

Uganda

Country context: the 2022 Uganda Demographic and Health Survey indicates that 44% of women have experienced physical violence since age 15, and 23% experienced such violence 12 months before the study.

Regional laws ratified

- **African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights** - 10 May 1986
- **African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC)** - 17 August 1994
- **Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol)** - 22 July 2010

National legislation

Constitution of Uganda, 1995

- Prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex.
- Guarantees equal rights in marriage, free consent to marry and sets the minimum age of marriage at 18 years.

Employment Act (Cap. 226, 2006)

- Prohibits sexual harassment.
- Prohibits sex-based discrimination in the workplace.

Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act, 2009

- **Penalty for trafficking in persons:** 15 years imprisonment.
- **Penalty for trafficking of children:** life imprisonment.
- Guarantees survivors the right to protection, medical and psychological care, safe accommodation, legal aid, and privacy.

Domestic Violence Act, 2010

- Defines domestic violence to include physical, sexual, emotional, verbal, psychological, or economic abuse.
- **Penalty for domestic violence:** up to 2 years' imprisonment, a fine, or both.
- Survivor's "consent" is not a defence to a charge of domestic violence.
- Provides for protection and interim protection orders to shield survivors from harm.

Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act, 2010

- Criminalises all forms of FGM.
- Aggravated FGM is where FGM results in death, disability, involves a child, is done by a person in authority, a health worker, or causes HIV infection.
- **Penalty for aggravated FGM:** 10 years to life imprisonment.
- Criminalise attempts, aiding, abetting, and participation in FGM.
- **Penalty:** up to 5 years imprisonment.

Penal Code Act, as amended in 2024

- **Penalty for rape:** Death.
- Prohibits defilement of persons under 18.
- **Penalty for defilement:** life imprisonment or death in aggravated cases, e.g where the survivor is under 14, the offender is a parent or guardian, and the survivor has a disability.
- **Penalty for indecent assault:** 14 years imprisonment.

Policy framework

National Policy on Elimination of GBV in Uganda, 2019

- Aims to reduce the prevalence of GBV, end impunity, and ensure survivor-centred care; emphasises community sensitisation, service provision, and accountability for GBV cases.
- **Penalty for forced and child marriages:** up to 10 years imprisonment.

Support mechanisms

- **Ministry of Health:** provides emergency medical care, post-rape services, mental health support, and referrals under gender-sensitive protocols.
- **Police & judiciary:** investigate and prosecute GBV offences; issue and enforce protection orders.
- **Social services & NGOs:** provide psychosocial support, shelters, and community-based assistance to survivors.

Legal gaps and implementation challenges

- Marital rape is not criminalised.
- Weak enforcement of child-marriage laws.
- Resource and capacity constraints across health, policing and legal aid hinder effective service delivery to survivors.

Scan to learn more about laws and protections on ending violence against women and girls in Uganda.

