

Project: "No to the Backlash: Supporting the Collective Resistance of Feminist and Women's Movements in Africa"

**"Our tradition is all about dignity" Collective resistance in the
face of the anti-feminist and anti-rights backlash in Africa**

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ensured it resonated with the diverse realities of movements in the select French-speaking countries.

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This toolkit is an embodiment of collective feminist knowledge practice and experiences that will shape and contribute to the growing body of feminist scholarship and movement-generated knowledge on resisting backlash.

Warning: This is the first part of a global report divided into two sections. The first presents the results of a qualitative survey conducted among feminist activists in 11 countries, and the second presents a catalog of 15 tools for effectively responding to the anti-feminist and anti-rights backlash in Africa.

Key findings

- Backlash is not a new phenomenon, but rather a structural and permanent one. In Africa, opposition to women's rights is not a mere "setback" but part of a long history, reinforced by patriarchal systems and colonial legacies.
- Those driving the backlash are now more organized and influential. Alliances between religious leaders, conservative groups, political elites and digital platforms give them access to funding, media outlets and coordinated strategies at the regional level.
- Legal progress often conceals persistent social inequalities. Despite advances such as gender parity laws, measures against FGM, and partial abortion legalization, implementation remains obstructed by institutional, customary, and religious barriers.
- Feminist activists are facing escalating hostility. They endure cyberbullying, defamation, police summons, physical assaults, and even death threats—often fueled by misogynistic narratives in public discourse.
- Religion and tradition are used as political weapons. The idea that feminism is "foreign to Africa" legitimizes repression and serves to reinforce male authority and control over women's bodies.
- Marginalized women experience compounded backlash. Rural women, young women, women with disabilities, and LBQ women face multiple forms of discrimination and violence—while often remaining invisible within the feminist movement itself.
- Feminist resistance is dynamic, creative and deeply rooted. African activists are developing local strategies (coalitions, counter-narratives in African languages, digital campaigns, activist arts) to counter fear and isolation.
- Care—both individual and collective—has emerged as a political strategy. Practices such as sisterhood, talking circles, and spaces for well-being are now recognized as vital tools of resistance, essential to sustaining feminist activism.
- Financial dependence and lack of coordination weaken the movement. The absence of economic autonomy, internal rivalries and poor documentation of struggles weaken the collective response to anti-feminist attacks.
- Inclusive pan-African solidarity is the key to sustainable and transformative feminist resilience. The future of the movement depends on intergenerational cooperation, regional networking, and the construction of shared narratives rooted in the African values of Ubuntu and social justice. These narratives must take into account the realities of all women.

Introduction

"As long as we breathe, we will resist. African feminism is our space for survival and collective imagination."

This document serves as a practical and political guide designed to support feminist activists and organisations in Africa in their strategies of resistance to coordinated attacks on women's rights, LGBTQI+ people and broader social justice movements. This toolkit is both a practical guide and a political manifesto.

This resource goes beyond explaining the mechanisms of anti-rights attacks and identifying key actors. It offers practical tools to strengthen individual and organizational protection, introduces innovative forms and methods of resistance, and, above all, aligns diverse strategies around a shared mission and common adversary. At its core, it emphasizes collective well-being and solidarity as pillars of resistance and as the foundation for sustainable activism.

Through this document we assert loud and clear that attacks on African feminist activists are not isolated incidents, but deliberate weapons of a patriarchal capitalist system. At national, regional, and global levels, this system hijacks and distorts the Pan-African ideal to silence us, suppress our voices and rights, and undermine our contributions to the continent's economic, political, and cultural development. Faced with these organized attacks—threatening democratic gains, fundamental freedoms, and trampling the dignity of African women—we resist, we organize, and we will not back down!

1.1 Project context and rationale for the practical guide

The anti-feminist backlash is a multifaceted phenomenon expressed through discourse, practices, and legislation explicitly designed to silence those advocating gender equality. While global in scope, its impact is particularly severe in many African contexts where feminist movements are still emerging and institutional protections for civil and political rights remain weak. Well-funded and highly organized anti-rights, anti-democratic, and anti-gender actors advance regressive laws and narratives targeting women's rights and feminism. Under the guise of defending "family values," these forces distort human rights language, vilify feminist activists, and orchestrate coordinated resistance that undermines progress and stalls reforms in gender justice and women's rights.

In socio-political contexts marked by patriarchy, where fundamental freedoms are of little importance and access to civic and political spaces is very limited and sometimes dangerous, feminist activists face numerous structural threats, both from institutions and from their communities. While these structural challenges are not new, the rise of conservative and reactionary movements [advocating a return to a social order where women are subordinate beings whose sole importance lies in motherhood and family] has a considerable impact on

women in general, on women's rights activists and in particular on those who identify as feminists. This impact is both personal and psychological, but also collective. It affects organisations and the feminist movement as a whole. In certain contexts, there has been a marked escalation in attacks and acts of aggression, including intimidation and even attempted assassinations. Hostility and prejudice toward feminists are increasing, forcing some activists to seek exile for their own safety. To counter this backlash, this operational and localized toolkit provides several strategic advantages: it consolidates African feminist knowledge and solutions, firmly grounded in local realities and informed by consultations across eleven countries in West and Central Africa, as well as Madagascar (Cameroon, DRC, CAR, Côte d'Ivoire, Mauritania, Ghana, Senegal, Togo, Benin and Chad). This toolkit therefore responds to an urgent need: to equip feminist actors with practical resources to resist various forms of repression.

An overview of the situation by country shows, first of all, that there are countries that have not signed or ratified the Maputo Protocol, including Mauritania, Madagascar and Chad. Nothing in their regulations therefore compels them to specifically promote and protect women and girls. Furthermore, although the other States have signed and ratified the protocol (the Central African Republic being the latest to ratify it), the adoption of the necessary reforms is very uneven, and implementation remains a daily challenge. Although laws have evolved to varying degrees across different contexts, progress remains limited, and a significant gap persists between legal provisions and actual practice, as illustrated in the table below. Rather than a regression, what these eleven countries share is a social and political environment shaped by entrenched socio-cultural norms, which continue to hinder any meaningful reform.

Table 1. Comparison of the situation by country

Country	Main laws/reforms	Major challenges
Benin	Laws against FGM, domestic violence and marital rape, legalised abortion, female quota in Parliament	Low representation, administrative delays, social pressures, lack of resources
Cameroon	Strategy against GBV without a binding framework, no law on parity, restricted abortion	Poor enforcement, Family Code blocked, high levels of GBV, weak political will
Côte d'Ivoire	Reform of the Family Code, criminalisation of FGM and forced marriages, law on parity (30%)	Low political representation, slow justice system, taboos and social pressures
Ghana	Unit to combat GBV, restricted abortion, no law on parity	Low participation of women, regional disparities, conservative religious influence
Senegal	Law on parity (43%), rape recognised as a crime	Total ban on abortion, Family Code blocked, strong religious influence
Mauritania	National plan against trafficking, electoral quota law	Difficult security context, religious pressure, weak enforcement and low school enrolment

Madagascar	National equality plan 2021-2025	Legal vacuum, lack of framework law, abortion prohibited, restricted civic space
CAR	Law on parity (35%), Family Code adopted, law against FGM	Political instability, internal displacement, illiteracy, economic weakness
DRC	Laws on sexual violence and women, peace and security plan	Armed conflicts, impunity, low representation (-15%), lack of resources
Chad	Egalitarian constitution, law on parity (30%), laws against FGM and child marriage	Weak implementation, cultural resistance, low representation, limited resources
Togo	Electoral parity planned, law against sexual violence in schools	Restricted civic space, institutional resistance, stigmatisation and illiteracy

Across all contexts, activists devise innovative advocacy, protection, and resistance strategies that amplify their voices and safeguard their fundamental rights. As one activist from Chad, Adeline, asserts: *'If they react like that, it's because we're disturbing them. They can no longer pretend we don't exist'*.

1.2 Objectives of the toolkit

This toolkit is designed as a *practical* and strategic resource for activists and their organizations. While numerous guides exist on responding to anti-rights and anti-feminist attacks, such as [1], most serve primarily as reference materials rather than actionable tools. They are often written in highly technical language that is inaccessible to grassroots activists and fail to adequately reflect on-the-ground realities. Others require significant training, resources, and time to implement. In contrast, our toolkit aims to strengthen the resilience of feminist actors through a contextualized analysis of the anti-feminist backlash in Africa. More broadly, it documents regional trends and threats, highlights solutions proposed by activists themselves, and enhances the capacity of gender justice advocates to amplify their voices, accelerate coordinated responses to attacks, reinforce the narrative power of feminist movements, and influence human rights discussions in sensitive contexts.

Unlike other global toolkits that primarily address external threats, ours approaches backlash as an internal phenomenon, reinforced by postcolonial nationalism and the radicalization of patriarchy. It goes beyond text-based resources that often cater only to urban, educated activists, to embrace oral traditions and ground itself in local justice practices expressed in diverse languages. Sensitive to the authoritarian contexts in which many activists operate, it offers survival strategies tailored to these realities. Rooted in pan-African values, it acknowledges and elevates the voices of young people, women with disabilities, rural women, and those facing discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Above all, this toolkit centers care, community, and collective well-being as essential practices of resistance.

1.3 Methodology

This toolkit was developed using an inclusive, participatory methodology grounded in feminist principles. We prioritized the involvement of a diverse range of actors—primarily community leaders, but also consultants, journalists, politicians, and educators. Deliberate efforts were made to include women living in rural areas, women with disabilities, young women under 25, women over 50, sex workers, and lesbian, bisexual, and queer women. Leveraging our activist networks and country representatives, we fostered horizontal relationships with participants based on listening and empathy. This approach enabled consultations with over a hundred individuals and the collection of testimonies and stories from feminists across eleven countries. Chad was included following insights from activists in Cameroon, the Central African Republic, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Chad stands out in Central Africa for its landlock territory, ongoing political tensions, and the creativity and youthfulness of its female activists. The country profiles in the appendix reflect this dynamism across all countries covered by the study.

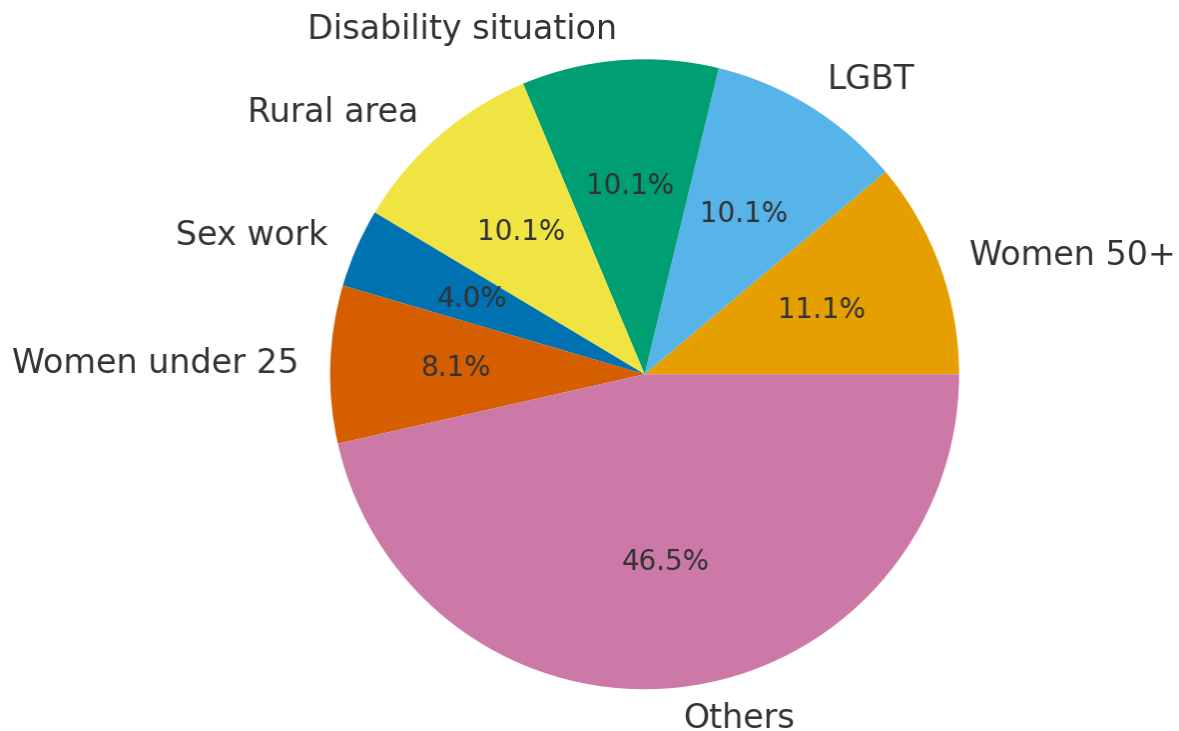
To adapt our approach to each audience and foster open, sincere dialogue, we combined two main methods: semi-structured individual interviews and focus groups of 5 to 15 activists per country. These focus groups, held in 8 of the 11 countries, were conducted in a hybrid format (in-person and online) and facilitated by country representatives recognized as community leaders. The discussions offered a clear picture of how backlash is perceived in different contexts, identified threats and their main perpetrators, and shared experiences of backlash alongside successful resistance strategies. They also explored solidarity and collaboration with other organizations, as well as the role of collective care within these strategies.

As this study was primarily qualitative, it also sought to ensure diversity among activists' profiles to capture the contextual richness and experiences of groups that are often under-represented due to being minorities or marginalized. These include young women under 25, women over 50, women with disabilities, women living in rural areas, and women facing discrimination based on sexual orientation or involvement in sex work. Including these profiles enabled us to document minority experiences that are frequently sidelined by systemic barriers.

Table 2. Summary of participation by country and profile

	Benin	CMR	C.I	Ghana	MDG	MTN	CAR	DRC	Senegal	Togo	Chad
Interviews	3	5	3	5	4	7	4	7	4	5	6
Focus group	5	6	5	7	-	-	8	15	7	10	-
Total	8	11	8	10	4	7	12	21	10	15	6

Distribution by Category



1.4 Limitations

The main challenge in implementing this project was time. Extremely short deadlines between the call for proposals, the start of research, and the production of deliverables limited both a thorough understanding of the issue and the scope of consultations. Conducting most of the research remotely introduced additional constraints: interviews via WhatsApp or Zoom may have affected participants' freedom of expression. Women in rural areas were underrepresented, as telephone interviews proved difficult and they could not join focus groups, which were restricted to urban settings. Our sample also reflects a bias, as most respondents were activists identified by their peers, capturing primarily the experiences of the most visible actors. This limitation was partially mitigated by the diversity of ages, activist backgrounds, and experiences among participants.

In terms of content, the project places national case studies side by side but does not clearly define the criteria for comparison—such as the level of movement organization or the intensity of attacks. This lack of clarity makes it challenging to assess organizational structures and cross-reference regional trends.

The analyses are also based solely on personal testimonies and accounts and not sufficiently on statistics. This is a conscious choice in order to focus on the qualitative depth of the backlash experiences.

The data was collected in several languages (French, English, and sometimes Arabic, Wolof, Lingala, or Sango). Some literal translations may attenuate emotional nuances, particularly in concepts such as backlash, care, radicalism, or intersectionality.

Finally, following organisations' criticisms of dependence on donors, this project also follows a logic of appeal with its constraints and time, rather than that of independent research. However, this report holds strong strategic and political value. It constitutes a historical and symbolic record of resistance to anti-rights attacks in Africa and proposes models of action that can be immediately used by activists.

1.5 Structure of the report

This report is organized into two interconnected parts. To ensure the toolkit is easy to read and apply, the first part focuses on analyzing the context: the various forms and experiences of backlash, their consequences, and the creative strategies of resistance mobilized by feminists. The second part serves as a practical guide for women's rights defenders, particularly feminist activists facing hostility and attacks from anti-rights actors. It offers tools to consolidate gains, protect oneself during attacks, and respond effectively and sustainably. To make this resource widely accessible, we have also developed a simplified version of the report and multiple formats tailored to different audiences.

Chapter 1. Anti-feminism in Africa: a long history and a worrying escalation

In literature, the term backlash is often associated with Susan Faludi ¹ and her book *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women*, 1991, in which she describes the backlash against American women's rights after each major progress. Today, the term backlash is widely used to describe negative or hostile reactions to social change, particularly when marginalized groups gain rights. Backlash actors seek to delegitimize, weaken, or even dismantle the legal, social, political, and economic progress achieved through feminist movements and broader struggles for equality and social justice. It typically emerges when dominant groups perceive their status as threatened. A notable example is the #MeToo movement, which many experts consider a turning point in the polarization of debates on gender-based and sexual violence, and more broadly, on gender equality.

Negative and hostile reactions to gender equality discourse exert a particularly complex influence on the African continent. This phenomenon is not a mere temporary “setback” but rather a structural, historical, and geostrategic dynamic. The backlash does not simply arise in response to recent progress; it cannot be reduced to the reactive patterns observed elsewhere. It has long existed and is now intensified by the global resurgence of authoritarianism and the extension of ideological conflicts between world powers onto African soil. When global conservative anti-gender and anti-rights networks portray Africa as the last bastion of “traditional values” against perceived global moral decline, they do so because the prevailing context remains largely resistant to an egalitarian vision of relations between men and women².

1. The anti-feminist backlash: a historical continuity

Ideas of women's liberation or emancipation have consistently triggered strong reactions across the African continent, where economic, cultural, and political structures reinforce male authority over women. Authority is perceived as inherently masculine, and women are expected to remain subordinate to men. This system is frequently legitimized through cultural and religious arguments, making any challenge to it appear as:

1. a threat to the established order,
2. an insult to traditions and socio-cultural norms, and
3. a foreign, Western ideology.

In recent years, this perception has been further strengthened by the rise of a global anti-gender movement that openly opposes feminists, sexual and reproductive rights, and sexual

¹ Susan Faludi, *Backlash. The Undeclared War Against American Women*, Crown, 1991.

² Patrick Awondo, Emmanuelle Bouilly, et Marième N'Diaye. « Introduction. Considering anti-gender in Africa », *Politique africaine* 168, n° 4 (2022) : 5-24. <https://doi.org/10.3917/polaf.168.0005>.

and gender minorities. This movement seeks to reaffirm heteropatriarchal norms governing sex, gender, and sexuality.

As several historical studies have shown, power relations in African societies were traditionally shaped more by the social logic of seniority, which ranked individuals according to age and lineage ³. However, the gendered division of tasks and responsibilities—though not always implying systematic domination—granted men greater authority than women. This explains the marginalization of women from the highest political positions within villages or kingdoms. Certain patriarchal norms already curtailed women's autonomy, including arranged or early marriages, widowhood rituals, and practices such as excision.

Fatou Sow, in *Women, Power, and Decision-Making in Sub-Saharan Africa* (2007), notes that African women's sexuality was historically perceived as a collective asset to be controlled. While female figures of power did exist—such as queens, prophetesses, and prominent merchants—demonstrating a degree of flexibility in gender roles, this flexibility never erased the dominant position of men. Attempts to transgress these roles—by opposing arranged marriages, female genital mutilation, or widowhood rites, or by seeking leadership—were viewed as challenges to customary law and the patriarchal order. Consequently, such efforts were often repressed or marginalized.

Colonial rule entrenched and introduced rigid patriarchal structures, further excluding women from the public sphere. Early colonial policies privileged men, confining women to domestic and subordinate roles and severely restricting their access to political, economic, and spiritual power. Later, the administration promoted women's education and employment, but only to advance its own economic, political, and ideological agenda. By claiming to rescue African women from male oppression, colonial authorities exploited the myth of "liberation" to legitimize their civilizing mission and conceal the exploitation of bodies and resources. In reality, colonial power reproduced a gender order rooted in gender-based hierarchy, the public/private divide, and systemic subordination. While professing modernity, it demonized women who resisted and normalized sexual violence and exploitation—through concubinage, rape culture, and impunity.

The hostility towards feminist mobilisations today stems from a dual patriarchal and colonial heritage, which often translates into legal mechanisms imported from the colonial system. Both colonial and post-colonial elites have effectively frozen certain social and cultural norms that are now redefined as traditional values, even though they were and continue to be interpreted according to a very colonial view of gender relations. The first family codes, some of which have been revised or are in the process of being revised, are inherited from colonisation and are inspired by religious and customary norms that enshrine male authority. In a system of institutionalized male dominance—where the family head is male, polygamy is legally sanctioned, and women are deemed legally incompetent, requiring their husband's consent for basic actions such as opening a bank account or traveling, and being barred from inheritance—any attempt at reform faces systematic resistance. Activists advocating change are routinely accused of seeking to "destroy" the family.

³ Olajumoke Yacob-Haliso et Toyin Falola, *The Palgrave Handbook of African Women's Studies* (Switzerland : Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2021).

Furthermore, many laws that are now invoked to defend so-called “African values” were, in fact, imported through colonial rule. This includes legislation criminalizing abortion, sex work, and consensual same-sex relations. Incorporated into post-independence legal systems, these provisions have become instruments for conservative reactionaries—who paradoxically denounce equality claims as foreign impositions. Today, such laws are weaponized against activists, yet they remain an enduring heritage of colonial governance, repackaged within post-colonial policy frameworks.

African women have never been passive victims of patriarchal or colonial domination. To counter these systems, they developed indigenous strategies of resistance that reinforced their collective power. For instance, when necessary, women could organize and employ the practice known as “Sitting on a man”—a ritualized, collective protest aimed at publicly humiliating a violent chief or husband, thereby exerting strong social pressure⁴. Moreover, through networks of female solidarity such as secret societies and associations, women wielded considerable ritual and economic influence. This power enabled them to boycott ceremonies or refuse alliances with other communities whenever they perceived their interests to be threatened.

Aware of the discrimination they suffered along with all colonised peoples, they were at the forefront of national liberation movements. Their commitment took many forms. They demanded the release of political prisoners, organised boycotts and mass demonstrations, denounced the abuses and violence of the colonial authorities, mobilised crowds, organised logistical support for independence fighters, and even joined armed groups⁵.

Despite the major role they played against colonial powers, African women were excluded from national and local decision-making bodies once independence was achieved. The achievement of political independence in the 1960s, like the democratic opening of the 1990s, had only a limited effect on the place and role of women in Africa.

2. *Women's rights in Africa: welcome progress*

In Africa, discussions on women and their role in building a modern society gained momentum largely influenced by international dynamics, notably the UN Decade for Women (1975–1985). Rooted in an economic perspective, this period saw the emergence of numerous initiatives aimed at expanding women’s access to education, employment, and family planning. However, these shifts in discourse did not challenge the structural inequalities entrenched by patriarchal systems—nor were they intended to. By contrast, African women’s mobilization for greater autonomy, both during and after the pre-colonial era, was never limited to economic concerns. Their objective was to restore a balance of power disrupted by colonization, which had dismantled women’s secret societies, excluded them from decision-making bodies, and relegated them to subordinate roles.

⁴ Charles Che Fonchingong. « Traditions of Women's Social Protest movements and Collective Mobilisation: Lessons from Aghem and Kedjom Women », dans *Civil society and the Search for development alternatives in Cameroon*, dir. Emmanuel Yenshu Vubo, African Books Collective (Dakar : Codesria, 2009).

⁵ Rose Ndengue. « Mobilisations féminines au Cameroun français dans les années 1940-1950 : l'ordre du genre et l'ordre colonial fissurés », *Le Mouvement Social* 255, n° 2 (2016) : 71-85.
<https://doi.org/10.3917/lms.255.0071>.

In the early 1990s, several African countries opened up to multiparty politics with numerous political reforms that also affected the role of women in politics. The 1995 Beijing Conference and its Platform for Action intensified international pressure on States to strengthen legal and political frameworks promoting gender equality and women's rights. This conference marked a paradigm shift in how women's roles were conceived: the challenge of integrating women into politics moved beyond improving living conditions to addressing the structural roots of gender inequality in power relations. This new perspective became central to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Since the early 2000s, gender equality has been recognized as a prerequisite for access to resources, fueling the growth of women's NGOs advocating for rights in education, health, and employment. At the same time, States introduced superficial institutional changes, such as creating ministries for gender issues and drafting gender policies.

As gender became a prerequisite for accessing resources, the question of gender equality gradually lost its political significance, reduced instead to a technical and bureaucratic concern. Increasing financial dependence on international donors amplified the prominence of gender issues in national and local policies, yet these shifts rarely translated into tangible improvements in women's daily lives. Appropriated by an educated bourgeois female elite, often closely linked to political power, gender discourse turned into a hollow buzzword—stripped of its critical edge and disconnected from any analysis of power relations and male domination⁶. Although feminist mobilizations persisted, the professionalization of organizations and their transformation into NGOs—driven by reliance on external funding—diluted their political demands and slowed the institutionalization of an African feminism capable of shaping public policy.

Key instruments like the Maputo Protocol mark a major achievement for African feminist movements. Unlike the non-binding Beijing Declaration, the Protocol imposes legal obligations on ratifying States. Adopted in 2003, it enshrines fundamental rights for women—such as the right to life, health, and education—and promotes their participation in decision-making, which has driven the adoption of quota and parity laws in several countries. It also affirms reproductive rights, including access to abortion under specific circumstances. To date, 46 of the African Union's 55 member States have ratified the Protocol. Those that have not yet ratified it generally invoke cultural and religious objections, particularly regarding provisions on safe abortion, minimum age for marriage, and the complete ban on female genital mutilation (FGM). Both the reluctance to ratify and the challenges in implementing the Protocol among signatory States underscore the conservative posture of political institutions and the persistent resistance to measures aimed at securing women's full autonomy over their body.

In the countries covered by this study, the ratification of this Protocol has nevertheless led to major legal reforms in most of the signatory countries, although these vary greatly from one country to another. On the political and legal fronts, laws on women's political participation are noteworthy. Some countries have opted for parity (Senegal) or quotas (Ghana). This has increased women's political representation.

On the economic and social fronts, attempts have been made to reform access to land, as in Ghana, Madagascar, Benin and Togo, where equality and non-discrimination clauses have

⁶ Verschuur, Christine, Isabelle Guérin, et Hélène Guétat-Bernard, dir., *Sous le développement, le genre*, Collection Objectifs Suds (Marseille : IRD Editions, 2015).

been introduced in the revision of land codes. Several countries have enacted laws specifically banning female genital mutilation (FGM), including Ghana, Benin, Togo, and Côte d'Ivoire. The minimum legal age for marriage has largely been standardized at 18 for both sexes, though some countries still allow exceptions that disproportionately affect girls, permitting marriage at 15 or 16. Additional measures include the creation of dedicated funds and vocational training programs for women and girls, as well as legislation promoting girls' education. Notably, laws that previously barred pregnant students and young mothers from continuing their education have been repealed in countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo and Togo. Benin stands out as a pioneer, having legalized abortion in 2021, while in most other countries abortion remains permitted only when the woman's life is at risk or in cases of rape.

There has certainly been progress over the last 30 years, particularly in terms of women's economic and political situation. This progress has been slow but commendable, with improvements in access to education, healthcare, employment and leadership positions in both the public and private sectors. However, transforming power relations between men and women towards greater equality remains a thorny issue on the continent, a situation exacerbated by the rise and institutionalisation of anti-gender rhetoric and policies at the global level.

3. Anti-rights movements. When patriarchy becomes radicalised

Each of these reforms has faced strong resistance, deeply rooted in cultural and religious norms, both within political institutions and in public spaces. The coexistence of customary and religious laws alongside civil law often enables the circumvention of progressive measures. Religious and traditional leaders frequently perceive these reforms as threats, actively slowing or blocking legislative changes. For example, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, protests led by the Catholic Church and traditional authorities in 2016 resulted in the rejection of proposed amendments to the Family Code by parliament. In Ghana, traditional chiefs opposed reforms granting women inheritance rights; in Cameroon, efforts to revise the Family Code remain stalled under pressure from conservative elites; and in Togo, a similar draft reform has been on hold since 2018.

Viewed as a structural phenomenon, this backlash reflects a persistent clash between "modern" and "traditional" values—often framed as African identity versus a "decadent West." In this context, anti-feminist resistance in Africa operates as a form of re-rooting, drawing ideological and financial strength from its alignment with a global conservative movement opposed to gender equality, minority rights, sex education, and sexual and reproductive health. Its most powerful argument is the claim that feminism is a foreign import—a narrative that is not merely one criticism among many but a pervasive discourse. This accusation obscures the long history of women's resistance predating the institutionalization of patriarchy. The term "feminism" has consistently been delegitimized through this lens, serving as a tool to justify systemic inequalities and gender-based violence. Most participants agree that the assertion "feminism is not African" remains the most widespread strategy to silence women challenging cultural norms and demanding recognition of their dignity as human beings.

Anti-rights movements—originating largely in Europe and the United States, but also in Latin America and Asia—have identified Africa as a strategic arena for advancing and legitimizing

their worldview. Women's rights advocates have long faced a conservative front under the guise of defending "traditional values." These anti-gender and anti-rights groups exploit political, social, economic, and institutional vulnerabilities to frame feminist struggles as threats to sovereignty and African identity. This narrative enables African leaders to present themselves as guardians of cultural values and national independence. At the core of these movements lies the preservation of traditional gender roles, the foundation of patriarchal systems. They instrumentalize debates on gender equality, anti-discrimination, and sexual and reproductive health to mobilize domestic constituencies. To amplify their influence globally, these groups build transnational networks, forge alliances with African political elites, organize regional and international summits, finance NGOs and parliamentarians, launch media campaigns, and even export restrictive legislative models. Through political, cultural, religious, and security partnerships, Africa has become a testing ground where global powers—and those aspiring to become such—assert and expand their ideological positions on gender and sexuality, turning these issues into tools of diplomacy and influence at the expense of local struggles for autonomy and self-determination.

African leaders often leverage criticism of the West to obscure internal systems of oppression—or even to reinforce them. By branding African feminists as Western puppets or cultural traitors, the rhetoric of defending "African values" becomes a powerful tool to rally public support for conservative ideologies hostile to women's rights. This consensus around anti-gender narratives consolidates male dominance and shields existing privileges from challenge.

We can speak of a radicalization of patriarchy—or an intensification of backlash—when multiple factors converge, notably the entrenchment of patriarchal norms alongside the rise of anti-rights movements. This convergence manifests in systematic, organized, and increasingly visible attacks on women's rights, often marked by heightened violence. Key indicators of this trend include: the normalization and trivialization of anti-rights and anti-feminist rhetoric by political leaders and public authorities, both online and offline; the obstruction of reforms in countries such as Senegal, Mauritania, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, and Chad; the adoption of laws targeting marginalized groups, particularly those discriminated against based on sexual orientation and gender identity (as seen in Ghana); the banning of sexuality education; and the instrumentalization of pan-Africanist and nationalist values to stigmatize activists. These dynamics fuel verbal, physical, and institutional violence against women advocating for abortion rights and against gender-based violence. This radicalization is rooted in a global trend of regression in individual and collective freedoms, reinforced by domestic legal and social structures that legitimize discrimination and violence based on gender and sexual orientation.

Chapter 2. "Backlash is our context. We expect it." Experiences of backlash, testimonies and stories

Discussions held in all the countries revealed that backlash is present everywhere, and although its intensity varies from one context to another and depending on the sector of activity, it is not limited to passive resistance. As Liz from Cameroon points out, *"backlash rarely comes from outside. It comes from those close to us, our peers, school friends, people from the same community who share the same educational and social background but have very different values. This proximity makes the confrontation more difficult: the criticism is not abstract, it is personal."* Backlash therefore begins in the privacy of the family, the community and the neighbourhood, before spilling over into the public sphere, public and private institutions, and the media. This resistance to women's demands for justice is fuelled by political actors and intellectual elites, traditionalist and religious, civil society groups, governments, mainstream media and social media.

1. Family pressures. The ideological argument

The main argument of those involved in the backlash is primarily the family, rather than sovereignty. Our respondents see the 'family' as the main moral and ideological structure used to resist feminism. Family pressure is very strong in all contexts. Very few activists have the support of their families in their activities. Some of them have even distanced themselves from their families because of the toxicity of this environment, such as Malyka, a 19-year-old Mauritanian activist: *"It had become unbearable. The pressure to get married, the reminders to toe the line, the threats. I fled to Senegal to continue my studies, but also to find peace and be able to speak out. My country is becoming like Afghanistan. Since when has being a woman become a curse?"*

By invoking tradition, opponents of feminism use the family as a tool to naturalize male dominance and delegitimize demands for equality. This explains the growing prevalence of masculinist content online, much of which gains visibility through attacks on feminists. In countries such as Togo, Benin, the DRC, Madagascar, and Senegal, feminists face narratives centered on the "loss of paternal authority." These narratives reflect shifting family roles and the erosion of traditional patriarchal structures, provoking backlash both within households and across social media. Such reactions stem from a fear of change and feed into anti-rights discourse promoted by authorities. The family thus becomes a political instrument to resist women's rights, framing challenges to gender hierarchies and female subordination as existential threats to social order and group survival.

This pressure from the family extends beyond the private sphere. Activists report the active involvement of churches and mosques in promoting the idea that feminism undermines family interests. Several political parties have also incorporated "defending the family" into their platforms—primarily as a means to tighten control over women's bodies. Few of these actors, however, speak out against violence targeting women. The family thus becomes a tool of

collective control, legitimizing pressure and discouraging public engagement. This dynamic has a profound psychological impact on activists: many describe feelings of guilt, exhaustion, and isolation when accused by relatives of betraying their culture or religion. This constant tension turns the family into a symbolic battleground for women's rights advocates. As one activist from Chad explains: *"Without family support, it's impossible to go far. That's why we need sisterhood. I found a new family with the League."*

2. Cyberbullying, misinformation and smear campaigns

Beyond family pressure, one of the most common challenges activists face is linked to their presence on social media. Increased online visibility exposes those who speak out against gender-based violence, the lack of enforcement of women's rights, or issues of sexual autonomy to relentless and repeated attacks. This digital violence often manifests as insults, threats, doxxing, false accusations, and degrading rumors. Meanwhile, masculinist content remains largely unsanctioned and is amplified, fueling hostility and spreading anti-feminist narratives.

In Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Chad, Cameroon, and other countries, cyberbullying has escalated sharply, often involving explicit threats of rape and death. As one activist from Mauritania shares: *"I sleep in fear. People send me anonymous messages on social media. My parents beg me to stop; they say it's dangerous to expose myself like this. People even send them my videos. I've blocked comments on TikTok, but I still receive threatening messages every day."*

"Social media has made us famous... but it has also intensified the violence. This online violence has also become normalised. Young people read it and insult us without any inhibitions. I've been called a pig." Carine from Benin added.

"Many say that women have too much freedom, that we must be stopped, which is why they devote content to destroying us." Viviane from Cameroon said. *"We are accused of defending homosexuality when we talk about gender equality or marital rape."* Maly Ka, Mauritania.

Apart from threats and insults, activists often face account hacking and abusive reporting. Many have shared experiences of their social media profiles being compromised, with personal photos and videos misused to intimidate, discredit, or silence them. In Chad and Benin, two feminists were even targeted by fabricated smear campaigns. *"I was subjected to a smear campaign on Facebook. People created fake pornographic photos with my face to humiliate me. It leaves deep psychological scars. You wonder who could be behind it all and, above all, why there is so much hatred."* — Epiphanie, Chad.

In Côte d'Ivoire, Marie O. recalls being targeted when her photo was posted on the Internet, accompanied by allegations that she had been paid by France to promote homosexuality in the country. *"They took my photo and posted it on the Internet to say that I was being paid by France..."* It was a massive campaign, she insists, "violent and relentless". Even though the threats were mainly online, the danger was palpable: *"I really felt unsafe"*.

"My account was reported multiple times, and I had to go through Facebook's verification process to recover it. Some people report your page purely out of spite", Marie added.

Platforms such as X (formerly Twitter), TikTok and YouTube have become key arenas for misogynistic disinformation and smear campaigns that portray feminists as agents of "Western values" seeking to undermine the institution of the family. In Senegal, respondents specifically cited *Jotna TV* and *Xalat TV* as leading anti-feminist media outlets and influencers, conducting coordinated digital hate campaigns that amplify misogynistic narratives and moralising religious rhetoric.

In Ghana, feminist activists describe online platforms as key battlegrounds for gender-related debates. They are frequently targeted through doxxing, coordinated harassment, and provocation by paid influencers and creators of "rage content" who deliberately incite hostility—particularly among young men—toward feminist voices. As Kadija explains: *"Even when we publish articles about widows online, people comment claiming we are lying, insisting this doesn't happen in Ghana. It's as if they feel personally dishonored and want to deny the issue."*

A participant from Togo recounted that her Facebook account was hacked after she publicly denounced a rape case, highlighting the personal risks inherent in digital activism. Anita noted that online attacks have intensified in recent years: *"The resistance has always been there... but over the past five years, it has become much more violent—especially after COVID."* Recent constitutional changes have further heightened political tensions, making criticism of the regime increasingly dangerous. As Floriane explained: *"You can no longer say certain things without risking arrest, being accused of terrorism, or of trying to destabilize the country."*

Respondents also emphasized that, in many countries, humor and sexist comments in mainstream media trivialize violence and normalize misogyny. This dynamic fosters an online environment that is hostile to feminist voices and discourages civic participation. To address this, some of the resources in our toolkit focus on the role of the media in promoting collective awareness of feminist issues.

3. Intimidation, summonses and arrests

In several countries, simply identifying as a feminist can expose activists to intimidation. Speaking out in public or organising feminist political events can lead to summonses and even legal proceedings. A Togolese activist noted that, as part of one of their activities, an official request to organise a peaceful demonstration was met with explicit warnings of arrest if the event went ahead.

In Ghana, the sentencing of Akuapem Poloo (whose real name is Rosemond Brown) to three months in prison was seen by feminists as an institutional backlash and a warning. The actress had posted nude photos of herself with her seven-year-old son for mother's day.

Ibrahim, founder of the NGO *For MVD* in Mauritania, *"Feminism is demonized by everyone—society, religious leaders, the State, and the police. Beyond threats and insults, I've been summoned twice by the National Police because of my positions and statements on social media. These summonses were meant to intimidate me into silence because I point out that the State is failing in its duties. We have no real freedom of expression. It only exists for those who attack feminists and violate rights. The moment you criticize the government; you become a target."*

In Chad, the police abducted an activist and arrested three individuals participating in a sit-in to denounce a rape case. *“They didn’t even want to hear our message. For them, it was simply an unauthorized demonstration. They smashed the camera of the person taking photos, and three of our comrades were taken to the police station before being released later. We had to wait several days to learn what had happened to the woman who was abducted.”* — Adelex.

In Senegal, the adoption of a landmark law in January 2020 criminalizing rape and pedophilia—following sustained advocacy by civil society and women’s rights organizations—was celebrated as a major political achievement. However, activists report facing a violent backlash, with heated debates questioning whether the law would expose men to false accusations. In response to persistent impunity and entrenched “rape culture,” feminist activists organized the **“Dress Code Nu”** demonstration. The organizers were subsequently summoned by the police.

In contexts marked by political instability and security challenges—such as Chad, the Central African Republic (CAR), and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)—women are frequently targeted by armed groups and militias. Reporting the violence they endure often exposes them to severe reprisals. In the CAR, a young woman was brutally murdered by unknown assailants after reporting being raped by Russian Wagner militias. In Chad, an activist was forced to flee clandestinely to Cameroon after denouncing the impunity of a politician accused of rape. In the DRC, particularly in North Kivu, some organizations face heightened police scrutiny. As Immaculée, 65, founder of the *Programme d’Appui aux Initiatives Féminines (PAIF)*, explains: *“When they don’t take us for spies, they take us for opponents—even though we are simply raising awareness and educating the public. Right now, we are forced to keep a low profile.”*

4. Legal and institutional barriers, discriminatory laws

Despite the limited progress noted above, many countries still uphold sexist laws that restrict women’s freedoms. All family laws remain a major obstacle to gender equality, largely due to legal pluralism, which gives significant weight to customary law—often reinforcing women’s subordination and perpetuating inequality. Several countries have initiated reforms to strengthen women’s rights within the family, addressing issues such as equality between spouses, filiation, inheritance, and land ownership. Examples include Benin (2021), Togo (2014), Côte d’Ivoire (2019), and the Central African Republic (2021). However, other countries—such as Senegal, Mauritania, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Madagascar, and Cameroon—continue to struggle, hampered by deep internal divisions. In these contexts, unwritten social norms governing community relations remain widely accepted and pose significant barriers to change.

The obstacles are not always visible; they involve the adoption of certain measures to please international donors, with no real intention of implementing them. This is the case, for example, with laws on parity or quotas: *“few political parties actually comply with these rules and nothing happens. We can criticise them all we want, but there are hundreds of local councils where there are barely one or two women, and nobody seems to be bothered,”* Marina from Chad said.

Obstacles also take the form of refusals to register certain organisations, slow administrative procedures, biased and moralising interpretations of the missions and mandates of feminist

organisations, and strategies to exclude them from certain spaces. As Aminata from Senegal testifies: *"We have made so much noise that the government cannot ignore us. Yet we've realized they only tolerate us for formality sake. They are obliged to invite us to certain workshops—just to tick boxes. But we are not given a voice. We are sidelined."*

For Françoise from Togo, an activist defending the rights of women with disabilities, the situation is clear: *"There are far too many obstacles. The organizations that manage to register easily remain confined to the social sphere. We are all considered apolitical, even though we are demanding equality. We know that if we include that in our statutes, the process will drag on for years (...)."*

Across the 11 countries covered by this study, associations face significant challenges in obtaining accreditation when their work touches on sexual and reproductive health, discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, or domestic violence. As Tracy from Ghana explains: *"There's no point in saying we work with sexual minorities. They'll ask, 'What does that mean?' So we hide it under other names. We say we work with marginalized and vulnerable women. It's vague, but it's the only way."*

For Maman Mimmie in the DRC, women's rights are often instrumentalized by leaders to attract funding—yet the resources rarely follow. *"There are ministries, departments, units; all supposedly part of the gender approach. But even outspoken women are sidelined for being deemed too radical. And there is no budget to work with. If resources don't come from external partners, nothing comes from State coffers. There is simply no political will."*

In this climate of institutional mistrust, victims of violence often hesitate to report cases to the police. Law enforcement officers, judges, and prosecutors frequently perpetuate sexist stereotypes, systematically redirecting victims toward family or community "mediation." As Diavolona from Madagascar explains: *"Sometimes we don't know which door to knock on because there are barriers everywhere. Sometimes you come to defend a case and end up being accused of embezzlement."* This experience mirrors the situation in Ghana. Even when women report abuse to official authorities, the justice system remains elusive. Tracy recounts: *"We sent a widow to DOVSU—the Ghanaian police's Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit—and to CHRAJ, the Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice, but they were very unresponsive. Several women said they felt worse after going there than they did before."*

Although the constitutions of all 11 countries enshrine the principle of equality between men and women and prohibit sex-based discrimination, law enforcement officials, prosecutors, civil administrators, and political party leaders often lack both the expertise and the willingness to interpret and apply the law accordingly. Furthermore, the existence of certain laws—or new draft legislation—that contradicts constitutional provisions and international conventions signed by these States represents a form of institutionalized backlash. This includes laws criminalizing same-sex relationships and any initiatives aimed at combating discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The popularity of such laws, and efforts to tighten them—as seen in Ghana—under the guise of cultural and religious arguments, undermine women's equal rights to privacy, freedom of expression, and bodily autonomy.

5. Violent attacks, surveillance and judicial harassment

Our study reveals the significant risks faced by certain activists. Social pressure forces many to keep a low profile and self-censor, while security threats place their lives in real danger. In some contexts, States misuse anti-terrorism laws to prosecute feminists under the pretext that they threaten public order or even national stability. In Mauritania, Islamist movements—acting in collusion with the State—target specific activists, accusing them of serving Western interests and corrupting society.

In 2023, Ibrahim narrowly escaped an attempted public lynching in Mauritania's capital. She is among the women advocating for the adoption of the Karama Law—a bill aimed at combating violence against women and girls. The proposal has faced fierce social and political resistance and has never reached parliamentary debate. Opponents argue that the bill contradicts Islamic traditions and precepts. *"Since then," Ibrahim explains, "I no longer go out alone. I fear for my safety. I appeared on television, people saw me. Later, I posted a video on Facebook without wearing a veil. I believe that's why I was attacked. People threatened to kill me."*

Soniya, meanwhile, escaped an assassination attempt, also in the Mauritanian capital. *"It shows how determined these people are," she says. "A man pulled a knife on me in the street. He said he was going to kill me and that it would serve as an example to others like me who tarnish the image of the Prophet. He was arrested and sentenced to five years in prison. But he was granted a presidential pardon after only a few months. I had to flee to Senegal. I feared for my life. I am now back home, but I sleep in fear (...) The fact that he was pardoned shows that our government turns a blind eye to violence against women and against us women's rights defenders. They are complicit with the extremists... They are the ones who create a climate conducive to hatred and violence. Anti-feminist rhetoric is not punished, but our words are twisted to create panic."*

The Chadian Feminist League was forced to shut down its offices just days after organizing a sit-in to denounce a gang rape case. *"We are seen as a dangerous organization in the eyes of the government,"* says Epiphanie. Similar experiences are reported by activists in Mauritania, Senegal, and Côte d'Ivoire.

6. How Factors Such as Sexual Orientation, Disability, Rural Context, and Age Influence Experiences of Backlash

By demonizing women's demands and rejecting the principle of equality, anti-rights actors reinforce harmful stereotypes, normalize gender-based violence, and heighten risks—particularly for those least able to defend themselves. Women with disabilities, women who love other women, young girls, older women, sex workers, and women living in rural areas bear a disproportionate share of the consequences of this radicalized patriarchy.

By weakening feminist demands for greater political representation and stronger protection against violence, these dynamics weaken advocacy channels, limit opportunities for progress, and restrict actions that could benefit countless women. Women with disabilities, for instance, are already at heightened risk of gender-based violence. Global studies indicate that women and girls with disabilities are up to ten times more likely to experience GBV than other women

[3].

The testimonies of several respondents in vulnerable situations reveal similarities. Many have faced discrimination since childhood, being told they are useless and a burden, and now live in extreme poverty that often forces them to beg. Disability is still perceived as a curse, and abuse of women with disabilities remains widespread, with little chance of obtaining justice. Throughout their lives, these women are exposed to all forms of violence. The greatest challenge lies in dismantling the stereotypes that weigh on people with disabilities: *"We must help women with disabilities understand that they have rights. It's difficult. When society mocks them, they lose all self-esteem,"* says Maman Sophie from the DRC.

Women facing discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity are often prime targets of anti-rights movements. This is evident in laws criminalizing same-sex relationships. These movements exploit homosexuality and trans identities as scare tactics to justify their agendas and incite panic. As online spaces and institutions grow increasingly hostile to women and gender issues, these individuals face mounting challenges simply to exist. The

consequences include heightened social exclusion, job loss, and, in some cases, relocation for safety. Beyond these external barriers, backlash also occurs within the feminist movement itself. As N., a lesbian feminist from Senegal, explains: *"Feminists prefer to set aside the issue of discrimination based on sexuality to avoid controversy. They focus on rape, pedophilia, and female genital mutilation. Of course, these issues matter, but why don't they speak out about homosexuality? It's about women's autonomy. So excluding us is also a backlash."*

Navigating feminism, disability and sexuality in the face of anti-feminist backlash

In Togo, T's story embodies the quiet resistance and tenacity that characterise feminist activism under pressure. At 29, she lives with a disability—she lost her right foot in an accident six years ago—and identifies as a lesbian. Her crutches, once a symbol of survival, have become a visible sign that attracts stares, mockery and insults, combining vandalism and homophobia.

In her neighbourhood, harassment is a daily occurrence. Children are told not to talk to her; parents circulate her phone number as a warning; rumours follow her to the market and at home. The labels "disabled" and "lesbian" are thrown at her like weapons, intended to silence her. Eventually, this constant hostility forced her to move away to find some peace and anonymity elsewhere. These daily humiliations, though individual, reflect the broader anti-feminist backlash spreading across the region. It is not always loud or violent: sometimes it hides behind polite attitudes, the withdrawal of opportunities or the silent breaking of social ties. For women like her, the backlash acts as a system of social control that punishes visibility and difference. The barriers extend beyond the public sphere. LBQT women and women with disabilities face systemic exclusion — from work, community networks, and even the right to speak without fear. Many censor themselves to avoid rejection or losing their fragile security. Silence is also generational: elders often reject feminism and LGBT identities as "foreign" or "shameful," leaving young women to fight for words, understanding, and space.

Yet amid this stifling climate, she and others have built subtle forms of resistance. A small WhatsApp group of LBQ women serves as their refuge — a space to confide, support each other, and share survival strategies. As a moderator, she helps organise discreet meetings, often in rented apartments away from prying eyes. Behind closed doors, they celebrate birthdays, hold workshops and recreate, for a moment, sanctuaries of laughter and solidarity. These gatherings may seem modest, but they carry a silent revolution. They affirm belonging in a society that seeks to erase them. Through digital solidarity and collective care, they rebuild the confidence that public life tries to take away from them.

For her, the backlash in Togo is not just the clamour of public condemnation; it is the slow erosion of freedom through daily judgement and exclusion. But every coded message sent, every story shared and every meeting held in secret is a refusal to disappear. In her words and actions, feminism becomes more than activism: it becomes survival, tenderness and courage. To exist despite the silence.

Eli, a trans woman from the DRC, recalls a painful moment in her activism when, in 2021, the Minister of Justice personally targeted her. She was subjected to a prosecution order for allegedly promoting homosexuality—despite the absence of any law on the matter. Her arrest was widely covered by the media. Despite her active role in numerous women’s and human rights networks, Eli says the lack of support deeply wounded her: *“Everyone backed down. No press releases, no public statements. I was completely alone—left at the mercy of these people.”*

Young girls also bear a disproportionate share of anti-rights attacks, even though more of them identify as feminists compared to older activists. For 16-year-old Malaika, speaking openly about gender-based violence exposes her to criticism, ridicule, and even threats in her neighborhood: *“Mothers point at me when I walk by, telling their daughters not to be like me. Some boys have promised to kill me. Others mock me, saying that once I’m married, I’ll shut up.”* Such attacks silence young feminists and prevent them from speaking out about the sexual violence they endure. This violence is pervasive and contributes to the low completion rates for girls’ education. As Mélanie explains: *“All my classmates married before finishing secondary school—before turning 18. There were many of us in Year 7. By Year 13, only two remained.”* She adds: *“We oppose child marriage. That’s why they’re against us.”*

Hostility and resistance to discussions on gender equality are particularly pronounced in rural areas, where the impact is even more severe. These regions are dominated by customary systems with limited recourse to statutory law. Women living in rural communities face multiple challenges that are amplified by anti-feminist rhetoric.

One major issue is isolation in the face of violence. Françoise, a woman with a disability in northern Togo, explains: *“Here, when you talk about women’s rights, people look at you like you’re crazy. Access to information is difficult. People don’t hesitate to insult me and attack my disability. It’s very violent, and I have little support.”*

Another challenge concerns access to resources, particularly land. Few rural women own the land they cultivate, reinforcing their dependence on male relatives or village authorities. In Madagascar, Danielle notes: *“Women do not have the right to inherit the rice fields they work in. Men fulfill these obligations. Despite the law, very few succeed. When we try to speak with traditional authorities, some refuse to meet us.”*

When it comes to gender-based violence, rural women have limited access to formal institutions and are often forced to comply with decisions made by family or village leaders. The absence of legal frameworks and protective programs perpetuates impunity, exposing women and their children to repeated abuse. Moreover, anti-feminist discourse erodes the legitimacy of rural women’s support networks, while women leaders face community harassment: *“We are often accused of turning women against their husbands,”* says Danielle from Madagascar.

Chapter 3. From resistance to systemic transformation: strategies and innovations

Negative reactions are an inherent part of feminist work, and the notion that rights, once gained, are ‘permanent’ is an illusion. Far from remaining passive in the face of growing attacks, feminist activists across countries are responding with creativity and renewed determination to sustain and advance the struggle for equality and justice. The evolution of feminist networks and the innovative initiatives they champion reflect the movement’s increasing strength, the diversification of its strategies, and their deep anchoring in local realities—while maintaining strong connections to global feminist alliances.

We have organized these strategies around five key pillars:

- **Local and decolonial roots** to counter guilt-inducing narratives and offer credible cultural alternatives.
- **Collective action and transnational solidarity** to reduce individual risks and amplify influence.
- **Training and autonomous knowledge production** to document attacks and create opportunities for action.
- **Digital mobilization, political engagement, and**
- **creativity** to circumvent legal and institutional barriers.

1. *"We show that feminism and traditions are not enemies." How African feminists anchor their discourse in African realities*

Faced with narratives portraying feminism as a Western import, a neo-colonial project, and a threat to family values, the activists we interviewed are developing both individual and collective strategies grounded in their lived realities. This local anchoring is first expressed through their affirmation of historical continuity—linking today’s struggles to women’s resistance movements in the pre-colonial era and the fight for independence. Prominent female figures who shaped political and social life are invoked to legitimize a distinctly African tradition of women’s activism.

In Côte d’Ivoire, for example, activist Bintou Traoré launched the social media campaign **#VraieFemmeAfricaine (Real African Woman)** in 2020 to challenge stereotypes that dehumanize African women, render them invisible, and justify their subordination. Hundreds of women from across Francophone Africa participated, sharing experiences and highlighting African women’s roles in liberation movements, social and economic struggles, ecological activism, and indigenous models of solidarity and collective well-being. This campaign marked

a turning point for Ivorian feminism, leading to the creation of the **Ivorian League for Women's Rights**.

Activists also draw on local languages and cultural forms of expression to make their discourse accessible and relevant. By addressing issues such as child marriage, domestic violence, and sexual and gender-based violence in local languages, they speak directly to communities and authorities, demanding justice. In the DRC, the association *Si Jeunesse Savait* adapts its messaging to reflect realities of armed conflict, limited education access, and widespread sexual violence: *“Our context here is unique, but we prioritize protecting the most vulnerable, health as a universal right, and community prosperity. Everyone benefits when discrimination ends,”* says Evia from the DRC.

The following table provides a non-exhaustive list of groups engaged in feminist action, with varying levels of consolidation.

Country	Name of network/collective
Benin	Ligue béninoise des droits de la femme Réseau des féministes du Bénin
Cameroon	Cameroonian Feminist Coordination (dissolved after two years) Stop Femicide Collective 237 Réseau des Jeunes féministes d'Afrique Centrale (REJEFEMAC) LEAP Girl Africa
Côte d'Ivoire	Ligue ivoirienne des droits des femmes
Ghana	SWIDA (Savannah Women's Integrated Development Agency) WOM (Women and Orphans) Pepper Dem Ministry (feminist collective against gender stereotypes and for equality)
Madagascar	Gender Links Collectif des Jeunes féministes de Madagascar Projet SORATRA (collectif de journalistes féministes)
Mauritania	No formal network; a WhatsApp group
CAR	No national collective but ad hoc coalitions

DRC	CAFCO (Cadre de concertation de la femme congolaise) Rien sans les femmes (mouvement national pour la représentation légale des femmes) Vision+ (Réseau national LGBT) Mouvement genre et droits des femmes (en cours de consolidation)
Senegal	Réseau des jeunes féministes d'Afrique de l'Ouest Réseau Ouest africain des Jeunes femmes Leaders Forum des féministes du Sénégal
Chad	Ligue Tchadienne des droits des femmes Super Banat (réseau de jeunes filles initié par Unicef) Maison pour les femmes (incubateur féminin)
Togo	La Negresse Féministe Voix des Femmes handicapées

In Chad, activists denounce the unequal treatment of children from birth: *"A baby girl is not welcomed in the same way as a baby boy. It is deeply unfair. Being belittled from birth will never help our society move forward"* said Ms Sob.

To break out of the isolation they face within families and communities, these activists have established support and self-help groups in each country, along with targeted programs aimed at reducing economic dependence. As Mélanie from Chad puts it: *"What keeps me going are my sisters. Without sisterhood, I would have given up long ago."*

2. ***"Together we are stronger": collective action and regional mobilisation***

Collective action remains one of the most powerful tools for resisting anti-feminist backlash. All respondents agree that only coordinated efforts can deliver meaningful results. Attempts by individual feminists to act outside organizational frameworks have often proven difficult and, at times, counterproductive.

Until recently, activism was largely confined to social media. Today, many of the activists interviewed for this study have made a strategic shift, joining or creating organizations, coalitions, and networks to strengthen mobilization at local, regional, and international levels. As Axelle from Benin explains: *"I am an activist 2.0. Before, I only campaigned online. With all the pressure I faced, I realized that together we are stronger."*

There is a growing trend toward forming openly feminist collectives and coalitions. By prioritizing unity over divisive issues such as abortion or homosexuality, many activists embrace the intersectionality of struggles, recognizing that no fight exists in isolation. Strategic, issue-based mobilizations are increasingly common—such as rallies against sexual violence and femicide. Examples include the December 2024 protest in Senegal against the "Dress code nu" [4], the January 2025 demonstration in Chad following the alleged rape of a high school girl by a police commissioner [5], and the July 2025 national

march in the Central African Republic, which brought together hundreds to denounce domestic violence and femicide [6].

At the regional level in Central Africa, the *Network of Young Feminists of Central Africa (REJEFEMAC)* brings together feminists from Chad, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Gabon. Another key initiative is *GenEgalite ECCAS* (Génération Égalité of the Economic Community of Central African States), which unites over 55 youth and feminist organizations across the region, including Burundi and the Republic of Congo.

In West Africa, the *West African Network of Young Feminists* plays a similar role in fostering collaboration among feminist groups.

Additionally, LBQT (lesbian, bisexual, queer, and transgender) activists organize themselves through formal national and regional networks. One notable example is *PI7 (Plateforme Initiative des 7)*, which connects LBQ activists from seven countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Senegal, and Togo.

By combining their strengths, knowledge, and resources, activists amplify the visibility of their struggles and actions while achieving tangible progress in legal, social, and political arenas. In Chad, the League has become a trusted point of contact for cases of sexual violence, surpassing the Ministry of Women's Affairs. It has established itself as a key actor on gender and equality issues. Through collective efforts to denounce government inaction and the impunity of perpetrators, the League has increased the number of rape complaints and exerted pressure on authorities to respond. As Melanie puts it: "*Justice is hard to obtain, but we're not giving up.*"

In Benin, the West African Network of Young Feminists mobilized in 2021 to support the legalization of abortion through awareness campaigns, community training, and political advocacy.

In Senegal, feminist activism led to the reclassification of rape from a misdemeanor to a crime, significantly increasing penalties for offenders.

Some regional networks, initially informal, are now moving toward formalization. One example is *Voix Féministes d'Afrique (VOFA)*, which aspires to become a Francophone regional structure dedicated to strengthening activists' power at individual, collective, and regional levels.

There is also a growing number of initiatives that seek to be inclusive of marginalised groups such as women with disabilities, women living in rural areas and LBQ women. By working with local radio stations in Madagascar and in the Central African Republic, some organisations are specifically trying to reach women living in rural areas and raise awareness of the difficulties they face, which are quite different from those faced by women in urban areas: "*We don't necessarily have the same problems, but as long as we don't give these women a voice, there will always be this unnecessary division between us*" Binette from CAR said.

One of the most significant challenges is ensuring the inclusion of women who face violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. This exclusion often stems

from a lack of understanding of their realities rather than deliberate refusal or bad faith—underscoring the need to create more spaces for dialogue and exchange.

Eli, a trans woman from the DRC, emphasizes: *“When we are confronted with violence and injustice, it is not the time to debate who qualifies as a woman. We must act for all women.”*

Responding to this concern, another activist from the DRC explains: *“It’s not that we don’t want to include everyone. When we talk about rights, we mean rights for all. But we all have opinions shaped by religion and other factors. Dialogue is essential. It’s hard to commit to something we don’t fully understand.”*

3. Capacity building, training and autonomous knowledge production

Beyond solidarity campaigns and legal assistance networks, collective action also encompasses community training initiatives. At both national and regional levels, numerous programmes have emerged to strengthen the individual and collective capacities of activists. These range from regional workshops on digital security, project development, and risk mapping to mentoring programmes.

A notable example is the West and Central African Feminist Summer University, held in Senegal in 2023 and 2024. This pioneering initiative in Francophone Africa provides a platform for intergenerational dialogue among feminists from West and Central Africa, fostering exchanges between researchers, community leaders, experts, and young activists. Other significant efforts include feminist schools such as the *African Women’s Camp* and the *Gorée Institute*, which train young feminist leaders in advocacy, communication, and project management.

Similarly, the Tassi Hangbe Interdisciplinary University and activist schools organized by the *Queer African Youth Network* focus on building the capacities of Francophone LGBT activists. While the activist schools have been held biennially since 2014, the first edition of Tassi Hangbe University took place in 2023, with the second scheduled for November 2025. Its mission is to consolidate the LGBTQI movement in Africa and promote social justice by training informed, skilled, and united activists.

In Ghana, several impactful initiatives aim to cultivate feminist leadership. The Young Female Leaders (YoFeL) *Fellowship* by FEAD Ghana equips young women with essential leadership skills through intensive training, mentoring, field visits, and community projects geared towards social change and aligned with the SDGs^[8]. Similarly, NETRIGHT's Women's Voice and Leadership programme supports local and regional women's organisations to promote women's rights and gender equality, strengthen governance structures and develop organisational capacity (netrightghana.org). Complementing these efforts, WACSI's Intergenerational Training Programme for Young Feminist Leaders offers a five-day workshop designed to strengthen feminist leadership, foster intergenerational mentorship, and develop strategies to support feminist movements in West Africa. Together, these programmes provide women in Ghana with strong pathways to assume leadership roles, drive social change, and contribute to a more equitable society.

4. Social media as a space for resistance and mobilisation

Best practices at the regional level demonstrate the effectiveness of online engagement. Social media has even become the heart of resistance in several countries, such as Chad, Mauritania, Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Senegal, Benin, and Togo. It has become the preferred alternative space for expression due to difficulties in accessing State media or mainstream media. Using hashtags, press releases and open letters posted online on various platforms, feminist organisations and activists have organised several campaigns on Facebook and X. These campaigns have given rise to a new generation of highly active cyberfeminists who are now being given a voice in the media.

In Cameroon, a powerful example is the 2022 campaign #StopBopda, launched to expose an influential producer with close ties to the government who was accused of serial rape. The hashtag, used nearly two million times across national, regional, and global platforms, enabled the collection of dozens of victim testimonies. This online mobilization led to an official investigation and ultimately the indictment of the accused. The campaign sparked an unprecedented wave of feminist activism in Cameroon, allowing activists to challenge rape culture, break the silence, and demand systemic change.

In Côte d'Ivoire, the 2019 campaign #StopAuViol on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram became a powerful tool to raise awareness and denounce rape and gender-based violence. It emerged in a context of pervasive silence, where rape was often trivialized and justified by patriarchal norms. The campaign highlighted the depth of rape culture and called for collective responsibility—while urging authorities to fulfill their duty to protect victims and punish perpetrators. As activist Marie Paule explains: *“It is fair to say that thanks to our collective action, we succeeded in passing several laws. Our greatest victory is the law on the protection of victims of domestic violence, rape, and sexual violence. This law ensures that a protection order is issued within 24 hours when the victim is in danger.”*

In Senegal, the campaign #NopiWoumaPour (“I will not be silent” in Wolof), launched by activists from the Senegalese feminist collective, created a powerful space for women to share their experiences of sexual violence—both publicly and anonymously. Beyond amplifying survivors’ voices, the campaign educated the public on consent and rape culture while calling on the justice system and the state to take concrete action. This initiative strengthened the feminist movement, repoliticized the issue of rape, and contributed to legal reforms. Most importantly, it empowered countless women to break their silence and denounce their aggressors.

When activists face summons or legal harassment, their peers often respond with visible and immediate support on social media. In **Mauritania**, this strategy proved crucial in 2024 when Soniya narrowly avoided imprisonment. After posting highly critical comments about the government, she was summoned by the police and warned to stop her criticism. Undeterred, she released another video denouncing the State’s complicity with Islamist terrorists, prompting a second summons. Soniya shared the summons online, and on the day she reported to the police station, more than a hundred women accompanied her in solidarity. *“They questioned me from morning until night. I was exhausted. They wanted me to admit I was receiving money from abroad to speak like this, but those are lies. They couldn’t keep me any longer because they fear bad publicity—that’s their only concern,”* she recalls.

Across all contexts, activists respond swiftly to cyberattacks by supporting one another, mass-reporting harassing accounts, and coordinating collective actions through digital platforms. The online space has thus become an essential tool for protection, mobilization, and amplifying feminist discourse—particularly where access to mainstream media remains limited.

5. Care and solidarity as a condition for collective survival

In the face of backlash, care begins at an individual level before becoming a collective effort. As Maman Mimmie, 65, from the DRC, explains: *“I’ve learned to disconnect, to rest, to breathe. If you don’t take care of yourself, you’ll burn out.”* Similarly, Emilie Tapie from Côte d’Ivoire reminds us: *“Taking care of yourself is not a luxury—it is a form of resistance.”*

The individual strategies adopted by activists reflect a resistance that is both pragmatic and intentional, grounded in caution, self-protection, data security, and care. In hostile environments such as Chad, Mauritania, and Senegal, activists maintain a low profile in public spaces, avoid traveling alone, and steer clear of direct confrontation. This vigilance extends to the digital sphere, where they use strong passwords and sometimes disable comments on shared content to prevent cyberbullying. For personal well-being, some activists use two SIM cards to separate professional and private communications, while others limit international travel and prefer to move within their own country. Intentional rest, therapy, and spirituality are also key self-care strategies.

“Care is not just individual—it is also collective. Taking care of each other means protecting the struggle,” says Axelle from Benin. At the collective level, numerous initiatives focus on mental health and mutual support. Talking circles are present in all the contexts studied. While their formats vary by country, these spaces foster group cohesion, solidarity, and emotional support. They often take the form of educational discussions, feminist cafés, collective outings, or recreational activities. According to activists, these spaces are essential for building trust and, at times, resolving internal tensions. Conflicts arise both within collectives and across the broader movement, and discussion circles provide opportunities to share perspectives, exchange experiences, and find common ground.

“Being surrounded by women who think like you and with whom you don’t have to justify anything is huge. We have to justify ourselves all the time. When we meet to talk, we feel better afterwards.”

Beyond care initiatives, emergency projects and support networks play a crucial role when activists face imminent danger. For instance, Cameroonian feminists provided refuge to an activist from Chad who had to flee for her safety. Similarly, thanks to the *Queer African Youth Network*, Eli was able to leave Congo and find refuge in Côte d’Ivoire.

It is important to note, however, that resources are largely insufficient to support this aspect of collective engagement and resistance. Few organisations have a budget for care and mental health, which limits long-term engagement.

6. Art as a field and tool for social transformation

Because their message targets not only political authorities but also society and local communities, activists strive to move beyond intellectual debates and cultural barriers. To achieve this, they harness visual, audio, and video media as powerful tools to promote equality and expose injustice. Art as a vehicle for social transformation is evident in many forms of resistance to backlash.

For example, Malika, a 16-year-old slam poet from Chad, uses her poetry to confront taboos surrounding the body, menstruation, and sexual violence—breaking imposed silences.

Similarly, Epiphanie Dionrang, also from Chad, describes her art as a way to channel anger and rebuild herself: *“Every poem I write is a crack in the walls of patriarchy.”* In Chad, the public speaking competition “Elles Parlent” provides activists with a platform to spotlight feminist issues. It brings together young girls from middle and high schools, enabling them to express their dreams, ambitions, and pain through words.

In Togo, some organizations have turned to community theatre to address early marriage. As Anita from Togo explains: *“It has touched many parents. When we talk about dignity and the future of children, even those who are hostile listen to us”.*

In Ghana, thanks to the initiative of feminist activists, the Commissioner for Women’s Affairs transformed a traditional university beauty contest into a platform for raising awareness about gender-based and sexual violence. As Leila from Ghana notes: *“It was a really big step forward for us because this is a conversation you never hear in such contests.”*

Chapter 4. Challenges and recommendations

Feminist activists and human rights defenders face multiple threats, as outlined in Chapter 2—ranging from family and religious pressure to cyberbullying, physical violence, smear campaigns, legal harassment, and intimidation. Yet, the mechanisms intended to support or protect them are virtually absent and, where they exist, remain highly unreliable.

1. Non-existent or improvised mechanisms

In most of the countries documented, there are no dedicated national protection mechanisms for feminist activists, unlike the systems that exist for journalists. The only exception is Ghana, which, following debates on the anti-LGBT law in 2024, established a helpline to provide material and psychological support to LGBT community members in danger. Beyond this isolated case, all existing protection systems are informal. While these networks demonstrate the resilience of feminists and can be effective in emergencies, they remain fragile because they rely on personal connections and the availability of activists.

In Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, and Mauritania, feminists at risk are often sheltered by volunteers without supervision or stable funding. Consequently, many threatened activists continue living in hostile environments, restricting their movements and sometimes withdrawing entirely for their physical and mental safety—leading to activist fatigue

2. Limited, slow and inaccessible legal support

In all the countries documented, access to justice remains extremely challenging—not only due to slow legal proceedings and the complicity of institutions hostile to women, but also because of prohibitive costs. For instance, defamation lawsuits targeting activists in Benin and Senegal require expensive technical defense that few can afford and which is rarely included in action plans. As Carine from Benin explains: *“When we speak out, we are sued for defamation. The CRIET (Court for the Suppression of Economic Offences and Terrorism) imposes heavy sentences.”* Similarly, Zipporah from Senegal recalls: *“We were summoned by the police after the ‘Dress Code Nu’ campaign. Without a lawyer, we were exposed.”*

Only a handful of regional NGOs—such as UAF or Lawyers Without Borders—offer occasional support, but often too late and ill-suited to the urgency of these situations.

3. Financial dependence and sustainability

Few organizations or collectives enjoy financial autonomy, and dependence on external funding remains the main barrier to sustainable collective action. When donor priorities shift, many activities come to an abrupt end. As Gloria from Benin warns: *“Too much dependence is risky. People claim we’re being manipulated by the West, which isn’t true. But when 100% of our activities rely on these organizations, yes—it’s risky.”* This concern is echoed by Viviane from Cameroon: *“Projects collapse when the funds run out.”*

By the same token, emergency funds for security and protection are equally hard to access, as donor procedures are often slow and ill-suited to urgent situations. Consequently, activists rely on internal solidarity or informal fundraising to cover costs such as bail, legal fees, or securing the release of an arrested activist.

4. Coordination and communication

Despite the creation of national networks and coalitions, many organizations still operate in silos, with little real coordination. This fragmentation often fuels internal rivalries, leadership struggles, and limits large-scale mobilization—as observed in Madagascar, the DRC, and Togo. These divisions weaken resistance and ultimately benefit anti-rights movements. Moreover, responses to attacks tend to be reactive rather than proactive, allowing anti-feminist discourse to dominate public space. Campaigns are largely confined to social media, with limited engagement in everyday community interactions, making it harder to counter online demonization. This highlights a deeper challenge: adapting feminist concepts and principles to local cultural contexts.

Another critical gap is the lack of documentation. Many experiences and struggles are not archived, undermining the creation of a collective memory and continuity. As Axelle from Benin warns: *“If the next generation has to start all over again, we will have failed.”* Liz from Cameroon reinforces this: *“We work, but we don’t document—so each generation starts over.”* Interviews and focus groups also revealed weak links between activists and legal professionals. Many women are unaware of their rights or fear ridicule by the police. Meanwhile, women’s legal associations are often slow to respond and disconnected from activist networks. When attacked, activists frequently rely on international conventions—such as the African Charter on Women’s Rights—which, while valid, can undermine their public credibility.

5. Intersectionality in question

Generational and intersectional dynamics are a major source of fragility across contexts. There is a noticeable gap between activists trained in the 1990s and 2000s—often through development and cooperation projects—and those belonging to what could be called Generation 2.0 (2010 onward). This younger generation is digitally savvy, openly identifies as radical and intersectional, and often embraces queer identities. Typically university-educated and deeply engaged with gender and sexuality issues, they are redefining both the language and the forms of feminist struggle.

This coexistence frequently generates tensions, as seen during the focus group in Accra. The divide manifests in approaches, tools, and even in values perceived as feminist. In Chad, a 59-year-old activist remarked that “her girls,” whom she “adores”, need to tone down their demands—while the younger activists responded indignantly: *“If what we are saying is true, why not listen to the message? We have the right to be angry.”*

On International Women’s Rights Day 2025, several women’s organizations convened a workshop and drafted recommendations for the government, including a proposal that husbands who divorce should leave the family home to their wives and children. The backlash was intense, culminating in a public apology from the Minister for Women’s Affairs. As league activists recall: *“We felt abandoned and completely unsupported.”*

In the DRC, young feminists often express frustration that their elders accuse them of provoking unnecessary repression by being too visible and radical. For activists under 35, these older generations appear too willing to compromise with the State or donors. As Aminata from Senegal puts it: *“Some have become institutionalized—they’ve forgotten the streets.”* This generational divide undermines movement cohesion, especially at a time when anti-feminist rhetoric is gaining ground. While spaces for intergenerational dialogue are emerging, they remain in their infancy and require deliberate attention.

Even when violence is acknowledged, protection mechanisms are weak, underfunded, and often inaccessible to those most at risk—particularly LBQ women, women with disabilities, and women in rural areas. Shelters for women in danger are scarce and concentrated in capital cities, prioritizing domestic violence cases over political threats, despite their severity.

In Cameroon, activists from the *Stop Féminicides 237* collective report that some shelters refuse to host “too visible” activists—such as masculine-presenting women—to avoid attracting trouble. Feminist emergency funds also fail to guarantee the confidentiality required for activists’ sexual orientation. Few feminist collectives openly address homosexuality, leaving LBQ women to shoulder this responsibility, even though identifying as LBQ is far riskier than identifying as a feminist and can lead to imprisonment.

The issue of disability further exposes an implicit hierarchy within feminist struggles, which often center on able-bodied, urban, educated women. In most contexts, disability is treated as a social issue rather than a political one—just as sexual orientation is considered private rather than political. As Michèle, a Cameroonian activist with a disability, argues: *“Mainstream feminism must recognize disability as a political experience and address it appropriately. How many seats in feminist associations are accessible to women in wheelchairs? Women with intellectual disabilities are raped every day, but do feminists talk about it?”*

6. Some possible solutions and recommendations

To address these challenges, we propose the following actions for **AWDF** and the organizations involved in this study. Some of these are already included in the toolkit provided as a supplement to this report:

- **Create and fund national and regional feminist emergency protocols**
The absence of a shared emergency system leaves activists vulnerable and weakens the movement. A regional protocol should include emergency hotlines, solidarity funds, and a secure reporting app. This would ensure that an attack on any activist doesn’t remain an isolated tragedy, but triggers a coordinated response across the movement.
- **Establish a pooled emergency fund for rapid and autonomous protection**
Current procedures are too slow for urgent situations. Without dedicated emergency funds, protection relies on individual charity, which is unreliable.
- **Prioritize intergenerational transmission as a political act**
Resistance also means passing on knowledge. Permanent intergenerational spaces should be created and funded—such as national dialogues, mentoring programs, or co-writing feminist manifestos. Decision-making and financial power should be

redistributed, for example by requiring at least one young person under 25 and one woman over 40–50 on boards and executive committees.

- **Build structured alliances between lawyers and feminist collectives**
Activists facing summons or prosecution should not have to search for legal support randomly. A pre-established network of lawyers trained in defending women's and human rights is essential.
- **Document and archive attacks as a political strategy**
Silence around attacks allows backlash to repeat. Documentation should serve as collective evidence and deterrence by exposing perpetrators.
- **Record victories and positive impacts**
If successes are not documented, they disappear. Backlash thrives on these gaps. Sharing feminist wins helps dismantle fear, build political resilience, and generate collective energy.
- **Institutionalize care within governance policies**
Chronic exhaustion is widespread. Care must become part of organizational culture, supported by an internal well-being policy and a dedicated budget.

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- [1] [https://gate.ngo/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/2024-GATE-Recognizing Documenting and Addressing Anti-Gender Opposition.pdf](https://gate.ngo/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/2024-GATE-Recognizing_Documenting_and_Addressing_Anti-Gender_Opposition.pdf); [https://adsock.org/wp-content/uploads/docs/ADSOCK Resource Book 2021 Final.pdf](https://adsock.org/wp-content/uploads/docs/ADSOCK_Resource_Book_2021_Final.pdf); <https://counteringbacklash.org/cards-against-backlash/>; <https://counteringbacklash.org/>.
- [2] MDG 3 is explicitly devoted to gender: promoting gender equality and empowering women. The gender dimension also cuts across five of the other MDGs. These include MDG 1 on poverty reduction, MDG 2 on universal primary education, MDGs 4 and 5 on maternal and child health, and MDG 6 on HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.
- [3] [https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Final Global Study English 3 Oct.pdf](https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Final_Global_Study_English_3_Oct.pdf)
- [4] https://www.facebook.com/warkhatv/photos/invitation-au-sit-in-contre-les-f%C3%A9minicides-aus%C3%A9n%C3%A9galparce-que-nos-vies-compten/1194023919401021/?_rdar
- [5] <https://www.rfi.fr/fr/afrique/20250105-tchad-sit-in-de-femmes-%C3%A0-ndjamena-pour-d%C3%A9noncer-le-viol-collectif-d-une-jeune-fille-de-17-ans>
- [6] <https://www.facebook.com/p/Marche-Nationale-Contre-les-Violences-Conjugales-en-RCA-61577212116759/>
- [7] <https://www.rejefemac.org/>
- [8] <https://www.feadghana.org>
- [9] <https://www.facebook.com/mrtvtchad/posts/%F0%9D%97%94%F0%9D%97%A5%F0%9D%97%A7-%F0%9D%97%A2%F0%9D%97%A5%F0%9D%97%94%F0%9D%97%A7%F0%9D%97%A2%F0%9D%97%9C%F0%9D%97%A5%F0%9D%97%98-la-grande-finale-du-concours-dart-oratoire-elles-parlent-tchad-2025/660192270502433/>
- [10] Several activists were unable to speak and asked to talk to our country representatives about their experiences and lives.