

# Country Assessment on Violence against Women

## RWANDA



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## **ABBREVIATIONS USED**

ADL:	Association for the Defense of Human Rights and Civil Liberties
AIDS:	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AJEPRODHO-JIJUKIRWA:	Association of the Youth for the Promotion of Human Rights and Development
ARJ:	Rwanda Journalist Association
ARTC Ruhuka:	Rwanda Association of Trauma Counselors
AVEGA-AGAHOZO:	Association of Widows Survivors of the 1994 Genocide
CDLS:	District AIDS Control Committees
CEDAW:	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence Against Women
CLADHO:	Rwandan Collective of Leagues and Associations for the Defense of Human Rights
CNDH:	National Human Rights Commission
DUHOZANYE:	Association of Widows of the Genocide of Save
EDPRS:	Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy
FACT Rwanda:	Forum for Activists Against Torture
GBV:	Gender Based Violence
GDP:	Gross Domestic Product
HAGURUKA:	Association for the Defense of Women's and Children's Rights
HIV:	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HUMURA ASSOCIATION:	Canadian association for the survivors of the 1994 Genocide of the Batutsi of Rwanda
ICT:	Information and Communication Technologies
ICYUZUZUO:	Association for the protection and promotion of widows and orphans in Rwanda
LIPRODHOR:	Rwanda league for the promotion and defense of human rights
MIGEPROF:	Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion
MINISANTE:	Ministry of Health
NPA:	Norwegian People's Aid

NISR:	National Institute of Statistical Research
NURC:	National Unity and Reconciliation Commission
PRO-FEMMES TWESE HAMWE:	Umbrella for women's liberty and rights in Rwanda
RWN:	Rwanda Women's Network
SACCA:	Street Ahead Children Center Association
SERUKA:	Action for the promotion of active contribution of Rwandan woman to the development of her country
SEVOTA:	Structure for the training of widows and orphans for labor
SNV:	Netherlands Development Organization
STDs:	Sexually transmitted diseases
SWAA Rwanda:	Society for women and AIDS in Africa
UMUSEKE:	Association for youth's peace education in Rwanda and in the Great Lakes Region
UN:	United Nations
UNFPA:	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF:	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM:	United Nations Development Fund for Women
VAW:	Violence against women
YWCA:	Young Women Christian Association

# **COUNTRY ASSESSMENT ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: CASE OF RWANDA**

## **I INTRODUCTION**

Over the last 20 years, violence against women (VAW) has been increasingly recognized as major health, human rights and development issues. The Secretary General's In-depth Study on all forms of violence against women (A/61/122/Add.1, and Cor.1) recommends intensified action to eliminate violence against women at all levels. The General Assembly's resolution urges United Nations (UN) entities to enhance coordination and intensify their efforts to eliminate violence against women in a more systematic, comprehensive and sustained way. It further calls upon UN entities to extend coordinated efforts to assist States in their efforts to eliminate violence against women. For this coordinated effort in assistance to States against violence against women to become a reality, a program has been initiated for 10 pilot countries including Burkina Faso and Rwanda for Africa, Jamaica in the Caribbean, Paraguay and Chile for Central America, Fiji for the Pacific, the Philippines for Asia, Jordan and Yemen for the Middle East, and Kyrgyzstan for the Central Asia. The task force will assist States through supporting comprehensive national approaches against violence against women, for example in designing and implementing national action plans and other relevant programs. Prior to this, a country assessment on violence against women is a priority. It is within this framework that this country assessment on violence against women has been undertaken. The Rwanda country assessment on VAW will emphasize the nature and extent of following issues:

- The forms of violence that exist, who the victims and perpetrators are, and what the consequences entail;
- The relevant policies and laws that exist;
- The stakeholders involved and their respective capacities; challenges and gaps in addressing violence against women; and,
- The identification of priorities for interventions.

### **1.1 Country Profile**

#### **1.2.1 Geographical location**

Rwanda is located in the part of Central Africa that is usually known as the "Great Lakes Region". It shares borders with Tanzania in the east, the Democratic Republic of Congo in the west, Uganda in the north and with Burundi in the south.

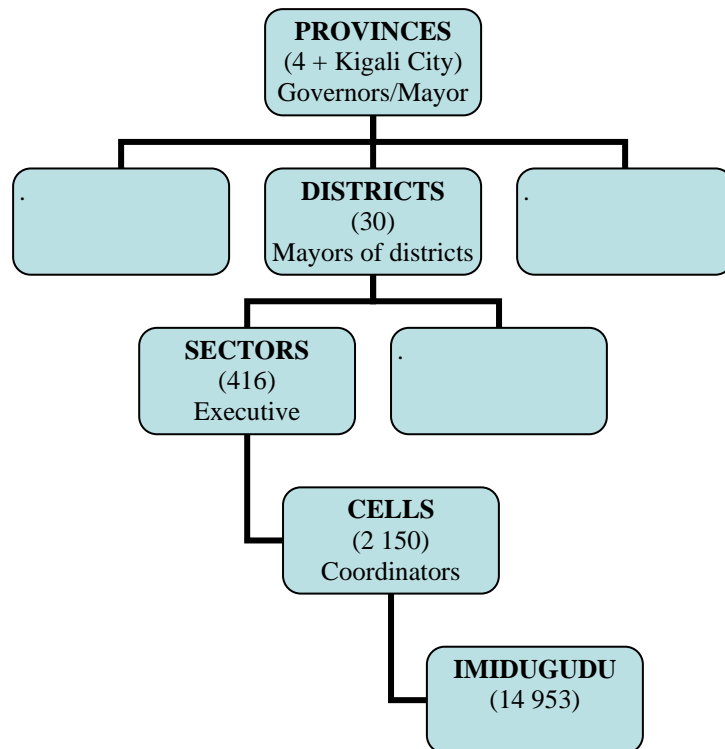
It is situated at a latitude between 11° and 3° south and at 29° and 31° longitude east, at 1,200 km from the Indian Ocean and at 2,000 km from the Atlantic Ocean. It has a tropical mountainous climate with two unequal rainy seasons alternating with a short dry

season and a long dry season. Its particularly mountainous topography has led Rwanda to be known as the “Land of a Thousand Hills”.

The population is estimated to be around 8,128,553 million, including 3,879,448 men representing 47.7% of the population, and 4,249,105 women representing 52.2%, distributed on a surface area of 26,338 sq km, (the population density is at 336 inhabitants per sq km, 1,000 sq km covered by Lake Kivu being included in the breakdown). The population residing in urban areas represents 16.69% of the total population and consists of 728,052 men, (53.5%), and 634,260 women, (46.5%)<sup>1</sup>.

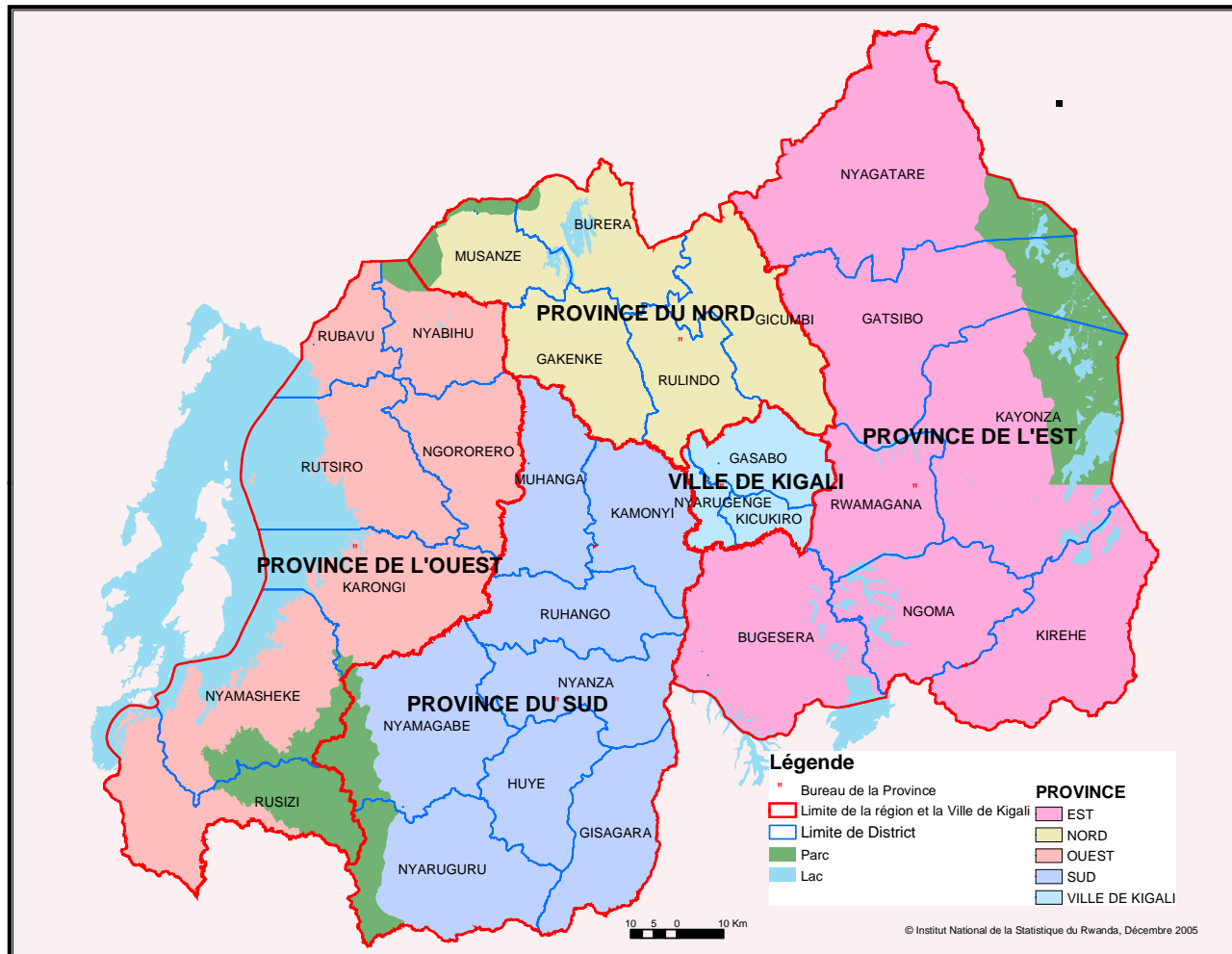
### 1.2.2 Administrative structure

The figure below indicates the administrative structure that the country has in place – it can be seen that Rwanda has a fairly decentralized structure of administration, with each unit having their own elected representatives, budgets and public administration structures.



<sup>1</sup> The General Census of Population and Housing, Preliminary Report, February 2003.

# ADMINISTRATIVE MAP OF RWANDA



### 1.2.3 Key development indicators

-	Population:	8 814 253 (52% women, 42% men) <sup>2</sup>
-	Total fertility rate:	6.0 <sup>3</sup>
-	Population under 25 years:	67% <sup>4</sup>
-	Adult literacy:	64.8% <sup>5</sup>
-	Poverty line:	56.9% <sup>6</sup>
-	Infant mortality rate (under 5):	85 per 1,000 live births <sup>7</sup>
-	Maternal mortality rate:	750 per 100, 000 live births <sup>8</sup>
-	Urban population:	19.3% <sup>9</sup>
-	Annual population growth rate:	2.5% <sup>10</sup>
-	GDP per capita:	USD 2.3 <sup>11</sup>
-	Population aged 65 and above:	2.5% <sup>12</sup>
-	Physicians per 100, 000 people:	5 <sup>13</sup>
-	Population using improved water sources:	74% <sup>14</sup>
-	Population using electricity at national level:	5% <sup>15</sup>

## 1.2 Definition of concepts related to violence against women

For the sake of clarification of some concepts that are interrelated and are sometimes used interchangeably in this assessment, it is important to define some of the basic concepts in the sections below:

The term **violence against women** refers to any act that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual and psychological harm to women and girls, whether occurring in private or in public. Violence against women is a form of gender-based violence and includes sexual violence<sup>16</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Les Indicateurs de Développement du Rwanda, 2005

<sup>3</sup> Op cit, pp 246

<sup>4</sup> Op cit, pp13

<sup>5</sup> Op cit

<sup>6</sup> Enquete Demographique et de Sante, pp219

<sup>7</sup> Op cit, pp?

<sup>8</sup> Op cit, pp?

<sup>9</sup> Human Development Report, pp 246

<sup>10</sup> Op cit

<sup>11</sup> Enquete demographique et de Sante, pp 219

<sup>12</sup> Op cit, pp 246

<sup>13</sup> Op cit, pp 250

<sup>14</sup> Op cit, pp 254

<sup>15</sup> Les indicateurs de Développement, 2005, pp13

<sup>16</sup> USAID and UNICEF: Strategic Framework for the prevention of and response to gender based violence in Eastern, Central and Southern Africa



“**Gender-based violence** is an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetuated against a person’s will, and that is based on socially ascribed (gender) differences between males and females. Examples include sexual violence, including sexual exploitation/abuse and forced prostitution; domestic violence; trafficking; forced/child marriage; and harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation, honor killings, widow inheritance, and others.”<sup>17</sup>

**Sexual violence**, including **exploitation and abuse**, refers to any act, attempt or threat of a sexual nature that results, or is likely to result, in physical, psychological and emotional harm. Sexual violence is a form of gender-based violence.

## II METHODOLOGY

**The following methodology was used to undertake the assessment:**

### 2.1 Data collection consisted of:

- **Documentary review of:**
  - Policies and legal frameworks
  - Studies conducted on violence against women
  - Other relevant documents.
  
- **The use of a questionnaire** to collect data from the UN agencies working in the country.
  
- **GBV mapping study** undertaken by the National Institute of Statistical Research (NISR) with the support of United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has been central to identifying perceptions of extent and types of violence as well as interventions/interveners in the area of GBV
  
- **To address gaps and to invite inputs**, the **draft results of this assessment** were presented in a multi-stakeholder (consisting of representatives of government, UN, donor, international and national communities) joint programming workshop on initiating a country-wide joint program on violence against women held in April 2008 in Kigali City.

### 2.2 Data analysis consisted of:

Using thematic analysis for a critical look at the emerging themes as visible from the above data collection processes.

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<sup>17</sup> USAID and UNICEF: Strategic Framework for the prevention of and response to gender based violence in Eastern, Central and Southern Africa.

### **2.3 Data Presentation and interpretation consisted of:**

Collected data that were then classified into the following categories:

- Forms of violence against women, their location, causes, perpetrators, and consequences;
- Existing policies and laws on violence against women;
- Stakeholders/interveners involved and their interventions: i) Who are the main government stakeholders-various line Ministries and their related public sector department- that work on addressing issues relating to violence against women? ii) Is the Judicial system and related laws enforcement agencies –the police, for instance- in the country active in addressing violence against women? iii) Which are the main UN agencies that have on-going programs that target violence against women? iv) Who are the main civil Society actors – national and non-governmental organizations, community based organizations, trade unions, teachers associations, media, etc-that work on issues related to violence against women?
- Resources available: what are the financial, technical and human resources that the different stakeholders (public, civil society and UN organizations) have allocated to programs addressing violence against women?;
- Capacities to address issues related to violence against women: i) what are the constraints that prevent the public sector agencies, the UN agencies and civil society to address issues on and to implement programs on violence against women? ii) What are the capacity gaps of identified stakeholders that need to be strengthened to more effectively implement such programs? iii) What are some of the strategies required to develop such capacities?
- Priorities for action.

### III VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN RWANDA

#### 3.1 Forms and incidences of violence against women

The data collection processes revealed the variety of forms of violence against women that exists in the country. Such human rights abuses results in increased of poverty and higher prevalence of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) infection, trauma, psychological troubles, unwanted pregnancies, disability, abortion, sterility, stigma, consumption of alcoholism and drugs, prostitution, school drop outs, corruption and polygamy. Other consequences can include mismanagement of family property, abandonment of children, isolation and even death.

The forms of violence against women as evident through the data collection can be summarized into the following: Sexual violence, physical violence, economic violence and psychological violence

**Sexual violence:** rape of minors was the most critical form of sexual violence visible, with the female children aged under 5 years and female adolescents being the majority of the victims as shown in the table below.

*Table 3.1: Distribution of victims of rape of minors per district*

Province	Districts			
	Children aged under 5 years	Female Adolescents	Male Adolescents	Orphelin(e)s
Kigali City	Gasabo, Kicukiro, Nyarugenge	Gasabo, Kicukiro, Nyarugenge	Kicukiro, Nyarugenge	-
Eastern Province	Gatsibo, Ngoma	Bugesera, Rwamagana, Nyagatare, Kayanza, Kirehe, Ngoma	Nyagatare	-
Western Province	Karongi, Rutsiro, Nyabihu	Rutsiro, Ngororero, Rubavu, Rusizi, Nyamasheke	Ngororero	Rusizi
Northern Province	-	Musanze, Rulindo, Burera	Rulindo	-
Southern Province	Ruhango, Huye, Nyamagabe, Kamonyi, Muhanga, Nyaruguru	Nyanza, Nyamagabe,	-	Nyanza

Source: GBV Mapping Study, 2008. Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF), UNFPA.

The above table is a reflection of views from interviews showing the districts in which rape of minors has been documented. The perception in Table 3.1 matches with statistics from the National Police, which indicate that out of 2935 reported cases, 2421 are those that relate to minors<sup>18</sup>. Table 3.2 shows that incidences of rape of minors are high in Kigali City and in the Eastern Province (as indicated in terms of frequencies).

<sup>18</sup> National Police Annual Report, 2007.

Table 3.2: Frequency of rape of minors per Province

Province	Districts		
	High (>70 %) <sup>19</sup>	Middle (30<F<70)	Low (< 30 %)
Kigali City	Gasabo, Kicukiro, Nyarugenge,	-	-
Eastern Province	Bugesera, Gatsibo, Nyagatare, Kayonza, Ngoma,	-	Rwamagana, Kirehe,
Western Province	Rubavu, Rusizi	Nyabihu	Karongi, Rutsiro, Ngororero, Nyamasheke
Northern Province	Gicumbi, Musanze, Burera, Gakenke	-	- Rulindo
Southern Province	Ruhango	Nyamagabe, Kamonyi, Muhanga, Nyaruguru,	Nyanza, Huye
Totals	<b>15</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>
%	<b>50.0 %</b>	<b>16.7 %</b>	<b>33.3 %</b>

Source: GBV Mapping Study, MIGEPROF, UNFPA, 2008

The percentages in Table 3.2 express perceptions of interviewees on frequency of rape of minors in their districts. The frequency was perceived to be high (70% and above) in Kigali City and in the Eastern Province. This perception matches the statistics from those as put out by the National Police (which classify Kigali City and the Eastern Province as among the top Provinces where rape crimes rate are high).

People serving at home (including houseboys and house girls) are ranking in the first position of perpetrators; teachers come in the second position, followed by those suffering from alcoholism. Results from interviews<sup>20</sup> conducted in the various districts indicate that causes of rape of minors were believed to be linked to alcoholism, consumption of drugs, and sexual perversion.

In the study conducted by the National Commission for Unity and Reconciliation (NURC)<sup>21</sup>, other causes of rape of minors that are included relate to bad intent (24%), revenge (24.1%), sexual perversion (12,2%), unavailability of parents at home(20,4%), alcoholism and ignorance (15,9%).

The rate of rape of minors is high in Kigali City this can be due to that of the high majority of parents that are working outside the domestic environment or another

<sup>19</sup> Les fréquences indiquées (forte, moyenne et faible) en terme de pourcentage sont les résultats des fréquences issues des entretiens dans les Districts et des enquêtes auprès des intervenants.

<sup>20</sup> See GBV Mapping Study, MIGEPROF, UNFPA.

<sup>21</sup> Etude sur les causes de violences au Rwanda après le Génocide de 1994.

probably cause is that it in fact is a result of higher education/sensitization level that lead to an increase in reported cases and not necessarily actual incidences.

The situation of rape of minors is alarming given that majority of perpetrators are among the people who are supposed to protect them. Concerned institutions and authorities, including schools and families should take appropriate measures to address this issue.

**Physical violence:** According to the GBV mapping physical violence is strongly felt in 25 districts (out of 30 districts of the country). Physical violence against women is expressed in around 83% of the national territory, as shown in the table below.

*Table 3.3: Distribution of districts in terms of prevalence of physical violence against women*

Province	Districts		
	High (>70 %)	Middle (30<F<70)	Low (< 30 %)
Kigali City	Gasabo, Kicukiro	Nyarugenge	-
Eastern Province	Rwamagana, Nyagatare, Kirehe, Ngoma	Gatsibo	
Western Province	Karongi, Rutsiro, Ngororero, Nyabihu, Rusizi, Nyamasheke		Rubavu
Northern Province	Musanze, Rulindo, Burera, Gakenke	Gicumbi	
Southern Province	Nyanza, Ruhango, Huye, Nyamagabe, Kamonyi, Muhanga, Nyaruguru	Gisagara	
Totals	25	4	1
%	83,3 %	13,3 %	3,3 %

Source: GBV Mapping in Rwanda, 2008. MIGEPROF, UNFPA

The informants listed alcoholism, poverty, consumption of drugs, ignorance and wrong interpretation of gender roles as main causes for such abuse, as shown in the table below.

*Table 3.4: Distribution of districts as per causes of physical violence against women*

N°	Causes	Provinces/Districts				
		Kigali City	Eastern Province	Western Province	Northern Province	Southern Province
1	Alcoholism	Gasabo, Kicukiro	Bugesera, Rwamagana, Gatsibo, Nyagatare, Kayonza, Kirehe, Ngoma	Karongi, karongi, Rutsiro, Nyabihu, Rubavu, Nyamasheke	Gicumbi, Burera	Nyanza, Kamonyi, Muhanga
2	Poverty	Gasabo	Bugesera	Nyabihu		
3	Drugs	Kicukiro, Nyarugenge	Gatsibo, Nyagatare, Kayonza, Kirehe	Karongi	Burera	
4	Jealousy					Nyanza, Ruhango, Huye
5	Wrong interpretation of					Huye, Muhanga

	gender					
6	Traditional practices	Gasabo		Ngororero		Nyamagabe
7	Ignorance	Gasabo		Rusizi		Kamonyi, Nyaruguru
8	Wickedness	Kicukiro, Nyarugenge	Ngoma	Rutsiro, Rubavu	Gicumbi, Gakenke	
9	Prostitution and adultery			Nyabihu		Gisagara

Source: GBV Mapping in Rwanda, 2008. (MIGEPROF) in collaboration with UNFPA.

The above causes (including poverty and ignorance, etc.) are in contradiction with the results of the 2005 Demographic and Health Survey, which indicates that the frequency of violence against women is slightly higher in families where women are working for money than in families where women are not working (40% as opposed to 36%). The same source shows that rate of violence is also higher in families where women are educated, than in families where women are uneducated (43% as opposed to 36%)<sup>22</sup>.

One way of analyzing the 2005 Survey results would be via a gender lens: in such a scenario, men are culturally trained to be breadwinners, with women playing a more subservient role. Therefore, men find it a challenge to accept women's earning capacities as this is likely to challenge their powers; thus the risk of violence is high. If one accepts this analysis, one can state that the root causes of physical violence are not related to poverty, drugs, ignorance, etc but rather rooted in the patriarchal system that gives and sustains inequality of powers, rendering women vulnerable to violence. The other causes mentioned in the table above are then associated or influencing factors that contribute to violence against women, but are not the root causes of such violence.

The other way of analyzing this Survey results would be that because of a culture of silence surrounding violence against women, it might be that violence is less reported in families with lower education. Either way of looking at these results would require more in-depth study. The table below reveals the main perpetrators of physical violence against women.

*Table 3.5: Distribution of districts as per perpetrators of physical violence against women*

N°	Perpetrators	Provinces/Districts				
		Kigali City	Eastern Province	Wester Province	Northern	Southern
1	Husbands	Gasabo, Kicukiro, Nyarugenge	Bugesera, Rwamagana, Gatsibo, Nyagatare, Kayonza, Kirehe	Ngoma, Karongi, Rutsiro, Ngororero, Nyabihu, Rubavu, Rusizi, Nyamasheke.	Gicumbi, Musanze, Rulindo, Burera, Gakenke	Nyanza, Ruhango, Huye, Nyamagabe, Kamonyi, Muhanga, Gisagara, Nyaruguru,
2	Alcoholics	Gasabo, Kicukiro,	Bugesera, Rwamagana,	Karongi, Ngororero,	Gicumbi, Musanze,	Nyamagabe, Kamonyi,

<sup>22</sup> Enquete Demographique et de Sante, 2005, p 202.

		Nyarugenge	Gatsibo, Nyagatare, Kayonza, Kirehe, Ngoma	Rubavu, Rusizi	Rulindo, Burera	Muhanga, Gisagara, Nnyaruguru
3	Employers	Gasabo, Kicukiro, Nyarugenge	Kirehe	Ngororero, Rubavu, Rusizi	Gicumbi, Musanze	Nyanza, Ruhango
4	Bandits	Nyarugenge	Gatsibo, Nyagatare	Karongi, Ngororero, Rubavu, Rusizi	-	Huye,
5	Local Defense Force (LDF)				Gakenke	Nyanza
6	Militaries		Ngoma			Ruhango

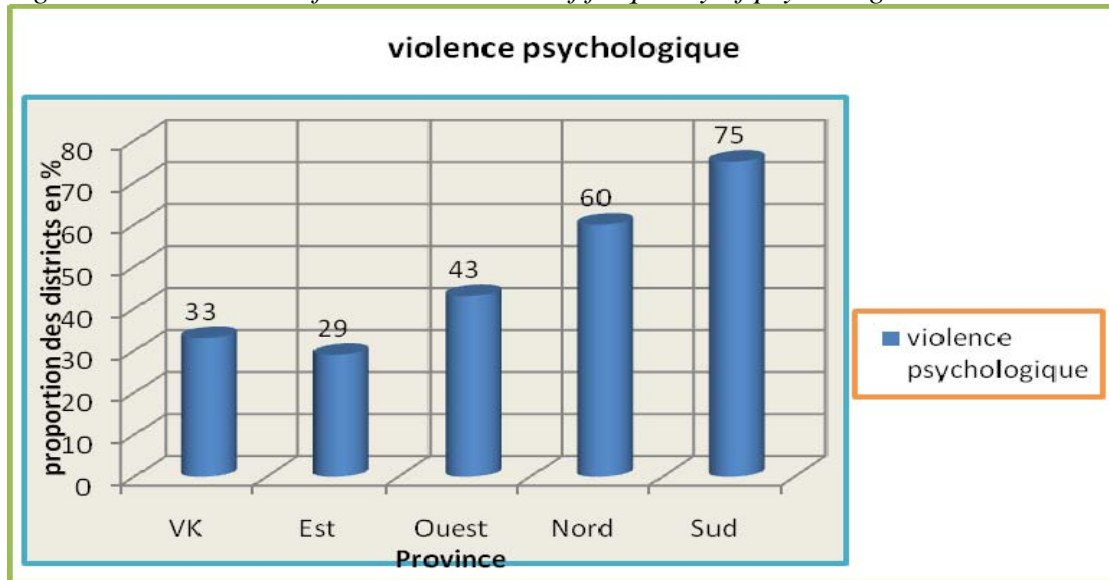
Source: GBV Mapping in Rwanda, 2008. Study conducted by MIGEPROF in collaboration with UNFPA.

Table 3.5 shows that majority of women suffer violence at the hands of their husbands. This sad reality reflects the picture of domestic violence where women suffer violence at the hands of those who they trust – their husbands/partners.

**Domestic violence:** incidences of this form of violence are high in Kigali City, though domestic violence was found to be a lived reality across the country. Again women are the majority of the victims with their husbands being the perpetrators. Causes are believed to be linked with alcoholism, poverty, ignorance, and some cultural norms and practices. It should be highlighted (as was discussed in the previous sections) that these causes are rather associated causes (or influencing factors) of violence against women. They are not the root causes or structural causes of domestic violence. An interesting example is the UNFPA Rota Fund for income generating programs in some *Imidugudu* in Eastern and Western Provinces, whereby the program serves as a forum for women and men to exchange around issues of common interests, including on violence against women. This approach has proved to mitigate impact of violence against women because men and women learn to respect each other through these exchanges. More importantly, men have learned to respect women as equal human beings who can access and control productions means for the good of both family and community.

**Psychological violence:** this form of violence can be verbal or non-verbal. It was found that 50% of the national territory has expressed this form of violence, with higher intensity reported from both the Southern Province and Northern Province, as shown in the figure below.

Figure 1: Distribution of districts in terms of frequency of psychological violence



Source: GVB Mapping in Rwanda, 2008. MIGEPROF in collaboration with UNFPA.

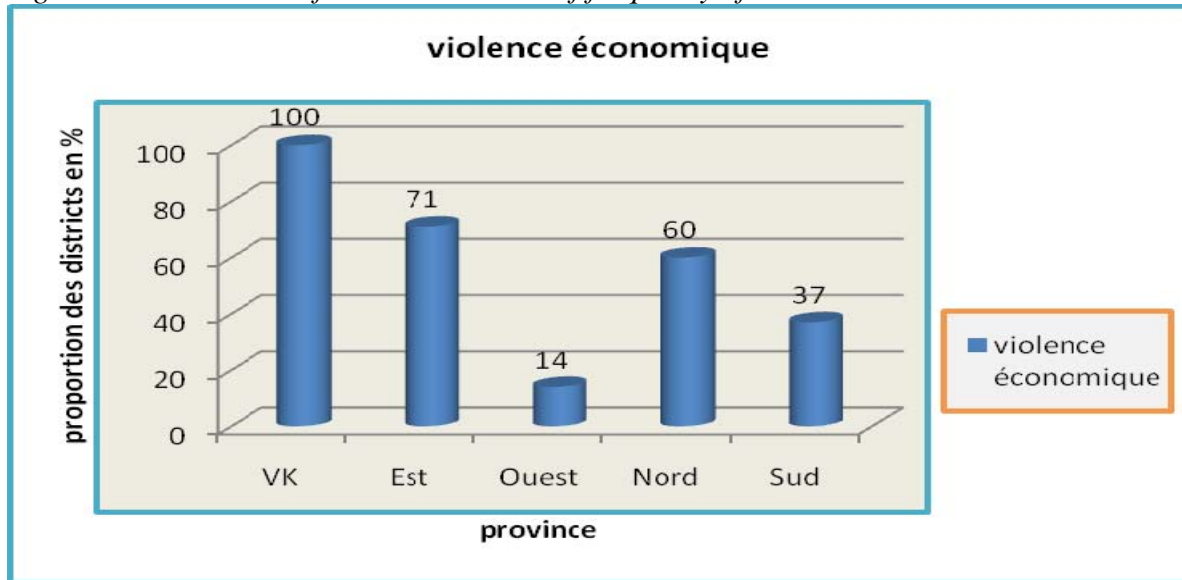
Figure 1 shows that psychological violence is less expressed in the Eastern Province (that consists of 29% of national territory). Causes attached to such violence include sexual perversion, ignorance, use of drugs and cultural practices. Perpetrators are mostly men with majority of them, being teachers and employers. Hence, it can be said that perpetrators are people in authority over the victims. Such people use their position of power to oppress their staff or persons under their authority. Hence, this is a situation whereby violence is caused due to inequality of power distribution. Reducing inequality of power is one of the best solutions to reduce psychological violence.

**Economic violence:** occurs when the abuser has complete control over the victim's money and other economic resources. Usually, this involves putting the victim on a strict "allowance," withholding money at will and forcing the victim to beg for the money until the abuser gives them some money. It is common for the victim to receive less money as the abuse continues. This also includes (but is not limited to) preventing the victim from finishing education or obtaining employment, or intentionally squandering or misusing communal resources.<sup>23</sup> Such violence was found to have been perpetrated throughout the country, with a higher intensity reported from Kigali City and the Eastern Province, as shown in Figure 2 below.

<sup>23</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Domestic\\_violence#Economic\\_abuse](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Domestic_violence#Economic_abuse)



Figure 2: Distribution of districts in terms of frequency of economic violence



Source: GBV Mapping in Rwanda, 2008. MIGEPROF in collaboration with UNFPA.

Causes of such violence include ignorance, alcoholism, sexual perversion and consumption of drugs. Most of these causes – like, alcoholism, for instance – are rooted in a social construct of unequal power relations wherein men are trained to see women as inferior and submissive to them (and, hence, men find it easier to inflict violence on women after a bout of drink).

**Sex-based discrimination:** was found to have been perpetrated in the Eastern and Western Provinces, with lesser reported incidences in the Southern Province and in Kigali City. Causes are again linked to poverty, ignorance and culture. Both men and women are found to be perpetrators of such violence.

**Early marriage:** instances of such incidents were found mainly in the Districts of Kirehe and Gakenge. Poverty, ignorance and polygamy are the identified causes of such incidences. Parents were found to rank at the highest level of perpetrators, with the girl child being the victim of such abuse. The girl child still has little value as compared to the boy child. She is seen as an object of exchange. Here, the focus is on dowry, with parents fearing that their daughter – if not married off early - may fall victim to unwanted pregnancies (which would devalue her as chances of having a husband). They also fear having to bear the costs that an unwanted pregnancy implies.

This highlights the cases discussed in Structure for the training of widows and orphans for labor (SEVOTA's) study whereby a young girls was sexually harassed by parents and other family members to marry her to a man who happened to kill his wife, just because he promised to pay good money in terms of dowry<sup>24</sup>.

<sup>24</sup> SEVOTA: Projet sur les droits humains- VIH/SIDA et lutte contre les violences basées sur le genre au Rwanda.

### **3.2 Existing policies and laws on violence against women**

A sizable amount of policies, laws and other legal instruments have been put in place to address violence against women at both international and national levels. At international levels, the key instruments that Rwanda has ratified include but are not limited to the:

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948);
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966);
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966);
- The Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discriminations Against Women (CEDAW) (1979);
- Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1984);
- United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (1994).
- Beijing Platform for Action (1995);
- United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (2000);

In addition to the above instruments, Rwanda has put in place legal instruments that not only assists implementation of the said international instruments but also addresses other issues pertaining to specific Rwandan contexts. These include but are not limited to:

- The June 2003 National Constitution that encapsulates a number of articles addressing violence against women, including Article 9 on the minimum requirement of 30% participation of women in decision-making at all levels and Article 185 that promulgates the establishing of the Gender Observatory that is charged with monitoring the implementation of gender indicators in all programs and at all levels;
- The Vision2020 policy that highlights gender as one of the crosscutting themes, together with HIV/AIDS, Environment and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs);
- The Economic and Development Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS) - wherein gender is taken as one of the crosscutting theme;
- The National Gender Policy;
- The Decentralization Policy;
- The Organic Law N° 29/2004 of 03/12/2004 modifying the Law of 28 September 1963, establishing Rwandan nationality Code(O.G. n° 1 of 01/01/2005);
- The Law N° 22/99 of 12/11/1999 to supplement the Civil Code and to institute Part Five regarding matrimonial regimes, liberalities and successions (O.G. n° 22 of 15/11/1999);

- The Law N° 42/2000 of 15 December 2000, instituting the Organization of Elections of Leaders at Grass-roots Levels in Rwanda as modified (O.G. n° Special of 19/12/2000);
- The Law N° 47/2001 of 18/12/2001, instituting punishment for offences of discrimination and sectarianism (O.G. n° 4 of 15/02/2002);
- The Law n° 51/2001 of 30/12/2001, establishing the Labor Code (O.G. n°5 of 01/03/2002); and,
- The Organic Law n° 17/2003 of 07/07/2003, related to presidential and legislative elections (O.G. n° special of 07/07/2003);

These international and national instruments show the undivided political will and commitment of the Government of Rwanda to address violence against women. In addition to the political will, Rwanda's commitment is also observable at the level of implementation of some policies, notwithstanding some resistance that is observed at the initial stages of implementation (but which keeps decreasing as the process moves along). For example, the Law No 22/99 on matrimonial regimes, liberalities and successions was initially resisted by a large number of men probably because of the general cultural belief that women should not access and control production means. This can be seen through the following reaction by a man during discussions on the application of the inheritance law who said that "giving inheritance to all children, including girls/women with no distinction is difficult". He went on to say that: "as it is difficult for a genuine Muslim to eat pork, such is the case for a parent to give same inheritance to all children, especially to girls". On the same question, another man said that the application of inheritance law will never be possible and rather advised authorities "to build more prisons to receive the many men who will never allow it happen"<sup>25</sup>.

However, everybody did not perceive the application of this law as causing problems. For some, it was seen as helping resolve many associated problems (currently, it is estimated that only 19.5% to 23.2% of respondents expressed problems with the law)<sup>26</sup>. The lesson to be learned is that resistance to the application of a new law or a policy may always be there, especially at the initial stages. Less resistance is likely if those supposed to resist it are involved in all the processes - from preparation to implementation - of policy-making, an instance being the Rwanda Bill on Gender-Based Violence that is currently awaiting passage in Parliament. Studies have revealed that this Bill was able to reach this stage primarily due to the equal involvement of men and women in formulating its contents. It is through such involvement that cultural opportunities are explored and leads to a scenario where culture is not seen from a homogenous viewpoint, but more from multi-faceted dimensions that would lead to positive changes (that sees the law or policy as a solution, not a problem).

It is worth mentioning that while efforts have been made to implement a large number of vital policies and laws, more needs to be done in the area of dissemination and revision of

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<sup>25</sup> Etude sur l'application et l'impact de la loi No 22/99 relative aux régimes matrimoniaux, libéralités et successions sur les droits de la femme au Rwanda, 2005, pp 95. Study conducted by HAGURUKA, a local women's rights organization. Kigali.

<sup>26</sup> Op cit, pp 97

those still containing provisions that are gender discriminatory. Currently, some legal instruments are under revision, including the Family Code and the Penal Code.

### **3.3 The main stakeholders and their interventions**

There are a sizable number of organizations that are involved in addressing violence against women. Those include (but are not limited to) the following interveners working at different levels:

#### **3.3.1 Public stakeholders**

- Ministry in charge of Gender and Family Promotion;
- Districts;
- General Prosecutor's Office;
- Parliament;
- Ombudsman's Office;
- Ministry of Justice;
- Ministry of Public Service and Labor;
- Ministry of Education, Technology and Scientific Research;
- National Police;
- National Unity and Reconciliation Commission;
- Supreme Court;
- Court of first instance;
- Ministry of Health;
- National Youth Council;
- Forum of Women Parliamentarians.

#### **3.3.2 UN Agencies**

Different UN agencies are involved in addressing violence against women in various ways and at different levels. The agencies whose mandate directly covers violence against women include UNIFPA, United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

#### **3.3.3 International organizations**

A significant number of international organizations are involved in tackling issues related to violence against women and these include (but are not limited to) TROCARE, SNV, YWCA, NPA, Action Aid, Care International, Canadian Cooperation, World Relief and World Vision.

#### **3.3.4 Civil Society/local organizations**

The local organizations comprising local civil society constitute the majority of stakeholders working in the area of violence against women. These include (but are not limited to):

- HAGURUKA
- SWAA Rwanda
- FACT Rwanda
- ARTC Ruhuka
- Réseau des femmes oeuvrant pour le développement
- Ordre des Avocats du Rwanda
- SERUKA
- ARJ
- Women for women
- AJEPRODHO-JIJUKIRWA
- AVEGA-AGAHOZO
- PRO-FEMMES TWESE HAMWE
- CNDH
- CLADHO
- LIPRODHOR
- ADL
- HUMURA ASSOCIATION
- SACCA
- INDORERWA
- CDLS
- Catholic Association for Women's Promotion
- Rwanda Women's Network
- Umushumba Mwiza
- Icyuzuzo
- Duhozanye
- Umuseke.
- Twuzuzanye

As shown in the sections above (3.3.1, 3.3.2, 3.3.3 and 3.3.4) a significant number of stakeholders are involved in addressing issues related to violence against women. The bulk of their interventions are geared towards the areas of sensitization (in different forms of activities), trainings, meetings and various forms of discussions, legal assistance, counseling, income generation, advocacy/lobbying, research, monitoring and evaluation. Most efforts have been put in activities related to sensitization, training and legal assistance as shown in the table below.

Table 3.6: Quick referencing-Interveners and interventions

		GBV MATRIX FOR QUICK REFERENCING-INTERVENERS AND INTERVENTIONS							
		Activities							
		Sensitization		Legal Assistance	Counseling	Income Generation	Mediation	Health Services	Advocacy / Lobbying
Discussions/ Meetings	Training/ Education								
1	Districts	X							X
2	Ministry in charge of gender and family promotion (MIGEPROF)	X		X		X			
3	HAGURUKA	X	X	X					X
4	UNFPA (Supports)	X	X			X			X
5	General Prosecutor's Office			X					
6	Parliament			X					
7	ARJ	X	X	X					
8	SWAA RWANDA	X			X				
9	Ombudsman's Office	X		X					
10	FACT-RWANDA	X	X	X	X				
11	ARCT-RUHUKA	X	X		X				
12	Réseau des Femmes oeuvrant pour le développement	X	X			X			

13	Ministry of Justice	X		X						
14	National Council of Women	X	X	X		X				
15	World Relief	X				X				
16	World Vision	X	X	X						
17	Ordre des Avocats du Rwanda	X		X						
18	SERUKA	X	X							
19	Ministry of Public Service and Labor	X	X							
20	Ministry of Education, Technology and Scientific Research	X	X							
21	Women for Women	X	X	X	X					
22	National Police	X	X	X						
23	National Unity and Reconciliation Commission	X	X							X
24	Supreme Court	X		X						
25	CDLS									
26	AJEPRODHO/JIJ UKIRWA	X	X							X

27	Tribunal de Grande Instance	X		X						
28	Faith Based Organizations	X	X							
29	AVEGA AGAHOZO	X		X		X		X		
30	PROFEMMES	X	X						X	X
31	CNDH	X		X						
32	UNICEF	X	X							
33	CLADHO	X		X						X
34	MINISANTE	X						X		
35	LIPRODHOR	X		X						
36	National Youth Council	X	X							
37	ADL			X						X
38	UNIFEM									
39	HUMURA Association	X				X				
40	SACCA	X	X		X					
41	INDORERWA	X			X					
42	CDLS									
43	Catholic Association for Women's Promotion		X		X					X
44	Association Twuzuzanye	X		X						
45	RWN	X	X	X	X	X		X		
46	UMUSHUMBA MWIZA									



47	ICYUZUZO									
48	DUHOZANYE									
49	YWCA	X			X					
50	TROCARE									
51	SNV									
52	NPA									
53	Forum of Women Parliamentarians (FFRP)	X		X						
54	UMUSEKE	X	X							X
	Total	42	25	23	9	8	0	3	1	10
	%	76.3 %	45.4 %	41.8 %	16.3 %	14.5 %	0 %	5.5 %	1.8 %	18.2 %

Source: GBV Programming in Rwanda: Actors, Activities, Collaboration, Coordination. May, 2006. Women's Legal Rights Initiative Rwanda  
Chemonics International

The above table also exhibits the areas that are given less attention, including counseling, income generation, research, monitoring and evaluation. Enough attention should be geared towards these areas as they count among the most critical ones in addressing violence against women. For example, women gain the courage to escape situations of violence through economic empowerment (which is linked to developing and training in income generation skills and activities). In fact, majority of women are those who remain victims of their husbands' violent behaviors because they have no other alternative to avoid them. Those women who have economic means can choose to stay in or to leave the families where they are experiencing violent relationship because they have the capacity to survive elsewhere.

An illustration of the above scenario is the story of a woman basket weaver who was interviewed on her role in the peace building processes. She stated that her main role in peace building is that she brought gender equations and its interplay into her house. When asked how, she said that initially her husband had developed a habit of beating her at least twice a week. Because of the money she makes from selling the baskets, the husband no longer beat her because she makes money and this is also being used for family benefits. When asked whether she thinks she has now escaped the cycle of violence, she said: "if he does it anymore, I will leave him because things have changed; I can survive without him"<sup>27</sup>.

### 3.4 Resources available

**Human and technical resources:** most stakeholders interviewed stated that they do not have enough skilled human and technical resources to combat violence against women at varying levels. This affects different levels of their interventions including designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating their projects and activities. However, local organizations state that they are receiving some assistance through training and other forms of capacity development initiatives from UN agencies and international organizations (and some local organizations).

**Financial resources:** limited funds are available to support implementation of programs, projects and strategies related to issues of violence against women. This is one of the serious challenges facing majority of local organizations working in the area of violence against women. However, it is worth mentioning that some funds are released from the government and the international donor community through UN agencies and international organizations that have, as their mandate, programs dedicated to combating violence against women.

### 3.5 Capacities to address issues related to violence against women

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<sup>27</sup> SEVOTA : Projet sur les droits humains- VIH/SIDA et lutte contre les violences basées sur le genre au Rwanda.

Capacities needed for effective implementation of policies, programs and projects related to violence against women depend on the constraints encountered and challenges faced by the various stakeholders. The latter are faced with different constraints (depending on their categories and level of intervention) as discussed below. Development of capacities in all these aspects are required if interventions are to prove successful.

### **UN Agencies**

UN Agencies face the following main constraints, related to:

- expanding the referral network: working with the health care authorities, police, etc;
- mobilizing communities;
- pending of the Draft of the National Policy on Gender Based Violence and Violence against Children;
- formulating a corresponding strategic plan to combat violence;
- involving men in tackling violence; and,
- tackling deep-rooted patriarchal norms.

### **Local and international organizations**

Challenges facing local organizations are mainly related to:

- dissemination of existing policies and laws;
- accompanying measures for some laws to be operational.
- involving men in addressing violence against women;
- designing policies and strategies that are gender sensitive to address violence against women;
- large numbers of victims beyond capacities to assist them;
- lack of response of populations to sensitization meetings;
- women's refusal to denounce cases of domestic violence for fear of personal and family shame that can come out of this denunciation;
- lack of facilities to receive victims;
- lack of coordination of and feedback mechanism to interveners' activities;
- lack of transportation means that impede victims to travel and report cases; and
- tackling deep-rooted patriarchal norms.

Other challenges are shown in terms of intervention gaps Table 3.7 below.

Table3.7: Geographical location of forms on violence with high intensity

N°	DISTRICT	A1 : Rape of minors	A2 : Rape of adults	B1 : Physical violence against women	B2 : Physical violence against men	C : Domestic violence	D : Psychological violence	E : Economic violence	F : Early marriage	G : Sex-based discriminations
	<b>KIGALI CITY</b>									
1	GASABO	A1	A2	B1				E		
2	KICUKIRO	A1		B1				E		
3	NYARUGENGE	A1					D	E		
	<b>SOUTHERN PROVINCE</b>									
4	NYANZA			B1		C	D			
5	RUHANGO	A1		B1	B2	C	D			
6	HUYE			B1			D			
7	NYAMAGABE			B1			D	E		
8	KAMONYI			B1				E		
9	MUHANGA			B1	B2					
10	GISAGARA			-			D			
11	NYARUGURU			B1	B2		D	E		
	<b>NOTHERN PROVINCE</b>									
12	GICUMBI	A1		-		C				G
13	MUSANZE	A1	A2	B1		C	D	E		
14	RULINDO	-		B1		C	D			G
15	BURERA	A1	A2	B1		C		E		
16	GAKENKE	A1	A2	B1		C	D	E	F	
	<b>EASTERN PROVINCE</b>									
17	BUGESERA	A1		B1		C		E		
18	RWAMAGANA	-		B1		C	D	E		
19	GATSIBO	A1		-		C	D	E		G
20	NYAGATARE	A1		B1		C		E		G
21	KAYONZA	A1		B1		C		E		G
22	KIREHE	-		B1		-			F	G
23	NGOMA	A1		B1		C				G
	<b>WESTERN PROVINCE</b>									
24	KARONGI			B1			D			
25	RUTSIRO			B1						G
26	NGORORERO			B1						
27	NYABIHU			B1			D	E		G
28	RUBAVU	A1		B1	B2					
29	RUSIZI	A1		B1	B2					
30	NYAMASHEKE			B1			D			G

Source: GBV Mapping in Rwanda, 2008. MIGEPROF in collaboration with UNFPA.

Table 3.6 and Table 3.7 show that there is a serious challenge of addressing forms of violence according to their importance. In other words, first priority should be given to addressing the strongly expressed forms of violence. Thus, interventions on violence against women meant for the Districts where it is marked A1 should target rape of minors as first priority. Where it is marked A2, interventions should target rape of adults, physical violence against women should be oriented in districts with a yellow color, and so on and so forth.

### **3.6 Priorities for actions**

As the above table indicates, priorities should be given to the following forms of violence:

- Physical violence against women;
- Rape of minors;
- Domestic violence;
- Psychological violence;
- Economic violence;
- Sex-based violence;
- Rape of adults.

Interventions should not be linear: they can concurrently be undertaken but with more emphasis in terms of interventions on the forms of violence that occur at higher frequencies than the others.

## **IV CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **4.1 Recommendations**

The recommendations given below have emanated out of the multi-stakeholder joint programming workshop on initiating a country-wide joint program on violence against women and which was held in Kigali City in April 2008.

**Government - Recommendations relating to implementation of policies and laws have been addressed primarily to government agencies as follows:**

- Concerned authorities to use their service to speed up the revision process and the passing of the Family Code and the Penal Code;
- The law on Gender-Based Violence and Violence against Children to be passed at the earliest, so that cases of relevant criminals can be tried;
- Dissemination of new policies and laws (including old ones) to be speeded up;
- To explore cultural opportunities including proverbs, songs, drama, and artistic activities to address issues of violence against women; and,

- To involve men and women from different social categories in formulation of policies and laws.

**Partners - Recommendations that are the domain of national and international organizations include:**

- Actively support and participate in sensitization/awareness raising and implementation of learned lessons;
- Involve men in awareness raising campaigns on violence against women;
- Design policies, programs and projects that are gender sensitive to address violence against women from the very early stages;
- Involve women and men in the different stages of relevant projects, including in designing, implementation, monitoring and evaluation; and,
- Identify cultural opportunities to address gender inequalities and violence against women.

**UN Agencies – Recommendations directed at UN agencies that have programs combating violence against women as part of their mandate include:**

- Maintain and enhance interventions in sensitization/awareness raising, training, advocacy and lobbying;
- Maintain and strengthen support for legal assistance measures;
- Increase significantly interventions in less covered areas including, income generation, counseling, research, monitoring and evaluation;
- Understand deeply the local context in which gender roles play out in the country context;
- Receive facts and experts' opinions;
- Identify positive cultural values and support them;
- Adopt and use a human rights-based approach to programming on violence against women;
- Encourage community involvement and strengthen and support community mobilization (including involving individuals as actors of their own change);
- Target men (whose involvement is necessary);
- Use the health sector as an entry point;
- Design interventions based on community organizations' strengths;
- Involve local community leaders, including leaders of faith –based organizations;
- Establish intersectoral alliances;
- Target the youth through education; and,
- Involve various media;

**ANNEXURE A: QUESTIONNAIRE USED FOR DATA COLLECTION- UN AGENCIES**

**GBV MAPPING STUDY**

**1 IDENTIFICATION OF THE ORGANISATION**

Name:

Location (Head Office):

Gender Focal Point (if any) job description:

Any other position related to gender (if any):

**2 INTERVENTIONS/PROJECTS OR ACTIVITY UNDER IMPLEMENTATION**

Give a list of interventions: Projects/Activities on Violence Against Women (VAW) you are implementing. In case you are not implementing any project, please see question 5 below.

- 2.1 Activity 1.....Area of intervention..... (Name of District)
- 2.2 Activity 2.....Area of intervention .....(Name of District)
- 2.3 A part from the form (s) of VAW you are intervening in what are the other forms of VAW that should be given more attention in your area (Districts) of interventions?

**3 CONSTRAINTS/DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED**

Give a list of constraints or difficulties encountered at the different levels of VAW projects:

- 3.1 Designing
- 3.2 Implementation
- 3.3 Monitoring and evaluation

- 4        What are the challenges facing you in the area of VAW?
  - 4.1     At organizational level?
  - 4.2     At partners' level?
  
- 5        What are the partnership mechanisms put in place by the organization to ensure that the assistance given reaches its VAW target?
  
- 6        What are the best practices (if any) have you experienced in VAW interventions?
  - 6.1     At organizational level?
  - 6.2     At partners' level?
  
- 7        What do you think should be done to improve your interventions on VAW?
  - 7.1     At organizational level?
  - 7.2     At partners' level?

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