



4th UPR CYCLE 2023

UPR PRE-SESSION

Statement by the Chairperson
of the Cameroon Human Rights
Commission (CHRC)

August 2023

[1]

1. Overview of the Cameroon Human Rights Institution

This statement is made on behalf of the Cameroon Human Rights Commission (CHRC), established by the law of 19 July 2019, section 1(3) which states that *‘the Commission shall also serve as the Cameroon National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture, abbreviated as ‘NMPT’.*

2. Consultations for the submission of Cameroon’s Report to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR)

In the run-up to the 4th cycle of the UPR, the Ministry of Justice consulted the CHRC, public administrations, businesses, development partners and civil society organisations (CSOs) on the drafting of the national report during a workshop held on 15 March 2023. In order to enrich the National Report, the CHRC also organised a consultation of CSOs on 4 May 2023, following an inclusive and widely publicised call for participation.

3. Situation on Human Rights in Cameroon

a) Review of the implementation of recommendations from the 3rd UPR cycle

At the last UPR Session in 2018, several recommendations were made to Cameroon, related to the:

- i) security situation in the Far-North, North-West and South-West Regions of the country ;
- ii) press freedom ;
- iii) protection of journalists and human rights defenders ; and
- iv) detention conditions.

One of these recommendations focused on the conduct of a multi-party dialogue aimed at a return to peace in the North-West

[2]

and South-West Regions. Thus, *the Major National Dialogue*, which was held from 30 September to 4 October 2019, and the Follow-up Committee met for the 5th time in Buea on 11 August 2023.

The CHRC is pleased to note that fact-finding investigations are systematically carried out whenever members of the Defence and Security Forces (DSF) are accused of human rights violations. However, the CHRC regrets not receiving feedback on certain survey reports.

The CHRC deploras the following recurring challenges:

- i) the 325 terrorist attacks in the last twelve months including terrorist attacks on educational institutions ;
- ii) the incomplete consideration of the right to reparations for victims of terrorism and torture ;
- iii) the failure to complete the ratification process for certain human rights instruments; and
- iv) the insufficient alternatives to detention.

b) CHRC recommendations

To improve the human rights situation in the above-mentioned areas, the CHRC recommends the State to:

- raise awareness among the DSF of the need to respect Human Rights ;
- deposit the instruments of ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture ;
- speed up the process aimed at issuing the decree implementing the articles of the Penal Code relating to alternative sentencing.

4. Situation on the right to identity, right to education, right to health, rights of persons with disabilities and rights of women, are the most violated in Cameroon and whose respect is crucial to the country's development

a) Review of the implementation of recommendations made from the 3rd UPR cycle

A total of 88 recommendations of the rights under this heading were received by Cameroon and 70 were accepted.

b) CHRC findings and recommendations

The CHRC is concerned about the four million Cameroonians without birth certificates, which threatens all rights based on **identity**. As a result, the CHRC recommends that all stakeholders in the civil status registration process implement its 24 recommendations.

The CHRC is concerned about juvenile delinquencies in schools, including violence, drug abuse and harassment. It is also worried about the **quality of education** and failure to respect certain components of the remuneration of teachers. **The CHRC suggests** that the State should introduce modern monitoring mechanisms, whistleblowing procedures and a human rights education programme at all levels of education to combat these abuses and ensure the right to education.

The CHRC commends the launch of Universal Health Coverage on 12 April 2023.

Concerning the **rights of persons with disabilities**, *the CHRC deplures* the lack of access to public services for all types of disability, including information, education, employment and health. In

[4]

addition to ensuring that services are accessible, *the CHRC also encourages* the deposit of instruments on the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Finally, concerning the protection of the **rights of women**, *the CHRC is particularly concerned* about the inadequate dissemination of women's rights and the mechanisms available in the event of a violation of these rights. *The CHRC recommends* that the competent authorities increase women's awareness of their rights and the remedies available to them.