



**STATEMENT ON ROUTINE TORTURE COMMITTED AGAINST ALLEGEDLY
UNARMED CIVILIANS BY CHIEF EWUME JOHN IN FAKO DIVISION,
SOUTHWEST REGION**

June 29, 2022

We condemn in strong terms the impunity and unlawful acts including torture and inhumane and degrading treatmentⁱ perpetrated against allegedly unarmed civilians by a member of Cameroon's elite force, the Rapid Intervention Battalion (BIR).

Chief Ewume John, also commonly known as Chief Moja Moja, who is the traditional authority of Bwasa village in Buea, Southwest Region, and member of the Cameroon military, has been regularly seen publicly humiliating and torturing unarmed civilians alleged to be separatist fighters or to share separatist ideology.ⁱⁱ These acts of routine torture have continued unabated, and most of the victims are presented as from Northwest Region. He records the torture on video, which is then circulated on social media by himself or his supporters.ⁱⁱⁱ This happens under the full glare of the state and judicial authorities.

Article 1 of the International Convention Against Torture (CAT) defines torture in the following terms: "The term 'torture' means any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person **for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing** him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or **with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity**. It does not include pain or suffering arising only from, inherent in or incidental to lawful sanctions."

It is an indisputable fact that Chief Moja Moja's acts are acts of torture, considering also the fact that he is acting in his capacity as a military man and also as a Chief, being an auxiliary of the administration. The CAT allows for no circumstances or emergencies where torture could be permitted. In December 2020, Chief Moja Moja met the Prime Minister Chief Dr. Joseph Dion

Ngute in Buea, and received words of encouragement from him on his activities against separatists in the Southwest Region.^{iv} This happened shortly after Moja Moja threatened to do harm against Northwesterners.^v

On June 27, a video went viral on social media of Moja Moja torturing a man in his palace at Bwasa village in Buea, Fako Division of the Southwest Region. The video was received and analysed by CHRDA, and he could be seen beating the unarmed man with a metal object and forcing him to confess to being an Ambazonian fighter.^{vi} The victim was bleeding profusely and confessing to being an Ambazonian fighter under duress. At the time of this report, the whereabouts of the victim remain unknown.

This is just one among many cases of arbitrary arrest and torture committed by this military officer in Buea.^{vii} In another video posted on social media on May 26, 2022, he was seen torturing another victim in his palace and opened fire on the victim.^{viii}

- Mindful of these unlawful acts carried out by a military officer against allegedly unarmed civilians, CHRDA condemns such impunity in strong terms and calls on the Ministry of Defence, and judicial authorities, to investigate all these allegations and hold the perpetrator accountable.
- We also call on the state to show proof of life of all the victims arrested and tortured by the Chief in his palace, and provide avenues for the victims to seek justice.

i <https://twitter.com/AgborNkonghoF/status/1541720534957936640?s=20&t=f-zY6KxVkn8qSk7YagemPA>

ii <https://www.facebook.com/graffipipo.ovadull/posts/pfbid02ygXEC6GNKCpjLfiFKFpkm7MmeX3PNEGKSxPYnNbtRiy2aqJayLXXpoCdUzuss8ul>

iii See e.g. <https://www.facebook.com/Fan-club-chief-moja-moja-101524241871265> and https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=pfbid0Bjo9EDddXgypDHxTZ2oeLSXVCMecudsu4zP2Z4sCXP9AVNUg9fh6PLBQqCYSHzQLI&id=100077115261188

iv <https://www.facebook.com/njume.frankline.10/posts/pfbid02kflL6eGpdxHZfSRN8jhivXP7a6F5HMn1GoV7Pcf8TCfJP6dfDs8VxJrkwdGY2jeZl>

v https://www.chrda.org/chrda-condemns-hate-speeches-by-chief-ewome-john-eko-of-bwassa-village-against-the-people-of-the-north-west-region/?fbclid=IwAR3u0tCNe0Z4HAM8N_GIY2QYL6LmKHf0SiefJwb-aNZ_QBzHLZspDF34

vi <https://www.facebook.com/njume.frankline.10/posts/pfbid02qmBe7frHbLFV4q4rUYUs18RGx2KzWGVNdSg9wSpyHzt3NcU9JeHj1y3yif8VXmVrl>

vii <https://www.facebook.com/BaretaNews/videos/686460329273278/>

viii https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=pfbid0CHFPuaziuArzHaH6qa7JB8uoiJmr5en78GUEvfa2aun9bssV8fKcSwLDFvcSdxl&id=100080433917500
https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=pfbid0CHFPuaziuArzHaH6qa7JB8uoiJmr5en78GUEvfa2aun9bssV8fKcSwLDFvcSdxl&id=100080433917500