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SUBJECT: THREATENED EDUCATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS IN CAMEROON'S NORTH-WEST AND SOUTH-WEST REGIONS: A MONITORING REPORT ON THE 2026/2027 SCHOOL RESUMPTION PERIOD

Reporting Period: 29 August–30 September 2026

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report documents 25 reported incidents of human rights violations and abuses in Cameroon's North-West and South-West Regions and other affected localities during the 2026/2027 school resumption period. The incidents occurred between 29 August and 30 September 2026, with follow-up information included through 10 October 2026.

The reported incidents include killings, torture, abductions, ransom demands, extortion, attacks affecting businesses, and violence against civilians, teachers, religious personnel, public officials, and road users. Several human rights abuses were reportedly linked to attempts by armed separatists to enforce a two-week lockdown intended to disrupt school resumption. Other incidents involved alleged abuses attributed to defence and security forces.

The cases raise serious concerns about the right to life, physical integrity, personal liberty, freedom from torture, civilian protection, and children's access to education. Abductions for ransom and attacks on road users also continue to threaten freedom of movement and economic activity.

Conscience Africaine calls on all parties to protect civilians, cease unlawful violence, respect applicable international human rights and humanitarian law, investigate credible allegations impartially, and pursue inclusive, sincere, and meaningful dialogue to address the underlying causes of the conflict.

2. BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

The armed conflict in Cameroon's North-West and South-West Regions, which escalated late 2016, continues to affect civilian safety, education, livelihoods, and access to essential services. The 2026/2027 academic year in Cameroon officially resumed on 7 September 2026. However, the situation was different in most parts of the North-West and South-West regions, where lockdown measures imposed by separatists and systematic attacks frightened children and prevented them from effectively resuming classes during the first few weeks of the school year.

The incidents documented in this report illustrate the risks faced by civilians during this period.

The report draws on eyewitness accounts, victim and family testimonies, community contacts, official statements, media reports, and other information received by Conscience Africaine.

Verification note: The incidents are presented as reported allegations, not judicial findings. Where information originates from family members, local sources, media reports, or official statements, this is indicated where possible.

3. DOCUMENTED HUMAN RIGHTS INCIDENTS

Incident 1: Abduction and Killing of Adamu Mohammed in Tabenken

Date: 29–30 August 2026, Location: Tabenken Village, Nkambe Central Subdivision, Donga-Mantung Division, North-West Region.

Adamu Mohammed was reportedly abducted from a funeral on 29 August by suspected armed separatists after being accused of informing government forces about separatist hideouts. His body was reportedly discovered in a roadside gutter on 30 August. The incident raises serious concerns about the right to life and the use of accusations of collaboration to justify violence against civilians.

Incident 2: Torture of Travellers Along the Bamenda–Mamfe–Ekok Road

Date: 31 August 2026, Location: Bamenda–Mamfe–Ekok road corridor.

Armed separatists reportedly intercepted several vehicles and subjected passengers and drivers to severe beatings. In a video circulating online, masked armed men allegedly claimed responsibility and accused the travellers of violating a two-week lockdown imposed to disrupt school resumption. Visible injuries were reportedly observed on some drivers. No official response was reported in the information received.

Incident 3: Abduction and Release of Reverend Father John Paul in Weh

Date: 4–5 September 2026, Location: Weh Village, Menchum Division, North-West Region.

Reverend Father John Paul, Parish Priest of Saint Jerome Parish in Weh, was reportedly abducted by suspected armed separatists on 4 September 2026. The circumstances of the abduction remained unclear. Local sources reported that he was released on 5 September.

Incident 4: Kidnapping of a Female Brewery Vendor in Nkwen

Date: 4th September, 2026, Location: Mile 4, Nkwen, Bamenda, North-West Region.

A female brewery vendor was reportedly abducted by suspected armed separatists. Local sources said her abductors subsequently contacted her family and demanded millions of CFA francs in ransom. She was allegedly accused of selling products from Les Brasseries du Cameroun, which the armed group had reportedly prohibited in the conflict North-West and South-West regions since the beginning of ongoing armed conflict.

Incident 5: Explosion at Mutengene Market

Date: 6 September 2026, Location: Buea Road, Mutengene Market, Fako Division, South-West Region.

An improvised explosive device reportedly exploded at Mutengene Market, damaging shops and injuring business people. Local sources suspected the incident was intended to intimidate traders into observing the two-week lockdown imposed by armed separatists during the school resumption period. No group actually claimed responsibility for the act.

Incident 6: Kidnapping of Five Teachers in Wum

Date: 8–10 September 2026, Location: Government Teacher Training College, Wum, Menchum Division, North-West Region.

Five teachers: Kwa Hope, Ache Presilia, Kometa Divine, Kum Nadine, and Nchia Dieudonné were reportedly kidnapped from the school campus at approximately 11 a.m. on 8 September 2026, shortly after school activities began. In a statement dated 9 September, the North-West Governor, Adolphe Lele Lafrique, confirmed the abduction and announced that security forces had been deployed. The teachers were reportedly released on 10 September after allegedly paying ransom of approximately 7.4 million FCFA as reported by some media outlets.

Meanwhile, in an online video attributed to the armed separatists who claimed responsibility for the attack, but denied that ransom was paid before the teachers were released.

Incident 7: Burning of Civilian Motorcycles in Batibo

Date: 9 September 2026, Location: Numba Road, Batibo, Momo Division, North-West Region.

Armed separatists reportedly set fire to motorcycles belonging to unarmed civilians who were going about their normal activities. The victims were allegedly accused of violating the two-week lockdown imposed during the school resumption period.

Incident 8: Alleged Torture and Killing of Kinen Gerard Nshom in Oku

Date: Arrested on 6 September 2026; reportedly killed several days later, Location: Mbockevu checkpoint, Babungo Village, Babessi Subdivision, Ngoketunjia Division and taken to Oku, Bui division, North-West Region where he was tortured to death.

According to family sources, Kinen Gerard Nshom, an unarmed civilian, was arrested at a checkpoint and subjected to severe torture before being killed. His mother reportedly visited the detention center and pleaded for his release. She was allegedly told that his son was a separatist and would be killed or transferred to Bamenda. His body was reportedly later found dumped beside a road few days later. The allegations require an impartial investigation.

Incident 9: Killing of Three Unarmed Civilians in Muyuka

Date: 12 September 2026, Location: Kumba–Buea road, Muyuka, South-West Region.

According to Mimi Mefo Infos an online media platform, later corroborated by local sources, three unarmed civilians were reportedly killed by armed separatists after being accused of violating the imposed lockdown. The victims were travelling along the Kumba–Buea road. One was identified as Ebot Clinton.

Incident 10: Kidnapping of Seven Family Members in Bangourain

Date: 13 September 2026, Location: Ngwenfon, Bangourain, Noun Division, West Region.

Seven family members were reportedly abducted by suspected armed separatists. The individuals named in the information received included Amza, Nah Karimou, Chouaibou, and Amidou. The circumstances of the abduction, and their subsequent whereabouts remains unknown according to Nzui Manto an online blogger.

Incident 11: Shooting of Civilians in Nkwen, Bamenda

Date: 14 September 2026, with a subsequent reported death, Location: Behind PMI Hospital, Nkwen, Bamenda, North-West Region.

According to TEBECK TV and local sources, two armed men dressed in civilian clothing arrived on a motorcycle and started shooting randomly on unarmed civilians, where three civilians died instantly. Albertine Bomnyuy, Emile, and Fabrice were among the victims identified in the information received. The Senior Divisional Officer for Mezam, Simon Emile Moore, confirmed in a statement dated 14 September that three people had been killed and four injured in the incident. Subsequent information reported that the death toll rose to four following the death of Lukong Adamu a Mechanic, who had been receiving treatment at the hospital. No group had claimed responsibility for the attack according to the information available.

Incident 12: Kidnapping of a Newly Recruited Primary School Teacher in Oku

Date: 15 September 2026, Location: Kesoten, Oku, Bui Division, North-West Region.

A newly recruited government primary school teacher was reportedly abducted by suspected separatist fighters while travelling to Bamenda allegedly to sign his employment contract. According to Cameroon News Agency an online media platform, the abductors demanded FCFA 5 million ransom for his release. At the time of publishing this report his whereabouts remains unknown.

13: Kidnapping of Headmaster Lhimbru Thomas Bache in Bafut

Date: 13 September 2026, Location: Bafut, North-West Region.

Lhimbru Thomas Bache, headmaster of Banange School, was reportedly abducted by armed men while returning from Benakuma in Menchum Division, where he worked. According to Mimi Mefo Infos, he was intercepted in Bafut and taken to an unknown destination. Local contacts subsequently corroborated the report. His whereabouts and whether a ransom was demanded remained unclear in the information received.

Incident 14: Killing of Two Business people in Muyuka

Date: 17 September 2026, Location: Muyuka, South-West Region.

Two unarmed civilians were reportedly killed by armed separatists at approximately 9 p.m. during an alleged attempt to abduct the two local business men. According to an eyewitness, the victims were killed after resisting the attempted kidnapping. One was a bar owner and the other a red-oil vendor. One victim was identified as Tita Taboh Tari, a well-known local business man in the locality.

Incident 15: Reported Killing of Three Civilians in Muea

Date: 19 September 2026, Location: Muea, South-West Region.

Chief John Eko Ewume, a traditional ruler and Cameroon Soldier, also known as Moja Moja, reportedly entered Muea with soldiers, broke into residents homes, and killed three people in their beds. Local sources described the victims as unarmed civilians. In a video circulating online, Chief Moja Moja reportedly disputed this characterisation, claiming the victims were armed separatists. The circumstances and status of the victims require an independent investigation.

Incident 16: Abduction, Torture, and Killing of Councilor Issa Ntarike in Ndu

Date: Abducted on 25 August and reportedly killed on 15 September 2026, Location: Ntisaw, Ndu sub division, North-West Region.

Issa Ntarike, a councilor representing Ntisaw and President of the Ndu Subdivision Drivers' Union, was reportedly abducted by armed separatists and subjected to prolonged torture. According to a statement by the Ndu Divisional Officer, his captors demanded ransom from his family, collected money, and subsequently killed him. The family was reportedly subjected to repeated demands even after his death. Another Ndu Council employee abducted alongside him was reportedly released after suffering severe torture.

Incident 17: Abduction and Killing of Lukong Yusifu

Date: September 2026; body discovered on 20 September, Location: Abducted around Vebarong while travelling to Ndop; body discovered near Squares, Kumbo, North-West Region.

Lukong Yusifu, an unarmed civilian and motorcycle mechanic from Ntur, was reportedly abducted by separatist fighters while returning to Ndop. The abductors allegedly accused him of collaborating with government forces

during a military operation in Ndzerem Nyam. Sources reported that an initial ransom of FCFA 750,000 was paid before a further FCFA 10 million was demanded. He was reportedly taken to Kumbo and killed. His body was discovered near Squares on 20 September.

Incident 18: Kidnapping of Ten Civilians in Sabga

Date: 22 September 2026, Location: Sabga, Turbah Subdivision, Mezam Division, North-West Region.

Ten unarmed civilians were reportedly abducted by armed separatists, who allegedly demanded ransom for their release. The incident adds to continuing concerns about kidnapping for ransom and the safety of civilians travelling in the region.

Incident 19: Shooting and Attempted Abduction of Public Officials in Bamenda

Date: 25 September 2026, Location: Nkwen and Foncha Street Junction, Bamenda, North-West Region.

Godwin Tafon Beyala, Principal of Government Bilingual High School Atiela, and Alfred Dohbit Sama, North-West Regional Delegate of CAMPOST, were reportedly shot in separate incidents after resisting attempted abductions. Beyala was attacked near Manda Catholic Church in Nkwen, while Sama was shot near Foncha Street Junction. Both sustained leg injuries and were hospitalised. A statement issued by the Senior Divisional Officer for Mezam Simon Emile Mooh on 29 September confirmed the attacks on the two officials and added that they were hospitalised receiving treatment.

Incident 20: Kidnapping of Five Passengers Along the Bamessing–Ndop Road

Date: 25 September 2026, Location: Bamessing–Ndop road, North-West Region.

Suspected armed separatists reportedly intercepted a passenger vehicle travelling from Ndop to Bamenda and abducted five passengers. According to Cameroon News Agency, the abductors demanded FCFA 5 million for their release. The incident reflects continuing risks faced by road users along this corridor.

Incident 21: Kidnapping of Five Mourners in Wainama

Date: 27 September 2026, Location: Wainama, Jakiri Subdivision, Bui division, North-West Region.

Five mourners travelling to Ndu for a burial were reportedly abducted by separatist fighters. Local sources said the abductors demanded FCFA 10 million for their release. The incident occurred amid continuing reports of kidnappings affecting travellers in the region.

Incident 22: Abduction of a Catholic Priest and a Female Sales Attendant

Date: 27 September 2026, Location: Sonac Street and Ntamulung, Bamenda, North-West Region.

Reverend Father Joseph Afumaboh King, a Mill Hill missionary and Catholic priest, was reportedly abducted near the Government Bilingual High School Junction in Ntamulung. In a separate incident, suspected separatist fighters reportedly abducted a female sales attendant from Aba Lounge on Sonac Street. A security guard was shot in the leg during the latter incident.

Incident 23: Armed Attack on a Guest House in Ntamulung

Date: Night of 27 September 2026, Location: Ntamulung, Bamenda, North-West Region.

Armed men suspected of being separatist fighters reportedly attacked a guest house, opened fire, shot a security guard in the leg, abducted a woman, and damaged a vehicle. The incident raised concerns about civilian safety and the security of commercial premises.

Incident 24: Abduction and Extortion at Small Babanki

Date: 30 September 2026, Location: Door Market, Small Babanki, Turbah Subdivision, Mezam Division, North-West Region.

Armed men suspected of being separatist fighters reportedly intercepted four passenger vehicles travelling along the Bamenda–Ndop corridor. The assailants allegedly extorted money from passengers before allowing the vehicles to continue their journeys. Six passengers were reportedly abducted and taken to an unknown location. Their whereabouts remained unclear at the time of reporting.

Incident 25: Kidnapping, Torture, and Ransom Extortion of Nyamngushi Zukuruneni

Date: Abducted on 16 September; escaped on 1 October 2026, Location: Baba I, Ngoketunjia Division, North-West Region.

Nyamngushi Zukuruneni, an unarmed civilian, was reportedly kidnapped from his residence by three armed separatists on a motorcycle. The abductors local sources say accused him of collaborating with government forces. According to his testimony, he was severely beaten with cutlasses, including repeated blows to his feet, head, neck, and back. His phone, keys, identity card, wallet, and SIM cards were confiscated. He reported that the captors forced him to disclose his mobile money CODES and withdrew funds from his accounts.

He was reportedly held for 11 days at a camp in Baba I Village. His condition deteriorated, and he was hospitalised for 5 days while allegedly guarded by armed men, denied food and water by his captors, and prevented from receiving family visits. His captors reportedly refused a doctor's request to transfer him for further medical care due to his critical condition. At the time of this report, he is still unable to speak and only communicate through sign language and written messages.

Reliable sources say his family was reportedly asked to pay FCFA 5 million for his release. They initially paid FCFA 1.5 million, but he was not released. On 1 October, he reportedly escaped from the hospital while his captors were away. Meanwhile, on 2 October 2026, his father whose only name we got as Alhadji was equally abducted and tortured in an attempt to force the his son Zukuruneni to return. His father was reportedly released on 6 October following an additional FCFA 500,000 payment, our sources added. The total ransom paid directly was reportedly FCFA 2 million, excluding funds allegedly taken from the victim's wallet and the one withdrawn from his accounts. The victims says his personal belongings are still with the abductors till date. The allegations raise serious concerns about kidnapping, torture, extortion, deprivation of medical care, and reprisals against family members.

4. KEY HUMAN RIGHTS FINDINGS

4.1 Killings and Attacks on Civilians

The reported killings in Tabenken, Babessi, Muyuka, Nkwen, Muea, and other locations raise grave concerns about the right to life. Accusations of collaboration or violation of lockdown directives cannot justify unlawful killings.

4.2 Torture, Kidnapping, and Extortion

Several accounts describe severe beatings, prolonged captivity, ransom demands, and financial extortion. The reported treatment of Nyamngushi Zukuruneni and the alleged torture and killing of Issa Ntarike demonstrate the urgent need for effective civilian protection and accountability.

4.3 Threats to Education

The kidnapping of teachers in Wum, attempted kidnapping and shooting of the Principal of Government Bilingual High school Atiela in Bamenda and the reported abduction of a newly recruited teacher in Oku illustrate the risks facing educational personnel during school resumption.

Lockdown by Separatists at the eve of school resumption, Violence and intimidation undermine children's right to education and disrupt the functioning of educational institutions.

4.4 Risks to Movement and Livelihoods

Kidnappings along major roads, attacks on traders, the burning of motorcycles, and extortion of passengers undermine freedom of movement, commercial activity, and household security.

4.5 Accountability and Protection

Allegations involving armed separatists and defence or security forces require impartial investigation. The protection of victims, witnesses, and their relatives is essential to prevent reprisals and encourage the reporting of violations.

5. APPLICABLE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The reported incidents should be assessed under applicable Cameroonian law, international human rights law, and international humanitarian law. Relevant standards include:

Right to life: Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Article 4 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights.

Prohibition of torture: Article 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 5 of the African Charter, and the Convention against Torture.

Liberty and security: Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Article 6 of the African Charter.

Right to education: Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and Article 11 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

Protection of children: The Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

Protection during armed conflict: Applicable international humanitarian law, including Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions where its legal conditions are met.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 To the Government of Cameroon

a. Strengthen civilian protection, particularly for children, teachers, institutions of learning, religious personnel, traders, and road users.

b. Investigate credible allegations of unlawful killings, torture, abductions, and other serious violations promptly and impartially.

3. *Ensure that persons responsible for crimes are held accountable through fair and lawful procedures.*
3. *Strengthen protection measures for schools, students, teachers, and educational personnel.*
4. *Ensure that security operations comply with applicable human rights and humanitarian law.*
5. *Facilitate appropriate medical, legal, psychosocial, and humanitarian assistance for victims and their families.*
6. *Pursue inclusive and meaningful dialogue to address the underlying causes of the conflict.*

6.2 To Armed Separatist Groups

- a. *Immediately cease killings, torture, kidnapping, ransom extortion, attacks, and intimidation against civilians.*
- b. *End threats and violence intended to prevent children from attending school.*
- c. *Release persons unlawfully held and cease ransom demands.*
- d. *Respect civilians regardless of their perceived political affiliations or alleged collaboration.*
- e. *Respect applicable international humanitarian law.*

6.3 To Education Authorities and School Administrators

- a. *Work with communities to identify and address threats affecting school operations.*
- b. *Establish safe mechanisms for reporting threats and attacks.*
- c. *Provide appropriate educational and psychosocial support to children affected by conflict.*
- d. *Address the security concerns of students, parents, and teachers during school resumption.*

6.4 To Civil Society and Human Rights Defenders

- a. *Continue independent monitoring and documentation while protecting victims and witnesses.*
- b. *Preserve original testimonies, supporting evidence, and verification records.*
- c. *Refer victims for appropriate legal, medical, psychosocial, and humanitarian assistance.*
- d. *Promote awareness of civilian protection, education rights, and accountability.*
- e. *Advocate for inclusive dialogue, reconciliation, accountability and sustainable peace.*

6.5 To International Partners

- a. *Support independent human rights monitoring and credible investigations.*
- b. *Provide resources for civilian protection, victim assistance, and safe access to education.*
- c. *Encourage all parties to comply with their applicable international legal obligations.*
- d. *Support inclusive peace initiatives and accountability mechanisms.*

7. CONCLUSION

- a. *The incidents documented during the 2026 school resumption period demonstrate the continuing vulnerability of civilians in Cameroon's conflict-affected North West and South West regions.*

- b. Reported killings, torture, kidnappings, ransom extortion, attacks on businesses, and threats against educational personnel undermine fundamental rights and community confidence.*
- c. Conscience Africaine calls on all parties to protect civilians, end unlawful violence, safeguard education, and ensure impartial investigations into credible allegations of serious violations.*
- d. Sustainable peace requires justice, accountability, reconciliation, and inclusive, sincere, and meaningful dialogue addressing the underlying causes of the crisis. Protecting civilians and restoring safe access to education must remain immediate priorities.*

Done in Douala, this 13th day of October 2026.

Signed

Amadu TARNTEH

Executive Secretary

Conscience Africaine, Cameroon