

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

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DE LA PROTECTION DES DROITS DE L'HOMME**

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**CAMEROON HUMAN
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Outstanding results from the Cameroon Human Rights Commission following complaints of workers' rights violations by the Cameroon Distribution Company, which manages the Casino and Super-U supermarkets in the Republic of Cameroon

The Cameroon Human Rights Commission (hereinafter referred to as "the Commission" or the "CHRC") was informed of allegations of violations of workers' rights, including unfair dismissals, attacks on workers' dignity, and systematic breaches of the Labour Code, against Mr Gregory Christian Michel Brun, General Manager of the Cameroon Distribution Company (SODICAM Co. Ltd), a Cameroonian subsidiary of the French Casino Group, which manages the Super-U and Casino supermarkets in Douala and other cities across the country. These allegations were brought to the CHRC's attention through a complaint by a trade union, published in the daily newspaper *Le Messager*, on 26 March 2025 (Issue No. 8484).

Acting on its statutory prerogative to initiate investigations *sua sponte*, pursuant to Section 6 of Law No. 2019/014 of 19 July 2019 relating to its establishment, organisation and functioning, the CHRC undertook to verify these allegations. Between March and April 2025, the Littoral branch of the Commission conducted a series of investigations. These were carried out at the Wouri Divisional Union of Commerce Workers (French acronym: SYNEDECOW), at the SODICAM headquarters in Douala, and on-site at various Super U and Casino outlets. SODICAM's Super U and Casino officials declined to engage in dialogue with the CHRC, consequently prompting the National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) team to gather information through interviews with union representatives and selected employees. Upon exhaustive deliberations and careful review of all documentation made available, the CHRC noted a significant deterioration in working conditions at SODICAM supermarkets since Mr Grégory Brun's appointment as the company's head in 2022. Key findings included:

- "abusive and discriminatory" dismissals and forced resignations, disproportionately targeting Cameroonian nationals, in violation of Law No. 96/06 of 18 January 1996 to amend the Constitution of 2 June 1972, Law No. 92/007 of 14 August 1992 on the Labour Code, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (AChHPR), the International Covenant on Social and Cultural Rights and ILO Conventions Nos. 158 and 111
- the creation of a "toxic" working environment in Casino and Super U supermarkets, characterised by fear of losing one's job, verbal humiliation, informal surveillance of staff and abusive restrictions on trade union rights
- the gradual erosion of acquired social benefits, including salary reductions, the elimination of bonuses and allowances (such as Sunday rest and school support for workers' children) and the growing reliance on precarious employment contracts that lack adequate social security coverage to replace permanent positions

- repressive measures against staff representatives, combined with management practices that reportedly display racial overtones towards certain employees
- termination of employment without due process, often lacking prior notice or adequate compensation, and
- Multiple complaints against SODICAM's top management were made to the competent local and central government authorities, initiated by workers and union leaders for the establishment of social dialogue.

Following interviews and examination of the material evidence collected during its investigations, the CHRC:

- documented a total of 61 cases of arbitrary dismissal since 2022, with severance payments made to only 70 per cent of the cases recorded, and often arbitrarily
- highlighted the emblematic case of a former store manager within the company, who was dismissed without notice or justification after 15 years of loyal service
- confirmed a climate of acute social tension within SODICAM Co. Ltd., coupled with the absence of internal mechanisms for staff consultation or complaints.

The CHRC's timely intervention, prompted by the newspaper article in the daily *Le Messager*, undoubtedly influenced the **decision of the Minister of Employment and Vocational Training not to renew Mr Gregory Christian Michel Brun's employment contract, as conveyed in letter No 000180/L/MINEFOP/SG/DRMO/SDRPMO dated 23 April 2025**.

The initiation of an investigation by the CHRC into allegations of serious, recurrent, or systemic violations of human rights, as demonstrated in this case, exemplifies its commitment to uphold human rights, even in corporate settings.

The CHRC invites individuals who have been subjected to human rights violations to submit formal complaints. These complaints can be lodged at the CHRC's head office or one of its eleven branches. Alternatively, the public may contact the CHRC through its **toll-free number 1523**.