

Committee to Protect Journalists

Joint Submission by the American Bar Association Center for Human Rights, the Committee to Protect Journalists, and Freedom House

for the 44th Session of the Universal Periodic Review Working Group, November 2023

Cameroon

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Executive summary

1. As organizations promoting freedom of expression and the rule of law, this submission focuses on Cameroon's compliance with international human rights obligations related to freedom of opinion and expression and freedom of the press and on progress made since the last review in 2018.
2. In particular, the concerns raised in this submission relate to:
 - Killing, abduction, and torture of journalists²
 - Physical attacks and harassment of journalists
 - Imprisonment of journalists
 - Incommunicado holding and lengthy pre-trial and arbitrary detention of journalists
 - Invocation of anti-terror law, anti-state and "false news" charges against journalists

- Criminal defamation legislation
- Prosecution of journalists in military court
- Denial to a right to a fair trial and appeals process
- Suspension of broadcast permissions and broadcasts, internet shutdown, and blocked access to social media, communication platforms, and journalism offices and studios

Human rights instruments referred to in this submission

3. The Preamble of the Constitution of the Republic of Cameroon (adopted in 1996) affirms Cameroon's attachment to the fundamental freedoms enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Charter of the United Nations and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, including to principles of freedom of opinion and expression, and encompassing press freedom.³ The right is therefore a fundamental right, but not unqualified. It is guaranteed "under the conditions fixed by the law" and hence may be limited to protect other rights.⁴
4. The Declaration of Principles of Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Africa (adopted by the African Commission on Human Rights in 2019) in its Preamble reaffirms "the fundamental importance of freedom of expression and access to information as individual human rights, as cornerstones of democracy and as means of ensuring respect for other human rights."⁵ It further highlights the "key role of the media and other means of communication in ensuring full respect for the right to freedom of expression, promoting the free flow of information and ideas, assisting individuals in making informed decisions and facilitating and strengthening democracy."⁶ It sets forth general principles including: (1) the importance of the rights to freedom of expression and access to information, (2) non-interference with freedom of opinion, (3) non-discrimination, (4) protection of the rights to freedom of expression and access to information online, and (5) protection of human rights defenders and others.⁷ The protection and safety of journalists is enshrined in Principles 19 and 20 of the Declaration which affirm that states shall not subject the right to express oneself through the media to "undue legal restrictions".⁸ Rather, states are obligated to "guarantee the safety of journalists" and "take measures to prevent attacks on journalists and other media practitioners, including murder, extra-judicial killing, torture and other forms of ill-treatment, arbitrary arrest and detention, enforced disappearance, kidnapping, intimidation, threats and unlawful surveillance undertaken by State and non-State actors."⁹
5. Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in 1948) enshrines the principle of freedom of opinion and expression, noting that "the right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers." Articles 8, 9, 10, and 11 protect the right to an effective remedy and to a fair trial, the presumption of innocence, and the prohibition on arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

6. Cameroon ratified the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights ("the **African Charter**") in 1989. Article 9 of the African Charter protects every individual's right to receive information and to express and disseminate opinions within the law.¹⁰ Article 7(1) protects the right to be tried within a reasonable time by an impartial court, and the right to an appeal.¹¹
7. Cameroon ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights ("**the Covenant**") in 1984. The Covenant sets forth the principle in its Article 19 that "[e]veryone shall have the right to hold opinions without interference" and to "freedom of expression" which includes "freedom to seek, receive and impart information."¹² Those rights are subject to restriction only as provided by law and necessary for the respect of rights or reputations of others or for the protection of national security, public order, public health or morals.¹³ Article 9(1) of the Covenant provides that no one shall be deprived of his or her liberty except on such grounds and in accordance with such procedures as are established by law. Article 9(2) of the Covenant requires that anyone who is arrested shall be informed, at the time of arrest, of the reasons for his or her arrest. Article 9(3) of the Covenant provides that: "Anyone arrested or detained on a criminal charge shall be brought promptly before a judge or other officer authorized by law to exercise judicial power and shall be entitled to trial within a reasonable time or to release." The jurisprudence of the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention has found that trial of civilians by military courts, and decisions taken by military courts that place civilians in pretrial detention, violate the Covenant and customary international law.¹⁴ This principle is confirmed by the United Nations Basic Principles and Guidelines on Remedies and Procedures on the Right of Anyone Deprived of Their Liberty to Bring Proceedings Before a Court, which state that the arbitrariness and lawfulness of the detention of civilians may not be reviewed by military courts given that military judges and prosecutors do not meet fundamental requirements of independence and impartiality.¹⁵ Article 14 of the Covenant also sets forth a right to a fair trial before an independent and impartial court.
8. The Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment (adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1988) provides in Principle 15 that "communication of the detained or imprisoned person with the outside world, and in particular his [or her] family or counsel, shall not be denied for more than a matter of days."¹⁶ Principle 17 provides the right to counsel which should be informed to him or her promptly after arrest.

Implementation of recommendations from previous review

9. Our commentary on the recommendations supported from the previous Universal Periodic Review ("**UPR**") cycle are contained in the matrix of relevant recommendations in

Appendix 1. Five recommendations that were accepted or noted can be considered “partially achieved”. Those recommendations are contained in the following themes: (i) Recommendation 121.120 for Theme: D43 Freedom of opinion and expression, (ii) Recommendation 121.108 for Theme: D51 Administration of justice & fair trial, (iii), (iv), and (v) Recommendations 121.107, 121.116, and 121.118 for Theme: D25 Prohibition of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. However, several other recommendations relevant to freedom of expression and press freedom and which were supported are “not implemented”.

Update on situation for freedom of expression since the last review

General observations

10. There are several areas of concern raised in this submission. Threats to freedom of expression and press freedom are occurring on multiple fronts: (i) the killing, physical attacks, abduction, torture, and harassment of journalists by police, intelligence agencies, military, and non-state actors which has a chilling effect on freedom of expression and press freedom, (ii) the arbitrary imprisonment of journalists coupled with incommunicado and lengthy pre-trial detention; (iii) the invocation of anti-terror, anti-state, and “false news” charges and allegations by the state, and criminal defamation legislation, (iv) the prosecution of journalists by military tribunals rather than impartial civilian courts and the denial of the right to a fair trial and appeals process, and (v) the suspension of broadcasts and broadcast permissions, internet shutdown, and blocked access to social media, communication platforms, and journalism offices and studios. All of these factors are limiting the right to freedom of expression and press freedom in Cameroon. These issues must be simultaneously addressed by the state in order to ensure the aforementioned rights.

Specific issues of concern

11. For each of the themes below, a detailed list of incidents reported between 2018 and April 2023 is contained in Appendix 2.

Killing, abduction, and torture of journalists

12. Over the past five years, at least three journalists have been killed or have died in apparent relation to their work in Cameroon.¹⁷ Others have been abducted and tortured with few perpetrators ever held accountable. The killings, abduction, and torture silence the targeted journalists, and result in censorship and self-censorship which stifles media freedom and freedom of expression in Cameroon.

13. Of particular concern is the January 2023 murder of prominent journalist Martinez Zogo following his abduction by unidentified attackers.¹⁸ As managing director and host of a popular current affairs show on the privately owned radio broadcasting station Amplitude FM, Zogo had recently reported on alleged public embezzlement that benefitted prominent businessman Jean-Pierre Amougou Belinga.¹⁹ Zogo was abducted near his home in Yaoundé, after being chased to the gate of the local police station where he had sought help.²⁰ Zogo's mutilated body was found on January 22, 2023.²¹
14. Cameroonian authorities announced an investigation and reportedly have since provisionally charged several individuals suspected of involvement in the murder, including directors of the General Directorate of External Intelligence (DGRE) and Belinga himself.²²
15. Another murder of particular concern is that of journalist Samuel Ajiekah Abuwe, also known as Samuel Wazizi, who died in government custody after being held incommunicado.²³ He had been accused of having connections with armed separatists.²⁴ After his detention in August 2019, he was transferred to a military-run facility and died in government custody 15 days after his arrest.²⁵ Various reports alleged that he died after being tortured by security forces.²⁶ His death was not announced by the government until June 2020.²⁷ As of March 2023, a family spokesperson confirmed to CPJ that his family has still been unable to see or recover his remains, over two and a half years after his death was announced.²⁸
16. Cameroonian and international organizations including CPJ called for an independent and impartial investigation into Wazizi's death.²⁹ President Biya reportedly promised the French Ambassador to Cameroon to open an investigation into Wazizi's death.³⁰ However, no progress on an investigation has been reported. CPJ has previously reported on opacity in another government inquiry of the 2010 death of journalist Germain Cyril (Bibi) Ngota Ngota while in government custody.³¹ The inquiry, which ultimately found no wrongdoing by the government, was conducted by judges who had been involved in the initial arrests, among other irregularities.³²
17. Other murders of journalists in Cameroon include that of Jean-Jacques Ola Bebe who was found killed on February 2, 2023, although it is unclear whether the motive for his killing related to his journalism.³³ In addition, new revelations have led CPJ to investigate whether the November 4, 2011 car accident death of investigative journalist Jules Koum Koum was related to his journalism.³⁴ His exposure of a former defense minister recently resulted in a conviction in February 2023.³⁵ There is now heightened speculation that he was murdered for his reporting on corruption.³⁶
18. There have been further reports of journalists being tortured while in custody.³⁷

19. In the previous review, Cameroon supported recommendations to end the use of torture and other cruel treatment, particularly of detainees suspected of belonging to terrorist groups, and to investigate extrajudicial executions by government forces and armed groups against members of the English-speaking minority.³⁸ However, as noted above, journalists continue to be killed or die, including in government custody. While investigations of these murders have been opened in some instances, they often lack transparency and end up stalling.

Physical attacks and harassment of journalists

20. There have been multiple incidents over the past five years of journalists being physically assaulted, abducted, or verbally or physically harassed, including by receiving death threats. Reports note that the attacks, abductions, and threats have resulted in a self-censorship of journalists due to fear of reprisal from government and non-state armed actors, stifling media freedom and freedom of expression in Cameroon.³⁹
21. During the incidents noted above and in Appendix 2, police officers and non-state aggressors have shown little regard for freedom of the press and freedom of expression. They have prevented journalists from covering events, confiscated journalists' equipment, and intimidated and assaulted journalists.⁴⁰
22. The attacks have come from several sources. The National Communication Council ("CNC") is a media regulatory body with a history of harassing journalists and outlets.⁴¹ Government authorities, including the gendarmerie, security police, military, and intelligence agents have also carried out such attacks.⁴² Representatives of the communication ministry have also been involved in detention and harassment.⁴³
23. There are reports of journalists being summoned and detained by authorities prior to their arrest.⁴⁴ Journalists' homes have been raided.⁴⁵ Several have received repeated death threats.⁴⁶ Others have been abducted from their homes and physically attacked.⁴⁷ Incidents of assault have included stabbings and beatings;⁴⁸ kicking and beatings with stones, bricks, a baton, and a whip,⁴⁹ among others. Female journalists have also faced particular threats of violence and physical assault.⁵⁰
24. Accusations associated with the attacks include allegations of separatist terrorism. For example, in a November 2017 raid of journalist Akumbom Elvis McCarthy's home, he was beaten and accused of being an "Amba terrorist," a slur referencing Ambazonia, the name that secessionists gave to English-speaking regions of Cameroon.⁵¹

25. In the previous review, Cameroon supported a recommendation to take all necessary measures to enable journalists (among others) to carry out their activities without fear of reprisal or restriction.⁵²

Imprisonment of journalists

26. Over the past five years, there have been several incidents of journalists being arrested, often while reporting. Following a presidential pardon on December 15, 2018, the government released 289 prisoners who had been arrested and/or prosecuted in military tribunals, some of whom were journalists.⁵³ However, we remain concerned that the arbitrary imprisonment of journalists continues.
27. Cameroon continues to be one of the largest jailers of journalists in Africa. It is the second-worst jailer of journalists in sub-Saharan Africa and has been featured on CPJ's annual "prison census" for every year since 2014.⁵⁴ Notably, it has not fared better since the last review in 2018, with a range of 5 to 9 journalists jailed in government custody per year from 2018 to 2022.⁵⁵
28. The submitters have repeatedly petitioned international organizations regarding Cameroon's detention of journalists, including incommunicado, its use of torture on journalists, and the ongoing threats of arrest and attack for members of the media.⁵⁶
29. Reports document the jailing of journalists under the following circumstances: (i) alleged violation of Law N°2014/028 on Repression of Acts of Terrorism ("**Law N°2014/028**") for crimes such as "non-denunciation of terrorism" and "laundering of the proceeds of terrorist acts,"⁵⁷ (ii) for the journalistic coverage of political rallies, opposition gatherings, or conducting interviews of protesters,⁵⁸ (iii) for reporting on political unrest and protests by Anglophone minority,⁵⁹ (iv) for criticizing in their reporting the government's treatment of the English-speaking minority population,⁶⁰ (v) for reporting on the deaths of Anglophone youth that had died in police custody,⁶¹ (vi) for allegedly publishing secessionist information or collaborating with secessionists,⁶² (vii) for filming police allegedly harassing taxi drivers and commuters in English-speaking territories,⁶³ (viii) for allegedly illegally monitoring military activity,⁶⁴ (ix) for alleged defamation,⁶⁵ (x) for journalism criticizing President Biya and other government officials,⁶⁶ and (xi) for allegedly publishing "false news".⁶⁷
30. In February 2022, CPJ and others called on President Biya to release all those arbitrarily detained in Cameroon for acts of free expression, including at least four journalists. The letter stated that over 100 people have been detained, most for more than a year, and some for over five years, for simply "peacefully exercising their human rights."⁶⁸

Incommunicado holding, lengthy pre-trial and arbitrary detention of journalists

31. Over the past five years, there have been several reported incidents of journalists in Cameroon being held incommunicado or suffering lengthy pre-trial or arbitrary detention. The incidents involved arrest, detention without contact, lengthy holding prior to being charged and before trial, and repeated adjournments of proceedings.
32. Radio journalist Akumbom Elvis McCarthy was detained by judicial police for three weeks after his March 20, 2018 arrest, prior to appearing before a military tribunal which ordered his detention in the Bamenda Central Prison for a renewable six-month period while police investigated the allegations.⁶⁹ He spent seven months in detention without trial before being charged with attempted secession, illegal monitoring of military activity, and propagating false information.⁷⁰
33. Journalist Kingsley Njoka was held in pre-trial detention for more than two years and is still awaiting trial before a newly constituted military tribunal.⁷¹
34. Journalist and former director of Cameroon's public broadcaster Amadou Vamouké was arrested on July 29, 2016 and was denied bail on the alleged basis that he did not have a known address.⁷² In May 2021, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention found that the deprivation of liberty of Amadou Vamouké was arbitrary and violated Articles 9, 10 and 11 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Articles 9 and 14 of the Covenant, calling upon Cameroon to immediately release Vamouké and accord him an enforceable right to compensation and other reparations.⁷³ His trial did not conclude until December 2022, at which point he had already been in prison for six years.
35. Journalist Mancho Bibixy was detained for 18 months prior to trial after being arrested without a warrant on January 17, 2017, during which he was only permitted minimal contact with his family.⁷⁴ His hearings were postponed more than 14 times.⁷⁵ He was charged with spreading false news in relation to his journalistic work as well as other acts of terrorism and secession. At trial before a military tribunal, he was sentenced to 15 years in prison.
36. While his military appeal was pending for over two years, a July 22, 2019 protest by inmates at the maximum security Kondengui Central Prison over prison conditions resulted in Bibixy and several other prisoners being transferred to the Special Operations Group in Yaoundé and later to the State Secretariat for Defense, where he was held incommunicado.⁷⁶
37. The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention found that Bibixy was being arbitrarily detained and that his deprivation of liberty violated Articles 8, 9, 10, and 11 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and Articles 2, 3, 9 and 14 of the Covenant.⁷⁷

38. Journalist Tsi Conrad was detained without outside contact for over two weeks at the Directorate for Territorial Surveillance, the police's secretive intelligence arm, following his December 8, 2016 arrest and overnight transfer to Yaoundé.⁷⁸ His trial began on December 23, 2016 but continued for over a year, interrupted by at least 16 adjournments.⁷⁹ Following a July 22, 2019 protest by inmates at the Kondengui Central Prison over prison conditions, Conrad was transferred to the State Secretariat for Defense, where he was held incommunicado for two weeks.⁸⁰
39. Journalists Wawa Jackson Nfor and Paul Chouta's respective trials were also repeatedly delayed following their respective arrests in 2018 and 2019 and until their release in 2021.⁸¹

Invocation of anti-terror law, anti-state, and "false news" charges against journalists

40. In December 2014, the government enacted Law N°2014/028 as part of President Biya's effort to counter Boko Haram in Cameroon. The law carries a maximum penalty of the death sentence and permits authorities to indefinitely detain individuals accused of terrorism.⁸²
41. We are concerned that Law N°2014/028 is overly broad with easy potential for abuse of political opponents and freedom of expression.⁸³ CPJ has documented a number of incidents where Cameroonian authorities have used the law against journalists who report on militants' activities, who have reported on unrest in Cameroon's English-speaking regions, or who are critical of President Biya's administration.⁸⁴
42. Journalists report that the government conflates news coverage of militants or demonstrators with their support.⁸⁵ This practice has resulted in journalists anonymizing their publications or refraining from reporting on activities involving these groups for fear of reprisal.⁸⁶ The Special Rapporteur to the UN Human Rights Council has reported that counter-terrorism and security are frequently cited as justification to cover for the adoption of high-risk and highly intrusive technologies.⁸⁷
43. A presidential decree issued in August 2017 ended legal proceedings against at least four journalists then detained in Cameroon in connection with its Law N°2014/028,⁸⁸ however, the violations are far from resolved. A number of other journalists have been arrested or continue to be detained on alleged anti-terror grounds under Law N°2014/028.⁸⁹ Other journalists have been the subject of anti-state and false news charges.⁹⁰

Criminal defamation legislation

44. Criminal defamation legislation continues to exist in Cameroon and journalists have been detained and prosecuted on charges of defamation. The crimes of libel, slander, defamation and blasphemy are treated as criminal offenses. Article 305 of Cameroon's Penal Code sets

a maximum penalty of six months prison and two million CFA francs in damages for the crime of defamation.⁹¹ Because the law places the burden of proof on the defendant, journalists may be disadvantaged in such suits for crimes punishable by prison terms and substantial fines.⁹²

45. The Covenant and the African Charter guarantee the right to freedom of expression, subject only to limitations that are lawful, necessary, and proportionate to achieve a legitimate aim. Regarding the proportionality requirement, the UN Human Rights Committee has concluded that “imprisonment is never an appropriate penalty” for defamation.⁹³ Similarly, the African Court has held that “violations of laws on freedom of speech and the press cannot be sanctioned by custodial sentences.”⁹⁴
46. There are several incidents involving the charging and detention of journalists for defamation. Approximately two years before his murder, journalist Martinez Zogo had been arrested on January 17, 2020 and charged with criminal defamation following a complaint filed by Sylvie Biye Essono, the ex-wife of a government official.⁹⁵ Journalist Paul Chouta was arrested on May 28, 2019 following a defamation complaint from a French-Cameroonian writer.⁹⁶ On November 7, 2019, journalist Adalbert Hiol was detained on charges of false news, defamation, and insult stemming from an April 2, 2019 defamation complaint filed by Louis Richard Njock.⁹⁷ Hiol was sentenced to 18 months in prison after being found guilty of the charges.⁹⁸ On February 22, 2022, journalist Malcom Barnabe Paho was arrested and investigated for criminal defamation following a complaint filed by pastor Boba Denis.⁹⁹

Prosecution of journalists in military court

47. Law N°2014/028 provides for prosecution in military court.¹⁰⁰
48. Following a presidential pardon on December 15, 2018, the government released 289 prisoners who had been arrested and prosecuted in military tribunals, some of whom were journalists.¹⁰¹ However, we continue to be concerned that the prosecution in military court of journalists charged with violations of Law N°2014/028 presents potential for abuse.
49. Journalists have been charged and tried in military courts and their pre-trial detention has been evaluated by military court judges.¹⁰² Journalists have been charged with various crimes in military court ranging from “non-denunciation of terrorism”, “laundering of the proceeds of terrorist acts”,¹⁰³ complicity in acts of terrorism,¹⁰⁴ hostility against the fatherland, secession, propagation of insurrection, incitement to civil war,¹⁰⁵ illegal monitoring of military activity, false news, and dissemination of secessionist propaganda on air.¹⁰⁶

50. Journalists have been convicted by military tribunals to significant prison sentences of ten to fifteen years.¹⁰⁷
51. Appeals before military tribunals have faced delays.¹⁰⁸ In one instance, an appeal before the military appeals tribunal in Yaoundé began on July 22, 2019 but was not ruled upon until August 29, 2021, nearly two years later.¹⁰⁹ An appeal was lodged with the Supreme Court despite the fact that a written judgment from the lower court still had not been issued.¹¹⁰

Denial to a right of fair trial and appeals process

52. In Cameroon, journalists have been denied a right to a fair trial and appeals process. This is because they are tried in many instances before military tribunals and not in civilian courts. Where they have been tried in civilian courts, they have also faced lengthy pre-trial detentions, repeated delays, and adjournments that have amounted to undue delay.
53. In multiple cases, courts ordered numerous adjournments or new proceedings despite significant delays in the original case.¹¹¹ Many of those delays have been reported to be frivolous. For example, in the trial of journalist Paul Chouta, various adjournments were the result of the prosecution's failure to summon relevant parties to court, for failure to bring Chouta to court, because the complainant or her lawyer failed to appear in court, or because the judge was unable to locate the record of the proceedings or forgot to return the case file to the registrar to schedule the hearing.¹¹² There were also significant fair trial issues including violations of the right of journalists to adequately prepare their defense, failure to respect the presumption of innocence, and failure of the judge hearing the case to act impartially.¹¹³

Suspension of broadcasts and broadcast permissions, internet shutdown, and blocked access to social media, communication platforms, and journalism offices and studios

54. Cameroon has cracked down on the press in recent years, for example in 2016 amid the unrest in the English-speaking regions. We are concerned that these trends will continue.
55. Authorities have banned news outlets deemed sympathetic to Anglophone protesters, shut down internet in regions experiencing unrest, and prevented outside observers, including CPJ, from accessing the country by delaying the visa process.¹¹⁴
56. On April 1, 2022, the National Communication Council media regulator announced the suspension of Equinoxe TV CEO Séverin Tchoukeu and editor-in-chief and presenter Cédric Noufele from working as journalists for one month, and ordered that the outlet's "Droit de Réponse" ("Right of Reply") program be barred from airing during that time.¹¹⁵

57. The National Communication Council also issued suspensions and warnings to three journalists on July 5, 2021 for allegedly unprofessional conduct based on statements concerning heads of state and political officials.¹¹⁶
58. In addition, because the Ministry of Communication requires editors by law to submit copies of their newspapers within two hours after publication, journalists report self-censorship, particularly when a previous suspension has occurred.¹¹⁷
59. The government has also ordered internet shutdowns on more than one occasion in response to protests, strikes, and boycotts in the English-speaking regions. In 2017, the government ordered internet providers to shut down the internet for three months, blocking internet access in the two concerned Anglophone regions.¹¹⁸ It also blocked social media networks in French-speaking regions in October 2017.¹¹⁹ Over 4 million inhabitants were affected by the shutdown and internet blackouts have made reporting about the region difficult.¹²⁰ Separately, for 136 days between October 2017 and February 2018, the government ordered internet service providers to shut down the internet.¹²¹ The internet shutdowns have been condemned in the past, including by the U.N. Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression.¹²²
60. It has also been reported that the government engaged in surveillance activities, monitoring private online communications without appropriate legal authority.¹²³

Recommendations to the Republic of Cameroon by the submitting organizations

Killing, abduction, and torture of journalists

61. Take measures to end all forms of torture and other ill-treatment inflicted on journalists.
62. Ensure prompt and thorough investigations into the torturing and killing of journalists, and bring all perpetrators, including conspirators, to justice in a fair trial to ensure accountability.
63. Ensure the government pursues and finalizes an independent, effective, and impartial investigation into the murder of journalist Martinez Zogo promptly and in full transparency, and brings all those responsible to justice in a fair trial to ensure accountability.
64. Ensure the government conducts an independent, effective, and impartial investigation into the death of journalist Samuel Wazizi promptly and in full transparency, including with respect to allegations of torture while in government custody, and brings all those responsible to justice in a fair trial to ensure accountability.
65. Ensure the government conducts an independent, effective, and impartial investigation into the murder of journalist Jacques Ola Bebe, and brings all those responsible to justice in a fair trial to ensure accountability.

66. Ensure the government conducts an independent, effective, and impartial investigation into the death of journalist Jules Koum Koum, particularly in relation to his exposure of a former defense minister's crimes.

Physical attacks and harassment of journalists

67. Take measures to end kidnapping, intimidation, and threats to journalists by state and non-state actors.
68. Promptly and effectively investigate threats and attacks against journalists.
69. Establish an effective mechanism to protect at-risk journalists, in particular those covering activities of the Anglophone minority, terrorist activities, and political activities including elections, that is tailored to address the needs of journalists, with necessary budget and staffing allocations for its full implementation.

Imprisonment of journalists

70. Take measures to end arbitrary arrest and detention of journalists.
71. Immediately release Tsi Conrad and accord him an enforceable right to compensation and other reparations.
72. Immediately release the four other journalists currently jailed in Kondengui Central Prison and accord them an enforceable right to compensation and other reparations.
73. Release all jailed journalists arbitrarily detained for acts of free expression and press coverage, and cease the practice of arresting journalists for such acts.

Incommunicado holding, lengthy pre-trial and arbitrary detention of journalists

74. Take measures to end incommunicado holding and lengthy pre-trial detention of journalists.
75. Release any journalists who continue to be in lengthy pre-trial detention.
76. Abolish detention without trial and ensure that arrests and detentions comply with international human rights law.
77. Conduct an investigation of the circumstances surrounding the incommunicado holding and lengthy pre-trial detention of journalists and take appropriate measures against those responsible for the violation of rights.
78. Cease the practice of holding journalists incommunicado and detaining journalists for lengthy periods without trial.

79. Release any journalists in pre-trial detention who have not been brought promptly before a judge or other officer authorized by law and/or have not been accorded a trial within a reasonable time in violation of Article 9(3) of the Covenant and/or are appealing their conviction.

Invocation of anti-terror law, anti-state, and “false news” charges against journalists

80. Amend Law N°2014/028 on Repression of Acts of Terrorism to include a public interest defense to protect journalists and other media workers, and otherwise align the act with international human rights standards.
81. Ensure that unnecessary and disproportionate limits to freedom of expression are removed from Law N°2014/028 on Repression of Acts of Terrorism such that they cannot be abused to jail or harass journalists in relation to their work, and foster an environment conducive to press freedom.
82. Stop the arrest and detention of journalists for covering events of separatists, militants, or terrorists. Adopt a policy which does not conflate coverage with support.
83. Ensure the Presidential decree issued in August 2017 is followed by a further Presidential decree to release other journalists being detained in connection with Law N°2014/028 on Repression of Acts of Terrorism.
84. End the authority for criminal prosecutions for the circulation of “false news”.
85. Repeal any law criminalizing disinformation and misinformation.
86. Ensure that allegations of “false news” are handled using a multi-stakeholder approach.
87. Ensure that security forces respect the confidentiality of journalists’ sources.
88. Commit to public transparency in government-decision making in all spheres of activity.

Criminal defamation legislation

89. Stop using criminal defamation charges to prosecute journalists and media outlets.
90. Undertake necessary reforms to Cameroon’s penal code to comply with African Court jurisprudence to end prison sentences for defamation.
91. Undertake necessary reforms to Cameroon’s penal code to exclude the criminalization of defamation.

Prosecution of journalists in military court

92. Promptly release any journalists whose placement in pre-trial detention or review of the arbitrariness and lawfulness of the detention was the result of a decision taken by a military court and not a civil judge in violation of Article 9(3) of the Covenant and the UN Basic Principles, and as such was not impartial and independent.
93. Promptly release any journalists whose placement in detention, assessment of detention, or conviction was the result of a decision taken or trial conducted by a military court and not a civil judge in violation of Article 9(3) of the Covenant and the UN Basic Principles, and as such was not impartial and independent.

Right to a fair trial and appeals process

94. Ensure that all journalists are granted the right to a fair trial before an independent and impartial court in a timely manner.
95. Ensure that the right of journalists to adequately prepare their defense is protected.
96. Ensure that the presumption of innocence of journalists is respected.
97. Amend Law N°2014/028 on Repression of Acts of Terrorism to provide a specific carve out for journalists and to prohibit journalists and other civilians from being tried by military tribunals.

Suspension of broadcasts and broadcast permissions, internet shutdown, and blocked access to social media, communication platforms, and journalism offices and studios

98. Abolish the National Communication Council media regulator and establish a new independent broadcast regulator with narrowly defined powers.
99. Allow the media to establish independent self-regulatory bodies without interference from government.
100. Ensure that independent and self-regulatory associations, such as the Consortium of Journalism Associations, are able to operate freely and without interference.

Annex 1
Matrix of Recommendations from the Previous Cycle
with Comments on Progress

Recommendation ¹²⁴	Position ¹²⁵	Full List of Themes	Assessment/Comments on Level of Implementation
Theme: D43 Freedom of opinion and expression			
<p>121.63 Observe the right of its citizens to express their views in dealing with the problems of the English-speaking provinces (Czechia);</p> <p>Source of position: A/HRC/39/15</p>	Accepted	<p>D43 Freedom of opinion and expression H1 Human Rights Defenders B8 Human rights & counter-terrorism A41 Constitutional and legislative framework S16 SDG 16 - peace, justice and strong institutions</p> <p>Affected persons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - general - minorities/ racial, ethnic, linguistic, religious or descent-based groups - media - human rights defenders 	<p>Not implemented.</p> <p>Expression of views regarding the English-speaking provinces continues to be criminalized through anti-terror, anti-state, “false news” allegations. Journalists continue to be detained, charged, and convicted for coverage of, and support for peaceful expression of views on the English-speaking provinces.</p>
<p>121.120 Fully respect, protect and fulfil the rights to freedom of expression, association and of assembly, including by lifting restrictions on mobile and Internet services unless provided for by law, and comply with international human rights law and standards on the use of force (New Zealand);</p> <p>Source of position: A/HRC/39/15</p>	Accepted	<p>D43 Freedom of opinion and expression H1 Human Rights Defenders B8 Human rights & counter-terrorism D25 Prohibition of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment A41 Constitutional and legislative framework A12 Acceptance of international norms S16 SDG 16 - peace, justice and strong institutions</p>	<p>Partially implemented.</p> <p>Since the 2017-2018 shutdown of the internet by the government, it appears not to have engaged in another mass internet shutdown. However, there are still concerns about freedom of expression on online platforms including social media. The overly broad cybersecurity and cybercrime law of December 2010 that restricts media freedom and freedom of expression online has yet to be amended.</p>

		Affected persons: - general - media - human rights defenders	
121.121 Ensure freedom of expression, freedom of access to information and the right to assembly (Spain); Source of position: A/HRC/39/15	Accepted	D43 Freedom of opinion and expression H1 Human Rights Defenders A41 Constitutional and legislative framework S16 SDG 16 - peace, justice and strong institutions Affected persons: - general - media - human rights defenders	Not implemented. Freedom of expression and freedom of access to information continue to be heavily restricted by government authorities. Journalists continue to be detained for covering protests, rallies, developments with English-speaking provinces, or information involving the President or other government officials.
121.122 Adopt measures to guarantee the freedom of the press and its diversity by allowing free access to media and information (Germany); Source of position: A/HRC/39/15	Accepted	D43 Freedom of opinion and expression A41 Constitutional and legislative framework S16 SDG 16 - peace, justice and strong institutions Affected persons: - general - media	Not implemented. Freedom of the press continues to be heavily restricted by government authorities. Journalists continue to be detained for covering protests, rallies, developments in English-speaking regions, or information involving the President or other government officials.
121.124 Ensure the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly for all, including journalists, human rights defenders and opposition party members, and lift any restrictions on these rights that are not in line with the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Finland); Source of position: A/HRC/39/15	Accepted	D43 Freedom of opinion and expression H1 Human Rights Defenders B8 Human rights & counter-terrorism A41 Constitutional and legislative framework A12 Acceptance of international norms S16 SDG 16 - peace, justice and strong institutions Affected persons:	Not implemented. Cameroon continues to violate provisions of the Covenant by arbitrarily arresting, detaining, mistreating, and prosecuting journalists, including in military tribunals.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - general - media - human rights defenders 	
<p>121.126 Respect the rights to peaceful assembly, and freedoms of association and expression, including when exercised online, and afford all of those detained all the rights enshrined in Cameroon’s constitution and under international law (United States of America);</p> <p>Source of position: A/HRC/39/15</p>	Accepted	<p>D43 Freedom of opinion and expression H1 Human Rights Defenders B8 Human rights & counter-terrorism D51 Administration of justice & fair trial D25 Prohibition of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment A41 Constitutional and legislative framework A12 Acceptance of international norms S16 SDG 16 - peace, justice and strong institutions</p> <p>Affected persons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - general - media - human rights defenders 	<p>Not implemented.</p> <p>The right to peaceful assembly, freedom of association and expression continue to be heavily restricted by government authorities. Journalists continue to be detained for covering protests, rallies, developments in English-speaking regions, or information involving the President or other government officials.</p>
Theme: H1 Human Rights Defenders			
<p>121.66 Redouble efforts for the full and effective implementation of the official bilingual policy, and ensure that the English-speaking minority is not subject to inequality in access to public services, the administration of justice, and freedom of speech (Republic of Korea);</p> <p>Source of position: A/HRC/39/15</p>	Accepted	<p>H1 Human Rights Defenders D43 Freedom of opinion and expression D51 Administration of justice & fair trial A41 Constitutional and legislative framework S16 SDG 16 - peace, justice and strong institutions</p> <p>Affected persons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - general - minorities/ racial, ethnic, linguistic, religious or descent-based groups - media 	<p>Partially implemented.</p> <p>President Biya ordered the enforcement of the 2019 bilingual law. However, freedom of speech continues to be restricted by government authorities. Journalists continue to be detained for covering protests, rallies, developments with English-speaking provinces, or information involving the President or other government officials.</p>

		- human rights defenders	
121.58 Ensure transparency of and provide information on the human rights situation in the English-speaking region, inter alia by allowing the United Nations and national and international human rights institutions and organizations access to the region (Netherlands); Source of position: A/HRC/39/15	Accepted	H1 Human Rights Defenders B8 Human rights & counter-terrorism D25 Prohibition of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment A61 Cooperation with civil society A12 Acceptance of international norms B52 Impunity S16 SDG 16 - peace, justice and strong institutions Affected persons: - general - minorities/ racial, ethnic, linguistic, religious or descent-based groups - media - human rights defenders	Not implemented. The right to peaceful assembly, freedom of association and expression continue to be heavily restricted by government authorities such that there is no transparency on the region. Journalists continue to be detained for covering protests, rallies, developments in English-speaking regions, or information involving the President or other government officials and face censorship.
121.51 Adopt legislation to protect human rights defenders and journalists (Czechia); Source of position: A/HRC/39/15	Rejected	H1 Human Rights Defenders D43 Freedom of opinion and expression B8 Human rights & counter-terrorism D25 Prohibition of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment A41 Constitutional and legislative framework S16 SDG 16 - peace, justice and strong institutions Affected persons: - media - human rights defenders	Not implemented. The submitters are unaware of any legislation that protects journalists.
121.125 Take all necessary measures to enable human	Accepted	H1 Human Rights Defenders	Not implemented. Freedom of speech,

<p>rights defenders, journalists and other members of civil society to carry out their legitimate activities without fear of reprisal, and free of all restrictions (Ireland); Source of position: A/HRC/39/15</p>		<p>D43 Freedom of opinion and expression B8 Human rights & counter-terrorism A41 Constitutional and legislative framework S16 SDG 16 - peace, justice and strong institutions</p> <p>Affected persons: - general - media - human rights defenders</p>	<p>expression, and the press continue to be heavily restricted and criminalized by government authorities. Journalists and others are unable to carry out their legitimate activities and actively engage in self-censorship, avoidance, and anonymity to avoid reprisal. Some have left the profession as a result and others have gone into exile to continue reporting without fear of reprisal.</p>
Theme: B8 Human rights & counter-terrorism			
<p>121.91 Revise the antiterrorist law of 2014 in accordance with international human rights standards and obligations (Poland); Source of position: A/HRC/39/15</p>	Noted	<p>B8 Human rights & counter-terrorism D51 Administration of justice & fair trial D25 Prohibition of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment A41 Constitutional and legislative framework A12 Acceptance of international norms S16 SDG 16 - peace, justice and strong institutions</p> <p>Affected persons: - general - media - human rights defenders</p>	<p>Not implemented. The submitters are unaware of any revisions adopted to Law N°2014/028 on Repression of Acts of Terrorism.</p>
<p>121.92 Formally abolish the death penalty by amending its Penal Code and counter-terrorism laws (Australia); Source of position: A/HRC/39/15</p>	Rejected Noted	<p>B8 Human rights & counter-terrorism D51 Administration of justice & fair trial D25 Prohibition of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment A41 Constitutional and legislative framework</p>	<p>Not implemented. The submitters are unaware of any abolishment of the death penalty in Cameroon's legislation.</p>

		S16 SDG 16 - peace, justice and strong institutions Affected persons: - general	
121.93 Review and amend the 2014 antiterrorism law to ensure that it is not used to restrict freedom of expression, assembly and association (Switzerland); Source of position: A/HRC/39/15	Noted	B8 Human rights & counter-terrorism D43 Freedom of opinion and expression D51 Administration of justice & fair trial A41 Constitutional and legislative framework S16 SDG 16 - peace, justice and strong institutions Affected persons: - general - media - human rights defenders	Not implemented. The submitters are unaware of any revisions adopted to Law N°2014/028 on Repression of Acts of Terrorism. To the contrary, it continues to be used as a basis for the restriction of freedom of expression, assembly, and association covered or participated in by journalists.
121.94 Review the texts relating to counter-terrorism by providing a more specific definition of terrorism (France); Source of position: A/HRC/39/15	Noted	B8 Human rights & counter-terrorism D43 Freedom of opinion and expression D51 Administration of justice & fair trial A41 Constitutional and legislative framework S16 SDG 16 - peace, justice and strong institutions Affected persons: - general - media - human rights defenders	Not implemented. The submitters are unaware of any revisions adopted to Law N°2014/028 on Repression of Acts of Terrorism.
121.95 Review, with the full participation of all stakeholders concerned, before the upcoming review cycle, the 2014 counter-terrorism law in order to harmonize it with all	Noted	B8 Human rights & counter-terrorism D43 Freedom of opinion and expression D51 Administration of justice & fair trial	Not implemented. The submitters are unaware of any revisions adopted to Law N°2014/028 on Repression of Acts of Terrorism.

<p>international standards on human rights and the right to a fair trial (Haiti); Source of position: A/HRC/39/15</p>		<p>D25 Prohibition of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment A41 Constitutional and legislative framework A61 Cooperation with civil society A12 Acceptance of international norms S16 SDG 16 - peace, justice and strong institutions</p> <p>Affected persons: - general - media - human rights defenders</p>	
<p>121.96 Amend the 2014 antiterrorism law to bring the definition of terrorism into line with international human rights obligations and standards, repeal the death penalty, and end the use of military tribunals to try civilians (Canada); Source of position: A/HRC/39/15</p>	<p>Noted Rejected</p>	<p>B8 Human rights & counter-terrorism D43 Freedom of opinion and expression D51 Administration of justice & fair trial D25 Prohibition of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment A41 Constitutional and legislative framework A12 Acceptance of international norms S16 SDG 16 - peace, justice and strong institutions</p> <p>Affected persons: - general - media - human rights defenders</p>	<p>Not implemented. The submitters are unaware of any revisions adopted to Law N°2014/028 on Repression of Acts of Terrorism. Military tribunals continue to be used and the death penalty remains in place.</p>
<p>121.97 Maintain the existing moratorium on judicial executions, and consider commuting all current death penalty sentences to other forms of punishment (Namibia); Source of position:</p>	<p>Rejected</p>	<p>B8 Human rights & counter-terrorism D51 Administration of justice & fair trial D25 Prohibition of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment</p>	<p>Not implemented. The submitters are unaware of any revisions adopted to Law N°2014/028 on Repression of Acts of Terrorism. Military</p>

A/HRC/39/15		A41 Constitutional and legislative framework S16 SDG 16 - peace, justice and strong institutions Affected persons: - general	tribunals continue to be used and the death penalty remains in place with an estimated total of 220 people sentenced to death as of 30 August 2021. The submitters understand that no formal executions under the death penalty have been carried out since 1997.
121.98 Finalize the abolition of the death penalty (Ukraine); Source of position: A/HRC/39/15	Rejected	B8 Human rights & counter-terrorism D51 Administration of justice & fair trial D25 Prohibition of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment A41 Constitutional and legislative framework S16 SDG 16 - peace, justice and strong institutions Affected persons: - general	Not implemented. The submitters are unaware of any revisions adopted to Law N°2014/028 on Repression of Acts of Terrorism. Military tribunals continue to be used and the death penalty remains in place with an estimated total of 220 people sentenced to death as of 30 August 2021. The submitters understand that no formal executions under the death penalty have been carried out since 1997.
Theme D51 Administration of justice & fair trial			
121.99 Improve the implementation of the right to a fair trial and access to justice (France); Source of position: A/HRC/39/15	Accepted	D51 Administration of justice & fair trial S16 SDG 16 - peace, justice and strong institutions Affected persons: - general	Not implemented. Journalists continue to be arrested and held incommunicado or arbitrarily. Journalists continue to experience lengthy pre-trial delays, and repeated delays or adjournments, during their trials and appeals. Journalists continue to be tried before military tribunals and not in civil courts in violation of international law.
121.100 Comply with procedural rights in trials, thus ensuring a fair trial for	Accepted	D51 Administration of justice & fair trial B8 Human rights & counter-terrorism	Not implemented. Journalists continue to be arrested and held incommunicado or

<p>everyone, also in cases of alleged terrorism (Germany); Source of position: A/HRC/39/15</p>		<p>D25 Prohibition of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment S16 SDG 16 - peace, justice and strong institutions</p> <p>Affected persons: - general</p>	<p>arbitrarily, for cases of alleged terrorism and anti-state charges. Journalists continue to experience lengthy pre-trial delays, and repeated delays or adjournments, during their trials and appeals. Journalists continue to be tried before military tribunals and not in civil courts in violation of international law.</p>
<p>121.101 Consider reasonable time frames for preventive detention (France); Source of position: A/HRC/39/15</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>D51 Administration of justice & fair trial B8 Human rights & counter-terrorism S16 SDG 16 - peace, justice and strong institutions</p> <p>Affected persons: - general</p>	<p>Not implemented. Journalists continue to be arrested and held incommunicado or arbitrarily for lengthy periods of time prior to trial.</p>
<p>121.102 Combat impunity by undertaking prompt, independent, effective and impartial investigations into allegations of human rights violations and crimes under international law by those held to account in accordance with international fair trial standards and the rule of law and without recourse to the death penalty, and ensure redress for victims (New Zealand); Source of position: A/HRC/39/15</p>	<p>Rejected</p>	<p>D51 Administration of justice & fair trial B8 Human rights & counter-terrorism D25 Prohibition of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment B52 Impunity S16 SDG 16 - peace, justice and strong institutions</p> <p>Affected persons: - law enforcement / police officials</p>	<p>Not implemented. The government has opened investigations with respect to certain deaths of journalists in custody in Cameroon. However, it has not done so for all relevant deaths and arbitrary detentions. In addition, investigations have not been transparent, impartial, and independent.</p>
<p>121.103 Acknowledge and investigate credible allegations of human rights violations and abuses, and hold those responsible to account (United States of America); Source of position: A/HRC/39/15</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>D51 Administration of justice & fair trial B8 Human rights & counter-terrorism D25 Prohibition of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment B52 Impunity S16 SDG 16 - peace, justice and strong institutions</p>	<p>Partially implemented. The government has opened investigations with respect to certain deaths of journalists in Cameroon. However, it has not done so for all relevant deaths and arbitrary detentions. In addition, investigations have not been</p>

		Affected persons: - law enforcement / police officials	transparent, impartial, and independent.
121.108 Ensure that civilians are not tried by military courts (Poland); Source of position: A/HRC/39/15	Rejected	D51 Administration of justice & fair trial B8 Human rights & counter-terrorism D25 Prohibition of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment D26 Conditions of detention S16 SDG 16 - peace, justice and strong institutions Affected persons: - general - media - human rights defenders	Not implemented. Journalists continue to be tried before military tribunals and not in civil courts in violation of international law. While the government did release certain journalists tried by military tribunals from custody, no change was made to the underlying law that individuals facing terrorism or anti-state charges will be tried before military tribunals and not in civilian courts.
Theme: D25 Prohibition of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment			
121.106 Pursue efforts to prevent torture and to improve prison conditions (Morocco); Source of position: A/HRC/39/15	Accepted	D25 Prohibition of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment B8 Human rights & counter-terrorism D51 Administration of justice & fair trial D26 Conditions of detention S16 SDG 16 - peace, justice and strong institutions Affected persons: - general - law enforcement / police officials	Not implemented. Journalists have been tortured in custody and suffer from poor prison conditions.
121.107 Release all those arbitrarily detained, make every effort to ensure the human rights of prisoners and detainees are fully observed, and ensure an end to practices of torture and illegal detention (New Zealand); Source of position: A/HRC/39/15	Accepted	D25 Prohibition of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment B8 Human rights & counter-terrorism D51 Administration of justice & fair trial D26 Conditions of detention	Partially implemented. Although some journalists have been released by the government, arbitrary detention continues.

		<p>S16 SDG 16 - peace, justice and strong institutions</p> <p>Affected persons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - general - media -human rights defenders - law enforcement / police officials 	
<p>121.109 Put an end to incommunicado detention and ensure that no person is deprived of liberty in secret or placed in unofficial detention facilities (Republic of Korea);</p> <p>Source of position: A/HRC/39/15</p>	Noted	<p>D25 Prohibition of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment</p> <p>B8 Human rights & counter-terrorism</p> <p>D51 Administration of justice & fair trial</p> <p>D26 Conditions of detention</p> <p>S16 SDG 16 - peace, justice and strong institutions</p> <p>Affected persons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - general - media -human rights defenders - law enforcement / police officials 	<p>Not implemented.</p> <p>Journalists have been detained incommunicado and placed in unofficial detention facilities.</p>
<p>121.110 End the practice of incommunicado detention and ensure that no one is detained in a secret or officially unrecognized place, including unregistered military detention centres (Austria);</p> <p>Source of position: A/HRC/39/15</p>	Noted	<p>D25 Prohibition of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment</p> <p>B8 Human rights & counter-terrorism</p> <p>D51 Administration of justice & fair trial</p> <p>D26 Conditions of detention</p> <p>S16 SDG 16 - peace, justice and strong institutions</p> <p>Affected persons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - general - media -human rights defenders - law enforcement / police officials 	<p>Not implemented.</p> <p>Journalists have been detained incommunicado and placed in unofficial detention facilities.</p>

<p>121.111 Carry out investigations into alleged torture and ill-treatment of detained persons, ban incommunicado detention and enact laws aiming at the prevention of torture in places of detention (Czechia); Source of position: A/HRC/39/15</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>D25 Prohibition of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment B8 Human rights & counter-terrorism D51 Administration of justice & fair trial D26 Conditions of detention A41 Constitutional and legislative framework B52 Impunity S16 SDG 16 - peace, justice and strong institutions</p> <p>Affected persons: - general - media -human rights defenders - law enforcement / police officials</p>	<p>Not implemented. The government has opened investigations with respect to certain deaths of journalists in Cameroon. However, it has not done so for allegations of torture and ill-treatment of detained persons. To the submitters' knowledge, the government has not banned incommunicado detention or enacted laws to prevent torture in places of detention.</p>
<p>121.112 Investigate thoroughly all cases of the use of excessive force against demonstrators and participants in public gatherings, and all cases of torture and illegal detention by security forces (Poland); Source of position: A/HRC/39/15</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>D25 Prohibition of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment H1 Human Rights Defenders B8 Human rights & counter-terrorism D51 Administration of justice & fair trial D26 Conditions of detention B52 Impunity S16 SDG 16 - peace, justice and strong institutions</p> <p>Affected persons: - general - media -human rights defenders - law enforcement / police officials</p>	<p>Not implemented. The government has opened investigations with respect to certain deaths of journalists in Cameroon. However, it has not done so for cases of the use of excessive force against journalists or in cases of torture and illegal detention by security forces.</p>
<p>121.116 Investigate all reported cases of violations and abuses, and hold</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>D25 Prohibition of torture and cruel,</p>	<p>Partially implemented. The government has opened investigations</p>

<p>perpetrators to account in accordance with the rule of law, in the context of concerns raised about arbitrary arrests, excessive violence and extrajudicial executions by government forces, armed groups against members of the country's English-speaking minority, and allegations of torture of detainees suspected of belonging to terrorist groups (Slovakia); Source of position: A/HRC/39/15</p>		<p>inhuman or degrading treatment B8 Human rights & counter-terrorism D51 Administration of justice & fair trial D26 Conditions of detention B52 Impunity S16 SDG 16 - peace, justice and strong institutions</p> <p>Affected persons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - general - minorities/ racial, ethnic, linguistic, religious or descent-based groups - media -human rights defenders - law enforcement / police officials 	<p>with respect to certain deaths of journalists in Cameroon. However, it has not done so for all relevant deaths and arbitrary detentions. In addition, investigations have not been transparent, impartial, and independent.</p>
<p>121.117 Endeavour to end all use of arbitrary arrest and detention of citizens, and the use of torture and other cruel treatment (Botswana); Source of position: A/HRC/39/15</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>D25 Prohibition of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment B8 Human rights & counter-terrorism D51 Administration of justice & fair trial D26 Conditions of detention S16 SDG 16 - peace, justice and strong institutions</p> <p>Affected persons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - general - media -human rights defenders - law enforcement / police officials 	<p>Not implemented.</p> <p>The submitters are unaware of any activities endeavoring to end all use of arbitrary arrest and detention of citizens, the use of torture, and other cruel treatment. Journalists continue to be arbitrarily arrested and tortured in custody.</p>
<p>121.118 Release prisoners deprived of their liberty for peacefully protesting (Poland); Source of position: A/HRC/39/15</p>	<p>Noted</p>	<p>D25 Prohibition of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment D43 Freedom of opinion and expression</p>	<p>Partially implemented.</p> <p>The government did release certain journalists tried by military tribunals from custody, however many other prisoners remain in custody,</p>

		<p>H1 Human Rights Defenders B8 Human rights & counter-terrorism D51 Administration of justice & fair trial S16 SDG 16 - peace, justice and strong institutions</p> <p>Affected persons: - general - media -human rights defenders</p>	
Theme: D26 Conditions of detention			
<p>121.104 Allow independent international and regional human rights investigators unhindered access to investigate and monitor human rights violations, including through unannounced inspection visits, to all places of detention (New Zealand); Source of position: A/HRC/39/15</p>	Noted	<p>D26 Conditions of detention D51 Administration of justice & fair trial D25 Prohibition of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment A61 Cooperation with civil society A12 Acceptance of international norms B52 Impunity S16 SDG 16 - peace, justice and strong institutions</p> <p>Affected persons: - general - media -human rights defenders - law enforcement / police officials</p>	<p>Not implemented. The submitters are unaware of any unhindered access which has been granted to human rights investigators to investigate and monitor human rights violations of journalists.</p>
<p>121.105 Take appropriate measures to align conditions of detention with international standards (Italy); Source of position: A/HRC/39/15</p>	Accepted	<p>D26 Conditions of detention D51 Administration of justice & fair trial D25 Prohibition of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment A41 Constitutional and legislative framework A12 Acceptance of international norms</p>	<p>Not implemented. The conditions of detention continue to violate international standards.</p>

		<p>S16 SDG 16 - peace, justice and strong institutions</p> <p>Affected persons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- general- media-human rights defenders- law enforcement / police officials	
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Annex 2

Timeline of Relevant Events

The following incidents were reported between 2018 and the date of this submission in April 2023. More details of these incidents can be found at: [insert primary sources – CPJ/FH].

Killing, abduction, and torture of journalists

2019

- August 3, 2019: Samuel Ajiekah Abuwe (also known as Samuel Wazizi) was arrested in retaliation for his critical coverage of the government’s activities in Anglophone Cameroon, and was accused of having connections with armed separatists.¹²⁶ According to the Ministry of Defense, Wazizi died in government custody 15 days after his arrest in 2019 from severe sepsis.¹²⁷ It is alleged he was tortured by security forces.¹²⁸

2020

- June 3, 2020: Denis Nkwebo, the president of the Cameroon Trade Union of Journalists, issued news reports and tweets alleging that Samuel Wazizi died at a military hospital at an unspecified date after being tortured by security forces.¹²⁹ Subsequent reports indicate that Wazizi died in August 2019.¹³⁰
- June 5, 2020: The French Ambassador to Cameroon stated that President Biya promised to open an investigation into Samuel Wazizi’s death.¹³¹
- September 3, 2020: The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Cameroon to the United Nations indicated that an investigation would be launched into Samuel Wazizi’s death.¹³²
- September 2020: No progress apparently had been made on the investigation into Samuel Wazizi’s death.¹³³

2021

- March 13, 2021: Gunmen presumed to be separatists abducted Ayiseh Bonyui Fame, a journalist assigned to the CRTV station in Buea, the Southwest Region. A video that was widely circulated on social media featured Ayiseh pleading for her life while in captivity at knifepoint at an unknown location. Ayiseh was eventually released on the night of March 14 after her family paid part of the ransom amount requested.¹³⁴
- September 2021: Philosophy professor Fridolin Nke, who had recently published a book criticizing the Biya government, was detained by military security forces in September 2021 but quickly released; Nke reported being tortured while in custody.¹³⁵
- December 2021: Although Wazizi was officially pronounced dead in June 2020, and despite the French Ambassador to Cameroon’s statement that President Biya promised to open an investigation into his death, there has been no credible or transparent investigation into his death in custody.¹³⁶ As of March 2023, a family spokesperson confirmed with CPJ that Wazizi’s family has still been unable to see or recover his remains, over two and a half years after his death was announced.¹³⁷

2023

- January 17, 2023: Unidentified men abducted Martinez Zogo, editor-in-chief of the privately owned radio broadcaster Amplitude FM, near his home in the capital city of Yaoundé, after Zogo commented on alleged embezzlement in public-sector procurement that benefitted a prominent businessman and media owner, Jean-Pierre Amougou Belinga. The attackers chased Zogo to the gate of the local gendarmerie office near the journalist's home, where he had sought help.¹³⁸
- January 22, 2023: Martinez Zogo's mutilated body was found on January 22, 2023; Cameroonian authorities announced the same day that they had begun an investigation to find the perpetrators and hold them accountable.¹³⁹
- February 2, 2023: In a statement published on social media, Ferdinand Ngoh Ngoh, the secretary general of Cameroon's presidency, announced that investigations into the death of Martinez Zogo led to the arrest of several individuals "highly suspected of being involved in this heinous crime," and that others remain wanted. According to the same news reports, the investigations led to the recent arrests of Léopold Maxime Eko Eko, head of the General Directorate of External Intelligence (DGRE), and Justin Danwe, director of operations at the DGRE.¹⁴⁰
- February 6, 2023: Cameroonian police arrested Jean-Pierre Amougou Belinga and two of his associates in connection to the investigation into the murder of Martinez Zogo. In his reporting, Zogo had alleged that Belinga, a businessman and media owner, was involved in a public embezzlement scheme.¹⁴¹
- March 3, 2023: Jean-Pierre Amougou Belinga has been provisionally charged with complicity in torture and is now in six-month pre-trial detention in Kondengui Principal Prison.¹⁴² The next stage is for the examining magistrate to investigate independently and decide whether to proceed to trial on this charge, or amend the charge or even discharge him.
 - Among the more than 20 other accused sent to Kondengui alongside Amougou Belinga are Leopold Maxime Eko Eko, head of the General Directorate for External Research (similar to the FBI), and its director of operations Justin Danwe. Eko Eko was charged with negligence in service and violation of instructions, while Danwe and other accomplices, were charged with kidnap and torture.
 - Nsoe and Bidjang were granted conditional bail to appear before the military tribunal whenever summoned.
 - At least 12 others detained in connection with the journalist's murder were released without charge.

Physical attacks and harassment of journalists

2018

- Fall 2018: Mimi Mefo, the head of English news and a presenter for privately owned Equinox television and radio station, and runner of her own news website Mimi Mefo Info, reported that threats against her related to her reporting had increased in recent months leading up to her November 2018 arrest, including social media accounts posting and

sharing menacing messages and images, identifying Mefo as a female journalist and threatening violence and even murder.¹⁴³

2019

- February 2019: Paul Chouta, a journalist covering politics, corruption, local news, and human rights for independent news website *Cameroon Web* and the Facebook news page *Le TGV de l'info*, was physically attacked outside his home by suspected government agents and received anonymous threats for months leading up to his May 2019 arrest.¹⁴⁴

2021

- March 13, 2021: Gunmen presumed to be separatists abducted Ayiseh Bonyui Fame, a journalist assigned to the CRTV station in Buea, the Southwest Region. A video that was widely circulated on social media featured Ayiseh pleading for her life while in captivity at knifepoint at an unknown location. Ayiseh was eventually released on the night of March 14 after her family paid part of the ransom amount requested.¹⁴⁵
- April 29, 2021: The private daily newspaper *Le Jour* reported that Yaounde V municipal police members assaulted two reporters from Canal 2 International while they were covering a protest by commercial bike riders. According to media reports, the Yaounde V police severely beat Canal 2 cameraman Bertrand Tchasse, seized and destroyed his working equipment, and threatened to kill him. Other team members, including a driver and a reporter, were threatened. A government spokesperson said Tchasse's work equipment was seized because the journalists were encouraging motorbike riders to be disorderly in order to record additional footage for their report.¹⁴⁶
- September 2021: Philosophy professor Fridolin Nke, who had recently published a book criticizing the Biya government, was detained by military security forces in September 2021 but quickly released; Nke reported being tortured while in custody.¹⁴⁷

2022

- March 2022: Paul Chouta was watching the UEFA Champions League soccer game between Real Madrid and Paris St. Germain with friends in a snack bar in the Damas district of Yaounde when three unidentified men in a green pick-up truck abducted the journalist, drove him to the outskirts of the city, and viciously kicked and beat him with stones, bricks, a baton and a whip.¹⁴⁸
- May 18, 2022: Eyong Macdella Bessong, a reporter for pan-African privately owned sports news website *kick442.com*, was accosted and dragged away from the main pitch minutes before the opening whistle by Njonje Mbua, the Molyko Omnisport Stadium's director, because she could not produce a hard copy of her press accreditation and only had a digital one on her cell phone.¹⁴⁹

2023

- January 17, 2023: Unidentified men abducted Martinez Zogo, chasing him to the gate of the local gendarmerie office near the journalist's home, where he had sought help.¹⁵⁰ Zogo's mutilated body was found on January 22, 2023; Cameroonian authorities announced the same day that they had begun an investigation to find the perpetrators and hold them accountable.¹⁵¹

Imprisonment of journalists

2018

- March 20, 2018: Akumbom Elvis McCarthy was arrested on March 20, 2018 while he filmed police allegedly harassing taxi drivers and commuters in Bamenda.¹⁵² McCarthy was detained by judicial police in Bamenda for three weeks before appearing before a military tribunal on charges of attempted secession and disseminating secessionist propaganda on air.¹⁵³
- April 10, 2018: Ahmed Abba, a Radio France Internationale correspondent who had been arrested on July 30, 2015 in Maroua and charged under Cameroon's Law N°2014/028 on Repression of Acts of Terrorism, was convicted by a military tribunal after nearly two years in custody of "non-denunciation of terrorism" and "laundering of the proceeds of terrorist acts" and sentenced to 10 years in prison.¹⁵⁴ Abba was reportedly detained incommunicado for at least three months after his arrest, and was beaten with machetes and sticks by members of the intelligence agency.¹⁵⁵
- April 10, 2018: A military tribunal ruled that McCarthy be detained in Bamenda Central Prison for a renewable six-month period while police investigate the allegations against him.¹⁵⁶ McCarthy was then detained for 7 months without trial before being charged.¹⁵⁷
- May 15, 2018: Wawa Jackson Nfor, who worked for local broadcaster Abakwa FM before starting his own Facebook and text message-based news service, Wawanews, and contributing to local news websites like *Hilltopnews*, was arrested without a warrant by National gendarmerie officers when returning to Bamenda.¹⁵⁸ Nfor was reportedly detained by the gendarmerie brigade in Nkambe, the capital of Donga-Matung, and interrogated by Patrick Engola, the district officer for Nkambe central district, who accused Nfor of published unfavorable news about his administration.¹⁵⁹ Nfor faced charges of publishing secessionist information (related to his journalism) and threatening the life of a prominent local ruling party politician and businessman, Ngala Gerard (though the threat charge was later dropped).¹⁶⁰
- May 25, 2018: Mancho Bibixy was sentenced by a military court in Yaoundé, Cameroon's capital, to 15 years in prison on anti-state and false news charges: terrorism, secession, hostility to the fatherland, spreading false information, revolution, insurrection, rebellion, and contempt for civil servants.¹⁶¹
 - Thomas Awah was sentenced to 11 years in prison for terrorism, hostility to the fatherland, secession, revolution, insurrection, spreading false news, and contempt for civil authority.¹⁶²
 - Tsi Conrad, a freelance journalist who had been arrested at gunpoint on December 8, 2016 by at least 10 military officers while filming a rally of the ruling Cameroon People's Democratic Movement that had turned violent.¹⁶³ Conrad was transferred to Yaoundé and detained without outside contact for two weeks at the Directorate for Territorial Surveillance, the police's secretive intelligence arm.¹⁶⁴
- September 17, 2018: Following a viral social media campaign, Thomas Awah was admitted to the hospital and treated for chronic tuberculosis and pneumonia, but was discharged from the hospital and returned to prison after only 16 days because of mounting hospital bills.¹⁶⁵

- October 23, 2018: Michel Biem Tong, editor of the privately owned *Hurinews* website, was detained without any charges after being summoned to the State Secretariat for Defense in Yaoundé following publishing articles criticizing the government's handling of grievances of Anglophones leading up to Oct. 7 presidential elections.¹⁶⁶ Tong had reportedly received repeated calls from Cameroonian military official Colonel Joel Emile Bamkouli to present himself to the State Secretariat for Defense in relation to an alleged audio recording in which Tong expressed sympathies toward Anglophone separatists (which Tong denied having made).¹⁶⁷ Tong was reportedly not granted access to a lawyer, but was charged by a military tribunal on Nov. 15 with apologizing for terrorism, fake declarations, and outrage to the head of state.¹⁶⁸ On December 15, 2018, Tong was released following a presidential pardon (along with 289 prisoners who had been arrested and held in Military Tribunals).¹⁶⁹
- October 31, 2018: Mimi Mefo was summoned to appear before the national gendarmerie in Douala, the capital of Cameroon's Littoral region, on November 5, 2018 as part of a false news and cybercrime investigation, following her active reporting about political unrest in Cameroon's Anglophone region.¹⁷⁰
- November 7, 2018: Mimi Mefo was questioned for several hours, charged with "publishing and propagating information that infringes on the territorial integrity of the Republic of Cameroon," arrested, taken to the central New Bell prison in Douala, and scheduled to appear before a military tribunal on November 12, 2018.¹⁷¹ Mefo was released on Nov. 10, 2018 and charges were dropped on Nov. 12, 2018.¹⁷²
- December 2018: Cameroon jailed the second highest number of journalists (4) on charges of false news, behind only Egypt.¹⁷³ Cameroon was the sixth-worst jailer of journalists in the world, with eight.¹⁷⁴

2019

- January 28, 2019: Théodore Tchopa and David Eyengue Nzima, journalists with the privately owned daily newspaper *Le Jour*, were arrested and detained at a house where opposition leader Maurice Kamto and opposition activists were also arrested, after covering an opposition gathering in Douala.¹⁷⁵ Tchopa and Nzima were released without charge on February 1, 2019.¹⁷⁶
- May 28, 2019: Paul Chouta was arrested in Yaoundé on May 28, 2019 by plainclothes officers following a defamation complaint from French-Cameroonian writer Calixthe Beyala.¹⁷⁷
- May 31, 2019: CPJ and eight other civil society organizations wrote a letter to the UN Security Council ahead of the June 2019 briefing of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) describing the increasing humanitarian and human rights crisis in the Anglophone Northwest and Southwest regions of Cameroon, citing the use of torture and incommunicado detention, the detention of Journalists (at least four of whom were behind bars at the time in relation to their reporting on the crisis), and ongoing threats of arrest and attack for members of the media.¹⁷⁸
- July 22, 2019: Following a protest by inmates at the Kondengui Central Prison over prison conditions, Mancho Bibixy was sentenced for an additional two years to run concurrently with his original sentence for group rebellion;¹⁷⁹ Bibixy appealed, but the judgment was rendered in French on October 9, 2020 and an English judgment had not been provided to defendants or their lawyers as of October 2022.¹⁸⁰

- Thomas Awah was sentenced for an additional three years to run concurrently with his original sentence for group rebellion, destruction of property, and resistance to the administrative order.¹⁸¹
- Tsi Conrad was sentenced to 15 years in prison by a military court in Yaoundé for terrorism, secession, hostility against the state, contempt for civil authority, rebellion, and spreading false news, including by electronic means.¹⁸²
- August 2, 2019: Samuel Wazizi was arrested and held at the Muea police station before being transferred to the military and held in Buea without access to his lawyer or family.¹⁸³ Wazizi's lawyer filed a Habeas Corpus Application on August 13, 2019, but it was dismissed on Nov. 5, 2019. Wazizi later was reported to have died in custody.¹⁸⁴
- October 28, 2019: CPJ and 64 other civil society organizations joined at open letter calling on the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) to address serious and systematic human rights violations in Cameroon, including the jailing of journalists (at that time including Paul Chouta, Mancho Bibixy, Tsi Conrad, Thomas Awah Junior, Amadou Vamoulke, Wawa Jackson Nfor, and Samuel Wazizi).¹⁸⁵
- November 7, 2019: Adalbert Hiol, publisher of the privately owned *Ades-Infos Jeunesse en Action* newspaper, was detained after he responded to a summons, on charges of false news, defamation, and insult stemming from an April 2, 2019 defamation complaint filed by Louis Richard Njock, the director of a regional hospital in Edea, regarding 2017 and 2018 articles by Hiol regarding Njock's management of the hospital.¹⁸⁶ The warrant ordering Hiol's detention stated that he should be held until May 8, 2020; Hiol was found guilty of those charges on December 27, 2019 and sentenced to 18 months in prison.¹⁸⁷ Hiol appealed his conviction on December 30, 2019, but the appeal was delayed because of COVID.¹⁸⁸
- December 1, 2019: There were at least 73 journalists in prisons in Africa, including seven in Cameroon.¹⁸⁹

2020

- January 17, 2020: Martinez Zogo was arrested by judicial police officers in Yaoundé and charged with criminal defamation following a complaint filed by Sylvie Biye Essono, the ex-wife of a government official,¹⁹⁰ but was later released.
- April 2020: Journalist Sébastien Ebala was arrested in April 2020 and sentenced in September 2021 to two years in prison for "contempt" of the president after stating publicly that President Biya should leave power while advocating for an antigovernment march.¹⁹¹
- April 29, 2020: The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention issued its opinions that the deprivation of liberty of Amadou Vamoulké – who had been arrested on July 29, 2016 allegedly in connection with proceedings instituted against him for the misappropriation of public funds and held in pretrial detention because he allegedly had no known address (despite reportedly having such an address) – being in contravention of Articles 9, 10 and 11 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Articles 9 and 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, is arbitrary and falls within categories I and III. The Working Group requested the Government of Cameroon to take the steps necessary to remedy the situation of Mr. Vamoulké without delay and to bring it into conformity with the

relevant international norms, specifically by releasing Mr. Vamoulké immediately and to accord him an enforceable right to compensation and other reparations.¹⁹²

- May 15, 2020: Freelance journalist Kingsley Fomunyuy Njoka was arrested and allegedly held in arbitrary detention, which the Government of Cameroon contests stating instead that he was suspected of being the coordinator of the operation of several *WhatsApp* pro-secessionist groups including one (BUI WARRIORS Group).¹⁹³
- June 3, 2020: Denis Nkwebo, the president of the Cameroon Trade Union of Journalists, issued news reports and tweets alleging that Samuel Wazizi died at a military hospital at an unspecified date after being tortured by security forces.¹⁹⁴ Subsequent reports indicate that he died in August 2019.¹⁹⁵
- June 12, 2020: Kingsley Fomunyuy Njoka was transferred to Kondengui Central Prison where he remained while his case before a military tribunal was pending and subject to repeated postponements.¹⁹⁶ Since his transfer he has been denied access to counsel for most of 2021.
- August 17, 2020: Six armed men in plainclothes arrested Mbombog Mbog Matip, director of the privately owned *CliMat Social* newspaper who also posts political commentary on Facebook. Matip was held at the State Secretariat for Defense (SED) until September 7, 2020.¹⁹⁷
- September 7, 2020: Mbombog Matip was brought before a military court judge and charged with “propagation of false news,” and ordered to be detained until March 7, 2021.¹⁹⁸

2021

- August 19, 2021: After repeated delays, a military appeals tribunal overturned Thomas Awah’s convictions for terrorism and rebellion charges but upheld the others, maintaining the original 11-year sentence but dropping certain fines.¹⁹⁹
- September 2021: Philosophy professor Fridolin Nke, who had recently published a book criticizing the Biya government, was detained by military security forces in September 2021 but quickly released; Nke reported being tortured while in custody.²⁰⁰
- October 2021: According to one of Kingsley Fomunyuy Njoka’s lawyers, the matter was still before the government commissioner at the Military Tribunal, and Njoka’s six-month preventive custody had been extended.²⁰¹

2022

- February 3, 2022: The Committee to Protect Journalists joined 26 other civil society organizations in calling on President Paul Biya to release all those arbitrarily detained in Cameroon for acts of free expression, including at least four journalists. The letter states that over 100 people have been detained, most for more than a year, and some for over five years, for simply “peacefully exercising their human rights.”²⁰²
- February 22, 2022: The national gendarmerie arrested Malcom Barnabe Paho, director of the newspaper *Midi Libre Hebdo*; opened a criminal defamation case against him; and detained him for two days in the capital Yaoundé, following a complaint filed by Boba Denis, a pastor who heads the Africa Life World Mission church, an international religious organization.²⁰³

- June 6, 2022: Kingsley Fomunyuy Njoka appeared before a military trial, but in repeated court appearances following that date, was not formally arraigned.²⁰⁴ The case has not made further progress since.
- December 1, 2022: There were five journalists imprisoned in Cameroon.²⁰⁵
- December 21, 2022: The special criminal court sentenced Amadou Vamouké to 12 years in prison and 47 million FCFA (US\$76,000) in fines for alleged embezzlement.²⁰⁶

Incommunicado holding, lengthy pre-trial and arbitrary detention of journalists

2018

- April 10, 2018: Ahmed Abba, who had been arrested on July 30, 2015 in Maroua and charged under Cameroon’s Law N°2014/028 on Repression of Acts of Terrorism, was convicted by a military tribunal of “non-denunciation of terrorism” and “laundering of the proceeds of terrorist acts” and sentenced to 10 years in prison.²⁰⁷ Abba was reportedly detained incommunicado for at least three months after his arrest, and was beaten with machetes and sticks by members of the intelligence agency.²⁰⁸
 - Akumbom McCarthy had his first military hearing on April 10, 2018, and was then detained for seven months without trial before being charged on September 3, 2018 with attempted secession, illegal monitoring of military activity in Bamenda, and propagating false information.²⁰⁹
- May 18, 2018: Wawa Jackson Nfor first attended a hearing on May 18, 2018 and was formally arraigned and pleaded not guilty on August 20, 2018, but his trial was repeatedly delayed until his release on February 20, 2021.²¹⁰
- May 25, 2018: Tsi Conrad was sentenced by a military tribunal after his trial was adjourned at least 16 times and dragged on for more than a year.²¹¹
- September 3, 2018: Akumbom McCarthy was detained for seven months without trial before being charged with attempted secession, illegal monitoring of military activity in Bamenda, and propagating false information.²¹² McCarthy was released on December 4, 2018 without being sentenced.

2019

- June 3, 2019: Paul Chouta was first brought to court on June 3, 2019 and returned on June 10, 2019, when he was formally charged with defamation and false news, but his trial was repeatedly delayed and/or restarted between June 2019 and his eventual release in May 2021.²¹³ Chouta was detained in Kondengui Central Prison for nearly two years, from the time of his arrest and the conclusion of his trial.²¹⁴
- July 2019: Following a protest by inmates at the Kondengui Central Prison over prison conditions, Mancho Bibixy, Tsi Conrad, and several other prisoners were transferred to the Special Operations Group in Yaoundé and later to the State Secretariat for Defense, where they were held incommunicado for weeks and reportedly beaten.²¹⁵
- August 6, 2019: Following Samuel Wazizi’s August 2, 2019 arrest, his lawyer was informed on August 6, 2019 that Wazizi would be transferred to the judicial police, the competent

authority to investigate, but was instead transferred on August 7, 2019 to the military's 21st Motorized Infantry Battalion in Buea, where he was held incommunicado. Wazizi may have been transferred to the State Defense Secretariat in Yaoundé, but that was unconfirmed.²¹⁶

Prosecution of journalists in military court

2018

- April 10, 2018: Akumbom McCarthy was detained by judicial police in Bamenda for three weeks before appearing before a military tribunal on charges of attempted secession and disseminating secessionist propaganda on air; the military tribunal ruled that McCarthy be detained in Bamenda Central Prison for a renewable six-month period while police investigated the allegations.²¹⁷
- May 10, 2018: Ahmed Abba was convicted by a military tribunal of “non-denunciation of terrorism” and “laundering of the proceeds of terrorist acts” and sentenced to 10 years in prison.²¹⁸
- May 25, 2018: Mancho Bibixy was sentenced by a military court in Yaoundé to 15 years in prison on anti-state and false news charges: terrorism, secession, hostility to the fatherland, spreading false information, revolution, insurrection, rebellion, and contempt for civil servants.²¹⁹ Bibixy's appeal before a military tribunal faced delays.²²⁰
 - Tsi Conrad was sentenced to 15 years in prison by a military court in Yaoundé for terrorism, secession, hostility against the state, contempt for civil authority, rebellion, and spreading false news, including by electronic means.²²¹
 - Thomas Awah was sentenced to 11 years in prison for terrorism, hostility to the fatherland, secession, revolution, insurrection, spreading false news, and contempt for civil authority.²²²
- November 7, 2018: Mimi Mefo was questioned for several hours, charged with “publishing and propagating information that infringes on the territorial integrity of the Republic of Cameroon,” arrested, taken to the central New Bell prison in Douala, and scheduled to appear before a military tribunal on November 12, 2018.²²³
- November 15, 2018: Michel Biem Tong was reportedly not granted access to a lawyer, but was charged by a military tribunal with apologizing for terrorism, fake declarations, and outrage to the head of state.²²⁴

2019

- August 6, 2019: Following Samuel Wazizi's August 2, 2019 arrest, his lawyer was informed on August 6, 2019 that Wazizi would be transferred to the judicial police, the competent authority to investigate, but was instead transferred on August 7, 2019 to the military's 21st Motorized Infantry Battalion in Buea, where he was held incommunicado. Wazizi may have been transferred to the State Defense Secretariat in Yaoundé, but that was unconfirmed.²²⁵

2020

- May 15, 2020: Freelance journalist Kingsley Fomunyuy Njoka was arrested and allegedly held in arbitrary detention, without access to his family or lawyer. The Cameroonian government

claims he was suspected of being the coordinator of the operation of several *WhatsApp* pro-secessionist groups including one (BUI WARRIORS Group).²²⁶

- June 12, 2020: Kingsley Fomunyuy Njoka was transferred to Kondengui Central Prison where he remained while his case before a military tribunal was pending and subject to repeated postponements.²²⁷ Since his transfer he has been denied access to counsel for most of 2021.
- August 17, 2020: Six armed men in plainclothes arrested Mbombog Mbog Matip, director of the privately owned CliMat Social newspaper who also posts political commentary on Facebook. Matip was held at the State Secretariat for Defense (SED) until September 7, 2020, when he was brought before a military court judge who charged him with “propagation of false news,” and ordered he be detained until March 7, 2021.²²⁸

2021

- August 19, 2021: A military appeals tribunal overturned Mancho Bibixy’s conviction on charges of terrorism and rebellion but upheld other charges and maintained the original 15-year sentence, but reduced certain fines. As of October 2022, a written judgment from the lower court had yet to be given to the defendants or their lawyer.²²⁹
 - After repeated delays, a military appeals tribunal overturned Thomas Awah’s convictions for terrorism and rebellion charges but upheld the others, maintaining the original 11-year sentence but dropping certain fines.²³⁰
 - Tsi Conrad was sentenced to 15 years in prison by a military court in Yaoundé for terrorism, secession, hostility against the state, contempt for civil authority, rebellion, and spreading false news, including by electronic means.²³¹

Denial to a right of fair trial and appeals process

2018

- May 18, 2018: Wawa Jackson Nfor first attended a hearing on May 18, 2018 and was formally arraigned and pleaded not guilty on August 20, 2018, but his trial was repeatedly delayed until his release on February 20, 2021.²³²

2019

- June 3, 2019: Paul Chouta was first brought to court on June 3, 2019 and returned on June 10, 2019, when he was formally charged, but his trial was repeatedly delayed and/or restarted between June 2019 and his release in May 2021.²³³ Chouta was detained in Kondengui Central Prison for nearly two years, from the time of his arrest and the conclusion of his trial.²³⁴
- August 3, 2019: Samuel Wazizi’s lawyer filed a habeas corpus petition. He received no response for three months, until the court dismissed it on a technicality.²³⁵
- November 7, 2019: Samuel Wazizi’s lawyer immediately filed a second habeas corpus petition. The hearing of this petition was repeatedly adjourned, primarily due to a failure by the court registry to serve the respondents in the matter.²³⁶

- December 30, 2019: Adalbert Hiol appealed his December 27, 2019 conviction and 18-month sentence, but the appeal was delayed because of COVID.²³⁷

2020

- April 30, 2020: The presiding judge eventually heard Samuel Wazizi's matter on the merits, but the respondents failed to attend the proceedings, despite having appeared and heard the court schedule the hearing earlier in the week.²³⁸

Criminal defamation legislation

2019

- May 28, 2019: Paul Chouta was arrested in Yaoundé on May 28, 2019 by plainclothes officers following a defamation complaint from French-Cameroonian writer Calixthe Beyala.²³⁹
- November 7, 2019: Adalbert Hiol was detained after he responded to a summons on charges of false news, defamation, and insult stemming from an April 2, 2019 defamation complaint filed by Louis Richard Njock, the director of a regional hospital in Edea, regarding 2017 and 2018 articles by Hiol regarding Njock's management of the hospital.²⁴⁰ Hiol was found guilty of those charges on December 27, 2019 and sentenced to 18 months in prison.²⁴¹

2020

- January 17, 2020: Martinez Zogo was arrested by judicial police officers in Yaoundé and charged with criminal defamation following a complaint filed by Sylvie Biye Essono, the ex-wife of a government official.²⁴²

2022

- February 22, 2022: The national gendarmerie arrested Malcom Barnabe Paho, director of the newspaper Midi Libre Hebdo; opened a criminal defamation case against him; and detained him for two days in the capital Yaoundé, following a complaint filed by Boba Denis, a pastor who heads the Africa Life World Mission church, an international religious organization.²⁴³

Invocation of anti-terror law and anti-state charges against journalists

2018

- April 10, 2018: Ahmed Abba was convicted by a military tribunal of "non-denunciation of terrorism" and "laundering of the proceeds of terrorist acts" and sentenced to 10 years in prison.²⁴⁴
- April 10, 2018: Akumbom McCarthy was charged with attempted secession and disseminating secessionist propaganda on air, and a military tribunal ruled that McCarthy be detained in Bamenda Central Prison for a renewable six-month period while police investigate the allegations.²⁴⁵ McCarthy was then detained for 7 months without trial before being charged on September 3, 2018 with attempted secession, illegal monitoring of military activity in Bamenda, and propagating false information.²⁴⁶

- May 25, 2018: Mancho Bibixy was sentenced by a military court in Yaoundé, Cameroon’s capital, to 15 years in prison on anti-state and false news charges: specifically terrorism, secession, hostility to the fatherland, spreading false information, revolution, insurrection, rebellion, and contempt for civil servants.²⁴⁷
 - Tsi Conrad was sentenced to 15 years in prison by a military court in Yaoundé for terrorism, secession, hostility against the state, contempt for civil authority, rebellion, and spreading false news, including by electronic means.²⁴⁸
 - Thomas Awah was sentenced to 11 years in prison for terrorism, hostility to the fatherland, secession, revolution, insurrection, spreading false news, and contempt for civil authority.²⁴⁹
- November 15, 2018: Michel Biem Tong was reportedly not granted access to a lawyer, but was charged by a military tribunal with apologizing for terrorism, fake declarations, and outrage to the head of state.²⁵⁰
- November 7, 2018: Mimi Mefo was questioned for several hours, charged with “publishing and propagating information that infringes on the territorial integrity of the Republic of Cameroon,” arrested, taken to the central New Bell prison in Douala, and scheduled to appear before a military tribunal on November 12, 2018.²⁵¹

2019

- June 3, 2019: Paul Chouta was first brought to court on June 3, 2019 and returned on June 10, 2019, when he was formally charged with defamation and false news.²⁵²
- August 2, 2019: Samuel Wazizi was accused of “collaborating with separatists” and “spreading separatist information,” and denied bail because his case related to potential charges under Law N°2014/028 on Repression of Acts of Terrorism, but no criminal charges were ever filed.²⁵³
- August 17, 2019: Colonel Serge Cyrille Atonfack alleged several months later that Wazizi was active in one of the several separatist groups operating in the South-West region and had been arrested under Law N°2014/028 on Repression of Acts of Terrorism, though due process was not followed, no criminal charges were ever filed, and no evidence was brought to court.²⁵⁴

2020

- May 15, 2020: Freelance journalist Kingsley Fomunyuy Njoka arrested and allegedly held in arbitrary detention, which the Government of Cameroon contests stating instead that he was suspected of being the coordinator of the operation of several *WhatsApp* pro-secessionist groups including one (BUI WARRIORS Group).²⁵⁵
- June 12, 2020: Kingsley Fomunyuy Njoka was transferred to Kondengui Central Prison where he remained while his case before a military tribunal was pending and subject to repeated postponements.²⁵⁶ Since his transfer he has been denied access to counsel for most of 2021.
- August 17, 2020: Six armed men in plainclothes arrested Mbombog Mbog Matip, director of the privately owned CliMat Social newspaper who also posts political commentary on Facebook. Matip was held at the State Secretariat for Defense (SED) until September 7.²⁵⁷

- September 7, 2020: When Mbombog Matip was brought before a military court judge, Misse Njone Jacques Baudouin, who charged him with “propagation of false news,” and ordered he be detained until March 7, 2021.²⁵⁸

2021

- August 19, 2021: After repeated delays, a military appeals tribunal overturned Awah’s convictions for terrorism and rebellion charges but upheld the others, maintaining the original 11-year sentence but dropping certain fines.²⁵⁹

Suspension of broadcasts and broadcast permissions, internet shutdown, and blocked access to social media, communication platforms, and journalism offices and studios

2018

- October 2017 - February 2018: The government ordered Internet service providers to shut down the Internet in the Anglophone areas and blocked social media networks in French-speaking regions. Internet services were cut off again for about 136 days, with negative impact on economic activity in the regions.²⁶⁰

2021

- 2021: Anecdotal reports indicated that the government monitored private online communications without appropriate legal authority.²⁶¹
- April 19, 2021: Pro-government private television channel Vision 4 produced a report on J. Remy Ngonu, a Cameroonian journalist who lived in France and participated in the Radio Foot International program on Radio France International. In the report Raoul Christophe Bia questioned Remy Ngonu’s sexual orientation. Using photoshopped pictures as evidence, Christophe Bia explicitly compared Ngonu to an animal. On September 16, Vision 4 television channel again featured the derogatory imagery in another report. Some observers believed the questioning of Ngonu’s sexual orientation and the photoshopped images were in response to Ngonu’s criticism of the government.²⁶²
- July 5, 2021: At a meeting for its 28th Extraordinary Session, the National Communication Council sanctioned three journalists for what they deemed to be unprofessional conduct. The sanctions ranged from suspensions for one to six months and a warning. Stive Jocelyn Ngo, a DBS TV journalist, received a 30-day suspension for publishing unsubstantiated and “offensive” information concerning the president of France on April 21 during the program DBS Martin. Sismondi Barkev Bidjocka, publisher of Ris Radio, received a one-month suspension for “insufficient investigation” leading to the broadcast of unsubstantiated and “offensive” information against parliamentarian Cabral Libii. The publisher insinuated that Cabral was engaged in some malfeasance involving the procurement of public contracts for private gain related to the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. Nynanssi Nkouya, publisher of Confidence Magazine, received a six-month suspension for publishing a flyer containing “offensive” information concerning Senator Sylvester Nghouchinghe.²⁶³

2022

- April 1, 2022: The National Communication Council media regulator announced that Equinoxe TV CEO Séverin Tchounkeu and editor-in-chief and presenter Cédric Noufele were

both suspended from working as journalists for one month, and that the outlet's "Droit de Réponse" ("Right of Reply") program was barred from airing during that time.²⁶⁴

Annex 3
Committee to Protect Journalists Memo on
Press Freedom and Safety of Journalists in Cameroon

March 6, 2023

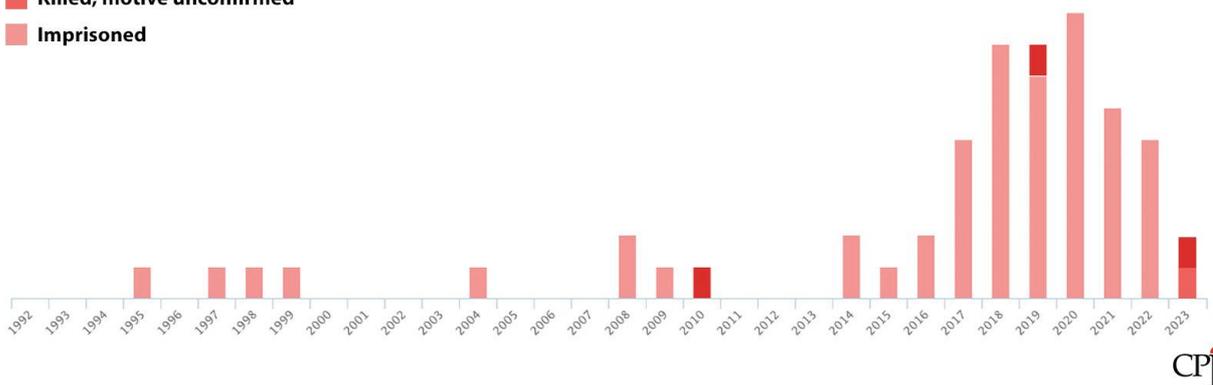


Press Freedom and Safety of Journalists in Cameroon

26 Journalists Attacked in Cameroon

between 1992 and 2023

- Killed, motive confirmed
- Killed, motive unconfirmed
- Imprisoned



Background: Press freedom and journalists’ safety in Cameroon has been in decline for more than a decade. Journalists are routinely detained, attacked, censored, and imprisoned on anti-state, criminal defamation, false news, and/or retaliatory charges, as [documented](#) by the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ). Several journalists have been forced into exile, two journalists have died in government custody under suspicious circumstances since 2010, and, most recently, prominent journalist [Martinez Zogo](#) was murdered in January 2023. In addition, CPJ continues to investigate the deaths of two other journalists to determine whether those were connected to their journalism.

Imprisonment of Journalists

- Cameroon has appeared consistently on CPJ’s [annual prison census](#) since 2014, and it is among the worst jailers of journalists in Africa, behind Egypt and Eritrea, with the third highest number of journalists in jail as of December 1, 2022.
- After Egypt and Eritrea, Cameroon also jails journalists the longest, dating back to mid-2016 and early 2017, including using lengthy pre-trial and arbitrary detention, where journalists have been held incommunicado, and convictions by military courts, among other serious violations of fair trial and due process rights.

- Four of the imprisoned journalists - [Tsi Conrad](#), [Mancho Bibixy](#), [Thomas Awah](#), and [Kingsley Njoka](#) - are in jail on anti-state charges in connection to the ongoing Anglophone conflict that has pitted separatists in the English-speaking regions of Cameroon against the forces of the majority French-speaking government.
- Conrad, Bibixy, and Awah have appealed their convictions by a military tribunal, but this process has stalled, ostensibly due to administrative delays.
- Njoka was held in pre-trial detention for more than two years and appeared before a military court late last year. In January 2023, a judge presiding over his case ruled that a new panel must be constituted, requiring Njoka's case to start over while he remains in detention.
- [Amadou Vamoulke](#), a 73-year-old journalist who is in poor health, was sentenced to [12 years in prison](#) in December 2022. CPJ believes Vamoulke was targeted for his independent management of the state broadcaster, Cameroon Radio Television (CRTV).

Killing of Journalists

- [Martinez Zogo](#) was abducted, tortured, and brutally murdered in January 2023.
- [Samuel Wazizi](#) was held incommunicado and died in government custody in August 2019, a fact that was only announced by the Cameroonian government in June 2020.
- [Bibi Ngota](#) died in government custody in 2010 from “abandonment, improper care” and the authorities’ “failure to render assistance,” according to a medical report. An opaque government inquiry absolved authorities of any responsibility, and claimed the journalist had died of HIV complications, a claim disputed by his widow.
- [Jean-Jacques Ola Bebe](#) was found murdered on February 2 in Yaounde. CPJ continues to investigate whether the motive for his killing is related to his journalism.
- [Jules Koum Koum](#), an investigative journalist, died in a car accident on November 4, 2011. CPJ is investigating whether Koum’s death is related to his journalism amid heightened speculation that he was [murdered](#) for his reporting on corruption following the [recent conviction](#) of a former defense minister, whom he had exposed at the time.

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¹ DISCLAIMER: ABA CHR staff have contributed to the drafting of the report and it reflects their own views. It has not been reviewed or approved by the House of Delegates or the Board of Governors of the American Bar Association and, therefore, should not be construed as representing the policy of the American Bar Association as a whole.

² The submitters define “journalists” as people who cover news or comment on public affairs in print, in photographs, on radio, on television, or online. Writers, editors, publishers, producers, technicians, photographers, camera operators, and directors of news organizations are all included. See Committee to Protect Journalists, “Frequently Asked Questions”, available at: <https://cpj.org/about/faq/>.

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