

URGENT ACTION

ACTIVIST IN NEED OF URGENT MEDICAL CARE

Political activist and member of opposition party, Cameroon Renaissance Movement (Mouvement pour la Renaissance du Cameroun - MRC), Serge Branco Nana, is serving a two-year prison sentence for “mutiny”, in Mfou Prison, southern Cameroon. Accused of inciting a riot while in pre-trial detention, he is at risk of further torture and requires urgent medical care.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Mr Laurent Eso, Minister of Justice
Secrétariat Général
Quartier ministériel
BP 1000 Yaoundé - Cameroun
Tel: (+237) 222 23 26 23
Email: celcomminjustice@yahoo.fr

Your Excellency,

I am deeply concerned about the wellbeing of political activist, Serge Branco Nana.

Serge Branco Nana is a member of the opposition party, MRC. He was arrested in January 2019 in Bagangté, western Cameroon, during peaceful demonstrations. He was then held in pre-trial detention in Kondengui Prison in Yaounde. In July, he was accused of inciting a riot in the prison and was subsequently sentenced to two-years in prison for “mutiny”.

Following the riot, Serge Branco Nana was taken to the State Secretariat for Defense (SED), where he was allegedly tortured for hours, severely beaten and his genitals were electrocuted. He was then transferred to Mfou Prison, 30km from Yaounde, and more than 300km from Bagangté, with wounds and in a very deteriorated physical condition. He has since been complaining about pain in his abdomen, back and feet. Despite his complaints he has not received medical care.

On 1 February 2020, Serge Branco Nana’s brother was denied access to him. He is reportedly chained in his cell.

Cameroon is a party to three international treaties that prohibit torture, as well as cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. Moreover, Cameroon’s Constitution, Penal Code, and Criminal Procedure Code forbid the use of torture and other treatment that violates human dignity and integrity. The treatment Serge Branco Nana has undergone amounts to torture or ill-treatment, which is prohibited by those texts.

As a principle, no human being should be submitted to torture or any other ill-treatment. In light of the above, I urge you to order the penitentiary administration holding Serge Branco Nana to immediately do the following:

- *Unchain Serge Branco Nana, if those allegations are verified;*
- *Grant him urgent medical care;*
- *Allow his family and lawyers to visit him;*
- *Ensure that he is protected from torture and other ill-treatment.*

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 26 January 2019, opposition party, Movement for the Renaissance of Cameroon (MRC) – the party of Maurice Kamto, the candidate that came in second during the October 2018 elections – called for public protests or “marches blanches” across the country, to contest the alleged mass irregularities that occurred during the electoral process. In response to the unauthorised protests, security forces used excessive force against demonstrators. Seven people were shot and injured in the coastal city of Douala, while other protesters were beaten. A Government spokesperson denied the use of live ammunition against protesters, but sequences of automatic gunfire in Douala, and one of a riot police officer shooting at a protester’s legs, were shown on social media.

More than one hundred protesters were arrested in Douala, Yaoundé, Dschang, Bafoussam and Bafang. Approximately 50 were released the following day and the remaining protesters were placed under administrative custody. Opposition leader Maurice Kamto was arrested on 28 January 2019; and high-profile member of the party, lawyer, Michele Ndoki, was also arrested in February. They were charged alongside 130 other people with offences including rebellion, hostility against the nation, incitement to insurrection, and were sent to pre-trial detention.

In October 2019, following an order from President Paul Biya to release some opposition members arrested during the demonstrations, hundreds of political activists, including Maurice Kamto and Michele Ndoki, were released. Amnesty International had campaigned on the cases of Michele and hip-hop artist Valséro.

Serge Branco Nana could not benefit from that measure, because he got caught up in another case. On 22 July a riot was reported in Kondengui Prison in Yaoundé. According to reports, detained armed separatists from the Anglophone regions and opposition members took possession of the prison yard, denouncing overcrowding in the prison, judicial delays and deplorable conditions. Serge Branco Nana, who was detained in that prison at the time, was accused of being among the initiators and sentenced to two years’ imprisonment, in August. Following the riot, he was taken from the prison and sent to the State Secretariat for Defence (SED), where he reportedly severely beaten for hours and his genitals electrocuted. He was then transferred to Mfou Prison, 30km from Yaounde and around 300km from the West region, making it very difficult for his family, relatives and lawyer to visit.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: French

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 20 March 2020

Please check with Amnesty regional office if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Serge Branco Nana (he/his)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: n/a

ADDITIONAL TARGETS: High Commissioner, Albert Fotabong, High Commission of Cameroon, 84 Holland Park, Kensington, London W11 3SB