



## PRESS RELEASE ON THE TERRORIST ATTACK ON A SCHOOL IN EKONDO-TITI IN THE SOUTH-WEST REGION

The Cameroon Human Rights Commission (hereinafter referred to as "the Commission") is very dismayed to learn of the armed attack on the Ekondo Titi Bilingual High School in Ndian Division, South West Region, on Wednesday, 24 November 2021, at about 7:37 a.m.

According to the Commission's preliminary investigations into the alleged offences, based on the provisions of Law No. 2019/014 of 19 July 2019 relating to the establishment, organisation and functioning of the institution, it would appear that secessionist terrorists in military attire and chanting propaganda are responsible for the attack that provoked loss of human lives and serious wounds. Five people were killed in the attack, including four students called Kum Emmanuel (17 years old), Iken Jocelyne (aged 16), Nkeng Ghislain (13 years old), Orume Emmanuel (12 years old) and a female teacher called Fien Celestina.

*The Commission extends* its heartfelt condolences to the families who have been so severely affected and to the national educational community, devastated by this latest desecration of the educational environment, which is considered to be one of the most sacred places in the same way as places of worship and hospitals. It also wishes a speedy and full recovery to the injured.

This deliberate attack against innocent students who only wanted to peacefully enjoy their right to education and against teachers performing their duties, adds to the list of attacks against schools and universities, recorded since the beginning of the unrest in the North-West and South-West Regions.

The attack at the University of Buea, in the South West Region, on 12 November is still fresh in the mind. The explosion of an improvised explosive device, planted in an amphitheatre of the university by secessionist fighters, caused about a dozen injured among the students who were there.

This upsurge of deadly assaults on educational institutions is all the more disturbing as it comes about a year after the massacre of seven students on 24 October 2020 at Mother Francisca Private College in the Kumba 2 quarter in the South-West Region, with six others injured. The shock wave that spread following this unfortunate event gave rise to a flurry of condemnations by national and international actors, including the Commission, which, in a press release of 25 October 2020 and the statement to mark the International Day for the Protection of Education from Attack on 9 September 2021, underlined the gravity of such acts from the standpoint of international human rights law.



**The Commission is therefore shocked** by the barbarity of these terrorist acts which seriously undermine:

- (i) the right to life and to physical and moral integrity enshrined in the Preamble to the Constitution of 18 January 1996, which states that "every person has a right to life, to physical and moral integrity...", in Article 4 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, which stipulates that "Human beings are inviolable. Every human being shall be entitled to respect for his life and the integrity of his person." and by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which states in Article 6(1) that "Every human being has the inherent right to life. This right shall be protected by law."
- (ii) the right to education crystallised in the Preamble of the Cameroon Constitution of 18 January 1996, which states that 'the State shall guarantee the child's right to education. Such right is also enshrined in regional and international human rights conventions such as the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (article 17), the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (Article 1), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 28), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (article 6) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (article 13). All these instruments recognise the right of the human person - in particular the child - to a quality education that respects moral values.

**The Commission further reminds** that Resolution 2601 of 29 October 2021 adopted by the Security Council at its 8889th meeting, by which it strongly condemns "attacks and threats of attacks, in violation of international humanitarian law, against schools and school-related civilians, including children and teachers, and urges all parties to an armed conflict to immediately cease such attacks and threats of attacks and to refrain from any action that impedes access to education".

**The Commission underscores** that at the Round Table on Accountability for Children Affected by Armed Conflict organised by Save the Children in Dakar from 6 to 12 June 2021, stakeholders in the meeting organised by the International Non-Governmental Organisation strongly condemned attacks on schools and urged the perpetrators of these abominable acts to stop.

**The Commission reminds** that as part of commemorating the International Day for the Protection of Education against Attacks, which is celebrated for the first time on 9 September 2021, the Commission launched an awareness-raising campaign to prevent attacks on schools. In addition to the Statement issued, the campaign included the dissemination of video clips with messages of denunciation that were widely relayed on social media and by the mainstream media.

**The Commission urges** the authorities to hunt down to the last mile the secessionist terrorists who perpetrated these heinous acts, for justice to be done and for the victims to have access to just and fair remedy.

**The Commission calls** on the education community in basic, secondary and higher education to support the State in preventing and punishing attacks against education.

**The Commission once again calls** on the people, especially those in the affected Regions, to collaborate fully with the defence and security forces to make it easy for them to apprehend those responsible for such atrocities.



**The Commission commends** the commitment of the defence and security forces who strive daily and at great sacrifice to preserve peace and national unity and urges them to scrupulously respect human rights in their operations.

**The Commission also applauds** the spontaneous reaction, on 24 November 2021, of the Council of Traditional Leaders of Ekondo Titi who strongly condemned the attack in their area and reaffirmed their attachment to Republican legality and a united and indivisible Cameroon<sup>1</sup>.

**The Commission recommends** that the Government should increase security measures in and around educational environments in unsafe Regions and pay more attention to ensuring that assistance, compensation and reparation for victims and families of victims of conflicts are carried out systematically and equitably.

Yaoundé, 2.5.2022



Pour le Président  
et par Délégation

*Shangbor née Anyuk Lucy*  
MAGISTRAT Hors Hiérarchie  
Superscale MAGISTRATE

<sup>1</sup> a Statement from the Ekondo-Titi Council Area Conference of Chiefs s. of 24 November 2021

Crée par la loi n° 2019/014 du 19 juillet 2019, la CDHP est une institution indépendante de consultation, d'observation, d'évaluation, de dialogue, de conciliation et de concertation en matière de promotion et de protection des droits de l'homme. La Commission fait également office de Mécanisme National de Prévention de la torture du Cameroun

Created by law n° 2019/014 of 19 July 2019, the CDHP is an independent institution for consultation, monitoring, evaluation, dialogue, conciliation and deliberation in the promotion and protection of human rights. The Commission shall also serve as the Cameroon National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture