



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Investment in Social Protections to Achieve Gender Equality

As we reflect on a year defined by unprecedented hurdles ranging from drastic funding cuts and a surging anti-rights movement to a rapidly shrinking civic space; we issue a collective call to governments, private sectors, and individuals. Gender-based violence remains widespread with the 2024 Uganda Police Force report showing 12,424 GBV cases, including 1,607 rape and 12,317 defilement cases. However, only about 26.6% of GBV cases reported to police are investigated and taken to court, and a marginal 4.8% result in convictions. Investment in social protections, specifically Gender-Based Violence (GBV) shelters, legal aid, and specialised trauma counseling, is not an act of charity; it is a fundamental requirement for gender justice and the long-term quality of life for survivors.

The theme *“Give to Gain”* serves as a vital reminder that when we invest in women and girls, whether through state budget allocations, corporate social responsibility and individual giving, we gain a safer, more resilient, and more equitable society. We cannot talk about justice or dignity for women and girls when the very structures that support survivors of violence and facilitate healing are being defunded into extinction. Without these social protections, legal victories remain hollow, and weak institutional responses often force survivors, majority of whom are women and girls back into the hands of their abusers. By investing in robust, trauma-informed care and specialised legal support, we insulate the hard-worn gains of gender justice from being eroded by the shifting political climates and economic crises.

**Strengthening Institutional Response:** We demand that governments move beyond rhetoric by adequately resourcing the police, forensic services, and the judiciary to ensure that GBV cases are handled with the urgency and legal rigour they deserve.

**Sustainable State Funding for Healing Spaces:** We call on governments to ring-fence budgets for GBV shelters and professional trauma counseling services, treating them as essential public infrastructure.

**Radical Collaboration:** We urge civil society to unite in advocating for the closing of legal and societal loopholes that allow perpetrators to evade justice, recognising that legal protection and psychological recovery are inseparable.

**The Power of Individual Giving:** In an era of institutional funding cuts, we encourage individuals to support grassroots movements directly, ensuring survivors have access to a bed, a lawyer, and the counseling needed to rebuild their lives.

**Defending the Civic Space:** We demand the protection of Human Rights Defenders and the removal of restrictive barriers that hinder the ability of NGOs to hold the state accountable.

On this International Women's Day, WPI and the Centre for Reproductive Rights stand in unwavering solidarity with survivors of gender-based violence and the advocates who champion their rights. Our commitment is absolute: we will continue to advocate, litigate, and mobilise until the safety of every girl and woman is no longer a luxury, but a non-negotiable reality

For more information about WPI's activities, please visit our website at [www.womenprobono.org](http://www.womenprobono.org) and our social media pages @womenprobono,wpi. Uganda et al or contact us on our toll-free line +256 (0) 800-220645 or email us directly at [info@womenprobono.org](mailto:info@womenprobono.org).

**About WPI:** The WPI is a feminist non-profit organisation with a reputation of boldly advancing equity, challenging discrimination and violence against women and girls, through advocacy and creative lawyering.

**About CRR:** CRR is a legal organisation taking cases to courts and human rights bodies, partnering with advocates, to protect reproductive health, self-determination, and dignity as basic human rights.