



The Paradox of Women's Protection: Why Women's Rights Remain Vulnerable in Cameroon Despite Legal Commitments

Nana Charles Nguindip

Faculty of Law and Political Science

Department of English Law, University of Dschang, Cameroon.

E-mail: nanalecturer84@gmail.com

Abstract

Despite advancements in legal frameworks and gender equality discourse, women in Cameroon continue to face widespread rights violations, including Female Genital Mutilation, sexual abuse, child marriage, and harmful traditional practices. This persists despite Cameroon's ratification of international instruments like CEDAW and the Maputo Protocol, raising concerns about the effectiveness of national legal and institutional responses. This study assesses the adequacy of Cameroon's legal framework—specifically the Constitution, Penal Code, and Civil Code in addressing violence against women. Using a qualitative-descriptive approach with document and normative legal analysis, the research draws on primary legal texts and secondary sources such as institutional reports and academic literature. The findings reveal a significant gap between legal commitments and enforcement, highlighting the absence of a comprehensive law on violence against women and persistent societal and institutional barriers. The study calls for stronger legal reforms, improved implementation, and greater public awareness to ensure effective protection of women's rights.

Keywords: Complications, Assessing, Women Rights, Legal, Institutional, Protection

Introduction

Addressing violence against women has become a key concern for the Cameroonian government, which acknowledges that tackling this issue goes beyond simply endorsing international treaties, conventions, or declarations. As part of its commitment to human rights, Cameroon has recognized the importance of enacting concrete legal measures aimed at protecting women and improving their treatment within society.¹ One example of these efforts is Cameroon's ratification in 2012 of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human

¹ Lenta, P.B., & Tchoungui, C.M.N.S. (2016). *The Protection of Women's Rights in Cameroon: An Analysis of the Legal Framework*. African Journal of Legal Studies, 9(2), 1-24.

and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa.² The primary goal of ratifying the Protocol was to eradicate all forms of inhumane, degrading, and discriminatory treatment of women. However, it is noteworthy that despite this formal commitment, Cameroon has yet to take meaningful legislative action by enacting a comprehensive law specifically addressing violence against women. While a draft bill targeting gender-based violence and discrimination is under review, no definitive legal framework has been adopted to date.³ Nonetheless, Cameroon has implemented a number of laws targeting specific forms of violence against women, including provisions on rape, sexual harassment, inheritance rights, and female genital mutilation. In 2012, the government also launched a National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women, which encompassed measures such as offering health and financial assistance to victims, setting up a support and reporting hotline, and promoting awareness campaigns at both the national and community levels.

In recent decades, the global community has increasingly acknowledged the critical importance of gender equality and the empowerment of women. International agreements like the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) have played a key role in promoting women's rights and encouraging states to take concrete action. Although Cameroon is a signatory to CEDAW and has taken steps to harmonize its legal system with international norms, the actual enforcement and implementation of these laws remain inadequate.⁴ Cameroon has established several legal measures intended to safeguard women's rights. The Constitution affirms the principle of equality for all citizens, irrespective of gender, and explicitly prohibits sex-based discrimination. In addition, targeted legislation has been enacted to address concerns like domestic violence, sexual assault, and female genital mutilation. Despite these legal protections, women still encounter major obstacles in accessing justice, largely due to systemic issues such as judicial corruption, limited public awareness of legal rights, and prevailing social stigmas.

Moreover, deeply rooted customary practices in Cameroonian society frequently perpetuate gender inequality and play a significant role in the ongoing violation of women's rights. Cultural norms related to marriage, inheritance, and property ownership typically prioritize men, placing women at

² This is otherwise known as the Maputo Protocol

³ There is no unique or uniform law in Cameroon that handles issues related to violence against women in Cameroon, the laws are still scattered in different legal instruments in the country making it difficult in handling or combatting cases of violence against women

⁴ Fombad, C.M., & Nkwi, P.N. (Eds.). (2010). *Gender and Law in Cameroon: Towards Equality for Women?* Langa RPCIG

a disadvantage in both legal and social contexts.⁵ Polygamy is still prevalent in numerous communities, reinforcing unequal power relations within families and exacerbating issues such as domestic violence and marital rape. Additionally, harmful traditional practices like breast ironing—where young girls' breasts are forcibly flattened to delay puberty—persist in some regions, even though they are legally banned.⁶ The infringement of women's rights in Cameroon has widespread effects that transcend individual experiences. It obstructs the country's overall progress by restricting women's access to critical resources like education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. Additionally, gender-based violence and discrimination perpetuate cycles of poverty and inequality, creating substantial obstacles to achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative-descriptive approach using documentary research and normative juridical analysis. This approach aims to evaluate the extent to which Cameroon's legal and institutional systems are effective in addressing and preventing violence against women, taking into account the various national legal instruments and international commitments ratified by the country. The data sources used in this research consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data includes Cameroonian legislation directly related to the protection of women, such as the Constitution, the Penal Code, the Labour Code, the Civil Status Registration Ordinance, the Civil Code, and, if available, the draft Law on Violence Against Women. Additionally, the research examines international legal instruments ratified by Cameroon, including the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (CEDAW), the *Maputo Protocol*, and the *African Charter on the Welfare of the Child*. Secondary data is obtained from reports by both national and international organizations such as UN Women, Amnesty International, and La Maison des Droits de l'Homme, as well as academic journal articles, previous research findings, and statistical data from official sources like the National Institute of Statistics of Cameroon. The study also incorporates case studies of violent practices against women, including female genital mutilation (FGM), breast ironing, and child marriage. Data collection techniques include literature review of legal documents, institutional reports, and relevant academic literature. In addition, secondary data analysis is conducted using previously

⁵ Kamga, S.D., & Ndi, G.A. (2018). *The Role of Customary Law in the Protection of Women's Rights in Cameroon: An Appraisal of the Challenges and Prospects*. African Journal of Legal Studies, 11(2), 139-161.

⁶ Banda, F., & Chinkin, C. (2017). *Gender, Equality and Cultural Rights: Intersectionality and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women*. Human Rights Quarterly, 39(2), 343-375.

published surveys and field research. The data analysis techniques used in this research include normative-juridical analysis to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of existing regulations, and content analysis of documents and reports to identify legal loopholes and gaps between policies and their implementation. Furthermore, thematic analysis is applied to reveal patterns of violations, institutional challenges, and the impacts on women who are victims of violence. The scope of this research covers the national territory of Cameroon, with a particular focus on communities or regions with a high prevalence of violence against women, especially rural areas and societies where harmful traditional practices persist.

Development Goals

This article investigates the various aspects of women's rights violations in Cameroon by analyzing the legal structures and institutional deficiencies that have enabled and sustained violence against women.⁷ By shedding light on the obstacles women face in Cameroon and identifying key areas that require reform, this analysis seeks to contribute to ongoing initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality and protecting women's rights. Despite various governmental efforts to address violence against women, such abuse remains widespread throughout the country. This persistence is primarily attributed to inadequate legal provisions and the absence of a comprehensive strategy to challenge stereotypes and eliminate harmful, discriminatory practices. The complexity and persistence of violence against women in Cameroon have raised concerns about whether meaningful change is truly attainable. A notable illustration of the problem is a 2018 survey, which found that among 2,570 women surveyed, 995 (38.7%) had experienced physical violence, while 381 (14.8%) reported being victims of sexual violence.⁸ These results are consistent with more recent data, including a study by the Douala-based organization La Maison des Droits de l'Homme, which found that around 39% of women were subjected to physical violence in 2008,⁹ This suggests that there has been minimal progress in addressing the persistent epidemic of violence against women over the years. The overwhelming majority of victims are women, who make up 92% of domestic violence victims in Cameroon.¹⁰ The Government of

⁷ Anyangwe, E. (2007). *Gender Violence and Human Rights Violations in Cameroon: A Case Study on Violence against Women*. Journal of International Women's Studies, 8(4), 1-17.

⁸ Alio, Amina P., et al, "Association between intimate partner violence and induced abortion in Cameroon," 112 International Journal of Gynaecology & Obstetrics 2 (Feb. 2018).

⁹ 159NGO Report On the implementation of the ICCPR (Replies to the List of Issues, available at CCPR/C/CMR/Q4)http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/docs/ngos/GeED_Cameroon_HR_C99.pdf (last visited August 20, 2013).

¹⁰ L'Association Camerounaise des Femmes Juristes, Lutte contre les violences faites aux femmes au Cameroun: Une mobilisation Considérable, Justice & Solidarité, July 2012, p. 4.

Cameroon has failed to effectively engage in criminal investigations and prosecutions regarding discriminatory and harmful acts against women. Notably, Cameroon's Penal Code does not specifically criminalize domestic violence, leaving a significant gap in legal protection for women.¹¹ In the absence of a specific provision criminalizing domestic violence, victims are left to rely on the general assault provisions in the Penal Code, which primarily addresses offenses such as murder, rather than providing targeted legal protection for instances of domestic violence.¹², aspect of grievous harm¹³, assault causing death¹⁴, assault causing grievous harm¹⁵, simple harm¹⁶, failure to assist women abandoned by their husbands¹⁷, and even cases of assault of a pregnant woman.¹⁸ Marital rape is not a crime under Cameroon law.¹⁹

Even though the existing legal framework contains provisions for crimes such as assault and murder, the behavior of actors within the legal system indicates a lack of commitment to prosecuting domestic violence cases. This form of violence is frequently treated as a private issue by both law enforcement and the community, which leads to it being largely overlooked in judicial proceedings.²⁰ Harmful practices exacerbate domestic violence, as some men justify their abusive behavior by referencing the bride price they paid for their wives. This belief reinforces a sense of ownership and control over women, further entrenching cycles of abuse and inequality.²¹ In its Third Periodic Report, the Government of Cameroon cites the 2010 prosecution of a police officer accused of murdering his wife, who was a magistrate, as an example of action taken against gender-based violence.²² While the prosecution of a single perpetrator for a domestic violence-related homicide marks a step forward in accountability, the government's report falls short by failing to address the broader issue—namely, the widespread lack of prosecutions in other

¹¹ Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2012: Cameroon, U.S. Department of State (2012), at 27; Beijing + 15, "The Stance of Cameroon and the Unfinished Business," Gender Power and Development, July 2010, pg.36.

¹² Section 275 that deals with simple murder and Section 276 that handled cases of Capital murder

¹³ Section 277 of the Penal Code

¹⁴ *Ibid*, Section 278 of the Penal Code

¹⁵ *Ibid* Section 279

¹⁶ *Ibid* Section 280

¹⁷ *Ibid* Section 282

¹⁸ Section 338 of the Cameroon Penal Code

¹⁹ Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2012: Cameroon, U.S. Department of State (2012), at 27.

²⁰ Beijing + 15, "The Stance of Cameroon and the Unfinished Business," Gender Power and Development, July 2010, pg. 35-36.

²¹ Johnson Takwa, Teke. 2009. "Violence Against the Women and the Girl Children in Cameroon." Poster presented at the International Conference on Population, 27 September-2 October 2009, Marrakech, Morocco, at 5, <http://iussp2009.princeton.edu/papers/90344>.

²² 3rd Government Report within the Framework of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, para. 505

domestic violence cases. Moreover, victims in Cameroon face significant barriers to protection, as the country lacks a specific domestic violence law that would empower women to seek protective orders against their abusers.²³ The Family Code, which was drafted in 1997 to tackle issues of domestic violence, has remained unused and inactive.²⁴ Stakeholders view the failure to adopt the law as a sign of insufficient political will to tackle domestic violence.²⁵ Women attempting to escape violence through divorce face the obstacle that spousal abuse is not recognized as a legal ground for divorce.²⁶ Additional measures taken by the Cameroonian government have also made it more difficult for victims to secure safety. In its report, the government notes the provision of marital and family mediation services as a means of addressing disputes, stating that its counseling and mediation units managed 17,000 cases and achieved amicable resolutions in 3,668 instances."²⁷ It is widely recognized that mediation can be inappropriate and even harmful in cases of domestic violence, as it is based on the flawed assumption that both parties have equal power. In reality, abusers often maintain substantial control over their victims, creating an imbalance that cannot be neutralized, even by skilled mediators. Throughout the mediation process, abusers may use subtle cues to intimidate or manipulate their victims, who may be too afraid or reluctant to speak openly. Furthermore, mediation tends to emphasize future conduct rather than past abuse, and many mediators discourage discussion of prior violent incidents. This approach can wrongly shift responsibility onto the victim while minimizing the perpetrator's accountability.²⁸

More than half of women (55%) have suffered physical abuse since the age of 15, with most of these acts committed by their husbands or intimate partners.²⁹ While the majority of physical violence against women is perpetrated by their current husband or partner (51%), other individuals also contribute to this abuse. These include former or most recent partners (16%), mothers-in-law or co-wives (15%), stepfathers (14%), siblings (12%), and even teachers (8%).³⁰

²³ Nisha Giridhar, *The Global Spread of Domestic Violence Legislation: Causes and Effects* (Spring 2012), at 20, http://politics.as.nyu.edu/docs/IO/4600/Giridhar_Nisha.pdf.

²⁴ Written Communication with Ndi Richard Tanto, Ecumenical Service for Peace, Aug. 20, 2013.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2012: Cameroon, U.S. Department of State (2012), at 27

²⁷ 3rd Government Report within the Framework of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, paras. 446, 506.

²⁸ *Mediation*, StopVAW, Feb. 2008, <http://www.stopvaw.org/Mediation>

²⁹ Institut National de la Statistique (INS) et ICF International, *Enquête Démographique et de Santé et à Indicateurs Multiples*, Calverton, Maryland, USA, INS et ICF International, septembre 2012, pp. 327-328.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p.329.

Among women who have had sexual intercourse, 20% reported that their first experience was forced, and 30% had engaged in sexual activity before turning 15.³¹ Overall, 41% of women aged 15 to 49 indicated that they experienced sexual abuse for the first time during that age range, while 19% reported being between 10 and 14 years old at the time of the incident.³² Additionally, 34% of women in this age group experienced physical violence, 8% were subjected to sexual violence, and 21% endured both physical and sexual abuse.³³ Among pregnant women, 14% reported experiencing violence during pregnancy. Furthermore, 60% of women in ongoing relationships or those who had recently separated reported facing physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse from their current or former partners.³⁴ According to 2016 data from the National Institute of Statistics,³⁵ 29% of women were physically abused in the year leading up to the survey, and nearly two-thirds reported having experienced physical violence at some point in their lives. The data also revealed that 11% of women had been victims of sexual violence, 33% suffered emotional abuse, and 40% of women in unions reported sustaining injuries. Injuries resulting from physical or sexual violence were reported by 43% of these women.

Challenges in Legal and Institutional Frameworks for Safeguarding Women's Rights in Cameroon"

There is growing concern about the limited effectiveness of Cameroon's legal framework in tackling violence against women. Many point to inconsistencies and gaps within existing laws as major obstacles. A central issue remains: what concrete steps is the government taking to address the widespread abuse of women's and children's rights? Although various national laws, legal provisions, and institutions have been introduced to protect these groups, it is still international treaties that provide the main legal foundation for their protection in Cameroon. In spite of these efforts, many women continue to suffer from outdated cultural practices that violate their basic human rights. While some may argue that the laws themselves are to blame, this oversimplifies the problem. The real issue lies in whether Cameroon's legal systems—including civil, labor, criminal, and customary laws—are consistent with international standards that the country has agreed to uphold. Clearly, they are not. These laws fall short in addressing the current challenges, and

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 333

³² *Ibid.*, p.330.

³³ *Ibid.*, p.334.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p.337

³⁵ Institut National de la Statistique (INS) et ICF International, Enquête Démographique et de Santé et à Indicateurs Multiples, Calverton, Maryland, USA, INS et ICF International, septembre 2016, pp. 327-328.

violence against women remains on the rise. It is particularly troubling that the Penal Code fails to directly address such violence, undermining the entire legal system's ability to safeguard women's rights. This reflects not just a lack of legal reform, but a deeper, persistent problem that continues to be difficult to resolve.

The Complexity and Misunderstanding of Legal Frameworks Protecting Women in Cameroon

A wide array of legal instruments exists to combat violence against women at the international, regional, and national levels, spanning multiple legal domains. Internationally, Cameroon has signed and ratified key human rights instruments, including the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Convention Against Torture, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, among others. On the regional front, frameworks such as the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and the Maputo Protocol also mandate strong state action against gender-based violence. At the national level, Cameroon has implemented a range of legal measures—including the Constitution, Penal Code, Civil Code, Labour Code, Civil Status Registration Ordinance, and the Southern Cameroon High Courts Law—to address violence against women and domestic abuse. These legislative efforts are notable and deserve recognition. However, the sheer number of overlapping laws can lead to confusion, raising concerns about the overall coherence and effectiveness of the legal framework. The main issue is that while these laws are meant to protect fundamental rights and ensure justice, their abundance may dilute clarity and hinder practical enforcement. This suggests that Cameroon may have committed to these legal instruments without thoroughly evaluating how to implement them effectively, especially when it comes to protecting women's rights in practice.³⁶

The Impracticalities in Implementing Cameroon's Legal Framework on Women's Rights

Relying solely on the numerous existing laws to combat violence against women in Cameroon proves to be largely ineffective across all levels. While the government undoubtedly has a duty to uphold human rights and eliminate violence against women, the issue stems from the overwhelming number of legal instruments in place. This abundance creates confusion, especially among

³⁶ Nicoline Azinwi Lumngwa Ambe, *Integrating the Struggles for the Rule of Law and Women's Equality Rights in Cameroon* (York University, 1999). pp.45.

law enforcement personnel, who often struggle to determine which law is applicable in specific circumstances. Although these laws are meant to protect women's rights, dignity, and status, their sheer volume and complexity have undermined the government's capacity to respond effectively. While the presence of these legal measures is praiseworthy, the real challenge lies in ensuring they are properly recognized and applied. A significant problem is the lack of consistency in how these laws define and interpret violence against women, which complicates the prosecution and resolution of such cases. Addressing gender-based violence is far from simple, and without a clear, standardized legal framework, inconsistencies in law enforcement and judicial outcomes are inevitable. This issue is compounded by societal and cultural differences in how violence against women is perceived, both within Cameroon and internationally. The multitude of overlapping, contradictory, and complex legal instruments makes it difficult to mount a coherent response to this pervasive and often hidden crime. As a result, the legal system's ability to address violence against women is not only limited but also weighed down by inconsistency and inefficiency, making progress feel both slow and uncertain.³⁷

Adultery in Cameroon: A Complex and Contentious Legal and Social Landscape

The concept of adultery has generated significant debate, particularly concerning its impact on women's rights and their societal standing. A closer look at the Penal Code, especially Section 361, reveals that historically, adultery was viewed as a crime primarily committed by women. However, men could only be penalized under specific conditions, such as when the act was habitual or occurred within the matrimonial home. This provision has been criticized for its gender-biased treatment of adultery. In response to these concerns, the introduction of the revised Penal Code in 2016 aimed to address and correct these outdated and discriminatory provisions.³⁸ The legal treatment of adultery in Cameroon presents significant challenges, particularly concerning how it applies to husbands. Under the law, a husband's act of adultery is only criminalized under specific conditions—namely if it is habitual or occurs within the marital home. This narrow scope makes it especially difficult for a wife to successfully pursue legal action against her husband, as it demands concrete evidence that is often hard to obtain, particularly in the absence of direct witnesses. As a result, a single instance of infidelity by the husband is insufficient grounds for legal proceedings, placing women at a disadvantage and

³⁷ Maakor Quarmyne, "Witchcraft: A Human Rights Conflict between Customary/Traditional Laws and the Legal Protection of Women in Contemporary Sub-Saharan Africa," *Wm. & Mary J. Women & L.* 17 (2010): 475.

³⁸ Section 361 of the Cameroon Penal Code

exposing them to emotional harm and intimidation when they attempt to raise the issue. Moreover, the law's emphasis on the location of the act—specifically within the matrimonial home—raises serious concerns. It implies that sexual relations occurring outside the home may not meet the legal threshold for adultery, thereby creating inconsistencies that fail to reflect the broader social and emotional consequences of infidelity. The complexity deepens when adultery is viewed within the framework of customary marriage. In such settings, it becomes even more difficult for a wife to claim adultery, as customary norms often permit or encourage polygamy. Consequently, a husband may not be considered adulterous unless his relationship involves another man's wife. Even in cases of extramarital affairs, men can justify their actions by claiming they intend to take the other woman as an additional wife, making it nearly impossible for a woman to prove wrongdoing. Often, a wife may only be able to take legal action if she has been abandoned, as infidelity alone may not be legally recognized unless it results in separation. Furthermore, obtaining direct proof of a husband's affair is exceptionally challenging, especially when such relationships are deliberately kept hidden or take place outside the marital setting. Much of the current legal framework relies on assumptions that do not meet the legal standard for adultery, further obstructing women's access to justice and perpetuating gender inequality in the legal system.³⁹

Matrimonial Rape: A Legally and Socially Delicate Issue in Cameroon

Marital rape, also known as spousal rape, refers to non-consensual sexual intercourse between spouses. It constitutes a serious violation of bodily autonomy and consent, falling under both domestic violence and sexual abuse. Historically, however, common law did not recognize marital rape as a crime, largely due to cultural norms that viewed marriage as giving the husband ownership over his wife—thus legitimizing forced sexual relations within marriage. This patriarchal view is evident in the *Achu vs. Achu* case, where the Court of Appeal in the South West Region, presided over by Justice Inglis, ruled that under customary law, marital property—such as land—is not jointly owned. In divorce, the wife is still considered part of the husband's possessions. This outdated interpretation reinforces the perception of women as property, creating major obstacles to recognizing and prosecuting marital rape. This notion is further entrenched through the tradition of bride price, where the payment of dowry in marriage implies ownership. In such a system, a husband who has paid the bride price may feel entitled to unrestricted sexual access, making the idea of a wife refusing sex—and therefore of accusing her husband

³⁹ Mikano Emmanuel Kiye, "Criminalisation of Adultery in Cameroon-Evaluation from Group Rights Perspective," *Africa Insight* 49, no. 1 (2019): 83-96.

of rape—culturally and legally implausible. According to Section 296 of the Penal Code, rape is criminalized and carries severe penalties when committed through physical or moral force, including against minors. However, when it comes to marital rape, legal redress remains virtually inaccessible due to entrenched societal norms and the perception that a wife must always consent to her husband.⁴⁰

The issue is further complicated by Section 297 of the Penal Code, which prevents the prosecution of rape if the woman was above the age of puberty and the marriage was entered into willingly. This clause is highly problematic, as it can be exploited by offenders to escape liability simply by citing the legality of the marriage. Such a loophole diminishes the seriousness of rape and undermines the principle that consent must be ongoing and revocable, regardless of marital status. In some cases, the very foundation of a marriage may have involved coercion or rape, making this legal exemption even more troubling. Ultimately, the core problem lies in the legal system's failure to adequately address sexual violence, particularly within marriage. By neglecting key aspects such as the complexity of consent and the power dynamics inherent in marital relationships, the law fails to provide effective protection for women. The Penal Code—Cameroon's primary tool for dealing with rape and gender-based violence—is riddled with gaps and inconsistencies that undermine its effectiveness. Moreover, this issue extends beyond the Penal Code, as broader legal frameworks dealing with domestic violence also fall short, leaving women vulnerable to continued abuse and lacking meaningful avenues for justice.⁴¹

Combating Abortion in Cameroon: A Perplexing Legal and Ethical Landscape

The issue of abortion presents a significant challenge in addressing violence against women in Cameroon. The country's Penal Code creates confusion and complications in dealing with abortion offenses. According to Section 337 of the Penal Code:

1. A woman who either performs or consents to her own abortion can face imprisonment ranging from 15 days to one year, or a fine ranging from 5,000 to 200,000 francs, or both imprisonment and a fine.
2. Anyone who carries out an abortion on a woman, regardless of her consent, can be punished with imprisonment, with fines ranging from 100,000 to 2 million francs.

⁴⁰ Joshua Doherty, "Marital Rape and the Third-Class Citizenship of Married Women in Cameroon," *Available at SSRN 2229027*, 2012.

⁴¹ Lotsmart N Fonjong, *Issues in Women's Land Rights in Cameroon* (African Books Collective, 2012).

This framework raises concerns, particularly regarding its implications for women's rights and the broader issue of violence against women.”.⁴²

Abortion in Cameroon is legally permitted only under two specific conditions: when the procedure is necessary to save the mother's life or when the pregnancy results from rape. However, the legal framework surrounding abortion remains deeply complex and raises several critical concerns. Although the Penal Code outlines these exceptions, it fails to address the broader range of situations women may encounter—particularly those involving risks to their overall well-being or fundamental rights. For example, the law does not consider cases in which a woman is abandoned by the father of the child and left to manage the consequences on her own. In such situations, the emotional, psychological, and physical toll can be significant, yet the legal system offers no protections or alternatives. Additionally, the legislation does not adequately consider other crucial factors that may impact a woman's decision to seek an abortion or affect her social and legal status.⁴³

There is also ambiguity in the law concerning the point at which abortion is considered the unlawful killing of a fetus, due to the lack of precise definitions regarding the stages of pregnancy. While abortion is widely viewed as illegal—and in some communities, morally unacceptable—the law's limited scope presents serious challenges, especially in contexts involving violence against women. Crucially, the current legislation overlooks scenarios in which a woman may seek an abortion due to abuse or coercion by her partner. Reforming Section 339 of the Penal Code could help clarify and broaden the legal grounds for abortion, taking into account not only threats to the woman's physical health but also cases involving incest, severe fetal anomalies, and other traumatic circumstances. Modernizing this provision would offer a more realistic and compassionate legal response, better aligned with the complex and distressing realities many women face.⁴⁴

The Handicap Nature of the Cameroon Judiciary

Although laws exist to penalize perpetrators of violence against women, their effective implementation remains a significant challenge. Judicial actors—such as the courts, law enforcement officers, and other legal authorities—often fail to enforce these laws rigorously. This lack of enforcement discourages many women from reporting abuse, as they fear that their complaints will be ignored or mishandled. While criminal behavior should

⁴² Section 337(1) and (2) of the Penal Code

⁴³ Amina P Alio et al., “Association between Intimate Partner Violence and Induced Abortion in Cameroon,” *International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics* 112, no. 2 (2011): 83-87.

⁴⁴ Sylvie Schuster, “Abortion in the Moral World of the Cameroon Grassfields,” *Reproductive Health Matters* 13, no. 26 (2005): 130-38.

be punished regardless of the offender's gender, the predominance of men within the judiciary, combined with deeply rooted societal norms that view women as subordinate or as property, makes addressing domestic violence particularly difficult. To effectively combat these violations, there is an urgent need for stronger enforcement mechanisms, increased accountability, and a shift in the attitudes of those responsible for upholding the law.⁴⁵

How can property own property? This mindset leads judicial officers to view women as inferior, making it difficult for them to effectively address the challenges women face. This bias also complicates the resolution of issues such as adultery, as outlined in Section 361.⁴⁶ One of the key issues with Section 361 of the Penal Code lies in how adultery, particularly when committed by men, is perceived and enforced. Law enforcement officials often treat male adultery as trivial or even expected, rooted in the cultural belief that men are naturally polygamous. This perspective fosters a dismissive attitude, making it less likely that such cases are taken seriously when the perpetrator is a husband. The legal provision itself reinforces this bias by stipulating that a man can only be punished for adultery if it is habitual or occurs within the matrimonial home. This sets an impractical and lenient threshold, effectively allowing many cases to go unpunished. As a result, the law not only reflects societal double standards but also enables law enforcement to disregard or inadequately apply it, thus minimizing the gravity of adultery and its impact on women.⁴⁷

When women report cases of adultery, judicial authorities frequently respond with hesitation or inaction, often citing the limitations of Section 361 of the Penal Code. Officials commonly argue that adultery is difficult to prove, as it typically lacks direct evidence or witnesses. This reluctance to pursue such cases not only weakens the enforcement of legal provisions intended to protect women's rights but also reinforces a culture of impunity. As a result, many

⁴⁵ Customary law position of the law as to property rights which sees women as property and according to this law a property like woman cannot own a property.

⁴⁶ This section of the law talks about the aspect of adultery which should be punishable

⁴⁷ Thanks to the new law of 2016 amending the provision of the 1967 law on adultery. Unlike the 1967 penal code which punished women simply for having sex with individuals other than their spouses, but equally punished men only if they had sex at home or habitually elsewhere with someone other than their wives, the new law punishes both men and women equally for sex with third party irrespective of where or how often. According to **Section 361** of the new Code provide that:

- (1) A woman who, being married, has sexual intercourse with a man other than her husband shall be punished with imprisonment for from two to six months or with a fine from 25000frs to 100,000frs
- (2) A husband who has sexual intercourse with a woman other than his wife or wives shall be punished as provided by subsection 1 above. However, the burden of proof of the existence of polygamous union shall lie with the husband
- (3) No prosecution may be commenced without the complaint of the wronged spouse.
- (4) Consent by wronged spouse to resume cohabitation shall put an end to the effects of conviction.

women are discouraged from seeking justice, knowing that their complaints may be dismissed or inadequately addressed.⁴⁸

Forced and Early Marriages in Cameroon: A Difficult Challenge to Overcome

The situation surrounding the Civil Code, particularly due to its French origins, poses a contentious and complex challenge, especially in addressing issues of violence against women. The law creates difficulties in aligning gender equality and women's rights with societal norms, as it often disproportionately favors the status of women in a way that contradicts fundamental principles of equality. A clear example of this can be found in the marriage provisions. According to Article 52 of the Civil Code, the minimum legal age for marriage is set at 15 for girls and 18 for boys. However, this contradicts the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, which Cameroon has ratified. According to Article 1 of the convention, anyone under the age of 18 is considered a child. Therefore, the Civil Code's provisions on the minimum age for marriage are not only inconsistent with international child protection standards but also undermine efforts to safeguard minors' rights."⁴⁹

This inconsistency within the Civil Code is further highlighted by the contradiction between its provisions. While the Code sets the minimum marriage age for girls at 15, Article 49 simultaneously stipulates that girls under 18 are not required to marry unless parental consent is granted. This creates a legal loophole that undermines protections against child marriage, effectively allowing it under the guise of parental approval. Such contradictions weaken the legal framework and conflict with international standards that define marriage under 18 as a violation of children's rights.⁵⁰ This provision has contributed to the prevalence of early and forced marriages in Cameroon, as it enables parents to compel their children into marriage before they have reached full legal maturity. By permitting such practices through parental consent, the law undermines the protection of children's rights. The Civil Code should be harmonized with Article 1 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, a fundamental international instrument that defines a child as anyone under the age of 18. While the law rightly attempts to establish a minimum age for marriage, it fails to fully protect minors by allowing exceptions that disregard their psychological and emotional readiness. Children at such a young

⁴⁸ Family law Lecture Notes, Simon Tabe Tabe where it was established that proving adultery on direct eye witness is difficult, as to the provision of Section 1(2) (A) of the Matrimonial Causes Act 1973, since it is difficult to prove adultery by mere eye witness, it has provided for circumstances that the petitioner can use and establish and it will still amount to adultery. Situations such as undue familiarities, evidence of spouses, marital confidence, venereal diseases, blood test and a host of others will amount to adultery.

⁴⁹ Article 1 of the Convention on the Right of a Child

⁵⁰ Ashu, E., & Njotang, P. (2016). *The Legal Protection of Women's Rights in Cameroon: An Appraisal of the Legal Framework*. African Journal of Legal Studies, 9(1), 1-23.

age often lack the capacity and maturity to comprehend the responsibilities and implications of marriage, making the current legal framework inadequate for safeguarding their well-being.⁵¹ This legal framework has played a significant role in sustaining the practice of early marriages, making it difficult to effectively combat or eliminate such harmful traditions in Cameroon. Early marriage remains particularly prevalent in the northern regions of the country, where cultural norms continue to promote the practice of marrying off girls at a young age. Although this is rooted in long-standing tradition, the law has inadvertently supported and legitimized it, rather than challenging or restricting it. As a result, efforts to prevent early and forced marriages are severely undermined, allowing these practices to persist with legal and cultural backing.

The Matrimonial Home: Reinforcing the Husband's Dominance

A major concern arises from the legal provision that grants the husband the authority to determine the matrimonial regime outlined in the marriage agreement. Under Article 70 of the Cameroon Civil Code, if no specific regime is selected, the couple is automatically subjected to the default system of customary law, which allows for polygamy and the communal ownership of marital property. This default position effectively promotes polygamous arrangements and complicates efforts to address related issues, such as domestic violence. Even when a monogamous regime is chosen, cultural beliefs—particularly the widespread notion that "all African men are naturally polygamous"—often override legal commitments, allowing men to engage in multiple relationships regardless of the agreed-upon marital structure. Compounding this imbalance, the law continues to recognize the husband as the head of the household, reinforcing gender inequality within the matrimonial home.⁵² he also has the sole right to determine the family domicile⁵³ and, in the interest of the household and the children, may prevent his wife from taking employment.⁵⁴ This situation is both troubling and deeply ironic, as it effectively undermines the woman's role within the household, reducing her status and agency. The husband is granted near-absolute authority over his wife, often denying her the freedoms and opportunities to which she is rightfully entitled. Operating under the belief that he alone is the provider for the family, he frequently disregards his wife's potential to contribute—

⁵¹ The situation of sound mind, sound memory and sound understanding is very instrumental for there to be a valid celebration of a marriage. The absent of these three elements in the celebration of a marriage will render the Marriage ceremony null and void.

⁵² Article 213 of the Civil Code

⁵³ *Ibid*, Article 108 and 215

⁵⁴ Article 74 of the Cameroon Civil Status Registration Ordinance of 1981 provides that a husband may object to his wife's exercise of a trade different from him in the interest of their marriage or children

particularly in terms of employment—thereby infringing on her fundamental right to work. This right is protected by numerous international human rights instruments that Cameroon has signed and ratified. Yet, the current legal framework continues to empower husbands in ways that allow them to restrict or violate their wives' rights without consequence, perpetuating systemic inequality within the home.

Furthermore, the fact that women are denied full control and enjoyment of property is a serious issue.⁵⁵ The husband's legal authority to manage communal marital property—including the power to sell or mortgage assets without his wife's consent—is highly problematic and contradicts the spirit of gender equality enshrined in Cameroon's Constitution. The preamble of the Constitution explicitly guarantees equal rights to all citizens, regardless of gender, status, language, or nationality. This includes the right to own and control property, a right that should apply equally to both men and women. However, in practice, these constitutional guarantees are undermined by legal provisions that disproportionately favor men. It is especially concerning that Cameroon has yet to adopt comprehensive legislation addressing violence against women or domestic abuse. Harmful traditional practices, such as female genital mutilation (FGM) and breast ironing, continue to persist in regions such as the North and South-West, with little legal intervention. While official government reports often claim that the legal framework supports gender equality, the reality is that the country lacks a clear legal definition of discrimination. The equality principle outlined in the preamble of the 1996 Constitution (as amended in 2008) does not meet the standards required under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Despite Cameroon having ratified CEDAW, its provisions have not been incorporated into domestic law. Although Article 45 of the Constitution states that international treaties override national legislation once ratified, this does not automatically ensure enforceable rights or remedies. Without enabling laws or criminal sanctions passed at the national level, treaty obligations remain largely symbolic and ineffective in practice.⁵⁶

Redressing and Reforming the Legal Climate on Violence Against Women in Cameroon

Violence—particularly gender-based violence against women—remains a grave and escalating issue that continues to harm the fabric of Cameroonian

⁵⁵ Article 1421 and 1428 is a good example of the Code depriving the women from using the matrimonial property. It continues by saying that only the husband has the right to sell or mortgage the matrimonial property, the wife has no right as to the property of the matrimonial home as she herself is considered as a property, and how can a property own a property.

⁵⁶ Cosmas Cheka, "How Law and Custom Serve to Disempower Women in Cameroon," *Reproductive Health Matters* 4, no. 8 (1996): 41-46.

society. The emphasis should not only be on acknowledging the widespread suffering endured by women but also on implementing tangible, effective measures to confront and mitigate this crisis. Ensuring a safer, more just future for victims of violence requires more than awareness; it demands action. While the complete eradication of violence may be a long-term goal, the pressing question is: what practical steps can be taken to reduce its occurrence and impact? Key actors within society—whether individuals, institutions, or communities—must recognize their responsibilities. These stakeholders have the power either to perpetuate or to challenge the structural and cultural forces that enable domestic and gender-based violence.⁵⁷

The Need for Reforming a Better Society in Combatting Violence Against Women In Cameroon

Firstly, the government must prioritize the enactment and enforcement of laws that unequivocally recognize women's rights and effectively address domestic violence. Currently, many laws are either unenforced or insufficiently robust, particularly those intended to tackle violence against women. To make these laws truly impactful, it is essential that the government implements clear measures, policies, and mechanisms to actively eliminate gender-based discrimination. This can be achieved through initiatives such as awareness programs targeting diverse segments of the population, including religious and traditional leaders, who wield significant influence in society. The government has a fundamental responsibility to protect the rights and well-being of its citizens, and this can only be realized through the effective application of anti-domestic violence laws. While the laws currently in place are commendable, they remain ineffective if not fully enforced. The true key to addressing violence lies not just in the formulation of laws but in their concrete implementation, ensuring that they serve their intended purpose of protecting and empowering women.⁵⁸

Strengthening Women's Involvement in Key National Activities and Policies

We believe that raising awareness must go hand in hand with empowering women to actively participate in political life, occupy leadership roles, and engage meaningfully in public affairs. Currently, the majority of high-ranking positions in Cameroon are held by men, while women are often perceived as unfit for political leadership and unfairly dismissed as the “weaker sex.” If the

⁵⁷ Laura-Stella Enonchong, “The Problem of Systemic Violation of Civil and Political Rights in Cameroon: Towards a Contextualised Conception of Constitutionalism” (University of Warwick, 2013).

⁵⁸ Shomsang Elvine Bendung and Irene Sama-Lang, “Assessment of Effects of Gender-Based Violence on Women’s Participation in Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding in NWSW Cameroon,” *International Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies* 10, no. 1 (2025): 50-75.

government is genuinely committed to eliminating domestic violence and advancing gender equality, it must prioritize inclusive governance by enabling women to take on decision-making roles. This is not about creating competition between men and women, but about ensuring equal access to opportunities. When both genders are afforded the same rights and responsibilities, outcomes—whether successful or flawed—are shared fairly. Empowering women in this way helps dismantle harmful stereotypes and fosters a more balanced and just society.⁵⁹

Effective Implementation of Laws Addressing Violence Against Women in Cameroon

Although Cameroon has ratified and signed numerous international and regional legal instruments aimed at protecting women's rights, the real challenge lies in their effective implementation. This gap between legal commitment and practical enforcement significantly undermines the protection and status of women in society. A key concern is whether domestic violence is being addressed meaningfully at the level of enforcement, where it truly matters. Too often, cases of domestic violence are treated with emotional bias or cultural sentiment, rather than with the legal seriousness they deserve. Law enforcement officers and members of the judiciary frequently minimize or dismiss these cases—especially when the victims are women—resulting in a lack of accountability and justice. This institutional negligence contributes directly to the rise in domestic violence, as it fosters an environment in which the suffering of women is not taken seriously, and perpetrators are rarely held accountable.⁶⁰

Creation of Training Schools in Educating Women on the Protection and Recognition of Their Various Rights

The establishment of targeted training programs, professional institutions, and the integration of gender-based violence education into school curricula could significantly advance public understanding of domestic violence and the legal protections afforded to women. These initiatives, once implemented, would play a vital role in promoting awareness of women's rights, human dignity, and the broader societal importance of protecting vulnerable groups. Currently, there is a noticeable lack of emphasis on women's issues, particularly regarding efforts to elevate their status and ensure their rights are recognized and respected. Incorporating education on women's rights and

⁵⁹ Lotsmart Fonjong, "Fostering Women's Participation in Development through Non-governmental Efforts in Cameroon," *Geographical Journal* 167, no. 3 (2001): 223-34.

⁶⁰ Sahnah Lim et al., "Violence against Female Sex Workers in Cameroon: Accounts of Violence, Harm Reduction, and Potential Solutions," *JAIDS Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes* 68 (2015): S241-47.

domestic violence at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels would be particularly impactful. Many individuals—including women themselves—are often unaware that domestic violence constitutes a serious violation of fundamental human rights and is prohibited under Cameroonian law. By introducing such educational programs, society would be better equipped to recognize that infringing upon an individual's rights is not merely a private matter, but a criminal offense subject to legal consequences. This foundational awareness is essential for fostering a culture of accountability, equality, and justice.⁶¹

Improving on the Various Resources in Combatting Violence Against Women

Another significant barrier to effectively combating domestic violence in Cameroon is the lack of adequate resources—particularly material resources—allocated by the government. Women's empowerment centers, which play a crucial role in advocacy, protection, and education, are often under-equipped and poorly supported. Providing these centers with modern tools such as computers, printers, and photocopiers would greatly enhance their operational capacity. With updated equipment, they could maintain accurate records, generate detailed reports, and produce vital awareness materials more efficiently. At present, many of these centers rely on outdated, frequently malfunctioning equipment, which hampers their ability to fulfill their mandate. This directly affects essential functions such as data management, communication, and the dissemination of information through printed materials like flyers and educational brochures. Without proper tools, the effectiveness of these institutions in promoting and safeguarding women's rights is severely compromised. Ensuring that these centers are well-equipped is therefore a practical and necessary step toward strengthening the fight against domestic violence in Cameroon.⁶²

Ensuring the Proper Investigation on Cases of Violence Against Women

The government must ensure that all allegations of human rights violations, particularly those involving domestic violence, are met with thorough, impartial, and independent investigations. Perpetrators must be prosecuted, punished, and appropriately sanctioned in accordance with the law. This would serve as a strong deterrent, reinforcing the principle that acts of violence—especially against women—will not go unpunished. A critical step toward achieving this goal is the reform of Cameroon's legal framework to bring

⁶¹ Ntoko Ntonga Rene, Patience Sone, and Ful Trinity, "The Protection of Children's Right to Education in Cameroon: A Legal Overview," *Available at SSRN 3932190*, 2021.

⁶² Lim et al., "Violence against Female Sex Workers in Cameroon: Accounts of Violence, Harm Reduction, and Potential Solutions."

domestic legislation into full alignment with the international and regional legal instruments the country has ratified. At present, legal provisions addressing domestic violence are fragmented across multiple texts, including the Constitution, the Penal Code, the Labour Code, the Civil Status Registration Ordinance, and various customary laws. This dispersion complicates enforcement, as the lack of a unified legal standard leads to confusion and inconsistency in interpretation. Additionally, the use of varied terminology to define domestic violence-related offenses further obscures the legal process. Despite the presence of numerous legal instruments, public awareness of domestic violence as a human rights violation remains limited. Harmonizing these laws into a comprehensive and coherent framework that aligns with international standards would mark a significant advance in the protection of women's rights. It is both troubling and surprising that Cameroon—despite its numerous legal commitments—still lacks a dedicated and unified legal instrument specifically targeting domestic violence. The need for comprehensive legislative reform in this area is urgent and essential for fostering a just and protective legal environment for women.⁶³

The Implementation of The Platform for Joint Intervention in The Fight Against Gender-Based Violence

All stakeholders involved in addressing violence against women in Cameroon should collaborate to establish a dedicated platform for dialogue, where effective measures, strategies, and best practices can be proposed and reviewed. Such a forum would be instrumental in fostering coordination, accountability, and innovation in the fight against domestic violence. The government's development of a national strategy to combat gender-based violence, including its commitment to a ten-year action plan, is a commendable initiative. However, a critical gap exists in the dissemination and public awareness of this strategy. A key question arises: how many people within Cameroonian society are actually aware of this action plan? In practice, knowledge of such initiatives is often confined to a narrow group of stakeholders, leaving the majority of the population uninformed. For the national strategy to be truly effective, it must be inclusive. Broad public engagement and awareness are essential, as domestic violence is a societal issue with far-reaching consequences. Ensuring that the entire population—not just policymakers or professionals—is informed and involved will strengthen the

⁶³ Parveen Kaur Parmar et al., "Need for a Gender-Sensitive Human Security Framework: Results of a Quantitative Study of Human Security and Sexual Violence in Djohong District, Cameroon," *Conflict and Health* 8 (2014): 1-12.

collective effort to eliminate gender-based violence and foster a culture of zero tolerance.⁶⁴

Women Embracing New Realities: Toward Empowerment and Social Transformation

Women must be encouraged to embrace modern ways of life and move beyond outdated traditions that no longer serve their dignity or well-being. Many women continue to adhere to customary laws out of fear of social or familial consequences, often unaware that any tradition or legal practice that violates principles of natural justice, equity, and good conscience should not be upheld in a just society. The persistence of harmful traditions is frequently sustained by the deeply ingrained belief that women are the property of their husbands—a notion reinforced by practices such as the payment of bride price. This symbolic transaction often leads women to feel perpetually obligated to their spouses, even in cases of abuse or violence. Parents must reconsider the cultural emphasis placed on bride price if they truly wish to protect their daughters from mistreatment. In certain communities, daughters are viewed as economic assets, and their marriages are treated as transactions, leading some men to see their wives as commodities they have purchased. This commodification fosters a dangerous power imbalance and perpetuates gender-based violence within marriages. While it is not necessary to abolish customary law—given its historical and cultural significance in shaping legal systems—it is imperative that such laws evolve. Customary practices must be reformed to reflect contemporary values that uphold the inherent dignity, worth, and equality of women. Women must be recognized not as possessions, but as equal members of society entitled to full protection of their rights, free from discrimination or subjugation under the guise of tradition.⁶⁵

Women Should Be More of Producers than Consumers

There remains a prevailing belief in Cameroonian society that once a woman is married, she should become financially and socially dependent on her husband. This notion is reinforced by legal provisions such as Article 74 of the Civil Status Registration Ordinance of 1981, which grants a husband the authority to object to his wife engaging in a trade different from his own, purportedly in the interest of their marriage or the welfare of their children. While such provisions may have been intended to promote family unity, they are now outdated and incompatible with modern principles of gender equality

⁶⁴ Georges Nguefack-Tsague et al., "Gender-Based Violence and Its Health Risks on Women in Yaoundé, Cameroon," *Archives of Public Health* 82, no. 1 (2024): 90.

⁶⁵ Linda Mayoux, "Tackling the down Side: Social Capital, Women's Empowerment and Micro-finance in Cameroon," *Development and Change* 32, no. 3 (2001): 435-64.

and economic empowerment. In contemporary society, both spouses should be encouraged to contribute equally to the welfare and sustainability of the family. Total financial dependence on the husband can place undue pressure on him, and in some cases, this may lead to frustration and even acts of domestic violence. To mitigate such risks and promote greater autonomy, it is essential that women are encouraged and supported to engage in income-generating activities. Learning vocational skills such as tailoring, hairdressing, or other forms of entrepreneurship can empower women to support themselves and their families, reduce vulnerability, and increase their standing within both the household and the broader community.⁶⁶

Conclusion

There is no doubt that the protection of women's human rights in Cameroon is a serious concern, and the future of women's rights remains uncertain. Women continue to suffer from inhumane practices and are often treated as inferior. While the laws of Cameroon, including the 1996 Constitution, clearly promote equality for all, regardless of status or gender, these laws are often disregarded when it comes to women. Although the laws condemn such inhumane treatment as contrary to natural justice, equity, and good conscience, and call for action to combat these abuses, women continue to face widespread violations of their rights. This persistent and pervasive violation of women's rights has created an environment where the legal and institutional systems' ability to protect women is often questioned. The issue remains controversial, and addressing it seems increasingly difficult as many African societies hold tightly to traditional customs that perpetuate these harmful practices, continuing to hinder progress in the protection of women's fundamental rights.

Bibliography

- Ako, R. (2019). *Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Cameroon: Progress, Challenges, and Prospects*. African Journal of Gender and Women Studies, 2(1), 45-62.
- Albert R. Roberts (2002) *Handbook of Domestic Violence Intervention Strategies: Policies, Programs, And Legal Remedies* 102,
- Anyangwe, E. (2007). *Gender Violence and Human Rights Violations in Cameroon: A Case Study on Violence against Women*. Journal of International Women's Studies, 8(4), 1-17.

⁶⁶ Manuel Ruiz Pérez et al., "A Gender Analysis of Forest Product Markets in Cameroon," *Africa Today*, 2002, 97-126.

Arvonne S. Fraser, *Becoming Human: The Origins and Development of Women's Human Rights*, The Johns Hopkins University Press 1999

Ashu, E., & Njotang, P. (2016). *The Legal Protection of Women's Rights in Cameroon: An Appraisal of the Legal Framework*. African Journal of Legal Studies, 9(1), 1-23.

Alio, Amina P, Hamisu M Salihu, Philip N Nana, Heather B Clayton, Alfred K Mbah, and Phillip J Marty. "Association between Intimate Partner Violence and Induced Abortion in Cameroon." *International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics* 112, no. 2 (2011): 83-87.

Ambe, Nicoline Azinwi Lumngwa. *Integrating the Struggles for the Rule of Law and Women's Equality Rights in Cameroon*. York University, 1999.

Bendung, Shomsang Elvine, and Irene Sama-Lang. "Assessment of Effects of Gender-Based Violence on Women's Participation in Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding in NWSW Cameroon." *International Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies* 10, no. 1 (2025): 50-75.

Banda, F., & Chinkin, C. (2017). *Gender, Equality and Cultural Rights: Intersectionality and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women*. Human Rights Quarterly, 39(2), 343-375.

Bongmba, E.K., & Nyamnjoh, F.B. (Eds.). (2013). *Gendering Wisdom the Hosts and Guests of Womanist Ways of Knowing*. Langaa RPCIG.

C. ANYANGWE, *The Cameroonian Judicial System*, Yaoundé: CEPER, 1987,

Chinkin, C., & Charlesworth, H.L. (2000). *The Boundaries of International Law: A Feminist Analysis*. Manchester University Press.

Crenshaw, K. (1991). *Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color*. Stanford Law Review, 43(6), 1241-1299.

Cheka, Cosmas. "How Law and Custom Serve to Disempower Women in Cameroon." *Reproductive Health Matters* 4, no. 8 (1996): 41-46.

Doherty, Joshua. "Marital Rape and the Third-Class Citizenship of Married Women in Cameroon." *Available at SSRN 2229027*, 2012.

DeKeseredy, W.S., Alvi, S., Schwartz, M.D., & Tomaszewski, E.A., *Under siege: Poverty and crime in a public housing community*, Lanham, MD: Lexington Books (2003)

Enonchong, Laura-Stella. "The Problem of Systemic Violation of Civil and Political Rights in Cameroon: Towards a Contextualised Conception of

Constitutionalism.” University of Warwick, 2013.

Fareeda Banda, *Women, Law and Human Rights* (2005), Oxford Portland Oregon, Hart Publishing

Fombad, C.M., & Nkwi, P.N. (Eds.). (2010). *Gender and Law in Cameroon: Towards Equality for Women?* Langaa RPCIG

Fonjong, Lotsmart. “Fostering Women’s Participation in Development through Non-governmental Efforts in Cameroon.” *Geographical Journal* 167, no. 3 (2001): 223-34.

Fonjong, Lotsmart N. *Issues in Women’s Land Rights in Cameroon*. African Books Collective, 2012.

Kamga, S.D., & Ndi, G.A. (2018). *The Role of Customary Law in the Protection of Women’s Rights in Cameroon: An Appraisal of the Challenges and Prospects*. *African Journal of Legal Studies*, 11(2), 139-161.

Kamgno K. H. and Mengue M. C.E. 2014. Rise of Unofficial Marriages in Cameroon: Economic or Socio-Demographic Response? *American International Journal of Social Science* Vol. 3, No. 3; May 2014

Kiye, Mikano Emmanuel. “Criminalisation of Adultery in Cameroon-Evaluation from Group Rights Perspective.” *Africa Insight* 49, no. 1 (2019): 83-96.

Lim, Sahnah, Sarah Peitzmeier, Charles Cange, Erin Papworth, Matthew LeBreton, Ubald Tamoufe, Aristide Kamla, Serge Billong, Pamela Fokam, and Iliassou Njindam. “Violence against Female Sex Workers in Cameroon: Accounts of Violence, Harm Reduction, and Potential Solutions.” *JAIDS Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes* 68 (2015): S241-47.

Mayoux, Linda. “Tackling the down Side: Social Capital, Women’s Empowerment and Micro-finance in Cameroon.” *Development and Change* 32, no. 3 (2001): 435-64.

Lenta, P.B., & Tchoungui, C.M.N.S. (2016). *The Protection of Women's Rights in Cameroon: An Analysis of the Legal Framework*. *African Journal of Legal Studies*, 9(2), 1-24.

Miller, J., *Getting played: African American girls, urban inequality, and gendered violence*. New York: New York University Press (2008);

Nguindip, N. C. (2021). Rethinking the nomenclature in the violation of women right under international law questioning and evaluating its recognition under the cameroon positive law system, *Revue Prospectif de Droit*,

- Nguindip, N. C. (2022). "How Can a Property Own a Property" Rejecting Female Right to Inheritance under Customary Law in Cameroon: A Continuous Frustration Platform Violating Female Right to Property in Cameroon. *Law & Safety*, 13.
- Nguindip, N. C. (2023). Combatting Domestic Violence under International Law: Assessing the Various Legal Inconsistencies Frustrating the Protection of Women's Rights in Cameroon. *African Journal of International and Comparative Law*, 31(1), 86-103.
- Nguindip, N. C., & Doris, N. L. (2021). Appraising the Stakes of Violence and Gender Based Discrimination in Cameroon: A Complete Disaster in the Protection and Preservation of Women Right and Status. *Issue 4 Int'l JL Mgmt. & Human.*, 4, 12.
- Ngwafor N. *Cameroon: The Law across the Bridge: Twenty Years (1972 1992) of Confusion*, *Revue générale de droit*, Volume 26, numéro 1, mars 1995 pp. 70-76
- Nguefack-Tsague, Georges, Adidja Amani, Valérie Djouna Dadjie, Donato Koyalta, Debora Nounkeu Carole, Fanny Nadia Dissak-Delon, Fabrice Zobel Lekeumo Cheuyem, Gilles Protais Lekelem Dongmo, Christelle Mbe Anastasie, and Justine Laure Menguene Mviena. "Gender-Based Violence and Its Health Risks on Women in Yaoundé, Cameroon." *Archives of Public Health* 82, no. 1 (2024): 90.
- Parmar, Parveen Kaur, Pooja Agrawal, Ravi Goyal, Jennifer Scott, and P Gregg Greenough. "Need for a Gender-Sensitive Human Security Framework: Results of a Quantitative Study of Human Security and Sexual Violence in Djohong District, Cameroon." *Conflict and Health* 8 (2014): 1-12.
- Pérez, Manuel Ruiz, Ousseynou Ndoeye, Antoine Eyebe, and Danielle Lema Ngono. "A Gender Analysis of Forest Product Markets in Cameroon." *Africa Today*, 2002, 97-126.
- Quarmyne, Maakor. "Witchcraft: A Human Rights Conflict between Customary/Traditional Laws and the Legal Protection of Women in Contemporary Sub-Saharan Africa." *Wm. & Mary J. Women & L.* 17 (2010): 475.
- Rene, Ntoko Ntonga, Patience Sone, and Ful Trinity. "The Protection of Children's Right to Education in Cameroon: A Legal Overview." *Available at SSRN 3932190*, 2021.
- Rhona K.M. Smith, *Textbook on International Human Rights (2014)*, Oxford University Press, 6th Edition

Schuster, Sylvie. "Abortion in the Moral World of the Cameroon Grassfields."
Reproductive Health Matters 13, no. 26 (2005): 130-38.

Suyunova, D. J., Koniushenko, Y. Y., & Nguindip, N. C. (2021). A Comparative Understanding of Criminal Liability Formation for Crimes Against Women in Uzbekistan and Cameroon. *Ius Humani, Revista de Derecho*, 10, 129.

The Cameroon Penal Code (2016).