

A Glance at Women's Legal Rights in Cameroon



Are Cameroonian Men and Women Equal Under the Law?



What does gender equality mean?



Four Bodies of Legislation

1. Cameroon's Constitution
2. Cameroon's Penal Code
3. Cameroon's Civil Code
4. CEDAW – UN Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women



**Cameroon's Constitution SUPPORTS
Gender Equality**

Cameroon's Constitution

(Preamble)

- "all persons shall have equal rights and obligations. The State shall provide all its citizens with the conditions necessary for their development;"
- every person has a right to life, to physical and moral integrity and to humane treatment in all circumstances. Under no circumstances shall any person be subjected to torture, to cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment;
- the Nation shall protect and promote the family which is the natural foundation of human society. It shall protect women, the young, the elderly and the disabled;
- "every person shall have the right and the obligation to work;"

Cameroon's Constitution

(Universal Declaration of Human Rights)

- Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. (Article 2)
- Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution. (Article 16)
- Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment. (Article 23)
- Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work. (Article 23)

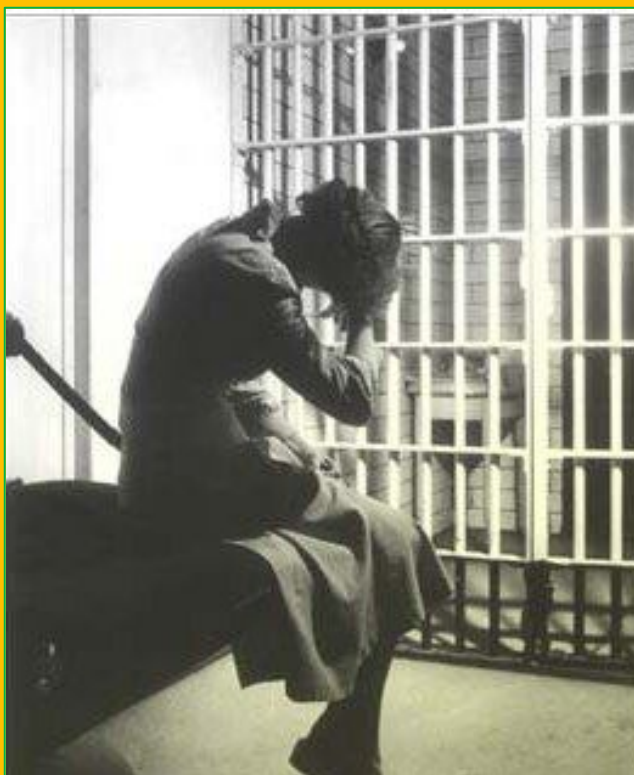
Cameroon's Constitution

(Part I Rights and Duties)

- The State shall ensure the elimination of every discrimination against women and also ensure the protection of the right of the women and the child as stipulated in international declaration and conventions. (Article 18)



**Cameroon's Constitution Repeatedly States
"ALL People..."**



Unconstitutional Penal Code



An Unconstitutional Penal Code

Adultery: Cameroon Penal Code section 361:

- 1) Any married woman having sexual intercourse with a man other than her husband shall be punished with imprisonment for two to six months and with fine of from twenty- five thousand to one hundred thousand francs.
- 2) Any married man having sexual intercourse in the matrimonial home or habitually elsewhere with a woman other than his wife or wives shall be punished in like manner.



An Unconstitutional Penal Code

Marriage: Cameroon Penal Code Section 52:

- Marriage Age (Article 52)
- Termination of Marriage (Article 77)



An Unconstitutional Penal Code

Rape: Cameroon Penal Code

Section 296 & 297:

- Penalty for rape (Article 296)
- Definition of Rape (Article 297)



Unconstitutional Civil Code



An Unconstitutional Civil Code

- Matrimonial home (Article 215)
- Women's right to work (Article 223)
- Ownership of property (Articles 1421 and 1428)



**CEDAW- Convention to End All
Forms of Discrimination
Against Women - 1994**

What is the reality for Cameroonian women?



How can that reality change?

How can that reality change?

