

Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada

NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations
Promoting human rights by protecting those who defend them

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Tuesday, 08 May, 2018

His Excellency Mr. Paul Biya
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His Excellency Mr. Philemon Yang
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Dear President Biya and Honourable Ministers:

Re: Restriction on Assembly and Protest by lawyers and law students in Yaoundé

I write on behalf of Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada (LRWC), a committee of lawyers and other human rights defenders who promote international human rights, the rule of law, and the integrity of legal systems through advocacy, education and legal research. LRWC is a volunteer-run NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

LRWC is concerned by reports of an arbitrary prevention of the progress of a peaceful demonstration by lawyers and law students in Yaoundé, who were attempting to protest the questionable results of recent bar admission exams and to call on President Biya to review these results.

Restriction on Assembly and Protest by lawyers and law students in Yaoundé

According to news reports, police confined the lawyers in question to a small cordoned perimeter, and failed to respect the pre-approved itinerary for the demonstration.

LRWC is deeply concerned by the failure of Cameroon authorities to uphold its international law obligations to respect the rights to peaceful assembly and freedom of association with others, guaranteed under the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, and the *African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights*. It particularly concerns LRWC that this arbitrary restriction on peaceful protest and association in violation of the rule of international law was applied to lawyers and law students who themselves have or will have a duty to ensure and respect the rule of law.

Accordingly, LRWC urges the Government of Cameroon to:

1. Ensure that the rights to protest, including freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of association are respected in Cameroon.
2. Put an end to all arbitrary restrictions, including restrictions and prohibitions by law enforcement authorities, of assemblies for peaceful protests and demonstrations.
3. Conform with the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, ratified by Cameroon, and particularly the provisions of each that guarantee the right to peaceful assembly and association.

Sincerely,



Robert Lapper, Q.C.

LRWC Cameroon Co-Monitor

Copied to:

Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association
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Restriction on Assembly and Protest by lawyers and law students in Yaoundé

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