

REF N°131-CA/SG/26

**SUBJECT MATTER: FIRST HEARING OF THE TWO INFANTS AND THEIR MOTHERS
BEFORE THE BAMENDA MILITARY TRIBUNAL**

Hearing of 18 June 2026

Judicial Monitoring Report

Introduction

As part of their mandate to promote and protect human rights, Conscience Africaine (CA), Mandela Center International (MCI), All Women Together (AWT), and Nouveaux Droits de l'Homme Cameroon (NDH) have for several months, been monitoring the situation of a number of civilians arrested in Bamessing Village, Ngoketunjia Division, North-West Region of Cameroon. This case is of particular concern due to the presence of two infants detained alongside their mothers since their arrest on 24 June 2025. At the time of the hearing observed by the mission, these children had already spent nearly one full year in detention despite not being prosecuted for any offence.

The mission aimed to observe the conduct of the first hearing before the Bamenda Military Tribunal, assess compliance with fair trial guarantees, and document human rights concerns related to the proceedings.

1. Background of the Case

On 24 June 2025, a police officer commonly known as "A1," accompanied by other members of the Defence and Security Forces, conducted an operation in Bamessing Village during which seven unarmed civilians, including two infants aged approximately three and four months respectively, were arrested.

According to information gathered by Conscience Africaine, the arrested persons were transferred to the Ndop Gendarmerie Brigade. During their detention, two of the detainees, namely Weyang Julius and Mami Woh Sera, were allegedly subjected to severe acts of torture and other forms of cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment. The injuries resulting from these acts reportedly required hospitalization.

These allegations were publicly denounced by Conscience Africaine through a press release issued after receiving consistent reports of serious human rights violations. Mandela Center International also submitted complaints to the Bamenda Military Tribunal, the Secretary of State for Defense in charge of the National Gendarmerie and at the Ministry of Defense.

The mission further received information indicating that several detainees were subjected to significant psychological pressure, including repeated threats of extrajudicial execution during police custody.

According to the authorities, the arrests followed the abduction of approximately fifteen civilians by separatist fighters operating in the Sabga Hill area of Mezam Division. Among those abducted was a gendarme serving with the Ndop Gendarmerie Company, who was reportedly later executed by his captors. The authorities suspected some of the arrested persons of maintaining family ties with a separatist fighter known as “General Never Die.”

2. Procedural History

Following their arrest, the concerned individuals were placed in detention and subsequently brought before the Bamenda Military Tribunal. They remained under judicial investigation for more than seven months before the Military Investigating Judge. During this period, allegations were brought to the attention of Conscience Africaine concerning an alleged request for one million CFA francs (1,000,000 CFA) purportedly made to facilitate progress in the case. The organization publicly denounced these allegations and called for respect for the principles of judicial independence, impartiality, and integrity.

On 18 March 2026, the Military Investigating Judge issued a Partial Dismissal and Committal Order.

The accused persons were referred to the Military Tribunal on charges including:

- Failure to report the activities of a separatist group;
- Harboring or assisting an offender;
- Lack of a National Identity Card for some of the accused.

3. Observations on the Committal Order

The analysis of the committal order conducted by the partner organizations reveals several important elements.

First, the two infants detained alongside their mothers do not appear among any of the persons referred before the Military Tribunal. No charge has been brought against them and no procedural document grants them the status of accused persons or suspects.

Second, the allegations concerning knowledge of the activities of the separatist fighter known as “Never Die” primarily relate to members of his immediate family circle.

Information reviewed by the mission indicates that the two mothers detained with their infants did not live with the fighter known as “Never Die” and were not members of his household. No clearly identified evidence reviewed by the mission establishes that they possessed actual knowledge of the activities attributed to him.

This situation raises questions regarding the individualization of criminal responsibility in the present proceedings.

Third, the principal material fact alleged against them appears to be the absence of a National Identity Card at the time of their arrest.

In this regard, the partner organizations note that in several conflict-affected areas, the permanent possession of official identification documents may expose civilians to significant security risks when intercepted by different armed actors.

This specific context deserves careful consideration when assessing the facts of the case.

4. Proceedings of the Hearing of 18 June 2026

The case was called before the Bamenda Military Tribunal as Case No. 20 on the court roll.

The panel, composed of the Presiding Judge and two assessors, proceeded with the identification of the accused persons.

The Registrar subsequently read the charges. When invited to respond to the accusations, the defendants admitted the facts relating to the absence of national identity cards but denied the allegations of failure to report separatist activities and harbouring an offender.

The Government Prosecutor informed the Court that the prosecution witnesses were unavailable to testify. Consequently, the case was adjourned to 23 July 2026 for the commencement of proceedings on the merits and the examination of evidence, while the infants remained in detention.

5. Mission Observations

The judicial monitoring mission was conducted by Conscience Africaine under the leadership of its Executive Secretary, Mr. Amadu Tarnteh. The defence team, coordinated by Barrister Tifuh Orchard, was also present. The mission identified several major concerns.

- a. Nearly one year after the arrests, hearings on the merits had still not begun.
- b. The two infants remained deprived of their liberty despite not being subject to any criminal proceedings.
- c. The allegations of torture raised during the investigation phase have not, to date, been publicly clarified.
- d. The charges brought against some of the women appear to be linked primarily to their family or social environment rather than to clearly established material acts.

CONCLUSION

- a. The joint mission conducted by Conscience Africaine, Mandela Center International, All Women Together, and Nouveaux Droits de l'Homme notes with concern that the persons involved remain in detention one year after their arrest.
- b. The partner organizations particularly note that two infants continue to live in detention alongside their mothers despite not being subject to any criminal proceedings.
- c. The organizations remain concerned about the consequences of this prolonged detention on the health, development, and well-being of the infants concerned.
- d. As 24 June 2026 approaches, marking 365 days of detention for these children, the partner organizations reiterate their commitment to respect for fair trial guarantees, the protection of the fundamental rights of the

accused persons, and the effective consideration of the best interests of the child in any decision likely to affect their situation.

e. The partner organizations call upon the competent judicial authorities to urgently examine all measures capable of ensuring the protection of the infants concerned and to take the best interests of the child fully into consideration in the continuation of these proceedings.

f. The two infants do not appear among the persons committed for trial before the Military Tribunal. No charge has been brought against them and no procedural act grants them the status of accused persons or suspects.

Done at Douala, this June 22nd, 2026

Signed



Amau TARNTEH
Executive Secretary