



United States Department of State

*Assistant Secretary of State
for African Affairs*

Washington, D.C. 20520-3430

MAY 20 2010

Dear Mr. Simon:

Thank you for your letter of April 25 concerning the April 22 death in prison of detained Cameroonian journalist Germain Ngota Ngota.

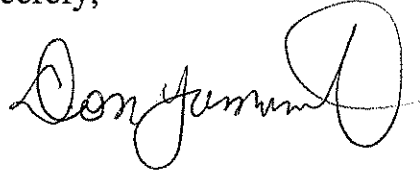
We are aware of the reports of abuse and failure to render medical assistance to Mr. Ngota during his detention. The problems of human rights abuses including security force torture, beatings, and other abuses, particularly of detainees and prisoners, in Cameroon have been well documented over the years, including in the U.S. Department of State's Country Report on Human Rights Practices.

The United States government considers the issue of human rights a top priority in our bilateral relationship with Cameroon. As such, I can assure you that I raised our concern about Mr. Ngota's death, as well as our concerns regarding the well-being and human rights of other detained prisoners, in my recent meeting with the Prime Minister. I urged the Cameroonian government to accelerate democratic reforms, including respect for human rights, freedom of speech and freedom of the press. The U.S. Embassy in Yaoundé issued a statement on April 26 calling on the government to carry out its investigation of the circumstances of Mr. Ngota's tragic death "comprehensively, transparently, and without delay." Additionally, the Embassy called on the Cameroonian government to reinforce the protection of human rights in Cameroon, including freedom of the press and freedom of expression. We continue to abhor the conditions of Cameroon's prisons, and raise the issue of prolonged detentions without due process of the law, at every opportunity.

Mr. Joel Simon
Executive Director,
Committee to Protect Journalists,
330 7th Avenue, 11th Floor,
New York, NY 10001.

We hope this information is helpful to you. Please do not hesitate to contact us further on this or any matter of concern to you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Don Yamamoto". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the word "Sincerely,".

Don Yamamoto, Acting