

H.E. Mr. Michel Tommo Monthe
Permanent Representative of Cameroon to the United Nations in New York

H.E. Mr. Salmon Eheth
Permanent Representative of Cameroon to the United Nations in Geneva

29th September, 2021

Your Excellencies,

Questions from Human Rights Council Elections Pledging Event 2021

On 8th September 2021, Amnesty International and the International Service for Human Rights held an online pledging event for candidate States to the Human Rights Council for the membership term 2022-2024.

This year's event had over 200 online attendees and an overwhelming number of questions posed to candidates, providing an opportunity for candidates to present their visions for membership and to engage with a range of stakeholders on their human rights commitments and pledges.

Despite representatives of Cameroon regrettably declining to participate in the event, questions were raised regarding your candidature to the Human Rights Council. With the goal of furthering dialogue, as well as improving adherence to Council membership standards and accountability, as articulated in UN General Assembly resolution 60/251, please find below the questions addressed specifically to Cameroon as well as questions for all candidate States.

The questions, as well as your responses, will be shared on ISHR's website. We request that you please send your responses to Maithili Pai at m.pai@ishr.ch by 8th October 2021.

Questions addressed specifically to Cameroon

1. *Human Rights Watch*: Is Cameroon suitable for HRC membership when its government tries to eviscerate the political opposition, crush dissent, and persecute LGBT people, and its forces fighting separatists in Anglophone regions commit human rights abuses with impunity and no international accountability.
2. *Organic farming for Gorillas*: In reaction to Mary Lawlor's report 'Final Warning: death threats and killings of human rights defenders', the Cameroon diplomat at the United Nations pledges to improve the position of human rights defenders in Cameroon. What measures have been taken so far to end reprisals?

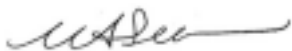
3. *Organic farming for Gorillas*: UN resolution 42/28 urges all States to prevent and refrain from all acts of intimidation or reprisals. This resolution got adopted by the Human Rights Council on 27 September 2019. Why did Cameroon abstain?
4. *Organic farming for Gorillas*: Is Cameroon considering to adopt and implement specific legislation or policies to promote a safe and enabling environment for engagement with the UN and to effectively protect those who seek to cooperate or have cooperated with the UN?
5. *Organic farming for Gorillas*: The UN Secretary General made it clear that Cameroon officials punished Belgian and Cameroonian human rights defenders for cooperating with the UN. Used tactics: attempted assassinations, forced expulsion. What measures have been taken to ensure investigations and accountability?
6. *Organic farming for Gorillas*: What measures have been taken by the Cameroon Government to ensure national investigations and accountability on allegations of intimidation and reprisals against Jan Cappelle, lawyer Mukana, Tudig's Regent Chief Mr Awazi?
7. *Genoveva Sotirova (Twitter user)*: What actions will your State take to keep women safe from domestic violence and ensure access to education, healthcare and information about in-vitro fertilisation procedures?
8. *Joseph Alafac*: Will you finally ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which was signed by Cameroon in 2008, and adhere to norms and principles of this unique UN Treaty? Will you commit to take appropriate steps for full realization of human rights of Persons with Disabilities?
9. *Women's Empowerment and Development*: We need to know what contributions your country will intend to make to uphold human rights at the UNHCR. What are they doing with the instruments already signed? Is this just checking the box and continuing the tokenism in human rights promotion?
10. *CIVICUS*: What concrete plans does the government of Cameroon have to use its membership to advance accountability for human rights violations perpetrated by military forces and resolve conflict within borders?

Questions posed to all candidate States:

1. *Outright International*: The Human Rights Council continues to be a vital resource for LGBTI communities to bring visibility to the human rights violations they face based on their sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sex characteristics. However, questions related to LGBTI persons are also unfortunately highly politicized at the Council. How would the candidates present today ensure that politics does not get in the way of promoting and protecting the human rights of LGBTI persons?
2. *CIVICUS*: What are the steps you will take to ensure full NGO participation in the Council, its mechanisms and resolutions, and to engage with national and international civil society as a Council member?
3. *Human Rights Watch*: NGOs have been banned from UN headquarters since March 2020. Although UN employees, diplomats & media representatives (resident correspondents) can now enter UN headquarters (with restrictions), NGOs remain under a total ban. What will you do to ensure COVID-19 isn't used as a convenient excuse for those who are not fans of civil society to bar NGOs from UN headquarters? Will you support allowing accredited NGO representatives to participate in

- UN headquarters activities in line with all UN guidelines and restrictions like other UN stakeholders?
4. *Child Rights Connect*: What are your plans to mainstream and advance child rights at the Human Rights Council?
 5. *Permanent Mission of the Principality of Liechtenstein to the United Nations*: Ensuring accountability for human rights violations should be a priority for all States, especially Human Rights Council members. The support of the ACT Code of Conduct is an important factor for Liechtenstein's support of a candidature, in addition to its human rights record, pledges and commitments. To what extent are you prioritising strengthening accountability and supporting the ACT Code of Conduct?
 6. *Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations*: How do candidate states intend to promote the protection of human rights defenders, at the national level and within the Council?
 7. *Eric Richardson*: During COVID-19, civil society's participation has been severely restricted, more so than at any other time in the Council's history. Links for informal negotiations which take place online are not publicly posted, NGOs are not permitted to enter the plenary room unless they are giving a speech, and during the recent Special Session on Afghanistan, there were time periods where no civil society was present due to the webcast shutting down and the ban on civil society's attendance in person. If elected, would you reverse these trends and maximize the opportunities for civil society to participate in all meetings of the Human Rights Council?
 8. *Genoveva Sotirova (Twitter user)*: What are your plans in order to improve access to healthcare to low-income individuals?
 9. *Genoveva Sotirova (Twitter user)*: What is your plan to promote the right of access to education of Muslim and Roma women refugees?

We look forward to hearing from you.



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