

## INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

Press Release No:

Date: 28 February 2025

Venue: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.



### **African Union adopts Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls.**

The African Union (AU) has reached a historic milestone with the adoption of the African Union Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (AU-CEVAWG) by Heads of State and Government during their 38th Ordinary Session. This landmark legal instrument signifies a bold and comprehensive commitment to eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls, paving the way for a safer, more equitable future across the African continent.

The Convention will now proceed to the ratification and domestication stages to make it a comprehensive, legally binding framework for the prevention and elimination of, and effective response to, all forms of violence against women and girls, across Africa. The Convention aims to address the root causes and drivers of violence against women and girls, strengthen legal and institutional mechanisms, and promote a culture of respect for human rights, gender equality and the dignity of women and girls. Once Ratified, the Convention also enables State Parties reinforce a commonality of approach, to eliminating violence against women and girls, whilst acting as a stimulus for an open narrative and advocacy on violence against women and girls.

The adoption of the Convention is timely as violence against women and girls remains a widespread issue that cuts across all regions, cultures, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Violence manifests in many forms, including physical, sexual psychological or economic violence by an intimate partner; Female Genital Mutilation (FGM); Early Child and Forced Marriage where girls below 18 years are forced into marriage; Sexual Violence in Conflict (SVC) and Humanitarian settings which includes rape, sexual assault with violent physical assault, kidnapping, sexual slavery and

forced prostitution in conflict situations. Women and girls also face sexual harassment and violence in the workplace, in schools and in other public spaces.

Violence against women and girls occurs in various environments, such as the family, schools, tertiary institutions, prisons, security institutions, in situations of armed conflict, in the world of work, in sports and on online platforms. The persistence of violence against women and girls is largely driven by entrenched gender power relations rooted in patriarchal systems. These systems are characterized by male dominance, an unequal distribution of resources, and power imbalances, all of which are reinforced by social norms and institutions that sustain gender inequality.

Violence against women and girls intersects with, and is exacerbated by, other forms of discrimination against women and girls, including race, ethnicity, nationality, age, disability, socio-economic status, which underscores the need for an inclusive approach that recognizes and responds to the specific needs of women and girls, including those marginalized or in vulnerable situations. Addressing this issue is not just about protection—it's about unlocking opportunities for women and girls to thrive in safe, supportive environments where their contributions to society can be fully realized.

Over the past four years, the AUC has worked relentlessly to ensure that the Convention encompasses the voices, needs, and aspirations of African women and girls, reinforcing the African Union's steadfast commitment to advancing gender equality and human rights.

The adoption of the Convention is a stark reminder that, despite ongoing efforts, violence against women and girls remains one of the most pervasive human rights violations, transcending age, socio-economic status, and geographic location. The Convention serves as a compelling call to action for all citizens, governments, civil society, media, the private sector, religious and traditional leaders, and academics to unite in the fight against gender-based violence. To ensure that the Convention enters into force, is effectively domesticated, and implemented, the African Union Commission remains committed to ongoing collaboration with all stakeholders.

**For further information, please contact:**

**Daniel Massamba Meboya** | Communication Officer | Office of the Special Envoy on Women, Peace, and Security – African Union Commission | Email: [MassambaD@africa-union.org](mailto:MassambaD@africa-union.org) | Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

**Information and Communication Directorate**, African Union Commission | E-mail: [DIC@africa-union.org](mailto:DIC@africa-union.org)  
Web: [au.int](http://au.int) | Addis Ababa, Ethiopia | Follow Us: [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#) | [YouTube](#)