AKINA MAMA WA AFRIKA

A Pan African Feminist Leadership Organisation

Development of A Civil Society Briefing Paper on Addressing Backlash to Ending Gender based Violence (GBV) in Africa

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Introduction

These Terms of reference serve as guidelines for a consultant to develop a Civil Society (CSO) Briefing Paper on addressing Backlash to Ending Gender Based Violence (GBV) in Africa

2. Background

Across the Continent, notable progress has been made in establishing legal, policy and institutional frameworks to address gender-based violence (GBV). At the continental level, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (the Maputo Protocol) set a benchmark for African states to legislate against GBV, representing a landmark commitment by African states to address gendered violence, with many countries subsequently domesticating parts of the framework through constitutional amendments and dedicated policies. This has translated into concrete national legislation across the continent. The progress in the legal and policy environment has resulted in evident reduction in cases of child marriages, female genital mutilation and femicide, for example, the prevalence of FGM among girls fell steeply between the mid-1990s and mid-2010s, from 71.4% to 8% in East Africa, from 57.7% to 14.1% in North Africa, and from 73.6% to 25.4% in West Africa, while FGM prevalence has declined by over 30 percentage in countries including Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, and Benin[1].

Despite these gains, civil society organizations (CSOs), women's rights organizations, and human rights defenders continue to face increasing resistance and backlash against GBV prevention and response initiatives, mostly due to the rise of conservatist, anti-rights and anti-gender groups that seek to erase women's rights and subjugate women. Across the continent, women's rights defenders are facing heightened violence, online and offline harassment, restrictive laws, and deep funding cuts that undermine their ability to mobilize and protect hard-won gains, with political instability, anti-rights movements, and digital repression adding to these pressures. This backlash is becoming increasingly sophisticated and mirrors a global pattern entrenched by the connections that anti-gender movements in Africa have to international Evangelical and Catholic networks. The backlash manifests through restrictive legal and policy environments, misinformation and disinformation, shrinking civic space, suppression of the media, harassment and extra-judicial attacks on human rights defenders, all prevailing in a highly militarized environment. The legal and policy dynamic is especially stark in the Greater Horn of Africa, and West Africa where a mass anti-rights movement against women and girls has manifested in the form of increased gender-based violence, femicide, child early and forced marriage, and conflict-related sexual violence rooted in deeply entrenched patriarchal norms, religion, and harmful traditional practices. There have also been instances of moves to pull back progressive laws in the name of 'upholding cultural values' as has been witnessed in The Gambia, with the 2015 FGM law and in Somalia with the 2020 Sexual Intercourse Related Crimes Bill which sought to replace a stronger 2018 bill that protected girls from Gender based violence and child marriage and instead

[1] https://www.fgmcri.org/continent/africa/?gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=20643219992&gbraid=0AAAACIOJUD9VANvAx1GQ21HUr8KQW-Km&gclid=CjwKCAjww-3VBhAcEiwAwUUIu4REz24qup0QB8YOJVsyHMdguG_gHBB7ShOW8fOY11dp32LRgPoDRBoCM7UQAvD_BwE.

required only the family's consent for a girl to be married. This backlash manifests through restrictive legal and policy environments, misinformation and disinformation, shrinking civic space, suppression of the media, harassment and extra-judicial attacks on human rights defenders, all prevailing in a highly militarized environment. These developments call for our attention because they threaten progress toward gender equality and promotion of women's rights, and suppress women's voices, choices, and agency over their bodies. Recent trends such as the adoption of weak and regressive legal frameworks such as the African Union Convention on Ending All Forms of Violence Against Women and Girls (AUCEVAWG), the pressure to overturn the law banning Female Genital Mutilation in Gambia and the Draft African Charter on Family Values and Sovereignty with clauses that call for the reversals of certain provisions within the Maputo Protocol, especially Article 14, are a cause for concern. This backlash is also happening when women rights activists, feminists and human rights defenders are seeing increasing rates of femicide, reduced funding for prevention and response and weakened commitments to implementing national, regional and international human rights frameworks.

To strengthen evidence-based advocacy and movement building, a Civil Society Briefing Paper will be developed to document the nature, drivers and impacts of backlash against addressing GBV in Africa and propose practical recommendations and actions for government, civil society, media and other relevant stakeholders.

3. Purpose

To develop a high-quality, evidence-based Civil Society Briefing Paper that analyses emerging backlash against GBV in Africa and provides strategic recommendations and actions to safeguard rights, strengthen accountability and support an enabling environment for effective programming and advocacy.

4. Objectives

The specific objectives are to:

- Document the current forms and trends of backlash affecting GBV interventions in Africa
- Examine the legal, political, socio-cultural, religious, and economic factors driving the backlash.
- Assess the implications of backlash on GBV survivors, access to SRHR services for women and girls of all diversities, especially the most marginalized, and civil society organizations.
- Identify promising practices, lessons learned and opportunities for strengthening resilience among civil society actors.
- Develop actionable policy, legislative and advocacy recommendations for key stakeholders.

5. Scope of Work

The consultant will:

- Conduct a desk review of relevant literature, legislation, policies, reports and research.
- Review relevant national and regional legal and policy frameworks relating to GBV, SRHR, gender equality, and civic space.
- Analyse regional and international human rights obligations relevant to GBV prevention and SRHR.

- Consult with key stakeholders through key informant interviews, or validation meetings as appropriate.
- Map the key actors driving and responding to backlash.
- Identify emerging narratives, misinformation trends, and barriers affecting public understanding of GBV and SRHR.
- Analyse the effects of backlash on GBV/SRH service delivery, advocacy, funding, policy engagement, and civic engagement.
- Document successful civil society strategies for addressing backlash.
- Prepare a concise, evidence-based briefing paper suitable for advocacy and policy engagement.
- Present findings during a stakeholder validation meeting and incorporate feedback into the final document.

6. Key Research Questions

The briefing paper should address the following questions:

- What forms of backlash against GBV prevention and SRHR are currently emerging in Africa with national examples?
- Who are the key actors driving the backlash?
- What legal, political, social, religious, and digital factors contribute to these trends?
- How does backlash affect survivors, women and girls, adolescents, healthcare providers and civil society organizations?
- What are the implications for national development priorities, regional mechanisms and international human rights commitments?
- What policy, advocacy, and programmatic responses are most effective in mitigating backlash?

7. Methodology

The assignment should adopt a mixed-methods approach, including:

- Comprehensive desk review
- Review of legislation, policies, and strategic documents.
- Key informant interviews
- Stakeholder consultations
- Analysis of media, social media, and public discourse where relevant.
- Validation workshop

The methodology should uphold ethical principles, including confidentiality, informed consent, gender sensitivity, and a survivor-centered approach.

8. Expected Deliverables

The consultant will produce:

1. An inception report detailing methodology, work plan and data collection tools
2. A literature review summary
3. Stakeholder consultation report
4. First draft Civil Society Briefing Paper.

5. Validation workshop presentation (validation workshop to be organized and facilitated by AMwA)
6. Final Civil Society Briefing Paper incorporating stakeholder feedback
7. Executive summary (2–4 pages).
8. Policy brief (5 pages) highlighting key advocacy messages

9. Duration

The assignment is expected to be completed within 40 working days from the date of contract signing. The consultant should provide a weekly breakdown of deliverables within these working days, as follows:

Activity	**Duration**
Inception meeting	Week 1
Literature review	Week 2
Stakeholder consultations	Weeks 3-4
Draft briefing paper	Week 5
Validation workshop	Week 7
Finalization	Week 8

10. **Required Qualifications**

The consultant should meet the following qualifications:

1. Advanced degree in Gender Studies, Human Rights, Development Studies, Social Sciences, or related fields
2. Demonstrated experience in conducting intersectional feminist research and policy analysis particularly on gender equality and social justice issues in Africa
3. Strong understanding of SRHR and its interlinkages with Gender justice
4. At least seven years of experience in GBV, SRHR, gender equality, or human rights programming
5. Demonstrated experience conducting policy analysis and producing high-quality advocacy publications
6. Strong understanding of Africa's legal, policy and institutional context
7. Capacity to work independently, meet deadlines, and coordinate stakeholder engagements effectively within the given timeframe.

11. Reporting

The consultant will report to the SRHR Lead at Akina Mama wa Afrika and work closely with the SRHR team.

12. Key Principles

The assignment shall be guided by:

- Intersectionality
- Feminist programming.
- Survivor-centered and trauma-informed principles.
- Do No Harm.
- Meaningful participation of women, young people, sexually minoritized communities and other key populations including sex workers
- Evidence-based analysis.
- Confidentiality and ethical research standards.

13. Fees

The Consultant's total fee is USD 5000 to cover:

- Professional consultancy fees
- Virtual consultations where applicable
- Costs of interviews
- Presentation during the validation workshop
- Incorporation of feedback from stakeholders

The consultant's total fee is inclusive of incidental costs and applicable taxes. Payment will be disbursed in three installments based on the successful completion of key deliverables:

1. 30% – Upon submission of the draft briefing paper for validation and partner engagement.
2. 30% – Upon presentation of key findings and recommendations during the validation meeting.
3. 40% – Upon submission and approval of the final comprehensive briefing paper incorporating stakeholder feedback.

Application Procedure:

Interested applicants should submit the following documents:

1. Technical Proposal outlining:
    a. Understanding of the consultancy objectives
    b. Proposed methodology and approach
    c. Work plan and timeline for completing the deliverables
2. Financial Proposal detailing the consultancy fee
3. Curriculum Vitae (CV) highlights relevant experience, qualifications, and past assignments.
4. Sample research work related to gender equality and feminist analysis.

Submission Deadline

Applications should be sent through email to Consultancy@akinamamawaafrika.org with the subject line: **"Application for Consultancy – Development of the Civil Society Briefing Paper on Addressing Backlash against GBV Prevention and Realisation of SRHR in Africa"**

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The deadline for submission is November 16, **2026**

About Akina Mama wa Afrika

AMwA is a feminist Pan-African leadership development organization founded in 1985 by a group of African women living in the diaspora who remained keenly aware of their African roots and the need to organize autonomously. AMwA later relocated her headquarters to Kampala, Uganda in 1996. AMwA's work is rooted in feminist principles and beliefs guided by the Charter of Feminist Principles for African Feminists, which define our leadership development program and movement-building activities. We envision a dignified and equitable feminist society for African women, girls, and gender-expansive persons. Our mission is to build feminist leadership and collective power to deconstruct intersectional systems of oppression to advance gender and social justice. Our thematic focus areas include Women's Political Leadership, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, and Economic Justice and Climate Action. The organization's work is advanced through feminist and transformational leadership development, feminist research and knowledge building, policy influencing and movement building, and arts and creatives. AMwA provides strategic direction in key Pan-African networks, including NGO CSW Africa, Solidarity for African Women's Rights, and the Gender Is My Agenda Campaign. AMwA also has consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council.