

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN
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DE L'HOMME DU CAMEROUN

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REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON
Peace – Work – Fatherland

CAMEROON HUMAN
RIGHTS COMMISSION

SUB-COMMISSION IN CHARGE
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STATEMENT BY THE CAMEROON HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
TO MARK THE 23RD WORLD REFUGEE DAY

20 June 2024

Theme.- For a World where Refugees are Welcomed

The Cameroon Human Rights Commission (hereinafter: “the Commission”), established by Law No. 2019/014 of 19 July 2019 and rendered operational on 29 April 2021, following the swearing in of its Commissioners before the Supreme Court sitting in Joint Benches,

Bearing in mind that the tradition of raising awareness of the cause of refugees throughout the world began in 1914, when Pope Pius X established the World Day of Migrants and Refugees¹, initially celebrated each second Sunday after 6 January and held every year under a theme proposed by the internal organ of the Catholic Church called *the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People*²,

Also bearing in mind that at its 24th Ordinary Session, held in Addis Ababa from 13 to 21 February 1975, the Council of Ministers of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), now the African Union (AU), adopted Resolution No. 398. This resolution determined the following:

¹ See Geneva international, *World Refugee Day: Contemporary Commemoration Based on a long Tradition*, <https://www.geneve-int.ch/fr/node/3974>, accessed on 27 May 2024.

² See « Journée Mondiale du migrant et du réfugié », <https://www.journee-mondiale.com/217/journee-mondiale-du-migrant-et-du-refugie.htm>, accessed on 14 June 2024.

noting with satisfaction the entry into force on 20th June 1974, of the OAU Convention governing the specific aspects of the refugee problem in Africa³ [decided] that the 20th of June of every year be observed by Member States as Africa Refugee Day, [the theme for the first time, on 20th June 1975 “*Voluntary⁴ Repatriation*”],

Noting that, in the lead up to the 50th anniversary of the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees,⁵ and in light of the growing success of the African Refugee Day celebrations, the United Nations General Assembly, by resolution A/RES/55/76 of 4 December 2000, has proclaimed 20 June each year as *World Refugee Day* (WRD), to be celebrated for the first time in 2001,

Recognising the importance of “*drawing the world’s attention to the plight of people fleeing conflict or persecution*”⁶ in their countries of origin or habitual residence, and of mobilising the resources necessary to uphold their dignity, rights, needs and dreams, so that they can “*not only survive but thrive*”⁷ in their host countries,

Noting that WRD is also an opportunity to pay tribute to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for his long and relentless efforts to provide assistance and protection to refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless persons all of whom “*need our solidarity now more than ever*”⁸,

Also noting that the WRD provides an opportunity for Governments, development partners and civil society organisations (CSOs) to act in synergy to defend the rights of refugees, particularly their right to safety, their right to social and economic integration and their right to an adequate standard of living,

Emphasizing that this year, activities to mark the World Refugee Day will focus on solidarity with refugees under the theme *For a World where Refugees are Welcomed*⁹,

Recalling that according to the HCR,

Solidarity means keeping our doors open, celebrating their strengths and achievements, reflecting on the challenges they face [and] finding solutions to their plight by ending conflicts so they can return home in safety, [by] ensuring they have

³ The OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, signed on 10 September 1969, was ratified by Cameroon on 7 September 1985, which deposited its instrument of ratification on 10 January 1986.

⁴ See OAU, CN/Res. 398 (XXIV), *Résolution sur la Journée des réfugiés africains*, [https://portal.africa-union.org/DVD/Documents/DOC-OAU-DEC/CM%20Res%20398%20\(XXIV\)%20_F.pdf](https://portal.africa-union.org/DVD/Documents/DOC-OAU-DEC/CM%20Res%20398%20(XXIV)%20_F.pdf), 1 p., accessed on 14 juin 2024.

⁵ Adopted in Geneva on 28 July 1951, the United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees entered into force on 22 April 1954 and was ratified by Cameroon on 23 October 1961.

⁶ See OAU, CN/Res. 398 (XXIV), *op. cit.*

⁷ See United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (HCR), « World Refugees Day », <https://www.unhcr.org/fr/world-refugee-day#:~:text=La%20prochaine%20Journ%C3%A9e%20mondiale%20du,plus%20sur%20les%20activit%C3%A9s%20organis%C3%A9es>, accessed on 3 June 2024.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Idem.*

opportunities to thrive in the communities that have welcomed them, and providing countries with the resources they need to include and support refugees¹⁰,

Bearing in mind that the people of Cameroon, exemplary in welcoming refugees and asylum seekers to their country,

[are] convinced that the salvation of Africa lies in forging ever-growing bonds of solidarity among African Peoples, [and] affirm our desire to contribute to the advent of a united and free Africa, while maintaining peaceful and brotherly relations with the other nations of the World, in accordance with the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations¹¹;

Also bearing in mind the Preamble of the Constitution of Cameroon of 18 January 1996 which states that

all persons shall have equal rights and obligations [and for this reason] the State shall provide all its citizens [all persons under its jurisdiction, particularly refugees] with the conditions necessary for their development [and] every person shall have the right to settle in any place and to move about freely, [including in times of internal strife or armed conflict], subject to the statutory provisions concerning public law and order, security and tranquillity,

Considering Article 55(4) of the Constitution, which states that “[t]he State shall ensure the harmonious development of all the regional and local authorities on the basis of national solidarity, regional potentials and inter-regional balance”, the driving force for harmonious and peaceful coexistence, peace and sustainable development,

Recalling that Article 3 of the Geneva Convention of 28 July 1951 relating to the Status of Refugees grants to the latter,

a status, which must be applied without discrimination as to race, religion or country of origin particularly, [as per Articles 31, 32 and 33 of the same Convention], a principle of immunity from criminal prosecution [illegal] entry, residence and non-refoulement to a country at risk¹²,

Noting that all States that ratify the instruments for the promotion and protection of the rights of refugees,¹³ undertake to particularly implement the recommendation

¹⁰ *Idem*.

¹¹ See Preamble to the Constitution of Cameroon of 18 January 1996.

¹² See *Dictionnaire des Droits de l'homme*, « Réfugié », Paris, Presses universitaires de France, 2008, 1074 pp, p. 838.

¹³ These are:

- the United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, adopted on 28 July 1951, which entered into force on 22 April 1954 and was ratified by Cameroon on 23 October 1961;
- the Convention of the Organisation of African Unity governing the specific aspects of refugee problems in Africa, adopted on 10 September 1969, which entered into force on 20 June 1974, and was ratified by Cameroon on 7 September 1985;
- the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, adopted on 27 June 1981 in Kenya, which entered into force on 21 October 1986 and was ratified by Cameroon on 20 June 1989;
- the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention), adopted on 23 October 2009, entered into force on 6 December 2012 and which Cameroon acceded to on 24 May 2017

adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in its Resolution No. 429 (V) of 14 December 1950 on international solidarity in the field of asylum and resettlement, and all other subsequent recommendations,

Also noting that Section 2 of Law No. 2005/006 of 27 July 2005 on the status of refugees in Cameroon, which is not only in conformity with Article 1(1) and (2) of the Geneva Convention of 28 July 1951 relating to the Status of Refugees, as amended by the New York Protocol of 31 January 1967, but also with Article 1(1) and (2) of the OAU Convention on the specific aspects of refugee problems in Africa, signed in Addis Ababa on 10 September 1969, considers as refugee:

- every person who, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country [of his] or her nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself [or herself] of the protection of that country, or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his or her former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it
- every person who, owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his country of origin or nationality, is compelled to leave his place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge in another place outside his country of origin or nationality¹⁴,

Noting that certain persons in "*humanitarian emergencies*" may be considered *prima facie* refugees and may legitimately seek the protection of the UNHCR, which in this sense,

defines an emergency as any humanitarian crisis or disaster which either:

- has caused or threatens to cause new forced displacement, loss of life and/or other serious harm or
- significantly affects the rights or well-being of refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), stateless persons, returnees and other persons of concern, unless immediate and appropriate action is taken
- which demands exceptional measures because current government and UNHCR capacities at country and/or regional levels are inadequate for a predictable and effective response [and in all cases] the overriding priority is to save lives and minimise damage by meeting the most urgent humanitarian needs¹⁵

Noting that during the last decade, the number of conflicts in Africa has almost doubled, with 15 conflicts recorded in 2013 compared to 28 in 2023, resulting in more than 330,000 battle-related deaths, making it the region of the world most affected by a

¹⁴ See Article 2 Law No. 2005/006 of 27 July 2005 on the Status of Refugees in Cameroon

¹⁵ See UNHCR/HCP/2023/01, Emergency, Security and Supply Division (ESSD), *Policy on Emergency Preparedness and Response*, approved on 31 January 2023 and entered into force on 1 February 2023, 24 pp., spec., p. 2, <https://emergency.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/2023-10/French%20-%20Policy%20on%20Emergency%20Preparedness%20and%20Response%20UNHCR-HCP-2023-01.pdf>, accessed on 14 June 2024.

large number of conflicts each year, followed by Asia (17), the Middle East (10), Europe (3) and the Americas (1)¹⁶,

Bearing in mind that, according to the summary report of the study conducted by the Oslo Peace Research Institute under the coordination of Prof Rustad Siri Aas, in 2023 “*the world has experienced the highest number of armed conflicts since 1946, even though, paradoxically, the number of states involved in these conflicts is decreasing*”¹⁷, and that:

Violence in the world [has] reached levels not seen since the end of the Cold War [in 1991], with a record 59 conflicts recorded worldwide in 2023 [28 of which were in Africa]. Although the number of combat deaths decreased [in 2022], the last three years [from 2021 to 2023] have seen more conflict-related deaths overall than at any time in the last three decades, due to more conflict actors operating within the same country [and] with the dramatic increase in combat deaths [mainly] due to three conflicts: the civil war in the Tigray region of Ethiopia, the war in Russia and Ukraine, and the State of Israel and Palestine¹⁸,

Considering that every year refugees from neighbouring countries affected by insecurity seek refuge in Cameroon, and that several Cameroonians have also sought refuge in friendly neighbouring countries such as Chad and Nigeria, due to the prevailing security situation in the Far North Region, characterised by attacks by the terrorist sect *Boko Haram*, and in the North-West and South-West Regions, where attacks by secessionist terrorists against the defence and security forces, as well as administrative, traditional and religious authorities, and the civilian population, are recurring,

Emphasizing the impact of climate change and environmental degradation on forcibly displaced persons and their host communities, and the need to strengthen the resilience of these communities by preserving and restoring the natural environment in situations of displacement,

The Commission commends the exceptional measures taken by the government to meet the ever-increasing demands of refugees and asylum seekers, and the warm hospitality shown by the people of the areas hosting them,

¹⁶ See UN, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (also known by its English acronym as OCHA), *ReliefWeb (RW), Conflict Trends: A Global Overview, 1946–2023*, <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/conflict-trends-global-overview-1946-2023>, accessed on 10 June 2024.

¹⁷ See RUSTAD SIRI AAS *et al.* (ed), *Conflict Trends: A Global Overview, 1946–2023, Synthesis Report*, Oslo, Peace Research Institute Oslo, PRIO Paper, cited by Agence France-Presse, 10 June 2024, “The number of armed conflicts in the world at its highest since 1946”, <https://www.lapresse.ca/international/2024-06-10/le-nombre-de-conflits-armes-dans-le-monde-au-plus-haut-depuis-1946.php>, accessed on 14 June 2024.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

The Commission is pleased that Olivier Guillaume Beer, UNHCR Resident Representative in Cameroon, has expressed his satisfaction as follows:

Cameroon is a model in Central Africa [in terms of respect for refugee rights] because it respects the international conventions that enshrine the principle of non-refoulement of refugees [and because] the regulations in force in Cameroon [are] favourable to the development of refugees, [which] is not always the case in other countries¹⁹,

The Commission commends the actions of African and universal institutions as well as those of development partners and the CSOs with which they work, aimed at improving the reception and living conditions of refugees, in particular:

- the adoption, on 20 October 2023 by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, of the Guidelines on the Human Rights of all Migrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers
- UNHCR's work to "*systematically integrate environmental sustainability into emergency preparedness and response to minimise the environmental footprint of its activities*"²⁰ including through the conservation and restoration of the natural environment, working together with refugees and host communities in the most climate change-affected locations, and designing pioneering initiatives on sustainable energy and reforestation in refugee-hosting zones²¹
- the awareness-raising of more than 60 people on humanitarian action and principles in Logone-and-Chari by the UNHCR throughout 2023²²
- the *first meeting of the regional consultation framework for authorities and humanitarian, development and peace actors*, organised by UNHCR, which took place in Maroua on 29 November 2023
- the assistance provided, during the year 2023 by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) in seven of the ten Regions of Cameroon, to 186,392 vulnerable persons²³, including 96,476 women and 89,916 men, through

¹⁹ See « Accueil des réfugiés : le Cameroun, un modèle en Afrique Centrale selon le HCR », <https://actucameroun.com/2023/06/20/accueil-des-refugies-le-cameroun-un-modele-en-afrique-centrale-selon-le-hcr/>, accessed on 5 June 2024.

²⁰ See UNHCR/HCP/2023/01, DESS, *Politique sur la préparation et la réponse aux situations d'urgence*, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

²¹ See. UNHCR's Operational strategy for climate resilience and environmental sustainability 2022-2025, 24 pp., spec. p. 5, <https://www.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/legacy-pdf/627ce69a4.pdf>, accessed on 15 June 2024.

²² OCHA, « Cameroon, Far North, Situation Report No. 38 », novembre 2023, <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/cameroon/cameroun-extreme-nord-rapport-de-situation-no-38-novembre-2023>, published on 4 January 2024, accessed on 16 June 2024.

²³ The NRC's assistance was granted to 82 104 persons in the Far North Region, 54 426 in North-West Region, 43 998 in the South-West Region, 5 431 in the East Region 83 in the Adamawa Region, 195 in the Littoral Region and 448 in the West Region.

various programmes focusing on education, housing, food security, access to justice and access to drinking water²⁴ ;

- NRC's commitment to four consortiums in 2023²⁵, which are still valid and under implementation, including with the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), Care International and *Action contre la Faim* (ACF) to provide durable solutions for displaced populations and Central African refugees in the East Region,
- the support of the *United States Agency for International Development* (USAID/BHA) with \$26 million in funding for the 2023 financial year, or 15,882,071,400 CFAF, as part of life-saving emergency food and nutrition assistance to more than 563,000 people, including internally displaced persons, refugees, and host communities in the Adamawa, East, Far North, North-West, and South-West Regions²⁶ ,

Taking into account the estimates provided in the *2024 Humanitarian response Plan for Cameroon*, adopted by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)²⁷ in February and published on 16 April 2024²⁸, the assessment is that:

- a total of 3,400,000 people living in Cameroon are in need of humanitarian assistance and protection
- a total of 2,300,000 people are benefiting from humanitarian assistance
- a total of 1 million people are internally displaced persons
- a total of 658,000 people have returned to their countries of origin or place of residence,

Also noting that according to statistics provided to the Ministry of External Relations by the UNHCR representation in Yaoundé, as of 31 December 2023, 488,285 refugees and asylum-seekers (mainly women and children), were registered in Cameroon, broken down as follows²⁹ :

²⁴ See Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Country Office Cameroon, Annual Report 2023, published in February 2024, 28 pp, p. 22., https://www.nrc.no/globalassets/pdf/annual-reports/2023/cameroon/cameroon-annual-report-2023_french.pdf, accessed on 16 June 2024.

²⁵ *Ibid*, p. 20.

²⁶ See *United State Agency International Development (USAID/BHA), Cameroon Assistance Overview*, October 2023, 2 pp, p. 2.

²⁷ OCHA is the English acronym for the UN *Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs*.

²⁸ OCHA, « Cameroon: 2024 *Humanitarian response Plan* at a glance (February 2024) », publiée le 16 April 2024, <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/cameroon/cameroon-2024-plan-de-reponse-humanitaire-en-bref-fevrier-2024>, accessed on 14 June 2024.

²⁹ See Ministry of External Relations, *Fiche a/s Participation du Cameroun à la réunion ministérielle du Conseil de paix et de sécurité de l'Union africaine sur les réfugiés, les personnes déplacées à l'intérieur et l'assistance humanitaire en Afrique*, Mode virtuel, Wednesday 19 June 2024, 5 pp, spec. pp. 2-4.

- a total of 354,139 Central Africans, mainly in the East Region (in the Gado, Mbile, Lolo, Tsimangolo and Ngarisingo camps) and Adamawa (in the Borgop and Ngam camps)
- a total of 120,839 people from Nigeria, concentrated in the Far North Region, particularly in the Minawao camp
- some 2,997 refugees of various origins (more than 40 other nationalities), and
- a total of 10,310 asylum seekers from 40 countries, including Burkina Faso, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Sudan, Chad and Togo, etc.,

Noting that according to the above-mentioned *Cameroon Situation Report as of 31 December 2023*³⁰ the challenges to be met in 2024 with regard to the situation of refugees and internally displaced persons are significant and relate in particular to:

- the lack of inclusive education for children (60 per cent of refugee children are out of school) and the need for education is estimated at \$2,473,784, which is 1,514,210,360 CFA francs
- acute malnutrition cases among refugee children under five, pregnant women and lactating mothers. Therefore, only 33 per cent of the refugee population received healthcare in 2023. In light of this, it is estimated that the financing essential to address the health difficulties of refugee people in 2024 amounts to 2,398,819 dollars, or 1,468,324,066 CFA francs
- the budget for the care of refugees and other people in emergencies is inadequate. Additional funding of \$10,066,788, which is 6,161,910,128 CFA francs is therefore requested
- access to drinking water, hygiene and sanitation for these vulnerable groups affected by conflicts and man-made or natural disasters is a significant challenge. Additional funding of \$1,068,151 is therefore requested, which is 653, 818, 325 CFA francs,

The Commission is pleased to note the measures taken by the Government to strengthen the promotion and protection of the rights of refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons. These include the continuation of registration activities and the updating of refugee files. The latest figures from UNHCR as of 31 January 2024 indicate that 2,222,702 individuals were in need of humanitarian assistance³¹ compared to 2,060,471 as of 31 January 2023, including 488,902 registered refugees and asylum seekers³², compared to 480,540 as of 31 January 2023,

The Commission also notes that the number of refugees registered with UNHCR has increased by 494, from 477,975 in December 2023 to 478,469. This is primarily due

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ See UN, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *ReliefWeb (RW)*, « *Cameroon : Statistiques des personnes déplacées de force - Janvier 2024* », <https://reliefweb.int/report/cameroon/cameroon-statistiques-des-personnes-deplacees-de-force-janvier-2024>, accessed on 5 June 2024.

³² That is, 478,469 refugees and 10,433 registered asylum seekers).

to the ongoing verification and continuous registration through the Biometric Identity Management System (BIMS), which ensures that the individual identities of the population are secure. This reduces the possibility of identity theft and other misrepresentation, and provides continuity of identity over time and in different locations around the world³³,

The Commission, however is still concerned about substantiated cases of violations of the rights of refugees that have been brought to its attention. For instance, the case of the arbitrary arrest of Mr Orji Emmanuel Ghigozie, a Nigerian refugee, and his unlawful detention from 2 to 4 October 2023 by members of the Ékounou Gendarmerie Brigade, followed by his transfer to the Legal Department of the Ékounou Court of First Instance (CFI), on 4 October 2024. The situation was brought to the attention of the CHRC by the person concerned. He reported his ill-treatment during his arrest and police detention, orchestrated by his landlord, who accused him of renting fraud. The CHRC carried out two fact-finding missions to the Gendarmerie Post at the Central Post Office in Yaoundé, where it drew the attention of the gendarmerie officers who had lodged the complaint against the victim for failure to comply with the rule of law, in this case, Section 322-1 of the Criminal Code on renting fraud which provides that

[w]hoever rents a built or un-built property on the basis of a duly registered contract, owing two months' rents, and who has not paid such rents or vacated the said property, one month after service of a notice to pay or quit, shall be punished with imprisonment for from 6 (six) months to 3 (three) years or with fine of from CFAF 100 000 (one hundred thousand) to CFAF 300 000 (three hundred thousand), or with both such imprisonment and fine.

The CHRC then referred the matter to the State Counsel at the Ékounou Court of First Instance, who, after a thorough examination of the case, released the victim from custody,

The Commission regrets to note:

- the lack of operationalisation of refugee status management bodies in Cameroon, particularly the *Refugee Status Eligibility Commission and the Refugee Appeals Commission*³⁴;
- the low uptake and implementation by public authorities and civil society stakeholders of certain regional instruments to protect the rights of refugees, in particular

³³ See UN, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *ReliefWeb (RW)*, « Cameroun: Statistics on Forcibly Displaced Persons - January 2024 », *op. cit.*

³⁴ The Refugee Status Eligibility Commission and the Appeals Commission, established by Decree No. 211/389 of 28 November 2011, made operational by Order No. 522/D/PL/CAB of 7 August 2019 to appoint the members of these bodies were inaugurated on 24 October 2019 after the swearing in of their members before the High Court of Yaoundé.

- Resolution ACHPR/RES.565 (LXXVI) 2023 on the inclusion of refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons and stateless persons in national socio-economic systems, services and economic opportunities in Africa and
- Resolution ACHPR/RES/RES. RES. 486 (EXT.OS/ XXXIII) 2021 on missing migrants and refugees in Africa and the impact on their families
- the failure to ratify the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Right to Nationality and the Eradication of Statelessness in Africa
- the insufficient support from development partners to States, like Cameroon, hosting large numbers of asylum seekers and refugees
- the fact that Cameroon continues to be affected by
 - community conflicts in the Lake Chad Basin
 - terrorism in the Far North, North-West and South-West Regions and
 - the impact of the security situation in the Central African Republic, felt in the Adamawa and North Regions

The Commission also reiterates the recommendations made in previous statements, which remain relevant, echoing those formulated during the 79th Ordinary Session of the African Commission of Human and People's Rights held from 14 May to 3 June 2024, presented by the Special Rapporteur on refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons and migrants in Africa, particularly to:

- *the Ministry of External Relations*, to operationalise the Eligibility Commission and the Appeal Commission, so that refugees can benefit from a recognised status and enjoy the privileges associated,
- *Ministries and other entities responsible for employment*, to continue to support their smooth socio-professional integration, allowing them to pursue a profession of their choice and utilise their talents and skills to contribute to the development of the country's economy,
- *Ministries in charge education*, to further implement government instructions to ensure continuous access to different schools and inclusion in educational environments, *the Ministry of Decentralisation and local Development, the Ministry of Territorial Administration*, to intensify awareness raising among administrative support staff and actors in charge of managing councils on the rules governing refugees, internally displaced persons and asylum seekers, as well as on appeal procedures, where applicable,

The Commission makes new recommendations to:

the Government:

- to take ownership and implement the African Guidelines on the Human Rights of all migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, adopted by the African Commission on Human and People's Rights on 20 October 2023
- to endorse Resolution ACHPR/RES, 486 (EXT.OS/ XXXI11) 2021 on missing migrants and refugees in Africa and its impact on their families, and Resolution ACHPR/Res.565 (LXXVI) 2023 on the inclusion of refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons and stateless persons in national socio-economic systems, services, and economic opportunities in Africa
- to continue to respect the principles relating to the protection of refugees, particularly the principle of non-refoulement, as enshrined in the Geneva Convention of 28 July 1951 relating to the Status of Refugees, which entered into force on 22 April 1954 and was ratified by Cameroon on 23 October 1961, and the OAU Convention governing the specific aspects of refugee problems in Africa, adopted on 10 September 1969, which entered into force on 20 June 1974 and was ratified by Cameroon on 7 September 1985
- to ratify the protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the specific aspects of the right to nationality and the eradication of statelessness in Africa,

the Minister of External Relations:

- to finalise the two tripartite agreements signed on 2 March 2017 between Cameroon, Nigeria and the UNHCR, on the one hand and between Cameroon, Chad and the UNHCR, on the other, to ensure the effective return of Cameroonian refugees in these two countries as well as the voluntary return of Nigerian and Chadian refugees to their home countries
- to continue with advocacy efforts for the operationalisation of the African Humanitarian Agency (AfHA), whose final draft is currently under consideration by the African Union,
- *the Minister of Territorial Administration*, to continue advocacy with development partners for increased funding to improve the hosting and living conditions of refugees,

the Ministry of Decentralisation and local Development,

the Minister of Territorial Administration, each in its own sphere

- to establish secondary civil status registries in refugee camps to prevent the high risks of statelessness due to non-registration of refugee children,
- protect refugee and migrant children, particularly unaccompanied minors from all forms of exploitation, violence and drug consumption as well as substance abuse,

- *Institutions responsible for the defence and security of persons*, to strengthen measures to provide protection and humanitarian assistance to refugees relocating to safer areas within the country,
- *the Ministry of Public Health*, to implement additional measures to ensure sufficient assistance for their access to healthcare services, benefiting both their well-being and that of their families,

The Commission urges key donor countries as well as the United Nations system bodies responsible for issues related to refugees and other forcibly displaced persons, to significantly strengthen the assistance provided to the States receiving large numbers of asylum seekers or refugees such as Cameroon,

The Commission also recommends to civil society organisations to step up their efforts to raise awareness of:

host populations, on the solidarity and hospitality to be shown to refugees, internally displaced persons and asylum seekers

refugees, on the conditions and procedures for obtaining refugee status and on appeal mechanisms, on their duties towards the host country and host population, including the obligation to comply with the laws and regulations in force, and the measures taken by the authorities to maintain public order, and therefore peace,

For its part, the Commission will spare no effort to keep on resolutely promoting and protecting human rights, with a particular focus on the rights of refugees, internally displaced persons and asylum seekers. This will be achieved through awareness-raising and information campaigns, advocacy, facts-finding missions and through the handling of complaints and self-initiated investigations,

The Commission therefore calls upon any person who is a victim or witness of Human rights violation and particularly violations of the rights of refugees, internally displaced persons and asylum seekers to contact the Commission via the **toll-free number: 1523** (free call).

Useful CHRC addresses.-

Website: www.cdhc.cm

Facebook and X account (former Twitter): **Cameroon Human Rights Commission**

WhatsApp: **691 99 56 90**

