

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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Amnesty International urges Mali to hold perpetrators for human rights violations to account

Human Rights Council adopts Universal Periodic Review outcome on Mali

Amnesty International welcomes Mali's acceptance of a large number of recommendations related to the continued crisis in Mali, including to investigate allegations of human rights violations by all parties including Malian defence and security forces, to hold the perpetrators for such crimes to account and to combat impunity.¹

Despite these commitments, however, Amnesty International is deeply concerned serious human rights violations continue to be committed. The Malian security forces continue to perpetrate horrific violations, including extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, torture, and arbitrary arrests. For example, on 15 February this year, during a baptism ceremony in the village of Daresalam, military forces arrested nine people - two of whom were from the Bambara ethnic group and seven of whom were Peulh – and took them to an unknown location. On 25 March, according to witnesses interviewed by Amnesty International, six bodies were found in a mass grave. They appeared to have been blindfolded prior to being killed.

On 31 May, the government passed a draft reconciliation law. During the New Year address to the Nation, on 31 December 2017, the President noted that the law could lead to “abandoning the prosecution of those involved in an armed rebellion if they have no blood on their hands”. Amnesty International is concerned that the law would lead to impunity for human rights violations and abuses committed by parties to the conflict.² The organization calls on Mali to ensure thorough and impartial investigations by civilian authorities into all allegations of crimes under international law and human rights violations and prosecution in fair trials.

The security situation in regions affected by the crisis has had a negative impact on the right to education. More than 200,000 students are out of school across the central and northern regions of the country due to threats from armed groups. Over 400 schools are closed due in part to insecurity and intimidation of teachers by armed groups, and in part to the lack of state authorities present in the central regions.

Amnesty International therefore welcomes Mali's acceptance of recommendations to guarantee the right to education, including in conflict situations.³

¹ A/HRC/38/7, recommendations 114.16 - 114.39 (Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Sweden, Tunisia, Ukraine, UK, USA, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Canada, Czechia, Denmark, Ecuador, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Mexico, Iraq, Ghana).

² Article 3 of the draft law reads: “The provisions of the present law apply to the facts which can be qualified as crimes or offences, envisaged and punished by the Malian Penal Code, other laws, and international conventions ratified by Mali regarding the protection and promotion of human rights in the context of events related to the crisis that began in 2012 and have seriously damaged national unity, territorial integrity and social cohesion.”

³ A/HRC/38/7, recommendations 114.72 (Senegal), 114.75-114.79 (Timor-Leste, Viet Nam, Egypt, Iraq, Maldives).

Amnesty International deeply regrets Mali's rejection of recommendations by 12 states to ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and to abolish the death penalty.⁴ Mali is abolitionist in practice and Amnesty International calls on the government to commute all death sentences pending full abolition.

Background

The UN Human Rights Council adopted the outcome of the Universal Periodic Review of Mali on 28 June 2018 during its 38th session. Prior to the adoption of the report of the review Amnesty International delivered this oral statement. The statement was dedicated to late Amnesty colleague, Gaëtan Mootoo, who led Amnesty's work on West Africa for over 30 years, and who died suddenly on 26 May 2018.

Amnesty International also contributed to the information basis of the review through its submission on country: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr37/6835/2017/en/>

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⁴ A/HRC/38/7, recommendations 116.1-116.7 (Switzerland, Uruguay, Namibia, Croatia, Montenegro, Estonia, Georgia, Italy, Portugal, Rwanda, Australia, Mozambique).