

# Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada

*NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations*

## *Check Against Delivery*

Organization: Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada  
Item: Item 6: UPR Outcomes - Cameroon  
Date: 20 September 2018  
Speaker: Barrister Felix Agbor Nkongho

## **Oral Statement to the 39th Session of the UN Human Rights Council from Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada (LRWC), NGO in special consultative status**

Mr. President,

During the 3<sup>rd</sup> UPR,<sup>1</sup> many States expressed concerns about inequality and discrimination faced by Cameroon's English speaking minority, recommending that Cameroon:

- Adopt legislation to protect human rights defenders and journalists;
- Provide transparent information on human rights in Cameroon;
- Grant international agencies access to English speaking separatist leaders extradited from Nigeria and detained incommunicado;
- Investigate disappearances of political opposition representatives, including members of the English speaking minority, and ensure their safe return;
- Observe citizens' rights to express their views about addressing the problems of English speaking Regions.

Although specific references to human rights issues of the English speaking minority are new to this UPR, during its first<sup>2</sup> and second UPRs,<sup>3</sup> Cameroon supported recommendations that it strengthen its human rights frameworks and continue to investigate acts and threats of aggression against rights defenders. Cameroon did not support recommendations that it take additional steps to ensure freedoms of expression and the press.

The arrest, arbitrary detention, torture and ill-treatment,<sup>4</sup> and wrongful conviction by military

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<sup>1</sup> UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Cameroon, A/HRC/39/15, 10 July 2018, available at: [http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage\\_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/39/15](http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/39/15).

<sup>2</sup> UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review; Cameroon, A/HRC/11/21, 12 October, 2009 available at: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G09/163/96/PDF/G0916396.pdf?OpenElement>.

<sup>3</sup> UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Cameroon A/HRC/24/15, 5 July 2013, available at: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G13/154/72/PDF/G1315472.pdf> (or scroll down at <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/CMIndex.aspx>). Matrice of Recommendations available at: [http://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session16/CM/CameroonMatriceRecommendations\\_E.docx](http://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session16/CM/CameroonMatriceRecommendations_E.docx)

<sup>4</sup> **Wirba Diminus** was severely tortured with the use of a hot electric iron resulting in severe bodily harm. See Statement by the Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa (CHRDA) on "The Unlawful Treatment of

tribunals of civilian rights defenders promoting equal rights for Anglophones, indicate persistent disrespect for the internationally protected rights of Anglophones, resulting in a humanitarian crisis. There are an estimated 411,358 Internally Displaced Persons<sup>5</sup> and more than 122 villages burned<sup>6</sup>.

LRWC urges Council to call on Cameroon to:

- Release all Anglophone activists, leaders, lawyers, and journalists detained, and grant general amnesty to all those who have been convicted by the military tribunals;
- Guarantee the safe return of more than 50,000 Anglophone refugees and internally displaced persons;
- Grant access to the Anglophone regions by international agencies, human rights NGOs, and journalists;
- Grant access by lawyers and family members to all those held incommunicado, and ensure adequate medical attention and services<sup>7</sup> are granted to all those in detention;
- Implement, through peaceful and legal means, effective policies to ensure equal and non-discriminatory legal, educational and social services for Anglophones.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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Detainees at the Kondengui Maximum and Principal Security Prison in Yaounde-Cameroon'' of Monday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2018 available at [www.chrda.org](http://www.chrda.org).

<sup>5</sup> See CHRDA Report on "The Plight of +400,000 IDP's" of 25<sup>th</sup> August 2018 available at [www.chrda.org](http://www.chrda.org).

<sup>6</sup> See CHRDA Report "122 Villages raided, 82 severely affected" of 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2018 available at [www.chrda.org](http://www.chrda.org)

<sup>7</sup> The cases of convicted journalist **Awah Thomas**, as well as **Fri Cristabel, Ngalim Felix, Bah Paulinus, Rev.**

**Father Ambeizei** and **Mbuh Rene** are prominent. See Statement CHRDA on "The Unlawful Treatment of Detainees at the Kondengui Maximum and Principal Security Prisons in Yaounde-Cameroon" of Monday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2018 available at [www.chrda.org](http://www.chrda.org).