

Forum : Forum sur l'égalité de genre

**Thématique : Face au regain des tensions et des enjeux autour du genre, comment atteindre l'ODD n°5?**

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Situation familiale <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Marié/en couple</li><li>○ Célibataire</li><li>○ Avec enfants, si oui combien</li></ul>	Niveau d'étude <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Primaire</li><li>○ Secondaire</li><li>• Universitaire</li></ul>
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1. De quelle manière êtes-vous concerné.e par le sujet ?

I was born and raised in South Africa, a country where inequality between men and women continues to exist and where only very small progress is being made towards achieving gender equality by 2030. This situation stems from centuries of colonial rule with the Apartheid system (legalized racism), which further ingrained patriarchy in south African society. Nowadays, women are mostly seen as “caregivers” and suffer immensely from inequalities in education, representation, economic independence, healthcare and are exposed to high levels of sexual and physical violence. The highest in the world in a non-war context. In 2025, South Africa stands as one of the countries with the highest reported rape rate globally and it has remained on that same spot for decades. The state even carries the troubling label of being “the rape capital of the world”.

According to a study, partly funded by UN Women, 9,9 % of women in South Africa, have experienced sexual violence in their lifetime and 33.1% physical violence (aged 18 or older). This translates to roughly 2.15 million women and about 7.31 million. Additionally, according to Humans Rights watch, 77% of women described sexual violence as “very common” in their living areas and 68 % say they have been subjected to some form of sexual harassment at work or school, at some point in their lifetime. This, creates an atmosphere of fear amongst South African women and makes most feel powerless. Even worse, this feeling of powerlessness is too often deepened by the justice system itself. According to a study made by Rapecrisis, only 18.5 % of police rape reports resulted in a trial and less than 9% of them ended with a guilty verdict. The National South African government is also mostly inactive, or at least very inefficient when dealing with the high rates of sexual and physical violence in their country. They have made numerous promises over the years, including to the UN, regarding the achievement of the 5<sup>th</sup> Sustainable Development Goal. They also have committed to several human rights-based conventions and treaties, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. However, when looking at statistics over these past few years, changes are very slight and completely insufficient. An article from “The South African” states that in 2024 there was only a decrease of 3.3% in rape cases compared to 2023. This very slow progress is partly due to a lack of proper enforcement, insufficient funding, a lack of coordination and deep-rooted cultural attitudes.

A survey, conducted by the South African Medical Research Council, revealed that one in four men admit to having committed rape and that a high proportion agreed that their partner should always consent to sex (44,4%). In some religions in South Africa, this gender violence is even institutionalised through cultural practices, such as FGM. Even if it is deemed illegal in the state, some communities still practise it, as it is considered “a very important rite of passage and

avenue for children". According to 2010 Pew Research Center, approximately 4% of South African women have undergone FGM.

## 2. Que proposez vous à votre échelle ?

I believe many changes can be made for gender violence in South Africa, depending on what we chose to do, as citizens, moving forward. First, we must spread awareness and speak out on the sexual violence women endure, which is too often minimised the media. Testimonies and local realities should be heard internationally, so that people understand the gravity of the problem. A good thing would be to include men in these advertisements, as spokesperson, to create male engagement. A second development would be to advocate for educational campaigns in schools on gender equality, consent, sexuality and reproductive health. This is crucial in order to put an end to generational violence cycles. It is therefore important that we ensure the quality of these campaigns and their extent, by aiding them financially. Additionally, we could, as citizens, donate to and volunteer in existing organisations, which act as support system to survivors of abuse or rape. A collaboration between the UN and these organisations would provide them with better resources, to create safer spaces for victims and develop better prevention strategies. Another important step would be to strongly advocate women's rights to the South African government, so that they reinforce their already established laws. This could be done through campaigns on social media, large manifestations and pressure from important organisations. For this to occur however, there needs to be huge involvement of people and international pressures. Lastly, but most importantly, society must believe in and fight for victims. No longer should they be looked over or silenced. If a verdict is unjust, word should be spread on social media, to create local or even national outrage, to force authorities to reconsider. An even better advancement of this change would be to create specialised police units in sexual offences and rape. The UN could help this happen through financial and organisational help.