

2017 ACTIVITY REPORT



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CEPROCUL	:	Housing for Environmental Sustainability organized by Action for the Needy
CSO	:	Civil Society Organization
EU	:	European Union
IRIC	:	International Relations Institute of Cameroon
JIDH	:	International Human Rights Day
MINAS	:	Ministry of Social Affairs
MINEFOP	:	Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training
MINJUSTICE	:	Ministry of Justice
MINPROFF	:	Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the family
MINREX	:	Ministry of External Relations
MINTSS	:	Ministry of Labour and Social Security
NANHRI	:	Network of African National Human Rights Institutions
NCHRF	:	National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms
NHRI	:	National Human Rights Institutions
SELAVIP	:	Latin American, Asian and African Social Housing Service
UB	:	University of Buea
UDHR	:	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNHCRD-CA	:	United Nations Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa
UPAC	:	Protestant University of Central Africa

INTRODUCTION

As per the prescriptions of law n° 2004/016 of the 22nd July 2004 setting up the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms, abbreviated “NCHRF” and hereinafter referred to as “the Commission”, the Commission is supposed to produce and make public its annual reports. Specifically, Section 19 of the said law states that *“Within the framework of its activities, the Commission shall hold deliberations, make recommendations, give its opinions and draw up reports. The Commission’s annual reports shall be submitted to the President of the Republic, the President of the National Assembly and the President of the Senate. The Commission’s half-yearly report shall be submitted to the Prime Minister, the Minister in charge of Justice and the Minister in charge of Territorial Administration. The Commission’s deliberations, recommendations, advisory opinions and reports shall be published, at the behest of its Chairperson”*

The 2017 Activity Report of the Human Rights Commission is therefore examining major areas like statutory activities which are major policy issues of the Commission, the cases of Human Rights Promotion and Protection as well as cross cutting issues. The report ends with a conclusion.

PART I.- STATUTORY ACTIVITIES

The statutory activities covered in the present report essentially deal with: The 22nd and 23rd Ordinary sessions of the NCHRF (Chapter 1), and other statutory activities (Chapter 2).

CHAPTER I.- 22ND AND 23RD ORDINARY SESSIONS

The two sessions held in accordance with section 14(1) of law n° 2004/016 of the 22nd July 2004 setting up the Commission.

SECTION I: TWENTY SECOND ORDINARY SESSION

Members of the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms met at the Chambers of Commerce in Yaounde on Thursday April 20, 2017 for its 22nd ordinary session presided over by its Chairperson, Dr Chemuta Divine BANDA.

The opening session comprised the roll call and verification of quorum, the adoption of the draft agenda and the opening address of the Chairperson.

In his opening statement, Dr BANDA welcomed all the members present and outlined the major activities the Commission had carried out from the last session that held on 20 and 21 December 2016 till date as well as major projections for 2017.

He began by situating the context under which the session was holding; specifically the fact that the country was witnessing frequent strike actions which began in October 2016 and involved many sectors of our society. He then called upon all to continue playing a leading role in educating the public on the respect for human rights.

In line with the promotion of human rights, the Chairperson said that the Commission participated in the organization of events to commemorate the International Women's Day on 8 March 2017 as well as an active participation in activities to commemorate the Commonwealth day on the 9-10 March 2017 in Bamenda.

In the domain of human rights protection, Dr BANDA said that the number of complaints received at the Commission has been on the increase. From these complaints, the most violated rights are the right to property, the right to physical and moral integrity, the right to a fair trial and the right to work.

Coming to the area of investigations and the visit to detention places, it was reported that routine visits were carried out in prisons, Police stations and Gendarmerie Brigades for purposes of investigation. Specifically, the Commission visited prisons such as the Central Prison in Maroua, the Principal Prison in Mora and the Principal Prison in Mokolo on the 18th to 20th January 2017. The Commission also carried out investigation missions to Bamenda and Buea on 1-4 February 2017 following the crises provoked by the strike action of Anglophone teachers and lawyers in the North West and Southwest Regions. Another investigation was the field visit to Ombessa on 30 March 2015 in connection with the torture of IBRAHIM BELLO which went wild on social media.

As regards meetings, the Commission Networked with other National, Regional and International Institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights including the

Network of African National Human Rights Institutions, the Commonwealth Forum of National Human Rights Institutions, the Association of Francophone National Human Rights Institutions, the African Commission on Human and People's Rights and the Global network of National Human Rights Institutions. The Commission attended the Conference of the Global Network of National Human Rights Institutions held on the 6-8 March 2016 and other side meetings, the human rights movement in Africa consultative meeting in Uganda on 4-8 April and the meeting of the African Union for the visually impaired in Kenya on 20-24 April 2017.

Audiences were granted to several delegations and personalities such as the British High Commissioner, H.E Brian Olley, on 20 February 2017, the Canadian High Commissioner H.E. Rene Cremonese on 23 February 2017, the Chief of Bureau for human rights at the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Madam Laurence COSTE on 23 March 2017 all to discuss the situation of human rights in Cameroon. Other audiences were granted to Mrs Françoise Collette, chief of Mission of the European Union Delegation in connection with the PROCIVIS project and the human rights situation in the country on 3rd March 2017, a delegation from the United States Department of Justice and the Department of State Bureau of Counter- terrorism, comprising Mr Brian Morgan and Mr Robert Bowman and Ms Jane Kaminski respectively. They came to consult with the NCHRF on assisting the government in the area of counter-terrorism justice on 20 March 2017.

The Commission equally received “*Ensemble Contre la Peine de Mort*”, consisting of Marie-Lina Samuel, Nicolas Perron, and Agnès Granroth on 23 March 2017 to discuss the death penalty and to present a project on the abolition of the death penalty in Cameroon.

Members of the Commission examined and adopted the report of the 21st ordinary session, the draft of the 2016 activity report and the draft of the 2016 report on the state of human rights in Cameroon, the administrative and management accounts for 2016 and the draft budget for 2018.

Another articulation of the 22nd ordinary session was the election of chairpersons and rapporteurs of working groups. The results were as follows:

Working group n° 1.- Civil and Political Rights

Chairperson: Barrister KAMGA NOUTCHOGOUIN Laurette

Rapporteur: BOBIOKONO Christophe

Working group n° 2.- Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Chairperson: Barrister BALEMAKEN Eugene

Rapporteur: Mr METUGE Manfred AKAME

Working group n° 3: Vulnerable Groups

Chairperson: Mrs MPOUNG née MEMONG MENO Elise Pierrette

Rapporteur: Mrs MINDLEND Clemence Sidonie

Working group n° 4: Special Issues

Chairperson: TILDER KUMICHI Ndichia

Rapporteur: Dr YANPELDA Virginie

Deliberations led to the creation of a four man committee to examine the impact of prison visits carried out by the Commission and submit their report within a one month period.

Emphasis was also laid on the continuous encouragement of the education of indigenous children in the East Region especially those around the border areas and the mining zone.

Members of the NCHRF also recommended the public presentation of the report of its investigation on the Eseka train accident and that of Ibrahim Bello within a space of two weeks.

The 22nd ordinary session ended with concluding words from the chairperson calling on members and the permanent secretariat to work in harmony to continue the promotion and protection of Human Rights in Cameroon.

SECTION II: TWENTY THIRD ORDINARY SESSION

The National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms (NCHRF) held its twenty-third Ordinary Session on December 21, 2017 at the Yaounde Conference Centre presided over by the Chairperson of the institution, Dr Chemuta Divine BANDA.

After the roll call of members, verification of quorum and adoption of agenda, the Chairperson opened deliberations with a keynote address. In his opening statement, the Chairperson welcomed all members present; outlined major activities carried out by the Commission since the last session held on April 20, 2017, as well as prospects envisaged for 2018.

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

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

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

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

As concerns human rights promotion activities, Dr BANDA indicated that, consultation days were organized with Civil Society Organizations (CSO) on the elaboration of the 22nd and 23rd Periodic Reports of Cameroon to the Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination on 4th October 2017, another consultation on 5th October 2017 with CSOs within the framework of the 3rd Session of the Universal Periodic Review of the State of Cameroon before this mechanism and the commemoration of the 28th Edition of the African Day on Human and Peoples Rights on 26 November 2017 on the theme *“Promoting the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights and the 2063 Agenda of the African Union”*.

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

At the regional and international levels, the NCHRF maintained its partnership with other institutions and organizations, including the Network of African National Human Rights Institution (NHRIs), the Association of the Francophonie NHRIs, the African Commission on Human and People’s Rights, and the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER II.- OTHER STATUTORY ACTIVITIES

There were other statutory activities performed by the Commission such as the publication of the 2016 reports of the Commission (Section 1) and the monthly meetings of Chairpersons and Rapporteurs of Working groups (section 2).

SECTION 1.- OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE 2016 REPORTS OF THE COMMISSION

In compliance with Section 19 paragraph 4 of law No. 2004/016 of 22 July, 2004 setting up the NCHRF, the Chairperson of the Commission, Dr Chemuta Divine BANDA officially made public the 2016 reports of the Institution on the 29th of December 2017 in the Conference Hall of the Chambers of Agriculture in Yaounde. Those in attendance were representatives of the Government, Diplomats and Representatives of diplomatic missions in Cameroon, Directors of institutions, administrative and traditional authorities, religious bodies, CSOs and over thirty media organs. In all, there were more than 200 people in attendance. The Chairperson used the opportunity to highlight the situation of Human Rights in Cameroon in 2016 as well as the activities carried out within the same year of reference. The hard copies of the reports were then distributed to the participants and the general public was equally invited to download or read the reports on the Commission's website www.cndhl.cm.

Dr BANDA used this occasion to decry some poor behaviours noticed from some public administrators, which render the work of the Commission sometimes ineffective. He used this opportunity to make a strong appeal to heads of administrations concerned to further deepen and consolidate their relations with the NCHRF. In handling complaints on cases of alleged human rights violations for instance, the Commission faced challenges including lack of cooperation by some public administrations, the judicial authorities and elements of the Forces of law and order.

SECTION 2.- MONTHLY COORDINATION MEETINGS OF CHAIRPERSONS AND RAPPORTEURS OF WORKING GROUPS

Chairpersons and Rapporteurs of the four Working Groups of the Commission held regular monthly meetings presided over by the Chairperson or the Vice to examine pertinent human rights issues in the country and give orientations on possible solutions. They also constantly followed the execution of the 2017 Action Plan of the Commission.

Within the year 2017, this instance handled issues such as the adoption of the 2016 report on the situation of Human Rights in Cameroon, the report of the 22nd and 23rd Ordinary sessions, the follow-up of the procedure leading to the construction of the Head Office of the NCHRF, recruitment of new staff members of the Permanent Secretariat, the social climate at the Commission. The members equally carried out field investigations to the Police and Gendarmerie detention places, the prisons, as well as handled pertinent cases like Ibrahim Bello affair and the Anglophone crisis, etc.

The Chairpersons and Rapporteurs examined and adopted the final versions of the 2016 reports (Human Rights and Activity).

PART II.- HUMAN RIGHTS PROMOTION AND PROTECTION

The NCHRF has as main objectives, the promotion and protection of human rights. This assignment was carefully handled in 2017 so as to give satisfaction to those whose rights were violated, or educate those who were ignorant of their rights.

CHAPTER I.- HUMAN RIGHTS PROMOTION

This Chapter covers the activities organized by the Commission (section 1) and those by other partners in which the Commission participated (section 2).

SECTION 1.- HUMAN RIGHTS PROMOTION ACTIVITIES BY THE NCHRF

The 2017 promotion activities of the Commission centred on:

- Commemoration of the 2017 edition of the International Women's Day
- Celebration of the 131st edition of the International Labour Day
- Organization of Workshop on the Right to Information
- Commemoration of the 28th edition of the African Day of Human and Peoples' Rights
- Organization of campaign to facilitate the Award of National Disability Card (NDC) to persons living with Disability
- Organization of Human Rights Debate with students of the University of Buea, the Catholic University and the Pan African Institute for Development for West Africa
- Commemoration of the Day of the African Child
- Organization of regional training on Business and Human Rights
- Organization of meeting between the UNCHRD-CA and affiliated CSOs in the South-West Region
- Organization of training of students of "*Centre International pour la Culture Humanitaire*"
- Commemoration of the 69th International Human Rights Day

Paragraph 1.- Commemoration of the 2017 edition of the International Women's Day

The celebration within the period of reference (32nd edition) was placed under the theme '*Women in a changing world: a 50-50 planet by 2030*'. As part of activities marking the celebration of the Women's Day, the Commission organized several activities at the Head Office (A) and the regional branches (B) and especially participated in the celebrations in the East Region.

A.- Commemoration of the 2017 International Women's Day at the Head Office

On the 7th of March 2017: Panel discussion on the theme "**Challenges on equality of men and women at work in Cameroon**". This event took place on the 7th of March 2017 in the conference hall of the Chambers of Agriculture presided over by the then Chairperson of the Working Group of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Mrs Ekoan Antoinette. She was acting in her capacity as the personal representative of the Chairperson of the NCHRF. The activity witnessed the attendance of over forty participants from partner organisations like the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training, the International Labour Office, UN Women, CSOs, members and workers of the NCHRF.

In her opening statement, she wished all the women a happy feast day and proceeded by contextualising the ceremony which she was presiding. She emphasised on the importance of the day, thereby justifying why the world at large had given a day of reflection on matters concerning the woman. Finally, she moderated the presentations and brainstorming session.

At the end of the event, participants recommended that:

- parents should take the first responsibility to educate the girl child at home and then the government should put everything in place to ease the professional training of the girl child so as to attain the 2030 objective;
- the informal sector which is mostly handled by women should be well structured;
- A gender based approach should be practiced in professional training programmes in schools.

On the 8th of March 2017: Participation of workers and interns of the Commission at the match pass at the 20th May Avenue in Yaoundé. The main objective of this event was to create a general public awareness especially to the women on their basic rights as far as equality in the labour sector in Cameroon is concerned.

B.- Commemoration of the 2017 edition of the International Women's Day in the South Region

The branch office was involved in activities organized at the regional level presided over by the Governor of the South Region, Félix NGUELE. Activities consisted of

- a sports walk across the town of Ebolowa;
- debates over radio stations;
- and human investments.

Specifically, on the 6th of March 2017, the South regional Branch office of the NCHRF organized an educative talk on the theme “Equality and Women Empowerment”. The objective of this activity was to project the woman who is more often relegated to the background by the man of the South and to make her build confidence in herself. Over thirty women (30) participated in the activity.

Paragraph 2.- Celebration of the 131st edition of the International Labour Day

The 2017 edition of the International Labour Day was commemorated under the theme «*Social Dialogue, Economic Growth and National Cohesion*».

The event that was presided over by the Chairperson of the Working Group on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Mme Ekoan, had three main articulations:

- a panel discussion on the theme of the commemoration
- a football encounter on the theme “*Sports and Health for all*” and
- a Match-Pass at the 20th May Avenue in Yaounde.

The general objective of this activity at the Commission this year was to bring all stakeholders together to reflect on the way forward on the employment of persons with disabilities in Cameroon.

During the panel discussion, five themes were on the table for debate amongst which were issues related to the employment of persons living with disabilities, labour and social security among others. Over sixty (60) participants took part in the event at the Chamber of Agriculture on the 2nd of May, 2017. Participants at the end of the day came out with some recommendations such as lobbying in the domain of professional training of persons with disabilities as well as encouraging more children with disabilities to attend school. Participants also recommended the continuous lobbying around the government of Cameroon to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Paragraph 3.- Organization of Workshop on the Right to Information



The South-West Regional Branch office of the Commission within the auspices of section 2 lines 1 and 5 of Law n° 2004/16 of 22 July 2004 organized a workshop on the right to information on the 7th of July 2017. This event was hosted at the conference hall of the Branch office. In attendance were over 60 persons representing the private and public media, students of the University of Buea, affiliated CSOs.

The workshop was organized within the context of alleged violation of the right to education of under privileged young Cameroonians. This was through discriminatory practices in the admission procedure in the University of Buea (UB). Denunciations received by the Branch and other outcries from the public, raised the fact that persons who do not have the required cut-off points were admitted into the university whilst less privileged Cameroonians were being refused admission.

After assembly and registration of participants, the Regional Secretary opened the event with a welcome speech. He later laid the platform of the event. In his talk, he established that all Cameroonians had the right to information on issues pertaining to their fundamental rights. He exposed the fact that the Commission is endowed with the right to gather all necessary information and educate persons on their rights. Since the under privileged were decrying discrimination in favour of the well to do in the admission of students into the University of Buea, the Commission being the last recourse to the less privileged had the onus to intervene.

Consequently, an investigation was opened within its mandatory functions in line with the provisions of *section 3 Line 2* of the law setting up the Commission and the indexed public authority was exposed. In order to achieve this, the GCE Board respecting the law, produced the requested results that permitted the Commission to establish facts about the acquisition of fake certificates of some individuals unjustly enjoying undeserved privileges in the public administration within the University of Buea. The Commission thus made them public and acting within the auspices of *Section 3 Line 6*, asked the University of Buea Authorities and the Public Authority in charge of Higher Education to take measures to put a stop to these discriminatory practices.

The attendance flooded questions all revolving around what the University should do with the certificates obtained by the indexed person, how this event will help the less privileged in their application for admission to UB. The Regional Secretary referred them to the organic texts of the NCHRF which as per the provision of *Section 2 Lines 6*, proposes measures to promote the Right to Education of every Cameroonian. The event ended with taking of family pictures and refreshment.

Paragraph 4.- Commemoration of the 28th edition of the African Day of Human and Peoples' Rights

In order to commemorate the 2017 edition of the African Day of Human and Peoples' Rights, the Commission jointly organised the event with partners such as the UN Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa (UNCHRD-CA) and CSOs on the 26th of October 2017. The venue of the activity was the conference hall of the International Relations Institute of Cameroon (IRIC). A panel discussion on the theme "*Challenges in the application of Human Rights within the African Continent*" was the main activity. Presiding over the event was Barrister BALEMAKEN, Member of the Commission and personal representative of the Chairperson of the Commission. Over three hundred (300) participants took part at the event.

Barrister BALEMAKEN in his opening remarks saluted the collaboration that has always existed between IRIC and the Human Rights Commission and went on to thank the Director of the Institution and other partners for joining hands with the Commission to see that the activity was organised.

Paragraph 5.- Organization of campaign to facilitate the Award of National Disability Cards (NDC) to persons living with Disabilities

As a follow-up of the 27th June 2016 capacity building workshop with CSOs on the fundamental rights of persons living with disabilities, the Southwest Branch office of the Commission launched a campaign in the month of June 2017 destined to facilitate the establishment of NDC to disabled persons.

This event was carried out in order to facilitate the enjoyment of the advantages provided by *Law n° 2010/002 of 13 April 2010*, relating to the protection and welfare of persons with disabilities. Since this law in *section 41* established as pre-requisite to the enjoyment of the

advantages of the law, the establishment of a NDC, the Commission thus in conformity with the provision of *Order N° 1 of 15 March 1993* which lays down conditions for the establishment and issuance of NDC, launched a campaign in the month of June 2017 in order to facilitate the establishment of NDC to persons living with disabilities.

Over a hundred persons living with disabilities have had their NDC produced with the aid of the NCHRF and affiliated CSOs.

This was made possible through tripartite collaboration between the South-West Branch office of the Human Rights Commission, affiliated CSOs and the Regional Delegation of Social Affairs. The branch's intervention also deferred all demand from hospital for persons with disabilities to pay for check-up in order to establish a medical certificate.

Paragraph 6.- Organization of Human Rights Debate with students of the University of Buea, The Catholic University and the Pan African Institute for Development for West Africa

The activity took place on the 27th of June 2017 organised by the Human Rights Commission's branch office in Buea. Over sixty (60) students from these different institutions took part and facilitators were CSOs, University lecturers and the Commission. Students were drilled on the basic notions of human rights in theory and practice. The main objective of this encounter was to enlighten students on their rights and how these rights could be protected and defended.

Paragraph 7.- Commemoration of the Day of the African Child

The North West Regional Branch commemorated the 2017 Edition of the African Child in June 2017 by joining hands with the Regional Delegation of Social Affairs as follows: Paper presentation, Radio talks, Symposium, etc.

Paragraph 8.- Organization of regional Training on Business and Human Rights

Some 16 countries were represented in the training (two European countries and 14 African countries, including Cameroon). Mme Marie Claire KONKOMBO, the regional secretary of the Littoral branch of the Commission was the Cameroon representative. The goal of the training was capacity building on standards and guidelines on business and human rights. The workshop equally aimed to demonstrate the relevance of Human Rights Institutions when it comes to business and human rights, and to plan concrete actions on the topic. The training, which fell under the EU-NHRI project, was managed by the Danish Human Rights Institution.

At the end of the training, many resolutions were taken in terms of concrete actions on "*business and human rights*", including the following three points: firstly, each participant of the workshop would carry out concrete actions in his or her home country. Accordingly, Mme

Marie Claire KONKOMBO, the representative of the NCHRF at Rabat, Morocco, made some proposals to hierarchy, as follows:

- a debate on the existing legal framework on business and human rights;
- a three-pronged workshop for sharing and brainstorming on the harmonization of rights in companies on guiding principles on business and human rights.

She equally drew the attention of the Chairperson of the Commission on the inactivity of the Cameroon NHRI, which together with Morocco represent Africa in the working group. In this respect, the focal points of the national human rights Commissions of the two countries agreed to develop a joint project on how to make NHRI working group dynamic, given that Cameroon and Morocco are representatives of the United Nations working group.

Paragraph 9.- Organization of meeting between the UNCHRD-CA and affiliated CSOs in the South-West Region

The main aim of the event was to inform the UNCHRD-CA on the Anglophone Crisis within the Region. This event was organized in the month of April and later in August 2017. The first event was for the UN Regional Service to be exposed to the *raison d'être* of the crisis in the Region.

It is worth mentioning that the major obstacle to this event was the attitude of the administration. The April debate was to be a two-phased event. The first was to be an exchange between the UN Delegation headed by Mr Ahowanou Agbessi in his capacity as Director of the UNCHRD-CA, also assisted, and the Governor of the South-West Region. Despite the fact that the Regional Secretary had personally met the Governor with a 24 hours prior notification on the day of the event, he refused to receive the UN Delegation. They were kept waiting for over two hours in the waiting room of the South-West Governor. Still, the Regional Secretary attenuated the disgrace by pushing forward the discussion between the delegation and affiliated CSOs. This took the form of a *tête à tête* exchange between the UN delegation and the representatives of the CSOs. The CSOs were to expose what was happening on the field and what were their experiences. They were to establish the veracity of the reported acts of torture and killings by the security forces within the Region. In attendance, were over 20 Civil Society Organizations (CSOs).

In the month of August 2017, the branch organized a follow-up discussion to the April event. The focus of this inter-active exchange was the proposal of the way forward to end the crisis in the Region. The UN delegation was headed by Mr Ahowanou Agbessi, assisted by Mr Fonyuy Kiven, all of the UNCHRD-CA Yaounde. The meeting was chaired by the Regional Secretary of the Commission's Branch Office for the South West. There were over 18 affiliated CSOs in attendance specialized in the Promotion and Protection of Socio-Economic, Civil and Political Rights.

The head of the UN delegation took the floor and informed all present that in view of high level meeting between the UN High Commission for Human Rights and the Cameroonian

Government, they wanted concrete proposals from CSOs on how the crisis can come to an end. He further thanked the Regional Secretary of the Commission for their continuous availability for the quest for a solution to the crisis. He later beckoned on the representatives of CSOs to outline their proposal for a way out.

Members of CSOs unanimously concluded and proposed the immediate release of all detainees concerned with the crisis. They all said the crisis cannot be expected to stop when the speakers of the people of both regions are in detention. A burning point which was raised by CSOs was the impression that the UN and the General International Community was not paying sufficient attention to the problem. The Regional Secretary reacted to this worry saying that though seemingly there seems to be no actions by the UN, there are diplomatic manoeuvres which have been engaged to solve the crisis. He concluded that the presence of the UN delegation speaks for itself about the concern of the UN on the situation.

The debate ended with the director of the UNCHRD-CA promising to transmit the proposals of CSOs in the UN report on a way out of this crisis and for the right to education of the children in the two regions to be protected.



Cross session of those in attendance

Paragraph 10.- Organization of training of students of “*Centre International pour la Culture Humanitaire*”

This training was centred on basic human rights principles and it took place on the 10th of October 2017. Eleven (11) persons took part in the training. Among the topics handled during the meeting, we had the history of human rights, general knowledge on human rights, human rights instruments and mechanisms and the functioning of the NCHRF.

During the practical phase of the activity, participants were schooled on how to identify a human rights problem and solve it through a well-designed project (Promotion). They were also initiated in the domain of complaint management.

Paragraph 11.- Commemoration of the 69th International Human Rights Day

The 69th International Human Rights Day was celebrated at the Head Office (A) and the Regional Branches (B) with focus on the celebrations at the North-West Branch Office.

A.- Commemoration of the 69th International Human Rights Day at the Head Office

On the 10th of December 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN) adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and announced that every year, Human Rights shall be commemorated all over the world on 10th December in accordance to UN General Assembly Resolution 423(V).

The theme of the commemoration this year was “*Human Rights Education as medium for Peace, Security and Sustainable Development.*” The Commission and its partners jointly organised activities to mark this day.

B.- Commemoration of the 69th International Human Rights Day in the North West Region

The North West Regional Branch Office of the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms (NCHRF) has since its creation abided by the spirit of the declaration by carrying out yearly commemorative activities under particular themes.

This year’s commemorative activities under the theme: “*let’s stand up for equality, justice and human dignity*” were belated owing to technical reasons.

To create visibility and awareness of the activities of the NCHRF, the North West Regional Branch Office decided to commemorate this year’s international Human Rights Day (IHRD) in Befang and Widikum in Menchum Valley Sub Division and Widikum Sub Division on the 10th and 11th of January 2018 respectively with the main objective of relaying and executing the planned commemorative activities of the IHRD, 10th December 2017 at the abovementioned localities.

For effective implementation, the office embarked on a preliminary field mission carried out by Messrs. Chenwi Chrysantus Shu and Agbor Nkeng Etengeneng to Befang and Widikum respectively on the 22nd of December 2017 to prepare the ground for the event.

SECTION 2.- PARTICIPATION IN ACTIVITIES ORGANIZED BY PARTNERS

The activities by partners in which the Commission participated were the following:

- open door days at the Protestant University of Central Africa
- the launch of a project on Housing for Environmental Sustainability organized by Action for the Needy in partnership with the Latin American, Asian and African Social Housing Service
- workshop on the phenomenon of illegal migration in Cameroon organised by the International Circle for the Promotion of Creation
- awareness campaign on the establishment of birth certificates for indigenous populations in the east region in partnership with the association “Respect Cameroon”.

Paragraph 1.- Participation in open door days at the Protestant University of Central Africa

The NCHRF participated in an open door event for students and the staff of the Protestant University of Central Africa on the 9th of February 2017. Representing the Commission was Mrs ENONCHONG Annet who made a general presentation on Human rights in general and the missions and activities of the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms in particular.

The Commission also participated by exhibiting its products through a stand and during this activity, over 50 activity and Human rights situation reports and Born Free magazines were distributed to participants. About 200 persons visited the NCHRF's Stand.

Paragraph 2.- Participation in the launch of a project on Housing for Environmental Sustainability organized by Action for the Needy in partnership with the Latin American, Asian and African Social Housing Service

On 24th February 2017, the NCHRF through its North West Branch attended the launch of a project on Housing for Environmental Sustainability organized by Action for the Needy (CEPROCUL) in partnership with the Latin American, Asian and African Social Housing Service (SELAVIP). The main objective of the project is to construct low cost housing in Bamenda for the needy and vulnerable. The office was represented by the Rapporteur.

Paragraph 3.- Participation in workshop on the phenomenon of illegal migration in Cameroon organised by the International Circle for the Promotion of Creation

This workshop was organised by the International Circle for the Promotion of Creation (CIPCRE) in collaboration with the World Association for the School of Peace (EIP) on April 20, 2017. It had as objective to bring together stakeholders involved in the issue of migration, to examine the different opportunities available for Cameroonian youths and eventually dissuade them from migrating clandestinely.

Present at this workshop were representatives from MINAS, MINEPAT, MINJUSTICE, MINJEC, MINREX, National, International as well as Civil Society Organisations.

Paragraph 4.- Participation in awareness campaign on the establishment of birth certificates to indigenous populations in the east region in partnership with the association “*Respect Cameroon*”

Article 15(1) of the 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights supports the fact that everyone has a right to a nationality and Article 8 of the United Nations convention on the rights of the child supports the fact that everyone has a right to an identity. In Cameroon, only 61% of children are registered at birth with the lowest rate in the Far North (38.2%) and in the East (56%) according to data from the Ministry of Territorial

Administration and Decentralization. A study conducted in 2014 by UNICEF shows that in a sample of indigenous populations of ages between 0 and 5 years, only 93% of the Bakas and 18.8% of the Bororos have birth certificates.

This is not in conformity with articles 4, 5 and 6 of Law No 2011/011 of 6th May 2011 amending ordinance No 2011/011 of 29th June 1981 which obliges every Cameroonian resident within the national territory or elsewhere to declare his/her birth, death and marriage with the competent civil status registrar. It is for this reason that the NCHRF through the Working Group on Civil and Political Rights in partnership with the association “*Respect Cameroon*” organized in 2016, a series of activities in the Mandjou locality (East Region) aimed at helping the indigenous population to have access to citizenship.

This locality was chosen because of the high number of indigenous populations found there and more than 1,000 out of about 10,000 inhabitants have never been subject to a declaration before the civil status registry. The National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms on one hand collected data for the identification of 200 Bororo children without birth certificates and on the other hand certificates of physical age and other attestations for non-registration of the concerned. On the 7th of June 2017, the NCHRF met with the President of the Appeal Court of the East, Mr Ntyame Ntyame Michel, the President of the Court of 1st Instance of Bertoua, Mr Djong Simplicie Herve, and the 1st assistant to the Mayor of Mandjou, Mrs Djecliek Salome Balbine. The delegation was not able to meet the Divisional Officer (DO) of Mandjou who was on a working mission. The local authorities however observed that, if all beneficiaries were present during the public hearings and if necessary actions were carried out in the best ways the birth certificates could be delivered to the said population in a period of 2-3 weeks. The team from the Commission assured the authorities that all measures had been put in place to facilitate the process in collaboration with the traditional authorities of Mandjou.

At the end of the campaign, 200 children of the Bororo community of Mandjou were identified and issued birth certificates.

The Commission therefore gives as recommendation to the State of Cameroon:

- the computerisation of the civil status system;
- the multiplication of awareness campaigns in order to encourage populations to declare all births;
- involvement of the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms as a national institution for the promotion and protection of human rights in Cameroon in projects to promote access to citizenship.

CHAPTER II.- HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION ACTIVITIES

The 2017 human rights protection activities of the Commission involved investigation activities as part of fact-finding missions (section 1). These activities equally concern handling of complaints subsequent to self-initiated investigations by the Commission, at the individual or company levels (section 2).

SECTION 1.- INVESTIGATION ACTIVITIES OF NCHRF

The Investigation visits organized by the Commission during the year in reference generally include fact-finding missions (paragraph 1), and other visits to places of deprivation of liberty (paragraph 2).

Paragraph 1.- *Proprio motu* investigations of the Commission

The Observation, Investigation and Alert unit of the National commission on Human Rights and Freedoms carried out several activities during the period from January to December 2017 in conformity with articles 2 and 3 of law no 2004/016 of 22nd July 2004 to set up the Commission. The treatment of self-initiated cases is done in 3 phases; observation, investigation and alert.

Information was gotten from the press, through telephone calls, social media (internet) and television. Non- governmental organisations also seized the Commission denouncing certain violations, seeking direct intervention.

A.- *Classification of self-initiated investigations*

The table below lists out the self-initiated cases handled at the head office of Commission in 2017.

Table 1.- List of 2017 cases of *proprio motu* investigation

Rights allegedly violated	Number of treated cases	Administrations seized
Right to life	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- the Ministry of Defence- the General Secretariat of the Presidency of the Republic- the Ministry of Justice- the Ministry of Transport- the Prime Ministry- the Ministry of Public Health- the Ministry of Social Affairs- Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization- Ministry of Commerce- National Anti-corruption
Right to security	10	
Right to fair trial (arbitrary arrest and detention)	3	
Right to physical integrity	5	
Rights to public manifestation (freedom to manifest and hold public meetings, freedom of movement, freedom of	2	

expression)		Commission
Torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.	3	- General Delegation of National Security
Right to property	3	- Ministry of Communication - Secretariat of State for defence - General Delegation of National Security
Right to health	2	
Right to education	2	
Right to work	6	
Right to a good standard of living	1	
Right to a safe and sane environment	3	- Governor of the Centre Region - Senior Divisional Officer of Mbam and Inoubou - Divisional Officer of Ombessa - Director of Ombessa Hospital
Right to peace	1	
Right to development	1	
Total	47	

Source: NCHRF

Some of the alleged cases of human rights violations were investigated on the ground by the Commission, in 2017 :

- investigative activity related to land disputes in Marou-Koungou I (Faro and Deo Division)
- investigation mission related to an attack on a United Nations delegation at Kontcha-Faro and Deo Division
- investigation visit to Ngan ha Sub Division based on a complaint from Mr Oumarou Bobbo and certain people in Awa village.

B.- Investigative activity related to land disputes in Marou-Koungou I (Faro and Deo Division)

On the 11th of May 2017, the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms through the Branch Office in Adamawa Region visited the village of Sadeck in Tignere Sub-Division in Faro and Deo Division, with respect to a complaint from Mr Yaya Adamou and other family heads on the violation of their rights to landed property covered by article 17 of the 1948 Universal Declaration on Human Rights which accepts the rights to ownership of property and forbids the arbitrary deprivation of anyone's right to property.

The Commission had the objective of evaluating the situation and obtaining valid information from the administrative and local authorities (1) as well as the family heads concerned (2) so that any right allegedly violated could be repaired (3).

1. Discussions with administrative, judicial and local authorities

During the fact-finding mission, the Commission engaging team spoke in turn with the Senior Divisional Officer of *Faro et Deo*, the State Counsel, the Divisional Officer and the traditional head of Marou Koungou I village.

➤ **Discussions with the SDO of Faro and Deo Division**

The Regional Secretary of the Commission for the Adamawa, explained that on the 8 May 2017, the Branch Office received a complaint from Mr Yaya Adamou and other family heads of Marou Koungou about the expropriation of land and expulsion of certain families from this land which was given to them by the Lamido of Tignere.

These people had escaped from their village because of rampant kidnappings and ransom demands. On their return after these criminal activities had stopped, they discovered that their huts and goods had been destroyed and their land occupied by strangers. Thanks to local solidarity, the population was able to resettle against their will in the village of Sadeck, abandoning their huts, arable lands and pastures. While in their temporal location, they stood the risk of running out of their food reserves and other facilities. They therefore wanted to reclaim their lands which had been sold to a rich breeder from Ngaoundere called Baba IA. In reaction to this, the SDO was surprised and expressed his disappointment in the procedure the displaced villagers had taken by directly seizing the Human Rights Commission without passing through the competent local and administrative authorities.

➤ **Discussions with State Counsel**

The State Counsel affirmed that Tignere is a zone full of economic expansion and strong land pressures. He also said the traditional authorities think wrong to hold on to management of any land without often referring to the administrative authority during land transactions to the detriment of the local population.

➤ **Discussions with DO**

The DO on his part, sought to know more through the Lamido of Tignere concerning the matter at hand. The Lamido on his part explained that Alhadji Chehou (one of the heads of the victimized families) who occupied the disputed land escaped after his liberation from kidnappers to have permanent residence in Nigeria. Quoting Alhadji Chehou's younger brother, the Lamido said that Mr Chehou was not to return to Marou Koungou again. Surprisingly Mr Chehou returned claiming his land and pastures after the land had been sold.

➤ **Discussions with the Djaouro (Village head) of Marou Koungou I, Adamou Hamadidicko**

He said that in November 2016, the families that lived in Marou Koungou left and settled in Sadeck because of the insecure conditions that reigned in Marou Koungou (Constant presence of kidnappers).

Considering the fact that certain family heads like Mr Chehou were said to have settled permanently in Nigeria, the disputed land, then unoccupied for some time, was sold to a rich breeder from Ngaoundere. He affirmed that everyone was surprised when these families came

back to claim their lands. However, alternative lands were offered to the said families who refused as they wanted only their land in Marou Kounbou.

2. Discussions with Victims

The team also spoke to the victims who affirmed that they ran away due to insecurity in the locality. They rejected the alternative lands given to them when they returned because the lands were infertile. They claimed not to have seized the administrative authorities for fear that they were accomplices to the traditional authorities who sold their lands to rich livestock owners.

The National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms ended its visit by assuring the people that they will look for a lasting solution to this problem. They also said that irrespective of the circumstances, the complainants should always seek intervention from the administrative authorities.

3. Investigation on the disputed site and Results

After dialogue with the village head, the team went on investigation to the disputed site where they discovered that this land is about 3km from the village of Sadeck. The said land is:

- close to 3 hectares whereby, one part is for agriculture, another one contains firewood and another part of the land has about 20 huts and most of them (about 13) were burnt and destroyed.
- the portion of land for agriculture had little sprouts of corn together with different types of vegetables as prove of recent agricultural activities.
- on the portion reserved for huts, the Commission discovered the presence of some herds of cows which according to the complainant belonged to the new owner.

The Commission therefore resolved to seize these authorities by transmitting the reports of their visit to them as well as recommendations. Finally, they called on the plaintiffs to take in good conscience the lands which were given them due to humanity and solidarity and consequently, to look for permanent solutions to peace through dialogue.

The Commission also gave recommendations to remedy the problem of land disputes such as;

- collaboration between traditional and administrative authorities in all land transactions with respect to national lands of the State
- sensitisation of traditional chiefs on their roles and responsibilities in matters concerning management of national lands
- taking necessary measures to apply the laws put in place
- Referring complicated cases to the competent judicial authorities.

C.- Investigation mission related to an attack on a United Nations delegation at Kontcha,-Faro and Deo Division

In line with an article published on the 1st of February 2017 by “*l’œil du Sahel*” newspaper about an attack suffered by a United Nations delegation at Kontcha in the Faro and Deo Division, the Human Rights Commission through its office in the Adamawa Region decided to investigate on the matter on the 11th of May 2017.

The Commission met with the Senior Divisional Officer of Faro and Deo, Mr Bouba Hamman, and the State Counsel of the Court of 1st Instance, Mr Valery Akongnda Samandi.

The data collected subsequent to the various exchanges (1) led to some recommendations (2).

1.- Finding of the Commission investigations

From their talks with the two officials, the Commission noted that the United Nations delegation came in respect of the “Green Tree Accord” for the demarcation of Cameroon-Nigeria Frontiers. The visit of this delegation had not been approved by hierarchy as the security conditions of the place were doubtful and the heads of the UN mission were reluctant. The UN delegation then left for the frontiers with a weak escort of just 2 elements of the Rapid Intervention Force (RIF) instead of 4, and were ambushed by an armed group as they approached the place, leading to the death of 5 people and 2 were seriously injured. These armed people responsible for these killings have not been identified.

Table 2.- List of the victims of the attack on UN delegation to Kontcha

Persons killed	Persons injured
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Moses Oromo (Kenyan)- Dyako Daouda (Cameroonian)- Ibrahim Daka (Nigerian)- Zakarie Bakarie (Nigerian)- Abdoulaye Bafa (Nigerian)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Bamanga (Nigerian)- A BIR Sergeant

Source: NCHRF investigations

After investigations the Commission discovered that:

- the UN team that was attacked did not have permission from hierarchy to go on mission that day. The team was asked to postpone their mission because of insecure conditions during that period;
- statements were taken from some witnesses related to the unfortunate incidence but the UN delegation refused to make any pronouncement on the matter without the authorisation of their hierarchy;
- the authorities of the Tignere town accompanied the dead bodies, the injured and the rest of the UN delegation to Yola in Nigeria;

- according to the State Counsel, this attack did not look like a habitual ambush as these people mercilessly killed the victims; making the attack look like it was planned with the aim of killing. This therefore looked like a terrorist attack to destabilise the State or sabotage the demarcation process.

2.- Recommendations

The State Counsel at the end of this meeting recommended that the governments of Cameroon and Nigeria should take serious measures in securing the demarcation process of Cameroon-Nigeria frontiers. The Regional Secretary of the Commission for the Adamawa Region ended by showing gratitude for the information they had and promised to transmit to the competent authorities the problems encountered in securing the demarcation process of the Cameroon-Nigeria frontiers.

D.- Visit to Ngan ha Sub Division on the strength of a complaint from Mr Oumarou Bobbo and certain people in Awa village

The Adamawa Regional Branch of the National Commission on human Rights and Freedoms received a complaint from Mr Oumarou Bobbo based on the violation of the right to landed property of certain families in Awa village in Ngan ha Sub Division . The Commission carried out an investigation visit on the 16th of May 2017 to the disputed site which was occupied by SOPROICAM COMPANY where they discussed with the DO, some of the officials of the company as well as the victims (1). The Commission made some recommendations in line with the findings of that visit (2).

1.- Meeting with the DO, Officials of SOPROICAM and the Victims

As earlier indicated, the Commission exchanged with the various parties involved, including the victims.

➤ Discussions with the Divisional Officer of Ngan Ha

Dialogue with the DO of Ngan ha resulted to the fact that the legal process for the occupation of land by the company was in process. That his predecessor had signed a property attestation on account of SOPROICAM Company and the said company had started negotiations with the local population for the realization of certain social projects such as the construction of a health centre. He said that Mr Bobbo was only expressing his anger on the fact that he was not appointed chief of Awa village and that he had been sentenced by the court for slanderous denunciations and the company had signed an accord with the local population of the Awa village who responded positively and Mr Bobbo who was instigating trouble was not a resident of Awa.

➤ **Meeting with the Administrative Head of SOPROICAM Company**

This meeting with Mr Soulaymanou Abba Administrative Head of the company resulted to the fact that the occupation procedure of the said parcel of land is legal; and because of the chieftaincy problem in Awa, Mr Bobbo opposed all procedures meant for the occupation of 2000 hectares of land in Awa by SOPROICAM. He was however, condemned for slanderous denunciations after accusing the traditional chief for illegal sale of land. They also said that the people of the village had positively welcomed the project from the SOPROICAM Company and were already enjoying the advantages of the agreement which consisted of:

- recruitment of the village youths by SOPROICAM;
- construction of a health centre and;
- multiple forms of support.

➤ **Discussions with the head of agricultural exploitation of the company**

Mr Meli Alex, head of exploitations of the company said that he only arrived in May 2014 and was not aware of any dispute concerning the occupation of lands in Awa by SOPROICAM. This meeting resulted to the fact that the company occupies 2000 hectares of land, 300 hectares meant for the cultivation of corn, 700 hectares for the cultivation of soya beans and 1000 hectares is not exploited. He added that SOPROICAM had recruited the village youths but that these youths abandoned most of the jobs because they didn't have the will to do difficult jobs.

➤ **Discussions with the population of Awa village**

The contrary was discovered when the team from the Commission encountered the population of the village of Awa who happened to be victims of expulsion. The Villagers revealed to the Commission that SOPROICAM Company made a series of promises to them which were written in a notebook. Among these promises were the:

- construction of a school;
- construction of a health centre;
- construction of a bore hole;
- development of agricultural roads and;
- compensation for the destruction of properties on that land belonging to the population.

The Commission from their investigations also discovered that the population did not have land certificates to the land and the company had worked on the land only once in 2013. It is for this reason that the Ministry of State Property and Land Tenure annulled the concession that SOPROICAM had on the land. The company refused to respect this annulment and resumed their activities on the land.

2.- Investigation into the matter of the disputed site and results

When the Commission engagement team went down to the disputed site, they found that Awa village is situated in the Ngan Ha Sub Division which is approximately 25km from Ngaoundere between Mbang Foulbe and Loum Nangue along the Ngaoundere-Toubooro road. The disputed site is at least 3km from the road leading to Toubooro. And SOPROICAM Company occupies for a contract of 18 years one part of the second category of national lands defined by section 15 of ordinance no 74/1 of 6th July 1974.

Subsequent to the fact-finding mission, the Commission concluded that:

- There was no formal collaboration between the population and SOPROICAM
- SOPROICAM's agricultural exploitation works are on going
- the company has sheds to store their engines and agricultural products
- the huts belonging to Mr Oumarou Bobbo and other members of the village were destroyed together with fruit trees and pasture by SOPROICAM
- 22 people were delocalized without indemnities and they no longer own agricultural space
- victims did not own land certificates on the land now occupied by SOPROICAM

The National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms Adamaoua resorted to give advice to the population of Awa village. The Commission made them know that;

- they are only bona fide users of the land. They have only rights of the user or usufruct rights to the land as they do not have titles to land, making the land national land as per section 14 and 15 of ordinance No 74/1 of 6th July 1974.
- fighting with the local authorities is not a solution to the problem. So they should avoid fighting
- the victims of expulsion could seize the competent jurisdictions for damages and interest.

The Commission also gave some recommendations, some of which are;

- SOPROICAM had to respect the promises made to the population for the development of the locality.
- that the State had to permit SOPROICAM Company to obtain a concession and not a land title to the disputed land.

Paragraph 2.-Visits to detention places

The Commission visited the central and principal prisons of the Centre, Far North, South, West and East regions and found that prison overcrowding is more acute in urban areas. Such is the case with the Central Prisons of Yaounde, Maroua, Buea, Douala, Bamenda, Bafoussam, as well as some secondary prisons in some divisions. Prison overcrowding in those detention places is justified by the high rate of criminality in urban

areas and the great number of people arrested in the fight against terrorism in the Far North and during protests in the North-West and South-West Regions.

The table below summarises the prison population as noted by the NCHRF during visits to detention places in 2017.

Table 3.- The prison population as observed by the Commission during the 2017 visits

Regions	Prisons visited	Date	Capacity (number of places)	Population (number of prisoners)	Overcrowding rate
Far North	Maroua Central Prison	16 March 2017	350	1633	467%
	Mokolo Principal Prison	22 May 2017	200	558	279%
	Mora Principal Prison	28 July 2017	250	294	118%
West	Mantoum Principal Prison	11 May 2017	500	129	26%
	Foumbot Secondary Prison	16 May 2017	150	162	108%
	Baganté Principal Prison	2 nd August 2017	150	132	88%
	Dschang Principal Prison	3 rd August 2017	120	160	133%
North	Guider Principal Prison	1 st February 2017	150	373	249%
South	Ambam Principal Prison	20 July 2017	100	208	208%
	Ebolowa Central Prison	21 July 2017	250	370	148%
East	Yokadouma Principal Prison	7 to 11 August 2017	400	163	41%
South-West	Kumba Principal Prison	17 September 2017	500	200	40%
	Buea	2 June 2017	200	500	250%
	Mamfé Principal Prison	2 April 2017	130	150	115%
Centre	Kondengui Principal and Central Prisons	16 January 2017	1000	2463	246%

Source: NCHRF

A.- Visit to detention Centres in the North Region

A team from the North Regional Branch of the Commission visited detention centres in the Mayo Louti Division, accompanied by the 1st assistant State Counsel of the Court of First Instance of Guider on the 1st of February 2017. They went to the Guider Principal Prison, the gendarmerie brigades in Mayo-Oulo, the gendarmerie brigade of Figuil and the Figuil Police District.

After the visit to the **Guider central prison**, they discovered that the prison had 373 detainees whereby, 96 were awaiting trial, 272 had been sentenced; of which 7 were women and 2 minors. The prison had 15 foreigners of Nigerian and Chadian nationalities. Officials of the prison explained to the Commission that 45 detainees had been transferred to the Garoua Central Prison and there was one case of recidivism. This Prison had 40 members of staff made up of 37 men and 3 women.

The Commission also noted that the prison had communal toilets and sports facilities. The prison as the Commission was told by some detainees lacks entertainment and leisure facilities like television and radio sets.

In the **gendarmerie brigade of Mayo-Oulo**, the Commission saw that the 2 cells meant for people kept in custody were clean but for a little ventilation problem. There were 2 people in custody within this detention place and the time prescribed for them to be in custody had not exceeded.

The cells in the special Police district of Dourbeye had empty clean cells with good ventilation. The gendarmerie brigade of Figuil according to investigations by the team respected the detention prescriptions and had clean cells but for a little ventilation problem.

The team at the end of this visit resolved that it would be good to think of offering antiseptics and first aid medication to persons who have been deprived of liberty.

The Prison authorities and detainees also advised that the Commission should make popular the Universal Declaration on Human Rights in order to make human rights a reality for all.

B.- Visit to detention Centres in the West Region

The engagement team from the Commission successively visited prisons such as Mantoum Main Prison, Foubot secondary Prison, Bagangté Main Prison, and Dschang Main Prison.

1. Visit to detention areas in Foubot and Mantoum

In May 2017, the West Regional Branch of the Commission visited the Mantoum prison and the Secondary Prison of Foubot.

➤ **Visit to the Mantoum Main Prison**

On the 11th of May 2017, the Commission visited the Mantoum prison where they noticed that most prisoners were from Bafoussam and Mbouda. This prison had 129 prisoners whereby 2 were transferred from the Baham Prison. This prison was constructed in 1963 and had been suffering from serious dilapidation. Visibly no action for renovation was envisaged. Consequently, the roof was poor, walls were deteriorating, no modern toilet facilities; all these causing the prisoners to defecate in a pit during the day and in buckets at night. The main meal in this prison is corn fufu and vegetables. The superintendent acknowledged the efforts of the administration who increased the yearly nutrition fee from 5.5 million to 6.5 million francs CFA. He also said that the files of 12 prisoners were unjustly blocked at the High Court in Yaounde.

➤ **Visit to the Foumbot Secondary Prison**

The Commission went to the Foumbot Secondary Prison on the 16th of May 2017 where they noticed that there were 162 prisoners that day made up of 6 women, 2 minors, and 154 majors.

They noted among other problems cases of arbitrary detention due to administrative delay in the implementation and execution of judicial decisions and difficulties in transferring detainees who have received adjournment decisions due to lack of transportation facilities.

The prison has poor sanitary conditions as the toilets are old causing difficulties of organic waste. They did not have medication for first aid treatment. It is impossible for smoke to be sent out through the door to the entrance of the women's quarter and as a result, the detained women suffer from eye problems and when it's raining, they are unable to cook.

They don't have water in their toilets and they sleep on bare floor.

2. Inspection of detention facilities in Bangangte and Dschang

The Commission visited the prisons of Bangangte and Dschang on the 2nd and 3rd of August 2017.

➤ **Visit to the Bangangté Main Prison**

The visit to Bangangte was a failure as the representatives of the newly installed State Counsel in the Nde Division did not facilitate this mission which was second after the mission that was carried out in August 2016.

The Commission went back to the Bangante prison because there were many pending files related to that prison, after the Commission's last visit in 2016. The 2017 visit was therefore a kind of follow-up mission to that of 2016.

➤ **Visit to the Dschang Main Prison**

The visit to the Dschang Principal Prison was successful. The work carried out with the Assistant Prison Superintendent permitted the Commission to register some statistics which reflected the state of human rights in the Dschang Principal Prison.

The prison was made up of 132 men, 4 women, 12 minors whereby 11 were boys and 1 a girl, 2 appeal cases, 5 cases of amnesty, 5 cases of the military tribunal.

Conclusively, the Commission noted that the prisons generally had poor sanitary conditions and the right to fair trial was not respected. The NCHRF therefore recommended that the Mantoum prison be closed down because the reason for its creation had expired. The institution also noticed that the working conditions in the Gendarmerie Brigade, the Special Police District and the Public Security Police District of Malantouen have to be ameliorated.

C.- Places of Deprivation of Liberty in the South Region

The Commission went down to the prisons of Ebolowa and Ambam and other places of deprivation of liberty.

1.- Visit to detention centres in Ambam

The Commission dispatched an engaging team to the Ambam Main prison, as well as four other places of deprivation of liberty in that town: Judicial police, gendarmerie, police station and the Ambam gendarmerie barracks.

➤ **Visit to the Ambam Main Prison**

This mission that took place from the 20th to the 21st of July 2017, led by the South Branch Head of the Commission, Mrs Ekoan, did not go smoothly as planned. This is because at Ambam Sub-Division, the State Counsel, Mr Atabong Eric Bertholet decided to violate chapter 2, section 2 (iv) of law n° 2004/16 of 22 July 2004 setting up the Commission. This part of the law obliges him or his representative to accompany the Commission in such missions. He refused to take part in the visit or to send any of his representatives. The Commission took note and went on with the mission as programmed.

In the prison at Ambam, the Commission recorded that it has a dimension of 175 m², initially constructed for 70 inmates had 338 prisoners, 7 cells and 30 beds.

The table below shows the detail statistics of the prison in Ambam.

Table 4.- Statistics on the various categories of inmates at the Ambam Main Prison as per 20 July 2017

Sentenced	Awaiting trial	Women	Minors	Foreigners	Men	Total
91	116	05	05	24	97	338

Source: NCHRF investigations

➤ Visit to detention centres at Ambam

The Commission inspected four detention units: The Special Police Branch in charge of investigations, the Gendarmerie Legion, the Ambam Police Station and the Territorial Gendarmerie Brigade of Ambam. At each stop, Mme Ekoan explained the missions of the Commission and the objectives of their visit. It was observed that at the Special Police Branch in charge of investigations, there was no detainee though the unit possesses detention facilities. At the Gendarmerie Legion, there was no one in detention at the time the Commission was visiting. The last detainee in their cell was released on the 19th of July 2017 (a day before the coming of the Commission). However, Captain Obam of this unit decried the insufficiency in logistics and elements in his brigade.

At the Ambam Police Station, the 1st Assistant refused access to the team of the Commission because there was no State Counsel accompanying the team.

Finally at the Territorial Gendarmerie Brigade of Ambam, the Commission met a group of more than thirty women arrested and detained for a case of theft. According to the declarations of Chief Sergeant KANE MENGUE, these women were not yet under custody. They were simply kept there pending the taking of their statements. *“We judged it necessary to keep them in a cell while their statements are being taken for their own security”* Chief Sergeant KANE MENGUE added. But the families of the victims found outside contradicted this information saying that their arrested family members were incarcerated since 8 a.m. and the men in uniform started hearing them only when the Human Rights Commission was announced. Equally, it was alleged that the arrested persons were deprived from talking to their family members, thereby violating **Article 37 of the harmonized criminal procedure code** which gives every arrested person the right to be in contact with family.

Among the women arrested, some were pregnant and others were carrying babies. The register signed by Mme Ekoan showed that the rest of the cells were empty except those harbouring the over thirty women.

2.- Visit to the detention centres at Ebolowa

The Commission visited some places of deprivation of liberty and the *Prison centrale* of Ebolowa.

➤ Visit to the detention centres in Ebolowa

The engaging team from the Commission moved to the Central Police Station, the Gendarmerie Legion, the Territorial Brigade n° 1, the gendarmerie company, and the 2nd and 3rd Police Districts of Ebolowa. At the Central Police Station and the Gendarmerie Legion, there were no detainees. The Commission however noted that the cells were in the basement with insufficient ventilation, nauseating odour and no lighting facilities.

The Territorial Brigade had 3 persons in custody sent in from the gendarmerie company but the Brigade Chief provided a safe environment for them. Generally, the detention areas had very poor sanitary conditions. Also, there was a problem of insufficient personnel, no funds to take care of the people under custody who have been abandoned by their families and joint cells for both men and women coupled with lack of toilets.

➤ Visit to the Ebolowa Central Prison

At the Ebolowa Prison created in 1933 for 200 inmates, 370 prisoners were found. Among them, 223 awaiting trial and 147 sentenced. In the table below the figures are broken down by category, gender and situation.

Table 5.- Classification of inmates of the Ebolowa *Prison central* as seen during 2017 Commission visit

Categories of inmates	women	Men	minors	Total
Awaiting trial	06	206	11	223
Sentenced	05	142	0	147
Appellants	0	11	0	11
Amnesty	0	03	0	03
Life imprisonment	02	06	0	08
Death sentence	0	02	0	02
Compelled	0	36	0	36
Military tribunal	0	15	0	15
Foreigners	0	03	0	03

Source: NCHRF investigations

From the above statistics, it is clear that 60% of the inmates of Ebolowa prison are awaiting trial. Of this percentage, men and minors are the most affected. No minor as per the above table had been sentenced when the Commission was visiting.

The team from the dialogue they had with the detainees and authorities (state counsel, Prison registrar and prison clerks) brought out certain recognized human rights and legal provisions that were being violated in this area coupled with the poor conditions of the prison areas especially in Ambam.

The Commission discovered from this visit that:

- there was barely any separation between the female and male cells in the Ambam Prison. The feeding conditions in Ambam prison were very poor as their yearly diet is comprised only of corn fufu and soya beans soup. Violating article 25(1) of the universal declaration of human rights which includes proper feeding or food as part of adequate standards of living for health and wellbeing.
- the right to physical and moral integrity is violated in both prisons (Ambam and Ebolowa) as the prisoners are sometimes subjected to acts of torture and inhumane treatment. They are often taken to court by foot where they are victims of insults from the onlookers. Also, people who have been detained or imprisoned often pay money before they are given access to any cell without which they'll be forced to sleep on the floor close to the urinary. The fee is 10 000 francs in Ebolowa, 15000 FRS in Ambam and 2500 FRS for access to a bed in both prisons.
- the prisoners who go out for manual labour are only paid on food basis. Monetary payment is on rare cases. Violating article 23(3) of UDHR which stipulates just and favourable remuneration for anybody who works.
- prisoners also complained of the absence of post penal measures which helps prisoners especially minors not to go back to criminal activities when they are released. Article 40(1) of the Cameroon penal code recognizes post penal measures for every offender who has been subjected to loss of liberty for more than a year to be supervised for a period of 5 years.
- there's a problem of over population and promiscuity in Ambam as the detention areas constructed for 70 people harbours 208 detainees. This causes a problem of hygiene as the cells are infested with rats, cockroaches and mosquitoes. The right to a safe and sound environment is therefore violated.
- the right to health is not respected as sick people in Ambam Prison ask for help from their families. The Commission was also confronted with a case of murder whereby the offender Mr Assoumou Eyimi Dieudonné who was sentenced to life imprisonment had chronic rheumatism, was abandoned by his family and the prison infirmary could not handle this critical condition. Also, there were frequent cases of malaria, diarrhoea and tuberculosis.
- Ambam detention units do not accord proper care to vulnerable people (aged people and minors)
- article 10 of the 1948 Universal declaration of Human Rights advocates for the right to equitable and fair trial. Contrary to this, the team took note of an involuntary homicide case by Mr Suh Charles who was detained on the 14th of December 2016 and at the time the Commission visited 7 months after, the

detainee had never been taken before the examining magistrate even after his detention period was extended.

At the end of the mission, the Human Rights Commission recommended the:

- respect for international directives on detention conditions and treatment of prisoners
- renovation, extension and equipment of prisons, Police Stations and Gendarmeries
- development of revenue generating activities
- reinforcement of measures against corruption in the judicial milieu and;
- putting in place of alternative sanctions to imprisonment.

3.- Points of concern on Special Issues raised during visit to detention centres of the South-West Region

The Commission is certain to have actually discussed the main issues arising from the detention centres. These main issues are linked to the obstruction of the Commission from performing fact-finding missions of the Commission in detention centres, as well as some recorded cases of corruption in such places. The matter of special issues in places of deprivation of liberty in the South-West Region is just one of such cases.

➤ Obstruction of the Commission's inspection of places of detention in Buea

Since its inception in 2006, the South-West Branch of the Commission has conducted several inspections of Police and Gendarmerie cells, not leaving out the prisons. The exercise is provided statutorily by the Law creating the Commission (chapter II section 2 of law n° 2004/16 of 22 July 2004). It has also resulted in the creation of greater public awareness of the unsatisfactory conditions in detention centres in the South-West Region as a whole.

It is sad to note that the South-West Branch of the Human Rights Commission was deprived from this role when the State Council for Buea refused to assign himself or deputy to accompany the Commission to the inspection of detention centres in Buea. This refusal or lack of collaboration was coming at the time when there were many allegations of torture, inhuman and degrading treatment meted on anti-government protesters. Till date, no formal explanation has been given for this refusal.

➤ Lingering cases of violation of human rights by law enforcement agents

Gross violations carried out by the Police and Gendarmes in the South-West Region. Denials of liberty and security of persons and arbitrary arrests and detention of persons in the South-West Region were sources of substantial concern for the Commission in 2017.

The Commission was incensed by several cases relating to the violation of these rights. In the months of September and October 2017, several arrests were made by the Police and

Gendarmes. It was not clear on the purpose of such arrests more especially as most of them took place at the private residence of the accused.

Pa Kontso, a resident of Buea, recounted his ordeal to the Commission and stated how kids were being tortured. In one of the sad cases, a young man was asked to slap an elderly man. Suspects were held at the Police and Gendarmerie cells longer than provided by the law. The criminal procedure code was never respected. Suspects were at the mercy of the Regional Delegate of National Security and the Procureur General.

During the crisis period, thousands of persons were subjected to arbitrary detention in all the six Divisions of the South-West Region.

All the accused persons were thereafter transferred to the Buea Central Prison, Kumba Central Prison and Mamfe Central Prison respectively. In all there were about 150 persons in Mamfe Central Prison, 200 cases at Kumba Central Prison and more than 500 cases at the Buea Central Prison. The accused persons have started appearing before the Magistrate for bail. While bail is being granted some of the cases, the Commission noted with dissatisfaction the fact that the conditions for bail were too harsh. Most of the accused persons arrested in connection to the strike were impecunious and could barely afford a meal. It is illogical to imagine that harsh bail conditions will be fulfilled. As a matter of fact, they were forced to stay back in the prison.

➤ **Cases of corruption in prison places**

This practice was particularly prevalent in the South-West Region. Forces of law and order (Police and Gendarmes) as well as Magistrates and State Counsels were the most visible in this unfortunate practice as noticed by the Commission in the exercise of its functions in 2017.

At the level of Police Stations and Gendarmerie Brigades, the Regional Office was solicited by several victims under police and gendarmes custody. A vivid case at hand is the intervention it made at the Gendarmerie office in Tiko, where innocent villagers were dragged by their Chief into the hands of the Gendarmes because they requested a fair distribution of their own share of land surrendered by the CDC. The Chief as usual took advantage of his connection with the men in uniform and filed in a malicious complaint to the Divisional Officer (DO) for Tiko against his own subjects. The DO transferred the complaint to the Gendarmerie for investigation. It only took timely intervention of the Commission to secure the release of all the villagers without any bail fee.

It must be emphasized here that to secure one's release at the Gendarmerie, accused persons are forced to pay a bail fee of 25.000 (twenty five thousand) FCFA irrespective of the offence.

In some cases, the homes of some of these suspects were broken into by the police. In what has turned out to be money making exercise, once arrested, the victims were coerced to pay huge sums of money before they are released. A woman selling food at Molyko was asked to

pay 400.000 (four hundred thousand) FCFA to secure the release of her son. A mechanic at Great Soppo is alleged to have paid 500.000 (five hundred thousand) FCFA to gain his liberty. He was arrested on spurious charges together with his apprentice.

This includes the above-mentioned Pa Kontso, who lives in Buea, and had to pay 300,000 FCFA for his freedom at the gendarmes.

4.- Fact-finding missions to places of deprivation of liberty, Yokadouma, subsequent to repeated alleged cases of torture

The National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms carried out an investigation visit in the detention places of Yokadouma in the Mboumba and Ngoko Division of the East Region from the 7th to the 11th of August 2017. This mission was in respect of two complaints received at the Commission through a local Civil Society Organisation that deals with the defence of human rights in the said locality. The Association denounced acts of torture and cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment inflicted on persons detained at the gendarmerie brigade (violation of the right to life for Mr Mohamadou Lawal) and Yokadouma Principal Prison (violation of the right to physical integrity for Mr Marigot Jordi).

This mission had as objective to gather information on the validity of allegations levied in these 2 cases and to inspect the different areas of detention in Yokadouma (gendarmerie brigade, Police Districts and the Principal Prison) to make sure that there was respect of the fundamental rights of persons who have been deprived of liberty.

Beginning with the administrative authorities, the Commission could not have any information from Mr Kuela Valeri Norbert Senior Divisional Officer of Mboumba and Ngoko concerning the allegations because he was just three weeks old in his new office.

➤ Alleged practice of torture that led to the death of M. Mohamadou Lawal at the Yokadouma Gendarmerie

In the company of the representative of the State Counsel of the Court of 1st instance Yokadouma, the Commission investigated allegations on torture leading to the death of Mohammadou Lawal in the gendarmerie brigade of Yokadouma on the 19th of April 2017

The team gathered from their investigations that Mr Lawal was arrested among 8 others and taken to the gendarmerie brigade of Yokadouma in relation to the fight against drug trafficking and consumption. In the course of searching them, 9 packets of *tramol* were discovered on Lawal. The Commander of the gendarmerie Brigade, Medjo Saker, went further to say that medical reports proved that Lawal didn't die of torture but of *acute pulmonary edema*.

Contrary to reports from the gendarmerie, the father of the deceased was very convinced that he died of torture as he had photographs of the deceased corpse which had some inflammations on the neck. The Commission concluded that there was not enough

corroborative evidence to counter the report of the medical expert on the real cause of the deceased death. The Commission recommended that the Government Commissioner of the Military Tribunal in Bertoua should carry out an in-depth investigation that will allow the prosecution of suspects if evidence of torture is found.

➤ **Alleged acts of torture inflicted on Marigot Jordi in the Principal Prison of Yokadouma**

In the Principal Prison of Yokadouma, the team from their investigations discovered that Mr Marigot who was arrested for being in possession of *tramol* and cigarettes was actually a victim of torture which violated his right to physical integrity. But the official who perpetrated the act accepted his fault and gave the victim proper medical attention which the victim confirmed. The Prison warder, however, received a query from the Prison Registrar to which he responded but he was not sanctioned.

➤ **Taking a general tour of detention facilities in Yokadouma**

The Commission noticed that the detention places had proper sanitary conditions. There were two people under custody in the gendarmerie brigade and the Police cells were empty. Their registers were properly filled. And from discussions with the commissioner of public security, the NCHRF gathered that the most common crimes are: theft, fraud, duping, trafficking of human bones and narcotics. In addition is the problem of refugees which is a disturbance to peace in the locality.

The principal prison of Yokadouma was initially constructed for 300 places. At the time of the visit of the Commission, 163 detainees were present; 68 awaiting trial, 91 sentenced, 1 appellant and 2 cases of cassation appeal. The table below summarises the prison situation. The team realized that the prison is well constructed with durable materials and has 13 cells.

Table 6.- The prison population in the Yokadouma Main Prison

Types Categories	Men	Women	Minors	foreigners	Total	Capacity
Awaiting trial	62	1	0	5	68	300 places
Sentenced	87	4	0	0	91	
appellants	1	0	0	0	1	
Cassation appeals	2	0	0	0	2	
Compelled	1	0	0	0	1	
TOTAL	153	5	0	5	163	

Source: NCHRF investigations

Table 7.- Observations on the low occupation rate of the Yokadouma Principal Prison

Quarters	Cell number	Number detained	Observation on the cell conditions
N°1	Local 1	5	All women occupy same cell
N°2	Local 1	41	This cell has a plethoric number of prisoners because it is a cell where all who are detained stay while waiting to be sent to permanent cells
	Local 2	8	R.A.S
	Local 3	9	R.A.S
	Local 4	7	Meant for pygmies only as this group prefer to be kept in one place (according to the prison disciplinarian)
	Local 5	9	R.A.S
	Local 6	3	R.A.S
N°3	Local A	8	R.A.S
	Local B	9	R.A.S
	Local C	7	R.A.S
	Local D	11	R.A.S
	Local E	8	R.A.S
	Local F	9	R.A.S

Source: NCHRF investigations

Generally, from the investigations carried out by the Commission, all human rights were respected in the various places of detention in Yokadouma.

However, some recommendations were given by the team from the Commission which are:

- That proper investigation should be carried out by the Government Commissioner of the Military Tribunal Bertoua on the real cause of the death of Mr Mohammadou Lawal in the Gendarmerie Brigade in Yokadouma on the 19 April 2017.
- That the prison authorities should sanction Mr Mekoulou Clement, the prison guard of Yokadouma Principal Prison for carrying out acts of torture on Marigot Jordi, a detainee on 23 April 2017.

SECTION 2.- HANDLING OF COMPLAINTS

This part of the report presents the number of written complaints filed in at the Commission by either individuals or cooperate bodies. It also shows how these complaints were treated and the type of collaboration the Commission received from authorities while handling these

complaints. This part of the report equally focuses on the categories of violated rights from the complaints received as well as the accused.

Paragraph 1.- Number of complaints handled in 2017

In 2017 therefore, a total of 1112 complaints were received whereby 713 were fully treated while 390 are still following their course.

Table 8.- Regional representation of complaints received and treated in 2017

Regions	N° of complaints		
	received	fully treated	still following its course
Centre	547	348	190
North West	213	166	47
Southwest	163	120	43
Littoral	82	16	66
Adamawa	48	48	00
South	37	01	36
North	22	14	8
Total	1 112	713	390

Source: NCHRF

The above table shows that the Centre Region received the highest number of complaints (547) in 2017 out of which 348 were fully treated. This number is 49.19 % of the total number of complaints received nationwide by the Commission. They were closely followed by the North West Region with 213 complaints and the South-West Region came on the third position with 163 complaints. The North Region registered the least number of complaints with 22 received.

Paradoxically, the most disturbing situation was recorded in the South Region whereby only 1 complaint was fully treated out of the 37 received. This may be explained by the fact that authorities in the South Region hardly cooperate with the Commission when it comes to the handling of complaints. This is visible in the table that follows (out of 30 correspondences served to authorities in 2017, only 3 replies were received). The Littoral Region is in a similar situation whereby out of 82 complaints received, only 16 were fully treated.

Paragraph 2.- Actions undertaken as part of handling complaints

In the course of handling complaints, the Commission came up with a summary of correspondences, category of respondents and the number of reference for hearing that were recorded as per the notices to appear.

Table 9.- Situation of feedback to Commission letters

Regions	Numbers of letters	Responses	Pending response
Centre	120	82	38
North West	47	16	31
South	30	03	27
South-West	22	02	20
Littoral	15	01	14
North	06	1	05
Adamawa	19	00	19
Total	259	105	154

Source: NCHRF

Table 10.- Situation of notices to appear and their respondents

Regions	N° of summonses served	N° responded	N° pending
North West	229	204	25
Littoral	59	32	27
Southwest	21	19	02
Centre	12	10	02
South	05	01	04
North	04	02	02
Adamawa	04	3	1
Total	334	271	63

Source: NCHRF

From the table above, a total of 330 summonses were served in 2017 out of which 268 positive responses were recorded and 64 responses pending. The North West Region served the highest number (229) of summonses, followed by the Littoral Region (59) in 2017.

Table 11.- Situation of accused violators of human rights in 2017

N°	Institutions/Accused persons	Number of times accused
1	Individuals	432
2	Public Administrations	135
3	Forces of law and order (Police and Gendarmerie)	102
4	Administrative authorities	95
5	Companies	61
6	Judiciary	53
7	Traditional authorities	40
8	Bar Association	11
9	Religious bodies	08
10	Army	06
11	Penitentiary Administration	04
12	Embassies	02
13	UNHCR	01
Total		950

Source: NCHRF

The table above indicates that the most presumed violators of human rights in Cameroon are individuals and they are closely followed by Administrative authorities and elements of the forces of law and order (Police and Gendarmerie).

Paragraph 3.- The categories of rights allegedly violated in 2017

In the course of handling complaints at the Commission alleged violations were classified as follows:

Table 12.- Representation of the categories of rights allegedly violated in 2017

N°	Various rights	Number
1	Right to property	179
2	Right to fair trial	122
3	Right to physical integrity	110
4	Arbitrary arrest and detention	72
5	Right to work	70

6	Right to social security	39
7	Right to family	34
8	Freedom of movement	32
9	Right to education	28
10	Torture	27
12	Right to life	22
13	Right to security	22
14	Right to health	18
15	Right to access to justice	10
16	Right to remuneration	10
17	Right to adequate standard of living	9
18	Right to public Service	8
19	Freedom of worship and religion	6
20	Succession Right	6
23	Abuse of power	6
24	Freedom of association	5
25	Right to identity	5
26	Forceful disappearance	5
27	Right to housing	4
28	Right to legal assistance	4
29	Child abuse	3
30	Right to self determination	2
31	Right to financial assistance	2
32	Right to information	2
33	Exile	1
34	Right to Refugee statues	1
35	Right to intimacy	1
36	Right to development	1
37	Right to food	1
38	Right to state security	1
39	Discrimination	1
40	Right to participate in the management of public affairs	1
41	Abuse of confidence	1
42	Right to remarry	1
43	Human trafficking	1
44	Right to a descent environment	1
45	Right to peace	1
Total		875

Source: NCHRF

The situation of alleged rights violated in 2017 as seen on the table above stands clear that the right to property was most violated within the period of reference. The Commission received 179 cases of alleged violation of the right to property. Although the right to property is the

most violated, it is worth noting that there is a remarkable drop in the number of cases received in this category in 2017 as compared with the cases received in 2016 (343 cases in 2016 against 179 cases in 2017).

This is closely followed by the right to fair trial (122 cases registered). The violation of the right to property is mostly caused by succession disputes and illegal sales of land in land matters or disputes. Violence is beginning to be on the rise as it often leads to violation of rights to physical integrity. The violation of this right is found even at the level of institutions meant to enforce law and order. Corruption and unnecessary disputes on succession, property etc., are major causes of the violation to physical and moral interest as the accused persons will often go at any length to achieve their interests.

PART III.- CROSS-CUTTING ACTIVITIES

This part of the report examines the rest of the activities of the Commission other than promotion and protection. Here, the report shall examine the Administrative and Financial Management, Cooperation and Communication.

CHAPTER I: ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

This section of the report will examine the financial and administrative management of the Human Rights Commission in 2017.

SECTION 1.- ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT

The following remarks were made:

- Staff recruitment and posting: a journalist, eight supervisors, four drivers, a secretary and a switchboard operator, all recruited on 1 December 2016 and also the recruitment of a gardener for the Chairperson's residence on 1 October 2017.
- The resignation of a supervisor and a gardener.
- The appointment of four chiefs of service, two regional secretaries and five office heads.
- The transfer of a regional secretary, three executive officers, two supervisors and two secretaries.
- The promotion and reclassification of some staff members.
- The death of a regional secretary.
- A record of 52 job applications.
- A record of 100 internship applications.
- An entry of 128 trainees.
- Organisation of various meetings.
- Fresh moves and negotiations for a new building for the head office.
- The follow-up of administrative files with bodies such as the National Social Insurance Fund.
- Organised the 2017 International Women's Day.
- Organised the 22nd and 23rd sessions of the Commission that held on 20 April and 21 December 2017 respectively.
- Organised the 2017 International Labour Day.

SECTION 2.- FINANCIAL AFFAIRES

The following transactions were registered:

- Following up the release of the sum of 915,000,000 CFA Francs 2017, representing the two instalments of the functioning budget.
- The commitment of the sum 500,000,000 CFA Francs representing the Commission's 2017 public investment budget (PIB) for the purpose of settling contracts issued during the 2017 financial year, as detailed below:
 - o Acquisition and installation of a transformer at the Far-North Regional Branch.
 - o Acquisition and installation of generators at the Head Office and the Littoral Branch.
 - o Acquisition and installation of 23 tents with 100 seats each.
 - o Acquisition and installation of communication equipment.
 - o Acquisition of 11 vehicles and ten motorcycles.
 - o The payment of staffs and Commissioners
 - o The payment of taxes, and contributions to the NSIF.

CHAPTER II.- COOPERATION ACTIVITIES

In the area of cooperation, besides audiences and meetings, the NCHRF focused on consolidating and establishing partnerships in a bid to strengthen the actions of the institution. Focus in this chapter shall be on national and international encounters and meetings where the Commission was present or represented.

SECTION 1.- AUDIENCES AND MEETINGS

This section includes audiences granted to some personalities as well as the national and international meetings in which the Chairperson participated.

Paragraph 1.- Audiences with various personalities in 2017

In 2017 the Chairperson or his representatives met with the following personalities:

- the Minister Delegate at the Presidency of the Republic in charge of Defence;
- the Secretary General of the Commonwealth.

Audiences granted by the Regional Secretary of South-West region are herein included.

A.- Audience with the Minister Delegate in charge of Defence

The Chairperson of the NCHRF was received in audience by the Minister Delegate at the Presidency in Charge of Defence on the 16th October, 2017. Discussions between the two personalities focused on the crisis in the North-West and the South-West Regions.

B.- Audience with Right Honourable Patricia SCOTLAND

The Chairperson on December 20, 2017, met with the Right Honourable Patricia SCOTLAND, Commonwealth Secretary General during an official visit to Cameroon. Other institutions available at the meeting were the National Governance Program, ELECAM and CONAC. This consultation was furnished with discussions on good governance.

C.- Audiences in the Southwest Region

The South-West Branch Office of the Commission in the course of the year played host to two important delegations. The first was the political desk of the American Embassy which came to evaluate the human rights situations of the Region. This meeting was followed by another. This time it was led by the head of the Political Desk and Mr Fon from the American Embassy. They were accompanied by conflict experts from the State Department. For close to one hour, the delegation brainstormed on some indicators likely to transform into violent conflict during elections. It was quite a rich encounter with the delegation. They appreciated the work of the Branch.

Again the Branch received the Director of Human Rights and Democracy for Central Africa, Mr Ahowanou Agbessi. He had been to the Branch on two previous occasions before the crucial meeting.

Paragraph 2.- National and International meetings

These meetings include a reception with the British High Commission in Cameroon attended by the Chairperson of the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms, and the international meeting organized by the *Association Francophone des Commissions Nationales des Droits de l'Homme* (AFCNDH).

A.- With the British High Commissioner

The NCHRF on 20th February 2017 received the British High Commissioner to Cameroon. The following articulations marked the one hour discussion between the Chairperson and the High Commissioner.

- The Anglophone crisis;
- The Boko Haram problem and;
- The young student arrested through telephone conversation on BOKO HARAM

B.- Participation in international meetings organized by the Association Francophone des Commissions Nationales des Droits de l'Homme

The Chairperson was at the French-Speaking Association of National Commissions on Human Rights held from the 25th to the 26th of November 2017 in Abidjan-Côte d'Ivoire. The encounter held under the theme: ***The role of national human rights institutions (NHRIs) in promoting and protecting the rights of migrants: standards, good practices.*** Here, Dr BANDA gave a presentation on the implementation of the mandate of NHRIs on the protection of the rights of migrants: experiences, good practices, lessons learned and challenges. At the end of the meeting, decisions arrived at included the concern of the advocacy mission in Cameroon to ensure the law of the NCHRF which was adopted in accordance with the Paris Principles is adopted. In addition, the network will be presided over by the Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms of Niger for the next three (3) years. The office of the Vice Chairperson will be jointly ensured by the National Council on Human Rights of Morocco and the Protection Office of the Citizens of Haiti.

SECTION 2.- PROJECTS DESIGNED AND SUBMITTED TO SOME TARGETED PARTNERS

A number of projects were elaborated and submitted to partners in the year 2017.

These included:

- the project to raise public awareness in the three northern regions and some parts of the South-West regions on the repercussions of early marriages of young girls, forwarded to the Italian embassy for eventual sponsorship ;
- an advocacy for the ratification of the United Nation Convention on the promotion and protection of persons with disabilities as well as the adoption of the application text of the 2010 law on persons with disabilities. The project is in line with the existing partnership between the NCHRF and Sightsavers ;
- sensitization of administrative authorities of the east region on the respect of the fundamental rights of migrants; (forwarded to the International organization for migration);
- information and sensitization project on the characteristics of free and fair elections (the dos and don'ts of free and fair elections);
- the training of Police, gendarmes, magistrates and journalists on the respect of fundamental human rights;
- sensitization campaign on the involvement of youths in military groups in Cameroon;
- information and sensitization of the population of the northern regions on the importance of the education of the girl child;
- sensitization campaign on the repercussion of female genital mutilation;
- Sensitization campaign on the respect of the fundamental rights of children and young girls of the east and Centre Regions in their local languages, in collaboration with SIL Cameroun.

SECTION 3.- COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES AND MEDIA PRODUCTIONS

The Commission throughout the year of reference made its activities visible through internal and external communication. The website of the Commission also greatly contributed in its visibility.

Media productions by the Commission

The National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms produces a bilingual radio programme over the National Station of the CRTV two Wednesdays per month from 9:15 pm to 9:30 pm. The programme is referred to in French as “*Tribune des Droits et des Libertés*” and in English as “*Born Free*”. This programme was produced and broadcast without perturbation in 2017. The main topics discussed in this programme were human rights commemorative days.

In the area of partnership with the press, the Commission tightened cooperation with the private and public press (audio-visual, print and online news organs)

Within 2017, the Commission produced its bilingual magazine Born Free. Two editions (40 and 41) were produced and distributed.

CHAPTER III - MAJOR PROGRESS AND DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED

Although the Commission confronted challenges in the course of carrying out its missions of human rights promotion and protection in Cameroon in line with their 2017 action plan, some progress was recorded.

SECTION 1.- MAJOR PROGRESS

The Commission in 2017 registered some improvements in the following areas:

- There was an increase in the response of the Commission's summonses in 2017 from 241 response out of 303 in 2016 to 268 response out of 330 in 2017;
- There was an increase in investigation visits to detention centres and prisons by members and staff of the Commission in 2017 as compared to the visits in 2016;
- There was a slight increase in the running budget of the NCHRF from 756 000 000 FCFA in 2016 to 915 000 000 FCFA in 2017;
- The recruitment and posting of about 16 staff in the Commission;
- The appointment of 4 chief of services, 2 regional secretaries and 5 office heads;
- Acquisition of 11 Vehicles and 10 Motorcycles to facilitate field investigations by members and staff of the Commission;
- Cooperation with both private and public press was tightened;
- Two editions of the Commission's bilingual magazine (Born Free) were produced.

SECTION 2.- DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED

The main difficulties experienced in 2017 included:

- The refusal of some administrative and judicial authorities as well as some forces of law and order to collaborate with the Commission, thereby deterring her sometimes in attaining its missions in the field. A glaring example is the case of the South Regional branch which out of the 37 complaints received in 2017, only 1 was fully treated due to the lack of collaboration from the authorities. Equally, out of the 30 correspondences served to authorities in 2017, only 3 replies were received. The South-West regional branch also faced this problem as they could not carry out prison visits effectively because the State Council for Buea refused to assign himself or deputy to accompany the Commission to the inspection of detention centres in Buea. This refusal or lack of collaboration was coming at the time when there were many allegations of torture, inhuman and degrading treatment meted on anti-government protesters;
- Another fundamental difficulty was the lack of sufficient funds to effectively execute the 2017 action plan of the Commission.

SECTION 2.- OBSERVATIONS

From the complaints registered in 2017, the highest categories of rights allegedly violated were the right to property (179), the right to fair trial (122), the right to physical integrity (110), arbitrary arrests and detentions (72) as well as the right to work (70) and social security (39). Although the right to property was most violated within the year of reference, it is worth noting that there was a remarkable drop in the number of cases received in this category in 2017 as compared with the cases received in 2016 (343 cases in 2016 against 179 cases in 2017).

The most presumed violators of Human rights in Cameroon in 2017 were individuals (432 accused violators), closely followed by administrative authorities (135) and elements of the forces of law and order (Police and Gendarmes) (102).

CONCLUSION

The activities of the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms in the year 2017, as in the previous years focused on:

- Statutory duties:
 - o The 22nd and 23rd Ordinary Sessions that held on 20 April and 21 December 2017, respectively;
 - o The publication of the 2016 Activity and the State of Human Rights in Cameroon Reports, on the 29th December 2017;
 - o The monthly coordination meetings of Chairpersons and Rapporteurs of Working Groups.
- Human Rights promotion and protection activities;
- Reactivation of partnerships agreements;
- Enhancement of the Institutional framework.

As part of promoting and protecting Human Rights, the Commission has been observing positive changes in the way both individuals and institutions respond to its summonses.

Notwithstanding, there were equally some challenges in the realisation of many of the Commission's projects. The construction of a new head office building and the official launching of its Far-North and West regional branch offices remain a hard nut to crack for the Commission. The budget allocated for the running of the Institution continues to post a problem to the appropriate functioning of the Commission.



Eva J. Etongue Mayen

Secretary General



Dr. Chemuta Divine BANDA

Chairperson