

## **Felix Agbor Nkongho Biography**

Barrister Felix Agbor Nkongho is a distinguished Anglophone Cameroonian human rights lawyer and activist. He currently serves as Chair of the Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa, an organization he founded in September of 2017.

Barrister Nkongho hails from Manyu Division, Southwest Region, Cameroon. He attended CBC Primary School in Great Soppo, Buea, and St. Joseph's College, Buea. His activism began in his youth, when he was wrongfully dismissed from CCAS Kumba for what was deemed "subversive writing" that challenged abuses by school administrators.

He studied at the University of Yaounde, graduating with an LLB in English Private Law in 1993. He has a Bachelor of Laws from Nigerian Law School, an LLM in International and Comparative Law from Law from Vrije Universiteit, Brussels, and an LLM in International Human Rights Law from University of Notre Dame, Indiana, USA.

He has held posts as a researcher at the Centre for International Law in Belgium; as a legal officer at the Sierra Leone International Criminal Court, a human rights officer at the United Nations offices in Sierra Leone, Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of Congo; as a post graduate lecturer at the Pan African Institute for Development – West Africa (Buea) and as President of the Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa.

He currently lectures on human rights and legal issues at the University of Buea, Faculty of Law and Political Science. He has served as President of the Cameroon Anglophone Civil Society Consortium, and Vice President for Central Africa of the African Bar Association and is a member of numerous African and International law associations. He is the immediate past president of the Fako Lawyers Association in Cameroon. He writes and speaks extensively on human rights law and states' obligations to prevent human rights violations.

Felix Agbor Nkongho is a leader in the civil society movement to challenge the marginalization of and systemic discrimination against Anglophone Cameroonians. The movement seeks to restore the full recognition of the rights of Anglophone Cameroonians guaranteed in the Cameroonian constitution, and ensure their full participation in the government, public institutions, public life and economy of the country.

In the fall of 2016, under the banner of the Anglophone Civil Society Consortium, he joined other prominent activists in leading peaceful protests of Anglophone lawyers and teachers to express their grievances against the increasing marginalization of the English language, and the common law in the courts and schools of Anglophone Cameroon. In January of 2017, the Anglophone Civil Society Consortium was

banned by the Government of Cameroon, and Barrister Nkongho and other leaders of the peaceful protest were arrested and charged with treason, terrorism, civil unrest, and jeopardizing the peace and unity of the Republic of Cameroon. These charges were to have been determined by a military tribunal, and could have resulted in the death penalty. Barrister Nkongho was detained until August 31, 2017. On that date, under international pressure, President Paul Biya issued a presidential decree ordering the military tribunal to release him, and three other activist leaders.

Barrister Nkongho continues to advocate for solutions to the Anglophone problem in Cameroon, and to draw attention to the growing humanitarian crisis that has resulted. He attended and spoke on these matters before the US House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs in June of this year, and most recently at the 39<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, in September 2018.