



JUST ATONEMENT INC.

justice
hope peace unity equal opportunity
golden age
progress sustainability democracy freedom
human rights harmony civilization

Just Atonement Inc.

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Just Atonement Inc. (JAI) is a legal non-profit that trains new advocates to address threats to human rights, a livable planet, and the international rule of law.

JAI was founded in the United States of America in 2017.

JAI invites and organizes legal professionals globally into a single order and aligns a vision of a peaceful, sustainable world, governed by the democratic rule of law; litigates in courts all over the world on cutting edge human rights cases to build peace and sustainability, and to defend democracy; and advocates for a vision of a true Golden Age for humanity: a world where countries settle their disputes peacefully, manage social and economic systems that are in harmony with the planet, and govern themselves through the principles of democracy, the rule of law, and human rights.

JAI submits this written submission with respect to the Universal Periodic Review of Mali.

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

1. Despite Mali having signed and ratified both the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) amongst other international treaties, Mali's human rights situation has deteriorated in the face of political instability and in-fighting within the country. These human rights violations have been perpetuated by the military, Islamist insurgents, counter-terrorism operations, and minority ethnic insurgent groups. It is imperative that the Mali government restore basic human rights protections, ensure the humane treatment of all persons, and protect the lives and fundamental rights of all Malians, especially those of minority groups.

2. JAI recommends that the Malian government focus on conflict resolution, peacebuilding, and long-term development strategies for climate change: herder-farmer relations, resource disputes, community conflict, governance, social marginalisation, and exclusion. The government and its partners should establish and enforce mechanisms for analysing the impacts of climate change to improve the knowledge base for agencies and organisations working on peacebuilding in Mali in order to effect capacity-building programs and reduce Mali's climate vulnerability.



3. **JAI commends Mali's efforts in improving its national human rights framework by strengthening legal protection of human rights defenders**, which was adopted in Parliament on 13 December 2017. Moreover, the legal enactment explicitly protects women human rights defenders (Article 18) and human rights defenders with disabilities (Article 19). The explicit recognition is imperative in recognising the disproportionate impact that can be faced by particularly vulnerable and/or frontline communities when upholding and championing for human rights.

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

4. **Despite having signed and ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, at least 185 children were killed due to communal violence, crossfire, or improvised explosive devices (IEDs).** Moreover, armed groups have continued to recruit children as soldiers, with these groups being responsible for at least 55 attacks on schools in 2019. Thus far, there have been no reported investigations, prosecutions, or convictions of corrupt or complicit individuals for child-soldier offences.

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDPS)

5. **Insecurity, ethnic conflict, and intercommunal violence has resulted in many persons forced to flee their homes.** Over 40,000 civilians fled their homes as a result of violence in 2020.¹ This violence affects individuals' right to housing, their right to life (and in particular, a dignified life), and the right to self-determination.

CONFLICT-RELATED HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES

6. **In response to attacks by Islamist armed groups, security forces have responded with counterterrorism operations that have allegedly resulted in arbitrary arrests, summary executions, torture, and other ill-treatment.**² In the first quarter of 2022, civilian fatalities in the conflict were greater than in all of 2021.³

7. Mali created the La Commission Nationale des Droits de l'Homme (CNDH), an independent institution which received administrative and budgetary assistance from the Ministry of Justice. The CNDH has issued statements on several human rights violations. Similarly, The Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation Commission was created in 2014 to accept evidence, hold hearings, and recommend transitional justice measures for crimes and human rights abuses from the 2012 crisis when terrorist groups had invaded the country. **JAI**

¹ Human Rights Watch, 2020 Country Report: Mali, available at <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021/country-chapters/mali#:~:text=Mali%27s%20human%20rights%20situation%20deteriorated,government%20in%20a%20military%20coup.>

² Submission for the Universal Periodic Review of Mali, Human Rights Watch, available at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/06/30/submission-universal-periodic-review-mali.>

³ Danielle Paquette, "Two coups and no election later, West Africa cuts off Mali" The Washington Post, 10 Jan 2022, available at [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/01/10/mali-west-africa-sanctions/.](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/01/10/mali-west-africa-sanctions/)



commends these efforts and urges the government of Mali to continue to empower relevant human rights institutions to help sustain and support the human rights situation in Mali.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Impacts of Climate Change

8. Mali is highly vulnerable to climate change, where more than 80 percent of the population is dependent on rain-fed agriculture. Already subject to frequent droughts and significant variability in annual rainfall, climate change is expected to increase local temperatures, the variability of rainfall, and the magnitude of extreme weather events. Moreover, in the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Report, the Sahel region in Mali has been identified as a “climate change hot spot”, which is a region whose human rights and security is particularly threatened due to projected climate change.⁴

Weather Extremes

9. Climate change is expected to increase temperatures, rainfall variability, and the magnitude of extreme weather events such as drought. With a significant majority dependent on rain-fed agriculture for their livelihood, Mali is extremely vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Losses in millet and sorghum production range from 150 tons in 2005 to an estimated 2,500 tons in 2025. In addition, changes in temperature and precipitation may facilitate pest infestations, which threaten crops and affect livestock grazing.

10. Consequently, a changing climate has disrupted livelihoods across the country. Agriculture employs close to two-thirds of Mali’s labour force and contributes to 39 percent of the country’s GDP. Environmental challenges create opportunities for armed non-state actors by providing openings for extremists groups to try to muster support from the local population or to try to recruit from particularly vulnerable communities.

11. Furthermore, increased extreme weather events have contributed to internal displacement. In 2020, seasonal flooding affected more than 80,000 individuals, damaging over 6,000 houses and over 7,000 tons of food. These floods led to deaths, injuries and a need for shelter and food. These floods have led to violations of the right to life, right to housing, and the right to self-determination.

Increasing Heat

12. Due to increasing greenhouse gas (GHG) concentrations, the temperature in Mali is projected to rise by 2.0 to 4.6 °C by 2080 relative to the year 1876, depending on future GHG

⁴ Climate Security Expert Network, *Climate Fragility Risk Brief: Mali* (28 May 2020) available at <https://climate-security-expert-network.org/sites/climate-security-expert-network.com/files/documents/csen_climate_fragility_risk_brief_-_mali_0.pdf> 15.



emissions scenarios.⁵

13. Increasing heat will likely violate the right to life. Temperature increases could also lead to more frequent outbreaks of meningitis. Mali is part of the “Meningitis Belt”, which is where the majority of meningitis epidemics occur. Furthermore, rising temperatures would likely lead to heat-related mortality.

14. Furthermore, increasing heat will likely cause public infrastructure such as bridges, roads, and protective structures to degrade more quickly. Despite transport infrastructure being essential for social and economic activities, it remains vulnerable to extreme weather events.

Loss of Natural Resources

15. Malian forests are an important source of food, fodder, and medicinal products, and provide over 90 percent of the country’s energy in the form of firewood and charcoal.⁶ Climate change has impacted these forests in a threefold way: (1) reduced precipitation has resulted in more severe droughts, altered forests lands, and reduced biodiversity; (2) water scarcity has led to the degradation of trees, plants, and soil; and (3) droughts and bushfires have resulted in deadwood areas and loss of biodiversity.

16. Consequently, natural resource-based conflicts are taking place in Central and Southern Mali.⁷ Increased climate variability has forced pastoralists to continually migrate to new areas of pasture while farmers extend agricultural practices into grazing areas to increase agricultural production. This has placed these groups in direct competition with each other. For example, the farming Soninké and pastoralist Toucouleur have been competing for feedstock due to reduced rainfall and encroachment onto farmlands.⁸

Biodiversity Loss

17. An increase in temperature and increased frequency of extreme weather events will likely result in wetlands and riverine systems being at risk of being converted to other ecosystems. Rising temperatures and extreme weather events can impact succession in forest systems while concurrently increasing the risk of invasive species, all of which affect biodiversity.

18. Moreover, fish production and trade from capture fisheries is flood dependent. With an increased risk of extreme weather events, it is likely that fish production in Mali will be adversely impacted by the changes to the weather. National regulation to increase capacity

⁵ https://www.pik-potsdam.de/en/institute/departments/climate-resilience/projects/project-pages/agrica/climate-risk-profile_mali_en

⁶ https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/DCHA_FFP_Mali_CRP_WITHOUT_adaptation_respon ses_10082019.pdf

⁷ *Climate Fragility Risk Brief: Mali* (n 4) 19.

⁸ *ibid.*



building and to control fishing activities is imperative in promoting the fisheries' sustainable management.

19. Beyond climate change projects, anthropogenic uses have a detrimental effect on biodiversity loss. For example, rapid growth of agricultural production and logging have resulted in high rates of deforestation: Mali has lost 330,000 hectares of forest cover in the period from 2001 to 2018, which is equivalent to a 13 percent decrease since 2000.⁹ Furthermore, with Mali's rapid population growth, this trend is likely to continue and will likely impact animal and plant biodiversity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

20. To address immediate implications from child soldier recruitment, JAI recommends the criminalisation of under-age recruitment, the prosecution and investigation of perpetrators, and raising awareness of the imperative need of child protection at the community level. In the long-term, JAI recommends addressing the root causes of child soldier recruitment, such as poverty, grievances, and survival.

21. JAI recommends local authorities provide protection and assistance to those who have been forcibly displaced, by providing humanitarian assistance in the form of food, shelter, legal assistance, education, and access to new livelihoods. Furthermore, in national preparedness and response efforts for both climate and non-climate emergencies, it is imperative that internally displaced persons are included in these assessments, and that funding is allocated to uphold the basic human rights of these individuals.

22. JAI recommends increased investigations and prosecutions, in accordance with international standards, for security forces or actors who allegedly violate international criminal law. Furthermore, JAI recommends capitalising upon the 2017 law that protects human rights defenders and to strengthen protection for human rights defenders who call attention to these atrocities. Lastly, the government should increase human rights monitoring through supporting and sustaining civil society organisations that are engaged in such monitoring.

23. Livelihood diversification is imperative to mitigate against the impacts of extreme weather events and to help communities adapt to climate change impacts. This could involve, by way of example: sustained investment and enforcement of climate-smart agriculture; increasing social and institutional support systems; and increasing accessible education, including adult education for all.

24. Mali should prioritise sustainable management of natural resources to ensure that there is no over-exploitation of these resources, and to prevent conflict over such resources. Investments in improved management of natural resources would be enabling factors for increasing food security, public health, and for economic livelihood.

⁹ <https://agrica.de/2020/10/08/mali-ecosystems/>



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