



**PRESS RELEASE CONCERNING THE TRAGIC ROAD ACCIDENT  
ON THE DSCHANG-DOUALA ROAD  
ON 27 JANUARY 2021**

The National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms (hereinafter: "the Commission") was stunned to learn of the terrifyingly tragic road accident that occurred on the Dschang-Douala road on Wednesday, 27 January 2021, around 3 a.m., at the place called "Falaise de Dschang", in the Menoua Division, following a collision between a bus of the interurban passenger transport company "Menoua voyages" registered **LT 954 IX** and a Toyota Dyna pick-up truck, registered **LT 485 CN**.

Following the preliminary investigations into this national tragedy, conducted by the Commission in accordance with the provisions of Law No. 2004/016 of 22 July 2004 setting up the Institution, it appears that:

- the seventy-seat bus of the company "Menoua voyages", which left Douala for Dschang, collided at around 3 a.m. with a Toyota Dyna pick-up truck, which left Dschang for Santchou,
- the pick-up truck was carrying a flammable liquid and more precisely adulterated fuel,
- the collision between the two vehicles caused a fire which spread rapidly as a result of the explosion of the containers of the adulterated fuel,
- the death toll in this accident was 53 burnt dead and 29 seriously injured, who are receiving medical care at the Dschang District Hospital, making a total of 82 victims.

**The Commission expresses** its sympathy and sincere condolences to the family members of the deceased. The Commission wishes the injured a speedy and full recovery.

While noting that the death toll recorded in road accidents fell from 1,588 in 2011 to 1,091 in 2015 and 937 in 2019, representing a 41% drop in road accident mortality in 8 years, as stated by the Minister of Transport in an interview with the daily press Mutations in January 2020, the Commission notes an increase in serious accidents on certain roads throughout the country. Thus, from December 2020 to January 2021, many road accidents were reported, notably:

- on 27 December 2020 in the locality of Ndikiniméki, Mbam-et-Inoubou Division, causing 37 deaths and 19 injured,
- on 17 January 2021 in the locality of Nkongtock, Nyong-et-Kellé Division, with a death toll of 5 dead and several injured,
- on 21 January 2021 in Akok, a locality on the Mbalmayo to Sangmélina road, causing the death of six students.



**The Commission observes** that this increase in road accidents is largely due to the irresponsible behavior of road users, manifested in:

- speeding,
- inappropriate transport of dangerous products,
- overloading,
- fancy overtaking,
- poor parking,
- drunk driving,
- lack of road worthiness,
- the risks run by some agencies which make night journeys despite the tiredness of some of their drivers,
- the complacency of public and private agents responsible for various safety checks.

In addition, **the Commission notes** that the poor condition of some of our poorly maintained roads and the absence of road signs in some places are factors contributing to the increase in road accidents.

Such accidents undermine the Right to Life, the Right to Physical and Moral Integrity and the Right to Property, which are protected by the Preamble to the Constitution of 18 January 1996 in its 12<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> indents, by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in its Article 6 et seq. and by the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights in its Articles 4 and 14.

**The Commission is** fully convinced that the prevention of most of these tragic accidents is possible. For this reason, the Commission calls on the Government to take strict measures to strengthen road safety controls as well as controls on the use and transport of dangerous products, to ensure the enforcement of penalties provided for in the regulations in force on road traffic offences, to ensure the permanent maintenance of road infrastructure and to intensify awareness raising of road users on the Highway Code and responsible behaviour;

**the Commission calls** on road users to be more responsible and to scrupulously respect the legal provisions in force, in particular the Highway Code and the specific texts governing road transport;

**the Commission strongly condemns** the aggravating collusion of drivers who report to each other the presence or absence of road checkpoints or "flash" so they can better violate the Highway Code, endangering their lives, the lives of their passengers and the property entrusted to them;

**the Commission encourages** public authorities to ensure that the injured are taken care of until they recover and to continue investigations in order to establish responsibilities and apply, where appropriate, the penalties provided for by the regulations in force.

Yaounde, the 29 JAN 2021

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