

## 2010-2011 activities

### 2010

Human Rights and Elections: Sub-regional seminar for media professionals	Douala, Cameroon	23-25 March 2010
UPR follow-up mission to Equatorial Guinea	Malabo, Equatorial Guinea	12 to 18 April 2010
UPR follow-up mission to Congo	Brazzaville, Congo	June 2010
Regional workshop on the role of elections management bodies in the protection and promotion of human rights within the context of electoral processes	Yaoundé, Cameroon	6-8 July 2010
Joint celebration of International Day of indigenous peoples	Brazzaville, Congo	4-9 August 2010
One day pre-MDG discussion: The link between human rights and MDGs	Yaoundé, Cameroon	26 August 2010
Commemoration of International Democracy Day at the Gabon Senate	Libreville, Gabon	15 September 2010
The role of parliaments in promoting human rights and democratic practices in the sub-region	Libreville, Gabon	15-17 September 2010
Sub-regional training and advocacy workshop on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	Yaoundé, Cameroon	28-30 November 2010
Sub-regional dialogue on migration and human rights	Yaoundé, Cameroon	6-8 December 2010
Sub-regional forum on the role of human rights defenders	Yaoundé, Cameroon	9 December 2010
Official celebration of the International Human Rights Day 2010 at the National Assembly	Yaoundé, Cameroon	10 December 2010

### 2011

Food for thought "Carrefour littéraire" event on elections and human rights focusing specifically on the rights of discriminated groups to political participation	Yaoundé, Cameroon	10 March 2011
Training workshop jointly organized with UNESCO for journalists on human rights and press freedom in the context of the World Press Freedom Day	Yaoundé, Cameroon	27 to 28 April 2011
Training workshop jointly organized with UNHCR to strengthen the capacities of the law enforcement authorities in human rights and the rights of refugees and asylum seekers	Garoua, Cameroon	28-29 April 2011
Dialogue with the media in order to present an overview of the human rights situation in the sub region and launch the pool of reporters	Yaoundé, Cameroon	24 May 2011
Elections and human rights: national workshop for political parties in Cameroon	Yaoundé, Cameroon	14-16 June 2011
National workshop on cooperation with international and regional human rights mechanism, including UPR follow-up	Sao Tomé and Príncipe	21-23 June 2011
Sub-regional workshop for National Human Rights Institutions	Yaoundé, Cameroon	27-29 June 2011
UPR consultation with Civil Society Organizations in Cameroon	Yaoundé, Cameroon	30 June 2011
Training for members of the inter-ministerial committee for follow-up of cooperation with international and regional human rights mechanisms, on the preparation of reports to international and regional human rights mechanisms	Brazzaville, Congo	13-15 July 2011
Training of trainer's workshop at the National School of Penitentiary Administration (ENAP)	Buea, Cameroon	18-22 July 2011
Elections and human rights: Training workshop for media professionals on reporting human rights aspects related to elections before, during and after elections	Mbalmayo, Cameroon	27-29 July 2011
Sub regional workshop on gender mainstreaming for human rights field presences and UNCT gender facilitators in Central Africa	Yaoundé, Cameroon	10-12 August 2011
Briefing of financial and technical partners on the UPR recommendations for Cameroon	Yaoundé, Cameroon	31 August 2011
Human rights and elections: National capacity building workshop for CSOs on promoting human rights during electoral periods	Yaoundé, Cameroon	7-8 September 2011
Training workshop on women's human rights and gender issues, including on CEDAW reporting, for officials of the Cameroon Ministry for the Promotion of Women and the Family	Yaoundé, Cameroon	13-14 September 2011
Commemoration of International Democracy Day at the Cameroon National Assembly	Yaoundé, Cameroon	15 September 2011



United Nations Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa / OHCHR Central Africa Regional Office (Yaoundé, Cameroon)



# 10 years at the service of Central Africa



The United Nations Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa (based in Yaoundé) was established in 2001, and promotes and protects human rights and democracy in 11 Central African countries, through advocacy, lobbying, dialogue, technical assistance and advisory services extended to Governments, parliaments, United Nations country teams, national human rights institutions, civil society organizations and the media, amongst others.

**Thematic priorities 2010-2013**

- Promotion of the rule of law and combating impunity
- Elimination of discrimination
- Promotion and protection of economic, social and cultural rights
- Promotion of democracy and good governance
- Strengthening national human rights protection systems and cooperation with international and regional human rights mechanisms

**2010 report on activities and results**

The human rights situation in Central Africa continues to be affected by past and ongoing conflicts and was aggravated by the recent economic and food crises. In 2010, several Central African countries held elections. In some, democracy and the rule of law were threatened by dominant one-party rule, corruption and undue executive influence over the judiciary and legislative bodies. Inadequate national legal frameworks, unresponsive and unaccountable public administrations, weak and under-resourced judiciaries and inadequate social policies all had an effect on the human rights situations in most of the subregion's countries. Discrimination based on ethnicity, nationality, social and political affiliations, gender, sexual orientation and health status remained a serious concern. Other continuing challenges included trafficking in persons and the protection of the human rights of migrant workers, as well as the absence of subregional coordinated action plans and policies to address these situations. Overall, national human rights protection systems throughout the region remained weak, with the existence of very few effective national human rights institutions (NHRIs). Civil society organizations working on human rights and democracy were largely uncoordinated and fragmented, and human rights defenders were under increasing threat during 2010.



All the subregion's countries engaged with the Universal Periodic Review of the Human Rights Council, providing an important opportunity for the Centre to engage on a wide range of human rights issues at national levels.

**Results**

**National laws, policies and institutions**

- So far, two NHRIs have met their objectives of becoming increasingly compliant with the Paris Principles and sufficiently strengthened to carry out their activities in compliance with international and regional human rights standards: Cameroon's NHRI received "A" status accreditation from the International Coordinating Committee for National Human Rights Institutions (ICC-NHRI) in July 2010 (joining Rwanda's NHRI the only two NHRIs with "A" status in Central Africa) and the NHRI of the Republic of the Congo received its first-time accreditation of "B" status in October 2010.
- In Cameroon, a national law to protect the rights of persons with disabilities was adopted in April 2010. The law was largely in conformity with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Following the Centre's advocacy efforts, ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in Cameroon, the Republic of the Congo and Equatorial Guinea should follow shortly.

**Participation**

- The Centre's continuing joint advocacy efforts with Sightsavers and the Cameroon NHRI have led to Cameroon's election management body, ELECAM, starting to take

concrete accessibility measures to allow persons with disabilities to vote freely, independently and in dignity in the 2011 presidential elections.

**State engagement with human rights mechanisms**

- The Republic of the Congo made significant progress in catching up with almost all outstanding treaty body reporting obligations (submission of overdue reports under ICCPR, ICESCR, CAT, CEDAW and CRC expected in 2011). Advocacy with the Governments of Gabon, Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea in this area was undertaken, with results expected in 2011.
- An important development in the subregion during the reporting period was the active engagement of all countries in the preparations and follow-up to the UPR process, facilitated by the Centre. Significant progress with the adoption of a national road map for the follow-up of recommendations from international and regional human rights mechanisms was achieved in the Republic of the Congo, and similar processes were initiated in Cameroon, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea through regular country visits and sustained dialogue. The Centre also supported Rwanda and Sao Tomé and Príncipe in their UPR preparations during 2010.
- The materials produced by the Centre for training the Inter-ministerial Committee managing national follow-up to the recommendations of the human rights mechanisms of the Republic of the Congo were used in Rwanda, Chad and Liberia, and will possibly also be used in other countries.

**Human rights mainstreaming within the United Nations**

- The very positive response to, and desire for, increased human rights engagement at country level by Resident Coordinators and the UN Country Teams in Cameroon, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Sao Tomé and Príncipe, has resulted in the Governments of Congo and Equatorial Guinea requesting the deployment of human rights advisers in their countries, supported by the Centre.
- The presentation of the Centre's annual report of activities to the United Nations Standing Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa led to the decision of the Standing Committee at ministerial level to consider the challenges posed by trafficking in persons to human rights and stability in the subregion at its meeting in 2011. The Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons was also invited to participate.

**Challenges and lessons learned**

Whilst countries of the subregion have generally ratified most key international human rights instruments, the implementation of these commitments was generally lacking. In some particularly challenging situations. OHCHR's approach required ensuring that national authorities remain engaged with international and regional protection mechanisms, which provide a useful entry point for addressing human rights protection concerns. The Centre also sought to ensure that any outstanding treaty body and special procedures recommendations were included in the assistance provided in UPR follow-up, to ensure consistency. Similarly, the importance of the Centre remaining in a facilitating role and securing national ownership of the process meant that the process took much longer than envisaged but was not imposed or externally driven.

The Centre also provided support to the visits of two special procedures mechanisms, namely on indigenous issues to the Republic of the Congo and on the use of mercenaries to Equatorial Guinea. The Centre's efforts to revitalise the Memorandum of Understanding between the Economic Community of Central African States and the Office, and cooperation with the subregional organization proved challenging and failed to ensure substantive and continued engagement.

