



MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATION
MINISTÈRE DE LA COMMUNICATION

GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION ON THE
UPSURGE OF FEMICIDE AND CHILD ABUSE
CASES

JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE

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INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

BY

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The Minister of Women's Empowerment and the Family;

The Minister of Social Affairs;

The Minister of Public Health;

Representatives of invited Administrations;

Dear Media Practitioners;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Allow me to start by expressing my sincere appreciation for your massive turnout at this joint press conference, which dwells on the upsurge of cases of femicide, acts of violence and especially rape against children in our country.

I am highly delighted to acknowledge the presence of several Heads of ministries and other institutions who are here with me today. After me, they will take the floor in turns to speak on this issue, which has become more preoccupying than ever.

I would also like to extend a warm welcome to you

all to this Auditorium of the Ministry of Communication, which is increasingly becoming familiar to most of you.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As a matter of fact, our country has, for some time now, been witnessing a dramatic rise in cases of femicide, rape, infanticide and other forms of abuse, committed against children, generally very young ones, in various parts of Cameroon.

These deeply regrettable phenomena, to say the least, are shocking, not only because of the circumstances in which they occur, but also because of their violence and cruelty, as well as the consequences they have for the stability of society as a whole.

These situations call for our close attention, not just to express our outrage, denounce and condemn such acts in the strongest possible terms, but also to appeal for robust action to punish those found

guilty of perpetrating them, in the hope and firm determination of putting an end to such practices.

With regard to cases of femicide in the first place, a few statistics suffice to illustrate the full extent of the gravity of the situation experienced in recent years.

In 2023, 50 women were murdered. This figure continued to rise, reaching 67 cases in 2024 and 77 in 2025.

The figures recorded since the beginning of 2026 confirm this unfortunate upward trend.

In this regard, it should be noted that these cases of femicide are mostly committed by persons close to the victims, specifically spouses, relatives, family members, neighbours, as well as friends and acquaintances.

As regards violence against children, which mainly takes the form of rape, murder and various forms of trauma, I would like to mention among others:

- **the most recent case, involving little Bissong Omgba Pauline Joyce, aged three, enrolled in nursery school at an educational establishment located in the Odza neighbourhood of Yaoundé, who was subjected to sexual abuse and whose case is currently under investigation ;**
- **that of young Divine Mbarga, aged 11, who was raped and murdered in the Nkoabang neighbourhood of Yaoundé;**
- **the killing of three children by their mother, who subsequently took her own life on 16 February 2026 in the Nkolbisson neighbourhood of Yaoundé;**
- **the killing of an 11-month-old infant in the Ndogpassi neighbourhood of Douala on 24 March 2026 by a member of the child's family;**
- **the murder of two secondary school girls in March 2026 in Kribi;**
- **the murder of 11-year-old child Karl Ethan in**

November 2025 at his family residence in Minkan, Yaoundé;

- **the rape and subsequent murder of a three-year-old girl in Manjo, Littoral Region, in November 2025;**
- **the aggravated abuse of a seven-year-old girl by her blood sister, who chained her up in September 2025 in Douala;**
- **the murder of young Mathis by his father's neighbour in the Ngoa Ekélé neighbourhood of Yaoundé in May 2025;**
- **the murder of eight-year-old Franky Solba, in Bertoua.**

The first point to note from this brief overview is that most of the cases of violence I have just listed took place either within the family environment, at the hands of persons close to victims, or within social institutions whose purpose is to supervise, or protect young children.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am sure you will agree with me that both the nature of the acts committed and the circumstances in which they took place are truly serious and therefore call for urgent and decisive collective action.

In this regard, the Government, on its part, through the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family and the Ministry of Social Affairs, provides support to victims of gender-based violence. This falls within the framework of a process aimed at protecting and offering them tailored assistance, as well as support to their beneficiaries where appropriate. In the same vein, mechanisms are put in place for the prevention of such violence, and sanctions meted against its perpetrators.

This support is provided through a referral system established within regional platforms for the fight against gender-based violence, involving all

government bodies operating in the social, health, judicial and security sectors, as well as Regional and Local Authorities, technical and financial partners, civil society organisations and local communities.

This victim support approach incorporates a psychological and social dimension through active listening, psychosocial support, appropriate follow-up and placement in dedicated facilities, commonly referred to as “safe spaces”, which provide temporary shelter for victims.

To date, there are approximately one hundred of such temporary shelters across the national territory.

Moreover, medical follow-up measures are provided, including emergency care for surviving victims.

Furthermore, victims or their beneficiaries are entitled to legal and security assistance, whether in

filing complaints or in following up on the related proceedings.

At the economic level, the State also intervenes to facilitate the socio-economic reintegration of survivors through the provision of appropriate capacity-building activities to set up income-generating activities.

Alongside these intervention mechanisms, specific actions are also being undertaken, including:

- the gradual establishment of Gender Desks within police stations and gendarmerie brigades, as well as the creation of reception centres for women in distress;**

- capacity building for stakeholders involved in the response chain to gender-based violence, notably magistrates, lawyers, judicial police officers, law enforcement officers, healthcare workers, and social workers among others.**

Measures aimed at preventing gender-based violence must, however, be further strengthened by placing greater emphasis on education and awareness raising on non-violence, tolerance and living together. These can specifically be enhanced with the use of local languages as well as traditional media and digital platforms.

It is essential that women and men at all levels fully understand the issues at stake in matters relating to the prevention of violence, particularly violence against women and girls.

As concerns abuse against children, the Government, in partnership with other institutional and social stakeholders, places greater emphasis on preventive action.

In this regard, the following measures are worth noting:

- the development and dissemination of the**

positive parenting programme;

- **the establishment of Child Desks in selected police and gendarmerie units;**
- **the fight against the sexual abuse of children;**
- **the establishment of a hotline to assist children in distress, which serves as a mechanism for reporting and referring cases of child abuse.**

Still under preventive measures, with special emphasis on security forces, we can cite, among others:

- **the provision of hotline designed to facilitate reporting of incidents and the provision of useful information enabling the security forces to intervene swiftly, particularly in schools and universities;**
- **a permanent security presence on the ground and increased surveillance in the high-crime areas;**
- **the training of security forces in child protection and gender issues.**

In terms of law enforcement, the Cameroonian lawmaker has established a framework of criminal laws comprising, in addition to Law No. 2016/007 of 12 July 2016 on the Criminal Code, law relating to the fight against child trafficking and slavery, as well as the law to institute the Charter on Child Online Protection and another law relating to cybersecurity and cybercriminality.

At the international level, Cameroon has ratified several conventions, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which guarantees the right to protection of children against all forms of physical or mental violence, abandonment or neglect, and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, which specifically protects children against physical and sexual abuse and acts of torture.

Backed by this legal framework, the security forces tasked with criminal investigation duties play an active role in combating offences against vulnerable persons through:

- the systematic initiation of investigations in cases of violence against vulnerable persons;**
- extending the scope of enforcement to related offences;**
- and the strict enforcement of criminal law provisions during the investigation phase.**

In any event, the Cameroonian legal system does not fail to take action whenever cases of violence against vulnerable persons are reported.

This was notably the case with the murderer of little Mathys, who was served a death sentence by the court.

Other proceedings are currently underway. It is not appropriate to make any comment at this level,

owing to the confidentiality of the investigation and judicial information prescribed by the Code of Criminal Procedure.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you can see, neither the Government nor the judicial authority are insensitive to these tragedies, which, unfortunately, are affecting our society with increasing frequency and on a staggering scale. To this effect, the Government is hands on deck to respond to these phenomena, as well as to take the strongest possible action.

That notwithstanding, the relentless fight we must wage against these abhorrent and unacceptable situations targeting vulnerable groups in society is a collective endeavour that requires everyone to come together for the benefit of all.

This initiative actively involves the whole of society, from raising awareness of these issues through to

the various actions that each of us is called upon to initiate or carry out at our own level.

Be it the Government or other institutions of the Republic, associations, religious denominations, traditional authorities, civil society organisations or every individual member of the national community, each and every one of us has a responsibility to play our part in prevention, awareness-raising, reporting and, where necessary, contributing to the prosecution of these criminal acts, which should leave no one indifferent.

It is, in fact, this spirit of collaboration and this synergy of action that justifies why several Heads of relevant ministries and institutions are taking part in this press conference.

They will take the floor after me and, drawing on their respective sectors and areas of expertise, provide you with a clearer picture of these

situations, which are becoming increasingly prevalent in our society.

Thank you for your kind attention.