

"It's not normal": sexual exploitation, harassment and abuse in secondary schools in Senegal

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"Ce n'est pas normal": exploitation sexuelle, harcèlement et abus dans des écoles secondaires au Sénégal

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Description:

"It's not normal" documents how female students are exposed to sexual exploitation, harassment, and abuse in middle and upper secondary schools. Based on interviews and focus group discussions with more than 160 girls and young women, the report documents cases of teachers who abuse their position of authority by sexually harassing girls and engage in sexual relations with them, promising students money, good grades, food, or items such as mobile phones and new clothes. Although some teachers have been prosecuted for rape or cases amounting to paedophilia, the report finds that there is a lack of accountability and prosecutions for sexual exploitation and harassment. It also shows that schools lack confidential mechanisms to ensure students can report school-related sexual abuses. Students - who are affected by deeply entrenched taboos, stigma associated with reporting sexual abuses - do not get comprehensive sexuality and reproductive health education in schools. Human Rights Watch calls on the Senegalese government to urgently adopt a national policy that specifically prohibits all forms of school-related sexual abuse, as well as a national code of conduct for teachers and other education officials, who should also receive mandatory child protection training. They should be legally bound to investigate or refer any allegations of sexual abuse to police. Senegal should also expedite the adoption of a comprehensive sexual and reproductive health curriculum.

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