

ACHPR67 | Periodic review of the Republic of Cameroon

04.12.2020

[Lire cet article en français ici](#)

In compliance with Article 62 of the African Charter, States have the obligation to report every two years on the legislative, administrative and political measures taken with a view to give effect to human rights guaranteed by the Charter. The State of Cameroon, which ratified the Charter in 1989, submitted its 4th-6th Periodic Reports.



On 23 November 2020, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) reviewed [Cameroon's 4th-6th periodic reports](#) relating to the implementation of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and its 1st reports as to the Maputo Protocol and the Kampala Convention. The report covering the period 2015-2019 was submitted to the ACHPR in January 2020. The Cameroonian delegation was led by Félix Mbayu Minister Delegate to the Minister of External Relations, in charge of Cooperation with the Commonwealth.

Prior to this review, ISHR, along with the Réseau des Défenseurs des Droits Humains en Afrique Centrale (REDHAC) and the Réseau Camerounais des Organisations des Droits de l'Homme (RECODH), submitted a [shadow report](#) to the Commission on the situation of human rights defenders in Cameroon. These submissions are intended to assist the Commission, and more specifically Commissioners, in making recommendations to governments.

The briefing paper called on the government of Cameroon to:

- Amend Law N° 0019 014 of 19 July 2019, so as to ensure a qualitative and legitimate representation of the representatives of civil society and of the competent sectoral administrations intervening in the penitentiary administration or the management of places of deprivation of liberty, social work as well as the expert on management and religious issues.
- Reinforce the protection of defenders through the establishment of a legislative framework to this effect.
- Carry out prompt, thorough, effective and transparent investigations of the allegations of enforced disappearances of human rights defenders
- Ensure an immediate end to secret detentions and torture, and to respect human rights in English-speaking regions
- Establish a transparent grant mechanism for the benefit of human rights organisations so that they can effectively support the implementation of the national action plan for the promotion and protection of human rights.
- Put an end to the expulsion of defenders with valid legal permits to travel to Cameroon
- Establish a Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission with the support of international mediators to ensure the establishment of a sustainable peace in Cameroon.

During the review, all the commissioners unanimously welcomed the submission of its periodic report by the government of Cameroon. They noted that the Republic of Cameroon became, therefore, the first country in Africa to present a report covering all three conventions, especially the Kampala Convention, and that other countries should do the same. In addition, most of the Commissioners mentioned the impact of the crisis in the North-West and South-West of Cameroon, as it made human rights in the country vulnerable. They also encouraged the government to make all the necessary efforts in collaboration with the ACHPR to resolve the crisis.

On the specific situation of human rights defenders, Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders, vice-chairperson of the ACHPR and Country Rapporteur of Cameroon, Commissioner Rémy Ngoy Lumbu noted that the report does not mention defenders. He therefore asked the following questions: "what efforts have been made to provide the country with a specific law for the protection of defenders? Regarding the school massacres in Kumba, what measures have been put in place to strengthen the security situation for the

population and defenders in the region? Finally, freedom of association is severely restricted by the authorities who systematically repress public demonstrations for various reasons. What measures have been taken to protect civic space?"

To conclude the review of Cameroon before the Commission, the Minister Delegate in charge of Cooperation with the Commonwealth, Félix Mbayu, highlighted that "in the case of Cameroon, particular challenges remain which have a significant impact on the protection and promotion of human rights. In these difficult times, the government has to deal with people with no respect for human rights, with COVID-19 and to resolve the internally displaced people crisis due to internal conflicts. He ended by thanking the members of the Commission for their constant commitment and asked the ACHPR to support Cameroon in the protection and promotion of human rights".

Watch the review [here](#)

Contact: Stéphanie Wamba, Africa Programme Advocate Consultant, s.wamba@ishr.ch

Photo: ISHR

ISHR