

UN Human Rights Council – 46th regular session
Item 4: General Debate
Oral statement

Delivered by: Walda Keza Shaka

Madam President,

DefendDefenders and AfricanDefenders remain deeply concerned over ongoing grave human rights violations and abuses in Cameroon. Since 2016, this Council has failed to take steps to address the situation in the North-West and South-West regions, where violations by armed separatists and government forces have led to killings, kidnappings, looting, SGBV, and attacks on schools, students, and aid workers. Despite the Grand National Dialogue, the grievances that gave rise to the “Anglophone crisis” remain unaddressed.

In the Far North, there has been a resurgence of exactions by terrorist group Boko Haram. Security forces’ response has also resulted in grave violations.

The deterioration of civic space is alarming. Cameroonian authorities have intensified their crackdown on the political opposition, demonstrators, the media, and civil society. Laws are being used to restrict freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly and association.

Enhancement of cooperation between OHCHR and the government is a positive step. However, high levels of violence and impunity continue to be reported. The humanitarian situation remains dire. Four million people are in need of assistance. To date, more than 3,000 civilians have lost their lives, and more than one million have been internally displaced.

Madam President,

Cameroon is among the human rights crises this Council has been unable or unwilling to adequately address. Being a member of the Council should not shield a State from scrutiny.

We call on states to collectively make clear that should Cameroon fail to take concrete steps to improve its human rights situation, they will stand ready to take action.

Thank you.