

**COMMISSION NATIONALE DES DROITS
DE L'HOMME ET DES LIBERTES**

**Sous-Commission des Droits
Civils et Politiques**

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**NATIONAL COMMISSION ON
HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS**
**Working Group on Civil and
Political Rights**

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PRESS RELEASE

In a correspondence of 11 August 2017, the Chairperson of the National Commission on Human Rights and freedoms informed the Government Commissioner of the Yaounde Military Court that the Commission was planning to visit some detention places in Yaounde, especially those of the Secretariat of State in charge of Defence (SED), the General Directorate of External Research (DGRE) and the National Surveillance Directorate (DST).

This initiative was prompted by:

- a video on internet showing twelve persons who were arrested during the anglophone crisis and detained in a secret place;
- the last report of Amnesty International denouncing acts of torture at the DGRE and at the regional Headquarters of the Rapid Intervention Battalion (BIR) of Maroua-Salak.

It is important to note that the aforementioned correspondence of the NCHRF Chairperson to the Government Commissioner was in compliance with the provisions of section 2 of the Law no. n° 2004/016 of 22 July 2004 to set up the NCHRF, requiring the presence of the competent State Counsel or one of his representatives during the commission's visits to detention places.

Since then, despite repeated reminders and audiences, the Government Commissioner did not consider it necessary to meet the Commission's expectation of being accompanied during scheduled visits to detention places. The Government Commissioner explained that he had not received authorization from his hierarchy to do so.

The statements of the Government Commissioner are corroborated by a correspondence of the Secretary of State in charge of Defense n° 00000417F/CAB/GN/200 of 22 August 2017 in which he suggested that the NCHRF Chairperson should refer the matter to the Minister of Defense, under whose jurisdiction falls Military Justice.

The NCHRF notes with regret that all these reserves constitute an infringement of the law as they obstruct the execution of the missions assigned to the Commission. The Commission further deplores this attitude which contributes to tarnish the image of our country, both nationally and abroad, and which is likely to hamper the Head of State's determination to make Cameroon, a State that respects Human Rights.



Done in Yaounde on... **15 SEPT 2017**

Dr. Chemuta Divine BANDA