



SECURING RIGHTS IN THE DIGITAL SPACE

an SRHR toolkit
for East Africa

women's **LINK** worldwide

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ABOUT US

We are Women's Link Worldwide (WLW), an intersectional, anti-racist, anti-colonial, and Global South-led feminist organisation working with and for the feminist movements in Latin America and the Caribbean, East Africa, and Europe. Our priorities are gender and reproductive justice, especially access to safe and dignified abortions, and the prevention of gender-based violence. Climate and racial justice are closely linked to our work on sexual and reproductive rights and gender-based violence.

Collaboration is at the heart of our work. We believe in the transformative power of our alliances with grassroots organisations and communities, and we are proud to work with more than 60 national partners and 40 regional and global coalitions and networks.

Our intersectional approach means we are committed to fighting against all types of discrimination and violence that women suffer

due to their socioeconomic condition, race, ethnic origin, migration status, age, or disability.

We use different legal strategies to unleash the power of women, girls, and gender-diverse people and fight alongside them for gender, reproductive, racial, and climate justice.

We transform traditional strategic litigation with a comprehensive vision beyond legal victories. We aim to influence public debate, promote social mobilisation, and bring about deep and lasting transformations. Our method focuses on the communities we work with, empowering them, improving their legal capabilities, and amplifying their voices.

We are driven to break down the structural barriers to access to justice faced by the most vulnerable communities. The law must be a helpful tool for social movements and not only for the elites.

WE KNOW THAT OUR WORK IS SUCCESSFUL WHEN

- ✓ We accompany allied organisations searching for creative and innovative ways to use national and international laws.
- ✓ Large-scale mobilisations bring together women, girls, civil society organisations, journalists, etc., supporting a case.
- ✓ We help build lasting capacities to use laws as a tool within local and transnational movements.
- ✓ Feminist attorneys use legal arguments developed or used in our work in new regions or contexts.

ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

At a time when reproductive rights are under attack in Europe and other regions, the Internet allows groups and organisations to provide accurate, evidence-based, and easy-to-read information about abortion. This type of information has proven to be crucial in restrictive legal contexts for abortion, such as Poland, Uganda, Kenya, the United States, and Venezuela.

This document is based on our experience with the case of Women on Web (WoW). This online abortion provider shares information on sexual and reproductive health and self-managed abortion through their website, which the Spanish government blocked. This case was not an isolated attempt to restrict and limit women's right to access an abortion and to fully enjoy their sexual and reproductive rights. It occurs within a framework of systematic and continuous harassment against women, civil society organisations, activists, and defenders of all women's right to make decisions about their bodies and their reproductive future. Information helps prevent unwanted pregnancies and reduces the risk of resorting to unsafe methods of terminating a pregnancy.

This toolkit shares our experience and lessons learned during the Women on Web case litigation. We share the main barriers to exercising reproductive rights in the digital space identified, which far transcend the specific case. Many of these obstacles and restrictions on digital rights and reproductive rights occur in many other countries and contexts in very different ways.

We explain the actions undertaken by WoW, represented by WLW, to overcome those obstacles.

Many applicable legal actions and arguments can provide input for organisations in the fight against these violations in other contexts. Others speak of a broader vision of litigation, which includes alliance-building with organisations and groups, the development of advocacy actions, and the communication strategies that must accompany these struggles to change the terms of public debate on abortion and reproductive autonomy.

Finally, we suggested good practices learned in this case, hoping they will help feminist organisations and those who promote digital rights strengthen their advocacy and strategic litigation processes against censorship, content blocking, online harassment, and other violations of fundamental rights and freedoms in the digital space.

Following the successful litigation on the case of Women on Web in Spain, Women's Link has developed a series of toolkits connecting sexual and reproductive health rights with digital rights. The toolkits are adapted to the three regions where the organisation works, that is, Europe, Latin America, and East Africa, to counter misinformation and share information on protections of digital rights and access to information on SRHR services and what organisations can do when working together.



GLOSSARY

Abortion: A health care intervention, as defined by the World Health Organization, that can be effectively managed by a wide range of health workers using medication or surgical procedures. Abortion care is included in the [2020 WHO list of essential health care services](#). In the first 12 weeks of pregnancy, a medical abortion can be safely self-managed by the pregnant person outside of a health facility, in whole or in part. For this to be effective, there is a need for accurate information, quality medicines, and the availability of support from a trained health worker.

Unsafe Abortion: A procedure for terminating an unintended pregnancy carried out either by persons lacking the necessary skills in an environment that does not conform to minimal medical standards or both.

Comprehensive abortion care: This includes the provision of accurate information, abortion management, and post-abortion care. It provides care related to miscarriage (in medical terms known as spontaneous or missed abortion), induced abortion (the deliberate interruption of an ongoing pregnancy by medical or surgical means), incomplete abortion as well and fetal death (intrauterine fetal demise).

Legal abortion: An induced abortion (deliberate interruption of an ongoing pregnancy by medical or surgical means) under the circumstances and assisted by a person who existing international, regional and national laws have sanctioned. The current legal framework authorises abortion in cases of sexual assault, rape, and incest and where the continued pregnancy endangers the mental and physical health of the mother or the life of the mother or the foetus. The care is to be provided by a trained health professional.

Illegal abortion: The deliberate interruption of a pregnancy by medical or surgical means outside the legal framework that permits access to abortion services. The legal framework is given above in defining “legal abortion”.

Algorithms: A term used to describe the language or rules that computers use to solve a problem. They have many uses. Here, we use it to describe the computer language that different platforms use to decide what content to show and recommend to each user.

Anti-abortion: The way of naming people or organisations that are against abortion and the women who request or need one, the medical teams that perform them, or the clinics that provide safe abortion care. Sometimes, they can engage in violent actions. They are also called pro-life or anti-choice groups.

Bodily autonomy: When you have the power and ability to decide about your body and your future. This includes the decision on reproductive choices and the freedom and possibility of accessing health services when needed. For it to exist, there can be no violence, coercion or refusal to give information.

Content moderation: Applying a series of predetermined rules to the content people create on a specific social network. They include legal obligations and regulations that the private company that owns the platform decides to establish. These are generally called ‘terms of service’ and ‘community standards’.

Contraceptives: The practices, methods, medications, or devices used to prevent pregnancy. They are not abortive. They can be hormonal or a barrier. The former come in various formats: pills, injectables, vaginal rings, patches, subdermal implants, intrauterine implants. The latter is mainly condoms and IUDs.

Disinformation: When false information is spread by a person or group who knows it is untrue. It seeks to cause damage or harm. It has always existed, but in recent years - thanks to digital technologies - the channels, the number of people who spread it, and how it is amplified have changed.

Misinformation: Like disinformation, it is inaccurate or even false, but its intent is not necessarily to harm and spreads quickly through technology.

Downranking: It translates as the action of lowering rank. Platforms adjust their algorithms to relegate certain content, typically following their terms of service or community standards to prevent the circulation of false or misleading information. Thus, the contents are less visible to users.

Gender ideology: An empty term that has been used as a distraction to delegitimize feminist and LGBTIQ+ struggles. It is also used to misinform regarding topics such as sexual and reproductive health, among others. It was invented by the Vatican in response to the advances of the International Conference on Population (Cairo, 1994) and the World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995).

Navigation protocol: A set of rules to know how devices and systems should exchange and manage information, such as directing data packets on networks so that they reach their destination correctly. These can be on the Internet and other types of networks. For example, on the Internet, the Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP) and the Secure Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTPS), its secure version, are very common when requesting and delivering web pages and handling data between servers and browsers.

Reproductive Autonomy: The right and power to make informed and free decisions about sexual and reproductive health (SRHR). This includes deciding whether to have children, how many, when, how often, and with whom. It consists of the freedom and possibility of accessing contraceptive methods, pre and postnatal care, and the possibility of terminating a pregnancy safely and legally.

Self-managed abortion: A non-invasive approach to abortion that is performed with pills that were obtained and taken with the help of a health professional. It is generally a very safe and effective practice.

Telemedicine abortion: A self-managed abortion that is performed at home with the support of a health professional who provides care through digital means. It is an option for people with difficulties accessing a health centre, whether due to distance, transportation, care and/or work responsibilities, or disabilities.

Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights: These are human rights that are understood in national laws and international frameworks. They are based on guaranteeing that we all have a healthy sexual and reproductive life with information and responsibility. It includes the right to freely decide when, how many, and how often to have children. They encompass the vision that sexuality can be enjoyed beyond reproduction and that people must be able to access education and health services without any type of discrimination.

Shadow banning: Actions that a social network takes to limit the visibility of an account, a topic, or a hashtag's publications.

Strategic litigation: It is used in contexts of human rights violations. It is a tool for change; it helps make these violations visible and the systems that allow them to be visible. It seeks to generate institutional changes that bring social transformation and, eventually, individual justice to people who have experienced specific violence.

The State Attorney's Office: It is part of the Corps of State Lawyers, the body in charge of providing legal advice and defence of the State, its entities, and the constitutional bodies of Spain in domestic and international proceedings.

CHAPTER 1: SRHR IN CONTEXT: THE DIGITAL SPHERE

The battlefield

In 2021, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights affirmed that digital technologies serve to “[advocate for, defend and exercise human rights](#)”. Furthermore, they can also be used to “violate rights, especially those of people who are already vulnerable or being left behind, for instance through surveillance, repression, censorship and online harassment, including of human rights defenders.” Governments and companies know this well and use it to censor and suppress vital information, including the sexual and reproductive rights of girls, women, and gender-diverse persons. This prevents millions of people worldwide from accessing essential healthcare and having complete control over their bodies.

Having access to accurate information about sexual and reproductive health services on the Internet, including social media, is extremely important for reproductive autonomy. With it, people can know their rights and understand the available reproductive health options. By accessing this type of information, harassment, stigmatisation, and discrimination based on people's reproductive decisions are also mitigated.

For digital spaces to be safe for the exercise of reproductive rights, governments and companies must guarantee reliable information on contraception, family planning, and safe abortion. The protection of privacy and personal data and the security of communications are crucial in the exchange of information connected to reproductive health due to the criminalisation associated with abortion.

Reproductive justice activists and groups around the world face challenges in digital spaces, from government censorship to content moderation, shadow banning, and the algorithms that promote misinformation and downranking or devaluation of critical content on sexual and reproductive health.

Despite attacks and censorship, with digital technologies, much progress has been made in

access to sexual health and reproductive health rights. There are online reproductive health services, medical consultations, information on the delivery of contraceptives, and tests to detect sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and people who undergo medical abortions at home are accompanied. These practices are very positive in allowing more people to access these services, mitigating some access barriers related to geographic location, migration status, or socioeconomic situation.

Digital spaces today are a disputed terrain. On the one hand, some people and organisations seek respect and guaranteeing all human rights. On the other hand, we find governments, companies, and organisations that want to misinform, spread lies, damage institutions, deepen inequalities, and openly discriminate against some groups of people. These spaces are fundamental for democracy and, thus, for all people.

A CASE STUDY: WOMEN ON WEB (WOW) CASE, SPAIN

Women on Web is a non-profit organisation that provides reliable, safe, and impartial information on sexual and reproductive rights, and in particular, access to abortion, through its website. Additionally, it offers telemedicine services for women residing in countries with restricted abortion access. Although registered in Canada, it operates globally through its website, www.womenonweb.org.

The website has been blocked in Saudi Arabia, Iran, Türkiye, South Korea, and, since 2020, Spain.

The COVID-19 pandemic more starkly exposed the vulnerabilities of some sectors of the population around the world in accessing reproductive health services. While health systems were at risk of collapse, sexual and reproductive health services – already minimal in many places – became even more limited.

Telemedicine and online services, such as WomenonWeb.org, became the only alternative for many women to access a safe abortion and receive accurate and timely information about their reproductive health and autonomy. The pandemic is gone, but websites like WoW and other online applications have demonstrated their power to break down the barriers that prevent many people from accessing safe abortion. Adolescents, migrants, victims of gender violence, and those who live in rural areas often find these tools the only route to avoid unsafe abortions.



It was precisely in this context of mobility restrictions and compromised health services due to the pandemic that the Spanish Agency for Medicines and Health Products (AEMPS) [ordered the blocking of Women on Web's website](#), leaving many women without access to an effective tool to exercise their right to a safe abortion, or even to receive information to make a decision.

The decision was based on inaccurate or outright false information about the services offered by the organisation. Without any evidence, it stated that the website marketed abortion pills, and without scientific basis, it argued that Women on Web's services put women's health and lives at risk.



ACCESS TO THE INTERNET AND ICTS IN EAST AFRICA

Access to the Internet and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) is critical to modern development, affecting economic growth, education, and social inclusion. East Africa has seen significant strides in ICT adoption over the past decade. However, challenges remain, particularly concerning equitable access, including the digital divide experienced by women.

East African countries have made notable progress in improving internet connectivity and ICT infrastructure. According to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the percentage of the population using the Internet in East Africa varies significantly by country. For instance, Kenya leads the region with approximately 40% internet penetration, followed by Tanzania and Uganda with 25% and 23%, respectively. Despite its smaller size, Rwanda has also made impressive gains, with around 26% internet penetration.

Mobile internet is the primary mode of access for most East Africans, driven by the widespread adoption of mobile phones. The affordability of mobile devices and competitive mobile data pricing have facilitated this trend. In Kenya, mobile penetration is around 114%, indicating that some individuals own more than one SIM card. Mobile money services, such as M-Pesa, have also increased, enhancing financial inclusion and access to various online services.

Significant investments in ICT infrastructure have been pivotal in expanding access. Undersea cables such as SEACOM and the Eastern Africa Submarine Cable System (EASSy) have drastically improved internet bandwidth and reduced costs. Countries like Rwanda have implemented ambitious national fibre optic backbone projects to provide broadband connectivity across urban and rural areas.

Despite these advancements, rural areas still face considerable challenges. Limited infrastructure, high costs, and inadequate electricity supply hinder the widespread adoption of ICTs in these regions. Bridging this rural-urban divide remains a critical task for policymakers.



WOMEN'S ACCESS TO ICTS

The digital divide is not only geographical but also gendered. Women in East Africa are significantly less likely to have access to ICTs than men. According to a World Wide Web Foundation report, women in urban low-income areas are 50% less likely to use the Internet than men. This disparity is influenced by various socioeconomic factors, including educational attainment, income levels, and cultural norms.

In Kenya, the gender gap in mobile phone ownership stands at 13%, with women facing barriers such as cost, digital literacy, and perceived irrelevance of technology. Similar trends are observed in Uganda and Tanzania, where cultural expectations and safety concerns further limit women's access to and use of ICTs.

Several initiatives have been launched to address the digital gender divide. For instance, the WomenConnect Challenge by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) supports innovative solutions to increase women's access to digital technology. In Kenya, the national government and private sector partners have rolled out digital literacy programmes targeting women and girls to enhance their digital skills and economic opportunities.

Community-based approaches have also proven effective. In Rwanda, initiatives like the Digital Ambassadors Programme train young women to teach digital skills within their communities, promoting peer learning and empowerment. Additionally, the proliferation of women-focused tech hubs and incubators, such as AkiraChix in Nairobi, provides platforms for women to engage with technology, develop skills, and foster entrepreneurship.

While East Africa has made commendable progress in enhancing access to the Internet and ICTs, challenges persist, particularly regarding rural connectivity and the digital gender divide. Addressing these issues requires comprehensive strategies involving government policy, private-sector investment, and community engagement.

ABORTION AND SRHR IN THE REGION

Sexual and reproductive rights, including access to safe abortion, are fundamental human rights that significantly impact the health and well-being of women, girls and gender-diverse people. In East Africa, these rights are often constrained by legal, cultural, and socio-economic barriers. The legal status of abortion in East Africa varies considerably, reflecting the diverse cultural and religious contexts of the region. Generally, abortion laws in East Africa are restrictive, with most countries permitting abortion only to save the life of the woman or to preserve her health.

- **Kenya:** The Kenyan Constitution allows abortion when the life or health of the mother is in danger or in cases of emergency. Additionally, the national guidelines on the management of sexual and gender-based violence in Kenya provide for access to termination of pregnancies and post-abortion care in the event of pregnancy from rape. However, access to safe abortion services remains limited due to stigma, lack of awareness, and inadequate health infrastructure.

- **Uganda:** Abortion is permitted to save the life of the mother, yet the law is vague, leading to varied interpretations and significant barriers to access. Unsafe abortions are common, contributing to high maternal mortality rates.

- **Tanzania:** Similar to Uganda, Tanzania permits abortion only to save the life of the mother. The legal restrictions contribute to the prevalence of unsafe abortions, which pose significant health risks.

- **Rwanda:** Rwanda has slightly more liberal abortion laws, allowing abortion in cases of rape, incest, forced marriage, or health risks to the mother. Nonetheless, societal stigma and legal barriers still hinder access.

- **Burundi and South Sudan:** These countries have among the most restrictive abortion laws in the region, allowing abortion only to save the mother's life. Consequently, unsafe abortions are a significant public health issue.

Sexual and Reproductive Health Services

Access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services in East Africa is constrained by various factors, including inadequate healthcare infrastructure, limited availability of trained healthcare providers, and cultural barriers.

- **Contraceptive Access:** There have been improvements in contraceptive access and use, particularly in Kenya and Rwanda, where government policies and international aid have supported family planning programs. However, the unmet need for contraception remains high across the region, particularly in rural areas.
- **Maternal Health:** East African countries have made progress in reducing maternal mortality, but rates remain high. Skilled birth attendance and emergency obstetric care are critical but often inaccessible, especially in remote areas.
- **Abortion Access:** There is limited access to safe abortion in the region because of cultural stigma, lack of implementation guidelines and information, and administrative obstacles. In Kenya, there have been some arrests of abortion providers because of legal ambiguities occasioned by the different legal interpretations, some as a result of bias from the bench.
- **Education and Information:** Investigations in Kenya have shown that comprehensive sex education is failing students, in part because they have mainly promoted abstinence-only in their curricula. There still remains a considerable gap in adolescents' access to information on SRHR.

Digital Access and Reproductive Rights

The digital revolution offers new avenues to improve access to sexual and reproductive health information and services. Mobile health (mHealth) initiatives and online platforms are increasingly used to disseminate information, provide counselling, and connect individuals with healthcare services.

- **Information Dissemination:** Digital platforms, such as mobile apps and social media, provide vital information on sexual and reproductive health, including contraception, safe abortion, and maternal health. For instance, a platform in Kenya and Tanzania offers SMS-based information on family planning.
- **Telemedicine:** Telemedicine services are emerging as a solution to the geographical barriers to accessing reproductive health services. Some organisations provide online counselling and support for safe abortion services, helping women navigate restrictive legal environments and access safe care.
- **Digital Literacy and Access:** Despite digital tools' potential, challenges such as low digital literacy and limited internet access, particularly in rural areas and among women, must be addressed to fully leverage these technologies.



CHAPTER 2: BARRIERS TO SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS IN THE DIGITAL SPACE

The blocking of the Women on Web website case is part of a global struggle over digital spaces for sexual and reproductive rights. In this chapter, we explore the obstacles and restrictions hindering access to sexual reproductive rights online globally. These barriers, akin to those in the physical realm, restrict women's autonomy over their bodies, transcending into the digital domain. They include:



CENSORSHIP AND DELETION OF CONTENT ON SRHR

“Impeding access to accurate, factual information on sexual and reproductive health can have serious implications for a range of human rights, including endangering the life and health of women and girls.”

Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, Irene Khan.

Digital platforms use diverse methods to censor content, resulting in infringements on freedom of expression, biased algorithms, and compromised user privacy. These techniques include:

Recommendation algorithms:

- **Content filtering:** Recommendation algorithms filter content based on keywords, images, or behavioural patterns, often resulting in the removal of content considered inappropriate or controversial.
- **Content customisation:** Platforms can personalise recommendations, resulting in an “echo chamber” where users only see content that reflects their own opinions, limiting the diversity of perspectives.

Content moderation:

- **Algorithmic moderation:** It consists of using algorithms to detect controversial content automatically.
- **Human moderation:** Platforms employ human moderators to enforce content policies. However, there is the risk that their biases may influence which content to remove.
- **Labelled:** Instead of directly removing certain content, platforms can label it or include warnings to inform about its possible controversial nature.

Downranking:

- **Algorithm manipulation:** Platforms can adjust their algorithms to "relegate" certain content, making it less visible to users.

Shadow Banning:

- **Hide contents:** This involves hiding a user's content without notification, allowing them to continue interacting and producing content without knowing that they are invisible to others.

The blocking of the WoW website in Spain is part of a broader pattern where different States and technology companies censor content related to women's SRHR. Also, anti-rights factions promote digital suppression and the blocking of information on abortion. Examples include:

Censorship and suppression:

- Organisations like WoW, the Oriéntame Foundation, and the International Planned Parenthood Federation have faced censorship for disseminating information on abortion and sexual and reproductive health topics. In Kenya, [Marie Stopes Kenya's operations](#) faced shutdown for its 2018 campaign on sexual and reproductive rights.
- Meta (owner of Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp) frequently [deletes accounts and publications](#) related to safe abortion, labelling them as "adult content" or promoting products or services for adults while allowing false information and advertising about abortion.
- TikTok prohibits the advertising of abortion services, especially those related to abortion pills and [releases content related to abortion](#).
- In Colombia, Google obstructs [organisations offering abortion services from advertising and appearing among the top search results in the first results](#), except in a few countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and Ireland and limits it in other countries where abortion has also been decriminalised.

Content moderation:

- In 2022, Facebook shared [Messenger conversations](#) of a mother and her daughter with Nebraska Police for allegedly planning to buy abortion pills to have an abortion. Police used this information to prosecute them.
- [Brazil](#) blocked access to several websites, including www.womenonwaves.org
- Poland imposed stringent abortion restrictions, accompanied by inflammatory rhetoric and disinformation campaigns. A [bill](#) prohibiting any information or promotion of abortion domestically and abroad was proposed in Poland but ultimately rejected.
- A [bill in Texas](#) aims to compel internet service providers within the state to block sites that provide abortion information. If approved, it would be illegal to "create, edit, upload, publish, host, maintain, or register a domain name for an internet website, platform, or other interactive computer services that assists or facilitates a person's effort in obtaining an abortion-inducing drug".

DISINFORMATION

Disinformation poses a significant threat to democracies and human rights today, particularly concerning SRHR. Gender misinformation, a form of online violence, aims to silence women and gender-diverse voices by portraying women as weak and incompetent, sexualised objects and undermining their leadership abilities. Additionally, it seeks to exclude women and gender non-conforming individuals from public spaces and positions of power while silencing those who defy gender norms. It not only targets individuals but also undermines collective feminist struggles and efforts for gender equality.

This violates women's right to health by spreading false information about SHR. Therefore, gender misinformation undermines the right of women and other gender-diverse individuals to accurate health information.

In **Ireland**, around the time of the abortion referendum, false information was spread linking abortion to depression, cancer, and Down syndrome¹⁹.

In **Italy**, a campaign by pro-life groups falsely claimed that abortion was the leading cause of femicide in the world²⁰.

A study carried out in **Latin America** found a thematic predominance of disinformation campaigns focused on gender violence and abortion, questioning women's right to physical autonomy, as well as polarising the exercise of that right²¹.

In **Kenya**, it is believed that abortions are for young, unmarried, and promiscuous women. Amongst young people, it is believed abortions can be caused by non-medical methods like drinking excessive tea leaves or bleach, amongst others. The use of such crude methods has led to life-long complications and deaths among adolescents.

LACK OF LAWS AND PRECEDENTS on fundamental rights in the digital space

Despite the importance of digital platforms, the WoW Case highlights the absence of a legal framework for protecting fundamental rights in the digital space, particularly the freedom of association and information. This raises questions about safeguarding these rights in online activities like telemedicine services. It highlights the need to review and clarify the digital space's freedom of expression and information framework, especially as more services move online. Despite the ruling's importance, Spain needs a straightforward procedure for the Administration to seek judicial authorisation to shut down a website. This absence allows authorities like AEMPS to block pages arbitrarily without justification. In this context, the Court observed that:

“

No procedure is provided to authorise the interruption of websites in all the cases that enable this. Indeed, until now, jurisprudence has not had the opportunity to deal with this problem, but the present case has revealed the existence of this gap in our procedural legislation

Supreme Court Ruling 1231/2022.

”



“

News, data, and factual judgments (information), as well as opinions, positions, and value judgments (expression), circulate publicly through the Internet, and, in this sense, websites fulfil a function comparable to that of traditional media for information and expression. From this, it follows that, in principle, art. 20.5 of the Constitution applies to the interruption of access to website

Supreme Court Ruling 1231/2022.

”

In general, the lack of regulations for digital platforms, search engines, and social networks poses a series of challenges:

1 The cross-border nature of the information that moves on these platforms suggests the need for global and regional consensus on content moderation and the platforms' responsibility for what is disseminated on them.

2 The lack of regulation leaves too much room for technology companies' subjectivity to decide what is controversial content and what should be done with it. There are also no common standards for how these companies should deal with disinformation.

3 Data protection and privacy regulations are very uneven between regions and countries. While the EU has the General Data Protection Regulation that creates a robust protection framework, most regions have lax and outdated rules.

4 The focus on self-regulation has dominated this debate in recent years. Although it is a necessary mechanism, it is incomplete without codes of conduct, standards, criteria, and real accountability mechanisms for the platforms' actions.

FACTUAL BARRIERS to accessing the right to abortion

Lessons from WoW Case

Despite abortion being legally recognised as a right in the [Organic Law on sexual and reproductive health and voluntary interruption of pregnancy](#) in Spain, many women and girls face significant barriers to accessing safe abortion services, prompting unsafe procedures. These barriers disproportionately affect migrant women, those in rural areas, adolescents, and individuals in violent contexts. The barriers include 1) the generalisation of conscientious objection, 2) delays in diagnosis and testing, 3) geographic and socioeconomic discrimination, 4) discrimination based on immigration status, and 5) lack of information about the procedure to access abortion in all the terms and conditions that are in the law.

Recognising these obstacles, the government amended the law in [February 2023](#). However, its effectiveness depends on regional administrations' regulatory development. The explanatory statement of this reform accepts that the sexual and reproductive rights of women in Spain are not being effectively guaranteed and states, among other things, that:

“The vast majority of voluntary terminations of pregnancy end up taking place in private out-of-hospital centres” (84.5% of abortions are performed in private centres, although the 2010 law establishes it as “a service included in the portfolio of benefits of the health system”); “The territorial difference in the exercise of this right is especially worrying since there are territories in Spain

that in recent years have not reported any voluntary termination of pregnancy in publicly owned centres.”;

- “The poor regulation of conscientious objection constitutes an obstacle for women when they exercise their right to access sexual and reproductive health services.”.

While the reforms are a step forward, they fail to address all concerns. The impact of ensuring equal access to safe abortion for all pregnant individuals in Spain remains uncertain.

The [Digital Services Regulation](#) of the European Union will come into force in February 2024. It is the world's first digital standard that requires digital services companies across the EU to be accountable for the content published on their platforms. It focuses on the creation of a safer online environment and the protection of fundamental rights in the digital environment by establishing new rules on:

- the fight against illegal online content, including goods, services, and information, in full respect of the Charter of Fundamental Rights;
- combating online risks to society;
- the traceability of traders in online markets;
- transparency measures for online platforms;
- reinforced supervision.

LACK OF ACCESSIBLE PUBLIC INFORMATION

Although LO 2/2010 has been in force for more than ten years in Spain, the information available about the provision of the Voluntary Interruption of Pregnancy that the administrative authorities provide is insufficient. Neither the Ministry of Health nor the Ministry of Equality offers online information on how to access an abortion. Most of the information available is for professional use or statistical purposes. The Health Departments of the Autonomous Communities (CCAA) also do not offer complete and updated information on how to access the service, the available methods, or the procedure that must be followed to be able to exercise the right. Some CCAA, such as Castilla y León,

even [provide misleading information and refer those who have questions about abortion to anti-choice organisations like Red Madre](#)²⁷.

A report prepared by [L'Associació de Drets Sexuals i Reproductius](#) demonstrated that the state health authorities have not carried out any citizen awareness campaign to inform about the right to abortion since the Law came into force.²⁸ The Ministry of Health, in the 2010-2020 period, has carried out more than 80 information campaigns, [none of them about abortion](#)²⁹.



Some revealing data:

- In Spain, in 2016, more than 80% of women did not know that they could have a free abortion, half of those under 30 years of age did not know that they could abort by their own decision, and two out of every three children under 18 years of age had information wrong about the right to abortion for minors.
- No Spanish health authority provides complete and accessible information on pharmacological abortion or facilitates access to the process without having to go to a clinic.
- From 2010 to 2020, the Ministry of Health carried out more than 80 information campaigns, none of which related to abortion.
- The WOW site received 1,100 visits every day from Spanish IPs before the blockade.

CHAPTER 3: HACKING THE LEGAL STATUS QUO



THE MAPUTO PROTOCOL: where are we?

The [Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa](#), also known as the Maputo Protocol, was adopted on July 11, 2003, in Maputo, Mozambique and entered into force on November 25, 2005, after it was ratified by at least 15 African Union member states. It aims to promote and protect the rights of African women. It addresses issues regarding equality, political participation, reproductive rights, access to justice, marriage and family life, economic and social welfare, and protection from violence, among others.

Its Article XIV is about health and reproductive rights and includes

1. a) The right to control their fertility;
b) The right to decide whether to have children, the number of children and the spacing of children;
c) The right to choose any method of contraception;
d) The right to self-protection and to be protected against sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS;
e) The right to be informed on one's health status and the health status of one's partner, particularly if affected with sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS, in accordance with internationally recognised standards and best practices;
f) The right to have family planning education

The States must also take measures to

2. a) Provide adequate, affordable and accessible health services, including information, education and communication programmes to women, especially those in rural areas;
b) Establish and strengthen existing pre-natal, delivery and post-natal health and nutritional services for women during pregnancy and while they are breast-feeding;
c) Protect the reproductive rights of women by authorising medical abortion in cases of sexual assault, rape, incest, and where the continued pregnancy endangers the mental and physical health of the mother or the life of the mother or the foetus.

Out of 55 African states, 52 have signed the Protocol, but 8 have not ratified it. Abortion has been a subject in which countries have different degrees of compliance. For example, Ethiopia and Rwanda go beyond it and allow access to it on socio-economic grounds. Some countries guarantee what is stipulated in [Maputo](#). Others only have partial compliance. A handful of them, like Kenya and Uganda, had [reservations](#) in the ratification.

The first one said, “The Government of the Republic of Kenya does not consider as binding upon itself the provisions of Article 10(3) and Article 14(2)(c), which is inconsistent with the provisions of the Laws of Kenya on health and reproductive rights.” The latter expressed reservations regarding “1. Article 14(1)(a): In respect to the women’s right to control their

fertility interpreted to mean; women entirely have the right to control their fertility regardless of their marital status. 2. Article 14(2)(c): interpreted in a way conferring an individual right to abortion or mandating a State Party to provide access to it. The State is not bound by this clause unless permitted by domestic legislation expressly providing for abortion.”

In 2014 the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights, established by the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights, issued the [General Comment No. 2 on Article 14.1 \(a\), \(b\), \(c\) and \(f\) and Article 14. 2 \(a\) and \(c\)](#) of the Protocol because some States Parties have been limiting women’s and girls’ access to family planning, criminalising and difficulting access to safe abortion, even where it’s legal. It states that :

“

“The Commission would like to stress the importance of information and education on family planning/contraception and safe abortion for women, especially adolescent girls and young people. State parties must ensure the provision of comprehensive information and education on human sexuality, reproduction and sexual and reproductive rights. The content must be based on clinical findings, rights-based, without judgment and take into account the level of maturity of adolescent girls and the youth.”

”

In December 2013, 21 countries in Eastern and Southern Africa signed the [Ministerial Commitment on comprehensive sexuality education and sexual and reproductive health services for adolescents and young people in Eastern and Southern Africa \(ESA\)](#). Its targets for 2015 were:

“

1. A good quality CSE curriculum framework is in place and being implemented in each of the 20 countries;
2. Pre and in-service SRH and CSE training for teachers, health and social workers are in place and being implemented in all 20 countries;
3. (...) decrease by 50% the number of adolescents and young people who do not have access to youth-friendly SRH services including HIV that are equitable, accessible, acceptable, appropriate and effective

”

In 2023, Kenya withdrew from the commitment.

APPROACHES TO JUSTICE: Addressing the Right to Information in the Digital Age

In many countries, the right to access information is recognised as part of the Bill of Rights and in tandem with international standards. However, this has proven to be a challenge, especially with the advancement of technology and Internet use. Access to information on sexual and reproductive health services is most affected. The WoW case has, however, demonstrated that access to reliable online information is a constitutional right that ought to be protected.

Legal Framework and International Standards of Freedom of Expression

| International Framework | Standard |
|--|--|
| <p>Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)</p> | <p>Article 19. Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media, regardless of frontiers.</p> |
| <p>International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966)</p> | <p>Article 19.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Everyone shall have the right to hold opinions without interference. 2. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice. 3. The exercise of the rights provided for in paragraph 2 of this article carries with it special duties and responsibilities. It may, therefore, be subject to certain restrictions, but these shall only be such as are provided by law and are necessary: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) For respect of the rights or reputations of others; b) For the protection of national security or of public order (order public), or of public health or morals. |
| <p>African Charter on Human and People's Rights (1988)</p> | <p>Article 9.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Every individual shall have the right to receive information. 2. Everyone shall have the right to express and disseminate their opinions within the law. |
| <p>Resolution 169 on the repeal of the criminal defamation law in Africa of the African Commission on Human and People's Rights - 24 November 2010</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Underlines that criminal defamation laws constitute a severe interference of freedom of expression and impede the role of the media as watchdogs, preventing journalists and media professionals from exercising their profession without fear and in good faith; 2. Congratulate States Parties to the African Charter (States Parties) that do not have, or have completely repealed, laws on insults and criminal defamation; <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Calls on States Parties to repeal criminal defamation or insult laws that impede freedom of expression and to respect the provisions on freedom of expression articulated in the African Charter, the Declaration, and other regional and international instruments; b) Also calls on States parties to refrain from imposing general restrictions that violate the right to freedom of expression; |
| <p>European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms</p> | <p>Article 10.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers. This Article shall not prevent States from requiring the licensing of broadcasting, television or cinema enterprises. 2. The exercise of these freedoms, since it carries with it duties and responsibilities, may be subject to such formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society, in the interests of national security, territorial integrity or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, for the protection of the reputation or rights of others, for preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence, or for maintaining the authority and impartiality of the judiciary. |

| International Framework | Standard |
|--|--|
| <p>American Convention on Human Rights (1969)</p> | <p>Article 13.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Everyone has the right to freedom of thought and expression. This right includes freedom to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing, in print, in the form of art, or through any other medium of one's choice. 2. The exercise of the right provided for in the foregoing paragraph shall not be subject to prior censorship but shall be subject to subsequent imposition of liability, which shall be expressly established by law to the extent necessary to ensure: a. respect for the rights or reputations of others; or b—the protection of national security, public order, public health or morals. 3. The right of expression may not be restricted by indirect methods or means, such as the abuse of government or private controls over newsprint, radio broadcasting frequencies, or equipment used in the dissemination of information, or by any other means tending to impede the communication and circulation of ideas and opinions. 4. Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph 2 above, public entertainments may be subject by law to prior censorship for the sole purpose of regulating access to them for the moral protection of childhood and adolescence. 5. Any propaganda for war and any advocacy of national, racial, or religious hatred that constitutes incitements to lawless violence or any other similar action against any person or group of persons on any grounds |
| <p>Declaration of Human Rights of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)</p> | <p>There is no regional human rights body established for Asia. However, the ten ASEAN countries formally established the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) on October 23, 2009, during the 15th ASEAN Summit. The group also adopted Art. 23 of the Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees freedom of expression.</p> |



The right to freedom of expression has solid legal protection in international human rights bodies. Litigation to fight against the digital suppression of information on sexual and reproductive health and access to abortion services can strengthen the legal framework of freedom of expression in the area of reproductive rights, generate standards on the intersection between reproductive rights and digital rights, or even promote regulatory changes.

The challenges organisations, activists, and defenders of reproductive rights face in the digital world are very similar in different contexts. A favourable judicial decision from a country can favourably impact a broader group of people and reinforce or accompany advocacy and campaign actions at a global level.

Litigation can make the problem of digital suppression regarding reproductive rights visible and help generate public debate. A positive or negative decision on a particular case of digital suppression regarding reproductive rights can be the hook for the media to take an interest in the issue and address this problem from a global perspective. In this sense, litigation in itself constitutes a campaign tool.

INTERCONNECTED LIBERTIES:

The Nexus Between Freedom of Expression and Freedom of Association

Freedom of expression and the freedom of association are intricately linked, with the exercise often reinforcing the other. The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) explicitly protects these rights in Articles 10 and 11, respectively, recognising their mutual reinforcement. Similarly, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) enshrines these freedoms in Articles 9 and 10, emphasising their importance in fostering democratic governance and civic participation. These treaties highlight that the ability to express oneself freely is often contingent on the ability to assemble and associate with like-minded individuals and vice versa. Understanding this nexus is crucial for protecting and promoting human rights globally.

The ECtHR has held that freedom of expression is intrinsically related to and challenging to separate from the right to freedom of assembly and association. In

[Women On Waves and others against Portugal](#) in 2009, this instance determined that the prohibition of the entry of a ship intended to inform on sexual and reproductive rights violated the right to freedom of expression³⁴.

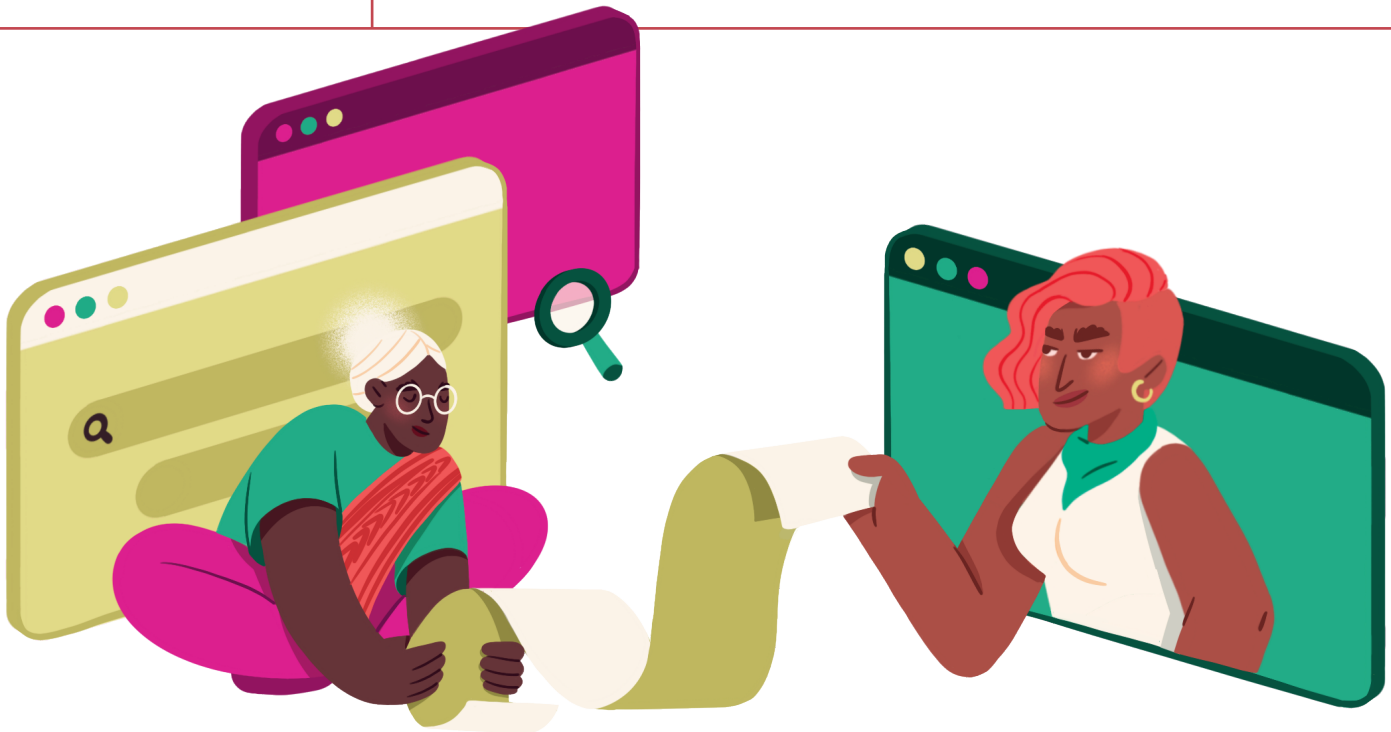
The connection between freedom of expression, association, and telemedicine requires development by the courts. As digital platforms have become fundamental means for delivering health services, jurisprudence must adapt and offer specific guidelines to protect these rights in the context of telemedicine.

Developing specific jurisprudence would provide legal certainty in a rapidly developing sector such as telemedicine. Clear regulation can ensure the provision of health services through digital platforms and the protection of associated fundamental rights.

Case Law advancing access to information and freedom of association

| Citation | Holding |
|---|---|
| Community Court of Justice of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) SERAP v. Federal Republic of Tanzania ECW/CCJ/JUD/40/22 | Access to Twitter is a “derivative right” that is “complementary to the enjoyment of the right to freedom of expression.” |
| Katiba Institute Vs. President's Delivery Unit HC Constitutional. Pet. 468 of 2017 | All “citizens” held the right of access to information, and recent legislation had defined “citizen” as including “any private entity that is controlled by one or more Kenyan citizens” (such as the NGO in the case). received in confidence, or for maintaining the authority and impartiality of the judiciary. |

| Citation | Holding |
|--|--|
| <p>Case of Delfi As vs Estonia Application No. 64569/09</p> | <p>It was recognised that "user-generated expressive activity on the Internet provides an unprecedented platform for the exercise of freedom of expression."</p> |
| <p>Spanish Constitutional Court Judgement 172/2020</p> | <p>The protection of freedom of expression, contained in Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECtHR) and reiterated by the ECtHR, covers the substance of the ideas and information expressed and how they are expressed and transmitted. That protection extends to the Internet, given its ability to store and disseminate large amounts of data and information.</p> |
| <p>Sentence of the Plenary Session of the Constitutional Court no. 236/2007, of November 7, 2007</p> | <p>Freedom of association is "an essential component of pluralist democracies, since without it such a system does not seem viable today, from which results, ultimately, one of its structural elements as an ingredient of the Rule of Law."</p> |
| <p>Case of Vogt against Germany, September 26, 1995</p> | <p>Despite its specificity, art. 11 ECHR must be seen in the light of Art. 10 ECHR since the protection of personal opinions (freedom of expression) contemplated is one of the objectives of the freedom of assembly and association enshrined in Art. 11 ECHR</p> |



CHAPTER 4: LESSONS AND GOOD PRACTICES

Feminist strategies, including strategic litigation and legal advocacy, require an intersectional, anti-racist, and anti-colonial approach for meaningful impact, as traditional methods are inadequate to create significant societal change. Therefore, drawing from over twenty years of experience, Women's Link Worldwide has honed its approach by prioritising the voices and realities of communities and grassroots organisations, particularly women, girls, and gender-diverse people, within our strategies. We have become familiar with their lives, realities, and aspirations through each case and legal journey. Along the way, we have forged strong partnerships with feminist organisations and movements within our regions, achieving significant impacts that seemed unattainable.

In Rwanda, we submitted an amicus curiae to the Supreme Court to support Esther, a rural woman who lost all economic support after she was left by her partner and fired from her job due to pregnancy. She went to a hospital and was instructed to buy prescribed medicine, but she couldn't afford it and had to have her delivery at home by herself. The baby died due to complications.

She was charged with infanticide, denied legal representation, and sentenced to life in prison. She challenged the ruling without legal aid, and when it got to the highest court, we supported her and influenced the court to reduce her sentence to ten years. Her story triggered positive change, leading to the presidential pardon of 417 women, including Esther. Also, the government changed the law to allow legal abortions under specified conditions.



This case illuminated systemic issues faced by marginalized women and girls, such as the State's failure to address the barriers preventing them from accessing their rights to health and justice. It catalysed legal progress and highlighted the long road ahead for social decriminalisation and access to reproductive justice in Rwanda and globally.

The Women on Web case, which we explained in this toolkit, confronts us with a challenging reality. The digital space is an essential tool for accessing information and a platform for global activism against discrimination of any form, but it also poses a danger. Anti-rights groups exploit it to spread disinformation, prejudices and hate speech. We emphasise that litigation cannot be an end in itself. While a legal win can advance rights, lasting impact requires complementary actions and strategies, especially collective advocacy efforts. Therefore, the following key insights from the Women on Web case are valuable for legal professionals, activists, and organisations that face similar challenges in safeguarding sexual and reproductive rights in the digital sphere:

THE COURTS MUST BE FREE

of all types of discrimination

Gender stereotypes pose a barrier to justice; often, judicial officers' perceptions and interpretations of facts and laws are influenced by their biases. While some judicial officers recognise and overcome these biases, others may remain unaware of them, and the biases may go unnoticed by everyone. Judicial officers need to acknowledge their biases to prevent decisions based on stereotypes that could result in discriminatory decisions. Feminist organisations fill the gap by training judicial officers, Supreme Court officials, and prosecutors in different countries and educating them on integrating a gender perspective into applying the law.



LACK OF KNOWLEDGE

of digital issues

Given the increasing significance of digital space in people's lives, it is necessary to increase the capacity and knowledge of courts and tribunals regarding the legal issues arising from the digital realm. For instance, the Supreme Court of Spain's Ruling became impossible to implement due to the lack of technical means to partially unblock the website without jeopardising the users' data security, potentially conflicting with the General Data Protection Regulation of the European Union (GDPR).

Furthermore, before the Supreme Court, the State Attorney's defence exhibited a profound disregard for women's rights and a lack of digital literacy. Simply suggesting that Women on Web's rights to freedom of

expression would be easily repairable and that WoW could segregate the information activity on a different website or open as many pages as it likes is preposterous. The suggestion overlooks the significant financial costs and time required for the website design, programming, and optimisation of search engines. Moreover, the current WoW website has established a strong presence over the years, making it a reliable resource for users seeking information about abortion. Instead of overburdening users with multiple sites, the focus should be ensuring that users can access the necessary information quickly, securely, and reliably.

The need to

WORK IN ALLIANCES

Conservative anti-rights groups strategically permeate various sectors like politics, media, social networks, and digital platforms. In turn, feminists and human rights organisations must ensure cooperation as a working method. By forming alliances, they leverage diverse perspectives and experiences to enhance strategies and narratives. Trust, understanding, and respecting cultural backgrounds are vital for solid partnerships. Even if successful, these alliances are necessary for the litigation to have the desired scope. One notable success resulting from such collaboration is the partnership between Women's Link Worldwide and Women on Web, which advanced the protection of online sexual and reproductive health information. These feminist alliances are instrumental in securing victories for women's rights globally.

The Causa Justa movement, uniting more than 100 feminist organisations, celebrated a historic victory in Colombia: the decriminalisation of abortion up to the 24th week. This achievement places Colombia at the forefront as one of the countries with advanced legislation in Latin America and the Caribbean. As proud members, we remain committed to advancing the social acceptance of abortion.



We partner with the Consejo Cívico de Organizaciones Populares e Indígenas de Honduras (Civic Council of Popular and Indigenous Organisations of Honduras) y el Movimiento Amplio por la Dignidad y la Justicia (Broad Movement for Dignity and Justice) to accompany the Lenca and Tolupán indigenous peoples in the presentation of an amicus curiae before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, within the framework of the Advisory Opinion on Human Rights and Climate Emergency requested by Chile and Colombia. Together, we are developing a concept of intersectional justice, connecting reproductive, racial, and climate justice and highlighting the disproportionate impacts of the climate crisis on their communities.

From 2019 to 2021, Women's Link partnered with Black women's organisations to develop and publish several reports ("Brave Voices," "Black Women's Cries for Freedom, Reparation, and Memory," and "No Justice and Reparation there will be no peace"), to make visible how racism, gender and class inequality were experienced by black women in Colombia during the armed conflict. These reports were presented to the Truth Commission and the Special Jurisdiction for Peace. Preparing the reports strengthened these organisations, making their voices and demands visible.

In Kenya, we have worked supporting JMM's mother and FIDA Kenya before the High Court of Kenya, advocating for legal and safe abortions, especially for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. JMM was a young girl who was sexually violated by an older man, became pregnant and lost her life after an unsafe

abortion. The Court held that withdrawing the 2012 Standards and Guidelines for Reducing Morbidity and Mortality and National Training Curriculum had been arbitrarily and unlawfully withdrawn, effectively reinstating them. It also found that abortion is permitted for survivors of sexual violence, classified post-abortion care as emergency care, and awarded JMM's mother compensation for the violation of her daughter's right to sexual and reproductive health rights.

We are working with allied organisations in Brazil, Chile, the Dominican Republic, Kenya, Uganda, Panama, Rwanda, and Tanzania to incorporate feminist, anti-colonial, anti-racist, and community narratives into the legal ecosystem. We are incorporating a feminist critique into our academic and technical-legal jargon. We know we must continue strengthening the best way to touch hearts and minds.

ADDING A GENDER PERSPECTIVE to digital activism, and vice versa

Digital, sexual and reproductive rights are interdependent and must be understood as human rights. Digital rights are a tool to guarantee access to SRHR. The Internet should be considered a crucial public service guaranteed by States, with attention given to addressing historical inequities and access barriers for marginalized groups, including women. Recognising this complementarity between SRHR and digital rights offers opportunities and challenges. It allows for innovative strategies to promote SRHR through digital platforms, such as raising awareness about abortion rights, the consequences of criminalisation of abortion, and creating new tools for access. However, it also requires addressing the growing online violence against women and sexual minorities and regulating digital platforms in a way that respects freedom of expression while combating harmful content.

GO BEYOND COURT WALLS

While legal victories are essential for driving societal change, they alone cannot address the complexity of social issues. It is crucial to prioritise the aspects of legal action, such as modifying laws or seeking court rulings. Still, these efforts must be supplemented by other forms of mobilisation, communication, and advocacy to achieve lasting transformations. Organising meetings, seminars, and training sessions can help consolidate expert voices, empower activists, and engage various stakeholders from governments,

academia, and the media. In the case of WoW, our goal goes beyond unblocking the website; we aim to raise awareness about barriers to accessing abortion and the importance of reliable SRHR services and information in Spain and other countries. Alongside legal proceedings, we conducted awareness sessions with journalists and media editors, published opinion pieces, participated in radio and television interviews, and launched social media campaigns to achieve this objective.

Webinar
**From Stigma to Strength:
Championing Menstrual
Wellness in East Africa**

Mark the date! **TUESDAY, 28TH MAY 2024**
Starting at: **16:00 HRS EAT/13:00 HRS GMT**
Location: **ZOOM / R. S. V. P.**

Guest Speakers

- Ms. Teresa Omond-Adetani, Deputy Executive Director, Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE Africa)
- Sylvia Khasani, Executive Director, Simama na Dada Initiative
- Arië, Judith-Simone, Advocate, Former Deputy Head of Mission, The Hague, Netherlands
- Lydia Tania, Director, Center for Justice & Advocacy, CERTA Foundation
- Primah Kwagala, Executive Director, Women Probono Initiative (WPI)
- Jovana Rios Clavero (opening remarks), Executive Director, Women's Link Worldwide

women's worldwide

In May 2024, we joined forces with allies in East Africa to work for a #PeriodFriendlyWorld and break the stigma around menstrual health in this region. We host the webinar From Stigma to Strength: Championing Menstrual Wellness in East Africa.



In August 2023, we sponsored an exchange of experiences between government and judicial authorities in Colombia and Kenya on the impact of specialised sexual and gender-based violence courts.

**CROSS-CONTINENTAL
INSIGHTS: SCALING UP
THE IMPACT OF
SPECIALIZED SEXUAL AND
GENDER-BASED
VIOLENCE (SGBV) COURTS**

An information exchange forum between
Kenya and Colombia

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**TUESDAY
22 AUGUST** | **TIME
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8:00 GMT-5**

Interpretation will be provided

MORE INFO
info@womenslinkworldwide.org

Speakers

- Clemencia Carabali, President's Advisor on Women's Equity, Colombia
- Jhoana Delgado, Vice-minister of Justice, Colombia
- Dr. Kizzile Shako, GBV Advisor to the Chief Justice, Kenya
- Hon. Nelly Karuki PM, In-Charge Shanzu Law Courts, Kenya

Closing remarks

- Jovana Rios Clavero, Executive Director, Women's Link Worldwide

women's worldwide

CREDITS

This document is based on the feminist strategic litigation work carried out by the Women's Link Worldwide team. In particular, the document draws on the work of Women's Link in Europe in the case of the blocking of the Women on Web website in Spain, which offered information on sexual and reproductive rights and access to pharmacological abortion. This document was prepared with funding from the [Digital Freedom Fund \(DFF\)](#).

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women's **L I N K** worldwide

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