

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN
Paix – Travail – Patrie

**COMMISSION DES DROITS
DE L'HOMME DU CAMEROUN**

**SOUS-COMMISSION CHARGÉE DE LA
PROMOTION DES DROITS DE L'HOMME**

Secrétariat Permanent

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REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON
Peace – Work – Fatherland

**CAMEROON HUMAN
RIGHTS COMMISSION**

**SUB-COMMISSION IN CHARGE OF
HUMAN RIGHTS PROMOTION**

Permanent Secretariat

Human Rights Protection
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**STATEMENT BY THE CAMEROON HUMAN RIGHTS
COMMISSION ON SPORT AND HUMAN RIGHTS
CONCERNING THE TOTALENERGIES 2021 AFRICA CUP
OF NATIONS**

9 January to 6 February 2022

The Cameroon Human Rights Commission (herein referred to as "the Commission"), established by Law No. 2019/014 of 19 July 2019 and set up on 29 April 2021 following the oath-taking of its members before the Assembled Chambers of the Supreme Court,

Recalling the UNESCO Kazan Action Plan¹ which defines "sport" as a generic term, comprising sport for all; physical play; recreation; dance; organized, casual, competitive, traditional and indigenous sports and games in their diverse forms,

Bearing in mind that sport contributes in achieving the highest attainable standard of health of all persons including both physical and mental health; promoting harmonious cultural relationships; healing and achieving peaceful inclusive and equitable societies; promoting good governance and ethics,

Recalling that Cameroon is the host of two mega-events: **the African Cup of Nations for women's football**, which took place from 19 November to 3 December 2016, and the country will also host the **TotalEnergies Africa Cup of Nations (CAN) 2021** from 9 January to 6 February 2022,

Bearing in mind that these mega events these mega-events required colossal capital investments, especially in infrastructure such as stadiums, road networks, health facilities, hotels and many other businesses,

¹¹ Action Plan drawn up at the sixth International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials responsible for Physical Education held in Kazan, Russia on 13-15 July 2017.

Considering that AFCON 2021 will be an opportunity to bring together many sporting delegations, visitors and tourists from across the world who will showcase their diverse cultures,

Considering that the Covid-19 pandemic and its related variants are still plaguing the world and that Cameroon registered 108 676 cases and 1 851 deaths as at 28 December 2021²,

Considering the need to clean up and beautify our towns and cities especially those in which matches will be taking place,

Bearing in mind that sporadic attacks are still happening in the three Regions prone to insecurity, some of the most recent being the raid on the town of Tourou in the Far North Region on 11 November 2021, which resulted in the death of four people, and the murder of three school children and a teacher at the Ekondo Titi Bilingual High School in the South West Region on 24 November 2021,

Bearing in mind the National Development Strategy for 2020-2030 which provides that in the area of sports, the Government intends to promote the sports economy, especially through the organization of mass and elite sports, the promotion of cultural activities and the permanent organization of competitions at all level (national, regional and local in various disciplines),

Taking note of the Statute of the African Union Sport Council whose preamble calls on member States “to increase their efforts to integrate sport and Sport for Development and physical activities in their respective development plans”,

Considering the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights which serves as standards for understanding and addressing human rights risks linked to the organization of mega sports events³,

Bearing in mind the London Declaration on Sport and Human Rights of April 2018 in which members of the Commonwealth Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (CFNHRI) took the commitment to *exercise their role, in accordance with the Paris Principles, to provide advice to government, investigate, and support legal action that protects and promotes human rights in sport*,

Bearing in mind the investigation mission of the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms to the MAGIL construction site at the Olembe Stadium on 7 September 2020 concerning workers’ rights and the visit to the Jamot Hospital by the Cameroon Human Rights Commission on 17 August 2021 within the framework of the campaign dubbed “*zéro malade mental errant dans les rues de Yaoundé* [zero mentally ill wandering in the streets of Yaoundé]” organised by the government and the Yaounde city council,

Recalling article 3 of the “*Fédération Internationale de Football Association*” (FIFA) Statute which stipulates that “*FIFA is committed to respecting all internationally recognized human rights and shall strive to promote the protection of these rights*”⁴,

² Worldometers.info latest update of 28/12/2021.

³ MEGA SPORTING EVENTS 2017, Host Actors and Human Rights Diligence in the Sports Context, p.7.

⁴ FIFA Statutes at <http://digitalhub.fifa.com>origina>, consulted on 28/11/2021.

Bearing in mind article 4 of the Statute of the Confederation of African Football (CAF) which states that “CAF shall respect the human rights recognized internationally,⁵ and will do its utmost to promote the protection of these Rights,

Recalling article 13(4) of FECAFOOT Code of Ethics which provides that “persons bound by this Code shall show great ethical concern. They must behave in a dignified manner and act with complete credibility and integrity at all times”,

Recalling the relevant indent of the Preamble to the Constitution, which reads: “freedom and security are guaranteed to every individual with due respect for the rights of others and the best interests of the State”,

Recalling also Article 27(2) of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, which provides that “The rights and freedoms of each individual shall be exercised with due regard to the rights of others, collective security, morality and common interest”,

Recalling also Article 29 (8) of the same regional instrument, which states that the individual has the duty to “contribute to the best of his abilities, at all times and at all levels, to the promotion and achievement of African unity”,

Recognising the decisive contribution of the African Cup of Nations to the promotion and achievement of African unity and integration,

Acknowledging the contribution of sport to achieving socio-economic and cultural rights (the right to leisure, the right to education, the right to work⁶, the right to health, etc.) and civil and political rights (the right to security, freedom of association, the right to an effective remedy before the competent national courts, freedom of movement, freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of peaceful assembly and association⁷ etc.),

The Commission lauds Government effort in organising the TotalEnergies Africa Cup of Nations especially in the area of infrastructure, transport, culture, tourism, security and health including:

- constructing new stadiums in Olembe, Japoma and Limbe and the re-habilitation of old ones in Bafoussam, Douala, Garoua and Yaoundé
- providing other amenities like water and electricity, internet to sporting sites
- constructing new access roads to stadia and rehabilitating old ones
- renovating and equipping earmarked hospitals for the sporting events and granting them modern equipment for quality care⁸

⁵ CAF official documents on <https://images.cafonline.com/image/upload/caf-prd/kziocnaamhhvjcxgrz0l.pdf>, consulted on 28/11/2021.

⁶ Sandrine GIUMMARRA (2012), *Les Droits Fondamentaux & le sport. Contribution à l'étude de la constitutionnalisation du droit du sport*, Presses universitaires d'Aix-Marseille, pp. 117, 202.

⁷ The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, <https://www.un.org/fr/universal-declaration-human-rights/>, accessed on 30/12/2021.

⁸ In this case, the Yaoundé Emergency Centre, the Yaoundé Central Hospital, the Yaoundé General Hospital, the CNPS Hospital Centre in Yaoundé, the Yaoundé Military Hospital, the Douala General Hospital, the Douala Gynaecological and Obstetric Hospital, Garoua referral hospital, Garoua regional hospital, Bafoussam reference hospital, Bafoussam regional hospital, Douala general hospital, Limbe regional hospital and Buea regional annex hospital.

- improving upon telecommunication infrastructure including by connecting sport sites to the optical fibre, setting up of pylons in Japoma and equipping the media and information technology sites⁹
- setting up AFCON villages at hosting sites to promote culture¹⁰
- marketing of tourist destinations online and the construction of new hotels and other tourism infrastructure,

The Commission salutes government effort to stamp out the Covid-19 disease including by screening visitors into the country and organizing a vaccination campaign against the disease beginning from 17 November 2021,

The Commission lauds the efforts of Government and decentralized local authorities for initiatives such as “Operation Clean Cities” taken to clear cities of refuse and of urban disorder by removing street vendors, homeless people, street children from the streets and destroying anarchical constructions along major roads,

The Commission recognizes the effort of private individuals who have invested heavily to set up additional infrastructure in the area of tourism, health, culture and communication, and who shall be providing various commercial services necessary for the holding of this mega event including hotels, restaurants, cultural activities, etc.,

The Commission is however preoccupied with potential risks of human rights violations involved in the organization and the smooth running of the AFCON likely to affect players, officials, spectators, workers, volunteers, journalists, human rights defenders, newsmen and local communities including:

- the manipulation of the competition
- discrimination in the selection of players
- corruption in the selection of players, sporting operations and the embezzlement of funds
- violence in stadia
- discrimination in access to stadia, notably concerning minorities, indigenous people, persons living with disabilities and other vulnerable groups
- racism
- child labour
- expropriation without proper relocation or compensation
- sexual and gender-based violence and
- limited participation in decision making for stakeholders (players, sports federations, coaches, officials and public),

The Commission recommends that the assessment of these risks and the setting up of measures to prevent or mitigate them when they occur is a cause for concern for all in the planning, implementation and evaluation phases of organization of this mega event,

⁹ MINPOSTEL visit to Japoma Stadium, www.minpostel.gov.cm, accessed on 24/11/2021.

¹⁰ Cameroon Tribune of 2 august 2021: AFCON TotalEnergies 2021: Preparations for Cultural Bonanza in Clean cities on www.cameroon-tribune.cm/article.html/41453/fr.html/afcon-total-energies-2021-preparations-for-cultural-bonanza-in accessed on 26/12/2021.

The Commission recommends to this end, that these risks are fully reflected in the policies, operations and practices of sport at the AFCON, so that they are consistent with human rights responsibilities,

The Commission recommends that organizers of this mega sports event should ensure the active, free, and meaningful, participation in decision-making by all stakeholders (players, sports federations, coaches, officials and public) so that their needs are taken on board,

The Commission recommends the establishment or reinforcement of existing complaint mechanisms such as public utility numbers, complaint management services (Cameroon Human Rights Commission (CHRC), National Anti-Corruption Commission (CONAC), police stations and gendarmerie brigades, social centres to rapidly take care of people whose rights are violated as part of the AFCON,

The Commission recommends that any case of sexual and gender-based violence during the AFCON should be investigated and those found guilty sanctioned,

The Commission recommends integrity during the AFCON by respectful behaviour by all stakeholders and by applying to all the rules of sports and of the protocol on Covid-19 and its variants, in a transparent and non-discriminatory manner,

The Commission recommends that business enterprises involved in the organization of this mega sports event should ensure that the rights of their workers are respected,

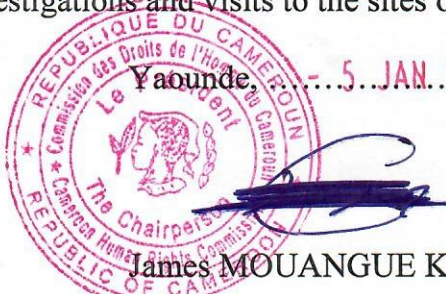
The Commission recommends that journalists and other media practitioners involved in covering the AFCON should freely express their views and opinions while respecting the rights of others and without hampering the proper organisation of sports activities or interfering with the running of the competition,

The Commission recommends that the rights of foreign nationals in the country be protected and calls on all Cameroonians to be hospitable and very welcoming to foreigners during the AFCON,

The Commission recommends that all stakeholders in the AFCON as well as all Cameroonians and foreigners living or visiting Cameroon seize the opportunity offered by this mega-competition to strengthen social cohesion, promote tolerance, peace and harmonious intercultural relations,

Meanwhile, the CHRC, which is convinced of the value of sports for achieving human rights, remains committed to promoting and protecting human rights during and around the AFCON TotalEnergies 2021, especially through awareness raising, human rights education, handling of complaints, investigations and visits to the sites of this mega-event.

Yaounde, ...5 JAN. 2022...



The stamp is circular with the text "REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN" at the top and "Commission des Droits de l'Homme du Cameroun" around the perimeter. In the center is a logo featuring a person's head. Below the stamp, the name "James MOUANGUE KOBILA" is printed.

James MOUANGUE KOBILA