



**SPORT &
RIGHTS
ALLIANCE**

RAISING THE BAR FOR
SPORT, HUMAN RIGHTS
AND TRANSPARENCY

Mr. Andreas Zagklis,
Secretary General

July 29, 2021

Fédération
Internationale de
Basketball (FIBA)

Re: Investigation on Sexual Abuse Allegation in Mali Basketball

Dear Mr. Zagklis,

The [Sport & Rights Alliance \(SRA\)](#) is a global coalition committed to embedding human rights and anti-corruption in world sport. We serve as a force multiplier for civil society groups and trade unions working to promote the rights of everyone affected by sport, including children, women, activists, journalists, LGBTI+ people, fans, athletes, and workers.

We are deeply concerned by the revelations of systemic sexual harassment and abuse and the lasting trauma experienced by female basketball players of Mali's Under-19 team, [documented by Human Rights Watch](#), one of the coalition's founding partners.

The SRA welcomes [FIBA's swift response](#), including the referral of the case to the independent integrity officer, Professor Richard McLaren, as well as the announced [partnership with the Swiss-based child rights organization Terre des Hommes](#). The SRA is encouraged by the suspension of the Mali Basketball Federation president, Harouna Maiga; as well as the [recent arrest and indictment of coach Amadou Bamba](#) for pedophilia, attempted rape and modesty.

These are important first steps, but evidence from the ground in Mali shows players and family members are under threat as "enemies of Mali," and powerful forces are working to silence them. This spotlights the urgency of a survivor-centered approach to protect players and whistleblowers who courageously brought complaints. We ask FIBA to uphold your commitment to "zero tolerance" for abuse by:

- Survivors' access to trauma-informed counselling, health care and legal assistance;
- Protection against retaliation for survivors and whistleblowers (including physical and digital security);
- Ensure that the independent investigation takes a trauma-informed approach – including physical and emotional safety, actively seeking to resist re-traumatisation and ensuring athletes are informed about risks and decisions with transparency;
- Ensure that the results of the independent investigation are made public when complete;
- Based on the findings of the investigation, provide survivors' access to remedy, including:

- Formal public apologies, at a minimum;
 - Resolute disciplinary action against all individuals implicated in the abuse, including against the leadership of the Malian Basketball Federation and at FIBA;
 - Support rigorous domestic criminal investigations by the authorities when appropriate; and
 - Survivors' continued ability to pursue their basketball careers, if not in Mali then regionally or internationally.
- The establishment of systemic reforms to prevent and respond to cases of abuse in the future, a FIBA governance structure that include women at high levels and ensures abuse reporting mechanisms exist on a national and global level; and
 - Ensuring all players, including female, people of color and indigenous, can effectively exercise their right to organise, that they have a seat at the table and a meaningful voice in the decisions concerning them.

As independent global organizations with vast experience reporting and advocating to ensure justice and remedy for abuse and harassment in sports, we would like to offer to meet and share our expertise to:

- 1) ensure survivors of abuse and whistleblowers receive adequate legal, trauma and physical safety support;
- 2) provide knowledge and advice to the ongoing independent investigation led by Professor Richard McLaren; and
- 3) develop policies and systems to allow other survivors to report abuse and prevent sexual harassment and abuse from happening in the future.

The SRA is committed to ending the widespread abuse of young athletes in sports.

We look forward to your response and remain at your disposal to schedule an online meeting at your earliest convenience. We can be contacted by email at andrea@sportandrightsalliance.org.

Sincerely,

The Sport & Rights Alliance

The Army of Survivors

The Committee to Protect Journalists

Football Supporters Europe

Human Rights Watch

ILGA World (The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association)

The International Trade Union Confederation

Transparency International Germany

World Players Association, UNI Global Union

Additional Supporter

Women's National Basketball Players Association

About the Sport & Rights Alliance

The Sport & Rights Alliance's mission is to promote the rights and wellbeing of those most affected by human rights risks associated with the delivery of sport. As part of this effort, this spring World Players Association launched the first global [Census on Athlete Rights Experiences](#) in sport, highlighting athletes' testimonies of lasting legacies of abuse. Over the last two years, Human Rights Watch has also documented the abuse of child athletes in [Haiti](#), [Japan](#) and [Afghanistan](#). The Army of Survivors goal is to end sexual assault against athletes by ensuring perpetrators and enablers are held accountable, creating transparency in reporting, building an environment in which athletes do not fear retaliation when reporting abuse, and advocating for change to protect survivors. The SRA Acting Director, Andrea Florence is based in São Paulo, Brazil, and can be reached at andrea@sportandrightsalliance.org.

*

* *