



Human Rights Council
Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review
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Compilation on Rwanda

Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

I. Background

1. The present report was prepared pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 5/1 and 16/21, taking into consideration the periodicity of the universal periodic review. It is a compilation of information contained in reports of treaty bodies and special procedures and other relevant United Nations documents, presented in a summarized manner owing to word-limit constraints.

II. Scope of international obligations and cooperation with international human rights mechanisms and bodies^{1, 2}

2. Referring to relevant supported recommendations from the previous review, the United Nations country team stated that Rwanda was not yet a party to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights or the Optional Protocol to Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure.³ Rwanda had also not ratified the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court or the Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities of the International Criminal Court.⁴

3. In 2020, the Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that Rwanda consider ratifying the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance,⁵ the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure⁶ and the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) of the International Labour Organization (ILO),⁷ and urged it to consider ratifying the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169).⁸

4. In 2017, the Committee against Torture invited Rwanda to ratify the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.⁹

5. In 2019, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities encouraged Rwanda to ratify the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print Disabled.¹⁰



6. In 2016, the Human Rights Committee expressed concern that Rwanda had withdrawn its declaration recognizing the competence of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights to receive cases from individuals and non-governmental organizations.¹¹

7. The Committee against Torture expressed regret that the majority of the recommendations identified for follow-up in its previous concluding observations had not been implemented.¹²

8. In a 2018 report, the Secretary-General noted that the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment had suspended its visit to Rwanda due to a series of obstructions imposed by the authorities in relation to accessing places of detention, the confidentiality of certain interviews and concerns that interviewees could face reprisals. The Subcommittee reported that during its visit, the experts had encountered an especially difficult environment to undertake private interviews with detainees and many detainees had expressed a fear of reprisals.¹³ The Committee against Torture recommended that Rwanda facilitate the resumption of the suspended visit by providing the Subcommittee with unrestricted access to all places of detention, in full respect of the principles of confidentiality and freedom from reprisals.¹⁴

III. National human rights framework¹⁵

9. In 2017, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women expressed concern that, following the amendment of the Constitution in 2015, the Constitution and organic laws had taken precedence over international treaties. It encouraged Rwanda to vest the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women with the status that ratified treaties had had before the constitutional amendments.¹⁶

10. Noting that the status of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights had changed in the domestic legal order following the 2015 amendments to the Constitution, the Human Rights Committee reminded Rwanda of its obligation to ensure that domestic law was consistent with the provisions of the Covenant.¹⁷

11. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that Rwanda harmonize Law No. 71/2018 relating to the protection of the child with the principles and provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.¹⁸

12. The same Committee urged Rwanda to review whether the existing legislation criminalized all offences prohibited under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, and take necessary legislative measures to rectify any discrepancy. It also urged Rwanda to criminalize the compulsory recruitment of children in the national armed forces and non-State armed groups.¹⁹

13. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that Rwanda accelerate the adoption of the bill on trafficking in persons.²⁰

14. The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recommended that Rwanda enact legislation recognizing the full legal capacity of persons with disabilities, including a supported decision-making regime that respected the autonomy, wishes and preferences of persons with disabilities.²¹

15. Expressing concern that the members of the National Commission for Human Rights were selected by a committee appointed by the President, the Human Rights Committee stated that Rwanda should ensure that the selection and appointment of the members of the Commission enjoyed full transparency and independence.²²

IV. Implementation of international human rights obligations, taking into account applicable international humanitarian law

A. Cross-cutting issues

1. Equality and non-discrimination²³

16. In 2016, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination recommended that Rwanda incorporate in article 16 of its Constitution and in its national legislation a definition of racial discrimination which included all the criteria and grounds set out in article 1 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.²⁴

17. While noting that the principle of equality and prohibition of discrimination were enshrined in the Constitution, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that Rwanda repeal all legal provisions that were discriminatory towards women and adopt comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation.²⁵ The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that Rwanda ensure the full implementation of relevant laws prohibiting discrimination, and provide anti-discrimination training to government and law enforcement officials.²⁶

18. While welcoming the adoption of legislative measures that had improved gender equality concerning access to land, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women remained concerned that the implementation of Law No. 43/2013 was hampered by stereotypical attitudes towards ownership and inheritance by women and by the continued application of discriminatory customs. It recommended that Rwanda ensure that rural women, as well as local authorities, mediation committee members (*abunzi*) and judicial officers, were made sufficiently aware of the legislation.²⁷

19. The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities expressed concern about the absence of recognition in national legislation of denial of reasonable accommodation as a form of disability-based discrimination, the insufficient laws and policies to combat discrimination against persons with disabilities and the lack of accessible mechanisms for reporting cases of such discrimination. It recommended that Rwanda take all appropriate measures to prevent and address all forms of disability-based discrimination.²⁸

2. Development, the environment, and business and human rights

20. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that Rwanda ensure the realization of children's rights in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women called for the realization of substantive gender equality.²⁹

3. Human rights and counter-terrorism

21. The Committee against Torture expressed concern about the alleged killing by the police of Muslim community members who were reportedly suspected of collaborating with international terrorist groups.³⁰

B. Civil and political rights

1. Right to life, liberty and security of person³¹

22. Alarmed by reports that the security forces and the police had summarily executed at least 37 suspected petty offenders between July 2016 and March 2017, the Committee against Torture urged Rwanda to ensure that all allegations of extrajudicial, arbitrary or summary executions and enforced disappearances were investigated by an independent authority.³²

23. The same Committee, concerned about deaths of suspects during arrests and in suspicious circumstances at police stations, stated that Rwanda should ensure that impartial and effective investigations were conducted promptly into all instances of death in custody and the prosecution of those allegedly responsible. Rwanda should also ensure that all members of the security forces received appropriate training in the use of force.³³

24. The Committee recommended that Rwanda define the crime of torture in full conformity with article 1 of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and ensure that it was punishable by appropriate penalties, in accordance with article 4 (2) of the Convention. It urged Rwanda to make the necessary legislative amendments to exclude the application of statutes of limitations, amnesties, presidential pardons and plea agreements to the crime of torture.³⁴

25. Expressing concern in 2016 at allegations that torture and ill-treatment had been practised in unofficial detention centres as a means of eliciting confessions, the Human Rights Committee stated that Rwanda should ensure that allegations of unlawful detention, torture and ill-treatment were promptly investigated and that the perpetrators were brought to justice, and should guarantee an effective right to remedy and redress for all victims.³⁵ In 2017, the Committee against Torture was concerned by information from various authoritative sources about a continuing practice of illegal detention in military facilities and in unofficial locations, notwithstanding the denial by Rwanda of the existence of secret detention facilities. It stated that Rwanda should investigate the existence of secret non-official detention places.³⁶ In 2018, Rwanda informed the Human Rights Committee that there were no unofficial places of detention and that all detention facilities were managed in accordance with United Nations standards and regulated by legislation, that all detained persons were provided with all legal safeguards, and that all allegations of unlawful detention, torture and ill-treatment were promptly investigated and prosecuted.³⁷

26. Referring to its previous concluding observations, the Human Rights Committee remained concerned that the disappearances of Mr. Augustin Cyiza, former president of the Court of Cassation, and Mr. Leonard Hitimana, a member of Parliament belonging to the Mouvement démocratique républicain (Democratic Republican Movement), were still unresolved and that other political dissidents had since disappeared or been killed. The Committee stated that Rwanda should undertake prompt, impartial and effective investigations into reported cases of extrajudicial executions, enforced disappearances and murders, including any possible complicity in those acts by members of the police and security forces, and bring the perpetrators to justice.³⁸ The Committee against Torture stated that Rwanda should take all necessary measures to combat impunity for the crime of enforced disappearance.³⁹

27. The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities stated that, while there had been no reported killings in Rwanda, the right to life of persons with albinism in Rwanda and in the East African region in general was under threat due to myths and false beliefs and practices. It recommended that Rwanda take all appropriate measures to protect persons with albinism.⁴⁰

28. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that Rwanda ensure that living conditions for children in prison with their mothers were adequate for the children's physical, mental and social development and, where possible, seek alternative measures to institutional confinement for pregnant women and mothers with small children.⁴¹

29. The Committee against Torture stated that Rwanda should ensure that detainees were provided with sufficient food and water and adequate sanitation, and ensure the strict separation of juveniles from adults and pretrial detainees from convicted prisoners.⁴² The Human Rights Committee stated that Rwanda should continue its efforts to address overcrowding in police and military detention facilities and in prisons.⁴³ In response, Rwanda stated that a new prison had been built in Mageragere and the prisons in Rubavu, Huye and Rwamagana had been renovated, and that efforts had been made to separate women and children from other inmates. Detainees in police and military detention centres had an appropriate place to sleep and access to water and food.⁴⁴

2. Administration of justice, including impunity, and the rule of law⁴⁵

30. The Human Rights Committee expressed concern at reports of unlawful interference in the judiciary by government officials and noted that the procedure for appointing judges could expose them to political pressure. It stated that Rwanda should take the necessary measures to ensure that judges were not subjected to political influence in their decision-making and that judicial appointments were based on the objective criteria of competence and independence, with the effective participation of the High Council of the Judiciary.⁴⁶

31. The United Nations country team stated that service delivery in the justice sector had improved with the use of the integrated electronic case management system. However, collaboration with relevant stakeholders was required to create the necessary infrastructure to facilitate access to online services for all, particularly those in remote areas.⁴⁷

32. The Committee on the Rights of the Child urged Rwanda to designate specialized judges for children in all courts. It recommended that Rwanda prevent the revictimization of children, including by ensuring safe and child-friendly criminal proceedings, with particular emphasis on their protection and confidentiality, and ensure that all child victims and witnesses had the right to refuse to testify in court.⁴⁸

33. The Human Rights Committee stated that Rwanda should ensure that military courts were prevented from exercising jurisdiction over civilians.⁴⁹

34. The Committee against Torture stated that Rwanda should ensure that lawyers were not identified with their clients or their clients' causes as a result of discharging their functions and were able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation.⁵⁰

35. The same Committee noted that the Rwandan Law on Evidence required proof that judicial admissions were the result of physical torture and consequently the burden of proof fell on an accused to prove that the confession had been obtained through torture. It recommended that Rwanda amend that law to ensure, inter alia, that the burden of proof did not lie with the accused, but with the prosecution. It also recommended that law enforcement officials, judges and lawyers receive training on detecting and investigating cases in which confessions had been obtained under torture, and that the competent authorities take action against judges who failed to respond appropriately to allegations of torture raised during judicial proceedings.⁵¹

36. The Committee stated that Rwanda should make the necessary legislative and other amendments to guarantee that all detained persons were afforded all the fundamental legal safeguards, including the right to be brought before a judge within 48 hours of apprehension, or within 24 hours in the case of detained juveniles, and the right to prompt and confidential access to a qualified and independent lawyer, and to legal aid when needed.⁵²

37. The United Nations country team stated that there was a need for increased technical and financial support to provide legal aid to the most vulnerable, particularly victims of gender-based violence, children and the poor.⁵³ The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that Rwanda strengthen the systems of legal aid and public defence to ensure that they were responsive to the needs of women.⁵⁴

38. The Human Rights Committee recalled its previous concluding observations and expressed concern about the lack of information on measures to investigate allegations that in 1996, the Rwandan army had carried out systematic and widespread attacks against Hutus in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and on past human rights violations by the Rwandan Patriotic Front. The Committee stated that Rwanda should, inter alia, investigate all allegations of human rights violations reportedly committed within its territory or abroad by its State officials.⁵⁵ Reminding Rwanda that passive acquiescence to past violence reinforced the culture of silence, impunity and stigmatization, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that Rwanda establish a commission of inquiry mandated to investigate allegations against members of the armed forces.⁵⁶

39. The Human Rights Committee stated that Rwanda should undertake prompt, impartial and effective investigations into the reported cooperation with the disbanded armed group Mouvement du 23 mars by members of the Rwanda Defence Force and other persons within its jurisdiction with a view to bringing those responsible to justice or extraditing them to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.⁵⁷

40. The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities expressed concern that persons with disabilities could not effectively participate in the judicial system and recommended, *inter alia*, providing them with accessible and free legal services, sign language interpretation, and comprehensive age- and gender-appropriate procedural accommodation.⁵⁸

41. The Human Rights Committee was concerned at reports about the inability to reopen cases that had been decided by the *gacaca* courts and that might have involved a miscarriage of justice. It stated that Rwanda should take the necessary measures to ensure that cases of miscarriage of justice in *gacaca* courts could be challenged through a procedure that met the requirements of article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.⁵⁹

3. Fundamental freedoms and the right to participate in public and political life⁶⁰

42. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that Rwanda respect the right of the child to freedom of thought, conscience and religion and ensure to every child the right to practise freely his or her religion or belief.⁶¹

43. Expressing concern about restrictions placed on Jehovah's Witnesses' enjoyment of freedom of conscience and religion, the Human Rights Committee stated that Rwanda should guarantee, in practice, freedom of thought, conscience and religion.⁶²

44. The same Committee stated that Rwanda should amend Law No. 04/2012 and Law No. 05/2012 and take other necessary measures to ensure that all individuals and political parties fully enjoyed, in practice, their rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association, and should refrain from interfering with the internal functioning of non-governmental organizations and political parties.⁶³

45. The Committee stated that Rwanda should take the necessary legislative measures to ensure that any restrictions on the exercise of freedom of expression complied with the strict requirements set out in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. It should also refrain from prosecuting politicians, journalists and human rights defenders as a means of discouraging them from freely expressing their opinions.⁶⁴ Rwanda stated that it recognized the freedom of the press and freedom of expression as fundamental rights, but that those rights were exceptionally limited by public order, good morals, the protection of young people and children, the rights of every citizen to honour and dignity, and protection of personal and family privacy.⁶⁵

46. The Committee on the Rights of the Child remained concerned about reports of the arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance of human rights defenders and the difficulties faced by civil society organizations in obtaining long-term registered status. It urged Rwanda, in line with its previous recommendation, to ensure the independence of civil society organizations and human rights defenders in exercising their right to freedom of expression and opinion.⁶⁶

47. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women expressed concern that the mandatory quotas for the representation of women at the local level had not been reached.⁶⁷ It recommended increasing efforts to implement the statutory quotas at the local and district levels.⁶⁸

48. The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recommended revising Organic Law No. 001/1918, articles 8 (3) and 24 (4) of which denied persons with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities their rights to vote and to stand for election.⁶⁹

49. The Human Rights Committee expressed concern at the procedural defects reported during the December 2015 referendum and stated that Rwanda should take legislative and other necessary measures to ensure that referendums and elections were held through a transparent, inclusive, informed and accountable process.⁷⁰

4. Prohibition of all forms of slavery⁷¹

50. The Committee on the Rights of the Child expressed concern over the underreporting of the sexual exploitation and abuse of children, the public tolerance of sexual violence against girls and the high proportion of teenage pregnancies that were a result of sexual violence. It recommended that Rwanda, *inter alia*, establish effective mechanisms, procedures and guidelines for the mandatory reporting of cases of sexual exploitation and abuse.⁷²

51. The same Committee urged Rwanda to take all necessary measures to prevent, prosecute and eliminate the exploitation of children in the commercial sex industry, including the tourism industry.⁷³

52. The Committee recommended that Rwanda develop and implement standard operating procedures for the identification and referral of child victims of trafficking, provide them with adequate assistance and protection and conduct awareness-raising activities to make parents and children aware of the dangers of trafficking.⁷⁴

53. The Committee against Torture noted the denial by Rwanda that the security forces facilitated or tolerated the recruitment of Burundian refugees into armed groups and the transport of Congolese refugees, including children, for sex trafficking. It stated that Rwanda should ensure that all cases of human trafficking were thoroughly investigated, intensify its efforts to protect refugees against the risk of being trafficked and provide training to immigration officers, camp management staff and military personnel on the identification of victims of trafficking.⁷⁵

5. Right to privacy and family life

54. The Human Rights Committee stated that Rwanda should ensure that any interference with the right to privacy complied with the principles of legality, proportionality and necessity. It expressed concern that Law No. 60/2013 permitted the interception of communications without the prior authorization of a judge. It stated that the judiciary should participate in the authorization and monitoring of the interception of communications.⁷⁶

55. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that Rwanda take measures to fully protect the right of the child to privacy, including developing guidelines for parents, teachers, social workers and other professionals working with and for children.⁷⁷

56. The Human Rights Committee expressed concern about reports indicating a high proportion of unregistered marriages and stated that Rwanda should take appropriate measures to ensure that marriages were registered.⁷⁸

57. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women noted with concern that women in non-formal unions, including women married under customary law or in polygamous unions, lacked legal protection. It recommended that Rwanda, *inter alia*, discourage the practice of polygamy and ensure the legal protection of the economic rights of women in non-formal unions.⁷⁹

58. Noting the criminalization of child abandonment, the Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that Rwanda ensure that families and parents who were unable to provide proper care for their children were not prosecuted for child abandonment.⁸⁰

59. Noting the phasing out of the institutionalization of children deprived of a family environment in favour of family-based care, the same Committee recommended that Rwanda put in place adequate safeguards and criteria, based on the principle of the best interests of the child, for determining whether a child should be placed in alternative care.⁸¹

60. The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities expressed concern about the insufficient measures to promote inclusive alternative care in family settings for children with disabilities who did not have parental care. It recommended that Rwanda take measures to enable those children to live in family settings with appropriate support.⁸²

61. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that Rwanda ensure that adoption procedures were in compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in respect of Intercountry Adoption, and ensure that the best interests of the child were the paramount consideration in all adoption cases.⁸³

C. Economic, social and cultural rights

1. Right to work and to just and favourable conditions of work⁸⁴

62. The same Committee recommended that Rwanda increase the resources allocated to labour inspections in order to effectively implement the laws and policies on child labour, explicitly prohibit the employment of children in underground mining activities and strengthen public awareness of the exploitative character and consequences of child labour.⁸⁵

63. The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recommended that Rwanda adopt the necessary policies to significantly increase the employment rate of persons with disabilities.⁸⁶

64. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that Rwanda promote the integration of women into the labour force and adopt a gender-sensitive and adequately resourced employment policy.⁸⁷

2. Right to social security⁸⁸

65. The United Nations country team stated that during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak, Rwanda had strengthened its social protection policy and framework.⁸⁹

66. The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recommended that Rwanda establish social protection and poverty reduction programmes aimed at guaranteeing an adequate standard of living for persons with disabilities.⁹⁰

67. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that Rwanda provide families living in poverty with adequate social protection and create income-generating opportunities for them.⁹¹

3. Right to an adequate standard of living⁹²

68. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that Rwanda take all measures necessary to improve access to adequate housing, safe drinking water and adequate sanitation.⁹³

69. Referring to a relevant supported recommendation, the United Nations country team stated that, in collaboration with the United Nations, Rwanda had upgraded the infrastructure and housing in underserved and unplanned settlements.⁹⁴

4. Right to health⁹⁵

70. The United Nations country team stated that the United Nations had supported Rwanda in developing and implementing a national COVID-19 preparedness and response plan, and that capacities had been strengthened with the aim of building a resilient health system.⁹⁶

71. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that Rwanda ensure that primary health-care services were accessible and affordable, strengthen efforts to prevent anaemia, stunting and undernourishment among children, build the capacity of health

workers to provide care and support to children living with HIV/AIDS and strengthen actions to promote breastfeeding.⁹⁷

72. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women expressed concern that the maternal mortality rate remained high and recommended that Rwanda continue with efforts to reduce that rate, including by improving the quality, availability and accessibility of medical assistance, decriminalizing abortion and removing the cumbersome requirements for access to legal abortion.⁹⁸

73. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that Rwanda strengthen reproductive health education for adolescents in all schools, improve access for adolescents to reproductive and sexual health services and ensure access to safe abortion and post-abortion care services for adolescent girls.⁹⁹

74. The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recommended that Rwanda adopt and implement a strategy to ensure the availability and accessibility of public health education and health-care services for all persons with disabilities. It also recommended adopting specific measures for persons with albinism in policies on health and disabilities, ensuring the quality of prevention and treatment for skin cancer.¹⁰⁰

5. Right to education¹⁰¹

75. The United Nations country team stated that the closing of schools and higher learning institutions due to COVID-19 had had a negative impact on the right to education. While Rwanda had embarked on e-learning and teaching programmes through television and radio, special initiatives to reintegrate children in school after the long break would mitigate the risk of school dropout.¹⁰²

76. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) stated that Rwanda should be encouraged to consider making one year of pre-primary education compulsory and free.¹⁰³

77. The Committee on the Rights of the Child expressed concern about the low secondary school enrolment rates and recommended that Rwanda strengthen efforts to eliminate all hidden costs of schooling, in particular the practice of fees for teacher bonuses and educational materials, address the school dropout rate at the secondary school level and develop vocational training for children and adolescents.¹⁰⁴

78. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that Rwanda strengthen awareness-raising campaigns to overcome traditional attitudes that constituted obstacles to the education of women and girls, tackle discriminatory stereotypes that required girls to perform significantly more housework than boys, ensure that every school was provided with adequate sanitation facilities for girls, repeal the mandatory suspension from school of pregnant girls and develop a comprehensive policy for their reintegration in school.¹⁰⁵

79. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that Rwanda guarantee all children, including those with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities, the right to inclusive education in integrated classes, with accessible environments and curricula and adequately trained teachers and professionals to provide individual support.¹⁰⁶ The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recommended removing physical, communication, information and other barriers and ensuring the provision of individualized accommodation such as assistive devices, support and accessible curricula and materials.¹⁰⁷

80. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that Rwanda integrate human rights education into school curricula and training programmes for teachers and education professionals.¹⁰⁸

D. Rights of specific persons or groups

1. Women¹⁰⁹

81. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women noted with concern the particularly high number of women who were victims of gender-based violence, including sexual violence. It recommended that Rwanda enhance its efforts to combat all forms of gender-based violence against women, including domestic and sexual violence.¹¹⁰

82. The same Committee recommended that Rwanda facilitate women's access to financial credit and strengthen initiatives aimed at encouraging the sustainable economic empowerment of women.¹¹¹

2. Children¹¹²

83. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that Rwanda establish a mechanism to regularly assess progress and identify any deficiencies in implementing the strategic plan for the implementation of the integrated child rights policy for the period 2019–2024.¹¹³

84. The same Committee noted with concern the removal of the principle of the best interests of the child from Law No. 71/2018 and recommended that Rwanda ensure that that principle was explicitly provided, appropriately integrated and consistently interpreted and applied in all legislative, administrative and judicial proceedings and decisions and in all policies and programmes that were relevant to and had an impact on children. It also recommended that Rwanda amend Law No. 32/2016 to ensure respect for the views of children in administrative and judicial proceedings concerning custody, divorce and adoption.¹¹⁴

85. The Committee recommended that Rwanda take measures to prevent child marriage, including by developing a national action plan and dedicating resources for its implementation.¹¹⁵

86. The Committee expressed concern about the continued extensive use of corporal punishment in schools and in the home. It urged Rwanda to explicitly prohibit the use of corporal punishment in all settings and to promote positive, non-violent and participatory forms of child-rearing and discipline.¹¹⁶

87. The Committee expressed concern about allegations of the detention, ill-treatment and beating of children in street situations. It recommended that Rwanda ensure that the rights of children in street situations were fully respected by the police and develop programmes that facilitated the reunification of those children with their families and communities.¹¹⁷

88. The Committee recommended that Rwanda guarantee the right of all children to engage in age-appropriate recreational activities, cultural life and the arts, including by ensuring their access to safe, accessible and inclusive spaces for play, recreation and cultural and sports activities.¹¹⁸

3. Persons with disabilities¹¹⁹

89. The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities expressed concern that Rwanda had not brought its domestic legislation into line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and that its laws still contained pejorative terms and reflected the medical model of disability. It recommended that Rwanda take measures to fulfil all of its obligations under the Convention.¹²⁰

90. The same Committee expressed concern about the deprivation of liberty of persons with disabilities on the basis of perceived or actual impairment, and the involuntary hospitalization and institutionalization of persons with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities. It recommended that Rwanda adopt legislation that prohibited any involuntary confinement of persons with disabilities and introduce mandatory guidelines for admission to such facilities.¹²¹

91. Expressing concern about the lack of measures to ensure the integrity of persons with disabilities, the Committee recommended that Rwanda adopt the necessary measures to protect the integrity of persons with disabilities in all setting and to prevent forced treatment and forced sterilization of persons with disabilities.¹²²

92. Expressing concern that there were persons with disabilities living in social isolation, the Committee recommended that Rwanda, inter alia, adopt a national strategy on living independently and being included in the community.¹²³

93. The Committee expressed concern that the accessibility of the physical environment, transportation, services, information and communications was limited, and that the provisions of the Building Code of 2015 on ensuring accessibility standards were not being fully implemented. It recommended that Rwanda adopt and implement a comprehensive plan of action and standards on accessibility.¹²⁴

94. The Committee recommended that Rwanda review article 2 of Ministerial Order No. 01/09/MININFOR to require both public and private media to provide information in accessible formats for persons with disabilities. It also recommended that Rwanda recognize Rwandan sign language as an official language and ensure access to public information for all persons with disabilities.¹²⁵

4. Minorities and indigenous peoples¹²⁶

95. In 2018, four Special Rapporteurs expressed concern about what appeared to be a recurring pattern of attacks against Batwa by non-Batwa.¹²⁷ The Human Rights Committee stated that Rwanda should guarantee the recognition of minorities and indigenous peoples and ensure the effective legal protection of indigenous peoples' rights to their ancestral lands and natural resources. It should also strengthen its programmes to promote equal opportunity and access to services for the Batwa community and increase its members' participation in decision-making processes and decisions that affected them.¹²⁸ The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination recommended that Rwanda take special measures to establish a more ambitious, bold and dynamic policy to facilitate the effective integration of the Batwa into political and public affairs.¹²⁹

96. The Committee on the Rights of the Child urged Rwanda to develop initiatives to reconnect Batwa children with their ancestral habitats and cultural practices, combat all forms of discrimination faced by Batwa children and ensure that they had full and equal access to education, adequate housing, health care and all other services without discrimination.¹³⁰

5. Refugees and asylum seekers¹³¹

97. Referring to two relevant supported recommendations from the previous review, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) stated that Rwanda had maintained an open door policy towards refugees.¹³² Despite the closure of the borders to contain the COVID-19 pandemic, Rwanda had shown its willingness to receive new arrivals and had put all preparations in place to screen, quarantine and transfer them.¹³³

98. UNHCR stated that in February 2018, police had fired on refugees demonstrating against a 25 per cent reduction in food rations outside the UNHCR Karongi Field Office, killing at least 12 of them.¹³⁴

99. UNHCR recommended that Rwanda ensure that all asylum seekers were issued with temporary residence permits and had their files transferred to the Refugee Status Determination Committee within 15 days.¹³⁵

100. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that Rwanda ensure that all reception centres for asylum-seeking and refugee children were child-friendly and that all unaccompanied and separated children had prompt access to national refugee status determination procedures, and investigate any reports of alleged disappearance of children, particularly adolescent girls, from refugee camps.¹³⁶

101. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that Rwanda increase the security situation in and around refugee camps, including by

establishing Isange One Stop Centres in the vicinity of camps and providing women and girls with accessible shelter and food for them and their children to avoid so-called “survival sex”.¹³⁷

6. Stateless persons¹³⁸

102. UNHCR stated that in October 2019, Rwanda had made eight pledges to eradicate statelessness by 2024, in line with the Global Plan of Action to End Statelessness 2014–2024. The Government had established a national task force to formulate a national plan of action to implement the pledges.¹³⁹

103. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that Rwanda raise public awareness of the importance of birth registration and of the e-registration system and implement the system in all health facilities, and ensure the digitalization without any fees of the registrations of children who had been born prior to the introduction of e-registration.¹⁴⁰

Notes

- ¹ Tables containing information on the scope of international obligations and cooperation with international human rights mechanisms and bodies for Rwanda will be available at www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/RWindex.aspx.
- ² For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/31/8, paras. 133.1, 134.1–134.16, 134.18, 134.25, 134.32–134.35, 134.42, 134.66, 135.1–135.20, 135.24–135.25, 135.46–135.48, 135.52 and 135.74.
- ³ United Nations country team submission for the universal periodic review of Rwanda, paras. 3–4 and endnotes 2 and 4–5, referring to A/HRC/31/8, paras. 134.1 (Netherlands), 134.13 (Greece) and 134.14 (Portugal).
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, para. 5.
- ⁵ CRC/C/RWA/CO/5-6, para. 53. See also CAT/C/RWA/CO/2, para. 55 (a), and CEDAW/C/RWA/CO/7-9, para. 57.
- ⁶ CRC/C/RWA/CO/5-6, para. 52. See also CAT/C/RWA/CO/2, para. 55 (d).
- ⁷ CRC/C/RWA/CO/5-6, para. 43 (d).
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, para. 42 (d).
- ⁹ CAT/C/RWA/CO/2, para. 55 (b)–(c).
- ¹⁰ CRPD/C/RWA/CO/1, para. 56.
- ¹¹ CCPR/C/RWA/CO/4, para. 7. See also United Nations country team submission, para. 6.
- ¹² CAT/C/RWA/CO/2, para. 7.
- ¹³ A/HRC/39/41, para. 64, and annex I, para. 92. See also CAT/C/RWA/CO/2, para. 36, and United Nations country team submission, para. 16.
- ¹⁴ CAT/C/RWA/CO/2, para. 37 (a).
- ¹⁵ For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/31/8, paras. 133.2–133.5, 134.19–134.24, 134.27–134.30, 134.37, 134.72, 134.89–134.90, 135.56 and 135.58.
- ¹⁶ CEDAW/C/RWA/CO/7-9, paras. 8–9.
- ¹⁷ CCPR/C/RWA/CO/4, paras. 5–6.
- ¹⁸ CRC/C/RWA/CO/5-6, para. 6.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, paras. 50 (a) and 51 (a).
- ²⁰ CEDAW/C/RWA/CO/7-9, para. 27.
- ²¹ CRPD/C/RWA/CO/1, para. 24.
- ²² CCPR/C/RWA/CO/4, paras. 9–10.
- ²³ For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/31/8, paras. 133.9 and 135.26.
- ²⁴ CERD/C/RWA/CO/18-20, paras. 6–7.
- ²⁵ CEDAW/C/RWA/CO/7-9, paras. 10–11.
- ²⁶ CRC/C/RWA/CO/5-6, para. 15 (a) and (c).
- ²⁷ CEDAW/C/RWA/CO/7-9, paras. 42–43.
- ²⁸ CRPD/C/RWA/CO/1, paras. 9–10.
- ²⁹ CRC/C/RWA/CO/5-6, para. 5, and CEDAW/C/RWA/CO/7-9, para. 54.
- ³⁰ CAT/C/RWA/CO/2, para. 40.
- ³¹ For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/31/8, 133.6–133.8, 133.17–133.18, 133.26–133.27, 134.17, 134.26, 134.36, 134.48, 135.33–135.36 and 135.43.
- ³² CAT/C/RWA/CO/2, paras. 38–39 (a).
- ³³ *Ibid.*, paras. 40–41.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, paras. 9 and 13.

- 35 CCPR/C/RWA/CO/4, paras. 19 and 20 (c)–(d).
- 36 CAT/C/RWA/CO/2, paras. 16 and 17 (c).
- 37 CCPR/C/RWA/CO/4/Add.1, paras. 9–10.
- 38 CCPR/C/RWA/CO/4, paras. 21–22.
- 39 CAT/C/RWA/CO/2, para. 43.
- 40 CRPD/C/RWA/CO/1, paras. 19–20.
- 41 CRC/C/RWA/CO/5-6, para. 31.
- 42 CAT/C/RWA/CO/2, para. 27 (a)–(b).
- 43 CCPR/C/RWA/CO/4, para. 32.
- 44 CCPR/C/RWA/CO/4/Add.1, paras. 12 and 14.
- 45 For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/31/8, paras. 133.28–133.29, 134.39–134.51, 135.28, 135.37–135.38 and 135.40–135.44.
- 46 CCPR/C/RWA/CO/4, paras. 33 and 34 (a)–(b).
- 47 United Nations country team submission, para. 34.
- 48 CRC/C/RWA/CO/5-6, paras. 48 (a) and 49.
- 49 CCPR/C/RWA/CO/4, para. 34 (d).
- 50 CAT/C/RWA/CO/2, para. 15 (c).
- 51 *Ibid.*, paras. 20 and 21 (a) and (d)–(e).
- 52 *Ibid.*, para. 15 (b)–(c). See also CCPR/C/RWA/CO/4, para. 20 (a).
- 53 United Nations country team submission, para. 33.
- 54 CEDAW/C/RWA/CO/7-9, paras. 12–13 (a).
- 55 CCPR/C/RWA/CO/4, paras. 23–24. See also CEDAW/C/RWA/CO/7-9, para. 24.
- 56 CEDAW/C/RWA/CO/7-9, paras. 24–25 (a).
- 57 CCPR/C/RWA/CO/4, para. 26.
- 58 CRPD/C/RWA/CO/1, paras. 25–26.
- 59 CCPR/C/RWA/CO/4, paras. 33 and 34 (c).
- 60 For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/31/8, paras. 133.30–133.34, 134.31, 134.52–134.55, 134.57–134.68, 135.21–135.23, 135.45, 135.49–135.51, 135.53–135.55, 135.57 and 135.59–135.62.
- 61 CRC/C/RWA/CO/5-6, para. 19.
- 62 CCPR/C/RWA/CO/4, paras. 37–38.
- 63 *Ibid.*, paras. 41–42.
- 64 *Ibid.*, paras. 39–40. See also CAT/C/RWA/CO/2, paras. 52–53, letter dated 30 May 2018 from the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression addressed to the Permanent Representative of Rwanda to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva, available at <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=23880>, and letter dated 6 November 2015 from the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders addressed to the Permanent Representative of Rwanda to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva, available at <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=21774>.
- 65 CCPR/C/RWA/CO/4/Add.1, para. 16.
- 66 CRC/C/RWA/CO/5-6, paras. 13–14 (a), and CRC/C/RWA/CO/3-4, para. 20. See also CEDAW/C/RWA/CO/7-9, paras. 16–17, and UNESCO submission for the universal periodic review of Rwanda, para. 9.
- 67 CEDAW/C/RWA/CO/7-9, para. 30. See also United Nations country team submission, paras. 36 and 62.
- 68 CEDAW/C/RWA/CO/7-9, para. 31.
- 69 CRPD/C/RWA/CO/1, paras. 53 (a) and 54 (a).
- 70 CCPR/C/RWA/CO/4, paras. 45–46.
- 71 For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/31/8, paras. 133.19–133.21, 134.38–134.39, 134.46 and 135.29–135.30.
- 72 CRC/C/RWA/CO/5-6, paras. 25–26 (a).
- 73 *Ibid.*, para. 50 (d).
- 74 *Ibid.*, para. 46.
- 75 CAT/C/RWA/CO/2, paras. 48–49.
- 76 CCPR/C/RWA/CO/4, paras. 35–36.
- 77 CRC/C/RWA/CO/5-6, para. 21.
- 78 CCPR/C/RWA/CO/4, paras. 11 and 12 (c).
- 79 CEDAW/C/RWA/CO/7-9, paras. 50–51.
- 80 CRC/C/RWA/CO/5-6, para. 28 (a).
- 81 *Ibid.*, para. 29.

- 82 CRPD/C/RWA/CO/1, paras. 13 (e) and 14 (e).
- 83 CRC/C/RWA/CO/5-6, para. 30 (a)–(b).
- 84 For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/31/8, paras. 133.35, 134.69 and 134.91.
- 85 CRC/C/RWA/CO/5-6, para. 43 (a)–(c). See also CEDAW/C/RWA/CO/7-9, para. 37.
- 86 CRPD/C/RWA/CO/1, para. 50 (a).
- 87 CEDAW/C/RWA/CO/7-9, para. 35.
- 88 For the relevant recommendation, see A/HRC/31/8, para. 134.73.
- 89 United Nations country team submission, para. 10.
- 90 CRPD/C/RWA/CO/1, para. 52.
- 91 CEDAW/C/RWA/CO/7-9, para. 37 (a).
- 92 For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/31/8, paras. 133.36–133.37, 133.39–133.40, 134.71, 134.74–134.77, 134.101 and 135.64–135.65.
- 93 CRC/C/RWA/CO/5-6, para. 37 (a). See also United Nations country team submission, para. 42.
- 94 United Nations country team submission, para. 41 and endnote 36, referring to A/HRC/31/8, para. 134.73 (Nigeria).
- 95 For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/31/8, paras. 133.41–133.42, 134.78–134.79 and 135.66–135.67.
- 96 United Nations country team submission, para. 49.
- 97 CRC/C/RWA/CO/5-6, para. 34 (b)–(e).
- 98 CEDAW/C/RWA/CO/7-9, paras. 38–39 (a).
- 99 CRC/C/RWA/CO/5-6, para. 36 (a)–(c).
- 100 CRPD/C/RWA/CO/1, para. 46 (a) and (d).
- 101 For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/31/8, paras. 133.43–133.44, 134.81–134.88, 134.92–134.94 and 135.68.
- 102 United Nations country team submission, para. 59.
- 103 UNESCO submission, para. 8.
- 104 CRC/C/RWA/CO/5-6, para. 38 (a) and (d).
- 105 CEDAW/C/RWA/CO/7-9, para. 33 (a)–(c). See also UNESCO submission, para. 8.
- 106 CRC/C/RWA/CO/5-6, para. 33 (b). See also United Nations country team submission, para. 57.
- 107 CRPD/C/RWA/CO/1, para. 44.
- 108 CRC/C/RWA/CO/5-6, para. 39.
- 109 For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/31/8, paras. 133.10–133.14, 133.24–133.25, 134.43–134.45, 134.70 and 135.63.
- 110 CEDAW/C/RWA/CO/7-9, paras. 22–23 (a).
- 111 *Ibid.*, para. 41.
- 112 For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/31/8, paras. 133.22–133.23, 133.38, 133.45, 134.33, 134.41, 134.47 and 135.31–135.32.
- 113 CRC/C/RWA/CO/5-6, para. 7.
- 114 *Ibid.*, paras. 16 (a) and 17 (a).
- 115 *Ibid.*, para. 27.
- 116 *Ibid.*, para. 23. See also CRPD/C/RWA/CO/1, para. 30 (f).
- 117 CRC/C/RWA/CO/5-6, paras. 44–45 (a) and (c).
- 118 *Ibid.*, para. 40 (a).
- 119 For the relevant recommendation, see A/HRC/31/8, para. 134.95.
- 120 CRPD/C/RWA/CO/1, paras. 5–6.
- 121 *Ibid.*, paras. 27–28.
- 122 *Ibid.*, paras. 31–32.
- 123 *Ibid.*, paras. 35–36.
- 124 *Ibid.*, paras. 17–18 (a).
- 125 *Ibid.*, para. 40.
- 126 For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/31/8, paras. 135.27 and 135.69–135.73.
- 127 Letter dated 14 December 2018 from the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples and the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance addressed to the Permanent Representative of Rwanda to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva. Available at <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=24206>.
- 128 CCPR/C/RWA/CO/4, para. 48.
- 129 CERD/C/RWA/CO/18-20, para. 17.
- 130 CRC/C/RWA/CO/5-6, para. 42 (a)–(c). See also CERD/C/RWA/CO/18-20, para. 15.
- 131 For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/31/8, paras. 133.47–133.48, 134.98–134.100 and 135.76–135.77.

- ¹³² UNHCR submission for the universal periodic review of Rwanda, p. 2, referring to A/HRC/31/8, paras. 133.47 (Republic of Korea) and 133.48 (Ethiopia).
- ¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 2.
- ¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 3.
- ¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 5.
- ¹³⁶ CRC/C/RWA/CO/5-6, para. 41 (a)–(b).
- ¹³⁷ CEDAW/C/RWA/CO/7-9, para. 49.
- ¹³⁸ For relevant recommendations, see A/HRC/31/8, paras. 133.15–133.16.
- ¹³⁹ UNHCR submission, p. 3.
- ¹⁴⁰ CRC/C/RWA/CO/5-6, para. 18. See also United Nations country team submission, para. 35.
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