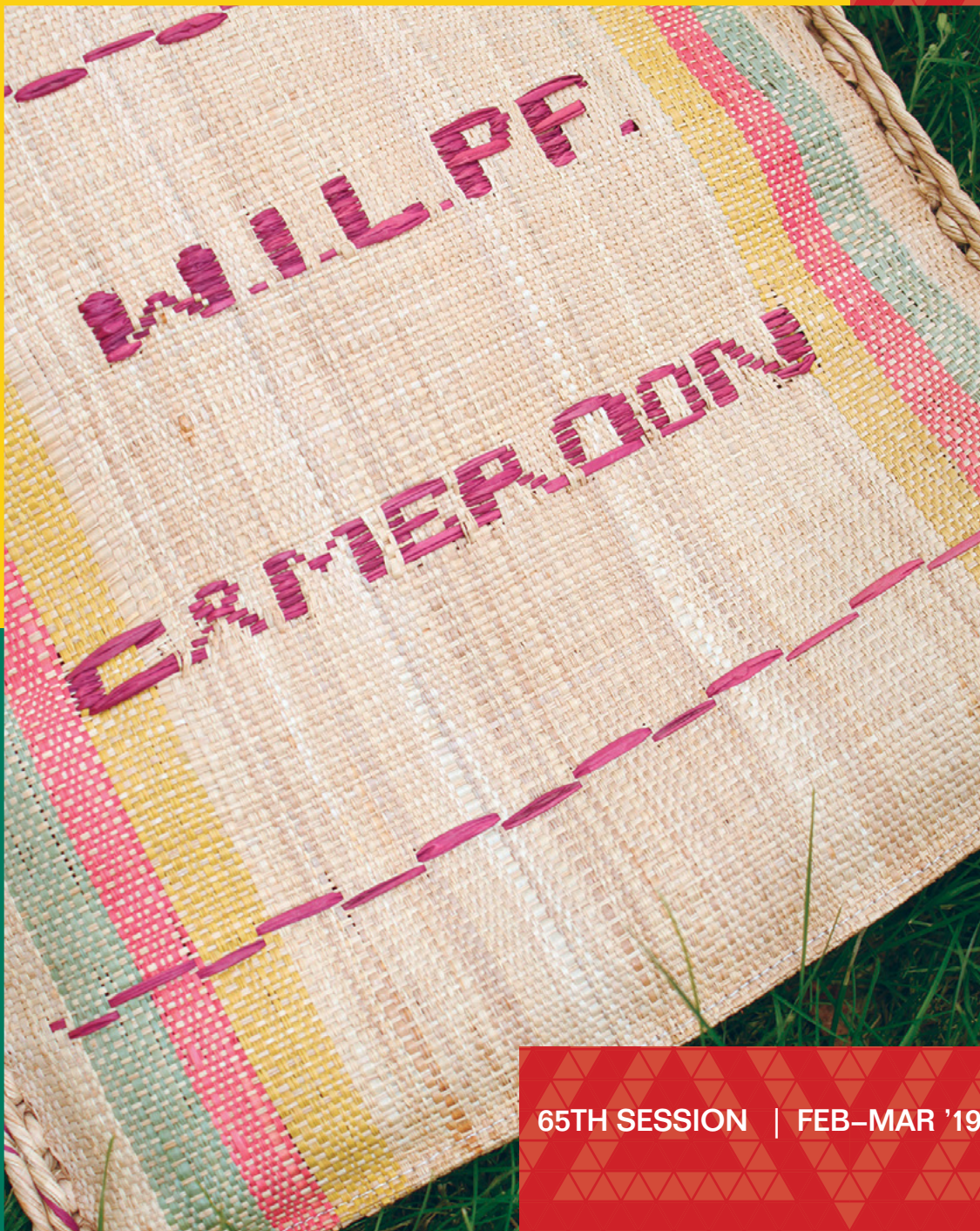




# Women's Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in Cameroon

PARALLEL REPORT TO THE UN COMMITTEE ON  
ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS



This report was developed by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom – Cameroon section (WILPF Cameroon). It was submitted to the 65th session of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which reviewed Cameroon's periodic report on 20 and 21 February 2019. The development of this report was made possible thanks to the financial support of Ville de Genève and the Channel Foundation and through collaboration with WILPF International, which supported its drafting, editing, and publication.

For more information, contact: [info@wilpf.org](mailto:info@wilpf.org)

In partnership with:



---

© 2019 Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Permission is granted for non-commercial reproduction, copying, distribution, and transmission of this publication or parts thereof so long as full credit is given to the publishing organisation; the text is not altered, transformed, or built upon; and for any reuse or distribution, these terms are made clear to others.

Submitted 25 January 2019

Original version submitted in French

24 pp.

**Design:** Nadia Joubert

**Cover photo credit:** Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

[www.wilpf.org](http://www.wilpf.org)

# Table of Contents

I. About WILPF Cameroon . . . . .	4
II. Non-Discrimination (Art.2 Para.2) . . . . .	5
III. Gender Equality and Gender-Based Violence (Art.3) . . . . .	7
A. Legal framework on gender-based violence . . . . .	7
B. Women's participation in political and public life . . . . .	8
1. Public and political life . . . . .	8
2. Peace and conflict resolution . . . . .	8
3. Impacts of conflict on women and girls . . . . .	9
a. Boko Haram . . . . .	9
b. Crisis in the North West and South West Regions . . . . .	9
C. Impacts of arms on gender-based violence . . . . .	11
IV. Women's Right to Favourable and Just Conditions of Work (Art.7) . . . . .	13
V. Birth Registration (Art. 10) . . . . .	14
VI. Right to Education (Art.13) . . . . .	15
Endnotes . . . . .	17



# I. About WILPF Cameroon

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom – Cameroon Section (abbreviated WILPF Cameroon) is a national section of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, an international non-governmental organisation with ECOSOC status. Since its establishment in January 2014, WILPF Cameroon has focused its actions on furthering the implementation at the national level of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and its related resolutions, also known as the Women, Peace and Security Agenda.<sup>1</sup> It carries out awareness-raising and advocacy on this issue and also works to ensure the implementation of instruments to fight against arms proliferation and the illegal arms trade.

WILPF Cameroon focuses on strengthening peace, disarmament and women's rights in the country. The security threat facing Cameroon due to the illegal circulation and trafficking of weapons, as well as the Boko

Haram insurgency, led WILPF Cameroon to carry out a study in partnership with the Ministry of Promotion of Women and Family (MINPROFF) and other stakeholders on the level of awareness of UNSCR 1325 and the impact of armed conflict on women and girls in Cameroon, with a view to developing the National Action Plan (NAP) for UNSCR 1325. Moreover, in the framework of the presidential election of 7 October, 2018, WILPF Cameroon set up a Women's Situation Room, which is an early warning and rapid response mechanism against violence around elections, and published a report of its monitoring of those elections. The comments and issues highlighted in this submission are based in part on the findings included in these two studies.<sup>2</sup>

WILPF Cameroon submitted a written contribution and participated in the 62nd CESCR Pre-Sessional Working Group for adoption of the list of issues in April 2018.<sup>3</sup>

## II. Non-Discrimination (Art.2 Para.2)

In 2012, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights had recommended to Cameroon the adoption of a comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation listing all prohibited grounds for discrimination, as set out in article 2, paragraph 2, of the Covenant.<sup>4</sup> Cameroon responded in its report submitted to the Committee in December 2017, detailing the various legal instruments to combat various forms of discrimination.<sup>5</sup> The legal framework as regards non-discrimination is relatively developed in Cameroon. However, discrimination against women is still persistent in custom. Indeed, Cameroon has two systems of jurisdiction, the jurisdiction of statutory law and that of traditional courts, which apply customary law often discriminatory against women.<sup>6</sup> In addition, discrimination is present in the practice of official languages, very often to the detriment of English speakers, despite the fact that the Cameroonian Constitution recognises French and English as the two official languages of the country.<sup>7</sup> The creation of the National Commission for the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism (CNPBM) in 2017 is a step forward but has serious shortcomings, including the fact that its members are all appointed by the President of the Republic, which does not guarantee their independence vis-à-vis the executive power.<sup>8</sup> The criteria for selection of members set out in the Decree of 23 January 2017 on the creation, organisation and operation of the CNPBM mentioned competence, moral integrity and intellectual honesty, but should also take into account expertise in human rights and non-discrimination.<sup>9</sup>

The presidential election of 7 October 2018 was marked by a rise of hate speech and the rhetoric of tribalism on social and traditional media. This, coupled with post-election protests and demonstrations in Douala, Bafoussam and Yaoundé, and even in the diaspora, amplified the already negative climate of insecurity and

further weakened peace. The weakening of the social fabric through hate speech among ethnic groups, circulated both on social networks and in the mainstream media, as well as used by certain political actors to consolidate their electoral base, are a major threat to peace in Cameroon.<sup>10</sup>

Article 241 of the Penal Code of 12 July 2016 sanctions with imprisonment and fines insulting behaviour against a race or a religion, and explains in paragraph 3 that: “the penalties provided in paragraphs 1 and 2 above are doubled when the offence is committed with the aim of provoking hatred or contempt among citizens.” (unofficial translation) This law was unfortunately not applied in the context of the 2018 presidential election. In addition, the National Communication Council (NCC, in French: CNC), a regulatory and consultative body, responsible especially for “ensuring social peace, unity and national integration in all media” and “promoting the ideals of peace, democracy and human rights” has a vital role in the prevention of hate speech.<sup>11</sup> The NCC, however, does not have the necessary powers to issue binding decisions in order to fully play its role of regulator of communication.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Ensure that statutory law prevails over customary law when it is discriminatory, especially against women.
- Strengthen the independence and powers of the National Communication Council (NCC, in French: CNC), by providing it with the powers capacity to issue binding decisions in order to fully play its role as the regulatory body of communication.<sup>12</sup>
- Undertake public awareness measures to reduce inter-community tensions by promoting citizenship beyond ethnic identities and take the necessary measures to sanction any hate speech and discriminatory remarks in the public sphere.
- Ensure the effective implementation of the bilingualism policy by the National Commission for the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism (CNPBM) in consultation with all relevant stakeholders, including civil society, in order to ensure equal treatment of the English-speaking minority and eliminate their marginalisation and discrimination in employment, education and access to legal services.<sup>13</sup>
- Strengthen the independence and powers of the members of the National Commission for the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism by ensuring that its members have expertise in human rights and non-discrimination.

# III. Gender Equality and Gender-Based Violence (Art.3)

## A. LEGAL FRAMEWORK ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

In 2012, the Committee recommended that Cameroon ensures that the relevant provisions of the Family Code, the Labour Code and the Penal Code are amended as quickly as possible and that any provisions discriminating against women are dropped from bills currently under consideration.<sup>14</sup> The Committee had also recommended the strengthening of the legislative framework to combat violence against women and girls, including by criminalising domestic violence, sexual harassment and marital rape.<sup>15</sup>

In its report to the Committee, Cameroon indicates that discriminatory provisions of this text concerning adultery, rape, and the sanction of early marriage have been removed in the revision of the Penal Code.<sup>16</sup> In addition, it indicates that despite the absence of specific provisions, domestic violence, as well as marital rape, may be sanctioned by certain provisions of the Penal Code. Domestic violence could thus fall under articles 277 to 281 of the Penal Code, which punish assault and battery.<sup>17</sup>

A specific law on preventing and combating violence against women has not been adopted, despite the inclusion of some aspects in the new Penal Code. The absence of offences of domestic violence and marital rape remain significant gaps, as highlighted by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.<sup>18</sup> Despite the creation of Call Centres for victims of gender-based violence in four regions of the country, women who are victims of sexual or domestic violence still do not always receive adequate support from public services.

In addition, the Civil Code includes discriminatory provisions against women and its reform has been awaited for almost 20 years.<sup>19</sup> The Committee on Economic, Social and

Cultural Rights had asked Cameroon in its list of issues to provide the timetable for finalising this reform.<sup>20</sup> During the Universal Periodic Review (3rd cycle, 2018), a recommendation was made calling on Cameroon to “review laws that discriminate against women, in particular articles 1421 and 1428 of the Civil Code relating to the administration of family assets.”<sup>21</sup> However, the government has only taken note of this recommendation without providing any justification. Cameroon has also accepted a number of UPR recommendations to strengthen its laws and policies relating to gender-based violence, including by adopting a specific law on violence against women and criminalising all forms of violence against women under the Penal Code, including domestic violence and marital rape.<sup>22</sup>

To date, however, the government has taken no steps to implement these recommendations, particularly with regard to the criminalisation of domestic violence and marital rape, which the Cameroonian government considers adequately covered by the general provisions of the Penal Code, despite the absence of data on prosecutions in cases of domestic violence. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights had also asked Cameroon in its list of issues to provide information on these gaps in the legal framework to combat violence against women.<sup>23</sup>

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Ensure the appropriate care of women or persons who are victims of gender-based violence, including domestic violence, by expanding the provision of shelters and counselling and rehabilitation services for victims of such forms of violence in the whole country.
- Adopt and implement a specific law that ensures the prevention and fight against all forms of violence against women including marital rape, followed by education and public awareness programs on domestic violence.
- Take steps to educate and inform the public about domestic violence, including traditional leaders, teachers, judges, defence and law enforcement forces, political authorities, boys and men in particular, to erect such violence as an unacceptable violation of human rights.
- Finalise the adoption of the Family Code and the reform of the Civil Code, in particular by abrogating Articles 1421 and 1428 of the Civil Code relating to the administration of the property of marriage, which are discriminatory against women.

## B. WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL AND PUBLIC LIFE

### 1. Public and political life

The representation of women in politics is low in Cameroon. Apart from the National Assembly where there has been some notable advance with 31, 11% of women, a delay persists in the other institutions: Government 16% (11 women out of 68 ministers), Senate 26%, (with the last senatorial elections of 25 March 2018, the number of women increased from 20 to 26 out of a total of 100 senators), municipal councils 8%.<sup>24</sup> No women were selected as candidates for the presidential election of 7 October 2018.<sup>25</sup> In addition, 3,108,453, i.e. about 45% of the registered voters for the presidential election, were women.

Furthermore, women were poorly represented as leaders of local commissions and polling stations in the last presidential election. Women additionally face various barriers limiting their participation as voters and candidates, even though they represent about 52% of the population. Politics continues to be considered a man's domain. Many women do not have a voter's card, and if they do, they sometimes are

instructed by their husbands or families on their vote and can face reprisals and violence from their spouse for voting.<sup>26</sup>

In social and economic matters, wages remain unequal between men and women, especially in the private sector. The majority of women work in food-producing agriculture, informal sectors and face underemployment, which hinders the exercise of other rights, including participation in political life.

### 2. Peace and conflict resolution

In Cameroon, 30.39% of those affected by conflict are women, followed by children (17.13%). Only 4.21% of the population perceives women as relevant actors in conflict management.<sup>27</sup> In addition, almost all peace mechanisms and processes in Cameroon do not include women, who are often relegated to the status of victims.<sup>28</sup> This suggests a great need to build the capacity of all key actors and to highlight the particular, specific and considerable nature of women's contribution to conflict resolution processes.

On 16 November 2017, the Government launched its first National Action Plan for the implementation of United Nations Security

Council Resolution 1325 (NAP) for a three-year period (2018-2020).<sup>29</sup> It is essential that sufficient human and financial resources be allocated to the implementation of this NAP.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Adopt temporary special measures to increase the number of women in decision-making positions in the public sector, particularly in the government, parliament, regions and municipalities, and the judiciary, both at the national and local levels, as well as in political parties, and produce statistical data on this.
- Analyse and statistically evaluate the participation of women as voters and candidates in the 2018 presidential election, as well as the obstacles to their participation.
- Take appropriate measures to support the nomination of women on electoral lists in the upcoming legislative and municipal elections and to strengthen the participation of women in the electoral process both as voters and candidates.

### 3. Impacts of conflict on women and girls

The Boko Haram crisis and violence in the South West and North West regions have profound impacts on the social, economic and cultural rights of the people in the affected areas.<sup>30</sup> More than 680,000 people have been displaced by the conflict in Cameroon; the majority of them women and children, according to OCHA.<sup>31</sup> The most affected regions are the Far North and the North West and South West regions where the violence has a specific impact on women and girls.<sup>32</sup>

#### a. Boko Haram

In the Far North, repeated attacks by Boko Haram have created a climate of widespread insecurity. Local authorities report that women no longer want to send their daughters to school, public places or the market because they are afraid that they will be abducted by Boko Haram.<sup>33</sup> Women are particularly victims of physical and sexual violence and girls are used in suicide attacks.<sup>34</sup> Indeed, Boko Haram has adopted a warfare method based on the use of women and girls as weapons.<sup>35</sup> In April 2017,

UNICEF reported that since January 2014, 117 children – more than 80% of them girls – have been used in suicide attacks in Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon.<sup>36</sup> Despite a decline in attacks that are becoming more sporadic and the use of girls as kamikazes also declining in the Far North, marginalised women and girls (internally displaced, widowed, etc.) seeking to improve their living conditions, are still at risk of being recruited by Boko Haram.

#### b. Crisis in the North West and South West Regions

Before the crisis, the majority of the population in the North West and South West regions relied on agriculture for their livelihood. The establishment of 'dead cities' on several days of the week by secessionists, the curfew introduced by the government and administrative security measures severely limit freedoms and have caused the slowdown or the virtual absence of various economic and social activities.<sup>37</sup> Threats of attack, roadblocks and 'dead cities' have a negative impact on trade, livelihoods, markets and on access to agricultural land that is abandoned as a result in some areas and does not receive

adequate maintenance.<sup>38</sup> Communities thus find themselves in extremely vulnerable situations with regard to food security. This has a disproportionate impact on women who make up the majority of farmers and who are often responsible for arranging food for their families.

Internally displaced persons fleeing violence, the majority of whom are women and children, also resort to harmful survival strategies, including reducing the number of meals and food intake for adults in order to feed the children.<sup>39</sup> This is often at the expense of women who eat last and thus are at a higher risk of malnutrition.<sup>40</sup> The lack of access to drinking water and electricity in urban areas, but particularly in rural areas, also has specific impacts on women's rights because of their role in water collection, agriculture and meal preparation.<sup>41</sup> Women and girls must wake up early to fetch water, sometimes traveling several kilometres, exposing them to violence (physical, sexual, verbal, etc.). The problem of lack of electricity also impacts on agricultural yield and creates huge losses.

Women and girls are also particularly affected by the destruction of socio-economic infrastructure such as hospitals, health centres and schools. Access to education for children in the South West and North West regions is currently very limited with the on-going crisis, leaving girls at risk of early pregnancy.<sup>42</sup> Thousands of children residing in these areas are no longer attending school, several schools have been closed, others have been burned, and teachers, parents and students have been threatened, kidnapped or killed.<sup>43</sup> Inaccessibility to basic social services also exacerbates problems related to access to health care, especially for pregnant women, which exposes them to pregnancies at risk.<sup>44</sup>

Finally, internally displaced persons (IDPs), sometimes without their national identity card or voter registration card, were not sufficiently informed about the measures to facilitate their voting during the presidential election of October 2018, which prevented a large number of IDPs from voting.<sup>45</sup> In November 2018, the Special Rapporteur on Internally Displaced Persons issued recommendations addressed to Cameroon, including in relation to political participation.<sup>46</sup>

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Facilitate safe access to humanitarian assistance for displaced persons and all persons in need of emergency assistance in all regions, taking into account the specific risks and needs of the different groups of internally displaced women and girls and of refugee women and girls, who are subjected to multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, such as women and girls with disabilities, the elderly, rural or indigenous women and girls.
- Provide protection and assistance to displaced and refugee women and girls, including against gender-based violence, ensuring that they are able to enjoy services and health care on an equal footing with men, and participate fully in the distribution of supplies and that the development of support programs that take into account their special needs; and ensure that education, income generation and vocational training programs are offered to them.
- Ensure that the meeting of needs for immediate humanitarian assistance and protection for internally displaced and refugee women and girls is accompanied by long-term strategies for the promotion and protection of their socio-economic rights and offers them livelihood opportunities, better ways of deciding their future, caring for themselves and choosing the sustainable solution that best meets their needs.
- As recommended by the Special Rapporteur on internally displaced persons, in view of the 2019 legislative and municipal elections, take measures to ensure that internally displaced persons are duly informed, sensitised and able to exercise their right to political participation, including the right to vote and stand for elections, with special attention to women and marginalised groups.<sup>47</sup>

## C. IMPACTS OF ARMS ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Boko Haram insurgencies, cross-border conflicts and organised crime turn Cameroon into fertile ground for the massive circulation of the weapons, which constitutes a permanent threat against peace. There are more weapons illegally held in Cameroon, in proportion to the total number of weapons in circulation.<sup>48</sup> These illegally owned weapons are used for the most part in criminal acts and poaching. Between 2/3 and 4/5 are either locally produced or come in from Nigeria.<sup>49</sup>

From a study conducted by WILPF Cameroon, it appears that the proliferation of weapons is one of the factors that increase insecurity and promote conflict in Cameroon.<sup>50</sup> Armed conflicts involving terrorist acts have been ranked as the fifth type of conflict affecting communities

in Cameroon.<sup>51</sup> Armed conflict in Cameroon has led to increased violence against women in the localities concerned. The immediate impact of these armed conflicts is the massive displacement of women and children. Women are also victims of threats, rape, and assault committed under the threat of weapons.<sup>52</sup> The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights asked Cameroon in the list of issues to provide information on the impact of the implementation of the National Strategy to Combat Gender-Based Violence, since such violence can be exacerbated by access to weapons.<sup>53</sup> The National Action Plan on the implementation of Resolution 1325, launched in November 2017, has not included measures to combat the proliferation and illegal circulation of weapons.

In this regard, the law N°2016/015 of 14 December 2016 on the General Regime of Weapons and Ammunition in Cameroon is a step forward. However, this law does not take into account the gender dimension in its provisions, as required by the Arms Trade Treaty<sup>54</sup> that Cameroon ratified on 18 June 2018. In addition, the Kinshasa Convention ratified by Cameroon in January 2015, and the law of 14 December 2016 recommend setting up a National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons. To date, little progress has been made to set up this body. Progress has been made, however, in controlling the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Indeed, on April 4, 2018, an order of the Minister of Territorial Administration prohibiting the sale of hunting and protective weapons and their ammunition in the Adamaoua, Center, Littoral, West, North West and South West regions has been published.<sup>55</sup>

On 30 November 2018, a presidential decree created a National Committee on Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration of former

Boko Haram fighters and armed groups from the North West and South West regions.<sup>56</sup> The establishment of this committee, however, should have been preceded and accompanied by an inclusive national dialogue with the English-speaking communities to reduce radicalisation, ensure appeasement, understand and respond to demands, and achieve a consensus-based and effective process of Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration. The gender dimension was not taken into consideration in the composition of the Committee, which consists only of men, nor in its mandate defined by Decree 2019/719 of 30 November 2018. This despite the Government's commitment in its National Action Plan 2018-2020 on Resolution 1325, to take into account the role of women in disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programs.<sup>57</sup> In addition, this committee is not inclusive since it is composed mainly of representatives of ministries, with the exception of the Ministry for the Promotion of Women and Family in charge of gender issues.<sup>58</sup>

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Establish without delay the National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons.
- Ensure the effective implementation at national level of the Arms Trade Treaty and the Kinshasa Convention.
- Open an inclusive national dialogue with the various stakeholders in the English-speaking communities in order to reach a consensual solution that respects human rights and enables an effective process of Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration that integrates a gender perspective.

# IV. Women's Right to Favourable and Just Conditions of Work (Art.7)

In 2012, the Committee in its Concluding Observations expressed concern about high rates of unemployment and underemployment, particularly among young people and women.<sup>59</sup> The Committee recommended that Cameroon include in its employment policy measures to address the difficulties of integrating young people and women into the labour market.

The Cameroonian government indicates in its report as measures of inclusion of young people and women in the labour market, the 'DSCE', the development of wage employment through the promotion of small and medium-sized enterprises, incentives encouraging the self-employment through specific programs and projects focused on youth and women, public service hiring, and the Decent Work Country Promotion Program.

This program includes, as priority areas, the promotion of income-generating activities for women, young people and vulnerable groups; improving the normative framework and working conditions for all; capacity building of tripartite constituents to social dialogue; and social protection.<sup>60</sup>

However, in social and economic terms, wages between men and women remain unfair, especially in the private sector, where recruitment is often discriminatory against women. In addition, the majority of women work in subsistence agriculture, informal sectors and underemployment.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Take measures, including legislative measures, to combat discrimination and gender-based violence in the workplace.
- Reduce the pay gap between men and women particularly in the private sector, including by addressing the problem of occupational segregation of women and ensuring equal pay for work of equal value.

# V. Birth Registration (Art.10)

The non-declaration of births or the possession of invalid acts constitutes a violation of the right to identity and nationality in Cameroon. This lack of respect for the right to identity hinders the exercise of many other rights such as the right to education, work and health care. A study conducted from August 2014 to June 2015 in 477 kindergartens and primary schools in the Littoral region revealed that 27,273 children (5.4 %) did not have birth certificates.<sup>61</sup> In the same period, in the North of the country, more than 200,000 children under the age of 15 were also identified as being without birth certificates.<sup>62</sup>

In 2017, the Committee on the Rights of the Child had noted the problem of the cost of birth registration, the lack of information of parents about the importance of birth registration, and the deadlines for doing so and the fact that civil registration offices are sometimes inaccessible and lack sufficient resources, which

has disproportionate effects on vulnerable populations.<sup>63</sup> The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has also raised this problem in its list of issues addressed to Cameroon, requesting it to provide statistical data on unregistered births and information on the impact of measures taken by the State party to urgently address the problems of non-declaration of birth and the possession of invalid acts.<sup>64</sup>

Finally, it should be noted that Cameroon has noted, without providing any justification, a recommendation from its 3rd Universal Periodic Review to: “Ensure universal birth registration without discrimination by developing information systems with solid databases that would include information on the number of people yet to be registered, creating mobile registration units to reach the most remote areas, and conducting campaigns to inform all families about deadlines and ways to register their children.”<sup>65</sup>

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Given target 16.9 of the Sustainable Development Goals, which is to ensure legal identity for all, including through birth registration, Cameroon must:

- abolish birth registration and certificate issuance fees by effectively enforcing free access as provided for in the 2011 Act;
- strengthen the financial, technical and human resources of the National Bureau of Civil Status in order to make it more accessible throughout the territory;
- strengthen awareness-raising campaigns encouraging parents to report births;
- collect national statistics on the number of people without birth certificates;
- organise mobile court hearings to facilitate the granting of substitute birth certificate judgments for populations without a birth certificate.

# VI. Right to Education (Art.13)

Despite the adoption of a law on free public primary education, the payment of fees to Parents' and Teachers' Associations and other related costs is still required in public primary schools as well as in secondary schools. Many civil society organisations contest this practice, which is not only a violation of the law on free education, but also a violation of the right to education, which encourages corruption and embezzlement by school headmasters. The

Committee on the Rights of the Child also noted in 2017 during its review of Cameroon: “(c) Excessive costs for education in the form of informal fees disproportionately affecting the large number of families in the State party living in poverty” and recommended that the Government abolish all indirect costs in primary education and punish educational staff who demand payment of unofficial fees.<sup>66</sup>

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Eliminate all indirect costs in primary and secondary education, especially those relating to Parents' and Teachers' Associations, and sanction members of the educational staff who require the payment of unofficial fees.

WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR  
**PEACE & FREEDOM**  
CAMEROON



WILPF Cameroon is a National Section of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. Since its establishment in January 2014, WILPF Cameroon has focused its actions on furthering the implementation at the national level of UN Security Council resolution 1325 and subsequent related resolutions, also known as the Women, Peace and Security Agenda.

The Section carries out awareness-raising and advocacy activities on this issue and also works to ensure the implementation of instruments to fight against arms proliferation and the illegal arms trade. WILPF Cameroon uses international human rights advocacy as part of its work on peace, disarmament and women's rights. WILPF Cameroon also engaged with the Universal Periodic Review of Cameroon that took place in 2018.

# Endnotes

1 <http://www.unwomen.org/fr/what-we-do/peace-and-security>

2 Rapport de l'Etude de base pour l'élaboration du Plan d'Action de la Résolution 1325 du Conseil de Sécurité des Nations Unies et des Résolutions connexes au Cameroun, Février 2017, WILPF Cameroon (English version of the report not available yet).; Prevention of electoral violence in Cameroon through the Women's Situation Room : Report of the monitoring of Presidential elections of 7 October 2018 in Cameroon, WILPF Cameroon

3 [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2fCESCR%2fICO%2fCMR%2f31021&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2fCESCR%2fICO%2fCMR%2f31021&Lang=en)

4 E/C.12/CMR/CO/2-3, 23 January 2019, paragraph 9

5 E/C.12/CMR/14, 11 December 2017, paragraphs 23-28.

6 The CESCR raised this concern in its list of issues: "Please indicate how the State party ensures that its Covenant obligations relating to the equal enjoyment of rights by men and women take precedence over customary law, including in cases handled by traditional courts. Please also provide information on the time frame for amending legislative provisions that discriminate against women, such as those relating to polygamy and other provisions of the Civil Code that remain in force." E/C.12/CMR/Q/4, Paragraph 9

7 E/C.12/CMR/14, paragraphs 23-28; the CESCR raised this concern in its list of issues E/C.12/CMR/Q/4, paragraph 6

8 <https://www.osidimbea.cm/institutions/presidence/commission-bilinguisme/>

9 E/C.12/CMR/CO/2-3, paragraph 12

10 E/C.12/CMR/2-3, 23 January 2012

11 <http://cnc.gov.cm/>

12 For example, on 28 November 2018, following the broadcast of the program "Club elites", broadcast on 4 November 2018 on Vision4 by Ernest Obama, where a journalist working for that TV channel was inciting tribal hatred and violence, the CNC decided to suspend for a period of one month the inciter's exercise of his profession as journalist in Cameroon. This decision was unfortunately not respected as reported in <https://www.lebledparle.com/medias/1105882-medias-vision-4-tv-et-son-directeur-ernest-obama-suspendus-au-cameroun> by the cnc and <https://www.lebledparle.com/company/1103930-parfait-ayissi-et-ernest-obama-al-antenne-malgre-la-suspension-du-cnc>

13 Recommendation developed based on two recommendations accepted by Cameroon during its third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review: A/HRC/39/15, rec. 121.61: "Ensure the effective implementation of the official bilingualism policy in consultation with all stakeholders, in order to assure equal treatment to the English-speaking minority and to eliminate marginalization in all its forms" (Haiti); and rec. 121.62: "Redouble its efforts to effectively implement its bilingualism policy in order to ensure that the English-speaking population does not suffer from discrimination in employment, education or access to legal services" (Honduras)

14 E/C.12/CMR/CO/2-3, 23 January 2012, paragraph 12

15 E/C.12/CMR/CO/2-3, 23 January 2012, paragraph 20

16 E/C.12/CMR/4, 11 December 2017, paragraphs 44 – 46

17 E/C.12/CMR/4, 11 December 2017, paragraphs 78 – 79

18 Committee on the elimination of discrimination against women, Follow-up letter to the State Party, 26 April 2017, available at: [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2fCEDAW%2fFGD%2f7102&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2fCEDAW%2fFGD%2f7102&Lang=en)

19 Extracts from article 1421 and 1428 of the Civil Code "Le mari administre seul les biens de la communauté. Il peut les vendre, aliéner et hypothéquer sans le concours de la femme" ; "Le mari a l'administration de tous les biens personnels de la femme. Il peut exercer seul toutes les actions mobilières et possessoires qui appartiennent à la femme" (English version not available)

20 The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has raised this issue in its list of issues E/C.12/CMR/Q4, paragraph 9

21 Rec. 121.85 (Mexico)

22 Rec. 121.73: "Adopt effective measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination against the most vulnerable and neglected groups of women, in particular older women, women with disabilities, rural women and refugee women" (Madagascar); rec. 121.178: "Strengthen the fight against gender-based violence, including domestic violence" (Algeria); rec. 121.179: "Adopt a law on violence against women, and repeal legal provisions that eliminate the crime of rape if the perpetrator marries the victim" (Spain); rec. 121.180: "Prohibit all forms of domestic violence against women, especially rape in marriage, as the new Penal Code does not cover all forms of violence against women" (Germany); rec. 121.182: "Provide women greater access to legal resources, and psychosocial and medical assistance" (Spain).

23 E/C.12/CMR/Q4, paragraph 17

24 <http://archive.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/1053.htm>; <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/dossiers-pays/cameroun/presentation-du-cameroun/article/composition-du-gouvernement>; <http://archive.ipu.org/parline-f/reports/1054.htm>

25 <http://laboggenre-ucad.org/test/index.php/dossier-genre/genre-droits-2/232-cameroun-aucune-femme-sur-les-9-candidats-retenus-pour-la-presidentielle-2018>

26 Prevention of electoral violence in Cameroon through the Women's Situation Room: Report of the monitoring of Presidential elections of 7 October 2018 in Cameroon, WILPF Cameroon

27 Rapport de l'Etude de base pour l'élaboration du Plan d'Action de la Résolution 1325 du Conseil de Sécurité des Nations Unies et des Résolutions connexes au Cameroun, February 2017, WILPF Cameroon (English version of the report not available)

28 Ibid

29 [https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Cameroon\\_UNSCR-1325-NAP\\_FR\\_Aout-2017.pdf](https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Cameroon_UNSCR-1325-NAP_FR_Aout-2017.pdf)

30 E/C.12/CMR/Q4, paragraph 8

31 <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/country/cmr>; [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/OCHA-Cameroon\\_Situation\\_Report\\_no1\\_SW-NW\\_November\\_2018\\_EN\\_Final.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/OCHA-Cameroon_Situation_Report_no1_SW-NW_November_2018_EN_Final.pdf)

32 Ibid

33 <https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/sc13618.doc.htm>

34 [https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2018/08/22/grossesses-et-mariages-precoces-la-face-cachee-de-la-guerre-contre-boko-haram-au-cameroun\\_5345027\\_3212.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2018/08/22/grossesses-et-mariages-precoces-la-face-cachee-de-la-guerre-contre-boko-haram-au-cameroun_5345027_3212.html)

35 [https://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/08/world/africa/boko-haram-suicide-bombers.html?emc=edit\\_na\\_20160407&nlid=57977175&ref=cta](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/08/world/africa/boko-haram-suicide-bombers.html?emc=edit_na_20160407&nlid=57977175&ref=cta)

36 Silent shame: Breaking the voices of children caught in the Lake Chad crisis, UNICEF, available at: [https://www.unicef.org/wcaro/nigeriaregionalcrisis/UNICEF\\_Silent\\_shame.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/wcaro/nigeriaregionalcrisis/UNICEF_Silent_shame.pdf)

37 The 'dead cities' operations were initiated by secessionists as a strategy of protest against the government, including by closing schools and suspending economic activity: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/cameroon/cameroon-the-risk-of-crisis-of-the-anglophone-crisis-worried-the-francophones>; <https://observers.france24.com/en/20170110-cameroon-goes-quiet-operation-ghost-town-protest>; Communiqué issued by the Governor on 17 September 2018 / communiqué from the Prefect of Fako restricting movements and associations in their administrative districts from 30 September to 2 October 2018

38 <http://fews.net/en/west-africa/cameroon/key-message-update/november-2018>

39 <https://reliefweb.int/report/cameroon/cameroon-north-west-and-south-west-crisis-situation-report-no-2-31-december-2018>; [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/cmr\\_nw\\_sw\\_fa\\_2018-05\\_summary\\_v07\\_light\\_0.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/cmr_nw_sw_fa_2018-05_summary_v07_light_0.pdf)

40 [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/cmr\\_nw\\_sw\\_fa\\_2018-05\\_summary\\_v07\\_light\\_0.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/cmr_nw_sw_fa_2018-05_summary_v07_light_0.pdf); <https://www.icrc.org/en/doc/resources/documents/interview/women-displacement-interview-020310.htm>

41 <http://www.pressegauche.org/Les-femmes-et-les-enfants-first-victims-of-conflict-in-Cameroon>

- 42 <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2018/sep/21/imagine-in-five-years-how-education-became-a-casualty-of-cameroon-war> ; [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/cmr\\_nw\\_sw\\_fa\\_2018-05\\_summary\\_v07\\_light\\_0.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/cmr_nw_sw_fa_2018-05_summary_v07_light_0.pdf)
- 43 <https://theirworld.org/news/safe-schools-report-cameroon-education-under-attack-kidnappings> ; <http://www.irinnews.org/news-feature/2018/12/19/cameroon-generation-unschooled-children-could-fuel-long-term-conflict> ; [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/OCHA-Cameroon\\_Situation\\_Report\\_no1\\_SW-NW\\_November\\_2018\\_EN\\_Final.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/OCHA-Cameroon_Situation_Report_no1_SW-NW_November_2018_EN_Final.pdf) ; <https://news.un.org/fr/story/2018/11/1029701>
- 44 <http://www.pressegauche.org/Les-femmes-et-les-premieres-first-victims-of-conflict-in-Cameroon>
- 45 <https://www.jeuneafrique.com/639943/politique/presidentielle-au-cameroun-le-vote-impossible-de-places-de-crise-anglophone/>
- 46 [https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/IDPersons/FourPrioritiestoStrengthenProtection\\_16November2018.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/IDPersons/FourPrioritiestoStrengthenProtection_16November2018.pdf)
- 47 "In the context of the legislative and municipal elections, planned for 2019, the Government must ensure that IDPs face no barriers to their rights to political participation, including access to documentation, voting and standing for office. An information and awareness raising campaign to inform IDPs about their right to vote and the process to do so could therefore be organized. Special attention should be paid to ensuring that IDPs who may be particularly vulnerable or marginalized, including women, non-accompanied children, older persons, persons with disabilities and persons belonging to minority groups are included." [https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/IDPersons/FourPrioritiestoStrengthenProtection\\_16November2018.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/IDPersons/FourPrioritiestoStrengthenProtection_16November2018.pdf)
- 48 Small Arms Assessment for the Sahel States and Limit Countries, UNREC-UNDP 2015, P.9
- 49 Ibid
- 50 Rapport de l'Etude de base pour l'élaboration du Plan d'Action de la Résolution 1325 du Conseil de Sécurité des Nations Unies et des Résolutions connexes au Cameroun, February 2017, WILPF Cameroon (English version of the report not available yet)
- 51 Ibid
- 52 Ibid
- 53 E/C.12/CMR/Q4, paragraph 17
- 54 The Arms Trade Party: Article 7 (4)
- 55 <https://www.camerlex.com/cameroon-circular-discard-of-the-right-toys-littoral-l-adamaoua-north-centre-west-south-west-west/>
- 56 <https://www.prc.cm/en/news/the-acts/decrees/3177-decree-n-2018-719-of-30-november-2018-to-establish-the-national-disarmament-demobilization-and-reintegration-committee> ; <https://www.jeuneafrique.com/676074/politique/le-cameroun-lance-un-processus-de-desarmement-dans-les-zones-en-conflit/>
- 57 <https://agencecamerounpresse.com/defense/les-chefs-de-centre-r%C3%A9gionaux-du-comit%C3%A9-national-de-d%C3%A9sarmement,-d%C3%A9mobilisation-et -r%C3%A9insertion-cnndr-named%C3%A9s.html> ; <https://www.prc.cm/en/multimedia/documents/6764-decret-no-2018-719-du-30-11-2018-cnndr> ; Republic of Cameroon : National Action Plan of Resolution 1325 and related United Nations Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security, see Product 1.2 (vi), available at: [https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Cameroon\\_UNSCR-1325-NAP\\_FR\\_Aout-2017.pdf](https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Cameroon_UNSCR-1325-NAP_FR_Aout-2017.pdf)
- 58 <https://www.prc.cm/fr/multimedia/documents/6764-decret-no-2018-719-du-30-11-2018-cnndr>
- 59 E/C.12/CMR/CO/2-3, 23 January 2012, paragraph 14
- 60 E/C.12/CMR/4, 11 December 2017, paragraph 51
- 61 Information and public awareness project on specific formalities and obligations for the rehabilitation of civil status, Douala 2015, funded by the European Union
- 62 Diagnostic study on the status of issuance of civil status records in the Department of Benoue, 2014-2015, funded by the European Union
- 63 CRC/C/CMR/CO/3-5, paragraphs 18 and 19

64 The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has raised this issue in its list of issues E/C.12/CMR/Q4, paragraph 18

65 Rec. 121.86 (Mexico).

66 CRC/C/CMR/CO/3-5, paragraphs 38 (c) and 39 (d)





The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) is a worldwide non-governmental organisation with national sections covering every continent, an international Secretariat based in Geneva, and an office in New York focused on the work of the United Nations.

Since our establishment, we have brought together women from around the world who are united in working for peace. Our approach is always nonviolent, and we use existing international legal and political frameworks to achieve fundamental change in the way states conceptualise and address issues of gender, militarism, peace and security.

WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR  
**PEACE & FREEDOM**



**WILPF International**

Rue de Varembe 1  
Case Postale 28  
1211 Geneva 20  
Suisse  
T: +41 (0)22 919 70 80  
E: [info@wilpf.org](mailto:info@wilpf.org)

**WILPF New York**

777 UN Plaza  
New York  
NY 10017  
Etats-Unis  
T: +1 212 682 1265

**WILPF Cameroon**

PO Box 15766  
Rond Point Salle  
des Fêtes d'Akwa  
Douala  
Cameroon