



CENTER FOR
REPRODUCTIVE
RIGHTS

Claiming Our Rights

Surviving Pregnancy and Childbirth in Mali

Center for Reproductive Rights and
Association des Juristes Maliennes



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***Surviving Pregnancy
and Childbirth in Mali***

***Center for Reproductive Rights and
Association des Juristes Maliennes
©2003***

Published by:
The Center for Reproductive Rights
120 Wall Street
New York, NY 10005
USA

Association des Juriestes Maliennes
BP. E 1094
Tel/Fax 23.23.83
Rue 422 porte N° 157 Niaréla
Bamako (Republic of Mali)

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ISBN 1-890671-40-1

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Acknowledgements

This report was produced by the Center for Reproductive Rights and the *Association des Juristes Maliennes* (AJM). It was written by Laura Katzive, legal adviser for global projects in the International Legal Program of the Center for Reproductive Rights, and Fatimata Dembélé Djourté, coordinator of AJM's Legal Clinic.

The report is based on fact-finding conducted in Mali between December 2000 and May 2001 by Ms. Katzive, Ms. Djourté, Maryse Fontus, former Center for Reproductive Rights legal adviser, and by Dembélé Fatimata Doumbia of AJM. Yacouba Diarra and Alima Doumbia helped conduct interviews with many of the women who shared their stories for this report.

Several people at the Center for Reproductive Rights contributed to the realization of this report. Katherine Hall-Martinez, international program director, and Anika Rahman, former international program director, provided guidance and input regarding the report's structure and content. Rumbi Mabuwa, legal adviser for Africa, reviewed the report and provided valuable input. Anaga Dalal, managing editor, reviewed several drafts and edited the text. Andrea Lipps provided research and production assistance throughout the drafting and finalizing of the report. Deborah Dudley oversaw art direction and photography. Ground Zero Design built the template for the layout and cover. Jonathan Weiss helped coordinate all aspects of production. Preliminary research and other assistance was provided by Sophie Lescure, former legal fellow.

The authors would like to thank the following people for providing invaluable feedback on an earlier version of this report: Pamela L. Bolton, director, Francophone Africa Program, Family Care International; Audrey R. Chapman, director, Science and Human Rights Program, American Association for the Advancement of Science; Rebecca Cook, professor, Faculty of Law, University of Toronto; Lynn Freedman, associate professor and director of the Law and Policy Program, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University; and Ann M. Starrs, vice president, Family Care International.

We are indebted to the many people in Mali who were generous with their time and provided us with invaluable information. We would particularly like to thank

the women in Bamako, Mopti, Ségou, and Sikasso who shared with us their experiences during pregnancy and childbirth. Dr. Moustapha Touré, chief physician in the division of public health, Commune IV of Bamako, provided extensive guidance and valuable contacts during our research. We are also very grateful to the following individuals (in alphabetical order):

Ali Ag Abdou, community development technician, Ségou; Mme. Boi, midwife, Nianankoro Fomba Regional Hospital, Ségou; Coumaré Fanta Coulibaly, Djoliba Center, Bamako; Salif Coulibaly, USAID, Bamako; Ténimbra Coulibaly, health technician, registered nurse, Sikasso; Fanta Demba, midwife, Bamako; Diarra Assa Dia, president, Order of Midwives, Bamako; Diallo Mama Diakité, CAFO, Ségou; Fatoumata Siré Diakité, Association for the Progress and Defense of Women's Rights in Mali (APDF), Bamako; Awa Diallo, midwife, Division of Family Health, Ministry of Health, Bamako; Bréhima S. Diallo, assistant project health officer, UNICEF, Bamko; Hadja Assa Diallo, president, Action Committee for the Rights of Women and Children (CADEF), Bamako; Kané Diawara, president, Order of Midwives, Ségou; Doyolou Dougon, registered nurse (l'infirmier d'état) and head, Loulouni Medical Post, Loulouni; Makadji Fanta Guèye, Order of Midwives, Ségou; Dr. Diarra Houleymata, training adviser, Child Follow-up/PCIME, John Snow, Inc./PDY, Bamako; Bocoum Mariétou Kamissoko, regional director, Regional Management of Social Action, Ministère de la Santé, des Personnes Agées et de la Solidarité, Ségou; Dr. Anna Diop Kampo, pediatrician/gynecologist (pédiatre gynécologue), private clinic, Sikasso; Dr. Dian Sidibé Karim, Division of Family Health, Ministry of Health, Bamako; Dr. Sylvain Keita, Association de Santé Sébénicoro, Commune IV, Bamako; Coulibaly Siga Keita, secretary, the Environment and Income-Generating Activities, Bamako; Traoré Keita, midwife, Maternity Ward, Markala Hospital, Markala; Roné Simone Keitu, midwife maîtresse, Maternity Ward, Sikasso Hospital, Sikasso; Dr. Sidi Kokaina, adjoint to the regional health director, Regional Health Hospital, Sikasso; Nana Kounandji, midwife maîtresse, Ségou; Traore Mariam Madembasy, health aide, Markala Hospital, Markala; Dr. Bouaré Malik, Markala Hospital, Markala; Dr. Daouda Mallé, specialist in health and population, World Bank, Bamako; Ahmed Ben Mohammed, social administrator, Ségou; Dr. Traoré Ousmane, ASDAP,

Bamako; Dr. Lin Ping, Markala Hospital, Markala; Suzanne Reier, director, John Snow, Inc./PDY, Bamako; René Rovira, social marketing adviser, distribution system, John Snow, Inc./PDY, Bamako; Dr. Traoré Safoura, Division of Family Health, Ministry of Health, Bamako; Touré Djénéba Samaké, vice president, Health, Social Affairs, and Solidarity Commission; Diarra Kadiatou Samoura, regional director, Ministry for the Promotion of Women, Children, and the Family, Ségou; Diamouténé Marie Laurence Sanfaré, regional midwife, Regional Hospital, Sikasso; Abdoulaye Sanogo, health technician, Niena; Dr. Doumbia Seydou, Population Council, Bamako; Dr. Alfani Sissoko, health administrator, Technical Council for Social Action, UNICEF, Ségou; Abdoulaye Sissouka, director, Nianankoro Fomba Hospital, Ségou; Dr. Sidibe Bintou Traore Tine, obstetrician/gynecologist, head of gynecology and obstetrics, Nianankoro Fomba Regional Hospital, Ségou; Dr. Attaher Touré, formerly of the Division of Family Health, Ministry of Health, Bamako; Nabo Kadiatou Touré, community development technician, Ségou; Traoré Oumou Touré, executive secretary, Coalition of Women's NGOs and Associations of Mali, Bamako; Dr. Aminata Traoré, Support Project against Practices that are Harmful to the Health of Women and Children, Bamako; Lamine Traoré, Support Project against Practices that are Harmful to the Health of Women and Children, Bamako; Ursula Nadolny, USAID, Bamako.

**+ CENTRE DE SANTE
D'ARRONDISSEMENT
REVITALISE (C.S.A.R) DE LOULOUNI**

TARIFICATION	AIRE	HORS AIRE
CONSULTATION INFIRMIER	200 ^{FCFA}	300 ^{FCFA}
ACCOUCHEMENT	1000 ^{FCFA}	2000 ^{FCFA}
PETITE CHIRURGIE	2000 ^{FCFA}	3 500 ^{FCFA}
CONSULTATION PRENATALE	500 ^{FCFA}	1000 ^{FCFA}
VACCINATION	100 ^{FCFA}	100 ^{FCFA}

Fees for nurse consultations, childbirth, minor surgery, prenatal care, and vaccinations at the health center in Loulouni. 500 CFA francs is approximately USD .80.

photo by Laura Katzive

Table of Abbreviations and Glossary

ABBREVIATION

COMPLETE TERM and DEFINITION

African Child's Rights Charter

African Charter on the Rights of the Child:
Regional human rights treaty protecting the rights
of children in Africa

American Convention

American Convention on Human Rights: Regional
human rights treaty in force in the Americas

Banjul Charter

African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights:
Regional human rights treaty in force in Africa

Beijing Conference

1995 United Nations Fourth World Conference on
Women: Global conference on women's human
rights

Beijing Platform

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, United
Nations Fourth World Conference on Women:
Consensus document adopted by nations
participating in the Beijing Conference

Cairo Programme

Programme of Action of the United Nations
International Conference on Population and
Development: Consensus document adopted by
nations participating in the International
Conference on Population and Development

CEDAW

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of
Discrimination against Women: International treaty
codifying states' duties to eliminate discrimination
against women

CEDAW Committee

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women: UN body charged with monitoring
states' implementation of CEDAW

Children's Rights Convention

Convention on the Rights of the Child: International
treaty upholding the human rights of children

Civil and Political Rights Covenant	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights: International treaty protecting individuals' civil and political human rights
Commune	Local governmental unit at which level management of community health centers is overseen
Community Health Center	Primary health-care centers, financed by the residents of the communes they serve
Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Covenant	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: International treaty protecting individuals' economic, social and cultural human rights
Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Committee	Treaty body that monitors state compliance with the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Covenant
European Convention	European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms: Regional treaty on human rights within the European Union
Fact-finding	A methodology employed to expose human rights violations, seek accountability for responsible parties, identify and secure a remedy for those whose rights have been violated, and help develop an effective advocacy strategy
FC/FGM	Female Circumcision/Female Genital Mutilation: Collective name given to several different practices that involve the cutting of female genitals
HRC	Human Rights Committee: Treaty body that monitors state compliance with the Civil and Political Rights Covenant
Maternal death	"Death of a woman while pregnant or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy, irrespective of the duration and site of the pregnancy, from any

cause related to or aggravated by the pregnancy or its management, but not from accidental or incidental causes”¹

Maternal mortality

Death of a woman resulting from conditions related to pregnancy, delivery and related complications

Matrone (birth attendant)

Provider of assistance at childbirth. Some basic training completed but not considered “skilled attendant” under international standards.

Ministry of Health

Ministry of Health, the Elderly and Solidarity

Practices that are harmful to women

Cultural practices harmful to women’s health and rights, including child marriage and FC/FGM

Reproductive Health Policy

Policy adopted by the Malian government in 2000 that identifies the elements of essential reproductive health care

**State registered nurses
(Infirmiers d’état)**

Health-care professional with basic medical training not specialized training to assist during childbirth

Ten-Year Health Plan

Ten-Year Health and Social Development Plan, adopted in Mali in 1998

Trained midwife

Trained provider of obstetric health-care services; considered a “skilled attendant” under international standards

UN Agencies

Organizations within UN system, including UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and the World Bank that pursue global development goals within their individual mandates

UNDP

United Nations Development Programme: UN agency devoted to funding and supporting development initiatives in low-income countries

UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund: UN agency devoted to funding and supporting population and reproductive health programs in low-income countries
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund: UN agency devoted to advocating for the protection of children's rights
Universal Declaration	Universal Declaration of Human Rights: UN human rights instrument at the foundation of modern international human rights law
USAID	United States Agency for International Development: U.S. government body responsible for funding and overseeing U.S. foreign assistance programs worldwide
WHO	World Health Organization: UN agency devoted to researching and promoting public health worldwide
Women's Commission	Commission for the Advancement of Women: Created in Mali in 1993 to oversee development of a national policy for the advancement of women
Women's Ministry	Ministry for the Advancement of Women, Children and the Family: Replaced the Women's Commission in Mali in 1997
World Bank	International lending institution providing financial assistance and technical support to low-income countries around the world

Executive Summary

The right to survive pregnancy and childbirth is grounded in women's right to life, the most fundamental of human rights guarantees. The number of deaths attributable to pregnancy and childbirth in Mali reveals that for women, the right to life has yet to be realized. Contributing to these deaths are everyday denials of the rights to health care, non-discrimination and reproductive self-determination.

Several factors have impeded women's enjoyment of their right to health care that is available, accessible, acceptable, and of good quality. Availability of care is undermined by a lack of facilities and shortages in material supplies and human resources. Health-care accessibility has been hampered by women's lack of information and, relatedly, the prevalence of misconceptions and myths about pregnancy and childbirth. Acceptability of care has been compromised by health care providers who treat women, particularly low-income women, disrespectfully and remain unresponsive to their needs. Finally, quality of care has suffered as a result of a lack of needed health systems evaluations and inadequate continuing education and provider regulation.

Discrimination against women in Mali takes several forms, all of which contribute to women's vulnerability during pregnancy and childbirth. Formal laws and policies, such as the early minimum legal age of marriage and the exclusion of women from policy- and decision-making roles, marginalize women and reflect a lack of government responsiveness to women's physiological conditions and needs. Practices that are harmful to women, namely female circumcision/female genital mutilation (FC/FGM), affect women's physical ability to endure childbirth. Finally, women's low status within the family further jeopardizes their lives in a health-care context that is poorly equipped to address complications of pregnancy and childbirth.

Women's lack of reproductive self-determination in Mali begins with societal perceptions of women as primarily mothers and nurturers. It is reinforced by women's lack of access to family planning methods. The law and medical providers further undermine women's autonomy by demanding authorization for certain procedures from husbands and requiring minors to obtain parental authorization for