

2 July 2019

Cameroon: Eight human rights defenders charged with rebellion, complicity in subversion, failure to report, using a false title, and dissemination of false news

On 27 June 2019, the first hearing for human rights defenders **Jules Raymond Anama, Christian Ouemba Kuete, Juliette Ndim Bih, Yannick Mbakop, Samuel Talla Giles, Stanislas Tokam, Herman Zebaze Takoubo** and **Aimé Kameni Wetchadji** took place at the Yaoundé Military Tribunal. They were charged with rebellion, complicity in subversion, failure to report, using a false title, and propagation of false news in relation to a protest they had organised to demand that President Paul Biya step down.

Jules Raymond Anama, Christian Ouemba Kuete, and Juliette Ndim Bih are members of [Citizen for the Cameroonian Memory](#) (*Citoyens Pour la Mémoire du Cameroun* - CPMC) a youth organisation that promotes citizen participation, government accountability, and transparency. CPMC has worked to monitor and highlight human rights violations in the Anglophone region. Yannick Mbakop, Samuel Talla Giles, Stanislas Tokam, Herman Zebaze Takoubo, and Aimé Kameni Wetchadji are members of the [Association for the Defence of Students' Rights in Cameroon](#) (*Association pour la Défense des Droits des Etudiants au Cameroun* (ADDEC), a student association and union advocating for reforms in the Cameroonian academic system, academic freedom and participation of students in decision making.

On 18 May 2019, the human rights defenders were arrested by the National Judicial Police while they were taking a selfie in front of the Central Post Office in Yaoundé. They were subsequently detained at the Intelligence Services' Office in Nlongkak-Yaoundé and transferred to the Elig Essono National Judicial Police station on the same day. They were arrested and detained in relation to a three-day protest they were planning to demand that President Paul Biya step down. Following their arrest and detention the protest did not take place.

On 5 June 2019 they were allowed their first visit at Elig Essono National Judicial Police station from their family after a period of sixteen days in detention. They were denied a visit with a lawyer for the first ten days of their detention. The human rights defenders were detained for a total of 37 days before they were charged and brought before a judge. This delay was well over the limit in Cameroon, which allows for a period of 24 hours, renewable only three times by the prosecutor or, for charges under the antiterrorism law, 15 days, renewable only one time by the prosecutor. At no point during their detention did the government produce an official document authorising the extension of their detention.

Front Line Defenders is concerned by the charges brought against Jules Raymond Anama, Christian Ouemba Kuete, Juliette Ndim Bih, Yannick Mbakop, Samuel Talla Giles, Stanislas Tokam, Herman Zebaze Takoubo and Aimé Kameni Wetchadji and the irregularities in the legal process as it believes that these acts are solely motivated by their legitimate and peaceful activities in defence of human rights.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Cameroon to:

1. Immediately drop all charges and release Jules Raymond Anama, Christian Ouemba Kuete, Juliette Ndim Bih, Yannick Mbakop, Samuel Talla Giles, Stanislas Tokam, Herman Zebaze Takoubo and Aimé Kameni Wetchadji as it is believed that their detention is solely motivated by their legitimate and peaceful work in defence of human rights;
2. Allow the human rights defenders consistent and unfettered access to their families and lawyers while in detention;

3. Investigate the irregularities in their pre-trial detention, including the illegal wait time and denial of visits with families and lawyers;
4. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Cameroon are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free from all restrictions, including judicial harassment.

Front Line Defenders respectfully reminds you that the United Nations Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, adopted by consensus by the UN General Assembly on 9 December 1998, recognises the legitimacy of the activities of human rights defenders, their right to freedom of association and to carry out their activities without fear of reprisals. We would particularly draw your attention to Article 5: *“For the purpose of promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, at the national and international levels: (a) To meet or assemble peacefully (b) To form, join and participate in non-governmental organizations, associations or groups (c) To communicate with non-governmental or intergovernmental organizations.”*

Please inform us of any actions that may be taken with regard to the above case.

Yours sincerely,



Andrew Anderson
Executive Director