

5. Multilateral context: Angola has made efforts to cooperate with UN bodies in order to promote human rights, including by engaging with several UN special procedure mandate holders. As part of the fourth cycle of the UN Human Rights Council's UPR, the human rights record of Angola was addressed during the 48th session in Geneva. During the third cycle, Angola had received 270 recommendations, of which it accepted 259 and noted 11. To date, Angola has not yet ratified the Rome Statute of the ICC or the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

Republic of Benin

1. Overview of the human rights and democracy situation: With the return of opposition parties to Parliament since January 2023, there has been more space for pluralism and debate. However, the electoral code was modified and tightened again in March 2024, raising further concern that the Opposition could be *de facto* virtually barred from competing in the presidential and legislative elections of 2026. The year 2024 also saw previous close advisers to the President arrested and accused of preparing a coup. At the same time, two prominent Opposition members, Reckya Madougou and Joël Aïvo, remain in jail on charges related to terrorism (Madougou) and breaching state security (Aïvo). Restrictions to civic space and freedom of expression remain. Nevertheless, Benin has progressed in the 2024 RSF ranking (from 112 in 2023 to 89 out of 180 in 2024). In the run-up to the 2026 general elections, tension is rising and freedom of assembly is undermined. Conditions in prisons are deplorable due to overpopulation, filthiness, lack of water and medical treatments, among others. Authorities have committed to improving this situation. Since 2021, children's and women's rights as well as good governance have seen positive developments. Legislative progress was made on women's rights and gender equality. However, women are still exposed to various forms of discrimination and inequality, both in their professional and personal lives. Sexual minorities are sidelined. Lastly, Benin's education and health sector still face serious challenges as well.

2. EU action - key focus areas: The action of EU and Member States in Benin focuses on the following three strategic priorities defined in the Country Strategy: The fight against inequalities—including women, children and minority rights; reinforcement of civic and politic space—namely freedom of the press, speech, opinion, assembly, space for civil society and access to information; and accountability of public institutions—including good governance, the fight against corruption, and support to the Benin Human Rights Commission.

3. EU bilateral political engagement: 2024 was particularly dense in terms of EU bilateral political engagement. A visit of the EU Council's Africa Working Party (COAFR) in February-March 2024 provided the occasion for several high-level meetings on, among others, the promotion of human rights and democracy. These meetings confirmed the closeness and trust established between Benin and the EU. The President of the European Council visited Benin in April. The Partnership Dialogue on 13 June 2024 saw a large participation from both the Benin Government and EU MS. Another key moment in the bilateral political engagement between EU and Benin was a joint visit to Benin by the President of the European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET) David Mac Allister and representatives of DG INTPA in March 2024.

The EU and Member States individually take part in the technical financial partners (PTF) sectorial groups. EU maintains a regular dialogue with Beninese CSOs, notably on the promotion of human rights, political and civic freedoms, gender equality, and children rights.

4. EU financial engagement: EU financial engagement in Benin, along with the three co-operation priorities listed above, has been partly covered by the DH&D instrument. Under this instrument, the EU financially supported the Beninese Commission on Human Rights until August 2024. In 2024 also, support to human rights education reached its end on a positive note. Two projects are still ongoing: support to the role of civil society in the UPR process and support to the pacification of electoral processes. The EU pledged new funds to support civil society observation and pre-electoral actions for the 2026 general elections and validated a G2 project to support women's and girls' participation and leadership. Several projects on the rights of women, children and minorities are funded via bilateral co-operation programmes of BENELUX, France and Germany, respectively.

5. Multilateral context: Benin was re-elected as a member of the UNHRC for the period 2025-2027. Benin is aligned with the EU and its Member States within international fora when it comes to human rights. For instance, Benin's vote at the UNGA was aligned with the EU Member States six times out of seven since the beginning of Russia's aggression on Ukraine.

Republic of Botswana

1. Overview of the human rights and democracy situation: Following a historic general election on 30 October 2024, Umbrella for Democratic Change under the leadership of Duma Boko assumed power a few days after the elections. Congratulating President Boko and the people of Botswana on the peaceful exercise of their civic rights, the EU welcomed the exemplary transition of power, after outgoing President Masisi conceded defeat. The historic election outcome and peaceful transition of power confirm the strong democratic traditions of Botswana.

While human rights and fundamental freedoms are generally upheld in Botswana, concerns remain, such as the death penalty, GBV and gender inequality, rights of minorities and rights of refugees and asylum seekers. There are moreover challenges with trust in law enforcement, police violence, corruption, and transparent and free media. After the elections and the commitment of the new authorities to apply a human rights-based approach to governance, it remains to be seen whether this will have concrete impact.

Following Zimbabwe's abolition of the death penalty in December 2024, Botswana is the only country in the region of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) still applying capital punishment, a position reconfirmed on 17 December 2024, as Botswana voted against the UN resolution calling for a moratorium on the use of the death penalty. Since 2021, there have been no executions while 17 individuals are on death row, some of whom have exhausted their appeals.

GBV remained a serious concern, together with broader gender inequality. Statistics of murder, rape, defilement cases are on the rise. According to UNFPA, in Botswana over 67% of women have experienced abuse.