

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN
Paix – Travail – Patrie

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

Secrétariat Permanent

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REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON
Peace – Work – Fatherland

**NATIONAL COMMISSION ON
HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS**

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TWENTY THIRD ORDINARY SESSION OF THE NCHRF

Palais de Congrès/ Conference Centre
Yaoundé, 21 décembre 2017 / Yaoundé, 21st December, 2017

FINAL COMMUNIQUE

The National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms (NCHRF) held its twenty-third Ordinary Session on December 21, 2017 at the Yaoundé Conference Center. The Chairperson of the institution, Dr. Chemuta Divine BANDA following roll call of members, verification of quorum and adoption of agenda, opened deliberations with a keynote address.

In his opening statement, the Chairperson welcomed all members present; outlined major activities carried out by the Commission since the last session held on April 20, 2017, as well as prospects envisaged for 2018.

Dr. BANDA underlined the difficult context characterizing this session with regard to the limited financial resources available and social tension. Despite the fact that, atrocities committed by the terrorist group *BOKO HARAM* have been significantly reduced by the Cameroon Arm forces, it however continues to wreak havoc and casualties. Similarly, the North West and South West regions have witnessed attacks by secessionist groups that terrorize the population and confront the defense and security forces. The Chairperson of the NCHRF firmly condemns all forms of escalating violence that has resulted to the death of some agent of the security and defense forces, as well as civilians. He once more appealed for restraint and constructive dialogue between parties.

The NCHRF which is closely monitoring this crisis, thanks to its regional branch offices, plans to carry out another field investigation in these regions soon.

The Chairperson also mentioned difficulties faced by the Commission in disbursing funds from the Treasury. This has an adverse impact on the functioning of this institution as it slows down the process of settling bills and its field activities.

Despite these difficulties, the NCHRF carried out human rights promotion and protection activities, engaged in cooperation, administrative and investment issues.

As concerns human rights promotion activities, Dr. BANDA indicated that, consultation days were organized with Civil Society Organizations (CSO) on the elaboration of the 22nd and 23rd Periodic Reports of Cameroon to the Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination on the 4, October 2017, another consultation on 5 October 2017 with CSOs within the framework of the 3rd Session of the Universal Periodic Review of the State of Cameroon before this mechanism and the commemoration of the 28th Edition of the African Day on Human and Peoples Rights on 26 November

2017 on the theme "Promoting the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights and the 2063 Agenda of the African Union".

Dr. BANDA further affirmed that, handling complaints has been a continues process and that, some cases of mediation were carried out. He equally stressed that, the NCHRF carried our prison visits in the North West, West, South and South West Regions. Other prison visits in the center region have been programmed, pending the available financial resources.

At the regional and international level, the NCHRF maintained its partnership with other institutions and organizations, among whom, the Network of African National Human Rights Institution (NHRIs), the Association of the Francophonie NHRIs, the African Commission on Human and people's Rights, and the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions.

Moreover, the Chairperson of the Commission granted audiences to several delegations and personalities such as: the Director of Rule of Law of the Common Wealth Secretariat, the Ambassador, Head of the European Union, a delegation from "La haute Ecole Pedagogique de Lucerne" and a mission from "La Francophonie".

On the 20, December 2017, a delegation from the NCHRF led by its Chairperson met with the Secretary General of the Common Wealth, Mrs. Patricia SCOTLAND, visiting Cameroon.

Issues such as the general situation of human rights in Cameroon, the respect for human rights in the fight against terrorism, the management of the electoral process were discussed.

As for Administrative activities, he recalled that, the Commission had acquired eleven new vehicles for its regional offices and services. Dr. BANDA then paid homage to Mrs. MPONGO Olive, Regional Secretary of the North Regional Branch Office, who passed on to glory after a brief illness on 24 November 2017.

As concerns the construction of the Head Office building, Dr. BANDA affirmed that architectural studies have been completed and submitted to the Ministry of Public Works for appreciation. He equally highlighted that, the Far North Regional Branch Office was ready for use pending its official opening.

In relation to the functional budget allocated to the NCHRF for the year 2018, Dr. BANDA indicated that it amounted to the tune of nine hundred and fifteen million (915 000 000). This was the same amount allocated in 2017 and could impact negatively on the implementation of some activities of the Commission during the 2018 electoral context in Cameroon.

As for the investment budget, it has been reduced from five hundred million (500 000 000) to two hundred and forty million (240 000 000) in 2018.

During discussions which resulted to important recommendations, Members of the NCHRF examined and adopted the report of the 22nd Ordinary Session, adopted the plan of Action of the 2017 Activity Report and State of Human Rights Reports as well as the 2018 budget of the Commission.

In his closing remark, the Chairperson encouraged Members and the Permanent Secretariat to be dedicated in achieving their mission to promote and protect human rights.

