

List of issues prior to reporting
Human Rights Committee
Submission on 19 August 2024

1. Authors of the report

This report was prepared by Cameroon Network of Human Rights Organisations (RECODH) (<https://recodh.org>) and the International Service for Human Rights (www.ishr.ch). This report focuses on the situation of human rights defenders in Cameroon.

The Cameroonian Network of Human Rights Organizations (RECODH) is a network of Cameroonian non-governmental organisations established in 2010. It is made up of associations, and collectives of associations working for the promotion and protection of human rights and good governance. Its members and supporters are scattered across Cameroon, to promote and protect human rights in the country. Contact: Joseph Désiré ZEBAZE, National Coordinator, recodhcameroun@gmail.com

The International Service for Human Rights is an independent, non-profit organisation promoting and protecting human rights. ISHR aims to support human rights defenders, strengthen human rights systems, as well as lead and participate in coalitions for human rights change. Founded in 1984, ISHR has offices in Geneva (Switzerland) and New York (United States), as well as a permanent presence in Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire). Contact: Adélaïde ETONG KAME, Senior Programme Manager (Africa), a.etong@ishr.ch

2. Situation of human rights defenders in Cameroon

- The 1996 Cameroonian Constitution guarantees the freedom of the press¹, yet journalists in Cameroon continue to face a lot of repression both in online and traditional media. In

¹ <https://www.fairobserver.com/world-news/unconstitutional-laws-limit-free-speech-and-punish-journalists-in-cameroon/>

2010, Cameroon passed the Cybercrimes Law², and since then it has been used to intimidate human rights defenders. For example, in July 2022, peace activist Abul Karim Ali, was arrested and detained for 200 days for posting a video online, denouncing a military chief for torturing civilians.³

- Journalists also continue to face threats and according to CIVICUS monitor ratings, Cameroon is categorised as 'repressed'.⁴ In March 2022, journalist Paul Chouta, a critic of the government, was kidnapped and assaulted. In January 2023, radio journalist Martinez Zogo was killed after having reported on government corruption scandals.⁵
- Cameroonian LGBTQ+ persons and their allies continue to face threats. Cameroonian Law continues to infringe the human rights of LGBT people, including through the criminalisation of same-sex sexual acts between consenting adults through Article 347-1 of the Penal Code.⁶ In June 2023, the government threatened to sanction media houses that broadcast LGBTQ+ content. This was on grounds that there are an increasing number of programmes that promote 'homosexual practices'.⁷
- The conflict that continues in the North, North West and South West regions of Cameroon, exposes women to violence that includes gender based violence. This [report](#)⁸ indicates that 97.1% of the incidences reported were females. This statistic shows how women are disproportionately affected by conflict in the country.
- In the Yabassi region of Cameroon, women are at the forefront of defending the environment. Most of the illegal timber in Cameroon is sourced from the protected Yabassi forest. Women play a vital role in protecting and defending the environment in this region by participating in protests, including barricading, mining, and logging machinery. However, their acts of resistance are often met with threats, violence and intimidation from forest guards and military personnel.⁹

3. Questions to Cameroon

- The rights of women and girls especially in the war-torn areas of Cameroon. Cameroon is a signatory of the Maputo Protocol which guarantees the protection of the rights of women

² <http://minjustice.gov.cm/index.php/en/68-ged-en/texts-and-laws/laws/296-law-no-2010-12-of-12-december-2010-relating-to-cybersecurity-and-cybercrime-in-cameroon>

³ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr17/6343/2023/en/>

⁴ <https://monitor.civicus.org/country/cameroon/>

⁵ <https://freedomhouse.org/country/cameroon/freedom-world/2024>

⁶ https://www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org/Res/cameroon_upr_tahr_ac%202.pdf

⁷ <https://www.fairplanet.org/story/cameroon-lgbtq-broadcast-queer-rights/>

⁸ <https://reliefweb.int/report/cameroon/gbv-aor-cameroon-gbvims-statistics>

⁹ <https://resiliencefund.globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Faith-Ngum-Radha-Barooah-Impact-of-biodiversity-loss-and-environmental-crime-on-women-from-rural-and-indigenous-communities-GI-TOC-October-2023.v3.pdf>

and girls. What steps has the government taken to ensure the protection of women in the conflict-prone areas is guaranteed?

- The continued intimidation of journalists represses press freedom in Cameroon both online and offline. This stifles dissent and poses a risk to journalists shedding light on alternative voices. What steps is Cameroon taking to guarantee the press is free, safe and independent ?
- Climate change and environmental degradation continue to pose a risk on human life. Protected areas are often prone to further degradation like the Yabassi Forest. Environmental rights defenders are often intimidated and threatened when defending these areas. What steps has the state taken to ensure the protection of environmental defenders and protection of protected forests?