

Revolutions That Breathe

*Reimagining Healing Justice
amidst Conflict and Crisis*



**URGENT
ACTION
FUND +
AFRICA**

FOR WOMN'S HUMAN RIGHTS

The 2024
Annual Action Report



Who We Are

We are bold, responsive, passionate, and allied in solidarity with African women leaders and organisations that promote and advance women's and girls' holistic transformation for an equitable and just future.

As a pan-African rapid response Fund, we have resourced over 8,000 grants with a geographical presence in all 54 African countries.

Our board and staff members are physically present in 18 African countries; collectively, we speak more than 46 African languages.



Values

Respect

Integrity

Organising with soul

Anchored in **four core** and interconnected strategies:

Sustaining Defenders

Feminist Knowledge Leadership

Fostering Cultures of Care

**Transformative Partnerships
& Philanthropy**



Our Vision

We envisage an Africa where transformative justice is a shared goal, ensuring that all marginalised women and girls are recognised for their full worth and value, live to their fullest potential and can actively participate in decision-making processes that shape their lives, families, and communities.

We believe that investing in local and regional initiatives can foster sustainable development and create a lasting impact.



Breathing through Conflict & Crisis

Amidst a multi-layered crisis landscape, Urgent Action Fund - Africa (UAF-Africa) supports African women leaders and organisations that promote and advance women's and girls' holistic transformation with intentional rest, reconnection, and regeneration strategies. By grounding and deepening our work in healing justice and accompanying organisations with healers, we move beyond rapid response to re-imagining transformative shifts amidst crises.

2024 was the year of burden and breath. The year reminded us that amidst polycrisis, our movements must be sanctuaries - spaces of joy, stillness, and power. It was a year wherein African women and girls faced multiple and intersecting crises: the tightening grip of authoritarian regimes; the rise of governments and movements opposing gender equality and fundamental human rights, emboldened by a wave of global conservatism. Women's rights organisations grappled with ongoing armed conflicts in regions such as eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, Sudan, northern Nigeria, and the Sahel, along with worsening climate disasters in the Horn of Africa and Libya. These disasters disrupted women's lives, redefined risk, and deeply challenged the work of women's rights leaders. We responded with urgency, political clarity, and radical care.

This annual action report offers a consolidated overview of our work in 2024, focusing on how we fortified women leaders and organisations across the continent through a **healing justice lens**, responsive and agile grantmaking. In doing so, we also deepened feminist knowledge leadership, laying the groundwork for sustaining women leaders, their organisations and movements.



Healing is Political - A Movement Building Approach

We believe that healing is not a retreat from struggle but a strategy for regeneration.

A key pillar of the Fund's work is advancing **healing justice** as an empirical framework for assessing and responding to structural causes of violence and recognising that trauma, burnout, and structural violence are intertwined with the demands for justice and equity. We actively promoted collective healing as a strategy for sustainability. Through our healing justice approach, we fostered spaces that prioritise holistic care, well-being, and community-centred healing in an era of intense crisis. These spaces, including activities taking place at the Feminist Republik Healing Farm, Collective Healing Sessions with Sudanese women in Uganda and Egypt, online Ubuntu Gatherings, and reflections from the AWID Forum's "Rest & Resist Nest", became spaces of rest and joy that also nurtured connections, sparked the exchange of strategies, and renewed collective energy for the work ahead.

Ubuntu Gatherings

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Rapid Response Grantmaking is Care

Amid these relentless storms, women's rights leaders, their organisations and movements did not falter. Mobilising and quickly deploying strategic resources during crises remained central to our work; we provided technical and financial support to women leaders and their organisations, supported women facing threats because of who they are and what they do, created spaces for strategic responses, and fostered collective resilience. Guided by our Urgent Action Sister Funds **Crisis & Care Framework**, we defined crisis as both acute shocks — such as conflict, natural disasters, and health emergencies – and deeper, systemic threats like authoritarianism, the closing of civic spaces, and climate injustice. Through this perspective, we integrated trauma-informed care and healing justice into our grant-making, incorporating regeneration and ensuring our crisis response addressed immediate and systemic threats.

We catalysed a wave of collective regeneration with more than fifty healing grants in conflict and crisis countries, including **Sudan, Senegal, Egypt, and Mozambique**. Grounded in ancestral wisdom and indigenous knowledge systems, these grants served as medicine for fatigue, uncertainty, disillusionment, and trauma.

Egypt
Mozambique
Senegal
Sudan

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Documenting the Invisible

“If we do not document, they do not take us seriously.” -

Feminist Republik Registry Partner

Feminist Knowledge Leadership team sharpened its tools to excavate truths and roots hidden beneath war, displacement, and silence. In North Africa, we confronted digital authoritarianism with **“Algorithms of Violence”**, our Arabic exposé on technology-facilitated gender-based violence. This was a call to reclaim digital space as safe terrain for women’s rights advocacy, not state surveillance. To democratise access, we developed 32 TikTok-style short-form videos highlighting the principles of healing justice.

Through knowledge outputs such as the Melting Pot and Ubuntu Gatherings insights, and peer-reviewed journal articles on feminist healing justice, we reasserted that African women’s rights movements must prioritise writing, archiving, and reimagining themselves through narratives that debunk western-oriented hegemonies that do not uplift African-centred knowledge systems and values.



Building with Fire & Intention

As a Fund, we remained deeply committed to our mission, leveraging our strategic knowledge, resources and influence to foster a continental and global philanthropic infrastructure that centres the livelihoods and well-being of women. We stayed grounded in solidarity with African women and organisations as they actively reimagined the narrative and contributed to shaping transformative philanthropic spaces.

Within the AWID Forum, collectively with the Urgent Action Sister Funds, we transformed healing into praxis through the **“Rest & Resist Nest”**, a space where healers, activists, and defenders could breathe, reflect, and remember that care is not indulgence, it is resistance.

« I was amazed at how our stories and experiences became interconnected. Regardless of our backgrounds, we discovered common threads of struggle, resilience, and hope that transcended geographical and cultural boundaries. This realisation deepened my understanding of our shared humanity and the collective trauma we often carry as activists. It became clear that while our experiences may differ, the emotions and healing processes we seek are universal. »

Healing practitioner, Egypt - The Rest & Resist Nest space



Alongside the AWID Forum, we launched **“Healing is for the Brave,”** a storybook chronicling the healing journey of Sudanese women leaders in Egypt. This initiative in Egypt reaffirmed that tenderness and collective care in times of conflict are revolutionary, especially for women who have lost their homes, language, and certainty.

« Healing sessions... helped me recognise that the war I was fighting wasn't just external, it was within me. I had carried so much shame and disgust for my body after experiencing sexual violence, but through these sessions, I began to find peace with my body.”

- Sudanese refugee, Egypt.

We redesigned **our website** to resonate with diverse audiences, creating an accessible and interactive online grant application portal with English, French, Portuguese, Arabic, and Swahili language options - embedding accessibility as a political act of care. In doing so, we are building a community of believers, accomplices, and kin. **We do not relent, we build, influence, and sustain. The stakes are life itself.**



Measuring What We Value, Not Just What We Can Count

Our Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) strategy evolved into a deeper politics of presence. We did more than gather data; we listened to stories, embraced nuance, and honoured the messiness of transformation. We followed up on the long-term impact of 2021 - 2022 grants, conducted Before and After-Action Reviews, and used feedback and storytelling as evaluation tools.

Our insights were straightforward, yet profound, centering lived realities, not logical frameworks, with more authentic accountability. Our work affirmed that evidence grounded in trust and truth-telling is more potent than metrics alone. Our healing grants underscored the importance of trauma-informed, collective care in sustaining movements.

Healing sessions with defenders, particularly Sudanese refugees, revealed the power of shared, supportive environments to address deep-seated trauma. Knowledge sharing efforts and storytelling circles helped integrate healing into broader movement building. Immersive spaces like our **“Rest & Resist Nest”** at the AWID Forum demonstrated how healing enhances the efforts of women leaders.

Rest & Resist Nest

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Grantmaking & Movement Resourcing for Impact

We provided technical and financial support to **419 grants across 46 African countries**, supporting women leaders, collectives, and grassroots movements confronting systemic violence, gender-based oppression, and socio-political, economic, climate and environmental instability.

More than 48% of the applications received focused on addressing gender-based violence, depicting the deep-rooted inequalities that women continue to be subjected to at interpersonal, institutional, and structural levels. In this regard, we supported 193 defenders and groups to prevent and respond to gender-based violence-related issues.

In Benin, our Francophone accompaniment spurred organisations' efforts, seeded stronger advocacy pathways, manifesting a great increase in grantmaking for Benin, proof that solidarity travels, transforms, and takes root.

In Chad, Mozambique, and Uganda, women leaders and movements made bold moves to expose the complacency in recording, reporting, and arresting perpetrators of femicide. 53% of the interventions we supported showed the complexities of authorities to acknowledge and act on the increasing number of femicide cases.

With increased conflicts and polycrisis, 14% of the grant applications received in 2024 sought to address holistic safety and digital security, highlighting the need for improved considerations around the well-being and collective care needs of defenders.

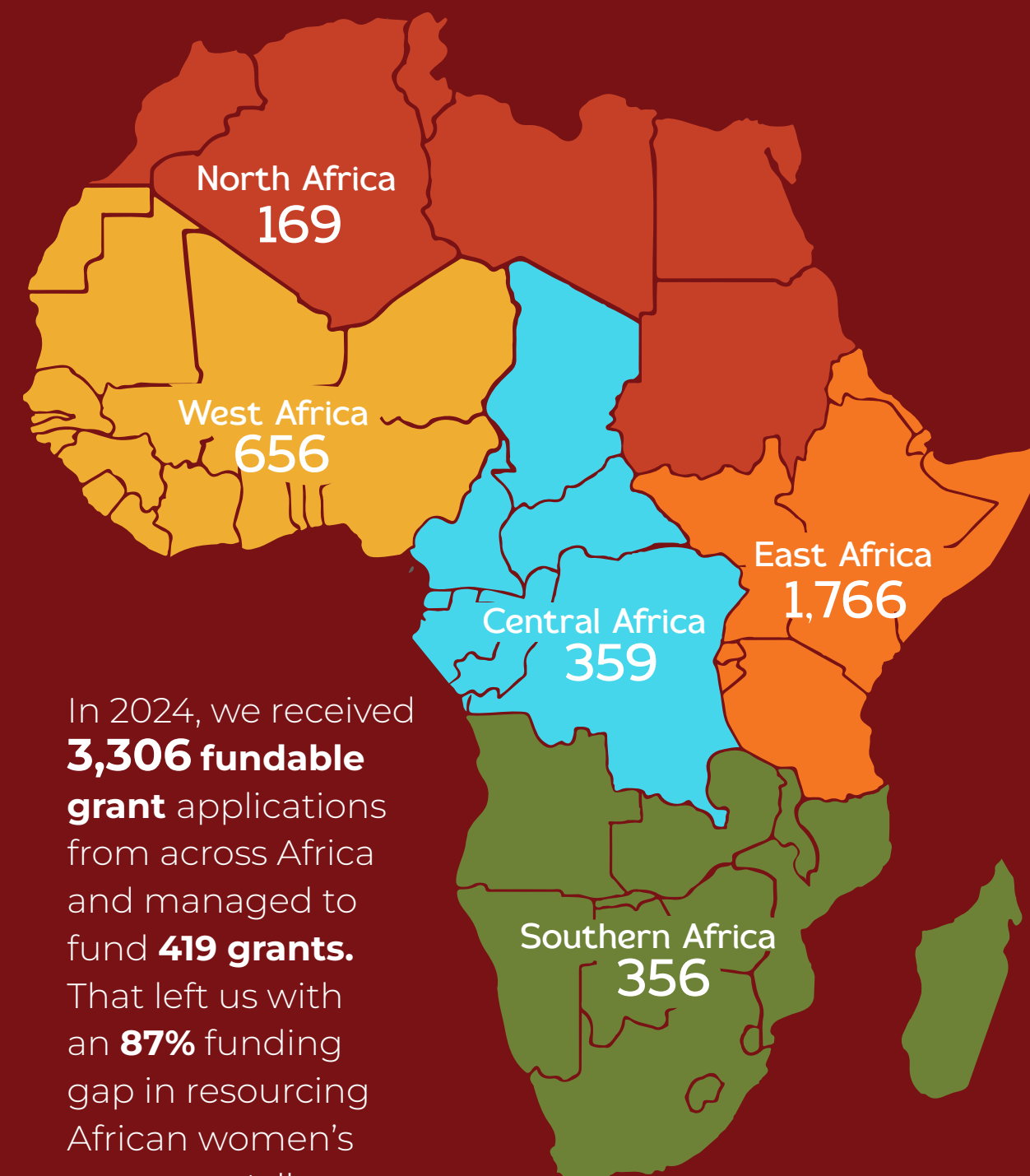
We put in place deliberate measures to reach out to women who face marginalisation, such as women with disabilities. Additionally, **55%** of our support went to grassroots/community-based organisations.

"With UAF-Africa's support, we mobilised quickly and prevented the repeal of the anti-FGM law in The Gambia. Feminist resistance is alive!"

Activist from the Gambia



2024 Grantmaking in Numbers



In 2024, we received **3,306 fundable grant** applications from across Africa and managed to fund **419 grants**. That left us with an **87%** funding gap in resourcing African women's movements!!

Funded Grants



33.4%

Violence Against Women/
Gender Based Violence



11.0%

Economic Justice



5.5%

Sexual and Reproductive
Health and Rights and
Justice (SRHRJ)



16.9%

Environmental & Climate Justice



1.2%

Disability Justice



31.0%

Sustaining AWHRDs and Civic
Engagement

1.0%

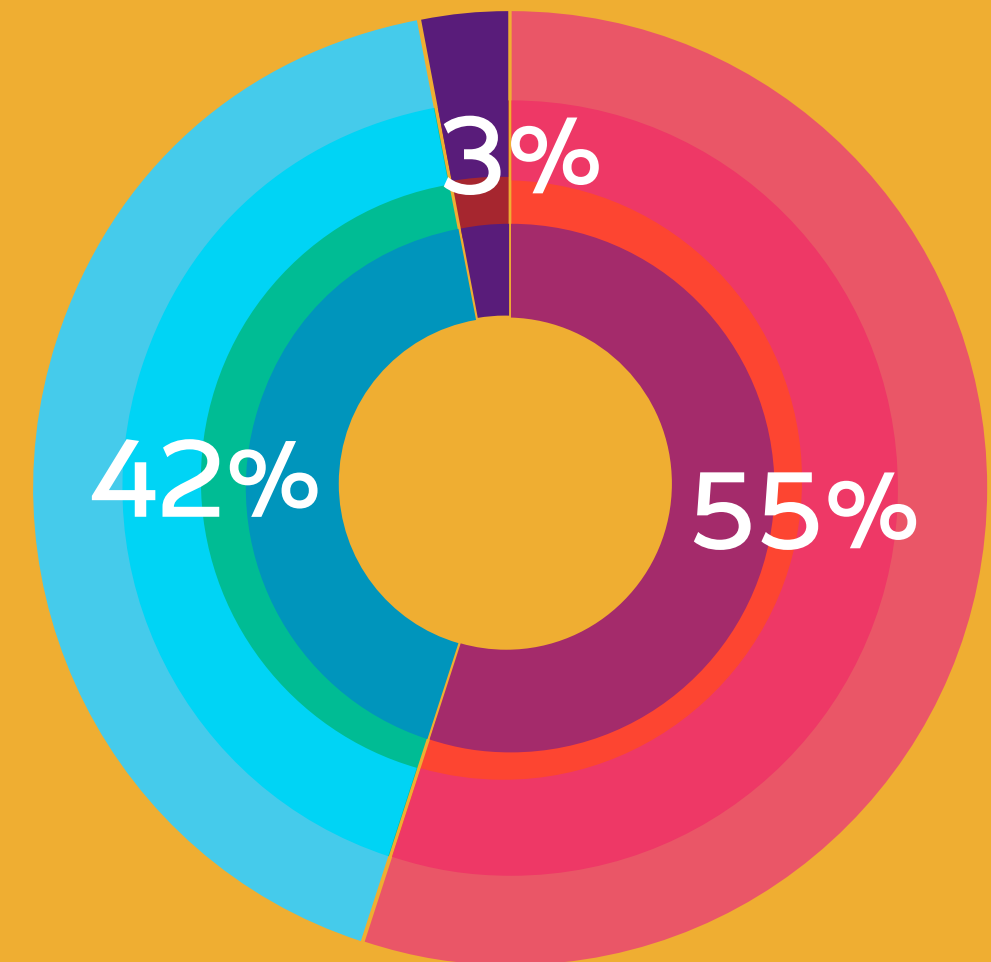
Other

419

Total number 2024



Types of Organisations Supported



Grassroots organisations

National organisations

Regional organisations



Stories of Impact

South Africa:

Protecting Frontline Activists in the Face of Threats

A grassroots ecofeminist activist in South Africa faced escalating threats, including harassment, false accusations, and attacks on her home due to her advocacy for gender justice and environmental protection.

She reached out, and we stepped in for her and her community. Our rapid response support enabled her to relocate safely and protect her property, giving her space to heal, regain her strength, and reconnect with the vital work she does for her community of environmental activists through healing circles. This prompt intervention safeguarded her life and reinforced the power of collective care and healing in sustaining activists and movements in hostile contexts.

Cameroon:

Reclaiming Healing & Wellness in Conflict

In Cameroon's South-West region, women human rights activists have long faced burnout, trauma, and threats amid the eight years long Anglophone crisis. With Urgent Action Fund Africa's support, over 85% of activists accessed therapy and emotional care through a community-led healing initiative.

Peer support groups have been formed, mental health taboos are breaking, and care is becoming central to their work. This shift is helping sustain movements from the inside out, grounded in wellness, not just resistance.

"Now, we speak of care as power, not weakness."



In 2025, We are...

- **Grounding healing and collective care** in conflict settings through deepened grant-making engagement and the **3rd Feminist Republik Festival** in Mombasa, Kenya.
- **Deepening our investment in building, accompanying and sustaining movements** through ecosystem development.
- Pushing philanthropy to move with courage, speed and trust amidst shifting terrain and crises.

Please stand with us!



The Feminist Republik Festivals

A Celebration of Healing & Collective Care

How Far We Have Come

The Feminist Republik Festival promote and advance collective care and healing as integral to women's human rights organising. The Festival provides a bold model and reimaginings of how African women leaders can convene in ways that centre healing as a cornerstone of our dreams for transformation and social justice.

The 1st Feminist Republik Festival (December 2019, Naivasha, Kenya) launched a bold political intervention, bringing together more than 500 women leaders from 56 countries worldwide in the face of structural violence, surveillance, and burnout.

The 2nd Feminist Republik Festival (November 2022, Naivasha, Kenya) gathered nearly 1000 women leaders and funders from over 70 countries to reclaim healing justice as a radical feminist practice in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This holistic approach ensures that movements survive and thrive amidst crisis, fostering sustainable change from individuals to communities across the continent.

Inspired by the Feminist Republik Festival, women leaders have organised mini-festivals and gatherings across the continent, carrying these critical conversations of healing justice, and collective care into new spaces. We celebrate this growing ripple effect and remain committed in solidarity.

- Activists from South Sudan's Feminists Initiative South Sudan (FEMISS) hosted a convening in Uganda. This five-day engagement with a healer was key to connecting defenders.
- The Initiative Pananetugri pour le Bien-être de la Femme (IPBE) hosted a feminist festival in Burkina Faso in March 2024. Furthermore, WHRDs in the Sahel region hosted the first Sahel regional meeting in May in Senegal, with activists from Mali, Burkina Faso, and Senegal exploring feminist strategies.
- Akina Mama wa Afrika holds the annual Feminist Healing Festival that brings together women's rights activists and marginalised groups to celebrate their work, reclaim joy, hang out, and heal together.

These examples highlight the growing impact of UAF-Africa's work, demonstrating how feminist movements are expanding collective care, strengthening healing justice, and creating sustainable strategies amidst a deteriorating socio-political context.



Looking Ahead in 2025

The 3rd Feminist Republik Festival

Building upon the transformative experiences of the 1st, and 2nd Feminist Republik Festivals, the 3rd Feminist Republik Festival is set to take place on the Indian Ocean shores of Mombasa, Kenya, with the bold and audacious theme of **Regenerating in the Storm: Grounding Healing & Collective Care in Conflict Settings**. This edition of the Festival, co-created with AWHRDs, will centre the experiences of women leaders in crisis contexts, the traumas they grapple with, how trauma plays out, is remembered, and is compounded in periods of crisis, and why we

must centre healing when it feels like our world is collapsing.

The 2025 Festival will bring together more than 1200 women leaders from 13 conflict-ridden African countries selected with guidance from the data and information from our grant-making trends analysis. AWHRDs will come from Burkina Faso, Central African Republic (CAR), Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Sudan, South Sudan and Somalia.





Echoes from the Frontlines

« Healing has revealed parts of me that exist beyond the trauma I've carried for so long; freed versions of myself I didn't know existed. I am proud of the person I am becoming,”

- Sudanese Activist in Egypt.

“... You may not fully understand the profound impact of this gathering. Having strong women together in one space, to celebrate our victories, grieve our losses, and share the stories of our struggles is something truly unique and powerful.” -

Senegalese Activist.

“I am deeply touched by how the festival incorporated African elements, giving it a unique and authentic touch. It rejuvenated my spirit and left me with lasting positive energy. Even after two years, the memories of the festival remain vivid, reminding me of the importance of healing for African women human rights defenders.” - Ethiopian Activist



Acknowledgements

To our grantee partners and allies, your dedication and resilience against systemic injustices fuel our purpose.

We are indebted to the incredible community of funding partners sustaining her work.

To our Board of Directors, thank you for your steadfast leadership and guidance in shaping UAF-Africa's vision and impact.

To our dedicated staff, your passion and resilience drive the heart of our mission. Your unwavering efforts ensure that feminist and women's rights movements receive the critical support they need.

Together, we are building a future where feminist and women's rights movements flourish, women's rights are protected and advanced, and justice prevails.

Urgent Action Fund Africa Team!



Our 2024 Publications



Weaving Impact: Systematising
Feminist Rapid Response in a
Polycrisis Era



Healing is for the Brave



Algorithms of Violence:
Exploring Trends of
Technology-Facilitated GBV



Not Wallflowers:
We Are Here to Dance

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