

**GENDER JUSTICE STRATEGY FOR THE JUDICIARY
OF ZANZIBAR 2026-2030**

CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS.....	3
1. INTRODUCTION	4
1.1. PURPOSE OF THE GENDER JUSTICE STRATEGY 2026-2030	4
1.2. RELEVANT STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK OF ZANZIBAR AND ALIGNMENT WITH INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS	5
International Frameworks and Regional Instruments.....	6
Domestic Provisions.....	7
1.3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR IMPLEMENTING THE GJS 2026-2030	9
1.4. STAKEHOLDER COORDINATION AND COOPERATION	10
2. ANALYSIS OF THE STATE OF PLAY.....	12
2.1. WOMEN WITHIN THE JUDICIARY.....	12
2.2. WOMEN'S ACCESS TO JUDICIAL SERVICES.....	14
2.3. KEY FINDINGS	16
2.4. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES.....	17
3. VISION, OBJECTIVES AND COMMITMENTS OF THE GENDER JUSTICE STRATEGY	18
STRATEGIC GOAL I: ACHIEVE EQUAL REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN AND MEN THROUGHOUT THE JUDICIARY, INCLUDING IN SENIOR ROLES	19
1.1. <i>Discrimination-Free Selection and Promotion of Judicial, Non-Judicial Staff and Judges in Place and Implemented</i>	20
1.2. <i>Well trained and capacitated judiciary.....</i>	23
1.3. <i>Gender friendly working environment.....</i>	25
1.4. <i>Accountability and Institutional Gender Planning.....</i>	27
1.5 <i>Women's Participation in Kadhi's Courts</i>	28
STRATEGIC GOAL II: GUARANTEE GENDER EQUALITY IN ACCESS TO CITIZEN-CENTERED JUSTICE, WITH PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO SURVIVORS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE.....	29
2.1. <i>Strengthening the Legal Framework on Gender-Based Violence</i>	29
2.2. <i>Reformed procedure, infrastructure and access to justice</i>	32
4. MONITORING AND EVALUATION.....	33
ANNEX 1: ACTION PLAN FOR IMPELEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC GOAL I OF THE GENDER	

JUSTICE STRATEGY 2026-2030.....	36
ANNEX 2: ACTION PLAN FOR IMPELEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC GOAL II OF THE GENDER JUSTICE STRATEGY 2026-2030.....	48

ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Affirmative Action
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CPD	Continuous professional development
CSO	Civil Society Organization
GBV	Gender-based violence
GEIMU	Gender Equality and Implementation Monitoring Unit
GJS	Gender Justice Strategy
JoZ	Judiciary of Zanzibar
MCDGEC	Ministry of Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children
MJCA	Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs
OO	Operational Objective
PWD	Persons with disabilities
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SG	Strategic Goal
VIS	Victim Impact Statements
WD	Work Day(s)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. PURPOSE OF THE GENDER JUSTICE STRATEGY 2026-2030

The Gender Justice Strategy 2026–2030 (the GJS 2026–2030) is a strategic document, the development of which is aimed at addressing gender disparities within the judicial system of Zanzibar and ensuring that women and men enjoy equal access to justice. This is the first such strategy to be adopted by the Judiciary of Zanzibar (the JoZ), and it represents a systemic and long-term approach to embedding gender considerations into all aspects of the judicial modernization process.

The Judiciary of Zanzibar has made formal commitments to gender equality, yet progress remains uneven and often fragile. While the framework of laws and policies widely reflects international standards in principle, their implementation has been inconsistent in practice. A closer analysis reveals cross-cutting issues that affect both the internal functioning of the judiciary and the way it serves women as court users.

The absence of a comprehensive gender justice framework has left gaps in attracting women into the judiciary, addressing existing imbalances, and supporting the professional advancement of women within the judiciary. Likewise, limited institutional mechanisms exist to promote gender sensitivity within the judiciary, which hinders equitable service delivery for women, children, persons with disabilities (PWD), survivors of gender-based violence (GBV), and other vulnerable groups. These issues must be addressed if specific reforms are to have a sustainable impact.

The adoption of the GJS 2026-2030 therefore seeks to ensure multiple benefits as follows:

- It will prioritize and sequence targeted actions through accompanying Action Plans, including measures to attract women and other vulnerable groups into the judiciary, to promote women judicial professionals, and to strengthen gender-sensitive services to citizens.
- It will institutionalize gender sensitivity and awareness across all levels of court service delivery to reduce unequal treatment based on gender or other vulnerabilities and to improve access to justice for all Zanzibaris.
- Finally, the strategic approach to gender justice will align the JoZ with international good practices and recommendations of international human rights bodies, thereby reinforcing fairness, equality, legitimacy, and the protection of fundamental rights for all Zanzibaris.

Through the GJS 2026–2030 and its accompanying Action Plans, the JoZ intends to strengthen its institutional capacities, draw on international experiences, and pilot innovative interventions such as standardized gender sensitivity training and survivor-centered GBV protocols. The strategic framework will ensure that actions are holistic, sustainable, and supported at the highest institutional levels, thereby embedding gender justice as a central pillar of the modernization of the judiciary in Zanzibar.

1.2. RELEVANT STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK OF ZANZIBAR AND ALIGNMENT WITH INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS

The Judiciary of Zanzibar recognizes gender equality as essential for judicial independence, institutional credibility, and access to justice. Equal participation of women and men strengthens public confidence and ensures justice reflects the needs of all citizens. The GJS 2026-2030 is grounded in the Constitution of Zanzibar, national legislation, and regional and international commitments, including CEDAW and the Sustainable Development Goals. It builds on the findings of the 2025 Gender Assessment and sets out a framework for systematic and sustainable progress.

The Constitution of 1984 is the supreme law governing Zanzibar's internal affairs and institutions, including the judiciary. It established that "all people are born free and are all equal, every person is entitled to recognition and respect of his dignity, and all persons are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination, to protection and equality before the law."¹ Furthermore, it states that it is the responsibility of the government to ensure that "all Government organs shall and its servants be follow and adhere the international treaties on human rights and good governance."²

The Zanzibar Gender Policy 2016–2020 outlines broader objectives for advancing equity and inclusion across public institutions, including the judiciary. While not legally binding, the policy provides a cross-sectoral framework for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment and serves as a critical reference for future strategies to ensure policy coherence and prevent contradictions.

Gender considerations are minimally addressed in **the Judiciary Strategic Plan 2024/25–2029/30**. Nonetheless, the strategy's focus on access to justice is notable, and while not explicitly gendered,

¹ The Constitution of Zanzibar, Chapter Three: Protection of Fundamental Rights and Individual Freedom, Sections 11 and 12(1).

² The Constitution of Zanzibar, Chapter Two: Fundamental Objectives And Directive Principles And Policies Of The Revolutionary Government Of Zanzibar, Section 10(9)

these measures are particularly relevant for women who face greater barriers in engaging with the justice system.

International Frameworks and Regional Instruments

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) imposes legally binding obligations for Zanzibar to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women in the political, social, economic, and legal spheres. Moreover, **the CEDAW Committee's General Recommendations** provide authoritative guidance on states' obligations to eliminate discrimination against women, calling on states to ensure legal aid, fair representation of women in the judiciary, survivor-centered procedures, capacity-building, and systematic monitoring with sex-disaggregated data to guarantee equitable access and accountability.

The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol) reinforces women's rights as inalienable, interdependent, and indivisible human rights. It obliges Zanzibar to eliminate discrimination through legislative, institutional, and policy measures, including affirmative action and public awareness campaigns, and to address social and cultural norms that perpetuate inequality. The Protocol guarantees women's rights to life, dignity, and security, mandating the criminalization of gender-based violence, survivor protection, and reparations. Additionally, it emphasizes equal access to justice, legal aid, gender-sensitive training for law enforcement and judicial authorities, and the promotion of women's representation in the judiciary.

At the regional level, **the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Gender and Development** provides a binding regional framework that obliges Zanzibar to promote substantive gender equality and eliminate discrimination. It requires equitable representation of women in all courts, equal access to justice, and the eradication of gender-based violence, including through accessible legal services and legislation prohibiting all forms of GBV. Implementing these obligations can strengthen women's participation in the judiciary, enhance legal protections, and ensure that gender equality is realized across Zanzibar's public, private, and customary spheres.

Finally, **the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and in particular SDG 5 on gender equality**, provide a critical framework for advancing women's rights and empowerment in Zanzibar, emphasizing the elimination of discrimination and violence, equal participation in decision-making,

and equitable access to education and economic resources. Mainstreaming gender perspectives across policies, programs, and legal frameworks can strengthen women’s inclusion in social, economic, and political life, improve access to justice, and enhance overall development outcomes on the islands.

Domestic Provisions

The primary legislative instruments governing **employment conditions, career advancement, and workplace provisions within Zanzibar’s judiciary** are the Public Service Act and the Judicial Administration Act, influencing both career pathways and working conditions for men and women in the Judiciary of Zanzibar.

The **Public Service Act** establishes the framework governing employment within the public service, including the judiciary, and sets out core values such as transparency, merit, and gender equality. It mandates that all judicial vacancies be publicly advertised and that appointments and promotions be based on merit—defined to encompass qualifications, experience, and potential for development—while authorizing the Judicial Service Commission to oversee recruitment and promotion processes. Although the Act references affirmative action and aspires to achieve gender balance “as much as practicable,” gender considerations are not explicitly integrated into the merit-based system, and related provisions appear only in the final “Miscellaneous” chapter. This structure positions gender equality as an aspirational rather than enforceable objective within the broader public service framework.

The **Judicial Administration Act** complements the Public Service Act by reaffirming its provisions on the recruitment, promotion, and discipline of judicial and non-judicial officers, while introducing only minimal gender-specific measures. It entrusts the Judicial Service Commission with broad authority over appointments and mandates the creation of an Employment Advisory Committee, yet provides limited procedural guidance on how merit should be assessed. Although the Act promotes values of quality service and professional development, it does not incorporate gender as a consideration in recruitment, ensure women’s representation in decision-making bodies, or require gender equality training. Moreover, it lacks provisions for collecting sex-disaggregated data, preventing effective monitoring of gender representation and hindering evidence-based reform.

The Legal Aid Act and the Penal Act constitute the primary legislative frameworks in Zanzibar for **ensuring access to justice and addressing gender-based violence**. The Legal Aid Act establishes the

organization, oversight, and delivery of legal aid services, while the Penal Act criminalizes a range of acts constituting GBV and defines the legal consequences of these offences. Moreover, the Criminal Procedure Act, jointly with some complementary acts, provides the mechanisms that enable survivors of GBV to engage with the legal system and seek redress, while also ensuring that alleged perpetrators are subjected to due legal process. Together, these Acts shape both the provision of legal assistance and the criminal justice response to gender-based violence in Zanzibar.

The Legal Aid Act establishes the institutional and regulatory framework for legal aid services in Zanzibar, centering on the creation of the Legal Aid Department as the main oversight body. The Department's role is primarily supervisory—registering and monitoring legal aid providers, investigating misconduct, and overseeing paralegal training and certification—rather than directly delivering legal aid. The Act defines legal aid broadly to include legal advice, representation, and legal education, while setting eligibility criteria based on indigence, public interest, and likelihood of success. However, the lack of clear financial thresholds for determining indigence and the broad discretion granted to providers create inconsistencies in access. Despite its comprehensive scope, the Act provides no state funding for legal aid, leaving providers entirely dependent on international donors and limiting the sustainability and reach of services.

The Penal Act criminalizes various acts of gender-based violence (GBV), including rape, sexual assault, and sexual exploitation. However, it does not define GBV or domestic violence, and its provisions are grouped under “Offences against Morality,” reflecting a focus on societal moral standards rather than individual bodily autonomy. Key limitations include the exclusion of marital rape, the gendered framing of offences that presumes male perpetrators and female victims, and restricted protections regarding consent in cases of intoxication. The Act also fails to criminalize psychological abuse, coercive control, or stalking as standalone offences, limiting legal recognition of non-physical forms of GBV. These gaps highlight significant challenges in providing comprehensive protection and aligning the law with international standards on gender-based violence.

The **Criminal Procedure Act and related legislation** in Zanzibar provide limited procedural protections for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV). While section 183 of the Act and section 134 of the **Evidence Act** recognize “vulnerable or intimidated” witnesses and allow for special measures during testimony, these provisions are vague, discretionary, and lack mandatory criteria, leaving their application entirely to judicial discretion. No specialized training in GBV is required for judges or magistrates, and there are no preventive or protective legal measures, such as protection orders, to

shield survivors before or after trial. The framework also lacks standard operating procedures, infrastructure requirements, or procedural guidelines for handling GBV cases.

1.3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR IMPLEMENTING THE GJS 2026-2030

The Gender Justice Strategy 2026–2030 will be guided by a set of core principles that ensure all actions are inclusive, accountable, and aligned with constitutional and international standards. These principles provide a foundation for sustainable reform, strengthen public trust, and support a judiciary that delivers equitable access to justice for women, men, and vulnerable groups.

I. Uphold Constitutional Principles of Equality, Non-Discrimination, Accountability, and Transparency

The Gender Strategy must be firmly anchored in the constitutional values that guide the Judiciary of Zanzibar. These include equality before the law, non-discrimination on any grounds, institutional accountability, and transparency in judicial processes. These principles are essential for advancing gender justice, building public trust, and delivering citizen-centered justice that is inclusive and responsive to the needs of all.

II. Ensure Budgetary Independence and Dedicated Resources

The judiciary must have the financial autonomy and institutional capacity to effectively implement its gender commitments. This includes securing gender-responsive budgeting, allocating dedicated resources for planned gender-related initiatives, and reducing reliance on external funding to ensure long-term sustainability.

III. Base Actions on Evidence and Reliable Data

All strategic decisions will be grounded in robust evidence and credible data. This includes the systematic collection and use of sex-disaggregated data, case statistics, and institutional performance metrics to identify gender gaps, inform interventions, and support continuous learning and adjustment aimed at more citizen-centered outcomes.

IV. Promote Realistic and Transparent Self-Assessment

Regular, structured self-assessments will be part of institutional practice. These assessments must be objective and inclusive, drawing on internal audits, staff input, and user feedback to evaluate progress,

acknowledge challenges, and recalibrate goals. Embedding self-assessment as a tool for institutional learning supports a justice system that remains aligned with citizen needs and expectations.

V. Establish Monitoring Mechanisms and Measurable Benchmarks

A strong monitoring and evaluation framework will be embedded in the strategy, with clear indicators, targets, and timelines. Regular reporting and public disclosure of progress will reinforce internal accountability and enable external oversight, helping to ensure that commitments lead to tangible improvements in access to citizen-centered justice.

VI. Foster Strategic Partnerships with Law Enforcement and Civil Society

Achieving gender justice requires coordinated, multi-sectoral efforts. The strategy prioritizes collaboration with law enforcement agencies, legal aid providers, community-based organizations, and broader civil society. These partnerships are essential to strengthen survivor support, improve referral systems, and promote a more holistic, citizen-centered justice system.

1.4. STAKEHOLDER COORDINATION AND COOPERATION

The Gender Justice Strategy 2026–2030 focuses primarily on strengthening gender equality within the Judiciary of Zanzibar—its structures, policies, and services. Its core purpose is to ensure that women and men participate equally in the judicial system and enjoy equitable access to justice. However, the Strategy also recognizes that gender equality cannot be achieved by the judiciary alone. Lasting progress requires action across the wider social, economic, and institutional landscape, involving multiple actors who address the social determinants of inequality.

The advancement of gender equality in Zanzibar therefore depends on coordinated efforts that extend beyond the judiciary. While the Judiciary of Zanzibar plays a central role in interpreting and enforcing the law, many of the underlying factors influencing gender inequality—such as economic dependence, limited access to education, cultural norms, and weak social protection systems—fall within the mandates of other state and non-state actors. Sustainable progress in gender justice thus relies on strong inter-institutional collaboration and shared accountability among all relevant stakeholders.

The Judiciary recognizes that achieving substantive gender equality and equal access to justice cannot be accomplished in isolation. Effective cooperation is essential among the institutions responsible for legislation, policy implementation, service delivery, and social welfare. This includes coordination with

the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs; the Ministry of Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children; the Judicial Services Commission; the Director of Public Prosecutions; law enforcement bodies; the Legal Aid Department; and local government authorities. Each of these actors contributes distinct yet complementary expertise in addressing the legal, social, and economic dimensions of gender inequality.

Civil society organizations, community-based groups, and development partners also play a critical role. They provide direct support to survivors of gender-based violence, raise community awareness, deliver legal aid, and promote accountability through monitoring and advocacy. Strengthening partnerships with these actors can enhance outreach, improve referral mechanisms, and ensure that women and vulnerable groups receive timely, survivor-centered support throughout the justice process.

To institutionalize these partnerships, the Judiciary of Zanzibar will seek to:

- Establish structured communication and coordination mechanisms with key justice and social sector institutions, including joint task forces or referral frameworks for GBV and family-related cases.
- Participate in inter-agency platforms on gender equality, access to justice, and legal reform to ensure coherence and avoid duplication of efforts.
- Engage with the Ministry of Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children to align judicial gender initiatives with national gender policies and social welfare programmes.
- Collaborate with civil society and legal aid providers to enhance community awareness of legal rights, particularly among women and marginalized groups.
- Foster partnerships with academia and development partners to promote research, innovation, and capacity-building on gender justice.

By strengthening coordination and cooperation, the Judiciary of Zanzibar aims to situate its gender justice efforts within a broader ecosystem of social transformation. While the judiciary's mandate focuses on the interpretation and application of the law, its success in promoting gender equality is inseparable from the collective commitment of all sectors to build a just, inclusive, and equitable Zanzibar.

2. ANALYSIS OF THE STATE OF PLAY

This chapter presents an analysis of the current state of gender equality within the JoZ, drawing on the findings of the 2025 Gender Assessment. The assessment combined quantitative and qualitative research, data collection, and consultations with stakeholders inside and outside the judiciary. It examined the legislative, regulatory, and institutional framework governing the judiciary, as well as human resource practices, to identify key barriers to gender equity in recruitment, retention, and promotion. The analysis also highlighted broader cultural, social, and institutional challenges that limit women's access to judicial services.

2.1. WOMEN WITHIN THE JUDICIARY

The assessment found that while gender equality is formally acknowledged in laws and policies, implementation remains inconsistent and limited in scope. Women are represented within the judiciary but continue to be **significantly underrepresented in both judicial and leadership positions**. As of 2024, women constituted 25.2% of magistrates and 35.7% of High Court judges, while over 70% of advisory and clerical roles were held by women. Overall female representation declined from 51% in 2017 to 45.5% in 2024, reaching a low of 40.7% in 2020. Notably, women appointed as judges had, on average, nearly six more years of professional experience than men. Leadership roles remain predominantly occupied by men, with women holding only 20% of regional "magistrate in charge" positions and 18% of district-level posts.

Recruitment and promotion processes lack transparency, objective merit-based criteria, and routine collection of sex-disaggregated data. Although the Public Service Act and Judicial Administration Act reference gender equality, they do not establish enforceable mechanisms for its implementation. Women are underrepresented on recruitment panels, and no structured mentoring, leadership development, or career progression support is in place.

In this context, **affirmative action** remains underdeveloped. While equality is cited in policy frameworks, there are no operational guidelines or enforceable targets to ensure practical application. Properly designed affirmative measures can be aligned with merit-based selection when merit criteria are applied transparently and equitably to address structural imbalances.

Human resource management does not provide a reliable foundation for advancing gender equality. Induction processes, continuous professional development, and gender-specific training are either

absent or inconsistently implemented. Most judicial staff, including those on recruitment and ethics committees, reported no exposure to formal training on gender issues.

Capacity-building efforts are irregular and largely donor-driven, rather than institutionally embedded. Performance management systems are underdeveloped, with no structured evaluation of leadership, conduct, or contributions to institutional gender objectives.

Workplace harassment remains a serious concern. While respondents acknowledged that harassment occurs, no formal cases were reported between 2017 and 2024. Underreporting is driven by stigma, fear of retaliation, and the lack of clear, confidential reporting mechanisms. Although Ethics Committees exist, they are not widely recognized and have no defined role in addressing harassment. The judiciary lacks formal procedures to prevent or respond to gender-based harassment, bias, or microaggressions, and whistleblower protections remain weak.

Challenges related to **work-life balance** further constrain women's participation. Involuntary transfers disproportionately affect women and disrupt career continuity. Flexible working arrangements and parental support measures—such as leave provisions or adjustable schedules—are not formally codified or consistently applied.

In Kadhi's Courts, prevailing religious interpretations continue to prevent the appointment of women, despite the absence of an explicit legal prohibition. While women may participate informally in mediation processes, their involvement is not institutionally recognized or supported through training or structural mechanisms.

The organizational culture reflects both areas of progress and enduring barriers. Entry into the judiciary is generally viewed as gender-neutral, but **disparities become more pronounced at senior levels**. Unconscious bias persists; women are sometimes characterized as less decisive, which can influence career advancement. Without institutional support, progression remains highly dependent on individual initiative, and efforts to foster gender parity lack structure.

Institutional capacity for data management is also limited. Human resources records report implausibly high retention rates and uniform promotion timelines, raising concerns about data accuracy. Discrepancies between official strategic documents and HR data further undermine institutional credibility and hinder effective accountability.

2.2. WOMEN'S ACCESS TO JUDICIAL SERVICES

Women's ability to access justice is constrained by both legal shortcomings and institutional weaknesses. The **Legal Aid Act of 2018** establishes a regulatory framework for legal aid in Zanzibar but does not ensure meaningful access to justice, especially for women and GBV survivors. The Legal Aid Department mainly oversees and registers providers rather than delivering aid directly. Legal aid includes advice, representation, and legal education, but services are entirely donor-funded with no real state support. Eligibility is limited to the indigent, yet the Act lacks clear financial criteria, leaving assessments inconsistent. In civil cases, aid is granted by judges or magistrates, while in criminal cases, only the accused are eligible—victims, including those of GBV, are excluded. This system prioritizes the accused and lacks the resources, clarity, and inclusiveness needed to protect vulnerable groups and guarantee equal justice.

Awareness-raising activities are sporadic and rarely evaluated, limiting public knowledge of available services. Planning and oversight remain fragmented, with no internal reporting units or standardized templates for tracking cases.

Many women, particularly in rural and low-income communities, **face practical and financial barriers** when pursuing legal remedies. Demographic data on court users are rarely collected, making it difficult to assess inclusivity or identify groups most affected by access barriers. Most respondents of interviews conducted during the assessment said getting to court is difficult—especially for rural women—due to long distances and costly transport. These expenses create a major barrier, adding to the financial strain of legal representation. For many women and vulnerable groups, just reaching the courthouse is enough to block access to justice.

For **survivors of gender-based violence (GBV)**, these challenges are particularly acute. The legal framework criminalizes some forms of GBV, but **marital rape and domestic violence are not criminalized**, while coercive control, stalking, psychological abuse, and economic violence remain unaddressed. The **Penal Act still contains archaic and moralistic language**, and definitions of rape, sexual assault, and consent are outdated. Protective measures remain discretionary rather than mandatory, and there is no routine system for issuing emergency protection orders within 24 to 48 hours. Survivors cannot reliably access protection through multiple entry points such as police

stations, legal aid centers, or community paralegals. The lack of digital monitoring tools further weakens enforcement.

Court proceedings frequently lack survivor-sensitive safeguards. Confidentiality and closed sessions are not consistently ensured, and survivors may be required to interact with the accused. Informed consent for medical or psychological examinations is not systematically required, heightening the risk of re-traumatization.

Judicial infrastructure remains inadequate: there are no specialized GBV benches or divisions, and judges, prosecutors, and clerks often lack trauma-informed training. Courts rarely have dedicated victim support officers, and facilities such as safe waiting areas and secure exits are unevenly available.

Court infrastructure generally lacks gender-sensitive accommodations, and there is no systematic mapping of court conditions. The judiciary lacks a geo-coded database of facilities and has no standard assessment of accessibility, including for persons with disabilities.

Oversight of GBV case handling remains weak. No independent body exists to monitor case processing, evaluate outcomes, or publish performance reviews. **Monthly GBV case reports are produced**, but they contain inconsistent data and use categories not aligned with international standards. In 2024, **only 13 of 292 reported GBV cases** resulted in prison sentences. This low conviction rate, combined with institutional shortcomings and lack of transparency, undermines accountability. Meanwhile, **social stigma continues to deter women from reporting domestic violence.**

Public transparency is limited. While some performance data are collected, they are not published in a systematic or accessible manner. There are no annual reports focused on gender and access to justice, no centralized online portal, and no regular public briefings. These gaps weaken opportunities for civic oversight and reduce the judiciary's accountability to women and other marginalized groups.

Taken together, these legal and institutional shortcomings significantly erode women's trust in the justice system. Without updated legislation, survivor-centered procedures, consistent access to legal aid, independent oversight, and gender-sensitive infrastructure, many women remain effectively excluded from equal justice.

2.3. KEY FINDINGS

The 2025 Gender Assessment reveals persistent gender disparities across the Judiciary of Zanzibar.

- **Women remain underrepresented in judicial and leadership positions.** In 2024, they accounted for only 25.2% of magistrates and 35.7% of High Court judges, while exceeding 70% in clerical roles. Senior leadership positions are still predominantly male.
- **Recruitment and promotion procedures lack transparency, reliable sex-disaggregated data, and clear merit criteria.** Women are not equally represented on panels and mentoring or leadership programmes are absent.
- **Organizational culture is shaped by persistent stereotypes and bias.** Sexual harassment occurs but is underreported due to stigma, lack of trust, and inaccessible complaint mechanisms.
- **Gender-sensitive training is missing,** while existing human resources and case **data are inconsistent and unreliable.**
- **Access to justice for survivors of gender-based violence remains limited.** The Legal Aid Act (2018) is underfunded, court facilities are not survivor-friendly, and legal provisions omit critical forms of violence such as marital rape and coercive control.
- **Kadhi's Courts remain closed to women** under prevailing interpretations, although there is no express legal prohibition.
- **Equality commitments in laws and policies are not systematically implemented.** The Zanzibar Gender Policy (2016–2020) has lapsed, and the current Judiciary Strategic Plan only marginally addresses gender.

Taken together, these findings highlight both structural and cultural barriers that limit women's representation within the judiciary and restrict their ability to access justice. Addressing these gaps will require comprehensive reforms that combine legal, institutional, cultural, and capacity-building measures, supported by robust monitoring and accountability mechanisms.

2.4. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

Absence of monitoring mechanisms and benchmarks

The judiciary lacks institutionalized mechanisms to track progress on gender equality. Without clear benchmarks or a designated monitoring structure, commitments in areas such as recruitment,

promotion, work-life balance, or prevention of harassment remain aspirational rather than measurable.

Gaps in sex-disaggregated data

Reliable, gender-disaggregated data are not collected systematically. This undermines evidence-based decision-making, weakens planning and budget allocation, and limits accountability. The absence of harmonized standards and shared definitions further reduces the comparability of existing data.

Lack of budget and underfunded initiatives

Gender-related reforms often rely on short-term donor support. Legal aid, gender training, awareness-raising, and monitoring mechanisms frequently lapse once external projects end, as they are rarely absorbed into the judiciary's ordinary budget. The challenge is not only scarce resources but also the failure to integrate gender priorities into routine budget planning and to protect them through specific budget lines.

Absence of institutional gender equality assessments

The judiciary lacks institutional mechanisms for conducting regular internal or external assessments of gender equality, and available data remain limited. Interviews conducted for the 2025 Gender Assessment indicate that many staff perceive gender equality positively, believing that men and women are treated equally and that gender does not significantly influence institutional dynamics. These perceptions, however, contrast with the assessment's findings, which highlight persistent gender disparities affecting both women within the judiciary and women accessing the courts. The absence of independent reviews and structured dialogue with external stakeholders restricts opportunities for institutional learning and accountability, reinforcing optimistic internal perceptions and masking gaps that require targeted reform.

Limited capacity and training

Beyond the absence of gender-sensitive training, broader institutional capacity gaps persist in areas such as human resources management, budgeting, judicial decision-making, and data collection. The judiciary has no systematic approach to training or professional development on gender equality. Induction programs, refresher courses, and continuous learning opportunities are largely absent, and the few training activities that occur are project-based and externally driven. Mentoring, leadership development, and advanced study programs for staff and judges are not in place. As a result, staff and

judges lack the knowledge, tools, and institutional support needed to apply gender-sensitive practices in their daily work. Without systematic skills development, gender considerations remain peripheral rather than embedded in daily practice.

Cultural and social barriers

Deeply rooted stereotypes, as well as restrictive interpretations of religious and customary norms, continue to influence institutional culture. These barriers limit women's participation, perpetuate bias in recruitment and promotion, and reinforce unequal treatment in service delivery.

Policy and legal misalignment

While Zanzibar's laws and policies contain important commitments, many are outdated, inconsistently applied, or poorly harmonized with international and regional obligations. This weakens implementation, creates uncertainty, and limits the judiciary's ability to guarantee gender equality in practice.

3. VISION, OBJECTIVES AND COMMITMENTS OF THE GENDER JUSTICE STRATEGY

The **VISION** of the Strategy is to build a Judiciary of Zanzibar where women and men participate equally at all levels, where decisions are taken transparently and without bias, and where justice is delivered in a manner that is impartial, inclusive, and accessible to all.

The **MISSION** of the Strategy is to advance gender equality within the Judiciary of Zanzibar by ensuring equal opportunities for women and men in judicial careers, embedding gender considerations in all institutional processes, and delivering citizen-centered justice that is equitable, survivor-sensitive, and responsive to the needs of all.

The Judiciary of Zanzibar pledges to uphold the following commitments in implementing the Strategy:

- Upholding the constitutional principles of equality, non-discrimination, transparency, and accountability.
- Implementing international and regional gender equality obligations, including CEDAW, the Maputo Protocol, and the SADC Gender Protocol.
- Eliminating gender-based discrimination and bias in recruitment, promotion, and workplace practices.

- Providing equitable access to judicial services, particularly for women, survivors of gender-based violence, and other vulnerable groups.
- Mainstreaming gender across all policies, procedures, and services, supported by dedicated resources and institutional capacity.
- Establishing robust monitoring, evaluation, and reporting mechanisms to ensure measurable progress and accountability.

The Strategy has two **strategic goals**:

- I. **Achieve equal representation of women and men throughout the judiciary, including in senior roles.**
- II. **Guarantee gender equality in access to citizen-centered justice, with particular attention to survivors of gender-based violence.**

Each of the strategic goals is complemented by operational objectives, which are contributing to the achievement of the strategic goal. A set of indicators (qualitative and quantitative) has been developed for each strategic goal and operational objective and is included in the action plans (see Annex 1 and Annex 2).

STRATEGIC GOAL I: ACHIEVE EQUAL REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN AND MEN THROUGHOUT THE JUDICIARY, INCLUDING IN SENIOR ROLES

Operational objectives related to strategic goal 1:

1.1. Discrimination-Free Selection and Promotion of Judicial, Non-Judicial Staff and Judges in Place and Implemented

Recruitment and promotion within the Judiciary of Zanzibar will be anchored in principles that guarantee both professional competence and gender equality. Transparent, merit-based procedures are essential to ensure fairness and accountability, while enforceable gender quotas provide measurable benchmarks to overcome structural imbalances. Properly designed, these mechanisms are complementary: merit standards safeguard quality, while quotas ensure equal access and representation.

Gender-balanced decision panels are equally critical, as they enhance the credibility of appointments and reduce the risk of replicating existing biases. To give effect to these commitments, operational affirmative action guidelines are required to clarify when and how corrective measures will be applied.

Equal access to information about job opportunities is a fundamental condition for fairness. The Judiciary shall therefore adopt clear procedures for **disseminating information on vacancies and promotion opportunities** to ensure that all qualified candidates, both women and men, can apply on an equal footing. All openings will be announced publicly through multiple channels, including the Judiciary's website, internal noticeboards, and professional networks that reach underrepresented groups—such as women lawyers' associations, bar associations, or university law faculties. Vacancy announcements will include information on eligibility criteria, merit standards, and timelines, and remain open for a reasonable period to allow equal participation.

This open dissemination mechanism will reduce reliance on informal networks and increase trust in the recruitment process. It will also help attract a broader and more diverse pool of qualified candidates, particularly women, and provide a measurable benchmark for transparency and inclusiveness.

To ensure accountability, each recruitment and promotion process will be documented from announcement to appointment, and anonymized data on applications and selections will be included in the Annual Gender Justice Report. Regular monitoring of outreach and applicant diversity will allow the Judiciary to assess whether dissemination measures are effective in reaching both men and women equally.

Taken together, these reforms establish a coherent and credible framework for appointments that advance both excellence and equality across the judiciary.

1.1.1. *Transparent, Merit-Based Recruitment and Promotion*

Appointments and career progression for non-judicial staff, judicial officers, and judges will be guided by a clear and publicly available definition of merit, applied consistently across all levels. Merit will be based on objective and documented criteria such as academic qualifications, relevant professional experience, ethical conduct, and demonstrated gender competence, with weightings determined in advance and communicated to all applicants.

Selection and promotion processes will follow standardized and fully documented procedures, supported by a central digital platform. Each stage will apply pre-set scoring rubrics, maintain a complete audit trail, and publish anonymized outcome data—such as shortlists, scores, and final decisions—to enable transparency and accountability. Independent oversight will be ensured through appeal mechanisms for contested decisions and through regular, evidence-based performance evaluations explicitly linked to advancement.

1.1.2. Gender Balanced Decision Panels

The credibility of recruitment and promotion processes depends not only on clear procedures but also on the composition of the bodies that make these decisions. At present, there is no requirement for gender balance, which risks perpetuating existing disparities. Establishing panels with equal representation of women and men would strengthen confidence in outcomes, ensure broader perspectives in candidate assessment, and reinforce the judiciary's commitment to fairness.

Gender balance will extend to leadership within these panels, giving women equal opportunity to chair or co-chair proceedings. To support consistency, members will receive training on equity principles and unconscious bias, ensuring that decisions are taken in line with merit standards while advancing institutional commitments to equality.

1.1.3. Operational Affirmative Action Guidelines

Affirmative action refers to targeted measures designed to correct structural disadvantages that prevent equal participation, for example by giving preference to qualified women in situations where they are underrepresented. Properly applied, it does not undermine merit or amount to discrimination but ensures that equal opportunity is realized in practice and not only in principle.

In the Judiciary of Zanzibar, affirmative action is recognized in principle but has no clear rules for application. Guidelines will specify when it applies, for example where candidates are close in merit and representation gaps exist and require that such decisions are documented and reviewable.

By embedding these rules in regulations or administrative directives, affirmative action can address structural imbalances while remaining fully compatible with merit-based standards.

1.1.4. *Enforceable Gender Quotas*

Despite long-standing commitments to equality, women remain significantly underrepresented across judicial roles, particularly at senior levels. To address this gap, binding quotas will be introduced as a corrective and time-bound measure. Quotas provide measurable targets that ensure progress is not left to chance or voluntary initiatives but becomes a structured part of institutional practice.

A phased approach is advisable, beginning with a minimum threshold—for example, 40 percent female representation—progressing to parity within a defined period. Quotas will be supported by disaggregated targets across different categories of staff and functions to prevent concentration of women only in lower positions. Compliance must be monitored through regular reporting, with clear timelines and consequences for non-implementation. Properly designed, quotas work in tandem with transparent merit standards, reinforcing both professional quality and gender balance.

In line with existing international practice, enforceable gender quotas will be introduced through administrative or statutory instruments, requiring all judicial bodies to meet minimum representation thresholds within specified timelines. Compliance will be monitored annually by the Gender Equality and Implementation Monitoring Unit (GEIMU). **Persistent non-implementation will trigger corrective measures, including mandatory submission of action plans, performance review of the responsible authority, and possible invalidation of appointments made in violation of quotas.** Repeated non-compliance will be reported to Parliament or the Judicial Service Commission, which may suspend approval of appointment lists or budgets, require re-submission of compliant nominations, or initiate disciplinary review.

A comparable approach exists in Kenya, where the Constitution’s “two-thirds gender rule” (Article 27(8)) has been the basis for litigation and public accountability, with courts and civil society successfully challenging appointments that failed to respect constitutional gender requirements. Several European countries, including Germany, have enacted laws on the **“Implementation of Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in the Public Service.”** These laws require the adoption of **equality plans** which, in areas where women are underrepresented, must include **binding targets for appointments and promotions**—for example, stipulating that **at least half of the vacancies in such areas must be filled by women.** Violations of these provisions may render the corresponding appointments **invalid.**

Together, these examples demonstrate how legal obligations, transparency, and accountability mechanisms can make gender quotas an enforceable tool for achieving real progress in institutional gender equality.

1.2. Well trained and capacitated judiciary

The Judiciary of Zanzibar has no systematic approach to training or professional development on gender equality. Induction, refresher courses, and continuous learning opportunities are absent, and the few activities that take place are project-based and externally driven. This leaves staff and judges without the knowledge and tools needed to apply gender-sensitive practices in their daily work.

Two areas require particular attention. First, all judicial and non-judicial staff will undergo **mandatory gender sensitivity training** to ensure a shared understanding of equality principles, unconscious bias, and survivor-centered approaches to cases involving gender-based violence. Without such training, institutional commitments risk remaining purely declaratory.

Second, **leadership development and mentoring for women** must become a structured component of career progression. Women remain underrepresented in senior roles, not because of lack of qualifications, but due to the absence of institutional mechanisms that prepare and support them for advancement. Targeted programmes—such as mentoring, leadership seminars, and access to advanced study—can help build a stronger pipeline of female leaders within the judiciary.

Together, these measures will create a foundation for a professional culture that values equality, improves service delivery, and strengthens institutional legitimacy.

1.2.1 *Mandatory Gender Sensitivity Training*

The Judiciary of Zanzibar does not yet provide structured or compulsory training on gender issues. A mandatory programme will therefore be introduced for all judicial and non-judicial staff, tailored to their responsibilities.

For judges and magistrates, training will focus on applying survivor-centered approaches in cases of gender-based violence, ensuring dignity, confidentiality, and procedural fairness. Court clerks and

administrative staff need practical guidance on how to receive survivors respectfully, provide accurate information, and facilitate access to available support services.

The programme will be standardized, tiered, and integrated into both induction and continuous professional development. It will include annual refreshers, systematic monitoring of participation, and certification. Completion will be a prerequisite for career progression, making gender competence a recognized professional standard across the judiciary.

1.2.2 Leadership Development and Mentoring for Women

Women remain underrepresented in senior judicial and administrative positions, not due to lack of qualifications but because structured pathways to leadership are absent. A targeted programme will therefore be established to prepare and support women for advancement.

Key measures include mentoring schemes that connect junior women with experienced judges, leadership seminars focused on management and decision-making skills, and women's forums that provide space for peer support and policy dialogue. Scholarships and fellowships for postgraduate study in areas such as gender law, judicial management, or leadership will complement these initiatives.

By institutionalizing such programmes, the judiciary can strengthen its pipeline of female leaders and ensure that promotion processes draw from a broader, better-prepared pool of candidates.

1.3 Gender friendly working environment

A judiciary that aspires to fairness and equality must also provide a working environment that reflects these values internally. At present, the lack of supportive measures for work-life balance and the absence of effective safeguards against harassment and bias are among the main obstacles preventing women from advancing in their careers. Addressing these issues is therefore not only a matter of staff welfare but a structural requirement for building a more inclusive and representative judiciary.

Work-life balance provisions and effective protection from harassment and bias are essential to retain qualified staff, strengthen morale, and ensure that the judiciary leads by example in promoting equality.

1.3.1 *Work-Life Balance Provisions: promote a workplace environment that enables staff to balance professional and family responsibilities*

Women in the Judiciary of Zanzibar are disproportionately affected by rigid work arrangements and frequent involuntary transfers. These practices disrupt family life, limit retention, and reduce opportunities for career advancement. Introducing clear provisions for work-life balance, alongside a review of transfer decision-making procedures, is therefore necessary to create a supportive environment in which all staff, and particularly women, can develop professionally without undue sacrifice of personal responsibilities.

Decisions regarding involuntary transfers of judges and magistrates will be guided by principles that safeguard judicial independence, ensure transparency, and uphold gender equality. To ensure fairness and gender equality, transfer decisions will be based on objective and transparent criteria that are publicly known and applied consistently. Consideration will be given to personal circumstances, including family responsibilities and spousal employment. When possible, the process will involve consultation with the affected staff and include mechanisms for appeal or review. Transfers will generally occur only with the judge's explicit consent, except in exceptional circumstances such as court restructuring, and any such decisions must be subject to full review by an independent judicial authority. Staff who believe a transfer decision is unfair or discriminatory will have the opportunity to appeal. Appeals will be reviewed by an independent committee of representatives from human resources, senior judiciary members, and a Gender Equality Officer.

In assessing potential transfers, gender-specific impacts will be actively considered, recognizing that women judges may face disproportionate challenges related to family responsibilities, work-life balance, and career progression. Measures will be taken to mitigate such impacts, ensuring that transfer decisions do not reinforce existing gender disparities or hinder the professional development of women within the judiciary.

Human Resources will maintain a transfer register disaggregated by gender, position, and location, and regularly review transfer trends to identify and address any disproportionate impact on women. This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure that it continues to support organizational efficiency while upholding gender equality and staff well-being.

Key work-life balance measures will include flexible work arrangements such as remote work or adjusted schedules where feasible, and parental support policies that are inclusive and non-discriminatory. Such provisions will be formally embedded in judicial regulations and regularly reviewed for effectiveness. By adopting these measures, the judiciary will strengthen staff motivation, increase retention of qualified women, and demonstrate its commitment to an inclusive workplace culture.

1.3.1 Protection from Harassment and Bias

The judiciary will adopt clear and enforceable rules that protect all staff from harassment, bias, and discriminatory treatment. These will include codified definitions of misconduct, confidential reporting channels at every court level, and the appointment of trained officers to receive and process complaints. Whistleblower protections must be guaranteed, and anonymized data on reported cases and their outcomes will be published regularly to ensure transparency.

Embedding these measures in regulations and linking them to accountability structures will demonstrate zero tolerance for harassment, promote equal treatment, and strengthen confidence in the judiciary as a respectful and professional workplace.

1.4 Accountability and Institutional Gender Planning

The Judiciary of Zanzibar has no dedicated structures to monitor compliance with gender equality obligations, and existing initiatives are rarely coordinated or sustained. Oversight is needed to track progress, address gaps, and ensure that commitments are implemented in practice.

At the same time, judicial institutions do not operate with formal Gender Action Plans. Without such plans, measures remain fragmented and are not linked to budgets or performance reviews. Introducing oversight mechanisms and requiring every institution to adopt a Gender Action Plan will provide the necessary structure for measurable and sustained progress.

1.4.1 Oversight and Accountability Mechanisms

The Judiciary of Zanzibar currently has no dedicated structure to monitor compliance with gender-equality obligations. To close the gap in monitoring and enforcing gender-equality obligations, a

Gender Equality and Implementation Monitoring Unit (GEIMU) shall be established as an internal mechanism within the Judiciary of Zanzibar. GEIMU will operate under the authority of the Chief Justice while maintaining functional independence.

GEIMU will act as the focal point for tracking implementation of the Gender Justice Strategy and related equality commitments. It will review institutional performance reports against agreed indicators and timelines, receive and process confidential complaints concerning discrimination, harassment, or non-compliance, advise on corrective measures, and publish an Annual Gender Justice Report for submission to the Chief Justice, Parliament, and civil society.

GEIMU will consist of a small core team—normally five to seven members—selected transparently by the Chief Justice on the basis of professional competence, integrity, and demonstrated gender expertise. In addition to its internal members from the Judiciary, one representative of civil society and one from academia will serve as external advisers with observer status and the right to provide recommendations. Both external advisers will be chosen through an open and transparent process organized by the Judiciary, inviting applications from organizations and institutions with a proven record in women’s rights, access to justice, or judicial governance. Selection will ensure professional competence, balanced representation, and rotation after a defined term to maintain openness and diversity.

Members of the judiciary appointed to GEIMU will have this role formally recognised as part of their official duties and reflected in individual work plans, rather than treated as an additional voluntary task on top of their regular workload. Adequate time and institutional support will be allocated to enable them to fulfil GEIMU responsibilities, including adjustments in case-management and administrative duties where necessary. The Judiciary will ensure that GEIMU is provided with the human, financial, and logistical resources required to perform its monitoring and advisory functions effectively. Participation in GEIMU will be acknowledged in performance appraisals and considered in decisions on career development and future appointments, signalling the institutional value attached to this role.

To strengthen transparency and public trust, GEIMU will hold at least one annual public presentation of its findings, open to representatives of civil society, professional associations, academia, the media, and the general public. These public sessions will provide an opportunity to discuss progress, challenges, and lessons learned, and to collect feedback for future planning.

A confidential and anonymous reporting channel will enable staff and court users to raise concerns safely; persistent non-compliance will be escalated to the Chief Justice. Detailed composition,

operating procedures, and reporting templates will be finalized with stakeholders during the initial implementation phase to ensure clarity, consistency, and alignment across all courts and administrative units.

1.4.2 Institutional Gender Action Plans

In many jurisdictions, each judicial body is required to adopt its own Gender Action Plan. For the Judiciary of Zanzibar, however, the Gender Strategy and its accompanying Action Plan already serve as the overarching GAP. An additional, separate judiciary-wide plan would risk duplication and create unnecessary complexity without adding value.

What is needed instead are **unit-level implementation plans** under the framework of this Strategy. Each part of the judiciary—such as the High Court, Magistrates’ Courts, Kadhi’s Courts, and administrative offices—will prepare short, practical plans that translate the Strategy’s priorities into concrete steps within their own structures.

These implementation plans will follow SMART criteria (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound), be integrated into routine work planning and budgets, and be reviewed annually. In this way, the Strategy becomes the binding reference point for the whole judiciary, while responsibility for execution is clearly anchored in every court division and administrative unit.

1.5 Women’s Participation in Kadhi’s Courts

For Kadhi’s Courts to deliver fair and credible justice in matters of family, inheritance, and personal status, women must be able to participate fully as judges, assessors, mediators, and staff. This requires a deliberate shift from current practices that keep women in marginal roles to an institutional framework that guarantees equal access and opportunity.

Women already serve as mediators, but their participation is limited and not institutionalized. Eligibility rules are minimal, and there are no clear procedures, training, or oversight. In practice, only two female mediators are active, both in urban areas, and their roles are poorly defined and under-resourced. Strengthening and professionalizing mediation—through standardized training, clear role descriptions, adequate resourcing, and wider deployment across rural as well as urban areas—would provide an important interim pathway for women’s participation in Kadhi’s Courts.

Over the longer term, reforms will address structural barriers to allow women to serve in judicial roles, including the revision of appointment procedures, the introduction of gender quotas or targets, and the creation of structured pipelines through scholarships, mentoring, and training. Careful sequencing of reforms—starting with stronger roles for women as mediators and building broader acceptance—can help reduce resistance and create sustainable change.

STRATEGIC GOAL II: GUARANTEE GENDER EQUALITY IN ACCESS TO CITIZEN-CENTERED JUSTICE, WITH PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO SURVIVORS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Operational objectives related to strategic goal 2:

2.1. Strengthening the Legal Framework on Gender-Based Violence

The current Penal Act, Criminal Procedure Act and related laws in Zanzibar contain major gaps in the protection of women from gender-based violence. Marital rape and domestic violence are not recognized as criminal offences, leaving survivors without legal remedy within marriage and the home. At the same time, the definition of gender-based violence is too narrow, omitting psychological, economic, and coercive forms of abuse that are widely recognized in international standards.

Closing these gaps is essential for compliance with constitutional guarantees of equality and with international obligations. Reform of the legal framework must therefore focus on the explicit criminalization of marital rape, domestic violence, and the expansion of statutory definitions of gender-based violence, so that all forms of abuse are recognized, prosecuted, and sanctioned.

2.1.1. *Criminalization of Domestic Violence*

The Penal Act will be amended to include the offense of domestic violence, which includes “all acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence that occur within the family or domestic unit or between former or current spouses or partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim.”³ Moreover, the Penal Act amendment will also specify that the

³ Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (2011) <<https://rm.coe.int/168008482e>>

use of force, including beating, to procure sexual intercourse between spouses constitutes an act of domestic violence.

Criminalizing domestic violence is essential to ensure that abuse within the home is treated as a serious violation of human rights and a manifestation of gender inequality, rather than a private or family matter. Women are disproportionately affected by domestic violence, making its criminalization a key measure for advancing gender equality and protecting women's rights. It holds perpetrators legally accountable and affirms the state's duty to protect victims from physical, sexual, psychological, and economic harm. By recognizing domestic violence as a criminal offence, the law strengthens survivors' access to justice, promotes institutional responsiveness, and aligns national legislation with international standards that call for zero tolerance toward gender-based violence.

2.1.2. *Criminalization of Martial Rape*

Zanzibar's Penal Act will be amended to explicitly criminalize rape within marriage. The current exemption denies protection to women and contradicts constitutional guarantees of equality and international standards. Reform requires a clear statutory provision that removes the marital exception and introduces a modern, survivor-centered definition of consent.

While some classical Islamic interpretations assumed ongoing consent in marriage, contemporary scholars and institutions like Al-Azhar affirm that harm and coercion contradict Islamic ethics. The higher objectives of Shariah—protecting life, dignity, and honor—are violated by non-consensual sex. Several Muslim-majority countries, including Turkey and Tunisia, have moved to criminalize marital rape, showing it is possible to uphold both Islamic values and global human rights standards.

Marital rape causes deep psychological, physical, and social harm. Marriage does not erase the need for consent. Criminalizing such violence is not only a legal duty but a moral and religious one—essential to justice, health, and human dignity.

As an interim legal measure in Zanzibar, a new offense such as "**coercive sexual conduct within marriage**" could be introduced to address situations where one spouse uses **force, threats, or intimidation to obtain sex**, regardless of marital status or separation. While distinct in terminology, this offense would carry **penalties on par with other serious sexual crimes**, emphasizing the gravity of the act.

This approach allows the legal system to respond to real harm experienced by victims and offer protection, while remaining consistent with broader principles of dignity, protection from harm, and mutual respect in marital relations. It serves as a transitional step—not the final solution—toward more comprehensive legal recognition of non-consensual sexual acts within marriage.

To support enforcement, survivor-centered procedures must be provided in implementing regulations, including confidentiality safeguards, access to medical and psychosocial support, and protection from intimidation during proceedings. Police, prosecutors, and judges will receive mandatory training on the new provisions and on survivor-sensitive handling of GBV cases.

2.1.3. Expansion of GBV Definition

The Penal Act will be revised to expand the definition of gender-based violence in line with international standards. Current provisions focus narrowly on physical and sexual violence and omit other forms of abuse that severely affect women’s rights and safety.

Reform will introduce explicit recognition of psychological violence, economic violence, and coercive control, and will replace outdated moralistic terminology with rights-based language. These changes would harmonize the law with constitutional guarantees and international obligations such as CEDAW and the Maputo Protocol.

Implementation requires clear guidance and training for police, prosecutors, and judges to apply the expanded definitions consistently, as well as integration of these standards into judicial procedures and case management.

2.2. Reformed procedure, infrastructure and access to justice

Survivors of gender-based violence in Zanzibar face systemic barriers in accessing justice. Court proceedings often lack confidentiality and safeguards, judicial infrastructure does not provide safe or supportive conditions, protection orders are weak and difficult to obtain, and legal aid is fragmented and donor-dependent. These gaps undermine trust in the judiciary and prevent survivors from exercising their rights. Reform must therefore focus on codifying survivor protections in procedures,

investing in specialized infrastructure, creating an effective system of protection orders, and establishing free legal aid as a state-guaranteed service.

2.2.1. Mandatory Survivor Protections in Court Proceedings

Procedural law will be amended to require safeguards such as closed sessions, confidentiality of records, and separation of survivors from the accused. Consent must be a legal prerequisite for medical and psychological examinations. Judges, prosecutors, and clerks need mandatory training on survivor-sensitive questioning and trauma-informed handling of GBV cases, and compliance with these protections will be monitored as part of judicial performance reviews.

Introduction of Victim Impact Statements (VIS) in Gender-Based Violence (GBV) cases to strengthen victim-centered justice will be considered. VIS allow survivors to explain the emotional, physical, and financial effects of the crime, supporting healing and dignity. They also help judges deliver informed, proportionate sentencing and assist parole bodies in understanding the full impact of the offense. Integrating VIS into GBV proceedings would therefore enhance both accountability and survivor participation in the legal process.

2.2.2. Protection Orders and Legal Safety Net

The law will be amended to establish emergency protection orders available within 24–48 hours. Survivors must be able to apply through multiple entry points, including courts, police stations, and legal aid centers. Enforcement will be supported by digital monitoring tools and clear sanctions for breaches. Simplified procedures and accessible guidance in Swahili will be available at community level to ensure that survivors understand and can exercise their rights.

2.2.3. GBV Specialized Judicial Infrastructure

Specialized benches or divisions for GBV cases will be introduced in the High Court and Magistrates' Courts. Facilities must be redesigned to provide safe waiting areas, separate entrances and exits, and secure spaces that prevent contact with perpetrators as well all features, which are necessary to fully implement the measures as already foreseen under the Evidence Act No 9/2016. Dedicated support officers will guide survivors through proceedings, and resources for infrastructure and specialized staff must be integrated into the judiciary's annual budget.

2.2.4. *Improved Access to Justice/State Guaranteed Free Legal Aid*

Permanent legal aid units will be established within the judiciary and funded through the state budget. Free legal aid for GBV survivors must be guaranteed across all courts, ending reliance on donor-funded projects. Standardized templates and gender-disaggregated data collection will be introduced to monitor provision and outcomes. Partnerships with civil society and community paralegals can extend coverage, but the judiciary must retain primary responsibility to ensure equal access to justice.

4. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

An **effective** Gender Justice Strategy requires not only clear objectives and action plans, but also robust monitoring, evaluation, and oversight mechanisms. To avoid the risk of declaratory commitments without implementation, the Judiciary of Zanzibar will establish an institutional mechanism to ensure accountability and sustained progress.

Establishment of GEIMU

The **Gender Equality and Implementation Monitoring Unit (GEIMU)** will be formally established within the Judiciary of Zanzibar, ideally as part of or closely linked to the existing Gender Unit. GEIMU will function as the judiciary's internal accountability mechanism, mandated to monitor whether gender equality commitments are effectively implemented across all courts and administrative units.

Mandate and Function

GEIMU will:

- **Monitor and evaluate implementation** of the Gender Justice Strategy, ensuring activities are carried out effectively. The Unit will coordinate with relevant bodies, track progress against deadlines, manage allocated resources, and systematically assess outcomes using defined success indicators.
- **Compile and analyze semi-annual reports** from all courts and judicial administrative bodies, based on a standardized reporting template, to ensure comparability of data.
- **Provide operational guidance** to judicial departments to improve compliance with gender equality provisions.
- **Recommend reforms and interventions** based on evidence, identifying gaps and proposing corrective measures.

- **Coordinate and collaborate** with external stakeholders, including ministries, civil society organizations, religious leaders, and development partners, to ensure inclusivity, credibility, and transparency of monitoring efforts.

Structured External Participation

While GEIMU will remain an **internal unit** of the Judiciary, its work will be reinforced by structured external participation to strengthen transparency and legitimacy.

- A **bi-annual Oversight Forum** will be convened by GEIMU, bringing together representatives from civil society, the Zanzibar Law Society, academia, and religious leaders to review progress, discuss challenges, and validate findings.
- In addition, **one representative of civil society** and **one representative of the Zanzibar Law Society** will serve as **external advisors** to GEIMU. They will participate as observers in GEIMU's deliberations, with rights to provide input and recommendations, but without decision-making authority.

Reporting and Evaluation Cycle

- All judicial institutions will submit **semi-annual reports** to GEIMU covering core indicators such as recruitment, promotion, training participation, case-level data on GBV, work–life balance provisions, and harassment complaints.
- GEIMU will consolidate findings into an **Annual Gender Justice Report**, to be published by the Judiciary and presented to Parliament and civil society.
- A **mid-term review mid 2027** will assess progress and propose adjustments to action plans, while a **final independent evaluation in 2030** will document overall impact and lessons learned.

Transparency and Oversight

Public accountability will be reinforced through the publication of Annual Gender Justice Reports on a central online platform and through structured dialogues with civil society, the Bar Association, academia, and religious stakeholders. Independent audits may be commissioned to verify the accuracy of data and ensure credibility of reporting.

Accountability Mechanisms

GEIMU will be empowered to require corrective measures from any judicial unit failing to meet obligations under the Strategy. Persistent non-compliance will be escalated to the Chief Justice for remedial action. In addition, a confidential reporting channel will be available to staff and court users to raise concerns about discrimination, harassment, or other forms of non-compliance.

Use of Findings

Findings from GEIMU will feed directly into judicial planning, budgeting, and performance management processes. This will embed a culture of continuous learning, evidence-based decision-making, and citizen-centered justice within the Judiciary of Zanzibar.

ANNEX 1: ACTION PLAN FOR IMPELEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC GOAL I OF THE GENDER JUSTICE STRATEGY 2026-2030

Timeframe for the Action Plan: January 2026 - December 2027

STRATEGIC GOAL I: ACHIEVE EQUAL REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN AND MEN THROUGHOUT THE JUDICIARY, INCLUDING IN SENIOR ROLES						
Operational Objective	Measure	Activity	Deadline	Success indicators	Competent body	Resources
1.1. Discrimination - Free Selection and Promotion of Judicial, Non-Judicial Staff and Judges in Place and Implemented	1.1.1 Transparent, Merit-Based Recruitment and Promotion	1. Establish a dedicated working group to draft Recruitment and Promotion Criteria and Guidelines for the JoZ.	March 2026	1 Working group operational with balanced representation (at least 40% women);	JoZ Other relevant bodies/ organizations: the Zanzibar Judicial Service Commission	Financial resources will primarily be required for the development and delivery of targeted training on the new recruitment and promotion guidelines for all JoZ staff. Additional modest costs may include dissemination materials, website updates, and the organization of workshops or information sessions for staff. All other activities, including drafting, consultation, adoption, and monitoring, will be covered by existing staff resources and infrastructure.
		2. Convene at least three meetings of the working group to prepare the draft criteria and guidelines, drawing on the findings of the 2025 Gender Assessment.	April, June, August 2026	3 meetings held with documented minutes;		
		3. Develop the first draft of the Recruitment and Promotion Criteria and Guidelines for JoZ.	September 2026	Draft Recruitment and Promotion Guidelines produced;		
		4. Circulate the draft guidelines to JoZ members and the public, including publication on the official JoZ website.	October 2026	Draft published on JoZ website and circulated internally, at least 200 stakeholders reached;		
		5. Collect and integrate feedback from JoZ members and the public to refine the draft guidelines. Ensure compatibility with the Rules of procedure (Measure 1.1.2.) and Affirmative Action Guidelines and Quotas (Measure 1.1.3. & 1.1.4.).	November 2026	Feedback report produced and incorporated;		
		6. Formally adopt the Recruitment and Promotion Criteria and Guidelines.	December 2026	Guidelines formally adopted by JoZ;		

		7. Publish the adopted guidelines on the JoZ website to ensure accessibility and transparency.	December 2026	Guidelines published on JoZ website;		
		8. Disseminate the adopted guidelines to all JoZ staff and deliver targeted training on their application.	December 2027	100% of JoZ staff receive guidelines, at least 30% of JoZ staff trained;;		
		9. Monitor and evaluate the application of the guidelines through annual reporting and review.	July 2027	2026 Annual report published.		
Measure	Activity		Deadline	Success indicators	Competent body	Resources
1.1.2. Gender Balanced Decision Panels	1. Establish a working group to draft Rules of Procedure for the establishment and regulation of gender-balanced decision panels in recruitment and promotion processes.		September 2026	1 Working group operational with balanced representation (at least 40% women);	JoZ Other relevant bodies/ organizations: the Zanzibar Judicial Service Commission	The main costs for this measure relate to the delivery of targeted training for staff on the application of the Rules of Procedure for gender-balanced panels, as well as communication materials to ensure broad understanding and awareness. Drafting, consultation, circulation, and monitoring activities will not require additional funds beyond existing staffing and administrative resources.
	2. Convene at least two meetings of the working group to prepare the draft Rules of Procedure, drawing on the findings of the 2025 Gender Assessment.		October, December 2026	2 meetings held with documented minutes;		
	3. Develop the first draft of the Rules of Procedure for gender-balanced decision panels.		January 2027	Draft Rules of Procedure prepared;		
	4. Circulate the draft Rules of Procedure with JoZ members.		February 2027	Draft circulated internally, at least 100 stakeholders reached;		
	5. Collect and integrate feedback from JoZ members to refine the draft Rules of Procedure. Ensure compatibility with the Recruitment and Promotion Criteria and Guidelines (Measure 1.1.1.) and Affirmative Action Guidelines and Quotas (Measure 1.1.3. & 1.1.4.).		March 2026	Feedback report produced and incorporated;		
	6. Formally adopt the Rules of Procedure.		April 2026	Rules of Procedure		20 wd national trainer

			formally adopted by JoZ;		
	7. Publish the adopted Rules of Procedure on the JoZ website to ensure accessibility and transparency.	April 2026	Rules published on JoZ website;		
	8. Disseminate the adopted Rules of Procedure to all JoZ staff and deliver targeted training on their application.	September 2027	100% of JoZ staff receive guidelines, at least 30% of JoZ staff trained;		
	9. Monitor compliance with the Rules of Procedure and report annually on the composition and functioning of decision panels.	December 2027	2026 Annual report published.		
Measure	Activity	Deadline	Success indicators	Competent body	Resources
1.1.3. Affirmative Action (AA) Guidelines	1. Establish a dedicated working group to develop comprehensive Affirmative Action Guidelines and operational gender quotas for recruitment, promotion, and leadership positions within the JoZ.	March 2026	1 Working group operational with balanced representation (at least 40% women);	JoZ	Financial resources are needed to conduct training for staff on implementing affirmative action guidelines and gender quotas, including practical exercises and case studies. Some modest funds may also be needed for dissemination materials, internal workshops, and website updates. All drafting, consultations, adoption, and monitoring will be managed with existing personnel and resources.
1.1.4. Enforceable Gender Quotas Operational	2. Conduct a series of at least two consultations with internal stakeholders, including judges, administrative staff, and HR personnel, to identify key gaps and opportunities for affirmative measures, informed by the 2025 Gender Assessment.	May, July, 2026	At least 2 consultation sessions held (participation of at least 40% women);	Other relevant bodies/ organizations: the Zanzibar Judicial Service Commission MJCA, MCDGEC, CSO representatives	
	3. Draft the Affirmative Action Guidelines and operational procedures for gender quotas, including clear targets, timelines, and responsibilities.	August 2026	Draft AA Guidelines and Quotas prepared;		
	4. Circulate the draft guidelines and quotas to JoZ members and relevant external stakeholders for feedback and validation.	September 2026	Draft published on JoZ website and circulated internally, at least 200		10 wd international expert 10 wd national trainer

				stakeholders reached;		
		5. Integrate feedback and finalize the Affirmative Action Guidelines and gender quota framework. Ensure compatibility with the Recruitment and Promotion Criteria and Guidelines (Measure 1.1.1.) and Rules of Procedure (Measure 1.1.2.).	October 2026	Feedback report produced and incorporated;		
		6. Formally adopt the Guidelines and quotas through the appropriate JoZ authority, ensuring they are enforceable and binding.	November 2026	AA Guidelines and Quotas formally adopted by JoZ;		
		7. Publish the adopted Guidelines and quotas on the JoZ website to ensure transparency and public accessibility.	November 2026	AA Guidelines and Quotas published on JoZ website;		
		8. Disseminate the Guidelines and quotas to all JoZ staff and deliver targeted training on their practical application.	May 2027	100% of JoZ staff receive AA Guidelines and Quotas, at least 30% of JoZ staff trained;		
		9. Establish monitoring mechanisms to track compliance with the Guidelines and quotas, including annual reporting on recruitment, promotion, and leadership appointments by sex-disaggregated data.	June 2027	2026 Annual report published with sex-disaggregated data.		
		10. Conduct periodic reviews of the effectiveness of affirmative action measures and gender quotas and update them as necessary to ensure progress toward gender parity objectives.	December 2027	At least one review of quotas conducted every 2 years.		
Operational Objective	Measure	Activity	Deadline	Success indicators	Competent body	Resources
1.2. Well trained and capacitated judiciary	1.2.1. Mandatory Gender Sensitivity	1. Engage qualified experts in gender equality and gender mainstreaming to develop a standardized, tiered Gender Sensitivity Training Programme for judicial and non-judicial staff.	February 2026	Training programme framework developed;	JoZ Other relevant	This measure requires financial resources to engage qualified gender experts for curriculum development and

Training	2. Develop role-specific curricula: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For judges and magistrates: survivor-centered approaches in GBV cases, ensuring dignity, confidentiality, and procedural fairness. For court clerks and administrative staff: respectful reception of survivors, accurate information provision, and facilitation of access to support services. 	May 2026	2 Curricula finalized;	bodies/organizations: the Zanzibar Judicial Service Commission, MJCA, MCDGEC, CSO representatives	to deliver training sessions across all staff levels. Costs include training materials, venue arrangements, and certification procedures. Staff time for planning and monitoring will be absorbed within existing budgets.
	3. Integrate the training into induction programmes for new recruits and the ongoing continuous professional development (CPD) framework.	May 2026	Training modules included in CPD and induction programmes;		
	4. Pilot the training programme with a representative group of staff and refine based on feedback and evaluation.	August 2026	Pilot conducted with at least 60 participants; evaluation report produced.		
	5. Refine programme based on pilot feedback.	September 2026			
	6. Roll out the mandatory programme to all staff, ensuring completion is recorded and tracked in HR records.	December 2027	At least 50% of staff trained within 2 years;		
	7. Establish certification procedures: completion of training becomes a prerequisite for career progression.	September 2026	Training completion linked to promotion eligibility (Measure 1.1.1 Transparent, Merit-Based Recruitment and Promotion);		
	8. Publish periodic reports on programme coverage and effectiveness to reinforce accountability and transparency.	December 2026 & July 2027	2 Reports on coverage and outcomes published, with sex-disaggregated data.		
	Measure	Activity	Deadline	Success indicators	Competent

				body	
1.2.2. Leadership Development and Mentoring for Women	1. Establish a dedicated Leadership Development and Mentoring Programme for female judicial and non-judicial staff.	February 2026	Programme officially launched with clear structure;	JoZ	Funds are required to deliver leadership seminars, mentoring programmes, and peer support forums, as well as scholarships, fellowships, and professional development opportunities. Costs will cover training materials, facilitators' fees, and communication activities to promote programme participation. Existing staff will manage planning, coordination, and monitoring without additional budget requirements.
	2. Identify potential participants and match junior women with experienced judges and senior administrators for one-on-one mentoring.	April 2026	At least 20 junior women paired with mentors;	Other relevant bodies/ organizations: the Zanzibar Judicial Service Commission, MJCA, MCDGEC, CSO representatives	
	3. Develop leadership seminars focusing on management, decision-making, negotiation, and policy advocacy skills.	May 2026	Seminar programme framework developed;		
	4. Deliver leadership seminars.	December 2027	Minimum of 2 leadership seminars delivered per year;		
	5. Create peer support networks and women's forums to provide safe spaces for discussion, policy dialogue, and professional networking.	December 2026	At least 1 active peer support forums established;		
	6. Offer scholarships, fellowships, and professional development opportunities in areas such as gender law, judicial management, and leadership.	December 2027	Minimum of 5 scholarships/fellowships awarded;		40 wd (inter)national expert
	7. Integrate mentoring and leadership training into career development plans and succession planning within the judiciary.	September 2026	Leadership training included in staff development plans;		50 wd national expert
	8. Conduct periodic evaluations to measure outcomes, including promotion rates, retention of female staff, and preparedness for leadership roles.	December 2026 & June 2027	Periodic evaluation reports produced;		
	9. Publicize programme achievements and success stories to encourage participation, foster institutional support, and reinforce the judiciary's commitment to gender equality.	December 2026 & December 2027	At least 2 success stories documented and publicized annually.		

Operational Objective	Measure	Activity	Deadline	Success indicators	Competent body	Resources
1.3. Gender friendly working environment	1.3.1. Work-Life Balance Provisions: promote a workplace environment that enables staff to balance professional and family responsibilities	1. Establish a working group to design and propose formal work-life balance policies and involuntary transfer regulations tailored to the Judiciary of Zanzibar.	January 2026	1 Working group operational with balanced representation (at least 40% women);	JoZ	Financial resources will be minimal and mainly focused on training HR officers and supervisors to implement and monitor new policies consistently. Other activities, including drafting policies, needs assessments, adoption, and regular reviews, will be managed using existing staff and resources.
		2. Conduct a needs assessment to identify staff challenges related to rigid work arrangements, transfers, parental responsibilities, and career progression.	March 2026	1 Assessment report completed.	Other relevant bodies/ organizations: MJCA, MCDGEC, CSO representatives	
		3. Develop policy provisions to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review of the transfer decision-making procedures and safeguards against involuntary transfers that disproportionately affect women. • Flexible work arrangements such as remote work, adjusted schedules, or staggered hours where operationally feasible. • Inclusive parental support measures (parental leave, childcare support, and return-to-work arrangements). 	May 2026	Draft provisions developed.		
		4. Circulate the draft policies to all JoZ staff for feedback and integrate relevant suggestions.	July 2026	Draft circulated internally, at least 100 stakeholders reached, feedback report produced and incorporated;		
		5. Formally adopt the policies and incorporate them into judicial regulations.	September 2026	Work-life balance provisions formally adopted by JoZ;		
		6. Train human resources officers and supervisors on implementing and monitoring the new provisions consistently across all departments.	December 2027	100% of JoZ staff receive work-life balance provisions, at		

			least 30% of JoZ staff trained;		
	7. Monitor compliance and effectiveness through periodic staff surveys, HR reports, and internal audits.	December 2026 & December 2027	1 staff survey conducted annually, annual HR report on implementation produced.		
Measure	Activity	Deadline	Success indicators	Competent body	Resources
1.3.2. Protection from Harassment and Bias	1. Establish a task force to draft clear and enforceable rules on harassment, bias, and discriminatory treatment applicable to all judicial and non-judicial staff.	January 2026	Task force operational with balanced representation (at least 40% women);	JoZ	Resources are needed for mandatory staff training on recognizing, reporting, and preventing harassment and bias, as well as for communication and awareness-raising materials. All other activities, such as drafting rules, piloting mechanisms, appointing officers, and monitoring reports, will utilize existing staff and infrastructure without additional funds.
	2. Define codified standards for misconduct, including sexual harassment, microaggressions, and other forms of bias.	May 2026	Codified standards drafted;	Other relevant bodies/ organizations: MJCA, MCDGEC, CSO representatives	
	3. Design confidential reporting channels at every court level, ensuring accessibility and protection for all staff.	September 2026	Rules on reporting channels produced and disseminated to all courts.		
	4. Incorporate whistleblower protections into the rules to safeguard individuals reporting misconduct.	September 2026	Protections included in rules.		
	5. Appoint and train designated officers to receive, investigate, and process complaints confidentially and effectively.	October 2026	At least one trained officer per court.		30 wd international expert 30 wd national expert
	6. Pilot the reporting and complaint mechanisms in selected courts to identify and address implementation challenges.	November 2026	Pilot conducted in 5 courts with evaluation report.		
	7. Formally adopt the rules on harassment and bias	January 2027	Rules formally adopted.		

		and integrate them into judicial regulations.				
		8. Disseminate the adopted rules to all staff and provide mandatory training on recognizing, reporting, and preventing harassment and bias.	December 2027	30% of staff trained on rules.		
		9. Collect anonymized data on complaints and outcomes and publish regular transparency reports to reinforce accountability.	December 2026 & December 2027	Transparency reports published annually.		
Operational Objective	Measure	Activity	Deadline	Success indicators	Competent body	Resources
1.4. Accountability and Institutional Gender Planning	1.4.1. Oversight and Accountability Mechanisms	Establish a Gender Equality and Implementation Monitoring Unit (GEIMU) as an internal mechanism within the Judiciary of Zanzibar to monitor compliance with gender-equality obligations.	March 2026	Body formally established with mandate (at least 40% women);	JoZ Other relevant bodies/ organizations: MJCA, MCDGEC, CSO representatives	Financial resources are required for training compliance officers, and conducting workshops for reporting and monitoring. Drafting procedures, establishing reporting systems, and internal reviews will be covered through existing staff and operational budgets. 20 wd national expert
		Define the mandate, powers, and operational procedures of the GEIMU, including protocols for investigation, reporting, and corrective action.	March 2026	Mandate and protocols approved;		
		Develop standard templates and guidelines for annual gender performance reporting by all judicial institutions, aligned with sector-wide targets.	September 2026	Templates developed and disseminated to all units;		
		Introduce confidential and anonymous reporting channels for staff and stakeholders to raise concerns about discrimination or non-compliance safely.	September 2026	At least 1 anonymous channel active;		
		Train monitoring officers and designated staff in handling reports, conducting assessments, and providing recommendations for corrective actions.	December 2027	100% of designated officers trained;		

		Prepare annual gender justice reports and disseminate them to relevant state institutions, civil society, and the public to ensure transparency, external scrutiny, and accountability.	July 2027	Annual reports produced;		
		Conduct regular reviews of compliance processes to identify gaps, recommend improvements, and reinforce institutional accountability.	December 2027	Review report produced.		
Measure	Activity		Deadline	Success indicators	Competent body	Resources
1.4.2. Institutional Gender Action Plans	1. Issue guidance to all units of the judiciary (High Court, Magistrates' Courts, Kadhi's Courts, administrative offices) to prepare unit-level implementation plans based on the Gender Strategy and its Action Plan.		April 2026	Official notice issued to all units;	JoZ	The main costs relate to training and technical support for units in developing SMART action plans and organizing periodic internal review workshops. All other activities, including issuing guidance, integrating plans into work routines and budgets, assigning responsibilities, and monitoring progress, will be implemented using current staff and resources. 10 wd international expert 20 wd national expert
	2. Provide training and technical support to units on developing SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound) action plans.		June 2026	At least 70% of units trained;		
	3. Integrate unit-level plans into routine work planning, operational procedures, and budget allocations.		October 2026	Unit plans integrated into annual work plans;		
	4. Assign clear responsibilities for execution of each action within the unit, ensuring accountability at all levels.		October 2026	Responsibilities documented in each unit plan;		
	5. Establish a reporting schedule for units to submit progress updates, challenges, and lessons learned to the Gender Equity Compliance Body.		November 2026	Regular annual reports submitted by 100% of units;		
	6. Conduct periodic internal reviews and joint workshops to assess the effectiveness of unit-level plans, share good practices, and resolve implementation challenges.		December 2027	At least one joint review workshop annually;		

		7. Recognize and reward units demonstrating strong implementation to encourage accountability and motivate compliance across the judiciary.	December 2026 & December 2027	At least 1 unit recognized per year.		
Operational Objective	Measure	Activity	Deadline	Success indicators	Competent body	Resources
1.5. Women's Participation in Kadhi's Courts	1.5.1. Strengthen and Professionalize Women's Participation as Mediators	1. Develop standardized role descriptions for female mediators, clarifying responsibilities, reporting lines, and performance expectations.	March 2026	Standardized descriptions developed;	JoZ	Financial resources are primarily required to develop and deliver standardized training programmes for female mediators. Additional costs include stipends for mediators, resourcing of office space, administrative support, and outreach activities to raise public awareness about female mediators. Other activities such as drafting role descriptions, and monitoring can be managed with existing staff and resources.
		2. Design and implement a structured training programme for mediators, including modules on family law, inheritance, personal status, gender sensitivity, and dispute resolution techniques.	August 2026	At least 15 female mediators trained;	Other relevant bodies/ organizations: Kadhi's Courts, the Mufti of Zanzibar	
		3. Allocate dedicated resources for female mediator positions, including stipends, office space, and administrative support.	October 2026	Stipends and resources allocated from the Court's budget;		
		4. Expand deployment of trained female mediators to underserved rural areas, ensuring equitable coverage across Zanzibar.	December 2026	Female mediators deployed in at least 5 rural districts;		
		5. Promote public awareness about the role and availability of female mediators to enhance trust, accessibility, and utilization of services.	December 2026	2 public outreach campaigns conducted annually.		20 wd national expert
Measure	Activity	Deadline	Success indicators	Competent body	Resources	
1.5.2. Pathways for Women to Serve as Judges in Kadhi's Courts	1. Initiate a public debate with the relevant stakeholders about the possibility of appointing Female Judges in Kadhi's Courts. Sequence reforms carefully, gradually expanding women's roles from mediators to Kadhis, while fostering institutional acceptance.	December 2026	At least 2 public debates organized;	JoZ	The implementation of this measure primarily relies on existing staff to lead and participate in consultations, monitoring, and reporting activities, and therefore does	
				Other relevant bodies/ organizations:		

		<p>2. Monitor recruitment, appointments, and retention of women in mediator roles, collecting sex-disaggregated data to inform ongoing adjustments.</p> <p>3. Report progress annually to the Gender Equity Compliance Body and make findings publicly available to ensure transparency and accountability.</p>	July 2027	<p>Annual sex-disaggregated data collected and reported;</p> <p>Annual progress report submitted to the Compliance Body.</p>	Kadhi's Courts, the Mufti of Zanzibar	<p>not require substantial additional funding. Modest resources will be needed for activities that involve external engagement or capacity-building, such as facilitating public debates, stakeholder consultations, and awareness-raising sessions to foster institutional acceptance of female judges. These costs may include venue hire, materials, and food for participants.</p>
--	--	---	-----------	--	---------------------------------------	--

ANNEX 2: ACTION PLAN FOR IMPELEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC GOAL II OF THE GENDER JUSTICE STRATEGY 2026-2030

Timeframe for the Action Plan: January 2026 - December 2027

STRATEGIC GOAL II: GUARANTEE GENDER EQUALITY IN ACCESS TO CITIZEN-CENTERED JUSTICE, WITH PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO SURVIVORS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE						
Operational Objective	Measure	Activity	Deadline	Success indicators	Competent body	Resources
2.1. Strengthening the Legal Framework on Gender-Based Violence	2.2.1. Criminalization of domestic violence	1. Establish a dedicated working group to draft amendments to the Penal Act to explicitly criminalize domestic violence and marital rape.	March 2026	1 Working group operational with balanced representation (at least 40% women);	MJCA, JoZ Other relevant bodies/ organizations: MCDGEC, CSO representatives	This measure primarily relies on existing institutional capacity, as legal drafting and working group coordination and consultations with stakeholders will be handled by already assigned staff.
		2. Review the Penal Act to identify gaps in the definition of GBV, focusing on psychological, economic, and coercive forms of abuse, informed by the 2025 Gender Assessment.	August 2026	1 report on the identified gaps;		Additional financial resources will therefore be required for the training and the awareness campaigns.
		3. Conduct consultations with legal experts, judges, prosecutors, women's organizations, and civil society to ensure the draft aligns with international standards and local context.	October 2026	At least 2 consultation sessions held (participation of at least 40% women);		20 wd international expert
		4. Draft amendments to the Penal Act to explicitly criminalize domestic violence and marital rape, removing exemptions and establishing a survivor-centered definition of consent; and expand statutory GBV definitions in line with CEDAW, the Maputo Protocol, and international best practices.	January 2027	1 Draft amendment text produced;		30 wd national expert
		5. Circulate the draft amendments to JoZ staff and the public, including publication on the official JoZ website.	March 2027	Draft published on JoZ website, at least 200 stakeholders reached;		
		6. Collect and integrate feedback from JoZ members and the public to refine the draft	June 2027	Feedback report produced and		

		amendments.		incorporated;		
		7. Formally adopt the amendments to the Penal Act.	September 2027	Amended law uploaded to JoZ website;		
		8. Publish the amendments to the Penal Act on the JoZ website to ensure accessibility and transparency.	September 2027			
		9. Disseminate the amendments to the Penal Act to all JoZ staff.	November 2027	100% of JoZ staff receive amended text;		
		10. Establish monitoring mechanisms to track enforcement and compliance, including reporting on cases handled under the new provisions.	November 2027	2026 Annual report published;		
		11. Deliver mandatory training for judges, prosecutors, and police on the new marital rape provisions, survivor-sensitive procedures, and the application of the expanded GBV definitions.	December 2027	At least 30% of JoZ staff trained;		
		12. Raise public awareness through campaigns and accessible legal guidance to inform communities about the criminalization of marital rape.	December 2027	At least 1 public awareness campaign conducted, more than 5,000 women reached.		
Operational Objective	Measure	Activity	Deadline	Success indicators	Competent body	Resources
2.2. Reformed procedure, infrastructure and access to justice	2.2.1. Mandatory Survivor Protections in Court Proceedings	1. Establish a dedicated working group to draft amendments to the Criminal Procedure Act to codify survivor safeguards, including closed sessions, confidentiality of records, separation from the accused, and establish emergency protection orders enforceable within 24–48 hours.	March 2026	1 Working group operational with balanced representation (at least 40% women);	MJCA; JoZ Other relevant bodies/ organizations: MCDGEC, CSO representatives	Most activities, including legal drafting and the adaptation of court procedures, can be carried out by existing staff and structures. The main financial requirements will be for capacity-building activities—
	2.2.2. Protection	2. Conduct consultations with legal experts, judges, prosecutors, women's organizations, and civil society to ensure the draft aligns with	June 2026	At least 2 consultation sessions held (participation of at least		

Orders and Legal Safety Net	international standards and local context.	40% women);			<p>training judges, prosecutors, and clerks in trauma-informed approaches—and for public awareness campaigns to ensure survivors know their rights. Costs will also cover simplified guidance materials and outreach through media.</p> <hr/> <p>20 wd national expert</p>
		3. Develop the draft amendments to the Criminal Procedure Act.		August 2026	1 Draft amendment text produced;
		4. Circulate the draft amendments to JoZ staff and the public, including publication on the official JoZ website.		October 2026	Draft published on JoZ website, at least 200 stakeholders reached;
		5. Collect and integrate feedback from JoZ members and the public to refine the draft amendments.		November 2026	Feedback report produced and incorporated;
		6. Formally adopt the amendments to the Criminal Procedure Act.		December 2026	Amendments adopted into law;
		7. Publish the amendments to the Criminal Procedure Act on the JoZ website to ensure accessibility and transparency.		December 2026	Amended law uploaded to JoZ website;
		8. Disseminate the amendments to the Criminal Procedure Act to all JoZ staff.		January 2027	100% of JoZ staff receive amended text;
		9. Establish monitoring mechanisms to track enforcement and compliance, including reporting on cases handled under the new provisions.		July 2027	2026 Annual report published;
		10. Deliver mandatory training for judges, prosecutors, clerks, administrative staff and legal aid providers on trauma-informed and survivor-sensitive case handling, and procedures for issuing, enforcing, and monitoring protection orders.		December 2027	At least 30% of JoZ staff trained;
		11. Include adherence to survivor protection protocols in judicial performance evaluations.		December 2027	Judicial performance reports reflect compliance;
		12. Raise public awareness through campaigns and accessible legal guidance (simplified guidance		December 2027	At least 1 public awareness campaign

	materials) to inform communities about the new amendments.		conducted, at least 3 simplified guidance materials (e.g. pamphlet, infographic, etc.) developed and disseminated, more than 5,000 women reached.		
Measure	Activity	Deadline	Success indicators	Competent body	Resources
2.2.3. GBV Specialized Judicial Infrastructure	1. Conduct an assessment of existing GBV benches and divisions to identify operational gaps, resource constraints, and procedural bottlenecks.	July 2026	Assessment report produced;	JoZ	Since specialized GBV benches already exist, additional staffing costs are minimal. The main financial needs lie in upgrading infrastructure to ensure that these benches function effectively and are survivor-friendly—safe waiting areas, secure entrances and exits, and private interview spaces.
	2. Recruit and/or assign dedicated support officers to each GBV bench to guide survivors through proceedings and provide assistance.	July 2026	Support officers assigned in all GBV benches;	Other relevant bodies/ organizations: MJCA, MCDGEC, CSO representatives	Training of specialized court staff will also require funding, alongside awareness activities to build public trust in specialized GBV courts.
	3. Develop a plan to strengthen the functionality of existing specialized benches, including clear operational protocols, roles, and responsibilities.	December 2026	Action plan for GBV benches adopted;		
	4. Redesign or optimize court facilities to ensure safe waiting areas, separate entrances and exits, and secure spaces for survivors, where necessary.	December 2026	At least 3 GBV benches upgraded with survivor-friendly facilities;		
	5. Provide targeted training for judges, clerks, and support staff on trauma-informed practices, case management, and survivor-centered approaches.	December 2027	At least 80% GBV bench staff trained;		
	6. Allocate and monitor budget lines to cover operational costs, infrastructure improvements, specialized staff, and maintenance of GBV divisions.	July 2027	Dedicated annual budget adopted;		
	7. Establish monitoring and reporting systems to track the performance and caseload management	July 2027	2026 Annual report produced and		20 wd international expert 40 wd national expert

	of GBV benches, including feedback from survivors.		published.		
Measure	Activity	Deadline	Success indicators	Competent body	Resources
2.2.4. Improved Access to Justice/State Guaranteed Free Legal Aid	1. Establish a dedicated working group to draft amendments to the Legal Aid Act to improve the free legal aid services.	March 2026	1 Working group operational with balanced representation (at least 40% women);	MJCA, JoZ Other relevant bodies/ organizations: MCDGEC, CSO representatives	Most legal amendments and administrative adjustments can be achieved by existing staff at minimal additional cost. However, dedicated financial resources are required for developing standardized templates and upgrading IT systems for gender-disaggregated data collection. Public awareness campaigns also require financing. IT hard- and software costs
	2. Conduct consultations with legal experts, judges, prosecutors, women's organizations, and civil society to ensure the draft aligns with international standards and local context.	August 2026	At least 2 consultation sessions held (participation of at least 40% women);		
	3. Develop the draft amendments to the Legal Aid Act which guarantee free legal aid for GBV survivors, funded through the state budget.	September 2026	1 Draft amendment text produced;		
	4. Circulate the draft amendments to JoZ staff and the public, including publication on the official JoZ website.	October 2026	Draft published on JoZ website, at least 200 stakeholders reached;		
	5. Collect and integrate feedback from JoZ members and the public to refine the draft amendments.	November 2026	Feedback report produced and incorporated;		
	6. Formally adopt the amendments to the Legal Aid Act.	December 2026	Amendments adopted into law;		
	7. Publish the amendments to the Legal Aid Act on the JoZ website to ensure accessibility and transparency.	December 2026	Amended law uploaded to JoZ website;		
	8. Disseminate the amendments to the Legal Aid Act to all JoZ staff.	January 2027	100% of JoZ staff receive amended text;		
	9. Implement annual monitoring and evaluation to assess the quality, accessibility, and impact of legal	July 2027	2026 Annual report published;		

	<p>aid services.</p>					
	<p>10. Develop and disseminate standardized templates for legal aid provision, including case intake, service delivery, and reporting.</p>		July 2027	<p>At least 1 standardized template produced and disseminated to all registered legal aid providers, template published on JoZ website;</p>		
	<p>11. Collect and maintain gender-disaggregated data on legal aid beneficiaries and outcomes to support evidence-based planning.</p>		December 2027	<p>Annual data report produced;</p>		
	<p>12. Strengthen partnerships with civil society to extend reach.</p>		December 2027	<p>At least 10 new registered legal aid providers;</p>		
	<p>13. Conduct awareness campaigns to ensure survivors understand their legal rights and available services.</p>		December 2027	<p>At least 1 public awareness campaign conducted, more than 5,000 women reached.</p>		