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Amnesty International urges Cameroon ensure accountability for human rights violations and abuses committed by government forces and armed groups

Human Rights Council adopts Universal Periodic Review outcome on Cameroon

Amnesty International welcomes Cameroon's acceptance of recommendations to end arbitrary arrest,¹ and to improve prison conditions and prevent torture in detention.² In acting on these recommendations, the government should close down secret and illegal detention facilities, to grant access for independent monitors to all places of detention, and to provide detainees with access to their families and lawyers, and adequate medical care, food and water.

Since the beginning of the conflict in the Far North region of Cameroon in 2013, Amnesty International has documented systematic human rights abuses by Boko Haram and human rights violations by the security forces, including arbitrary arrests, incommunicado detention, torture, death in custody, enforced disappearances, unlawful killings and extrajudicial executions.

Amnesty International welcomes Cameroon's commitment to investigate allegations of excessive use of force by the security forces.³ However, there is a lack of accountability for crimes committed by the security forces in the fight against Boko Haram and in the North and South West regions of the country, and the government must ensure perpetrators are brought to justice in fair trials and victims compensated.

It is regrettable that Cameroon rejected all the recommendations to abolish the death penalty,⁴ to decriminalize same-sex relations,⁵ to repeal the anti-terrorism law,⁶ and to ensure civilians are not tried in military courts.⁷

Since 2015, hundreds of people accused of supporting the armed group Boko Haram have been sentenced to death in military courts, including under the deeply flawed anti-terrorism law, which was passed in December 2014.⁸

¹ Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, Cameroon, A/HRC/39/15, recommendations 121.116 (Slovakia) and 121.117 (Botswana).

² A/HRC/39/15, recommendations 121.105 (Italy) and 121.106 (Morocco).

³ A/HRC/39/15, recommendations 121.112-121.116 (Poland, Australia, Belgium, Switzerland, Slovakia).

⁴ A/HRC/39/15, recommendations 121.1-121.9 (Italy, Uruguay, Rwanda, Brazil, Togo, Chile, France, Spain, Czechia), 121.92 (Australia), 121.96-121.98 (Canada, Namibia, Ukraine).

⁵ A/HRC/39/15, recommendations 121.74 (France), 121.75 (Germany), 121.76 (Ireland), 121.77 (Spain), 121.78 (Mexico), 121.79 (Uruguay), 121.80 (Australia), 121.81 (Switzerland), 121.82 (USA), 121.83 (Netherlands), 121.84 (Argentina)

⁶ A/HRC/39/15, recommendations 121.91-121.96 (Poland, Australia, Switzerland, France, Haiti, Canada).

⁷ A/HRC/39/15, recommendation 121.108 (Poland).

LGBTI persons continue to face discrimination, intimidation and harassment in Cameroon.

Amnesty International notes with great concern, since late 2016, reports of beatings and killings by the security forces, including of peaceful protestors in the Anglophone regions of the country. It calls on Cameroon to investigate these human rights violations, as agreed to during the review,⁹ and to immediately release opposition party leader Aboubakary Siddiki.

Background

The UN Human Rights Council adopted the outcome of the Universal Periodic Review of Cameroon on 20 September 2018 during its 39th session. Prior to the adoption of the report of the review Amnesty International delivered this oral statement.

Amnesty International also contributed to the information basis of the review through its submission on country: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr17/7703/2017/en/>

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International Secretariat, Amnesty International, 1 Easton St., London WC1X 0DW, UK
www.amnesty.org

⁸ Law N° 2014/028 of 23 December 2014 on Terrorism, <http://princekmer.skyrock.com/3240467049-Loi-N-2014-028-du-23-decembre-2014-portant-repression-des-actes-de.html>

⁹ A/HRC/39/15, recommendation 121.113 (Australia).