

COMMISSION DES DROITS
DE L'HOMME DU CAMEROUN

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

Secrétariat Permanent

Division de la Protection et de la
Promotion des Droits de l'Homme

B.P./P.O. Box 20317, Yaoundé
Fax : (237) 222-22-60-82

Numéro Vert.- 1523



CAMEROON HUMAN
RIGHTS COMMISSION

SUB-COMMISSION IN CHARGE
OF HUMAN RIGHTS PROMOTION

Permanent Secretariat

Human Rights Protection
and Promotion Division

Tel.: (237) 222-22-61-17 / 691 12 86 70
e-mail: chrc.cdhc2019@yahoo.com
Web : www.cdhc.cm

Toll-Free Number.- 1523

**STATEMENT BY THE CAMEROON HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
TO MARK THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE AND TRIBUTE
TO VICTIMS OF TERRORISM**

21 August 2022

The Cameroon Human Rights Commission (hereinafter: "the Commission"), established by Law No. 2019/014 of 19 July 2019 and set up on 29 April 2021, following the swearing-in of its members before the Supreme Court sitting in Joint Chambers,

Mindful that through this day, established by Resolution 72/165 of the UN General Assembly on 19 December 2017 on the recommendation of the Human Rights Council, the United Nations affirmed its commitment to strengthening international cooperation to prevent and combat terrorism in all its forms,

Bearing in mind that this day is dedicated to honouring and supporting the victims of terrorism and promoting and protecting the full exercise of their human rights,

Recalling that every year, innocent people of all races, cultures and religious beliefs around the world are killed, injured or harmed by acts of terrorism¹,

Bearing in mind that a growing number of countries are affected by terrorism today and that in 2017, around three-quarters of all deaths caused by terrorism occurred in just five countries: Afghanistan, Iraq, Nigeria, Somalia and Syria²,

Taking note that all too often victims of terrorism still have to struggle to make their voices heard, as it appears that the atrocity of the events suffered is not sufficient to enable them to automatically obtain assistance and have their rights respected³,

¹ UNODC, Best practices in criminal justice support for victims of terrorism, 2016, https://www.unodc.org/documents/terrorism/Publications/Good%20practices%20on%20victims/good_practices_victims_F.pdf, accessed on 8/7/2022.

² Portal to support the victims of terrorism, International Day of Remembrance, in tribute to the victims of terrorism, <https://www.un.org/victimsofterrorism/fr/node/5280>, accessed on 8/7/2022.

³ Ibidem.

Referring to the Preamble of the Cameroon Constitution of 18 January 1996 which states that "every person has a right to life, to physical and moral integrity and to humane treatment in all circumstances. Under no circumstances shall any person be subjected to torture, to cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment" and that "no person shall be harassed on grounds of his origin, religious, philosophical or political opinions or beliefs, subject to respect for public policy,"

Considering Law No. 2014/028 of 23 December 2014 on the repression of acts of terrorism which, in its relevant provisions, firmly and equitably punishes acts of terrorism and other related crimes,

Considering the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, adopted on 27 June 1981 in Nairobi, Kenya, which entered into force on 21 October 1986 and was ratified by Cameroon on 20 June 1989, and which stipulates in Article 7, paragraph 1, letter a), that "Every individual shall have the right to have his cause heard. This comprises the right to an appeal to competent national organs against acts of violating his Fundamental rights as recognised and guaranteed by conventions, laws, regulations and customs in force",

Bearing in mind that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 10 December 1948 states in Article 10 that "everyone is entitled to a full and equal hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him",

Bearing in mind Article 26 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, adopted on 16 December 1966, which entered into force on 23 March 1976 and was ratified by Cameroon on 27 June 1984, which stipulates that "[a]ll persons are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to the equal protection of the law,

Further bearing in mind the last three Resolutions of the Review of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (A/RES/66/282, A/RES/68/276 and A/RES/72/284) which underline the importance of the role of victims in the fight against terrorism and prevention of violent extremism, as well as the importance of recognising their Human Rights⁴,

Considering Resolution A/RES/72/284 of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which specifically notes that building the resilience of victims and their families, through appropriate support and assistance in the immediate aftermath of an attack and beyond, is a major step forward in coping with, healing from and recovering from an attack sooner⁵,

Considering that terrorism is an offence under international law, is absolutely forbidden and cannot be defended under any circumstances,

Considering that terrorism, like torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, affects not only the life or physical integrity of the victim but also the healthy and effective exercise of a wide range of other rights, most importantly the right to education and the right to health, thus creating a lack of basic determinants for an acceptable standard of living⁶,

Bearing in mind that in 2022, the UN General Assembly adopted an expanded programme of activities for the Terrorism Prevention Branch of the UN Office on Drugs and

⁴ *Idem.*

⁵ *Idem.*

⁶ *Torture and ill-treatment as a violation of economic, social and cultural rights,*

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CESCR/Shared%20Documents/PER/INT_CESCR_NGO_PER_48_9880_E.pdf, consulté le 31/5/2022.

Créée par la loi n° 2019/014 du 19 juillet 2019, la CDHC 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 CHRC 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.

Crime (UNODC) with the aim of assisting States (upon request) to ratify and implement the 18 universal legal instruments against terrorism

Remembering that the Global Terrorism Index (GTI), produced annually by the Institute for Economics and Peace Think-Tank, defines terrorism as the threat or actual use of "unlawful force and violence by a non-state actor to achieve a political, economic, religious or social objective through fear, coercion or intimidation"⁷,

Observing that according to the IWG 2022, Cameroon has dropped from 15th to 11th most affected country by acts of terrorism in the World⁸,

Further observing that the GTI 2022 reveals that despite an increase in attacks, the impact of terrorism continues to decrease in 2021, deaths from terrorism fell by 1.2 per cent to 7,142 persons, although attacks increased by 17 per cent; two-thirds of the world's countries recorded no attacks or deaths, while 86 countries recorded an improvement in their GTI score⁹,

The Commission deplores that Sub-Saharan Africa has become "the main jihadist global hub", especially Burkina Faso with the terrorist group Ansaroul Islam, Mali with the Groupe de soutien à l'islam et aux musulmans (GSIM), Niger, Nigeria, Cameroon and Chad with Boko Haram¹⁰, such accounted for 48 per cent of deaths from terrorism worldwide in 2021¹¹,

The Commission further observes that according to the latest yearbook on jihadist terrorism published by the *International Observatory for the Study of Terrorism*¹², Cameroon ranks 5th in the World, with approximately 129 terrorist attacks in 2021,

The Commission is still concerned about the terrorist bombings on 2 and 12 July 2022 in Mokolo quarters, Yaoundé, Central Region, which caused the death of an individual and the serious injury of four others,

Recognising that punishing acts of terrorism is not enough to remedy the harm caused to the victims, that it is absolutely crucial to identify the rights and needs of the victims, support them and provide a remedy for the harm they have suffered¹³,

The Commission observes with the association *Action locale pour un Développement participatif et autogéré* (ALDEPA) that Victims of acts of terrorism in the Far North, North-West and South-West Regions have suffered several serious violations of their fundamental rights, such as:

- the right to life

⁷ *Jeune Afrique*, « Indice 2019 du terrorisme mondial : Africains et arabes, principales victimes », <https://www.jeuneafrique.com/859556/politique/indice-2019-du-terrorisme-mondial-africains-et-arabes-principales-victimes/>, consulté le 11/8/2022.

⁸ Global terrorism Index 2019, *Measuring the impact of terrorism*, file:///D:/Ordinateur/Downloads/GTI-2019web.pdf, p. 8, consulté le 7/8/2022.

⁹ <https://www.agenceecofin.com/multimedia/2004-96841-le-classement-des-pays-africains-les-plus-touchees-par-le-terrorisme-global-terrorisme-index-2022>, consulté le 11/8/2022.

¹⁰ ALTAYAR, <https://atalayar.com/fr/content/le-terrorisme-djihadiste-tu%C3%A9-plus-de-9-600-personnes-dans-2-200-attaques-en-2021>, consulté le 8/7/2022.

¹¹ CISION PR NEWswire, <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/indice-mondial-du-terrorisme-2022-l-afrique-subsaharienne-emerge-comme-l-epicentre-mondial-du-terrorisme-alors-que-le-nombre-de-deces-dans-le-monde-diminue-822592253.html>, consulté le 8/7/2022.

¹² *Ibidem*.

¹³ *Ibidem*.

- the right to physical and moral integrity
- the right to freedom of movement
- the right to education
- the right to health
- freedom of opinion
- freedom of expression
- the right to work
- the right to property
- the right to pay
- freedom of commerce and industry
- the right to socio-economic development.

These violations have devastating effects on the living conditions of the victims, such as:

- the status of persons living with a disability
- forced displacement following multiple exactions causing social, health, economic and even cultural problems
- the non-enrolment of surviving children of murdered parents or the non-enrolment by some parents due to the stress of meeting basic needs as a priority
- the ever-increasing number of "girl mothers" due to multiple sexual waves of abuse
- the dislocation of the family fabric leading to the presence of unaccompanied children, separated children and children associated with armed forces and groups
- the material and financial losses estimated at several hundred billion CFA francs.

The Committee further observes that, particularly in the North West and South West Regions, secessionist terrorists are responsible for multiple human rights violations, including:

- the burning of the Molyko Government Primary School in Buea and the Queen of Rosary Catholic College in Mamfe, in the South West Region, on 8 and 11 February 2022 respectively
- the rape of several women, with the consequent contamination with sexually transmitted diseases or unwanted pregnancies
- the forced recruitment of children
- kidnapping for ransom
- the murder of civilians suspected of collaborating with the Defence and Security Forces or who disapprove of the armed struggle or the secession project
- the closure of civil registration centres such as the one in Muyuka, in the Fako Division, South-West Region, where several civil registration documents were destroyed by the secessionists
- the occupation of civilians' homes
- forced labour with people having to pay to have access to their plantations.

The Commission, with input from the Cameroon Freedoms Observatory (CFO) and the CHRC branches for the Far North, North West and South West, *observes* that victims of terrorism have specific needs, such as:

- the revival of their socio-economic activities
- the need for health and psychological care for their well-being
- the reconstitution of their civil registration and academic documents

- food aid for all
- the payment of school fees for displaced children in other regions.

The Commission strongly commends the Government's measures to effectively combat terrorism and protect the rights of victims, through:

- the granting of special status to the North-West and South-West Regions, to ensure the harmonious and sustainable development of these Regions
- the establishment of a humanitarian emergency plan worth 12.7 billion CFA francs for the North-West and South-West Regions on 20 June 2018, to provide food and basic necessities to displaced persons and ensure access to basic social services
- the establishment of the National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (CNDDR) by Decree No. 2018/719 of 30 November 2018, which has already received more than 2856 people since 2019¹⁴
- the enactment of Law No. 2014/028 of 23 December 2014 on the repression of acts of terrorism
- and the setting up of public utility telephone lines to be called toll-free to report any violation of the right to safety of goods and persons to the police (117) or gendarmerie (113)
- the functioning of the CHRC's toll-free number to report any human rights violation (1523)
- the issuance of Decree No. 2017/013 of 23 January 2017 on the establishment, organisation and functioning of the National Commission for the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism
- the CHRC's organisation in collaboration with the European Union and the Ministry of Communication of an educational talk on 4 September 2020 for 30 journalists (representatives of radio and television stations and press organs) on the effects of hate speech on peace and national security
- the implementation of the SEPTAAM 2020 Project under the supervision of the Ministry of External Relations (MINREX), for the destruction of small arms and light weapons retrieved from the hands of secessionist terrorists and Boko Haram
- the inclusion of human rights modules in the training programme of the National School of Penitentiary Administration.

The Commission equally commends the efforts of the ALDEPA association in caring for the victims of terrorism, through:

- support for communities that have been victims of exactions by providing them with means of subsistence: food, sleeping materials, clothing, etc. ;
- conducting studies to better understand women's and young people's situation in the security crisis
- conducting community dialogues on participatory analysis of community problems and reconciliation initiatives
- capacity building for Koranic school teachers and religious leaders
- developing awareness-raising and prevention materials for young people against extremism,

¹⁴ <https://www.aa.com.tr/fr/afrique/cameroun-plus-de-250-ex-combattants>, consulté le 22/8/2022.

The Commission commends Government efforts and those of development partners and some civil society organisations that are working tirelessly to promote peace and protect the rights of victims of terrorism,

The Commission further encourages the Government to continue to bring the perpetrators of such acts to book, so that they may serve as an example to deter others who would attempt to commit such international crimes,

The Commission recommends that the Government take measures to relocate vital statistics centres and to enable the continuity of vital statistics records in areas affected by terrorism,

The Commission recommends that the Government build secure camps to house IDPs and provide for their basic needs,

The Commission recommends that the Government encourage the return of families from communities already secured by the Defence and Security Forces,

The Commission recommends that the Government take concrete measures to support the victims in the reconstruction of their family, academic, professional and social life,

The Commission recommends that the Government and civil society organisations further promote the implementation of educational, professional and social reintegration activities

The Commission also recommends that the Government create youth spaces (playgrounds, multifunctional youth centres, child-friendly spaces, cohesion spaces, etc.),

The Commission further recommends that professionals in charge of victims of terrorism be appointed at the beginning of investigations, to inform victims of all existing support services, assess their needs and, if necessary, refer them to service providers or facilitate their contact,

The Commission urges all those who may be informed about the preparation of terrorist acts to denounce the perpetrators and accessories, and hinder these heinous activities which destroy institutions so as to save human lives,

The Commission has a compassionate thought for all victims of terrorism in Cameroon and will spare no effort to continue to promote and protect human rights and such as the rights of victims of terrorism, through training workshops, awareness campaigns, advocacy, fact-finding missions, handling of complaints, self-initiated investigation, and as part of preventing of torture, through visits to all detention facilities and use of its toll-free number, 1523.

Yaoundé, the

21 AOUT 2022



James MOUANGUE KOBILA