

A woman and her four children have been left without a permanent home in Kigali after a house where they had lived for more than a decade was sold by her long-term partner, according to neighbours.

Jacqueline Uwamahoro, who lives in Busanza Cell, Kanombe Sector, is seeking help after the property was sold. Neighbours say Uwamahoro and her partner had lived together for more than 10 years and built the household's property during that period.

They say the couple arrived in the area with little money, worked together and later acquired a house and a vehicle.

Uwamahoro and her children are currently relying on neighbours for temporary accommodation.

Neighbours allege that Uwamahoro's partner sold the house without informing her, took the proceeds and later entered a civil marriage with another woman.

The property was reportedly registered in the man's name because the couple had not formally registered their relationship as a civil marriage.

The case has raised questions about the rights of people who live together for years without formalising their union, particularly where property is acquired during the relationship.

Rwanda's Law No. 71/2024 Governing Persons and Family provides for the consideration of unpaid domestic work when courts determine the value of property acquired during marriage.

However, Uwamahoro was not formally married to her partner, raising questions about whether matrimonial property provisions apply to her case.

Her options could instead depend on civil law claims and evidence showing her financial or other contributions to the property. A legal expert would need to assess the specific circumstances before determining what claim she can make.

The case also highlights the difference between living together as partners and being legally recognised as spouses when property disputes arise.

Kigali City spokesperson Emma Claudine Ntirenganya urged Uwamahoro to pursue

the matter through local authorities.

Ntirenganya advised her to formally approach the leadership of her cell to seek administrative intervention and access available legal and social assistance.

Rwanda Dispatch also sought clarification from officials in Kanombe Sector and Kicukiro District on the case and what assistance was being provided to the family.

The case comes amid thousands of registered divorces in Rwanda.

The National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda recorded 4,479 registered divorces in 2025. Courts granted 2,629 divorces during the year, while the remainder had been granted in previous years but registered in 2025.

Kigali City recorded 1,119 registered divorces, the highest figure among Rwanda's provinces and the City of Kigali.

The statistics cover registered divorces and do not show how many couples separate after living together without a formal marriage.