

Annex II: Letter from the Education Ministry

The following is an unofficial translation of a French letter received by Human Rights Watch on May 18, 2020, in response to a letter sent by Human Rights Watch on April 20, 2020.

Ouagadougou, May 18, 2020

Ministry of National Education, Literacy, and the Promotion of National Languages
[MENAPLN]
Cabinet
Burkina Faso

Responses to the concerns of Human Rights Watch regarding the attacks on teachers, students and schools in Burkina Faso

1. GOVERNMENT EFFORTS

» *For the re-enrollment of affected students*

As of February 28, 2020, there were 50,522 displaced students re-enrolled in host establishments [schools] across the country. Compared to the situation in October 2019, which was 17,705 re-enrolled students, there was an increase of 32,720 students. [sic]

Moreover, efforts are continuing for the re-enrollment of all students affected by the security crisis.

» *For the psychosocial support of victims*

Regarding psychosocial support for affected stakeholders [education workers] (attacked or threatened), MENAPLN is accompanied by the Ministries in charge of Humanitarian Action, Health, and Defense and Security, as well as NGOs and Associations (DRC, HI, Plan International, UNICEF, ...).

From 2017 to 2019, 324 education supervisors [and] 6,742 teachers from 1,504 schools were trained in the Safe School approach, which takes into account psychosocial support.

For the specific case of teachers, it should be noted that after the initial psychosocial support, generally the victims rejoin their families of origin; which therefore distances them from the mechanisms put in place for their support.

As for the students, in addition to the support of psychologists in some establishments [schools], MENAPLN has a teacher training manual for the psychosocial support of affected students. In this context, trainings have already been given to teachers in the Centre-Nord, Nord, and Sahel regions. These training courses are also programmed in the MENAPLN 2020 Action Plan.

» *Compensation for teachers who were victims*

By late April 2020, the [number] of education workers who were victims of terrorist attacks was two hundred and twenty-two (222). We recorded twelve (12) cases of death, [as well as] physical assaults, the burning of homes, [and] destruction and/or confiscation of property.

In addition to the solidarity and livelihood support provided to these victims, since January 2020 MENAPLN has undertaken the documentation of incidents for the compensation of victims in accordance with Decree 2019 0306/PRES/PM/MINEFID/MFPTPS/MATD/MDNAC of April 15, 2019, concerning modalities for compensation of civil servants who suffered [harm or losses] in terrorist attacks during the exercise of or as a result of the exercise of their duties.

The documentation process is lengthy because it requires gathering many administrative elements whose procurement is made difficult by the context of insecurity in the regions of residence of teachers who are victims, where certain government services are no longer functional.

However, the different departments involved in the process are collaborating so that the documentation advances, and the compensation process should likely be completed this year 2020.

» *Strengthening the capacities of host establishments [schools]*

In order to build the capacity of host establishments [schools], MENAPLN, with the support of technical and financial partners, has developed several actions. 70 temporary classrooms have been created in the Centre-Nord, Est, Nord, and Sahel [regions], 80 classrooms have been rented in the Boucle du Mouhoun, Est, Nord, and Sahel [regions], [and] 450 desks have been acquired for schools in the Sahel [region]. Regarding schools occupied by IDPs, 67 benefited from financial support for the rehabilitation of their facilities. Some damaged schools have also been rehabilitated.

In addition, 7,740 school kits were distributed to students of the Boucle du Mouhoun, Centre-Nord, Est, Nord, and Sahel [regions].

The 2020 Action Plan provides for the development of additional classrooms and WASH infrastructure, [and] acquisition of school equipment, furniture, supplies, and textbooks to accompany these host schools.

2. DATA COLLECTION

Since the beginning of the crisis, MENAPLN has implemented a mechanism for collecting data on education in emergencies. Thus, a weekly report is produced on the situation of schools closed, schools reopened, and the teachers and students affected. In addition, a quarterly report provides information on the situation of displaced students reenrolled and schools occupied.

The last report dated March 12, 2020 noted fourteen (14) occupied schools: twelve (12) by internally displaced persons (IDPs) and two (02) by the of Defense and Security Forces [*Forces de Défense et de Sécurité*, FDS]. All of these occupied schools were already closed for reasons of insecurity.

The situation by region is as follows:

- Centre-Est: 02;
- Centre-Nord: 03 of which 02 by the FDS;
- Sahel: 09.

Part of the monitoring [and] evaluation of the National Strategy for the Education of Students in Areas with High Security Challenges (SSEZDS) 2019-2024 includes the development of an annual implementation report.

3. RESPONSE TO ATTACKS

The attacks are generally reported by [education workers] on the ground, [and by] the [regional and local] administrative authorities.

In addition, schools whose staff received training in the Safe School approach have monitoring committees for reporting to the relevant authorities in the event of an attack.

4. MILITARY USE OF SCHOOLS

In general, schools occupied by the military are schools [that were] closed due to the security crisis.

As part of the implementation of the National Strategy for the Education of Students in Areas with High Security Challenges, there are plans for inter-departmental collaboration frameworks that can be used to disseminate the Safe Schools Declaration and the “Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict.”

In addition, with the support of partners, there are plans to raise awareness during 2020 among the stakeholders involved in ensuring the safety of schools.

In the medium and short term, MENAPLN will contact the relevant ministries for the establishment of a specific committee for ensuring the safety of schools.

5. TOTAL NUMBER OF SCHOOLS AND CLOSURES

During the 2019-2020 school year, MENAPLN [oversaw] 20,764 schools. As of March 12, 2020, there were 2,512 schools closed due to insecurity. Following the COVID-19 health crisis, all school and university establishments have been closed since March 16, 2020.

Statistics on the situation of closed schools are fluid. Even while new school closures are noted, others are reopened thanks to security efforts, the resilience of communities, and the implementation of actions of the National Strategy for the Education of Students in Areas with High Security Challenges.

6. COVID-19

To reduce the spread of coronavirus, of which the first cases appeared on March 9, 2020, the Government has taken several preventive steps. In an education sector, a response plan for educational continuity in the context of Covid-19 has been developed. This plan includes four (04) axes which are:

- use of Information and Communication Technologies for Teaching [*Technologies de l'Information et de la Communication pour l'Enseignement*, TICE], for purposes of educational continuity;
- resumption of classes for the completion of the 2019-2020 school year;
- information, raising awareness, and communication ;
- coordination and monitoring/evaluation .

7. INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT

Technical and Financial Partners, NGOs and Development Associations participated in the process of developing the National Strategy for the Education of Students in Areas with High Security Challenges. Their contributions to the implementation of response activities in relation to the security and health crises are made through the Partnership Framework and the Education Cluster, at both technical and financial levels.

The three-year Education in Emergencies Plan (2020-2022) is estimated at [69,764,175,000] francs CFA, i.e. [\$116,273,626] US dollars.

In addition, the provisional budget of the Covid-19 pandemic response plan for educational continuity amounts to [8,253,975,220] francs CFA [US \$13.6 million].

In view of the resources available and the announcements of certain partners, the funding gaps are estimated to be at around 70% of the needs.

The Minister

Pr Stanislas OUARO

Officer of the Order of Academic Palms