

COMMISSION DES DROITS  
DE L'HOMME DU CAMEROUN

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

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CAMEROON HUMAN  
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**STATEMENT BY THE CAMEROON HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION  
TO MARK THE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION  
OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

**On the theme - *Unite! Activism to end violence against women and girls***

**25 November 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 joint chambers,

*Considering* that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence against Women was adopted by the United Nations UN General Assembly Resolution 34/180 on 18 December 1979, entered into force on 3 September 1981 and was ratified by Cameroon on 23 August 1994,

*Bearing in mind* that the commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, which was proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in its Resolution 54/134 of 17 December 1999, pays tribute to "the three sisters - Patria, Minerva and María Tereza Mirabal, political opponents, brutally murdered in the Dominican Republic on 25 November 1960, under the instructions of Rafael Trujillo (1930-1961), the leader of the time"<sup>1</sup>,

*Recalling* that the UN's commitment to eliminate all forms of violence against women is reflected in several other initiatives, such as:

- the adoption of Resolution No. 48/104 of 20 December 1993 on the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women
- the launch in 2008, of the campaign "UNiTE to End Violence against Women by 2030", in support of the Civil Society-led "16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence against Women and Girls" campaign,"

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.un.org/fr/observances/ending-violence-against-women-day/background>, accessed on 18 November 2022.



**Considering** that the theme of this year's celebration, *UNITE! Activism to end violence against women and girls*, calls on Governments, development actors, Civil Society, women's organizations, youth, the private sector, the media and the entire UN system and men to join forces to combat violence against women and girls,

**Recalling** that, according to Article 1 of the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, *the term "violence against women" means any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life"*

**Recalling further** that Article 2 of the same Declaration lists, in a non-exhaustive and illustrative manner, the following forms of violence: physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the household<sup>2</sup>, in the community and violence perpetrated or tolerated by the State, wherever it is practised,

**Whereas** the Preamble to the Constitution of 18 January 1996 states that *"the Nation shall protect and promote the family which is the natural foundation of human society. It shall protect women, the young, the elderly and the disabled"*,

**Stressing** that, according to the principle of non-discrimination enshrined in Article 7 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 10 December 1948, all human rights shall apply to women as well as men,

**Recalling** that Cameroon ratified the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on 20 June 1989, as well as its Protocol on the Rights of Women (Maputo Protocol) on 28 May 2009,

**Noting** that these legal instruments for the protection and promotion of women's rights guide the definition of strategies and measures concerning eliminating violence against women in the area of prevention, law and criminal procedure, criminal sanctions and remedial measures, assistance and support to victims, health and social services as well as training,

**The Commission is indignant** about the resurgence of these despicable acts which seriously affect women and cause numerous violations of their rights, referring to the results of its work carried out as part of monitoring cases of violence against women from 1 January to 31 August 2022, recording 19 cases, including seven cases of violation of the right to life, four cases of rape, four cases of domestic violence, three cases of kidnapping and a case of physical violence, which occurred in the North-West, Centre, Adamawa, Littoral, Far-North, West and South-West Regions,

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<sup>2</sup> This includes beatings, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to child abuse.



Concerning the above-mentioned violations of women's right to life, *the Commission was especially shocked* by the following pattern of violence:

- rape, followed by the murder of a 24-year-old woman, internally displaced in Bafoussam and originally from the Donga-Mantung Division in the North-West Region, who was raped in her room on 20 March 2022, committed by unknown persons who stabbed her three times in the heart. Her body was found stark naked and the wall of her room bloody
- the suspected death of a young woman of approximately 24 years old, who was found on the road in the Ahala neighbourhood of Yaoundé, in the morning of 4 April 2022. The victim was seen the day before with four men in a liquor store
- the murder of a woman by terrorists of the Boko Haram sect, in Dabi-Koda, Mayo-Sava Division, Far North Region, on 8 May 2022
- the death of a prostitute woman in Douala, following a group rape perpetrated by seven men, on 17 July 2022. The victim allegedly met one of them while she offered him her services at a crossroad, not far from the place called “*Elf*”
- assault followed by the killing of Mademoiselle GAGNE Béatrice, a student at the Collège Saint-Stephen in Yaoundé, discovered at the «Nouvelle route Tam-tam» neighbourhood in Yaoundé, on 3 August 2022. The victim who was returning from a relaxing walk was stabbed to death in the throat by unidentified individuals
- Marie France MBEYA on August 21, 2022, was murdered in a hotel in the Biyem-Assi neighbourhood and dismembered and her remains were loaded into a suitcase by BEYANGA Désiré, her sister-in-law.

*The Commission equally regrets* the following cases of rape:

- a seven-year-old girl was abducted at a place called *Joli Soir*, in Ngaoundéré in the Adamaoua Region, taken to an unknown location, and then raped by a man over 60 years old, on 20 May 2022. The girl's screams caught the attention of the people in the neighbourhood quarters who caught the perpetrator in the act
- seven young girls aged between four to 12 years were sexually abused for more than a year by their home-teacher aged about 27, studying at the Faculty of Legal and Political Sciences at the University of Dschang. The man was arrested by the police, following complaints lodged against him by the relatives of the victims, on 22 June 2022
- an 18-year-old girl raped and sodomized several times by KENMOGNE Vincent, her parent. The victim who lived in Douala undertook, after her mother's death, to join her father in the Mimboman quarters. She eventually disclosed her torturer to her maternal family and the facts became publicly known on 19 April 2022.

*The Commission further regrets* the myriad of acts of domestic violence perpetrated throughout the country, which unfortunately includes the following cases of femicide:



- the case of a woman, beaten her to death at "Collège Vogt", Nsimeyong neighbourhood in Yaoundé, on 11 April 2022
- the death of Annie, 35 years old, mother of four children and, a trader at the Bepanda market in the 5th Sub-Division of Douala, on April 19, 2022, following the violence perpetrated by her spouse
- the case of Miss KAMMEUGNE Maheva Orlane, 23 years old, mother of two children, beaten to death by her concubine on 18 June 2022 around 7 a.m. in the Domga neighbourhood, Block VI, in Banka, Upper Nkam Division in the West Region
- the case of a woman stabbed to death by her concubine on June 18, 2022. This happened in the presence of their two children, in Bafang, Upper Nkam Division, West Region.

***The Commission is outraged*** to recall the cases of abduction of women:

- the abduction of four women by armed secessionist terrorists in Mbalangi, Meme Division, South West Region, on 19 April 2022
- the kidnapping of Senator MUNDI Regina by separatist terrorists in Foncha Street, Bamenda, North West Region, on 30 April 2022, at about 10 am. She was released by the Defence and Security Forces on 30 May 2022
- the kidnapping of Ms SUNJO Nicoline, a chemistry teacher at the Bilingual High School in Bamenda, on 17 June 2022, in Kumbo, Bui Division, North West Region, by an armed terrorist gang.

Concerning blatant assault, the Commission filed the case of Ms Ngoune Ingrid, who was assaulted, near her car, by Fokam Ngnie Armand Brice, on the Wouri Bridge in Douala, following a minor collision, on 20 August 2022.

***The Commission deplores*** the findings of the legal clinic and the multi-actor consultation organised with women in the Bogo community, on the establishment of birth certificates in the Diamaré Division, Far North Region, on 9 March 2022, as part of celebrating the International Women's Day. The statistics of the 197 registered participants (mostly women) indicate that about:

- 60 per cent of women do not go to health centres and do not use family planning
- 80 per cent of school-age girls do not attend school
- 85 per cent of widows have children and have difficulty caring for them
- 85 per cent of women and girls are given in marriage before the age of 15.

***The Commission strongly condemns*** such dehumanising and dishonouring practices, which can in no way be justified.

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***The Commission again commends*** Government efforts to end the high level of violence against women in the Cameroonian society, particularly through:

- the enactment of laws, especially the Penal Code, which protects women from discrimination and other harmful practices (rape, incest, genital mutilation, excessive dowry, etc.) and criminalises certain forms of violence and discriminatory practices perpetrated against women
- the production of 300 radio programmes in local languages, French and English in collaboration with local and traditional authorities and Civil Society to combat violence against women and raise awareness of human rights, especially women's rights<sup>3</sup>.

***The Commission further commends*** Government efforts to strengthen the fight against gender-based violence, through:

- the establishment of integrated systems for the care of victims of gender-based violence to improve the services offered and care provided to survivors of gender-based violence<sup>4</sup>
- the ongoing validation by MINPROFF of the national strategy to combat gender-based violence 2021-2026<sup>5</sup>
- awareness-raising on preventing gender-based violence and reproductive health, and harmful traditional practices among institutional and non-institutional actors in formal and non-formal education levels<sup>6</sup>
- Setting up and strengthening gender desks within the police and gendarmerie units in Maroua to raise awareness among the defence and security forces about their role in protecting victims of GBV and disseminating the legal instruments concerning GBV<sup>7</sup> ;
- the establishment, by the Ministry of Decentralisation and Local Development, of local platforms for discussion on gender-based violence, to raise awareness of these practices and provide care for survivors
- the development and approval, in August 2022, of the National Action Plan for UN Resolution 1325 and other related resolutions for women, peace and security, to be implemented by the Ministry of Women Empowerment and the Family<sup>8</sup> ;

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<sup>3</sup> MINPROFF official website [www.minproff.cm](http://www.minproff.cm) accessed on 3 September 2021.

<sup>4</sup> <http://minproff.cm/adamaoua-les-systemes-integre-de-prise-en-charge-des-victimes-des-vbg-mis-en-place/>, accessed on 15 November 2022.

<http://minproff.cm/relecture-de-la-strategie-natio>

<sup>5</sup> <http://minproff.cm/relecture-de-la-strategie-nationale-de-lutte-contre-les-violences-basees-sur-le-genre2021-2026>, accessed on 15 November 2022.

<sup>6</sup> <http://minproff.cm/organisation-des-seances-de-sensibilisation-sur-la-prevention-des-violences-sur-le-genre-sur-la-sante-de-reproduction-sur-la-prevention-des-pratiques-traditionnelles-nefastes-aupres-des-services/>, accessed on 15 November 2022.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.minproff/les-forces-de-maintien-de-lordre-de-la-region-de-lextreme-nord-a-lecole-de-la-politique-de-la-lutte-contre-les-violences-basees-sur-le-genre>, accessed on 10 November 2022.



- the election, on 27 October 2022, of the members of the National Mirror Committee No. 63 - gender and equality between men and women - ahead of Cameroon's participation in the work of the ISO PC 337 Project Committee, which is responsible for developing the ISO 53800 international standard on guidelines for the promotion and implementation of gender equality for all public and private organisations<sup>9</sup>

***The Commission reiterates*** the recommendations made in its previous **Statement to mark the 21st Edition of this Day in 2021 under the theme *UNiTE to End Violence against Women by 2030***,

***The Commission further recommends*** the conclusion of investigations into violence against women by state and non-state actors and, if found guilty, the perpetrators should be brought to trial and sentenced to punishment commensurate with the crime or offence committed, and that victims should be compensated,

***The Commission recommends*** that the Government should invest more in the collection and publication of disaggregated data to better develop policies and evaluate the measures already taken to combat violence and assess their impact. It should also support civil society organisations, universities and others involved in data collection,

***The Commission recommends*** that the role of men and local communities in preventing and combating violence against women be further explored and strengthened,

***The Commission recommends*** that the human, financial and material resources of existing social structures working with victims be increased and that an inter-agency unit (one-stop-shop) with shelters and helplines be created to provide information, support and advice to victims/survivors of violence,

***The Commission recommends*** gender-sensitive training for actors who respond to violence against women, such as law enforcement officers, immigration officers, medical personnel, social workers, and the judiciary,

***The Commission urges*** traditional leaders to change customary practices that support and condone violence against women, such as widow battering and female genital mutilation and eliminate stereotypes that legitimise violence against women,

***The Commission recommends*** that women be made aware of the various forms of protection and remedies available to them and encourages women to report all forms of violence at an early stage, regardless of their age, social status or religion,

<sup>8</sup> <https://cameroon-tribune.cm/article.html52245/fr.html/recherche-de-la-paix-les-dames-en-premiere-ligne>, access on 10 November 2022.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.anor.cm/articles-assemblee-generale-elective-du-comie-miroir-63-genre-et-egalite-homme-femme>, accessed on 10 November 2022.



*The Commission appeals* to all men to immediately stop all forms of violence against women and the girl child,

For its part, *the Commission will spare no effort* to continue to sensitise on violence against women through training workshops, awareness-raising campaigns, advocacy, fact-finding missions and handling complaints or self-initiated investigations,

*The Commission also encourages* anyone who is a victim or witness of a human rights violation - and especially the rights of women to contact it, including through its **toll-free number 1523**.

Yaounde, **25 NOV 2022**

**Pour le Président  
et par Ordre**



*Balega Gana Raphaël*  
Ministre Plénipotentiaire Hors Echelle