31

Criminal accountability for intimate partner violence and the right to development: A comparative analysis of Nigeria and Italy

*HB Ojibara**
Lecturer, Faculty of Law, University of Ilorin; Deputy Director, Institute for Legislative Studies, University of Ilorin, Nigeria
https://orcid.org/0009-0007-4517-2630

*AC Onuora-Oguno***
Sabbatical Research Professor, Faculty of Law, University of the Free State, South Africa
https://orcid.org/0009-0009-1926-8764

*MM Salvadori****
Professor of International Law, University of Turin, Italy
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8023-9809
https://doi.org/10.29053/978-1-0672374-3-1_31

1 Introduction 923
2 Understanding the conceptual framework of the right to development 923
2.1 Analysing different components of intimate partner violence and the right to development 928
3 Criminal justice responses to intimate partner violence: Nigeria and Italy in comparative perspective 929
3.1 African Women's Protocol and Istanbul Convention: Impact on the right to development 934
3.2 The mandatory obligations emerging from the Istanbul Convention and African Women's Protocol as a precursor to the right to development 937
4 Recommendations for Africa 942
5 Conclusion 943

* LLB (Hons) (Ilorin) LLM (Portsmouth) PhD (Ilorin); ojibara.hb@unilorin.edu.ng
** LLB (Ilorin) LLM LLD (Pretoria); onuoraoguno.ac@unilorin.edu.ng
*** LLM PhD (Lorraine); margherita.salvadori@unito.it

Abstract: *This chapter argues that intimate partner violence (IPV), that is, violence within intimate relationships, can impede women's participation in social and economic development. Using the right to development (RtD) as an analytical framework, the chapter critically examines the role of the RtD paradigm as a complement to criminal accountability for IPV in Nigeria and Italy. The comparison between Nigeria and Italy provides an opportunity to examine differences in criminal accountability and reliance on regional treaties to curb IPV's impact on RtD. To achieve this, the chapter draws a distinction between the United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development (DRtD), the aspirations of the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals. It adopts a qualitative analysis of primary sources, including national legislation, the African Women's Protocol and the Istanbul Convention, and of secondary literature. It is argued that IPV increases imbalances in a gendered political economy and governance structures that impact on RtD. By reframing IPV as a structural barrier to development, the chapter demonstrates that although criminal accountability is essential in curbing IPV, it is not sufficient for advancing RtD. The chapter concludes that IPV remains a pervasive human rights violation and a major obstacle to achieving RtD. Additionally, criminal accountability addresses the punitive dimension of IPV, whereas the RtD framework addresses the structural conditions that enable IPV to undermine women's participation in and enjoyment of development. It suggests an integrative approach of using both criminal responsibility and the RtD to protect the rights of women to development.*

Résumé : *Ce chapitre soutient que la violence entre partenaires intimes (VPI), c'est-à-dire la violence au sein des relations intimes, peut entraver la participation des femmes au développement social et économique. En utilisant le droit au développement (DaD) comme cadre analytique, ce chapitre examine de manière critique le rôle du paradigme du DaD en tant que complément à la responsabilité pénale en matière de VPI au Nigeria et en Italie. La comparaison entre le Nigeria et l'Italie offre l'occasion d'examiner les différences en matière de responsabilité pénale et de recours aux traités régionaux pour limiter l'impact de la VCP sur le droit au développement. À cette fin, ce chapitre établit une distinction entre la Déclaration des Nations unies sur le droit au développement (DNUDAD), les aspirations de l'Agenda*

2063 de l'Union africaine et les Objectifs de développement durable. Il s'appuie sur une analyse qualitative de sources primaires, notamment les législations nationales, le Protocole de Maputo et la Convention d'Istanbul, ainsi que de la littérature secondaire. Il est avancé que la violence conjugale accentue le déséquilibre au sein d'une économie politique et de structures de gouvernance genrées qui ont une incidence sur le droit au développement. En recadrant la violence conjugale comme un obstacle structurel au développement, ce chapitre démontre que, bien que la responsabilité pénale soit essentielle pour endiguer la violence conjugale, elle n'est pas suffisante pour faire progresser le droit au développement. Le chapitre conclut que la violence conjugale reste une violation généralisée des droits de l'homme et un obstacle majeur à la réalisation du droit au développement. En outre, la responsabilité pénale traite de la dimension punitive de la violence conjugale, tandis que le cadre du droit au développement s'attaque aux conditions structurelles qui permettent à la violence conjugale de compromettre la participation des femmes au développement et leur capacité à en bénéficier. Il suggère une approche intégrée combinant la responsabilité pénale et le droit au développement pour protéger les droits des femmes au développement.

Key words: *intimate partner violence; right to development; African Union's Agenda 2063; gender equality; Sustainable Development Goals 2030; African Women's Protocol; Istanbul Convention*

1 Introduction

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a global phenomenon that applies to men, women and other gender identities. It specifically refers to violence in homes or the private sphere in relation to persons who have a familiar relationship and are regarded as intimate partners.[1] This chapter acknowledges that males and persons of other identities are possible victims of IPV. However, it focuses on women as victims, considering that women are reported to be particularly vulnerable. According to the

1 E Burrill, R Roberts & E Thornberry 'Domestic violence and the law in Africa' in E Burrill, R Roberts & E Thornberry (eds) *Domestic violence and the law in colonial and postcolonial Africa* (2010) 19.

World Health Organisation (WHO), 30 per cent of women globally who have been in a relationship have experienced physical or sexual violence, or both, by an intimate partner.[2] Likewise, the United Nations (UN) reported that 50 000 women and girls worldwide were killed by their intimate partners or other family members in the year 2024,[3] compared with an estimated 48 800 killed in the year 2022, although the United Nations (UN) cautions that differences between annual estimates largely reflect changes in country-level data availability rather than actual trends.[4] This suggests that more than five women or girls are killed every hour by someone in their family. Africa has the highest rate of femicide by an intimate partner or family member at 3 per 100 000 female population.[5] According to Lubaale and Budoo-Scholtz, the increasing level of intimate violence requires criminal accountability if it is to be curbed.[6] This notwithstanding, it is acknowledged that dealing with IPV is multifaceted and presents numerous challenges.

We argue in this chapter that the position of Lubaale and Budoo-Scholtz, while true, may require the complementary prism of the RtD framework to achieve more results. On this basis, the chapter assumes that IPV impacts the development ratio of every nation and Africa in general. The idea of a development ratio in this chapter speaks to the ration of individuals who are able to access education, health and other related development indicators. The right to development (RtD) provides a complementary analytical lens through which the impact of

2 World Health Organisation (WHO) 'Global and regional estimates of violence against women: Prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence' (2013), https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/85241/WHO_RHR_HRP_13.06_eng.pdf?sequence=1 (accessed 20 July 2026).

3 United Nations Information Service '137 women and girls killed every day by intimate partners or family members in 2024' Press release (2025), https://unis.unvienna.org/unis/en/pressrels/2025/uniscp1192.html (accessed 17 July 2026).

4 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime & UN Women 'Gender-related killings of women and girls (femicide/feminicide): Global estimates of female intimate partner/family-related homicides in 2022' (2023) 6, https://knowledge.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2023/11/gender-related-killings-of-women-and-girls-femicide-feminicide-global-estimates-2022 (accessed 4 October 2026).

5 United Nations Information Service (n 3).

6 EC Lubaale & A Budoo-Scholtz 'Violence against women in Africa: A human rights violation necessitating criminal accountability' in A Budoo-Scholtz & EC Lubaale (eds) *Violence against women and criminal justice in Africa: Volume I: Legislation, limitations and culture* (2021) 13-49.

IPV can be examined. Importantly, the chapter focuses on the nature of legal and institutional responses to survivors of IPV and whether they can benefit from development.

Aspiration 6 of the African Union (AU)'s Agenda 2063 envisions an Africa where development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially women and the youth.[7] IPV directly contradicts this aspiration by limiting women's ability to participate fully in society. Similarly, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 (Gender Equality)[8] and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions)[9] call on states to eliminate violence and strengthen accountability systems. Correlatively, RtD recognises a collective and individual entitlement enabling every human to economic, social, cultural and political development, in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realised.[10]

The third principle of the Rio Declaration, 1992 reinforces the need for the right to development to be fulfilled.[11] The major indices of RtD are hinged on equality, non-discrimination and dignity.[12] The impact of IPV ranges from deprivation of economic sustenance, psychological trauma and disrupted access to education. Invariably, a woman or girl child who experiences IPV is at risk of experiencing all of the above, jointly or separately.[13] At the governance level, IPV hinders the creation of strong, responsive governance structures. All these reveal that eliminating IPV is not only a human rights obligation but also a developmental necessity.

As a result, this chapter explores an integrative approach of utilising both the criminal justice and RtD approaches to curb IPV and drive

7 https://au.int/en/agenda2063/aspirations (accessed 20 September 2026).
8 https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/ (accessed 20 September 2026).
9 https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/peace-justice/ (accessed 20 September 2026).
10 Declaration on the Right to Development, UN General Assembly Resolution 41/128 (4 December 1986) art 1 (DRtD).
11 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, UN Doc A/CONF.151/26 (Vol I) (1992) Principle 3.
12 United Nations 'Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' UN General Assembly Resolution 70/1 (25 September 2015), https://sdgs.un.org/sites/default/files/publications/21252030%20Agenda%20for%20Sustainable%20Development%20web.pdf (accessed 20 July 2026).
13 N Duvvury and others 'Intimate partner violence: Economic costs and implications for growth and development' Women's Voice, Agency and Participation Research Series 3 (World Bank 2013), https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/16697 (accessed 4 October 2026).

development. In addition, it analyses the law and criminal justice approach to IPV in Nigeria and Italy considering their national laws and other international legal frameworks to which they subscribe. This approach is adopted because of the obligations on the state to protect individuals from violence. While Nigeria has ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), it has yet to domesticate it.[14] Italy, on the other hand, applies both CEDAW[15] and the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention).[16] This approach further exposes the effects of IPV on economic dependence, exclusion and participation of women in developmental initiatives.

The chapter adopts a comparative qualitative and secondary data analysis to provide an in-depth analysis of the criminal justice response to IPV. The rationale for comparison of Nigeria and Italy evaluates the effectiveness of the criminal justice system to IPV in contrasting cultural, legal and socio-economic contexts and how it hinders or facilitates the protection of women and their RtD. The analysis examines how the design and implementation of legal frameworks respond to IPV and the extent to which they create institutional conditions conducive for the realisation of the RtD. Additionally, the choice of analysing Nigeria and Italy is because of academic collaboration between the University of Ilorin and the University of Turin. While the authors note that the comparison is not a comprehensive indicator or representation of European and African jurisdictions, it provides a basis for identifying the core differences in legislation, international law obligations and how the different frameworks react to IPV. The comparison further examines how IPV impacts on economic conditions and social protection on women's realisation of the RtD.

Thus, it is also imperative to examine the operational framework of RtD in Nigeria and Italy as both provide distinct frameworks and reliance

14 Nigeria ratified CEDAW on 13 June 1985. Under sec 12(1) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended), a treaty has the force of law only to the extent that the National Assembly has enacted it into law.

15 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); Italy ratified it on 10 June 1985.

16 Italy signed the Istanbul Convention on 27 September 2012 and ratified it on 10 September 2013; ratification having been authorised by Law 77 of 27 June 2013; the Convention entered into force on 1 August 2014.

on regional treaties. This comparison would enable one to understand how IPV is treated in Nigeria and Italy, how the political governance structures are affected by IPV and, finally, how regional instruments impact on a gendered responsive governance and participation in relation to the RtD. The chapter is structured in five core parts: Part 1 deals with its introduction; part 2 deepens the understanding of the RtD analytical framework; part 3 addresses criminal justice responses to IPV from a comparative prism. Parts 4 and 5 offer recommendations for Africa and conclude.

2 Understanding the conceptual framework of the right to development

In this chapter, the RtD is construed as distinct from the questions of human rights or sustainable development that are easily linked to the question of IPV. The United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development (DRtD) provides a comprehensive perspective into the economic, social and cultural ways of ensuring that a society and individuals continue to develop on a steady trajectory. The political economy component and the power theories are clearly laid down to ensure that no one is left behind despite any social construction indices. To realise this, the individual must be at the centre of development initiatives as the main subject of policy and not just the object. The questions of inclusivity, consultations and consent all become important in the jurisprudence of the right to development. It is noted that where IPV exists, these components are missing and thus impacting negatively on the main bedrock of the RtD.

Articles 1 and 2 of the DRtD reinforce these assertions. In article 3, the responsibility to protect RtD is placed on the state; this aligns with the argument of the authors that where the state fails to shield a woman from IPV, the woman is subsequently deprived of an enabling environment to develop. IPV is sometimes shaped in economic forms, which deprive the victim of access to basic amenities such as education, health and housing. In Nigeria, for instance, women are often subjected to economic violence when they are not economically empowered because of the power and patriarchal indices, which makes them unable to be part of decision making that affects them. This position is supported by article 8 of the DRtD which, read purposively, supports substantive equality.

The nexus between IPV and RtD resolves the question as to the processes of development that are restricted by the continuance of IPV. It brings to the fore the questions of equal and substantive participation, accountability and elimination of discrimination which are often the bedrock of IPV. In resolving the above, this chapter proposes the need to construe RtD as an issue of participation, equality, accountability and fair distribution of development benefits which are hinged on power relations and economic empowerment. Thus, IPV must be examined from the prism of substantive equality, social protection and economic empowerment. This is because sustained economic deprivation of women, political subjugation of women and non-inclusion in decision making will impact negatively on the main goals of both the DRtD and the AU Agenda 2063.

2.1 Analysing different components of intimate partner violence and the right to development

The RtD analysis, advanced above, hinges on a gendered political economy, power relations based on patriarchy and insecurity. The gendered political economy provides a fertile ground for violence to fester, particularly against women. A gendered power-driven allocation of resources and decision formulation would clearly exclude a woman who suffers IPV and subsequently entrench developmental exclusion. The social and economic barriers that limit women provide room for IPV to grow. The question is whether the criminal justice approach is sufficient to eliminate IPV or whether there is a need to adopt a RtD approach. The authors argue that a feminist approach would ensure that power relations, patriarchal power equations and economic inequalities are addressed to complement the criminal justice efforts. Additionally, curtailing the influence of patriarchy is important as women will be more empowered to be involved in decision making, policy formulation and other indicators of RtD.

Thus, the comparison of Nigeria and Italy will benefit from an analysis of economic empowerment of women in both countries, access to economic opportunities and reliance on regional legal frameworks to seek redress of IPV while advocating the RtD.

3 Criminal justice responses to intimate partner violence: Nigeria and Italy in comparative perspective

In discussing criminal justice as a response to IPV, there is a need for a discourse on IPV and the concept of crime. IPV was initially not recognised as a crime,[17] due to the importance attributed to persons in intimate relationships or as married partners. Intimate relationships were seen as a form of protection for women by men from third parties, thereby warding off crime.[18]

Crime simply refers to activities that break the law.[19] Therefore, criminalisation is an act or a process by which an activity is made a criminal offence by declaring it illegal and attaching a sanction.[20] Where acts of IPV constitute criminal offences, they should attract a sanction.[21] The criminalisation of IPV involves acts of violence between partners regarded as offences under general criminal legislation or offences in the specific legislation enacted for the purpose.[22] In addition, the Nigerian Constitution provides that an act can only be an offence where it is stipulated in an enacted law and the punishment is also stated.[23] The Italian Constitution provides that no punishment may be inflicted except by virtue of a law in force at the time the offence was committed.[24]

IPV connotes crime, especially when it is physical in form resulting in assault, battery, rape, homicide or murder.[25] For the purposes and scope of this chapter, IPV refers to any act of aggression by a man against a woman in a relationship. Therefore, to address IPV employing the criminal justice response, it is imperative to understand it as a form of crime notwithstanding the relationship between the parties involved. Despite the fact that IPV has the elements of crime, it is not often

17 LE Ross *Domestic violence and criminal justice* (2018) 108.
18 Duvvury and others (n 13).
19 *Oxford advanced learner's dictionary* (2010) 347.
20 L Goodmark *Decriminalizing domestic violence: A balanced policy approach to intimate partner violence* (2018) 26.
21 CO Okonkwo *Criminal law in Nigeria* (2002) 28.
22 HB Ojibara 'Legal responses to domestic violence in marriages and their implication for marriage sustainability in Nigeria' (2023) 7 *Strathmore Law Journal* 158-160.
23 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended) sec 36(12).
24 Constitution of the Italian Republic art 25(2).
25 DG Dutton *The domestic assault of women: Psychological and criminal justice perspectives* (1995).

reported by the partners who are facing this violation, especially those in marital relationships, because of the sacredness attached to marriage in some parts of the world (including Africa) and various other factors, such as patriarchy, stigma, economic dependency and children.[26] IPV is the most common form of violence against women,[27] and states have often responded to IPV through the enactment of laws, especially in the realm of crime.

In addressing the question of RtD, it is pivotal to ask whether the deprivation of earnings or lack of financial support constitutes IPV and impedes the realisation of RtD.[28] The descriptions and categorisations of acts that constitute IPV are provided in the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (African Women's Protocol) and the Istanbul Convention. In the African Women's Protocol, violence against women is provided in article 1(j), as follows:

> 'Violence against women' means all acts perpetrated against women which cause or could cause them physical, sexual, psychological, and economic harm, including the threat to take such acts; or to undertake the imposition of arbitrary restrictions on or deprivation of fundamental freedoms in private or public life in peace time and during situations of armed conflicts or of war.

The implication of the above is that acts that occur between intimate partners should not be construed in any other terms but noted as violence. Similarly, Anyanwu and Onuora-Oguno[29] identify age-long practices that subjugate women in the African culture as violations of the rights of women. Consequently, the identified acts, as will be argued later in the chapter, can limit the participation of women in decision making, policy formulation and, invariably, a denial of the RtD.

The Istanbul Convention in article 3(a) speaks to a similar situation, and it provides as follows:

---

26 J Chopin & MF Aebi 'Can we predict intimate partner violence victims' decisions to withdraw from the criminal process using official data?' (2026) *Evidence Base*, https://doi.org/10.1080/30679125.2026.2664613 (accessed 21 July 2026).

27 L Sardinha and others 'Global, regional, and national prevalence estimates of physical or sexual, or both, intimate partner violence against women in 2018' (2022) 399 *The Lancet* 803.

28 MO Bakare, MD Asuquo & AO Agomoh 'Domestic violence and Nigeria women: A review of the present state' (2010) 8 *Nigerian Journal of Psychiatry* 5.

29 C Anyanwu & AC Onuora-Oguno 'An overview of the girl child access to education in Africa' (2013) 10 *Journey to Equality* 74.

> Violence against women' is understood as a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women and shall mean all acts of gender-based violence that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.

Although the Istanbul Convention is more explicit on it being an act that violates human rights, the African Women's Protocol did not use this term expressly, but the same can be inferred from the provision. The upshot is that both provisions view violence against women as an abuse of human rights that can cause physical, sexual, psychological, or even economic harm to women. Economic deprivation and psychological trauma can significantly constrain a woman's capability to participate in, contribute to and benefit from processes of development. Thus, the nexus between IPV and RtD can be drawn. In this regard, the AU Agenda 2063's Aspiration 6 includes women in decision making and protection of women against violence, including IPV, and striving to reduce the occurrence of IPV towards the actualisation of the RtD in Africa.

The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria contains human rights provisions that cater for the rights of its citizens. These rights are enshrined in chapter IV[30] and include the right to life, the right to human dignity and the right to personal liberty. Section 34(1) provides that '[e]very individual is entitled to respect for the dignity of his [or her] person, and accordingly ... no person shall be subject to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment'. Section 17 of the Constitution stresses the obligation on the government of Nigeria to ensure equality and freedom for every individual to enjoy social rights, although, as part of the Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy in chapter II, it is not directly justiciable by virtue of section 6(6)(c). These social rights are developmental in nature; thus, a joint reading of the sections shows clearly that the government is obligated to ensure that every woman enjoys the RtD without any hindrances, especially those arising from IPV.

Likewise, the Italian Criminal Code criminalises acts of IPV that constitute offences. Acts of IPV that could be regarded as a crime in

30 Secs 33-44 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended).

the Criminal Code are battery,[31] bodily harm[32] and threat.[33] There have also been substantial amendments to the Criminal Code. Article 572 sanctions the ill-treatment of family members and cohabitants,[34] which concerns the maltreatment or harm to a person in the family or home and is an autonomous offence. In addition, the Criminal Code also strengthened certain penalties where the crime is committed by a spouse or intimate partner even if the relationship no longer exists. For example, the crime of murder is punished with life imprisonment.[35] Thus, general acts of IPV that constitute crime are usually prosecuted with the Criminal Code and Penal Code. While the laws have been considered effective, they are still said to be inadequate in covering the specifics and peculiarities of IPV.[36]

As discussed earlier, most nations, in addition to their general laws, have specific laws, as complementary laws. Specific legislation in this regard refers to laws that are enacted specifically as IPV laws. This also includes laws that cover other offences and have specific provisions for IPV as an offence. Italy has laws that address IPV, some of which were enacted in compliance with the Istanbul Convention. There is the Law on Femicide,[37] which heightens the need to investigate expeditiously certain acts of domestic violence, stalking and IPV. It also provides free legal aid for women and protective measures during legal proceedings. The Law on Femicide tries to address domestic violence through training and awareness, especially for stakeholders who are involved with victims.[38] It is instructive to note that Law No 181 of 2 December 2025, specifically accommodates article 577 which establishes the distinct offence of femicide punishable by life imprisonment according applicable circumstances.

The 'Red Code' Law (Codice Rosso)[39] introduces new crimes in the Italian Criminal Code, such as violation of measures of removal from

31 Italian Criminal Code art 581.
32 Italian Criminal Code art 582.
33 Italian Criminal Code art 612.
34 Italian Criminal Code art 572.
35 Italian Criminal Code art 577.
36 D Arcidiacono & S Crocitti 'Criminal justice system responses to intimate partner violence: The Italian case' (2015) 15 *Criminology & Criminal Justice* 613.
37 Law 119 of 15 October 2013 (converting Decree-Law 93 of 14 August 2013).
38 Law 119/2013 art 5(1).
39 Law 69 of 19 July 2019 (Codice Rosso).

the family home, prohibition of visiting places frequented by the victim and prescribed punishment. The Italian Law 206/2021[40] considers cases of separation between partners where the woman is a victim of violence, wherein the judge is obliged not to prescribe conciliation but is expected to grant protective measures and speedy trials, which is in compliance with article 48 of the Istanbul Convention.

In Nigeria, the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act (VAPP Act) is one of the laws that fall in the category of specific criminal legislation. The VAPP Act[41] directly addresses violence generally. This includes domestic violence, electoral and sexual violence, either in the private or public space. However, unlike the general legislation, the VAPP Act provides for other forms of domestic violence. Section 19 of the VAPP Act provides for spousal battery and states an option of fine, imprisonment or both for perpetrators as with other related offences. Some other possible domestic violence offences criminalised by the VAPP Act are instances in which a person wilfully places another person in fear of physical injury,[42] forceful ejection from home,[43] forced financial dependence or economic abuse,[44] or harmful widow practices.[45]

Despite the extended provisions of the VAPP Act, its impact is yet to be felt, and IPV is still on the rise. The Act is yet to assume universal application in all Nigeria as it requires state domestication to become applicable. The VAPP Act has been criticised for falling short of international standards, in scope and accountability.[46] Onyemelukwe emphasises the deficiency of the VAPP Act in providing civil remedies and that rape is the only offence that garners remedy under the Act.[47] However, as rightly stated by Anyogu, the VAPP Act gives a more balanced definition and addresses the offence of rape more than the

40 Law 206 of 26 November 2021 (Delegation of Power to the Government for the Efficiency of the Civil Process and for the Rationalisation of the Procedures Regarding the Rights of Individuals and Families as well as Regarding Forced Execution).

41 Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act 2015 (VAPP Act).

42 VAPP Act sec 4.

43 VAPP Act sec 9.

44 VAPP Act sec 12.

45 VAPP Act sec 15.

46 O Igwe 'Critique of the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act 2015' (2022) 6 *African Journal of Law and Human Rights* 115.

47 C Onyemelukwe 'Legislating on violence against women: A critical analysis of Nigeria's recent Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act, 2015' (2016) 5 *DePaul Journal of Women, Gender and the Law* 3; VAPP Act sec 1(3).

Criminal Code.[48] Irrespective of this, the offence does not expressly criminalise marital rape, so its application to rape between spouses remains uncertain. Also, the VAPP Act where applicable opposes section 55(1)(d) of the Penal Code in its provision on wife beating and supersedes it.[49]

In addition to national laws, there are international instruments that protect persons from IPV and reinforce RtD. Nigeria and Italy are parties to some of the laws and treaties discussed in the next part of the chapter.

3.1 African Women's Protocol and Istanbul Convention: Impact on the right to development

The right to development is significantly reinforced in the African Women's Protocol and Istanbul Convention. The African Women's Protocol serves as an instrument to ensure equality and preserve the rights of women in Africa, and the Istanbul Convention aims at the prevention of violence against women. IPV is an obstruction to the attainment of the right to development, as it violates dignity, equality and freedom from torture. States are legally reinforced to make provisions to protect women, criminalise IPV and align domestic laws with international standards. Since RtD is built on the developmental framework, IPV reduces productivity and eliminating it is essential for achieving RtD, which will lead to assurance of equal participation in governance, and this aligns with the Agenda 2063 responsive governance goals and other international law obligations, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Universal Declaration), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and CEDAW. The obligations arising from the instruments mandate states to ensure the protection, promotion and fulfilment of not just the rights of women, but also their enjoyment of the benefits of development.[50]

48 F Anyogu 'Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act 2015 and other existing gender legislation: A comparative analysis' (2017) 8 *Nnamdi Azikiwe University Journal of International Law and Jurisprudence* 37.

49 VAPP Act sec 45(2) and Sec 19.

50 OJ Ojigho 'Prohibiting domestic violence through legislation in Nigeria' (2009) 23 *Agenda* 87.

Nigeria has ratified and domesticated the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (African Charter)[51] which is classified as a regional law.[52] The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Court of Justice found Nigeria in violation of its obligation to provide a victim of domestic violence the right to a fair trial in the case of *WARDC & IHRDA (on behalf of Mary Sunday) v Federal Republic of Nigeria*.[53] Italy is also a party to the Istanbul Convention, and the cases of *Talpis v Italy*[54] and *Landi v Italy*[55] were decided by the European Court of Human Rights under the European Convention on Human Rights, with reference to the Istanbul Convention. The right to fair trial in this instance can be akin to adequate consultation as women are very often silenced due to cultural beliefs that limit women's participation in local governance or even at higher levels. Clearly, acts that constitute violence against women deprive women of the chances of enjoying development.

Articles 3[56] and 4[57] of the African Women's Protocol refer directly to the protection of the dignity of women and the sanctity of the right to life and protection from violations of bodily integrity. The implication of this is that any act that impedes the enjoyment of these rights violates and contravenes the rights of women, not just from a human right prism but from an RtD perspective. Considering that many acts of violence against women are steeped in cultural patriarchy, efforts must be made to eliminate such practices and beliefs. This proposition is made from the perspective of the provision of article 17, which guarantees positive cultural values.[58] Article 4[59] centres on the protection of women against violence and discrimination against women based on race, religion or other status.

51 African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Ratification and Enforcement) Act 2 of 1983, Cap 10 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 1990 (now Cap A9 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004).
52 World Bank Group 'Compendium of international and national legal frameworks on domestic violence' vol I (2019) 1-23.
53 ECOWAS Community Court of Justice (17 May 2018), Judgment ECW/CCJ/JUD/11/18, Suit ECW/CCJ/APP/26/15.
54 ECHR (2 March 2017) Application 41237/14.
55 ECHR (7 April 2022) Application 10929/19.
56 African Women's Protocol art 3 (right to dignity).
57 African Women's Protocol art 4 (the rights to life, integrity and security of the person).
58 African Women's Protocol art 17 (right to positive cultural context).
59 Istanbul Convention art 4 (fundamental rights, equality and non-discrimination).

Chapter III of the Istanbul Convention states the need to put in place measures that curb domestic violence. Article 12[60] prohibits the use of cultural, social and religious practices to justify violence. Article 25 of the African Women's Protocol provides:

> States Parties shall undertake to –
>
> (a) provide for appropriate remedies to any woman whose rights or freedoms, as herein recognised, have been violated;
> (b) ensure that such remedies are determined by competent judicial, administrative or legislative authorities, or by any other competent authority provided for by law.

The above provision requires states to engage all legal tools to ensure that the access to justice and development of women must be protected, promoted and fulfilled.

The Istanbul Convention imposes an obligation on its state parties to introduce the following offences into the criminal justice system: article 36 (sexual violence, including rape); article 37 (forced marriage); article 38(female genital mutilation); and article 39 (forced abortion and sterilisation). According to article 36 of the Convention, which places importance on the lack of consent as central element, the following intentional conduct should be criminalised:

> (a) engaging in non-consensual vaginal, anal or oral penetration of a sexual nature of the body of another person with any bodily part or object;
> (b) engaging in other non-consensual acts of a sexual nature with a person;
> (c) causing another person to engage in non-consensual acts of a sexual nature with a third person.
>
> (2) Consent must be given voluntarily as the result of the person's free will assessed in the context of the surrounding circumstances.

It is important to note that article 55(2) provides that parties shall adopt such legislative or other measures as may be necessary to ensure, in accordance with the conditions provided for in their domestic law, the possibility for governmental and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and domestic violence counsellors to assist and/or support victims, at their request, throughout investigations and judicial proceedings relating to the offences covered by this Convention. This process, the authors argue, is fundamental if RtD is to be be realised. It

60 Istanbul Convention art 12 (general obligations).

is reiterated that the crimes mentioned in this part all deny meaningful individual development of the girl child or woman, thus impacting strongly on the questions of development talk, less of sustainable development.

The African Women's Protocol and Istanbul Convention promote the realisation of SDG 5 and SDG 16 by creating binding obligations that require states to unify domestic laws with international law. For SDG 5, which focuses on gender equality, the elimination of harmful practices, sexual violence and the ending of discrimination against women, the alignment is evident in articles 4, 5, 9, and 13 of the African Women's Protocol and articles 3, 4, 12, and 18 to 28 of the Istanbul Convention. For SDG 16, which emphasises peace, justice and strong institutions, the alignment is reflected in articles 4 and 26 of the African Women's Protocol and articles 12 and 49 to 58 of the Istanbul Convention. These instruments reinforce the RtD by obligating states to criminalise IPV, protect women's rights, and guarantee equal participation in governance, thereby advancing RtD.

3.2 The mandatory obligations emerging from the Istanbul Convention and African Women's Protocol as a precursor to the right to development

This chapter reiterates that IPV has a direct impact on RtD. It is recalled that a woman who faces either physical or emotional and economic violence in a patriarchal community will be unable to effectively pursue any form of development. It is therefore imperative that we delve deeper in the two regional treaties of interest in this chapter to determine if mandatory prosecution of IPV is a precursor to the RtD. Despite the above position, it is noted that prosecuting IPV is confronted by multifaceted challenges, which these are discussed next.

3.2.1 Challenges of the criminal approach to intimate partner violence and pathways for reform

The criminal justice response to IPV is faced with numerous challenges that inhibit its effectiveness to prosecute and prevent IPV generally and hinders the right to development, as will be further discussed. Under-reporting is one of the main challenges of the criminal justice response and a barrier to development. IPV is grossly underreported, and this is

first and foremost attributed to the relationship that exists between the parties.

Nigeria's 2024 Demographic and Health Survey found that 19 per cent of women aged 15 to 49 years had experienced physical violence since age 15, and 5 per cent sexual violence, yet reporting remains extremely low; 58 per cent of women who had experienced physical or sexual violence never sought help or told anyone, with many survivors only disclosing abuse after divorce or separation.[61] Some of the reasons for this are cultural reasons, financial dependence on the men[62] and fear of retaliation. Low reporting results in inadequate and inaccurate statistics regarding the number of victims, the form of violence and frequency of violence. This subsequently impacts on the ability of the government to initiate developmental policies and projects.[63] This important information is a determinant of policy making and laws that are people-centred, participatory and promotes equity and fairness, which are key elements of RtD. For instance, the provision of health care and educational development projects will be grossly inadequate where there is no existing or accurate statistics.

The lack of integrated criminal justice and development strategies is also a challenge. The criminal justice system involves a whole process of interviews, investigations and arrests to ensure justice.[64] This cumbersome process places a huge financial burden on victims, society and government, thereby affecting the social and economic development. This is borne out of costs incurred for investigation, prosecution and alternative provisions, such as temporary homes, urgent medical care, and running costs of these establishments.[65] Also, loss of income as a result of absence from work or low productivity on the part of the victims all put

61 National Population Commission & Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare '2024 Demographic and Health Survey: Summary report Nigeria' (2024), https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/SR294/SR294.pdf (accessed 19 September 2026). See also NG Onyeneho and others 'Intimate partner violence in Nigeria: Prevalence, reporting behaviour and policy implications' (2019) *International Journal of Nursing and Health Care Research* 1.

62 Arcidiacono & Crocitti (n 36).

63 C Cullen 'Method matters: The underreporting of intimate partner violence' (2023) 37 *The World Bank Economic Review* 49.

64 Ojibara (n 22) 72.

65 CK Baker 'Connections between domestic violence and homelessness' in LE Ross (ed) *The war against domestic violence* (2015) 53-68.

pressure on development, especially as there are no strategies in place.[66] Thus, financial constraints generally hinder the training of personnel and contribute to inadequate investigations, reporting delays and a lack of specialised support services, consequently obstructing development.

Despite Italy having a strong legal framework, including the ratified Istanbul Convention and the Red Code Law, which was created to ensure an active judicial response to domestic and gender-based violence, there are still some significant challenges in preventing IPV. One of these challenges includes the issue of inconsistent enforcement because enforcement depends widely on the region and the specific judicial authority handling cases.[67]

Reliance on the concept of parental alienation remains a challenge, as the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), which is an international monitoring body set up by the Council of Europe, has criticised Italian courts for prioritising child custody or family unity over the victim's safety.[68] Also, information on prosecutions, convictions and orders is often unavailable, making it impossible to track cases or re-evaluate the effectiveness.[69]

Ultimately, ending IPV is more about closing the existing gaps between legislation and its real-world execution. In many IPV situations, victims fear for their lives and may therefore remain passive, because the violence occurs against a background of unequal power relations and forms part of a broader pattern of abuse.[70]

66 NA Jackson (ed) *Encyclopedia of domestic violence* (2007) 46.

67 K Jarvers 'Der "Codice Rosso": Neue Maßnahmen gegen geschlechtsbezogene und häusliche Gewalt in Italien' (2022) 134 *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Strafrechtswissenschaft* 805.

68 GREVIO 'Baseline evaluation report: Italy' GREVIO/Inf(2019)21 (13 January 2020); Concluding Observations on the eighth periodic report of Italy, CEDAW Committee (27 February 2024) UN Doc CEDAW/C/ITA/CO/8 (2024) para 55(a); University of Padua Human Rights Centre 'GREVIO 2025 – building trust through justice: Publication of the recommendations of the first thematic evaluation report addressed Italy's response to violence against women in compliance with the Council of Europe Istanbul Convention', https://unipd-centrodirittiumani.it/en/topics/grevio-2025-building-trust-through-justice-publication-of-the-recommendations-of-the-first-thematic-evaluation-report-addressed-italys-response-to-violence-against-women-in-compliance-with-the-council-of-europe-istanbul-convention (accessed 29 July 2026).

69 Concluding Observations on Italy (n 68) paras 27(f) & 27(h).

70 GF Waterhouse and others 'Myths and legends: The reality of rape offences reported to a UK police force' (2016) 8 *European Journal of Psychology Applied to Legal Context* 1.

The entry into force of the Istanbul Convention on 1 August 2014 marked a turning point. Several European states that have ratified the Convention have since amended their legislation to bring it in line with the Convention's provisions on sexual violence and IPV. The persistence of IPV points not just to a criminal menace, but also a denial of RtD for victims. Many victims are continually faced with social stigma, lack of finance and access to post-psychological care and, consequently, retarding their development efforts.

3.2.2 Beyond prosecution: Complementary RtD-based responses to intimate partner violence

In the RtD theoretical framing discussed earlier, the individual should be at the centre of any developmental initiative. There needs to be prior and informed consent duly sought and obtained. Having highlighted the challenges confronting the criminal prosecution route, this part will discuss alternative routes to resolving IPV with a target of enhancing the woman's ability to realise RtD. RtD has social and cultural dimensions and, thus, these options could be effective in advancing the realisation. This assumption again builds on the already argued premise that development is individual-centred and interfaces with cultural and religious philosophies.

The social approach focuses on community-based interventions, counselling, awareness campaigns and support services. For development to be meaningful, the above components must be engaged with either survivors of IPV or the community in general in promoting good ideals. This approach emphasises rehabilitation, education, and changing social attitudes rather than punishment. Studies have shown that social support is an important factor for mediating, buffering and improving the outcomes of survivors of IPV and improving mental health outcomes and development.[71]

The cultural and religious approach relates more to traditional values, community mediation that discourages violence, promotes harmony and draws on religious teachings. This is where patriarchy must be

71 B Liang and others 'A theoretical framework for understanding help-seeking processes among survivors of intimate partner violence' (2005) 36 *American Journal of Community Psychology* 71.

deconstrued for sustainable development. In both Nigeria and Italy, alternatives such as social, cultural and religious approaches provide important community-based support, but they lack enforcement and often perpetuate silence or reconciliation at the expense of justice. Hence, Nigeria's reliance on the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act and Italy's reliance on the Istanbul Convention.

With this gap identified, the authors argue that an integrative use of criminal prosecution and development components would yield more efficient results in the realisation of RtD. This is because the social, cultural and religious approaches emphasise reconciliation, forgiveness, and guidance from traditional or religious leaders. While they can promote peace, they often risk reinforcing patriarchal norms and discouraging victims from seeking justice. The criminal approach remains indispensable because it provides accountability, deterrence and institutional protection; however, these functions cannot by themselves address the structural inequalities that sustain IPV. In Italy, statistics suggest that the criminal justice system contributes to a comparatively peaceful society: Italy recorded 0,55 homicides per 100 000 inhabitants in 2024, below the European Union (EU) average of 0,91, although 62 women were killed by a current or former partner in that year.[72]

In Nigeria, strengthening the enforcement of the VAPP Act[73] is essential to overcome cultural barriers and advance Agenda 2063 Aspiration 6 on women's empowerment and, subsequently, RtD. In Italy, the criminal justice system demonstrates how binding international obligations can reinforce SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 16 (Strong Institutions). Ultimately, the criminalisation of IPV is not only a legal necessity but a developmental imperative, ensuring dignity, equality and the RtD across diverse societies.

Another plausible approach of Italy is its compliance with the monitoring mechanisms of the CEDAW Committee and GREVIO.[74] Articles 66 and 68 of the Istanbul Convention regulate the mechanism for monitoring the implementation of the Convention in the state

72 Italian National Institute of Statistics 'Homicides: Victims and perpetrators, year 2024' Press release (10 February 2026), https://www.istat.it/en/press-release/homicides-victims-and-perpetrators-year-2024/ (accessed 18 September 2026).

73 Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act 2015.

74 Istanbul Convention arts 66(1) & 68(1); Concluding Observations on Italy (n 68).

parties. This requires state parties to submit a report on measures put in place in accordance with the provisions of the Convention. Such monitoring and compliance are a strong perk towards reducing domestic violence occurrences and are worthy of emulation. One aspect that has hindered policy making or its effectiveness towards eliminating domestic violence is a result of inaction or complacency of states or nations on their obligations to protect their citizens.

4 Recommendations for Africa

The first suggestion is that the need to adopt an integrative approach is fundamental if the RtD is to be achieved while eliminating IPV in Nigeria and Italy. To achieve this, all institutions involved must be strengthened and capacity of staff enhanced. The institutions must be bolstered through specialised departments and training.[75] Standard operating procedures should be in place where victims are first catered to medically and to alleviate the psychological trauma.[76] Expanding domestication of supranational instruments and periodic accountability through reports must be ensured and monitored towards achieving the AU's Agenda 2063, and the gender equality commitments of the SDGs and the aspirations of the DRtD.

The RtD should be embedded in national development plans through budgetary allocations[77] to cater to medical care, funding of shelters and legal aid for victims of IPV. Victim-centred remedies should be provided such that victims are provided support through psychosocial support, shelter, medical care, skills, training and empowerment, such that they are not trapped by financial dependence.[78] In addition, protection orders should be put in place. There should be public awareness through media, religious leaders and traditional rulers to break the stigma that IPV is a

75 European Institute for Gender Equality 'A guide to risk assessment and risk management of intimate partner violence against women for police' (2019) https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/20191701_mh0119277enn_pdf.pdf (accessed 20 September 2026).

76 E Blaney 'Police officers' views of specialized intimate partner violence training' (2010) 33 *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management* 354.

77 DRtD (n 10) arts 2(3) & 8(1).

78 RC Shorey, V Tirone & GL Stuart 'Coordinated community response components for victims of intimate partner violence: A review of the literature' (2014) 19 *Aggression and Violent Behaviour* 363.

private matter and as such should not be reported. Where victims are aware of this support, they would be willing to come forward to report and testify. Having accurate data on the rate of IPV and the true statistics would assist in making further policies to address IPV and its negative impact on RtD.[79]

5 Conclusion

The criminal justice response to IPV has evolved significantly over the years and remains the most widely accepted mechanism for addressing the menace across jurisdictions. Despite the proliferation of laws and reforms, IPV continues to be prevalent, manifesting in diverse forms that keep it at the forefront of global and regional discourse. The reality is that IPV constitutes a serious violation of human rights that hinders the RtD. Thus, in the instance of IPV, which is often a criminal offence, decisive state intervention remains an appropriate and effective response.

From a development perspective, IPV undermines the right to development by eroding human dignity, limiting participation and entrenching gender inequality. It obstructs the ability to contribute meaningfully to social and economic life, thereby weakening the foundations of inclusive and people-centred development. The persistence of IPV directly contradicts the aspirations of the AU's Agenda 2063, particularly Aspiration 6, which envisions an Africa where development is driven by empowered women and youth. It also undermines SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), both of which call on states to eliminate violence and strengthen accountability systems. The possible outcome of the above suggests that IPV has a strong potential of impacting public development concerns despite its occurrence in a private space.

The Italian criminal justice response offers valuable lessons for Nigeria. Its proactive implementation of international instruments, particularly CEDAW and the Istanbul Convention, despite the enforcement and data gaps identified by GREVIO and the CEDAW Committee, demonstrates how supranational obligations can strengthen

79 STAAR Facility 'Gender-responsive social protection and violence prevention: Thematic brief', https://socialprotection.org/sites/default/files/publications_files/3%20GRSP%20Thematic%20Brief%20-%20Preventing%20Violence.pdf (accessed 20 September 2026); see also Cullen (n 63).

national accountability frameworks. Italy's emphasis on reporting, victim protection and institutional coordination reflects a development-responsive model of criminal justice that aligns with global human rights and development standards.

While the criminal justice system is not without challenges, it remains an essential pillar in addressing IPV. However, criminal accountability alone cannot achieve lasting change. Development-aligned measures such as institutional strengthening, economic empowerment, public education and improved data systems must complement criminal justice efforts to ensure holistic and sustainable development outcomes. Integrating these measures within national development plans will help states fulfil their RtD obligations and advance the gender-responsive vision of Agenda 2063 and the SDGs. When embedded within a broader RtD-aligned framework, the criminal prosecution system becomes a transformative tool capable of deterring perpetrators, protecting victims, and fostering societies where women can live free from violence and participate fully in Africa's development trajectory.

References

Anyanwu, C & Onuora-Oguno, AC 'An overview of the girl child access to education in Africa' (2013) 10 *Journey to Equality* 74

Anyogu, F 'Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act 2015 and other existing gender legislation: A comparative analysis' (2017) 8 *Nnamdi Azikiwe University Journal of International Law and Jurisprudence* 37

Arcidiacono, D & Crocitti, S 'Criminal justice system responses to intimate partner violence: The Italian case' (2015) 15 *Criminology & Criminal Justice* 613

Bakare, MO, Asuquo, MD & Agomoh, AO 'Domestic violence and Nigeria women: A review of the present state' (2010) 8 *Nigerian Journal of Psychiatry* 5

Baker, CK 'Connections between domestic violence and homelessness' in Ross, LE (ed) *The war against domestic violence* (CRC Press 2015)

Blaney, E 'Police officers' views of specialized intimate partner violence training' (2010) 33 *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management* 354

Burrill, E, Roberts, R & Thornberry, E 'Domestic violence and the law in Africa' in Burrill, E, Roberts, R & Thornberry, E (eds) *Domestic violence and the law in colonial and postcolonial Africa* (Ohio University Press 2010)

Chopin, J & Aebi, MF 'Can we predict intimate partner violence victims' decisions to withdraw from the criminal process using official data?' (2026) *Evidence Base*

Cullen, C 'Method matters: The underreporting of intimate partner violence' (2023) 37 *The World Bank Economic Review* 49

Dutton, DG *The domestic assault of women: Psychological and criminal justice perspectives* (UBC Press 1995)

Goodmark, L *Decriminalizing domestic violence: A balanced policy approach to intimate partner violence* (University of California Press 2018)

Igwe, O 'Critique of the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act 2015' (2022) 6 *African Journal of Law and Human Rights* 115

Jackson, NA (ed) *Encyclopedia of domestic violence* (Routledge 2007)

Jarvers, K 'Der "Codice Rosso": Neue Maßnahmen gegen geschlechtsbezogene und häusliche Gewalt in Italien' (2022) 134 *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Strafrechtswissenschaft* 805

Liang, B and others 'A theoretical framework for understanding help-seeking processes among survivors of intimate partner violence' (2005) 36 *American Journal of Community Psychology* 71

Lubaale, EC & Budoo-Scholtz, A 'Violence against women in Africa: A human rights violation necessitating criminal accountability' in Budoo-Scholtz, A & Lubaale, EC (eds) *Violence against women and criminal justice in Africa: Volume I: Legislation, limitations and culture* (Palgrave Macmillan 2021)

Ojibara, HB 'Legal responses to domestic violence in marriages and their implication for marriage sustainability in Nigeria' (2023) 7 *Strathmore Law Journal* 149

Ojigho, OJ 'Prohibiting domestic violence through legislation in Nigeria' (2009) 23 *Agenda* 86

Okonkwo, CO *Criminal law in Nigeria* (Spectrum Books 2002)

Onyemelukwe, C 'Legislating on violence against women: A critical analysis of Nigeria's recent Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act, 2015' (2016) 5 *DePaul Journal of Women, Gender and the Law* 3

Onyeneho, NG and others 'Intimate partner violence in Nigeria: Prevalence, reporting behaviour and policy implications' (2019) *International Journal of Nursing and Health Care Research*

Oxford advanced learner's dictionary (Oxford University Press 2010)

Ross, LE *Domestic violence and criminal justice* (Routledge 2018)

Sardinha, L and others 'Global, regional, and national prevalence estimates of physical or sexual, or both, intimate partner violence against women in 2018' (2022) 399 *The Lancet* 803

Shorey, RC, Tirone, V & Stuart, GL 'Coordinated community response components for victims of intimate partner violence: A review of the literature' (2014) 19 *Aggression and Violent Behaviour* 363

Waterhouse, GF and others 'Myths and legends: The reality of rape offences reported to a UK police force' (2016) 8 *European Journal of Psychology Applied to Legal Context* 1