



Oral Statement by the International Bar Association

57th Session of the Human Rights Council

ID with IE on CAR

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Gender-Based Violence Requires Urgent Responses

The International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute (the IBAHRI) welcomes the report of the IE on CAR. The IBAHRI welcomes multiple references to gender-based violence (GBV) in the report. We are highly concerned about the ever-present rise of GBV in the country. According to OCHA, GBV has reached alarming proportions, particularly in the wake of the humanitarian crisis afflicting the country over the last few years. In 2023, 3.4 million people needed humanitarian assistance and protection - 56% of the population. According to OCHA, every hour, two people are victims of GBV, mostly women and girls. In 2023, only 41% of survivors received multisectoral assistance, including shelter in a protective environment, livelihood support and legal assistance.

Furthermore, conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) in the CAR has a long history and is part of a wider system of discrimination, marginalisation and violence against women and girls across the CAR, but also flourishes in impunity. The last two decades have seen several conflicts which sparked high numbers of CRSV - including to terrorise civilians and as a means of ethnic or ideological targeting. Despite being a long-standing issue, CRSV has not been addressed with adequate responses. Among the ongoing challenges preventing responses are insecurity and ongoing conflict, gender inequalities, stigma around CRSV, lack of basic services to victims/survivors, and low understanding of rights and legal avenues for justice and accountability.

The IBAHRI calls upon this Council to:

- Support, with all possible means, the IE and the CAR in ensuring that all cases of GBV and CRSV are investigated and prosecuted;
- Assist the CAR in building capacities to support victims/survivors of GBV and CRSV, including with their physical and psychological needs;
- Ensure that the voices of victims/survivors are heard and they are fully involved in all decisions that concern them.

Thank you.

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