

URGENT ACTION

THREE CAMEROON JOURNALISTS RISK PRISON TERM

Cameroonian journalists Baba Wame, Felix Ebole Bola and Rodrigue Tongue are on trial for 'non-denunciation' of information and sources at the Military Tribunal of Yaoundé, Cameroon for upholding journalism ethics in not disclosing their sources of information. If convicted, they could face between one to five years in prison.

Baba Wame, a journalist and cyber journalism teacher, in July 2014, received an email from a source containing photos and information alleging collusion between elements of the Cameroonian security forces and a leader of an armed group from Central African Republic that had been linked to the attack of a town in the east of Cameroon. He shared the email with **Felix Ebole Bola**, a journalist at the daily newspaper 'Mutations' and **Rodrigue Tongue**, a journalist at the daily newspaper 'Le Messenger' and together they started to investigate the allegations.

Felix Ebole Bola wrote to the national security delegate in August 2014 informing him of their findings and requesting additional information. No response was received by any of the three journalists until two months later, when Felix Ebole Bola received a phone call from an agent with the General Direction of National Security who requested for more information on the case. The journalists, having no additional information to share, did not respond to the request neither did they continue with their investigations nor publish anything on the case.

The three journalists, on 24 October 2014, received a written summon from a judge, requesting them to report to her office on 28 October 2014 for questioning. Later, the three were charged with 'non-denunciation' of information and sources under Article 107 of Cameroon's Criminal Code, and placed under judicial control. The judicial control was lifted in January and February 2015 for each of the journalists.

An order of partial dismissal and referral was issued by a judge on 30 November 2015 and the journalists' case was referred to the Military Tribunal of Yaoundé. The trial against the three was scheduled to start on 29 January, but it was adjourned to 19 February and later to 18 March. If convicted, the three journalists could be sentenced to jail terms of between one to five years and/or a fine of between 50,000 to 5 million CFA (approximately US\$832 - US\$8,325).

Please write immediately in French or your own language:

- Calling on Cameroonian authorities to immediately and unconditionally drop all charges against Baba Wame, Felix Ebole Bola and Rodrigue Tongue;
- Urging them to protect and ensure the right to freedom of expression for all in conformity with Cameroon's international human rights obligations and commitments;
- Urging them to ensure that Cameroonian laws provide for the right of access to information, and define any exception to disclosure, which must be clearly provided by law, necessary and proportionate.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 19 APRIL 2016 TO:

Minister of Defence

Joseph Beti Assomo

Ministry of Defence

Yaoundé,

Cameroon

Email: serco.mindéf@yahoo.fr

Salutation: Dear Minister

President

Colonel Abega Mbezoa

Military Tribunal of Yaoundé

Yaoundé,

Cameroon

Email: serco.mindéf@yahoo.fr

Salutation: Dear President

And copies to:

President of the Republic of Cameroon

His Excellency Paul Biya

P.O. Box 95 Yaoundé, Cameroon

Fax: +237222219376

Email: cellcom@prc.cm;

contact@presidenceducameroun.com

Twitter: @PR_Paul_Biya

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. HIS EXCELLENCY MR NKWELLE EKANEY, High Commission for the Republic of Cameroon, 84 Holland Park W11 3SB, 020 7727 0771, Fax 020 7792 9353, info@cameroonhighcommission.co.ukm, www.cameroonhighcommission.co.uk

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 21 December 2015, Amnesty International sent an official letter to Cameroonian Ministry of Justice with copies sent to the Ministry of Defence and the Military tribunal. So far, no response has been received.

On 21 January 2016, Amnesty international published a joint press release with Reporters without Borders available here <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2016/01/cameroon-authorities-must-drop-non-denunciation-charges-against-three-journalists/>.

On 12 February 2016, Amnesty International delegates met with the Ministry of Defence and raised the case with him.

Name: Felix Ebole Bola, Rodrigue Tongue and Baba Wame

Gender m/f: m

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