

16 March 2021

Cameroon: Human rights defender Paul Chouta abducted and subjected to physical abuse

On the evening of 9 March 2022, human rights defender **Paul Chouta** was abducted by three unidentified men while watching a football game in Yaounde. The human rights defender was forced into a vehicle and taken to the highway that leads to the International Airport in Yaounde and subjected to physical abuse which may amount to torture. He was later abandoned at the scene at around one o'clock the following morning and immediately went to the hospital where the human rights defender is currently receiving medical treatment for the injuries he sustained.

[Paul Chouta](#) is a human rights defender, whistle-blower and promoter of the Facebook page TGV DE L'INFO, an online media broadcast platform. The human rights defender is known for exercising his freedom of opinion on societal issues and advocating against social injustices in Cameroon. Paul Chouta is also a member of the international citizens' movement, Tournons La Page.

During the evening of 9 March 2022, human rights defender Paul Chouta was abducted by three unidentified men while watching a football game in Yaounde. He was taken to the highway that leads to the International Airport in Yaounde and was held in a vehicle where he was subjected to physical abuse. According to the human rights defender, he was forced into a vehicle, blindfolded, threatened and received several blows that left him with swollen eyes. He was abandoned at the scene at around one o'clock the following morning. Paul Chouta went directly to a hospital where he is currently receiving medical treatment for his injuries.

This incident came after the human rights defender posted on his social media page about the nation-wide strike of teachers, called “craie morte”, that Cameroon has been experiencing in recent weeks. The teachers on strike have been denouncing their working conditions in Cameroon, with some of them working in conflict affected areas, without security in very hostile and volatile environments. There are also reports that some teachers have not been receiving their salaries, despite having worked for anywhere between 3 and 10 years. Paul Chouta has frequently expressed his support of the “craie morte” teachers, relaying the messages of the teachers on strike on his social media. Before this abduction, Paul Chouta has been assaulted three times reportedly in relation to his denouncement of human rights issues in Cameroon.

Front Line Defenders is seriously concerned about the abduction and the physical abuse of human rights defender Paul Chouta, as it strongly believes that it is directly linked to his peaceful and legitimate work in defence of human rights.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Cameroon to:

1. Strongly condemn the abduction and physical abuse, of human rights defender Paul Chouta, as it is believed to be directly motivated by his peaceful and legitimate human rights;
2. Carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the abduction and physical abuse of human rights defender Paul Chouta with a view to publishing the results and bringing those responsible to justice in accordance with international standards;

3. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Cameroon are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including harassment, threats, abduction and torture.