



**International Covenant on  
Civil and Political Rights**

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**Human Rights Committee**

**Sixth periodic report submitted by Cameroon  
under article 40 of the Covenant, due in 2025\* \*\***

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- \* The present document is being issued without formal editing.
  - \*\* The present document was submitted pursuant to the simplified reporting procedure. It contains the responses of the State Party to the Committee's list of issues prior to reporting (CCPR/C/CMR/QPR/6).



## List of acronyms and abbreviations

ANIF	National Agency for Financial Investigation
CCPR	Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
CFCE	Business Establishment Formalities Centres
CHRC	Cameroon Human Rights Commission
CISPAV	Intersectoral Committee for Projects Involving Vulnerable Indigenous Peoples
CONSUPE	Supreme State Audit
CPC	Criminal Procedure Code
CPFF	Centre for Women's Empowerment and the Family
CPIMS+	Child Protection Information Management System
CPTMO	Training Centre for Policing Techniques
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DGSN	General Delegation for National Security
DSF	Defence and Security Forces
ELECAM	Elections Cameroon
ENAM	National School of Administration and Magistracy
FNE	National Employment Fund
FP	Family Planning
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GSBD	Gender-Sensitive Budget Document
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
JPO	Judicial Police Officer
MINJUSTICE	Ministry of Justice
MINPROFF	Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family
MND	Major National Dialogue
NACC	National Anti-Corruption Commission
NASLA	National School of Local Administration
NCPBM	National Commission for the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism
NMPT	National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture
OPCAT	Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention against Torture
PAME	Micro-Enterprise Support Program
PAREC	Cameroon Education Reform Support Programme
REDHAC	Network of Human Rights Defenders in Central Africa

## Introduction

1. In 1984, Cameroon ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. It has since then produced 5 Periodic Reports. Its 5th Periodic Report (CCPR/C/CMR/5) submitted in October 2016, was examined by the Human Rights Committee (the Committee) at its 3426th and 3427th meetings (CCPR/C/SR.3426 and 3427) on 24 and 25 October 2017. At its 3444th meeting on 6 November 2017, the Committee adopted its concluding observations (CCPR/C/CMR/CO/5) and recommendations.

2. Furthermore, the Committee came out with a List of Issues (CCPR/C/CMR/QPR/6), the response to which is the main subject of this Report, which covers the period from November 2016 to September 2025.

3. Drawn up in accordance with an inclusive approach under the coordination of the Interministerial Committee for monitoring the implementation of the Recommendations and/or Decisions of international and regional mechanisms tasked with Promoting and Protecting Human Rights (Interministerial Monitoring Committee), this Report is the result of contributions from all relevant stakeholders including civil society organisations (CSOs) who validated it during a workshop held from 13 to 15 May 2025 in Yaounde.

4. The Report is structured in 2 parts. Part I is devoted to general information on Human Rights in Cameroon and Part II is dedicated to the response to the response on the List of Issues.

## Part I

### General information on human rights in Cameroon

#### I. Measures taken to implement recommendations made by the Committee in its previous concluding observations

##### A. Recommendations with a Similar Purpose as the List of Issues

5. Due to their content, the responses to the List of Issues (Part II) are also relevant for measures taken in the implementation of recommendations with a similar purpose.

##### B. Recommendations without a Similar Purpose as the List of Issues

###### 1. Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities (Rec 16)

6. Decree No. 2018/6233/PM of 26 2018 to lay down the enabling instruments of Law No. 2010/2 of 13 April 2010 relating to the protection and promotion of persons with disabilities in Cameroon. With regard to accessibility, the 2018 Decree provides for measures aimed at guaranteeing access of persons with disabilities to infrastructure, housing, transportation, and communication. Concerning buildings, their architectural plans must incorporate necessary accommodations to facilitate access of persons with disabilities. Employment.

7. Cameroon ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities on 28 September 2023.

###### 2. Extrajudicial Killings (Rec. 26)

###### (a) Investigation, Sanction and Reparation

8. Investigations are opened and perpetrators brought before the competent courts in case of allegations of Human Rights violations, including the case of alleged extrajudicial killings.

Pursuant to Section 385 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CPC), any person who has suffered harm as a result of an offence, including family members in the event of extrajudicial killings, may take a civil action and assess the amount of compensation sought. The person may also bring his/her claims before a civil court. As an illustration of cases of investigation, sanction and compensation related to the violation of Human Rights, (see § 29, 30, 116, 117 and 118).

**(b) Mob Justice**

9. Allegations of mob justice reported to the authorities give rise to investigations and sanctions where the facts are established. Besides, the Constitution of Cameroon prohibits taking the law into one's own hands.

**3. Detention Conditions  
(Rec. 30)**

**(a) Reducing Overcrowding in Prisons**

10. In addition to the budget allocated to Penitentiary Administration, a special allocation of CFAF2,166,049,169<sup>1</sup> was provided by the Presidency of the Republic in 2019 for the rehabilitation, construction, extension and equipment of prisons. This was added to the CFAF55,081,575<sup>2</sup> disbursed in 2023 for urgent works. All such allocations helped extend the capacity of functional prisons, from 17,915 beds in 2016 to 20,955 beds in 2024.

11. Other measures consisted in moving detainees from overcrowded prisons to less populated prisons. An illustration is the prisons in the West Region where some 1,110 inmates were transferred to other prisons from 2019 to 2024. Besides, through Decree No. 2020/193 of 15 April 2020 on the commutation and remission of sentences, out of 27,500 detainees, 6,942 were released, representing 25.24% of the prison population.

**(b) Improvement of Living Conditions and Treatment of Inmates**

12. The budget allocated to the feeding of inmates increased from CFAF2,570,000,000<sup>3</sup> in 2016 to CFAF5,465,000,000<sup>4</sup> in 2024. Over the same period, the daily consumption of prisoners rose from CFAF250<sup>5</sup> to CFAF412<sup>6</sup>, while the budget allocated to the healthcare of prisoners rose from CFAF150,000,000<sup>7</sup> to CFAF1,100,000,000<sup>8</sup> and the annual amount for the healthcare per prisoner rose from CFAF5,327<sup>9</sup> to CFAF30,302<sup>10</sup>.

13. To overcome the difficulties of access to water and energy, investments were made in water towers and boreholes built in about 3 prisoners<sup>11</sup> in 2019 and in 5 others in 2020<sup>12</sup>. Some prisons, such as the Maroua Central Prisons and Douala Central Prison-New-Bell were equipped with generators and the outdated electrical installations in other prisons updated.

14. The strategy adopted to ensure the social reintegration of detainees focused on schooling, vocational training and production activities. The Buea Secondary Prison at Upper Farms, for example, had an agro-industrial complex where 11 hectares of corn (5,874 kg produced), 7 hectares of red beans (3,625 kg produced) and 3 hectares of green beans (2,500 kg produced) were grown.

<sup>1</sup> About 3,306,945 Euros.

<sup>2</sup> About 84,094 Euros.

<sup>3</sup> About 3,923,664 Euros.

<sup>4</sup> About 8,343,511 Euros.

<sup>5</sup> About 0.381 Euros.

<sup>6</sup> About 0.629 Euros.

<sup>7</sup> About 229,985 Euros.

<sup>8</sup> About 1,679,389 Euros.

<sup>9</sup> About 8.13 Euros.

<sup>10</sup> About 46.26 Euros.

<sup>11</sup> The Main Prisons of Mbanga, Monatele, Batouri, Central Prison of Yaounde.

<sup>12</sup> Central Prisons of Bafoussam, Bertoua, Maroua, Ngaoundere and the Secondary Prison of Edéa had boreholes.

15. From 2016 to 2024, some 1,455 inmates were trained in different fields such as tailoring, hairdressing, carpentry, computer science, agriculture, etc. During the same period, about 1,921 inmates were enrolled in school and 258 passed different official examinations.

**(c) Alternatives to Imprisonment**

16. In addition to the measures provided for by the CPC, notably judicial supervision, release with or without bail and institutional placement of minors in conflict with the law, Sections 26, 54 and following of the Penal Code provide for community service and reparatory sentence (applicable to offences punishable by imprisonment for less than 2 years or a fine), as well as the possibility of a suspended sentence under certain conditions.

**(d) Separation of Inmates**

17. In almost all the Central Prisons, detainees are separated into categories in different quarters: minors, women and men. In other prisons, due to infrastructure constraints, when they are gathered in the same area, they are accommodated in different cells.

**(e) Family Visits**

18. Detainees have the right to receive visits from family members.

**4. Treatment of Refugees  
(Rec. 36)**

19. Cameroon is respectful of ratified international Conventions and has been home to hundreds of refugees and asylum seekers for years. Moreover, despite the insufficiency of resources, with the support of her partners, it is multiplying measures aimed at protecting the rights of these persons. On the basis of the tripartite agreements signed between the Governments of Cameroon, Nigeria and the UNHCR on 2 March 2017 and between the Governments of Cameroon, Central African Republic and the UNHCR on 29 June 2019, Cameroon, it works to organise, under dignified and secure conditions, the voluntary return of refugees wishing to go back to their countries. In 2023, for example, 2,396 refugees were repatriated to their respective countries, including 1,319 Nigerians, 997 Central Africans, and 80 refugees living in urban areas with different nationalities. In 2024, some 242 Nigerian refugees and about 600 Central African refugees voluntarily returned to their respective countries.

**5. Right to privacy  
(Rec. 40)**

20. In a bid to step up the protection of personal data, Law No. 2024/17 of 23 December 2024 relating to personal data protection in Cameroon was enacted. The law limits the retention of data to a duration not exceeding the period necessary for their processing. It also regulates the regime of data processing authorisations, prohibitions and sanctions against offenders.

**II. Other significant developments since the adoption of the previous concluding observations**

21. With regard to the legal and institutional framework for the promotion and protection of Human Rights, the responses to the List of Issues (Part II) provide information on significant events that occurred since the adoption of the previous Concluding Observations.

**III. Procedure for giving effect to the Views adopted by the Committee**

22. The findings adopted by the Committee are submitted to the Interministerial Monitoring Committee which examines the opportunities and challenges related to their implementation.

## **Part II**

### **Specific information on the implementation of articles 1 to 27 of the ICCPR**

#### **I. Constitutional and Legal Framework for Implementing the Covenant (Art. 2)**

23. In a bid to better comply with the Paris Principles, the State of Cameroon, which had a National Commission for Human Rights and Freedoms, enacted Law No. 2019/14 of 19 July 2019 relating to the establishment, organisation and functioning of the Cameroon Human Rights Commission (CHRC), which serves as the National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture (NMPT). The CHRC is operational since 19 February 2021 with the appointment of a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson, a Secretary-General and 13 permanent members (commissioners) including 3 women).

24. The commissioners<sup>13</sup> are chosen from among personalities of Cameroonian nationality recognised for their moral integrity, intellectual honesty and proven knowledge in Human Rights. The Chairperson of the CHRC, the Vice-Chairperson and the commissioners are appointed by the President of the Republic for a term of office of 5 years renewable once, and as concerns commissioners particularly, they are appointed on the proposal of the services, associations and socio-professional bodies to which they belong.

25. The 13 commissioners who are chosen with due consideration for linguistic, regional and gender balance, in addition to incompatibilities (which resolve conflicts of interest), enjoy immunity, cannot receive orders or instructions from public or private authorities nor have their mandate terminated except in the limited cases provided for by Law No. 2019/14.

26. The CHRC, in its role as NMPT, under the Sub-commission on Prevention of Torture (comprising 4 commissioners including a medical doctor), is free to carry out announced or unannounced visits to all places of detention (§ 119).

27. The budget of the CHRC increased from CFAF867,928,304<sup>14</sup> in 2019 to CFAF4,796,000,000<sup>15</sup> in 2025 to enable it to increase its means of action, including its staff. It also receives funding from national, regional and international partners.

#### **Customary Law Courts**

28. Their jurisdiction in former East Cameroon is governed by Decree No. 69/DF/544 of 19 December 1969 to lay down the judicial organisation and procedure before traditional courts in East Cameroon. The parties are free to decline their jurisdiction. In former West Cameroon, Customary jurisdictions are governed by the Customary Court Ordinance, Cap. 142 of the Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 1948; while the Alkali Courts apply Muslim laws in disputes where Muslims are concerned. The said courts cannot apply customary rules that are contrary to public policy, like those not in compliance with the provisions of the ICCPR. In such cases, they apply the ICCPR. Where they breach such rules, their judgments are subject to review before the Courts of Appeal or the Supreme Court.

<sup>13</sup> They are divided as follows: 1 Judicial and Legal Officer, 1 expert in Penitentiary Administration or in the management of places of detention, 1 diplomat, 1 lawyer representing the Bar, 1 medical officer representing the Cameroon National Order of Medical Doctors, a representative of traditional authorities, 1 journalist designated by the Trade Union of Journalists, 1 expert of social work, 1 gender expert, 1 expert in religious matters, 1 expert in trade unionism, designated by workers' unions, 2 members from organisations working on promoting the rights of some categories of persons, including one representative of persons with disabilities .

<sup>14</sup> About 1,323,148.17 Euros.

<sup>15</sup> About 7,311,454.86 Euros.

## II. Combating Impunity (Arts. 2, 6 and 7)

### A. Measures to Combat Impunity

29. Allegations of Human Rights violations against the population of the Far North, North West and South West Regions are systematically investigated. By way of illustration, on 21 September 2020, the Yaounde Military Tribunal delivered judgment in the matter *The People vs. Lieutenant F.E., Sergeant B.C.H. and 1<sup>st</sup> Class Soldiers D.G.B., T.C.J.B. and N.F.G.L.*, who were involved in the assassination, in 2015, of 2 women and 2 children in Zeleved in the Far North Region. The first 4 accused persons were convicted and sentenced to 10 years imprisonment for violation of instructions, capital murder and complicity, while the last accused was convicted and sentenced to 2 years imprisonment for violation of instructions. The judgment was appealed against by the Public Prosecutor on 30 September 2020.

30. Regarding the incident that occurred on 14 February 2020 in Ngarbuh in the North West Region, members of the defence and security forces (DSF) accompanied by members of a Mbororo vigilance committee during a patrol retaliated to an attack by separatists. During this operation, non-combatant civilians, including 3 women and 10 children, caught in the crossfire were killed. Investigations into the matter ordered, enabled the suspects to be charged before the Yaounde Military Tribunal of. The matter was ongoing.

### B. Statistics on Investigations, Prosecutions, Convictions and Type of Sanctions

31. Although no specific statistics are available for these regions, it is worth noting that 37 procedures were initiated for cases of torture between 2019 and 2024 nationwide.

32. Administrative or criminal sanctions were imposed against staff of the DSFs for Human Rights violations. Thus, between 2019 and 2023, some 213 administrative penalties were imposed on police staff.

### C. Compensation

33. Any person who has suffered harm as a result of an offence may seek compensation before the criminal or civil court. Such compensate in is generally monetary, known as “damages”. For illustration, see §116.

## III. Combating Corruption (Arts. 2 and 25)

### A. General Measures

34. Through a system of courts and specialised institutions, Cameroon continued to combat corruption and related offences, while addressing their root causes. Among other official documents, Reports of the National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC) on combating corruption in Cameroon from 2014 to 2023<sup>16</sup> provide detailed information on the measures taken thereto. To ensure the coherence of actions in this area, a National Anti-Corruption Strategy 2022–2026 was adopted, including strategic anti-corruption actions in 20 sectors of activity<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> <https://conac.cm/fr/telechargements/rapports-annuels/>.

<sup>17</sup> Public investment budget and public contracts, Private sector, Regional and Local Authorities, Education, Public health, Mines and extractive industries, Transport, Forests and the environment,

35. The comparative statistics for 2017 and 2024 provide information on the intensity of the fight against corruption as follows:

- NACC: 3,982 to 10 520 complaints received and processed (which were investigated or forwarded to the competent administrations), 21 to 60 actions by means of rapid intervention, 15 to 13 cases of *flagrante delicto* forwarded to the competent authorities;
- National Agency for Financial Investigation (ANIF): 618 to 8,802 suspicious reports, 88 to 440 files forwarded to the competent authorities;
- Supreme State Audit (CONSUPE): 290 to 219 reports received and processed, 19 to 8 checks effected;
- Budget and Financial Disciplinary Council: 42 to 54 files received, 28 to 13 forwarded to competent authorities, CFAF74,790,241,032<sup>18</sup> to CFAF1,759,385,695<sup>19</sup> in terms of penalties and special fines;
- Special Criminal Court (SCC): 45 to 44 proceedings enlisted, 18 to 20 judgments delivered, 27 to 39 persons convicted;

36. In 2024 alone, the Audit Bench of the Supreme Court produced 569 investigation reports on the f of public accountants and issued 394 rulings and judgements in matters of control and examination of accounts.

37. All these efforts of the State of Cameroon had a positive impact on the corruption perception index of Transparency International: from 157<sup>th</sup> in 2017 to 140<sup>th</sup> in 2024.

## B. Institutions to combat Corruption

38. The independence of the bodies in charge of combating corruption and related offences is guaranteed by the Constitution (Article 37-2) and the Special Rules and Regulations governing the corps of Judicial and Legal Officers (Article 5) with regard to the courts, by Decree No. 2006/88 of 11 March 2006 relating to the establishment, organisation and functioning of NACC (Article 2-1) and by Decree No. 2005/187 of 31 May 2005 to lay down the organisation and functioning of ANIF (Article 2-1).

39. With regard to resources, from 2017 to 2025, the budget allocated to these bodies increased from CFAF5,046,000,000<sup>20</sup> to CFAF6,600,000<sup>21</sup> for CONSUPE, CFAF513,500,000<sup>22</sup> to CFAF1,058,041,000<sup>23</sup> for the Audit Bench of the Supreme Court, CFAF750,000,000<sup>24</sup> to CFAF850,000,000<sup>25</sup> for ANIF and CFAF69,255,000,000<sup>26</sup> to CFAF74,808,000,000<sup>27</sup> for MINJUSTICE, including the SCC and other courts.

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Land and real estate, Tourism, Agriculture, Livestock and fisheries, Trade, SMEs/SMIs and Craft Industry, Public Service and Administrative Reform, Family and Social Affairs, Water and Energy, Youth, Sports and Leisure, Communication, Post and Telecommunications, Culture and Intellectual Property, Finance (Customs/Taxation/Treasury), Banks, Microfinance, Insurance and Tontines.

<sup>18</sup> About 114,016,987.27 Euros.

<sup>19</sup> About 2,682,166.20 Euros.

<sup>20</sup> About 7,692,577.40 Euros.

<sup>21</sup> About 10,061,635.12 Euros.

<sup>22</sup> About 782,825.70 Euros.

<sup>23</sup> About 1,612,973.10 Euros.

<sup>24</sup> About 1,143,367.63 Euros.

<sup>25</sup> About 1,295,816.64 Euros.

<sup>26</sup> About 105,578,566.72 Euros.

<sup>27</sup> About 1,231,788.06 Euros.

### **C. Investigations of Corruption**

40. The above developments (See § 34 to 39) provide information on investigations opened following allegations of corruption, regardless of the *locus standi* of the accused, as well as prosecutions and sanctions for proven cases.

41. With regard specifically to Judicial and Legal Officers, the Inspectorate General of Judicial Services of MINJUSTICE handles complaints, some of which concern acts of corruption. In 2024, for example, it received and processed 242 complaints, ordered 106 investigations, sent 14 observation letters, 80 requests for observation, and 14 queries. MINJUSTICE also has an anti-corruption unit which, in 2024, held a session and carried out raids at the CFIs of Yaounde-Ekounou and Yaounde-*Centre-Administrative*.

### **D. Declaration of Assets**

42. Article 66 of the Constitution is still to be implemented.

### **E. Legislation on Access to Information of Public Interest and Protection of Whistleblowers**

43. While noting the point in the recommendation regarding legislation on access to information of public interest, the State of Cameroon points out that since the normative framework on security, the protection of persons and property as well as the judicial response to violation of rights applicable to whistleblowers, the adoption of a specific law to protect them is not topical.

## **IV. State of Emergency (Arts. 4, 9 and 14)**

### **A. Instruments governing the State of Emergency and the State of Siege**

44. The state of siege provided for in Article 9 (2) of the Constitution, may be declared in case of serious danger threatening the integrity of the territory, life, independence or institutions of the Republic.

45. Law No. 90/47 of 19 December 1990 on a state of emergency provides that it may be declared only in case of events which, by their nature and gravity, constitute a public disaster, disturbances seriously affecting public order or the security of the State or foreign aggression.

46. During the period under review, a state of emergency and a state of siege were not declared.

### **B. Compliance of the Legal Framework**

47. Article 9 of the Constitution and Law No. 90/47 referred to above are in compliance with Article 4-1 of the ICCPR which allows for derogatory measures to be taken in case of public emergency threatening the existence of the Nation. This internal legal framework did not authorise the derogations prohibited by the ICCPR.

## V. Combating Terrorism (Arts. 4, 9 and 14)

### A. Amendment of Law No. 2014/28 on the Suppression of Acts of Terrorism

48. The State of Cameroon takes note of the recommendation while submitting that it has been a *de facto* abolitionist State since 1989, with the retention of the death penalty in its legislation as more of deterrence. Moreover, the law requires the Ministry of Justice to forward applications for pardon to the President of the Republic, so that he can exercise his right of pardon. By Decree No. 2020/193 of 15 April 2020, the Head of State commuted death sentences to life imprisonment.

### B. Application of Law No. 2014/28 against Journalists, Lawyers, Human Rights Defenders and Members of Opposition Political Parties

49. This law with a wide scope, does not aim at the suppression of speeches critical to Government or concerning terrorism or internal conflicts. Furthermore, proceedings before Military Tribunals are legal and compliance with the rules of fair trial is endured. Besides, the State of Cameroon guarantees everyone freedom of expression in accordance with the law.

### C. Prevention of Human Rights Violations in the Context of Counter-Terrorism

50. The State continued to provide initial and in-service training to staff of the Defence and Security Forces (DSF) by maintaining the modules on *Human Rights and Civil Liberties* and *Prohibition of Torture* in the training curricula of the staff of the General Delegation for National Security, as well as modules on international humanitarian law in the Training Centres of the National Gendarmerie, and the Combined Military Academy. Thus, 250 staff of the National Gendarmerie of the Adamawa, Far North, Littoral, North, North West and South West Regions participated in 7 training sessions on humanitarian law organised as part of the dialogue with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). In addition, 1,100 other staff members attended in-service training courses on Human Rights organised by the National Gendarmerie.

51. With regard specifically to the DSFs in operation, the State, through Circular Letter No. 190256/DV/MINDEF/01 of 18 January 2019 of the Minister of Defence, relayed by Note No. 153/MRP/GN/244 of 23 January 2019 of the Secretary of State to the Minister of Defence (SED) in charge of the National Gendarmerie, recalled the principle of the absolute prohibition of torture, while warning that any public official who disregards this prohibition would be personally held responsible. This directive also applies to operations in the North West and South West Regions. It is in line with Section 277-3 (6) of the Penal Code<sup>28</sup>.

52. Regarding compliance with deadlines for remand in police custody the Secretary of State in Charge of the National Gendarmerie (SED), in a message of 13 November 2024, reminded all Legion Commanders of the Gendarmerie of the obligation to respect deadlines for remand in custody during investigations opened in their different command jurisdictions. He also instructed sanctions against offenders. These provisions consolidate those already enacted in this area by the Code of Military Justice and the CPC on guaranteeing the rights of prosecuted persons.

53. In addition to these measures, as a prelude to the deployment in the fields of operations in the Far North, North West, and South West Regions, the staff of the National Gendarmerie undergo operational refresher courses during which they are reminded of the fundamental

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<sup>28</sup> Which provides: "No exceptional circumstances, whatever they are, whether a state of war or threat of war, internal political [in]stability or state of exception, may be invoked to justify torture."

rules of Human Rights and international humanitarian law. The courses also allow them to focus on the rules of engagement and operational behaviour, the cornerstone of which is respect for human dignity.

54. From a procedural stand point, the accused persons enjoy all the guarantees of a fair trial.

## **VI. Non-Discrimination (Arts. 2, 20, 23 and 26)**

### **A. Legal and Institutional Framework on the Prohibition of Discrimination, Instigation to Hatred and Hate Crimes, and Others**

55. In a bid to respond in particular to the rise of intolerance and hate speech, Law No. 2019/20 of 24 December 2019<sup>29</sup> to amend and supplement some provisions of Law No. 2016/7 of 12 July 2016 relating to the Penal Code<sup>30</sup> was enacted, which reviews Section 241, on the one hand by extending to the press and radio, the types of media for the commission of the offence of “*contempt of race or religion*”, and on the other hand by increasing the penalties and providing that they be doubled where the offence is committed with the intent of instigating hatred or contempt among citizens or residents. Moreover, this law extends protected social values by criminalising contempt of tribe or ethnic group (Section 241-1). To ensure effective enforcement, the law strictly regulates the benefit of mitigating circumstances or deferment and increases the penalties for civil servants.

56. As part of its activities, the National Commission for the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism (NCPBM) received between 2019 and 2023, some 95 complaints based on discrimination of language and culture, 60 by the toll-free number (1518) and 35 in writing. They have been forwarded to the competent authorities for appropriate action.

### **B. Measures taken by the State to combat Discrimination among Others**

57. Human Rights courses which include the right to non-discrimination were taught in professional schools like the National School of Administration and Magistracy, the National School of Penitentiary Administration as well as Police and Gendarmerie training schools.

58. The NCPBM was active in combatting hate speech, xenophobia and promoting living together. In 2022, civic education efforts reached a total of 6,285,618 youths, with the Ministry of Youth and Civic Education structures<sup>31</sup> directly engaging 1,083,270 of them. These efforts included carrying out awareness-raising activities and training to cultivate civic responsibility, national unity, volunteerism, and values essential for harmonious coexistence.

59. Furthermore, in the context of the project entitled “Consolidating the role of youths in promoting living together and multiculturalism through secondary education and non-formal and informal learning centres in Cameroon” (funded by the United Nations Peace Building Fund), a competition to promote young people’s cultural and artistic initiatives for

<sup>29</sup> To amend and supplement some provisions of Law No. 2016/7 of 12 July 2016 relating to the Penal Code.

<sup>30</sup> Section. 241. Contempt of Race and Religion.

(1) Whoever commits a contempt, within the meaning of section 152 of this Code, of the race or religion of a number of citizens or residents shall be punished with imprisonment for from 6 (six) days to 6 (six) months and with fine of from CFAF 5 000 (five thousand) to CFAF 500 000 (five hundred thousand).

(2) Where the offence is committed by means of the press or wireless the fine may extend to CFAF 20 000 000 (twenty million).

(3) Where the offence is committed with intent to arouse hatred or contempt between citizens, the penalties provided by the foregoing subsections shall be doubled.

<sup>31</sup> National Civic Service Agency for Participation in Development and the National Civic Education Programme for Moral, Civic and Entrepreneurial Rearmament (launched in 2022).

peace-building was organised and the prize handing over ceremony took place on 9 and 10 September 2024 in Yaounde.

### **C. Decriminalisation of Homosexuality**

60. The position of Cameroon on the criminalisation of homosexuality has not changed. This position is in line with the moral and cultural values of the Cameroon society, of which the State of Cameroon is the guarantor.

## **VII. Gender Equality (Arts. 2, 3, 23, 25 and 26)**

### **A. Compliance of Legal Provisions with the ICCPR**

61. As part of the amendment of the Penal Code in 2016, new offences were introduced such as genital mutilation (Section 277-1), interference with the growth of an organ (Section 277-2), sexual harassment (Section 302-1), expulsion from the matrimonial home (Section 358-1) and obstruction to the right of education (Section 355-2). Moreover, Section 356 of the same Code punishes forced marriage and increases the penalty where the victim is a minor.

62. Discrimination between men and women with regard to the conditions of adultery has also been resolved. Thus, in order for prosecution to take place, it suffices that a married woman has sexual intercourse with a man other than her husband and a man has sexual intercourse with a woman other than his wife or wives, are equally liable to prosecution.

### **B. Equal Access to Divorce**

63. The conditions for seizing the court for divorce are the same for men and women. The sharing of property subsequent to divorce depends on the matrimonial regime adopted by the spouses. Where the regime is that of joint property, the acquired property is divided equally between the two spouses. Where the regime is that of separate property, each spouse retains their own property. In the absence of a choice of regime, the legal regime of joint property is applied to them.

64. Furthermore, several decisions were taken in favour of women in divorce matters. As an illustration, by Judgment No. 13/L of 4 January 2022, the Court of First Instance Douala-Bonanjo pronounced the divorce of the spouses, holding that the husband was solely responsible for the breakdown of the marriage and granted custody of the 3 children to the mother. The Court also ordered the husband to pay her a monthly alimony of CFAF300,000<sup>32</sup>, as well as CFAF10,000,000<sup>33</sup> in damages and CFAF3,000,000<sup>34</sup> for settlement costs.

### **C. Access of Women to Land and Protection of their Inheritance Rights**

#### **1. Access of Women to Land**

65. Between 2019 and 2021, some 3,602 land titles were established for women following direct registration applications. In 2024, another 4,593 land titles were issued to women out of a total of 22,141. In the same year, the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family (MINPROFF) carried out capacity development for 2,319 heads of women's peasant organisations on procedures for obtaining a land title.

66. The right of women to access land is also protected before the courts as evidenced by the following decisions: By Judgment No. 33/2021/TA-YDE of 16 February 2021, the

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<sup>32</sup> About 458.16 Euros.

<sup>33</sup> About 15,267.17 Euros.

<sup>34</sup> About 4,580.15 Euros.

Yaounde Administrative Court cancelled Land Title No. 6613/Mefou-and-Afamba in favour of Ms. M.T.E.; By Judgment No. 65/TA/FOND/2021 of 14 December 2021, the Ngaoundere Administrative Court declared the action by Ms. D.F.M. admissible and cancelled Order No. 535/MINDCAF/ SG/D2/1300 of the Minister of State Property, Surveys and Land Tenure; By Judgment No. 23/CIV/TGI/2023 of 17 May 2023, the High Court (HC) of Upper-Nkam Division ordered that Ms. N.D.C. be removed from the from the joint ownership of immovable property, following her application since the other co-owners, all men, repeatedly attempted to transfer the said property without her consent.

## 2. Inheritance Rights of Women

67. The inheritance rights of women are protected in the same way as those of men. In this connection, the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family (MINPROFF) organised awareness-raising activities for widows. Thus, in 2022 during the commemoration of the International Widows' Day in Fouban, Douala and Yaounde, educational talks on the rights of widows were organised and about 4,010 people were reached. On the same occasion in 2023, MINPROFF, in partnership with the Yaounde III Council, organised a ceremony to present the *Legal Assistance Guide for Widows*, published in 2022 in French and English, in order to enlighten widows on their rights and procedural issues t, including in inheritance matters. In 2023, this *Guide* was translated into several other languages, such as Pidgin, Ewondo, Ffuldé and Ghomala.

68. Moreover, the inheritance rights of women and girls were guaranteed by the judicial system, in particular during inheritance proceedings which led to their designation as co-heirs, usufructuaries or administrators of property. By way of illustration, 2,195 court judgments recognised the right of usufruct to widows in 2020 and 1,878 in 2021. Some decisions illustrate this fact: Judgment No. 62/CIV/TGI/021 of 15 September 2021 of the HC Sanaga Maritime designated the children N.S./M.J.; N.M.V.F.; N.M.B.A.; M.M.M, all female, co-heirs of their late father. Similarly, by Judgment No. 194/TPD/2023 of 5 July 2023, the CFI of Foubot granted the widow P.S. her legal right of usufruct over the whole estate in question.

## D. Consideration of Women in the Management of Public Affairs and Promoting Female Leadership

69. With regard to the management of public affairs, women's rights were taken into account in the development of several strategic documents such as the National Development Strategy 2020–2030 (SND30). Among the priorities set out therein, is gender equality and women's empowerment.

70. Furthermore, since 2022, a Gender-Sensitive Budget Document (GSBD) was appended to the Finance Law. As part of the decentralisation process, the General Code of RLAs states that the Regional Council, the House of Divisional Representatives and the Municipal Council must reflect sociological components and gender.

71. Statistics as at June 2025 show that Government had 11 women, including 8 Ministers, a Minister Delegate, and 2 Secretaries of State. There were also 15 women Directors General, 3 Ambassadors, 2 Rectors, 2 Senior Divisional Officers, and 27 Subdivisional Officers compared to 21 in 2020. At the level of 3<sup>rd</sup> Class Chieftaincy, there were 10 women in 2024 compared to 6 in 2019. At the end of 2024, there were also 256 women notables in *Lamidats*.

72. In the Army, the number of women promoted to the rank of Colonel evolved from 2 in 2020 to 21 in 2024. At the level of the police, 44 women Senior Superintendents (*Commissaires Divisionnaires*) were registered in 2024 compared to 18 in 2018. In the justice sub-sector, in June 2025 at MINJUSTICE, the Secretary-General, the Inspector General of Judicial Services, as well as 3 Directors were women. Besides, the President and the Procureur General of the Special Criminal Court (SCC) were both women.

73. Political life in Cameroon was also characterised by the participation of women, both in legislative and municipal elections. Thus, from March 2023, the Senate had 33 women out of 100 Senators compared to 26 in 2018. In 2020, there were 210 out of 900 women Regional

Councillors. In addition, 12 women were elected executive members of Regional Councils compared to 60 men. Similarly, in 2020, some 24% of elected municipal councillors were women compared to 16% in 2012. The proportion of women mayors rose to 10.83% in 2020 compared to 6.94% in 2012. In June 2025, among the 18 members of the Electoral Board of Elections Cameroon, 5 were women and in the Constitutional Council, there were 2 women among the 11 members.

## **E. Access of Women to Employment and Social Protection**

74. Concerning access of women to employment, the legal framework of the Business Establishment Formalities Centres (CFCE) was consolidated by Decree No. 2024/2374/PM of 13 June 2024 to lay down the organisation and functioning of the CFCE, within which the rate of creation of women led businesses increased from 25.87% in 2022, to 26.57% in 2023 and 30.24% in 2024.

75. From 2018 to 2024, out of 332,320 job seekers monitored by the National Employment Fund (FNE), 152,867 women were recruited into paid employment. As part of the Rural Employment Development Support Programme, 4,229 women benefited from support for the development of jobs in rural areas. With regard to the Citizen Graduate Employment Programme, 5,529 youths including 2,654 women were placed on probation. Through the Micro-Enterprise Support Program (PAME), 12,083 promoters were also funded, including women.

76. As for the public service, in 2023, of the 2,230 newly recruited civil servants, 51% were women.

77. From the Survey on Employment and the Informal Sector, the results of which were published in November 2023 by the National Institute of Statistics, the national employment rate stood at 58.3% for men and 43.7% for women.

78. Social protection applies without distinction to men and women. In December 2024, out of 1,472,463 registered workers, 446,230 were women.

## **VIII. Violence against Women and Harmful Practices (Arts. 2, 3, 6, 7, 8 and 26)**

### **A. Enhancement of the Strategic Framework**

79. Policies were developed to combat Gender-Based Violence (GBV). In this connection, repression, holistic care for victims/survivors, as well as the involvement of all stakeholders are part of the main thrusts of the National Strategy to Combat GBV (2022–2026).

80. In addition, the National Plan of Action for the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) (2022–2026) and the National Multisector Plan of Action to End Child Marriage (2020–2024) provide for the repression of such violence.

### **B. Awareness-Raising Activities**

81. Concerning awareness-raising with regard to GBV and harmful cultural practices, the following can be mentioned: the dissemination of the National Strategy to Combat GBV (2022–2026) and the Plan of Action to End FGM, as well as the organisation of several awareness-raising campaigns that were conducted remotely (through the media, including community radios, social networks) and in person.

82. Some of these campaigns were organised during the commemoration days on the rights of women and girls (16 days of activism on violence against women and girls, International Women’s Day, African Women’s Day, International Day of the Girl Child, etc), on themes such as combating GBV, the abolition of forced marriage, child marriage, combating economic violence against women, sexual violence against children and

especially girls, etc. At the end of these campaigns, thousands of people among who, men, women and children were reached.

### C. Repression of GBV

83. The repression of cases of violence continued. By Judgment No. HCF/CRIM/JGT/096/2022 of the High Court Fako Fako, for example, justified the life imprisonment imposed on N.R.F., analysing rape as a form of violence the impact of which goes beyond the physical aspect and seriously affects the soul of the victim.

84. For acts of minor injuries and conditional threats perpetrated against his ex-partner and despite the withdrawal of the victim, the Legal Department continued prosecution and by Judgment No. 170/COR of 8 May 2023 of the Court of First Instance of Foumbot, K.R. was convicted and sentenced to 12 months imprisonment and a fine of CFAF50,000<sup>35</sup>.

85. By Judgment No. 166/CRIM of 12 March 2024, the HC of Mfoundi found Mr. W.D. guilty of the murder of his concubine, late Mezoa Issa Nene, convicted and sentenced him not only to life imprisonment but to the payment of CFAF25,000,000<sup>36</sup> to the rightful claimants as compensation.

86. The perpetrators of child marriage were also prosecuted and punished. As an illustration, by Judgment No. 139/COR of 3 November 2020, the Court of First Instance of Tignere found S.H. guilty of attempted forced marriage and H.M. guilty of abduction of a minor, convicted and sentenced them to 2 years imprisonment.

### D. Care for Victims of GBV

87. The multiplication of Centres for Women's Empowerment and the Family (CPFF) enabled more survivors to benefit from holistic care. As at June 2025, there were 122 functional CPFFs, in which over 206,000 women and girls, including survivors of GBV, were trained in income-generating activities. In the same vein, 90 mentors and 9 supervisors were deployed in 165 targeted Councils. The State of Cameroon also developed the mapping of safe spaces, which increased from 10 in 2020 to 48 in 2025, as well as the national mapping of stakeholders, 242 in all, working in the care and prevention of GBV, the management of GBV cases, and humanitarian coordination.

88. Furthermore, set up Gender and Child Desks<sup>37</sup> in 20 police stations and 8 gendarmerie units. More than 2,500 gendarmes and police officers were trained to receive and take care of GBV victims in accordance with international standards including confidentiality and attentive listening.

### E. Training of Stakeholders in the Judicial Chain

89. As part of initial training provided in the different police and gendarmerie training centres, issues related to combating GBV are addressed in the module related to the protection of Human Rights. In addition, police officers regularly participated in training activities on GBV, such as the international symposium on polymorphic security of vulnerable categories in Africa: the case of women and children, organised by the General Delegation for National Security (DGSN) and the International School of Security Forces on 6 and 7 May 2025 at Awae.

<sup>35</sup> About 76.22 Euros.

<sup>36</sup> About 38,167.93 Euros.

<sup>37</sup> The Gender or child desk is a special office at the police and gendarmerie services and dedicated to the management of GBV. This is a gateway for GBV survivors who seek legal care, and is a safe place where they can be received.

90. In the same vein, the training of 213 soldiers and 29 officers and non-commissioned officers of the Gendarmerie on GBV in Bertoua, Douala, Bafoussam and Ngaoundere was also organised in 2024.

91. Furthermore, from 3 to 14 June 2024, at the initiative of the French cooperation, the first training course for staff of the National Gendarmerie on combating violence against women was held in Yaounde during which 24 judicial police officers were equipped on the reception of victims, their legal care as well as the normative framework applicable in such matters.

92. From 2021 to 2022, the State, in collaboration with UN-Women, organised awareness-raising activities, mobile clinics, as well as workshops on combating GBV in times of crisis in the North West (Bamenda), South West (Buea) and Far North (Maroua) Regions bringing together 200 participants including Judicial and Legal Officers, Lawyers, Doctors and members of the civil society. Through this collaboration, the awareness of more than 300 people was also raised in Kolofata, Koza Goulfey, Buea, Limbe, Santa and Bamenda.

## **IX. Voluntary Termination of Pregnancy and Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health Information and Services (Arts. 3, 6 and 7)**

### **A. Legislation on Abortion**

93. Note has been taken of the recommendation.

### **B. Information on Abortion and Obstacles to Accessing Abortion**

94. During the period under reference, the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family (MINPROFF) regularly organised educational talks and awareness campaigns in Women and Family Empowerment Centres (CPFFs), survivor support centres, in schools and during the celebration of international days (for example, International Women's Day, International Day of the African Woman, International Day of the Girl Child, International Day of the Family, International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilations) to disseminate information on women's and girl's rights including sexual and reproductive rights, among which the legal grounds for abortion and the importance of accessing qualified health services. Some 1,200 community awareness sessions on sexual and reproductive rights were conducted through CPFFs nationwide, reaching about 150,000 women and girls.

95. Furthermore, over 3,500 frontline stakeholders including social workers, CPFF staff, and community educators were trained on the framework on abortion and how to guide affected individuals through appropriate legal and health referral pathways.

### **C. Preventing Unwanted Pregnancies**

96. Cameroon made a commitment to improving Family Planning indicators by joining the FP2030 initiative which was launched in Cameroon on 29 June 2023<sup>38</sup>. Cameroon had on 8 June 2022, made 10 commitments towards participating fully in this initiative. These commitments include, increasing modern contraceptive prevalence from 15.4% to 35%, reducing unmet need for Family Planning (FP) from 23% to 10% and increasing the number of women of childbearing age (15–49 years) who have access to quality modern contraceptive services in underserved areas through community distribution, from 8% to 30% by 2030.

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<sup>38</sup> FP2030 is a global partnership focused on family planning. It is a core convening partner on the High Impact Practices for Family Planning. Its vision is a future where women and girls everywhere have the freedom and ability to live healthy lives, make their own informed decisions about using contraception and having children, and participate as equals in society.

97. In September 2021, the 4th edition of the Survey on the availability of contraceptive methods and “maternal health lifesaving products in service delivery Points in Cameroon”,(2020) was published by the National Institute of Statistics in collaboration with MINSANTE and the UNFPA. As concerns routine provision of family planning (FP) services, 94% of health facilities surveyed offered at least 3 modern contraceptive methods and 76% offered at least 5.

98. Campaigns were carried out to raise awareness on family planning. By way of illustration, to mark World Contraception Day, the North Regional Delegation of Public Health, in partnership with the Cameroon Association for Social Marketing, organised an awareness-raising campaign from 24 to 27 September 2018 in the Garoua 1 Health District during which nearly 3,000 men and women were made aware of the benefits of family planning and modern contraception methods. Also, more than 5,000 women, including refugees and internally displaced persons in the East Region were sensitised on the use of modern contraceptive services and methods in May 2022 by UNFPA and UNICEF in collaboration with MINSANTE.

99. By Circular Letter No. D36-116/LC/MINSANTE of 8 December 2022 relating to the establishment of reproductive health units in categories 1 to 5 health facilities, addressed to various hospital directors, the Minister of Public Health instructed, among others, to listen, inform, educate and support adolescents and young people in matters of sexuality, and deliver quality services that are adapted and accessible to them, in particular family planning, prenatal consultation and menstrual hygiene management.

100. Through MINPROFF, 199,612 adolescents and young persons, particularly girls, benefited from comprehensive sexuality education in 2024.

## **X. Use of Force and Firearms (Arts. 2 and 6)**

### **A. Normative Framework on the Use of Force and Firearms**

101. The Constitution of Cameroon guarantees everyone the right to life, as well as the prohibition of inhuman and degrading treatment. Thus, the abusive use of force is punishable by the Penal Code, which only justifies its use in case of an imminent threat.

102. The conditions for using law enforcement officers to manage public demonstrations are governed by Law No. 90/54 of 19 December 1990 on policing. This law provides for the use of force as a last resort, in a gradual and proportionate manner to threat. Furthermore, Law No. 97/21 of 10 September 1997 on the general organisation of Defence distinguishes between the missions of the Police, the Gendarmerie and those of the Armed Forces, including the maintenance of order. Moreover, the Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement is inspired by the 1990 UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms.

103. Offenders are subject to disciplinary sanctions ranging from the withdrawal of the weapon to dismissal and criminal penalties.

### **B. Investigations and Sanctions on the Irregular Use of Force or in Cases of the Use of Lethal Force**

104. In the same way as in cases of torture (§ 116 to 118), investigations are opened and sanctions imposed in cases of irregular use of force or the use of lethal force.

## **XI. Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict (Arts. 2, 3, 6, 7, 9, 23 and 24)**

### **A. Protection against the Abuses of Armed Separatist Groups in the English-speaking Regions and by Armed Groups of *Boko Haram***

105. The military high command carried out a strategic redeployment and a consolidation of the DSFs while prioritising projected and human intelligence.

### **B. Protection of Internally Displaced Persons and Refugees, in particular Women and Children**

106. Cameroon provides shelter to forcibly displaced persons living on its soil. Thus, refugees were settled, either on sites set up in the East and Far North Regions, or as a community in the villages of the regions<sup>39</sup>. Some IDPs were accommodated in equipped sites, in shelters or with host families<sup>40</sup>.

107. On the whole, regarding access of forcibly displaced persons to essential needs for their development, there were the following initiatives taken: the decision in 2019 to provide free schooling for refugee and internally displaced children; the implementation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) of the Multi-year and Multi-Partner Strategy (2018–2020), renewed for the period 2022–2026, in order to ensure better access of refugees, asylum seekers and persons threatened with statelessness to protection, security, dignity and better living conditions, including their return to their usual places of residence; the adoption of Humanitarian Response Plans (2017–2020) for the Far North and 2018–2019 (extended until December 2022) for the North West and South West Regions; the signing of the MINSANTE-UNHCR Framework Agreement in 2021 allowing a 30% reduction in the cost of health care for refugees; the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding on 7 March 2024, between the Government (MINDDEVEL) and UNHCR for the socio-economic inclusion of refugees and forcibly displaced persons in local and regional development plans, etc.

108. On measures to prevent, sanction and compensate Human Rights abuses by elements of DSFs, including in the context of counter-terrorism, see § 29 et seq, § 50 et seq, § 101 et seq and §113 et seq).

### **C. Mobilisation of Vigilance Committees**

109. The defence policy is rooted in the “Army/Nation” duo. Operations are carried out by staff belonging to professional DSFs who have undergone adequate training. However, the State through local vigilance committees involves the population in combating terrorist threats.

<sup>39</sup> This includes the Far North, North, Adamawa, East Regions, or in urban areas in the Centre and Littoral Regions; asylum seekers live in urban areas.

<sup>40</sup> They were scattered among households in the South West, North West, Littoral, Centre, West, Adamawa, South, and East Regions.

## **XII. Death Penalty (Arts. 6 et 7)**

### **A. Abolition of the Death Penalty**

110. Cameroon is a *de facto* abolitionist state since 1989. The retention of the death penalty in its legislation is for the purpose of deterrence. Few (about 15) offences punishable by the death penalty are those of particular gravity such as acts of terrorism or assassinations.

### **B. Detention Conditions and Statistics**

111. Without any discrimination persons detained in Cameroon, including those sentenced to death (held in separate wings in some prisons<sup>41</sup>), enjoy the same detention conditions, which are constantly improving. In February 2025, prisons registered 100 inmates convicted and sentenced to death, some of who were sentenced for acts of terrorism or murder.

### **C. Commutation of Death Sentences**

112. As he did by Decree No. 2020/193 of 15 April 2020, the President of the Republic, by virtue of his discretionary powers conferred on him by the Constitution, may decide to commute death sentences to life or fixed-term imprisonment.

## **XIII. Prohibition of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and Treatment of Persons deprived of their Liberty (Arts. 6, 7, 9 and 10)**

### **A. Consolidation of the Prevention of Torture and Ill-treatment**

113. Beyond the developments mentioned above see § 50 et seq, workshops were also organised in July, September and December 2021 in Yaounde, Buea, Maroua and Bafoussam by the Ministry of Justice (MINJUSTICE), with the support of the United Nations Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa, for some 110 civilian and military Judicial and Legal Officers on International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law. Furthermore, on 9 January 2024, the Conference on the theme *Encouraging and supporting the prevention of torture in Cameroon through international law* held in Douala, which aimed to raise awareness among law enforcement officers, civil society and lawyers of the Cameroon Bar Association on the prevention of torture in Cameroon.

114. During celebrations to mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention against Torture (OPCAT), an interregional Conference was held from 10 to 12 October 2023 in Yaounde, organised by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and supported by the Association for the Prevention of Torture, under the theme *Advancing the prevention of torture in Central and East Africa*. This meeting, which brought together more than 60 representatives from 18 countries, was an opportunity not only for States to share their experiences and challenges, but also to raise awareness among hesitant States on adhering to OPCAT.

115. With regard to the deposit of instruments of ratification of OPCAT by Cameroon, the process is being finalised after consultation with all stakeholders.

<sup>41</sup> Such as the Central Prisons of Yaounde and Douala.

## **B. Investigations and Sanctions against Perpetrators of Torture**

116. Allegations of torture and ill-treatment are investigated in order to determine the perpetrators and bring them, where necessary, before the competent courts. Thus, on 6 May 2020, in the matter involving Ibrahim Bello, the HC of Mbam-and-Inoubou found 2 police officers guilty of torture and grievous harm. First-grade Police Inspector D.S.J. was convicted and sentenced to 4 years imprisonment, while Assistant Superintendent of Police B.N. was convicted and given a 3 year suspended sentence. They were also ordered to pay jointly and severally to the civil party the sum of CFAF50,000,000<sup>42</sup>.

117. By Judgment No. 116/22 of 7 July 2022, Military Tribunal of Garoua found Chief Warrant Officer Major K. guilty as co-offender in acts of torture, abuse of office, extortion to the detriment of individuals and others, and convicted and sentenced him to 3 years imprisonment. Furthermore, by Judgment No. 106/CRIM/23 of 15 March 2023, Assistants Superintendents of Police L.M. and Y.N. were found guilty of arbitrary arrest, false imprisonment, and violation of instructions. And were sentenced to 2 years imprisonment suspended for 3 years and to jointly pay the victim the sum of CFAF4,500,000<sup>43</sup>.

118. Following the suspicious death in January 2023 of the Journalist Arsène Salomon Mbani Zogo, popularly known as Martinez Zogo, whose body was found mutilated, judicial the opening of judicial police investigations led to the arrest of suspects, who were remanded in custody and their matter was pending before the Yaounde Military Tribunal . They were being prosecuted for violation of instructions, arrest and kidnapping, torture, murder and usurpation of office.

## **C. Enhancement and Monitoring of Detention Conditions**

119. In addition to what precedes (see § 10 and 11), as part of its NMPT mandate (see § 23, ), the CHRC conducted visits between July and September 2021 to 16 judicial police units, 9 prisons and one psychiatric hospital in the North, Far North, West, Littoral, South West, South Regions, as well as at the Jamot hospital in the Centre Region. As a result of the report made by the CHRC, several persons unlawfully detained were released, including 6 in the South West Region. In 2023, the CHRC carried out 614 visits to places of detention and 1,085 in 2024.

120. In addition to this monitoring mechanism, detention controls are carried out by judicial authorities.

## **XIV. Liberty and Security of the Person (Art. 9)**

### **A. Procedures for Remand in Police and Prison Custody**

121. Regardless of the offence, the duration and manner of remand in police and prison custody as well as the renewal of these measures are governed by criminal legislation, notably the CPC, the Code of Military Justice and Law No. 2014/28 of 23 December 2014 on the suppression of acts of terrorism. Judicial authorities and the CHRC may carry out checks at any time. Upon expiry of the custody periods, the persons detained are released or brought before a judicial authority.

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<sup>42</sup> About 76,335.87 Euros.

<sup>43</sup> About 6, 870.22 euros.

## B. Place of Detention and Others

122. Allegations of incommunicado detention are still unfounded insofar as detainees are held in official places such as judicial police units and prisons, which are regularly checked by the judicial authorities or visited by the CHRC (see § 26 et 119).

## XV. Administration of Justice, Independence of the Judiciary, and Right to Fair Trial (Art. 14)

### A. Capacity Development of the Judicial System

123. MINJUSTICE budget was revised upwards, from CFAF59,498,000,000<sup>44</sup> in 2017 to CFAF74,808,000,000<sup>45</sup> in 2025, which enabled the continued development of judicial infrastructure.

124. To reduce the average processing time for cases, in addition to the fact that the courts rejected delay tactics, the Minister of Justice, by Circular Letters of 30 June and 22 September 2022, addressed to the Procureurs General at the Courts of Appeal, emphasised that case should be heard without delay. This issue was addressed during meetings of Heads of Court of Appeal and Regional Delegates of Penitentiary Administration in 2019, 2020 and 2024.

125. To facilitate effective access to justice, indigent litigants benefited from legal aid. By way of illustration, 634 Counsel were appointed in 2022 alone, for indigent persons, minors or persons facing the death penalty or life imprisonment.

126. In addition, pursuant to Law No. 2017/14 of 12 July 2017 to amend and supplement some provisions of Law No. 2006/16 of 29 December 2006 to lay down the organisation and functioning of the Supreme Court, a Common Law Division was set up thereto. Moreover, as part of the special recruitment of English-speaking Judicial and Legal Officers and Registrars for the Courts of Appeal of the North West and South West Regions, the National School of Administration and Magistracy (ENAM) recruited 160 pupil registrars and 280 pupil judicial and legal officers.

127. Any Violations of the rights of victims and witnesses are punished as per offences against personal tranquillity or physical integrity (Section 275 and following, as well as section 300 and following of the Penal Code). Allegations of such violations result in the opening of judicial police investigations, prosecutions where appropriate and, when the facts are established, convictions accompanied by measures of compensation, without prejudice to administrative penalties.

### B. Independence and Impartiality of the Judiciary

128. The independence of the Judiciary, *ipso facto* its impartiality, is guaranteed, inter alia, by the Constitution (Article 37 (2) and by the Special Rules and Regulations governing the corps of Judicial and Legal Officers (5) and by the Penal Code (section 27) which punishes the interference of the executive power in the judicial power. At an operational level, to mitigate external pressures, including those of the political power, in addition to the increase in the budget of MINJUSTICE (see § 123), focus was on the ethics of judicial staff and the independence of the judiciary during activities of the Inspectorate General of Judicial Services of MINJUSTICE, meetings of Heads of Court of Appeal and Regional Delegates of Penitentiary Administration (the meeting in October 2021), interventions of the Minister of Justice (his editorial in the May 2024 edition of the magazine *Justitia* published by MINJUSTICE) and continued education activities.

<sup>44</sup> About 90,704,116.13 Euros.

<sup>45</sup> About 114,044,060.64 Euros.

129. Moreover, the CPC and the Civil and Commercial Procedure Code, among others, enable the recusal of a judge whose impartiality is not certain. By way of illustration, 55 applications for recusal were filed in 2023.

### **C. Trial of Civilians by Military Tribunals**

130. Subject to the fair trial standards set out in Article 14 of the ICCPR, Military Tribunals comprising military and civilian Judicial and Legal Officers, all trained at ENAM, deal with some specific offences, irrespective of the perpetrator. Matters from the Military tribunal on appeal to the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court the panels are headed by civilian Judicial and Legal Officers. Any breaches of these standards may be invoked. Indeed, under the CPC (Section 713) and the Code of Military Justice (Section 9), minors are not tried before Military Tribunals.

131. Decree No. 2024/555 of 14 November 2024 to lay down the rules applicable to the recruitment and discipline of military justice staff consolidated the independence of military Judicial and Legal Officers by requiring them to take oath before the Supreme Court of Cameroon.

## **XVI. Elimination of Slavery and Servitude (Arts. 6–8 and 24)**

132. With a view to better coordinating actions to combat trafficking in persons (TIPs) and smuggling of persons, 2 bodies were set up to improve on the fight against these scourges, namely, Regional Coordination Committees (through Order No. 010 /CAB/PM of 10 Feb 2023 on the creation, organisation and functioning of regional coordination committees for sectoral action to prevent and combat trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants) on the one hand, and on the other hand, the Platform for Exchange and Consultation between the Government and Civil Society (through Order No 009 /CAB/PM of 10 February 2023 on the creation, organisation and functioning of the platform for exchange and consultation between the Government of Cameroon and civil society in the fight against trafficking of persons and the smuggling of migrants).

### **A. Identification of Victims and Referral for Appropriate Assistance**

133. The toll-free number (1503), for reporting and receiving assistance in trafficking in and smuggling of persons, was launched on 18 January 2022 with the support of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM).

### **B. Awareness-Raising and Training**

134. Diverse initiatives were taken. By way of illustration, as part of the implementation of the Project dubbed *Situational Assessment of trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants in Cameroon*, IOM, in collaboration with Government Departments, organised 3 awareness-raising campaigns from 10 to 26 December 2021, respectively in Bertoua, Garoua Boulai and Yaounde on trafficking in persons and smuggling of persons, reaching about 10,000 persons. Also, in 2022, through the programme on Family Development and Protection of Children's Rights, MINPROFF raised the awareness of the following among others: 99 leaders of women's associations, 300 parents in Yaounde, Bertoua and Ngaoundere; 343 secondary school students in Yaounde and Ngaoundere as well as 485 trainee girls of the Women's Empowerment and Family Centres on trafficking in persons and smuggling of persons.

135. In addition, posters to raise awareness on the fight against trafficking in persons and smuggling of persons were unveiled on 18 March 2024 at the Yaounde-Nsimalen International Airport and on 16 July 2024 at the Douala International Airport.

136. As concerns training, a module on organised crime, with specific chapters on trafficking in persons and smuggling of persons was included in the new training programmes of Judicial Police Officers (JPO) of the Gendarmerie.

137. Moreover, in order to improve on the prosecution of trafficking in persons cases and the protection of victims, MINJUSTICE organised a Capacity-Building Workshop for Magistrates on Human Rights and Trafficking in Persons in Yaounde on 23 and 24 February 2022. MINJUSTICE also organised on 25 July 2024 in Yaounde, in collaboration with the Global South Centre of the University of Cologne, a workshop to evaluate the status of the current fight against trafficking in persons in Cameroon<sup>46</sup>.

138. Also, Judicial and Legal Officers as well as Forces of Law and Order participated in a workshop on trafficking in persons, illicit trafficking and organised crime from 2 to 4 August 2022 in Douala, organised with the support of IOM.

### C. Protection of Victims and Access to Compensation

139. A transit centre for migrants was inaugurated in Yaounde by the Minister of Social Affairs on 18 January 2022. Some migrants who arrived at the centre and were cared for were victims of trafficking.

140. Cases were heard by the courts and damages awarded in favour of the victims where applicable. For example, in judgment No HCB/107C of 11 January 2018, the High Court Mezam in *The People v B.H.B.*, sentenced the accused to 10 years in prison for trafficking N.M to Kuwait and awarded to N.M as damages, the sum of CFAF6,5000,000<sup>47</sup>.

### D. Criminal Prosecution

141. The Courts relied on section 342-1 of the Penal Code and Law No. 2011/024 of 14 December 2011 to prosecute *trafficking in persons cases*. By way of illustration: in Judgment No. 258/CRIM of 8 August 2019, N.D.M was found guilty of TIPs by the Wouri High Court and sentenced to 20 years in prison; on 21 May 2021, the Ntem Valley High Court found M.A. guilty of TIPs and smuggling of persons and passed a sentence of 5 years in prison and a fine of 100,000 CFA<sup>48</sup>; and on 20 January 2022, the Mayo-Sava High Court sentenced K.N. to 18 years in prison and a fine of CFAF800,000<sup>49</sup> for TIPs.

142. Furthermore, in Judgment No.738/CRIM of 30 September 2024, the Mfoundi High Court found K.M.N. guilty of TIPs and smuggling of persons and sentenced her to 18 months in prison. Also, in suit No. HCK/CR/01/2023, the Meme High Court on 23 January 2024 sentenced A.B.C. to 10 years in prison.

## XVII. Right to Freedom of Movement (Art. 12)

### A. Guaranteeing Freedom of Movement

143. To ensure the free movement of persons and in response to restrictions imposed in some localities by terrorists, DSFs in addition to stepping up the security of places of assembly and sensitive points, increased the number of checkpoints, as well as foot, vehicle and air patrols. Moreover, in addition to the possibility of directly denouncing the actions of

<sup>46</sup> Participants came from some Government Departments involved in the fight against TIPs (including the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, the General Delegation for National Security, the Secretariat in charge of the National Gendarmerie), the judiciary, law enforcement, civil society, international organizations, diplomatic representations, and university research.

<sup>47</sup> About 99, 236.64 Euros.

<sup>48</sup> About 152.67 Euros.

<sup>49</sup> About 1,221.37 Euros.

terrorists to the authorities, the population can resort to toll-free numbers including those of the National Gendarmerie (1501) and the General Delegation for National Security (1500 and 117). Moreover, in order to increase controls and patrols, new units were set up like the Rapid Intervention Battalion bases in Kumbo, Nguti, and Alou.

## **B. Allegations of Extortion of the Population by DSFs**

144. Such allegations are only proven in isolated cases, and result in administrative and judicial sanctions where the authorities become aware of them.

# **XVIII. Freedom of Expression and Protection of Journalists and Human Rights Defenders (Arts. 2, 6, 7, 9, 14 and 19)**

## **A. Review of the Legislative and Institutional Framework on Freedom of Expression**

145. At the legislative level, freedom of expression is governed by Law No. 90-52 of 19 December 1990 on Freedom of Mass Communication in Cameroon. This law of general and impersonal scope aims to guarantee freedom of expression and to regulate the profession of journalist. The only restrictions are those that violate public policy and morality.

146. At the institutional level, the regulation of freedom of expression and communication is conferred on the National Communication Council and the Telecommunications Regulatory Agency. Moreover, the courts guarantee the protection of freedom of expression and communication and punish abuses to the said freedom.

## **B. Sanctions on the Exercise of the Right to Freedom of Expression**

147. In 2023, the CNC issued 20 decisions against press organs, including 16 temporary suspensions of less than six months, a warning, a permanent ban, and 2 dismissals. These sanctions were imposed following allegations of non-compliance with the rules of ethics and deontology with regard to mass communication.

148. Moreover, decisions delivered by the courts enabled the protection of the interests of third-parties who are victims of attacks perpetrated by media professionals. As an illustration, on 25 August 2022, by Judgment No. 578/COR, the CFI of Mbalmayo found A.M.E.C. guilty of defamation and dissemination of false news through the use of electronic means and convicted and sentenced him to 4 months imprisonment and a fine of CFAF1,000,000<sup>50</sup>. The said Court awarded the victim Z.M.O.D., a symbolic franc in compensation for the prejudice suffered.

## **C. Protection of Journalists and Others (Arts. 2, 6, 7, 9, 14 and 19)**

149. Journalists and press organs benefit from decisions of dismissal issued by the NCC. As an example, 3 decisions of dismissal were issued in 2021 against journalists, on 12 November 2021 for the benefit of some journalists of the *Kalara* newspaper, and on 8 April 2021 against some journalists of the *La Missive et Eco Matin* newspapers.

150. Besides, allegations of the violation of rights of Journalists resulted in the opening of a judicial police investigations and, where appropriate, prosecution and conviction, without prejudice to administrative penalties. For example, in the case of the Journalist Arsène Salomon Mbani Zogo, see § 118).

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<sup>50</sup> About 1,526.72 Euros.

## **XIX. Freedom of Peaceful Assembly (Art. 21)**

151. Law No. 90-055 of 19 December 1990 governing meetings and public demonstrations guarantees the exercise of the right to freedom of assembly in Cameroon<sup>51</sup>. Any restrictions provided for are justified by the need to safeguard the interest of national security, the safety of others, health, morals or the rights and freedoms of individuals.

152. On allegations of the use of force by law enforcement officers during public demonstrations, see § 102.

153. In addition, the National Gendarmerie ensures training on compliance with the regulatory framework, including the illegal or disproportionate use of force and respect for the dignity of the person during the training module on maintenance of peace and order. For this purpose, it has a Training Centre for Policing Techniques (CPTMO). From 2019 to 2024, nearly 12,686 Gendarmes were trained in respecting the dignity of the person during law enforcement operations at CPTMO.

154. Furthermore, 100 police officers were trained for 2 weeks in October and November 2024 in Yaounde, on essential techniques such as law enforcement, by the DGSN in collaboration with the Embassy of the Kingdom of Spain in Cameroon.

## **XX. Freedom of Association (Art. 22)**

### **A. Refusal to Register and Issue Receipts to some Associations**

155. In Cameroon, freedom of association is governed by Law No. 90/53 of 19 December 1990, as amended and supplemented by Law No. 99/11 of 20 July 1999. Section 4 of this law provides: “*Associations founded in support of a cause or in view of a purpose contrary to the Constitution, the law and public policy, as well as those whose purpose is to undermine especially security, the integrity of the national territory, national unity, national integration, or the republican character of the State shall be null and void.*” Section 12 adds that associations may be dissolved in the event of nullity as provided for in Section 4.

156. Since homosexuality is punishable under Section 347-1 of the Penal Code, the legalisation of associations whose purpose is to promote the rights of homosexual persons is prohibited, as the object of their existence is illegal within the meaning of Section 4 referred to above.

157. Moreover, Government makes it a point of duty that the rights of all citizens are respected, without any discrimination.

### **B. Allegations of Suspension or Dissolution of Associations**

158. As at 6 December 2024, the associations called *Network of Human Rights Defenders in Central Africa* (REDHAC)<sup>52</sup> (2nd name)<sup>53</sup>, *L.M. NANJE FOUNDATION INC*<sup>54</sup>, were declared null and void and their activities, publications, meetings and demonstrations prohibited throughout the national territory, due to lack of authorisation and activities likely to undermine the integrity of the national financial system.

<sup>51</sup> Section 3 of this Law provides that public meetings shall be free and must be the subject of a prior declaration.

<sup>52</sup> Order No. 122/A/MINAT of 6 December 2024 to establish the nullity of an organisation and prohibit its activities.

<sup>53</sup> Order No. 122/A/MINAT, to establish the nullity of an organisation and prohibit its activities.

<sup>54</sup> Order No. 123/A/MINAT to establish the nullity of an organisation and prohibit its activities.

159. For reasons related to non-compliance with legal provisions on the operation of a non-profit organisation, non-compliance with the obligation of special vigilance concerning non-profit organisations, lack of justification of the destination of the funding received, activities likely to undermine the integrity of the national financial system, the Non-Governmental Organisation *Reach out Cameroon*<sup>55</sup> was suspended for a period of 3 months.

### **C. Allegations of Unjustified Interference in the Functioning of some Political Parties and Hindrance to their Legitimate Activities**

160. These allegations are unfounded. Moreover, political parties are free to take legal action. By way of illustration, in the matter between L.N.N.C (Chairperson of *Parti Camerounais pour la Réconciliation Nationale (PCRN)*) and the State of Cameroon (Subdivisional Office of Kribi II), the Ebolowa Administrative Court, in Ruling No. 196/OSE/TA/EBWA/2023, rejected the application for stay of execution of Decision No. 39/D/L11-03/SP of 23 November 2023 by the Subdivisional Officer of Kribi II, nullifying a receipt of a declaration of a public demonstration and prohibiting the said demonstration in Kribi II Subdivision, by stating that the holding of the proposed congress may lead to brawls between the factions in contention and jeopardize public order, security or tranquillity. Furthermore, the Court concluded that “the contested prohibition measure is an administrative police measure in that it seeks to prevent any breach of public order, in its various aspects, notably public safety, tranquillity and public health”.

## **XXI. Rights of the Child (Arts. 7, 16 and 24)**

### **A. Awareness-Raising**

161. In 2019, 170 leaders of adolescent groups and clubs were trained on life skills for the prevention of violence, child marriage and risky behaviour. In 2020, MINPROFF raised the awareness of about 396,520 persons on international and regional Human Rights instruments for the protection of children’s rights nationwide. On 22 June 2022, members of the Committee on Cultural, Social and Family Affairs of the National Assembly together with MINAS organised an awareness-raising workshop on guarding against violence inflicted on children. In the same year, awareness raising on children’s rights reached 154,389 children, including 79,542 girls. Furthermore, in 2024, MINPROFF raised the awareness of 2,432,771 persons on children’s rights.

162. These awareness-raising campaigns were yielding fruits as illustrated by a study carried out by the CHRC on a sample of 400 pupils and students in 4 public and secondary schools in Yaounde between 6 and 7 November 2024. The study showed that a total of 92.25% of children were aware of the basic rights of the child (80% for primary schools and 99.6% for secondary schools).

### **B. Comprehensive Assistance**

163. In 2022, to improve the protective learning environment for children, UNICEF equipped 148 (including 55 women) education and social services frontline workers with skills to prevent, identify, and refer cases of children who face violence and abuse in the school environment. Also, in 2024, MINPROFF Built the capacity of 8,954 teenagers on “life skills”.

164. The Child Abuse hotline, 116 run by MINPROFF which went operational in April 2023 enables children and concerned individuals to report cases of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation. It was staffed by 18 operators trained to ensure that cases reported are dealt

<sup>55</sup> Order No. 120/A/MINAT of 6 December 2024 to suspend a Non-Governmental Organisation.

with quickly. The number of calls to the helpline increased steadily. Between 17 April and 31 December 2023, 1327 calls were received while from January to 9 December 2024, 3275 calls were received and between 13 December 2024 and 30 July 2025, the helpline received 6325 calls.

165. Furthermore, in order to curb violence in the school milieu, the Minister of Secondary Education and the Minister of Basic Education respectively issued Circular letters No.13/23/C/MINESEC/SG/DPPC/DAJ/DOVAS of 10 November 2023 and No. 12/B<sup>1</sup>/M64/C-L/MINEDUB/CAB of 27 November 2023.

166. On 14 November 2024 in Yaounde, the Child Protection Information Management System (CPIMS+) was launched with the support of UNICEF. The objective of the system is to improve the management and delivery of child protection services and protection of vulnerable children.

167. Moreover, within Police Stations there is a social section with particular focus on vulnerable groups including children).

168. Also, between 2020 and 2021, 1,865 children were taken out of the streets and 1013 of them were reintegrated into society.

### C. Combatting Child Marriage

169. The Multisectoral National Action Plan to end child marriage (2020–2024), which focuses on mobilising families and communities as agents of change, and on access to health, education and justice services was adopted.

170. Between 2019 and 2024, 12 targeted awareness-raising workshops on child marriage were conducted for community leaders in Bertoua, Garoua, Maroua, and Ngaoundere, effectively reaching nearly 10,000 individuals.

171. Demonstrating a strategic outreach effort, MINPROFF's mobile caravan broadcast a 23-minute microfilm on the detrimental impacts of child marriage across 11 locations (Bertoua, Kette, Kenzou, Ouli, Bétare-Oya, Garoua-Boulai, Maroua, Garoua, Ngaoundéré, Meiganga, and Tibati) between 2020 and 2022, successfully engaging almost 4,000,000 persons.

172. Furthermore, in 2024, MINPROFF raised the awareness of 12,989 persons (including 2,939 institutional stakeholders, 6,335 parents and 3,715 community leaders) on preventing child marriage.

173. Alleged perpetrators of child marriage were prosecuted before the courts and where found guilty, sanctioned. By way of illustration, in Judgement No. 150/COR of 25/08/2020, the accused D.R. was found guilty of attempted forced marriage and false arrest and was sentenced to one year in prison as well as a fine of 25,000<sup>56</sup>, while the victim's father E.W. was found guilty of being an accessory to the offence and was stripped of his parental authority over the victim for 5 years.

### D. Measures on Birth Certificates

174. The Civil Registration System underwent a significant update with the enactment of Law No. 2024/16 on 23 December 2024. The legislation aims to modernise the system, enhancing its efficiency and accessibility. A key change extends the timeframe for requesting birth registration through the State counsel from 6 to 12 months. Beyond this period, registration requires a declaratory judgment from the court, before the civil status registrar can issue the birth certificate.

175. From 2019 to 2024, MINPROFF through collaboration with councils, financially supported families for the establishment of 58,847 birth certificates.

<sup>56</sup> About 38.16 Euros.

176. In 2022, in order to increase the issuance of birth certificates, MINDDEVEL through Order No. 000107/MF/MINDDEVEL/SG/DSL/SDSLB of 1 April 2022, officially launched the campaign for massive deliverance of birth certificates to children and vulnerable persons.

177. Moreover, the Cameroon Education Reform Support Programme (PAREC), in partnership with the World Bank, launched a special operation to establish birth certificates to pupils in *CM1*, *CM2*, Class 5 and Class 6 during the 2023–2024 school year, following which about 58,000 birth certificates were established.

## **XXII. Participation in Public Affairs (Arts. 2 and 25)**

### **A. Measures to Ensure Fair Electoral Processes**

#### **1. Fair Conditions for all Candidates**

178. In addition to the laws on public freedoms, the fair treatment of candidates for elections is ensured by the Electoral Code, by Law No. 2000/15 of 19 December 2000 on the public financing of political parties and election campaigns, by Decree No. 2012/38 of 23 January 2012 to lay down the reorganisation of the National Communication Council and Law No. 2006/11 of 29 December 2006 to set up and lay down the organisation and functioning of Elections Cameroon (ELECAM), which is the body in charge of electoral and referendum processes.

179. In application of these instruments, candidates for presidential (October 2018), legislative and municipal (February 2020), senatorial (March 2018 and 2023) elections as well as for the election of regional councillors (December 2020) benefited from fair treatment in the allocation of public funding, in the follow-up of registration on the electoral register, allocation of airtime, measures for security, etc.

#### **2. Independence and Impartiality of ELECAM**

180. The independence and impartiality of ELECAM are guaranteed by the Electoral Code and by Law No. 2006/11 of 29 December 2006 to set up and lay down the organisation and functioning of ELECAM. Pursuant to these legal instruments, members of this electoral body are appointed in compliance with the requirements of competence, integrity, neutrality and impartiality. By taking the oath required to act impartially, they enjoy immunity for opinions expressed in the course of their duties, are subject to incompatibilities and to the obligation to refrain from anything that might compromise the independence of their office, and cannot receive instructions or orders from public or private authorities.

#### **3. Effective Access to Judicial Remedy**

181. Cameroon legislation ensures effective access to remedies by independent and impartial courts, namely, administrative courts<sup>57</sup> and the Constitutional Council<sup>58</sup>.

182. Thus, the Administrative Bench of the Supreme Court before which petitions on disputes over the municipal elections of 2013 and 2020 as well as the regional elections of 2022 were brought, delivered 671 judgments. For its part, the Constitutional Council that

<sup>57</sup> Pursuant to Law No. 2006/22 of 29 December 2006 to lay down the organisation and functioning of Administrative Courts (Section 2-2), administrative courts have primary jurisdiction over disputes concerning regional and municipal elections. On appeal, this dispute is, pursuant to Law No. 2006/16 of 29 December 2006 to lay down the organisation and functioning of the Supreme Court of Cameroon (Section 38), shall be heard and determined by its Administrative Bench.

<sup>58</sup> Set up by Law No. 96/6 of 18 January 1996 to amend the Constitution of 2 June 1972, the Constitutional Council is responsible, among other things, for ensuring the regularity of the presidential election, parliamentary elections, referendum operations, and to proclaim the results thereof. (Article 48). The Electoral Code reiterates this duty (Section 132-1, 168-1, 209-1 and 239-1).

ruled on disputes over the legislative elections of 9 February 2020, upheld petitions to cancel election and thus elections were cancelled in 11 constituencies<sup>59</sup>.

## **B. Reform of the Electoral Code**

183. The State of Cameroon notes this concern while recalling that it's the current formulation, of the Electoral Code is the result of a broad consensus among the stakeholders of the electoral system.

## **C. Allegations of Vexatious Actions against Political Parties and Others**

184. These allegations are not proven. Administrative or judicial police measures apply, in full legality and without discrimination, to all political parties and individuals regardless of their political orientation. In accordance with Articles 9, 21 and 22 of the ICCPR, the Cameroon legislation strictly regulates both the deprivation of liberty and restrictions on freedom of association, assembly and public demonstration. Thus, arrests may only be made in the event of participation in a prohibited or undeclared public demonstration and most often after a warning to disperse which is not respected. Moreover, the interested parties may challenge such measures by means of judicial remedies, which are available and effective.

# **XXIII. Rights of Persons belonging to Minorities and Indigenous Peoples (Arts. 2 and 27)**

## **A. Addressing issues relating to the North West and South West Regions**

185. As a follow up to the Major National Dialogue (MND) organised from 30 September to 4 October 2019 to examine, among other things, the causes and seek solutions to the crisis that started in the South West and North West Regions, Decree No. 2020/136 of 23 March 2020 to lay down the establishment, organization and functioning of the Committee to follow up the Implementation of the Recommendations of the Major National Dialogue was set up. At its 6th Session, held on 19 March 2025, the Prime Minister, Head of Government indicated strides made so far, including the reorganisation of the Presidential Plan for the Reconstruction and Development of the North West and South West Regions to give the local population more involvement in the process. He stated that major roads under construction or rehabilitation were near completion, such as the Ring Road, the Babadjou-Bamenda and Kumba-EkondoTiti Roads.

186. Moreover, Government put in close to CFAF20,000,000,000<sup>60</sup> to revamped the Cameroon Development Cooperation which was the second employer after the State before the crisis. This has enabled many youths to have jobs and with the construction of permanent sites of DDR Centres in Bafut and in Tiko, some 3,500 former fighters have dropped their weapons and joined the centres. Furthermore, Law No. 2019/24 of 24 December 2019 to institute the General Code of Regional and Local Authorities, provides for a special status for the North West and South West Regions, giving them a specific organizational and operational regime of governance based on historical, social and cultural values of the Regions. The status includes regional assemblies, regional Councils, a house of chiefs and independent conciliator. The President of the Republic, thus, through Decree No. 2021/342 of 10 June 2021 appointed Public Independent Conciliators in the North West and South West Regions.

<sup>59</sup> Bamenda 1, Bamenda 2, Bamenda 3, Mezam-Centre, Mezam-North, Momo-West, Momo-East, Bali, Menchum-South, Menchum-North, Lebialem.

<sup>60</sup> About 30,534,351.14 Euros.

187. Equally, by Decree No. 2020/111 of 2 March 2020, the National School of Local Administration (NASLA), which ensures professional training in the areas of local administration was created.

188. Concerning the effective implementation of bilingualism, Law No.2019/19 of 24 December 2019 lays down the general legal framework for the promotion of official languages in Cameroon.

189. The National Commission for the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism (NCPBM), created in 2017 continued its activities on the promotion of the two official languages and multiculturalism. In 2021, among its activities, the Commission carried out field visits to follow up and evaluate the implementation of the public policy on the promotion of the two official languages by Employers' Organizations and some private Companies in Douala. In 2023, NCPBM members embarked on a 10-day field mission from 25 September 2023. The objective was to make an appraisal of the effective implementation of Constitutional provisions relating to the official use of the English and French languages in State Universities, defence and security training centres as well as public hospitals in Cameroon.

190. Following the parliamentary elections of 2020 in Cameroon, 35 Parliamentarians from the North West and South West Regions were elected into the National Assembly of 180 members, while 20 Senators from the same regions were in the Senate following the March 2023 senatorial election (13 elected and 7 appointed).

191. Furthermore, Special Recruitment of Legal and Judicial Personnel as well as court registrars of English expression into the Magistracy and Court Registry Division of the National School of Administration and Magistracy were organised from 2017 and the first batch appointed in 2020.

## **B. Addressing Issues relating to Indigenous Peoples**

192. The 4 Bs (Baka, Bakola, Bagyeli and Bedzang) and the Mbororos. are most often considered as indigenous peoples Even though there is not yet a specific legislation on indigenous peoples, Government continued to adopt different policies, mechanisms and strategic documents relating to the promotion of the interests of indigenous peoples.

193. At the strategic level, the SND30, which takes into consideration the Social Protection Policy of vulnerable persons (indigenous peoples inclusive), with the objective to expand social coverage for the population, particularly the most vulnerable, by gradually integrating all social categories previously marginalized by the system, through: reducing inequalities, deprivations, and social exclusions; measures to protect against all forms of vulnerability; social cohesion and inclusion, and the achievement of sustainable, inclusive, and pro-poor development.

194. Development projects for indigenous peoples were carried out in the context of the National Plan for the Development of Indigenous Peoples 2021–2025, which indicates the strategic axes and the main actions of the State and its partners for the benefit of this targeted group.

195. Regular sessions of the Intersectoral Committee to Follow up Programmes and Projects Involving Vulnerable Indigenous Peoples (CISPAV) were held. At its 12<sup>th</sup> Session in 2024, which also marked the celebration of the 13<sup>th</sup> Edition of the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples in Cameroon, focused was on awareness raising for indigenous peoples to declare the births of their children, establishment of National Identity Cards, registration on electoral registers and participation in sustainable development.

196. Concerning the protection of their land and natural resources, environmental impact studies were carried out prior to the implementation of major projects to ensure the protection of the environment and the provision of social amenities to the localities concerned. These included areas where indigenous peoples live. Their free, prior and informed consent was also sought for projects affecting their lands. For example, the preamble, to the agreement

for the Lobe-Kribi iron ore mining project mandated seeking the prior, free, and informed consent of indigenous peoples (Bagyali) and local populations before implementation.

197. Equally, Indigenous peoples participated in the management of forest and took part in the sharing of benefits from forest products. Furthermore, on 29 November 2024, a Memorandum (MOU) between the Ministry of Social Affairs and the World-Wide Fund for Nature was revised. The collaboration aims to define a strategic framework between the two parties to ensure the protection and promotion of the individual and collective rights of indigenous peoples within the framework of biodiversity conservation. Also, on 19 September 2023, an MOU was signed between the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife and the Association of indigenous peoples, *Sanguia Baka Bumma'a Kpodé* (ASBABUK) was revised to grant the Baka community access to the national parks of Lobeke, Nki, Boumba Bek as well as the Ngoyla Reserve to conduct traditional activities.

198. In addition, Government Partner, REPALEAC (Network of Indigenous and Local Populations for the Sustainable Management of Forest Ecosystems in Central Africa), continued to implement its 5-year (2022–2027) programme titled Programme for the Strengthening, Protection and Securing of the Forest Tenure Rights of Indigenous and Local Communities in Central Africa<sup>61</sup>. Its objectives are to develop a political and social environment that guarantees secure land tenure and forest tenure rights as well as economic autonomy for Indigenous and Local Communities while preserving their authenticity and the natural resources of the Congo Basin.

199. In 2023, about 20 hectares of land was acquired by the State for agriculture for the 4Bs in the South Region.

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<sup>61</sup> The programme is implemented in Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon and Rwanda.