

REVIEW ARTICLE

Rethinking legal protection against gender-based and domestic violence in Angola: human rights and governance

Repensando la protección jurídica contra la violencia de género y doméstica en Angola: derechos humanos y gobernanza

Yonayka Licea-Suárez¹ Lisandra León-Brizuela² Ariadna Moya-Rodríguez¹
Leonel Céspedes-Tamayo¹ Osvaldo Hipólito-Fernando¹

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Abstract Gender-based and domestic violence remain among the most significant challenges to the protection of women's human rights in Angola. This study aimed to analyse the conceptual evolution of gender-based violence, examine the applicable national and international legal framework, and assess the institutional challenges affecting the effectiveness of the protection system from a socio-legal perspective. A qualitative research design was adopted through a legal-documentary review of scientific literature, national legislation, international human rights instruments, and institutional documents published mainly between 2020 and 2026. The findings reveal important legal advances through the Constitution of Angola, Law No. 25/11 on Domestic Violence, and international human rights instruments that strengthen the legal protection of women. However, significant challenges remain regarding effective access to justice, institutional coordination, prevention strategies, and the implementation of public policies. As its main contribution, the study proposes a socio-legal model structured around five strategic dimensions—prevention, comprehensive protection, access to justice, institutional coordination, and comprehensive repair—to strengthen the State's response and improve the effective protection of women's rights in Angola.

Keywords gender-based violence, domestic violence, human rights, angola.

Resumen La violencia de género y la violencia doméstica continúan representando uno de los principales desafíos para la protección de los derechos humanos de las mujeres en Angola. El objetivo de este estudio fue analizar la evolución conceptual de la violencia de género, examinar el marco jurídico nacional e internacional aplicable y valorar los principales desafíos institucionales que limitan la eficacia del sistema de protección desde una perspectiva socio-jurídica. Se desarrolló una investigación cualitativa basada en una revisión jurídico-documental de literatura científica, legislación nacional, instrumentos internacionales y documentos institucionales publicados principalmente entre 2020 y 2026. El análisis permitió identificar avances relevantes en el reconocimiento normativo de los derechos de las mujeres mediante la Constitución de Angola, la Lei n.º 25/11 contra la violencia doméstica y los instrumentos internacionales de derechos humanos. No obstante, persisten limitaciones relacionadas con el acceso efectivo a la justicia, la coordinación interinstitucional, la prevención y la implementación de las políticas públicas. Como principal aporte, el estudio propone un modelo sociojurídico integrado por cinco dimensiones estratégicas —prevención, protección integral, acceso a la justicia, coordinación institucional y reparación integral— orientado a fortalecer la respuesta del Estado y garantizar una protección efectiva de los derechos de las mujeres en Angola.

Palabras clave violencia de género, violencia doméstica, derechos humanos, angola.

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Yonayka Licea-Suárez
yonayka.licea@unic.co.ao

¹Universidade Internacional do Cuanza (UNIC). Angola.

²FUNIBER, España.

Introduction

Gender-based violence constitutes one of the most serious manifestations of human rights violations and one of the principal challenges confronting contemporary legal systems. Its persistence reflects structural inequalities based on gender that restrict the effective enjoyment of fundamental rights, including the rights to life, dignity, personal integrity, equality, and freedom. Although the international community has, over recent decades, strengthened the normative framework aimed at preventing (Jesrani & Garcia, 2025; Sivakumaran, 2025), sanctioning, and eradicating all forms of violence against women (Gómez, 2024), this phenomenon continues to represent a highly complex legal, social, and political challenge, particularly within developing countries (UN Women, 2024; Jesrani & Garcia, 2025).

The World Health Organization estimates that approximately one in three women has experienced physical or sexual violence during her lifetime, most frequently perpetrated by an intimate partner or former partner. This statistic underscores both the global scale of the problem and its profound implications for public health, sustainable development, and the effective protection of human rights (World Health Organization, 2021). Likewise, recent evidence published by UN Women and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) indicates that the home remains one of the most dangerous environments for women and girls, particularly in cases of lethal violence perpetrated by intimate partners or family members (UN Women & UNODC, 2024; Stöckl & Sorenson, 2024).

Within the African continent, gender-based violence remains closely associated with historical, cultural, economic, and institutional factors. Persistent inequalities between women and men, certain traditional practices, economic dependency, the limited availability of protection services, and barriers to accessing justice collectively contribute to the continued prevalence of domestic violence and other forms of gender-based violence (UNFPA, 2024). In response to these challenges, regional legal instruments such as the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol) (African Union, 2003) have reinforced the obligations of States to adopt legislative, administrative, and judicial measures designed to ensure the effective protection of women's rights (Mintarsih et al., 2026; Davies et al., 2025).

Angola has made significant normative progress in advancing gender equality and the protection of women's rights (Grubba et al., 2024) through the incorporation of international commitments, the enactment of specific legislation addressing domestic violence (Worthen & Schleifer, 2024), and the gradual strengthening of public policies. Nevertheless, numerous scholarly studies and international reports demonstrate that violence against women continues

to constitute a significant challenge for the legal system and for the institutions responsible for the prevention, protection, investigation, and prosecution of such acts. The persistent underreporting of cases, insufficient interinstitutional coordination, sociocultural barriers to reporting, and limitations affecting effective access to justice undermine the effectiveness of the protective measures established under the Angolan legal framework.

Although the scientific literature has extensively examined gender-based violence from medical, psychological, and sociological perspectives, legal scholarship specifically addressing the Angolan context remains limited and, in many instances, approaches normative issues in isolation without incorporating an interdisciplinary human rights-based perspective. This situation reveals a significant research gap concerning the integrated analysis of the conceptual evolution of gender-based violence, the development of the national and international legal framework, and the institutional challenges faced by Angola in ensuring the effective protection of women (Matos & Santos, 2025; Sivakumaran, 2025).

Against this background, the present article aims to analyse gender-based violence and domestic violence against women in Angola from a socio-legal and human rights perspective (Ibreck, 2024), identifying the principal normative and institutional challenges that constrain the effectiveness of the existing protection system. To this end, the study undertakes a legal-documentary review of the specialized scientific literature, Angolan legislation, and the principal international and regional human rights instruments concerning the protection of women's rights. The findings provide the basis for proposing an integrated interpretative framework that contributes to strengthening public policies and legal mechanisms aimed at preventing, addressing, and eradicating gender-based violence in Angola.

Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative research approach based on a descriptive and analytical legal-documentary design. The methodological strategy consisted of a narrative review of the scientific literature and the principal normative sources relating to gender-based violence and domestic violence against women, intending to examine the conceptual evolution of these legal categories and the challenges confronting Angola's protection system from a human rights perspective.

Following the application of the inclusion and exclusion criteria, a total of 68 documents were selected, including peer-reviewed scientific articles, international legal instruments, legislation, academic books, and technical reports, which constituted the documentary corpus analysed in this

research.

The literature search was conducted between January and March 2026 using the Scopus, Web of Science, SciELO, Redalyc, and Google Scholar databases. This search was complemented by an examination of Angolan national legislation, international human rights instruments, reports issued by specialized organizations, and official documents published by international organizations. The search strategy employed combinations of the keywords gender-based violence, domestic violence, women's rights, Angola, human rights, legal protection, and violence against women, together with their Spanish and Portuguese equivalents, using the Boolean operators AND and OR.

The inclusion criteria comprised peer-reviewed scientific articles, academic books, current legislation, international treaties, and institutional reports published primarily between 2020 and 2026, owing to their relevance to the Angolan legal and social context. In addition, seminal doctrinal works and foundational international legal instruments were incorporated where their inclusion was essential to the theoretical and legal framework of the study. Publications that were duplicated, lacked academic support, constituted opinion literature, or were not directly related to the research objectives were excluded from the review.

The information collected was subjected to a process of documentary analysis, legal interpretation, and thematic synthesis. The selected documents were organized into four analytical categories: (i) the conceptual evolution of gender-based violence; (ii) domestic violence as a manifestation of structural inequality; (iii) the national and international legal framework for the protection of women's rights; and (iv) institutional challenges to the prevention, response to, and prosecution of violence in Angola. This procedure enabled the integration of the principal doctrinal, normative, and institutional contributions into a critical analysis aimed at identifying the strengths, limitations, and opportunities for improving the legal protection system.

Finally, the study adhered to the principles of academic integrity, methodological transparency, and scientific rigour through the exclusive use of verifiable sources, accurately referenced in accordance with the APA (7th edition) guidelines, thereby ensuring the traceability of the information and the reliability of the analysis.

Results and discussion

The doctrinal and comparative analysis of specialised legal scThe Conceptual Evolution of Gender-Based Violence

The legal understanding of gender-based violence has undergone a significant transformation over recent decades, evolving from a narrow conception limited to domestic vi-

olence within the family to the recognition of a structural phenomenon rooted in historically unequal power relations between women and men. Initially, legal responses focused primarily on protecting family unity and sanctioning acts of physical violence committed within the domestic sphere. However, the progressive incorporation of a human rights-based approach has led to the recognition that violence against women constitutes a form of gender-based discrimination and a violation of fundamental rights that extends beyond the private domain.

This conceptual shift was consolidated through a series of international legal instruments that redefined the scope of legal protection afforded to women. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) established the obligation of States to adopt measures aimed at eliminating structural discrimination, while the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, adopted in 1993, expressly recognized that gender-based violence constitutes a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between women and men. Subsequently, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol) reinforced this approach within the African human rights system by expanding States' obligations to prevent, punish, and eradicate all forms of violence against women.

From a contemporary doctrinal perspective, gender-based violence cannot be confined exclusively to acts of physical or sexual violence. It encompasses a broad range of conduct, including psychological, economic, patrimonial, symbolic, institutional, and, more recently, digital violence (d'Amato et al., 2025), all of which are characterized by generating situations of domination, subordination, or exclusion that undermine the effective enjoyment of women's human rights. This conceptual expansion reflects the need to recognize emerging forms of violence arising from social and technological transformations, while simultaneously strengthening legal mechanisms capable of responding to increasingly complex contexts.

Within the African context, and particularly in Angola, the conceptual evolution of gender-based violence has likewise been shaped by historical, cultural, and socioeconomic factors. Persistent inequalities, certain traditional practices, economic dependency, and entrenched gender stereotypes continue to influence societal perceptions of violence and, in many cases, restrict victims' effective access to the protection mechanisms established under the national legal framework. Consequently, domestic violence should be understood as a specific manifestation of a broader structural phenomenon intrinsically linked to unequal power relations that extend beyond the family sphere.

Recent scholarship consistently demonstrates that the ef-

fectiveness of public policies depends not solely upon the existence of legal norms (Khosa-Nkatini & Muthivhi, 2026; Bawuah et al., 2025; Bennett & de Lacey, 2017; Gupta et al., 2013), but also upon the institutional capacity to ensure their effective implementation through prevention mechanisms, comprehensive support services, timely access to justice, and adequate remedies for victims. From this perspective, the conceptual evolution of gender-based violence requires its recognition as a multidimensional phenomenon demanding coordinated responses across the legal, social, health, and educational systems, thereby moving beyond exclusively punitive approaches and promoting comprehensive policies aimed at achieving substantive equality and ensuring the effective protection of women's human rights.

The conceptual evolution described above is summarized in Figure 1, which illustrates the transition from a traditional understanding of domestic violence toward a comprehensive human rights-based approach.

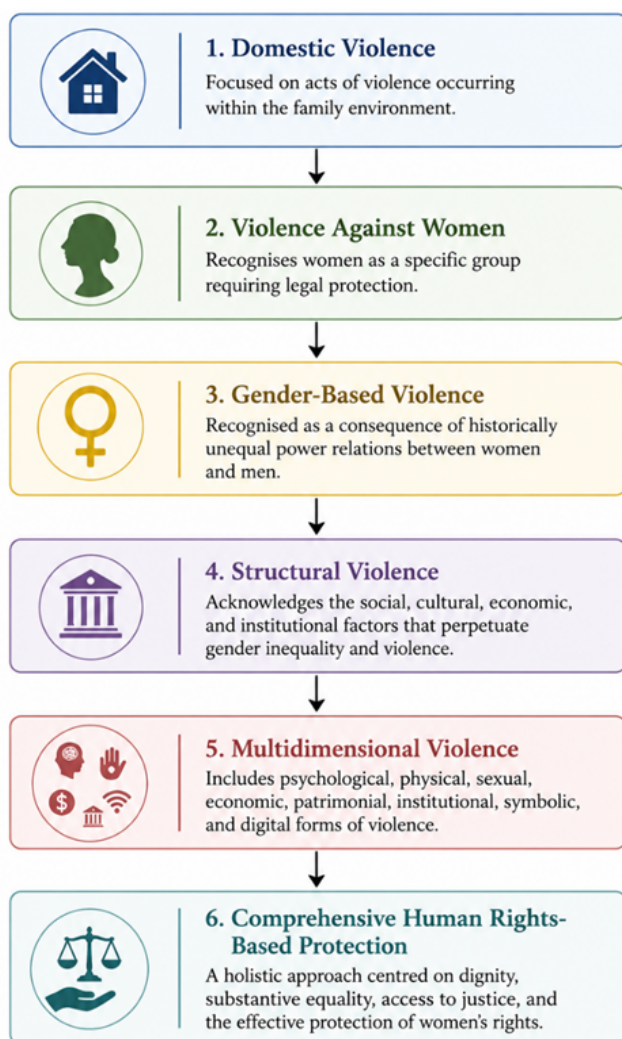


Figure 1. Conceptual Evolution of Gender-Based Violence.

Source: Prepared by the authors based on the evolution of

international legal doctrine and normative frameworks.

As illustrated in Figure 1, the conceptual evolution of gender-based violence reflects a gradual transition from approaches focused exclusively on the family sphere toward a multidimensional understanding grounded in substantive equality, comprehensive protection, and human rights. This transformation has directly influenced the development of contemporary legal systems and the formulation of public policies aimed at preventing and eradicating all forms of violence against women.

Domestic Violence as a Manifestation of Structural Gender Inequality

Domestic violence is no longer understood as a private conflict confined to the family sphere but is now recognized as a manifestation of the structural inequalities that have historically shaped relations between women and men. This paradigm shift represents one of the most significant advances in International Human Rights Law, moving the analysis beyond an exclusively criminal law perspective toward a comprehensive approach that incorporates social, cultural, economic, and institutional dimensions.

From this perspective, domestic violence constitutes a concrete expression of asymmetrical power relations that restrict women's autonomy and undermine the effective enjoyment of their fundamental rights. Its persistence is attributable not only to individual conduct but also to structural factors, including gender stereotypes, economic dependency, social tolerance of certain forms of violence, and the reproduction of discriminatory cultural norms. These factors contribute to the normalization of practices of control and domination, thereby hindering the early identification of situations of risk and reducing victims' willingness and ability to report acts of violence.

In Angola, domestic violence continues to represent one of the principal challenges to the protection of women's rights. Despite the legislative progress achieved through the enactment of specific legal provisions designed to prevent and punish this phenomenon, numerous national and international reports indicate that significant obstacles remain, including limited effective access to justice, unequal geographical coverage of specialized support services, insufficient coordination among the competent institutions, and the persistence of sociocultural barriers that contribute to the underreporting of cases.

Accordingly, the State's response to domestic violence must extend beyond a purely punitive approach. The effective protection of women requires public policies focused on prevention, comprehensive support services, legal as-

sistance, psychosocial support, and adequate remedies for victims, together with institutional mechanisms capable of ensuring coordinated action among the judiciary, health services, social protection agencies, and the institutions responsible for promoting gender equality.

The scientific literature consistently demonstrates that countries which have succeeded in reducing levels of violence against women have done so not solely through legislative reform but by implementing comprehensive strategies combining education for gender equality (Bawuah et al., 2025), institutional strengthening, timely access to justice, social protection measures, and sustained community awareness programmes. Consequently, the effectiveness of the Angolan legal system should be assessed not merely by the existence of protective legislation but also by its capacity to ensure an effective, coordinated, and human rights-based institutional response centred on the needs and rights of victims.

In this regard, domestic violence should be understood as a multidimensional public concern whose resolution requires the coordinated involvement of the State, judicial institutions, the education system, healthcare services, and civil society. Only through a preventive and interdisciplinary approach will it be possible to achieve comprehensive protection capable of reducing structural inequalities and strengthening women's access to effective justice.

These considerations provide the foundation for the analysis developed in the following section, which examines the legal framework currently in force in Angola and evaluates the extent to which its normative provisions effectively address the challenges identified.

Table 1 illustrates the evolution of the legal treatment of domestic violence from a private and predominantly criminal law approach toward a human rights-based model. This transformation demonstrates that the State's response can no longer be limited to the punishment of the perpetrator but must also incorporate comprehensive measures for the prevention of violence, the protection of victims, the provision of support services, and the full reparation of harm suffered.

The Legal Framework for the Protection of Women against Gender-Based Violence in Angola

The legal protection of women against gender-based violence in Angola has undergone progressive development over recent decades as a result of both domestic legislative reforms and the incorporation of international and regional human rights commitments. This process has contributed to the consolidation of a normative framework aimed at preventing, punishing, and eradicating violence against women. Nevertheless, its practical implementation continues to face significant challenges associated with institutional effectiveness and genuine access to justice.

The constitutional foundation of this protection is established in the Constitution of the Republic of Angola (República de Angola, 2010), which recognizes the inherent dignity of the human person, the principle of equality, and the prohibition of all forms of discrimination, while imposing upon the State the obligation to guarantee respect for and protection of the fundamental rights of all individuals. These constitutional principles provide the legal basis for the development of public policies and specific legislative measures designed to protect women from all forms of violence.

In furtherance of these constitutional mandates, Angola enacted the Law against Domestic Violence (Law No. 25/11 of 14 July) (Lei contra a Violência Doméstica (Lei n.º 25/11, de 14 de julho)) (República de Angola, 2011), which is regarded as one of the country's principal legal instruments for the prevention and punishment of domestic violence. This legislation broadened the traditional concept of family violence by recognizing multiple forms of abuse, including physical, psychological, sexual, economic, and patrimonial violence. It also introduced protective measures aimed at ensuring victims' safety and promoting coordinated action among the competent public institutions.

The Angolan legal system is also shaped by several international human rights instruments ratified by the State. Among the most significant are the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and

Table 1. Evolution of the Legal Treatment of Domestic Violence

Stage	Predominant Approach	Key Characteristics
Traditional	Private Sphere	Regarded as a family matter, with limited State intervention.
Transitional	Criminal Protection	Introduction of specific criminal sanctions and protective measures for victims.
Contemporary	Human Rights	Recognized as a human rights violation requiring comprehensive and interinstitutional responses.

Source: Prepared by the authors based on the specialized literature and the principal international human rights instruments.

Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol), and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. These instruments impose specific obligations upon States to prevent gender-based violence, protect victims, guarantee effective access to justice, and adopt legislative and administrative measures to eliminate the structural causes of discrimination.

Nevertheless, the existence of a relatively robust legal framework does not, in itself, guarantee the effective protection of women's rights. The specialized literature indicates that the implementation of existing legislation continues to be constrained by the limited territorial coverage of specialized services, inadequate institutional resources, barriers to reporting, the persistence of gender stereotypes, and socio-economic inequalities that disproportionately affect women in situations of vulnerability. These circumstances highlight the need to strengthen the implementation of the existing legal framework through comprehensive public policies, continuous training of legal professionals and justice-sector personnel, and effective mechanisms for interinstitutional coordination.

From a human rights perspective, the effectiveness of a legal system should not be assessed solely by the number

of legislative instruments enacted, but rather by its capacity to prevent violence, ensure the immediate protection of victims, conduct prompt and effective investigations, prosecute and punish perpetrators, and provide full reparation for the harm suffered. Accordingly, the principal challenge currently facing Angola is not merely the expansion of its legislative framework but the consolidation of an institutional governance model capable of transforming legal guarantees into effective mechanisms for the protection and enforcement of women's rights.

Table 2 demonstrates that the legal protection of women in Angola is founded upon a multilevel legal framework comprising constitutional provisions, national legislation, and international and regional human rights instruments (Sivakumaran, 2025). This normative architecture provides a sufficient legal basis for the prevention and punishment of gender-based violence. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of this framework depends upon its proper implementation, effective coordination among the institutions responsible for its enforcement, and victims' timely access to protection and justice mechanisms, all of which continue to represent significant challenges for the Angolan State.

Table 2. Principal Legal Instruments for the Protection of Women against Gender-Based Violence Applicable in Angola

Legal Instrument	Scope	Principal Contribution
Constitution of the Republic of Angola	National	Recognizes equality, human dignity, and the prohibition of discrimination.
Law No. 25/11 of 14 July (Law against Domestic Violence) (<i>Lei n.º 25/11, de 14 de julho – Lei contra a Violência Doméstica</i>)	National	Regulates the prevention of, protection against, and punishment of domestic violence.
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)	International	Requires States to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women.
Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol)	African regional	Strengthens the protection of women's rights in Africa and requires States to adopt measures to combat gender-based violence.
African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights	African regional	Guarantees fundamental rights and equality before the law.

Source: Prepared by the authors based on Angola's national legislation and the principal international and regional human rights instruments.

Institutional Challenges to the Effective Protection of Women against Gender-Based Violence in Angola

The consolidation of a legal framework aimed at preventing and punishing violence against women represents a significant advancement in the protection of human rights in Angola. However, the effectiveness of these legal provisions depends largely upon the institutional capacity to ensure their effective implementation. Comparative experience demonstrates that the mere existence of legal norms is insufficient to reduce levels of violence unless accompanied by

sustained public policies, adequate institutional resources, and effective mechanisms for coordination among the competent authorities (Yemo, 2025; Ojewale et al., 2024).

One of the principal challenges identified in the specialized literature concerns effective access to justice. A range of factors—including the geographical distance to specialized services, economic constraints, victims' limited awareness of their legal rights, and fear of retaliation—continue to impede the reporting of incidents of violence. These challenges are compounded by the persistence of sociocultural norms

that tend to normalize certain forms of domestic violence, thereby contributing to the underreporting of cases and limiting the timely intervention of the competent authorities (Ellsberg et al., 2021; Watson, 2023).

A further significant challenge relates to interinstitutional coordination. The comprehensive protection of women requires coordinated action among judicial authorities, law enforcement agencies, healthcare providers, social assistance services, educational institutions, and public bodies responsible for promoting gender equality. Where these actors operate in a fragmented manner, victims encounter greater obstacles in obtaining timely protective measures, specialized support services, and effective remedies (Dima & Aboubakar, 2025; Dogoli et al., 2023).

The training of legal professionals and justice-sector personnel likewise constitutes a determining factor in the effectiveness of the protection system. The implementation of legislation addressing gender-based violence requires specialized expertise in human rights law, gender-sensitive approaches, and comprehensive victim-centred assistance. The absence of continuous professional training may result in unduly restrictive interpretations of the applicable legislation, secondary victimization during judicial proceedings, and inadequate institutional responses to high-risk situations.

From a preventive perspective, it is equally necessary to strengthen public policies aimed at transforming the structural factors that perpetuate violence. Education for gender equality, the promotion of relationships free from discrimination, the economic empowerment of women, and sustained public awareness campaigns constitute essential instruments for reducing the conditions that foster gender-based violence. In this regard, prevention should be conceived as a cross-cutting public policy involving not only the State but also civil society, educational institutions, the media, and local communities.

The challenges identified demonstrate that the effective protection of women in Angola requires moving beyond an approach centred exclusively on criminal justice responses toward a comprehensive model of institutional governance. Such a model should integrate prevention, immediate protection, timely access to justice, comprehensive reparation, and the continuous monitoring and evaluation of public policies. Only through a coordinated, human rights-based strategy will it be possible to ensure effective protection against all forms of gender-based violence.

Figure 2 illustrates a comprehensive legal protection model that places prevention at the core of public policies aimed at combating gender-based violence. The model demonstrates that the State's response should not be confined to the operation of the criminal justice system but must also incorporate coordinated mechanisms involving the justice sector,

healthcare services, social protection, and legal assistance. It further highlights the importance of comprehensive reparation, institutional monitoring, and continuous evaluation as indispensable components for ensuring the effective protection of women's rights and strengthening the State's capacity to prevent future acts of violence.



Figure 2. Comprehensive Legal Protection Model against Gender-Based Violence in Angola

Proposal for a Socio-Legal Model to Strengthen the Protection of Women against Gender-Based Violence in Angola

The analysis conducted in this study demonstrates that gender-based violence in Angola constitutes a multidimensional phenomenon whose persistence results from the interaction of legal, social, economic, cultural, and institutional factors. Consequently, responses based exclusively on criminal sanctions are insufficient to ensure the effective protection of women's rights. The evidence reviewed indicates that prevention, protection, and reparation should be understood as complementary components of a comprehensive public policy grounded in human rights (Mazhambe & Mushunje,

2023).

From this perspective, a comprehensive socio-legal protection model is proposed, structured around five strategic dimensions: prevention, protection, access to justice, institutional coordination, and comprehensive reparation. These dimensions should not be regarded as independent interventions but rather as interrelated components that strengthen the State's capacity to respond effectively to the various manifestations of gender-based violence (Sivakumaran, 2025; Jesrani & Garcia, 2025).

The first dimension is prevention, understood as the set of measures aimed at transforming the structural factors that contribute to gender-based violence. This includes promoting educational policies based on gender equality, sustained public awareness campaigns, women's economic empowerment programmes, and strategies designed to challenge discriminatory sociocultural norms that perpetuate relationships of domination and inequality.

The second dimension comprises the comprehensive protection of victims, which requires the provision of immediate assistance mechanisms, timely protective measures, specialized legal aid, psychological support, and access to healthcare and social protection services. The effectiveness of these measures depends upon the institutional capacity to deliver prompt, coordinated, and victim-centred responses tailored to the specific needs of each individual.

The third dimension concerns effective access to justice, understood not merely as the formal possibility of filing a complaint but as women's right to obtain a timely, impartial judicial response free from any form of discrimination. Achieving this objective requires strengthening the specialized training of judges, prosecutors, public defenders, and law enforcement officials in human rights law and gender-sensitive approaches.

The fourth dimension is institutional coordination, which constitutes a cross-cutting component of the proposed model. Effective cooperation among judicial institutions, social protection agencies, healthcare providers, educational institutions, and civil society organizations enables more efficient use of available resources, prevents secondary victimization, and improves the continuity and quality of services provided to women affected by violence.

Finally, comprehensive reparation constitutes the fifth dimension of the proposed framework. Beyond the imposition of sanctions upon perpetrators, effective protection requires mechanisms aimed at restoring victims' rights, ensuring their physical and psychological rehabilitation, providing compensation where appropriate, and establishing guarantees of non-repetition through sustainable public policies and permanent systems of institutional monitoring and evaluation.

Taken together, these five dimensions constitute a socio-legal model that integrates normative protection with the operational capacity of the institutions responsible for its implementation. Its adoption has the potential to strengthen the system for the protection of women in Angola and to serve as a reference framework for other African States facing similar challenges in the prevention and eradication of gender-based violence.

Figure 3 summarizes the socio-legal model proposed in this study. The framework demonstrates that the effective protection of women against gender-based violence depends upon the interaction of five strategic dimensions: prevention, comprehensive protection, access to justice, institutional coordination, and comprehensive reparation.



Figure 3. Comprehensive Socio-Legal Model for the Protection of Women against Gender-Based Violence in Angola

The integration of these components makes it possible to move beyond exclusively punitive approaches and advance toward a governance model grounded in human rights, substantive equality, and the coordinated action of public insti-

tutions and civil society (Jesrani & Garcia, 2025).

Conclusions

Legal subordination has neither weakened nor disappeared. Gender-based violence and domestic violence against women continue to represent one of the principal challenges to the protection of human rights and the consolidation of the rule of law in Angola. The analysis undertaken in this study demonstrates that the conceptual evolution of these legal categories has moved beyond traditional understandings centred exclusively on the family sphere. They are now recognized as manifestations of structural inequalities that require comprehensive responses from the legal, institutional, and social systems.

The research further reveals that Angola has progressively strengthened its legal framework through the Constitution of the Republic, Law No. 25/11 of 14 July (República de Angola, 2011), and the principal international and regional instruments for the protection of women's rights. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of these legal provisions continues to be constrained by institutional, cultural, and socioeconomic factors that limit timely access to justice, contribute to the underreporting of cases, and hinder the coordinated implementation of the preventive, protective, and reparative measures established under the existing legal framework.

The study also demonstrates that the State's response to gender-based violence cannot be confined to strengthening the punitive system alone. The effective protection of women requires comprehensive public policies incorporating sustained prevention strategies, education for gender equality, specialized support services, institutional capacity-building, intersectoral coordination, and effective mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of public interventions.

The principal scientific contribution of this article lies in the proposal of a comprehensive socio-legal model that integrates five strategic dimensions—prevention, comprehensive protection, access to justice, institutional coordination, and comprehensive reparation—as interdependent components for strengthening the State's response to gender-based violence. This model provides an analytical framework that may serve as a reference for the design of public policies and for future research on the legal protection of women in Angola and other African countries facing similar challenges.

Finally, further empirical research is needed to evaluate the practical implementation of the existing legal framework, the effectiveness of public policies, and the impact of the protection measures adopted across the different territorial contexts of Angola. The generation of robust scientific evidence will contribute to strengthening evidence-based

decision-making, improving institutional coordination, and consolidating a protection system founded upon the principles of equality, human dignity, and the effective protection of women's fundamental rights.

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Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that she has no conflicts of interest.

Author contributions

Yonayka Licea-Suárez: Conceptualization, methodology, investigation, formal analysis, data curation, writing – original draft, visualization. Lisandra León-Brizuela: Metho-

dology, validation, supervision, formal analysis, writing – review & editing. Ariadna Moya-Rodríguez: Investigation, data curation, formal analysis, validation, writing – review & editing. Leonel Céspedes-Tamayo: Investigation, supervision, validation, visualization, writing – review & editing. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript..

Data availability statement

The datasets used and/or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

Statement on the use of AI

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