



HAUT-COMMISSARIAT AUX DROITS DE L'HOMME • OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
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2 November 2018

Excellency,

I have been following the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Cameroon and welcome the constructive engagement of your Government during the 30th session of the UPR Working Group in May 2018.

Following the adoption by the Human Rights Council, at its 39th session, of the final outcome report on the review of Cameroon, I would like to take this opportunity to follow up on a number of areas raised in the two reports that my Office had prepared for the review of Cameroon, namely the Compilation of UN information and the Summary of Stakeholders' submissions which I consider in need of particular attention over the next four and a half years until the next cycle of the UPR. In identifying those areas, I have also considered the statements and/or recommendations made by 76 delegations, the presentation and responses made by the delegation of Cameroon and the actions taken by the Government to implement the 124 recommendations it had accepted during the second cycle of the UPR. The aforementioned areas cover a range of issues and appear in the Annex to this letter.

I was particularly encouraged by Cameroon accepting several recommendations during its review as it is a real opportunity for cooperation between your government and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). In particular, I would like to highlight the reinforcement of the implementation of the protection mandate of the National Human Rights Commission and the fight against impunity concerning human rights violations involving entities acting on behalf of the State, including security and defence forces.

I encourage Cameroon to strengthen further the national action plan and to effectively implement it in order to achieve concrete results in the areas contained in the annex and facilitate the preparation for the fourth cycle of the UPR. The implementation of the plan should be carried out in consultations and cooperation with all stakeholders, in particular the national human rights institution and civil society organizations, and where necessary, the support of international organisations, including OHCHR and other United Nations entities, under the leadership of the UN system Resident Coordinator.

H.E. Mr. Lejeune Mbella Mbella
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Cameroon



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I encourage Cameroon to make further efforts to establish a national mechanism for reporting and follow up in relation to recommendations from international and regional human rights mechanisms and treaty obligations. I strongly recommend the use of the practical guide that my Office released in 2016 on this topic and which is available at:
http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/HR_PUB_16_1_NMRF_PracticalGuide.pdf.

Please kindly note that I will be sharing my advice with all Member States as they go through the third cycle of the UPR with a view to assisting them with the implementation of UPR recommendations early on, following the review. An important measure that can contribute positively to follow up action is voluntary mid-term reporting. I strongly encourage all Member States to submit a voluntary mid-term report two years after the adoption of the UPR outcome report. In this regard, I encourage Cameroon to submit a mid-term report on the follow-up of the third cycle of the review, by 2020.

As the Secretary-General stated in his 2017 report on the work of the Organization (A/72/1, paragraph 98): *"The Human Rights Council's universal periodic review process is now entering a new cycle, with every Member State scheduled for a third round of scrutiny. We will work to strengthen the relevance, precision and impact of the Council's recommendations, including by providing better support to Member States in implementation, stronger collaboration with United Nations country teams and the establishment of national mechanisms for human rights reporting and follow-up to link the universal periodic review to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals."*

I look forward to discussing with you ways in which my Office may assist Cameroon to take action in the areas I have identified in this letter and its Annex.

Please, accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michelle Bachelet".

Michelle Bachelet
High Commissioner for Human Rights



Annex

Scope of international obligations and cooperation with international human rights mechanisms and bodies

- Ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography; the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture and accordingly create a National Preventative mechanism; the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances; the 2011 Convention on Domestic Workers (no. 189) of the International Labour Organisation.
- Ensuring transparency and provide information on the situation of human rights in the Anglophone regions, namely by granting the United Nations as well as national and international human rights institutions and organisations access to the region.

Respect of international human rights obligations, taking into account applicable international humanitarian law

A. Cross-cutting issues

Equality and non-discrimination

- Increasing efforts to implement a comprehensive and effective official policy of bilingualism and ensure that the Anglophone population do not face inequalities, particularly in the areas of employment, education and judicial matters.
- Ensuring the effective implementation of the official policy of bilingualism in consultation with all stakeholders, in order to ensure equal treatment of the Anglophone minority and the elimination of all forms of marginalisation.
- Increasing its efforts in combatting discrimination against persons living with HIV/AIDS.
- Ensuring that women enjoy the same rights to nationality as men pursuant to the Code of Nationality.

Right to life, liberty and security of person

- Investigation of cases of disappearance of members of the political opposition, including members of the Anglophone minority, and take all necessary measures to find them and allow them to return home safely.
- Investigation of all reported cases of serious violations and abuses, and bring the perpetrators to justice respecting the rule of law, relating to concerns of arbitrary arrests, excessive use of force and extrajudicial executions carried out by government forces and armed groups targeting members of the Anglophone minority, and relating to allegations of torture of against prisoners suspected of belonging to terrorist groups.
- Abolishment of the death penalty by modifying the Penal Code and the anti-terrorist laws.

Administration of justice, including impunity, and the rule of law

- Ending the practice of solitary confinement and ensure that no one is detained in a secret place or a place that is not officially recognised, including unclassified military detention centres.



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- Respect of the right to a fair trial, guarantee of a fair process for everyone, even in cases of suspected terrorism.
- Allowing free access to international and regional independent human rights inspectors to assess human rights violations.
- Ensuring that civilians are not tried in military tribunals.
- Ending solitary confinement and ensuring that no one is deprived of the right to confidentiality or placed in unofficial detention centres.

Fundamental freedoms

- Taking more robust legislative and political steps to guarantee political participation of under-represented groups in political bodies and organisations at local, regional and national levels.
- Guarantee of freedom of expression, freedom of information and freedom of assembly.
- Taking all necessary steps to allow human rights defenders, journalists and other members of civil society to carry out their activities without fear of reprisal or without restricting them.
- Review of the anti-terrorist law of 2014 bringing it into line with international human rights laws and norms.

B. Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Right to an adequate standard of living

- Continuing to promote sustainable economic and social development and put strategies in place to reduce poverty.

Right to health

- Speeding up the implementation of universal healthcare coverage.
- Taking legislative and political steps to guarantee access to healthcare for persons living with HIV/AIDS and access to sexual and reproductive education for women and girls, particularly in rural areas.
- Decriminalization of abortion in every instance and repealing paragraph 2 of article 339 of the modified Penal Code.

Right to education

- Implementation of a strategy and a national action plan aimed at guaranteeing minorities access to appropriate educational programmes which respect their way of life and their culture.
- Ratification of the UNESCO Convention on Discrimination in Education.
- Taking steps to effectively guarantee the equality of girls and young women at all education levels and school retention rates.



C. Rights of specific persons or groups

Women

- Continuing to combat female genital mutilation by implementing the five-year plan adopted in 2011 and revised in 2016.
- Finalisation of the national policy document on the family in order to adequately respond to early and forced marriage.
- Intensification of awareness-raising campaigns across the state to eradicate the practice of female genital mutilation and forced marriages, with the participation of all societal stakeholders, including religious and community leaders.
- Increasing efforts to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women, by taking positive steps and conducting awareness-raising campaigns on this subject.

Children

- Development and implementation of a national strategy aimed at coordinating the swift release of children suspected of being members of terrorist organisations and detained based upon unsubstantiated claims; modify the antiterrorist law no. 2014/028 of the 23 December 2014 so that military tribunals do not have jurisdiction in cases relating to children, and create community structures of accompaniment for reintegrating children associated with armed groups, which will facilitate their rehabilitation and their social reintegration into secure conditions.
- Adoption of public policies aimed at eliminating the recruitment of children by armed groups, including strategies for their rehabilitation and reintegration into society, in line with international human rights norms.
- Increasing efforts to stop and bring to justice the perpetrators of child abductions for the sale of organs or magical practices.
- Adoption of legislation to prevent corporal punishment against children in all contexts.
- Guarantee of the full and effective implementation of the national action plan of 2017 for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour.