



The UIA Institute for the Rule of Law

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## STATEMENT

Paris, 28 November 2024

### Cameroon

#### **UIA-IROL strongly condemns the attack on Richard Tamfu, victim of violence committed while he was practicing his profession as a lawyer**

**UIA-IROL condemns the unacceptable attack on Richard Tamfu, a lawyer at the Cameroon Bar, on 27 November 2024, in Douala, while he was performing his professional duties assisting a client. This incident constitutes a serious attack on the legal profession and on fundamental rights. UIA-IROL wishes to express its full solidarity with Mr. Tamfu and the entire legal profession.**

According to information brought to the attention of UIA-IROL by the UIA Cameroon National Committee, the attack occurred when Mr. Tamfu challenged the arrest of one of his clients, who had been summoned to the Bonanjo Gendarmerie Group. As he was denouncing an arrest he considered illegal in the absence of a lawful warrant, Mr. Tamfu was violently assaulted by gendarmes in the presence of witnesses. These acts of violence, perpetrated in the course of the legitimate exercise of Mr. Tamfu's duties, are intolerable.

**UIA-IROL strongly condemns this assault, which violates procedural guarantees and fundamental rights. It expresses its unwavering solidarity with Mr. Tamfu and reaffirms its support for the entire legal profession in Cameroon.**

This attack raises important questions about the respect for fundamental rights and procedural safeguards, including the right of lawyers to practice their profession without fear, harassment or interference.

UIA-IROL is all the more concerned as assaults, interference and acts of intimidation against lawyers by security forces appear to have become an increasingly common practice in Cameroon. UIA-IROL therefore supports the stand taken by the Cameroon Bar Association in its press release published on 28 November.

The Institute recalls that lawyers play an essential role in protecting the fundamental rights and freedoms of those subject to trial, and in safeguarding the Rule of Law. In accordance with the United Nations Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers<sup>1</sup> and the Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Fair Trial and Legal Assistance in Africa<sup>2</sup>, it is incumbent on the Cameroonian authorities to guarantee the free and secure exercise of the legal profession, in strict compliance with the guarantees of a fair trial.

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<sup>1</sup>[Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers](#), adopted by the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, Havana, Cuba, in 1990, see for example Principles 16 and 17.

<sup>2</sup>[Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Fair Trial and Legal Assistance in Africa](#), adopted by African Commission on Human and People's Rights in 2003, see for example, I. (b)

UIA-IROL calls on the Cameroonian authorities to undertake an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into this serious incident, to ensure that those responsible are held accountable for their actions, and to reaffirm their commitment to the Rule of Law. Such a step is indeed essential to ensure the safety of lawyers and the respect of fundamental rights in Cameroon.

**UIA-IROL will stand by the Cameroon Bar Association and will follow developments with the utmost attention.**

#### **More about UIA-IROL**

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*The Institute for the Rule of Law of the International Association of Lawyers (UIA-IROL) promotes the Rule of Law and supports and defends, in particular, (1) lawyers, judges and human rights defenders who are harassed, threatened and/or persecuted in the exercise of their professions, (2) the independence of the legal and judicial professions, and (3) the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers, especially in defense of human rights.*

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