

**The Third and Fourth Ordinary Sessions of the General Assembly of Commissioners of the Cameroon Human Rights Commission (CHRC)**

**Yaoundé, Conference Centre**

**21 and 22 December 2022**

**SPEECH BY THE CHRC CHAIRPERSON**

* **The Vice-Chairperson of the CHRC,**
* **Distinguished Chairs of the Sub-Commissions,**
* **Distinguished Commissioners of the CHRC,**
* **The Permanent Secretary,**
* **Distinguished Professors and guests,**
* **The Head of the Division for Human Rights Promotion and Protection,**
* **Distinguished Staff Members, all Protocols observed**
* **Distinguished Representatives of the press,**
* **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Here we are again for two ordinary General Assemblies of the CHRC, following the Extraordinary General Assembly of 30 March 2022, which was dedicated to the adoption of the Rules of Procedure.

The Third and Fourth Ordinary Sessions of the General Assembly of Commissioners of the Cameroon Human Rights Commission (CHRC), which will be held over two successive days, as last year, a year to this day on the same dates - and for the same reasons - in this same place, the Yaounde Conference Centre.

After 2021, which was mainly a year of impregnation for the very first team of **CHRC** officials and commissioners, as of their taking office following the swearing-in of the 15 Commissioners before the assembled chambers of the Supreme Court on 29 April 2021, 2022 was marked by intense activity for the new team of this new institution.

It must be recognized at the outset that the remarkable activity of the CHRC in 2022 was possible thanks to the assistance of the high authorities of the State. They do not cease to substantiate their determination to endow the new National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) of Cameroon with progressive and growing resources to enable the institution to peacefully fulfil its threefold mandate to promote and protect human rights, and prevent torture in detention facilities.

This is the place to express the full extent of my gratitude to the high authorities of the State, to which I include the gratitude of all the Commissioners and Permanent Secretariat of the CHRC. Firstly, for the budgetary extension, we received once again this year, which has enabled us to be more effective on the ground. We are all the more grateful to the Government for the substantial increase in the Commission's budget for the year 2023. In fact, we have gone from a **2021 budget** of **one billion 493 million 501 thousand CFA francs** (including the extension), or 1 billion 246 million CFA francs excluding the extension (996 million for functioning and 250 million for investment), to a **2022 budget** of **3 billion 746 million** **CFAF** (including extension) and 3 billion 246 million CFAF excluding extension (of which 2 billion 496 million CFAF for operations and 750 million CFAF for investment), **which represents an increase of 2 billion CFAF compared to the 2021 budget excluding extension, in absolute terms, or 160.51% in relative terms**. It should be noted that this sharp increase in the budget was necessary to enable the 15 now permanent Commissioners to be paid.

And here we are with a **2023 budget** of **3 billion 946 million CFAF for the year 2023** (of which 2 billion 996 million CFAF is for functioning and 950 million for investment), **i.e. an increase of 700 million** **CFAF** (500 million for functioning and 200 million for investment) **in absolute value compared to the 2022 budget, which represents 21.56% in relative value.**

The Commission also benefited from a grant from MINEPAT consisting of *a generator, eight desktop computers, two video projectors, 15 directors' chairs, five visitors' chairs, three hoovers, 10 coffee makers and two microwave ovens*. The UNDP also donated equipment to the Commission consisting of office and electronic equipment (seven desks, six air conditioners and 15 blinds), computer equipment (a printer for Braille deciphering, 15 laptops, 15 anti-virus software) and a large collection of documents (510 thematic books), **worth a total of 27 million 898 thousand 500 CFAF.** We would like to reiterate our warm and sincere gratitude to this UN partner agency.

On the strength of this encouragement, which shows the determination of the authorities to spare no effort to accompany the new NHRI in its implementation process the CHRC deployed during the year 2022 on the promotion front, that of the protection of human rights as well as that of the prevention of torture. On observation, such positioning makes it possible to affirm today that CHRC, the new NHRI, has taken its mark in the institutional landscape of our country.

It suffices only to look at the Institution’s 2022 record to see that.

**As far as the promotion of human rights is concerned**, we can welcome the rise of the regime in the celebration of the commemorative human rights days. Indeed, out of the 31 Human Rights Commemorative Days that the CHRC selected the day after its establishment, a total of 30 were marked by the publication of a statement for each Commemorative Day, including the special statement - so to speak - on sports and human rights during the TotalEnergies AFCON last January. Therefore, ***31 statements were published in total in 2022, as opposed to 18 in 2021***. These statements, it should be recalled, have the merit of contributing to the achievement of all five promotion objectives assigned to the CHRC by its founding law of 19 July 2019 in Section 4, which expresses the purpose of the mandate to promote Human Rights:

*“contribute to developing a human rights culture based on the ideals of peace, equality in rights and duties, mutual respect and sustainable development, particularly*:

* *by popularizing human rights legal instruments* [which our statements realize by systematically informing readers about all relevant regional, international and national human rights instruments for each day celebrated]
* *by raising public awareness on various human rights issues, including gender issues, as well as the rights of vulnerable groups* [all the value of the broadest possible dissemination of our statements, including the increased visibility provided by the visuals with which they are increasingly systematically accompanied]
* *through research, education and training in the domain of human rights* [given the richly informative nature of these statements, which include the research they require on the situation of the topic addressed in the world in general and in the country in particular]
* *through cooperation in the domain of human rights* [through administrative services, CSOs and all partners involved in the enrichment of these statements, as well as the distribution of their compendiums to each national and international partner we meet]
* *by advocating the improvement of the legal and institutional framework for human rights promotion* [through the recommendations contained in our statements, that are specifically addressed to the authorities and actors concerned, and then highlighted in the transmittal letters accompanying the statements].

**The Vice-Chairperson,**

**Distinguished Chairpersons of Sub-Commissions,**

**Distinguished Commissioners,**

**The Permanent Secretary,**

Our work in promoting human rights has not been limited to the publication of statements. We have also organized numerous ***Human Rights awareness activities, 61 in all***, four through the Head Office and *57 through the 10 branches* – and I should point out that the East Branch has been operational since 1 September 2022, the date when the Branch Head and the Rapporteur were installed.

Among the activities to raise awareness of Human Rights, we can mention among the most eloquent:

* **the celebration of International Women's Day** in Maroua, in the Far North, and **the mission of peace-building between the Arab *choua* and *mousgoums* communities in the Logone-et-Chari Division**, following the inter-community conflict between the citizens of these two communities between August and December 2021 – it should be noted that this peace building mission was, in fact, the implementation of a recommendation of the 2nd Ordinary Session of the General Assembly of Commissioners
* **the series of activities organized from 22 November to 3 December 2022, as a prelude to and to mark the 2022 International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD),** which is celebrated on 3 December of each year, and I should point out that following this series of activities, we were awarded the “***Prix de la meilleure institution de promotion et de protection des Droits des personnes handicapées*”** [Prize for the best institution for the promotion and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities] by the civil society platform called *Solidarité des personnes handicapées pour le développement*, abbreviated as SOPHAD. This award was won precisely for the following activities:
	+ The ***capacity building workshop for CHRC members and staff on measures to monitor access to public buildings for persons with disabilities***, which was held on 22 November 2022 at the CHRC Head Office, and was followed by
	+ The actual ***visit of the main public buildings in Yaounde and the headquarters of the ten Regions***, ***to check access for persons with motor, visual or hearing disabilities***, on 23 and 24 November 2022, a visit punctuated by awareness-raising activities on the rights of this vulnerable category of persons
	+ The ***Round Table with representatives of CSOs defending the rights of persons with disabilities*** at the Cardinal Paul Émile Léger National Centre for the Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities in Etoug-Ebe (CNRPH) on 29 November, followed on the same day by
	+ ***The ceremonial launch of the IDPD celebration at the “Centre national de rehabilitation des personnes handicapées” (CNRPH) with the presentation of gifts*** to the residents of the said Centre
	+ ***Activities in Bafoussam and the West Region*** ***in general***, from 1 to 3 December 2022 (exhibition fair, legal clinics, visits centres for persons with disabilities with donations, media campaigns, official ceremony), and so on.

Concerning **cooperation**, the CHRC Chairperson granted audiences to three diplomatic missions accredited to Cameroon this year. These were, from the latest to the oldest:

* the audience granted to H.E. Mr Nigel HOLMES, Deputy High Commissioner of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to Cameroon, on 8 December 2022
* H.E. Mr Christopher John LAMORA, Ambassador of the United States of America to Cameroon, granted audience on 25 August 2022. The Chairperson of the CHRC presented to the Ambassador the Observations of the institution under his responsibility on the 2021 Report of the *United States State Department on Human Rights in Cameroon*
* the audience granted to Mr Leslie CAMPBELL and Mr Ashley JONES of the British High Commission on 19 July 2022.

As part of cooperating with UN agencies, the Chairperson granted an audience to Mr Sangare NOUHOUM, the new Director of the UN Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa, on 9 December, after the farewell audience granted to Mr Louis Marie BOUAKA, his predecessor, on 24 March 2022, and just before going to Douala, on invitation from the new Director, to take part in the Subregional Workshop on the Strengthening and Establishment of NHRIs in the Central African Sub-region, on 14, 15 and 16 December. In the same vein, the Resident Coordinator of the United Nations also granted an audience to the Chairperson of the CHRC on 8 November 2022, to strengthen ties between the CHRC and all UN agencies active in the country.

According to the CHRC's enabling law, cooperation in human rights matters makes a major contribution to the institution's promotion mission (Section 4, 4th indent and Section 5, 4th, 6th and 7th indents). Thus, with regard to collaboration with international organisations (the CHRC participated in 18 activities organised by this category of partners), including the treaty bodies, particularly at the African level, with which the CHRC made a point of being actively involved this year, as follows:

* + **the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, *whose 73rd session the Chairperson of the CHRC attended in person***, in Banjul, from 18 October to 3 November 2022, and
	+ **the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child**, whose ***40th session*** the Chairperson of the CHRC again attended, from 23 to 26 November 2022 in Maseru (it should be recalled that ***the CHRC is the first NHRI affiliated to this Committee in 2021).***

In 2022, the CHRC was equally proactive in collaborating with other NHRIs or networks of NHRIs. In this respect, the following actions and activities were carried out:

* On 28 April 2022, a delegation from the Burundi National Human Rights Institution led by Dr Sixte Vigny NIMURABA, its Chairperson, visited the Commission and made a presentation on the experience of Burundi's Independent National Commission in preparing and publishing its Annual Report to the Commissioners and staff members of the Commission
* Following the announcement of its membership to the *Association des Ombudsmans et Médiateurs de la Francophonie (AOMF),* the Commission took part in the Association Congress in Marrakech from 16 to 19 May 2022
* From 16 to 22 May 2022, the Commission took part in the biannual meeting of the *Commonwealth Forum of National Human Rights Institutions* (CFNHRI) and related activities organised on the margins of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Rwanda. The activity enabled the Commission to gather information on the functioning and organisational charts of Commonwealth National Human Rights Institutions and to *submit a project aimed at increasing the participation of youth in public affairs management in two years to the Government*
* As part of making the National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture (NMPT) operational- a new mandate of the National Human Rights Institution of Cameroon provided for by the 2019 Law, the Chairperson of the National Human Rights Council of Morocco, kindly sent Dr Mohammed BENAJIBA, Coordinator of the Moroccan National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture, to the workshop that took place with the technical and financial support of the UN Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa (UNCHR-CA) at the Mont Fébé Hotel in Yaoundé from 25 to 26 May 2022. The workshop enabled the Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Torture to adjust its roadmap and better prepare its *Annual Report on the Prevention of Torture in Cameroon*, a document that is currently being finalised
* From 5 to 6 September 2022, the Association francophone des Commissions nationales des Droits de l'Homme (AFCNDH) under the auspices of the CHRC, conducted in Cameroon, *Experience-Sharing Workshop on Monitoring Human Rights in Business Activities and State Engagement in the Negotiations on the UN Draft Treaty on Business and Human Rights*. National Human Rights Institutions from Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, France, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Senegal took part in the workshop and expressed their wish to follow Cameroon's example, as it has been participating in negotiations aimed at adopting a binding instrument to govern human rights in business activities since 2020. After the workshop, the Commission made a statement at the 8th Session of the Working Group on Business and Human Rights in Geneva, on 24 to 28 October 2022. The Commission’s commitment led the government to send a verbal notice for Cameroon to be included in the core group of States in charge of finalising the Draft Treaty on Business and Human Rights. Cameroon is currently the only African country in the group.

In total, besides the statement mentioned in the previous paragraph, the CHRC submitted four other statements and eight written contributions to African and international human rights bodies in 2022: (i) the statement delivered at the 71st Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (virtual, 21 April -13 May 2022) and (ii) the statement delivered in person at the 73rd Session of the said Commission, in Banjul from 21 to 30 October 2022; (iii) the statement delivered on 23 November 2022 before the 40th Ordinary Session of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child in Lesotho; and finally (iv) the CHRC statement at the 106th Session of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (April 2022), which the Chairperson of the CHRC attended in Geneva, Switzerland.

Concerning cooperation with international NGOs, the CHRC granted an audience to a delegation from ***Amnesty International*** which was on a working mission in Cameroon. The audience, which was chaired by the Vice-Chairperson of the Commission, provided an opportunity to renew contact with that NGO, whose relations with the NHRI of Cameroon had, to all intents and purposes, been at a standstill since 2015.

The **Ensemble contre la peine de mort (ECPM)**, is an international NGO with which the CHRC has had a particularly rich collaboration this year. The CHRC took part in two major international meetings organised by ECPM, namely the ***African Seminar on the Abolition of the Death Penalty***, in Nairobi, Kenya, from 27 May to 3 June 2022, and the ***8th World Congress against the Death Penalty***, from 15 to 18 November 2022 in Berlin. Furthermore, the CHRC hosted the Workshop on the presentation of the *Guide on the abolition of the death penalty and NHRIs* organised by ECPM at its Head Office, on 18 October.

It is on the strength of this collaboration that the CHRC embraced advocacy for the abolition of the death penalty in Cameroon, which is one of the working documents to be considered at the present sessions of the General Assembly of Commissioners.

Other cooperation actions of the CHRC at the institutional and operational level at the local level were carried out with national partners such as:

* Public authorities (**22 in total, for 93 collaborative activities**). It should be noted that specific measures have been taken to strengthen collaboration with the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Decentralisation and Local Development, given the importance of these two Ministries in achieving human rights. The draft Memoranda of Understanding with the CHRC are currently being examined by these authorities
* CSOs, whose number of partners continues to grow, increasing from **630 last year to 765 this year, of which 413 are affiliated and 352 are grouped in two networks**, such as the Cameroon Network of Human Rights Organisations, which brings together **74** CSOs, and the Cameroon Freedoms Observatory, which comprises **278** CSOs. It is also worth noting that upon invitation or in partnership with these CSOs, the CHRC recorded **151 interactions** of various forms with them, including 49 events related to various human rights themes, for which the CHRC received about twenty applications for technical and financial support from its partner CSOs.

**Distinguished Participants,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**Let’s talk about the protection of human rights...**

Here again, the Commission's track record in 2022 speaks for itself. An emblematic success in this area is the launch of the CHRC's toll-free number, **1523**, on 28 July 2022 and its dissemination to all users of the Orange Cameroon mobile phone network by SMS in English and French.

This free, functional, secure and confidential public utility line, backed by a CAMTEL number and accessible from all mobile telephone operators in Cameroon, enables the Commission to better carry out its human rights protection missions, which, under section 6 of its enabling law, aims to "*contribute to strengthening the rule of law and combating impunity in the domain of human rights*". The toll-free number enables all citizens of the country to report cases of human rights violations, to express their concerns about the exercise of their rights, or just for enquiries. Authorities, the press, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and citizens have already welcomed this initiative and it has started bearing fruits.

Between 28 July (the date of its launching) and 14 December 2022:

* some **935** calls were recorded *including* ***303*** *reported cases of human rights violations, of which* ***273*** *were referred to branches,* ***30*** *cases of human rights violations directly handled at the Head Office*
* some ***135*** *enquiries*
* *some* ***497*** *nuisance calls.*

It should be noted that **223 out of the 308 cases of human rights violations reported to the Commission through its toll-free number** have already been handled or are in process of being handled. Of the cases, **34** have had a very satisfactory outcome, resulting in ***success stories***. This reflects the speedy handling of the oral complaints received through the Commission's toll-free number.

Generally speaking, concerning all the complaints filed and handled at the CHRC, there was a *significant increase in 2022 compared to 2021, from 824 complaints filed and 548 handled to* **1,239 filed and 951 handled in 2022** and of course, especially given the aforementioned data on the number of reports (or oral complaints) filed through the toll-free number. **Concerning the complaints lodged, the increase in absolute value is 415 and in relative value, it is more than 50 per cent. As for the complaints handled, in absolute terms, they have increased by 403 that is over 73 per cent in relative terms.**

Concerning the self-initiated investigations for human rights violations, the Commission has once again increased in number, in a rather spectacular way! Here are the figures: *from 89 cases of self-initiated investigations in 2021* ***to 253 in 2022, giving an increase of over 184 per cent!***

As part of handling both complaints filed and self-initiated investigations for human rights violations, the Commission conducted **547 fact-finding visits, 322 as part of handling complaints and 225 as part of self-initiated investigations.**

These figures speak for themselves. They demonstrate that on the strength of its sovereign prerogative to "*request the competent authorities to put an end to human rights violations noted* ", the CHRC is determined to do everything in its power to ensure the triumph of the rule of law and to combat impunity in matters of human rights.

**Distinguished guests,**

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

It should be noted that the Commission’s monitoring of respect for human rights concerns ALL Cameroonians, including those in the diaspora.

As part of the Commission’s mandate of “*spontaneously examining allegations which may constitute serious, recurrent or systemic human rights violations brought to its knowledge*” and “*monitoring the human rights situation*” *(Section 6 (2) and (3), of the 19 July 2019 Law*) and concerning the situation of Cameroonians both in and outside the country, the Commission undertook the following verification, gathering information and investigation actions after it was informed of alleged cases of ill-treatment of **Cameroonians living in Equatorial Guinea** in November 2021:

* As a diplomatic measure, the Equatorial-Guinean Commission was requested to inquire about the situation through a letter sent on 17 November 2021
* Following this, the Chairperson of the Commission received the Ambassador of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea to Cameroon, based on the Ambassador’s request, on 16 December 2021. The Ambassador informed the Commission that the Republic of Equatorial Guinea suspended monitoring operations and granted a three-month moratorium to foreign nationals to regularise their status in the country
* Upon the expiry of this deadline, on 25 March 2022, the Ambassador of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea to Cameroon granted an audience to the Chairperson of the Commission, upon the Chairperson's request. The Ambassador assured the Chairperson that the Equato-Guinean authorities were on the lookout for a favourable outcome concerning the issue of regularising all foreigners who could potentially be regularised. Both countries appointed focal points to follow up on these issues and promote collaboration between them
* When the Commission was once more informed through the media of alleged cases of violations during expulsion against Cameroonians, which had been ongoing since 20 October 2022, the Commission dispatched its focal point to MINREX and the Embassy to gather information on the issue. The Commission noted the highly commendable efforts of the Equato-Guinean authorities concerning cooperation and patience. It also commended the actions of the State of Cameroon to safeguard the dignity of its nationals by organising a coordinated repatriation. Following this, the Commission immediately dispatched the South Branch Office officials to the border both countries share. This was for them to collect ground data to inform the next stage of Commission actions aimed at *guaranteeing the respect of the Rights of the citizens concerned in every circumstance*, *fighting against misinformation on the issue and preserving peace and the quality of relations with this neighbouring and friendly country*.
* Finally, the Commission is working to dispatch a mission to Equatorial Guinea as soon as possible. The mission will not only verify the situation of Cameroonians still living there, but also contribute to setting up the National Human Rights Institution of that country.

**Dear Commissioners,**

**The Permanent Secretary,**

**Dear guests,**

As the National Preventive Mechanism for Torture in Cameroon, let us now focus on the third pillar of our mandate. This is the main innovation of the 2019 Law compared to the former National Human Rights Institution (the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms) which only had the two traditional missions of promotion and protection of human rights.

The innovation also lies in the fact that the 2019 Law gives *the Commission access to places of detention (Section 8(2)).*

The Commission, therefore, wanted to leverage this innovation by focusing on these new places when visiting detention facilities in 2022.

Thus, the Commission conducted visits to **379 detention facilities in 2022, including 147 new ones,** the following are the legal categories of reference referred to above: *borstal institutes, border transit areas on land, at sea and in the airport, customs detention areas, psychiatric centres and hospitals, Defence and Security Forces disciplinary cells or premises, detainee escort vehicles, detention cells of legal departments, all other places where people could be detained*.

Last year, I mentioned that we had moved from *six visits to detention facilities in 2020 to 176 in 2021*. This year, it is possible to speak of a significant **leap in the Commission’s activities in this area of its mandate, with an increase of 203 in absolute terms** and **115 per cent** in relative terms.

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**The Vice-Chairperson,**

**Distinguished Chairpersons of Sub-Commissions,**

**Distinguished Commissioners,**

A look at some statistics of the human rights situation in Cameroon in 2022 makes us realise the magnitude of the task that still awaits us concerning the promotion and protection of human rights and the prevention of torture, to put an end to violations and ensure the triumph of the law. This is also to ensure that respect for human rights becomes part of the daily lives of Cameroonians in all ten regions of the country and beyond.

Indeed, the Government is increasingly making efforts to safeguard human rights in most areas, particularly through strengthening the legal corpus, with **40 new legislative and regulatory laws relating to human rights in force in Cameroon by 19 December 2022** (compared to 35 in 2021)[[1]](#footnote-1).

We are also proud that, following the observation at the end of last year of a large number of children and persons at risk of statelessness in Cameroon due to the lack of birth certificates (over four million people), the State and elites have continued to carry out initiatives, through administrations and institutions concerned, to tackle this issue in 2022. One of such initiatives is the mass birth certificate issuance campaigns. We are particularly pleased to welcome the setting up of registration offices in health facilities, to enable the issuing of birth certificates to children on the spot in hospitals, immediately after birth. According to the National Civil Status Registration Office (BUNEC), this already concerns 115 health facilities across the country, including 57 in the Far North Region, 43 in the North Region, six in the Adamawa Region, seven in the East Region and two in the Centre Region (including the Chantal Biya Foundation, since 10 June 2021), a development that stems from the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Ministry of Public Health and BUNEC on 18 February 2020. It is hoped that this development can be extended as soon as possible and start bearing fruits.

However, generally speaking, it is deplorable that at the end of 2022, the human rights situation in Cameroon still presents:

* **12, 335** cases of cholera including **251** deaths recorded in 2022[[2]](#footnote-2)
* About **126 civilians** were killed following attacks by terrorist groups in the North West and South West Regions[[3]](#footnote-3)
* About **170 persons were kidnapped by terrorist groups and six hostages were released by the Defence and Security Forces** in the North-West and South-West Regions[[4]](#footnote-4)
* Some 38,000 households (200,072 people) affected by floods in the Far North Region during the year[[5]](#footnote-5)
* Some **86,000** Cameroonian refugees in Nigeria as of 19 December 2022 - *12,130 more than in 2021* – because of the security context in the North-West and South-West Regions[[6]](#footnote-6) which, despite periods of stability, are still marked by series of attacks and kidnappings by secessionist terrorists, leaving a feeling of insecurity in certain areas of the Regions and forcing some of their communities to flee
* Some **30,027** Cameroonian refugees and asylum seekers in Chad, mainly due to inter-community conflicts in the Far North Region[[7]](#footnote-7)
* about **two million persons in humanitarian emergencies** are affected by the security situation in the North-West and South-West Regions[[8]](#footnote-8)
* Some **2,038,539** persons under UNHCR protection in Cameroon (including 983,281 internally displaced persons, 555,668 returnees, 490,351 refugees and 9,239 asylum seekers)[[9]](#footnote-9).

These and other situations require the Commission to mature its strategies for the year 2023 which lies ahead.

The year 2023 will bring challenges for the Commission, including finalising and publishing our first annual reports, and most importantly, successfully passing through the stringent accreditation process of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions next March to maintain our prestigious "A" status, as a label for NHRIs as per the Paris Principles.

However, we must continue to make progress in fulfilling our missions of promoting and protecting human rights, as well as preventing torture.

We will quietly pursue the setting up of our institution. We will keep working based on the experience gained during the 18 first months of activity of the Commission.

I hope that deliberations on administrative, budgetary and practical issues that we will have to address over these two days will be rich, constructive and fruitful.

**Long live human rights!**

**Long live the Cameroon Human Rights Commission!**

**Long live Cameroon, one and indivisible!**

1. [www.prc.cm](http://www.prc.cm/) and [www.spm.gov](http://www.spm.gov/), accessed on 19 December 2022. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Based on the information provided by the Minister of Public Health at the Cabinet Council held in Yaoundé in September 2022. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. International Crisis Group website (Crisisgroup.org), accessed 19 December 2022 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. *Ibid*. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Statistics from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Action (OCHA) in Cameroon, accessed 19 December 2022. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. *Ibid*. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Statistics, accessed on 19 December 2022. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. OCHA Statistics, *op. cit*. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. UNHCR Statistics, *op. cit*. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)