

REF N°139-CA/SG/26

SUBJECT: THE ALARMING SURGE OF FEMICIDE AND LETHAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN CAMEROON

A National Human Rights Emergency Requiring Urgent Action

Date: 27 August 2026 | Location: Cameroon

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Cameroon is facing an alarming and unacceptable escalation of violence against women, including killings allegedly committed by husbands, intimate partners and other men known to the victims. Recent cases reported across the country demonstrate a deeply disturbing pattern in which women are subjected to extreme violence in spaces where they should be safest: their homes and intimate relationships.

Recent reports of several women killed within a short period have generated widespread fear and outrage. These deaths must not be dismissed as isolated family disputes, crimes of passion or private marital matters. They constitute grave violations of the rights to life, dignity, equality, security and freedom from violence.

Conscience Africaine considers the current situation a serious human rights emergency requiring immediate, coordinated and measurable action by the State, law-enforcement authorities, the judiciary, communities, religious and traditional leaders and civil society.

2. THE RECENT WAVE OF FEMICIDE: A CRISIS THAT CANNOT BE NORMALIZED

The recent killings of women have generated widespread fear and outrage. The brutality and repetition of these incidents demonstrate that Cameroon cannot continue treating violence against women as an ordinary social problem.

Behind every woman killed is a human being whose life has been violently taken away. Many leave behind children, parents, siblings, friends and communities permanently affected by grief and trauma.

Children who witness violence against their mothers, or who grow up after losing them to lethal domestic violence, may suffer profound psychological and social consequences.

How many women must die before Cameroon treats femicide as a national emergency?

3. FEMICIDE IS NOT A PRIVATE FAMILY MATTER

For too long, domestic violence has been treated as a private disagreement between spouses or partners. This approach is dangerous.

A woman being beaten, threatened, economically controlled, confined, sexually abused or terrorized by her husband is not experiencing a private family dispute. She is experiencing violence and a violation of her fundamental human rights.

When repeated abuse is ignored, minimized or resolved through pressure to reconcile and return home, the violence may escalate and become fatal.

No tradition, religion, culture, marriage or family relationship can justify violence against a woman.

Marriage is not a license to abuse. Love is not a justification for control. Jealousy is not a defence for murder.

4. THE HUMAN RIGHTS DIMENSION

The killings and persistent violence against women engage fundamental human rights, including:

The right to life;

The right to human dignity;

The right to physical and psychological integrity;

The right to equality and non-discrimination;

The right to liberty and security of the person;



The right to be free from cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment;

The right of women to live free from violence.

The State has a duty to exercise due diligence to prevent, investigate, punish and provide redress for violence against women, including violence committed by private individuals.

The fact that an abusive husband or intimate partner is a private individual does not remove the responsibility of the State to act. Where authorities fail to respond adequately to known or foreseeable risks, serious questions arise concerning whether protection obligations have been fulfilled.

5. STRUCTURAL FAILURES THAT ALLOW VIOLENCE TO CONTINUE

The recent killings cannot be understood only as isolated acts of individual cruelty. They occur within a broader environment marked by structural and institutional weaknesses.

Weak prevention and limited early intervention for women facing escalating violence;

Social and family pressure on women to remain in abusive relationships;

Economic dependence that makes it difficult for survivors to escape dangerous situations;

Inadequate access to emergency shelters, psychosocial support and legal assistance;

Informal settlement of serious domestic violence instead of effective protection;

Delays and weaknesses in investigation and access to justice.

6. WOMEN ARE DYING DESPITE YEARS OF PROMISES

Cameroon has made commitments to promote women's rights and reduce violence against women. Yet recent developments demonstrate that public commitments and awareness campaigns have not produced sufficient protection.

Awareness alone is not enough if women continue to be killed. Cameroon needs measurable reforms, dedicated resources, effective enforcement and institutions capable of protecting women before violence becomes lethal.

7. CONSCIENCE AFRICAINE'S POSITION

Conscience Africaine strongly condemns the recent killings of women and the continuing escalation of domestic and gender-based violence in Cameroon.

We reject any attempt to excuse femicide as: domestic misunderstanding; marital disagreement; crime of passion; Jealousy; financial disagreement; family conflict or cultural practice.

A woman is not the property of her husband.

A husband has no right to beat, torture, control or kill his wife.

A relationship does not remove a woman's right to life.

8. URGENT RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Strengthen the legal and policy response

The Government should strengthen the national framework addressing gender-based and domestic violence and ensure effective protection, investigation and punishment of lethal violence against women.

8.2 Establish emergency protection mechanisms

- Emergency shelters;
- Protection services;
- Accessible emergency reporting channels;
- Legal assistance;

- Psychosocial support;
- Safe referral mechanisms.

8.3 Stop forcing reconciliation

Police officers, judicial authorities, families, religious leaders and traditional authorities should never pressure survivors of serious domestic violence to return to an abusive partner. Reconciliation cannot replace protection.

8.4 Strengthen police and judicial response

Reports of serious domestic violence should be treated as potential threats to life. Authorities should improve risk assessment, emergency intervention, investigation, evidence collection, survivor protection and prosecution.

8.5 End impunity

Every allegation of femicide and lethal domestic violence must be promptly and thoroughly investigated. Perpetrators must be held accountable through fair and effective judicial processes.

8.6 Establish a national monitoring mechanism

Cameroon should develop a coordinated national mechanism to collect reliable data on femicides, intimate-partner killings, domestic violence, repeated threats and institutional responses.

8.7 Invest in prevention

The State should invest in sustained programmes addressing harmful gender norms, male violence, economic inequality, community awareness and non-violent conflict resolution.

8.8 Engage men and boys

Preventing femicide requires the active involvement of men and boys in challenging violent masculinity, control, entitlement and the normalization of abuse.

8.9 Protect children affected by domestic violence

Children who witness domestic violence or lose a parent to femicide should receive appropriate psychosocial, social and legal support.

9. CALL TO CAMEROONIAN SOCIETY

This crisis is not only the responsibility of government.

- Families must stop returning women to dangerous situations.
- Communities must stop normalizing violence.
- Religious leaders must speak clearly against abuse.
- Traditional authorities must never settle serious violence in ways that expose women to further danger.
- Neighbours and friends must take threats seriously.
- Men must speak to other men.

When a woman repeatedly reports violence, society must not wait until she becomes another photograph circulating on social media.

- Intervene before the funeral.
- Protect before the murder.
- Listen before it is too late.

10. CONCLUSION

The recent wave of killings of women in Cameroon is a warning that cannot be ignored.

Women are being killed. Children are being traumatized. Families are being destroyed.

- This is too cruel.
- This is too much.
- This is unacceptable.

Cameroon cannot continue counting dead women while failing to build effective systems to protect living ones.

- No woman should die because she chose to leave.
- No woman should die because she demanded respect.
- No woman should die inside her own home.
- No child should watch their mother being killed.

The time for expressions of concern alone has passed.

- Cameroon needs action.
- Cameroon needs protection.
- Cameroon needs accountability.
- Cameroon must stop femicide.

Done at Douala, this 27th Day of August, 2026

SIGNED

Amadu TARNTEH

Executive Secretary

Conscience Africaine