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### ARREST AND INCOMMUNICADO DETENTION OF A STUDENT BY MEMBERS OF CAMEROON DEFENSE AND SECURITY FORCES IN BAMENDA, NORTH WEST REGION

WE WISH TO BRING TO THE ATTENTION OF NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AS FOLLOWS:

That according to reliable sources, Ishaka Abdel Njutreh, a student alleged to be in his early 20's (about 20 years old) was illegally arrested on May 15, 2023, by members of Cameroon's Defense and Security forces and taken to an unknown destination, where he is currently being detained incommunicado. The incident allegedly occurred at the mixed control checkpoint in Sabga, Turbah sub division, Northwest Region of Cameroon.

That it's alleged Ishaka Abdel is being accused of collaborating with armed separatists against Cameroon's Defense and Security forces. There are rumors that he may have been transferred to Yaoundé after undergoing severe acts of torture.

That our sources further revealed Ishaka Abdel has suffered systematic persecutions with similar treatments from the belligerent forces previously, as he was arrested by Defense forces some months ago and later released, before equally being kidnapped by Armed Separatists who accused him of selling Brasseries du Cameroun products, which were banned by Separatist leaders in Anglophone regions since the beginning of ongoing armed conflict. Alongside his studies, the young man reportedly holds a part time job at a snack bar in Bamenda.

That several unarmed civilians selling Brasseries Brewery products have faced similar fates, including kidnappings, killings and tortures. And at the time of writing this report, there's no official reaction from the authorities to that effect, and Ishaka's Abdel whereabouts remain unknown till date.

That the ongoing armed conflict in Anglophone regions has led to numerous arrests, tortures, detention of several unarmed civilians by Defense and Security forces where they are tried at the Military tribunal. Some have been sentenced to life imprisonment without due trial process, while others have died in pretrial detentions due to harsh or inhumane prison conditions and some detained for several years without trial.

That these actions violate the fundamental human rights principles enshrined in



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Cameroon's 1996 Constitution and International legal instruments, including:

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights on its article 7 which prohibits torture, cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatments, article 9 on right to liberty and security of persons, and article 14 on right to fair trial.
- United Nations Convention Against Torture on article 2 on obligation to prevent and punish acts of torture and article 12 talking about prompt and impartial investigation into allegations of torture.
- African Charter on Human and People's Rights in article 5 which prohibits exploitation and degradation of humans, particularly tortures and cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatments and article 6 on the right to liberty and security of person
- While in the National context we have the 1996 Cameroon Constitution which in its preamble guarantee equality and protection under the law for all citizens and the rights to life, liberty, and security of person.
- Same like the Cameroon Penal Code which prohibits torture, cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment, as well as arbitrary arrest and detention.

## THAT IN VIEW OF THE ABOVE, CONSCIENCE AFRICAINE,

1. Strongly Condemns the repeated disregard for criminal procedure rules, particularly the illegal arrest, torture, and arbitrary incommunicado detention of Ishaka Abdel Njutreh, a student arrested in Bamenda by Defense and Security forces, while demanding for his Immediate and Unconditional release.

2. Urges the judiciary to uphold the rights of the accused in criminal proceedings, ensuring fair trials for all Cameroonian citizens, especially those arrested in conflict affected Anglophone regions. This includes:

- Informing arrested individuals of the reasons for their arrest
- Allowing access to family members
- Providing the right to a lawyer
- Ensuring access to medical care
- Upholding suspects rights to presumption of innocence, whether in police custody or other detention facilities.

3. Demands an end to impunity in Anglophone regions, where perpetrators of grievous human rights violations and abuses often go unpunished. And equally urging immediate and impartial investigations to hold perpetrators accountable, rather than attempting to shield perpetrators from their crimes.

4. Reminds the Cameroonian government of its responsibility to hold senior State officials accountable for failing to prosecute serious crimes committed by their subordinates. This is in line with Article 28 of the Rome Statute, which establishes the principle of command responsibility under international law.



5. Continue to advise the belligerents forces to consistently respect International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights Law during attacks, while reminding them that they will ultimately be held accountable for their crimes sooner or later.

6. Calls on the international community to support efforts to persuade the Yaoundé regime to engage in an inclusive and sincere dialogue with stakeholders to properly address the root causes of the armed conflict.

Done in Bamenda, this May 20, 2023.

Signed

A handwritten signature in red ink is written over a circular blue stamp. The stamp contains the text "CONSCIENCE AFRICA" at the top, "NORTH WEST / CAMEROON" in the middle, and "AFRICAN NETWORK OF GRASSROOTS PEACE DEVELOPMENT" at the bottom. In the center of the stamp is a globe with a laurel wreath.

Amadu TARNTEH

Executive Secretary

