



PRESS STATEMENT ON THE MURDER OF SCHOOL CHILDREN IN KUMBA

The National Commission on Human Right and Freedoms (herein referred to as : “the Commission”) took notice of an unsupportable scene in abominable videos, posted on social media (*Facebook, WhatsApp and Twitter*) on the despicable murder of school children by bloodthirsty terrorists on 24th October 2020 in Kumba in the Meme Division of the South West Region.

Following preliminary investigations by the Commission on these allegations, with respect to Law No. 2004/016 of 22nd July 2004 setting up the Organization and Functioning of this institution, it has been observed that, this attack was committed at the Mother Francisca private college, in Kumba 2 Sub-Division, at about 11 a.m., on 24th October 2020 by nine heavily armed men who stormed the college on three motorcycles and opened fire on students in the classrooms. This act resulted to the death of about 6 children and more than twelve others severely wounded, who were peacefully enjoying their right to education.

Given the heavy toll of this unqualified barbaric and unbearable attack against children who incarnate the image of innocence,

- The Commission addresses its heartfelt condolences to the devastated families “*according to the bloodshed*” of the cowardly murdered children as well as to the entire saddened Cameroonian family “*according to the heart*” of the unhappy victims;
- The Commission extends its condolences to the entire severely affected national educational community, and particularly to that of the North West and South West regions;
- The Commission wishes a prompt and speedy recovery to those injured in hospitals and taken care of by the Government;
- The Commission is scandalized by the unprecedented relentlessness of secessionists savagery against the education of millions of young Cameroonians in the North West and South West Regions since 2016, in spite of the fact that no one ignores the importance of education to the development of the nation and human progress, despite of pertinent answers by the government on the legitimate request of the population of the two regions, and despite its supported efforts to bring peace and to reconstruct these regions;

- The Commission strongly condemns this pic of atrocities that constitute the height of horror and cruelty no circumstance can justify;
- The Commission once more recalls that, since its resolution 1566 (2004) of 8 October 2004 calling for greater cooperation in the fight against terrorism, **the Security Council of the United Nations (U.N.) “[...] condemns in the strongest terms, all acts of terrorism [...] irrespective of their motivation whenever and by whomsoever committed”**;
- The Commission strongly encourages State authorities to continue investigations on **this terrorist acts that could constitute a crime against humanity**, so that the arrested suspects should be tried before competent courts and their authors punished, according to the law;
- The Commission urgently calls on the national, sub-regional, regional and international, as well as both bilateral and multilateral partners of Cameroon, to redouble efforts to search, and contribute in arresting and trying before competent courts, the authors of these terrorist acts, and all those who instigate, support or praise it, with respect to the international Law on the fight against terrorism;
- The Commission renews its call to armed groups operating in these regions to seize this occasion during this “Month of Amnesty” initiated on 19 October 2020 till December 2020 by laying down the illegally acquired arms in their keeping and accept extended hand of the Government by integrating the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Centers, in order for the peace to return definitively in the two regions;
- The Commission continues to call on the population, particularly that of the concerned regions to fully collaborate with the defense and security forces so as to help track those responsible for such atrocities, that constitutes serious violations on the rights to life, physical integrity as well as to education. These rights are protected by the Constitution as well as other regional and international Human rights instruments;
- Recalling that Human rights are the founding principles of modern societies, the Commission finally considers that the rate of cruelty and revolting character of crimes perpetrated in Kumba on 24 October 2020 should lead secessionists who triggered this hostility in the two regions to definitely give up their secessionists project and immediately put an end to violence, as well as to the violation of fundamental rights of citizens they pretend in particular to defend.

Yaoundé, 25 of October 2020

(é) James MOUANGUE KOBILA