international standards for the government to lift reservations on the Maputo Protocol." COVAW also developed a policy brief and report on the impact of the reservations which can be found on [SOAWR's website](#).

ACHPR - 77th Ordinary Session

Numerous SOAWR Members attended the 77th Ordinary Session of the ACHPR in Arusha, Tanzania in October 2023 and two members conducted their own events:

- i) ACDHRS hosted **the Hybrid Forum on the Participation of NGOs** in the 77th Ordinary Sessions of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, discussing the acceleration of the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement.
- ii) *SIHA Network* convened two side events:
 1. **From Shadows to Spotlight: Addressing Sexual Violence & Upholding Women's Rights in Somalia.** This event shone a spotlight on women's rights challenges in Somalia, urged Somalia's Government to ratify the Maputo Protocol without reservations, reinforced the connections between sexual violence accountability, the African Charter, and the Maputo Protocol, and also presented actionable grassroots-driven recommendations for both the ACHPR and the Somali state, highlighting Somalia's responsibilities as a member of the African Charter.
 2. **Silent Weapons, Loudest Wounds: Addressing the Crisis of Sexual Violence in Sudan.** This briefing session illuminated the ongoing atrocities, especially against women and girls, engaged with ACHPR commissioners, government officials, and relevant stakeholders at a meaningful level, and advocated for increased awareness, actionable resolutions, and continued engagement on the women's human rights situation in Sudan.

Launch of the Egyptian Feminist Forum for Young Women Leaders

In a new initiative to enhance the role of young feminist leaders to participate in political and public life, the Association of Egyptian Female Lawyers (AEFL) launched the "Feminist Forum for Young Women Leaders" in November 2023. The Forum aims primarily to build the capacities of young women leaders from different governorates, political parties, civil society organisations and youth centres.

Ms. Shaimaa Ahmed Abd El Khaleq, the project manager, stated that "the philosophy of the forum is based on qualifying young women leaders so that they can become active cadres in political and public life in the future, capable of occupying leadership and administrative positions in various fields, and obtaining a number of life skills and personal experiences".

"the philosophy of the forum is based on qualifying young women leaders so that they can become active cadres in political and public life in the future...."



Image source: AEFL

The launch of the forum came at the end of a three-day training workshop held by AEFL in Giza. Thirty young women and feminist leaders participated in the training. The workshop covered a number of topics, the most important of which were those related to identifying problems and arranging priorities in order to prepare to build a cadre of young women to run in elections and participate effectively in local elected councils and syndicates. Topics related to the concept of feminism and the emergence of feminist movements and the concepts associated with them were also discussed and reviewed, with a presentation of international feminist waves and Egyptian feminist waves, as well as the concept of intersectionality.

At the end of the training, AEFL invited all feminist leaders from within political parties, CSOs and youth centres from the various governorates of Egypt to join the forum, provided that specialised training workshops are held for those who wish to join to produce active young women's cadres in public and political life.

“the philosophy of the forum is based on qualifying young women leaders so that they can become active cadres in political and public life in the future....”

Pan-African Feminist Peace Conference on Sudan

SIHA Network hosted a pan-African Feminist Peace Conference from November 22-23, 2023, in Nairobi, Kenya. The Conference aimed to extend solidarity and support to Sudanese civilians and bring attention to the ramifications of Sudan's current war on women and their communities. The Solidarity Conference also discussed the importance of women's access to decision-making and provided a platform to debate the politics of gender disparity and impunity that have dominated Sudan's political environment for decades.



Image source: Maria Sarungi Tsehai (@MariaSTsehai), Twitter

Reflecting on lessons learned: All for Maputo Protocol Initiative (AMPI)

In 2019, the SOAWR Coalition, through Equality Now, received a four-year grant from Sida towards the implementation of the All for Maputo Protocol Initiative (AMPI), which is anchored in the 2020-2024 SOAWR Strategic Plan. In advance of the conclusion of the grant on 31 December 2023, the SOAWR Steering Committee, SOAWR Strategic Plan Working Group and Equality Now's Monitoring, Evaluation, Knowledge, and Information (MEKI) Team met in November to evaluate the project and to deliberate on the same for the advancement of the SOAWR Coalition. Key trends of Lessons Learned emerged throughout the evaluation such as the importance of collaboration and partnerships as well as innovating advocacy and lobbying mechanisms. The final M&E report is due for validation by all SOAWR Members in February 2024.



The SOAWR Steering Committee in Mombasa, November 2023

Call to Action and Accountability

As part of 16 Days of Activism, on the 30th of November, the SOAWR Coalition conducted a press conference in Mombasa, Kenya, with media houses including Citizen, KTN, NTV, [KBC](#), Standard, Pwani, [Capital FM](#), Radio Maisha and [Baraka](#) whilst also live-streaming on SOAWR's Facebook page. Representatives of the Steering Committee read out the press statement, launching the [Call to Action and Accountability to African Union Member States](#). With deep concern about the remaining work yet to be done in order to achieve universal ratification and implementation of the Maputo Protocol, the Coalition made 10 key appeals to AU Member States.

The Steering Committee also fielded questions from the media about GBV statistics and trends, responding that “one instance of GBV is too many for us”.



Carice Tancho of WCIC addresses media questions



Olabukunola Williams of AMWA presenting SOAWR's Call for Action & Accountability



Tom Mulisa, Executive Director of GLIHD, speaking during SOAWR's Press Conference

Ratification Missions to Burundi and Permanent Representatives of Non-Ratified Countries in Addis Ababa

One of SOAWR's Strategic Plan's key result areas is to ensure ratification of the remaining AU member states that have not ratified the Maputo Protocol. Subsequently, SOAWR members Equality Now and Kadirat accompanied CAFOB, a SOAWR member from Burundi, in meeting with the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the 8th of December 2023 in Bujumbura, Burundi. The Permanent Secretary stated that he will request the Ministry in charge of reviewing treaties to review the Maputo Protocol and confirm if the treaty complies with their laws, especially the constitution. The team also engaged with CSOs from Burundi in the hope of mobilising greater pressure on their government in securing ratification of the Maputo Protocol.

Additionally, a delegation of five SOAWR members (Equality Now, GLIHD, HelpAge International, Kadirat and SIHA Network) visited seven embassies of non-ratified countries in Addis Ababa between 11th and 14th December 2023. SOAWR met with:

1. The Charge d'Affaires of the Embassy of **Madagascar** in Ethiopia: the situation of women's rights in Madagascar vis a vis the Maputo Protocol was discussed and mediums of collaboration between the government & civil society actors in advancing women's rights in Madagascar were mapped.
2. H.E Mohamed Omar Gad, **Egypt's** Ambassador to Ethiopia & Permanent Representative to the African Union: the possibility of the ratification of the Maputo Protocol was discussed. H.E assured SOAWR of Egypt's unfaltering commitment to women's rights and to update on the ratification process.
3. The Ambassador of **Niger** to Ethiopia, the AU and UNECA H.E. Ambassador Amadou Hassane Mai Daboua: together, a positive plan on addressing the barriers to women's rights in Niger with the ratification of the Maputo Protocol was discussed. He urged the SOAWR team to field a mission to the capital as soon as possible and continue the discussion at that level as well as mobilise Nigerien women's rights CSOs to engage in the efforts at ratification as well.
4. The Federal Republic of **Somalia's** Ambassador to Ethiopia, H.E. Abdullahi Warfa: SOAWR discussed the steps his government should take towards ratifying the Maputo Protocol. H.E committed to work with his government to ratify the Protocol.
5. His Excellency Mahamat Ali Hassan, Ambassador of **Chad** in Ethiopia and Permanent Representative to the AU: the Ambassador shared that the drafting of their new constitution had become a priority focus for his country but emphasised the importance given to women's rights in Chad. He committed to follow-up with his capital on the status of ratification of the Maputo Protocol.
6. Ambassador Poukre-Kono of the **Central African Republic**: expediting the deposit of the country's instrument of ratification of the Maputo Protocol to the African Union was the priority of the meeting. SOAWR chartered out a collaborative pathway to realise this.
7. The SOAWR team also met with the First Secretary of the **Embassy of the State of Eritrea**: the official refrained from engaging on the matter but accepted a copy of the Maputo Protocol and agreed to bring it to the attention of his capital.



SOAWR's delegations visited embassies of non-ratified countries in Addis Ababa, December 2023

African Women's Rights Issues: An Overview of Some Achievements and Challenges Throughout 2023

Security Forces Violently Target Women in Angola

In February, the Angolan Women's Movement for Civil and Political Rights in Angola denounced “physical attacks, mistreatment, and sexual harassment by police officers against local women street traders, also known as ‘Zungueiras’”.¹ In May, police with dogs fired tear gas without warning at a crowd of women vendors who had gathered to march from the local Sao Paulo market to the Luanda governor's official residence to protest the city's decision to reorganise informal street markets in some areas of the capital.

Relevant Articles of the Protocol: 3(4) & 4(2)

#AfricaDisruptCSW67

SOAWR Member FEMNET convened its second Africa CSW event, with more than 200 distinguished delegates from 21 African countries gathering virtually and in Lilongwe, Malawi from the 28th February to the 2nd March 2023. Representation included women, girls, non-binary persons, persons with disabilities, government representatives, members of the Malawi Parliament, political leaders, traditional leaders, women and girls living in rural areas and informal settlements, media representatives, development partners and private sector. The space was “co-curated and co-designed to allow African women and girls in all their diversity to deep dive into the CSW67 themes, challenging the patriarchal and colonial underpinnings embedded in the design of digital technology and re-imagining solutions, for and by Africans.”² The [Lilongwe Declaration](#) was co-created and used as a key advocacy tool to influence and amplify the voices of African women and girls in the CSW67 agreed conclusions.

Relevant Articles of the Protocol: 2(1)(e) & 17

SGBV in Senegalese Schools

Human Rights Watch reports that Senegalese girls face high levels of sexual and gender-based violence, including sexual exploitation, harassment, and abuse by teachers and school officials as well as rape and sexual abuse by other students. In March, 27 girls filed rape charges against their Quranic teacher, 34-year-old Serigne Khadim Mbacké, in Touba, central Senegal. On June 5, after several weeks on the run, Mbacké was arrested by security forces. The government has yet to accept the scale of school-related sexual violence or take concrete actions to tackle school-related sexual violence and protect survivors when and after they report abuses.”³

Relevant Article of the Protocol: 12(1)(c)

Restrictions to Libyan Women's Freedom of Movement

In May, the Tripoli Internal Security Agency began requiring Libyan women travelling without a male escort to “complete a detailed form about the reasons for their travel and past travel, which is not a requirement under Libyan law and violates women's rights to equality and freedom of movement.”⁴

Relevant Articles of the Protocol: 2 & 3(1)

1 Human Rights Watch (2024) <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/angola#54d8d8>

2 FEMNET (2023) <https://www.femnet.org/2023/10/report-on-african-womens-development-and-communication-network-femnet-engagement-in-the-67th-session-of-the-commission-on-the-status-of-women-csw67/>

3 Human Rights Watch (2024) <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/senegal#fc2bdt>

4 Human Rights Watch (2024) <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/libya#1de7c4>

Women Deliver Conference - Rwanda

The Women Deliver 2023 Conference took place in-person in Kigali, Rwanda, (the first time for the conference to be hosted on the continent) as well as virtually, from 17-20 July 2023. As one of the largest multi-sectoral convenings to advance gender equality, the Conference reported that 6,300 people convened in Kigali and 200,000+ people joined virtually.⁵ SOAWR Members and other CSOs, politicians from around the world and International Organisations discussed a variety of women's rights issues including, abortion, nutrition, child marriage, and resourcing of women's rights and feminist movements.

Relevant Articles of the Protocol: 2(1)(e) & 17

Violence Against Women and Girls in Sudanese Civil War

As reported by Ellen Johnson Sirleaf in November 2023, "Sudanese women are bearing the brunt of the vicious war that began in mid-April 2023 between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces."⁶ The UNFPA reported in October that "close to 6 million people have been forced to flee their homes. Around 4.5 million people are displaced inside Sudan, including an estimated 105,000 women who are currently pregnant."⁷ Additionally, the World Health Organisation reports that the healthcare system in Sudan is in a "perilous state – 70 to 80 percent of hospitals in conflict areas are not operational – with devastating consequences for women in need of maternal health medicines. And sexual and gender-based violence has become an epidemic (and a tool of war)⁸ with more than four million women and girls at risk of sexual violence in Sudan."⁹ SIHA Network has also raised the alarm on the increasing rate of the enforced disappearance of Sudanese women.¹⁰

Relevant Article of the Protocol: 10

Launch of the AWLN - Private Sector Coalition

The African Women Leaders' Network launched its Private Sector Coalition during the World Bank Group-IMF Annual Meeting in Marrakech in October. The Coalition's five key objectives are summarised as:

1. Private sector supply chain diversification
2. Capacity building programs and training
3. Facilitating access to finance and investment networks
4. Corporate Social Responsibility Initiative
5. Advocacy for Gender Equality

Relevant Article of the Protocol: 13

5 Women Deliver (2023) <https://womendeliver.org/conference/wd2023/>

6 Al Jazeera (2023) <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2023/11/24/do-not-ignore-the-suffering-of-sudanese-women>

7 UNFPA (2023) <https://www.unfpa.org/sudan#:~:text=The%20conflict%20in%20Sudan%20is,women%20who%20are%20currently%20pregnant>

8 OHCHR (2023) <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/11/sudan-un-experts-appalled-use-sexual-violence-tool-war>

9 World Health Organisation (2023) <https://www.who.int/news/item/05-07-2023-sudan-top-un-officials-sound-alarm-at-spike-in-violence-against-women-and-girls>

10 SIHA Network (2024) <https://sihanet.org/sudan-women-and-girls-at-ongoing-risk-of-abduction-and-enforced-disappearance/>



Image source: AWLN, Twitter

African Women in Leadership Positions

2023 saw a number of African women elected or appointed to senior leadership and decision-making positions at national and local levels, particularly young women politicians. These include but are not limited to:

1. In January 2023, Manuela Roka Botey was appointed **Equatorial Guinea's** first woman Prime Minister.
2. Rose Christiane Ossouka Raponda served as **Gabon's** first woman Vice-President from 9 January 2023 until 30 August 2023 when a coup occurred.
3. Housseina Abdoukader Ali, at 28 years old, became the youngest member elected to **Djibouti's** National Assembly, following the February parliamentary election.
4. Similarly, 28-year-old Hon. Sia Mahawa Habiyama Tommy and 26-year-old Hon. Alice Kornya Sandy, both of the **Sierra Leone** People's Party, made history at the June parliamentary election by becoming the youngest members of the country's parliament.
5. Following **Eswatini's** Parliamentary election in September, Senator Pastor Lindiwe Dlamini was re-elected President of the Senate.
6. Shantel Chiwara became the first woman Mayor of Masvingo in **Zimbabwe**; she was elected by her fellow councillors in September and is also the youngest ever to hold the position at 25 years old.

Further, AJS president Mrs Aminata Fall Niang was appointed to the Electoral Governing Body in Senegal: [Commission Electorale Nationale Autonome](#). The SOAWR Coalition is proud to celebrate such a significant achievement of one of our SOAWR members.

Relevant Article of the Protocol: 9

Overview of the Implementation of the Maputo Protocol in 2023

At the beginning of 2023, President of Ghana Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo called on the remaining AU Member States to ratify the Maputo Protocol and submit their instruments of ratification to the AU Commission, declaring “It’s time for action... We should stand together to create a boldly visible force for gender equality, saying no to acts and threats of violence against women and girls.”¹¹

Excitingly, in its 20th year, the Maputo Protocol gained two new ratifications:

South Sudan - 7th June 2023

The Honourable Minister of Gender, Child and Social Welfare of South Sudan announced that South Sudan had completed the ratification process of the Maputo Protocol by depositing the instrument to the African Union. The SOAWR Coalition [congratulated](#) South Sudan and the Revitalised Transitional Government of National Unity on the momentous achievement and published the news widely, including in Juba Arabic.¹² SOAWR also took the opportunity to commend the determined and diligent efforts of our member organisations, particularly STEWARD Women, SIHA Network, and Women for Justice and Equality, who have been working tirelessly towards this milestone.



‘South Sudan has ratified the Maputo Protocol’ in Juba Arabic

Botswana - 1st December 2023

Until December, Botswana had previously been one of just three African Union Member States who had neither signed nor ratified the African women’s rights treaty, alongside Egypt and Morocco. [Botswana’s ratification came after SOAWR conducted a ratification mission](#) to the country in December 2022 and

¹¹ Modern Ghana (2023) <https://www.modernghana.com/news/1214071/its-time-for-action-akufo-addo-on-maputo-prot.html>

¹² Juba Arabic, also known since 2011 as South Sudanese Arabic, is a lingua franca spoken mainly in Equatoria Province in South Sudan, and derives its name from the South Sudanese capital, Juba. It is also spoken among communities of people from South Sudan living in towns in Sudan.

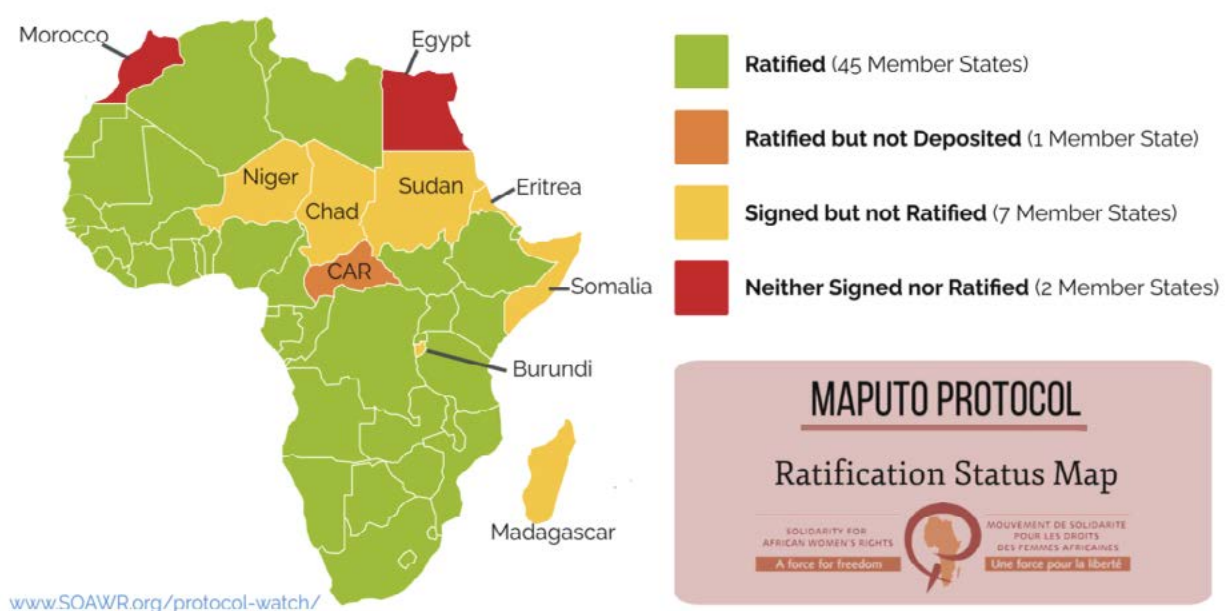
held the high-level convening in Nairobi to commemorate the 20th Anniversary on the 11th of July 2023, where Botswana's Minister for Gender indicated the country's intention to join the rest of the continent.

“The depositing of this instrument comes as a welcome development, taking into consideration that it speaks to Botswana's national principles and priorities on the rights of women that the country has been practising for many decades. It further shows that the country is party to advancing the AU agenda and its efforts and priorities.” - Botswana Ministry of Foreign Affairs



Image source: Botswana Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Facebook

SOAWR continues to map the status of ratification via [Protocol Watch](#). As of the 31st of December, 2023, 45 AU Member States have ratified the Maputo Protocol, one has ratified but not yet deposited (Central African Republic), seven have signed but not yet ratified (Burundi, Chad, Eritrea, Madagascar, Niger, Somalia and Sudan) and two are yet to sign the treaty: Egypt and Morocco.



In 2023, there were two new state reports on the Maputo Protocol submitted to the AUC: Zambia submitted its Initial Report (for 2005-2019) and Angola submitted its 1st Periodic Report (for 2016-2023) on the Maputo Protocol. This brings the total of submitted initial reports to 19¹³ and the number of countries who have also submitted their 1st period report to four¹⁴ since the Maputo Protocol entered into force in 2005. SOAWR Member, Center for Human Rights - University of Pretoria, also submitted two shadow reports for Eritrea.

Regarding tangible domestication and implementation of the Protocol, there were a number of documented developments by AU Member States:

1. **Angola's** Ministry of Social Action, Family and Promotion of Women launched a statistical digital platform for Domestic Violence and Victim Protection services.
2. In **Nigeria**, the Women's Affairs Ministry concluded plans to constitute a mobile court to try Sexual and Gender-Based Violence cases. Similarly in **Kenya**, Chief Justice Martha Koome has launched the second specialised Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) Court to be held in Siaya County; another SGBV Court was also launched in Meru.
3. The **Kenyan** Government launched its first national plan to end gender-based violence.
4. **Malawi's** President opened a new centre for Comprehensive Emergency Obstetric and Neonatal Care to improve maternal and neonatal outcomes in the Mangochi District.
5. In September, King Mohammed VI of **Morocco** formally instructed the head of government to begin revising the 2004 Family Code, also known as the Moudawana. Justice Minister Abdellatif Ouahbi emphasised the government's intention to address existing gender inequalities in the law relating to marriage, divorce, and guardianship of children.
6. **Nigeria's** Senate passed a bill to mandate teaching about SGBV in schools.
7. First Lady Jeannette Kagame launched the **Rwanda** Chapter of the African Women Leaders Network (AWLN).
8. **Sierra Leone** adopted The Women's Equality and Empowerment Act, requiring all public or private organisations to reserve 30% of their jobs for women, including in the Government.
9. **South Africa's** Cabinet approved a draft policy on women in sport to address barriers to entry by women in sport such as lack of funding, sponsorship and inadequate remuneration.
10. **Uganda's** Parliament passed the Employment (Amendment) Bill 2023, which obligates all employers to prevent sexual harassment, and prohibits mistreatment, harassment or violence against any employee. At the time of writing, the President is yet to sign the Bill.
11. **Zambia** enacted an amendment to the 1918 Marriage Act that raised the minimum marriageable age to 18 for all marriages, including those concluded under customary law, effectively abolishing child marriage.

13 Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, DR Congo, Eswatini, The Gambia, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritania, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Seychelles, South Africa, Togo, Zambia and Zimbabwe

14 Angola, Malawi, Namibia and Nigeria

2023 SOAWR/Sida Sub-grantees

Member Activities:

1. BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights (BAOBAB) - Nigeria



Under their project title “Strengthening Capacity for Advancing Advocacy for Domestication and Implementation of the Maputo Protocol in Nigeria”, BAOBAB completed several activities:

- i. Biannual virtual town hall meetings, X space on Maputo Protocol at 20, dissemination of physical advocacy materials and social media campaigns, which increased the knowledge of the general public on the Maputo Protocol and a Virtual Strategy meeting with media personnel that led to commitments to innovative strategies that will ensure women's seamless participation in the upcoming 2027 general elections in Nigeria.
- ii. A two-day training workshop was conducted for 30 female politicians in Nigeria, focusing on the theme “Women's Inclusion in Political Leadership: The Maputo Protocol to the Rescue!”. The Network of Female Politicians 4 More (NFP4More) was established at the end of the workshop.

2. Coalition On Violence Against Women (COVAW) - Kenya



COVAW implemented four activities under the project title “Securing Change: Popularising and Strengthening the Implementation of the Maputo Protocol in Kenya”. The activities included lobbying meetings with the Attorney General and International Law Decision as well with the Kenyan Government regarding the lifting of the reservations under Article 14 of Maputo Protocol. This was supplemented by capacity building with 20 Magistrates and Justice Actors from Nairobi County on the use and reliance on the provisions of the Maputo Protocol by judicial officers as well as training of state and non-state actors on reporting on the Protocol, culminating in a technical committee and action plan. COVAW also conducted research on the Impact of the Reservations placed by the Kenya Government on Article 14 (2)(c) of the Maputo Protocol leading to a [policy brief and report](#). Finally, two consultative meetings were held with 17 CSOs and other government agencies on Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights; the stakeholders gave inputs on the National CSOs' Action Plan for the implementation and realisation of the Maputo Protocol, and developed a CSO National Action Plan on supporting SRHR in the realisation of the Maputo Protocol.

3. Great Lake Initiative for Human Rights and Development (GLIHD) - Rwanda



GLIHD implemented the “Effective implementation of the Maputo Protocol: Advancing the Rights of Women and Girls in Rwanda” project to strengthen the capacity of women-led CBOs, activists and professionals to understand and disseminate the Protocol. This involved:

- i. A four-day awareness raising workshop with 120 representatives of Conseil National de Femme (CNF), Maison d’ access ala Justice (MAJ), and Isange one-stop centre as gender focal persons including CSOs at the District Level on the Maputo Protocol and their role in disseminating the Protocol amongst their peer group members.
- ii. A hybrid engagement with 30 lawyers (including women lawyers) on the utilisation of the Maputo Protocol.
- iii. Training workshops of 30 women-led CBOs on reporting and monitoring of the Maputo Protocol to ensure its effective implementation.
- iv. A roundtable discussion with 30 key stakeholders and CSOs to discuss the implementation status of the Maputo Protocol and the ACHPR Concluding Observations, developing actions and roadmaps towards their effective implementation.

4. KADIRAT - Tunisia



Kadirat implemented their project titled “Towards a More Rapid Ratification of the Maputo Protocol in Morocco” by conducting a [research study](#) to lobby stakeholders for the ratification of both the African Charter and the Maputo Protocol. The study compares national and international legislation ratified by Morocco against the Maputo Protocol, which it has not yet ratified, in the area of Moroccan Women's Rights. The work is based on a set of documentation as well as reports issued by the related national authorities and the reports from women's NGOs. This document will subsequently serve as an advocacy and an awareness raising tool to inform Moroccan decision-makers and civil society to call for the ratification of the Maputo Protocol by Morocco.

In addition to their project, Kadirat extended their activities to Egypt where they carried out ratification missions. This included training of journalists on the Maputo Protocol and benefits to women and girls if ratified. The training had [wide media coverage](#) and led to decision-makers contacting members of the SOAWR Coalition on the Maputo Protocol. Kadirat also had a meeting with the advisor of the Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs. An outcome of the meeting was the advisor's commitment to follow up with the department in charge of international treaties.

5. Malawi Human Rights Resource Centre (MHRRC) - Malawi



During the implementation period, the Malawi Human Rights Resource Centre implemented several activities:

- i. MHRRC mobilised the five permanent Committee members of the Coalition on the Prevention of Unsafe Abortion (COPUA)¹⁵ and other CSOs who were not members of the Coalition before the convening but eventually joined COPUA. The meeting aimed to strengthen coordination among COPUA members on advocacy for safe abortion and train committee members in advocacy for sexual justice. The participants were also trained in Sexual Reproductive Health Justice and Gender Transformative Approach to advocacy for the Termination of Pregnancy (ToP) Bill. The training focused on SRHR justice because it has a direct link to social, political and economic inequalities that affect women's ability to access reproductive health care services.
- ii. MHRRC, in partnership with COPUA's Community Mobilisation Permanent Committee, mobilised 20 women and girls' networks to be trained in lobbying and advocacy skills. The training strengthened the capacity of women and girls in advocacy and lobbying, as well as Gender Transformative Approaches skills. The women and girls who benefitted from the training networks can now conduct awareness meetings in their communities on SRHR and safe abortion.

6. National Association for the Defence of Rights and Freedoms (NADRF) - Egypt



NADRF started its activities by implementing a workshop with media professionals entrusted to support their campaign at the media level. The objective was to use the media to shed light on the Maputo Protocol and the project activities in general and its importance in advancing women's rights and gender equality. Thanks to this workshop, there has been positive media coverage of the following project activities:

- i. Capacity building workshop for Women Affairs Committees (WAC), National Council of Women and local NGOs
- ii. Women of Inspiration Awards

7. Support the Empowerment of Women and their Rights for Development (STEWARDS WOMEN) - South Sudan



Significantly, STEWARDS WOMEN were successful in campaigning for the ratification of the Maputo Protocol by South Sudan through accelerating the engagement of a coalition of CSOs led by STEWARDS WOMEN on the use of pertinent advocacy strategies, tools, and skills to advocate for the ratification of Maputo Protocol. STEWARDS WOMEN also:

¹⁵ The Coalition on the Prevention of Unsafe Abortion (COPUA) was established in 2010 and is comprised of state and non-state stakeholders.

- i. Popularised the Maputo Protocol through increased knowledge among government decision-makers at regional, national, and sub-national levels and citizens.
- ii. Held a radio talk show at Eye Radio on the process of deposition of the instruments of ratification. The talk show was listened to by 25,000 people across Central Equatoria State and neighbouring States.
- iii. Participated, alongside the Coalition for Civil Society Organisations for the Ratification and Domestication of the Maputo Protocol in South Sudan (CCORPs) members, in the national launch for the implementation of the Maputo Protocol. The one-day conference brought together over 350 participants.
- iv. Held a live radio talk show at Eye Radio FM in Juba to discuss the progress made on the implementation of Articles 10 & 11 of the Maputo Protocol. The talk show was listened to by 15,000 people across Central Equatoria State. There were seven callers who successfully called to join the discussions on the Maputo Protocol.
- v. Conducted a three-day refresher training for 30 prosecutors and lawyers on the use of the Maputo Protocol for legal action.

8. Well Being Africa (WBA) - South Africa



WBA carried out their project on “The advocacy on the prevention and management of teenage pregnancy in accordance with the Maputo Protocol”. WBA held three sessions of advocacy training for 78 community care workers (CCWs) and 21 youth care workers from 10 CSOs. During the training workshops, participants produced a draft manual on the prevention and management of teenage pregnancy for use by CCWs. WBA revised the draft manual for content validity.

9. Women Counselling and Information Centre (WCIC) - Cameroon



WCIC implemented the following activities under their project “Empowerment of Internally Displaced Women and Girls in Bangangte through the Promotion of Peace, Education, Health, and Socio-economic Inclusion”:

- i. Identification of 100 women and girls and 20 men in Bangangte who are internally displaced.
- ii. Popularisation of the Maputo Protocol through educating 41 state and non-state actors including municipal councils and relevant authorities on the existence of the Maputo Protocol as a protective instrument for women's rights and issuing the non-state actors a bilingual publication of the Protocol. Additionally, WCIC raised awareness of the 20th anniversary of the Maputo Protocol through branding shirts and social media; specifically on Facebook.

- iii. Trained 76 women and girls and 20 men on harnessing skills and knowledge of contraceptives, and on producing reusable sanitary pads.
- iv. Conducted Education Promotion campaigns, including donation of school necessities for the neediest adolescent IDPs, were done in four schools: Government Bilingual High School BASSAMBA, Government Bilingual High School BABOU, Bilingual Grammar School BATELA and Lycée de Nkoagon (route projet du Noun).
- v. Identification and selection of internally displaced students as beneficiaries of educational kits to raise awareness on the need to promote peace between the internally displaced students and their other school mates and to address specific issues faced by internally displaced students in schools in line with Article 10 of the Maputo Protocol.

Cluster Activities:

10. Eastern African Cluster

SIHA Network coordinated the following activities with SOAWR's Eastern Africa Cluster member organisations:

- i. In-depth interviews and 21 audio-visual productions in Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda. These productions were widely disseminated across various partner and SOAWR social media platforms, including Twitter/X, TikTok, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube. This dissemination utilised the hashtags #20ReasonsWhy20Voices and #MaputoAt20 to enhance visibility and engagement across the online platforms.
- ii. Two virtual trainings covering a) Digital Security and b) Digital Marketing and Online Communication. The Digital Security Training provided the 33 participants that attended with knowledge on emerging trends in cybercrime, the domain of cybersecurity, and the impacts of cybersecurity threats at individual and institutional levels.
- iii. In collaboration with the South Sudan Taskforce on the Maputo Protocol and the Ministry of Gender, Child, and Social Welfare, SIHA Network organised a hybrid Regional Public Lecture with 92 participants where presentations and panel discussions delved into the Maputo Protocol's integral aspects, highlighting its comprehensive and legally binding nature, and detailed South Sudan's journey, government reservations, and pivotal articles addressing equality, access to justice, education, and harmful practices.

11. Francophone West Africa Cluster

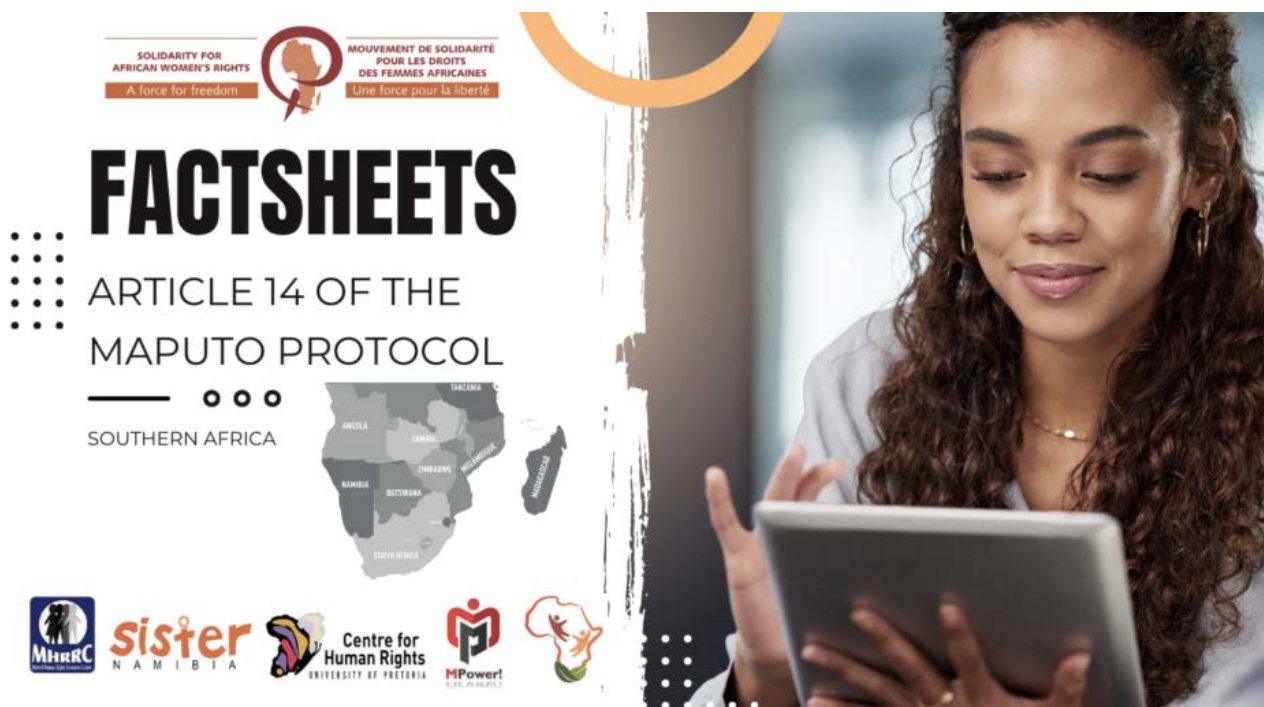
Between the 6th and 10th of November 2023, the Francophone West Africa cluster had a successful meeting where they were able to develop a strategy to strengthen the cluster. Being the only cluster that had not developed a

strategy in 2022 due to some challenges, this was an important meeting for them. The northern Africa cluster lead Kadirat was the lead facilitator as she shared experiences from their cluster. At the end of the meeting, an action plan was developed for the Francophone Western African Cluster.

12. Southern African Cluster

Throughout 2023, SOAWR's Southern African Members produced informative [Fact Sheets](#) on different issues under Article 14 of the Maputo Protocol. These Fact Sheets are tools for popularising the knowledge and utilisation of the Maputo Protocol, aimed at encouraging the use of the Protocol in conversation and public debate on these issues. It is further aimed that the Fact Sheets will provide those reached with the information, vocabulary and context needed to more effectively encourage AU Member States to meet their obligations under the Maputo Protocol. They explore various issues including breastfeeding as well as the specific health and reproductive rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women.

We celebrate Well-Being Africa, South Africa; Sister-Namibia; M-Power! Mauritius; Malawi Human Rights Resource Centre and Centre for Human Rights University of Pretoria, South Africa, for their united effort to develop these accessible resources.



2024 Plans

A number of activities are planned for 2024, including:

1. Participation in the 68th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women
2. 20 Years of the SOAWR Coalition celebration and Annual General Meeting
3. Launch of the SOAWR Podcast: All Things Maputo Protocol
4. Mobilise new funding
5. 2024 Regional Cluster Activities
6. Moot Court Competition for African university law students
7. Participation in the ACHPR Ordinary Sessions in May and October/November
8. Commemorating the 21st Anniversary of the Maputo Protocol
9. Ratification Missions to Morocco (February) and follow-up with the other nine remaining countries
10. CSO engagement to accelerate the ratification of the Maputo Protocol in Niger 2-4th March 2024
11. Training of Legal Researchers which will be held between the 4th and 12th April
12. Training of judges on the Maputo Protocol

We are pleased to share that in December 2023, Equality Now received a grant from the African Women's Development Fund (AWDF) to support the SOAWR Coalition's project: Movement Building for Collaborative Advocacy on the Maputo Protocol (2024-2025). The grant will focus on strengthening collaboration among SOAWR members, movement building to promote the rights of African women and girls in all their diversity, and the ratification, domestication, and implementation of the Maputo Protocol.

**SOLIDARITY FOR
AFRICAN WOMEN'S RIGHTS**

A force for freedom



**MOUVEMENT DE SOLIDARITÉ
POUR LES DROITS
DES FEMMES AFRICAINES**

Une force pour la liberté

SOAWR Secretariat c/o Equality Now

P.O. Box 2018-00202 Nairobi Kenya

T: +254-20-2719832

F: +254-20-2719868

E: info@soawr.org