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Cameroon: The government must throw more light on the disappearance of 9 children in Douala

"The Cameroon government must throw more light on the disappearances in Douala," Amnesty International said today.

The government must take all urgent and necessary measures to address the concerns of the people, the media and civil society in Cameroon and to guarantee that they freely express themselves on the issue, the human rights organization urged.

On 23 February, nine adolescents were arrested by security forces from the Bjpanda Omnisports neighbourhood in Douala, as suspects in the theft of a neighbour's cooking gas bottle. Marc Etaha, Frederic Ngouffo, Chatry Kuete, Eric Chia, Jean Roger Tchiwan, Kouatou Charles, Chia Effician, Kouatou Elysee and Kuate Fabrice were subsequently transferred to a detention facility in Bonanjo-Douala belonging to the Commandement operationnel, an elite security corps created last year to combat armed robbery in Douala and Yaounde. They were last seen there by relatives on 26 and 27 February. Since then, there has been no information on their whereabouts.

Residents of the Bepanda Omnisports neighbourhood have planned a public demonstration on Sunday 4 March, to press for information on the fate of the nine youths.

Since its creation last year, there have been several reports by local NGOs that the Commandement operationnel has carried out large scale extrajudicial executions while fighting street crime in Douala. After the discovery of a mass burial site in Douala in November last year, Amnesty International raised concerns about impunity and disregard for the rule of law.

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