



General recommendations

Forum on strengthening women's and children's access to justice and community policing

The forum on strengthening women's and children's access to justice and community policing, held from the 23rd to 24th February 2023 was organised by the Female Lawyers Association-Gambia (FLAG) in partnership with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation's (KAS) Program for the Promotion of the Rule of Law in Sub-Saharan Africa. The forum brought together community women and youth representatives with stakeholders from all over The Gambia to exchange about their expertise, experiences, difficulties and good practices, and thus create and deepen pathways of collaboration to strengthen women's and children's access to justice and community policing in the region.

Specific training was provided on gender-based violence, the respective legal framework and the institutional processes concerned. Additionally, two different panel discussions provided a platform for seven panellists from different parts of the country to discuss about the status and challenges of women's and children's access to justice and community policing in The Gambia. These panels were moderated by prominent persons from the legal field who are also members of FLAG.

The observations during the panel discussions allowed participants and panellists to share their experiences and opinions on the different thematic areas.

Consequently, the panellists issued the following recommendations:

To Central Government

- › Utilize existing communities to monitor cases of sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) and merge sensitization efforts to protect women and children;
- › Provide adequate resources to Gambia Police Force and Department of Social Welfare Gender Units to investigate SGBV cases and provide adequate response to SGBV;

- › Construct and rehabilitate safe houses for survivors of SGBV;
- › Enhance collaboration and coordination with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and other non-governmental stakeholders to avoid duplication of efforts and ensure meaningful intervention on SGBV activities;
- › Harmonise the laws relating to SGBV, particularly consolidate SGBV offences under the Tourism Offences Act, Criminal Code and Children's Act into the Sexual Offences Act;
- › Review the Sexual Offences Act to enhance survivor protection, particularly denial of bail to an accused person if he/she resides or is within proximity with the survivor.

To the Civil Society

- › Synergise the efforts of CSOs in communities in their advocacy initiatives for proper delivery such as partnerships in interventions where objectives are common;
- › Enhances coordination in SGBV interventions by ensuring the appropriate organisations conduct the activities to ensure the appropriate messages in connection to SGBV are relayed;
- › Expand target groups in awareness raising and capacity initiatives to include community leaders, local community structures and household heads to eradicate cultural barriers relating to SGBV.

To the Police and Security Forces

- › Generating and using robust data and evidence to inform prosecution of SGBV cases;
- › Foster collaboration between the Police, and Communities in protecting victims of SGBV and in SGBV case reporting;
- › Conduct regular and continuous training for community police officers to witness protections and evidence handling in SGBV cases.



**PROGRAMME
POUR LA PROMOTION
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Afrique subsaharienne



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