Decolonising Justice: A Scoping Review of Access to Justice in Least Developed Small Island States

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Abstract

The establishment of Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG 16) has placed an emphasis on access to justice, yet its meaning and application in least developed small island states (LDSIS) remains poorly understood. This article presents a scoping review of academic and grey literature on access to justice in LDSIS, with a particular focus on how justice is conceptualised, delivered and experienced in relation to SDG 16. A significant finding of the review is the shallow and fragmented nature of the existing literature: much of it comes from donor reports and multilateral organisations such as the United Nations, with limited in-depth, locally grounded research. This limits the field's ability to engage critically with how justice is experienced on the ground. Although SDG 16 has elevated global attention to justice and the rule of law, the review finds a disconnect between international policy frameworks and the lived realities of justice in LDSIS in particular, with limited attention paid to informal justice systems. The article concludes by outlining key evidence gaps and proposing a research agenda that centres context, and everyday practices of justice in LDSIS.

Keywords: Decoloniality; pluralism; customary practices; SDG 16; Comoros; Guinea-Bisau; Haiti; Kiribati; São Tomé and Príncipe; Solomon Islands; Timor-Leste; Tuvalu.

Introduction

Access to justice has emerged as a central pillar in global efforts to promote peaceful, just and inclusive societies. Since the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were introduced in 2015, the adoption of SDG 16 has reinforced its importance, linking justice to broader agendas of peace, stability and sustainable development. SDG 16 – peace justice and strong institutions, which aims to "promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels" (United Nations, 2016), captures the way access to justice is connected to stability and peace within countries. Moreover, SDG 16 has ten overarching targets and two implementation targets, which are listed in Table 2, later in the article. These sub-themes highlight key areas through which access to justice can be understood.

While international bodies and scholars have increasingly examined how the justice agenda is operationalised, significant gaps remain in understanding how access to justice is conceptualised, implemented and measured in non-Western contexts (Satterthwaite & Dhital, 2019). This gap is particularly acute in the least developed small island states (LDSIS), where unique structural, cultural and geographic factors shape justice delivery (Verma et al., 2023). The ways in which access to justice has been conceptualised and actioned have been uneven across developing states. LDSIS have unique characteristics, which require fit-for-purpose analysis to understand access to justice in these contexts.

Building on recent scholarship connecting crime, governance and sustainable development, Watson et al. (2020) critically examine how the rule of law became central to SDG 16 through the broader crime–development nexus. They argue that the integration of crime and justice into the sustainable development agenda reflects a post-Cold War liberal governance project in which crime control and institutional reform were framed as pathways to stability and growth. This process, driven largely by actors such as the UNODC, privileged a 'thin' institutional conception of the rule of law, measured through quantifiable indicators rather than the lived realities of justice. Such framings mask the contextual and epistemic diversity of justice practices in the Global South, where informal and relational systems remain dominant. Incorporating this perspective underscores that gaps in SDG 16 implementation are not simply technical or resource based, but stem from deeper tensions over whose models of justice and development are legitimised in global governance.

The United Nations recognises 39 small island developing states (SIDS), eight of which – Comoros, Guinea-Bisau, Haiti, Kiribati, São Tomé and Príncipe, Solomon Islands Timor-Leste and Tuvalu – are also classified as least developed countries (UN OHRLLS, n.d.).[1] Grouping these LDSIS together enables a comparative exploration of shared characteristics that influence justice systems, including colonial legacies, economic constraints, geographic isolation and heavy reliance on donor funding (Guillaumont, 2013; Takahashi, 2024; Watson et al., 2023). These conditions create distinctive governance challenges, while four of the eight states – Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste – also carry the legacies of post-conflict transitions, further shaping their justice landscapes. These countries share specific characteristics that make it valuable to study them collectively. Such research provides a robust evidence base to better understand their unique challenges and to develop approaches to justice that are spatially, socially, culturally and economically appropriate and effective. Common experiences, such as the legacy of colonialism, limited domestic economies and geographic boundedness, not only justify grouping these countries together for analysis, but also highlight how structural conditions shape development and governance challenges in relation to access to justice. Such an approach also enables the identification of patterns and divergences in how justice is understood, accessed and experienced, and how these align, or fail to align, with the ambitions of SDG 16.

Beyond their shared structural vulnerabilities, LDSIS should also be understood as epistemic frontiers in global justice discourse. They sit at the margins of international development frameworks, yet provide rich sites for examining how plural, relational and customary justice practices persist outside Western legal logics. A decolonial perspective invites a deliberate delinking from the epistemic dominance of Global North legal traditions (Mignolo, 2007), repositioning LDSIS not as peripheral recipients of justice reform but as producers of alternative legal and normative orders. This approach reframes SDG 16 as both a policy instrument and an epistemological project that privileges particular forms of knowing and measuring justice.

This article presents a scoping review of academic and grey literature between 2015 and 2024 on access to justice in LDSIS, adopting Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) framework for mapping the "extent, range and nature" of research activity. It examines how access to justice is conceptualised in LDSIS with specific reference to SDG 16, explores the degree of progress made towards advancing the access to justice agenda and assesses the extent to which both formal and informal justice systems are addressed in the existing literature. In doing so, it highlights thematic trends, contextual specificities and significant gaps in knowledge. Overall, the review argues that, despite increased global attention to justice, LDSIS remain under-represented in empirical research and international policy discourse. By placing these contexts at the centre of analysis, the article contributes to a more nuanced and inclusive understanding of access to justice, one that acknowledges the interplay between formal and informal systems, responds to locally embedded conceptions of justice and reflects the lived realities of those in some of the world's most vulnerable states. A literature review canvasses the importance of access to justice in relation to LDSIS, followed by an overview of the review methodology and findings, and a discussion of the key themes and gaps identified.

The recognition of legal pluralism in Latin America has constituted a key step toward acknowledging the rights of Indigenous peoples to maintain their own legal systems and cultural practices in the administration of justice (Sieder, 2002; Van Cott, 2000). In Peru, the Constitution and international instruments such as ILO Convention 169 formally recognize the jurisdiction of Indigenous communities within their territories (International Labour Organization, 1989). This allows them to administer justice according to their customary norms, provided these do not violate fundamental rights.

Literature Review

Access to justice is a multifaceted concept, broadly understood as the ability of individuals and communities to seek and obtain remedies for grievance through formal or informal institutions, in accordance with human rights standards (Liefaard, 2019; UNDP, 2020a). It encompasses legal, procedural and substantive dimensions, including the recognition of rights, effective legal representation, fair adjudication and outcomes that promote equity and social inclusion (Gutterman, 2022). For marginalised groups, particularly in fragile or post-conflict societies, access to justice is both a legal concern and a developmental imperative

(Anderson et al., 2017; UN OHCHR et al., 2018). From a legalistic standpoint, access to justice includes a functioning court system, legal aid and rule-of-law mechanisms, while procedurally it involves transparency, timeliness and fairness, including culturally adapted or child-sensitive processes (Gutterman, 2022; Liefaard, 2019). Substantive access to justice goes further, ensuring outcomes that uphold human dignity and provide meaningful redress. These dimensions are interconnected and shaped by the broader socio-political context in which justice institutions operate. As a normative concept, justice has been theorised across philosophical traditions. Anderson et al. (2017) suggest that justice is inherently relational, rooted in social expectations and institutional configurations. Vinod Kumar (2018) frames justice as both virtue and process, highlighting the need for equitable distribution, accountability and ethical governance. The language of decoloniality provides a useful lens through which to reposition legal pluralism and hybridity in access to justice. Specifically, Mignolo's (2007) concept of delinking from the knowledge, power and logic of colonial thought offers an alternative to the study of justice shaped by the traditions of modernity. So, legal pluralism and hybridity become ways through which a justice system can be constructed without the overarching lens of Western legal structures and thinking. Customary justice is not an addition to the formal legal system, but a crucial aspect of it, offering not only its own structures but also the opportunity to centre local epistemologies. These perspectives are critical when considering access to justice in LDSIS, where normative frameworks are often shaped by a combination of customary, religious and imported legal traditions.

Several global frameworks provide conceptual anchors for understanding access to justice. The UNDP (2020a) defines it as the ability to seek and obtain remedies through institutions that conform to human rights standards. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 16, have elevated access to justice as a global development priority. Target 16.3 promotes the rule of law and equal access to justice for all, while related targets – such as 16.9 (legal identity) and 16.10 (access to information) – broaden the scope of justice systems (Hanmer et al., 2019). However, global indicators often fail to account for the socio-legal specificities of LDSIS, which limits their relevance in practice (UN Women, 2019; Watson et al., 2024). LDSIS commonly operate under plural legal systems where formal institutions coexist with customary, religious or community-based systems. While such pluralism can increase legitimacy and accessibility, it also risks entrenching social hierarchies or procedural inconsistencies if unregulated (Kirk, 2015; Pankhurst, 1999). For example, while traditional justice systems may be culturally resonant, they are often patriarchal or lack procedural safeguards, whereas formal systems may appear more neutral but remain under-resourced and inaccessible in remote contexts.

The literature on legal pluralism and hybrid systems highlights the need for integrative justice approaches (Kirk, 2015; Pankhurst, 1999; Susi & Marder, 2025). Scholars such as Susi and Marder (2025) argue that restorative justice should be considered a human right, proposing its integration into legal frameworks as a non-adversarial, community-centred alternative, particularly critical in post-conflict or transitional contexts. As such, justice in LDSIS is shaped by interlocking barriers: weak judicial infrastructure, scarce legal aid, political interference and systemic marginalisation of women, youth and minority populations (Cortez et al., 2019; Jean Baptiste, 2021; Martins et al., 2022; United Nations, 2016). Geographic isolation adds logistical burdens, undermining physical and economic access to courts (Jean Baptiste, 2021; Pierre, 2019). Gender-based violence (GBV) is likewise particularly prominent in the literature as a justice access issue. Reports from UN Women (2018) and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT, 2018) in Australia point to deeply embedded cultural and structural obstacles to reporting and legal redress, including stigma, low legal literacy and limited enforcement. Efforts to implement gender-responsive laws such as those in São Tomé and Príncipe often falter during enforcement and can face resistance from customary institutions (Cortez et al., 2019; Martins et al., 2022).

Transitional justice is another prominent theme in LDSIS scholarship, particularly in post-conflict states such as Timor-Leste, Solomon Islands and Guinea-Bissau. The literature points to ongoing tensions between international justice models and local conceptions of accountability and reconciliation (Cronin, 2019; Engel, 2015; Kirk, 2015; Zvobgo, 2019). In Timor-Leste, for example, the TRC's findings failed to gain wide traction due to weak reparations and limited local ownership (Engel, 2015; Zvobgo, 2019). In Solomon Islands, customary practices often intersect, and sometimes conflict, with formal legal processes, producing a patchwork of justice outcomes that challenge uniform implementation (Cronin, 2019; Kirk, 2015). Guinea-Bissau has received attention for gender-inclusive mediation efforts within its post-conflict reform processes, although the durability of these reforms remains uncertain (Abdenur, 2018). The literature increasingly acknowledges intersectional barriers to justice in LDSIS (Jean Baptiste, 2021; World Bank, 2020). People with disabilities, LGBTQI+ individuals, youth and older persons face compounded exclusions due to legal discrimination, social stigma or institutional neglect (UN OHCHR et al., 2018; UNICEF, 2020; World Bank, 2020). In Haiti, for example, initiatives involving LGBTQI+ civil society and police training programs mark incremental progress, although these remain fragmented and underfunded (Gallón Giraldo & United Nations, 2015; Jean Baptiste, 2021). Similarly, access to justice for older persons is often sidelined despite being central to human rights protections, underscoring the importance of age-sensitive frameworks and the dismantling of structural barriers (Gutterman, 2022).

Despite broad thematic coverage, significant research gaps remain. At the surface level, there appears to be a dearth of comparative, cross-country analysis on access to justice in LDSIS, and most existing studies are descriptive or donor driven. Peer-reviewed academic output, particularly empirical, locally grounded work, is limited (Evans, 2022; Futaiasi, 2023). The full spectrum of DG 16 is also under-examined. Targets such as crime prevention (16.1), anti-corruption (16.5) and participatory decision-making (16.7) receive little attention, while legal identity (16.9) and non-discriminatory laws (16.B) are rarely addressed in LDSIS contexts (Hanmer et al., 2019). Methodologically, the LDSIS justice literature is dominated by grey sources, produced by multilateral organisations, INGOs and donor agencies. While informative, these sources often lack theoretical rigour and long-term engagement with local contexts. There is growing consensus about the need for research that incorporates Indigenous epistemologies and participatory frameworks (Anderson et al., 2017; Vinod Kumar, 2018). Promising work by doctoral scholars has begun to reframe justice using decolonial, relational and culturally situated lenses, challenging assumptions imported from Global North legal traditions (Costa, 2022; Cronin, 2019).

Methodology

While access to justice has been a resonating concept in LDSIS, there is no systematic analysis of the work conducted to date. This review aims to fill that gap. The scoping review assesses the extent of the work in the field rather than addressing "very specific research questions nor, consequently … assess[ing] the quality of included studies" (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005, p. 20). The review is guided by a set of broad, exploratory questions intended to map the field and identify key patterns, gaps and themes. These questions serve as entry points rather than fixed frameworks for analysis. With this mind, the research questions are as follows:

1. *What is the scope of publications on access to justice in LDSIS?*
2. *How is access to justice conceptualised with a particular focus on SDG 16 definitions?*
3. *What progress has been made towards advancing the access to justice agenda in LDSIS?*

The review maps the existing literature on access to justice in LDSIS, analysing how it is conceptualised in relation to SDG 16 and highlighting key thematic and geographic gaps to guide future research. However, because there is limited literature on access to justice in the jurisdictions on which we are focused, we have taken a broad approach to literature inclusion. To this end, we have included grey literature, particularly from international organisations, and theses, as well as both qualitative and quantitative peer-reviewed research.

The methodological approach applied to this scoping review is designed to be rigorous, transparent and replicable. The methodology draws from the model provided by Arksey and O'Malley (2005, p. 20), who outline that a scoping review is "a technique to 'map' relevant literature in the field of interest". To do this, a "scoping study tends to address broader topics where many different study designs might be applicable" (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005, p. 20). The study design is replicable and includes iterative and variable elements to the review. Overall, the study followed a structured, multi-stage screening process to identify relevant literature. A detailed description of the search process and search terms is provided in the next section.

Study Selection

Six search platforms were initially selected for their vast repositories of relevant peer-reviewed research, dissertations, policy papers, ebooks, newspapers, periodicals and historical archives, providing comprehensive access to high-quality academic content and grey literature. The databases identified were Scopus, ProQuest (Dissertations and Theses) and EBSCOhost (Open Dissertations), Violence and Abuse Extracts, Overton and QUT Theses (QUT ePrints). Additionally, these databases focus on broad access to justice topics, including violence, as well as the geographic area of the Pacific, where half of the LDSIS are located. Academic and non-academic articles were equally prioritised in this search to broadly locate all access to justice-related content.

All authors designed and ran the search strategy, which was peer-reviewed by a Faculty Librarian according to PRESS guidelines, narrowing down and refining the search, and undertaking an expansion of the context of the search terms and a line search (McGowan et al., 2016). Search terms, which focused on the names of the LDSIS in scope and justice, were applied across the six databases. No publication type restrictions were applied. English language limits were applied and the date range was post the inception of the SDGs in 2015 until October 2024, when the search was conducted. The complete search strategy can be found in Appendix 1.

Screening and Extraction

The initial search across the six databases, which was conducted on 24 October 2024, resulted in a total of 2375 records. All retrieved records were imported into Covidence, a systematic review management tool, for screening and data management. The PRISMA diagram in Figure 1 outlines the number of records identified and the systematic screening process that was applied.

Figure 1

PRISMA Diagram
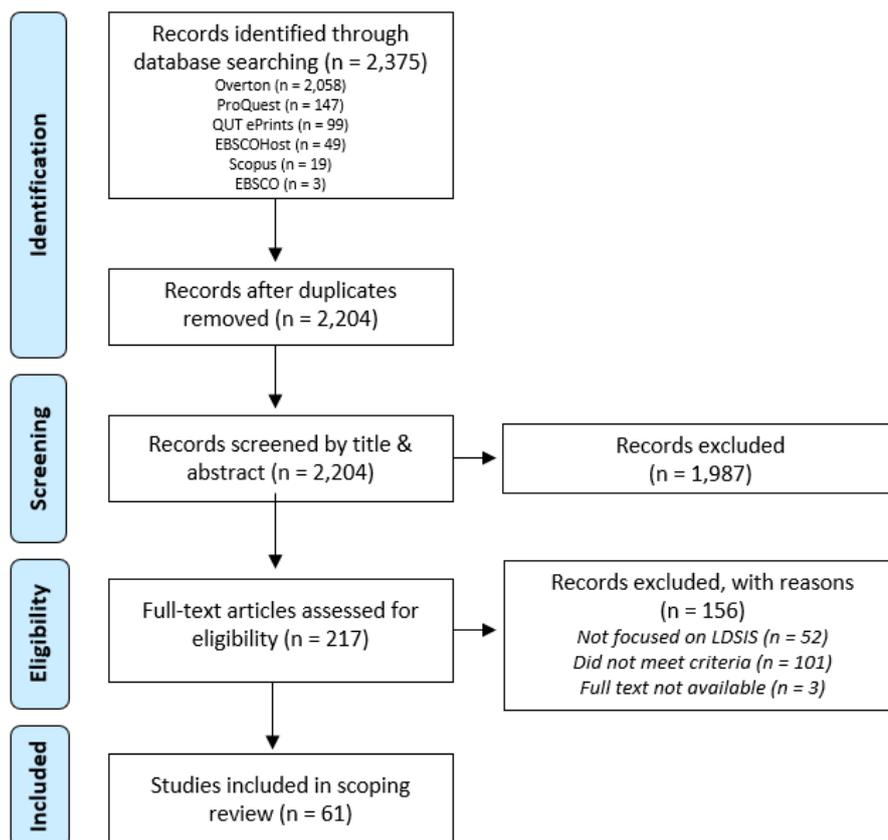
Following, the removal of 171 duplicate entries, a two-stage screening process was undertaken, namely title and abstract screening (Phase 1) and full-text screening (Phase 2). In Phase 1, the researchers established the parameters for screening the remaining 2204 records informed by the broader literature review of the field. To operationalise the research questions, we devised four dimensions of analysis, which guided analysis of the final papers. Studies that matched the following criteria were included:

1. Explain/mention how access to justice is understood in LDSIS with a particular focus on UN SDG 16 definitions.
2. Mention that progress has been made towards advancing the access to justice agenda in one or more LDSIS.
3. Focus on formal or informal (state or non-state) forms of justice in one or more LDSIS.
4. Explain ideologies about justice in one or more LDSIS.

Studies were excluded if the full record was not accessible in English or was not accessible for review, and where the study did not sufficiently discuss any of the eight LDSIS – for example, lightly mentioned the LDSIS in a few sentences of a global report.

Two researchers (the fourth and second authors) completed the Phase 1 screening, and a third researcher (the first author) resolved any conflicts, resulting in 217 articles retained. In Phase 2, full-text review of the remaining 217 included studies was undertaken by two researchers (the second and third authors) to ensure relevance and alignment with the study objectives. Conflicts were discussed and resolved among the authorship team. A total of 61 studies were deemed eligible for inclusion and extraction. Data extraction was conducted by all four researchers, with an iterative process ensuring in-depth review of all 61 sources.

Results

Characteristics

A final set of 61 papers were included for analysis. Most included sources (n = 47, 77%) were reports commissioned by multilateral agencies, non-government organisations and national governments. UN agencies in particular were responsible for 26 (43%) of the included studies, while the World Bank was the second largest contributor to resources, with nine access to justice (15%) commissioned reports included for analysis. In contrast with commissioned reports, academic publications – journal articles (n = 3, 5%) and theses (n = 11, 18%) – were a far smaller subsection of included publications.

There was a relatively consistent breakdown of included papers by year of publication; however, a critical mass of included papers were published between 2019 and 2021 (n = 29, 48%). Most papers focused on a singular country (n = 47, 77%); however, several – largely global and regional reports – included detail on two or more LDSIS. By country, as outlined in Table 1, a significant proportion of included papers focused on Haiti and Timor-Leste.

Table 1

Included Papers by LDSIS of Focus

LDSIS	# of included papers	% of included papers
Comoros	6	10%
Guinea-Bissau	13	21%
Haiti	19	31%
Kiribati	6	10%
São Tomé & Príncipe	6	10%
Solomon Islands	15	25%
Timor-Leste	22	36%
Tuvalu	6	10%

Importantly, Table 1 shows documents as they cover LDSIS, but this does not necessarily mean access to justice is comprehensively covered across contexts.

Gender was the major theme outlined across publications (n = 29, 48%), while access to justice in the context of post-conflict and fragile states was also a major theme identified across the included literature (n = 11, 18%).

SDG 16 was a direct focus for only three documents (Blind, 2020; UN ESCAP, 2019; UN OHCHR et al., 2018). Further, these documents did not consider all the SDG 16 targets or dimensions. A table incorporating the main attributes of each paper and their identification of SDG-related themes can be found in Appendix 2. However, it is important to note that the table in the appendix provides only an indicative mapping to SDG 16. This is because references to SDG 16 were often implicit rather than explicit, not all LDSIS were covered in each document and the full scope of each SDG 16 target may not be addressed in depth.

Thematic Analysis

The results outlined above show the scope of literature by type of document, country and major thematic focus. This section provides an in-depth exploration of the emergent themes as they relate to the article's dimension of analysis and focus on access to justice as it pertains to SDG 16.

Although the SDGs are designed to focus on specific areas with specific targets, it is not uncommon for there to be an intersection with other SDGs. Unsurprisingly, there is crossover with SDG 5 – achieve gender equality and empower women and girls. As noted by Fitz-Gibbon and Walklate (2020, p. 387), "violence and gender are threaded through the Agenda". These authors also note that preventing violence against women and girls requires "justice and strong institutions". Consequently, there are a number of sub-themes in this theme, including gender-based violence, the importance of extending rights to women, codifying gender discrimination and sexual harassment, and describing gender equal laws – expressed as "making legal gender equality" in São Tomé and Príncipe (Martins et al., 2022).

Another illustrative example is the *Solomon Islands Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan 2017–2021* (Solomon Islands Government, 2017), which identifies the persistence of legal and institutional gaps, with weak judicial capacity, lack of enforcement of laws protecting women, and limited resources for victim support. Addressing these systemic injustices requires gender-sensitive reforms, legal aid and stronger enforcement mechanisms (Solomon Islands Government, 2017). This framing rests on an often unarticulated presumption that that formal justice systems must be strengthened or adapted to fulfil these goals, rather than questioning whether alternative, non-formal systems might offer more contextually appropriate forms of justice in relation to gender. Further, despite the importance of justice systems for ending violence against women and girls, there is no systematic understanding of gender as it intersects with SDG 16 in the existing LDSIS-specific literature. The prominence of gender-focused justice discourse reflects donor priorities rather than local agenda-setting. External funding frameworks frequently equate gender justice with legal reform, overshadowing culturally embedded forms of resolution and restorative practice. This dynamic underscores how the global gender–justice nexus can reproduce dependence on externally defined benchmarks of equality.

A second prominent theme is transitional justice broadly conceived, which includes a range of issues arising from the transition to peace. The high number of documents in this sub-theme reflects the number of post-conflict societies in the LDSIS category. The issues canvassed under this theme range from direct results of peace processes through to the ongoing impacts of, and challenges with, the TRC processes and outcomes. These include the failure to pay reparations in Timor-Leste (Salvioli & United Nations, 2018) and resonance failures in the Solomon Islands, where limited vernacularisation has undermined the TRC's legitimacy and impact (Cronin, 2019). The limitations of transitional justice are not just institutional but epistemic. Truth and Reconciliation Commissions often rely on and reproduce Western legal notions of truth and accountability (Vella, 2014). Consequently, and as noted by Cronin (2019) and Salivioli and United Nations (2018), they lack local legitimacy. This highlights the importance of reframing justice epistemology to consider local, customary traditions to secure local legitimacy. These patterns reveal how post-conflict LDSIS grapple with reconciling internationalised truth-telling mechanisms with community-based reconciliation norms. The resulting hybridity is less a governance flaw than evidence of legal pluralism in practice, where legitimacy derives from social recognition rather than formal legality.

Understanding of Access to Justice and SDG 16

Epistemic Marginalisation and Donor Logics – A key focus of this review was to engage with how access to justice is understood in LDSIS in relation to SDG 16. However, while SDG 16 was visible in the content of the documents, as mentioned above, it was rarely explicitly discussed. Only three documents explicitly engaged with SDG 16, examining SDG 16 targets and implementation goals' sustainability. SDG 16 engages with governance and institutions and goes directly to the heart of debates about whose models of justice are being prioritised, whose agendas are being served and which epistemologies are legitimised in the global development agenda. The "neutral and benevolent language of the SDGs mask complex and contentious political issues" (Blaustein et al., 2020, p. 34). For example, *SDG 16.3 Promote the Rule of Law and ensure equal access to justice* is considered to be the backbone of democratic, stable governance in Western governance systems, reflecting a universalism that underscores Western dominance. Watson et al. (2020) suggest that a static and universal interpretation of rule of law does not always resonate with conceptions of justice in non-Western settings.

Table 2

Breakdown of SDG 16 Targets

SDG 16 Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
16.1 Reduce violence everywhere
16.2 Protect children from abuse exploitation, trafficking and violence
16.3 Promote the rule of law and ensure equal access to justice
16.4 Combat organised crime and illicit financial arms flows
16.5 Substantially reduce corruption and bribery
16.6 Develop effective accountable and transparent institutions
16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive and representative decision-making
16.8 Strengthen the participation in global governance
16.9 Provide universal legal identity
16.10 Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms
16.A Strengthen national institutions to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime
16.B Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies

Source: Goal 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions (United Nations, 2025).

In one of the three papers that explicitly considers SDG 16, Blind (2020) suggests that, although SDG 16 has a catalytic role in achieving other SDGs, insufficient attention has been paid to governance mechanisms underpinning it and that SDG 16 should be better integrated into sustainable development efforts. A second publication that focuses on SDG 16, *SDG 16 Goal Profile,* is a global report that identifies the alignment between SDG 16 other SDGs but notes that SDG 16 has only been marginally successful, referencing examples from Timor-Leste, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Kiribati (UN ESCAP, 2019). It identifies data generation and collection as key challenges in tracking the progress of SDG 16. The final document to engage explicitly with SDG 16 is the UN OHCHR et al. (2018) report*, A Practitioner's Toolkit on Women's Access to Justice Programming,* which explicitly focuses on 16.1, 16.3, 16.7, 16.9, 16.10 and 16.B. While perhaps providing the most substantive engagement with SDG 16 of the included sources, this source does so in the context of SDG 5 – promoting gender equality and only mentions one LDSIS – Timor-Leste – but applies principles and strategies highly relevant to LDSIS more broadly.

This section considers the contribution of documents that implicitly engaged with SDG 16 – that is, they did not mention SDG 16 but were clearly aligned with the SDG targets and/or implementation goals in a substantive way. For instance, there was a clear focus on legal identity, which is directly connected to SDG 16.9 – provide legal identity for all, including birth registration. Several documents also connect specifically to SDG 16.3 – promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all, such as laws and policies to address violence against women in countries affected by fragility and conflict – for example, Santagostino Recavarren et al. (2024), which outlines the legal and supportive frameworks addressing domestic violence and sexual harassment in 55 countries, including 17 affected by fragility, conflict and violence (FCV). The analysis highlights significant gaps in both the existence and enforcement of laws designed to protect women. While some countries have legal provisions, sources found that many lack effective implementation and support systems. Similarly, *Strengthening and Coordinating United Nations Rule of Law Activities: Report of the Secretary-General* (United Nations, 2021b) aligns with SDG 16's emphasis on inclusive, accountable and effective justice systems (16.6 and 16.7), advocating for gender-responsive policies, legal protections for vulnerable groups and alternative dispute-resolution mechanisms to enhance justice accessibility in LDSIS.

However, while the clear attachment to SDG 16 is not always foregrounded, all included documents have some connection to the substantive intent of SDG 16. Of particular note, and explored below, is the variety of ways in which justice is considered, including between formal and informal approaches, where intersections with SDG 16 are apparent. These findings illustrate what may be termed epistemic marginalisation, a process through which donor-produced knowledge defines what counts as

justice evidence. Rather than being neutral, data scarcity reflects the politics of visibility within SDG 16 implementation: only what can be measured is valued. This measurement bias privileges the formal and the quantifiable over the relational and experiential.

Progress Towards Advancing Access to Justice

While we were interested in the progress made on advancing access to justice in LDSIS, the lack of comprehensive engagement made this one of the least developed foci considered in the review. The documents expressed very little in the way of substantive concrete, quantifiable evidence of progress made against the access to justice agenda.

There were a number of ad hoc programs and some movement on enshrining access through legislative changes – for example, Guinea Bissau has inserted female genital mutilation (FGM) into its child protection legal code (World Bank, 2021) and Kiribati, Timor-Leste, Tuvalu and the Solomon Islands have all ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (DFAT, 2018). Other ad hoc policy programs included training of preservice police incorporating LGTBQI+ civil society groups in Haiti (Amnesty International, 2016). Another bespoke program in Timor-Leste developed 'Insider Mediators' – volunteers trained as mediators to respond to small-scale violent incidents at the local level through customary conflict-resolution mechanisms, known as 'Tara Bandu' (UNDP, 2020b). These programs suggest that there are some pockets of progress, while other documents suggest limited progress, such as the SDG goal profile (UN ESCAP, 2019), which identifies ongoing issues with data collection to establish progress on LDSIS, while an Amnesty International (2022) report also noted ongoing human rights abuses in Haiti, signalling insufficient visible progress. Findings from this review hence denote both uneven progress towards SDG 16 and uneven assessment of that progress in LDSIS.

Focus on Formal and Informal Justice

Given that LDSIS often have plural legal systems (IDLO, 2019), we endeavoured to explore the extent to which these systems are conceptualised in the access to justice literature. What we found was that formal justice was the dominant interpretation in the included documents. Where informal justice systems were mentioned, they were commonly discussed with regard to the challenges they present in developing formal legal approaches. The role of non-state actors in informal justice was rarely explored, even though they are valuable in negotiating and managing the interplay between customary and formal legal systems (IDLO, 2019). Moreover, in Elefante et al. (2023), where informal justice is discussed, it is in the context of an impediment to formal justice mechanisms, particularly in relation to gender equality where "the interplay of pervasive social norms and legal pluralism may also pose a challenge to legal gender equality" (Elefante et al., 2023, p. 4). This framing in the included literature was common and often minimised the value of informal justice systems in LDSIS. In this framing, informal justice is portrayed as deficient. Decolonial scholarship reminds us that such views reproduce the assumption that the principles developed in the Global North define and often speak for the experiences in the Global South, effectively crowding out alternative ways of understanding justice.

Papers that viewed informal justice as a strength were relatively few, though there were some substantial contributions in this field, particularly from theses such as Cronin's (2019) work on TRC in the Solomon Islands and Futaiasi's (2023) work on Constituency Development Grants, which foreground the role of custom and informal legal systems in the life of Solomon Islanders. Another notable example is in a Timor-Leste-focused academic article that highlights how the Community Reconciliation Programs operated through customary legal authorities and spiritual leaders (*lia nain*), rooted in the traditional justice practice of *lisan* (Zvobgo, 2019). This informal, community-based approach emphasises reconciliation and reintegration, contrasting with more formal, state-based mechanisms such as national courts (Zvobgo, 2019).

Justice Ideologies

A final dimension of analysis used in this review was how justice was understood in the LDSIS-focused literature. While, as noted above, formal justice systems tended to be the dominant approach, where justice is considered as a technical/legal norm rather than a socially contested or philosophical concept (United Nations, 2021a), there was some interpretation of justice supplied in the literature. Sherwood's (2020) work on post-earthquake humanitarian interventions in Haiti examined justice through a critical, counter-hegemonic perspective rooted in critical criminology, structural violence and social harm theory. Others critiqued the top-down approach to justice, which failed to include context-sensitive and political cognisant approaches, but did not develop the concept of justice (OECD, 2016). While this work provides some engagement with the concept of justice, it was rarely discussed in depth and was not applied across all LDSIS. The lack of engagement with justice ideologies

conceptually further reinforces the view that dominant interpretations are embedded in the presentation of justice. Treating justice as a problematised concept limits opportunities to explore plural conceptions, and while – as noted in other sections – there are some plural justice systems, a failure to engage with them conceptually hampers the ability to develop shared understanding across plural legal systems or to understand and improve the operation of justice within those systems and in global institutions. While the review highlights common structural constraints across LDSIS, key regional differences are also apparent. Post-conflict LDSIS such as Timor-Leste, Solomon Islands, Guinea-Bissau and Haiti display a stronger emphasis on transitional justice and state legitimacy, whereas non-conflict LDSIS such as Tuvalu, Kiribati, Sao Tome and Principe, and Comoros focus on administrative accessibility and social inclusion. Yet, in all contexts, customary and community-based mechanisms remain central to justice delivery, suggesting a shared tendency towards hybrid legal orders that defy the state-centric assumptions embedded in SDG 16.

Conclusion

This review has highlighted the persistent gaps in knowledge and practice concerning access to justice in LDSIS, particularly in relation to SDG 16. Although global attention to justice has expanded in recent years, LDSIS remain marginal in both scholarly and policy discourse. Much of the existing work is descriptive, donor-driven and limited in scope, often offering brief mentions within broader reports rather than substantive, locally grounded analysis. This lack of systematic engagement results in a shallow evidence base that fails to capture the complexity of justice experiences in these diverse contexts. The uneven geographic coverage, particularly the absence of depth in Comoros, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Tuvalu, illustrates the risks of allowing global frameworks to define progress without sustained empirical research at the local level. The limited exploration of critical SDG 16 sub-targets, such as those related to corruption, organised crime, access to information and strengthening institutions, further signals an urgent need for a deeper and more comprehensive research agenda and a more targeted policy agenda.

Moreover, this review highlights the persistent lack of attention given by the Global North to the Global South and LDISIS in particular. Further, it showcases that the advent of the SDGs and SDG 16 have not rebalanced this attention. Instead, LDSIS continue to be framed as marginal and deficient, thereby constituting LDSIS as peripheral. These reflections not only reflect LDSIS realities but actively shape how they are understood. This speaks to broader issues concerning the dominance of Western perspectives in global institutions, which privilege not only Western interests but also Western epistemologies and their underlying approach to justice. As this review shows, such attention further marginalises LDSIS perspectives, highlighting the need to rebalance dominant Global North perspectives by employing a decolonial lens through which empirical and conceptual engagement with local, hybrid and plural justice can occur.

Moving forward, a clear priority for researchers is to explore how plural legal systems function across LDSIS. The review confirms that formal justice institutions are frequently under-resourced, inaccessible or undermined by political and structural fragility, while customary and community-based mechanisms remain central to how justice is delivered and experienced locally. Yet these informal systems are too often treated as peripheral, or as obstacles to formalisation, rather than as legitimate sites of justice in their own right. Future research must therefore engage seriously with the hybrid nature of justice in LDSIS, paying close attention to the ways in which customary, religious and state-based systems interact, overlap and (at times) conflict. This requires both empirical depth and theoretical innovation, drawing on decolonial, relational and culturally situated perspectives that foreground local understandings of justice. There is also a need for more comparative, cross-country studies that identify commonalities while recognising divergence across LDSIS, to avoid reducing diverse experiences into a single narrative of fragility.

For policy-makers and practitioners, findings from this review underscore the importance of designing justice interventions that are context-sensitive, inclusive and grounded in local realities. Development partners and multilateral organisations must go beyond reliance on global indicators and donor reports by investing in long-term, locally led research and programming that reflect the plural legal landscapes of LDSIS. Efforts to strengthen formal institutions should be pursued in tandem with support for non-state and community-based actors, who are often the first point of contact for justice-seekers. Policies must also pay greater attention to neglected SDG 16 sub-targets, including corruption, organised crime and access to information, all of which have significant implications for security, governance and trust in institutions in LDSIS. Importantly, interventions should seek to integrate gender-sensitive and intersectional approaches that recognise the barriers faced not only by women and girls but also by other marginalised groups, including youth, people with disabilities, and sexual and gender minorities.

At the same time, the future of access to justice research in LDSIS must be interdisciplinary and collaborative, bringing together legal scholars, criminologists, anthropologists, development practitioners, policy-makers and local knowledge-holders. Such collaboration will allow for both theoretical innovation and practical impact, ensuring that scholarship speaks directly to the

pressing governance and developmental challenges faced by LDSIS. Donor agencies and governments should prioritise building local research capacity, supporting emerging scholars within LDSIS to generate knowledge that is both contextually grounded and globally relevant. This will not only deepen the evidence base, but also democratise knowledge production, reducing reliance on externally produced reports that often fail to capture local nuances.

While this review has revealed that access to justice in LDSIS has thus far received sporadic and patchy attention, the gaps it has identified should be seen as an opportunity to establish a forward-looking research and policy agenda. Advancing such an agenda requires a dual commitment: on the one hand, to rigorous and innovative scholarship that theorises justice in plural legal systems and foregrounds local voices; and on the other, to policy and practice that integrate these insights into reform strategies, capacity-strengthening initiatives and donor programming. For LDSIS, strengthening access to justice is not only about meeting the aspirations of SDG 16, but also enhancing resilience, legitimacy and trust in governance systems. For the global community, centring LDSIS in justice research offers an opportunity to broaden and enrich understandings of justice itself, demonstrating how it can be secured under conditions of vulnerability, hybridity and resilience.

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[1] São Tomé and Príncipe was removed from the LDSIS list in December 2024 (UN DESA, 2024). It has been included in this study, given that the searches were conducted in October 2024.

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Appendix 1

Search Terms

Search term 1	"access to justice" OR "accessing justice" OR "judicial access" OR "justice accessibility" OR "justice availability" OR "availability of justice" OR "women's justice" OR "traditional justice" OR "customary justice" OR "judicial equity" OR "feminist justice" OR "legal access" OR "land conflict resolution" OR "dispute resolution" OR "Indigenous rights"
Search term 2	Comoros OR Guinea-Bissau OR Haiti OR Kiribati OR Timor-Leste OR "East Timor" OR Tuvalu OR "São Tomé and Principe" OR "Sao Tome and Principe" OR "Solomon Islands" OR "small island nation*" OR "small island state*"
Search term 3	"gender-based violence" OR "gender-based violence response" OR "GBV response" OR "SGBV response" OR "response to gender violence" OR "response to gender-based violence" OR "gender-based violence intervention" OR "addressing gender violence" OR "addressing gender-based violence" OR "support for gender violence survivors" OR "support for gender-based violence survivors" OR "response to sexual and gender-based violence" OR "gender violence support services" OR "gender-based violence support services" OR "gender violence prevention and response" OR "gender-based violence prevention and response" OR "gender rights" OR "gender-based rights" AND Injustice* OR Crime* OR Illicit OR Unfairness OR Inequity OR Unlawful OR Oppression OR Abuse OR Discrimination OR Prejudice OR Inequity OR Misconduct OR "Human Rights Violation" OR Tyranny OR Exploitation OR Unjust OR Wrongdoing OR Exploitation OR lawless*
Search term 4	injustice* OR crime* OR illicit OR Violence OR unfairness OR inequity OR unlawful OR oppression OR abuse OR discrimination OR prejudice OR inequity OR misconduct OR "Human Rights Violation" OR tyranny OR exploitation OR unjust OR wrongdoing OR exploitation OR lawless*

Appendix 2

Mapping Document to SDG 16 Targets

Commissioner	Title	Year	Report type	LDSIS discussed	Major Theme	Explicit names and explores SDG 16 in depth	Implicit connection with SDG 16
Amnesty International	Amnesty International report 2021/22: The state of the world's human rights	2022	Global report	Haiti	General – human rights		16.1, 16.3; 16.10, 16.A, 16.B
Amnesty International	Amnesty International report 2015/16: The state of the world's human rights	2016	Global report	Haiti, Guinea-Bissau & Timor-Leste	General – human rights		16.1, 16.3; 16.10, 16.A, 16.B
DFAT	Literature review: Ending violence against women and girls	2018	Regional report	Solomon Islands, Tuvalu & Kiribati	Gender – violence		16.1, 16.2, 16.3, 16.7, 16.B
DFAT	Ending violence against women roadmap synthesis report	2019	Regional report	Solomon Islands, Kiribati & Tuvalu	Gender – violence		16.1
DFAT	Inquiry into the Human Rights of Women and Girls in the Pacific: Submission 1	2020	Regional report	Solomon Islands	Gender – minority rights		16.B
Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance	Recommending change: Truth Commission recommendations on institutional reforms	2019	Global report	Timor-Leste	Post-conflict truth commissions		16.3, 16.B
Igarape Institute	Gender and Mediation in Guinea-Bissau	2018	National report	Guinea-Bissau	Gender – Mediation		16.7
N/A	Nodes and networks: The governance of constituency development funds in Baegu/Asifola and Gizo/Kolombangara, Solomon Islands	2023	Thesis	Solomon Islands	Democracy – constituent funds		16.7
N/A	The state, society and international interventions in Timor-Leste: Creating conditions for violence?	2015	Thesis	Timor-Leste	Post-conflict political processes		16.1, 16.3, 16.6, 16.7, 16.8
N/A	The peace–economy nexus: Evidence from the Solomon Islands	2016	Thesis	Solomon Islands	Post-conflict economic prosperity		16.7
N/A	Reconstructing exclusion: State-humanitarian crime and practices of land resistance in post-disaster Haiti	2020	Thesis	Haiti	Post-crisis structural violence		16.3, 16.6

Commissioner	Title	Year	Report type	LDSIS discussed	Major Theme	Explicit names and explores SDG 16 in depth	Implicit connection with SDG 16
N/A	Speaking suffering: A post-colonial analysis of why the Solomon Islands Truth and Reconciliation Commission failed to "touch the heart of the people"	2019	Thesis	Solomon Islands	Post-conflict reconciliation		16.6, 16.10, 16.A, 16.B
N/A	Designing truth: Facilitating perpetrator testimony at truth commissions.	2019	Journal article	Timor-Leste	Post-conflict truth commissions		16.1, 16.3
N/A	Taking local agency seriously: Practical hybrids and domestic violence in Timor-Leste	2015	Journal article	Timor-Leste	Legal structures – domestic violence		16.3
N/A	Enemy friends: Silence and the limits of transitional justice at Melanesian boarding schools	2021	Thesis	Solomon Islands	Post-conflict – transitional justice		16.1, 16.2, 16.3, 16.6
N/A	Perceptions of domestic violence among women in the Department of Artibonit	2021	Thesis	Haiti	Gender – violence		16.1
N/A	Fragments of youth: Young men and the state in Honiara, Solomon Islands	2022	Thesis	Solomon Islands	Youth		16.1, 16.3
N/A	Building pockets of peace: A case study using the "veil of ignorance" methodology	2022	Thesis	Guinea-Bissau	Local capacities and peacebuilding		16.1
N/A	VWA: Hearing the courageous voices of extraordinary women who have experienced intimate partner violence in Haiti: An interpretive phenomenological analysis	2019	Thesis	Haiti	Gender – violence		16.1
N/A	An exploration in international comparative legal geography: Military status of forces agreements (SOFAs), sexual violence and jurisdiction	2016	Thesis	Haiti	Laws governing conduct of foreign military personnel and gendered violence		16.3, 16.8

Commissioner	Title	Year	Report type	LDSIS discussed	Major Theme	Explicit names and explores SDG 16 in depth	Implicit connection with SDG 16
N/A	Using the organisation of American states to end the abuse of Restaveks	2016	Journal article	Haiti	Forced labour – children's rights		16.2, 16.8
OECD	Improving security and justice programming in fragile situations	2016	Global report	Timor-Leste	Fragile state justice programing		16.6, 16.10
OECD	SIGI 2021 Regional Report for Southeast Asia	2021	Regional report	Timor-Leste	Gender – discrimination		16.1, 16.B
OECD	SIGI 2021 Regional Report for Africa	2021	Regional report	Comoros, Guinea-Bissau, Sao Tome and Principe	Gender – discrimination		16.B
OECD	SIGI 2023 Global Report	2023	Global report	Comoros, Guinea-Bissau & Haiti	Gender – discrimination		16.B
Solomon Islands Government	Solomon Islands Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan 2017–2021	2017	National action plan	Solomon Islands	Gender – peace & security		16.1, 16.3, 16.6
UN – High Commissioner for Human Rights	Rule-of-law tools for post-conflict states: archives	2015	Global report	Timor-Leste	Rule of law		16.3
UN – High Commissioner for Human Rights	United Nations human rights report 2019 United Nations, Human Rights, Office of the High Commissioner	2020	Global report	Timor-Leste, Guinea-Bissau & Haiti	General – human rights		16.1, 16.8
UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women	Concluding observations on the combined 8th and 9th periodic reports of Haiti: Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women	2016	National report	Haiti	Gender – women's rights		16.B
UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women	Concluding observations on the combined initial and 2nd to 5th reports of Sao Tome and Principe: Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women	2023	National report	São Tomé and Príncipe	Gender – women's rights		16.B

Commissioner	Title	Year	Report type	LDSIS discussed	Major Theme	Explicit names and explores SDG 16 in depth	Implicit connection with SDG 16
UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women	Notes for Combined initial and 2nd to 5th periodic reports submitted by Sao Tome and Principe under article 18 of the Convention, due in 2020: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women	2021	National report	São Tomé and Príncipe	Gender – women's rights		16.B
UN International Labor Organisation	Labour market policies for the youth in Timor-Leste: A mapping exercise	2023	National report	Timor-Leste	Youth labour market access		16.B
UN Peacekeeping	Presence, Capacity and Legitimacy: Implementing Extension of State Authority Mandates in Peacekeeping	2017	Global report	Haiti, Timor-Leste	State authority mandates in peacekeeping		16.1, 16.6
UN Women	Justice for women: High-level Group report	2019	Global report	Comoros, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti & Timor-Leste	Gender – women's rights		16.B
UN Women	A practitioner's toolkit on women's access to justice programming	2018	Global report	Timor-Leste	Gender – access to justice	16.3, 16.1, 16.3, 16.7, 16.9, 16A, 16.B	
UN Women	Gender equality and women's empowerment: Constitutional jurisprudence	2017	Global report	Solomon Islands	Gender – constitutional jurisprudence		16.3, 16.7, 16.B
UNDESA	Notes for a post-SDG summit governance primer: Interlinking the institutional, peace and justice dimensions of SDG 16 (2016–2019)	2020	Global report	Timor-Leste	General – SDG16 dimensions	16.3, 16.6, 16.7, 16.8	
UNDP	Inclusive electoral processes: A guide for electoral management bodies on promoting gender equality and women's participation	2015	Global report	Timor-Leste	Gender – inclusive electoral processes		16.7
UNDP	Engaging with insider mediators: Sustaining peace in an age of turbulence	2020	Global report	Timor-Leste	Local mediators		16.1
UNDP	Country program document for Guinea-Bissau (2022–2026)	2021	National report	Guinea-Bissau	Governance priorities & current risks		16A

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UNESCAP	The long road to equality: Taking stock of the situation of women and girls in Asia and the Pacific for Beijing+25 – a synthesis report	2021	Regional report	Global report ft: Kiribati, Timor-Leste, Tuvalu & Solomon Islands	Gender – women's rights		16.B
UNESCAP	Pacific Perspectives 2021: Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	2021	Regional report	Tuvalu, Solomon Islands & Kiribati	Disability rights		16.8, 16.B
UNDESA	SDG 16 goal profile	2019	Regional report	Timor-Leste, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu & Kiribati	SDG progress	16.1, 16.2, 16.5, 16.6, 16.9, 16.A	
UNFPA	Taking stock: Sexual and reproductive and health and rights in climate commitments: A West and Central Africa review	2024	Regional report	Guinea-Bissau	Gender – sexual and reproductive health rights		16.1, 16.2, 16.7
UNGA	Strengthening and coordinating United Nations rule of law activities: Report of the Secretary-General	2021	Global report	Haiti	Rule of law		16.3
UNGA – Human Rights Councill	Visit to the Comoros: Report of the Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment	2020	National report	Comoros	Torture by law enforcement and within detention		16.3, 16.8
UNGA – High Commissioner for Human Rights	Rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities: Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights	2018	Global report	Haiti	Minority rights		16.B, 16.3
UNGA – High Commissioner for Human Rights	Situation of human rights in Haiti: note	2023	National report	Haiti	General – human rights		16.1, 16.2
UNGA - Human Rights Council	Report of the Independent Expert on the Situation of Human Rights in Haiti, Gustavo Gallón	2015	National report	Haiti	General – human rights		16.1, 16.2, 16.3
UNGA – Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth,	Promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence	2018	Global report	Timor-Leste	Reparations		16.1, 16.8

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justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence							
UNGA –-Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples	Rights of Indigenous peoples: Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples	2019	National report	Timor-Leste	Indigenous rights		16.B
UNICEF	Gender transformative approaches for the elimination of female genital mutilation	2020	Global report	Guinea-Bissau	Gender – FGM		16.1, 16.2, 16.B
World Bank	Accelerating gender equality through reforming legal frameworks	2023	Global report	Tuvalu	Gender – economic prosperity		16.7, 16.B
World Bank	Achieving universal access to ID: Gender-based legal barriers against women and good practice reforms	2019	Global report	Comoros, Haiti & Kiribati	Gender – ID access		16.9, 16.B
World Bank	Legal reforms to protect women at home and at work in São Tomé and Príncipe	2022	National report	São Tomé and Príncipe	Gender – women's rights		16.B
World Bank	Sexual orientation and gender identity in contexts affected by fragility, conflict, and violence	2020	Global report	Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Timor-Leste & Solomon Islands	Gender – sexual orientation & gender identity in fragile settings		16.1, 16.3, 16.B
World Bank	Women, business and the law 2018	2018	Global report	Comoros, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti & Solomon Islands	Gender – economic participation		16.3, 16.9, 16.B
World Bank	The Timor-Leste Country Gender Action Plan (CGAP) 2021	2022	National report	Timor-Leste	Gender – action plan		16.1, 16.2, 16.3, 16.5, 16.6, 16.7, 16.8, 16.9, 16.10 16.A, 16.B
World Bank	Compendium of international and national legal frameworks on female genital mutilation, 5th ed.	2021	Global report	Guinea-Bissau	Gender – FGM		16.1, 16.2, 16.B
World Bank	Country economic memorandum for Sao Tome and Principe – background note 14: The case for economic inclusion of sexual and gender minorities in São Tomé and Príncipe	2019	National report	São Tomé and Príncipe	Gender – economic inclusion of sexual and gender minorities		16.1, 16.B

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World Bank	Country economic memorandum for Sao Tome and Principe –background note 13: What do we know about gender in São Tomé and Príncipe?	2019	National report	Sao Tome and Principe	Gender – economic participation		16.1