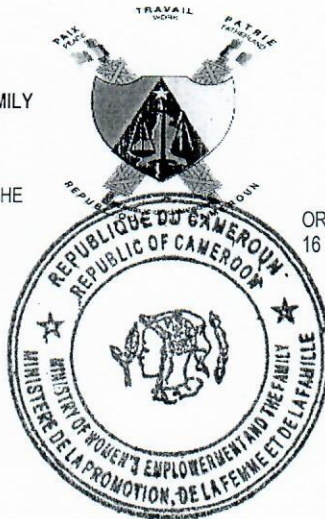


REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN
Paix-Travail-Patrie

MINISTRY OF WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND THE FAMILY

GENERAL SECRETARIAT

ORGANISING COMMITTEE FOR THE 16TH EDITION OF THE
CAMPAIGN 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN 2023



REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON
Peace-Work-Fatherland

MINISTRY OF WOMEN'S
EMPOWERMENT AND THE FAMILY

GENERAL SECRETARIAT

ORGANISING COMMITTEE OF THE 16TH EDITION OF THE
16 DAYS ACTIVISM CAMPAIGN ON VIOLENCE AGAINST
WOMEN 2023

17th EDITION OF THE GLOBAL CAMPAIGN

"16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST VIOLENCE ON WOMEN AND GIRLS

25 November - 10 December 2023

THEME:

**"INVESTING TO PREVENT VIOLENCE AGAINST
WOMEN AND GIRLS"**

TERMS OF REFERENCE

I. BACKGROUND TO THE 16DAYS CAMPAIGN

The 16 Days of Activism against violence on Women and Girls is a global campaign that starts on 25 November, International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and ends on 10 December, Human Rights Day, reflecting the fact that violence against women is the most widespread human rights violation in the world. (ACORD, 2021). This campaign is used as a strategy to mobilise people and organisations around the world for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls (VAWG).

In 2008, in support of this civil society initiative, the Secretary General of the United Nations launched the "UNiTE" *initiative to end violence against women*. Through this UN initiative, Antonio Guterres is calling for global action to raise awareness, galvanise advocacy efforts and share knowledge and innovations to end violence against women and girls. The "UNiTE" initiative calls on governments, development actors, the civil society, women's organisations, young people, the private sector, the media and the entire UN system to join forces to prevent and combat violence against women and girls. (UN, 2023).

II. CONTEXT AND JUSTIFICATION

The current context marked by various crises (humanitarian, environmental, security, economic, etc.) has witnessed an increase in violence against women, including in the workplace and on the internet. This violence is caused by gender inequality and abuse of power. It is rooted in education, prejudice, ignorance on the part of the victims, the entrenchment of certain harmful cultural practices and many other factors. (SNLVBG, 2022). Violence negatively affects the physical and mental health and well-being of women at all stages of their lives, with an impact on their professional development and economic empowerment. It also has social and economic consequences that extend to families and communities, severely hampering the achievement of sustainable development.

Femicide in Cameroon has been on the rise since the beginning of 2023, with a peak in April. On 6 October, during an audience with one of her partners, the Minister of Women's Empowerment and the Family (MINPROFF) reported that there had been at least 54 cases of femicide, including teenage girls. In June 2021, still referring to femicide in a press release published in the national daily Cameroon Tribune No. 12360/8559, the Minister noted that "For some time now [...] there has been a resurgence of cases of extreme violence against women. *How can we erase from our memories the atrocities experienced by some women in recent times, at the hands of those with whom they shared a life, as spouses or life partners?*" (Cameroon Tribune, 2021) and (EYIKE-VIEUX, 2023).

Violence against women and girls remains a reality in Cameroon. With regard to physical violence, the DHSC V indicates that 24% of women in broken unions, 21% of women in unions and 13% of single women have experienced this form of violence in 2018. Physical violence against pregnant women is also common, with a rate of 8% in rural areas and 5% in urban areas. The perpetrators of this violence are either the husband/partner (64%), a former partner (21%), the mother's husband (27%) or a brother (23%) (SNLVBG, 2022).

As far as sexual violence is concerned, the highest percentages of women who said they had been sexually assaulted at some time were in the Centre (excluding Yaounde) (21%) and North-West regions (19%), and slightly lower percentages in Douala (17%) and the West region (17%). (SNLVBG, 2022).

In an emergency context, the Gender Based Violence Information Management System (GBVIMS) reports that 73 incidents were reported in the Far North region in the first half of 2023. In these incidents, 100% of those affected were women and 26% were children under 18. As regards the status of the people affected, 19% are internally displaced persons (IDPs), 70% are from the host community, and 11% are refugees. The types of incidents reported were sexual violence (25%), rape (18%), sexual assault (7%), physical assault (38%), denial of resources, opportunities or services (22%) and psychological violence (15%). 64% of perpetrators are intimate partners (OCHA, 2023).

In the North West and South West regions, 93 incidents were reported by GBV partners. These included sexual violence such as rape and sexual assault (31.2 per cent), physical assault (30.2 per cent), denial of resources and opportunities (21.3 per cent) psychological and emotional violence (16.2 per cent) and forced marriages (1.1 per cent). They involved women, 82.8% of whom were internally displaced persons (IDPs), and 7.5% of whom were children below 18 years.

In summary, for the three crisis regions and the type of incidents reported, sexual violence accounted for 15.5%, including rape at 9.1% and sexual assault at 6.5%. Physical assaults account for 20.2%, forced marriages for 5.2%, denial of resources and opportunities for 37.6% and psychological and emotional violence for 21.7%. In terms of case context, 69.5% of survivors were raped by intimate partners (IPV), 4.3% of children were sexually assaulted and 2.9% were sent into early marriages.

With regard to the alleged perpetrator-survivor relationship, it should be noted that 73.7% of perpetrators were an intimate partner/former partner, 7% were a family member other than the spouse or care giver, 4.4% were another member of the resident community and 4.3% were a primary care giver. Other authors included persons not related or unknown to the survivors and others.

In any case, this state of affairs, although worrying, is avoidable and the mechanisms to counter this scourge exist and can be improved. In terms of legislation, Cameroon has ratified almost all the international and regional conventions and resolutions promoting human rights in general and women's rights in particular.

At national level, the principle of gender equality is enshrined in Cameroon's Constitution, adopted in 1972 and revised in 1996 and 2008. Although there is no specific law that punishes violence against women, the legal framework for protecting women against attacks on their dignity and physical integrity was strengthened with the adoption in 2016 of Law 2016/007 of 12 July 2016 on the Criminal Code. The same applies to the protection of girls, notably with Law No. 98/004 of 14 April 1998 on the orientation of education in Cameroon, to name but a few.

Efforts continue to be made at regional level, following the example of the Continental Convention on Violence against Women and Girls. At the national level, we have seen calls for an end to impunity for perpetrators and for the international provisions ratified by Cameroon to be domesticated and aligned with the national legal framework, and for the adoption of a framework law against VAWG, as well as awareness-raising campaigns aimed at changing behaviour.

This year's campaign is being commemorated against a backdrop marked by an upsurge in femicide and violence against women and girls in all sectors. Investment strategies aimed at promoting and protecting the rights of women and girls need to be better developed. Tackling economic hardship and using other promising prevention strategies such as investing in women's rights organisations, transforming social norms, combating unequal power relations between men and women, strengthening essential services for survivors and creating safer environments, among others, can contribute to preventing and reducing violence against women. (Htun & Melon, 2020).

III. PRESENTATION OF THE THEME

Commemorated worldwide, the 16 Days of Activism global campaign is a perfect opportunity to carry out coordinated actions in a bid to reduce such violence through prevention and support for survivors. The theme for this year's UNITE campaign is **"Invest to prevent violence against women and girls"**. It aims at putting emphasis on the need to fund different violence prevention strategies on women and girls. The European-UN Spotlight global initiative led by the United Nations, which represents the largest targeted effort to eliminate violence against women and girls, demonstrates that significant, concerted and comprehensive investment to end violence can make a transformative difference in the lives of women and girls.

This year's theme is in line with the 2024 Priority theme of the Commission on the Status of Women, which focuses on “**accelerating the achievement of gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective**”. The aim of this campaign is to increase actions to prevent violence and to spur national advocacy for the promotion and protection of the rights of women and girls.

IV. OBJECTIVES

1. General Objective

Mobilise the various actors in the public, private sector, CSOs, **TFPs** and others to support the various prevention strategies for the reduction of violence against women and girls.

2. Specific Objectives

- Mobilise the various actors in the public, private sector, CSOs, TFPs and others to support the various prevention strategies to reduce violence against women and girls;
- Strengthen advocacy for the adoption of a framework law to fight violence against women and girls;
- Popularise the new documents drafted and validated within the framework of the fight against VAWG;
- Build the capacity of those involved in the mechanisms for preventing and punishing violence, for protecting and caring of victims and survivors;
- Promote the positive masculinity approach;
- Make survivors' management platforms more active;
- Increase platforms for the management of survivors;
- Strengthen advocacy for the free health care of survivors of sexual violence;
- Involve the media and decision-makers in exploring innovative communication approaches to raise awareness;
- Update statistical monitoring of data relating to VAWG.

3. Expected Results

- State actors, civil society organisations, development partners, the private sector and other actors provide technical, material and financial support for actions to fight violence against women;
- Advocacy for the adoption of a framework law to fight violence against women and girls strengthened;
- The new documents drafted and validated are popularised;

- The capacities of stakeholders in the mechanisms for preventing and punishing violence, protecting and supporting victims and survivors, are strengthened;
- Positive masculinity is promoted;
- Advocacy for free health support for survivors of sexual violence is strengthened;
- The media and decision-makers are committed to exploring innovative communication approaches for a better awareness-raising;
- Statistical monitoring of data relating to VAWG is updated.

V. ACTIVITIES

At the Central Level

- National launching of the Campaign;
- Advocacy to Parliament for the adoption of a framework law on VAWG ;
- Mapping presentation of safe spaces;
- Official presentation and dissemination of documents on Gender-Based Violence, including development and humanitarian contexts;
- Continuation of HeForShe activities;
- Formulation of messages to be disseminated on the social media;
- Equipping safe spaces;
- Capacity-building for support actors;
- Capacity-building for IDPS;
- Distribution of economic empowerment kits to surviving women and girls;
- Promotion of positive masculinity;
- Amplifying the voices of women leaders;
- Organisation of radio and TV broadcasts;
- Design and production of leaflets, roll-up, gadgets, T-shirts, posters, etc;
- Organisation of debate Conferences, education talks and socio-legal clinics;
- Distribution of kits to GBV survivors;
- Organisation of an awareness-raising caravan.

At the Decentralised level

- Handing over of economic empowerment kits to surviving women and girls;
- Setting up regional and local GBV support platforms;
- Organising education talks and socio-legal clinics;
- Organising capacity-building sessions in various fields;
- Promoting positive masculinity;
- Conference-debates, radio/TV debates;
- Producing and distributing leaflets, roll-ups, gadgets, T-shirts and posters;
- Dissemination of documents on Gender-Based Violence;

- Amplifying the voices of women leaders.

V. STAKEHOLDERS

- Public and semi-public administrations;
- Parliament;
- Regional and local authorities;
- Development partners;
- Civil society organisations;
- Private sector;
- Traditional, community and religious leaders;
- Non-school, school and university environments.

VI. METHODOLOGY

The 17th edition of the global campaign "16 days of activism against violence on women and girls" will take place, as in previous years, throughout the country. The events are being organised in strict compliance with the barrier measures prescribed by the Government and the World Health Organisation (WHO).

MINPROFF will produce a national report, which shall be the synthesis of reports from regional delegations, civil society organisations and partner administrations. The various reports are expected at MINPROFF central level, no later than two weeks after the end of the campaign.

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