

ACHPR/Res. 442 (LXVI) 2020: Resolution on the Deterioration of the Human Rights Situation in Cameroon during the Covid-19 Period

The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (the Commission), meeting at its 66th Ordinary Session, held virtually from 13 July to 7 August 2020:

Recalling its mandate of promotion and protection of human and peoples' rights in Africa under Article 45 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (the African Charter);

Considering Article 1 of the African Charter which stipulates that "States, parties to the present Charter shall recognise the rights, duties and freedoms enshrined in the Charter and shall undertake to adopt legislative or other measures to give effect to them";

Recalling and reaffirming Resolutions [ACHPR/Res. 395 \(LXII\) 18](#) and [ACHPR/Res. 405 \(LXIII\) 2018](#) on the human rights situation and the continuation of human rights violations in the Republic of Cameroon;

Deeply concerned at the continuation of human rights violations in the Far North, North-West and South-West regions of Cameroon, which continues to give rise to a proliferation of armed groups, a massive flow of refugees and internally displaced persons and an increase in cases of sexual abuse of women and under-age girls;

Also concerned at the reports of assassinations, murders, enforced disappearances, summary and extrajudicial killings of civilians, security personnel, administrative and religious authorities, journalists and human rights defenders in the North-West and South-West regions, including the destruction of villages and livelihoods;

Considering the ramifications of the various crises in Cameroon on the security of the sub-region with economic and humanitarian consequences on neighbouring countries;

Deeply concerned by the tense socio-political situation resulting from the latest post-electoral crisis of 7 October 2018, the recurrent restrictions on the civic space exacerbated by increased online surveillance since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic;

Bearing in mind the strategy of the African Union meeting held on 9 and 10 February 2020 in Addis Ababa aimed at "Silencing the Guns by 2020 in Africa";

Recalling the appeal of 22 June 2020 made by Nobel Peace Prize laureates, intellectuals and international non-governmental organizations to the Government of the Republic of Cameroon and the separatists, calling for an end to the fighting and a better management of the coronavirus pandemic;

Taking note of the negotiations initiated by the stakeholders and their common will to find lasting solutions for a ceasefire in the North-West and South-West regions during this period of Covid-19;

The Commission:

1. **Commends** the stakeholders for the ceasefire negotiations initiated and confirmed by a Press Release of the Minister of Communication of the Republic of Cameroon and Government Spokesperson on 6 July 2020;
2. **Urges** the stakeholders to work in a concerted manner to find a lasting solution to the crisis as soon as possible with a view to saving lives;
3. **Calls upon** the Government to exercise restraint in the crack-down on acts of terrorism and not to use this struggle as a justification for arbitrary arrests and extra-judicial killings;
4. **Calls on** the Government to work closely with and allow free operation of journalists, human rights defenders and other civil society actors in the restoration of peace; and also, in the fight against Covid-19;
5. **Calls on** the Government to ensure that online surveillance does not result in restriction of civic space;
6. **Encourages** the Government to establish an inclusive commission of inquiry and fact-finding on the human rights situation in the country;
7. **Urges** the State to establish mechanisms for peace and reconciliation by addressing the historical causes of the crisis, including systemic discrimination against the English-speaking minority, in order to achieve genuine reconciliation and social cohesion;
8. **Calls on** the State to ensure the effective implementation of the recommendations of the Broad National Dialogue held from 30 September to 4 October 2019;
9. **Calls on** the State to build on the African Union Policy on Transitional Justice as well as the recommendations contained in the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights' study on Transitional Justice and Human and Peoples' Rights in Africa;
10. **Calls on** the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the African Union (AU) to initiate a peace process that supports the cease-fire negotiations;
11. **Reiterates** its request to carry out a Fact-Finding Mission to Cameroon and calls on the relevant authorities to grant the authorization for this purpose.

Done virtually, 7 August 2020