



Final Press Release endorsing the Monthly Meeting of the Chairpersons and Rapporteurs of the Commission Working Groups 27 May 2020

The monthly meeting of the Chairpersons and Rapporteurs of the working groups of the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms (NCHRF) held on 27 May 2020, in the Yaounde Head Office Conference Room, under the chairmanship of Professor James MOUANGUE KOBILA, the acting Chairperson.

This meeting extended to other available members, following the death of Dr Chemuta Divine BANDA, the Chairperson of the NCHRF, in Yaounde, on 18 May 2020, after an illness.

Professor James MOUANGUE KOBILA, starting the meeting, immediately moved for a minute's silence in tribute to the memory of Dr Chemuta Divine BANDA. Discussions were mainly devoted to the suggestions from the participants regarding the organization of his funeral. The purpose was to pay a dignified homage to the illustrious deceased. Several suggestions were endorsed.

Participants then addressed the threat of Coronavirus and the deaths resulting from the disease. The members of the Commission seized this opportunity to re-echo the message of caution from the Head of State of 19 May 2020, when he called on all the people of the country to scrupulously respect the prevention measures prescribed by the authorities and the WHO. With Coronavirus disease, the right to health protection has become an obligation to stay healthy and preserve the health of others.

With regard to the resumption of classes for examination classes in primary and secondary education, and classroom lessons in higher education from next 1 June, compliance with social distancing measures and other prescribed preventive practices is an absolute necessity. These include regular washing of hands with running water and soap, respect for social distancing, as well as the wearing of masks in public places, in order to avoid contaminating others or becoming contaminated.

In this regard, the members of the NCHRF, calling on the public authorities to take preventive measures, commended the response of UNDP, for a donation of equipment and anti-COVID-19 products for prisons in five regions of the country (North-West, South-West, Littoral, Far North and Centre).

The members of the NCHRF recommend that the Government continue to extend the recognition of hospital facilities throughout the country, to better protect the right to health. The Government should likewise ensure that all persons affected by the Coronavirus have access to adequate and free health care. In this regard, the Ordre National des Médecins could take measures to harmonize and rationalize the treatment rates for patients in private hospitals. Essential medicines against the pandemic, disinfectant solutions, protective masks as well as temperature control flashes must be available in pharmacies and health facilities throughout the national territory.

The members of the NCHRF recommend that the Government take measures to ensure respect for the dignity of the dead of the pandemic and their families.

The members of the Commission did not fail to congratulate and encourage the professionals and actors of the health sector for the efforts undertaken in a particularly difficult context in order to limit the spread of the pandemic and its negative impact on the people.

Concerning the alleged human rights violations, especially the destruction of property and acts of looting allegedly committed by soldiers in Bafut on 26, 27, and 28 April 2020, the participants recommended that a thorough investigation be conducted and that those responsible for such acts be brought to book before the courts. It is also necessary to get to the bottom of the alleged killings and acts of torture that are said to have occurred in that community.

Finally, the members of the NCHRF expressed their strong condemnation of the assassination of Presley OJONG, the Mayor of Mamfé, during an ambush by the secessionists on 10 May 2020. They emphasized that such an attack on democracy is part of the extremist secessionists' conspiracy against the youth.



Elongue Mayor
Efse Tamo