

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1. Since its Third-Cycle Universal Periodic Review in 2018, Cameroon continues to persecute and discriminate against people based on their perceived and actual status as members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, and other sexual and gender minority (LGBTIQ+) community. The State condones and participates in violence, persecution, and discrimination against the community. The State also fails to appropriately respond to such conduct by officials and private individuals. The criminalization of consensual adult same-sex sexual activity, coupled with public animus toward sexual minorities, fosters a hostile and often deadly environment for the LGBTIQ+ community in Cameroon.
2. The Republic of Cameroon continues to criminalize consensual relations between same-sex adults under Article 347-1 of the Cameroon Penal Code and continues to enforce that provision. Since its 2018 review until the time of this report's submission, human rights organizations have documented scores of arrests and detentions under Article 347-1.
3. Members of the LGBTIQ+ community struggle to access to healthcare, experience arbitrary arrests, and lack access to justice when they experience violence due to Cameroonian police failing to adequately investigate incidents of violence against sexual and gender minorities. Police routinely attempt to extort money from members of the LGBTIQ+ community through violence and threats. Homophobic vigilantes also threaten, harass, and commit physical and sexual violence against members of the LGBTIQ+ community. The Republic of Cameroon also fails to adequately protect human rights defenders.
4. Authorities do not promptly or impartially investigate allegations of human rights violations on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or sex characteristics, including acts of torture, ill-treatment, and "corrective rape." The police often participate in or condone the violations. As a result, members of the LGBTIQ+ community do not feel safe reporting crimes committed against them.

### **I. IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS OBLIGATIONS**

#### **A12 Acceptance of international norms**

##### **Status of Implementation: Accepted, Partially Implemented**

1. In its Third Cycle review, Cameroon received several recommendations to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.<sup>1</sup> Cameroon accepted each of these recommendations.<sup>2</sup>

2. Cameroon also received a recommendation to accept visits by relevant Special Procedures mandate-holders, and facilitate monitoring and reporting to the Human Rights Council.<sup>3</sup> Cameroon accepted this recommendation.<sup>4</sup>
3. Cameroon acceded to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and has signed the Optional Protocol, but it has not yet ratified or acceded to it.<sup>5</sup>
4. Although Cameroon accepted a recommendation to accept visits by relevant Special Procedures mandate-holders, no mandate holders have visited Cameroon since its previous review. All seven requests for visits either remain unanswered or have become inactive; an eighth request by the Special Rapporteur on minority issues in 2021 was postponed by the mandate-holder, likely by the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>6</sup> Possible visits by the special rapporteurs on health and minority issues, and the Working Group on disappearances all could have addressed serious violations of LGBTIQ+ Cameroonians' human rights.
5. Despite these commitments, there are an increase in reports of violence and abuse in against members of the LGBTIQ+ community since 2020.<sup>7</sup> Cameroon's Minister of External Affairs, Lejeune Mbella Mbella, told the Committee of Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights in February 2019 that "[a]s for the criminalization of homosexuality, that was the position of the society, not of the Government ... Cameroonian society was not ready for 'such practices' because homosexuality was deemed socially unacceptable."<sup>8</sup>
6. Police frequently administer forced anal examinations of transgender women and men suspected of being gay, bisexual, or queer. The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention has deemed forced anal examinations to amount to torture.<sup>9</sup> Despite anal examinations providing no scientific or evidentiary value as to whether an individual has engaged in consensual anal intercourse, Cameroonian police often subject individuals to these invasive examinations to "prove" that they engaged in anal intercourse.<sup>10</sup>
7. Alternatives-Cameroun and Humanity First documented 191 cases of police committing physical violence against members of the LGBTIQ+ community, which included 69 cases of torture.<sup>11</sup> There have also been reports that on the nights of May 16 and 17, 2020, police allegedly illegally arrested more than 50 people who were members of the sexual minority rights and HIV care organization Colibri. Police subjected some of those arrested to forced anal examinations.<sup>12</sup>

## **A41 Constitutional and legislative framework**

### **Status of Implementation: Partially Accepted, Not Implemented**

8. Cameroon received several recommendations to repeal laws that criminalize consensual same-sex sexual activity between adults.<sup>13</sup> The Government of Cameroon noted these recommendations.<sup>14</sup>
9. In addition, Cameroon received a recommendation to enact laws aiming at the prevention of torture in places of detention and to ban incommunicado detention.<sup>15</sup> Cameroon accepted this recommendation.<sup>16</sup>
10. Article 347-1 of the Cameroon Penal Code criminalizes consensual same-sex sexual activity between adults. Under Article 347-1, consensual same-sex sexual activity is illegal and punishable by a prison sentence of six months to five years and a fine ranging from 20,000 to 200,000 CFA francs. Cameroon is also one of the few countries that criminalize both consensual same-sex sexual activity between adult men and adult women.<sup>17</sup> Cameroon has not repealed Article 347-1 and it remains in effect.
11. Cameroon continues to enforce Article 347-1 of the Penal Code, with members of the LGBTIQ+ community frequently subjected to arrests.<sup>18</sup> Police also frequently subject LGBTIQ+ people to mass arrests, arbitrary detention, and torture and violence while in custody.<sup>19</sup> Cameroon also reportedly prosecutes consensual same-sex sexual activity between adults at higher rates than most other countries that criminalize same-sex sexual conduct.<sup>20</sup>
12. Human Rights Watch reported that from February to April 2021, Cameroonian security forces arbitrarily arrested, beat, or threatened at least 24 people, including a 17-year-old, for alleged consensual same-sex conduct or gender nonconformity.<sup>21</sup> Human Rights Watch reported another uptick in violence and abuse against members of the LGBTIQ+ community in 2022.<sup>22</sup>
13. From 2018 to 2021, Alternatives-Cameroun reported 185 arbitrary arrests and detentions of members of the LGBTIQ+ community; 945 incidents of economic violence, including extortion, scamming or blackmail; 1,304 incidents of physical abuse, including assault, inhuman treatment, physical injury, or torture; 238 incidents of sexual violence; 5,499 incidents of psychological violence; 334 incidents of hate speech; and 4 murders.<sup>23</sup> In one high-profile case in 2021, two transgender women were arrested under this law and received the maximum sentence of five years' imprisonment.<sup>24</sup>
14. Human Rights Watch notes that "Cameroon's law criminalizing same-sex conduct has created a climate that allows both other Cameroonians and security forces to abuse and assault LGBTI<sup>25</sup> people without consequence."<sup>26</sup> Because Cameroon's

penal code criminalizes *conduct*, not identity, arrests of people on the basis of perceived identity are unlawful, and yet this does not stop Cameroonian police from making these unlawful arrests.<sup>27</sup>

15. Article 83 of the 2010 law on cybercrimes and cyber security also makes it illegal for a person to make “sexual propositions to another person of the same sex” by electronic communications.<sup>28</sup> If convicted, individuals are subject to imprisonment for one to two years and/or fines of up to 1,000,000 CFA francs, and those penalties double if the propositions are followed by sexual relations.<sup>29</sup>
16. While the Government of Cameroon notes that “[T]he Constitution protects all persons from torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, as well as from arbitrary arrest and detention. The Code of Criminal Procedure lays down the guarantees pertaining to deprivation of liberty,”<sup>30</sup> security forces and police sometimes violate these protections when it comes to the LGBTQI+ community. Although the Code of Criminal Procedure says that for someone to be kept at the police station they need to be caught in the act, many police arrest members of the LGBTQI+ community on suspicion of or based on rumors of “homosexual” behavior.<sup>31</sup>

### **B10 Access to justice & remedy**

17. Members of the LGBTQI+ community face obstacles to access to justice and remedies in Cameroon. Numerous organizations report that members of the LGBTQI+ community are afraid to go to the police, as once their sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or sex characteristics are known they are at risk of abuse or extortion by police officers.<sup>32</sup> The police are reportedly frequently unresponsive to requests for assistance from members of the LGBTQI+ community.<sup>33</sup> Instead, security forces arrest members of the LGBTQI+ community when they come to report violent attacks.<sup>34</sup>
18. For example, after Kenfack Tobi Aubin Parfait’s older brother beat him to death on August 12, 2018, on the assumption that Parfait was gay, the police took into custody the older brother and sister, who was arrested for not helping a person in danger. Both the brother and sister were released. A case was opened against the brother, but when Alternatives-Cameroun attempted to follow up several months later, the police told the organization that the brother’s file did not exist.<sup>35</sup> After Alternatives-Cameroun’s follow-up, the police did nothing further to investigate the crime.<sup>36</sup>
19. Humanity First Cameroon and Alternatives-Cameroun also received reports of young people beating a transgender woman in her neighborhood because of her sexual orientation and gender identity and expression in May 2019. The woman has refused to seek legal support and report her to police because she is afraid

her request would ultimately be ignored.<sup>37</sup>

20. Further, a group of at least ten individuals attacked a teacher on March 9, 2022, after they had accused him of homosexuality. The teacher reportedly does not want to take legal action against the attackers out of fear of retaliation and stigma.<sup>38</sup>
21. These fears are not without reasons. When an individual filed a break-in complaint with police, the alleged victim was incarcerated after the thief accused the complainant of homosexuality.<sup>39</sup>
22. While the Government of Cameroon has maintained that it does not tolerate crimes committed by security or police forces, it has failed to demonstrate progress in investigating and punishing those crimes allegedly committed by them.<sup>40</sup>

### **B31 Equality & non-discrimination**

#### **Status of Implementation: Not Accepted, Not Implemented**

23. Nigeria recommended that Cameroon “[C]ontinue its efforts aimed at combating all forms of discrimination in its population.”<sup>41</sup> The Government of Cameroon noted this recommendation.
24. Cameroon has no legislation that protects members of the LGBTIQ+ community from discrimination on the basis of their sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and/or sex characteristics.<sup>42</sup>
25. In the criminal justice system, members of the LGBTIQ+ community and, in particular, gay men, experience discrimination that negatively affects the outcomes of their cases. Human Rights Watch reports that prosecutors presiding over “homosexuality” criminal cases often harbor biased assumptions about gay men.<sup>43</sup>
26. Freedom House also notes that members of the LGBTIQ+ community in Cameroon are generally excluded from political processes, and that their interests are poorly represented by elected officials.<sup>44</sup> This exclusion can limit LGBTIQ+ people’s ability to advocate for positive legislative change for their community.
27. Further, the National Commission for Human Rights and Freedoms, Cameroon’s national human rights institution, not only negates and ignores LGBTIQ+ issues and requests, but also denies incidents of discrimination and upholds the country’s criminalization of consensual same-sex sexual conduct between adults.<sup>45</sup>

### **D28 Gender-based violence; E41 Right to health - General**

#### **Status of Implementation: Not Accepted, Not Implemented**

28. Cameroon received a recommendation from Argentina to take the necessary measures to protect and prevent discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons.<sup>46</sup> Cameroon also received a recommendation from the Netherlands to eliminate discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity and protect the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex community from violence and harassment.<sup>47</sup> The Government of Cameroon noted both of these recommendations.
29. The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Health has called for the decriminalization of homosexuality as an essential step in ensuring the right to health for all is upheld.<sup>48</sup>
30. In Cameroon, where same-sex consensual conduct between adults is criminalized, members of the LGBTIQ+ community avoid accessing healthcare services including testing and treatment for HIV/AIDS for fear of being subject to criminal sanctions, violence, or discrimination.<sup>49</sup>
31. Alternatives-Cameroun has documented several cases in which staff at hospitals in Cameroon refused to treat patients because of their perceived sexual orientation.<sup>50</sup>
32. Police arrested 53 people in May 2020 on "homosexuality" related charges. A lawyer representing two of those arrested reported that several of the individuals detained were deprived of HIV treatment that they needed.<sup>51</sup>

### **D33 Arbitrary arrest and detention**

#### **Status of Implementation: Not Accepted, Not Implemented**

33. It is not illegal *per se* to be a member of the LGBTIQ+ community in Cameroon. Section 347-1 of Cameroon's penal code punishes "sexual relations with a person of the same sex,"<sup>52</sup> meaning the focus is on the act, not on an individual's identity.
34. Police frequently rely on anal examinations or forced HIV and sexually transmitted infection (STI) testing to "confirm" whether an individual is "homosexual." Anal examinations, however, have no evidentiary value.<sup>53</sup> Further, they are recognized by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture and Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment as a form of ill-treatment that can rise to the level of torture.<sup>54</sup>
35. According to Alternatives-Cameroun, however, police often arrest people on same-sex sexual relations charges on the basis of the way a person dresses; the locations where they associate; or based on rumors, tips or suspicions. From 2018 to 2020, Alternatives-Cameroun received reports of police committing 185 arbitrary arrests of people believed to be members of the LGBTIQ+ community.<sup>55</sup>

36. On May 13, 2018, 18 men were arrested in a video club in Yaoundé and seven others at a cabaret. Police charged them with “homosexuality” because they had been watching pornographic movies or dancing together. Police took all of their personal property, including money, computers, and cell phones, and detained the men for five days. Police then forced them to disclose their perceived sexual orientation with their relatives and reveal their HIV status to authorities.<sup>56</sup>
37. On February 8, 2021, police arrested Njeuken Loic (known as “Shakiro”) and Mouthe Roland (known as “Patricia”), two transgender women in Douala. They were charged with “homosexuality”-related offenses and were taken to a brigade and then transferred to prison. Their attorneys stated that police beaten and threatened both of the women.<sup>57</sup>
38. On February 14, 2021, Cameroon police arrested 12 youth, including a 17-year-old boy, in a restaurant in Bertoua, on “homosexuality”-related charges. One of those arrested, a 21-year-old woman, said that the police beat, threatened, and verbally assaulted her and others.<sup>58</sup>
39. On February 24, 2021, police officers raided the Bafoussam, West Region, office of Colibri, a non-profit organization that provides HIV prevention and treatment services. Police arrested 13 people on “homosexuality” charges, including seven Colibri staff members. Three of those arrested stated that the police threatened them, verbally assaulted them, interrogated them without a lawyer, and slapped a transgender woman in the face. Police also forced at least one individual to undergo an HIV test and anal examination at a health center the following day.<sup>59</sup>

### **F31 Children**

#### **Status of Implementation: Not Accepted, Not Implemented**

40. Zimbabwe recommended Cameroon “[a]ccelerate the process of updating the Civil Code with a view to enhancing the protection of children’s rights.”<sup>60</sup> The Government of Cameroon noted this recommendation.
41. In December 2018, a list of alleged members of the LGBTIQ+ community in Cameroon was circulated. This list included the names of minors who were dependents still living with their parents.<sup>61</sup>
42. In Cameroon, parents often evict children if they learn that the child identifies as a member of the LGBTIQ+ community. Such youth end up on the streets, cut off from the schools they have been attending, and often struggle with mental health problems.<sup>62</sup>
43. In May 2020, police officers arrested at least 6 teenagers in Bafoussam during an event hosted by the HIV care-centered organization, Colibri. They along with 53 others were charged with “homosexuality, pimping, and complicity in pimping”.<sup>63</sup>

44. In February 2021, police arrested, detained, and beat 12 youths from Bertoua on "homosexuality"-related charges. Human Rights Watch reports that several of the detained were left needing medical care upon their release.<sup>64</sup>

## **G2 Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender and intersex persons (LGBTI)**

45. According to Alternatives-Cameroun, members of the LGBTIQ+ community are often subject to private violence, including murder, sexual assault/"corrective rape", psychological abuse and extortion. Members of the LGBTIQ+ community are often afraid to report these crimes out of fear they themselves will be charged under Section 347-1 or Article 83 and face up to five years in prison (see paragraphs 20-25 above). According to Alternatives Cameroun, from 2018 to 2021, there have been 8,509 reported incidences of private violence against the LGBTIQ+ community including physical, psychological, or sexual abuse. These numbers have been steadily increasing year over year, starting with 982 in 2018 and rising to 4,116 in 2021.<sup>65</sup>
46. The families of those individuals who are or are perceived to be LGBTIQ+ often subject their family member to "corrective rape" by either another family member or by strangers. They do so under the belief that homosexuality is a mental illness that can be "cured."<sup>66</sup>
47. Alternatives-Cameroun reports several incidents of "corrective rape" since 2018.<sup>67</sup> In 2018 in Yaoundé, the family of 18-year-old "Marina" discovered explicit text messages between her and her girlfriend. Her family beat and lashed her before forcing her to marry a local pastor. Then, her husband, who believed her to be a lesbian "witch," chained and raped her. Marina's aunt and brothers also took her to the local witch doctor who forced her to drink chicken blood and inserted hot peppers into her anus as part of a "cleansing ritual."<sup>68</sup>
48. In December 2018, a list of people accused of being "homosexuals" was published and spread through social media, subjecting those who may have been hiding their identities to abuse.<sup>69</sup>
49. In January 2019, a group of anti-gay youths forced the cancellation of a gay pride event after burning down the office of the organizers.<sup>70</sup>
50. On March 9, 2022, a group of at least 10 people assaulted a 32-year-old teacher in Buea, South West Region, accusing him of homosexuality, repeatedly slapping and kicking him and dragging him on the ground. The police arrested but released the attackers, but then arrested the teacher on suspicion of homosexuality. After paying 50,000 CFA the teacher was released.<sup>71</sup>
51. On March 31, 2022, a group of approximately 15 men armed with sticks, broken bottles, knives, and machetes broke into at least two homes of people they



suspected of being LGBTIQ+ in Mabanda neighborhood in Douala. The attackers destroyed private property and threatened the occupants. The attackers then called the police, who arrested the victims, accusing them of being LGBTIQ+. The victims were arrested, then released.<sup>72</sup>

52. On April 5, 2022, a group of approximately 20 men and women, beat, threatened, insulted and humiliated a 29-year-old man they suspected of being a member of the LGBTIQ+ community outside of his home in Yaoundé's Bastos neighborhood. They also beat his 55-year-old mother and 16-year-old sister, who tried to defend him. The group, some of whom carried sticks, also threw rocks at the victims' home, causing damage.<sup>73</sup>
53. On April 10, 2022, a crowd of men armed with machetes, knives, sticks, and wooden planks, attacked a group of at least 10 members of the LGBTIQ+ community who had attended a party at a private home in the Messassi neighborhood in Yaoundé. Witnesses stated that the armed men beat a watchman, stormed the house and pursued the victims through the neighborhood, severely beating them.<sup>74</sup>

## **H1 Human rights defenders**

### **Status of Implementation: Not Accepted, Not Implemented**

54. Switzerland recommended that Cameroon take measures to "[e]nsure the protection and security of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons and of human rights defenders committed to their cause."<sup>75</sup> The government of Cameroon noted this recommendation.
55. In 2018, police arrested five LGBTIQ+ human rights defenders at a youth center run by the Avenir Jeune de l'Ouest. Police forced the human rights defenders to undergo anal exams.<sup>76</sup>
56. In January 2019, a group of anti-gay youths forced the cancellation of a gay pride event after burning down the office of the organizers.<sup>77</sup>
57. Lawyers who defend clients charged with "homosexuality" frequently experience harassment and threats of violence against them and their families.<sup>78</sup> This happens even if the lawyers do not identify as members of the LGBTIQ+ community.
58. Despite the prevalence of these threats, Cameroonian authorities have failed to publicly denounce threats made against lawyers defending clients charged with "homosexuality" and have not ensured their protection.<sup>79</sup>

## II. RECOMMENDATIONS

59. This stakeholder report suggests the following recommendations for the Government of Cameroon:

- Decriminalize consensual same-sex sexual activity between adults by repealing Article 347-1 of the Penal Code. Immediately release, commute the sentences of anyone convicted of consensual same-sex sexual activity between adults, and expunge their criminal records related to consensual same-sex sexual activity between adults.
- Repeal Article 83 of Law 2010 on Cyber Security and Cybercrime. Immediately release, commute the sentences of anyone convicted of violating this law, and expunge their criminal records in relation to this law.
- Immediately release anyone being detained only on the basis of their real or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, and/or sex characteristics.
- Until Section 347-1 is repealed, instruct the Ministry of Health to ensure equal access to healthcare and clarify that no one will be barred access to healthcare based on real or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, and/or sex characteristics.
- Ensure that the Ministry of Health sanctions health care workers who do not respect patients' rights to confidentiality, regardless of their real or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, and/or sex characteristics, and who refuse to provide care to members of the LGBTIQ+ community or those perceived to be members of the LGBTIQ+ community.
- Investigate arbitrary arrests based on actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, and/or sex characteristics and adopt necessary legislation to eliminate these practices.
- Direct the police and other security forces to respect Cameroon's Code of Criminal Procedure in carrying out arrests.
- Encourage the General Delegate of National Security and the Secretary of State in charge of the police force to issue instructions to the police and other security officers to investigate alleged crimes directed against LGBTIQ+ persons, without using the complaint as a basis to initiate proceedings against the complainant on grounds of Section 347-1.
- Immediately stop forced anal examinations.
- Train police, security forces, and judicial personnel on issues related to sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, and/or sex characteristics.

- Adopt legislation to ban discrimination against all minority groups, including members, real or suspected, of the LGBTIQ+ community.
- Update the Civil Code to ensure the protection of children’s rights, regardless of actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, and/or sex characteristics.
- Prohibit the exclusion of LGBTIQ+ identifying persons in Cameroon from political processes.
- Adopt legislation that ensures the prohibition of arbitrary arrests of youth based on actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, and/or sex characteristics.
- Develop and provide safe shelter and housing options for youth currently unhoused as a result of their actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, and/or sex characteristics.
- Take measures to ensure the protection and security of human rights defenders and lawyers representing LGBTIQ+ persons or those accused of engaging in consensual same-sex sexual activity between adults.

<sup>1</sup> Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group the Universal Periodic Review: Cameroon* (July 10, 2018), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/39/15. ¶ 121.19 Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Senegal); ¶ 121.20 Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and establish a national preventive mechanism accordingly (Czechia); ¶ 121.21 Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and establish a national mechanism for the prevention of torture (Finland); ¶ 121.25 Take necessary measures to complete ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture, and ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (Tunisia); ¶ 121.26 Move towards the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Democratic Republic of the Congo).

<sup>2</sup> Human Rights Council, *Addendum to the Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Cameroon*, (12 September 2018), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/39/15/Add.1, ¶¶ 121.19, 121.20, 121.21, 121.25, 121.26.

<sup>3</sup> Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group the Universal Periodic Review: Cameroon* (July 10, 2018), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/39/15. ¶ 121.45 Accept visits by relevant special procedures, and facilitate monitoring and reporting to the Human Rights Council (Slovakia).

<sup>4</sup> Human Rights Council, *Addendum to the Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Cameroon*, (12 September 2018), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/39/15/Add.1, ¶ 121.45.

<sup>5</sup> Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, Dec. 18, 2002, U.N. Doc. A/RES/57/1999, (January 9, 2003), 2375 U.N.T.S. 237.

<sup>6</sup> Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, “View Country visits of Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council since 1998: Cameroon,” accessed April 4, 2023, Available online at <https://spinternet.ohchr.org/ViewCountryVisits.aspx?visitType=all&country=CMR&Lang=en>.

<sup>7</sup> UNAIDS, *UNAIDS calls on governments to stop arbitrary and discriminatory arrests of LGBTI people and to protect their human rights*, May 2020. Available online at [https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/presscentre/pressreleaseandstatementarchive/2020/may/20200517\\_IDAHOT](https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/presscentre/pressreleaseandstatementarchive/2020/may/20200517_IDAHOT).

<sup>8</sup> Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights, *Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights reviews Cameroon’s report* (Feb. 21, 2019). Available online at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/news/2019/02/committee->

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<sup>9</sup> Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention*, (2 March 2011), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/16/47/Add.1, ¶ 28 (Egypt). Available at

[http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/16session/A.HRC.16.47.Add.1\\_AEV.pdf](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/16session/A.HRC.16.47.Add.1_AEV.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> Human Rights Watch, *Cameroon: Guilty by Association, Human Rights Violations in The Enforcement of Cameroots Anti-Homosexuality Law*, (21 March 2013), 44. Available online at <https://www.hrw.org/report/2013/03/21/guilty-association/human-rights-violations-enforcement-cameroots-anti>.

<sup>11</sup> Humanity First-Cameroon & Alternatives Cameroun, "Guilty Silence: Violence and rights violations based on sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression in Cameroon," 2019, <https://rightsafrika.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/ANNUAL-REPORT-2010-ON-VIOLENCE-AGAINST-MSG-IN-CAMEROON.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> Unity Plateforme, *Rapport National Annuel 2020 des Violences et Violations Faites aux MSG au Cameroun* (2020) ; Reuters, *LGBT persecution on the rise in Cameroon, Human Rights Watch says*, Reuters, Apr. 14, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/lgbt-persecution-rise-cameroon-human-rights-watch-says-2021-04-14/>.

<sup>13</sup> Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group the Universal Periodic Review: Cameroon* (July 10, 2018), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/39/15. ¶ 121.52 Consider repealing provisions that criminalize homosexuality (Italy); ¶ 121.74 Decriminalize homosexuality, punished under article 347 bis of the Penal Code (France); ¶ 121.75 Decriminalize same-sex relations by replacing article 347-1 of the Penal Code, and initiate a campaign to raise awareness in the public about homosexuality (Germany); ¶ 121.76 Decriminalize consensual same-sex conduct between adults, and take all necessary steps to protect the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex community from all forms of discrimination and violence (Ireland); ¶ 121.77 Review the Penal Code with a view to decriminalizing homosexuality (Spain); ¶ 121.78 Decriminalize consensual sexual relations between persons of the same sex, and combat discrimination and violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons (Mexico); ¶ 121.79 Decriminalize consensual sex between adults of the same sex, and any other discriminatory practice based on sexual orientation or gender identity, protecting lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons and guaranteeing their fundamental rights (Uruguay); ¶ 121.80 Decriminalize consensual same-sex relations (Australia); ¶ 121.82 Decriminalize consensual same-sex sexual relations and immediately cease targeted discrimination and violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons (United States of America).

<sup>14</sup> Human Rights Council, *Addendum to the Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Cameroon*, (12 September 2018), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/39/15/Add.1, ¶¶ 121.52, 121.74, 121.75, 121.76, 121.77, 121.78, 121.79, 121.80, 121.82.

<sup>15</sup> Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group the Universal Periodic Review: Cameroon* (July 10, 2018), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/39/15. ¶ 121.111 Carry out investigations into alleged torture and ill-treatment of detained persons, ban incommunicado detention and enact laws aiming at the prevention of torture in places of detention (Czechia).

<sup>16</sup> Human Rights Council, *Addendum to the Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Cameroon*, (12 September 2018), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/39/15/Add.1, ¶ 121.111.

<sup>17</sup> Penal Code of Cameroon, art. 347-1(Cm.), <https://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/en/cm/cm014en.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> Human Dignity Trust, [www.humandignitytrust.org/country-profile/cameroon](http://www.humandignitytrust.org/country-profile/cameroon).

<sup>19</sup> Human Dignity Trust, [www.humandignitytrust.org/country-profile/cameroon](http://www.humandignitytrust.org/country-profile/cameroon).

<sup>20</sup> The Independent Advisory Group on Country Information, *Country Policy and Information Note Cameroon: Sexual orientation and gender identity or expression* (2020). Also available online at [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/865882/Cameroon\\_-\\_SOGIE\\_-\\_CPIN\\_-\\_v1.0\\_Final\\_Feb\\_20\\_Gov.uk.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/865882/Cameroon_-_SOGIE_-_CPIN_-_v1.0_Final_Feb_20_Gov.uk.pdf); Human Rights Watch, "Progress and Setbacks on LGBT Rights in Africa — An Overview of the Last Year," June 22, 2022, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/06/22/progress-and-setbacks-lgbt-rights-africa-overview-last-year>.

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- <sup>25</sup> The Advocates for Human Rights and Alternatives-Cameroun use “LGBTIQ+” in this report because of its more expansive and inclusive nature, but other organizations may use the more restricted “LGBTI.”
- <sup>26</sup> Human Rights Watch, *Cameroon: Rising Violence Against LGBTI People* (May 11, 2022). Also available online at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/05/11/cameroon-rising-violence-against-lgbti-people>.
- <sup>27</sup> Human Rights Watch, *Cameroon: Rising Violence Against LGBTI People* (May 11, 2022). Also available online at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/05/11/cameroon-rising-violence-against-lgbti-people>.
- <sup>28</sup> Cyber Security and Cyber Criminality in Cameroon, Law No. 2010/012 of 21st December, 2010.
- <sup>29</sup> Cyber Security and Cyber Criminality in Cameroon, Law No. 2010/012 of 21st December, 2010.
- <sup>30</sup> Human Rights Council, *National report submitted in accordance with paragraph 5 of the annex to resolution 16/21 of the Human Rights Council: Cameroon*, (5 March 2018), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/WG.6/30/CMR/1, ¶ 99
- <sup>31</sup> Video Communications to The Advocates from Human Rights from Alternatives-Cameroun, (Feb. 13, 2023).
- <sup>32</sup> The Independent Advisory Group on Country Information, *Country Policy and Information Note Cameroon: Sexual orientation and gender identity or expression* (2020). Also available online at [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/865882/Cameroon\\_-\\_SOGIE\\_-\\_CPIN\\_-\\_v1.0\\_Final\\_Feb\\_20\\_Gov.uk.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/865882/Cameroon_-_SOGIE_-_CPIN_-_v1.0_Final_Feb_20_Gov.uk.pdf).
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- <sup>35</sup> Alternatives-Cameroun & Humanity First Cameroon, *Rapport Annuel des Violences et Violations Faites aux Minorités Sexuelles et de Genre au Cameroun* (2018).
- <sup>36</sup> Alternatives-Cameroun & Humanity First Cameroon, *Rapport Annuel des Violences et Violations Faites aux Minorités Sexuelles et de Genre au Cameroun* (2018).
- <sup>37</sup> Humanity First-Cameroun & Alternatives Cameroun, *Guilty Silence: 2019 Annual Report* (2019).
- <sup>38</sup> Human Rights Watch, *Cameroon: Rising Violence Against LGBTI People* (May 11, 2022). Also available online at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/05/11/cameroon-rising-violence-against-lgbti-people>.
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- <sup>40</sup> Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2019: Rights Trends in Cameroon* (January 2019). Also available online at [www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/cameroon#e81181](http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/cameroon#e81181).
- <sup>41</sup> Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group the Universal Periodic Review: Cameroon* (December 9, 2018), A/HRC/39/15. ¶121.90 Continue its efforts aimed at combating all forms of discrimination in its population (Nigeria).
- <sup>42</sup> Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, *Responses to Information Requests* (May 2019). Also available online at <https://irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/country-information/rir/Pages/index.aspx?doc=457796>.
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- <sup>44</sup> Freedom House, *2019 Freedom in the World Report* (February 2019). Also available online at [https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2021-08/FIW2019\\_book\\_jumbo-PDF.pdf](https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2021-08/FIW2019_book_jumbo-PDF.pdf).

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- <sup>45</sup> ILGA World, *State Sponsored Homophobia-2019* (March 2019). Also available online at [https://ilga.org/downloads/ILGA\\_State\\_Sponsored\\_Homophobia\\_2019.pdf](https://ilga.org/downloads/ILGA_State_Sponsored_Homophobia_2019.pdf).
- <sup>46</sup> Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group the Universal Periodic Review: Cameroon* (July 10, 2018), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/39/15. ¶121.83 Take the necessary measures to protect and prevent discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons (Argentina).
- <sup>47</sup> Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group the Universal Periodic Review: Cameroon* (July 10, 2018), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/39/15. ¶121.83. Eliminate discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity and protect the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex community from violence and harassment (Netherlands).
- <sup>48</sup> Human Rights Council, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health*, Anand Grover. P.5. II. *Same sex conduct, sexual orientation and gender identity*. 6. Criminal laws concerning consensual same-sex conduct, sexual orientation and gender identity often infringe on various human rights, including the right to health. These laws are generally inherently discriminatory and, as such, breach the requirements of a right-to-health approach, which requires equality in access for all people.<sup>5</sup> The health-related impact of discrimination based on sexual conduct and orientation is far-reaching, and prevents affected individuals from gaining access to other economic, social and cultural rights. In turn, the infringement of other human rights impacts on the realization of the right to health, such as by impeding access to employment or housing.<sup>6</sup>
7. These infringements ultimately undermine the inherent dignity of persons upon which the international human rights framework is based. Denying the dignity of individuals through the criminalization of certain conducts substantially diminishes their self-worth and, in doing so, prevents the realization of the right to health. The decriminalization of such conduct is necessary to address the disempowerment that affected individuals and communities face, and to enable full realization of the right to health.
- <https://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/14session/a.hrc.14.20.pdf>.
- <sup>49</sup> Human Rights Council, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health*, Anand Grover, P.5.
- <sup>50</sup> Video Communications to The Advocates from Human Rights from Alternatives-Cameroun, (February 13, 2023).
- <sup>51</sup> Human Rights Watch, *Cameroon: Wave of Arrests, Abuse Against LGBT People*, (April 14, 2021). Also available online at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/04/14/cameroon-wave-arrests-abuse-against-lgbt-people>.
- <sup>52</sup> PENAL CODE art. 347-1 (Cameroon). Also available online at <https://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/en/cm/cm014en.pdf>.
- <sup>53</sup> Human Rights Watch, *Dignity Debased: Forced Anal Examinations in Homosexuality Prosecutions*, (July 12, 2016.) Also available online at <https://www.hrw.org/report/2016/07/12/dignity-debased/forced-anal-examinations-homosexuality-prosecutions>.
- <sup>54</sup> Human Rights Council, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment*, U.N. Doc. A/HRC/31/57, (January 5, 2016) ¶36.
- <sup>55</sup> Based on 2018-2021 Annual Reports of Alternatives Cameroon. Number of reported arbitrary arrests of members of the LGBTIQ+ community: 2018: 60; 2019:27; 2020:98.
- <sup>56</sup> Alternatives-Cameroun & Humanity First Cameroon, *Rapport Annuel des Violences et Violations Faites aux Minorités Sexuelles et de Genre au Cameroun*, 2018.
- <sup>57</sup> Human Rights Watch, *In Cameroon Transgender Women Given Five-Years in Prison*. Also available online at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/05/12/cameroon-transgender-women-given-five-years-prison>
- <sup>58</sup> Human Rights Watch, *Cameroon: Wave of Arrests, Abuse Against LGBT People*, April 14, 2021. Also available online at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/04/14/cameroon-wave-arrests-abuse-against-lgbt-people>
- <sup>59</sup> Human Rights Watch, *Cameroon: Wave of Arrests, Abuse Against LGBT People*, April 14, 2021. Also available online at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/04/14/cameroon-wave-arrests-abuse-against-lgbt-people>
- <sup>60</sup> Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group the Universal Periodic Review: Cameroon* (July 10, 2018), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/39/15. ¶121.185 Accelerate the process of updating the Civil Code with a view to enhancing the protection of children’s rights (Zimbabwe).
- <sup>61</sup> Erin Royal Brokovitch, *List of alleged homosexuals endangers 82 in Cameroon, Erasing 76 Crimes* (December 31, 2018). Also available online at <https://76crimes.com/2018/12/31/list-of-alleged-homosexuals-endangers-82-in-cameroon>.
- <sup>62</sup> Erin Royal Brokovitch, *List of alleged homosexuals endangers 82 in Cameroon, Erasing 76 Crimes* (December 31, 2018). Also available online at <https://76crimes.com/2018/12/31/list-of-alleged-homosexuals-endangers-82-in-cameroon>.

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- <sup>64</sup> Human Rights Watch, *Cameroon: Wave of Arrests, Abuse Against LGBT People*, April 14, 2021. Also available online at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/04/14/cameroon-wave-arrests-abuse-against-lgbt-people>
- <sup>65</sup> Based on 2018-2022 Annual Reports, Alternatives Cameroun. Incidents of violence against members of the LGBTIQ+ community in 2018: 982; 2019: 1380; 2020: 2031; 2021: 4116.
- <sup>66</sup> Reuters, *Lesbian “witches” chained and raped by families in Cameroon*, October 1, 2018. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-cameroon-lgbt-rape-idUSKCN1MC001>.
- <sup>67</sup> Reports from Alternatives Cameroun.
- <sup>68</sup> Reuters, *Lesbian “witches” chained and raped by families in Cameroon*, (October, 1, 2018). Also available online at <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-cameroon-lgbt-rape-idUSKCN1MC001>.
- <sup>69</sup> ILGA World, *State-Sponsored Homophobia 2019*, by Lucas Ramon Mendos (Geneva; ILGA World, March 2019), 313 <https://ilga.org/state-sponsored-homophobia-report-2019>.
- <sup>70</sup> Rights Africa, Steeves Winter, *Cameroon: Youths disrupt Pride, burn advocacy office*, January 9, 2019. Also available online at <https://rightsafrika.com/2019/01/09/cameroon-youths-disrupt-pride-burn-advocacy-office/>.
- <sup>71</sup> Human Rights Watch, “Cameroon: Rising Violence Against LGBTI People,” accessed on Dec. 16, 2022. Also available online at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/05/11/cameroon-rising-violence-against-lgbti-people>.
- <sup>72</sup> Human Rights Watch, “Cameroon: Rising Violence Against LGBTI People,” accessed on Dec. 16, 2022. Also available online at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/05/11/cameroon-rising-violence-against-lgbti-people>.
- <sup>73</sup> Human Rights Watch, “Cameroon: Rising Violence Against LGBTI People,” accessed on Dec. 16, 2022. Also available online at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/05/11/cameroon-rising-violence-against-lgbti-people>.
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- <sup>75</sup> Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group the Universal Periodic Review: Cameroon* (December 9, 2018), A/HRC/39/15. ¶121.81 Ensure the protection and security of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons and of human rights defenders committed to their cause (Switzerland).
- <sup>76</sup> The Rustin Times, *LGBTI activists arrested in Cameroon get released but are ordered to take anal exams*, May 11, 2018. Also available online at <https://therustintimes.com/2018/05/11/lgbti-activists-arrested-in-cameroon-get-released-but-are-ordered-to-take-anal-exams/>.
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