

Burkina Faso

May 2010

Maternal Mortality: Giving life, risking death

Burkina Faso is a French-speaking country in West Africa. Every year, more than 2000 women die there from complications during pregnancy and childbirth. That means at least five women die each day. Most of these deaths could be prevented if women were able to receive quality health care services.

The medical services available are often of poor quality. Medical supplies, doctors and nurses are not always available and other medical people often lack the right training. For many families in Burkina Faso, the high cost of health care means that even when the services are available, they are too expensive.

Many women and girls also do not have enough information about their rights to health care and about the services available.

Women who live in poor and rural communities are the most affected.

Even though the law says that women and men are equal in Burkina Faso, many women are not able to decide for themselves whether to have children, when to have them and how many to have. Many women get married and

have children at a very young age. This can increase their risk for problems during pregnancy and childbirth.

By adopting a law in 2005, the government of Burkina Faso recognized the

importance for every individual to have information and be able to make

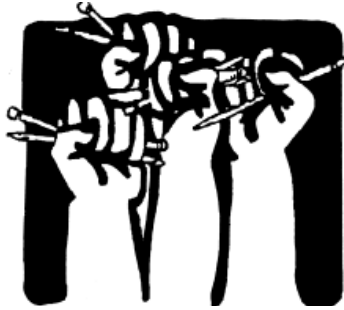
decisions about their sexual and reproductive health. But four years later, the government has not done enough to put the law into practice and to inform women and men about their rights.

The government of Burkina Faso must create a plan and take action to avoid the deaths of women in pregnancy and childbirth.



Amnesty International is working in Burkina Faso to promote the right to health care services for women and girls. The banner on this truck says “Give life without risking death”.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?
Turn the page to find out.



WHAT CAN I DO?

Write a short, polite message to the Minister of Health of Burkina Faso. You may write in French or English.

1. Start your letter with Dear Minister. In your first sentence, express your concern that more than 2000 women die every year in Burkina Faso during pregnancy and childbirth.
2. Then ask the Minister to create a plan to save more lives of women by respecting their right to quality health care services.
3. Ask him to organize an information campaign about maternal health with other women's organizations and to make sure that women are part of government decisions about maternal health care.

WHERE DO I SEND MY MESSAGE?

Monsieur Seydou Bouda
Ministre de la Santé
Ministère de la Santé
03 BP 7005
Ouagadougou 03
Burkina Faso

- You will need \$1.70 in postage to mail the letter.



WHAT ELSE CAN I DO?

Send a “pagne” to the women of Burkina Faso. *Pagnes* are pieces of brightly coloured fabric that people give to symbolize friendship and encouragement. Your *pagne* will be stitched together with others from all over the world. The banners will be used at events this summer to promote health and life for women and girls in Burkina Faso. Find a colourful piece of fabric and cut out a square about 5cm X 5cm. Write a message of support on it. It could say “Women in Burkina Faso have the right to good health care” or “I support quality care for mothers in Burkina Faso”. Add your name and your city. Make sure to add “Canada”. Send your pagne by **June 1st** to:

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