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Years-long sexual harassment and abuse in Malian basketball

Urgent call for help after being kicked off national team: Survivor and whistle-blower from Mali to be allowed to compete in U-19 basketball world championship tomorrow in Hungary

Berlin, August 6, 2021: Athleten Deutschland turns to the public, the IOC and FIBA with a plea for help. We were informed that the main whistle-blower of the abuse cases in the Malian U-18 national basketball team lost her spot on the national team on August 2 and thus her starting eligibility for the U-19 World Championships taking place in Budapest starting tomorrow. Observers interpret this step as retaliation against the player and survivor, whose courage had contributed significantly to the revelation of years of systemic abuse in Malian basketball.

All those involved, especially FIBA and the IOC, must urgently ensure that the player has her spot on the team reinstated and is allowed to compete in the world championships. Survivors, whistle-blowers, and their families must be provided with the necessary legal and psycho-social support. Young female players were reportedly called to provide testimony in court in late July in the presence of the perpetrator, without access to adequate legal representation or psychological trauma support. Their physical integrity must be protected. There are reports of hate messages and threats on the Internet. The announced investigation by Richard McLaren must be survivor- and trauma-centered. The players should be allowed to continue their still young sporting careers; also abroad, should this be necessary for security reasons.

We feel compelled to take this step due to the urgency of the matter, as those responsible do not seem to be providing sufficient protection for the survivors.

Process history for background:

- August 2: Main whistle-blower apparently kicked off Mali U-18 national team
- July 31: The New York Times [reports extensively](#) on the current situation and on the apparent failure of federation officials at the national and international levels.
- July 28: The [Sport & Rights Alliance](#), along with the [WNBPA](#), sends an [open letter](#) to FIBA.
- July 26: Coach Bamba [is arrested](#) and arrested and charged for pedophilia, attempted rape, and incident assault in Mali.
- July 26: Young female players were asked to answer questions in court in the presence of the perpetrator, with no legal counsel (or trauma help) available.
- July 23: Mali's Basketball Federation president Maiga [is suspended](#).
- June 14: FIBA President Hamane Niang denies the allegations and temporarily resigns for the duration of the investigation. This is to be conducted by integrity commissioner Richard McLaren, according to the [FIBA announcement](#).
- June 13: The New York Times [publishes its investigative reports](#) on years of abuse in Malian basketball since the early 2000s.
- June 12: Human Rights Watch [addresses FIBA in a letter](#) about abuse in Mali's U18 girls' national basketball team.

About Athleten Deutschland e.V.:

Athleten Deutschland was founded in 2017 to give Germany's elite athletes a real say for the first time. The association is committed to fundamentally change the German and international sporting system. Our focus is to represent, protect and empower our members.

We fight for working conditions which allow our members to fulfil their full potential as athletes and human beings alike. We stand for fair and clean sport, free from abuse and violence, manipulation, and mismanagement. To fulfil our mission, we collaborate with various stakeholders from politics, business, science, and civil society, as well as like-minded partners in Europe and around the world.

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