

**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**

Theme: *Women against violent extremism*

21 August 2023

The Cameroon Human Rights Commission (hereinafter referred to as "the Commission"), established by Law No. 2019/014 of 19 July 2019, was inaugurated on 29 April 2021, following the swearing-in of its members before the Supreme Court sitting in Combined Chambers,

Recalling that the United Nations General Assembly, by resolution A/RES/72/165, decided to proclaim 21 August as an International Day of Remembrance and Tribute to Victims of Terrorism to ensure that they are not forgotten, marginalised or left behind in their individual or collective efforts to rebuild their lives,

Considering that this Day aims not only to honour and support victims and survivors of terrorism but also to promote and protect their rights

Considering that, since the attacks of 11 September 2001 in New York in the United States of America, the threat of terrorism has increased and is now, more than ever, a major concern for States throughout the world and especially for Cameroon

Emphasising that it was on 28 September 2001 that the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1373 (2001), which suppresses the financing of terrorism and calls upon States to bring to justice "*all persons involved in the financing, planning,*

*preparation or perpetration of terrorist acts or in supporting terrorist acts"*¹,

Recalling that it was at the Paris Summit for Security in Nigeria (17 May 2014) that the Head of State of Cameroon officially declared war on Boko Haram, in response to the upsurge in terrorist attacks against Cameroonians since 2013,

Emphasizing that, in addition to Boko Haram terrorism from abroad, a worrying internal security situation has developed in the North-West and South-West Regions since 2016, with increasing acts of terrorism by secessionists,

Aware that people in conflict situations are particularly vulnerable due to the insecurity and physical and mental instability they encounter,

Recalling that victims of terrorism are forced to live with fear and uncertainty every year, while terrorist acts and violent attacks around the world remain front-page news, compounding their trauma²,

Considering that the term "victims of terrorist acts" refers to the following persons [...]:

- (a) persons killed or seriously injured physically or psychologically as a result of a terrorist act (direct victims)*
- (b) the next of kin or dependents of a direct victim (secondary victims)*
- (c) innocent persons indirectly killed or seriously injured as a result of a terrorist act (indirect victims); and*
- (d) potential future victims of terrorism.*³,

Noting that terrorism is a crime under international law, is prohibited and cannot be justified under any circumstances

Recalling that the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, adopted on 1st July 1999 and entered into force on 6 December 2002, defines a terrorist act in Article 1(3)(a) as "any act which is a violation of the criminal laws of the State Party and which may endanger the life, physical integrity or freedom of, or cause serious injury or death to, any person, number or group of persons, or which causes or threatens to cause damage to public or private property, natural resources, environmental or cultural heritage, and which is calculated or intended to: (i) to intimidate, to cause fear [. ...] or (ii) to disrupt public services [...] or (iii) to incite general insurrection in a State",

Noting that the United Nations Security Council, in its Resolution 1566 of October 2004, defines terrorist acts as "criminal acts, in particular, those directed against the civilian population, which are intended to cause death or serious injury, or to take

¹https://www.lorientlejour.com/article/356972/Les_lecons_du_11_septembre_-_La_resolution_1373_%253A_un_Etat_a_rehabiliter.html, accessed on 7 August 2023.

² <https://press.un.org/fr/2022/dh5475.doc.html>, accessed on 7 August 2023.

³ *Principles and Guidelines on Human and Peoples' Rights while Countering Terrorism in Africa*, African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, p. 35.

hostages, to spread terror among the population, a group of persons or individuals, to intimidate a population, or to compel a government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act"⁴,

Considering further that the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism of 9 December 1999 defines an act of terrorism in Article 2(1)(b) as "any other act intended to cause death or serious bodily injury to a civilian or to any other person not taking an active part in the hostilities in a situation of armed conflict, when the purpose of such an act, by its nature or context, is to intimidate a population or to compel a government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act".

Recalling also Article 28(G) of the Protocol on Amendments to the Protocol on the Statute of the African Court of Justice and Human Rights and relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions on the fight against terrorism, in particular resolution 1373 (2001), may define an act of terrorism as "the intimidation or coercion of peoples or Governments through the threat or use of acts of violence, resulting in death, serious injury or the taking of hostages"

Considering that women, including young girls, are privileged targets of extremists and terrorists due to their vulnerable status, who use sexual violence and slavery to limit the enjoyment of their rights, taking advantage of traditional norms and dynamics as well as gender stereotypes in certain societies

Considering also that the factors that make women vulnerable include "commitment to an ideology, gender inequality, lack of financial autonomy, grievances related to bad governance, revenge for the death of a close relative or the arrest of a loved one, sexual and gender-based violence, marginalisation and lack of opportunities"

Aware also that women are used as vectors to promote acts of terrorism, in that they facilitate and/or participate in the organisation and execution of terrorist acts as suicide bombers or "human bombs" in terrorist attacks, in the smuggling of arms and ammunition, in espionage and the recruitment of other women into armed gangs, and that they are often used as domestic servants to perform various tasks for the benefit of terrorists (cooking, general housework, sexual services, etc.),

Aware that women, through their active, voluntary or involuntary participation in terrorist criminal enterprises, play a key role in maintaining and perpetuating insecurity in the world and in Cameroon in particular,

Considering that, based on the foregoing observations, the United Nations has designated from 19 to 23 June 2023 a week of counter-terrorism activities on the theme "Women against violent extremism,

Noting that the joint initiative of the United Nations and the Global Compact for Coordinated Action against Terrorism resulted in an "Appeal to Strengthen the Fight against Terrorism on the African Continent", to which Qatar, Morocco, Nigeria and

⁴ <https://dictionnaire-droit-humanitaire.org/content/article/2/terrorisme/>, accessed on 2 August 2023.

Tunisia responded positively by actively participating in the relevant discussions in New York, United States of America, and to which Cameroon did not remain indifferent,

Noting that, in response to the emerging threat of violent extremism and terrorism in Africa, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights adopted in May 2015 the Principles and Guidelines on Human and Peoples' Rights while Countering Terrorism in Africa, which states that "States must take into account the gender dimensions of terrorism and the fight against terrorism, that women and children are all too often the direct and indirect victims of terrorism and the fight against terrorism, and that human rights must be respected and protected at all times",

Recalling that the Preamble to the Constitution of Cameroon of 18 January 1996 provides that "Everyone has the right to life and physical and moral integrity. They must be treated humanely in all circumstances. Under no circumstances may they be subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment,

Aware that the whole of humanity aspires to peace as a universal value and a lasting social reality

Noting that, in the search for peace and security, States have often minimized the contribution of women in the fight against violent extremism and radicalisation leading to terrorism (VRET)

Recalling that the UN Security Council, in its resolution S/RES/1325, adopted on 31 October 2000, reaffirmed the role of women in peace-building through the "Women, Peace and Security Programme [which] focuses on conflict prevention, gender equality and the meaningful participation of women in all phases of conflict management and resolution, as well as in all aspects of post-conflict reconstruction and development".⁵,

Noting that, in addition to the social constraints and challenges that women face daily, they are affected differently by conflict, which justifies the strengthening of the above-mentioned UN Security Council Resolution S/RES/1325 through the adoption of Resolutions 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960 and 2106, which recognise that "sexual violence in conflict has been and continues to be used in some contexts as a tactic of war to achieve military and political objectives".⁶,

Considering the close linkages between the above-mentioned Women, Peace and Security Programme, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the African Union's Agenda 2063⁷ and the National Development Strategy 2020-2030⁸,

⁵ Forward of MOUSSA FAKI MAHAMAT, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, in the book titled *Elle se bat pour la paix, 20 ans, 20 parcours*, jointly published by the United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU) and by the African Union Commission (AUC), January 2020, p. 12.

⁶ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. Guidelines for drawing up a national plan for women, peace and security. Geneva, October 2021, p. 5.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Ministry of the Economy, Planning and Regional Development, National Development Strategies 2020-2030, published in 2020, p. 22.

⁹ African Union Commission Agenda 2063, *L'Afrique que nous voulons*, Addis-Abeba, Ethiopia, 2015, p. 2.

¹⁰ UNESCO, *Notre vision de la paix*, <https://www.unesco.org/fr/vision>, accessed on 3 August 2023.

Recognising that the aspirations of the above-mentioned Agenda 2063 "*reflect the desire for shared prosperity and well-being, unity and integration, in a continent of free citizens and expanded horizons, where women and young people of all genders reach their full potential, free from fear, disease and want*"⁹,

Emphasising that UNESCO has identified eight essential pillars of the culture of peace in its contribution to world peace¹⁰, as follows:

1. Promote peace through education for all children, with special attention to girls.
2. Enhance sustainable economic and social development, giving priority to the eradication of poverty.
3. Promote respect for all human beings by guaranteeing the rights outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
4. Ensure equality between women and men by integrating a gender perspective and eliminating all forms of discrimination.
5. Promote democratic participation by educating citizens in responsible practices.
6. Promote the concepts of tolerance, understanding and solidarity by encouraging dialogue between civilisations.
7. Support the free flow of knowledge and information through independent media.
8. Promote international peace and security through actions such as disarmament and the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

Noting that, Cameroon, to combat terrorism effectively, has strengthened its legal framework by adopting Law No. 2014-028 of 23 December 2014 on the suppression of acts of terrorism and that this Law punishes terrorist acts, in particular in Section 2 (1), which provides that "*whoever, acting alone, as an accomplice or an accessory, commits or threatens to commit an act likely to cause death, endanger physical integrity, cause bodily injury or material damage, destroy natural resources, the environment or cultural heritage, with the intent to:*

- a) *a)to intimidate the public, to provoke a situation of terror or force the victim, the government and/or a national or international organisation to carry out or refrain from carrying out any act, adopt or renounce a particular position* ;
- b) *b) to disrupt the normal functioning of public services, the delivery of essential services to the public or to create a situation of crisis among the public;*
- c) *to create a widespread insurrection in the country"*,

Noting that the Sixth Resolution on the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (A/RES/72/284) places particular emphasis on the importance of recognising the rights of victims and their role in countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism

Considering that, to counter violent extremism and play an active role in conflict transformation, women need to be economically empowered, well-informed on these issues and skilled in both discussion and negotiation,

Recognising that to achieve this, women-led civil society organisations must not only build their capacity to prevent violent extremism and counter-terrorism and foster cooperation between local actors and political leaders but must also be recognised and supported to better play their role in countering VAE,

Recalling The Preamble to the Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), which states that "*it is in the minds of men that wars begin and it is in their minds that the defences of peace must be built*",

Considering that strengthening the resilience of victims and their families through sustained assistance and support is an important step forward in coping, healing and recovering more quickly from the trauma caused by an attack¹¹,

Noting that the African Union, through its Principles and Guidelines on Human and Peoples' Rights while Countering Terrorism in Africa, African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, p. 35, imposes duties on States towards victims¹², including:

- Obtaining justice for them through effective official investigations whenever people have been killed or seriously injured as a direct or indirect result of an act of terrorism, to ensure accountability and learning lessons for the future

- Ensuring that they have the right to form representative organisations. Their freedom of association and expression should be fully guaranteed

Noting that the United Nations, as part of implementing justice measures concerning victims of crime and abuse of power, has recommended 21 good practices to assist victims of terrorism, which aim to "*ensure access to justice and fair treatment, and provide restitution, compensation and social assistance to victims*"¹³,

Recalling that through Resolution A/RES/72/165, which proclaims 21 August as The International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism, the United Nations reaffirms that the promotion and protection of human rights for all and

¹¹ *Idem*.

¹² *Principles and Guidelines on Human and Peoples' Rights while Countering Terrorism in Africa*, African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, p. 35.

¹³ See Best practice in support for victims of terrorism in the justice system, UN Office on Drugs and Crime, New York, 2016, p. 9.

¹⁴ <https://www.un.org/fr/observance/terrorism-victims-day>, accessed on 8 August 2023.

¹⁵ United Nations counter terrorism strategy, p. 5.

the rule of law at the national and international levels are essential to prevent and combat terrorism¹⁴,

Emphasizing that, in addition to punishing acts of terrorism, it is essential to identify the rights and needs of victims, support them in their post-traumatic phase and provide reparation for the harm they have suffered

Bearing in mind the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (A/RES/60/288), which in its measures to prevent and combat terrorism¹⁵, states that "[t]he Member States of the UN:

1 - Refrain from organising, facilitating, financing, encouraging or tolerating terrorist activities [...] for terrorist facilities or training camps or for the preparation or organisation of terrorist acts against third States or their nationals

2. Cooperate fully in the fight against terrorism, as per their obligations under international law, to detect, deny haven to and bring to justice, by extradition or prosecution, all persons who aid or abet, or attempt to aid or abet, the financing, planning, preparation or commission of, or provide a haven for, terrorist acts

3. Ensure that those responsible for terrorist acts are apprehended and prosecuted or extradited according to the relevant provisions of national and international law, in particular human rights law, refugee law and international humanitarian law."

Bearing in mind the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which enshrine the interdependence of all human rights, including the right to peace and sustainable development

Noting that terrorism affects not only human life but also the full enjoyment of a wide range of other rights, most notably the right to health and the right to education

Noting that, according to the Global Terrorism Index compiled and published in 2022 by the Institute for Economics and Peace, the number of terrorist attacks worldwide has increased by 17 per cent over the past five years, reaching 5,226 in 2021¹⁶ although the impact of terrorism is diminishing,

Also noting that according to the Global Terrorism Index mentioned above, 2,066 deaths were attributed to Daesh between 2021 and 2022, making it the world's deadliest terrorist organisation¹⁷,

Noting that, according to the annual Global Terrorism Index (GTI), Cameroon ranks 11th among the countries most affected by terrorist acts in the world in 2023¹⁸,

¹⁶www.cnews.fr/monde/2022-08-21/journee-internationale-en-hommage-des-victimes-du-terrorisme-5-chiffres, accessed on 5 August 2023.

¹⁷Idem.

¹⁸Global Terrorism Index 2023, accessed on 3 August 2023.

Noting that, according to the GTI published on 14 March 2023, violent conflict remains the main driver of terrorism, as more than 88 per cent of attacks and 98 per cent of deaths caused by terrorism in 2022 took place in countries in conflict, and that the ten countries most affected by terrorism in 2022 were also involved in armed conflict, and that attacks in countries in conflict are seven times more lethal than those in countries at peace¹⁹,

Noting that an in-depth study of the rights of victims in the epicenters of the security situations in the Far North, North-West and South-West regions is crucial to:

- Identify and define the typology of victims
- Identify the rights that have been violated, disaggregated by gender and type of disability
- Identify the measures taken by the State, its development partners and civil society organisations as per the anti-terrorism law and other legislation in force
- Identify the challenges, the methods of adapting to the management of their needs and the level of satisfaction with the support provided by the State and its partners.

The Commission deplores the fact that the Sahel region of sub-Saharan Africa is today the global epicenter of terrorism and that in 2022, this part of the continent recorded more deaths caused by terrorism than South Asia, the Middle East and North Africa combined, that deaths in the Sahel represented 43 per cent of the global total in 2022 compared with 1 per cent in 2007, and that Burkina Faso and Mali accounted for 73 per cent of deaths caused by terrorism in the Sahel in 2022 and 52 per cent of all deaths caused by terrorism in sub-Saharan Africa²⁰,

The Commission notes that between the 22 of August 2022 and 21 August 2023, the following were recorded in Cameroon:

- Some 197 attacks by Boko Haram terrorists on communities and members of the Defense and Security Forces in the Far North area²¹, the five most recent of which are:
 - o the attack by Boko Haram terrorists on 8 August 2023 on the inhabitants of a commune on the Amchidé road between Gaderou and Djourou, during which seven (7) motorcycles were stolen.
 - o the attack by Boko Haram elements on 8 August 2023 on the Amchidé-Kolofata road, at Djourou, during which one motorbike was stolen by the attackers

¹⁹*Idem.*

²⁰*Idem.*

- the attack by members of Boko Haram on 8 August 2023 in the commune of Ouro Dole 1, between Gouderou and Amchidé, during which two bicycles, mobile phones and clothes were stolen
 - the attack by Boko Haram on 8 August 2023 on the Bakarisse and Tala Adoum IDP camps in Keraawa, during which three civilians were killed, including Blama Alamine (aged 78), Sale (aged 72) and Amchi (a woman aged 70), and one terrorist was killed by members of the local vigilance committee
 - the incursion by Boko Haram fighters into Malmouri, Djourou and Guederou, between Amchidé and Kolofata, on 7 August, during which the fleeing inhabitants scattered into the bush and a bicycle and a motorbike were stolen,
- Some 61 attacks by secessionist terrorist groups against civilians and members of the Defense and Security Forces in the North-West region²², the five most recent of which are:
 - the burning of a 70-seater bus belonging to Moghamo Travel Agency on 28 July 2023 at Sonac Street, Bamenda II, during the funeral of Ni John Fru Ndi, the late National President of the Social Democratic Front,
 - the killing of an unidentified civilian on 20 July 2023 at Mile 4, Nkwen, Bamenda III
 - the killing of an unidentified civilian on 19 July 2023 at Mankon, Bamenda III
 - the detonation of an improvised explosive device on 19 July 2023 along the road of the Finance Building in Bamenda, killing an old man
 - the attack on 16 July 2023 on Mankon town in Bamenda 2, killing 10 civilians and wounding two others,
 - Some 67 attacks by secessionist terrorist groups against civilians and members of the Defense and Security Forces in the South-West Region²³, the five most recent of which are :
 - the murder of two policemen and a gendarme in Ekok on 24 July 2023
 - the assassination of two members of the defence and security forces on 6 June 2023 in Ekondo-Titi
 - the execution of two civilians on 5 June 2023 in Kombone Bakundu, Meme Division
 - the detonation of an improvised explosive device on 20 May 2023, after the Unity Day parade in the Mbongo quarter of Mile 16 in Buea, killing a civilian and burning four vehicles
 - the attack on 10 April 2023 at Mile 16 in Buea, which resulted in the death of a civilian and the torching of four vehicles.

²¹ Excerpt from the 2023 first semester report of the CHRC Far North Regional office.

²² Excerpt from the 2023 first semester report of the CHRC North West Regional office.

²³ Excerpt from the 2023 first semester report of the CHRC South West Regional Office

The Commission is deeply shocked by the recent macabre discovery in a mass grave of the remains of six people, including five divisional delegates and an official of the regional tax delegation, who were kidnapped by secessionist terrorists on 15 June 2021 in Ekondo-Titi, Ndian Division, Southwest Region,

Noting that all these criminal acts primarily affect women, making them key actors in the fight against violent extremism and terrorism

Recalling that as a result of the many acts of terrorism in the South-West and North-West Regions, women in these two insecure parts of the country have mobilised around the North-West and South-West Women Task Force for Peace to make their voices heard and to protest against acts of terrorism by organising peaceful marches:

- on 18 August 2020 in Buea, the day after the beheading of Sirri Comfort TUMASANG in Muyuka on 12 August 2020
- on 24 October 2020 in Kumba and on 27 October 2020 in Yaoundé and Douala, to commemorate the massacre of pupils at the Mother Francisca International Bilingual Academy in Kumba on 24 October 2020
- on 27 November 2021 in Ekondo-Titi to commemorate the massacre of pupils at the Ekondo-Titi bilingual high school on 24 November 2021,

The Commission notes that women *"are capable of achieving everything they want, [because] they have the gift of persuasion, of tipping the balance in their favour, [and that] they should therefore be using this ability to help their countries"*.²⁴

The Commission is pleased to note the enormous efforts made by the President of the Republic, Head of State, in the relentless fight against violent extremism and terrorism in the affected regions, especially through:

- the signing on 4 August 2023 by the President of the Republic of Decree No. 2023/330 of 4 August 2023 ratifying the loan agreement concluded on 10 May 2023 between the Republic of Cameroon and the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) for the implementation of the Presidential Plan for the Reconstruction and Development of the North-West and South-West Regions of Cameroon (PPRD) for an amount of 32,250 million CFA francs
- the signing of Decree No. 2023/076 of 6 February 2023 by the President of the Republic authorising the Minister of the Economy, Planning and Regional Development to sign a loan agreement with the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) for the sum of 33.25 million euros or approximately 21.155 billion CFA francs to finance the Presidential Plan for the Reconstruction and Development of the North-West and South-West Regions of Cameroon (PPRD)

²⁴Comments by Zeinabou MAATA, member of association *Mourchidates* – a civil society organisation supported by the UN as part of the fight against violent extremism in Mauritania.

- the successful holding of the 5th meeting of the Follow-up Committee on the implementation of the recommendations of the Great National Dialogue, under the committed chairmanship of the Prime Minister and Head of Government, in Buea on 11 August 2023
- the adoption of Law No. 2014-028 of 23 December 2014 on the suppression of acts of terrorism in Cameroon and its implementation as of February 2015
- the decisive action taken bilaterally with Chad and Nigeria, and multilaterally with the Mixed Multilateral Force, through military operations Emergence 4 and Alpha, which have made it possible to dismantle terrorist training camps, their explosives production facilities and cut off their supply channels²⁵,

The Commission calls on the members of the armed secessionist terrorist groups and those of Boko Haram to immediately and definitively cease all forms of attacks against the people and the defense and security forces and to work for the definitive return of peace for the development and reconstruction of the Far North, North West and South West regions.

The Commission recommends that the Government continue its dialogue with civil society organisations, in particular women's organisations and those working in the field of conflict and violence prevention, peace-building or humanitarian aid, with the following objectives:

- Develop a more comprehensive understanding of the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism and the factors that trigger violent extremism and radicalisation leading to terrorism in specific contexts.
- Giving women a greater voice in the development of more localised, credible and comprehensive strategies to counter violent extremism and build peace
- Integrate human rights and gender perspectives into the development, implementation and evaluation of counter-CSEC policies at the national, African and global levels
- Ensure that education systems and curricula include content and teaching that promote tolerance and acceptance of gender equality and human rights, irrespective of religious or ideological differences, and closely monitor the content of teaching in this regard, to enable the building of peaceful and functional societies.

The Commission recommends to the Ministry of Territorial Administration to:

- Continue to involve women in the reconciliation process in insecure areas by increasing the number and proportion of women in security groups and training programmes, and by considering strategic advice on priorities for countering violent extremism and radicalisation leading to terrorism from

²⁵Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Pr Joseph NTUDA EBODE / Pr Mark BOLAK Funteh / Dr Mahamat Henri MBARKOUTOU / M. Joseph Lea NKALWO NGOULA, *Le conflit Boko Haram au Cameroun, pourquoi la paix traine-elle ?* publié en 2017, www.fes-kamerun.org, accessed on 8 August 2023.

local women's organisations that are particularly vulnerable to violent community reactions and/or reprisals from violent extremist groups.

- Better equip vigilance committees in areas prone to terrorist attacks to help them identify attacks, suspected cases of violent extremism and incitement to terrorism promptly so that the relevant services can respond quickly if necessary,

The Commission recommends that the Ministry of Defense continue to pursue with the utmost vigour those terrorists who refuse the outstretched hand of the Head of State, wherever they may be, to capture them and bring them before the competent courts so that 'they may answer for their actions and be punished with the utmost severity'

The Commission recommends that the organs of the United Nations system, development partners and civil society organizations continue to raise public awareness about the dangers of intolerance, hate speech and violent extremism, which are the driving forces that fuel terrorism, with a special emphasis on critical thinking, communication, language learning, knowledge of religious texts that promote a culture of peace, as well as the necessary technical skills to help women participate in debates in mainstream and social media to mitigate the violence of extremist messages

The Commission recommends that civil society organisations, the majority of which are women, be mobilised more to make their voices heard and to fight more vigorously against violent extremism and acts of terrorism in society

The Commission recommends that religious authorities carry out awareness-raising and information campaigns in places of worship, with particular emphasis on the essential role of women in promoting harmonious coexistence and peace within families, as well as in society as a whole

The Commission, for its part, reaffirms that it will spare no effort to assist victims of terrorism and their families through legal clinics, training workshops, awareness-raising campaigns, advocacy, fact-finding missions and handling complaints and self-initiated investigations,

The Commission calls upon any victim or witness of acts of violent extremism, radicalisation or terrorism to contact the Police free of charge on **117**, the Gendarmerie on **113** and, in the event of a violation of human rights, to contact the Commission, including through its **toll-free number 1523** (free calls, even without credit).

Yaoundé, 21 AOUT 2023



James MOUANGUE KOBILA