

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

Cabinet du Président

B.P./P.O. Box 20317-Yaounde
Fax: (237)22 22 60 82



**NATIONAL COMMISSION ON
HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS**

Cabinet of the Chairperson

Tel.: (237) 22 22 61 17
Email : cndhl@iccnet.cm / cndhl@cndhl.cm

Yaoundé, le **22 MARS 2019**
The

N° **012** /19/NCHRF/PR/mn

The Chairperson
Le Président

To: **H.E. Paul BIYA**
**PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC
OF CAMEROON**

YAOUNDE

Your Excellency,

OPEN LETTER

We have the honour most respectfully to inform you that, when the Regional Secretary of the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms (NCHRF) of the South West Region informed us that he had been contacted yesterday the 21st of March 2019 by those who kidnapped the students of the University of Buea and that he was with South West Authorities discussing steps for their release, we instructed him to try to use peaceful means to secure their release. Late in the night, he sent information indicating that he had succeeded to obtain the release of the twenty (20) students. We praised the Almighty God for having touched the hearts of the kidnappers and caused them to spare the lives of the students and the life of our Regional Secretary who was himself traumatized in the process. The kidnappers knew that we have stood and continue to stand for a peaceful approach to the solution to the crisis.

Your Excellency, we condemn the kidnapping and the torture but we thank God that it ended without any loss of human lives. What we learn from this unfortunate act is the fact that the security we so much talk about is not really there. One is left doubting where the defence and security forces were when the students were kidnapped. They did not, for instance, also prevent acts committed at the Sacred Heart College Mankon in August 2017, PSS Bafut in

November 2017, PSS Nkwen in November 2018 and the Kumba District Hospital in February 2019.

We believe that this crisis which is benefiting some people has done serious damage to us and that the situation could get worse than this if we do not take positive action to reverse it.

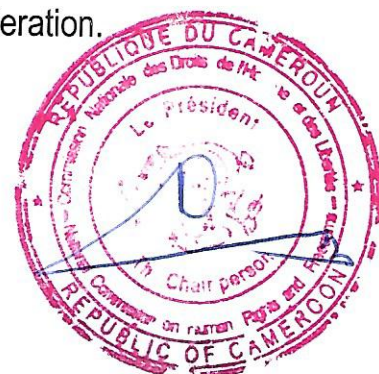
The NCHRF has repeatedly sent reports and recommendations to you and has not received direct reaction to any of them. These include:

- 1) Letter n° 009/17/CNDHL/SG/DPP/TP of 09/02/2017 following our observation and investigation mission to the North-West and South-West addressed through the SG/PR;
- 2) Letter n° 1179/18/CNDHL/PR of 18/06/2018 presenting the contribution of the NCHRF to a way out of the crisis in the North-West and South-West Regions;
- 3) MESSAGE PORTE n° 002/19/CNDHL/PDT/CAB/EGA of 14/01/2019 through MINDEF and MINETAT-SG/PR and
- 4) Letter n° 006/19/CNDHL/PR of 18/02/2019 concerning the deterioration of the socio-political and security situation in Cameroon and the consequences on the fundamental rights of the population.

Your Excellency, it is because we have not received any direct reaction from your office that we have adopted the approach of an open letter to you. The professional, intellectual, philosophical and religious mix of the persons at this National Human Rights Institution that you put in place here is such that merits attention to its advice and recommendations in matters of human rights. Since human rights impact significantly on our progress and since many people have started doubting if we are unwilling to co-operate in the search for an effective and lasting solution to the crisis, we wish to let you know that, with your support we can do it. Having also met with the leaders of the dissidents, we know that they will co-operate in a peaceful approach to the solution of the problem. We believe that our last letter to you outlines the steps necessary for coming back to a situation of normalcy in Cameroon. We pray you to give us the green light and the necessary support.

Accept, Your Excellency, the assurance of our highest consideration.

Chemuta Divine BANDA
Ministre Plénipotentiaire



Créée par loi n° 2004/016 du 22 juillet 2004, la CNDHL est une institution indépendante de consultation, d'observation, d'évaluation, de dialogue, de concertation, de promotion et de protection en matière de droits de l'homme

Created by law n° 2004/016 of 22nd July 2004, the NCHRF is an independent institution for consultation, monitoring, evaluation, dialogue, concerted action, promotion and protection in the domain of human rights