HUMAN RIGHTS UNDER FIRE: ATTACKS AND VIOLATIONS IN CAMEROON'S STRUGGLE WITH BOKO HARAM

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Cover photo: A Cameroonian soldier standing post in the Cameroonian town of Fotokol, on the border with Nigeria, 17 February 2015. © Getty Images

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Having killed at least 7,000 people in Nigeria since January 2014, armed fighters belonging to Boko Haram - now officially the "Islamic State's West Africa Province" – have brought their violence to Nigeria's neighbours, including people living in the Far North region of Cameroon.

Boko Haram has disrupted the lives of hundreds of thousands of people in northern Cameroon since early 2014, committing crimes under international law and human rights abuses, including wilful killings, attacks directed against civilian objects, misappropriation, looting and abductions. In addition, about 81,000 people have been forced to flee from their homes. The Cameroon government increased its security presence to counter these growing attacks.

However, while playing an important role in defending people threatened by Boko Haram, the response of the Cameroonian security forces has too often been heavy-handed and has failed to put in place all necessary safeguards to prevent crimes under international law and human rights violations being committed during their operations. As a result, many people have been victims of both parties.

This report documents both Boko Haram's violent attacks and abuses against the population, and the Cameroonian government's response, including crimes under international law and human rights violations committed by its security forces, and should be read in close connection with previous Amnesty International reports on the situation in north-east Nigeria.

Over 160 people were interviewed for this report, including during three Amnesty International research missions in northern Cameroon in February, March and May 2015, as well as follow-up research between June and August 2015. Those interviewed include victims and eyewitnesses of attacks committed by both Boko Haram and Cameroonian security forces, government officials, including the Minister of Justice, members of the security forces, journalists, human rights defenders, diplomats, humanitarian workers, and other various experts.

Amnesty International shared its findings with government authorities, both verbally and in writing, and continued to engage with the Cameroonian authorities during the drafting of this report. On 8 July 2015, letters were sent to the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Defence, the Head of the military in the Far North region, head of the National Police and head of the National Gendarmerie, with copies to the Secretary-General to the Presidency, requesting updated information on various cases. However, no response has yet been received from the Cameroonian authorities.

Crimes under international law and human rights abuses committed by Boko Haram

Amnesty International documented crimes under international law and human rights abuses committed by Boko Haram, including wilful killings through suicide bomb attacks in civilian areas, summary executions, torture, hostage taking, abductions, recruitment of child soldiers, looting and destruction of public, private and religious property. These crimes appear to also be taking place as part of a widespread, as well as systematic attack against the civilian population across north-east Nigeria and the Far North of Cameroon. Exact estimates are difficult to provide, but analysis of local and international media reports of attacks across the Far North, combined with further research on a smaller number of incidents, suggest at least

380 civilians and dozens of security personnel have been killed by Boko Haram since January 2015.

Information was collected on a wide range of Boko Haram raids across the Far North region of Cameroon, and documented in detail the attacks on the villages of Amchide, in October 2014, and Bia in April 2015, and on the city of Maroua in July 2015.

In Amchide, hundreds, and perhaps up to 1,000, Boko Haram fighters attacked the village killing at least 30 civilians, including those accused of collaborating with State authorities, and eight members of the security forces. In Bia, 16 civilians including two children were killed, and over 150 houses were burnt, when over 100 Boko Haram fighters attacked the town. In Maroua, three suicide attacks within 3 days in crowded civilian areas – a market, a neighbourhood and a bar - killed at least 33 people and wounded more than 100. Girls as young as 13 were used to carry out these suicide attacks.

Amnesty International calls on Boko Haram's leadership to publicly condemn crimes under international law and abuses of human rights and immediately issue orders, from the highest levels of its leadership, that individuals who are members or fight on behalf of Boko Haram must respect human rights and international humanitarian law, especially by immediately ending all deliberate and indiscriminate attacks against civilians.

Crimes under international law and human rights violations committed by Cameroonian security forces

A significant deployment of state forces, including of elite troops, in the Far North region has so far prevented Boko Haram from taking control of Cameroonian soil. However, Cameroonian's security forces have at times failed to protect the civilian population from attacks and have themselves committed crimes under international law and human rights violations.

Amnesty International has collected information on a range of crimes under international law and human rights violations committed by state security forces, and has documented in detail some specific cases of mass arrests, unlawful killings, excessive use of force, enforced disappearances, deaths in custody and torture. Cameroonian security forces have arrested at least 1,000 people in Far North Region accused of supporting Boko Haram, including in mass cordon and search operations where dozens, and sometimes hundreds, of men and boys were rounded up and arrested all together. Amnesty International found that, during such operations, the security forces used excessive force and committed human rights violations, including unlawful killings, inhuman and degrading treatment and destruction of property.

In the most extreme cordon and search operation documented by Amnesty International, 35 direct eyewitnesses and a senior military source confirmed that at least 200 men and boys were arrested on 27 December 2014 in the villages of Magdeme and Doublé. In the same operation conducted jointly by the army, the police and the gendarmerie, at least 8 people, including a child, were killed, over 70 buildings were burnt down and many possessions were stolen or destroyed.

The fate of most of those arrested in these two villages remains unknown. At least 25 of these men and boys – perhaps more - died in custody during the night of their arrest in a makeshift cell, while 45 others were taken and registered in Maroua's prison the following day. At least 130 people, therefore, remain unaccounted for, presumed to be victims of enforced disappearance, with some evidence suggesting more may have died while in the custody of the security forces. Almost nine months after the incident, an internal

investigation has yet to even identify those people who died, reveal the location of their bodies, or interview a number of key eyewitnesses.

In another case, 84 children – over half under ten years-old - were detained without charge for six months in a children's centre following a raid on Qur'anic schools in the town of Guirvidig. Their subsequent release provides some hope that national and local authorities are prepared to remedy some human violations when recognised.

In the face of horrendous Boko Haram's attacks over the past year in the Far North region, and following the spill over of the Central African Republic's conflict in the south-west of the country, Cameroonian security forces have been visibly overstretched. Improving their ability to respond lawfully and efficiently to the threat posed by Boko Haram and to protect affected populations should be a key priority of Cameroonian authorities.

Conditions of detention also require rapid improvement, with the prison in Maroua having housed more than four times as many detainees as its intended capacity, resulting in life-threatening levels of over-crowding, malnutrition and insanitary conditions. Between March and May 2015, at least 40 detainees may have died in the prison. While some work has started to increase prison capacity, detainees will continue to get sick and die unless more is done to improve conditions and ensure that people are not detained for lengthy periods before trials, which should themselves meet international standards, without recourse to the death penalty.

Cameroonian authorities must investigate promptly, thoroughly, independently and impartially all reliable allegations of crimes under international law and other serious human rights violations and abuses by members of the security forces and Boko Haram, with the aim of bringing suspects to justice in fair trials in accordance with international human rights law and are not subject to the death penalty.

Investigations should include specific cases highlighted in this report, including allegations of human rights violations committed by state forces during mass arrests in the villages of Magdeme, Doublé, and Guirvidig, with the view to put an end to abuses committed by security forces and bringing abusive officials to trial. Failure to ensure accountability for security force abuses will only foster impunity and contribute to further alienate already frustrated communities and, potentially, increase the risk of radicalization particularly among disenchanted youth.

The international community should also condemn human rights violations by both Boko Haram and Cameroonian security forces and publically call on the Cameroon government to urgently initiate thorough, independent, impartial, effective and transparent investigations into allegations of human rights violations and crimes under international law. It should also ensure that its support to Cameroonian and regional efforts to protect populations from Boko Haram is in line with international human rights standards.

METHODOLOGY

This report is based on field investigations by Amnesty International in the Far North region of Cameroon conducted during three missions in February, March and May 2015, and follow-up research in June, July and August 2015.

In February, March and May 2015 Amnesty International interviewed more than 102 victims and eyewitnesses of attacks committed by both Boko Haram[1] and Cameroonian security forces across the Far North region. 85 interviews with key informants were also held, including with members of the security forces, government officials at national and regional level, including the Minister of Justice, religious and customary leaders, journalists, human rights defenders, diplomats, humanitarian workers, academics, judges, magistrates, lawyers, and other various experts. Amnesty International has not spoken with the leadership or members of Boko Haram.

Furthermore, Amnesty International has carried out more than 60 telephone interviews with human rights defenders and authorities and continuously monitored media reports, academic texts, reports by Cameroonian and international humanitarian and human rights organisations, court documents, relevant legislation, as well as government and Boko Haram statements.

Amnesty International collaborated closely with Cameroonian human rights defenders who have long worked to expose and denounce human rights violations in northern Cameroon.

Almost all victims and witnesses who spoke with Amnesty International did so on the condition of anonymity; therefore all names used in the report are pseudonyms.

Interviewees were informed about the purpose of the research and how the information they provided would be used and why. Amnesty International obtained consent from each of the interviewees. Interviews were conducted in private and discrete locations taking into consideration security and confidentiality. Most of the times interviews were conducted in the interviewee's mother language and were translated by an interpreter.

Amnesty International also analysed photographs, videos and satellite imagery showing damage and casualties resulting from both Boko Haram and security forces' attacks.

Amnesty International researchers were able to visit both the prison in Maroua and a public hospital in the city where detainees are brought when seriously ill. They were able to consult the prison register, interview correctional officers including the prison manager, but were not granted permission to interview detainees in private.[2]

Amnesty International shared its findings with government authorities, both verbally and in writing, and continued to engage with them during the drafting of this report. On 8 June

[1] Commonly known as Boko Haram, usually translated as "Western education is forbidden", the group is officially called Islamic State's West Africa Province (ISWAP) since it pledged to the extremist group Islamic State. BBC, *Nigeria's Boko Haram pledges allegiance to Islamic State,* 7 March 2015, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-31784538, (accessed 27 August 2015)] and was formerly officially called Jamā'atu Ahlis Sunnah Lādda'awatih wal-Jihad (People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad), see Amnesty International, *Nigeria: 'Our job is to shoot, slaughter and kill': Boko Haram's reign of terror in north east Nigeria* (Index: AFR 44/1360/2015).

[2] Amnesty International asked prison authorities permission to interview detainees in private, but was only offered to talk to detainees in the presence of prison authorities.

2015 Amnesty International provided a list of names of people arrested by security forces but whose whereabouts are unknown to their families. On 8 July 2015 Amnesty International wrote to the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Defence, the Chief of National Police, the Secretary-General of the Gendarmerie and the Commander of military operations in the Far North, with preliminary findings and questions for clarification.

This report is to be read in close connection with previous Amnesty International's reports on the situation in north-east Nigeria and the ongoing conflict between Nigeria and Boko Haram.[3]

Amnesty International thanks everyone who agreed to be interviewed. In particular, Amnesty International wishes to express its gratitude to the victims and relatives of victims who shared their stories.

[3] Amnesty International, *Nigeria: 'Our job is to shoot, slaughter and kill': Boko Haram's reign of terror in north east Nigeria* (Index: AFR 44/1360/2015) and Amnesty International, *Nigeria: Stars on their shoulders. Blood on their hands: War crimes committed by the Nigerian military* (Index: AFR44/1657/2015).

BACKGROUND

The post-independence history of Cameroon has not been one marked by major conflict. As such, Boko Haram's attacks have shocked many inside and outside the country. It should not, however, have been a surprise.

The scale and intensity of Boko Haram's attacks on Cameroonian territory may be relatively recent, but their presence in the northern regions of the country is not. The armed group has been present since at least July 2009 when many Boko Haram fighters fled to Cameroon to escape a major military crackdown in Nigeria that led to the killing of Boko Haram's leader, Mohammed Yusuf.[4]

In some sense Boko Haram is a problem 'imported' from its larger neighbor, but it is also home grown. The Far North region of Cameroon, over 1,000 km from the capital Yaoundé, shares many features with its neighboring Nigerian states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa, where the epicenter of Boko Haram's operations is located. Strong cultural, linguistic, ethnic, religious and economic ties long pre-date colonial borders[5], and provide the social networks and trade routes needed to recruit fighters, transport weaponry and conduct operations. With a long history of criminality and banditry in the region offering hospitable terrain for armed groups, "Boko Haram is a new phenomenon on older criminal grounds[6]" taking advantage of a well-developed criminal economy in the regions around Lake Chad. The same routes used today by Boko Haram have been used by highway robbers and bandits for many years previously.[7]

According to some estimates 3,000-4,000 Cameroonians have joined the ranks of Boko Haram.[8] To understand this it would be important to consider the presence of radical Islamic movements in the history of the Far North region[9], but above all the existence of

[4] Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, *Nigeria's Interminable Insurgency? Addressing the Boko Haram Crisis*, September 2014 (M-A Pérouse de Montclos, Nigeria's Interminable Insurgency?) and International Crisis Group, *Curbing Violence in Nigeria (II): The Boko Haram Insurgency*, http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/africa/west-africa/nigeria/216-curbing-violence-in-nigeria-ii-the-boko-haram-insurgency.aspx (accessed 3 April 2014).

[5] Populations from the North/East of Nigeria share a common history with communities in Northern Cameroon - in the form of pre-colonial entities such as the Borno-Kanem Empire, the Sokoto caliphate and the Adamawa Emirate.

For information on the Adamawa Emirate, see Hamadou Adama, *Islam and State in Cameroon: Between Tension and Accommodation (*H. Adama, *Islam and State in Cameroon)*, http://www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?ots591=EB06339B-2726-928E-0216-1B3F15392DD8&lng=en&id=46649 (accessed 27 August 2015). For information on the Borno-Kanem empire see: Louis Brenner, *The Shehus of Kukawa: A History of the al-Kanemi Dynasty of Bornu* in *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (1974), pp. 148-150, http://www.jstor.org/stable/216577?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents (accessed 27 August 2015). For information on the Sokoto caliphate see: J. T. Reynolds, *The politics of history: The legacy of the Sokoto Caliphate in Nigeria*, 1997, and Muktar Umar Bunza, *The Sokoto Caliphate after 200 years,* July 2014, http://www.nmnonline.net/caliphate200/M.Bunza_SokotoCaliphateAfter200Years_ENGLISH_.pdf (accessed 27 August 2015).

[6] Professor Saibou Issa, Director of the *Ecole Normale* of Maroua, Meeting with Amnesty International researchers in Maroua on 16 May 2015, Key Informants interviews n° 48 (AI interview n°48, 16 May 2015). On the phenomenon of "zaraguinas", also see Christian Seignobos, *Le phénomène Zargina dans le Nord du Cameroun: Coupeurs de route et prises d'otages, la crise des sociétés pastorales Mbororo,* Afrique contemporaine 3/2011 (No 239), pp. 35-59.

[7] AI interview n°48, 16 May 2015.

[8] AI interview n°48, 16 May 2015.

[9] For information on the Sokoto caliphate see: J. T. Reynolds, *The politics of history: The legacy of the Sokoto Caliphate in Nigeria*, 1997, and Muktar Umar Bunza, *The Sokoto Caliphate after 200 years,* July 2014, http://www.nmnonline.net/caliphate200/M.Bunza_SokotoCaliphateAfter200Years_ENGLISH_.pdf (accessed 27 August 2015); for information on the Maitatsine rebellion", see: M-A Pérouse de Montclos, *Nigeria's Interminable Insurgency?*

extreme poverty and a feeling of marginalization in these areas. Just as in Nigeria, those joining Boko Haram are those with least to lose. In the Far North region, where Boko Haram is most active, more than half of the population is poor[10], 76 percent are illiterate[11] and the industrial sector is extremely underdeveloped. The catastrophic effects of the current climate of insecurity on the economy, and the displacement of approximately 81,000[12] people, only serve to exacerbate these problems.

Boko Haram has exploited this poverty, as well as a range of social cleavages to recruit youngsters. According to a number of accounts collected by Amnesty International, the armed group began by infiltrating Cameroonian villages along the border by preaching "a new form of Islam", and managed to lure youth with money and weapons, exploiting generational conflicts, disrupting family ties, playing fathers off against sons and reversing traditional unity and stability in the communities. One traditional leader told an Amnesty researcher that:

"They came and started tricking our kids by reading them books such as Al-Usul Ath-Thalatha[13] and by preaching a new form of Islam which we did not know. Then they gave them 10,000 naira [31 GBP] each and a gun. The kids would return home and no longer listen to their parents. Instead they would tell them to follow the new path and, if they didn't, they would even kill them."[14]

Cameroon has looked on anxiously as populations in neighboring Nigeria suffered attack after attack by Boko Haram. At least 6,800 civilians were murdered, at least 2,000 kidnapped, and 1.2 million forced to flee their homes in north east Nigeria since 2013[15] – including over 56,000[16] refugees now hosted on Cameroonian soil.

Cameroon will also have seen how the Nigerian army committed crimes under international law, including war crimes, and human rights violations in response to other crimes, such as attacking the civilian population on a massive scale. According to evidence collected by Amnesty International this includes over 1,200 people extra-judicially executed, 7,000 people dying in inhumane prison conditions, and over 20,000 people arbitrarily arrested.[17]

For information on the relations between the Cameroonian state and Islam, see H. Adama, *Islam and State in Cameroon.*

[10] International Monetary Fund, *Country Report No. 14/213*, July 2014, http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2014/cr14213.pdf (accessed 15 June 2015).

[11] The World Bank, *Cameroon Economic Update, Revisiting the Sources of Growth*, Issue N°7, January 2014, http://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/Worldbank/document/Africa/Cameroon/Report/cameroon-economic-update-vol7.pdf (accessed 15 June 2015).

[12] OCHA, Regional Overview of the Northeast Nigeria Crisis, 20 August 2015, https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/system/files/documents/files/nga_regionalsnapshot_popmvt_20_aug_2015.pdf (accessed 02 September2015).

[13] The three Fundamental Principles, the main work of Muhammad ibn Abdil-Wahhab.

[14] Interview by Amnesty International researcher with the traditional leader of a village in the Far North of Cameroon, Maroua, 24 May 2015, Key informants interview n° 27 (AI interview n°27, 24 May 2015).

[15]Amnesty International, *Nigeria: 'Our job is to shoot, slaughter and kill': Boko Haram's reign of terror in north east Nigeria* (Index: AFR 44/1360/2015).

[16] OCHA, Regional Overview of the Northeast Nigeria Crisis, 20 August 2015, Up to 15,000 might have been returned in August 2015 (IRIN, *Nigerians who fled Boko haram forced home*, 21 August 2015, http://reliefweb.int/report/cameroon/nigerians-who-fled-boko-haram-forced-home, (accessed on 02 September 2015).

[17] Amnesty International, *Nigeria: Stars on their shoulders. Blood on their hands: War crimes committed by the Nigerian military* (Index: AFR44/1657/2015).

The Cameroon government responded to the Boko Haram threat by seeking to mobilize the population behind a war effort, and behind President Paul Biya, who has framed his country's struggle as one of good versus evil.

"The reality is simple. On one side, there are our forces, defenders of a modern and tolerant society which guarantees the exercise of human rights, including that of religion, as well as representative democracy. On the other side, namely Boko Haram and similar movements, there are partisans of an obscurantist and tyrannical society which has no consideration for human dignity."[18]

[18] Speech by Paul Biya, President of the Republic of Cameroon, at the opening ceremony of the Extraordinary Summit of the Conference of Heads of State and Government of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX), 16 February 2015, https://www.prc.cm/en/news/speeches-of-the-president/1168-speech-by-h-e-paul-biya-president-of-the-republic-of-cameroon-at-the-opening-ceremony-of-the-extraordinary-summit-of-the-conference-of-heads-of-state-and-government-of-the-council-for-peace-and-security-in-central-africa-copax (accessed 11 September 2015).

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Based on the evidence gathered so far Amnesty International is of the view that there are reasons to believe that a non-international armed conflict is taking place in the Far North region of Cameroon and, therefore, international humanitarian law should be applied. The armed conflict appears to be a spill over of the conflict in Northern Nigeria. Human rights violations and abuses are being committed by both parties to the conflict.

Legal norms and standards applicable to the Cameroonian security forces

The legal analysis of this report is based on both national and international law. On the national level[19], the main sources used are the Constitution[20], the Penal Code[21], the Code of Criminal Procedure[22] and the Anti-terror law introduced in December 2014.[23] The Constitution of Cameroon recognizes, in accordance with the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties[24], the precedence of international law over Cameroonian law[25] and, therefore, international and regional treaties duly approved or ratified by Cameroon are binding to all state agents including police officers, military personnel, gendarmes and members of the Cameroon security services.[26]

Excessive use of force by security forces

The UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials state that "law enforcement officials, in carrying out their duty, shall, as far as possible, apply non-violent means before resorting to the use of force and firearms. They may use force and firearms only if other means remain ineffective or without any promise of achieving the intended result".[27] The Basic Principles also outline that any unavoidable use of force must be in proportion to the seriousness of the offence and the legitimate objective to be achieved, while minimising damage and injury, and respect and preserve human life. That force should be "exceptional", proportional and only used when "reasonably necessary". Such provisions are reinforced by the Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials.[28] On the national level,

[19] Cameroon is a bijural country with both the common and the civil law systems being applicable: http://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=10221&LangID=E#sthash.EgsUrWSn.dpuf (accessed 18 June 2015).

[20] Cameroon's Constitution of 1972 with Amendments through 2008 http://www.wipo.int/wipolex/fr/text.jsp?file_id=315586 (accessed 23 August 2015).

[21] Journal Officiel de la République du Cameroun, Code Pénal n° 67/LF/1 12 Juin 1967, http://www.geneva-academy.ch/RULAC/pdf_state/CODE-PENAL.pdf (accessed 18 June 2015).

[22] Law N°2005 of 27 July 2005 on the Criminal Procedure Code, Cameroon, http://www.icla.up.ac.za/images/un/use-of force/africa/Cameroon/Criminal%20Procedure%20Code%20Cameroon%202005.pdf (accessed 20 August 2015).

[23] Law N° 2014/028 of 23 December 2014 on Terrorism, http://princekmer.skyrock.com/3240467049-Loi-N-2014-028-du-23-decembre-2014-portant-repression-des-actes-de.html (accessed 14 August 2015).

[24] Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties (signed 23 May 1969, entered into force 27 January 1980), 1155 UNTS 331, 8 ILM 679, Article 27. Cameroon acceded to it on 23 October 1991, without making any reservation.

[25] Article 45 of the revised Constitution of the Republic of Cameroon, http://www.wipo.int/wipolex/fr/text.jsp?file_id=315586 (accessed 23 August 2015).

[26] See appendix 2 for relevant applicable international law.

[27] UN, *Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials*, adopted by the Eight United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, Havana, Cuba, 1990, para. 4, http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/UseOfForceAndFirearms.aspx (accessed 7 July 2015).

[28] UN General Assembly, *Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials*, G.A. res. 34/169, annex, 34 U.N. GAOR Supp. (N° 46) at 186, U.N. Doc. A/34/46 (1979), para. 5, http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instree/i1ccleo.htm (accessed 26 August 2015).

Section 30 of the Code of Criminal Procedure states that "no bodily or psychological harm shall be caused to the person arrested".

Legal provisions related to the prohibition of arbitrary arrest or detention

Imprisonment or other severe deprivation of physical liberty in violation of fundamental rules of international law is a crime against humanity, when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack against a civilian population.[29] It may also amount to a war crime. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has found that "arbitrary deprivation of liberty is prohibited". The ICRC has also remarked that state practice establishes this rule as a norm of customary international law applicable to both international and non-international armed conflict.[30]

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Cameroon is a state party since 1984, also prohibits arbitrary arrest or detention.[31] It also states that, amongst other provisions, arrested persons shall be brought promptly before a judge and shall be entitled to trial within a reasonable time or to release[32]. These and other rights apply at all times and enable individuals to challenge their detention if they believe it is unlawful or unfounded.

The Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Fair Trial and Legal assistance in Africa state that "arrest, detention or imprisonment shall only be carried out [...] pursuant to a warrant, on reasonable suspicion or for probable cause".[33] Moreover, international human rights law, states that everyone has the right to be presumed innocent, until and unless proved guilty according to law after a fair trial.[34]

The Human Rights Committee stated that “delays must not exceed a few days" before being brought before a judicial body.[35] The Cameroonian Criminal Procedure outlines that suspects should be brought before a court within 48 hours[36], and states that the time allowed for remand in custody is 48 hours, renewable twice.[37]

Under offences covered by the new anti-terror law, however, suspects can be held without charge for a period of 15 days, renewable indefinitely. Amnesty International believes that

[29] Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, Article 7(1) (e), which reflects customary international law.

[30] ICRC, Customary International Humanitarian Law Study, Rule 99, https://www.icrc.org/customary-ihl/eng/docs/v1_rul_rule99 (accessed 23 August 2015).

[31] International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (adopted 16 Dec. 1966, entered into force 23 March 1976), 999 UNTS 171, Article 9.

[32] ICCPR, Article 9 (2). This provision is also similar to Article 7 (4) of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights ; Principle 10 of the UN Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment and Section M (2)(a) of the ACHPR Principles on fair trial and legal assistance in Africa.

[33] Section M (2) (a) of the Principles on Fair Trial in Africa, http://www.achpr.org/files/instruments/principles-guidelines-right-fair-trial/achpr33_guide_fair_trial_legal_assistance_2003_eng.pdf (accessed 26 August 2015).

[34] Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 11, http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/ (accessed 26 August 2015) and ICCPR, Article 14(2), http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/ccpr.aspx (accessed 26 August 2015).

[35] Human Rights Committee, *General Comment 8*, Article 9 (Sixteenth session, 1982), Compilation of General Comments and General Recommendations Adopted by Human Rights Treaty Bodies, U.N. Doc. HRI/GEN/1/Rev.1 at 8 (1994), para. 2, https://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/gencomm/hrcom8.htm (accessed 7 July 2015).

[36] Section 119 of the Cameroon Criminal Procedure Code, http://www.icla.up.ac.za/images/un/use-of-force/africa/Cameroon/Criminal%20Procedure%20Code%20Cameroon%202005.pdf (accessed 7 July 2015).

[37] Section 119 of the Cameroon CPC.

such a long period of police custody increases the risk of other human rights violations, including torture, and ill-treatment.

The Code of Criminal Procedure Code declares that suspects should then be tried within six months after their arrest[38], but this period may be extended for at most 12 months.

Children in detention

According to international human rights standards, children who have not reached a minimum age should not be formally charged with an offence or held responsible within a criminal justice procedure.[39] The Committee on the Rights of the Child has concluded that 12 is the lowest internationally acceptable minimum age for the purposes of criminal responsibility. The Principles on Fair Trial in Africa establish a minimum age of criminal responsibility of 15.[40] However, according to Cameroonian law[41], a minor between 10 and 14 years of age may be found guilty of a crime.

Children accused of infringing the law are entitled to all fair trial rights that apply to adults[42], as well as to additional juvenile justice protections.[43] Their treatment must reflect the fact that children differ from adults in their physical and psychological development and must take into account the best interests of the child.[44] Deprivation of liberty must be a measure of last resort and alternatives must be explored.[45]

Children in armed conflicts

Cameroon is a party to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict. It forbids state forces and non-state armed groups, under any circumstances, to recruit or use in hostilities anyone under the age of 1846. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, to which Cameroon is a signatory state but not yet party, states that conscripting, enlisting or using children to participate actively in hostilities is a war crime in both international and non-international armed conflicts.

Enforced disappearance and incommunicado detention

Enforced disappearance is always a crime under international law, even when committed in a random or isolated manner.[47] When committed in an armed conflict, either international or

[38] Section 221 of the Cameroon CPC.

[39] Committee on the Rights of the Child, *General Comment 10*, 27 April 2007, para.31, http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/CRC.C.GC.10.pdf (accessed 7 July 2015).

[40] Section O (d) of the Principles on Fair Trial in Africa, http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/research/ZIM%20Principles_And_G.pdf (accessed 7 July 2015).

[41] Article 80 of the Cameroon Penal Code, Journal Officiel de la République du Cameroun, Code Pénal n° 67/LF/1 12 Juin 1967, http://www.geneva-academy.ch/RULAC/pdf_state/CODE-PENAL.pdf (accessed 18 June 2015).

[42] Section O (b) of the Principles on Fair Trial in Africa, Articles 9 and 14 of the ICCPR and Article 40 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

[43] Article 24(1) of the ICCPR, Preamble and Article 3(2) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 17 of the African Charter on the Rights of the Child.

[44] Committee on the Rights of the Child, *General Comment 10*, 27 April 2007, paras 5-14.

[45] Article 37(b) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and Section O (j) of the Principles on Fair Trial in Africa.

[46] Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, Article 4(1).

[47] International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, Article 2. An enforced disappearance is defined as "the arrest, detention, abduction or any other form of deprivation of liberty by agents of the

non-international, it may amount to a war crime; when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population it constitutes a crime against humanity, either perpetrated by state or non-state agents.

The right not to be subjected to enforced disappearance is a well-established rule under customary international law[48] and also under conventional law, including international and regional treaties to which Cameroon is a state party, including the ICCPR Cameroon is also a signatory to, but has not yet ratified, the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICCPED)[49].

Likewise, all persons deprived of their liberty have the right to communicate with the outside world, especially with their families, lawyers, medical professionals and other third parties.[50] Although the right to communicate with the outside world might sometimes be reasonably restricted[51], the denial of this right may amount to incommunicado detention, which violates the right to liberty and also the right not to be subjected to torture or other ill treatment. According to Section 122 of the Cameroonian Code of Criminal Procedure, while in detention, people may at any time be visited by their counsel, members of his family, and any other person following up their treatment while in detention.[52]

Rights to humane detention conditions and freedom from ill-treatment

Any person deprived of his or her liberty retains human rights and fundamental freedoms[53], except for restrictions required by the very fact of their incarceration. The Human Rights Committee found that the implementation of this rule "cannot be dependent on the material resources available in the State party".[54]

Article 10 of the ICCPR states that “all persons deprived of their liberty shall be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person”.[55] Section 122 of the Cameroon Code of Criminal Procedure also provides that "the suspect shall be treated

State or by persons or groups of persons acting with the authorization, support or acquiescence of the State, followed by a refusal to acknowledge the deprivation of liberty or by concealment of the fate or whereabouts of the disappeared person, which place such a person outside the protection of the law".

[48] ICRC, Customary International Humanitarian Law Study, Rule 98, https://www.icrc.org/customary-ihl/eng/docs/v1_rul_rule99 (accessed 23 August 2015).

[49] International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CED/Pages/ConventionCED.aspx (accessed 7 July 2015). A State that signs a treaty is obliged to refrain, in good faith, from acts that would defeat the object and purpose of the treaty. Signature alone does not impose on the State obligations under the treaty.

[50] ICCPR, Article 14(3)(b) ; Standard Minimum Rules for the treatment of Prisoners, Rules 37 and 79 and Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment, Principle 19.

[51] Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment, adopted by General Assembly resolution 43/173 of 9 December 1988, Principle 19, http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/DetentionOrImprisonment.aspx (accessed 27 August 2015).

"A detained or imprisoned person shall have the right to be visited by and to correspond with, in particular, members of his family and shall be given adequate opportunity to communicate with the outside world, subject to reasonable conditions and restrictions as specified by law or lawful regulations".

[52] Law N°2005 of 27 July 2005 on the Criminal Procedure Code, Cameroon, Section 122.

[53] UN Basic Principles for the Treatment of Prisoners, Principle 5, http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/BasicPrinciplesTreatmentOfPrisoners.aspx

(accessed 7 July 2015).

[54] Human Rights Committee, General Comment 21, Article 10 (Forty-fourth session, 1992), Compilation of General Comments and General Recommendations Adopted by Human Rights Treaty Bodies, U.N. Doc. HRI/GEN/1/Rev.1 at 33 (1994), Paragraph 4, https://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/gencomm/hrcom21.htm (accessed 7 July 2015).

[55] ICCPR, Article 10.

humanely both morally and materially".[56] Cameroon is under the obligation to ensure the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health[57] to everyone, including people in custody.

Cameroonian authorities should make sure that all those deprived of their liberty have access to necessities and services that satisfy their basic needs, including adequate and appropriate food, washing and sanitary facilities, bedding, clothing, health care, natural light, recreation, and communication with others, including those in the outside world.[58] The government should also ensure that all inmates are provided with adequate medical care free of charge in conformity with international standard contained in the Body of Principles for the Protection of all Persons under any Form of Detention or Imprisonment.[59] The African Commission on Human and People's Rights underlined that "[t]he State's responsibility in the event of detention is even more evident to the extent that detention centres are of its exclusive preserve, hence the physical integrity and welfare of detainees is the responsibility of the competent public authorities".[60]

Deaths in custody

State responsibility for deaths in custody arises not only when state actors perpetrate abuses on prisoners that result in death, but also when the state does not respect its positive obligation to protect the rights of detainees. Violations of the right to life are therefore committed where prisoners die from poor prison conditions or a lack of medical treatment or following attacks from other prisoners (where the prison officials have failed to protect them).[61]

The standards contained in the Principles on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-Legal, Arbitrary and Summary Executions recalls the obligation to ensure "thorough, prompt and impartial investigations" into suspected unnatural deaths.[62] Such investigations should collect evidence, conduct an autopsy and collect witness statements to ascertain the cause, manner and time of death and ensure those responsible are held accountable. The results and methodology should be public.

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[56] Law N°2005 of 27 July 2005 on the Criminal Procedure Code, Cameroon, Section 122.

[57] ICESCR, Article 12 and ACHPR, Article 16.

[58] UN Special Rapporteur on torture, *Report A/64/215 (2009)*, para.55, http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N09/437/92/PDF/N0943792.pdf?OpenElement (accessed 7 July 2015); See also the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, Rules 9-22 and 37-42, http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/treatmentprisoners.pdf (accessed 7 July 2015).

[59] Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment, December 1988, Principle 24, http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/43/a43r173.htm (accessed 5 June 2015). Although these Principles are not binding in the same manner as treaties, they contain authoritative interpretations of states' obligations under international law and include detailed guidance regarding the protection of persons held in any type of detention.

[60] *Malawi African Association and Others v. Mauritania*, African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, Comm. Nos. 54/91, 61/91, 98/93, 164/97 à 196/97 and 210/98 (2000), http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/africa/comcases/54-91.html (accessed 5 June 2015).

[61] Under international human rights instruments, the right to life imposes both an obligation to abstain from arbitrarily depriving individuals of life ("negative obligation", see ICCPR, Article 6; ACHPR, Article 4) and to take all appropriate measures to protect and preserve human life ("positive obligation", see the HRC, General Comment N°.6, Article 6). States are thus required to ensure adequate conditions of detention for all those deprived of their liberty, which includes providing access to sufficient food and water and medical care.

[62] The UN Principles on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-Legal, Arbitrary, and Summary Executions, para. 9, at http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instree/i7pepi.htm (accessed 5 June 2015).

ANTI-TERROR LAW

Law 2014/028 (hereafter the anti-terror law) was promulgated on 23 December 2014.[63] The law, which came as Cameroon struggled to respond to the growing threat posed by Boko Haram, has been the object of wide criticism from Cameroonian political opposition and civil society, as well as international organizations for being against the fundamental rights and freedoms and to be used to curtail dissent.[64] Amnesty International believes that the anti-terror law infringes on many basic rights and freedoms protected in the Cameroonian Constitution and international human rights law. Its article 2 contains a very broad definition of terrorism, which might be used to criminalize peaceful political dissent and various other actions that should not be deemed as terrorism. The text of the law states, inter alia, that anyone who "disrupts the functioning of public services, the delivery of essential services to the population, or creates a situation of crisis" commits an act of terrorism that is subject to punishment by death. This definition of terrorism includes acts that do not involve violence, such as property crimes and disruption of public services. The UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, affirmed that the model definition of terrorism implies an action that is "intended to cause death or serious bodily injury to one or more members of the general population or segments of it" and should not include property crimes.[65] Articles 2 and 3 of the anti-terror law introduce new, vaguely defined offenses that could be used to persecute dissidence, and jeopardize fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed by international law and the Cameroonian Constitution, such as freedom of association and assembly. The law also allows suspects to be held without charge for a period of 15 days, renewable indefinitely. Finally, the anti-terror law provides for the death sentence[66] for all those guilty of carrying out, assisting or sponsoring acts of terrorism. Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases without exception.

Military courts

The right to a fair trial is a norm of international human rights law designed to protect individuals from the unlawful and arbitrary curtailment of basic rights and freedoms. It is guaranteed under Article 14 of the ICCPR, ratified by Cameroon in 1984, which provides that “everyone shall be entitled to a fair and public hearing by a competent, independent and impartial tribunal established by law”.[67] The standards against which a trial is to be considered fair are set both in the Cameroonian[68] and international human right frameworks[69], and include the right to equality before the law and courts, the right to trial by a competent, independent and impartial tribunal established by law, the right to a fair and public hearing, exclusion of evidence obtained in violation of international standards, and the right to be tried without undue delay.

[63] Law N° 2014/028 of 23 December 2014 on Terrorism, http://princekmer.skyrock.com/3240467049-Loi-N-2014-028-du-23-decembre-2014-portant-repression-des-actes-de.html (accessed 5 June 2015).

[64] Library of Congress, *Cameroon: New Law on Repression of Terrorism Passed*, 18 December 2014, http://www.loc.gov/lawweb/servlet/lloc_news?disp3_l205404239_text (accessed 5 June 2015) ; Reporters Without Borders, *Disproportionate Penalties For Media In Cameroon's Anti-Terrorism Law*, 18 December 2014, http://en.rsf.org/cameroon-disproportionate-penalties-for-18-12-2014,47401.html (accessed 5 June 2015).

[65] UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, *Ten areas of best practices in countering terrorism*, Report A/HRC/16/51, 22 December 2010, Human Rights Council, Sixteenth session.

[66] Law N°2014/028 of 23 December 2014 on Terrorism.

[67] ICCPR, Article 14.

[68] Law N° 67/LF/1 of 12 June 1967 on the Penal Code; Law N°2005 of 27 July 2005 on the Criminal Procedure Code.

[69] Core human rights treaties, including the ICCPR (Article 14), and specific Instruments such as the Basic Principles for the Treatment of Prisoners; Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, Principles on Fair Trial in Africa.

Amnesty International is concerned that many of these guarantees are undermined by the use of military courts, including under the anti-terror law introduced in December 2014 (see box). Trials before military courts have raised a number of concerns including the lack of independence, impartiality, competence of such courts, violations of the right to equality before the courts.[70]

Amnesty International believes that the jurisdiction of military courts in Cameroon, as in any other state, should be limited to trials of military personnel for breaches of military discipline. In addition, Amnesty International considers that military courts should not have jurisdiction to try members of the military and security forces for human rights violations or other crimes under international law. Because most military courts are composed of members of the military, respect for the right to trial by an independent and impartial tribunal, both in fact and appearance, is threatened.[71] Equally, human rights mechanisms have stated categorically that military courts should not have the authority to impose the death penalty.[72]

According to the Principles on Fair Trial in Africa, military courts "should not in any circumstances whatsoever have jurisdiction over civilians".[73] Moreover, human rights mechanisms such as the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention have stated firmly that military courts should not be authorized to impose the death penalty.[74]

Legal norms applicable to Boko Haram

As stated above, Amnesty International considers that a non-international armed conflict is taking place in Far North region of Cameroon between governmental forces and members of Boko Haram. Consequently, international humanitarian law - and, in particular, common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 - should be applied. The Additional Protocol II to the Geneva Conventions, to which Cameroon is a state party, may also be applicable to the conflict, should the conditions of its application are met.[75]

In addition, although international human rights law generally does not apply directly to armed groups Amnesty International condemns human rights abuses by armed groups, such as those committed by Boko Haram and documented in this report. Amnesty International calls on armed groups to respect fundamental principles of humanity drawn from human rights law and international humanitarian law and to cease committing crimes under international law or human rights abuses. The organization calls on states to uphold and protect human rights by ending and preventing abuses by armed groups and to bring those suspected of criminal responsibility to justice in fair trials in civilian courts and without recourse to the death penalty.

[70] Human Rights Committee, *General Comment No. 32*, Article 14: Right to equality before courts and tribunals and to a fair trial, UN Doc. CCPR/C/GC/32 (2007), paras 14, 22, See also *Centre for Free Speech v Nigeria* (206/97), African Commission, 13th Annual Report (1999) paras 12-14.

[71] Amnesty International, *Fair Trial Manual,* Chapter 29.4.2. and 3 (Index: POL 30/002/2014).

[72] Amnesty International, *Fair Trial Manual,* Chapter 26.6 (Index: POL 30/002/2014).

[73] The Principles on Fair Trial in Africa, Section L (c).

[74] Report of the working group on arbitrary detention, UN Doc, E/CN.4/1999/63 (1998) para. 80 (d), http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Detention/Pages/Annual.aspx (accessed 31 August 2015).

[75] The Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II), 8 June 1977. Cameroon is a state party to it since 16 March 1984.

The Cameroon government has the obligation to protect the population in the Far North of the country. It has also the obligation to investigate and, if there is sufficient admissible evidence, prosecute those suspected of criminal responsibility in fair trials before ordinary civilian courts, without recourse to the death penalty.

International criminal law provides that all who commit crimes under international law, like war crimes or crimes against humanity, or even human rights abuses may be held liable.[76] Amnesty International has documented serious crimes under international law and other crimes committed by Boko Haram, including suicide bomb attacks, summary killings, torture, hostage taking, abductions, recruitment of child soldiers, looting and destruction of public, private and religious property. These crimes appear to also be taking place as part of a widespread, as well as systematic, attack against the civilian population across north east Nigeria and the Far North of Cameroon. Some of these acts may therefore amount to crimes against humanity. In any event, they constitute serious abuses of human rights and those responsible should be brought to trial.

[76] ICRC, Customary International Humanitarian Law Study, Rule 151. "Individuals are criminally responsible for war crimes they commit"; Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity, Article 2 "If any of the crimes mentioned in article I is committed, the provisions of this Convention shall apply to representatives of the State authority and private individuals who, as principals or accomplices, participate in or who directly incite others to the commission of any of those crimes, or who conspire to commit them, irrespective of the degree of completion, and to representatives of the State authority who tolerate their commission".

CRIMES UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES COMMITTED BY BOKO HARAM

Patterns of human rights violations by Boko Haram

"We no longer eat, sleep, go to the fields or take our animals to pastures. Millet grew a lot, but there's nobody to harvest it. Boko Haram went on the rampage here. Life has changed. Now we live in fear."[77]

Amnesty International collected information on crimes under international law - including war crimes - and human rights abuses committed by Boko Haram across the Far North region of Cameroon, and documented in detail the attacks on Amchide in October 2014, in Bia in April 2015 and in Maroua in July 2015. These crimes and abuses include, among others, wilful killings (through, for example, suicide bomb attacks in civilian areas), torture, hostage taking, abductions, recruitment of child soldiers, looting and destruction of public, private and religious property. These crimes also appear to be taking place as part of a widespread, as well as systematic, attack against the civilian population across north east Nigeria and the Far North of Cameroon.

Although present in Cameroon since 2009, Boko Haram's first reported actions in the country were the kidnappings of French citizens in February and November 2013.[78] The scale and frequency of attacks only increased from July 2014 onwards, however, coinciding with the capture by Boko Haram of major towns in the north-east of Nigeria and with the declaration by Abubakar Shekau of an independent "caliphate" with its capital in Gozwa.

Between October 2014 and February 2015, the scale and intensity of Boko Haram's attacks in Cameroon grew significantly, leading to wilful killings, torture, mass displacement, abductions, looting and burning.

The group repeatedly attacked towns and villages located along the Cameroonian/Nigerian border such as Achigachia, Amchide, Limani, Fotokol, Waza, Kolofata, but also struck targets in other cities across the Far North region like Kousseri and Maroua.

From March to June 2015, there was a significant reduction in the number of Boko Haram attacks, which became smaller, less frequent and increasingly aimed at getting supplies. This was likely due to the increased pressure applied on the armed group by Chadian, Nigerien, Cameroonian, and Nigerian security forces both from within Nigeria and from neighbouring countries. However, between late June and July 2015, the group launched a new wave of attacks, including five suicide attacks in Northern Cameroon, of which three in the city of

[77] Interview by Amnesty International researcher with a religious leader, Maroua, 15 May 2015. Key informants interview n° 64.

[78] For more information, see the Timeline of attacks in appendix 1.

Maroua, killing almost 50 civilians.[79] On 3 September 2015, more than 30 were killed and more than 100 wounded in twin suicide attacks in Kerawa.[80]

For none of the three suicide attacks carried out by suspected Boko Haram in Maroua and documented in this report, did Amnesty International find evidence of a military target at the time of the attack. These attacks were intended to spread fear and terror among the civilian population. Similarly, while civilians were sometimes killed as a consequence of Boko Haram aiming at military targets, Boko Haram also raided villages where no security forces were present (Bia), deliberately killing and punishing civilians. During attacks on cities and villages with a military presence (Amchide), Boko Haram deliberately targeted and killed civilians as well as killing members of the Cameroonian army. Deliberately targeting civilians and civilian objects is a war crime.

Experts and analysts agree that Boko Haram's movements and strategies - which may not be labelled as internal disturbances - have been shown to be elusive, changing, and difficult to predict or counter. [81] The group acts both as a guerrilla force, attacking in small groups, as well as an army able to deploying large numbers of fighters and heavy weapons. While small raids on border villages have been a regular occurrence in Cameroon over the last year, on a number of occasions Boko Haram has attacked with hundreds of fighters – almost 1,000 in the attack on Amchide documented below – and used rockets, tanks, armoured personnel carriers and artillery stolen from the Nigerian army.

Improvised explosive devices (IEDs), including anti-personnel mines[82], and suicide bombers, have been used by Boko Haram to kill civilians and attack military targets[83] at public places, including crowded markets and bars.[84] About 50 people died in five consecutive suicide attacks in July 2015, three of which occurred in Maroua, the main city of the Far North region.[85] The use of children as suicide bombers is a tactic Boko Haram has resorted to and

[79] Boko Haram also launched attacks in Chad, Niger and Nigeria. For attack in Chad see: BBC, *Suicide attack kill many in N'Djamena,* 15 June 2015, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-33133511 (accessed 15 June 2015) ; For attack in Nigeria see: BBC, *Nigeria violence: 'At least 40 dead' in Boko Haram attack,* 24 June 2015, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-33250393 (accessed 25 June 2015); For attack in Niger see: BBC, *Boko haram crisis: attack in Niger kills dozens*, 18 June 2014, at http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-33186154 (accessed 19 June 2015); for attacks in Cameroon see attached Timeline of attacks at appendix 1.

[80] Œil du Sahel, https://www.facebook.com/loeildusahelcameroun/posts/998337413551488, 03 September 2015 (accessed 03 September 2015)

[81] African Studies Centre, Institut Français de Recherche en Afrique, West African Politics and Society Series , *Boko Haram: Islamism, politics, security and the state in Nigeria*, , Vol. 2, Edited by Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclosm 2014; Interviews by Amnesty International with Cameroonian military Commanders and officers, May 2015.

[82] The Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby-Traps and Other Devices as amended on 3 May 1996 (Protocol II, as amended on 3 May 1996), annexed to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons which may be deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to have Indiscriminate Effects applicable also to non-international armed conflicts, prohibits "the use of any mine, booby-trap or other device designed or of a nature to cause superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering", Article 3 (3). Cameroon is a state party since 7 December 2006.

[83] Camerpost.com, *Mines antipersonnel, attentats-kamikazes, les nouvelles armes de Boko Haram,* 2 March 2015, http://www.camerpost.com/cameroun-mines-antipersonnel-attentats-kamikazes-les-nouvelles-armes-de-boko-haram-02032015/ (accessed 3 March 2015).

[84] Reuters*, Cameroon says two suicide attacks kill at least 13 in Maroua***,** 22 July 2015, http://uk.reuters.com/article/2015/07/22/uk-nigeria-violence-cameroon-idUKKCN0PW1Q120150722 (accessed 23 July 2015).

[85] See Timeline of attacks in appendix 1.

appears to be a growing trend.[86] Mines have been planted all around Boko Haram's main operational base in the Sambisa forest (Nigeria) and in border areas inside Cameroon.

Amnesty International received many reports from witnesses and victims of Boko Haram's attacks, military officers and human rights defenders that Boko Haram used child soldiers - a war crime in both international and non-international armed conflicts [87] - during attacks on their communities. They reported that children are often put in the first row of the fighting, carrying torches and screaming "Allah Akhbar", and that they are also often killed before more experienced fighters come from behind.[88] According to the information collected by Amnesty International, children as young as 13 have also been deployed as suicide bombers by Boko Haram in Cameroon.

Accurately estimating casualties from attacks in the Far North is difficult, but by comparing local and international media reports, in addition to independent research on a smaller number of incidents, it appears that Boko Haram has killed at least 380 civilians and dozens of security personnel in dozens of attacks since January 2014, mainly by firearms but also with knives, machetes and other sharp objects.

Boko Haram also abducted hundreds of people and, according to a United Nations official, more than 1,000 children.[89] A 44 year-old man from Bia told Amnesty International that Boko Haram's fighters attempted to kidnap his two daughters.

"They knocked at my door and asked me to give them my two girls. I refused and told them I'd rather get killed than leave my children to them. I negotiated with them and eventually they left. After this incident I was obliged to bring my daughters to Mora, where they would be safe".[90]

On 3 August 2015, about 130 people were subject to enforced disappearance - a conduct prohibited in armed conflicts[91] - during a raid by Boko Haram in the village of Tchakarmari, close to the border with Nigeria.[92]

Boko Haram carried out widespread destruction, setting on fire hundreds of houses and businesses and looting large amounts of supplies, including livestock. In the Mayo-Moskota

[86] The Telegraph, *Children and mentally ill lead new wave of suspected Boko Haram suicide bombers,* 26 July 2015, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/nigeria/11763803/Mentally-unstable-suicide-bomber-kills-at-least-14-people-in-Nigeria.html (accessed 26 July 2015).

[87] ICRC, Rule 136; Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, Article 4 (1). Cameroon is a state party since 9 February 2013.

[88] Amnesty International's meetings with human rights defenders, authorities and security forces in Maroua and Yaoundé, 9-28 May 2015, Key informants interviews n° 62-70 and n° 29-44.

[89] Vanguard, *UN condemns Boko Haram abuse of children in Cameroon,* 4 June 2014, http://www.vanguardngr.com/2015/06/un-condmens-boko-haram-abuse-of-children-in-cameroon/ (accessed 5 June 2015). See also The Independent, *Boko Haram kidnap 80 people including children in Cameroon*, 19 January 2014, http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/boko-haram-kidnap-80-people-including-children-in-cameroon-9986799.html (accessed 20 January 2015).

[90] Interview by Amnesty International researchers with a 44-years old man from Bia, Maroua, 19 May 2015. Victims and Witnesses Interview n° 19.

[91] ICRC, Rule 98.

[92] AllAfrica, *Dozens kidnapped in village raid*, http://allafrica.com/stories/201508050224.html (accessed 31 August 2015); Oeil du Sahel, https://www.facebook.com/loeildusahelcameroun/posts/983078331744063 (accessed 31 August 2015).

Province alone, local authorities report that about 7,000 sheep and cattle were stolen from the end of 2013 to February 2015.[93]

Public buildings, including schools, have also been destroyed by the militants. According to UNICEF, since the start of the 2014-2015 school year, 120 schools in the Far North region were forced to close. Of them, 18% suffered structural damage as a result of the violence, and 11% were pillaged, with the loss of school equipment and material.[94]

It is difficult to establish a clear pattern of who is targeted by Boko Haram attacks, which appear to be directed at State officials, members of the security forces, and civilians - Christian and Muslim - alike. In some cases the creation of civilian vigilantes' groups in several villages and cities appear to have led to increased targeting of civilian "traitors", while in others Christians have been specifically threatened and churches burnt. Often, however, the victims are simply the civilian population at large.

[93] According to estimations from the authorities of the Mayo-Moskota Province (Sous-Prefecture) 5,000 cattle, 1524 sheep and 425 goats have been stolen by Boko Haram from the end of 2013 to February 2015. Interview with sous-prefect of Mayo Moskota, Mr Ouhe-Kolandi, 21 May 2015, Maroua.

[94] UNICEF, *Education sector rapid needs assessment: Far North, Cameroon*, February 2015, https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/cameroon/assessment/education-sector-rapid-needs-assessment-far-north-cameroon-february (accessed 20 March 2015).

Boko Haram attack on Amchide, 15 October 2014

"Everyone fled after the attack. Amchide is now an empty village. There is nobody here. Only birds are flying."[95]

Daytime attack

On Wednesday 15 October 2014, Boko Haram attacked the border town of Amchide, in the Mayo-Sava department of the Far North region. The attack came a week after a rocket, fired by Boko Haram from the Nigerian town of Banki, landed in Amchide, killing at least eight civilians and injuring many more.[96]

Civilian eyewitnesses spoke of seeing many hundreds of fighters, while military sources interviewed by Amnesty International estimated the number of insurgents at almost 1,000.[97]

The attack, which took place simultaneously in Amchide and Limani, another village located 2 km away, started at around 4 pm on 15 October and ended at midday the following day. At least 30 civilians, 8 Cameroonian soldiers and more than a hundred insurgents were killed.[98] Boko Haram also carried out widespread destruction of private and public properties, including a mosque, a church, a school, and a health centre which were burned down together with dozens of houses.

Before directly assaulting the barracks where soldiers from the *Brigade d'Intervention Rapide* (BIR) were garrisoned, Boko Haram fighters infiltrated the market, ambushing people while they were still pursuing their business. Military sources added that the insurgents entered the market on foot, dressed like civilians, and hid weapons under their clothes.

"It was at around 4 pm. I was at the workshop repairing a vehicle because I am a mechanic. The workshop wasn't far from the market. Suddenly I heard gunshots from the market. One, two, three, four, until I couldn't count them anymore. I saw many Boko Haram fighters coming my way. I understood I had to leave, so I took my kids and ran."[99]

Killings of civilians

Eyewitnesses, local authorities and military sources described to Amnesty International the appalling level of brutality of the attack. Boko Haram killed at least 30 civilians. People were either shot or had their throats slit. One of the eyewitnesses described to Amnesty

[95] Interview with Amnesty International researchers with a man from Amchide, Maroua, 25 may 2015. Victims and Witnesses interview n°17 (AI interview n°17, 25 May 2015).

[96] Information Nigeria, *Boko Haram kills 8 in rocket attack on Cameroon town*, 7 October 2014, http://www.informationng.com/2014/10/boko-haram-kills-8-in-rocket-attack-on-cameroon-town.html (accessed 8 October 205). Note that Amchide borders the Nigerian town of Banki, with streets and houses straddling the border

[97] Amnesty International's meetings with BIR Commanders and officers on 22 and 23 May 2015, Maroua. Key Informants interviews n°38 and n°40-43 (AI interviews n° 38 and 40-43, 22 and 23 May 2015).

[98] Reuters, *Cameroon says troops kill 107 Boko Haram militants*, 17 October 2014 http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/10/17/us-nigeria-boko-haram-cameroon-idUSKCN0I61RY20141017 (accessed 25 August 2015).

[99] Interview by Amnesty International researchers with a 26 year-old man from Amchide, Maroua, 22 May 2015. Victims and Witnesses interview n° 14 (AI interview n°14, 22 May 2015).

International the killing of three employees, of a money transfer agency located nearby the market:

"They stormed the Espresso agency and robbed all the money. But that wasn't enough. They savagely killed the manager and two security guards. Finally they set the building on fire. One of the accountants of the agency survived and fled to Mora with us. When you speak to her, you can tell she's really traumatized."[100]

As Abba Yana (not his real name), an eyewitness whose life was spared and who managed to escape, told Amnesty International: "I saw Boko Haram fighters brutally cutting the throats of at least two of my neighbours. I could not do anything and I stood and watched. Then I ran away. I ran and ran and ran".[101]

Amnesty International was not able to confirm whether Boko Haram targeted specific people or houses, but several eyewitnesses said the insurgents threatened to kill all the Christians. A Christian man who was able to escape following the attack told Amnesty International:

"I fled with only my children. I had to leave my wife behind so that she could take care of my old father who's blind. They only managed to escape the day after. She told me that, when they were fleeing, Boko Haram yelled at her: 'Where are you going with this old Christian man? We are going kill all the Christians in town! We are going to slaughter them all!'. She told me she pretended not to have heard and continued to walk"[102]

According to both eyewitnesses and military sources, although Boko Haram targeted the military base, it also fired rockets indiscriminately in the area where civilians were staying or trying to flee.

"Bullets were flying over our heads and everyone was running. There was a stampede as almost two hundred people gathered at the little river just outside the village to find an escape. I was there as well and, while we were running, a rocket landed in front of my feet. Thank God it didn't explode and everyone could cross."[103]

Attack on the military

Boko Haram's insurgents, who were equipped with artillery including rocket-launchers, came on board of several vehicles and tanks that, a military source said, they had stolen from the Nigerian military army.[104]

One of the tanks was destroyed by the Cameroonian soldiers, as photographic evidence obtained by Amnesty International shows.

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[100] Interview by Amnesty International researchers with a 47 year-old man from Amchide, Maroua, 22 May 2015. Victims and Witnesses interview n°13 (AI interview n° 13, 22 May 2015).

[101] Interview by Amnesty International researchers with a man from Amchide, Maroua, 25 May 2015. Victims and Witnesses interview n° 16 (b) (AI interview n°16 (b), 25 May 2015).

[102] AI interview n°14, 22 May 2015.

[103] AI interview n°14, 22 May 2015.

[104] AI interviews n° 38 and 40-43, 22 and 23 May 2015.

One of the tanks used by Boko Haram to attack Amchide, 15-16 October 2015. © Private

Boko Haram combatants also attempted to drive a car bomb against the military base, but the soldiers managed to destroy it before it exploded.[105]

Looting and destruction of property

Witnesses told Amnesty International that, while some Boko Haram insurgents were engaging the BIR in heavy fighting, close to the military barracks, others walked through the streets, searching and looting houses. They took food and other goods from many homes before setting them on fire.

The district of Bama, where I used to live, was the most affected one. Four Boko Haram insurgents entered my house screaming. Luckily I was alone at the time. They let me go, but set the house on fire, after having stolen all my goods. They took the beans, the rice, and all other food stocks. They also stole the kitchen utensils that my wife used to cook. They just left me the clothes that I am wearing today. That's all I have.[106]

Insurgents also broke into shops, stole the supplies inside and burned the buildings down. Several cars and motorbikes were also stolen. A 49-year-old man who was victim of the attack said that Boko Haram took two of his motorbikes. "When they left", he recalled, "they told me that they would use the bikes to work for Allah".[107] He added that Boko Haram also stole many vehicles. "As soon as they found a car, they would try it. If it could be turned on, they would take it, if not they would burn it".[108]

[105] AI interviews n° 38 and 40-43, 22 and 23 May 2015.

[106] AI interview n°16 (b), 25 May 2015.

[107] Interview by Amnesty International researchers with a 49 year-old man from Amchide, Maroua, 25 May 2015. Victims and Witnesses interview n°16(a) (AI interview n°16 (a), 25 May 2015).

[108] AI interview n°16 (a), 25 May 2015.

Boko Haram also destroyed a school, a church, a mosque and a health centre. According to one resident, a large amount of money was also stolen from the health centre, together with medicines and medical equipment.[109]

Retaliation for collaboration

According to several sources from Amchide, the attack was perpetrated in revenge for the denunciations of Boko Haram's suspects to the military by members of the town's security committee ('comité de vigilance'). A 26 year-old man told Amnesty International that Boko Haram came to punish the entire population who they believed had betrayed them: "They told us we were traitors and should be killed".[110]

Another man reported that when the insurgents entered his house, they accused him of "carrying the stick"[111] and being an informant of the military.

"The day of the attack, 10 Boko Haram stormed my compound and broke into my house. They were heavily armed with AK-47, rockets-launchers and machetes. They started to scream and put me on the floor. They said that they will slit my throat in front of my family. My wife and kids were crying. Then, one of them pointed his rocket launcher on my belly and threatened me again in Hausa: 'Why do you carry the stick? Why do you collaborate with the military?' I replied I didn't, and I beg them not to kill me. I beg them so many times until a friend came and negotiated my release. That's how they let me go."[112]

Aisha (not her real name), a woman who was in Amchide the day of the attack and managed to flee, told Amnesty International she is certain that Boko Haram raided the town to take revenge against the local population who denounced some people to the BIR: "They came in retaliation of our collaboration with the army. They knew we denounced some villagers to the security forces, so they came to punish us. They did not aim before shooting".[113]

Displacement

The attack led to significant displacement of people, including many women and children. The majority of them walked for many days in order to reach safer cities, such as Mora and Maroua. However, there, they struggled to access food and clean water before finding a host family where to settle.

"We left Amchide at around 5 pm and we passed through a tiny village called Ngoumuliti, where we found a woman who had just given birth. We carried and brought them to another small village where we separated. Then we continued to Kourgui, close to Mora, where we arrived at around 11 pm. We were exhausted. We sat down close to the school and slept in one of the classrooms. We stayed in Kourgui for a week, with little to no food and no possibility to wash. The kids were hungry and I had nothing to give them. The soldiers who

[109] Interview with Amnesty International researchers with a woman from Amchide, Maroua, 25 May 2015. Victims and Witnesses interview n° 13-16(b).

[110] AI interview n°14, 22 May 2015.

[111] Kanuri/Hausa expression meaning "those who collaborate with/help the security forces".

[112] AI interview n°13, 22 May 2015.

[113] Interview by Amnesty International researchers with a woman from Amchide, displaced in Maroua, Maroua, 25 May 2015. Victims and Witnesses interview n°15 (AI interview n°15, 25 May 2015).

were based few blocks from the school had pity on us and gave us water and biscuits."[114]

Many internally displaced are afraid to return to Amchide. A woman told Amnesty International researchers that, after more than 8 months since the attack, she can still feel the fear he experienced when she heard the gunshots.

"The noise of gunfire and screaming was so loud that it was unbearable and I can still hear it now. I saw lots of suffering in front of me."[115]

Because of its geographical position right on the Nigerian/Cameroonian border, Amchide was also hit by violence several times in the months following the abovementioned attack. On 11 December 2014, for instance, as military sources told Amnesty International, heavy fighting was reported between the BIR and about a hundred Boko Haram fighters, leading to dozens of casualties from the insurgents' side.[116]

[114] Interview by Amnesty International researchers with a 49 year-old man from Amchide, Maroua, 25 May 2015. Victims and Witnesses interview n°16.

[115] AI interview n°15, 25 May 2015.

[116] Information shared (verbally and in writing) during a meeting with the BIR hierarchy in Maroua, 22 May, 2015. Key informants interviews n°38-43.

Boko Haram attack on Bia, 17 April 2015

"They took everything from me; my goats, my chickens, my millet, my rice and then they burned down my house. I'm left with nothing. What I wear today is not mine, people lent me clothes because I don't even have a shirt left."[117]

Around 100 Boko Haram fighters attacked the village of Bia (Mayo Sava department, Far North region) on 17 April 2015. The insurgents arrived at around midnight, surprising people during their sleep. They left their motorcycles on the edge of the village, entered by foot, killed more than a dozen civilians, stole a large amount of supplies - including seeds, food, motorbikes, and agricultural tools - and set about hundred houses on fire. The eyewitness said people were unable to call the soldiers, stationed about 20 km from Bia, as the raid was sudden and everyone was running for their lives.[118]

Amadou Boukar (not his real name), 53 year-old farmer from Bia described the attack to Amnesty International:

"They started in the district of Bliablinne, then entered the Arab area and finally the centre of the village. Neighbourhood after neighbourhood, they killed people and burned down everything. There was fire all over the place and bullets flying in the air. I ran to the bush to save my life."[119]

According to all sources interviewed by Amnesty International many of Boko Haram's fighters who carried out the attack were young men from Bia. The raid appears to have been a retaliatory operation against "those who carry the stick" (expression meaning "those who collaborate with or help the security forces").

The widespread burning of homes by Boko Haram in a village like Bia, which had never witnessed such a large-scale attack before, also suggests that the attack was a form of collective punishment against its residents.

Killings of civilians and destruction of civilian property

In the course of the attack, Boko Haram fighters killed at least 16 civilians, including two children of 8 and 15 years old.[120] People were shot while running away, mostly close to their houses. In at least two instances, witnesses reported that the bodies were thrown back in the house and set on fire. Photographic evidence obtained by Amnesty International from the BIR show bodies burned almost beyond recognition, or penetrated by bullets.

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[117] Interview by Amnesty International researchers with a 50 year-old woman from Bia, Maroua 19 May 2015. Victims and Witnesses interview n°20.

[118] Interview with Amnesty International researchers with eyewitnesses who left Bia after the attack, Maroua, 17 May 2015, Victims and Witnesses interviews n°18-25.

[119] Interview by Amnesty International researchers with a 53 year-old farmer from Bia, Maroua 23 May 2015. Victims and Witnesses interview n°21.

[120] Interview by Amnesty International researchers with BIR Commanders and Officers (Maroua, 22 May, 2015) and with 8 eyewitnesses (Maroua, 17 April 2015).

Malla Mohamed (not his real name), 50 year-old, witnessed some of the killings before fleeing to the bush. He returned the following day to join other villagers in collecting the corpses for burial.

"They [Boko Haram] were so many, at least one hundred. Some were wearing the uniforms of the Nigerian army and many had a scarf on the head. They screamed "Allah Akbar" and opened fire on everyone in the village, shooting and killing whoever they saw… It was very painful to see women burying their husbands and children".[121]

The above mentioned eyewitness, the farmer Amadou Boukar (not his real name), who was in Bia the night of the attack, reported to Amnesty International that he helped with the burial of at least 10 people who "were shot by the militants while attempting to escape or were burned in the flames invading their houses". He added that he saw the bodies of two children of 8 and 15 year-old completely burned: "The kids died in their compound, their bodies were devastated by the fire which quickly spread from the rooftop made of straw to the entire little space of their houses".[122]

Both eyewitnesses and photographic evidence obtained by Amnesty International through the BIR confirmed the extent of the devastation following the attack. At least 150 houses were set alight[123], in most cases with all their assets inside. Boko Haram fighters torched the houses methodically in all three areas of the village, although the most affected one appears to be Bliablinne (west side of the village), as Abdoullahi Boukar (not his real name), a resident of Bia, told Amnesty International:

"I was sleeping when I heard the noise of gunfire. I saw flames rising from one side of the city, so I took my wife and my kids and ran to the bush. The day after, when Boko Haram had already left and the army arrived, I came back to Bliablinne and I was shocked by what I saw. My house was devastated by the fire, all my food stocks were gone, as well as my animals."[124]

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[121] Interview by Amnesty International researcher with a 50 year-old farmer from Bia, Maroua, 23 May 2015. Victims and Witnesses interview n°22.

[122] AI interview n°21, 23 May 2015.

[123] Interview by Amnesty International researchers with BIR Commanders and Officers (Maroua, 22 May, 2015) and with 8 eyewitnesses (Maroua, 17 April 2015).

[124] Interview by Amnesty International researchers with a man of 26 year-old from Bia, Maroua, 19 May 2015. Victims and Witnesses Interview n°8.

Houses burning following the attack by Boko haram in Bia, 20 April 2015. © Private

The insurgents poured gasoline on the houses and set them on fire. The houses burned rapidly as the majority had roofs made of straw. Abdoullahi Boukar explained:

"I was able to run away before they arrived at my compound. I hid myself in the bush, but I could still see what was going on. I watched them setting my house ablaze and I wanted to cry. I felt so desperate. It took me years to build that house, it was all I had for me and my family. All my life burned with that fire."[125]

The accounts provided by the eyewitnesses were corroborated by members of the BIR interviewed by Amnesty International. The BIR arrived in Bia in the morning after the attack, sealed off the village and conducted house-to-house searches to hide out any possible remaining fighters. They also secured the population and evacuated the wounded to the hospital in Maroua. The soldiers, who found widespread destruction in several areas of the village, assessed the damages and collected video and photographic evidence, which Amnesty International was able to consult.

Since the attack, the village has been almost empty, as the majority of its population fled after having been made either homeless or completely destitute. Many sought refuge in Mora, Maroua or other urban settings close to military bases. Very few stayed behind and are coping with economic hardship and trauma. Abdoullai Boukar has abandoned Bia and settled in the city of Mora with all his family and numerous relatives:

"I left Bia the night Boko Haram came and destroyed everything. The BIR told us we could stay, as they would secure the area and chase Boko Haram. But I have nothing left. How can I live in a place which doesn't even look like a house anymore? How can I feed my family? So I went to Mora where I have some friends and relatives who can help me."[126]

[125] Interview by Amnesty International researchers with a man of 26 year-old from Bia, Maroua, 19 May 2015. Victims and Witnesses Interview n°8.

[126] Interview by Amnesty International researchers with a man of 26 year-old from Bia, Maroua, 19 May 2015. Victims and Witnesses Interview n°8

Suicide bombings in Maroua Central Market and Barmare district, 22 July 2015, and Pont Vert, 25 July 2015

"I was walking through the market when I heard a horrible sound. I had no idea what had happened. I found myself on the ground. I tried to stand up but I could not walk, because my legs were broken. Then I heard people screaming and crying and running. I will always remember that horrible sound."[127]

On 22 July 2015, at around 3.30 pm, at least 13 civilians were killed and more than 30 wounded after two young female suicide bombers detonated their explosives almost simultaneously at the central market and in the nearby district of Barmare in the city of Maroua.[128] Just a few days later, on 25 July 2015, at around 8 pm, at least 20 people were killed and more than 80 wounded after another young female suicide bomber detonated her explosives in a crowded bar in the popular district of Pont Vert in Maroua.

Amnesty International interviewed ten victims at the hospital in Maroua and nine eyewitnesses who described in detail what they saw during the twin attacks. Although no group claimed responsibility for the attacks, military and other sources attributed them to Boko Haram. There were no military targets in the vicinity of any of the three attacks.

Central market

Boukar Hamada (not his real name, picture below), a 43-year-old man working as a tailor at the central market, told Amnesty International that the two bombs exploded within minutes of each other. He his legs were injured and bystanders took him to hospital.

"The market was very crowded at the time. There was a loud explosion. I was blown up just right in front my shop. I think I felt unconscious and I remember people carrying me. They took me to the hospital where the doctors had to amputate my left leg. I can see a big change in my life. It will never be as before."[129]

[127] Interviews by Amnesty International partners, Maroua 5-8 August 2015. Victims and Witnesses interview n°92.

[128] See Timeline of attacks in appendix 1.

[129] Interviews by Amnesty International partners, Maroua 5-8 August 2015. Victims and Witnesses interview n°88.

A 43 year-old man had his leg amputated following the suicide attack at the Maroua market, July 2014.
©Amnesty International

A 32 year-old trader at the central market told Amnesty International that he saw the suicide bomber who was a young girl "dressed like a beggar".[130]

Bachir Samba (not his real name), a mechanic, was walking about 150 metres from the market when the suicide bomber detonated her explosives. He told Amnesty International that there was a lot of confusion and people were screaming, running in all directions to save their lives or those of others. "I lost my 54 year-old brother and two friends. They were killed immediately. I collected their bodies and mourned them according to our tradition. This attack left a void in my life. I am still totally shocked".[131]

Barmare district

The bomb in the Barmare district followed a similar pattern. Yusuf Mohammudu (not his real name), a 33 year-old carpenter, was working in his workshop in the popular neighbourhood of Barmare in Maroua when he was caught into the explosion. He told Amnesty International he saw the young girl who detonated the bomb.

"She was acting as a beggar, I saw her twice, she was asking money at the corner close to my shop. Then I heard the explosion. I don't remember anything except that I woke up at the hospital. My left arm is severely injured and I wonder when I'll be able to restart my activities to provide for my family."[132]

Ousmanou Oumarou (not his real name), a 54 year-old Imam, told Amnesty International that Barmare was a very busy area.

[130] Interviews by Amnesty International partners, Maroua 5-8 August 2015. Victims and Witnesses interview n°90.

[131] Interviews by Amnesty International partners, Maroua 5-8 August 2015. Victims and Witnesses interview n°91.

[132] Interviews by Amnesty International partners, Maroua 5-8 August 2015. Victims and Witnesses interview n°95.

"There's a truck-loading station in Barmare, where lorries get ready to travel to other markets of the region or to Chad. There were many people when the bomb exploded. I was having lunch in a small restaurant. I don't know how I was not wounded, I really thank God. After the explosion, there was panic and people were screaming. I saw at least 5 dead bodies. I helped those wounded and tried to comfort them."[133]

Security forces carry the remains of one of the victim of the blasts in Maroua, 22 July 2015. © Getty Images

Pont vert

The suicide attack in a bar in the Pont Vert district – a crowded area of Maroua with many bars, drinking spots, restaurants and street vendors - occurred even as security measures had been intensified in the city and across the country following the twin suicide bombings just three days earlier.

Samba Yana (not his real name), a 50 year-old taxi driver recalled:

"Every night this neighbourhood is full of people. People come here to have a drink in one of the many bars. I had just come back home from work and I was parking my car when the explosion occurred. Everyone fled and there was lots of confusion. Luckily I was not hit and so I could assist those affected. I saw many wounded and at least 10 killed. There was blood all over the road and pieces of human flesh scattered around."[134]

Another witness, a 37 year-old man who has a shop in Pont Vert, told Amnesty International that only civilians died in the attack.

"I was in my shop when the bomb went off. I was very close to the explosion, but thank God, I survived and got no injuries. But two of my friends died there and many others were killed. All those who lost their lives were innocent civilians, fathers and mothers. There were no military targets in the vicinity of the explosion."[135]

[133] Interviews by Amnesty International partners, Maroua 5-8 August 2015. Victims and Witnesses interview n°96.

[134] Interviews by Amnesty International partners, Maroua 5-8 August 2015. Victims and Witnesses interview n°104.

[135] Interviews by Amnesty International partners, Maroua 5-8 August 2015. Victims and Witnesses interview n°103.

CRIMES UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS BY CAMEROONIAN SECURITY FORCES

To fight Boko Haram, Cameroon has sought to strengthen the presence of its security forces in the northern regions. In August 2014 it reorganized its military command structure[136] and increased the number of personnel serving in the north. At least 2,000 troops of the *Brigade d'Intervention Rapide* (BIR)[137] were deployed alongside forces from the *Bataillon d'Infanterie Motorisé* (BIM) to protect the border region under operations "Alpha" and "Emergence 4". In July 2015, following an upsurge of violence in the Far North and at least five suicide bombings, Cameroon announced its intention to deploy an extra 2,000 troops along its northern border with Nigeria.[138]

The Government of Cameroon also sought the support and cooperation of others. In January 2015 the African Union-mandated Multi-National Joint Task Force[139] was revived, with Cameroon pledging 2,650 troops.[140] This force should have become operational by the end of July 2015, but details of operations and deployment of troops have not yet been finalized.[141] In January 2015 Chadian troops were also invited to conduct operations from Cameroonian soil, while training and other support has been provided from countries including the United States, France, Israel, Italy, Germany, China and Russia.[142] Such cooperation, combined with the reinforcement of Cameroonian forces, appeared to have contributed to a reduction in Boko Haram attacks between March and June 2015, before a sharp increase once again in July.

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[136] Monthly Information Bulletin n°20, August, 2014 available at http://cameroonhighcommission.co.uk/docs/Les_temps_des_realisations_vol20.pdf (accessed 12 August 2015).

[137] The BIR is a highly-trained elite force, with greater resources and equipment than the regular army, and with a different command hierarchy. It was established and overseen by an Israeli Commander.

[138] BBC, *Boko Haram crisis: Extra Cameroon troops to border area,* 28 July 2015, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-33694695 (accessed 21 August 2015).

[139] The Communiqué of the 484th meeting of the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) at the level of Heads of State and Government held in Addis Ababa on 29 January 2015, authorised the deployment of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) comprising up to 7 500 military and non-military staff, for an initial period of 12 months, renewable. See more at: http://www.peaceau.org/uploads/psc-484.com.boko.haram.29.1.2015.pdf. (accessed 31 August2015). The PSC's position was endorsed by the AU Assembly at the AU 24th Summit, held in Addis Ababa on 30 and 31 January 2015. MNJTF was established in 1998 to counter transnational crime in the Lake Chad basin region, but was mostly dormant until 2012, when it was reactivated in order to deal with Boko Haram.

[140] RFI, *Lutte contre Boko Haram: finalisation de la force multinationale mixte*, 23 August 2015, http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20150823-fin-reunion-lutte-contre-boko-haram-tchad (accessed 24 August 2015).

[141] Premiumtimesng, Defence Chiefs from Nigeria, Cameroon, others meet in Chad, 25 August 2015, http://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/188987-boko-haram-defence-chiefs-from-nigeria-cameroon-others-meet-in-chad.html (accessed 03 September 2015).

[142] Cameroon Presidency, *Head of State's New Year message to the Nation,* https://www.prc.cm/en/news/1101-head-of-state-s-new-year-message-to-the-nation? (accessed 31 August 2015) ; see also Database of Stockholm Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), http://www.sipri.org/databases/armstransfers (accessed 31 August 2015).

Amnesty International has documented crimes under international law and human rights violations committed by state security forces, including mass arbitrary arrests, extrajudicial killings, excessive use of force, enforced disappearances, deaths in custody and inhumane and degrading treatment.

The patterns of violations committed by State security forces appear to match the pattern of frequency and scale of Boko Haram attacks – increasing from mid-2014, becoming significantly marked between October 2014 and March 2015, and then reducing in intensity from March 2015 onwards. Senior sources in the security forces explained to Amnesty International that they were under severe pressure between October 2014 and March 2015, their personnel were unprepared, and panic led to a heavy-handed and at times overly indiscriminate approach.

Mass arrests

Cameroonian security forces have arrested at least 1,000 suspected militants in Far North region[143], including in mass operations where dozens, and sometimes hundreds, of men and boys were rounded up and arrested all together. Amnesty International has documented mass arrests of suspected Boko Haram members in the city of Maroua, and in the villages of Magdeme, Doublé, and Guirvidig, during cordon and search operations usually conducted jointly by the army, the police and the gendarmes - as well as targeted arrests of individuals or smaller groups in streets and in public places.

Most of the arrested are young men, although one case includes the detention of 84 children, some as young as five years old. They come from different social, economic and cultural backgrounds, but many are ethnic Kanuri who lived in villages and cities along the Nigerian border. They are held in several prisons and detention centres across the country, particularly in Maroua, where at least half the prison's population is made up of Boko Haram suspects.[144] As outlined later in this report, dozens have died in custody and hundreds are unaccounted for.

Excessive use of force during cordon and search operations

Cameroonian security forces' have used cordon-and-search operations involving massive raids and house-to-house searches in a number of villages and cities across the Far North region, and in particular those located along the Nigerian border.

Those operations have been conducted since at least June 2014, reached a peak in December 2014, appear to have reduced from March to June 2015 and appear to have increased again at the end of July following the three suicide attacks in Maroua. Amnesty International found that, during such operations, the security forces used excessive force and committed human rights violations, including unlawful killings and destruction of property. Based on the identities of those reported to have been arrested, the primary targets of these raids appear to be men between 18 and 40 year-old, suspected of being members or supporters of Boko Haram.

[143] AFP, *Cameroon holding over 1,000 Boko Haram-affiliated suspects: army,* 16 February 2015, http://news.yahoo.com/cameroon-holding-over-1-000-boko-haram-affiliated-222939034.html (accessed on 3 August 2015). According to prison authorities, over half the population of Maroua's prison, which contains between 1,200 and 1,500 people, is made up of Boko Haram suspects, while hundreds are held in other sites.

[144] Interview by Amnesty International researchers with the Maroua's prison manager, 22 May 2015.

The stated objectives of the three cordon and search operations documented by Amnesty International were to track down Boko Haram combatants and sympathisers. Yet in seeking to do so, security forces threatened and harassed civilians, destroying their property and stealing their goods. In one operation security forces killed at least eight people, including a seven-year old girl.

Enforced disappearances

Amnesty International research strongly suggests that hundreds of people arrested by the Cameroonian security forces in the Far North province have become victims of enforced disappearances, including at least two hundred people arrested during a cordon and search operation in the villages of Magdeme and Doublé in December 2014. The gendarmerie, army, BIR and police are all implicated.

In addition to those who still remain missing, Amnesty International also documented and pursued other cases where families of those arrested had been unable to get any information on the whereabouts of their loved ones. In one case, at least 24 had been people arrested in a Maroua market during a single operation in June 2014, and family members interviewed by Amnesty International in May 2015 still had no news of their whereabouts, despite requesting information from the authorities. It was only by Amnesty International pursuing the cases that, in July 2015 they were located in detention in the capital city Yaoundé, and later transferred back to Maroua.

Amnesty International has written letters to the Cameroonian authorities – including the Minister of Defence, Minister of Justice and Chief of Police - with a list of people who have been arrested in Magdeme and Doublé, in addition to others arrested in a handful of other incidents. These letters asked the authorities to confirm their whereabouts and inform their families.

Guirvidig, 20 December 2014: mass arrests, excessive use of force and arbitrary detention of children following a raid at Qur'anic schools

"We were at school when the military broke in. They had so many questions for us and wanted to see our IDs. Suddenly they started to beat up our teachers and some of them had their face covered in blood. At the end we were all brought outside and made to board trucks."[145]

On 20 December 2014, early in the morning, Cameroonian army, gendarmerie and police conducted a cordon and search operation in the town of Guirvidig, Mayo-Danay district. The security forces raided a number of Qur'anic schools and houses, and detained 84 children and at least 43 men, including many teachers. No attacks had previously been reported in the town, but the authorities claimed the schools were being used as fronts for 'Boko Haram training camps'.[146] All but three of the children were under 15 years old, 47 were under ten years old, and one was as young as five. All of these children were subsequently detained for six months without charge.

One child told Amnesty International how children were threatened and men beaten during the raid:

"The security forces stormed our school, asked for ID cards and interrogated us. They said they would dig our grave and throw us into it. We were scared. Then they roughed up our teachers... some among them had blood all over their faces."[147]

A man whose 22 year-old child (not a student at any Qur'anic school) was arrested also described the threats he was victim of by the military:

"I woke up to pray as I do every morning. I was surprised to see four soldiers armed to the teeth in my compound. They asked where I was going. I replied I was going to the Mosque. 'Today, the mosque is home,' they shouted at me, and I went back inside frightened. After a while, my son went out to go to the market where he used to work in a 'callbox'. He was stopped by the military and brought to the point where many other people had been gathered. He was then loaded on a truck and is currently at the prison in Maroua."[148]

Amnesty International met one 39 year-old Qur'anic teacher at the prison in Maroua who said he had been beaten. Eyewitness confirmed that he was both beaten in the public, during the arrest, with the back of a gun, and kicked while boarding the truck. He was not able to hold his head in an upright position and needed assistance to walk. He was transferred to the hospital to be treated for tuberculosis but he did not receive any treatment for injuries

[145] Interview by Amnesty International researchers with a child of 16 year-old, 10 May 2015, Institution Camerounaise de l'Enfance, Maroua. Victims and Witnesses interview n°28.

[146] Telephone interview by Amnesty International with local authority from Maga, a city nearby Guirvidig. Key informants interview n°24, 18 May 2015.

[147] AI interview n°27, 24 May 2015.

[148] AI interview n°27, 24 May 2015.

sustained during his arrest. He died in detention on 17 June 2015 and no investigation appears to have been launched into his death.

Witnesses also told Amnesty International that security forces forcibly entered several houses confiscating assets and asking residents for bribes. One parent saw people giving money to the security forces to secure the release of their arrested sons. "That day, I had no money and so they took my child,"[149] he said. Another reported that members of the security forces threatened him before trying to steal some of the family's assets. "At around 6 am, four military and gendarmes entered my house and tried to take my two motorbikes. I had to give them 30,000 CFA to have them back".[150]

Eyewitnesses told Amnesty International that after being rounded up and made to wait for hours in a public square, the men and boys were forced to board trucks to Maroua. The children were kept in custody at the gendarmerie headquarters in Maroua for four days before being transferred to a juvenile centre. The men were taken to the Central Prison in Maroua where they still remain in detention in extremely poor conditions.

"My brother is still at the prison in Maroua. I go to visit him three times a week to bring him food. He's suffering a lot, he's sick. He had undergone a surgery before he was arrested and the stiches have not been removed since. Also he got scabies in prison and it's very painful. He told me that, at night, he can't sleep because of the heat and that he's scratching all the time. I am very worried about his health condition."[151]

The 84 children were detained for just over six months, mostly at the 'Institution Camerounaise de l'Enfance', managed by the Ministry of Social Affairs. Despite having no charges brought against them, they were not allowed to leave the center during their stay. The center relied on food supplies from the World Food Programme and sleeping material from UNICEF.

Amnesty International visited the children's center and spoke to some of the detained boys. Although looked after, many did not understand why they were being held there, nor why they could not see their parents. All told Amnesty International that they wanted to go home. According to one local human rights defender:

"The children were treated well at the centre. They ate enough, attended classes, including readings of the Qur'an and could play football or watch movies. But they couldn't leave the centre nor see their parents as they wanted."[152]

Between 20 and 24 December, 2014, five relatives went to Gendarmerie Headquarters to visit their children but did not gain access to them and were instead brought to the prison in Maroua where they are still detained.[153]

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[149] Interview by Amnesty International researchers with a 58 year-old man from Guirvidig, Maroua, 13 May 2015. Victims and Witnesses interview n°29.

[150] Interview by Amnesty International researchers with a 27 year-old man from Guirvidig, Maroua, 13 May 2015. Victims and Witnesses interview n°31.

[151] AI interview n°31, 13 May 2015.

[152] Interview by Amnesty International researchers with a Cameroonian human rights defender on 9 May 2015, Maroua. Key informants interview n°62.

[153] Interview by Amnesty International researchers with a Cameroonian human rights defender between 10 and 26 May 2015, Maroua, Key informants interview n°47.

Amnesty International and other organisations raised the case of the children in detention with the Cameroonian authorities, publicly and privately.[154] On 24 June 2015 the children were finally given permission to leave the centre and return home to their parents.

[154] Amnesty International, *End six-month illegal detention of 84 children held following Quranic school raid*, 19 June 2015, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2015/06/cameroonillegaldetention/ (accessed 21 June 2015).

Magdeme and Doublé, 27 December 2014: mass arrests, excessive use of force, unlawful killings, destruction of property, deaths in custody and enforced disappearances

"The army stormed the little hut where I used to keep my animals. They burned it to the ground. 30 of my sheep died in the fire. My animals were all my wealth."[155]

On 27 December 2014, early in the morning, the Cameroonian security forces sealed off the adjacent villages of Magdeme and Doublé in the Mayo Sava department of the Far North region to conduct a cordon and search operation. According to the information received and verified by Amnesty International, this operation resulted in nine unlawful killings, the widespread destruction of property, hundreds of arbitrary arrests and unlawful detentions in circumstances that may amount to enforced disappearances, and the deaths in custody of at least 25 people – and possibly many more.

The operations, which unfolded in a similar manner in both villages, first started in Magdeme, and then continued in Doublé. More than 35 victims and witnesses described to Amnesty International how the security forces - gendarmes, police and military – broke into people's houses, threatened and mistreated them, stole money and other goods, and burnt homes.

"Early in the morning, we heard gunshots and thought it was Boko Haram. We were scared and fled to the bush; then people called us to say it wasn't Boko Haram, but the security forces, so we came back thinking we were safe. However, to our great surprise, those forces made us suffer even more than Boko Haram."[156]

During the raids, security forces told people to assemble at central points in the village. They separated the men from the women and children, and ordered men to unclothe to their trousers. Men were made to lie face to the ground in the sun and kicked intermittently by the security forces with their boots. Members of the security forces accused them of being complicit with Boko Haram.

"Soldiers were shouting 'You are Boko Haram!' We replied that we are just farmers, growing onions. A helicopter circled above our heads spotting those who tried to flee. We were so frightened."[157]

Unlawful killings, looting and destruction of property

During the search and screening operations, at least nine people, including a young girl, were killed, shot by the security forces. Six were shot in Magdeme and the remaining in Doublé. Amnesty International obtained a list of names of those killed from people in the village and verified it by interviewing eyewitnesses and relatives who buried the bodies.

[155] Interviews by Amnesty International partners' with a man from Double. Victims and Witnesses interview n° 82, Maroua, 5 July 2015 (AI interview n°82, 5 July 2015).

[156] Interview by Amnesty International researchers with a man from Doublé, 13 May 2015, Maroua. Victims and Witnesses interview n°42.

[157] Interview by Amnesty International researchers with a woman of 35 year-old from Doublé, 14 May 2015, Maroua. Victims and Witnesses interview n°39.

In Magdeme, at least five witnesses explained how a woman and her young daughter were shot in their house. The sister of the victim, who was nearby the house where the killing took place, told Amnesty International:

"Soldiers broke down the door and shot in the house. My sister and her seven year-old daughter were killed while hiding under the bed. My sister was shot on right side of the head, under the ear and her daughter in the neck. They died the same day. I walked into the house after the security forces left and found their bodies. Together with other villagers, we buried them in evening."[158]

In Doublé, three men were shot as they tried to run away from the crowd during the screening operations. A father of three was shot to the head, a 40-year old man was shot in the stomach, and a 30 year-old man was shot in the abdomen.[159]

The raid also resulted in widespread destruction. Amnesty International received detailed lists and maps of 70 homes and other buildings destroyed by security forces in Magdeme and in Doublé from people in the village. These reports were corroborated by photographic evidence, as well as satellite imagery showing at least 50 buildings destroyed in the south-west area of Doublé around the time of the attack.

"The security forces destroyed many houses in the village. When they entered my house, they searched all over, took my phone and then set the roof on fire."[160]

[158] Interview by Amnesty International researchers with a woman of 36 year-old from Magdeme, 14 May 2015, Maroua. Victims and Witnesses interview n°36.

[159] Interview by Amnesty International researchers with 3 men from Doublé, Maroua, 14 May 2015. Victims and Witnesses interview n°39, 40 and 41.

[160] Interview by Amnesty International's partners with a 16 year-old girl from Magdeme, 8 July 2015, Maroua. Victims and Witnesses interview n°73.

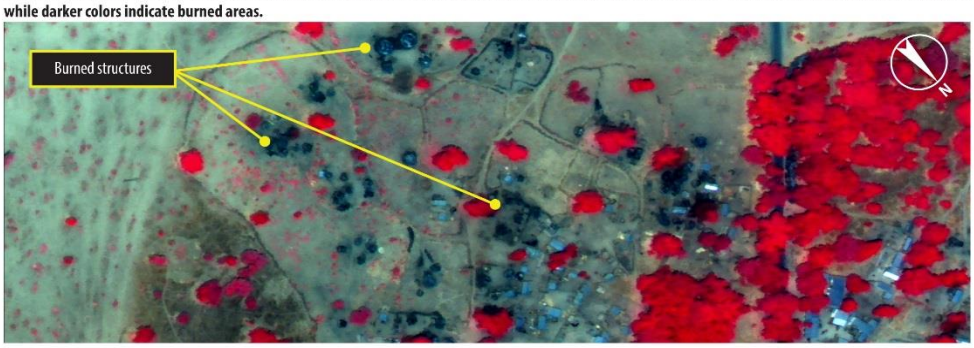
Figure 2. On October 4, imagery shows the southwest area of Doublei.

DigitalGlobe Natural Color Imagery, October 4, 2014,11.1737°, 14.2442°

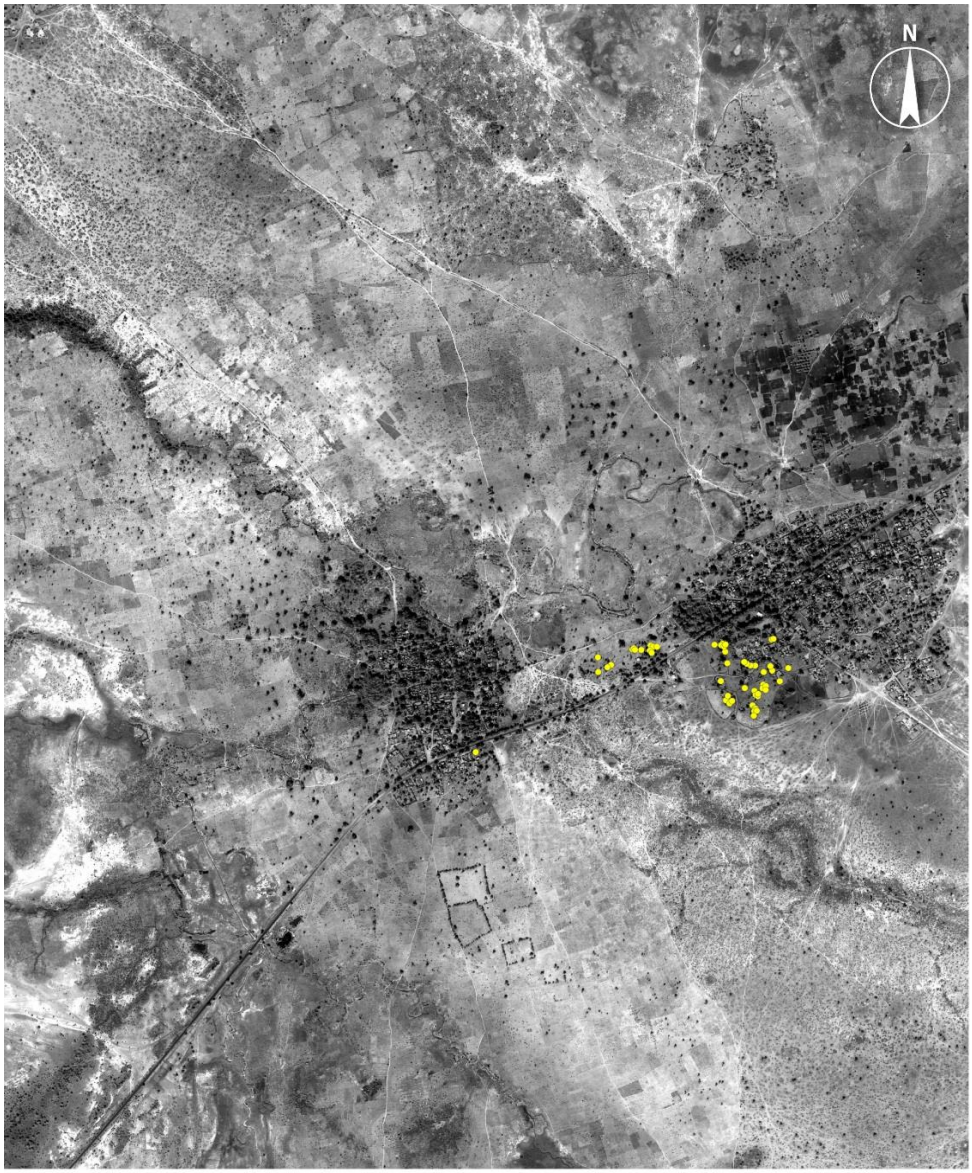
Figure 3. Imagery on December 29 shows many structures in the southwest area have been damaged or destroyed.

DigitalGlobe Panchromatic Imagery, December 29, 2014, 11.1737°, 14.2442°

Figure 4. False-color infrared imagery on January 26 highlights the damaged areas seen on December 29 in Doublei. Red color indicates healthy vegetation, while darker colors indicate burned areas.



DigitalGlobe False-Color Infrared Imagery, January 26, 2015,11.1737°, 14.2442°



Doublé, over 50 structures—represented here by yellow dots—appear damaged or destroyed in imagery from 29 December 2014. Analysis commissioned by Amnesty International. Images © DigitalGlobe

One of the houses destroyed in the village of Doublé, December 2014. © Private

Looting of homes by the security forces was reported and witnesses described how security forces stole money and other goods in front of them, while supposedly searching the premises.

"My house was searched by two soldiers. After having savagely broke down the door, they fired one shot in the air. They told my old husband to lie face down on the ground and threatened to kill him if he didn't do it. Then, they searched his pockets and found 50,000 CFA [about 54 GBP] which they took together with 10,000 naira [about 32 GBP] that I had in my room."[161]

One woman from Doublé said: "They came inside my house, they took 550.000 CFA [about 595 GBP] from my husband and 220,000 CFA [about 238 GBP] from my brother. They also burned six bags of beans. They burned many houses with everything inside".[162] A man reported that the military stole money and various assets from his house, including "460,000 CFA [about 497 GBP], jewellery and clothes".[163]

Following the raid, many abandoned the villages of Magdeme and Doublé seeking refuge elsewhere, including in Mora and Maroua. However, from May 2015, thanks to an improved security situation, some people started to return in an attempt to resume their normal lives and restart economic activities.

[161] Interview by Amnesty International with a 41 year-old woman from Magdeme, 14 May 2015, Maroua. Victims and Witnesses interview n°37 (AI interview n°37, 14 May 2015).

[162] Interview by Amnesty International with a 25 year-old woman from Doublé, 14 May 2015, Maroua. Victims and Witnesses interview n°41.

[163] Interview by Amnesty International's partners with a 50 year-old man, 3 July 2015, Maroua. Victims and Witnesses interview n°80.

Over 200 people arrested

While a government spokesperson has said that 70 people were arrested during the raid on Magdeme and Doublé[164], the evidence suggests that at least three times this number were detained.

Amnesty International received detailed lists from people in the village of those arrested during the raid that it has sought to corroborate through interviewing more than 35 eyewitnesses and consulting the prison register. According to the lists received, at least 90 men and boys were arrested from Magdeme and 141 from Doublé. In addition eyewitness say that men from other villages were also arrested during the raids and on the subsequent journey, but Amnesty International has not been able to confirm numbers or details of these reported arrests. A senior military source also confirmed to Amnesty International that at least 200 people had been arrested from the two villages.[165]

When the sweep operation described above ended, people were loaded into at least five trucks, taken first to the town of Mora, where children were released and men were beaten. One detainee explained to a family member how people were threatened and hit with truncheons by the security forces in Mora.[166] Another family member explained how some of those arrested "told me they had been beaten up violently when trucks stopped in Mora. In fact, some of them had signs of this ill-treatment".[167] Other testimonies from detainees confirmed this mistreatment.

25 deaths in custody – or more

"They took us to the military camp in Mora, then put us in a vehicle for Maroua. They locked us in two different cells... They said to us 'if you want, you can all die' ".[168]

On the same evening of 27 December, the men were then brought to the Gendarmerie Headquarters in Maroua, and the majority were placed and locked in two separate store rooms.

What happened next has been fiercely contested, and is the subject of an internal investigation managed by the Ministry of Defence. At a minimum, however, at least 25 people – though perhaps significantly more – died in custody that night, while the whereabouts of at least 130 others remain unaccounted for.

After rumours had circulated in Maroua of a large number of deaths at the Gendarmerie Headquarters on the night of 27 to 28 December, a network of human rights defenders, Réseau des defenseurs des droits humains en Afrique Centrale (REDHAC), was the first to publicly denounce the deaths of detainees who, they said, had succumbed to asphyxiation in

[164] Cameroun-Info.Net, *Issa Tchiroma explique comment 25 suspects Boko Haram ont trouvé la mort dans une cellule à Maroua*, 13 March 2015 http://www.cameroon-info.net/stories/0,65684,@,cameroun-issa-tchiroma-explique-comment-25-suspects-boko-haram-ont-trouve-la-mor.html (accessed on 6 July 2015).

[165] Interview by Amnesty International researchers with a military Commander, 26 May 2015, Maroua.

[166] Interview by Amnesty International's partners with a man from Magdeme, 3 July 2015, Maroua, Victims and Witnesses interview n°71.

[167] AI interview n°82, 5 July 2015.

[168]Interview by Amnesty International's partners, July 2015, Victims and Witnesses interview n°105.

the store room. In a press release on 15 January 2015 they estimated that at least 50 people had died.[169]

The government did not recognise the incident until 13 March 2015, when it said 25 detainees had died on the night between 27 and 28 December 2014 in the Gendarmerie Headquarters in Maroua. In a press conference, the Minister of Communication Issa Tchiroma claimed that only 70 suspected militants had been arrested, of whom 56 had been taken to a "specially prepared" cell at the Gendarmerie Headquarters, given that the other cells were full. He added that the screening of the arrested was to take place the following day, but "while opening the door in the morning we found 25 had died." The Minister concluded that a forensic pathologist carried out the post mortem examinations and that "there was no tangible evidence to confirm that the 25 had been deliberately murdered".[170]

Testimonies from those present in the makeshift cells when the deaths occurred, however, suggest there may have been an even larger number of deaths. According to these accounts, men were brought to two different rooms containing at least 100 people each. Some recounted how gas filled at least one of the two rooms, leading to people vomiting and bleeding from their nose, while their eyes burned and they struggled to breathe.[171] The presence of a 'toxic substance' was also raised by other official sources. Amnesty International received names of over 140 people reported to be among those that died, but is unable to corroborate or verify their accuracy.

Amnesty International is not able to definitively conclude how many people died that night in the Gendarmerie, nor the cause of their death. But the allegations are serious and credible enough to warrant an independent, impartial and effective investigation to ascertain the truth.

Almost nine months after the incident, however, despite the establishment of an internal investigation managed by the Ministry of Defence, the government has yet to release the names of those who died in custody, disclose the location of their burial, or provide explanations regarding the causes of death. Key eyewitnesses, including survivors from the cells, do not appear to have been interviewed for their accounts.

At least 130 enforced disappearances

The government's claim that only 70 people had been arrested is at odds with the evidence collected by Amnesty International, highlighted earlier, showing that at least 200 people were taken into custody from Magdeme and Doublé on 27 December 2014. Even accepting the government account that 25 people died at the Gendarmerie in Maroua, that should leave at least 175 people arrested from Magdeme and Doublé who must be accounted for.

According to all sources, those who survived in the cells at the Gendarmerie were transferred the next morning to the Central Prison in Maroua. Amnesty International visited the prison,

[169] REDHAC, Declaration, *Boko Haram and human rights violations in the region of the Far North of Cameroon*, 15 January 2015, available at http://www.redhac.org/interne.php?page=article.php&idmenu=49&idsmenu=137&idarticle=225; See also the French version of the Declaration at http://www.redhac.org/interne.php?page=article.php&idmenu=49&idsmenu=137&idarticle=224 (accessed 30 May 2015).

[170] Cameroun-Info.Net, *Issa Tchiroma explique comment 25 suspects Boko Haram ont trouvé la mort dans une cellule à Maroua,* 13 March 2015 http://www.cameroon-info.net/stories/0,65684,@,cameroun-issa-tchiroma-explique-comment-25-suspects-boko-haram-ont-trouve-la-mor.html (accessed 6 July 2015).

[171] Victims and Witnesses interviews n°84-86.

spoke to detainees, survivors and consulted the prison register. Only 45 people – two of whom later died in detention – were ever registered in the prison after being transferred from the Gendarmerie headquarters. This still leaves at least 130 people unaccounted for, not counting those arrested who were from neighbouring villages.

The families of those who are not currently in prison, such as Amina Samba (not her real name), remain without any information about whether or not their loved ones are alive.

"They took all the men and put them on several trucks. My son was on board. This was the last time I saw him. He is only 17, he knows nothing about life, has never gone out from the village. I came to the prison in Maroua with nine other women whose relatives had been arrested too, but I couldn't find my son, he disappeared. Among the women who accompanied me, only three found their loved ones, the others are still looking for their children, husbands, uncles, and fathers. Today I am left with nothing but the hope to see my son again."[172]

Families told Amnesty International how they have tried to find out what happened to their loved ones, but many remain unable to locate them.

"The military took my 19 year-old child, named Al Hadji. He used to carry and sell cola nuts in and around the village of Magdeme. He was arrested just two days after he finally got his national ID card. They put him on a lorry and packed him with many other men. The village chief told me they were all brought to the prison in Maroua, so I went there few days after the operation, but I couldn't find him. I went back several times and asked the prison guards, but nothing. They [prison guards] told me that if he's not at the prison, it means he has been executed. I don't know where my son is, he disappeared, I keep hope that he's not dead, but I don't know for how long."[173]

Another woman told Amnesty International that some relatives were threatened by prison guards in Maroua if they continued to seek information on the whereabouts of their loved ones; others said security officers at the prison asked them to pay in order to check the registry.

"My husband and my two sons were arrested in Magdeme. I don't know where they are. I went to the prison three times, but I've no more money to keep going, as the security officers asked me to pay each time to check the registry."[174]

On 8 June 2015, Amnesty International provided the authorities with a list of names of people reported to have been arrested on 27 December 2014, requesting that they inform Amnesty International and their families if any of these men are being held in detention facilities outside of Maroua – something denied by authorities in interviews to date. These facts constitute enforced disappearances.

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[172] Interview by Amnesty International researchers with a woman of 28 year-old from Doublé, 14 May 2015, Maroua. Victims and Witnesses interview n°38.

[173] AI interview n°37, 14 May 2015.

[174] Interview by Amnesty International researchers with a woman of 51 year-old from Magdeme, 14 May 2015, Maroua. Victims and Witnesses interview n°40.

Conditions of detentions

Amnesty International and other organisations have documented the extremely poor conditions in Cameroonian detention centres for many years[175], including chronic overcrowding, inadequate food, lack of drinking water, limited medical care, deplorable hygiene and sanitation. The wave of arrests of individuals suspected of supporting Boko Haram since mid-2014 have further aggravated these conditions to extreme levels in the Far North region.[176]

Amnesty International representatives were able to visit the prison in Maroua[177], where the majority of Boko Haram suspects are held, as well as a section of the hospital where detainees are brought when ill. Conditions both in prison and at the hospital amount to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.

Overcrowding

The Central Prison in Maroua was built in 1935 with an intended maximum capacity of 350 people. At the time of the visit by Amnesty International, prison officials said that the prison housed over 1200 people, and had previously housed over 1500 before some detainees were transferred to other prisons.[178] The vast majority of detainees are men, over half of whom are estimated by the prison authorities to be detained in relation to suspicion of supporting Boko Haram. There are also about 20 women and 30 children, kept in separate wings. Prison authorities told Amnesty International that, although overcrowding has been a long-standing problem, the number of prisoners rose significantly since mid-2014, when security operations against Boko Haram were scaled up, and hundreds of people were arrested.

The prison's authorities themselves admitted that "the prison has for a long time experienced problems of overcrowding, but never on such a scale as in the past twelve months".[179] They added that "current prison infrastructures are inadequate to properly host a growing number of prisoners" and that the government is planning to build new cells. Works at the Maroua

[175] Amnesty International, *Making love a crime*, (Index: AFR 01/001/2013), https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr01/001/2013/en/ (accessed 31 August 2015) ; Amnesty International, *Republic of Cameroon: Make human rights a reality* (Index: AFR 17/001/2013), https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr17/001/2013/en/ (accessed 31 August 2015) ; Amnesty International, *Cameroon: Only limited progress on human rights despite promises: Amnesty International Submission to the UN Universal Periodic Review, April-May 2013,* (Index: AFR 17/002/2012), https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr17/002/2012/en/ (accessed 31 August 2015); Amnesty International, *Fear of torture or ill-treatment/prisoners of conscience/harsh prison conditions*, (Index: AFR 17/003/2006), 6 July 2006, https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/AFR17/003/2006/en/ (accessed 31 August 2015) See also: ACAT, *Report on the situation of prisons in Cameroon*, December 2011, http://ccfd-terresolidaire.org/IMG/pdf/camerounrapportprison2011.pdf (accessed 31 August 2015).

[176] In May 2015, more than 25,000 people were detained in prisons in Cameroon. The official capacity of the Cameroonian prison system has been estimated at 16,995 (International Centre for prison Studies, http://www.prisonstudies.org/country/cameroon). However, in July 2015, the Minister of Justice announced the construction of three new prisons (Cameroon-info.net, *Trois nouvelles prisons créées au Cameroun*, 17 July 2015, http://www.cameroon-info.net/stories/0,67136,@,cameroun-justice-trois-nouvelles-prisons-creees-au-cameroun.html, accessed 21 August 2015)

[177] Amnesty International visited the prison in Maroua on 25 June 2015.

[178] Interviews of Amnesty International researchers with prison authorities, Maroua, 25 June 2015.

[179] Meetings with prison authorities during Amnesty International's visit to the prison in Maroua on 25 May 2015.

prison have started in July 2015[180] and the Minister of Justice also announced a new prison policy.[181]

The prison in Maroua lags far behind national and international standards setting basic requirements with respect to prisoners' cells, sleeping facilities, ventilation, space, light. The prison has about 20 cells, the biggest of which, commonly known as Le Grand Bateau, hosts about 120 people, sharing a space that measures about 22 per 4 meters, with small windows and no mattresses. Prison authorities described this as the 'best' cell, preferred by the inmates, as the roof had been raised to try and allow more air to circulate via air vents at the top.

Detainees are forced to sleep 'like sardines'[182], with no space between people. Sleeping in these crammed conditions, with inadequate ventilation and light, is extremely difficult. The extreme heat of the Far North of Cameroon, with temperatures reaching over 40 degrees Celsius in the hotter months, adds to the great discomfort detainees crammed in such a small space. At night the doors are locked from 6 pm until 6 am and with no toilets in the cells, detainees must go to the toilet on the floor by the door.

Some detainees have been chained. Amnesty International is aware of detainees that were temporarily chained while under treatment in hospital, while in July 2015, 33 prisoners who had been transferred from a detention facility in Yaoundé to Maroua have been kept in chains since their arrival in Maroua.[183] The use of chains either as punishment or as a means of restraint constitutes cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.[184]

A high death toll from insanitary conditions, malnutrition and poor medical care and inhuman and degrading treatment

The deplorable hygiene and sanitation conditions in Maroua's Central Prison are putting the lives of its detainees at serious risk. At the time of Amnesty International's visit in May 2015, the prison had no running water. While ICRC was working with the fire service to transport water to the prison, water supply levels were low and prisoners were rarely able to wash. The prison has fewer than 20 latrines for over 1,200 people, while the lack of water meant that faeces and water remained stagnant in open channels in the prison courtyard.[185]

Although there are two doctors appointed to work in the prison - one working only part time - healthcare services are also deeply inadequate. Many prisoners arrived sick and their health problems have been exacerbated by overcrowding, poor sanitation, malnutrition and limited medical treatment. Even previously healthy prisoners are at high risk of skin conditions such

[180] Interviews by Amnesty International with local human rights defenders, July and August 2015. Key informants interviews n°47.

[181] Camer24, *Le Cameroun craint l'endoctrinement de ses prisonniers par des adeptes de Boko Haram,* 31 August 2015 http://www.camer24.de/le-cameroun-craint-lendoctrinement-de-ses-prisonniers-par-des-adeptes-de-boko-haram/, (accessed on 1 September 2015).

[182] Interview by Amnesty international with a human rights defender based in Maroua, May 2015. Key informants interviews n°47.

[183] Telephone interview by Amnesty International with three human rights defenders based in Maroua, July and August 2015. Key informants interviews n° 47, 62, 90.

[184] Amnesty International Dutch Section, *Monitoring and Investigating Torture, Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment, and Prison Conditions*, 2000, p. 14, http://www.amnesty.nl/sites/default/files/public/booklet_eng_torture_0.pdf (accessed 31 August 2015).

[185] Amnesty International Dutch Section, *Monitoring and Investigating Torture, Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment, and Prison Conditions*, 2000, p. 14.

scabies[186], which is amongst the most common health concern for prisoners in Maroua, in addition to respiratory infections such as tuberculosis.

Scabies can spread quickly in overcrowded conditions, like the prison in Maroua, and there is frequent skin-to-skin contact. Amnesty International met with relatives of prisoners who were in need of medical treatment prior to the arrest. They complained that regular medication and medical checks were not available in the prison and expressed concerns regarding the deteriorating health of their loved ones.

"My son is at the prison in Maroua and he's not ok. He's sick, he got scabies there. I live far from Maroua, but I have to come to see him at least three times a week to bring him food, because he's not eating well. Also, he told me that in prison it's almost impossible to wash yourself and because of that his infection has deteriorated."[187]

In this situation, the escalating death toll registered in the prison is not surprising. Amnesty International received a list of 40 prisoners reported to have died between March and May 2015, although authorities did not confirm these figures when requested. During the three weeks Amnesty International's researchers were in Maroua, three prisoners died at the hospital.[188] Amnesty International spoke with a man whose brother died in the prison of Maroua in April 2015. Questioned on the causes of death of his relative, the man replied: "He died of suffering. You know? Here, when you are sent to prison it's like you are sent to death".[189]

Amnesty International also twice visited the section of the hospital where detainees are brought when they are seriously ill. During the first visit, Amnesty International researchers were not accompanied by prison authorities. Severely malnourished patients were housed in a filthy room, with at least three half-naked detainees sleeping on the floor, one in his own excrement. The room and patients had been cleaned before a second visit accompanied by officials from the prison.

One man working in the hospital recognized the pain experienced by inmates held in such inhumane conditions. "I feel their suffering every day...I try to alleviate their pain by talking to them. But I am not happy to see that these men are held in these conditions".[190]

Prolonged pre-trial detention

The main factors leading to prison overcrowding include wave of arrests conducted during the security operations against Boko Haram suspects, as well as the large number of those held without charges, awaiting trial for protracted periods, and the slowness of the judicial system. In Maroua, as well as in other detention facilities across Cameroon, prisoners awaiting trial make up the majority of the prison population, languishing behind bars for months and even

[186] One of the doctors of the prison explained that scabies - an infestation of the skin that causes itching and pain - might be due to drops of rust leaking from the old and poorly maintained iron sheeting of the roof of the prison

[187] Interview by Amnesty International researchers with a 40 year-old man, 20 May 2015. Interview with Victims and Witnesses n°35.

[188] Amnesty International has requested information on the cause of death, but has not been provided this information.

[189] AI interview n°17, 25 May 2015.

[190] Interview by Amnesty International researchers with a man working at the Maroua hospital, 18 May 2015. Interview with Victims and Witnesses n°83.

years. According to latest available figures 70% of the prison population is made of pre-trial detainees and/or remand prisoners.[191]

[191] International Centre for Prison Studies, *World Prison Brief: Cameroon*, http://www.prisonstudies.org/country/cameroon (accessed 31 August 2015).

TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The Cameroon government has committed itself to ensuring that struggle the conflict with Boko Haram will be conducted in full respect of human rights, and has repeatedly dismissed criticism of the conduct of its armed forces when they have been accused of behaving unlawfully.

"Cameroon has voluntary ratified the UN Convention against Torture and is party to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as the African Charter. And it's with the greatest respect to these legal provisions and human rights that our security forces conduct their operations on the front line... Regarding the respect of human rights by our security forces in their daily battle against Boko Haram, our hands are clean."[192]

A key element of any respect of human rights, however, is to ensure accountability for any violations committed. Yet, apart from the internal investigation into the deaths of at least 25 people in the Gendarmerie de la Legion in Maroua, authorities told Amnesty International in May 2015 that no other investigation into large-scale human rights violations was underway, including into the mass arrests documented in this report.

Even in the one case where an investigation has been ordered, the process undertaken may not guarantee justice and accountability. Although in March 2015 officers, including Colonel Zé Onguene[193], Head of the Gendarmerie of the Far North region, were removed from duty pending an internal investigation into the deaths in custody, almost nine months after the incident no information about its progress has been communicated publicly and many key witnesses, such as eyewitnesses in the villages and survivors from the cells, have not been questioned have not been questioned for their accounts.

The investigation also appears to contain a number of weaknesses, not least that it is being managed under the Ministry of Defence, rather than an independent and impartial body. Given the nature of the allegations, and the involvement of the army, gendarmerie and police, an independent and impartial investigation would be needed to gain the confidence of key witnesses and determine the responsibility of different security forces, identify the individuals responsible for the alleged crimes, as well as the commanders in charge of the operation. Amnesty International believes that the military justice system lacks the independence and impartiality to judge members of the military. In fact, because military courts are composed of members of the military, respect for the right to trial by an independent and impartial tribunal, both in fact and appearance, is jeopardized. The Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial executions expressed concern about "trials of members of the

[192] Ministry of Communication, Allegations of torture and summary executions by NGO REDHAC against Cameroonian security forces in the fight against Boko Haram, Press Conference, Opening remarks of Mr Issa Tchiroma Bakary, Minister of Communication, Yaoundé, 13 March 2015, http://www.cameroonvoice.com/news/article-news-18115.html (accessed on 30 May 2015).

[193] Cameroun-info.net, *Nominations au Ministère de la Défense - Le Chef de l'Etat limoge le commandant de la Légion de gendarmerie de l'Extrême-Nord*, 03 March 2015, http://cameroon-info.net/stories/0,65533,@,cameroun-nominations-au-ministere-de-la-defense-le-chef-de-l-etat-limoge-le-comm.html (accessed on 2 July 2015).

security forces before military courts where it is alleged, they evade punishment because of an ill-conceived esprit de corps, which generally results in impunity"[194]. The Committee on Enforced Disappearances has reaffirmed "[t]hat military jurisdiction ought to be excluded in cases of gross human rights violations, including enforced disappearance.[195]

The scope of the investigation also appears to be too narrow, according to the information provided by the authorities to Amnesty International, as it is limited to the deaths in custody and does not look into the allegations of unlawful killings, excessive use of force and arbitrary arrests made against the security forces in the villages. Ensuring that security forces respect the law means ensuring accountability, and failure to do so will only result in impunity and persistent abuses.

Accountability is also hindered by restrictions, often informal, on freedom of expression that has curtailed public debate about the conduct of the fight against Boko Haram. Amnesty International spoke to a number of journalists who said they did not feel free to report openly on allegations of violations committed by security forces, and as a result practiced a degree of self-censorship that has prevented the media from playing its proper role.[196] Such a climate has been nourished by the Government, which has attacked criticism of the war effort as undermining national security and demoralising the troops.[197] The National Council of the Communication - a regulatory body charged with overseeing media - has said "media should promote republican values [...] as well as the protection of the territorial integrity of the nation"[198] and has called on journalists through both public statements and the organisation of journalist seminars to conduct 'patriotic journalism'[199] in support of the fight against Boko Haram. Many journalists and human rights defenders also feared the impact of anti-terror legislation passed in December 2014, which entails a curtailment of basic rights and freedoms as detailed earlier in this report.

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[194] Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial Executions, UN Doc. A/51/457 (1996), para. 125, http://www.un.org/documents/ga/docs/51/plenary/a51-457.htm (accessed 31 August 2015).

[195] CED, Article 16(2).

[196] Interviews by Amnesty International with 4 journalists in Yaoundé, Douala and Maroua, 11-24 May 2015. Key informants interview n°85-88 (AI interviews n°85-88, 11-24 May 2015).

[197] AI interview n°85-88, 11-24 May 2015.

[198] Camer.be, *Cameroun : Lutte contre le terrorisme : La responsabilité des médias,* http://www.camer.be/40747/24:21/cameroun-lutte-contre-le-terrorisme-la-responsabilite-des-medias-cameroon.html (accessed 8 August 2015).

[199] Agenceecofin.com, *Cameroun : le CNC appelle les médias au patriotisme dans la lutte contre Boko Haram*, 12 September 2014, http://www.agenceecofin.com/regulation/1209-22730-cameroun-le-cnc-appelle-les-medias-au-patriotisme-dans-la-lutte-contre-boko-haram (accessed on 3 August 2015); Journalducameroun, *Le Conseil national de la communication invite les journalistes au devoir patriotique,* 18 March 2015, http://www.journalducameroun.com/article.php?aid=19660 (accessed on 3 August 2015).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Boko Haram has brought violence to Cameroon, attacking civilian and military targets alike, killing and kidnapping hundreds of people, looting and destroying villages and property. This brutality is at the very root of human rights abuses and violations committed, and Boko Haram has a clear and unambiguous responsibility to stop wreaking havoc on the lives of people of northern Cameroon.

As in Nigeria, the Cameroonian government face a serious security threat and has both the right to defend itself and the duty to protect its citizens from attack, using all legal and necessary means. But it must learn the lessons of its larger neighbour. The experience of Nigeria shows that failing to respect human rights and international humanitarian law in the fight against Boko Haram can have catastrophic effects – not only failing to adequately protect the population from the armed group, but committing violations of their own.

Cameroon does not have to follow this example. The Cameroon government has made a commitment to respect human rights in the fight against Boko Haram, but as this report shows this promise has often been betrayed on the ground with hundreds of victims. Civilian populations in the Far North of Cameroon urgently need protection from Boko Haram and support to rebuild their lives and livelihoods.

Putting an end to Boko Haram's crimes will not be enough unless Cameroonian security forces place respect for human rights at the centre of its security operations and its judicial system. Urgent measures are needed to improve the conduct and discipline of security forces, strengthen and speed up its judicial system, and ensure humane prison conditions that meet international standards.

If Cameroon wants to defeat Boko Haram, it needs to win the confidence of the population and demonstrate clearly and unequivocally that it is committed to respecting human rights. This must start by acknowledging the scale of the challenge and opening independent and impartial investigations into the violations outlined in this report, including those that may amount to war crimes by Boko Haram, and bring any perpetrator to justice according to international fair trial standards without recourse to the death penalty.

In doing so the Government of Cameroon can show that it is serious about its commitment to respecting human rights in the fight against Boko Haram, ensuring accountability for crimes committed and identifying measures to prevent such violations from occurring again.

TO CAMEROONIAN AUTHORITIES

- Investigate promptly, thoroughly, independently and impartially all reliable allegations of crimes under international law and other human rights violations and abuses by members of the security forces and Boko Haram with the aim of bringing suspects to justice in fair trials with no recourse to the death penalty;
    - Investigations should include specific cases highlighted in this report, including allegations of human rights violations committed by state forces during mass arrests

in the villages of Magdeme, Doublé, Guirvidig and in the city of Maroua, as well as by Boko Haram in the villages of Amchide and Bia and in the city of Maroua;

- Acknowledge publically the severity of allegations of the crimes under international law and human rights violations perpetrated by the security forces against the civilian population in the Far North province, including excessive use of force leading to killings, death in custody, destruction of property, arbitrary arrests and detentions, and enforced disappearances.

EXCESSIVE USE OF FORCE

- Make sure security forces only use force when strictly necessary and only to the minimum extent required under the circumstances. Lethal force should not be used except when strictly unavoidable in order to protect life;

- Issue clear orders to the military, the gendarmes and the police commanders to immediately cease the use of excessive force in the context of cordon and search operations and ensure security forces comply with international human rights law and standards on the use of force;

- Ensure that international human rights standards on the prohibition of torture and ill-treatment are strictly enforced and continue to be part of regular scenario-based training of all security forces;

- Make sure all security forces have sufficient resources and equipment to operate and meet human rights standards;

- Develop a set of guidelines to govern cordon and search operations to restrain the use of excessive force by security force;

ARBITRARY ARRESTS AND DETENTIONS

- Ensure arrests and detentions are conducted in compliance with domestic law and international human rights law, and with international standards such as the core human rights treaties, and specific instruments such as the Principles on Fair Trial in Africa and ensure all security forces are trained on and understand these norms;

- Ensure that when a suspect is brought into custody, there are sufficient, recognizable and precise grounds for arrest and evidence is appropriately gathered. If there are insufficient grounds for arrest, the person must be immediately released;

- Ensure that detainees are promptly brought before an independent court meeting international fair trial standards, know and have access to legal procedures allowing them to challenge the legality of their detention;

- Ensure all detainees have prompt and unhindered access to their families, medical professionals and legal assistance in accordance with international standards.

PRISON CONDITIONS

- Ensure that conditions in detention facilities are humane and preserve prisoners' physical and psychological integrity and provide all detainees with professional medical care, adequate food and water. In particular conditions in the prison in Maroua, as well as in the section of the hospital were detainees are brought, should be immediately improved by:

    - Urgently ensuring that all detainees have access to professional medical care, suitable sanitation facilities, adequate food and water, and all other necessities of human survival;

    - Addressing overcrowding and speeding up projects to build new cells as soon as possible or considering relocation of prisoners to other facilities.

- Fully implement in practice the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment and its Optional Protocol;

- Ensure that all detention facilities are subjected to unhindered, regular independent inspection by national and international human rights bodies, including the National Human Rights Commission, the ICRC, human rights NGOs and relevant mechanisms of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) and the United Nations;

- Ensure that an up-to-date, centralized register of all people arrested and detained is maintained and kept accessible to the relatives and lawyers of those arrested and detained, as well as to any other people who may be concerned. The register must include the personal details of the detainees, the names and places of detention, the names of the individuals responsible for the detention, the date of arrest and detention, all transfers and the grounds for arrest and detention.

ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES

- Conduct prompt, impartial and independent investigations into all cases of enforced disappearances including those documented in this report;

- Release immediately or reveal the fate and whereabouts of all persons who have been subjected to any form of deprivation of liberty;

    - Those not released must be brought promptly before a regular civilian court, charged with a recognizably criminal offence and, if remanded by the court, held in an official place of detention with access to lawyers, family and the courts and given a fair trial without imposing the death penalty.

- Bring to justice all those suspected of criminal responsibility for ordering or carrying out enforced disappearances, irrespective of rank and status, in proceedings which meet international standards of fair trial;

- Ratify promptly the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and recognize the competence of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances to receive and consider communications from or on behalf of victims and inter-state complaints.

DEATHS IN CUSTODY

- Ensure thorough, prompt, effective and impartial investigations of all suspected cases of death in custody. The methodology and findings of the investigations should be public, and authorities should ensure that persons identified by the investigation as having participated in an unlawful killing are held accountable.

- Ensure, in particular, that a thorough, prompt and impartial investigation by a civilian court is conducted for the death in custody of 25 or more people at the Gendarmerie Headquarters in Maroua between 27 and 28 December 2014, including by:

    - Providing public and precise information on the place of burial, the causes and circumstances of the death;

    - Interviewing key eyewitnesses present in the cell of the Gendarmerie headquarters on the night between 27 and 28 December 2014.

FAIR TRIAL

- Ensure that all detainees are charged with a recognizable criminal offence and tried in accordance with international standards, or released;

- Ensure that detainees are brought promptly before a judge and have access to a procedure through which they may challenge the legality of their detention;

- Ensure that all detainees have prompt and ongoing access to their relatives, legal counsel and other third parties in accordance with international standards;

- Make sure that the criminal jurisdiction of military courts is limited to trials of members of the military for breaches of military discipline and not extend to crimes over which civilian courts have jurisdiction, human rights violations or crimes under international law;

- Ensure all victims and families of victims of violations committed by both security forces and Boko Haram have access to adequate and effective reparation, including restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction and guarantees of non-repetition of violations;

- Make sure all civilians without discrimination are protected against Boko Haram's or governmental attacks and all measures are taken to guarantee the safety, security and protection of civilians and civilians' properties:

    - Ensure safety, security, and protection of informants and members of vigilantes committees and set up mechanisms to avoid any form of retaliation by Boko Haram;

- Bring the Anti-terror law it in line with international human rights standards. This should include:

    - Revoking the death penalty and disproportionate sanctions;

    - Amending Articles 2 and 3 by providing a narrower definition of terrorism and specifying which specific activities can amount to a terrorist act;

- Amending Article 11 on police custody and make sure all individuals are promptly brought before a court and charged with a recognizable criminal offence within 48 hours;

- Domesticate international human rights treaties:

  - Ratify promptly the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance to receive and consider individual cases and inter-State complaints;
  - Ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty or pronounce an official moratorium on executions, with a view to abolishing the death penalty, as called for by UN General Assembly resolution 67/176(2012);

  - Ratify promptly the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and make the declaration under Article 12 (3) allowing the Court to exercise jurisdiction over all crimes covered under the Statute committed since it came into force in 2002;

  - Amend Article 80 of the Penal Code by raising the age of criminal responsibility to that contained in international law and standards.

TO BOKO HARAM

- Abide by the laws of war, especially by immediately ending all deliberate, indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks against civilians;

- Publicly condemn abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law and immediately issue orders, from the highest levels of leadership, that individuals who are members or fight on behalf of Boko Haram must respect human rights and international humanitarian law;

- Remove from the ranks anyone suspected of responsibility for ordering or committing crimes under international law and other serious human rights abuses or possible war crimes and crimes against humanity;

- Guarantee safe passage to all civilians who wish to travel to government-controlled areas;

- Cooperate with independent and impartial investigations into crimes under international law and human rights abuses.

TO CAMEROON'S INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS, INCLUDING FRANCE, THE UNITED KINGDOM, GERMANY, THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE UNITED STATES

- Condemn the crimes under international law and human rights violations or abuses by both Boko Haram and Cameroonian security forces and publically call on the Government of Cameroon to urgently initiate thorough, independent, impartial investigations into allegations of human rights violations and crimes under international law;

- Ensure that any military co-operation with Cameroon, including training or technical advice, does not contribute to the perpetration of human rights violations;

- Consider revising assistance and cooperation programs, including training, to Cameroonian security forces until a full, independent and impartial investigation is launched into allegations of human rights violations they committed and Cameroonian authorities take appropriate steps to stop and prevent violations;

- Set up or strengthen existing vetting mechanisms in order to deny further training opportunities to individuals within the Cameroonian security forces involved in human rights violations;

- Provide long-term and sustainable financial and technical support to strengthen the judicial system and improve prison conditions across Cameroon.

TO THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL

- Ensure that any resolution in support of international forces in the fight against Boko Haram requires these forces to institute robust accountability mechanisms to ensure their compliance with IHL and human rights law.

TO THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

- Adopt a resolution calling upon the Government of Cameroon to initiate urgently thorough, independent, impartial and effective investigations into crimes under international law by all parties to the conflict and to seek regional and international assistance and advice in the conduct of these investigations and any subsequent prosecutions;

- Request a report from the Cameroonian government on steps taken towards the implementation of its obligation to pursue truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence, including through the investigation and prosecution of crimes under international law committed by all parties to the conflict.

TO THE UN OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

- Offer technical assistance to any independent investigations by the Cameroonian government, in particular for the collection and preservation of evidence;

- Continue to inform the Council on human rights violations committed by all parties to the conflict including Boko Haram and the Cameroonian security forces, as well as progress made in holding perpetrators of crimes under international law and human rights abuses and violations accountable, in its periodic reports to the Human Rights Council on Boko Haram called for by Resolution A/HRC/S-23/L.2..

TO THE AFRICAN UNION (AU)

- Condemn and demand an end to crimes under international law and human rights violations or abuses by both Cameroonian security forces and Boko Haram and publically call on the Government of Cameroon to urgently initiate thorough, independent, impartial, effective and transparent investigations into allegations of human rights violations and crimes under international law;

- Ensure all armed forces in Cameroon, including those of the Multinational Joint Task Force, comply with obligations and standards under both International Humanitarian Law and human rights law.

TO THE AU SPECIAL ENVOY ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

- Assess the impact of the ongoing conflict in the Far North region of Cameroon on women and girls, with a view to making recommendations to the Government of Cameroon, the AU Commission chairperson and the Peace and Security Council on appropriate reparation and rehabilitation mechanisms to be taken.

TO THE AFRICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES' RIGHTS

- Issue a public statement condemning and expressing concern over reports of crimes under international law and human right violations or abuses committed by Boko Haram as well as government security forces in the Far North region of Cameroon;

- Urge the government of Cameroon to comply with the Commission's 2003 Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Fair Trial and Legal Assistance in Africa and the 2014 Guidelines on the Conditions of Arrest, Police Custody and Pre-trial Detention in Africa;

- Urgently request a visit to Cameroon to assess and establish the extent of human rights violations and abuses committed in the Far North region of Cameron by Boko Haram and government security forces.

APPENDIX 1 TIMELINE OF ATTACKS

03 September 2015
Two suicide attacks by suspected Boko Haram fighters hit Kerawa. The first one was carried out at the market and the second one at the army health facility. At least 26 killed and about 100 wounded.[200]

25 August 2015
Boko Haram killed 12 civilians in the village of Mourdass.[201]

23 August 2015
Boko Haram attacked the village of Manawadji, abducting many and burning down dozens of houses.[202]

22 August 2015
Boko Haram killed 4 civilians in the village of Ngoumouldi.[203]

17 August 2015
Following a clash between Boko Haram and the Cameroonian army in the locality of Wambeché, one military and a man from the vigilantes committee were injured[204]. Also, the villages of Mafourou and Beda were attacked by Boko Haram, resulting in one civilian killed and several houses burned.[205]

15 August 2015
Cameroon army repelled a Boko Haram attack on the village of Afade.[206]

14 August 2015

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[200] Œil du Sahel, https://www.facebook.com/loeildusahelcameroun/posts/998337413551488, 03 September 2015 (accessed 03 September 2015)

[201] Cameroon-concord.com, *Boko Haram slaughters 12 in Cameroon*, 26 August 2015, http://cameroon-concord.com/news/headlines/item/3906-boko-haram-slaughters-12-in-cameroon (accessed 27 August 2015).

[202] Newsfultoncounty, *Boko Haram abducts dozens in Cameroon: Military source*, 24 August 2015, http://www.newsfultoncounty.com/world/news/247809-boko-haram-abducts-dozens-in-cameroon-military-source (accessed 25 August 2015).

[203] L'Œil du Sahel, https://www.facebook.com/loeildusahelcameroun/posts/992941367424426 (accessed 24 August 2015).

[204] L'Œil du Sahel, https://www.facebook.com/loeildusahelcameroun/posts/990105414374688 (accessed 17 August 2015).

[205] L'Œil du Sahel, https://www.facebook.com/loeildusahelcameroun/posts/990487341003162 (accessed 17 August 2015).

[206] L'Œil du Sahel, https://www.facebook.com/loeildusahelcameroun/posts/989499314435298 (accessed 17 August 2015).

Boko Haram killed one man and burned several houses in the village of Mourdas. Clashes between Boko haram and the Cameroonian army were reported to take place in the village of Tayer.[207]

13 August 2015
Boko Haram killed 6 in the village of Blame before being repelled by government soldiers, who killed 12 of the militants.[208]

08 August 2015
Clashes between Boko Haram and Cameroonian security forces in the village of Gassama.[209]

03 August 2015
Boko Haram burned down the village of Tchakarmari, killing 8, including members of the local vigilantes' committee and kidnapping at least 135 people.[210]

31 July 2015
More than 2,000 Nigerians living in Cameroon "rounded up" and expelled in bid to prevent Boko Haram attacks.[211]

26 July 2015
Boko Haram burned the gendarmerie base of Afade killing 4[212], and also attacked the adjacent villages of Tchebe-Tchebe and Dzaba, killing 7 and burning down a catholic church.[213]

25 July 2015
A suicide bombing hit a crowded bar in the city of Maroua, killing more than 20 and injuring at least 80.[214]

22 July 2015

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[207] L'Œil du Sahel, https://www.facebook.com/loeildusahelcameroun/posts/989017897816773 (accessed 17 August 2015).

[208] L'Œil du Sahel, http://thenationonlineng.net/boko-haram-raids-cameroon-village-kills-six/ (accessed 17 August 2015).

[209] L'Œil du Sahel, https://fr-fr.facebook.com/loeildusahelcameroun (accessed 17 August 2015).

[210] L'Œil du Sahel, https://www.facebook.com/loeildusahelcameroun/posts/983078331744063 (accessed 15 August 2015).

[211] The Telegraph, *Cameroon 'expels 2,000 Nigerians' in fight against Boko Haram*, 31 July 2015, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/cameroon/11777246/Cameroon-expels-2000-Nigerians-in-fight-against-Boko-Haram.html (accessed 27 August 2015).

[212] L'Œil du Sahel, https://www.facebook.com/loeildusahelcameroun/posts/978964828822080 (accessed 15 August 2015).

[213] 7sur7, *Sept morts lors d'attaques de Boko Haram au Cameroun,* http://www.7sur7.be/7s7/fr/1505/Monde/article/detail/2405400/2015/07/27/Sept-morts-lors-d-attaques-de-Boko-Haram-au-Cameroun.dhtml, 27 July 2015 (accessed 15 August 2015).

[214] BBC, *Fresh attack in north Cameroon town of Maroua kills 19*, 25 July 2015 http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-33666272 (accessed 13 August 2015).

Twin suicide attack rocked Maroua, killing at least 13 and injuring dozens. First suicide attack in the main city of the Far north region.[215]

21 July 2015
Boko Haram attacked the village of Amsabour and took control of the village of Kaforam.[216]

19 July 2015
Boko Haram attacked and burned down the village of Kamouna killing 23 people[217], including 9 children.[218]

16 July 2015
Governor issues burqa ban in the Far North region.[219]

14 July 2015
At least 5 Boko Haram militants were killed by the Cameroonian military in Kerawa and Zelevet.[220]

12 July 2015
A twin suicide attack by Boko Haram, the first of this kind in Cameroon, killed at least 15 people, including 2 soldiers in Fotokol.[221]

7 July 2015
Boko Haram attacked Bodo, targeted the BIR base and also killed 13 civilians[222]. Militants also attacked the village of Tayer, killing 3 and abducted 3 more in the adjacent locality of Mbriché.[223]

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[215] Reuters, *Cameroon says two suicide attacks kill at least 13 in Maroua*, 22 July 2015, http://uk.reuters.com/article/2015/07/22/uk-nigeria-violence-cameroon-idUKKCN0PW1Q120150722 (accessed 13 August 2015).

[216] L'Œil du Sahel, https://www.facebook.com/loeildusahelcameroun/posts/975986435786586 (accessed 13 August 2015).

[217] News24, *Suspected Boko Haram fighters kill 23 in north Cameroon*, 21 July 2015, http://www.news24.com/Africa/News/Suspected-Boko-Haram-fighters-kill-23-in-north-Cameroon-20150721 (accessed 13 August 2015).

[218] L'Œil du Sahel, https://www.facebook.com/loeildusahelcameroun/posts/975295309189032 (accessed 13 August 2015).

[219] This day live, *Cameroun Joins Chad to Ban Hijabs as Nigerians Debate Outlaw*, 17 July 2015 http://www.thisdaylive.com/articles/cameroun-joins-chad-to-ban-hijabs-as-nigerians-debate-outlaw/214846/ (accessed13 August 2015).

[220] Turkishweekly.net, *Five Boko Haram militants killed in N. Cameroon*, 15 July 2015 http://www.turkishweekly.net/2015/07/15/news/five-boko-haram-militants-killed-in-n-cameroon-source/ (accessed 13 August 2015).

[221] Reuters, *Suicide attacks killed at least 13 in northern Cameroon*, 13 July 2015, http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/07/13/us-cameroon-violence-idUSKCN0PN1B720150713 (accessed 11 August 2015).

[222] Reuters, *Cameroon repulses Boko Haram attack, kills three militants*, 9 July 2015, http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/07/09/us-nigeria-violence-cameroon-idUSKCN0PJ2XD20150709; (accessed 11 August 2015); Voice of America, *At Least 13 Killed in Boko Haram Attack on Northern Cameroon*, 08 July 2015, http://www.voanews.com/content/boko-haram-attack-kills-at-least-13-in-northern-cameroon/2853250.html (accessed 11 August 2015).

[223] Interview by Amnesty International's partners.

3 July 2015
Boko haram militants hijacked a truck between Zigague and Dabanga.[224]

15 June 2015
Boko Haram attacked Dabanga and Ngassa, killing 2 people, stealing supplies and taking hostages.[225]

10 June 2015
2 Cameroonian soldiers were killed in Blame when Boko Haram attacked the village using grenades.[226]

9 May 2015
A Cameroonian soldier was killed by Boko Haram while on patrol in Achigachia.[227]

17 April 2015
Boko Haram attacked Bia killing 19 people and burning dozens of houses.[228]

17 February 2015
8 people were killed by Boko Haram in Gaboua.[229]

16 February 2015
5 soldiers were killed in a series of clashes in the Waza region.[230]

11 February 2015
Boko Haram attacked the Chadian military base in Fotokol, killing 1 soldier.[231]

9 February

[224] Interagency report on the situation in Cameroon Far North, 29 June – 5 July, https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/system/files/documents/files/05072015_rapport_inter-agences_extremenord.pdf (accessed 11 August 2015).

[225] Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) Africa data, http://www.acleddata.com/data/realtime-data-2015/ (accessed 11 August 2015).

[226] Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) Africa data, http://www.acleddata.com/data/realtime-data-2015/ (accessed 11 August 2015).

[227] Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) Africa data, http://www.acleddata.com/data/realtime-data-2015/ (accessed 11 August 2015).

[228] The guardian, *On the border and in the crossfire: Cameroon's war with Boko Haram*, 13 May 2015, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/may/13/on-the-border-and-in-the-crossfire-cameroons-war-with-boko-haram (accessed 11 June 2015).

[229] Cameroon-info.net, *Des civils lancent une contre-offensive sur Boko Haram à Gaboua, dans l'arrondissement de Koza*, 19 February 2015, http://www.cameroon-info.net/stories/0,65393,@,cameroun-extreme-nord-des-civils-lancent-un-contre-offensive-sur-boko-haram-a-ga.html (accessed 2 August 2015).

[230] Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) Africa data, http://www.acleddata.com/data/realtime-data-2015/ (accessed 15 June 2015).

[231] Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) Africa data, http://www.acleddata.com/data/realtime-data-2015/ (accessed 15 June 2015).

Boko Haram hijacked a bus near Koza, kidnapping 20 and killing 12 people.[232]

4 February 2015
Boko Haram attacked Fotokol, killing 90 civilians, 19 soldiers and setting dozens of buildings alight. Up to 500 civilians were wounded.[233]

30 January 2015
3 Chadian soldiers were killed when Boko Haram attacked a Chadian army contingent in Fotokol.[234]

28 January 2015
Boko Haram killed 7 people in Achigachia[235] and 3 in Dola.[236]

27 January 2015
Boko Haram killed 3 people in Gnam Gnam and burned dozen of houses.[237]

18 January 2015
Boko Haram attacked several villages in the Mayo Tsanaga district including Maki, Maba and Mokolo. They kidnapped up to 80 people, killed 3 and burned houses.[238]

12 January 2015
Boko Haram attacked a Cameroonian military base in Kolofata, killing 1 soldier.[239]

29 December 2014
2 Cameroonian soldiers died as their vehicle hit a mine planted by Boko Haram.[240]

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[232] Vanguard, *Boko Haram kidnaps 20 people in Cameroon, executes 12*, 10 February 2015, http://www.vanguardngr.com/2015/02/boko-haram-kidnaps-20-people-cameroon-executes-12/ (accessed 15 June 2015).

[233] The guardian, *Boko Haram kills 90 civilians and wounds 500 in Cameroon attacks*, 5 February 2015, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/feb/05/boko-haram-kills-civilians-attacks-cameroon-border-nigeria-fotokol (accessed 15 June 2015).

[234] Daily trust, *3 Chad soldiers, 123 Boko Haram fighters killed in Cameroon,* 31 January 2015, http://www.dailytrust.com.ng/weekly/index.php/new-news/18909-3-chad-soldiers-123-boko-haram-fighters-killed-in-cameroon (accessed 15 June 2015).

[235] Cameroon-concord, *War on terror: Boko Haram kills 10, welcomes Chadian forces in Fotokol with 7 rockets*, 29 January 2015, http://cameroon-concord.com/news/other/item/2338-war-on-terror-boko-haram-kills-10-welcomes-chadian-forces-in-fotokol-with-7-rockets (accessed 15 June 2015).

[236] Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) Africa data, http://www.acleddata.com/data/realtime-data-2015/ (accessed 15 June 2015).

[237] Cameroon-concord, *War on terror: Boko Haram kills 10, welcomes Chadian forces in Fotokol with 7 rockets*, 29 January 2015, http://cameroon-concord.com/news/other/item/2338-war-on-terror-boko-haram-kills-10-welcomes-chadian-forces-in-fotokol-with-7-rockets (accessed 15 June 2015).

[238] The guardian, *Boko Haram kills three and kidnaps 80 in attack on Cameroon villages*, 19 January 2015, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/18/boko-haram-kidnapping-children-killed-cameroon-nigeria?_sm_au_=iVVfHWHRN84qH8k7 (accessed 15 June 2015).

[239] Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) Africa data, http://www.acleddata.com/data/realtime-data-2015/ (accessed 15 June 2015).

[240] Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) Africa data, http://www.acleddata.com/data/version-5-data-1997-2014/ (accessed 15 June 2015).

28 December 2014
Boko Haram attacked Achigchia, killed 8 soldiers and forced the Cameroonian military to retreat.[241]

26 December 2014
Boko Haram killed 23 civilians in Mbaljuel[242] and also attacked Amchide, Limani, Makari, Chogori, Doble, and Waza. 1 Cameroonian soldier killed.

20 December 2015
Cameroonian security forces raided Guirvidig and arrested of 84 children of koranic schools and 43 men. Authorities claimed the schools were used as 'Boko Haram training camps'.[243]

13 December 2014
2 Cameroonian soldiers killed after their vehicles hit a landmine planted by Boko Haram in Achigachia.[244]

23 November 2014
The Cameroonian destroyed a Boko Haram training camp in Fotokol.[245]

9 November 2014
Boko Haram attacked 6 communities simultaneously, including Fotokol, Kolofata and Talamade. 3 civilians killed in Fotokol. The village chief of Talamade also killed.[246]

31 October 2014
1 Cameroonian soldier killed and another injured when their car hit a mine planted by Boko Haram between Fotokol and Kousseri.[247]

15-16 October 2014

[241] RFI, *Boko Haram se retire d'un camp militaire au Cameroun*, 28 December 2014, http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20141228-cameroun-boko-haram-retire-camp-militaire-ashigashiya/ (accessed 15 June 2015)

[242] Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) Africa data, http://www.acleddata.com/data/version-5-data-1997-2014/ (accessed 15 June 2015).

[243] Reuters, *Cameroon army says dismantles Boko Haram training camp*, 22 December 2014, http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/12/22/us-cameroon-boko-haram-idUSKBN0K01IA20141222 (accessed 15 June 2015).

[244] French people daily, *Cameroun : 2 soldats tués par une mine antipersonnel posée par Boko Haram,* 15 December 2014, http://french.peopledaily.com.cn/n/2014/1215/c96852-8822833.html (accessed 15 June 2015).

[245] Koaci, http://koaci.com/cameroun-larmee-detruit-camp-dentrainement-boko-haram-fotokol-96644.html (accessed 15 June 2015).

[246] Le Monde, *Six localités camerounaises attaquées simultanément par Boko Haram*, 11 November 2014, http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2014/11/11/six-localites-camerounaises-attaquees-simultanement-par-boko-haram_4521599_3212.html (accessed 15 June 2015).

[247] Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) Africa data, http://www.acleddata.com/data/version-5-data-1997-2014/ (accessed 15 June 2015).

Boko Haram attacked Amchide and Limani, killing at least 30 civilians and 8 Cameroonian soldiers.[248]

11 October 2014
27 hostages released by Boko Haram, including 10 Chinese nationals and 17 Cameroonians (including the Deputy PM's wife).

6 October 2014
8 people killed by a rocket fired by Boko Haram from Banki, Nigeria, into a crowded market in Amchide, Cameroon.[249]

21 September 2014
20 people killed by Boko Haram at the village market in Tourou.[250]

18 September 2014
4 people killed by Boko Haram in Gans.[251]

26 August 2014
Cameroonian forces battled Boko Haram in Achigachia (which was partially occupied), Fotokol and Kolofata (Cameroonian forces forced to retreat).[252]

18 August 2014
3 people killed and 15 abducted by Boko Haram in Greya. Boko Haram also burned down the village's primary school.[253]

14 August 2014
Boko Haram attacked the Cameroonian military in Bonderi, kidnapping 7 police officers and a gendarme.[254]

30 July 2014
Boko Haram raided Zigague, killing 10 people and kidnapping a child.

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[248] Reuters, *Cameroon says troops kill 107 Boko Haram militants*, 17 October 2014 http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/10/17/us-nigeria-boko-haram-cameroon-idUSKCN0I61RY20141017 (accessed 15 June 2015).

[249] Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) Africa data, http://www.acleddata.com/data/version-5-data-1997-2014/ (accessed 15 June 2015).

[250] Anadolu Agency, *20 killed in Boko Haram attack in N. Cameroon*, 22 September 2014 http://www.aa.com.tr/en/rss/393273--20-killed-in-boko-haram-attack-in-n-cameroon (accessed 15 June 2015).

[251] Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) Africa data, http://www.acleddata.com/data/version-5-data-1997-2014/ (accessed 15 June 2015).

[252] Al Jazeera, *Boko Haram seizes town after soldiers flee*, 26 August 2014, http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2014/08/boko-haram-seizes-town-after-soldiers-flee-201482618131173910 7.html, (accessed 26 August 2015).

[253] Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) Africa data, http://www.acleddata.com/data/version-5-data-1997-2014/ (accessed 15 June 2015).

[254] Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) Africa data, http://www.acleddata.com/data/version-5-data-1997-2014/ (accessed 15 June 2015).

27 July 2014
14 people killed and 50 kidnapped following a Boko Haram attack in Kolofata. Among the kidnapped the Deputy PM of Cameroon's wife.[255]

15 July 2014
Boko Haram ransacked the home of Bieshair Mohaman, the traditional and influential ruler of Limani and kidnapped two of his children.[256]

23 June 2014
The Cameroonian gendarmes cordoned off the market in Maroua suspected of hiding arms for Boko Haram's members, and arrested around 50 people.[257]

16 May 2014
10 Chinese nationals kidnapped during a raid by Boko Haram on a Chinese company in Waza.[258]

20 April 2014
Boko Haram robbed a cooperative and tried to kidnap three Colombian nationals from the Ouzal parish.[259]

13 March 2014
Boko Haram attacked a market near Kousseri, killing one soldier.[260]

13 November 2013
French priest G. Vandenbeusch was abducted from his parish in Nguetchewe by Boko Haram.[261]

19 February 2013

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[255] Reuters, *Boko Haram kidnaps wife of Cameroon's vice PM, kills at least three*, 27 July 2014 http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/07/27/us-cameroon-violence-boko-haram-idUSKBN0FW0CQ20140727 (accessed 15 June 2015).

[256] Voice of America, *Suspected Boko Haram Militants Kidnap Cleric's Children*, 15 July 2014, http://www.voanews.com/content/suspected-boko-haram-militants-kidnap-clerics-children/1957791.html (accessed 15 June 2015

[257] Camerpost, *Lutte contre Boko Haram : 45 suspects aux arrêts à Maroua*, 24 June 2014 http://www.camerpost.com/cameroun-lutte-contre-boko-haram-45-suspects-aux-arrets-a-maroua-24062014/ (accessed 15 June 2015); Anadolu Agency, *40 présumés complices de Boko Haram arrêtés au Cameroun*, 24 June 2014 http://www.aa.com.tr/fr/afrique/349185--40-presumes-complices-de-boko-haram-arretes-au-cameroun (accessed 15 June 2015).

[258] Aproko247, *Boko Haram Strikes In Cameroon; Kills Chinese, Kidnaps 10*, 17 May 2014 http://www.aproko247.com/2014/05/17/boko-haram-strikes-in-cameroon-kills-chinese-kidnaps-10/ (accessed 15 June 2015).

[259] Camer.be, *Boko Haram attaque le village de D'ouzal*, 25 April 2014 http://www.camer.be/33251/11:1/cameroun-boko-haram-attaque-le-village-douzal-cameroon.html (accessed 15 June 2015).

[260] Voice of America, *Cameroon Blames Boko Haram for Attack Near Kousseri*, 14 March 2014, http://www.voanews.com/content/cameroon-boko-haram-responsible-for-attack-near-kousseri/1871061.html (accessed 15 June 2015).

[261] France24, *Boko Haram 'holding' kidnapped French priest*, 16 November 2013, http://www.france24.com/en/20131115-nigeria-boko-haram-holding-french-priest-kidnapped-cameroon (accessed 15 June 2015).

French family of 7, including four children, kidnapped in Cameroon by militants of Boko Haram's spin off ANSARU.[262]

[262] France24, *Video claims French family kidnapped by Boko Haram*, 26 February 2013 http://www.france24.com/en/20130225-video-claims-french-family-kidnapped-boko-haram (accessed 15 June 2015).

APPENDIX 2

International human rights treaties to which Cameroon is party:

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)[263] – ratification on 27 June 1984;
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)[264] - accession on 27 June 1984;
- Convention Against Torture (CAT)[265] – ratification on 19 December 1986;
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)[266] - ratification on 23 August 1994;
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)[267] – ratification on 11 January 1993;
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict – ratification and accession in 2013[268];
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)[269] – ratification in 1971.

Cameroon is also party to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)[270], whose provisions are reaffirmed in the preamble of the Cameroonian Constitution.

Regional human rights treaties to which Cameroon is party:

[263] International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI) of 16 December 1966 entry into force 23 March 1976, in accordance with Article 49, http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/ccpr.aspx (accessed 6 July 2015).

[264] International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI) of 16 December 1966 entry into force 3 January 1976, in accordance with Article 27, http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CESCR.aspx (accessed 6 July 2015).

[265] Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 39/46 of 10 December 1984 entry into force 26 June 1987, in accordance with Article 27 (1), http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CAT.aspx (accessed on 6 July 2015).

[266] Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 34/180 of 18 December 1979 entry into force 3 September 1981, in accordance with Article 27(1), http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/cedaw.pdf (accessed 6 July 2015).

[267] Convention on the Rights of the Child, Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 44/25 of 20 November 1989 entry into force 2 September 1990, in accordance with Article 49, http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx (accessed 6 July 2015).

[268] Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution A/RES/54/263 of 25 May 2000 entry into force 12 February 2002, http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/OPACCRC.aspx (accessed 10 July 2015).

[269] International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Adopted and opened for signature and ratification by General Assembly resolution 2106 (XX) of 21 December 1965 entry into force 4 January 1969, in accordance with Article 19, http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CERD.aspx (accessed 10 July 2015).

[270] The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 December 1948 at the Palais de Chaillot, Paris, http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/ (accessed 6 July 2015).

- African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR)[271] – ratification on 20 June 1989;
- African Charter on the Rights of the Child[272]- ratification on 5 September 1997.

International humanitarian law treaties to which Cameroon is party:

- Convention (I) for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field. Geneva, 12 August 1949 – ratification on 16 September 1963[273];
- Convention (II) for the Amelioration of the Condition of Wounded, Sick and Shipwrecked Members of Armed Forces at Sea. Geneva, 12 August 1949 – Succession on 16 September1963[274];
- Convention (III) relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War. Geneva, 12 August 1949 – ratification on 16 September 1963[275];
- Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. Geneva, 12 August 1949 – ratification on 16 September 1963[276];
- Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I), 8 June 1977 - ratification on 16 March 1984[277];
- Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II), 8 June 1977 – ratification on 16 March 1984[278];
- Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby-Traps and Other Devices as amended on 3 May 1996 (Protocol II, as amended on 3 May 1996), annexed to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons which may be deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to have Indiscriminate Effects – ratification on 7 December 2006[279].

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[271] The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, Adopted 27 June 1981, OAU Doc. CAB/LEG/67/3 rev. 5, 21 I.L.M. 58 (1982), entered into force 21 October 1986, http://www.achpr.org/files/instruments/achpr/banjul_charter.pdf (accessed 6 July 2015).

[272] African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, OAU Doc. CAB/LEG/24.9/49 (1990), *entered into force* Nov. 29, 1999, http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/africa/afchild.htm (accessed 6 July 2015).

[273] Convention (I) for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field. Geneva, 12 August 1949, https://www.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/INTRO/365?OpenDocument (accessed 31 August 2015).

[274] Convention (II) for the Amelioration of the Condition of Wounded, Sick and Shipwrecked Members of Armed Forces at Sea. Geneva, 12 August 1949, https://www.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/INTRO/370?OpenDocument and https://treaties.un.org/Pages/showDetails.aspx?objid=08000002801591b0 (accessed 31 August 2015).

[275] Convention (III) relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War. Geneva, 12 August 1949, https://www.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/INTRO/375?OpenDocument (accessed 31 August 2015).

[276] Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. Geneva, 12 August 1949 https://www.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/INTRO/380 (accessed 31 August 2015).

[277] Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I), 8 June 1977, https://www.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/INTRO/470 (accessed 31 August 2015).

[278] Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II), 8 June 1977, https://www.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/INTRO/475?OpenDocument (accessed 31 August 2015).

[279] - Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby-Traps and Other Devices as amended on 3 May 1996 (Protocol II, as amended on 3 May 1996), annexed to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the

Cameroon is also party to the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees – ratification on 23 October 1961[280].

Other specific, not binding, instruments:

- United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners[281];
- Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment[282];
- Basic Principles for the Treatment of Prisoners[283];
- Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Fair Trial and Legal Assistance in Africa[284];
- UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials[285];
- Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials[286];
- Principles on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-Legal, Arbitrary and Summary Executions[287].

Use of Certain Conventional Weapons which may be deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to have Indiscriminate Effects, https://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/other/icrc_002_0811.pdf, (accessed 31 August 2015).

[280] Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, adopted on 28 July 1951 by the United Nations Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Status of Refugees and Stateless Persons convened under General Assembly resolution 429 (V) of 14 December 1950, entry into force: 22 April 1954, in accordance with article 43, http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/StatusOfRefugees.aspx (accessed 31 August 2015).

[281] The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, Adopted by the First United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, held at Geneva in 1955, and approved by the Economic and Social Council by its resolutions 663 C (XXIV) of 31 July 1957 and 2076 (LXII) of 13 May 1977, http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/treatmentprisoners.pdf (accessed 10 July 2015). The Rules have been revised in May 2015 and have been named the "Mandela Rules" to honour the legacy of the late President of South Africa, see Amnesty International, *'Mandela Rules' on prisoner treatment adopted in landmark revision of UN standards,* 22 May 2015, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2015/05/mandela-rules-on-prisoner-treatment-adopted-in-landmark-revision-of-un-standards/ (accessed 10 July 2015).

[282] Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment, A/RES/43/173

76th plenary meeting, 9 December 1988, http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/43/a43r173.htm (accessed 10 July 2015).

[283] The Basic Principles for the Treatment of Prisoners, Adopted and proclaimed by General Assembly resolution 45/111 of 14 December 1990 http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/BasicPrinciplesTreatmentOfPrisoners.aspx (accessed 10 July 2015).

[284] Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Fair Trial and Legal Assistance in Africa, 2003, http://www.achpr.org/instruments/principles-guidelines-right-fair-trial/ (accessed 25 August 2015).

[285] UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials, paragraph 4, Adopted by the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, Havana, Cuba, 27 August to 7 September 1990, http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/UseOfForceAndFirearms.aspx (accessed 15 July 2015).

[286] Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials, G.A. res. 34/169, annex, 34 U.N. GAOR Supp. (No. 46) at 186, U.N. Doc. A/34/46 (1979), http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instree/i1ccleo.htm (accessed 10 July 2015).

[287] Principles on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-legal, Arbitrary and Summary Executions Recommended by Economic and Social Council resolution 1989/65 of 24 May 1989, http://www.unrol.org/doc.aspx?d=2243 (accessed 25 August 2015).

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