



**Statement on the Women Convention on Ending Violence Against Women & Girls (VAW/G) in the Rwenzori region seated at Lisieux Hotel, Fort Portal, 14<sup>th</sup> December 2021.**

**Theme: "From the Ground -Up; Ending Violence Against Women & Girls (VAW/G) in the Rwenzori region":**

We the undersigned stakeholders from the Rwenzori region gathered at Lesieux Hotel Fort Portal, to discuss the up surge of Gender-Based Violence in the Rwenzori region under the space organised by Action for Women Foundation (AWF) in partnership with Rwenzori Forum for Peace and Justice (RFPJ) with support from UN Women under the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund;

Having fully understood what violence against women and girls is, including its different forms and manifestations in communities;

Aware that violence against women and girls remains a major barrier to women's participation in peace building, economic and community development in the Rwenzori region;

And that the persistence of these practices is generated by the socio-cultural privileges attached to masculinity, rooted in the religious and traditional cultural perceptions about men and women; boys and girls;

Cognizant of the fact that the COVID-19 national lockdown and its effects have led to an upsurge in Gender-Based Violence, especially against women and girls in the Rwenzori Region; And that men and boys are at the epicentre of propagating this vice in communities in the region;

Acknowledging the role being played by different stakeholders, including women rights activists, CSOs, police and judicial structures, religious and cultural institutions among others in addressing violence against women and girls in communities;

And that safeguarding women and girls from all forms of violence in communities and social spaces is a collective responsibility;

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**We hereby commit ourselves to the following;**

- To raise awareness of all forms of Gender-Based Violence, including their causes and effects, and sensitise communities to embrace the campaign to end all forms of violence against women and girls in the Rwenzori Region;
- To improve inter-spousal communication, respect and support for one another to foster a culture of tolerance and peace, as a way of eliminating conflicts at household level;
- To act as examples to our children through modelling good parenting behaviour in homes and communities, to break the chain of violence in their lives now and in the future;
- To explore ways of improving family livelihoods, including involvement in income generating activities; to enhance our ability to counter financial vulnerabilities that lead families into conflicts and Gender-Based Violence;
- To always identify, report and/or refer cases of Gender-Based Violence happening in our communities and families to the relevant stakeholders such as police, Community-Bases Services, religious and cultural leaders, CSOs among others;

**We thus implore:**

- The general public to identify, report and desist from any behaviours and actions that promote violence against women and girls in society;
- Stakeholders such as the probation officers, Community Development Officers among others to engage both men and women in advocating for the prevention of violence against women and girls, including domestic violence and violation of basic human rights in homes;
- Policy makers to make and popularise laws and policies that seek to eliminate violence against women and girls in communities;
- The Police, courts of law and DPP to hasten the investigation and prosecution of all GBV-related cases expeditiously within the existing legal framework;
- The government through the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development to raise awareness of the laws and policies dedicated to the promotion of the rights of women and girls, and fighting violence against the same;
- Religious and cultural institutions/leaders in the Rwenzori region to denounce all negative cultural and religious norms, practices and attitudes that propel

Kansime. M. Hamiet

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