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**PRESS STATEMENT OF THE CAMEROON HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION CONCERNING ITS  
INVESTIGATION OF THE ALLEGED ASSAULT OF A CAMEROONIAN BY A CHINESE MIGRANT IN  
FEBE VILLAGE, YAOUNDE**

The Cameroon Human Rights Commission (CHRC) (hereinafter referred to as: "the Commission") noticed information posted on social media (WhatsApp, Facebook) on 8 May 2022, regarding the case of a certain MVODO Herve Christian, alleged to have been physically assaulted by a Chinese migrant, his employer, at his place of work after he abortively requested for the payment of his dues.

According to published sources on the incident, it is alleged that:

- MVODO Herve Christian observed that his employer had modified his business hours, and insisted he worked 24 hours, continuously. When he refused to do so, he was suspended from work.
- He tried to negotiate with his employer for the payment of his dues, who, instead, ordered him out of the site. While being forcefully taken out of the venue, he resisted but was seriously beaten up to the point of losing consciousness. He was then rushed to the hospital for medical attention by some Gendarmes on guard at this site.
- Despite his health condition, he was arrested and held in custody and later detained at the Yaounde Central Prison, after his Chinese employer filed a complaint against him for a *murder attempt*.

On the strength of the provisions of Section 7 of Law No. 2019/014 of 19 July 2019 relating to the establishment, organization and functioning of the Commission, which states that "*In order to perform the duties provided for in Section 6 above, the Commission may conduct investigations, in accordance with the laws in force, particularly by :*

- *carrying out all necessary inspections ;*
- *accessing any place of alleged human rights violation ;*
- *gathering all necessary information",*

The CHRC carried out preliminary investigations on that allegation, which established that:

- MVODO Christian, a Muslim by confession, was hired as an employee at a quarry in Febe village, Yaounde, on 11 April 2022. During the *Ramadan* fasting period, a Chinese national, his employer, a man about 65 years of age who has resided in Febe village for over 29 years and is appreciated by the community for his development projects, sent Christian on a short time leave starting on 18 April 2022, on the grounds that he was not physically strong to accomplish his work. He was paid the sum of 25 000 francs CFA for the number of hours covered before his short leave, given that the company paid his wages per hour according to work accomplished.



- Against all odds, MVODO Christian presented himself at the quarry on that same day (18 April 2022) and pleaded with his employer's translator to persuade the employer to let him work, all in vain. Disappointed and angry, he went to meet his employer who was sitting on a bridge at the site where work was ongoing, attacked him by hitting his forehead with a stone, pushing him under a bridge and trying to escape. Unfortunately, the people seized him and publicly beat him up. MVODO Christian was saved from the angry mob, thanks to the intervention of some persons who recognized him and elements of the Mbankolo Gendarmerie Brigade.
- MVODO Christian and his Chinese employer were both rushed to the *Deos Gracias* and *Le Jourdain* clinics, respectively, for medical attention. Due to the deteriorating state of his Chinese employer, he was rushed to the Yaoundé Central Hospital, and then to the Yaoundé General Hospital for urgent medical attention. In the meantime, a complaint was filed against Mr MVODO Christian at the Mbankolo Gendarmerie Brigade. Mr MVODO Christian, after his treatment, was transferred from the hospital to the Chambers of the State Counsel of the Mfoundi High Court on 21 April 2022 and later held in pretrial detention at the Yaoundé central prison.

Further investigations on the issue are ongoing by the CHRC. From the foregoing and on the basis of information gathered during the CHRC's investigation of the incident,

**Recalling** the 25<sup>th</sup> hyphen of the Preamble to the 1996 Cameroon Constitution which proclaims that *"the State shall guarantee all citizens of either sex the rights and freedoms set forth in the Preamble of the Constitution"*.

**Considering** the CHRC's role to strengthen the rule of law by combatting misinformation, as well as *"providing human rights advice and guidance"* with respect to the 4<sup>th</sup> hyphen of Section 6 of Law No. 2019/014 of 19 July 2019, relating to the establishment, organization and functioning of this institution,

**Mindful** of Article 19 (2) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which states that *"Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice"*.

**Considering** that Article 19 (3) of the same Covenant emphasizes that *"The exercise of the rights provided for in paragraph 2 of this article carries with it special duties and responsibilities. It may therefore be subject to certain restrictions, but these shall only be such as are provided by law and are necessary: (a) For respect of the rights or reputations of others"*,

**Taking into account** Section 113 of law No. 2016/007 of 12 July 2016 relating to the Penal Code which states that, *"whoever sends out or propagates false information liable to injure public authorities or national unity shall be punished with imprisonment for from three (3) years and with fine of from CFAF one hundred thousand (100 000) to CFAF two million (2 000 000)"*,

**Mindful** of Article 4 of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights which states that *"Human beings are inviolable. Every human being shall be entitled to the respect for his life and the integrity of his person"*,

**The Commission appreciates** the reaction of the gendarmes of the Mbankolo Gendarmerie Brigade and some members of the community that intervened to save the life of MVODO Christian who was almost lynched to death by the angry mob and rescued his Chinese employer who was rushed to the hospital for medical attention.



**The Commission condemns** in contrast, acts of violence inflicted on MVODO Christian by the mob and those perpetrated on the Chinese national by MVODO Christian himself, thereby violating the right to the physical integrity of these two individuals.

**The Commission also reiterates** its concern highlighted in its Press Release of 22 April 2022 condemning mob justice and calling on the people to collaborate with the security forces in handling such cases.

**The Commission** further urges the judicial authorities to accelerate investigations on this issue so that the authors of such actions should be identified, arrested and brought to book before the competent courts according to the law.

**The Commission** once more calls on the people to refrain from propagating false information on social media and other information platforms.

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James MOUANGUE KOBILA