



# QUARTERLY

## ARDHO NEWSLETTER



**Amakuru y'ibikorwa by'umuryango ARDHO**

Mutarama – Werurwe 2025



### **Access to Justice and Pro Bono Legal Aid Services**

**ASSOCIATION RWANDAISE POUR LA  
DEFENSE DES DROITS DE L'HOMME (ARDHO)**

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## **ABAGIZE IKIPE Y'UBWANDITSI**

Abatunganyije iyi nyandiko y'ibikorwa bya ARDHO

- ISATIBASUMBA Olivier
- NIYIRORA Pierre Celestin

Uwanononsoye ibyanditswe  
ISATIBASUMBA Olivier

Abajyanama b'ubwanditsi

- MUNYAGASIZA Jonas
- GAKIRE Anastase

## A WELCOME REMARKS FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

On behalf of ARDHO Secretariat, the Chairperson is pleased to welcome you to our Newsletter. We aim to make it a tool where you can learn of, engage with, and provide feedback on our work.

This newsletter contains various information about ARDHO, Members and our Structure, Core values and motto, Our Programs, news and events of what we are doing for the promotion and defense of Human Rights. It has also a link to some human rights instruments and program documents, especially those applicable to human rights, access to equitable justice and legal aid.

ARDHO thanks The Ministry of Justice, National Public Prosecution Authority (NPPA), Courts and Tribunals and other Institutions like RGB,RCS, RNP, RIB, Development partners and CSOs, SDC especially, that Support ARDHO to achieve its mission of promoting and protect fundamental human's rights and providing legal aid for a better access to justice.



**MUKARUGIRA Marie**  
**ARDHO Chairperson**

ARDHO finds that it is not possible to achieve this objective alone, but the inputs of everyone is a catalyzer to strengthen the culture of providing legal aid at no cost, especially to the needy vulnerable people.

ARDHO believes that its interventions will help and play an important role in strengthening the principle of compliance and rule of law in Rwanda by providing Pro Bono legal aid services to the vulnerable people.

Once again, we encourage you to read our newsletter. Together, the culture of respect of civil, political, economic rights without any discrimination is established in Rwanda!

## What is ARDHO?

**ARDHO (Association Rwandaise pour la Défense des Droits de l'Homme) is a non-governmental organization for human rights protection based in Rwanda**

It was created on September 30, 1990 by Rwandan law professionals and journalists concerned about the future of their country in the face of multiple violations of human rights documented, despite the existence of national and international instruments for the protection of freedoms and fundamental human rights.

The main purpose of ARDHO is to provide Pro Bono legal aid to vulnerable and disadvantaged Rwandans with access to justice through a range of services including Legal Advice, Mediation, Referral, Orientation, Legal assistance/Representation in Courts and Other Justice Institutions.

It was legally registered and has fulfilled all requirements in accordance with the Law No. 058/2024 of 20/06/2024, governing non-governmental organizations.

### Our Mission

Ensure the culture of respect for civil and political, cultural and socio-economic rights in favor of everyone living in Rwanda without any distinction.

### Our Vision

Contribute to the establishment of a society where there is no discrimination in terms of rights, where there is neither small nor large before the law, a society where everyone knows their rights and claims them .

## Our focus

**At ARDHO (Association Rwandaise de Défense des Droits de l'Homme) we are concerned about human rights as a whole but our main actions are:**

- **Education:** We educate all levels of the population from grassroots people to high level governmental officials about human rights in order to stay away of their violation and help finding protection in any case.
- **Defense:** We defend all persons whose rights have been violated to regain their rights and dignity in the society.
- **Denounce:** We denounce cases showing the violation of human rights.

## What we do

The main purpose of ARDHO is to provide Pro Bono legal aid to vulnerable and disadvantaged Rwandans with access to justice through a range of services including Legal Advice, Mediation, Referral, Orientation, Legal assistance/Representation in Courts and Other Justice Institutions.

## Our Programs

Human Rights and Legal Education (HRLE) Program	Research, Capacity Building and Advocacy (RCBA) Program	Access to Justice and Pro Bono Legal Aid (AJPBLA) Program
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Community Human Rights and legal awareness</li><li>• Outreach and legal education on Prisoners and detainees Rights</li><li>• Community Dialogue on Laws through school's interactions and outreach with local leaders</li><li>• Promotional activities &amp; legal education messages</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Public Policy, Laws Analysis and Advocacy</li><li>• Research, Monitoring and Documentation on Human Rights Issues</li><li>• Capacity Building of CSOs and Stakeholders</li><li>• Shadow reporting on International</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Legal Advice, Mediation, Referral, Orientation</li><li>• Legal assistance/Representation in Courts and Other Justice Institutions</li><li>• Provision of other Pro Bono legal aid Service</li></ul>



## Partners of ARDHO

Republic of Rwanda, Ubushinjacyaha bukuru, Rwanda Governance Board, Rwanda Collection Service, Rwanda National Police, Rwanda Investigation Bureau, Komisiyo y'Igihugu y'Uburenganzira bwa Muntu, Akarere ka Musanze, Akarere ka Nyarugenge, Akarere ka Rulindo, Akarere ka Gakenke, Akarere ka Rubavu, UNDP, Kingdom of the Netherlands, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Advocates for International Development, GIZ, The Legal Aid forum, CLADHO, Never Again Rwanda, Ministry of Justice Rwanda.



### **Community dialogues on Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Policy are forums where community members, stakeholders, and policymakers come together to discuss**

In a world increasingly fraught with conflict—be it personal, professional, or social—the need for effective dispute resolution mechanisms has never been greater. As communities look for alternatives to the often lengthy and costly legal processes, many are turning toward Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) methods. Recently, community dialogues centered on shaping ADR policies have gained traction, providing a platform for residents to voice their views, share experiences, and collaborate on developing solutions.



This includes mediation, arbitration, and negotiation, all of which offer more informal, flexible, and cost-effective approaches compared to traditional court proceedings.

ADR not only conserves resources but also allows for more amicable solutions, preserving relationships that might become collateral damage in adversarial legal battles.

#### **Understanding Alternative Dispute Resolution**

Alternative Dispute Resolution encompasses a range of processes designed to help parties resolve disputes without resorting to litigation.



# The Need for Community Dialogues

Recognizing the potential of ADR, various communities are initiating dialogues to demystify these processes and harness their benefits. In communities beset by conflict whether due to property disputes, family issues, or even broader social tensions these dialogues aim to educate residents and gather input on shaping effective ADR policies.



According to the Executive Secretary of ARDHO, Jonas MUNYAGASIZA, who facilitates one such dialogue series, "Community input is critical. We need to understand the specific challenges our residents face and how ADR can be tailored to meet those needs. The dialogues create a forum for this exchange."

## Recent Community Dialogue Events



During this quarter, in February and March 2025, ARDHO in partnership with Rubavu District and with the support of SDC, organised a community dialogue in Nyakiriba Sector and hosted a series of community dialogues, where residents, local leaders, and legal experts gathered to discuss the future of ADR in the area.

The events featured workshops where participants could engage in role-playing mediation scenarios, helping them comprehend the process's nuances and advantages.

NSENGIYUMVA John Bosco, a resident who attended the dialogues, expressed his thoughts on the importance of such initiatives. "Many people don't even know what options they have when conflict arises. These conversations opened my eyes to how we could resolve issues without going to court."

Facilitators also gathered valuable data during these discussions, identifying common themes and concerns. Issues such as access to ADR services, cultural sensitivities, and misconceptions about the processes frequently emerged.

# The Potential of Community-Driven ADR Policy

Community dialogues on Alternative Dispute Resolution policies are paving the way for more harmonious and resilient neighborhoods. In rural areas like Nyakiriba sector, embrace these conversations, they take a significant step toward creating a culture of collaboration, understanding, and proactive conflict resolution.



The ongoing dialogues symbolize a shift from reliance on traditional legal systems to community-driven solutions, ensuring that the voices of everyday residents are integral in the policymaking process. With continued engagement and education, communities can transform conflicts into opportunities for growth and unity, setting a powerful precedent for others to follow.

As more communities embark on similar dialogues, it becomes clear that the path to resolution lies not only in the mechanisms we employ but also in the relationships we cultivate along the way.



## Legal education in community is a key for preventing crimes

The discussions with legal actors operating in Nyarugenge District centered on Law No 71/2024 of 26/06/2024, which governs persons and family, as well as the role of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) in resolving family-related legal issues.



Participants raised essential questions about the law's provisions regarding marriage, divorce, and child custody, highlighting the need for clarity on how these laws protect vulnerable individuals within families. There was a strong interest in understanding the practical applications of ADR, with community members seeking information on how it can be utilized to resolve

conflicts amicably and efficiently, thereby reducing the burden on the traditional court system. To address the concerns raised during the discussions, several actions are proposed.



First, organizing educational workshops will be crucial to provide community members with comprehensive information about Law No 71/2024 and the benefits of ADR. These workshops will empower individuals to understand their rights and the resources available to them.

Additionally, establishing clear referral systems for cases requiring further legal assistance will ensure that citizens know where to seek help when necessary.

Furthermore, implementing a monitoring system to evaluate the effectiveness of legal aid services and the impact of the new law on family dynamics will be essential. This system will gather feedback from community members, allowing for continuous improvement of legal support initiatives. Lastly, collaborating with local leaders and organizations will help disseminate vital information, ensuring that all community members have access to the legal resources and support they need.



**DEA of Nyarugenge District and leaders of ARDHO during a partnership meeting on promoting pro Bono legal aid among legal actors on 12 March 2025**

By taking these actions, stakeholders aim to foster a more informed and supportive community environment, ultimately empowering citizens to navigate their legal challenges effectively. Beneficiaries thank ARDHO for this fruitful knowledge on Law No 71/2024 and the benefits of ADR.

## **ARDHO mu bukangurambaga ku mpinduka ziri mu itegeko risya rigenga abantu n'umuryango**

Leta y'u Rwanda yashyizeho uburyo bushya bwo gucunga umutungo hagati y'abashyingiranwa aho mbere yo gusezerana mu mategeko bashobora guhitamo uburyo bwo gucunga umutungo biyumvukaniyeho, bakigenera ibyo bazakurikiza mu mibanire yabo ariko butanyuranyije n'amategeko ndemyagihugu n'imyifatire mbonezabupfura y'Abanyarwanda.

Mu Rwanda hashize imyaka myinshi abashakanye bahitamo uburyo butatu bwo gucunga umutungo wabo, burimo ivangamutungo rusange, ivangamutungo w'umuhahano, n'ivanguramutungo risesuye. Muri iyi nkuru, umuryango ARDHO wifuje kugaruka ku micungire y'umutungo w'abashyingiranywe.

Mu itegeko rigenga abantu n'umuryango ryasohotse ku wa 30 Nyakanga 2024, hongerewemo uburyo bwa kane bwo gucunga umutungo aho abashaka gushyingiranwa bazajya bitegurira amasezerano y'uburyo bashaka ko umutungo wabo ucungwa.

Ingingo ya 166 iteganya ko "Abagiye gushyingiranwa bashobora guhitamo uburyo bw'imicungire y'umutungo bushingiye ku masezerano ategurwa na bo ubwabo iyo itanyuranyije n'amategeko ndemyagihugu n'imyifatire mbonezabupfura y'Abanyarwanda."

Aya masezerano ategurwa n'abashaka gushyingiranwa agomba kuba akubiyemo uruhare rwa buri wese mu bitunga urugo, uburyo bwo kwita ku bana no kubarera, n'uburyo burambuye umutungo uzacungwamo.

Hagomba kuba harimo kandi inkurikizi z'urupfu ku mutungo wabo, inkurikizi z'ubutane ku bana babo, inkurikizi z'ubutane ku mutungo wabo; inkurikizi ku guhinduka kw'imicungire y'umutungo wabo, ibijyanye n'imirimo idahemberwa yo kwita ku rugo; uburyo bwo kwishyura imyenda yafashwe n'umwe cyangwa bombi mbere na nyuma yo gushyingirwa; n'ibijyanye n'impano, indagano n'izungura.

Iri tegeko kandi riteganya ko inyandiko mpamo y'imicungire y'umutungo w'abashyingiranywe ishingiye ku masezerano ategurwa n'abashaka gushyingiranwa ishyirwaho umukono n'abagiye gushyingiranwa bombi imbere ya noteri.

Nyuma yaho ishyikirizwa umwanditsi w'irangamimerere nibura iminsi irindwi mbere y'umunsi w'ishyingirwa kugira ngo asuzume niba ibiyikubiyemo bitanyuranyije n'amategeko ndemyagihugu n'imyifatire mbonezabupfura y'Abanyarwanda.

Iyo umwanditsi w'irangamimerere asanze iby'ingenzi biranga ubu buryo bituzuye cyangwa binyuranyije n'amategeko ndemyagihugu n'imyifatire mbonezabupfura y'Abanyarwanda, asaba abashaka gushyingiranwa kubyuzura cyangwa kubikosora mbere y'uko umunsi w'ishyingira ugera.

## **Abashyingiranwe bashobora guhindura uburyo bwo gucunga umutungo**

Ingingo ya 170 y'iri tegeko iteganya ko uburyo bw'imicungire y'umutungo w'abashyingiranywe bushobora guhinduka bisabwe n'umwe mu bashyingiranywe cyangwa bombi.

Icyo gihe abashyingiranywe basabwa kugaragaza ko iryo hinduka risabwe ku nyungu z'urugo cyangwa impinduka zikomeye zabayeho mu mibereho yabo bombi cyangwa y'umwe muri bo.



Ikirego gisaba guhindura uburyo bw'imicungire y'umutungo w'abashyingiranywe gitangwa mu buryo bw'ibirego bisanzwe mu rukiko rubifitiye ububasha rukorera mu ifasi y'aho abashyingiranywe baba.

Iyo urukiko rwanze ku buryo budasubirwaho ikirego, ikindi kirego ntigishobora kongera gutangwa hadashize umwaka umwe ubarwa uhareye igihe icyemezo cy'urukiko cyafatiwe ku buryo budasubirwaho kandi bishingiye gusa ku ngingo nshya.

Gusa uburyo bw'imicungire y'umutungo w'abashyingiranywe buseswa kubera imwe mu mpamvu zirimo ubutane; guhindura uburyo bw'imicungire y'umutungo w'abashyingiranywe cyangwa urupfu rw'umwe mu bashyingiranywe.

Raporo y'ikigo cy'Igihugu cy'Ibarurishamibare ya 2023 ku mibare y'ingenzi mu buzima n'imibereho by'Abanyarwanda (Rwanda Vital Statistics Report), igaragaza ko imiryango yashyingiranywe mu mategeko ari 57 880, muri yo 97.6% basezeranye ivangamutungo rusange, na ho imiryano 1,182 ingana na 2% yasezeranye ivangamutungo w'umuhahano mu gihe imiryango 212 ingana na 0.4% yasezeranye ivanguramutungo risesuye.

## Abafasha mu by'amategeko mu turere bagiye kongerwa

Minisiteri y'Ubutabera yatangaje ko abafasha mu by'amategeko mu turere dutandukanye bagiye kongerwa kuko bakigorwa no kuba ari umubare muto kandi hari abantu benshi bakeneye guhabwa ubufasha.

Mu rwego rwo gufasha abaturage kubona ubutabera n'ubufasha mu by'amategeko, Guverinoma yashyizeho abakozi bafasha mu by'amategeko kuri buri Karere hashyirwaho abazwi nk'abakozi ba MAJ batatu.

Ni abakozi batanga umunzu ukomeye haba mu gutanga ubufasha mu guhangana n'ibyaha no kugera ku butabera by'umwihariko ku bakorewe ibyaha by'ihohoterwa rishingiye ku gitsina n'ibindi bikigaragara mu muryango nyarwanda.

Imibare ya Minisiteri y'Ubutabera igaragaza ko mu mwaka wa 2022-2023, abakozi ba MAJ mu turere bakiriye ibirego 1664 by'abakorewe ihohoterwa rishingiye ku gitsina, ibigera ku 1248 bitangwaho ubujyanama mu by'amategeko, ibigera kuri 203 bijyanwa mu nkiko n'aho ibindi birego 167 bishyikirizwa inzego zibifitiye ububasha.

Muri rusange, uwo mwaka abakozi ba MAJ bakiriye ibirego birenga 2.1405, hatangwa ubujyanama mu by'amategeko ku birego bisaga 17.100, ibindi 2.310 byoherezwa mu nkiko mu gihe 1.989 byashyikirijwe inzego zibifitiye ububasha.

Nubwo bikimeze bityo ariko haracyagaragara imbogamizi zitandukanye zishingiye ku kuba umubare w'abo bakozi ukiri muto kandi abakeneye guhabwa serivisi ari benshi.



**Umunyamabanga Uhoroho muri Minisiteri y'Ubutabera**, Mbonera Théophile, yagaragaje ko uwo mubare ukiri imbogamizi ariko hari gahunda yo kubongera. Ati "Iki kibazo tukimaranye igihe kuko no muri gahunda yo kwihutisha iterambere ya NSTI harimo ko tugomba kugerageza kumanura serivisi za MAJ tukazigeza no ku mirenge. Ubu ntabwo twavugaga ko twabigezeho ku kigero gishimishije."

Yongeyeho ati "Abo dufite ni batatu ni byo ariko murabizi ko Guverinoma y'u Rwanda yiyemeje gushyira ingufu mu byo yiyemeje. Bimwe mu byo dukora rero ni ugushyira imbaraga mu gufasha abo ba MAJ kutaguma gusa mu biro ahubwo bakamanuka bakagera ku mirenge nubwo bitabaho mu buryo buhoraho, bakaba batanga amasomo, ubukangurambaga, ndetse no gutanga n'ubwo bufasha."



Yavuze ko hari ubwo abo bakozi bamanuka bakajya mu mirenge gusa ashimangira ko uko amikoro azagenda aboneka hazajya hongerwa imibare yabo cyane ko biri no muri gahunda yo kwihutisha iterambere ya NST2.

Ati "Uko amikoro azagenda aboneka, n'ubundi iyo gahunda turayifite muri gahunda ya NST2, tuzakomeza guharanira ko hari icyashoboka kisumbuye mu bijyanye no kugeza serivisi za MAJ hasi mu mirenge ntizibe gusa ku turere."

Yashimangiye kandi ko hari gahunda yo gushyira imbaraga muri politiki y'ubuhuza no kunga kugira ngo Abanyarwanda bagire umuco wo kumva ko amakimbirane yakemurwa hatisunzwe inkiko.

Perezida w'Urugaga rw'Abavoka, Me Nkundabarashi Moïse, yagaragaje ko kuba abo bakozi bakongerwa byatanga umusaruro ukomeye mu gufasha abantu mu kubona ubutabera.

Ati "Ntekereza ko Minisiteri y'Ubutabera igenda ibikoraho kandi uko amikoro agenda aboneka kizagenda kirushaho gukemuka. Birakwiye ko bongerwa kuko umubare w'abantu bakeneye ubufasha mu by'amategeko ni munini cyane ugereranyije na ba MAJ batatu gusa muri buri Karere."

Me Nkundabarashi yagaragaje ko imiryango y'abatanga ubufasha mu by'amategeko ikwiye guhuriza hamwe imbaraga hagamijwe kwishakamo amikoro ashobora gufasha abaturage bose kugera ku butabera.

Yemeje kandi ko bifuzwa kwegera ibigo bitandukanye bikorera mu Rwanda bisanzwe bitanga n'inkunga mu guteza imbere imibereho myiza y'abaturage kuba byanagira uruhare mu rwego rw'ubutabera kuko narwo ari ingenzi ku baturage.

## SDC as a Special partner of ARDHO

### ARDHO under the financial support from Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC

Swiss Regional Cooperation Office Great Lakes



ARDHO is implementing the Project named "Strengthening local leaders and community engagement in Alternative Dispute Resolution and family conflicts resolution in NYARUGENGE, MUSANZE AND RUBAVU District. This project is contributing to the Transformational Governance Pillar of NST2, objective one of To ensure universal access to quality justice, the justice system's capacity will be strengthened, focusing on reducing the case backlogs by half and improving justice service delivery. This will be delivered by enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of existing Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) and Criminal Justice policies to increase cases settled through mediation and plea-bargaining.



# Understanding what is Universal Periodic Review (UPR)

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is a unique mechanism of the Human Rights Council that calls for each UN Member State to undergo a peer review of its human rights records every 4.5 years. The UPR provides each State the opportunity to regularly:

- Report on the actions it has taken to improve the human rights situations in their countries and to overcome challenges to the enjoyment of human rights; and
- Receive recommendations – informed by multi-stakeholder input and pre-session reports – from UN Member States for continuous improvement.

Established in March 2006 by the UN General Assembly in resolution 60/251, the UPR is designed to prompt, support, and expand the promotion and protection of human rights in every country.

Since the first periodic review in 2008, all 193 UN Member States have been reviewed three times.



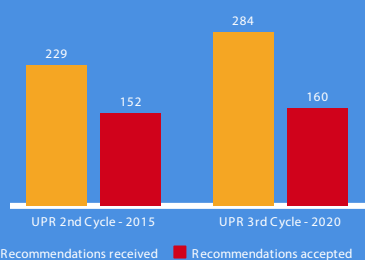
## Rwanda

### The Universal Periodic Review

Rwanda was reviewed by UPR WG 37 in January of 2021. It received 284 recommendations and it supported 160 recommendations at the adoption of its UPR outcome at Human Rights Council 47, in July 2021 (an increase of 5.26% with respect to the 2nd cycle).

Supported recommendations related to: Legal and general framework of implementation, universal and cross-cutting issues, civil and political rights, economic, social, and cultural rights, women's rights, and rights of other vulnerable groups and persons.

### Trends in supported recommendations

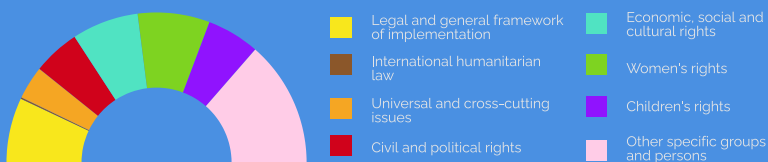


### Top 5 Sustainable Development Goals\*



\*UPR Recommendations as they relate to SDGs. Source: Universal Human Rights Index (from September 2020).

### Recommendations by Issue\*



\*Supported UPR Recommendations from the 3rd Cycle. See: Matrix of Recommendations.



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