

## Mali | UN calls on Mali to establish the protection mechanism for human rights defenders

In its concluding observations, the Committee (CESCR) urges Mali to ensure “the effective implementation of the human rights defenders law, in particular by adopting the decree setting out the procedures for its application and establishing the protection mechanism envisaged therein. The Committee encourages the State party to carry out information and awareness campaigns on the importance of the work of defenders of human rights, including economic, social, cultural rights, in order to create a climate of tolerance in which they can fulfil their mission, free of intimidation of any kind, and to prevent acts of violence against them. The Committee refers the State party to its statement on human rights defenders and economic, social and cultural rights, adopted in 2016.”

For Mohamed El Moctar Mahamar, representative of the Malian Coalition of Human Rights Defenders (COMADDH), the recommendation is timely: “We welcome the Committee’s decision to insist on the adoption of the implementation decree of the law, which echoes the grievances we had expressed prior to the review of Mali”. He added: “The Committee has also identified the recommendation as urgent, meaning that Mali will have to report on the implementation within 18 months, by April 2020”.

Women’s rights activist Nana Sanou, who participated in the Committee’s review of Mali in September in Geneva, also welcomes the conclusions: “The Committee called on Mali to revise legislative provisions that discriminate against women and to strengthen the implementation of measures to combat such discrimination.”

Mali took more than 40 years to submit its initial report to the CESCR, after it ratified the Protocol on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 1974. The Committee had examined Mali in 1994 despite no initial report, but the government had not attended the review. “The importance of this first-ever interactive dialogue between the Committee and the Malian authorities must be emphasised,” says Vincent Ploton of ISHR. “We urge them to adopt a plan to implement the Committee’s recommendations and to comply with the requirements for timely submission of future reports,” he concluded.

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