



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Centre for Human Rights
Faculty of Law

PRESS STATEMENT

CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS STUDENTS HOLD MEETING WITH CAMEROONIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER TO SOUTH AFRICA ON HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING REGIONS OF CAMEROON

3 June 2021

On Friday 28 May 2021, a delegation of students on the [Human Rights and Democratisation in Africa](#) (HRDA) Programme at the Centre for Human Rights, Faculty of Law, University of Pretoria, met with the Cameroonian High Commissioner to South Africa, HE Mr Anu'a-Gheyle Solomon. This meeting was held under the auspices of a three-week campaign dubbed [#StopCameroonViolations](#). The HRDA students relaunched this campaign on 22 May 2021 in response to the escalating conflict in Cameroon which started as a conflict over cultural rights and identity in the English-speaking regions.

The crisis particularly assumed tragic dimensions following the declaration of independence of a new state of 'Ambazonia' in October 2017, with reports of blatant disregard for international human rights and humanitarian principles by both state and non-state actors. The [#StopCameroonViolations](#) campaign thus seeks to buttress past and ongoing responses to this crisis at the regional and international levels.

In their presentation to the High Commissioner, the HRDA delegation noted their concerns and called on the Cameroonian government to take meaningful steps to end the Anglophone crisis. The concerns raised included:

- The continuous violence which has so far claimed the lives of thousands of Cameroonians in the two English-speaking regions of Cameroon;
- The increased cases of extrajudicial and summary executions, murders, assassinations, enforced disappearances, arson, torture, arbitrary arrest and detention of civilians, religious

Centre for Human Rights
Faculty of Law,
University of Pretoria,
Pretoria, 0002, South Africa

Tel +27 (0)12 420 3810
Fax +27 (0)12 362 1525
Email chr@up.ac.za
Web www.chr.up.ac.za



authorities, journalists and human rights defenders for unfounded claims of supporting the separatist movements in the North-West and South-West regions;

- Violent attacks on public institutions such as hospitals and schools in some cases killing school children, the rising proliferation of armed groups, and cases of sexual abuse of women and under-age girls;
- The continuous shrinking of the civic space characterized by violent crackdown by the military, on peaceful demonstrations coupled with the arrests and detentions of human rights defenders; as well as
- A failure of the government to allow regional and international bodies such as the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and the United Nations against Torture to conduct independent investigations into the ongoing human rights situation.

In his remarks, HE Mr Anu'a-Gheyle Solomon, who was accompanied by his Minister Counsellor and Cultural Counsellor, welcomed the expressed concerns and accepted the petition presented by the HRDA students. The [petition made recommendations](#) for the government to do the following:

- Take tangible steps to end the violence whilst working on a lasting solution to the crisis in order to ensure lasting peace;
- Establish a credible commission of inquiry on the prevailing human rights atrocities;
- Expedite the implementation of all the recommendations of the Grand National Dialogue held between 30 September and 4 October 2019;
- Stop crackdowns on peaceful demonstrations and the associated arbitrary arrest and detention of civilians, journalists, human rights defenders and government critics should be stopped;
- Accountability of those responsible for the atrocities;
- Grant authorization to regional and international bodies such as the Commission and UN Committee against Torture to visit the country on their human rights mandate; and to
- Immediately release from prison all individuals held on politically motivated charges.

Later in the day, the students held a 'Solidarity Vigil' at their Future Africa residence in commemoration of the thousands of lives that have so far been lost to the Anglophone crisis.

The events of Friday 28 May 2021 were preceded by a virtual (Zoom) Consultative Meeting held with Cameroon-based stakeholders on Saturday 22 May 2021. At the Consultative meeting, the HRDA team was accompanied by the Director of the Centre for Human Rights, Prof. Frans Viljoen, who noted that the 2021 campaign confirms the Centre's commitment and interest in the developments in Cameroon.

For more information, please contact:

Prof Frans Viljoen

Director,

Centre for Human Rights, Faculty of Law, University of Pretoria

Tel: +27 (0) 12 420 3228

Email: frans.viljoen@up.ac.za

www.chr.up.ac.za