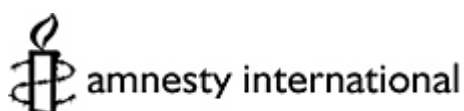


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Amnesty International Report 2007 - Cameroon

REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON

Head of state: Paul Biya
Head of government: Ephraim Inoni
Death penalty: retentionist
International Criminal Court: signed

Nine men and four women were convicted for practising homosexuality. Scores of people were tortured by members of the security forces. Courts convicted some officials of involvement in killings. At least two students were killed and many others detained during clashes with government forces. Several journalists were briefly detained or beaten. Secessionist political activists were arrested and detained.

Background

Nigeria formally handed the disputed oil-rich Bakassi Peninsula to Cameroon in August and withdrew its troops. Several thousand Nigerian nationals left the peninsula for mainland Nigeria. The handover implemented an October 2002 decision of the International Court of Justice.

More than 80 members of the Kedjom Keku community in Northwest province accused of involvement in the killing of their former traditional chief were arrested between January and March. Many were reportedly beaten at the time of their arrest. Former chief Simon Vugah, who was deposed in 2004, was killed after he returned to Kedjom Keku to reclaim his position. Those detained included Simon Vugah's successor, Benjamin Vubangsi, who was released with about 60 others in September. At least 25 people were held without trial in connection with the killing at the end of 2006.

A power struggle within the Social Democratic Front (SDF) opposition party culminated in the killing in May of Grégoire Diboulé, a supporter of Bernard Muna, leader of a faction opposed to SDF chairman, John Fru Ndi. More than 20 members of the SDF were arrested and charged with involvement in the murder. They were still awaiting trial at the end of the year. John Fru Ndi was charged with complicity to murder and assault but was not detained.

At least 400 people were rendered homeless in November when the government demolished their houses in the Etetak district of the capital, Yaoundé. The government claimed that the houses had been built without authorization, but provided no alternative accommodation or compensation.

Several senior managers of state companies accused of embezzlement were arrested after the government launched an anti-corruption campaign in January. Those detained included Siyam Siwé, a former director general of the Autonomous Port of Douala, and Barthélemy Kamdem, the company's assistant financial director. Others being investigated for embezzlement were members of parliament whose immunity was withdrawn in October.

Convicted for practising homosexuality

Patrick Yousse-Djaudio and another gay man were reportedly sentenced in February to one year's imprisonment for practising homosexuality. In March, four young women were arrested for allegedly engaging in lesbian activities. They were released in June after a court in Douala sentenced them to a three-year suspended prison sentence and a fine.

Two minors arrested in May 2005 with nine others accused of practising homosexuality were released in February without trial. The remaining nine were tried in June. Two were acquitted and seven were sentenced to 10 months' imprisonment then released because of the time already spent in custody. One of these, Alim Mongoche, died of an illness soon after his release.

Twelve young women students were expelled in March from a college on account of being lesbian. They were not able to join any other college.

Threats to freedom of expression

Several journalists were detained or assaulted because of their work. The authorities were not known to have taken any action against those responsible for assaults.

- Duke Atangana Etotogo, director of *L'Afrique centrale* newspaper, was arrested on 3 September by members of the military security service after the newspaper published an article critical of the army. He was released without charge on 8 September.
- Patient Ebwele of *Radio Equinoxe* was beaten and detained for four hours in April by gendarmes in Akwa-Nord district of Douala.
- Eric Motomu, editor of *The Chronicle* newspaper, was assaulted in April by SDF supporters in Bamenda who accused him of publishing articles critical of their leader, John Fru Ndi.

Ten convicted for political killing

In April, a court convicted former chief and member of parliament Doh Gah Gwanyin and nine others of involvement in the death of John Kohtem, an SDF leader beaten to death in August 2004. They were sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment but Doh Gah Gwanyin was released on bail pending his application to appeal. Two of the accused were acquitted.

Student unrest culminates in deaths

In April, several university student leaders in Yaoundé received suspended prison

sentences for their role in clashes between students and members of the security forces in November 2005.

At least eight Buea university students were arrested in March during a demonstration in support of independence for Anglophone Cameroon. They were released without charge after several days.

At least two Buea university students were shot dead on 29 November by the security forces during violent demonstrations over alleged corruption and discrimination against Anglophone students. The authorities did not hold any formal investigation into the killings.

Torture and ill-treatment

Torture by members of the security forces continued to be reported.

- Serges Ondobo died in April, reportedly as a result of being beaten in police custody in Yaoundé when he protested against the arrest of a fellow trader. The authorities are not known to have taken any action against the policemen responsible.

More than 100 people were reportedly beaten in late October after they were arrested by members of the Rapid Intervention Brigade (Brigade d'intervention rapide, BIR) in and around Maroua, the capital of Extreme North province. The victims were detained for several days at Salack, where many of them were stripped naked, blindfolded and beaten, then held in a cell with water on its floor. The victims included Hamidou Ndjidda, Aziz Dikanza and Ismael Balo Amadou.

The trial by the Douala military tribunal of several gendarmes and a manager implicated in the death of Emmanuel Moutombi, who died in February 2005, ended in March. The manager was found not guilty of involvement in torture but was fined 25,000 CFA Francs (approximately US\$50) for slapping Emmanuel Moutombi. A gendarmerie commander was sentenced to 10 months' imprisonment, while three gendarmes convicted of causing the death were sentenced to eight, nine and 10 years' imprisonment. The tribunal ordered the state to pay 44 million CFA Francs (approximately US\$88,000) to the victim's family.

Southern Cameroons National Council

As in previous years, members of the Anglophone separatist movement, the Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC), were arrested and briefly detained.

At least 40 SCNC members were arrested in January while holding a meeting in Buea. They were released without charge after several days. A further 29 were arrested in March and detained for several days in Buea.

More than 60 SCNC members were arrested in Bamenda on 24 April and released without charge on 1 May. When SCNC leaders, including Humphrey Prince Mbiglo, tried to hold a press conference on 7 May to protest, they were among 20 SCNC members who were detained for several days. Fidelis Chinkwo, Emmanuel Emi, Priscilla Khan, Elvis Bandzeka and Cletus Che were arrested in Bamenda on 16 September and released several days later without charge.

Anglophone prisoners

Anglophone prisoners serving long prison sentences for involvement in politically motivated violent activities were transferred in May from Kondengui prison in Yaoundé to their home provinces. Eight were transferred to Bamenda in Northwest province and

the ninth, Roland Tatah, was transferred to Buea central prison in Southwest province. One of the nine, Philip Tete, died from an illness in November.

AI country reports/visits

Visit

The authorities did not respond to AI's request to visit Cameroon.

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