

**IHRDA**

INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS  
AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA



**ANNUAL  
IMPACT  
REPORT  
2025**

**PURSUING  
HUMAN RIGHTS  
IN A TURBULENT  
WORLD**

**IHRDA**

INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS  
AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA



# ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT 2025

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# FOREWORD

## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In 1998, our founders believed that African regional human rights mechanisms could become powerful instruments for justice, if only they were used strategically, persistently, and in partnership with those most affected by injustice. Nearly three decades later, that belief continues to guide our work.



The year 2025 was defined by both urgency and resolve. Across the continent, civic space narrowed in some contexts, environmental harm intensified, harmful practices persisted, and political repression tested democratic institutions, especially in countries that held elections. Yet at the same time, regional human rights bodies continued to demonstrate their capacity, even with struggles, to shape jurisprudence, articulate standards, and demand accountability.

In this landscape, the Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa remained steadfast in its mission: to ensure that victims and communities can access regional justice mechanisms, and that decisions of human rights mechanisms do not remain symbolic victories but translate into real change.

In 2025, eight (8) decisions were delivered in cases led or supported by IHRDA before regional human rights bodies. These decisions strengthened jurisprudence on sexual and gender-based violence, harmful practices including female genital mutilation, protection of persons with albinism, nationality and statelessness, access to justice, and civic freedoms. Each ruling represents not only legal progress but a measure of recognition for victims whose suffering had long gone unaddressed.

At the same time, we filed new and/or advanced submissions on pending cases involving child marriage in Sierra Leone, labour protection for domestic workers and excessive cost orders awarded against public interest litigants in Malawi, child protection failures in Botswana, arbitrary arrest of political actors

and electoral justice in Tanzania, civic space restrictions and detention of political actors in Togo, deprivation of travel documents and seizure of the property of politically exposed persons in Rwanda and female genital mutilation in The Gambia. These cases reflect our deliberate strategy to address structural violations and emerging human rights challenges across multiple regions.

However, our work does not end with a judgment or recommendations. Implementation remains the most fragile link in the justice chain. In 2025, we deepened engagement with governments, national institutions, regional human rights mechanisms and victims to ensure that the decisions of courts and other human rights mechanisms resulted in compensation, medical treatment, educational access, housing, land allocation and legal reform. Progress was uneven, but tangible.

As a thought-leader, IHRDA continued to produce cutting edge research, with the publication of a comprehensive study on business and human rights in Africa.

Behind this work stands a growing and dedicated team, a refined IHRDA, strengthened partnerships with civil society across Africa, and the courage of victims who continue to place their trust in regional justice.

As we look ahead, we remain convinced that African human rights institutions are indispensable to the continent's future. With persistence, collaboration and strategic engagement, rights on paper can become rights in practice.

**Dr. Musa Kika**, Executive Director

# IMPACT SUMMARY

In 2025, the Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa (IHRDA) consolidated its position as one of the continent's leading legal advocacy organisations. Through litigation, implementation follow-up, advocacy, research and capacity building, IHRDA addressed structural violations across West, East, Central, Southern and Northern Africa.

3



new strategic cases filed before regional and international mechanisms.

3



merits submissions on pending cases before regional and international mechanisms.

3



amicus curiae interventions.

8



landmark decisions delivered in 2025.

25+



cases under active litigation or implementation follow-up.

1



amicable settlement agreement concluded.



15+

countries engaged through litigation, advocacy and training.

200+

lawyers, civil society actors and journalists trained.

Active presence at the ordinary sessions of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, and African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

Direct engagement with the East African Court of Justice, including our inaugural participation in the East African Court of Justice Judicial Conference in Kigali, Rwanda.



The decisions delivered and amicable settlement agreement concluded in 2025 advanced jurisprudence on:

- Prevention and accountability for sexual and gender-based violence.
- Prohibition of female genital mutilation.
- Protection of persons with albinism.
- Nationality rights and prevention of statelessness.
- Access to justice and protection of public interest litigants.
- Child protection and accountability for child sexual abuse.



## STRATEGIC LITIGATION: DEFENDING RIGHTS THROUGH THE COURTS AND TREATY BODIES

Strategic litigation remained the core of IHRDA's work in 2025. Cases were selected not only for their potential to secure remedies for individual victims, but for their ability to clarify legal standards and influence policy reform across jurisdictions.

### CASES FILED AND ACTIVELY LITIGATED IN 2025



#### Togo

##### **Shrinking civic space, freedom of association and the right to assembly**

In *Katakou Yao Kouma v Togo (ECOWAS Court)*, the applicant challenges repeated administrative interference with peaceful assemblies and community meetings. Restrictions were imposed without written orders, judicial authorisation or lawful justification. The litigation situates these incidents within a broader pattern of civic space repression and seeks declaratory relief, guarantees of non-repetition and reform of administrative practices governing public gatherings.



#### Malawi

##### **Excessive cost orders awarded against public interest litigants**

In *IHRDA v Malawi (African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights)*, IHRDA challenges excessive and punitive cost orders imposed against public interest litigants. The application argues that such financial penalties deter strategic litigation and undermine access to justice.

The case invites the Court to clarify standards protecting those who pursue public interest litigation to safeguard human rights, the rule of law and constitutional democracy.



## Botswana

### Child protection from sexual abuse and access to justice

In **ACM (Represented by IHRDA) v Botswana (African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child)**, IHRDA challenges systemic shortcomings in child protection and access to effective remedies. The case addresses procedural safeguards, best interests determinations, and the right of children to be heard in proceedings affecting their rights. Written submissions were filed in reply to the Government of Botswana's defence, followed by an oral hearing during the 45th Ordinary Session of the ACERWC in Maseru, Lesotho.



## Rwanda

### Refusal to renew travel documents and unlawful deprivation of property

In **Buregeya Ahmed v Rwanda (African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights)**, IHRDA represents a Rwandan businessman who alleges that the authorities refused to renew his passport after its expiry in February 2018, leaving him in a precarious legal situation. The case further alleges reprisals linked to perceived political affiliations, including interference with property and harassment of associates. The application raises violations of the rights to liberty and security, freedom of movement, property, and an effective remedy.



## Sierra Leone

### Failure to hold perpetrators of child marriage to account

In **Adamsay Kabia v Sierra Leone (ECOWAS Court of Justice)**, IHRDA challenges the State's failure to investigate and prosecute those responsible for the applicant's child marriage. Married at the age of eleven, the applicant was later convicted in connection with the death of an infant belonging to another wife of her husband. Despite clear indicators that she had been a victim of child marriage, no investigation was conducted into the circumstances of the marriage and no reparations were provided. The case seeks to hold the State accountable for failing to take adequate legal and protective measures to end child marriage and safeguard the rights of the applicant.



## AMICUS INTERVENTIONS



### The Gambia

#### Constitutional challenge to female genital mutilation legislation

In **Almamy Gibba & 7 Others v Attorney General (Supreme Court of The Gambia)**, IHRDA provided legal support to the National Human Rights Commission in its amicus curiae intervention challenging the constitutionality of Sections 32A and 32B of the Women's (Amendment) Act 2015, which criminalise female genital mutilation (FGM). The petitioners argue that the provisions violate the 1997 Constitution and seek to have them struck down. The Supreme Court has affirmed its jurisdiction, an amicus brief has been filed, and the parties await hearing dates.



### Malawi

#### Gender equality and labour rights for domestic workers

In **Eliza Steven & Another v Attorney General & Others (Constitutional Court of Malawi)**, IHRDA intervened as amicus curiae together with the Initiative for Strategic Litigation in Africa, the Women Lawyers Association of Malawi and the Centre for Human Rights. The petition challenges the exclusion of domestic workers from labour protections and pension benefits, arguing that the exclusion discriminates against a workforce predominantly composed of women. The case presents an important opportunity to clarify constitutional standards on equality, labour rights and gender justice.



### Tanzania

#### Electoral justice and accountability

In **Ado Shaib & Others v Tanzania (African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights)**, IHRDA and Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights intervened as joint amici curiae. The applicants challenge the composition and conduct of the national electoral management body and the constitutional prohibition on legal challenges to presidential election results announced by the electoral commission. The amicus submissions highlight how restrictions on opposition parties and civil society actors contribute to shrinking civic space and undermine free and fair elections.

## LANDMARK DECISIONS DELIVERED IN 2025

In 2025, IHRDA secured and supported landmark decisions and concluded amicable settlement agreements that strengthened regional human rights standards and delivered recognition and reparations to victims.



### Sierra Leone

#### State responsibility for female genital mutilation and harmful practices

In **Forum Against Harmful Practices & Others v Sierra Leone (ECOWAS Court of Justice)**, the Court examined the State's failure to prevent female genital mutilation and protect girls from harmful practices. The judgment affirmed that female genital mutilation constitutes a violation of human rights and emphasised the State's due diligence obligations to prevent harmful practices, ensure legislative reform and provide effective remedies to victims. The Court ordered compensation and reforms, significantly advancing regional jurisprudence on harmful practices.



### Sierra Leone

#### Accountability for sexual violence during post-electoral violence

In **Satta Lamin Banya v Sierra Leone (ECOWAS Court of Justice)**, the Court addressed the State's failure to investigate and prosecute gang rape committed during post-electoral violence. The judgment held the State responsible for failing to ensure accountability for sexual violence and awarded compensation to the victim. The decision reinforced State obligations to investigate and prosecute sexual violence and provide effective remedies to survivors. IHRDA continues to engage in follow-up efforts related to compensation, medical care and accountability measures.



### Tanzania

#### Protection of persons with albinism from violence and discrimination

In **Centre for Human Rights & Others v Tanzania (African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights)**, the Court addressed widespread violence, discrimination and harmful practices against persons with albinism. The judgment affirmed State obligations to prevent attacks, protect persons with albinism and ensure access to justice and remedies. The Court ordered Tanzania to strengthen legal and policy

protections for persons with albinism. IHRDA continues to engage in follow-up advocacy to support implementation of the Court’s orders.

“

*For those of us who have fought this battle for years, this ruling is deeply personal. It represents hope, justice, and a commitment to real change. But a court ruling alone will not change the daily realities for persons with albinism. We must ensure that Tanzania follows through on these directives, and we must continue to advocate for stronger protections across Africa. I have a dream one day that people with albinism in Tanzania and across Africa will take their rightful place in every level of society, and that the days of discrimination will one day be a faint memory.”*

Peter Ash, Founder & CEO, Under The Same Sun



### Côte d'Ivoire

#### Accountability for sexual violence during electoral conflict

In **Dame Gbela Guelalo & Others v Côte d'Ivoire (ECOWAS Court of Justice)**, the Court examined sexual violence perpetrated during post electoral violence and the State’s failure to provide effective remedies to victims. The judgment recognised the State’s responsibility for failing to investigate and address these violations. The case continues to inform IHRDA’s advocacy on accountability for election-related sexual violence and the implementation of regional court judgments.



### South Sudan

#### Arbitrary deprivation of nationality and risk of statelessness

In **Afekuru Animu Risasi Amitai v South Sudan (African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights)**, the Commission addressed the arbitrary deprivation of nationality and denial of due process, which exposed the applicant to statelessness. The Commission found the deprivation of nationality unlawful and reinforced procedural safeguards

protecting individuals from statelessness. IHRDA continues to engage with the African Commission and relevant stakeholders to support implementation and broader advocacy on nationality rights.

“

*To be stateless is to exist in a state of constant displacement. Identity is a fundamental right, and no human being should have to endure a lifetime of fear simply to prove they exist. I am deeply grateful to IHRDA for standing by me and fighting to ensure that my dignity is restored.”*

Animu A. Risasi Amitai



### Botswana

#### Accountability and remedies for child sexual abuse

In **ACM v Botswana (African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child)**, the case addressed the State’s failure to effectively investigate and prosecute the repeated sexual abuse of a minor and to provide adequate protection and remedies for survivors. During its 45th Ordinary Session in Maseru, the African Committee facilitated negotiations that resulted in an amicable settlement. Botswana committed to prosecute the perpetrator, provide comprehensive medical and psychosocial support to the victim, and pay monetary compensation. IHRDA continues to monitor implementation to ensure full justice and rehabilitation for the survivor.



### Democratic Republic of Congo

#### State responsibility for widespread sexual violence in conflict

In **IHRDA & Others v Democratic Republic of Congo (African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights)**, the Commission addressed widespread violations committed by members of the Congolese Armed Forces during armed conflict in North Kivu. The violations included torture, severe bodily harm, destruction of

property, property, extortion, death threats and widespread sexual violence. The Commission found the State responsible for multiple violations of the African Charter and the Maputo Protocol. Importantly, it recognised the gendered nature of the violence, acknowledging that the attacks were targeted and designed to degrade women.



## Democratic Republic of Congo

### Accountability for collective rape and conflict-related sexual violence

In *Association des femmes avocates défenseurs des droits humains, IHRDA & Equality Now v Democratic Republic of Congo* (African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights), the applicants challenged the State's failure to ensure accountability and remedies for victims of collective rape committed by soldiers during a military operation in South Kivu in 2011. Although several soldiers were convicted, some later escaped or benefited from amnesty and victims were unable to effectively pursue justice. The African Commission found the Democratic Republic of Congo responsible for violations of the African Charter and the Maputo Protocol, ordering prosecution of perpetrators, reparations and medical and psychosocial support for victims, a public apology, and human rights training for security officials.

## CASE DEVELOPMENT AND INVESTIGATIONS



## Goumoukope, Togo

### Environmental Harm and Corporate Accountability

In Goumoukope, communities have endured decades of environmental degradation linked to phosphate mining. Homes have cracked from blasting, schools have deteriorated, and water sources have been contaminated. Children experience persistent respiratory and dermatological conditions, while families face displacement and loss of livelihoods.

In 2025, IHRDA conducted an in-depth on-the-ground investigation, documenting environmental damage, health impacts and regulatory failures. The evidence forms the basis of litigation before the Economic Community of West African States Court of Justice, arguing that the State failed to regulate corporate actors and protect rights to health, housing, education and a satisfactory environment.

This case reframes environmental harm as a human rights violation

with cross-border implications for extractive industries throughout West Africa. The case will be filed in 2026.



## Kabwe, Zambia

### Lead Poisoning and Children’s Rights

Kabwe remains one of the most polluted towns in the world, with widespread lead contamination affecting an estimated



**140,000**

residents.

Children bear the heaviest burden, suffering cognitive impairment, developmental delays and long-term health complications.

Working with Human Rights Watch, and the Alliance for a Lead-Free Kabwe, IHRDA’s legal team undertook a case building mission to gather evidence in preparation for litigation before the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child arguing that the State failed to prevent exposure, remediate contamination and provide adequate healthcare and support. The case will be filed in 2026.

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**95%** Kabwe, Zambia

of children have elevated blood lead levels.

This has led to:

- Cognitive impairment
- Stunted growth
- Learning difficulties
- Chronic illness
- Death

#JusticeforKabwe

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E O DESENVOLVIMENTO NA ÁFRICA

**A Public Health Crisis for Zambian Children**

Kabwe, Zambia

**One of the world’s most polluted places**

Children are exposed to lead poisoning daily

#JusticeforKabwe



## FROM JUDGMENT TO JUSTICE: ADVANCING IMPLEMENTATION ACROSS AFRICA

Implementation of decisions of regional human rights bodies has been flagged as key issue undermining the efficacy of the African human rights system. In response, IHRDA devised pointed interventions to drive enforcement of decisions. These ranged from diplomatic engagements, implementation dialogues in various countries, engagement with human rights mechanism, and advocacy.



### The Gambia

#### **Nana-Jo Ndow v. The Gambia (ECOWAS Court)**

In August 2025 in The Gambia, IHRDA engaged directly with the Office of the Attorney General and Minister of Justice, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, regarding the long-outstanding implementation of the ECOWAS Court judgment in Nana-Jo Ndow v. The Gambia, which awarded USD 100,000 in compensation for the enforced disappearance and murder of the applicant's father.

The case represents one of the many unresolved legacies of past human rights violations in the country. During IHRDA's engagement, the Government acknowledged that implementation of the judgment is long overdue and expressed willingness to develop a structured payment plan to satisfy the judgment debt. This commitment marks an important step toward restoring confidence in state accountability and reinforcing The Gambia's obligations under regional human rights mechanisms.



## Sierra Leone

### Multiple ECOWAS Court Decisions

In Sierra Leone, IHRDA worked alongside Advocaid Sierra Leone and other national partners to convene a high-level meeting on October 27 with the Attorney General to follow up on the implementation of three significant ECOWAS Court decisions: *Forum Against Harmful Practices & Others v. Sierra Leone (FGM case)*, *Mohamed Morlu v. Sierra Leone* (concerning the shooting of protesters), and *AdvocAid Limited v. Sierra Leone* (on the decriminalisation of petty offences). The engagement yielded an immediate breakthrough in the Mohamed Morlu case: Mr. Morlu, who attended the meeting in person and still carries a bullet lodged in his abdomen from the police shooting, secured a commitment from the Attorney General that the Ministry of Health would arrange urgent medical assessment and surgery to remove the bullet. Beyond individual redress, further meetings have been scheduled to develop concrete plans to support the Government in implementing the broader structural reforms ordered by the Court in the FGM and petty offences cases, including legislative amendments and policy reform. These engagements reflect a shift from abstract compliance to practical steps toward implementation.



## Mali

### AS v. Republic of Mali (ACERWC)

In Mali, IHRDA followed up with representatives of the victim in *L'Association pour le Progrès et la Défense des Droits des Femmes and IHRDA (on behalf of AS) v. Republic of Mali*, in which the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child recommended amendment of the Family Code to raise the minimum age of marriage to 18 and to ensure equal inheritance rights for girls. Despite the clarity of the Committee's recommendations, implementation remains stalled. National partners report that political and administrative resistance—largely influenced by pressure from conservative religious actors—has impeded legislative reform. Ongoing national instability has further disrupted institutional continuity and reform processes. These challenges underscore the reality that implementation is often shaped by deeply entrenched social and political dynamics. We continue to engage partners and explore strategic advocacy avenues to revive momentum toward aligning Mali's legal framework with regional child rights standards.



**Burundi**

**IHRDA v. Republic of Burundi (ACERWC)**

In Burundi, we followed up with local partners on the implementation of Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa and Another v. Republic of Burundi, a case amicably settled in late 2024 under the supervision of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. The case concerned the Government’s failure to enforce a Supreme Court order awarding property to the applicant’s mother following her parents’ separation, and the subsequent harassment by the child’s father that forced the child and her mother into exile in Kenya—disrupting her education and violating her rights to survival and development. Encouragingly, implementation has progressed significantly. The applicant and her mother have now been granted family plot No. 5/26 in Carama, including the existing small house on the property. In addition, the Government committed to constructing a new three-bedroom house with a sitting room and store in Ntahangwa commune (Bujumbura city); this house has been provided to the family, with title deeds currently being processed.



**This case demonstrates how sustained follow-up and constructive engagement can translate regional decisions into tangible improvements in the daily lives of affected children.**





## Cameroon

### **TFA v. Republic of Cameroon (ACERWC)**

In May 2018, the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child delivered its decision in *Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa & Finders Group Initiative on behalf of TFA (a minor) v. Republic of Cameroon*, concerning the rape of a 10-year-old girl in 2012 and the authorities' failure to effectively investigate, prosecute and provide redress, finding violations of Articles 1, 3 and 16 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and recommending prosecution of the perpetrator, payment of 50 million CFA (approximately USD 90,000) in compensation, legislative reform, specialised child-protection mechanisms, training of justice actors and public awareness measures. At its 46th Ordinary Session in December 2025, the Committee received updates indicating that the perpetrator had been prosecuted and sentenced in August 2023 to 12 years' imprisonment and ordered to pay 10 million CFA in damages, though full compensation to TFA remains pending; the State also reported legislative and policy initiatives addressing gender-based violence in schools and broader child-protection measures, while acknowledging delays in establishing specialised police units and courts due to financial and human resource constraints. Although TFA has reportedly received psychosocial support and assistance with school fees, significant elements of the Committee's recommendations remain outstanding, and IHRDA will continue to engage with the Committee and the State to ensure full and timely implementation.



## The Gambia

### **Muhamed Secka & Others v. The Gambia (African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights)**

In the case of *Muhamed Secka & Others v. The Gambia*, IHRDA continues to pursue justice on behalf of the displaced community of Kerr Mot Hali Village in the Upper Saloum District. Although the High Court of The Gambia ruled in 2017 that the community's land be restored to them, the judgment remains unimplemented. The Government's continued failure to comply with the domestic court order underscores the structural challenges surrounding enforcement of judicial decisions and protection of minority religious and cultural communities.

Following the filing of an application for default judgment before the African Court on 23 April 2021, IHRDA formally requested an update on the status of proceedings on 7 July 2025. The African Court responded on 21 July 2025, confirming that the matter

remains under consideration. While the passage of time has compounded the hardship faced by the displaced community, who remain unable to return to their ancestral lands, the case remains a critical test of the effectiveness of regional judicial oversight where domestic remedies have proven illusory in practice.



### IMPACT OF SAHELIAN STATES' WITHDRAWAL FROM ECOWAS ON PENDING CASES

The withdrawal of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) on 29 January 2025 has created significant uncertainty for pending cases before the ECOWAS Court of Justice. In 2025, the Court struck out a number of applications involving these States, including two cases supported by IHRDA, on the basis of their withdrawal from the Community - proceedings addressing female genital mutilation and violence against women in Mali, as well as a case concerning persecution linked to accusations of witchcraft in Burkina Faso. The decisions have raised serious concerns regarding continuity of jurisdiction, access to justice for victims and the protection of accrued rights in ongoing proceedings. IHRDA is preparing applications for review and continues to engage partners to explore legal avenues to safeguard victims' claims, underscoring the broader regional implications of geopolitical shifts on human rights accountability.

### NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION DIALOGUE IN NIGER

Since 2023 IHRDA has been piloting national implementation dialogues as a platform to bring together representatives of state, victims/litigants and their representatives, national human rights institutions, civil society and other stakeholders to engage on the thorny issue of implementation of decisions. The national implementation dialogues offer an opportunity for these national actors to deliberate and identify the challenges impeding effective implementation of decisions and to engage on how to move forward towards full

implementation. The dialogues also assisted in raising national awareness about the decisions as well as increasing the visibility of the human rights mechanisms and their mandates. Following earlier dialogues in Cameroun, Guinea, Malawi, Mali, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone in 2023 and 2024, the final national implementation dialogue was organised in Niamey in March 2025 bringing together government officials, judges, lawyers, civil society leaders, and international partners to discuss the status of implementation of two

decisions of the ECOWAS Court concerning violations relating to modern day slavery practices in Niger.



**The dialogue provided a unique platform to review the state of implementation, highlight obstacles, and explore possible solutions.**

## INTER-COUNTRY DIALOGUE ON IMPLEMENTATION

To consolidate the findings from national implementation dialogue and encourage regional exchange, IHRDA convened a two-day inter-country regional dialogue in Dakar, Senegal in May 2025. The meeting brought together over 37 participants from across Africa, including representatives from the AfCHPR, ACHPR, ECOWAS Court of Justice, and the East African Court of Justice; Government officials and focal persons; civil society actors and legal practitioners; experts, academics and representatives of NHRIs; and victims or their representatives in selected cases.

Sessions included high-level reflection, expert-led presentations, comparative learning from regional and sub-regional mechanisms.

Proceedings from the Dakar event provided deeper insights into the structural, political, legal and institutional barriers to implementation, as well as emerging good practices and innovative models from across the continent. The finding will be published in a report in 2026.





## **ADVOCACY: INFLUENCING POLICY, ACCOUNTABILITY AND INSTITUTIONAL REFORM**

Litigation alone cannot transform systems. In 2025, IHRDA deepened its advocacy engagement before regional human rights bodies and national institutions to strengthen accountability, address systemic violations, and improve the effectiveness of African human rights mechanisms.

Through formal statements, side events, working group participation, coalition-building and engagement with duty bearers, IHRDA positioned itself as both a watchdog and a constructive institutional partner.

### **ENGAGEMENT AT THE ORDINARY SESSIONS OF REGIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS BODIES:**

#### **83RD ORDINARY SESSION OF THE AFRICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES' RIGHTS - MAY**

Held in Banjul, Gambia. In a joint statement with Centre de Documentation et de Formation sur les Droits de l'Homme, IHRDA raised alarm over discriminatory cybersecurity laws in Togo, shrinking civic space in Tanzania and Zimbabwe, high prevalence of female genital mutilation in Liberia, and grave violations in conflict-affected regions of Sudan and Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. The statement commended the Commission's fact-finding efforts, particularly its mission to Sudan, while urging intensified engagement with States to repeal restrictive laws.

The intervention reinforced the need for proactive oversight and stronger follow-up to documented abuses.



**We urge the Commission  
to intensify engagements with  
State Parties to reform or repeal  
laws that undermine the  
enjoyment of fundamental  
rights and freedoms.**

## 85TH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE AFRICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES' RIGHTS - OCTOBER

At this session, IHRDA delivered a comprehensive intervention addressing armed conflict, environmental destruction, civic repression and institutional accountability.

The statement highlighted the Commission's own findings from its Virtual Joint Fact-Finding Mission on Sudan, which documented indiscriminate attacks, ethnically motivated atrocities and conflict-related sexual violence. It further addressed mass displacement and food insecurity in the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, violent dispersal of protests in Togo, and severe environmental degradation linked to mining in Ghana, Democratic Republic of Congo and Zambia.

The statement also welcomed the Joint Complementarity Retreat between the African Commission and the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights and the adoption of Guidelines on Submission and Transfer of Cases, while raising concern over State non-compliance with decisions.

The intervention positioned implementation as central to the credibility of the regional system.



Musa Delivering Statement at 85th OS ACHPR

advancing the implementation of decisions of the African Commission. The discussion, convened by the Implementation Working Group, brought together Commissioners, State representatives, national human rights institutions and civil society actors to examine persistent barriers to implementation and identify practical strategies to strengthen follow-up, coordination and accountability. IHRDA contributed perspectives from its litigation and implementation work, emphasising the need for stronger communication channels between stakeholders and more systematic approaches to tracking compliance with the Commission's decisions.

IHRDA also contributed to a range of side engagements, including a panel discussion on women in South Sudan convened by the Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (SIWHA), and the United Against Torture Consortium meeting hosted by REDRESS.

**“Strengthening compliance is not merely an administrative task; it is an opportunity to reinforce the authority of the Commission, consolidate the rule of law, and ensure that the rights guaranteed under the African Charter are given full and practical effect.”**



85th Ordinary Session ACHPR

In addition to its formal statement, IHRDA actively contributed to dialogue at the session through participation in a high-level panel on

## NETWORKING RECEPTION ON THE MARGINS OF THE SESSION

On 23 October 2025, IHRDA hosted its Annual Networking Reception on the margins of the 85th Ordinary Session.

Bringing together partners, advocates, Commissioners, State representatives, and members of the human rights community, the reception created a warm and dynamic space for meaningful exchange beyond the formal sessions.

This annual gathering provides an opportunity to reconnect with long-standing partners, welcome new allies, and reflect on the collective journey toward justice, accountability, and stronger protection of rights across the continent. More than a networking event, it served as a reaffirmation of our shared purpose: to strengthen the African human rights system and ensure it delivers real impact for individuals and communities.



## 45TH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE AFRICAN COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON THE RIGHTS AND WELFARE OF THE CHILD - APRIL

IHRDA's statement focused on the devastating impact of armed conflict on children in Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The intervention detailed sexual violence, recruitment of child soldiers, large-scale displacement, family separation, denial of humanitarian access, and increasing abductions.

Particular emphasis was placed on accountability gaps and the Committee's moral and legal obligation to act decisively.

The statement urged condemnation of atrocities, intensified mediation efforts, accountability for perpetrators, and unrestricted humanitarian access.



**This Committee has a moral and legal duty to act decisively and urgently.**

The session also saw progress in *ACM v. Botswana*, where a proposal was made for an amicable settlement. The settlement was reached at the 46th Ordinary Session reached under the auspices of the Committee. The



Micheal at the 45th Session of the ACERWC

agreement includes commitments to prosecution, financial compensation, and provision of medical and psychosocial support, alongside broader measures to strengthen national responses to child sexual abuse.

These developments underscore the tangible impact of strategic litigation before the Committee, particularly in securing accountability—while highlighting the continued need for sustained follow-up to ensure that justice is fully realised for child victims.

## 46TH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE AFRICAN COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON THE RIGHTS AND WELFARE OF THE CHILD – OCTOBER/NOVEMBER

At the 46th session, marking the 35th anniversary of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, IHRDA addressed child protection in armed conflict, mass abductions in Nigeria, the ongoing lead poisoning crisis in Kabwe, Zambia, and the persistence of female genital mutilation across the continent.

The statement linked ongoing litigation before the ECOWAS Court to broader regional reform

efforts and called for stronger follow-up on implementation gaps identified in the Committee's own study.

The intervention reinforced the inter-connection between child protection, environmental justice and accountability.

The IHRDA delegation to the session included Dr. Musa Kika (Executive Director), Michael Gyan

Nyarko (Deputy Executive Director), Abdulmalik Bello (Legal Officer), Maimouna Jallow (Communication and Publications Manager), and Louisa Ntaji (Advocacy Fellow), reflecting a strong and multidisciplinary presence across litigation, advocacy, and communications.



**Africa's development trajectory must not be built at the expense of its children.**

## BROADER ENGAGEMENT ACROSS THE SESSION

Beyond its formal statement, IHRDA maintained a strong and dynamic presence throughout both the CSO Forum (23–25 November) and the Ordinary Session of the Committee. The team actively contributed to key discussions shaping the children's rights agenda on the continent, including participation in panels on the Committee's jurisprudence and engagement with stakeholders on child rights and business.

IHRDA also engaged in high-level dialogues with African Union mechanisms, Regional Economic Communities, State Parties, and private sector actors, strengthening partnerships and advancing advocacy on accountability and child protection.

A central pillar of IHRDA's engagement was implementation follow-up. The team participated in dedicated forums and technical workshops on the implementation of the African Children's Charter and the Committee's decisions, including engagements with National Human Rights Institutions and civil society actors. These discussions reinforced the urgent need for more systematic follow-up and stronger coordination to ensure that decisions translate into real change for children.

IHRDA further contributed to the Child Rights Symposium commemorating the 35th anniversary of the Charter, as well as broader dialogues on State reporting and compliance, positioning implementation as a critical priority for the effectiveness of the system.



## HEARING BEFORE THE COMMITTEE: IHRDA & ANOTHER V. GHANA

A key highlight of the session was IHRDA's participation in the hearing of **Communication No. 0019/Com/001/2022, IHRDA & Another v. Ghana, with Dr. Musa Kika, Michael Gyan Nyarko, and Abdulmalik Bello** representing the organisation before the Committee.

The case concerns violations of the rights to education and non-discrimination affecting schoolgirls in communities along the River Offin in Ghana, where discriminatory customary practices prevent girls from crossing the river at certain times, causing them to miss significant periods of schooling.

During the session, the Government of Ghana requested a further extension to pursue an amicable settlement. While IHRDA agreed in

good faith, it raised strong concerns about the repeated delays and the ongoing harm to affected children. The applicants urged the Committee to proceed to a decision on the merits should no settlement be reached within the extended timeframe, emphasising the urgency of securing redress.

The Committee granted a final extension, underscoring that the best interests of the children must remain central and indicating that it would consider proceeding without a full hearing if delays persist. The case remains a critical opportunity to address structural barriers to girls' education and to clarify State obligations to eliminate discriminatory practices affecting children.

## KEY DECISIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION DEVELOPMENTS

The 46th session marked significant progress in several IHRDA-supported cases before the Committee, including **major advances in criminal accountability for child sexual violence**.

In **IHRDA & APDF on behalf of AS v. Mali**, the Government reported that the perpetrator has been **successfully prosecuted and sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment**—a critical step toward justice following years of inaction. While this represents meaningful progress, key elements of the Committee's decision remain outstanding, including compensation and full access to medical and psychosocial support for the victim.

Similarly, in **IHRDA & Finders Group Initiative on behalf of TFA v. Cameroon**, the perpetrator has now been **prosecuted and sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment**, marking a significant breakthrough in a case that had long been stalled. However, delays in compensation and incomplete structural reforms continue to limit full redress for the victim.





## STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS

In 2025, IHRDA deepened long-standing collaborations and expanded new alliances to strengthen the African human rights system and amplify impact for children, women and vulnerable communities.

### STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF AFRICAN HUMAN RIGHTS BODIES

#### AFRICAN COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON THE RIGHTS AND WELFARE OF THE CHILD

##### **African Children's Charter Project (ACCP3)**

The African Children's Charter Project remains one of IHRDA's longest-standing and most strategic partnerships.

Conceptualised in 2010 by a consortium of five child-focused organisations — Plan International, Save the Children Sweden, the Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa, the Dullah Omar Institute for Constitutional Law, Governance and Human Rights, and the African Child Policy Forum — the Project was designed to advance children's rights within the framework of the African Union by promoting implementation of the African Charter on the Rights and

Welfare of the Child. Now in its third phase, the partnership continued to deliver concrete institutional support in 2025.

##### **Institutional Secondment Support**

IHRDA recruited and seconded two additional staff members to support the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child:

- One supporting the Working Group on Children's Rights and Climate Change.
- One serving as Media and Communication Officer.

These secondments, bringing up the total to five seconded staff, strengthened the Committee's technical capacity, particularly

in emerging thematic areas such as climate justice and children’s environmental rights. Enhanced communications support also improved the visibility, accessibility and public understanding of the Committee’s work.

### Support to Working Groups

The ACCP project facilitated the participation of eight external experts in meetings of three Working Groups of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child during its 44th Ordinary Session:

- Working Group on Child Rights and Business.
- Working Group on Children with Disabilities.
- Working Group on Implementation of Decisions.

By strengthening expert participation, the partnership contributed to improving the quality, coherence and follow-up of the

Committee’s substantive work.

Through ACCP3, IHRDA continues to play a quiet but decisive role in reinforcing one of Africa’s most important child rights institutions.

### Strategic Planning Engagement

In 2025, IHRDA contributed to the strategic planning retreat of the African Committee in Maseru, Lesotho. Through technical input and institutional dialogue, IHRDA supported the development of the Committee’s strategic plan, offering insights grounded in years of litigation and implementation experience.

This engagement reinforced IHRDA’s role not only as a litigant before the Committee, but also as a constructive partner committed to strengthening its long-term vision, efficiency and impact.

## AFRICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES’ RIGHTS

IHRDA continued to support the work of the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights through the secondment of five Senior Fellows to the Commission’s Secretariat. Under a partnership supported by the Open Society Foundation, the fellows were deployed for 18-month placements, providing support in key areas including communications drafting and implementation of decisions, special mechanisms, programme coordination, legal and administrative support to the Secretariat, and registry functions. In addition, an intern supported the Chair of the Commission in her role as Focal Point on Human Rights Defenders and reprisals in Africa, helping strengthen the Commission’s capacity to carry out its mandate.

IHRDA also supported the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights in the

implementation of the Sudan Virtual Fact-Finding Mission, established pursuant to African Union Peace and Security Council mandates to investigate serious human rights and humanitarian law violations arising from the conflict in Sudan. Acting as fiscal host and providing 13 technical assistants, IHRDA supported the Commission’s investigation, which documented patterns of killings, sexual violence, arbitrary detention and other grave abuses through virtual evidence collection and testimony from victims and witnesses.

The Mission produced a comprehensive investigative report adopted by the Commission and transmitted to the AU Peace and Security Council, contributing to continental policy responses on accountability, civilian protection and transitional justice in Sudan.

## LITIGANTS' GROUP

IHRDA continues to coordinate the Litigants' Group, a platform dedicated to strengthening the protective mandate of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights.

The Group advocates for:

- Greater transparency in communications procedures.
- Timely finalisation of cases.
- Consistency in jurisprudence.
- Improved engagement with the Commission's Secretariat.
- Clearer functioning of the Working Group on Communications.

Over the past decade, litigants have identified systemic challenges including procedural delays, limited access to information, and inconsistent jurisprudence. The Litigants' Group works to resolve structural, technical and interpretational barriers that undermine the Commission's effectiveness.



IHRDA also actively participated in working groups and coalitions addressing implementation and African Union institutional reforms. The organisation supported development of a joint civil society position on reforms affecting African human rights mechanisms.

## COALITION FOR AN EFFECTIVE AFRICAN COURT ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES' RIGHTS (AFRICAN COURT COALITION)

Between 29 January – 7 February, an IHRDA delegation made up of the Executive Director – Dr. Musa Kika, Deputy Executive Director – Michael Gyan Nyarko and Legal Officer – Dr. Chipo Irene Rushwaya, participated in the inaugural Stakeholders' Platform convened on



the margins of the opening of the judicial year of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights. The Coalition provides a space to examine ways to strengthen the Court's effectiveness, accessibility and compliance environment.

Engagement included dialogue on improving cooperation between the African Court and the African Commission, enhancing awareness of the Court's jurisdiction, and responding to withdrawals from the Article 34 (6) declaration.

IHRDA's management team took this opportunity to organise courtesy visits to local partners, including the Pan-African Lawyers Union (PALU), the East African Law Society (EALS), the East African Court of Justice and the African Court with a view to strengthening collaboration.

## EAST AFRICAN COURT OF JUSTICE ENGAGEMENT

From February 18-19 2025, IHRDA had its inaugural participation in the Third Annual East African Court of Justice Judicial Conference held in Kigali, Rwanda. The conference examined the evolving jurisprudence of the Court and its role in strengthening rule of law within the East African Community.

During this engagement, discussions were initiated toward negotiating a Memorandum of Understanding between IHRDA and the East African Court of Justice. IHRDA's Executive Director introduced the organisation's litigation and capacity-building work to judicial and civil society stakeholders. Further, opportunities were explored for strategic litigation and knowledge exchange within the East African sub-region.

This engagement signals IHRDA's expanding geographic footprint and commitment to cross-regional accountability mechanisms.



## PAN-AFRICAN LAWYERS UNION ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The Executive Director, Dr. Musa Kika, and Deputy Executive Director, Michael Gyan Nyarko, represented IHRDA at the Annual Conference of the Pan-African Lawyers Union in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire from 25- 27 June.

The annual conference convenes jurists, academics, civil society actors and policy makers to examine emerging legal challenges across the continent, including rule of law erosion, shrinking civic space and the role of regional courts.

During the conference IHRDA representatives participated in expert consultations on proposed requests for advisory opinion to be submitted to the African Court concerning violence against women and girls and the rights of persons with disabilities.

IHRDA representatives also participated in panel discussions on the rights of persons with disabilities, food security and the implementation of decisions of regional human rights bodies.

The gathering provided an important platform to strengthen collaboration between litigation organisations and build solidarity across sub-regions.

During this conference, an important declaration was adopted, *the Abidjan Declarations on the Role of lawyers and Bar Associations in Implementation of Decisions on Human Rights Mechanisms in Africa*. IHRDA is participating in the Steering Committee established to drive implementation of the declaration.



**Spaces like the Pan-African Lawyers Union remind us that strategic litigation does not happen in isolation. It is part of a continental movement to defend rule of law, strengthen institutions, and ensure that justice systems serve the people they were designed to protect.**

Dr. Musa Kika, Executive Director, IHRDA

## LITIGATION LEARNING LAB (L3)

In October 2025, IHRDA's Deputy Executive Director, Michael Gyan Nyarko, participated in the Litigation Learning Lab (L3) in São Paulo, Brazil, a collaboration space for lawyers involved in strategic human rights litigation. Organized by Conectas Direitos Humanos (Brazil), Open Society Justice Initiative, Forum Asia, and Pan-African Lawyers Union, the L3 aims to strengthen the community of litigators, promote the exchange of ideas, and generate opportunities for transnational collaboration. The convening provided a forum to engage legal practitioners from across the world to engage on jurisprudence, accountability mechanisms and strategic litigation and political trends that impact human rights, rule of law and democratic governance as well as how litigation may be strategically deployed to counter these trends.

These engagements reflect IHRDA's expanding geographic footprint and commitment to cross-regional collaboration.

## INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERSHIP ON NATIONALITY AND DOCUMENTATION REFORM – THE GAMBIA

In The Gambia, IHRDA engaged closely with the National Human Rights Commission to address longstanding documentation and nationality challenges affecting residents of Ghana Town. This engagement was informed by a field mission to Ghana Town on 13 June 2025, led by Michael Gyan Nyarko (Deputy Executive Director) and Maria Saine (Advocacy Officer), and supported by Ronan van Rooij (Legal Intern), Jeff Barker (Legal Intern), and Annie McGovern (Legal Intern), which provided critical insight into the lived realities of communities at risk of statelessness.

Building on this, IHRDA developed a legal opinion analysing gaps in the nationality and documentation framework and their impact on affected communities. This work forms part of IHRDA's broader strategic litigation and advocacy on nationality and statelessness before regional human rights mechanisms, reinforcing the link between institutional reform and the protection of fundamental rights.

Looking ahead, the legal opinion will be used as a basis for targeted engagement with key government institutions—including the Immigration Department, Ministry of Interior, and The Gambia Commission for Refugees—with the aim of advancing concrete administrative and legal reforms to rectify the situation.

## STRENGTHENING COOPERATION WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF THE GAMBIA

On 13 August 2025 an IHRDA delegation, led by the Executive Director Dr. Musa Kika, Director of Finance and Administration Amie Njie, and Legal Officer Abdulmalik Bello met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Gambians Abroad Honourable Sering Modou Njie and the Permanent Secretary and Head of



**In 2025, partnerships served three strategic functions:**

# 1

### **Institutional Strengthening**

Supporting the operational and strategic capacity of regional human rights mechanisms.

# 2

### **Movement Building**

Connecting litigators, scholars and advocates across sub-regions.

# 3

### **Leadership Development**

Investing in the next generation of human rights lawyers, particularly women leaders.



Diplomatic Service Ambassador Lang Yabou, to discuss mutual cooperation between IHRDA and the Government of The Gambia. IHRDA holds diplomatic status in The Gambia under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and closely cooperates with the Ministry in its programming and operations.

Since 1998 IHRDA has actively cooperated with the Government in training and capacity building, technical support in legislative, judicial and other legal processes, and in supporting redress for victims of human rights violations. IHRDA took the occasion to congratulate the Minister on his recent appointment to the Ministry, and to renew its commitment to support The Gambian government in advancing human rights for all.

## WAGING JUSTICE FOR WOMEN FELLOWSHIP

In 2025, Awa Gai was selected as a Fellow of the Clooney Foundation for Justice's Waging Justice for Women Fellowship, a prestigious initiative supporting early-career African women lawyers advancing justice for women and girls.

During her year with IHRDA's legal team, Awa contributed to strategic litigation before the ECOWAS Court, including oral advocacy in child marriage and FGM cases, supported evidence-gathering for the Kabwe lead poisoning case, and led capacity-building and advocacy initiatives on women's and girls' rights across The Gambia and the region.

Awa specialises in women's rights and gender equality. She founded She Awards Gambia, the country's first and largest women's awards platform, celebrating women leaders and inspiring young girls. She previously supported The Gambia's transitional justice process with Democracy International and holds a Master of Laws in Human Rights and Democratisation in Africa from the University of Pretoria.

Awa's selection reflects both her individual excellence and IHRDA's broader commitment to gender justice.



## CAPACITY BUILDING: STRENGTHENING ACTORS AND INSTITUTIONS

Capacity building remained central to sustaining long-term impact in 2025. While strategic litigation delivers precedents and remedies, durable change depends on strengthening the capacity of lawyers, journalists, civil society organisations and emerging leaders to understand, utilise and defend human rights frameworks at national

and regional levels.

Throughout the year, IHRDA delivered targeted training and workshops designed not only to transfer knowledge, but to build networks, develop litigation pipelines and reinforce institutional resilience across the continent.

### STRATEGIC LITIGATION ON TORTURE AND PROTEST-RELATED REPRESSION – TOGO

Against the backdrop of continued repression of civic space in Togo—where state officials have used excessive force, torture and inhuman treatment against protesters and dissenting voices—IHRDA, in partnership with the **Centre de Documentation et de Formation sur les Droits de l’Homme (CDFDH)** and with support from REDRESS, convened a specialised workshop for Togolese lawyers and civil society organisations from 13–15 August 2025 in Lomé.

Led by Dr. Gilbert Hagabimana (Legal Officer, IHRDA), the training focused on strengthening

national and regional strategic litigation of torture-related cases. It culminated in the development of concrete litigation plans for specific cases involving protesters detained in various cells across Togo.

Beyond technical skills, the workshop strengthened collaboration, solidarity and coordinated response strategies among participants—laying the groundwork for sustained strategic litigation against torture and protest-related repression.

## REGIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING AND CASE IDENTIFICATION WORKSHOP ON CHILD RIGHTS AND BUSINESS – ZAMBIA

As business activities expand across Africa, particularly in extractive industries, agriculture and manufacturing—children often bear the hidden costs of economic growth. Recognising this, from 27–29 August 2025, IHRDA convened a sub-regional capacity-building and case identification workshop in Lusaka, Zambia, bringing together civil society organisations from ten Anglophone African countries: **Nigeria, Malawi, Zambia, Uganda, Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania, Ghana, Lesotho, and Zimbabwe.**

The workshop aimed to raise awareness of the harmful impacts of business activities on children and to galvanise coordinated action toward corporate accountability and stronger State oversight. Participants explored how

environmental degradation, unsafe labour practices, land dispossession and inadequate regulatory frameworks disproportionately affect children’s health, education and development.

A central component of the workshop focused on case identification and ripeness for litigation. Participants identified harmful business practices within their respective countries that could benefit from strategic intervention. By the end of the workshop, a pipeline of potential cases had been mapped, reinforcing IHRDA’s broader strategy of expanding child rights jurisprudence in the context of business and economic activity.



## TRAINING OF GAMBIAN JOURNALISTS ON CHILD RIGHTS AND ETHICAL REPORTING

Despite the growth of media platforms in The Gambia, reporting on child rights issues has often remained superficial and, at times, sensationalised. In the context of the country’s democratic transition and renewed commitment to human rights, IHRDA partnered with UNICEF The Gambia and the Gambia Press Union to strengthen journalists’ capacity for ethical and child-sensitive reporting.



Held on 10–11 October 2025 in Banjul, the training brought together over **20 journalists, editors, and media practitioners**

from across the country, including senior reporters covering courts, human rights, and social justice.

The IHRDA team involved Michael Gyan Nyarko (Deputy Executive Director), Awa Gai (Legal Fellow), Maimouna Jallow (Communications and Publications Manager), and Raghda ElShaloudy (Communications and Publications Officer), who led sessions on legal frameworks, ethical reporting, and practical storytelling.

By equipping media professionals with stronger legal literacy and ethical tools, the training positioned journalism not merely as a reporting function, but as an advocacy instrument capable of advancing children’s rights and influencing policy discourse.



**The training was practical, impactful, and immediately applicable, serving as a valuable guide for ethical, child-sensitive reporting. We are grateful for the opportunity and suggest regular sessions to maintain and strengthen these ethical practices in our professional work.**

Biran Gaye, News Editor, Foroyaa Newspaper

## JUSTICE IN ACTION: ENGAGING YOUNG WOMEN IN PUBLIC INTEREST LAW

As part of the Waging Justice for Women Fellowship in partnership with the Clooney Foundation for Justice, IHRDA launched the Justice in Action initiative to empower young women pursuing legal careers.

The initiative engaged **thirty female law students** from the University of The Gambia and the International Open University in a series of interactive sessions held at the IHRDA offices between 20–21 August, focused on women’s rights, legal advocacy and public interest litigation.

Participants were introduced to international and regional legal frameworks protecting women’s rights and examined how strategic litigation can address gender-based discrimination and violence.

Beyond knowledge-sharing, the initiative aimed to cultivate role models and inspire long-term engagement in public interest law. By showcasing viable career pathways and creating space for mentorship, Justice in Action sought to strengthen the pipeline of future women human rights lawyers in The Gambia.



## TRAINING ON WEST AFRICAN LAWYERS ON LITIGATING STATELESSNESS AND FORCED DISPLACEMENT BEFORE REGIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS

In October 2025, IHRDA in partnership with the United National High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) led a training of about 50 lawyers from various West African countries on using the ECOWAS and African regional human rights mechanisms to litigate statelessness and forced displacement. This virtual training was part of a process to set up a pro bono roster of lawyers who will work with IHRDA and the UNHCR to litigate these cases.



## TRAINING OF THE GAMBIA BAR ASSOCIATION ON REGIONAL LITIGATION



In November 2025, IHRDA conducted a specialised training for

### 25 Members of the Gambia Bar Association

on litigating before the Economic Community of West African States Court of Justice and African Union human rights mechanisms.

Although The Gambia has demonstrated growing commitment to human rights, challenges remain in effectively utilising regional and international accountability mechanisms. The training addressed this gap by equipping legal practitioners with practical tools to navigate jurisdictional requirements, admissibility criteria, procedural rules and enforcement strategies.



**This training has dismantled the myth that approaching the ECOWAS Court or AU protective mechanisms is such an arduous process. I now cannot wait to start to file cases on behalf of victims of human rights violations.**

Abdoulie Fattu, Secretary General, Gambia Bar Association

## STRENGTHENING STRATEGIC LITIGATION FOR CHILDREN’S RIGHTS IN AFRICA

Despite the progressive normative framework of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, litigation before the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child remains underutilised, particularly in emerging areas such as girls’ rights.

In November 2025, the Centre for Human Rights at the University of Pretoria, in partnership with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), convened a regional capacity-building workshop in Nairobi to address this gap. The workshop brought together non-governmental organisations and

lawyers from across Africa committed to advancing children’s rights.

On behalf of IHRDA, Legal Officer Abdulmalik Bello facilitated a session on the role of civil society organisations in advancing children’s rights through litigation, drawing on practical experience to illustrate strategic engagement before the Committee. He also co-facilitated interactive sessions on case identification, ripeness for litigation, procedural strategy and ethical considerations in child rights cases.

The engagement reinforced IHRDA’s continental leadership in child rights litigation and capacity development.



**This kind of convening is critical, not only for building technical skills, but for ensuring that children’s rights litigation before the African Committee becomes deliberate, collaborative, and impactful rather than sporadic and isolated.**

Abdulmalik Bello, Legal Officer, IHRDA

## STRENGTHENING WOMEN’S ACCESS TO REGIONAL JUSTICE

As part of its ongoing capacity-building efforts, IHRDA contributed to the Conference on Enhancing Women’s Engagement with the African Court’s Procedures, held in Arusha from 3–4 September 2025. During the conference, Michael Gyan Nyarko delivered a panel presentation on litigating women’s rights within the African human rights system, drawing on IHRDA’s experience in strategic litigation before regional mechanisms. The session explored practical pathways to strengthen women’s access to justice, highlighting both the opportunities and persistent barriers within the system, and underscored the role of litigation



as a tool for advancing gender equality and accountability across the continent.

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## STRENGTHENING THE AFRICAN COMMISSION'S COMMUNICATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION WORK

On 26–27 June 2025, IHRDA's Dr. Chipó Irene Rushwaya co-moderated a two-day strategic training workshop organised by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights in Banjul, The Gambia, focused on the Communications Procedure and the implementation of decisions.

The workshop brought together Secretariat staff and key stakeholders, creating a valuable space for reflection, peer learning, and practical exchange on strengthening the effectiveness of the Commission.

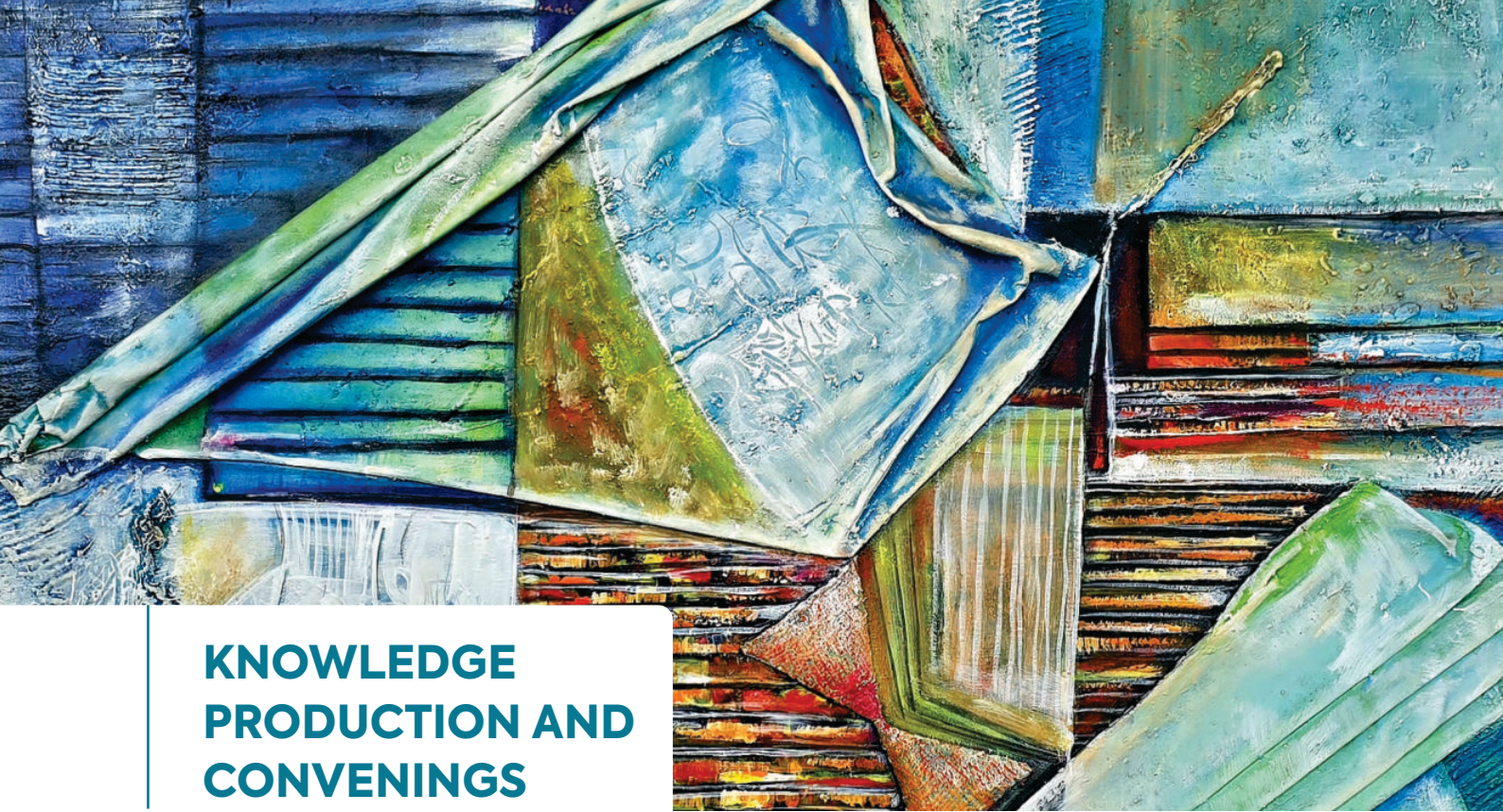
Participants engaged with leading experts, including Prof Frans Viljoen, Prof Rachel Murray, Ms Marisol Blanchard and Mr Ibrahima Kane, exploring key issues such as drafting practices, reparations, bottlenecks in implementation, and knowledge management systems.

The training also led to concrete outcomes, including revised timelines and templates under the Communications Procedure, and strengthened institutional capacity within the Secretariat.



**This workshop was an important opportunity to reflect not just on how the Communications Procedure works, but on how we ensure that decisions translate into real impact for victims across the continent.**

Dr Chipó Irene Rushwaya

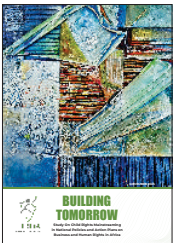


## KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION AND CONVENINGS

In 2025, IHRDA deepened its role not only as a litigation leader, but as a knowledge institution shaping continental discourse on emerging human rights challenges.

At the centre of this work was the landmark publication:

### **BUILDING TOMORROW: Study on child rights mainstreaming in National policies and action plans on Business and human rights in africa**



Across Africa, the intersection between business activity and the rights and welfare of children has become one of the defining human rights challenges of our time. As economies expand — driven by extractive industries, infrastructure development, digital innovation and global trade — millions of children are profoundly affected by corporate conduct and the policies that regulate it.

Business has immense potential to advance children’s well-being through decent work for caregivers, child-sensitive products and responsible community investments. Yet harmful business practices continue to expose children to hazardous labour, environmental degradation, displacement, exploitation and digital harms.

Children make up nearly half of Africa’s population, yet their unique vulnerabilities and evolving capacities remain insufficiently recognised within business and human rights frameworks. This gap represents more than policy oversight, it reflects a structural exclusion that undermines inclusive and sustainable development.

In this context, IHRDA developed a comprehensive evidence-based study assessing how children’s rights are integrated or neglected, within National Action Plans (NAPs) on Business and Human Rights across Africa.

The findings reveal a clear and urgent reality: while African States have ratified the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the UN Convention on the Rights of the

Child, and committed to the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, the mainstreaming of these commitments into business regulation remains uneven and incomplete.

Children remain largely invisible in policy discourse. Enforcement mechanisms are often weak. Corporate accountability remains limited.



## CONTINENTAL CONFERENCE ON CHILD RIGHTS AND BUSINESS

The study was launched on 20 November during a regional conference held on the sidelines of the 47th Session of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child in Maseru, Lesotho. The convening brought together policymakers, civil society actors, legal practitioners and child rights advocates to discuss mainstreaming children’s rights into business regulation.

The conference created a rare platform for dialogue between governments, experts and regional actors on ensuring that economic growth does not come at the expense of children’s dignity, health, education and future. The launch marked a strategic shift: moving child rights and business from a niche concern to a continental governance priority.

The event was attended by leading regional experts and stakeholders, including Prof. Julia Sloth-Nielsen, member of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child; Hon. Joseph Sunday Sinnah, Member of the Working Group on Business and Children’s Rights; and Dr Shimelis Tsegaye Tesemma, Director of Programmes and External Expert to the Working Group on Business and Children’s Rights. Other notable participants included Dr Chairman Macaulay Okoloise and Prof. Uchenna Emelonye, alongside representatives from national human rights institutions and civil society organisations across the continent.

The IHRDA delegation included:

- Dr. Musa Kika – Executive Director,
- Michael Gyan Nyarko – Deputy Executive Director,
- AbdulMalik Bello – Legal Officer,
- Maimouna Jallow – Communication and Publications Officer
- Louisa Ntaji – Advocacy Fellow.



### Conference and Study - Media & Visibility Impact 2025

#### Global Amplification:

Featured on **BBC Newsday**, **RFI**, and **SABC – Channel Africa**.

#### Regional Dominance:

Sustained coverage in Lesotho via **Lesotho Tribune**, **The Reporter**, **LENA**, and **Africa Press**.

#### Digital Footprint:

Strong cross-platform engagement across **LinkedIn**, **X (Twitter)**, and **Facebook**.

#### Strategic Goal:

Moving child rights recommendations from “abstract commentary” into **domestic policy discussions**.



# BUILDING SYSTEMS FOR SUSTAINABLE IMPACT

*From Vision to Structure*

## Consolidating Change

If 2024 marked leadership transition, 2025 marked consolidation.

Following the appointment of the new Executive Director, Dr. Musa Kika, and Deputy Executive Director, Michael Gyan Nyarko, in 2024, IHRDA entered a deliberate phase of institutional strengthening. As the organisation’s programmatic footprint expanded and its influence within the African human rights

system deepened, it became imperative to embed stronger governance frameworks, risk management systems and forward-looking strategies.

Throughout 2025, IHRDA developed, adopted and operationalised a suite of policy frameworks and strategic documents designed to strengthen transparency, sustainability, accountability and long-term institutional resilience.



## GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONAL POLICIES

### Procurement Policy

In 2025, IHRDA adopted a comprehensive Procurement Policy and Procedures framework to ensure transparent, efficient and cost-effective procurement of goods and services.

The policy establishes clear standards to mitigate risks, promote value for money and embed accountability in all procurement processes. It aligns the Institute with best practices in monitoring, sustainability and financial stewardship, reinforcing donor confidence and strengthening internal controls. By formalising procurement procedures, IHRDA

enhances operational efficiency while safeguarding institutional integrity.

### IT and Information Security Policy

Recognising the growing importance of digital security within human rights work, IHRDA adopted a robust IT and Information Security Policy in 2025.

The policy establishes a framework for managing risks and protecting the organisation’s people and information resources from internal and external threats, whether intentional or accidental. It sets out

security requirements to safeguard the integrity, confidentiality, availability and authenticity of IHRDA's data, systems and networks.

Beyond technical compliance, the policy empowers staff to understand digital risks, make informed decisions about information security and know where to seek guidance. In a context where human rights organisations face

increasing cyber threats, this policy strengthens organisational resilience.

### Digitalisation

To institutionalise memory, improve knowledge management, and enhance systems efficiency, IHRDA adopted a new accounting software system, migrated to a new centralized file management system, and revamped its digital communications system.

## MONITORING, ACCOUNTABILITY AND IMPACT

### Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) Framework

In 2025, IHRDA adopted a comprehensive MEAL Framework grounded in a results-based approach.

The framework marks a shift from activity-focused reporting to results-focused impact measurement. It provides structured processes, tools and templates to collect, analyse and disseminate data that measure achievements,

identify unintended outcomes and assess long-term impact on vulnerable communities and regional institutions.

By embedding accountability and learning into its operations, IHRDA enhances evidence-based decision-making, strengthens donor reporting and ensures continuous institutional improvement.

## STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR GROWTH AND SUSTAINABILITY

### Litigation Strategy and Standards

Recognising litigation as a central pillar of its legal advocacy, IHRDA adopted a comprehensive Litigation Strategy and Standards framework in 2025.

The Strategy positions litigation not as an isolated legal intervention, but as a deliberate and phased process aimed at achieving systemic change. It establishes clear criteria for case selection, prioritising matters with the potential to advance human rights norms, address structural violations, and strengthen accountability across the continent. Emphasis is placed on quality over quantity, ensuring that each case contributes meaningfully to jurisprudential development and social impact.



It further introduces structured approaches to case management, partnership-building, risk assessment and post-judgment implementation, reinforcing IHRDA’s commitment to strategic impact litigation. By integrating litigation with advocacy, communications and implementation efforts, the Strategy ensures that legal victories translate into tangible outcomes for affected individuals and communities.

**Communication and Publications Strategy (2026–2029)**

Recognising that influence depends not only on litigation success but also on narrative power, IHRDA developed a Communication and Publications Strategy for 2026–2029.

The Strategy positions communication as a core pillar of institutional impact rather than a supporting function. Through clear messaging, consistent knowledge production and human-centred storytelling, IHRDA aims to strengthen its visibility, credibility and authority within the African human rights ecosystem and beyond.

The Strategy establishes structured approaches to publications, digital platforms, media engagement and documentation — ensuring that the Institute’s jurisprudential contributions and advocacy efforts reach policymakers, practitioners and affected communities.



**Fundraising and Grants Management Strategy**

The global funding landscape for human rights organisations continues to contract, driven by declining Official Development Assistance, shifting geopolitical priorities and increased competition for limited resources.

In response, IHRDA adopted a forward-looking Fundraising and Grants Management Strategy in 2025. The Strategy acknowledges the challenges facing organisations working in niche areas such as strategic litigation, where long-term sustainability is often undermined by short-term funding cycles.

It establishes a comprehensive framework for resource mobilisation — including both conventional and innovative funding models — while strengthening grant management systems to ensure accountability, efficiency and strong donor relationships.

By proactively adapting to a changing funding environment, IHRDA positions itself to remain financially resilient while meeting growing demand for its services across the continent.

**SAFEGUARDING AND INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY**

**PSEAH Policy**

In 2025, IHRDA adopted a Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) Policy, reaffirming its zero-tolerance approach to sexual misconduct.

The policy outlines clear roles, responsibilities and reporting mechanisms to safeguard staff, partners and beneficiaries — particularly vulnerable groups including children, women, and persons with disabilities.

A dedicated training session was held in November 2025 to introduce the policy to staff,



clarify expectations and reinforce prevention and response mechanisms. The adoption and operationalisation of this policy strengthens IHRDA's safeguarding culture and institutional accountability.

### **Child and Adult Safeguarding Policy**

Recognising its responsibility to uphold the highest standards of safety and dignity in all its work, IHRDA adopted a comprehensive Child and Adult Safeguarding Policy in November 2025.

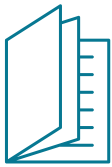
The Policy establishes a robust, organisation-wide framework to prevent, identify and respond to all forms of abuse, exploitation and harm affecting children and vulnerable adults.

Grounded in a human rights-based approach, it embeds principles of zero tolerance, survivor-centred care, non-discrimination and accountability across all programmes, partnerships and operations.

It further sets out clear standards for recruitment, risk management, reporting and response mechanisms, alongside defined roles and responsibilities for staff, partners and leadership. By strengthening internal systems and fostering a culture of safeguarding awareness and responsibility, the Policy ensures that IHRDA's work not only advances human rights externally, but is conducted in a manner that consistently protects and respects the individuals and communities it serves.

## **INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE AND INTERNAL FRAMEWORKS**

### **Staff Handbook (8th Edition)**



The publication of the 8th Edition of the IHRDA Staff Handbook in 2025 consolidated updated terms and conditions of service and organisational procedures.

The Handbook embodies institutional standards, professional expectations and governance principles applicable to all employees. Regular updates ensure alignment with evolving legal, operational and organisational needs.

### **Updated Basic Statutes**

In 2025, IHRDA updated its Basic Statutes to reflect evolving institutional realities and governance structures. This revision ensures that the organisation's constitutional framework remains aligned with its strategic ambitions, leadership model and operational growth.

### **Reserves and Investment Policy**

To strengthen financial stewardship and long-term sustainability, IHRDA adopted a Reserves Investment Policy in 2025. The policy establishes guiding principles for prudent financial management and responsible investment of organisational resources, reinforcing long-term institutional stability.



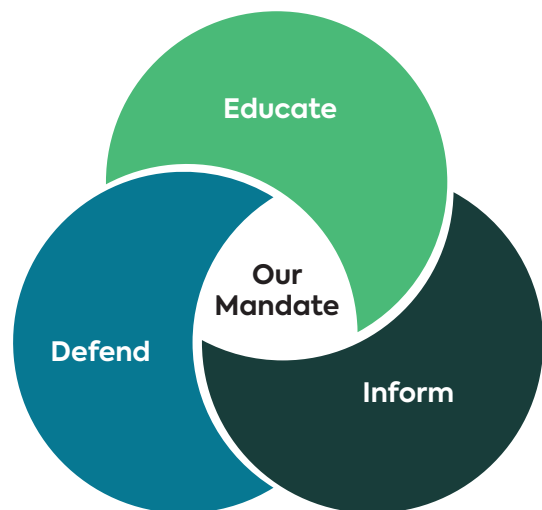
## OUR PEOPLE: BUILDING INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTH

### A TRANSFORMATIONAL YEAR FOR HUMAN RESOURCES

2025 marked one of the most significant recruitment and institutional strengthening years in IHRDA's history. In response to growing programmatic demands, expanding litigation portfolios and a sharpened focus on implementation and sustainability, the Institute created several new strategic positions and recruited multiple new team members across legal, advocacy, communications and development functions.

This expansion was not simply about growth in numbers. It reflected a deliberate investment in institutional sustainability, stronger advocacy on implementation of decisions, enhanced communications and visibility, and long-term resource mobilisation.

By the end of 2025, IHRDA had recruited six new staff members and created three new senior-level functions, significantly strengthening its capacity to deliver on its threefold mandate: Defend, Educate and Inform.



## STRENGTHENING THE LEGAL TEAM



### **Awa Gai**

#### **Legal Officer (The Gambia)**

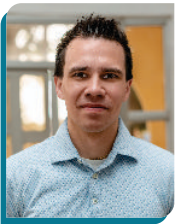
In 2025, Awa Gai transitioned from Legal Fellow to Legal Officer, reinforcing IHRDA's growing work on women's rights and gender justice. A feminist human rights lawyer enrolled as a Barrister and Solicitor of the Supreme Court of The Gambia, Awa brings both litigation expertise and deep engagement in grassroots advocacy.



### **Raphael Birindwa Rukundabahizi**

#### **Legal Officer (Democratic Republic of Congo)**

Raphael joined IHRDA as Legal Officer, bringing over nine years of experience in human rights litigation and advocacy from the Democratic Republic of Congo. A Senior Advocate with advanced legal training in human rights from UCLouvain (Belgium) and the University of Pretoria, Raphael strengthens IHRDA's regional litigation capacity, particularly in cases involving sexual violence, restorative justice and victims' rights.



### **Jeff Barker**

#### **Legal Fellow (Canada)**

Jeff joined IHRDA as a Legal Fellow, contributing to research and litigation support across the Institute's case portfolio. He holds a Juris Doctor from Osgoode Hall Law School in Canada and previously worked with the Global Legal Action Network on international human rights matters.



### **Anne Henley McGovern** - Columbia University (USA)

and **Ronan Valentine Smith Van Rooij** - McGill University (Canada)

#### **Legal Interns**

Ronan van Rooij (Canada) and Anne Henley McGovern (USA) joined IHRDA as Legal Interns, supporting the organisation's litigation and research work. Ronan was entering his third year of the BCL/JD program at McGill University's Faculty of Law and participated in McGill's International Human Rights Internship Program (IHRIP), building on his academic background in political science, ethics, society and law from the University of Toronto. Anne studied at Columbia University in the United States, where she developed a keen interest in the promotion and protection of human rights.

## EXPANDING ADVOCACY AND IMPLEMENTATION



**Maria Saine**  
Advocacy Officer

In recognition of the persistent challenge of non-implementation of decisions by States, IHRDA created the new role of Advocacy Officer in 2025. Maria Saine was appointed to lead this strategic function. Maria is a Barrister and Solicitor of the Supreme Court of The Gambia with over a decade of expertise in women and girls' rights. A former Legal Officer at the National Human Rights Commission, she serves as a Country Expert for the Global Citizenship Observatory. She holds an LLM from Trinity College Dublin and an LLB from the University of The Gambia.



**Loisa Ntaji**  
Advocacy Fellow

Louisa Ntaji joined IHRDA as an Advocacy Fellow, supporting our engagement with Africa's regional human rights mechanisms. Louisa has experience with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, including previous roles at the Commission's Secretariat and with the International Justice Program at The Advocates for Human Rights in Minnesota. Louisa is a Nigerian-qualified lawyer with advanced degrees in human rights law from the University of Pretoria and the University of Minnesota.

## ENHANCING COMMUNICATIONS AND INSTITUTIONAL VISIBILITY

2025 saw the creation of a new Communications Unit, with two new positions: Communications and Publications Manager and Communications and Publications Officer, a strategic move to elevate IHRDA's visibility, narrative influence and knowledge management.



**Maimouna Jallow**  
Communications and Publications Manager

Maimouna Jallow, a seasoned communications specialist with over 20 years of experience, was appointed to the role of Communications and Publications Manager. Her distinguished career includes serving as a producer with the BBC World Service, Regional Information Officer for Médecins Sans Frontières, and Senior Programme Manager at the African Media Initiative, where she managed a \$1 million Pan-African media innovation fund.



**Raghda ElShaloudy**

**Communications and Publications Officer**

Raghda ElShaloudy joined IHRDA bringing over seven years of experience in strategic communications and publications across Africa and the Middle East. She has worked with institutions including the African Union to strengthen institutional visibility and advocacy. Raghda holds a Fulbright-supported Master’s degree in Political Science from Ohio University and a B.A. in Mass Media and Communication Sciences from Ain Shams University in Cairo, Egypt.

**SECURING SUSTAINABILITY AND MEASURING IMPACT**



**Brice Martial Djeugoue**

**Development and Impact Manager (Cameroon)**

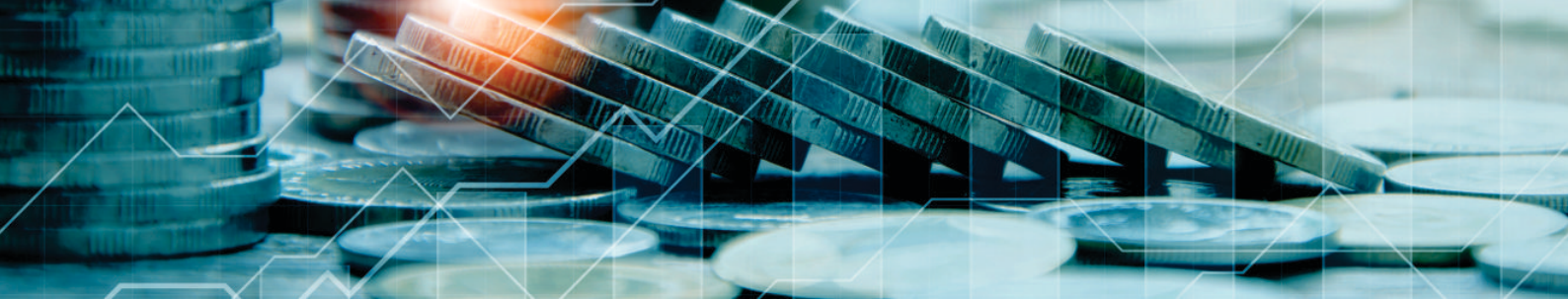
To strengthen financial sustainability and institutional accountability, IHRDA created the new role of Development and Impact Manager in 2025. Brice Martial Djeugoue was selected to lead this critical function.

With advanced degrees in Media and Communications and certification in project management and monitoring and evaluation, Brice brings extensive experience in resource mobilisation, external relations and programme oversight. His previous roles with CAJAD in Cameroon and the World Health Organization in Nigeria reflect a strong grounding in international development and human rights programming.



**Our people remain our greatest strength, and in 2025, that strength grew significantly.**





## FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

During the financial year 2025, IHRDA continued to develop and expand its programs amid a shrinking funding space by maintaining a proper financial management system to ensure continuity and long-term financial sustainability.



For the year under review, total income amounted to **US\$2,300,624**, with total expenditure of **US\$1,978,618**, resulting in a surplus of **\$322,006**. Our 2025 budget stood at **\$2,190,307**.

### FUNDING

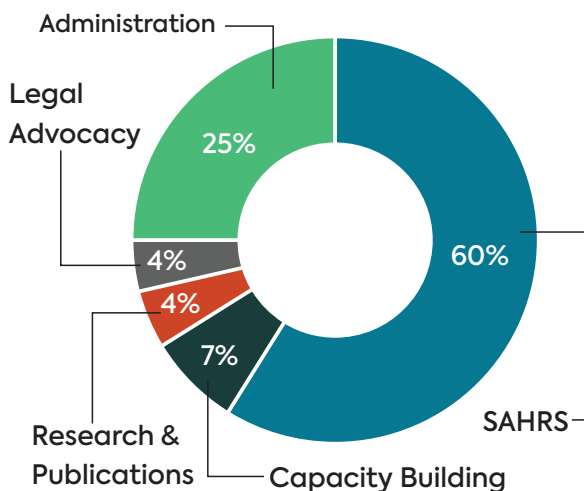
IHRDA receives funding from diverse sources and our major funders in 2025 were:

**OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATIONS**



### EXPENDITURE BREAKDOWN FOR 2025

IHRDA expenditures are mainly categorized under Administration and Programs. Programming is further categorized under four streams, namely: Capacity building, Strengthening the African Human Rights System (SAHRS), Legal Advocacy, and Research and Publications. The 2025 expenditure breakdown is shown below with administration costs comprising 25% of total expenditure:



### FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

IHRDA maintains a strong financial management system to ensure accountability and transparency. To strengthen its internal control systems, IHRDA conducts quarterly internal audits by an independent auditor and is also subject to annual external audit by independent external audit firms, in compliance with the provision of our Basic Statute.

As part of its sustainability strategies, IHRDA plans to diversify its funding sources by embarking on aggressive fundraising initiatives, strategic collaborations for joint funding bids, efficient and effective management of available limited resources by cutting down operational costs, and building reserve and endowment funds for long-term financial sustainability.



## LOOKING AHEAD 2026 AND BEYOND

As IHRDA moves into 2026, we do so from a position of strengthened foundations, expanded expertise and sharpened strategic clarity.

The year 2025 was defined by consolidation — building systems, recruiting key personnel, adopting institutional policies, strengthening governance frameworks and deepening our evidence base. With these foundations in place, 2026 marks the beginning of a more deliberate phase of impact expansion.

### FROM JUDGMENTS TO JUSTICE

While IHRDA remains a trailblazer in strategic litigation before African human rights mechanisms, the next phase of our work will intensify our focus on implementation.

Securing favourable decisions is only one step toward justice. Ensuring that States comply — through legislative reform, policy change, reparations and institutional accountability, is the true measure of impact. With the establishment of a dedicated Advocacy Officer and a strengthened implementation strategy, IHRDA will mainstream follow-up and compliance efforts from the earliest stages of case development.



Our objective is clear: transform jurisprudence into lived change for victims.



### EXPANDING STRATEGIC LITIGATION FRONTIERS

Emerging areas of human rights concern demand bold and innovative legal responses. In 2026, IHRDA will continue to expand litigation in under-addressed areas including:

- Child rights and business accountability.
- Environmental and climate-related harms affecting children.
- Gender justice and structural discrimination.
- Civic space and protest-related repression.
- Accountability for serious human rights violations.

By combining rigorous legal analysis with strengthened partnerships across the continent, we aim to deepen the use of regional human rights mechanisms as instruments of structural reform.

## STRENGTHENING THE AFRICAN HUMAN RIGHTS SYSTEM

IHRDA’s work remains inseparable from the vitality of the African human rights system itself.

Through continued collaboration with regional mechanisms, we will support institutional strengthening, jurisprudential development and enhanced accessibility for victims and civil society actors.

Our goal is to ensure that these mechanisms remain credible, responsive and effective guardians of rights across the continent.

## DEEPENING EVIDENCE AND NARRATIVE LEADERSHIP

The Study on Child Rights and Business marked a defining moment in IHRDA’s evolution as a knowledge institution. In 2026, we will build on this foundation by:

- Producing targeted research that informs litigation and advocacy.
- Strengthening publications and policy engagement.
- Expanding strategic media partnerships.
- Elevating voices of affected communities.

In an era of shrinking civic space and contested narratives, evidence-based advocacy remains essential. We will continue to shape public discourse through research, strategic communications and principled engagement.

## INVESTING IN SUSTAINABILITY AND INSTITUTIONAL RESILIENCE

The global funding landscape remains uncertain. However, the adoption of a new Fundraising and Grants Management Strategy,

strengthened monitoring and evaluation systems, and improved governance frameworks position IHRDA to navigate this terrain with greater resilience.

In 2026, we will:

- Diversify funding streams.
- Strengthen long-term partnerships.
- Expand innovative financing approaches.
- Enhance impact measurement and accountability.

Institutional sustainability is not an administrative goal, it is a prerequisite for defending rights in the long term.

### OUR COMMITMENT

As Africa confronts complex and evolving human rights challenges, from democratic backsliding to economic transformation and climate vulnerability — the need for strong, independent and technically rigorous human rights institutions has never been greater.

IHRDA remains committed to:

- Defending victims through strategic litigation.
- Educating lawyers, journalists and civil society actors.
- Informing policy through research and evidence.
- Strengthening the institutions that safeguard rights.

With strengthened internal systems, expanded human capital and renewed strategic clarity, we enter 2026 with confidence — not because the challenges are smaller, but because our capacity to respond to them is stronger.

The work continues. And so does our resolve.

## Closing Note to Partners and Supporters – Thank you!

As we conclude this year's report, we extend our deepest appreciation to the partners, donors, collaborators and communities who make our work possible.

Your partnership enables victims to access justice beyond national borders. It strengthens regional mechanisms that protect millions. It supports lawyers, journalists and advocates working on the frontlines of accountability. It allows us to move from judgments on paper to meaningful change in people's lives.

2025 has been a year of consolidation and institutional growth for IHRDA. We have strengthened our systems, expanded our team, adopted new policies and sharpened our strategic focus. These investments are not administrative milestones, they are safeguards for the long-term sustainability of human rights protection across Africa.

As we look ahead, we invite you to continue walking with us.

With gratitude and commitment.

**Dr. Musa Kika**

Executive Director

Institute for Human Rights  
and Development in Africa

# IHRDA

INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS  
AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA



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