

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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Friday, November 30, 2012

Ambassador Urs Berner
Swiss Embassy in Cameroon
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Dear Ambassador Berner;

Re: Jean-Claude Mbédé, Alice Nkom and Michel Togue under threat in Cameroon

We write on behalf of Lawyers Rights Watch Canada (LRWC), a committee of Canadian lawyers who promote human rights and the rule of law internationally. LRWC also provides support to lawyers and other human rights defenders in danger because of their advocacy.

LRWC is deeply concerned by the death threats directed at Jean-Claude Roger Mbédé and his lawyers during the last month.

Jean-Claude Roger Mbédé is charged with homosexuality and has already spent 16 months in prison. He is targeted for being homosexual and his lawyers, Michel Togue, Alice Nkom and Saskia Ditisheim are threatened for defending him as a homosexual person.

Reports indicate that last Thursday, the authors of the threats went to the university campus where Mr. Bbédé studies and looked for him. On Friday, Mr. Bbédé received a threat by phone that they will 'make an example out of him for all the other homosexuals of Cameroon'. Fearing for his life, Mr. Bbédé he has gone into hiding and hopes his whereabouts are unknown to his tormentors. He fears the 'safe house' may not be available for long as his presence there may place others in danger. Leaving Cameroon appears to be his only option for personal safety at this time.

What help is the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms able to provide for immediate protection and assistance leaving Cameroon? The next court appearance is scheduled for Monday, 3rd of December. He and his lawyers urgently require at least 2 bodyguards in order to attend the hearing safely.

LRWC is deeply worried by this situation and hopes that the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms will be able to provide them with protection.

We look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,



Gail Davidson, Executive Director of LRWC