

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN
Paix-Travail-Patrie

SERVICES DU PREMIER MINISTRE

SECRETARIAT GENERAL

REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON
Peace-Work-Fatherland

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

SECRETARIAT GENERAL

**PRESS RELEASE FOLLOWING CABINET MEETING
OF THURSDAY 5 MARCH 2020**

Yaounde, 5 March 2020

The Prime Minister, Head of Government, Joseph DION NGUTE, this Thursday, 5 March 2020, at 10 am, at the main building of the Prime Minister's Office, chaired a Cabinet Meeting specially dedicated to the examination of the issue of violence in schools, in execution of the instructions of the President of the Republic. It was attended by Ministers of State, Ministers, Ministers-Delegate and Secretaries of State.

During this Meeting, the Minister of State, Minister of Higher Education, the Ministers of Basic Education and Secondary Education took turns to make presentations on the state of violence in institutions under their authority, together with proposals for solutions. There was also an additional presentation by the Minister of Youth and Civic Education on the item on the agenda.

Speaking first at the end of the introductory statement by the Head of Government, the Minister of State, Minister of Higher Education, first of all outlined the different meanings of violence in the university environment, before taking stock of this phenomenon in higher education institutions and pointing out that violence affects the quality of training and often leads to the desertion of campuses by students, lecturers and support staff.

The Minister of State further indicated that, with the exception of the Buea and Bamenda campuses, where violent events related to the crisis in the North-West and South-West Regions have been recorded, the level of violence remains marginal on the campuses of other State universities and private institutes of higher learning. Physical assaults with or without weapons are rare on campuses and are generally carried out by drug addicts, who operate off-campus, in remote and often poorly lit areas.

Among the measures taken to curb the spread of violence in universities, the Minister of State referred, inter alia, to the establishment of watch units within universities, strict control of drug use on campus, depoliticizing academic institutions, and strengthening awareness of the culture of peace, citizenship and responsibility through traditional and cyber media, and teaching programmes. In addition to the above, a new managerial governance is being implemented, based on permanent consultation, equity and probity in the management of various resources, as well as the improvement of the working conditions of members of the university community. The Minister of State concluded his remarks by emphasizing the vital role that the family must play in preventing violence in all its forms.

Speaking after him, the Minister of Basic Education first of all presented the main causes of the violence observed in primary and nursery schools. After referring to the various forms of violence observed in the schools under his jurisdiction, he said that the perpetrators and victims of such violence are, on a recurrent basis, the pupils themselves, teachers and administrative and supervisory staff.

The Minister of Basic Education went on to say that the legal mechanism for combating acts of violence in schools is laid down in Law No. 98/004 of 4 April 1998 on the orientation of education in Cameroon. Section 35 of that law provides that *"the physical and moral integrity of pupils shall be guaranteed in the education system. The following are therefore prohibited: physical abuse and all other forms of violence, discrimination of any kind, and the sale, distribution and consumption of alcoholic beverages, tobacco and drugs"*. This legal framework is supplemented by various circular letters on combating violence in schools and the internal regulations of primary and nursery schools. Lastly, the Minister recommended, inter alia, the development of a parental education programme on combating violence in schools and the adoption of a code of conduct for teachers and administrative staff.



Speaking in turn, the Minister of Secondary Education stated from the outset that violence in schools is global in that all countries are confronted with it, and complex in view of its origins and the diversity of the actors involved. She stressed the need to distinguish between cases of indiscipline and cases of violence, in that the former are punishable by punishment or disciplinary measures in the school setting, while the latter constitute offences punishable under criminal law.

As for the causes of violence and insecurity in secondary schools, they are numerous and relate both to students and their families and to the social environment. The Minister mentioned, inter alia, the negative influence of mass media, the consumption of alcohol and drugs, insufficient facilities to cope with the increase in enrolment in some schools, the lack of parental supervision and the absence of fences in most schools. As solutions, the Minister of Secondary Education stressed the need to humanize schools by enforcing teaching on citizenship, effective monitoring of students by their parents and strengthening the partnership with the educational community.

In closing the presentation phase, the Minister of Youth and Civic Education stated that the issue of youth violence falls within the overall policy to combat uncivil acts. After recalling the activities carried out as part of the implementation of the National Civic Education Programme, the Minister advocated, inter alia, the revival of after-school and extracurricular activities in schools and universities, the deployment of mobile urban and rural outreach teams, and the activation of the National Council for Civic Education and Integration.

At the end of these presentations and the ensuing discussion, the Head of Government instructed the Ministers of Education to ensure the physical security of schools and universities, the systematic search of students and their school bags, and the implementation of video surveillance systems. The Prime Minister also instructed the Minister of Justice to draw up a practical guide on the criminal qualification of each type of possible violence in schools. He also instructed the Ministers in charge of Basic and Secondary Education, and the Family to organize awareness-raising campaigns among parent-teacher associations for the need to support the efforts of public authorities to combat all forms of violence in schools.

The Meeting was adjourned at 1:10 p.m.-

Yaounde, the **10 5 MARS 2020**

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