

'RIGHT TO EDUCATION'

Submission to the Universal Periodic
Review of the United Nations Human
Rights Council

4th Cycle – 43rd Session

Country Review: Mali

October 2022
by Ramazan Ince



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Broken Chalk is an Amsterdam-based NGO established in 2020 which focuses on monitoring and minimizing human rights violations in education all around the world. Our goal is to contribute to promoting universal and equal access to education for all.

Together with our international sponsors and partners, we encourage and support achieving societal peace by advocating for intercultural tolerance, preventing radicalism and polarization, and tackling inequalities in the field of education.

Content

I. Introduction.....	3
The Malian education system.....	3
Budget on Education.....	3
Overview of the previous UN UPR cycle.....	3
II. Girls in Education.....	3
III. Politics in the educational sector.....	4
IV. Attack on Education.....	4
V. Recommendations.....	5

I. Introduction

The Malian education system

1. Education in Mali is free, compulsory between the ages of 7, and 16 or until the end of the ninth grade Primary education is the first six years, and the last six years are divided into two three-year cycles of secondary education.¹
2. To continue with the second level of secondary education, students take an exam called Diplôme d'études fondamentales at the end of the ninth grade.²
3. At the end of grade 12, students sit for an exam called the Baccalauréat, which is required to pass in order to graduate. From there, students may attend an institute of tertiary education.

Budget on Education

4. In 2020, the Malian state budget for education amounted to USD 637.3 million. Only 13% of the national budget was allocated to the construction of classrooms and 4.8% to the acquisition of teaching materials.³

Overview of the previous UN UPR cycle

5. In its national report prepared for the 2017 UN UPR, Mali particularly emphasized the significant development in the education sector because of implementation of the Ten-Year Educational Development Programme, the Education Sector Investment Programme.⁴
6. The Malian Government has continued to strengthen vocational education, including with the support of the international community through the implementation of several projects and programmes, including the Youth Employment Programme and the Ten-Year Vocational Training for Employment Programme.⁵
7. In the previous UPR cycle, Mali received 194 recommendations and accepted 187. Sixteen of the recommendation was regarding the right to education. Five percent of the recommendations was on Quality of the Education. Mali supported all of those recommendations.⁶

II. Girls in Education

8. Malian girls are at higher risk of dropping out of school early, as they are expected to marry young. According to UNICEF, 62 percent of all Malian children who start primary school eventually finish their last year of primary school, while 64 percent of boys and only 59 percent of girls complete their basic education.⁷
9. In a study of the scientific, technical and vocational education of African girls, UNESCO found that on average, 23 percent of university graduates in medicine, three percent of engineering graduates and 10 percent of agricultural science graduates are women. Higher education in Mali may be out of reach for many students, but especially for Malian girls.⁸
10. At the age of 14, young Malian girls are expected to marry, forcing them to drop out of school. Before marriage, little girls are late for school or not at all due to expectations such as cleaning the house, cooking and taking care of family members.⁹
11. Education is free in Mali, but many children still do not attend class due to high ancillary education costs, including transportation, writing supplies and uniforms.¹⁰

12. Secondary schools are mostly located in urban areas and most are private institutions so accessibility is limited for poor children in rural areas.
13. According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 31 percent of primary school-aged Mali children are not enrolled in primary school, and 64 percent of secondary school-age students are not enrolled in secondary school.

III. Politics in the educational sector

14. Turkish schools in Mali and other countries are being unlawfully closed or taken over by order of the Turkish government. According to research, the Gulen movement established over 63 educational institutions in Africa, 222 in Asia, 150 in Europe, 315 in South and North America, and 10 in Oceania. However, the Turkish government has ordered that all Turkish schools in Mali established by the movement must be closed and transfer administration to Maarif foundation, a state-owned foundation for education in Turkey. (Khattak, 2022)
15. Turkish Government established the Maarif Foundation after the July 2016 coup attempt in order to take over the administration of overseas Turkish schools linked to Gulen Movement. There were 18 schools in Mali. There 3,297 students attend those schools, which have 406 teachers, 33 of whom are Turkish. The schools are unlawfully hand over to the Maarif Foundation.¹¹
16. Parents of the school want the outgoing Turkish teachers, “ We wanted this Turkish team from the outgoing team to be part of the provisional committee. If there are parents who want Maarif, they can go with Maarif. We simply said that we have reservations about Maarif. Those who don't want to, certainly, will look for, another, school for their children ,” remarks Mamadou Coulibaly of the parents' association.¹²
17. The Turkish Government has managed to take over 217 schools in 18 countries where the rule of law and democratic principles were problematic –Mali is among those countries. The Turkish Government has been trying to pressure foreign governments to hand over schools affiliated with Erdogan's arch-foe, Fethullah Gülen, to the Maarif Foundation. Gülen has revealed that he rejected Erdoğan's demand to tap schools operated by businesspeople aligned with his movement for use in promoting the Turkish president's political goals, which prompted the Turkish Government to establish Maarif to compete with and take over Gülen schools.^{13, 14}

IV. Attack on Education

18. In Mali, over 60 attacks on education took place in 2019 alone, with over 1,100 schools closed.¹⁵
19. The critical shortage of humanitarian funding for education combined with attacks on schools by armed groups currently does not send 519,000 children to school across Mali. According to the Norwegian Refugee Council, the number of children leaving school in the country increased by 15 percent last year.¹⁶
20. As of 31 March 2022, 1,700 schools remained closed in Mali affecting access to education for more than half a million children.¹⁷
21. Between 2020 and 2021, Mali was one of the three countries in Africa most affected by attacks on schools.¹⁸

V. Recommendations

- 22.** Based on the above analysis of the issues in Mali's education, Broken Chalk would like to encourage Mali to continue its efforts to improve the access and quality of education upscale its current projects and address the issues that are not yet dealt with. In particular, Broken Chalk would like to present the following recommendations to Mali:
- 23.** Setting the same age for marriage as 18 for boys and girls and strengthening efforts to end child, early and forced marriages
- 24.** Take all necessary measures to ensure the right to education in emergencies and conflict situations and ensure that education is open to all.
- 25.** Find alternatives to closing schools for safety reasons to continue teaching in partnership with the public.
- 26.** Redouble efforts to promote education among girls.
- 27.** Try to remove the ancillary education costs, which are on the parents/guardians shoulder.
- 28.** Make education available for rural areas.
- 29.** Try to increase the enrolment rate to the primary schools among the children.
- 30.** Give the Turkish schools back to their initial owners. Apologizing to the families of Turkish teachers, restoring their dignity and paying compensation, and start an immediate open and transparent investigation of the unlawfulness of government officials.
- 31.** Try to increase the enrolment rate of the girls in to institute of tertiary education.
- 32.** Increase the budget on Education to solve the problems of education.

- ¹ <https://www.scholaro.com/db/countries/Mali/Education-System>
- ² <https://borgenproject.org/education-in-mali/#:~:text=In%20Mali%2C%20the%20first%20six,the%20end%20of%20grade%20nine.>
- ³ <https://reliefweb.int/report/mali/mali-insecurity-and-lack-funding-force-over-half-million-children-out-school>
- ⁴ <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G17/333/47/PDF/G1733347.pdf?OpenElement>
- ⁵ <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G17/333/47/PDF/G1733347.pdf?OpenElement>
- ⁶ https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/lib-docs/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session29/ML/MALI_Infographic_29th.pdf
- ⁷ <https://sahelien.com/en/education-of-girls-mali-among-the-10-bad-students/>
- ⁸ <https://borgenproject.org/education-in-mali/#:~:text=In%20Mali%2C%20the%20first%20six,the%20end%20of%20grade%20nine.>
- ⁹ <https://borgenproject.org/improvements-for-girls-education-in-mali/>
- ¹⁰ <https://borgenproject.org/education-in-mali/#:~:text=In%20Mali%2C%20the%20first%20six,the%20end%20of%20grade%20nine.>
- ¹¹ <https://www.dailysabah.com/war-on-terror/2017/08/15/feto-schools-in-mali-transferred-to-maarif-foundation>
- ¹² <https://www.rfi.fr/fr/afrique/20171007-mali-turquie-horizon-gulen-college-ecole-administration-provisoire-ex-maarif-rentre>
- ¹³ <https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/feto-schools-still-active-in-75-countries-minister-143044>
- ¹⁴ <https://nordicmonitor.com/2019/08/erdogans-long-arm-maarif-trains-30000-students-in-34-countries/>
- ¹⁵ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/09/08/attacks-students-teachers-and-schools-surge-africas-sahel>
- ¹⁶ <https://reliefweb.int/report/mali/mali-insecurity-and-lack-funding-force-over-half-million-children-out-school>
- ¹⁷ <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/fr/operations/mali/document/cluster-education-situation-des-ecoles-mali-f%c3%a9vrier-2022>
- ¹⁸ <https://www.agencecofin.com/formation/0306-98345-le-mali-le-nigeria-et-la-rdc-sont-les-pays-africains-qui-comptent-le-plus-d-attaques-contre-l-education-rapport>



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