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Home Office

# Country Policy and Information Note

## Cameroon: North-West/South-West crisis

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# Preface

## Purpose

This note provides country of origin information (COI) and analysis of COI for use by Home Office decision makers handling particular types of protection and human rights claims (as set out in the [Introduction](#) section). It is not intended to be an exhaustive survey of a particular subject or theme.

It is split into two main sections: (1) analysis and assessment of COI and other evidence; and (2) COI. These are explained in more detail below.

## Assessment

This section analyses the evidence relevant to this note – i.e. the COI section; refugee/human rights laws and policies; and applicable caselaw – by describing this and its inter-relationships, and provides an assessment of, in general, whether one or more of the following applies:

- A person is reasonably likely to face a real risk of persecution or serious harm
- The general humanitarian situation is so severe as to breach Article 15(b) of European Council Directive 2004/83/EC (the Qualification Directive)/Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights as transposed in paragraph 339C and 339CA(iii) of the Immigration Rules
- The security situation presents a real risk to a civilian's life or person such that it would breach Article 15(c) of the Qualification Directive as transposed in paragraph 339C and 339CA(iv) of the Immigration Rules
- A person is able to obtain protection from the state (or quasi state bodies)
- A person is reasonably able to relocate within a country or territory
- A claim is likely to justify granting asylum, humanitarian protection or other form of leave, and
- If a claim is refused, it is likely or unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

Decision makers **must**, however, still consider all claims on an individual basis, taking into account each case's specific facts.

## Country of origin information

The country information in this note has been carefully selected in accordance with the general principles of COI research as set out in the [Common EU \[European Union\] Guidelines for Processing Country of Origin Information \(COI\)](#), dated April 2008, and the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation's (ACCORD), [Researching Country Origin Information – Training Manual, 2013](#). Namely, taking into account the COI's relevance, reliability, accuracy, balance, currency, transparency and traceability.

The structure and content of the country information section follows a [terms of reference](#) which sets out the general and specific topics relevant to this note.

All information included in the note was published or made publicly available on or before the 'cut-off' date(s) in the country information section. Any event taking place or report/article published after these date(s) is not included.

All information is publicly accessible or can be made publicly available, and is from generally reliable sources. Sources and the information they provide are carefully considered before inclusion. Factors relevant to the assessment of the reliability of sources and information include:

- the motivation, purpose, knowledge and experience of the source
- how the information was obtained, including specific methodologies used
- the currency and detail of information, and
- whether the COI is consistent with and/or corroborated by other sources.

Multiple sourcing is used to ensure that the information is accurate, balanced and corroborated, so that a comprehensive and up-to-date picture at the time of publication is provided of the issues relevant to this note.

Information is compared and contrasted, whenever possible, to provide a range of views and opinions. The inclusion of a source, however, is not an endorsement of it or any view(s) expressed.

Each piece of information is referenced in a brief footnote; full details of all sources cited and consulted in compiling the note are listed alphabetically in the [bibliography](#).

## Feedback

Our goal is to continuously improve our material. Therefore, if you would like to comment on this note, please email the [Country Policy and Information Team](#).

## Independent Advisory Group on Country Information

The [Independent Advisory Group on Country Information](#) (IAGCI) was set up in March 2009 by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration to support him in reviewing the efficiency, effectiveness and consistency of approach of COI produced by the Home Office.

The IAGCI welcomes feedback on the Home Office's COI material. It is not the function of the IAGCI to endorse any Home Office material, procedures or policy. The IAGCI may be contacted at:

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Information about the IAGCI's work and a list of the documents which have been reviewed by the IAGCI can be found on the Independent Chief Inspector's pages of the [gov.uk website](#).

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# Assessment

Updated: 14 December 2020

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Basis of claim

#### 1.1.1 Fear of persecution and/or serious harm by state actors because the person

- is from the North-West and South-West (NWSW) region or
- is from the NWSW region and supports, or is perceived to support, the independence of the regions from the rest of Cameroon.

or

#### 1.1.2 That the general humanitarian situation in the NWSW regions is so severe as to make removal to this area of Cameroon a breach of Article 15(b) (torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment of an applicant in the country of origin) of European Council Directive 2004/83/EC of 29 April 2004 (the Qualification Directive)/Articles 2 and 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), as transposed in paragraph 339C and 339CA(iii) of the Immigration Rules.

and/or

#### 1.1.3 A fear of serious harm because the security situation in NWSW regions presents a real risk to a civilian's life or person such that removal would be in breach of Article 15(c) (serious and individual threat to a civilian's life or person by reason of indiscriminate violence in situations of international or internal armed conflict) of the Qualification Directive as transposed in paragraph 339C and 339CA(iv) of the Immigration Rules.

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### 1.2 Points to note

#### 1.2.1 A person may claim that they are or considered to be an 'Anglophone', who is an English-speaking Cameroonian.

#### 1.2.2 However, while an Anglophone is primarily distinguished from other Cameroonians by the fact that they speak English, or a dialect of English, the distinction is not simply linguistic. Around 20% of the population speak English but perhaps 50% speak 'pidgin' English, not all of whom are considered Anglophones. Instead, being 'Anglophone' may also encompass other aspects of a person's background including belonging to or having a shared culture, history and being from an ethnic group with its origin in the NWSW regions (which were formerly UN mandated territories administered by the UK and have a legal system derived from UK-common law) (see [Who is an Anglophone?](#)).

#### 1.2.3 Many sources use 'Anglophone' to describe the NWSW regions and the people who originate from there, although they may not speak English fluently. For consistency and convenience, this note refers to people from or originating from the NWSW who speak fluent or pidgin English as 'Anglophones'.

- 1.2.4 This note is an assessment of the risk of people from the NWSW regions who speak English or a dialect of it commonly referred to as 'Anglophones'. It does not represent the policy position of the British Government on the crisis in the NWSW regions of Cameroon.
- 1.2.5 Additionally, it is difficult to verify reports coming out of the Anglophone regions due to limited access. There have also been reports of deliberate disinformation or reliance on social media from both sides which may not always be verifiable.

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## 2. Consideration of issues

### 2.1 Credibility

- 2.1.1 For information on assessing credibility, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).
- 2.1.2 Decision makers must also check if there has been a previous application for a UK visa or another form of leave. Asylum applications matched to visas should be investigated prior to the asylum interview (see the [Asylum Instruction on Visa Matches, Asylum Claims from UK Visa Applicants](#)).
- 2.1.3 Decision makers should also consider the need to conduct language analysis testing (see the [Asylum Instruction on Language Analysis](#)).

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### 2.2 Exclusion

- 2.2.1 Decision makers must consider whether one (or more) of the exclusion clauses of the Refugee Convention and Qualification Directive are applicable. Each case must be considered on its individual facts and merits.
- 2.2.2 There are reports that armed separatist groups have perpetrated human rights abuses including using violence, targeting killings, committing arson, and been involved in kidnapping and abductions to further their aims in the NWSW region (see [Separatists' actions](#)).
- 2.2.3 If there are serious reasons for considering that the person has been involved in such activities, then decision makers must consider whether one of the exclusion clauses is applicable.
- 2.2.4 If the person is excluded from the Refugee Convention, they will also be excluded from a grant of humanitarian protection.
- 2.2.5 For further guidance on the exclusion clauses and restricted leave, see the Asylum Instructions on [Exclusion under Articles 1F and 33\(2\) of the Refugee Convention](#), [Humanitarian Protection](#) and [Restricted Leave](#).

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### 2.3 Convention reason(s)

- 2.3.1 Nationality/race due to the person's Anglophone ethnicity and/or actual or imputed political opinion.



- 2.3.2 Establishing a convention reason is not sufficient to be recognised as a refugee. The question is whether the person has a well-founded fear of persecution on account of an actual or imputed Refugee Convention reason.
- 2.3.3 For further guidance on Convention reasons see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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## 2.4 Risk

### a) Refugee Convention ground

- 2.4.1 Cameroon's English-speaking minority of 5 million make up approximately 20% of the country's total population. They largely live in the two 'Anglophone' regions of the North-West and South-West (NWSW). The regions are referred to officially as Western Cameroon but as 'Southern Cameroon' by pro-(Anglophone) independence supporters. There are, however, English speakers throughout Cameroon, with Anglophone populations living in Yaoundé and Douala while Anglophones are represented across Cameroonian society, notably Prime Minister Joseph Dion Ngute (see [North-West and South-West crisis: background](#) and [Situation of Anglophones outside of North-West and South-West regions](#)).
- 2.4.2 Cameroon was administered as 2 separate UN trust territories under the UK and France between 1922-1960/61. In a 1961 referendum 'Anglophone' Cameroon chose to join newly independent 'Francophone' Cameroon in a federation, instead of joining Nigeria (the other option). Anglophone Cameroon continued its separate language, education and justice systems. The federation was abolished in 1972 and Cameroon became a unitary state (see [Historical context](#) and [Situation of Anglophones outside of North-West and South-West regions](#)).
- 2.4.3 There has been some periodic expression of Anglophone discontent over these changes since 1972. The most recent phase of discontent began in October 2016 when Anglophone lawyers and teachers protested about the growing number of Francophone judges and teachers in the Anglophone regions. The Government responded by deploying troops, including using live ammunition. On 1 October 2017, separatists declared an independent state called the 'Republic of Ambazonia' (see [Historical context](#) and [Background to North-West/South-West conflict](#)).
- 2.4.4 Separatist groups then announced a boycott of schools. By mid-2019 more than 80% of schools remained closed, mainly enforced through violence against teachers and attacks on school buildings by separatist armed groups. Around 850,000 children have been deprived of an education for the last three school years (see [Education](#)).
- 2.4.5 The separatists are structured around two main political bodies - the Interim Government of the Federal Republic of Ambazonia (IG) and the Ambazonia Governing Council (AGC). Linked to these political parties are more than 20 armed groups. Their size and capacity is unclear. Many separatists are based outside the country (see [Separatist/militia groups](#)).
- 2.4.1 In September 2019, the President of Cameroon announced that a 'national dialogue' would take place to allow all Cameroonians the opportunity to

submit proposals to resolve the security crisis in the NWSW regions. Violent clashes between the military and pro-independence fighters occurred in the lead up to the talks in late September and several key separatists did not attend. The national dialogue resulted in a number of proposals, which included changing the country's name back to the 'United Republic of Cameroon' and the adoption of a Special Status for the two Anglophone regions. Afterwards President Biya freed more than 300 people who had been arrested in connection with the NWSW crisis. Key figure Julius Sisiku Ayuk Tabe, who was extradited from Nigeria, remains in prison (see [National dialogue – 2019](#) and [Release of prisoners](#)).

- 2.4.2 In December 2019, legislation was passed on decentralisation including Special Status for the NWSW regions. Reactions to the granting of Special Status for the NWSW regions have been mixed. Steps need to be taken by the Government to implement the legislation (see [National dialogue – 2019](#)).
- 2.4.3 Legislative and municipal elections took place in Cameroon on 9 February 2020. There were reports of violence and allegations of electoral fraud. Voter turnout was low in the Anglophone regions (see [Legislative and municipal elections - February 2020](#)).
- 2.4.4 According to the sources used, Anglophones in the NWSW regions and elsewhere in Cameroon face discrimination including accessing education and the labour market. However, the available country information does not indicate that the government targets Anglophones for arrest, harassment or other serious human rights violations solely because they are from the NWSW regions and/or they are English speakers. In general, Anglophones are not subject to treatment which, by its nature and/or repetition, or by a combination of measures, amounts to persecution. Each case will need to be considered on its facts.
- 2.4.5 Prior to the national dialogue the government released 289 Anglophone activists in December 2018. Sources, however, indicate that the government is generally intolerant of opposition and criticism, and has continued to arrest and detain, including under anti-terror laws, those who are, or it perceives to be, Anglophone separatists, some of whom may have experienced ill-treatment during detention (see [North-West/South-West crisis: State response](#)).
- 2.4.6 In addition to separatists within Cameroon, diaspora groups supporting a federal or separate Anglophone Cameroon are active outside of the country in Europe, the USA and Canada. There are reports that some have provided funding to armed groups. Sources note that Anglophones living in the diaspora who criticise or are perceived to oppose the government and advocate secession may face arrest and detention on return depending on their profile and the nature of their views. One source cited in a Canadian information response suggested that Anglophones generally are not safe on return as they 'might' be taken from the airport to prison or an unknown destination and 'can be' imprisoned and fined unless they bribe their way out. However this assertion is not supported by specific examples or corroborated by other sources. Nor is there consistent, recent and cogent evidence that unsuccessful asylum seekers per se are at risk on return (see [Separatist support outside of Cameroon](#) and [Treatment on return](#)).

- 2.4.7 The available information, when considered in the round, does not indicate the government has an adverse interest in all returning Anglophones. However it may have an interest in those it perceives to support or to be linked to secessionist activities (see [Separatist support outside of Cameroon](#) and [Treatment on return](#)).
- 2.4.8 Based on a review of the sources consulted, persons who are Anglophones and have been, or are perceived to have been, involved in activities opposed to the government, including advocating greater autonomy or secession for Anglophone areas, are likely to be of adverse interest to the state. Whether a person is at risk of persecution will depend on their profile and activities. Factors to take into account include:
- the nature, aims and methods of the group they support or are linked to
  - the role, nature and profile of their activities for the organisation they represent or are linked to
  - whether it has a presence in Cameroon as well as outside of the country and any evidence that it is monitored by the government
  - if they are not part of a particular group their role and activities in opposing the government, such as organising demonstrations or publicly criticising the government via conventional or social media, both in-country and also in the country of seeking asylum
  - whether they have come to the attention of the authorities previously, and if so, the nature of this interest.
- 2.4.9 Each case must be considered on its facts with the onus on the person to demonstrate that they would be at real risk from the state.
- 2.4.10 For further guidance on assessing risk, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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#### b) Humanitarian protection - general

- 2.4.11 Before considering whether a person requires protection because of the general humanitarian and/or security situation, decision makers must consider if the person is at a real risk of persecution and/or serious harm for a Convention reason .
- 2.4.12 Where the person qualifies under the Refugee Convention, decision makers do not need to make an assessment of the need for protection under Article 15(b) of the Qualification Directive/Articles 2 and 3 of the ECHR or under Article 15(c) of the Qualification Directive.
- 2.4.13 For guidance on Article 15(b)/Article 3 ECHR, including consideration of enhanced risk factors, see the [Asylum Instruction on Humanitarian Protection](#).

#### c) Humanitarian situation in North-West and South-West regions

- 2.4.14 The humanitarian impact of the conflict has been extensive. Hundreds of thousands of people have been internally displaced and tens of thousands have sought refuge in Nigeria. One in 3 people in the Anglophone regions

are in need of humanitarian aid, including assistance with education, food, healthcare, shelter, water and sanitation. Many of the internally displaced persons (IDPs) remain in the Anglophone regions, hiding in remote bush areas. Sexual assault, exploitation and rape are frequently reported by female IDPs and humanitarian assistance is hampered by the volatile security situation, especially in remote areas. Many Anglophones have moved to other areas of Cameroon including neighbouring West and Littoral regions (see [Humanitarian situation](#) and [Situation of Anglophones outside of the NW and SW regions](#)).

- 2.4.15 Around 35% of health facilities are closed and those that are open are not functioning at full capacity. Supplies and access to medication are limited for people in rural and hard-to-reach areas with mobile clinics being the only source of health care in most of these communities. The UN in June 2020 estimated that 3 million people are in need as a consequence of critical problems related to physical and mental wellbeing and 2.6 million people are estimated to be in need with regard to critical problems relating to living standards. The conflict has resulted in severe damage to housing and villages with IDPs living in bush and remote areas with little or no access to medical assistance, food or basic services (see [Humanitarian need and aid](#), [Food shortages](#) and [Health and healthcare](#)).
- 2.4.16 Vulnerable, high risk groups that face particularly acute challenges in accessing basic services, food, and shelter include women (in particular pregnant women), children, people with disabilities and people with chronic illnesses who can no longer access necessary medication. Women, children and disabled persons are at particular risk of sexual and gender-based violence as well as abuse, neglect and exploitation (See [Humanitarian need and aid](#), [Health and healthcare](#) and [Sexual and gender-based violence](#)).
- 2.4.17 The ongoing conflict has impacted the economy, resulting in a decrease of agriculture and livestock activities. This in turn has led to food insecurity with an estimated 854,302 people in the North-West and 618,746 in the South West food insecure (representing 34% and 33% of the total population respectively) (see [Socio-economic decline](#) and [Food shortages](#)).
- 2.4.18 Despite access constraints and violence in the region, aid agencies continued to provide humanitarian aid and support in the NWSW areas. Some remote areas are cut off from basic services and from humanitarian assistance due to the presence of non-state armed groups. The Cameroon government published an 'Emergency Humanitarian Assistance Plan' and announced details of COVID-19 related supplies to be distributed throughout the region (see [Humanitarian situation](#)).
- 2.4.19 While the socio-economic and humanitarian conditions remain poor and have been exacerbated by the restrictions imposed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the economy continues to function and some basic services such as healthcare and water remain available. At the end of 2019 around 19% of basic and secondary schools in the region remained functional. However, all schools were closed across Cameroon from March 2020 due to COVID-19 and did not reopen until October 2020 (see [Humanitarian situation](#)).

- 2.4.20 In general, conditions in the NWSW regions do not reach the threshold that would make removal a breach of Article 3 ECHR/Articles 15(b) of the Qualification Directive. However, communities who have relocated to remote rural areas and vulnerable groups, such as women, children, disabled persons or IDPs in areas where humanitarian conditions are poor and humanitarian aid is less accessible, are likely to face a generalised risk of a breach of Article 15(b) QD or Article 3. Each case will need to be considered on its facts.
- 2.4.21 For guidance on Article 15(b)/Article 3 ECHR, including consideration of enhanced risk factors, see the [Asylum Instruction on Humanitarian Protection](#).

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d) Humanitarian situation outside of the conflict areas of NWSW regions

- 2.4.22 Areas outside of the conflict zones in the NWSW regions and northern Cameroon whilst often difficult and liable to deteriorate as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic are relatively stable and the general situation does not amount to a breach of Article 3/Article 15(b) of the QD (see [Situation of Anglophones outside of the NW and SW regions](#)).

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e) Security situation in North-West and South-West Regions

- 2.4.23 A state of civil instability and/or where law and order has broken down, which might exist in some places outside of government control, does not of itself give rise to a well-founded fear of persecution for a Convention reason.
- 2.4.24 Since October 2017, there have been many violent clashes between the security forces and armed separatist groups and the area is in a state of internal armed conflict. The civilian population has suffered killings, village burnings, shootings, kidnappings and torture at the hands of different actors in the conflict (see [North-West/South-West crisis: State response and Separatist actions](#)).
- 2.4.25 Significant levels of insecurity, conflict and frequent human rights violations continue across the NWSW region. Violent clashes between separatists and military forces as well as killings by both parties have caused multiple civilian deaths and injuries as well as the continued destruction of property. According to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) there have been 420 incidents of violence with 811 fatalities between October 2019 and October 2020. Violence against civilians (220) and battles (184) were the lead causes of casualties during the 12 months between October 2019 and October 2020, out of population of between 3 to 5 million (see [Separatists' actions, North-West/South-West crisis: State response and Security incidents and civilian casualties](#)).
- 2.4.26 There have been some efforts by the Government of Cameroon to resolve the crisis in the NWSW regions, including a national dialogue in October 2019 and the release of 333 prisoners. In July 2020 peace talks were held between government representatives and separatists to discuss a ceasefire agreement, although a full ceasefire did not result. Also, the Government of Cameroon announced in April 2020 Presidential plans for the reconstruction

of the region which followed an 18 month 'Emergency Humanitarian Assistance Plan' published in June 2018 (see [Humanitarian situation](#), [Efforts to resolve the North-West/South-West crisis](#) and [Security situation](#)).

- 2.4.27 However, several armed separatist groups remain active. Separatist groups and the military have reportedly continued to commit violations of international humanitarian law, and abuses of human rights. There has also been a breakdown of law and order and the situation remains volatile and unpredictable. Vulnerable groups include women and children who are at particular risk from incidents of sexual and gender-based violence and abuse (see [Separatist actions](#), [Efforts to resolve the North-West/South-West crisis](#), [Security incidents and civilian casualties](#) and [Sexual and gender-based violence](#)).
- 2.4.28 The security situation remains volatile and fluid. However, while levels of violence remain high they are not such at a level as to indicate that a person returning to the NWSW regions is likely, solely because of their presence in those regions, to face a real risk of being subject to a threat to their life or person and a breach of Article 15(c) of the Qualification Directive. However, there may be particular factors relevant to the person's individual circumstances which might nevertheless place them at risk, for example age, disability, gender or ill-health. The more the person is affected by factors specific to their personal circumstances, the lower the level of indiscriminate violence required for them to be eligible.
- 2.4.29 For further guidance on assessing risk, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#) and the [Asylum Instruction on Humanitarian Protection](#).

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#### f) Security situation outside of the NWSW regions and the far north

- 2.4.30 Areas outside of the conflict zones in the NWSW regions and northern Cameroon are stable and offer relative security. A person returning to these areas, including the main cities of Douala and Yaoundé, will not face a real risk of being subject to a threat to their life or person and a breach of Article 15(c) QD (see [Situation of Anglophones outside of the SW and NW regions](#)).

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## 2.5 Protection

- 2.5.1 Where the person has a well-founded fear of persecution from the state they will not, in general, be able to avail themselves of the protection of the authorities.
- 2.5.2 For further information relating to particular groups, for example, Sexual orientation and gender identity or expression, see the relevant [Country Policy and Information Note](#).
- 2.5.3 For further guidance on assessing the availability of state protection, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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## 2.6 Internal relocation

- 2.6.1 Where the person has a well-founded fear of persecution from the state, it is unlikely to be reasonable to expect them to relocate to escape that risk.
- 2.6.2 There are Anglophone communities outside of the NWSW, including in the main cities of Douala and Yaoundé (see [Situation of Anglophones outside of the SW and NW regions](#)). A person from the NWSW regions who does not have a well-founded fear of persecution from the government is likely to be able to relocate to another part of Cameroon. Decision makers must give careful consideration to the relevance and reasonableness of internal relocation taking full account of the individual circumstances of the particular person.
- 2.6.3 For further guidance on internal relocation see Country Policy and Information Note on [Cameroon: Internal relocation](#) and the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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## 2.7 Certification

- 2.7.1 Where a claim is refused, it is unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.
- 2.7.2 For further guidance on certification, see [Certification of Protection and Human Rights claims under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 \(clearly unfounded claims\)](#).

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# Country information

Section 3 updated: 1 December 2020

## 3. North-West and South-West crisis: background

### 3.1 Who is an Anglophone?

3.1.1 In a 2014 research paper, Joseph L Nfi – a Senior Lecturer with the Department of History, University of Buea – noted that ‘Scholars disagree about the concept of Anglophone in Cameroon’<sup>1</sup> Nfi argued that:

‘According to Ndobegang (2009) an Anglophone in Cameroon is not just someone who speaks English; not just someone whose parents lived in the former British Southern Cameroons; not just someone who has acquired Anglophone education or culture but precisely someone whose ancestry is Southern Cameroonian. Bobda (2001) clearly indicates that the term Anglophone, as it is understood in Cameroon, has mostly an ethnic connotation. It has very little to do with knowledge of the English language as an Anglophone in the Cameroonian sense does not need to know a word of English. This definition is more relevant because in Cameroon the concept Anglophone is more ethnic, cultural and regional than linguistic... Anglophones are those Cameroonians whose ancestral origins and ethnic bases are in the former British territory of the Southern Cameroons whether they speak the English Language or not. The term is therefore exclusionary and limited to people of a defined territory, culture and history.’<sup>2</sup>

3.1.2 A House of Commons briefing paper, dated 17 April 2019, stated that:

‘A 2008 academic study noted that, in a country of over 250 African languages, a significant minority of Cameroonians spoke neither French nor English. But it also acknowledged that “pidgin English” was the lingua franca in the bulk of the country, with at least 50% of the population speaking it. It added there was also an emerging “Camfranglais” or “Francamglais” amongst the young in Cameroon’s two main cities, Yaoundé and Douala...

‘These observations suggest that the “Anglophone”/“Francophone” linguistic distinction may be more blurred in everyday life for ordinary Cameroonians than contemporary advocates for the independence of Southern Cameroon might suggest.’<sup>3</sup>

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### 3.2 Demography

3.2.1 The English-speaking minority make-up approximately 20% (or 5 million)<sup>4</sup> of the total population (of around 25.5 million)<sup>5</sup> and are concentrated in the Anglophone North West/South West (NWSW) regions<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph L. Nfi, [‘The anglophone identity in Cameroon 50 years after reunification’](#), Jan 2014

<sup>2</sup> Joseph L. Nfi, [‘The anglophone identity in Cameroon 50 years after reunification’](#), Jan 2014

<sup>3</sup> HoC, [‘The Anglophone Cameroon crisis...April 2019 update’](#) (p7), 17 April 2019

<sup>4</sup> BBC News, [‘Cameroon’s Anglophone crisis’](#), 4 October 2018

<sup>5</sup> CIA, [‘The World Fact Book, Cameroon’](#), (section: population), updated 26 August 2019

<sup>6</sup> Refugees International, [‘Crisis denied in Cameroon’](#), 29 May 2019



3.2.2 The Government of Cameroon published the following details on the Presidency of the Republic webpage

‘North West region

- Regional capital: Bamenda  
Population: 1,702 559 inhabitants  
Surface area: 17,300 km<sup>2</sup>  
Number of Divisions: 7  
Density: 98.41 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>

‘South West region

- Regional capital: Buea  
Population: 1,153,125 inhabitants  
Surface area: 25,410 km<sup>2</sup>  
Number of Divisions: 6  
Density: 45.38 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup><sup>7</sup>

3.2.3 Comparatively the area of Cameroon according to CIA World factbook is 478,440sq km<sup>8</sup>.

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### 3.3 North-West and South-West regions

3.3.1 There are 2 Anglophone regions in Cameroon: South-West and North-West<sup>9</sup>, known as ‘Southern Cameroon’ and ‘Western Cameroon’ respectively by pro-independence supporters<sup>10</sup>, which the map below illustrates<sup>11</sup>

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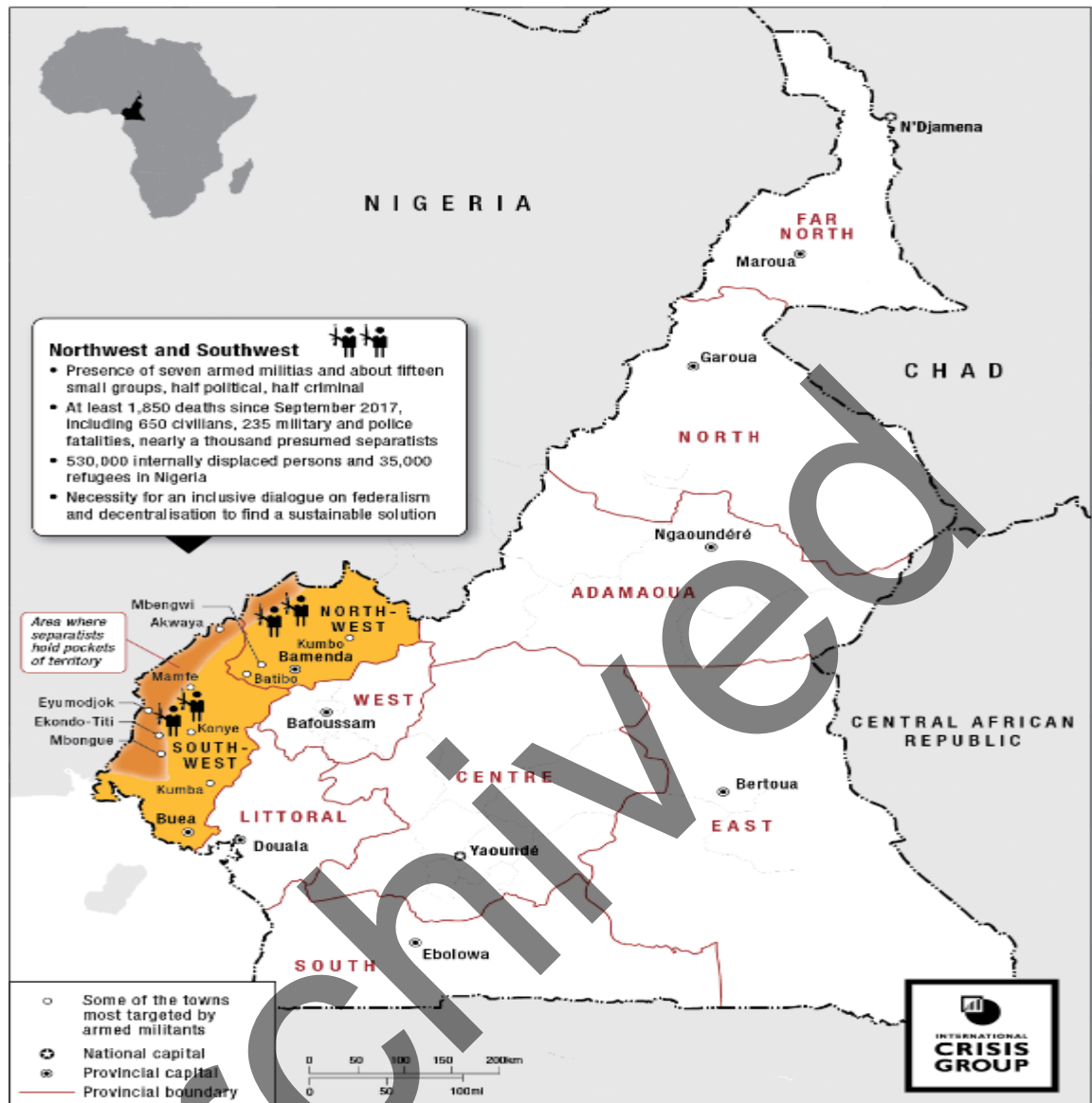
<sup>7</sup> Republic of Cameroon, ‘[Cameroon: Presentation of Cameroon](#)’, undated

<sup>8</sup> CIA, ‘[The World Fact Book, Cameroon](#)’, (section: population), updated 26 August 2019

<sup>9</sup> ICG, ‘[Cameroon’s Anglophone Crisis: How to get to Talks?](#)’, 2 May 2019

<sup>10</sup> HoC, ‘[The Anglophone Cameroon crisis...April 2019 update](#)’, (p5), 17 April 2019

<sup>11</sup> ICG, ‘[Cameroon’s Anglophone Crisis: How to get to Talks?](#)’, (p30), 2 May 2019



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### 3.4 Historical context

3.4.1 Cameroon was administered as 2 separate UN trust territories under the UK and France between 1922-1960/61<sup>12 13</sup>.

3.4.2 A House of Commons briefing paper, dated 17 April 2019, stated that:

‘...There continue to be important differences between Anglophone Cameroon and the rest of the country that it opted to join in 1961. The main difference centres on language. French dominates the public realm in Cameroon, despite a long-standing official policy of bilingualism. Most Southern Cameroonians characterise the region as still predominantly English-speaking...

‘Another important difference is the legal system in Southern Cameroon, which is based predominantly on UK-derived common law. But critics of the

<sup>12</sup> UN Library, [‘Trusteeship Council – Trust territories introductions’](#), last updated 9 October 2019

<sup>13</sup> UN Library, [‘Trusteeship Council – Cameroons under...’](#), last updated 9 October 2019

central government argue that the autonomy of this legal system has been progressively eroded, with the use of French increasingly being imposed in local courts. There are similar complaints about the marginalisation of English in schools and universities.’<sup>14</sup>

3.4.3 The Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa (CHRDA) and the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights’ joint report, Cameroon’s Unfolding Catastrophe, 3 June 2019, reported that: ‘The crisis in Cameroon is commonly characterized as a linguistic one, with politically marginalized Anglophones opposing the government, but language is only part of the crisis, which is deeply rooted in the local and institutional culture and history of decolonization.’<sup>15</sup>

3.4.4 A House of Commons briefing paper, dated 17 April 2019, stated that: ‘Relations between the largely Anglophone regions of Cameroon and the country’s dominant Francophone elite have long been fraught... ‘The tensions originate in a complex and contested decolonisation process in the late-1950s and early-1960s, in which Britain, as one of the colonial powers, was heavily involved... ‘Many Anglophone Cameroonians argue that they were denied the right to meaningful self-determination at the time of independence and that federal arrangements introduced at the time were subsequently illegitimately dismantled by the Francophone-controlled central government. Many also claim that the central government privileges the majority Francophone population. They complain (with some justification) that they have been marginalised within the state, including in the education and judicial systems. Finally, they complain that they do not benefit much from the oil which has been found in the region.’<sup>16</sup>

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### 3.5 Background to North-West/South-West conflict

3.5.1 The March 2019 Congressional Research Service ‘In Focus’ report stated: ‘Current-day Cameroon was formed through the merger of French and British colonial territories in 1961; in 1972, the central government unilaterally replaced a federal system with a unitary state. Northwest and Southwest provinces (formerly UK-held “Southern Cameroons”) remain predominantly English-speaking, with distinct educational and legal systems. In 2016, Anglophones protested over state appointments of Francophone lawyers and teachers to English-speaking areas. The government granted minor concessions but cracked down on unrest, arresting hundreds (including peaceful activists, some of whom were charged with terrorism) and deploying the military to affected areas. ‘In October 2017, protesters marked the anniversary of Cameroon’s 1961 unification by symbolically proclaiming the secession of Anglophone areas. Some groups also took up arms in the name of an independent state of

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<sup>14</sup> HoC, ‘[The Anglophone Cameroon crisis...April 2019 update](#)’ (p7), 17 April 2019

<sup>15</sup> CHRDA, ‘[Cameroon’s Unfolding Catastrophe](#)’, (p18), 3 June 2019

<sup>16</sup> HoC, ‘[The Anglophone Cameroon crisis...April 2019 update](#)’, (summary)’, 17 April 2019

Ambazonia. The ensuing conflict between government forces and a fractious array of rebel groups has featured widespread abuses against civilians. Security forces have been accused of torture, extrajudicial killings, indiscriminate arrests, and burning of villages. Armed groups have reportedly carried out assassinations, kidnappings, mutilations, and attacks on schools and teachers. Attackers have targeted health facilities, spurring a mounting health crisis.’<sup>17</sup>

3.5.2 Bertelsmann Stiftung’s Transformation Index (BSTI) Country report 2020 covers the period from February 1, 2017 to January 31, 2019. The BSTI assesses the transformation toward democracy and a market economy as well as the quality of governance in 137 countries. The report noted:

‘Equal opportunity is only partially achieved, and discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, and region exists...

‘Perception of discrimination is high among Anglophones and the government’s heavy-handed response to demonstrations led to a violent secessionist movement. Anglophone activists cite historical cultural, economic, and political grievances that date back to the abolishment of federalism in 1972. These include the diversion of major infrastructural investments to other areas, the absence of sufficient accommodations for English in educational testing and higher education, and the relegation of the tradition of British Common Law to secondary status. The government has tried to address some of these issues by launching a teacher recruitment drive, legislating the creation of a Common Law Bench on the Supreme Court, and revising its training program at the National School of Administration and Magistracy (ENAM).’<sup>18</sup>

3.5.3 Human Rights Watch 2020 report, considering events in 2019, stated:

‘Cameroon’s Anglophone regions have been engulfed in crisis since late 2016, when English-speaking lawyers, students, and teachers began protesting what they saw as their under-representation in, and cultural marginalization by, the central government.

‘The response of government security forces has included killing civilians, torching villages, and using torture and incommunicado detention. Armed separatists have also killed, tortured, and kidnapped dozens of civilians, including teachers, students, and government officials.

‘On September 10, amid increasing violence and following sustained international pressure, President Biya called for a “national dialogue,” a series of nationwide discussions aimed at addressing the Anglophone crisis. The dialogue ended with the adoption of a special status for the two Anglophone regions and the release of hundreds of political prisoners, including Maurice Kamto, leader of the opposition Cameroon Renaissance Movement (MRC), and other people arrested in connection with the unrest in the North-West and South-West regions.’<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> CRS, ‘[In Focus – Cameroon](#)’ (section Anglophone crisis), 12 March 2019,

<sup>18</sup> BSTI, ‘[2020 Cameroon Country Report](#)’ (p24-25), 29 April 2020

<sup>19</sup> HRW, ‘[World Report 2020 events of 2019, Cameroon events of 2019](#)’, 14 January 2020

## 4. Separatist/militia groups

### 4.1 Overview of groups

#### 4.1.1 A DW article of 30 September 2019, 'Who are Cameroon's self-named Ambazonia secessionists?', based on interviews with an Anglophone human rights lawyer, an activist and Human Rights Watch employee, reported that:

'It is a conflict which is scarred by violence and severe human rights violations from both security forces and armed groups, Amnesty International reported. 3,000 people have died and close to half a million have been displaced.

'...Multiple separatists groups have formed in the southwest and northwest of the country.

'Agbor Balla, an Anglophone human rights lawyer, tells DW: " I think each county or each community is coming up with its own groups. There are about ten groups, including the Ambazonia Defence Forces, the Tigers, and groups working for the interim government of Ambazonia." All of these groups serve one purpose: the fight for independence. It is a struggle that has a long history.

'...Freedom fighters, radicals, or Amba-boys – nowadays, the separatists have many names. Mark Baretta, a Cameroonian activist in the diaspora fighting for Ambazonia, explains: "At the moment we have different groups, different structures: Those who decided to pick up arms and are fighting the republic, those doing diplomacy and those providing support to those in the bushes."

'The groups don't have a chain of command. "You cannot really identify how they operate", Balla says.

'...Some of the armed groups are led and funded by Cameroonians living in the diaspora, Balla says. "The diaspora, these are Cameroonians. Some want to see things changed, some of them want to have an independent state, some of them might have had their issues with the government. Some of them might have been blacklisted and they cannot come back to the country. So some hope to come back to an independent state." However, most groups survive through kidnappings and ransom.

'The fights have become increasingly brutal, schools, hospitals and whole villages are burned down, people murdered and intimidated. "At the beginning, abuses were mostly and largely committed by government forces. Now the line between the bad and the good is really blurred and we see these separatist groups attacking and targeting civilians", explains Ilaria Allegrozzi from Human Rights Watch. "Civilians are really being caught in the middle of this crisis and paying the highest price."<sup>20</sup>

#### 4.1.2 The New Humanitarian in an analysis piece from July 2020 stated:

'The secessionist forces [...] can be divided into two rival so-called Ambazonia interim governments (referred to as "IGs").

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<sup>20</sup> DW, ['Who are Cameroon's self-named Ambazonia secessionists?'](#), 30 September 2019

'One is led by Sisiku, a former university administrator and engineer, who is currently facing a life sentence on terrorism and secession charges. The second is headed by Samuel Ikome Sako, a US-based former pastor. "IG Sisiku" is seen locally as the stronger of the two wings.

'The split in the movement followed the arrest of Sisiku in Nigeria, along with nine other senior officials – the so-called "Nera 10" (named after the hotel in which they were staying) – and their extradition to Cameroon in January 2018.

'The friction between the two camps largely plays out in the diaspora – where nearly all the secessionist leaders are based – but has increasingly led to clashes among their men in Cameroon.

'Each IG is an umbrella group for a range of other factions. As Cameroon's war continues, a key question is how much control the diaspora-based leadership has over individual commanders and fighters on the ground.

'The division has complicated humanitarian efforts, with aid workers not knowing which group they must seek permission from to access communities in need.

'On Monday, international NGOs released a joint statement reiterating that they provided aid to "all civilian populations affected by the ongoing crisis based on need and without discrimination".

'Adding to the confusion are the militias not affiliated to either camp, as well as the so-called "Fake Amba" – local vigilantes accused of being in the pay of the government.

'Following Sisiku's arrest, Sako was selected as acting interim president of the original IG in a move condemned by some for a lack of transparency. Tensions between the two men reached boiling point in early 2019 when Sisiku announced he was "dissolving" his organisation.

'Sako hit back and said Sisiku had been impeached – creating the two separate groups, known as "IG Sisiku" and "IG Sako."

'While divisions within the separatist movement have existed since the 1980s, this rupture has proven far more significant than others. Cash is a factor, with control over money raised from donations abroad – including the so-called "War Draft" – and kidnappings and extortion in Cameroon proving a lucrative revenue stream.'<sup>21</sup>

#### 4.1.3 See also :

- [ICG, 'Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis: How to get to Talks?', \(section IV\), 2 May 2019](#)
- [CHRDA, 'Cameroon's Unfolding Catastrophe', \(section H\), 3 June 2019](#)
- [DW, 'Who are Cameroon's self-named Ambazonia secessionists?', 30 September 2019](#)

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<sup>21</sup> The New Humanitarian, '[Ahead of peace talks, a who's who of Cameroon's separatist...](#)', July 2020

## 4.2 Interim Government Sisiku and Ambazonia Governing Council (AGC)

### 4.2.1 International Crisis Group stated, in 'Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis: How to get to Talks?', published 2 May 2019, that:

'The IG's rival, the Ambazonia Governing Council (AGC), was founded in 2013 by its president, Ayaba Cho Lucas'... The AGC is more hardline than the IG. Ayaba Cho, who lives in Norway, is its undisputed leader and takes decisions practically alone, contrary to the relatively collegial way of making decisions in the IG. It aims to make the Anglophone regions ungovernable until the government realises that the cost of fighting the armed militias is greater than the benefits accruing from exploitation of the regions' natural resources.'<sup>22</sup>

### 4.2.2 In their June 2018 report, A Turn for the Worse, Amnesty International explained how they use the phrase "self-proclaimed armed separatists" to describe a spectrum of groups embracing an armed struggle for secession from Cameroon in order to create an independent state of "Ambazonia", that 'One of the most prominent groups is the Ambazonia Defense Forces (ADF),'<sup>23</sup>

### 4.2.3 The New Humanitarian stated in July 2020:

'IG Sisiku, [...], is aligned with the Ambazonia Governing Council (AGovC) – one of the largest opposition groups – led by Norway-based Cho Lucas Ayaba. It has an armed wing, the Ambazonia Defence Forces (ADF), which is active across both anglophone regions.

'Political activist Mark Bareta, currently in Belgium, told The New Humanitarian that the alliance between IG Sisiku and AGovC, formalised in August 2019, "solidifies President Sisiku as the face of the revolution [and shows he has] one of the strong men of the revolution, Cho Lucas Ayaba, with him."<sup>24</sup>

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## 4.3 Interim Government Sako and the Ambazonia Coalition Team (ACT)

### 4.3.1 The International Crisis group, in 'Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis: How to get to Talks?', published 2 May 2019, reported that:

'Considered by most separatists and many Anglophones to be the government of Ambazonia on its creation in June 2017, the IG was weakened politically by the arrest in January 2018 in Nigeria of its figurehead, Julius Ayuk Tabe. Several separatist activists accuse the new leadership under Ikome Sako of incompetence and misappropriation of funds. Some activists now see the IG as just a separatist organisation among many others.

'Grouping several organisations, it nevertheless remains the most politically credible and best-funded separatist organisation.

'It [IG] established an Ambazonia Security Council (ASC), a kind of platform for cooperation between the armed militias within its field of influence, such

<sup>22</sup> ICG, '[Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis: How to get to Talks?](#)', (section IV), 2 May 2019

<sup>23</sup> Amnesty, '[A Turn for the Worse](#)' (p10), 12 Jun 2018

<sup>24</sup> The New Humanitarian, '[Ahead of peace talks, a who's who of Cameroon's separatist...](#)', July 2020

as Tigers 2 and Red Dragons, and an embryonic parliament called the Ambazonia Recognition Coalition (ARC). It has ten ministerial departments, including the Department of Health and Social Services, which assists Cameroonian refugees in Nigeria. The IG, whose monthly budget reportedly varies from tens of thousands to a hundred thousand dollars, is mainly funded by donations from the diaspora, including a significant number of women, but business people and shopkeepers in Cameroon allegedly also contribute in order to protect their premises from vandalism.’<sup>25</sup>

#### 4.3.2 The New Humanitarian stated in July 2020:

‘In 2019, groups aligned with IG Sako coalesced under a new umbrella, the Ambazonia Coalition Team (ACT). Its main military asset is Lekeaka Oliver, popularly known as the “field marshal of Lebialem”, who has proved an able commander. It also includes the Southern Cameroons Defense Forces (SOCADEF), an armed group led by Ebenezer Akwanga. ACT’s civilian activists are mostly US-based. They include Boh Herbert, who heads the Movement for the Restoration of the Independence of Southern Cameroons, and Kometa Elvis of the Southern Cameroons National Council, among others.’<sup>26</sup>

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#### 4.4 Ambazonia Recognition Collaboration Council (ARCC)

4.4.1 The Ambazonia Recognition Collaboration Council (ARCC) are also affiliated to the AGC<sup>27</sup>.

4.4.2 According to Amba News 24:

‘ARCC is a collaborative platform of six Ambazonia liberation movements, which include the Ambazonia Governing Council (AGovC), Ambazonia Mobilization Initiative, China (AMIC), the Ambazonia People Restoration Movements (APERM), the Movement for the Restoration of the Independence of Southern Cameroons (MoRISC), the Republic of Ambazonia Nation (RoAN), and the Southern Cameroons Women Movement (SCWM).’<sup>28</sup>

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#### 4.5 Smaller separatist groups

4.5.1 In February 2018, Reuters reported that ‘The ADF has been joined by newer armed groups made up mostly of young men. The Vipers has claimed responsibility for burning government buildings. The Manyu Tigers says its ranks are growing and it has carried out attacks on military checkpoints.’<sup>29</sup>

4.5.2 International Crisis group, in May 2019, listed the smaller separatist organisations as:

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<sup>25</sup> ICG, ‘[Cameroon’s Anglophone Crisis: How to get to Talks?](#)’, (section IV), 2 May 2019

<sup>26</sup> The New Humanitarian, ‘[Ahead of peace talks, a who’s who of Cameroon’s separatist...](#)’, July 2020

<sup>27</sup> ICG, ‘[Cameroon’s Anglophone Crisis: How to get to Talks?](#)’, (section IV), 2 May 2019

<sup>28</sup> Amba News 24, ‘[ARCC adopts tough resolution on any negotiations...](#)’, 28 June 2019

<sup>29</sup> Reuters, ‘[Exclusive: ‘We are in a war’ - Cameroon unrest confronted by ...](#)’, 8 February 2018



- Ambazonia People's Liberation Movement (APLM) – Led by Ebenezer Akawanga
- Southern Cameroons People's Organisation (SCAPO) – Led by Milan Atam, former IG general secretary.
- Southern Cameroons Youth League (SCYL)
- Southern Cameroons Defense Forces (SOCADEF) – Military wing<sup>30</sup>

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#### 4.6 Size of groups

4.6.1 The ICG, provides details in their May 2019 estimating the number of members attributed to a separatist group/armed militia. See ICG, '[Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis: How to get to Talks?](#)', (section IV), 2 May 2019

4.6.2 The IGC added that:

'It is difficult to estimate the numbers in these armed groups in the Anglophone part of Cameroon because they tend to claim higher numbers than they really have. For example, SOCADEF's leader said that his group had more than 3,500 active combatants, but he appears to have no more than 500. International Crisis Group has only listed groups with at least 200 members, an official name and an identifiable leader. About 20 smaller semi-criminal, semi-separatist groups also exist and have a few dozen members. Finally, the attacks in the Francophone West Region (Noun, Bamboutos and Menoua divisions) seem to be the work of a few small groups based in Ngoketunjia division (Babessi, Bambaland, Bamessing and Bamali) in the Northwest region.'<sup>31</sup>

4.6.3 The New Humanitarian stated: 'The secessionist forces number anywhere between 2,000 and 4,000 armed fighters.'<sup>32</sup>

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#### 4.7 Separatist actions

4.7.1 OCHA reported in their situation report, Cameroon: North-West and South-West as of 31 August 2019 that:

'The month of August was marked by increased targeting of humanitarians by [non-state armed groups] NSAGs hampering the ability of organisations to provide life-saving services. On 5 August, NSAGs interrupted a food distribution at a site in the Muyuka subdivision (SW) and a beneficiary was injured by a gunshot. Later that same day, two aid workers were shot in the legs and arms by NSAGs in the Muyuka subdivision. On 7 August, a humanitarian aid worker working for a local NGO in Batibo subdivision, was abducted from his home and later killed allegedly by NSAG fighters. On 18 and 19 August, an aid organization in KupeMuanenguba (SW) was sealed by the Divisional Officer (administrative authority) and the Commissioner for public security and three staff of the organization were held in overnight

<sup>30</sup> ICG, '[Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis: How to get to Talks?](#)', (section IV), 2 May 2019

<sup>31</sup> ICG, '[Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis: How to get to Talks?](#)', (p33), 2 May 2019

<sup>32</sup> The New Humanitarian, '[Ahead of peace talks, a who's who of Cameroon's separatist...](#)', July 2020

detention. On 27 August, NSAG fighters abducted four staff of an aid organization at Kurabi (Batibo subdivision, Momo division). The Humanitarian Coordinator ad interim issued a statement on 8 August condemning the killing of the aid worker. This incident happened barely a month after the killing of a community health worker in the South-West. The Humanitarian Coordinator called all armed actors to refrain from any attacks or obstruction of aid workers and humanitarian agencies on whose assistance so many lives depend. OCHA has continued to advocate for humanitarian access.’<sup>33</sup>

#### 4.7.2 HRW noted its report covering events in 2019:

‘In Anglophone regions, violence intensified as government forces conducted large-scale security operations and armed separatists carried out increasingly sophisticated attacks. Over 3,000 civilians and hundreds of security forces personnel have been killed in the Anglophone regions since 2016, when the crisis started...

‘Armed separatists have...killed, tortured, and kidnapped dozens of civilians, including teachers, students, and government officials.’<sup>34</sup>

#### 4.7.3 Amnesty International in their report on the human rights situation covering 2019 stated:

‘Separatist armed groups continued to kill security forces and to commit serious abuses against the population. They were responsible for unlawful killings, often involving mutilations. They targeted civil servants, ordinary people who failed to respect “ghost town” and instructions to close schools and relatives of members of defense and security forces. In September, a video was posted on social media showing hooded men beheading a woman who worked as a wardress at the Bamenda Central Prison. They were also responsible for numerous abductions of students, journalists and humanitarian workers. In February, the president of the Cameroon Association of English Speaking Journalists was abducted by separatist fighters in the city of Bamenda after he criticized their call for families not to send their children to school. In September, a local radio in Buea (South-West) was attacked and the radio presenter, Mary Namondo, was abducted. In October, armed groups also abducted ten workers of two UN implementing partners in Tubah subdivision, all were later released.’<sup>35</sup>

#### 4.7.4 Amnesty International reported in February 2020:

‘Armed separatists continue to commit serious crimes, including killings, abductions and extortions.

‘On 30 January [2020], four staffs of a humanitarian organisation were abducted by an armed separatist group, which accused them of working for the government. They were released a day later after three of them were beaten and subjected to psychological torture, according to the organisation. On 15 January [2020], a young man was killed, and his father injured near

<sup>33</sup> UNOCHA, ‘[Cameroon: North-West and South-West](#)’, (Situation overview), 31 August 2019

<sup>34</sup> HRW, ‘[World Report 2020 events of 2019, Cameroon events of 2019](#)’, 14 January 2020

<sup>35</sup> AI, ‘[Human Rights in Africa: Review of 2019 – Cameroon](#)’, 8 April 2020

Bamenda (North-West), as they tried to avoid checkpoints held by armed separatists.

'On 3 December 2019, three people including a doctor were abducted by armed separatists between the village of Bambili and the town of Bamenda (North-West). Abductors started asking for a ransom of 5000 euros before reducing it to 100 euros. Before their release, the persons were blindfolded, and guns pointed at them while they were yelling.

Armed separatists have also asked aid workers to stop their activities during the 6 to 11 February 2020 planned lockdown they have ordered in the Anglophone regions. Only Emergency health services can continue with their activities during this period.'<sup>36</sup>

#### 4.7.5 Human Rights Watch in February 2020 and following the February 2020 elections in Cameroon stated:

'The SDF, one of Cameroon's largest opposition parties, is led by John Fru Ndi. Founded in early 1990, it has, since its establishment, had a close connection with groups advocating the rights of the Anglophone minority. The party remains rooted in the North-West region, where it has significant support. The government views the party as too close to the Anglophone cause. While the party does not support secession like separatist groups, the government depicts the party as destabilizing. The SDF did not boycott this latest round of elections.'

'Ahead of the February 9, 2020 elections, armed separatists targeted the party, seeing it as betraying Anglophones by not withdrawing its elected members from parliament in solidarity with separatists. Joseph Mbah Ndam, a member of parliament for the party, said: "SDF did not start its campaign on time in the Anglophone regions, because of the prevailing climate of intimidation and insecurity. Our members are being targeted by armed separatists. They have been kidnapped and threatened."

'Armed separatists in the Anglophone regions have kidnapped hundreds of people, including at least 100 SDF members since December 2019, according to the party's vice president, Joshua Osih. All but six were released, mostly after paying ransom. Most were held for several days. Fru Ndi, the party leader, was kidnapped twice in 2019, on April 27 and June 28.'<sup>37</sup>

#### 4.7.6 The USSD report for 2019 noted: 'Anglophone separatists attacked and killed members of defense and security forces, as well as civilians considered loyal to the central government. For example, during the night of April 23 and the morning of April 24 in Muyuka, Southwest Region, separatist fighters decapitated and dismembered gendarme Adam Assana and scattered his body parts on the highway.'<sup>38</sup>

#### 4.7.7 The USSD report for 2019 also stated:

'As in the previous year, armed separatists carried out abductions in the Anglophone Northwest and Southwest Regions and held noncombatants as

<sup>36</sup> AI, '[Cameroon: Rise in killings in Anglophone regions...](#)', 6 February 2020

<sup>37</sup> HRW, '[Cameroon: Election violence in Anglophone regions](#)', 12 February 2020

<sup>38</sup> USSD, '[Human rights report 2019 \(section 1D\)](#)', 11 March 2020

hostages, including public officials, political leaders, teachers, schoolchildren, and traditional leaders. There were credible allegations that separatists physically abused abduction victims, including forcing them to sit in excrement, putting them in stress positions, beating them, and flogging them with the flat edges of machetes. In most cases, the abductors subsequently freed the victims, after either negotiations or payment of ransoms.

'A June 30 situation report by OCHA indicated that kidnapping rates increased in June. On June 7, gunmen kidnapped the owner of a travel agency in Bamenda, Northwest Region, before releasing him hours later. On November 5, armed Anglophone separatists stormed a Presbyterian school in Bamenda, Northwest Region. The head of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon and the Council of the Protestant Churches of Cameroon reported 79 children and three adults were kidnapped, adding that 11 students had also been kidnapped on October 31. In November Anglophone separatists kidnapped three Franciscan sisters and 13 novices who were traveling in the Northwest Region.'<sup>39</sup>

4.7.8 Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) in their regional overview dated 23 July 2020 stated:

'... Ambazonian separatists were involved in several high profile attacks against civilians in the Anglophone regions. Separatists carried out a number of kidnappings in the South-West, including a mass kidnapping of at least 63 people in the village of M'Muock-Mbie. In the North-West, Ambazonian fighters kidnapped, tortured, and killed a local prince in Babessi, after accusing him of being a government collaborator. Two separatists were subsequently executed by their commander for their involvement in the killing.'<sup>40</sup>

4.7.9 Responsibility to protect (R2P) reported in their bi-monthly bulletin 15 September 2020 that: 'Armed separatist forces have also perpetrated abuses, including kidnapping and killing civilians.'<sup>41</sup>

4.7.10 For further information on Separatist actions see:

- [ACLED – Regional overview: Africa](#)
- [ACLED, 'Abductions and spreading violence in the Ambazonian...'](#), March 2019
- [BBC News, 'Cameroon kidnap: 170 students freed'](#), 18 February 2019
- [BBC News, 'Student football team abducted in Anglophone Cameroon'](#), 20 March 2019
- [HRW, 'New Attacks on Civilians By Troops, Separatists'](#), 28 March 2019
- [HRW, 'Routine Torture, Incommunicado Detention'](#), 6 May 2019
- [HRW, 'Cameroon: Civilians killed in Anglophone regions'](#), 27 July 2020

<sup>39</sup> USSD, '[Human rights report 2019 \(section 1D\)](#)', 11 March 2020

<sup>40</sup> ACLED, '[Regional overview – Africa](#)', 23 July 2020

<sup>41</sup> R2P, '[Monitor- bi-monthly bulletin](#)', (p3), 15 September 2019

- [HRW, 'Horrific video shows Cameroon killing' 14 August 2020](#)
- [UN OCHA – Situation reports and Humanitarian Bulletins](#)

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#### 4.8 Separatist support outside of Cameroon

4.8.1 The website of Foreign Policy (FP), reporting on Cameroon's separatist movement in May 2019, stated that:

'... A particularly active diaspora is increasingly funneling resources into Cameroon's separatist armed groups and courting foreign states for support.

'One of the actors moving into this now crowded field is Marshall Foncha. Based in the United States, Foncha serves as the chairman of the Ambazonia Military Council, the AMF's political wing. In an interview with Foreign Policy, he said he has attempted to source arms from two foreign powers in a deal that is being mediated by sympathetic officers in the Nigerian Army.

'From Foncha's vantage point in the United States, a steady weapons supply will help bring an end to the fragmentation of Cameroon's array of Anglophone separatist movements and help to galvanize support from military factions behind the council.

'On social media, diaspora activists have been promoting fundraising campaigns for Kalashnikovs and other firearms, and there is an increasing, if uncoordinated, effort to get guns to those willing to fight the Cameroonian government. These resources are already reshaping the realities of the Anglophone separatist movement on the ground, however fragmented it may be.'<sup>42</sup>

4.8.2 A BBC Monitoring 'Organisation' post, of 9 October 2019, gave the following information:

"The Brigade Anti-Sardinards movement stages a mass anti-Biya regime protest in Geneva, during the visit of President Paul Biya in Switzerland on 29 June 2019. The movement says that it will organise a similar protest in Yaoundé on 8 July 2019.

'The Brigade Anti-Sardinards movement hails the release of political detainees including [Maurice Kamto](#). The group goes on to call for the release of separatist leader [Julius Sisiku Ayuk Tabe](#) and his co-accused.'<sup>43</sup>

4.8.3 There are a number of Cameroonian community organisations in the UK (see [africancultureblog](#)) including [South Cameroons National Council \(SCNC\) UK](#). SCNC (UK) described themselves as 'a group advocating for self determination aiming at obtaining independence for the former British Southern Cameroons. It is a non violent and a non political group of activists with its motto; "The Force Of Argument Not The Argument Of Force".'<sup>44</sup>

4.8.4 The New Humanitarian stated:

<sup>42</sup> FP, '[Cameroon's separatist movement is going international](#)', 13 May 2019

<sup>43</sup> BBC Monitoring, 'Organisation - Brigade Anti-Sardinards (BAS)', 9 October 2019, subscription only

<sup>44</sup> SCNC, [website](#), (homepage), undated

'ACT [Ambazonia Coalition Team] remains united on their preference for the "Swiss process" – and their opposition to Sisiku's initiative. But divisions do regularly emerge within the coalition, usually between those seen as relatively new to the struggle and the veteran secessionists.

'With leaders based abroad, who do not coordinate particularly well, conflicting policy positions are a perennial problem – which has a direct impact on daily life in the English-speaking regions.'<sup>45</sup>

#### 4.8.5 See also

- [The Africa Report – Cameroons diaspora: Learning to live with the enemy within, 11 February 2020](#)
- [The Voice news – London protester sets herself on file outside Cameroon High Commission, 26 February 2020](#)

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Section 5 updated: 1 December 2020

## 5. North-West/South-West crisis: state response

### 5.1 Efforts to resolve North-West/South-West crisis

#### 5.1.1 The International Crisis Group in a May 2019 article on the Anglophone crisis stated:

'In March 2018, President Paul Biya created a ministry for Decentralisation and Local Development and appointed Anglophones to ministerial posts that no Anglophone had previously occupied. In June [2018], the prime minister announced a Humanitarian Response Plan with a budget of FCFA 13 billion (€19.8 million) for the Anglophone regions; in November [2018], President Biya created a disarmament and demobilisation committee for ex-combatants of Boko Haram and the separatists; and in December [2018], he released 289 of the around 1,000 detained Anglophone activists. Finally, in his end of year speech, he announced that elections for regional councils would be held in 2019.

'But these measures may be counter-productive if the government is simply trying to offer evidence of good faith. The president may have appointed Anglophones to important ministries, but the appointees are very unpopular in the Anglophone regions.'<sup>46</sup>

#### 5.1.2 The UN Security Council in a letter dated 19 July 2019 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

'Since the last meeting in N'Djamena in December 2018, the Government of the Republic of Cameroon, in order to resolve the crisis in the North-West and South-West Regions, has continued to carry out initiatives aimed at stabilizing the situation and ensuring a gradual return to normal life. These initiatives include the establishment by presidential decree of the National Commission for the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism on 23 January 2017 and the implementation of the emergency humanitarian

<sup>45</sup> The New Humanitarian, '[Ahead of peace talks, a who's who of Cameroon's separatist...](#)', July 2020

<sup>46</sup> ICG, '[Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis: How to get to Talks?](#)', (section IIIc), 2 May 2019

assistance plan for the North-West and South-West Regions, developed in June 2018, in conjunction with an emergency humanitarian assistance coordination centre. Six months after its establishment on 30 November 2018, the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Committee, which concerns former Boko Haram fighters and former members of armed rebel groups in the North-West and South-West Regions, has centres in Bamenda, Buea and Mora, welcoming many former secessionist and jihadist fighters.<sup>47</sup>

- 5.1.3 The website of 'The Commonwealth' following a 2017 five day visit to Cameroon by the Secretary-General including 'high-level discussions with the President, Prime Minister and senior political figures'<sup>48</sup> stated:

'Secretary-General Scotland said: "It was enormously encouraging that political parties, civil society representatives and citizens from every corner of Cameroon chose to meet with me to discuss some of the most pressing challenges facing their country today."

'On Buea, the Secretary-General said: "It was incredibly important for me to visit this region of Cameroon, to hear first-hand how those affected plan to overcome the current challenges and work towards peacefully unifying the country.

"Everyone was talking about the need for peace, the need for dialogue and that the only way to resolve all of these problems will be through inclusive and substantive engagement."<sup>49</sup>

- 5.1.4 Following a May 2019 visit to Cameroon by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, OCHA reported:

'The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet, after concluding a visit to Cameroon, has welcomed the Government's openness to work with the UN Human Rights Office, and the rest of the UN, to seek effective solutions to the major human rights and humanitarian crises caused by the serious unrest and violence taking place in the west and north of the country.

"I believe there is a clear – if possibly short – window of opportunity to arrest the crises that have led to hundreds of thousands of internally displaced people, as well as the killings and brutal human rights violations and abuses that have affected the northern and western areas of the country," Bachelet said. "But it will not be easy to turn these situations around. It will take significant actions on the part of the Government, and substantial and sustained support from the international community – including us in the UN."

"The challenges are immense, and the situation involving some ten or more separatist movements in the North-West and South-West regions risks spiralling completely out of control, if serious measures are not taken to reduce tensions and restore trust. There is also a general understanding that

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<sup>47</sup> UN Security Council, '[Letter dated 19 July 2019 from the Permanent...](#)', 5 August 2019

<sup>48</sup> The Commonwealth, '[Cameroon's opposition parties discuss route to...](#)', 21 December 2017

<sup>49</sup> The Commonwealth, '[Cameroon's opposition parties discuss route to...](#)', 21 December 2017

the root causes and underlying grievances must also be tackled if long-term stability is to return to a country that had, until just a few years ago, been one of the most settled and peaceful in the region.”<sup>50</sup>

5.1.5 UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, also stated regarding alleged abuses by government forces:

“As a former Minister of Defence myself, I recognize the difficulties and dilemmas faced by soldiers confronted with extremely violent armed groups moving in and out of civilian areas, committing atrocities as they go,” the UN Human Rights Chief said. “Nevertheless, every violation committed by Government forces is not only unlawful, but also counter-productive as it plays into the hands of the extremist groups, by feeding local resentment and aiding recruitment. The armed forces must win and keep the trust of local populations, and to do that they must keep scrupulously within the framework of international law and standards. If they fail to do that, they will not defeat an enemy that thrives on civilian mistrust of the authorities. In the meantime, the civilians trapped between these two powerful, if asymmetric, opposing forces, are increasingly vulnerable to lethal abuses and violations by both sides.”

“The High Commissioner stressed that it is essential that members of the security forces who commit serious violations are held accountable.

“The Government briefed me on steps they have taken in response to allegations of violations,” Bachelet said. “And I urged them to be fully transparent about such cases. It is essential that crimes are punished, and are seen to be punished. If there is impunity, then there is an assumption of immunity – and this will lead to more crimes being committed, and a further decline in trust in the armed forces, which will only compound the challenges they face. The maintenance of morale is important, but deterring unlawful actions by members of the security forces is imperative. This particular issue is damaging Cameroon’s international standing, and undermining international support for efforts to combat the armed groups operating on its territory.”

“The High Commissioner said she utterly condemned the targeting of civilians by all armed groups, as well as the torching of schools and medical facilities by the separatist groups in the North-West and South-West regions. “There is no logic to their behavior,” she said. “If they are arguing for more autonomy, why seek to deprive their own children of education, why kill the teachers, and destroy the health facilities? This is not idealistic, it is nihilistic. The only way to solve the issues in the two western regions is through dialogue, including in-depth analysis of the root causes of the unrest, and I urge all sides including the Government to make a strenuous effort to end the fighting and begin peace talks.”<sup>51</sup>

5.1.6 In an address to the nation in September 2019 President Paul Biya outlined the government’s efforts to resolve the crisis in the NWSW regions as:

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<sup>50</sup> UNOCHA, [‘Bachelet welcomes Cameroon’s willingness to cooperate to tackle...’](#), 6 May 2019

<sup>51</sup> UNOCHA, [‘Bachelet welcomes Cameroon’s willingness to cooperate to tackle...’](#), 6 May 2019



- ‘the translation into English of the OHADA instruments which are now available in the two official languages;
- ‘the creation of a Common Law Section at the Supreme Court to handle appeals filed against the decisions of lower courts in Common Law matters;
- ‘regarding the training of judicial and legal officers, the creation of a Common Law Section at the National School of Administration and Magistracy. This measure was accompanied by a programme for the recruitment of English-speaking pupil judicial and legal officers and court registrars;
- ‘the launching of the special recruitment of bilingual teachers in secondary schools;
- ‘at the level of the judiciary, the stay of proceedings against some persons arrested in connection with the demands;
- ‘the setting up of a national Commission for the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multi-culturalism to, among other things, carry out an in-depth review of all the sources of frustration suffered by our compatriots in the North-West and South-West Regions.’<sup>52</sup>

5.1.7 The state run media outlet, Cameroon Radio Television (CRTV), reported on 18 April 2020:

‘Prime Minister – Head of Government, Joseph Dion Ngute has the commissioned the coordinators of Presidential plan for the Reconstruction of the [North] West and South West regions.

‘During the installation, Paul Tasong and Njong Donatus were instructed to present their annual plan of action to the Head of Government.

‘The target of the Presidential Plan for the reconstruction of the North West and South West regions to build and rehabilitate:

‘350 schools,

‘115 health centres,

‘40 bridges,

‘400 water points,

‘600 km of rural roads,

‘45 markets,

‘17000 private homes,

‘25000 hectares of farm, and grazing land,

‘300 000 personal documents.

‘The Coordinator, Paul Tasong said they will begin work immediately in the green areas where there is sufficient stability, pace and security to allow rehabilitation and construction to go on unperturbed.

‘The plan the will cost some 89 billion CFA francs will be funded by the government of Cameroon and development partners.

<sup>52</sup> Republic of Cameroon, ‘[The Head of State’s message to the nation](#)’ (p1), 10 September 2019

'The United Nations Development Program is a key stakeholder in the designing and follow up of execution of the project.

'The UNDP resident representative says it their responsibility to ensure that a instruments are available for the projects to be carried out in all accountability, transparency and efficiency.

'The Prime Minister called on the Ministers of Finance and Economy, Planning and Regional Development to support the project.

'The Presidential plan for the reconstruction of the North West and South West regions is a fulfilment of some of the recommendations of the Major National Dialogue to tackle the crisis in the English speaking regions.

'The coordinator and his assistant who have the responsibility of ensuring the implementation of the project were appointed on April 3, 2020 by the Prime Minister.

'Minister Paul Tasong and former Mayor of Jumbo Donatus Njong are expected to revitalize the economy and rehabilitate basic infrastructure destroyed during the sociopolitical crisis.'<sup>53</sup>

#### 5.1.8 Journal du Cameroun reported in August 2020:

'The US Under Secretary in charge of African Affairs Tibor Nagy has cast doubts over plans by the government of Cameroon to reconstruct parts of the Anglophone regions destroyed by a long-drawn conflict between separatist and government forces that has entered into its fourth year.

'Last month, the head of the committee charged to lead the reconstruction of the two regions was on the ground to sensitise the population on its mission though doubts continue to be raised over the feasibility of the project given that scenes of violence are still being recorded.

'Addressing the US Congress on Thursday, July 31, Tibor Nagy added his voice to doubters, saying it is not feasible to reconstruct the regions when the war is still going on.

"The Cameroonian government is talking about the UN development programme for the North West and South West. Unfortunately, there is just no way to implement that. The government seems to forget that the number one desire of the people of the North West and the South West Regions is to have a say in their own affairs.," Tibor Nagy said.

"It is one thing to talk about development but at the heart of it is the key desire to have control over their own lives. Until the Cameroonian government understands that, all these plans are going to come but are not going to succeed," he added.'<sup>54</sup>

#### 5.1.9 Janes commented that:

'Biya has indicated willingness, albeit limited, to engage in dialogue and grant political concessions to Anglophones, passing a bill to grant their two regions greater autonomy in judicial and education policy, and granting them their own legislatures and executives. However, his refusal to discuss

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<sup>53</sup> CRTV, '[Annual plan for reconstruction of North West and South West regions...](#)', 18 April 2020

<sup>54</sup> Journal du Cameroun, '[Tibor Nagy rubbishes plans by gov't to reconstruct...](#)', 1 August 2020

secession with insurgents makes the chances of fruitful peace negotiations very low. In August 2019, separatist leader Julius Ayuk Tabe was imprisoned for life.’<sup>55</sup>

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## 5.2 National dialogue - 2019

5.2.1 BBC monitoring reported on 19 September 2019 that to ensure the participation of all Cameroonians in the national dialogue announced by President Paul Biya, the site [www.nationaldialogue.com](http://www.nationaldialogue.com) has been created on the initiative of Prime Minister Joseph Dion Ngute. The aim is to allow all Cameroonians to contribute to the national dialogue. The digital platform has been set-up so that Cameroonians can submit proposals to resolve the security crisis in the North-West and South-West regions. The debates are scheduled to take place in Yaoundé’s Palais des Congres from 30 September 2019 to 4 October<sup>56</sup>.

5.2.2 Arrey Elvis Ntui a senior analyst on Cameroon and writing for the International Crisis Group commented in February 2020:

‘The government-controlled national dialogue, which commenced in Yaoundé at the end of September 2019, has done little to prevent the Anglophone crisis from deepening. Separatists, most of whose leaders are based outside the country or are in prison in Yaoundé, took no part in the conference, which they viewed as a government ploy to deflect international criticism. Even those Anglophones who seek a federalist solution rather than their own state, and who largely eschew violence, were given little room to present their views. For example, the government offered participants no chance to discuss the recommendations that Prime Minister Joseph Ngute, who convened the dialogue, transmitted to President Biya. These included a recommendation to confer “special status” on the Anglophone South West and North West regions under the decentralisation provisions of the 1996 constitution.

‘As it stands, even the “special status” recommendation – which parliament approved in December and which President Biya has touted as a working solution to the crisis – seems destined to have limited impact. The new status would, on paper, provide for the central government in Yaoundé to consult Anglophone regional assemblies concerning decisions about the formulation of educational policy and the application of common law in their regions. But the provisions lack details on what kind of consultation is required or how the measures would be implemented, leaving many Anglophones frustrated, and bolstering the separatist narrative that division of the country is the only solution to English speakers’ marginalisation.’<sup>57</sup>

5.2.3 R2P in a report from August 2020 stated: ‘In an attempt to ease tensions, between 30 September and 4 October 2019 President Paul Biya organized a national dialogue, followed by the adoption of several measures, including granting “special status” to the Anglophone regions. The government also

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<sup>55</sup> Janes, Cameroon: Security, last updated 26 October 2020, subscription only

<sup>56</sup> BBC monitoring, ‘Cameroon launches ...’, 19 September 2019, subscription only.

<sup>57</sup> ICG, [‘Cameroon: Elections Raise Prospect of Further Ruling-party...’](#), 8 February 2020

released 333 prisoners from the Anglophone region, as well as opposition leader Maurice Kamto.<sup>58</sup>

#### 5.2.4 See also

- [ICG, 'Cameroon's Anglophone Dialogue: A Work in Progress', 26 September 2019](#)
- [Al Jazeera, 'Cameroon to hold 'national dialogue' on separatist crisis', 11 September 2019](#)
- [Reuters, 'Cameroon peace talks falter as separatists, politicians boycott', 30 September 2019](#)
- [Reuters, 'Cameroon grants special status to Anglophone regions', 20 December 2019](#)
- [VOA News, 'Cameroon's Separatists Intensify Attacks...', 24 September 2019](#)
- [The Conversation, 'Why Cameroon must move beyond dialogue...' 20 October 2019](#)

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### 5.3 Extrajudicial killings, disappearance and destruction of property

5.3.1 This sub-section and the following sub-sections primarily covers events in the NWSW (Anglophone) region.

5.3.2 Further details of alleged human rights violations between January and May 2018 can be found in Amnesty International's June 2018 report '[A turn for the worse](#)' which documented interviews carried out with victims and witnesses to human rights violations by security forces and armed separatists.

5.3.3 HRW noted in its report on events in 2019, in a subsection on the 'Anglophone Crisis' that 'The response of government security forces has included killing civilians, torching villages, and using torture and incommunicado detention.'<sup>59</sup> A Human Rights Watch report from February 2020 reported:

'Government forces and armed ethnic Fulani killed at least 21 civilians in Cameroon's Ngarbuh village [Northwestern Cameroon], including 13 children and 1 pregnant woman, on February 14, 2020. They also burned five homes, pillaged scores of other properties, and beat residents. Some of the bodies of the victims were found burned inside their homes. The government denies that its troops have deliberately committed crimes.

"The gruesome killings of civilians, including children, are egregious crimes that should be effectively and independently investigated, and those responsible should be brought to justice," said Ilaria Allegrozzi, senior Africa researcher at Human Rights Watch. "Denying that these crimes have occurred adds another layer of trauma to survivors and will only embolden government troops to commit more atrocities."

<sup>58</sup> GCR2P, '[Monitor – bi-monthly bulletin](#), (p3), 15 September 2020

<sup>59</sup> HRW, '[World Report 2020 events of 2019, Cameroon events of 2019](#)', 14 January 2020

'Human Rights Watch interviewed 25 people, including 3 witnesses to the killings and 7 relatives of victims, about these events that took place in Ngarbuh, Donga Mantung division, in the North-West region...

'Witnesses said that between 10 and 15 soldiers, including members of the Rapid Intervention Battalion, the elite unit of the Cameroonian army, and at least 30 armed Fulani first entered Ngarbuh 1, a neighborhood in Ngarbuh, on foot at about 11 p.m. on February 13, looting scores of homes. Some of these forces then continued to the Ngarbuh 2 neighborhood, looting homes and beating civilians. At around 5 a.m. on February 14, a group of soldiers and armed Fulani attacked the Ngarbuh 3 neighborhood, killing 21 civilians in four homes, then burning the houses.

'Human Rights Watch made several attempts to contact a senior member of the government but did not receive a response. Cameroon's defense minister issued two statements on February 17. He first announced that the government had opened an investigation and that its findings would be made public. In a second statement later that day, he stated that the investigation findings "could be published at an appropriate time." Both statements asserted that armed "terrorists" attacked government security forces and that the fighting led to an explosion of fuel containers, which destroyed several homes and killed one woman and four children. This assertion was restated on February 18 in a news release from the communication minister.

'However, witnesses and residents with whom Human Rights Watch spoke said that there was no confrontation between armed separatists and security forces, that they heard no explosions, and that the killings were deliberate.

'Residents said the attack was to punish civilians suspected of harboring separatist fighters. Twelve witnesses said that, after the killings, the military addressed residents in Ngarbuh 2, warning that their village would be destroyed if they continued to shelter separatists.'<sup>60</sup>

#### 5.3.4 The US State Department human rights report for 2019 in its section on abuses in internal conflict noted:

'There were credible reports that members of government forces deliberately killed innocent citizens. On January 21, for example, according to credible organizations, members of government security forces removed a young man from his bike at Squares Kumbo, Northwest Region, and killed him. The victim reportedly had just dropped off a passenger when security forces laid hands on him. According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), a video circulated on social media showing the military harassing a group of men, reportedly from Kurt-Nwa, Northwest Region. These men were reportedly found dead after the incident...

'There were credible reports that members of government forces physically abused civilians and prisoners in their custody, including those detained in the conflicts in the Far North and Southwest and Northwest Regions, especially after the July 22-23 [2019] riot at the Yaounde and Buea prisons... There were reports of repeated attacks on health workers and

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<sup>60</sup> HRW, '[Cameroon: Civilians Massacred in Separatist Area](#)', 25 February 2020

institutions and the use of firearms around health facilities by both members of security forces and Anglophone separatists.’<sup>61</sup>

- 5.3.5 Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) in their regional overview dated 23 July 2020 stated: ‘Ambazonian acts of violence came against the backdrop of military raids on several villages in the Anglophone regions. Military acts of violence against civilians were reported in Ngo-Ketunjia and Menchum departments in the North-West and Ndiabou in the South-West.’<sup>62</sup>
- 5.3.6 R2P in a report from August 2020 stated: ‘Violence has escalated throughout 2020, including ahead of elections in February. During mid-August armed separatists allegedly killed 13 civilians, including three aid workers and two teachers, decapitating three women. In response the government tortured and killed several alleged separatists and arbitrarily arrested hundreds of civilians.’<sup>63</sup>
- 5.3.7 For further information on State response to the NWSW crisis see:
- [ACLED – Regional overview: Africa](#)
  - [HRW, ‘World Report 2019: Cameroon events of 2018’, 17 February 2019](#)
  - [HRW, ‘New Attacks on Civilians By Troops, Separatists’, 28 March 2019](#)
  - [Refugees International, ‘Crisis denied in Cameroon’, 29 May 2019.](#)
  - [HRW, ‘Promised Investigation Should Be Independent’, 23 May 2019](#)
  - [HRW, ‘Security Forces kill civilians, rape woman’, 22 July 2019](#)
  - [CHRDA, ‘Cameroon’s Unfolding Catastrophe’, \(Executive Summary\), 3 June 2019](#)
  - [R2P, ‘Monitor- bi-monthly bulletin’, \(p9\), 15 September 2019](#)
  - [OCHA – Situation reports and Humanitarian Bulletins](#)

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## 5.4 Destruction of homes and villages

- 5.4.1 Human Rights Watch reported in March 2019 that ‘Government forces in [Cameroon’s](#) Anglophone regions have killed scores of civilians, used indiscriminate force, and torched hundreds of homes over the past six months.’<sup>64</sup>
- 5.4.2 Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa (CHRDA) and Raoul Wallenbergs report Cameroon’s Unfolding Catastrophe, 3 June 2019, reported that:

‘Burning and razing homes and villages are established military tactics and the signature human rights violation perpetrated in the conflict. Civilians have

<sup>61</sup> USSD, [Human rights report 2019](#) (section 1g), 11 March 2020

<sup>62</sup> ACLED, [‘Regional overview – Africa’, 23 July 2020](#)

<sup>63</sup> R2P, [‘Monitor – bi-monthly bulletin’, \(p3\), 15 September 2020](#)

<sup>64</sup> HRW, [‘Cameroon: New Attacks on Civilians By Troops, Separatists’, 28 March 2019](#)

been killed and mistreated as a result of military raids, which have forced hundreds of thousands to flee. Homelessness, a humanitarian crisis, and food insecurity are direct results of these tactics.

'The CHRDA has reported 206 settlements raided and partially destroyed by state defence forces during attempts to crack down on armed separatists, 134 of which have been severely damaged. Several villages in Mbonge and Konye Subdivision have been completely emptied of their populations.

'The government has frequently denied these allegations. Civilian witnesses say that army attacks are routinely followed by the ransacking of houses and shops, the destruction of food stocks, and the rounding up and mistreatment or killing of civilians, often as reprisals for the killing of a member of the defence and security forces.

'Anglophone villages suspected of harbouring separatists or arms have been burned and pillaged in both the South West and North West regions. Homes have been burned to ashes, sometimes with their inhabitants.'<sup>65</sup>

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## 5.5 Enforced disappearance

### 5.5.1 The United States Department of State Human Rights report 2019 (USSD report 2019) noted that:

'As in the previous year, government security forces were widely believed to be responsible for disappearances of suspected Anglophone separatists and political opponents. In a May report, Human Rights Watch (HRW) documented the cases of 26 detainees, including two women and an 18-month-old child, who were held incommunicado at the State Secretariat for Defense for the Gendarmerie (SED) between January 2018 and January 2019, many for several months, without any contact with family, friends, or legal counsel. HRW also reported that it had received additional credible accounts since April indicating that these violations continued'

'According to credible nongovernmental organization (NGOs), the government did not readily account for most of the inmates removed from the Yaounde Kondengui and Buea prisons following July 22 and 23 riots provoked by overcrowding, poor living conditions, and extensive delays in cases going to trial. Family members of detainees were unable to obtain information about individuals' welfare or whereabouts. On July 30, the Mandela Center described the situation as forced disappearances.'<sup>66</sup>

See also [Arrests and detentions](#) below

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## 5.6 Arrests and detentions

### 5.6.1 The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) reported on 9 April 2018 about the arrest of radio presenter Mancho Bixiby, who is said to have reported on the 'rights of the Anglophone minority in Cameroon with a focus on their social and economic marginalisation.'<sup>67</sup> Cameroon Info-net reported

<sup>65</sup> CHRDA, '[Cameroon's Unfolding Catastrophe](#)', (section C), 3 June 2019

<sup>66</sup> USSD, '[Human rights report 2019](#)' (section 1b), 11 March 2020

<sup>67</sup> FIDH, '[Ongoing detention and judicial harassment of Mr. Mancho Bibixy Tse](#)', 9 April 2018

on 27 June 2019 that 'Mancho Bibixy is currently serving a 15 year jail term at the Yaoundé Central Prison. He was arrested on January 19, 2017 in Bamenda and was tried at the Yaoundé Military Court on charges of terrorism, secession among others.'<sup>68</sup>

5.6.2 OCHA in their situation report, Cameroon: 'North-West and South-West as of 31 May 2019 noted that: In the SW young men and boys, suspected of being members or accomplices of NSAGs, are frequently arbitrarily arrested. Reasons for their arrests include non-possession of identification documents.'<sup>69</sup>

5.6.3 BAMF – Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (Germany): Briefing Notes 2 September 2019, 2 September 2019 reported that:

'A military court in the capital Yaoundé sentenced ten members of the opposition to life imprisonment on 20 August 2019. Among them was the leader of the separatist group SCNC, Sisiku Ayuk Tabe. According to media reports the court found them guilty of rebellion, terrorism and separatist pursuits. The charges were motivated by opposition-organized protests against the controversial re-election of President Paul Biya in October 2018.'<sup>70</sup>

5.6.4 The US Department of State's (USSD) annual terrorism report covering 2019 noted that

'Cameroon continued to use the anti-terrorism law enacted in 2014 to suppress criticism and freedom of expression by arresting journalists and activists in connection with the ongoing crisis in the Anglophone regions. In October, the government released 333 low-level detainees arrested for suspicion of being Anglophone separatists and facing misdemeanor charges. However, hundreds of others remain in detention. The government continued to characterize people espousing separatism for the Northwest and Southwest Regions as terrorists and, in August, sentenced separatist leader Julius Ayuk Tabe to life imprisonment.'<sup>71</sup>

5.6.5 International Crisis Group (ICG) in August 2020 reported the following incidents:

'Authorities mid-Aug [2020] acknowledged about 130 former separatist combatants recently escaped from Disarmament, Demobilisation and Rehabilitation centres in Bamenda and South West capital Buea due to poor living conditions and unmet promises.

'Anglophone detainee in pre-trial detention since 2017 died 5 Aug in capital Yaoundé, sparking outcry from human rights activists and separatist leaders, with NGO Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa same day calling on govt "not to subject inmates to any form of inhumane and degrading treatment"<sup>72</sup>.

5.6.6 See also

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<sup>68</sup> CIN, '[Cameroon – Mancho Bibixy launches online campaign](#)', 27 June 2019

<sup>69</sup> UNOCHA, '[Cameroon: North-West and South-West](#)', (Protection section), 31 May 2019

<sup>70</sup> BAMF, '[Briefing Notes 2 September 2019](#)', (section Cameroon), 2 September 2019

<sup>71</sup> USSD, '[Country Reports on Terrorism 2019: Cameroon](#)', 24 June 2020

<sup>72</sup> ICG, '[Cameroon: Crisis watch, tracking conflict worldwide](#)', August 2020



- [HRW, “These Killings Can Be Stopped”, 19 Jul 2018](#)
- [Al Jazeera, ‘Cameroon to hold ‘national dialogue’ on separatist crisis’, 11 September 2019](#)
- [UN OCHA – Situation reports and Humanitarian Bulletins](#)

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## 5.7 Release of prisoners

### 5.7.1 France24 reported on 5 October 2019 that:

‘Cameroon’s president on Thursday [3 October 2019] freed more than 300 separatist fighters from the country’s anglophone regions in an effort to calm a conflict that has killed nearly 3,000 people in the past two years.

‘President Paul Biya made the decision “in a bid to ensure that peace returns to Cameroon’s restive English-speaking regions,” according to a statement by Secretary General Ferdinand Ngo.

‘The order discontinues court proceedings against 333 fighters accused of misdemeanours but does not apply to their leaders who were sentenced to life in prison by a military tribunal in August.’<sup>73</sup>

### 5.7.2 Human Rights Watch, in a report ‘Cameroon: Political Opponent Freed’ published on 7 October 2019 reported that:

‘President Paul Biya ordered the release on October 4, 2019 of a prominent opposition leader, Maurice Kamto. The president also ordered the release of other members and supporters of Kamto’s party, the Cameroon Renaissance Movement (MRC). Kamto and the other detainees were released on October 5.

‘Kamto, along with over 200 MRC members and supporters, was arrested between January 26 and 28 after countrywide peaceful protests. At least 350 more party members and supporters, including its vice president Mamadou Mota, were arrested between June 1 and 2 after they tried to hold demonstrations across the country...

‘In another case, Abdul Karim Ali, an outspoken Anglophone activist and political analyst, was arrested on September 25 [2019] and denied access to a lawyer for five days, in violation of Cameroonian law.

‘Abdul Karim Ali was taken to the State Defense Secretariat (Secrétariat d’État à la défense, SED) in Yaoundé. His whereabouts were finally made public on September 30 when he was taken before the Yaoundé Military Court and charged with acts of terrorism, financing terrorism, and secession.’<sup>74</sup>

### 5.7.3 The USSD human rights report for 2019 noted that ‘On October 3, President Biya announced the pardoning of 333 lower-level Anglophone detainees, and on October 5, the Military Tribunal ordered the release of Kamto and hundreds of his associates.’<sup>75</sup>

<sup>73</sup> France24, [‘Cameroon’s president releases more than 300 anglophone...’](#), 4 October 2019,

<sup>74</sup> HRW, [‘Cameroon: Political Opponent Freed’](#), 7 October 2019

<sup>75</sup> USSD, [‘Human rights report 2019’](#) (section 1e), 11 March 2020

## 5.8 Media and internet disruptions

5.8.1 BBC Monitoring stated in their media guide of 29 May 2019 that: ‘The Anglophone crisis has led to the emergence of separatist media in response to a systematic government crackdown on private media and journalists in the regions.’<sup>76</sup>

5.8.2 The USSD human rights report 2019, covering events in 2019 stated that:  
‘Independent media were active and expressed diverse views. This landscape, however, included restrictions on editorial independence, in part due to stated security concerns related to the fight against Boko Haram, the Anglophone crisis, and the postelectoral crisis. Journalists reported practicing self-censorship to avoid repercussions for criticizing the government, especially on security matters. According to the 2018 Press Freedom Index by Reporters without Borders, the re-election of President Biya for a seventh term of office was accompanied by multiple instances of intimidation, attacks, and arrests of journalists...Police, gendarmes, and other government agents arrested, detained, physically attacked, and intimidated journalists for their reporting. Journalists were arrested in connection with their reporting on the Anglophone crisis. According to reports by multiple organizations, including the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), police arrested Pidgin news anchor Samuel Wazizi, who worked for the Buea-based independent station Chillen Muzik and Television. The arrest occurred on August 2 in Buea, Southwest Region. Police initially held Wazizi at the Buea police station and subsequently handed him over to the military, who detained him on August 7 [2019] without access to his lawyer or family. As of late November, he was presumed to still be in detention....

‘No credible reports indicated that the government monitored private online communications without appropriate legal authority. The government occasionally disrupted access to the internet.’<sup>77</sup>

5.8.3 Bertelsmann Stiftung’s Transformation Index (BSTI) Country report 2020 covers the period from February 1, 2017 to January 31, 2019. The report noted:

‘The environment for freedom of expression has declined noticeably since the start of the Anglophone crisis in 2016. Between 2016 and 2018, dozens of journalists and local reporters were detained under the 2014-anti terror law for reporting on the crisis. For instance, in 2018, editor Michel Biem Tong was charged as an apologist for terrorism and spreading false information. Later that year, TV presenter Mimi Mefo was charged with propagating information that infringed on the territorial integrity of Cameroon. Freedom of expression was also significantly curtailed when the government regularly shutdown internet services to Anglophone regions between January 2017 and March 2018. Internet service has remained spotty.’<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> BBC Monitoring, Media Guide, 29 May 2019, subscription only

<sup>77</sup> USSD, ‘[Human Rights Report 2019](#)’, (section 2), 11 March 2020

<sup>78</sup> BSTI, ‘[2020 Cameroon Country Report](#)’ (p11), 29 April 2020

#### 5.8.4 See also

- [BBC News, 'Cameroon profile – media', 22 January 2019](#)

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### 5.9 State response to human rights reporting

5.9.1 The Government of Cameroon issued a [detailed response](#) to a Human Rights Watch's report '[These Killings Can be Stopped](#)' in July 2018 on the situation in the North West and South West regions.

5.9.2 Human Rights Watch report 'Promised investigation should be independent', published 23 May 2019, found that:

'The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights requested permission to investigate abuses in the Anglophone regions in 2018. The government has not yet granted permission. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights visited Cameroon in early May and raised the lack of access for both international and national human rights activists and humanitarian agencies.

'The Cameroon government denied a Human Rights Watch researcher entry to the country on April 12, two days after Human Rights Watch published a report on a deadly attack by soldiers, gendarmes, and members of the Rapid Intervention Battalion on a village in the North-West region.'<sup>79</sup>

5.9.3 The USSD human rights report for 2019, covering events in 2018 noted that 'The government criticized reports from international human rights organizations, including Amnesty International, HRW, and the International Crisis Group, accusing them of publishing baseless accusations. On April 12, for example, officials at Douala International Airport refused entry to an HRW researcher, even though she held a valid visa.'<sup>80</sup>

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Section 6 updated: 1 December 2020

## 6. Legislative and municipal elections - February 2020

6.1.1 Arrey Elvis Ntui a senior analyst on Cameroon and writing for the International Crisis Group commented in February 2020:

'In November 2019, President Paul Biya called elections for Cameroon's National Assembly and local councils, to be held on 9 February. The elections should have been held in 2018, when these bodies' five-year terms came to a close, but the government has put them off twice. In 2018, the government argued that it was logistically impossible to hold them at the same time as the presidential polls that year, and in 2019 it cited a tense political and security atmosphere, including in Anglophone areas, as justification for further delay. Now Biya is moving ahead with the vote, however, perhaps in order to keep up appearances after the national dialogue held in September and October 2019 [...] failed to bring an end to the Cameroonian government's conflict with Anglophone separatists. [...]

<sup>79</sup> HRW, '[Promised investigation should be independent](#)', 23 May 2019

<sup>80</sup> USSD, '[Human rights report 2019](#)' (section 5), 11 March 2020

'Conditions for the legislative and municipal elections are hardly ideal. Residents in Anglophone areas are unlikely to vote in significant numbers, given both the ongoing violence on the ground and their view that the government lacks legitimacy. Although the government has assured Anglophones that they will be able to cast ballots, and has deployed troops and clustered polling centres to better secure them, voters will still be unable to travel safely on election day. At the same time, separatists have stepped up attacks on election offices, contributing to a general sense of insecurity.'

<sup>81</sup>

#### 6.1.2 Al Jazeera reported in February 2020:

'Polls have closed in Cameroon's long-delayed parliamentary and municipal elections, held for the first time in seven years amid security concerns and political division.

'Sunday's polls witnessed a low turnout of voters in the English-speaking Northwest and Southwest Regions, the epicentre of separatist violence that has displaced hundreds of thousands of people.

'A clash occurred in Muyuka, a rebel stronghold in the Northwest Region, although fighting takes place almost daily in both English-speaking regions bordering Nigeria.

'There was also a shooting at Buea, the main town in Southwest region, and in Kuma in the same region, witnesses said.

'In the country's French-speaking regions, voting proceeded normally. The elections were being held with a heavy military presence.

"For the opposition, if there is a low turnout, that means much of the same. Most of these elections that have happened under President Paul Biya have been called into question by the opposition," Al Jazeera's Nicolas Haque reported.

'Speaking from Douala, Cameroon's biggest city and economic hub, Haque said there were no long queues outside the polling stations.'<sup>82</sup>

#### 6.1.3 VOA news reported on 13 February 2020:

'Claiming massive fraud, Cameroonian opposition political parties are calling for the results of the February 9 local elections that gave the ruling People's Democratic Movement of long-serving President Paul Biya a landslide victory to be discarded. Meanwhile, results of the parliamentary polls are still expected...

'The results also indicate that less than 30% of the close to 8 million voters actually voted, and voter participation in the English-speaking regions, where separatist fighters had promised to disrupt the polls, was less than 10%.

'The CPDM party has called on supporters to respect the verdict of the elections as announced by competent authorities.'<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> ICG, '[Cameroon: Elections Raise Prospect of Further Ruling-party...](#)', 8 February 2020

<sup>82</sup> Al Jazeera, '[Polls close in Cameroon's parliamentary, municipal elections](#)', 9 February 2020

<sup>83</sup> VOA News, '[Claiming massive fraud, Cameroon opposition challenges...](#)', 13 February 2020

- 6.1.4 RFI, a French news and current affairs public radio station, reported that ‘President Paul Biya’s People’s Democratic Movement party (RDPC) took 139 out of 167 declared seats in the controversial 9 February [2020] polls. ... Elections did not take place in 13 seats covering the Anglophone regions and are expected to be held at a later date.’<sup>84</sup>
- 6.1.5 The African Union Observer Mission deployed 13 teams of observers in six regions during the initial process of February 2020 Legislative and Municipal Elections. The [preliminary statement](#) made a number of conclusions and recommendations to both the Government of Cameroon and Legislative authorities as well as Elections Cameroon, political parties and civil society. However, the report did not cite any serious incidents with the conduct of elections<sup>85</sup>.

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Section 7 updated: 1 December 2020

## 7. Humanitarian situation

### 7.1 Humanitarian need and aid

- 7.1.1 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) stated in their Humanitarian Needs Overview Cameroon 2020 issued in June 2020

‘In November 2017, tensions in the North West and South West regions turned into violence with dramatic humanitarian consequences. Almost 680,000 Cameroonians are now internally displaced. An additional 58,000 people have sought refuge in neighboring Nigeria. 80% of health and education services in the two regions were non-functioning even before the COVID-19 outbreak. IDPs and host communities, particularly in rural areas, need immediate protection, food, shelter/NFI, water and sanitation assistance.’<sup>86</sup>

- 7.1.2 UN OCHA also noted in its Humanitarian Needs Overview report regarding people in the North-West and South-West regions:

Humanitarian consequence	People in need	Most vulnerable groups	Associated factors
Critical problems of the population affected related to physical and mental wellbeing	3 million	Children, Adolescents, Women, esp. pregnant and lactating women and women and children headed households	Insecurity, displacement, limited or no access to drinking water, basic services and land

<sup>84</sup> RFI, ‘[Biya's party maintains grip on parliament as Cameroon election...](#)’, 28 February 2020

<sup>85</sup> African Union, ‘[Preliminary statement, African Union Election Observation...](#)’, 11 February 2020

<sup>86</sup> UNOCHA, ‘[Cameroon Humanitarian Needs Overview 2020 revised](#)’ (p10), revised June 2020

Critical problems related to living standards	2.6 million	Women and girls, People with disabilities, IDPs, Returnees, Host families	Insecurity, displacement, limited access to basic services
Critical problems related to resilience and recovery	2.6 million	IDPs, Host Population, Women, adolescents	Limited access to employment and loss of livelihoods due to insecurity and displacement

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### 7.1.3 UN OCHA continued:

‘The situation in the North West and South West regions which started as a political crisis has led to a complex humanitarian emergency with 3 million people in need. In comparison, in early 2019 1.3 million people were estimated to need humanitarian assistance, and 2.3 million people were estimated to need assistance in early 2020. This significant increase can be explained by several factors. Firstly, the continued deterioration in the security situation led to more displacement and an increase in needs. While at the end of 2018, 530,000 people were estimated to have been displaced due to the crisis, needs assessments carried out in 2019 indicate displacement of more than 720,000 people – an increase of 30%. The number of people displaced within the two regions remained at around 450,000 according to the August 2019 MSNA. However, the number of people displaced to other regions of Cameroon increased almost three-fold from 80,000 to 220,000 persons displaced to the Adamawa, Littoral, West, and Central regions. Including the people in need of urgent humanitarian assistance within the North West and South West (1.9 million), assessments have shown that 675,000 IDPs and host community members need assistance in the Littoral, West and Central regions due to effects of the crisis in the North West and South West. Secondly, sectors have increased their capacity to assess the needs of the population in the North West and South West regions. Thirdly, in 2019, the humanitarian community in Cameroon engaged in the enhanced Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC) approach to further improve the accuracy of people in need (PIN). Supported by new global guidance on estimating PIN, more focused analysis on people in need and severity was made possible for the 2020 current cycle. Given the methodological shift, a degree of cautiousness should be exercised when comparing trends across years.’<sup>88</sup>

<sup>87</sup> UNOCHA, [‘Cameroon Humanitarian Needs Overview 2020’](#) (p7-8), revised June 2020

<sup>88</sup> UNOCHA, [‘Cameroon Humanitarian Needs Overview 2020’](#) (p20), revised June 2020

7.1.4 With regard to access to NWSW areas by humanitarian organisations and personnel UN OCHA stated:

‘Authorities require humanitarian actors to obtain written authorizations from the Governor’s office for the implementation of humanitarian activities, a process facilitated by the establishment of Government Humanitarian Coordination Centres (HCC) in Buea and Bamenda in June 2019.

‘Access constraints identified in both regions include insecurity, physical access challenges and bureaucratic impediments. Lockdown days, with associated movement restrictions by UN agencies and NGOs, have caused substantial interruptions in humanitarian operations. Delays and demands for payment at roadblocks by both non-state armed groups and Government forces, despite having all required authorizations, cause needless delays and insecurity for the transport of aid goods. Occasionally, these roadblocks result in kidnapping attempts, or kidnapping of aid workers in demand for ransom. In addition, the use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), which has also caused civilian victims, remains an important risk factor for humanitarian actors. The suspension of UNHAS flights in January 2020 has seriously affected the efficient movement of humanitarian personnel. Access constraints often translate into delays, partial response to humanitarian needs and increased operational costs for humanitarian partners. In parallel, access to basic social services by the affected population remains a critical concern in the two regions as fear of violence and lack of civil documentation limits movements (especially for men of fighting age). Disrespect for the sanctity of health care services and disruption of education services is equally worrisome.

‘Non-state armed groups have increased their presence in hard-to-reach areas, particularly in the North West. People in these regions find themselves cut-off from basic services and economic opportunities. Areas that were hard-to-reach before the crisis have become even more isolated, increasing their vulnerability. The weekly “ghost town” days, set up by non-state armed groups, particularly affect displaced persons and host communities, limiting their movements and therefore their economic and agricultural activities.’<sup>89</sup>

7.1.5 UN OCHA stated: ‘With the escalation of violence between government forces and non-state armed groups in the North West and South West regions of Cameroon during 2019, civilian populations are facing serious violations of human rights at the hands of the belligerents. The contextual complexity of the conflict increases the vulnerability of the civilian population and has disastrous humanitarian consequences: the massive displacement of the population, attacks on property, burning of houses and villages, family separation, loss of civil status documents, arbitrary arrest and detention, prohibitions on educational services leading to increased risks for children, lack of access to basic services that are severely affected by the crisis and serious human rights violations (killing, child recruitment, abduction, GBV incidents, etc.) The conflict has displaced at least 650,000 people since the end of 2017, including women and children who are at particular risk of incidents of sexual and gender-based violence as well as abuse, neglect and

<sup>89</sup> UNOCHA, [‘Cameroon Humanitarian Needs Overview 2020’](#) (p15), revised June 2020

exploitation. With the persistence of conflict, this number, as well as protection needs, are likely to continue to increase during 2020.’<sup>90</sup>

7.1.6 OCHA stated in an operational presence map that there were: ‘56 active partners are working in North-West & South-West regions comprising 36 national NGOs, 8 international NGOs, and 3 faith based organization with 9 UN agencies. There are 7 active clusters Food Security, Protection, WASH, Health, Nutrition, Education and Shelter. In addition there are the GBV sub-cluster and Child protection AoR. Most of the activities are located in Fako and Mezam Divisions.’<sup>91</sup>

7.1.7 See also

- [World Food Programme - Cameroon North West and South West Emergency Dashboard Infographic, August 2020](#)
- [UN OCHA – Humanitarian Response Plan: Cameroon, June 2020](#)
- [UN OCHA – Situation reports and Humanitarian Bulletins](#)

## 7.2 Humanitarian state support

7.2.1 The Government of Cameroon stated on their website in August 2020 that four trucks of COVID-19 related supplies ‘gifts’ had arrived in Buea, South West region in April 2020. Items included sanitizer, masks, soap and buckets. The supplies were intended to be distributed throughout the region<sup>92</sup>.

7.2.2 The Government of Cameroon published details on the Presidency of the Republic webpage of an 18 month ‘Emergency Humanitarian Assistance Plan’. The plan, announced on 20 June 2018, is designed ... ‘to assist internally displaced persons (IDPs) and victims of abuses in the North-West and South-West Regions...

‘The main objective of the 12.7 billion CFAF humanitarian relief fund is to protect the IDPs, facilitate the resumption of economic and agricultural activities, and promote togetherness. This will be achieved through the provision of food and basic needs – healthcare, education, and housing.’<sup>93</sup>

7.2.3 See Government of Cameroon

- [Government Emergency Humanitarian assistance plan in the North-West and South-West Regions 2018-19](#)
- [Republic of Cameroon - 12.7 billion CFAF Emergency Humanitarian Assistance Plan for the North-West and South-West regions](#)
- [UN OCHA – Humanitarian Response Plan: Cameroon, June 2020](#)
- [Refugees International, ‘Crisis denied in Cameroon’, 29 May 2019.](#)

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<sup>90</sup> UNOCHA, ‘[Cameroon Humanitarian Needs Overview 2020](#)’ (p42), revised June 2020

<sup>91</sup> UNOCHA, ‘[Cameroon: North-West and South-West regions, operational presence](#)’, August 2020

<sup>92</sup> Republic of Cameroon, ‘[Paul Biya’s anti COVID-19 gifts arrived in Buea](#)’, 4 August 2020

<sup>93</sup> Republic of Cameroon, ‘[12.7 billion CFAF emergency humanitarian assistance plan for...](#)’ undated



### 7.3 Internally displaced persons (IDPs)

7.3.1 OCHA reported in their situation report, Cameroon: North-West and South-West as of 30 June 2020 that: 'Over 15,780 individuals from 2,625 households were reportedly displaced in the NWSW due to ongoing violence during the month of June [2020]. Over 60% of the displacements were recorded in the NW.'<sup>94</sup>

7.3.2 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) stated in their Humanitarian Needs Overview Cameroon 2020 issued in June 2020 'In the North West and South West, the socio-political crisis, now entering its fourth year, has led to massive population displacements, increasing the vulnerabilities of people who have often left their villages to live in the bush since the beginning of the crisis. As of August 2019, 450,000 internally displaced persons have been registered in the two regions, as well as 204,000 returnees. As of 31 March 2020, 58,000 Cameroonians are registered as refugees in Nigeria. The largest numbers of IDPs are registered in the divisions of Meme (SO), Mezam (NO), Ngo-Ketunjia (NO) and Fako (SO). 52% of the displaced are women. According to the latest Multi-Sectorial-Needs-Assessment (MSNA) of August 2019, 44.5% of IDPs are children (96,472 girls and 95,031 boys). It is also estimated that 200,000 have fled to the neighboring regions of Littoral and the West...

'While at the end of 2018, 530,000 people were estimated to have been displaced due to the crisis, needs assessments carried out in 2019 indicate displacement of more than 720,000 people – an increase of 30%. The number of people displaced within the two regions remained at around 450,000 according to the August 2019 MSNA. However, the number of people displaced to other regions of Cameroon increased almost three-fold from 80,000 to 220,000 persons displaced to the Adamawa, Littoral, West, and Central regions. Including the people in need of urgent humanitarian assistance within the North West and South West (1.9 million), assessments have shown that 675,000 IDPs and host community members need assistance in the Littoral, West and Central regions due to effects of the crisis in the North West and South West.'<sup>95</sup>

7.3.3 The same report stated

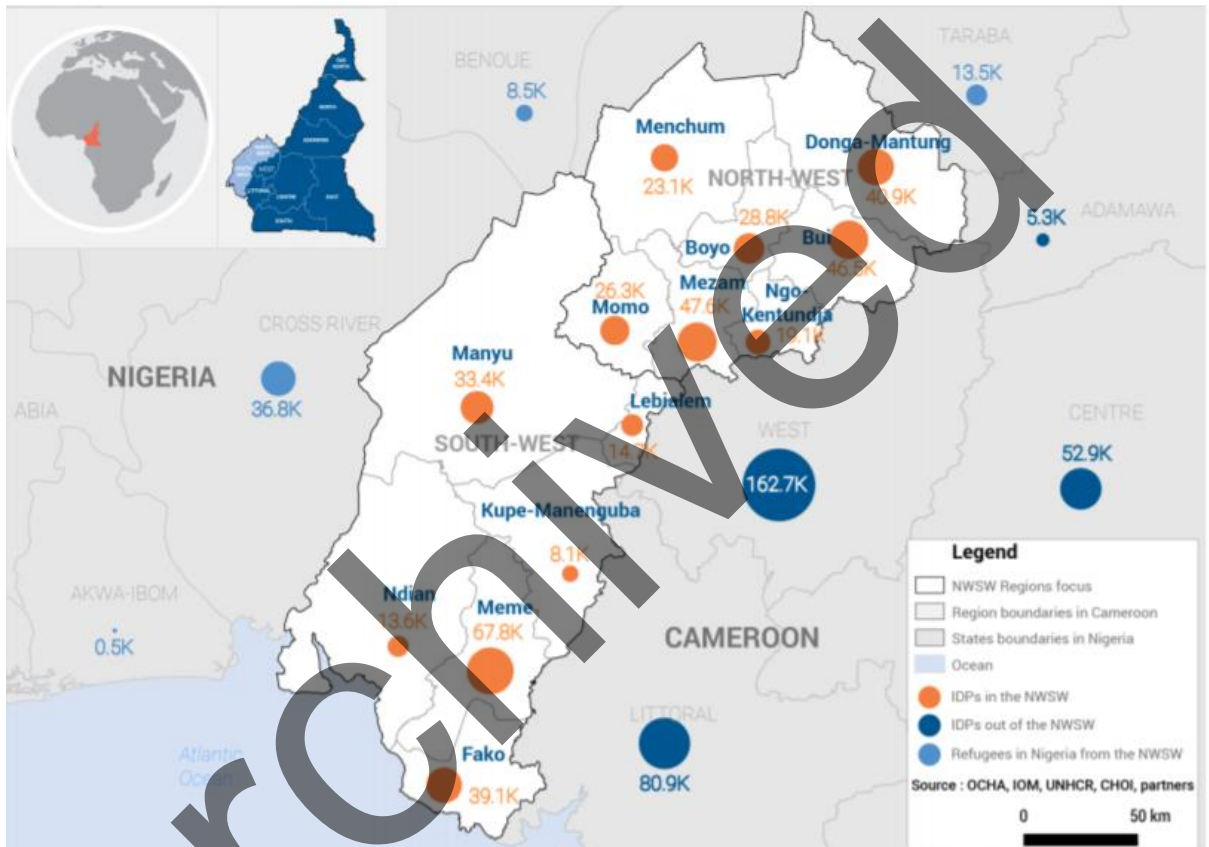
'... The displacement situation remains dynamic with new displacements to forest areas and urban centres in both crisis-hit regions, as well as to neighbouring regions where schools and other basic services are functional and employment opportunities are available. The divisions most affected by the presence of displaced persons in the two crisis-hit regions are Mezam, Ngo-Ketunjia, Bui, Boyo and Momo in the North West, and Meme, Fako and Ndian in the South West. Host communities, already strained by the conflict, are facing increased pressure to access services, resources and basic needs. The ongoing conflict between armed forces and non-state armed groups has had a significant impact on the security situation, protection and access to services and has considerably increased the vulnerability of the population. Insecurity, including prolonged periods of lockdowns, clashes or

<sup>94</sup> UNOCHA, ['Cameroon: North-West and South-West'](#), 30 June 2020

<sup>95</sup> UNOCHA, ['Cameroon Humanitarian Needs Overview 2020'](#) (p10), revised June 2020

the prospect of a possible confrontation between armed actors, protection risks and the absence of State authority are the main causes of population movements'.<sup>96</sup>

7.3.4 OCHA provided a map in a situation report dated 2 November showing the number of IDP's, Returnees and Refugees from the North-West and South-West Regions of Cameroon by division. The map illustrates the dispersal of IDP's across Cameroon and neighbouring Nigeria. The report gives an updated number of the 705,800 IDP's within or displaced from NWSW regions<sup>97</sup>.



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7.3.5 For more information see

- [Refugees International, 'Crisis denied in Cameroon', 29 May 2019.](#)
- [DW, 'A new surge of people fleeing Cameroon's Anglophone regions', 27 August 2019](#)
- [OCHA – Situation reports, maps and infographics](#)
- [UN OCHA – Humanitarian Response Plan: Cameroon, June 2020](#)

7.3.6 For up to date IDP numbers see [Reliefweb - Cameroon](#) and [UNHCR - dashboard](#)

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<sup>96</sup> UNOCHA, 'Cameroon Humanitarian Needs Overview 2020', revised June 2020

<sup>97</sup> UNOCHA, 'Cameroon: North-West and South-West', last updated 2 November 2020

<sup>98</sup> UNOCHA, 'Cameroon: North-West and South-West', last updated 2 November 2020

## 7.4 Children

7.4.1 US Department of State reported in its 2020 report covering events of 2019 that 'There were also some reports that Anglophone separatist armed groups in the Southwest and Northwest Regions used children.'<sup>99</sup>

7.4.2 The same report stated

'Many displaced children continued to live on the streets of urban centers, although the trend was in decline as a result of stringent security measures and the amended penal code that criminalizes vagrancy. [...] As in 2018, thousands of children were negatively impacted by the humanitarian crisis in the Northwest and Southwest. These children faced significant abuses of their rights by armed forces and nonstate armed actors alike. The government had not established structures to ensure that internally displaced children were protected from recruitment by nonstate armed groups and terrorist organizations.'<sup>100</sup>

7.4.3 Refugees International Stated in their report of May 2019 that

'Many IDPs and communities affected by the conflict have witnessed atrocities and are in need of psychosocial support. The UN estimates that more than 266,000 children need care after experiencing trauma, losing family members, engaging in the conflict, or finding themselves separated from their families. In addition, sexual and gender-based violence is common in the NWSW, where survivors need urgent medical care and psychosocial support.'<sup>101</sup>

7.4.4 UN OCHA stated in a situation report covering September 2020 'According to the most recent MSNA (Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment) conducted in the NWSW regions in August 2020, there are more than 16,000 separated children and 5,800 unaccompanied children, who were separated from their families due to the intensifying security situation and the COVID-19 pandemic during the last few months'.<sup>102</sup>

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## 7.5 Persons living with disabilities

7.5.1 The US State Department stated in its 2020 report covering events of 2019 that

'Persons with disabilities did not receive adequate protection in conflict zones. In an early August report, HRW remarked that persons with disabilities were among the most marginalized and at-risk population in any crisis-affected country, and that Cameroon was no exception. Persons with disabilities in the Northwest and Southwest Regions continued to face attack and abuse by belligerents, often because they were unable to flee. HRW claimed that between January and May, it interviewed 48 persons with disabilities living in the Anglophone regions, their families, representatives of UN agencies, and national and international humanitarian organizations to

<sup>99</sup> USSD, '[Human rights report 2019 \(section 1G\)](#)', 11 March 2020

<sup>100</sup> USSD, '[Human rights report 2019 \(section 6\)](#)', 11 March 2020

<sup>101</sup> Refugees International, '[Crisis denied in Cameroon](#)', 29 May 2019

<sup>102</sup> UNOCHA, '[Cameroon: North-West and South-West](#)', last updated 2 November 2020

investigate how the crisis in the two regions had disproportionately affected persons with disabilities'.<sup>103</sup>

- 7.5.2 The UN OCHA Humanitarian Needs Overview of June 2020 stated 'It has been reported that people living with disabilities have been tortured or killed by parties to the conflict and that women and girls living with disabilities are repeatedly subjected to sexual violence. In addition, these people also have very limited access to services and protection due to insecurity.'<sup>104</sup>

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## 7.6 Socio-economic decline

- 7.6.1 The International Crisis Group in an article on the Anglophone crisis stated in May 2019:

'The conflict has also devastated the local economy, which accounts for about one fifth of the country's GDP. Major state-owned companies, such as the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC) and Pamol, which employ tens of thousands of people in the Anglophone regions, are experiencing serious problems. There is no thorough assessment of the conflict's economic impact, but in July 2018 the Cameroon Employers' Association (GICAM) estimated the value of losses at FCFA 269 billion (€410 million). It also calculated that 6,434 jobs had been lost in the formal economy and a further 8,000 jobs were under threat.'<sup>105</sup>

- 7.6.2 Responsibility to protect (R2P) reported in their bi-monthly bulletin 15 September 2019 that: 'The targeting of individuals based upon their cultural identity poses a direct threat to both Anglophone and Francophone civilians. As a result of ongoing violence and insecurity in Cameroon, 4.3 million people are in need of emergency assistance.'<sup>106</sup>

- 7.6.3 Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index (BSTI) Country report 2020 stated: 'The economic toll in these regions [NWSW], which are the heart of Cameroon's palm oil industry, has been heavy. The conflict has also reduced international confidence in Cameroon's stability, which has limited new investments...

'Further deterioration in Anglophone regions will continue to limit agricultural production, primarily of cocoa, coffee, and palm oil.'<sup>107</sup>

- 7.6.4 OCHA in their June 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan stated: 'In the North West and South West, on-going violence has had a major impact on the economy. Cultivable and grazing areas have been reduced more and more in recent years, due to demographic pressure, but also to insecurity and population displacement. Trade with neighboring countries, especially Nigeria, is becoming increasingly difficult.'<sup>108</sup>

- 7.6.5 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) stated in their Humanitarian Needs Overview Cameroon 2020 issued in June 2020:

<sup>103</sup> USSD, '[Human rights report 2019 \(section 6\)](#)', 11 March 2020

<sup>104</sup> UNOCHA, '[Cameroon Humanitarian Needs Overview 2020](#)', revised June 2020

<sup>105</sup> ICG, '[Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis: How to get to Talks?](#)', (section II, p. 6) 2 May 2019

<sup>106</sup> R2P, '[Monitor- bi-monthly bulletin](#)', (p9), 15 September 2019

<sup>107</sup> BSTI, '[2020 Cameroon Country Report](#)' (p3&25), 29 April 2020

<sup>108</sup> UNOCHA, '[Humanitarian Response Plan: Cameroon](#)', June 2020.

'Economic activity has been heavily impacted by the crisis in the North West and South West. Displacement has meant a loss of resources for food self-reliance. It primarily affects the access to land to cultivate, the loss of livestock and of the families' productive assets. Men, who are overwhelmingly the titled landowners, are affected by the spoliation of their property or by the fact that it has become inaccessible. Women are also heavily affected: The rural sector is mainly driven by women who represent 71.6% in the informal agricultural sector. The men, who were wage earners, gave up their jobs or left the villages because they could not continue their work due to the prevailing insecurity. Low living standards and lack of access to essential services, particularly for those displaced, has significantly increased women's workload, due to a rise in morbidity and to the fact that children are out of school, resulting in increased care. Also, collecting water or firewood, are time consuming and expose women to dangers. As a result, and because these tasks require significant daily investment, women are particularly affected by a lack of access to income-generating activities, with less resting time and a lower access to decision-making forums.'<sup>109</sup>

- 7.6.6 See [Cameroon Country Background Note](#) for more information socio-economic situation.

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## 7.7 'Ghost' or 'Dead' Towns (general strikes)

- 7.7.1 The State Secretariat for Migration (SEM), Switzerland in their report on the conflict and human rights situation in Anglophone regions, 25 September 2018, noted that: 'Bamenda and Buea, the two largest towns in the English-speaking region, are periodically subject to curfews. Every Monday, militant separatists call on shops to remain closed and road traffic is interrupted.'<sup>110</sup>

- 7.7.2 In the same report and during a phone interview with an inhabitant of Buea, an interviewee said:

'Ghost towns [general strikes] happen every week, on Monday. During a ghost town, taxis and most private cars are not moving. Shops and markets are closed. In a part of Buea, some businesses are operating, but not elsewhere. Most people stay at home or they move by foot in their neighbourhood. Government offices are open. The universities of Bamenda and Buea are functioning, but regarding primary schools, 10 % to 20 % are functional: it is difficult to tell why and it depends to who you ask. Most people would like their children to go to school, but the enrolment for exam is very low.'<sup>111</sup>

- 7.7.3 The FCDO's travel advice, aimed at UK nationals, which was updated on 23 November 2020 and remained current as of 30 November 2020 noted that General strikes (or 'ghost towns') are called in the North West and South West (Anglophone) regions for each Monday, with additional days often

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<sup>109</sup> UNOCHA, '[Cameroon Humanitarian Needs Overview 2020](#)' (p24), revised June 2020

<sup>110</sup> SEM, '[Report on the conflict...](#)', (section: Main findings, p4) 25 September 2018

<sup>111</sup> SEM, '[Report on the conflict...](#)', (section: Annex 1) 25 September 2018

called in particular periods including February, May and October. Violence and travel disruption is regularly reported on these days.’<sup>112</sup>

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## 7.8 Food shortages

7.8.1 The Refugees International report published 29 May 2019, stated that ‘The majority of the displaced population previously relied on agriculture or raising livestock for both food and income. Forced to flee their villages, they now lack access to fields and markets. This circumstance has increased the threat of food insecurity for IDPs in the NWSW. According to OCHA, 1.5 million people in the region are food insecure’.<sup>113</sup>

7.8.2 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) stated in their Humanitarian Needs Overview Cameroon 2020 issued in June 2020:  
‘Continued fighting over the last three years, exacerbated by limited access to fields and livelihoods, coupled with the challenging humanitarian access to certain localities and low coverage of food assistance has led to acute food insecurity (crisis) and nutritional insecurity among the displaced and vulnerable populations in urban, peri-urban and bush areas in the North West and South West regions...

‘The Cadre Harmonisé, analysis in March 2019, pre-COVID-19, estimated that 601,109 people in the North West and 402,177 people in the South West are considered food insecure. March 2020 Cadre Harmonisé modelling data indicates that 854,302 people in the North West representing 34% of the total population of this region and 618,746 in South West representing 33% of the total population of this region are estimated to be in crisis (phase 3+). Meanwhile, the current assistance provided is small scale compared to the growing needs. The host community is also increasingly dependent on humanitarian assistance. However, markets are limited and informal in most rural areas, leaving in-kind assistance as the predominant response option in these areas, but cash and vouchers are implemented on a small scale.

‘According to the March 2020 assessment of food security monitoring system (FSMS), 38% of households in the North West and 31% in the South West are female-headed. 60% of the food insecure population are living in the North West, while 40% are in the South West. Due to the difficult food security situation, the population has turned to adopting emergency strategies to survive, with about 40% of the IDPs in the North West and nearly a quarter of the IDPs in the South West engaging in such activities as selling land, livestock and houses.’<sup>114</sup>

7.8.3 The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported in their situation report, CAMEROON: North-West and South-West as of 31 August 2020 that: ‘In total 245,911 people received food security assistance in August 2020...

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<sup>112</sup> FCDO, ‘[Foreign travel advice: Cameroon](#)’ (summary), updated 28 August 2019

<sup>113</sup> Refugees International, ‘[Crisis denied in Cameroon](#)’, 29 May 2019

<sup>114</sup> UNOCHA, ‘[Cameroon Humanitarian Needs Overview 2020](#)’ (p53), revised June 2020

'94 children were treated for severe acute malnutrition (SAM) in the North-West and South-West regions in August 2020. 15 percent of the 110 children identified with SAM did not receive the required assistance due to low coverage of SAM treatment in the two regions.'<sup>115</sup>

#### 7.8.4 See also:

- [Refugees International, 'Crisis denied in Cameroon', 29 May 2019.](#)
- [Reuters, 'Cameroon conflict turns climate-stressed farmers into 'food beggars'', 30 July 2019](#)
- [UN OCHA – Situation reports and Humanitarian Bulletins](#)

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## 7.9 Health and healthcare

### 7.9.1 Amnesty International in their report on the human rights situation covering 2019 stated:

'The crisis in North-West and South-West led to the destruction of healthcare facilities, impacting the ability of people to access health care. On 30 October, during fights between military men and armed groups, the Integrated Health Facility in Tole (South-West) was burnt down. In December, health actors recorded three attacks on healthcare facilities in Ekondo-Titi (South-West), Idenau (South-West) and BuaBua (North-West)...'<sup>116</sup>

### 7.9.2 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) stated in their Humanitarian Needs Overview Cameroon 2020 issued in June 2020:

'Attacks on medical personnel and infrastructure have become another feature of the crisis with the closure of more than 35% of all health facilities and many of the remaining not functioning at full capacity. As a result, maternal and child mortality rates have increased, and an average of only 12% of women give birth in health centers. Lack of access to contraceptive methods, combined with poor coverage of sexual and reproductive health services, lead to early pregnancy, unsafe abortion and sexually transmitted diseases. Children's nutritional status is deteriorating due to multiple health and food insecurity issues. Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) in the South West is 7.3% and in North West 5%. Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) is 2.7% in the South West and 2.1% in the North West. People living with HIV who were on Antiretroviral (ARV) drugs can no longer access drugs when they take refuge in the bush, increasing the risk of infection. People in rural or hard-to-reach areas are most affected due to limited or no access to basic medical services. This population is mainly composed of women and children. In terms of access to WASH infrastructure, it should be noted that IDPs often share shelters, water points, latrines and showers with host populations. The increased proximity increases the risks of COVID-19 transmission and does not give girls and women the necessary privacy, exposing them to the risk of violence.'<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> UNOCHA, '[Cameroon: North-West and South-West](#)', 31 August 2020

<sup>116</sup> AI, '[Human Rights in Africa: Review of 2019 – Cameroon](#)', 8 April 2020

<sup>117</sup> UNOCHA, '[Cameroon Humanitarian Needs Overview 2020](#)' (p14), revised June 2020

### 7.9.3 UN OCHA also stated:

‘Due to transportation challenges, destruction of facilities and insecurity, IDPs and rural host communities are turning to alternative healthcare in the form of traditional healers. In combination with lack of documentation, loss of income, and reduced numbers of health practitioners, this has led to the use of unqualified or underqualified health practitioners. A shortage of safe drinking water in rural areas leads to gathering water for drinking and domestic use from streams, rivers and unprotected wells. Open defecation or construction of unsafe latrines is a common practice in most rural settings. Waste is not being collected in rural areas and is mostly thrown into streams (reducing water quality), bushes or burnt. The number of people in need of WASH assistance almost doubled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, from 870,000 people to 1.5 million people in need.’<sup>118</sup>

7.9.4 The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported in their situation report, Cameroon: North-West and South-West as of 31 July 2020: ‘Mobile clinics are the only sources of health care in most rural communities.’<sup>119</sup>

7.9.5 In September UN OCHA reported

‘Cholera continued to spread across the health districts of the SW region. The Buea health district was the fifth health district to report a cholera outbreak in the SW region since the outbreak started in the Bakassi health district in November 2019. A total of ten cases with one death were reported in two health areas (Muea and Buea road) in Buea health district giving a case fatality rate of 10 percent. [...] COVID-19 continued to spread across the NWSW regions. The number of affected health districts increased by two, with 30 health districts out of 37 reporting cases by September. [...] The mobile clinics operated by the implementing partners of WHO have been the main source of health care in most hard to reach areas in the ten divisions where they have been operating in the past six months. With the exhaustion of the CERF funds in September, a good proportion of these communities will have little or no access to health care in the coming months despite the continuing health needs in these regions.’<sup>120</sup>

7.9.6 See also

- [Medicins Sans Frontiers, A hospital at the heart of the North-West crisis in Cameroon. 1 September 2020](#)
- [UN OCHA – Humanitarian Response Plan: Cameroon, June 2020](#)
- [WHO, ‘Health cluster updates – North-West and South-West regions](#)

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<sup>118</sup> UNOCHA, ‘[Cameroon Humanitarian Needs Overview 2020](#)’ (p25), revised June 2020

<sup>119</sup> UNOCHA, ‘[Cameroon: North-West and South-West #21](#)’, (July 2020 Highlights), 31 July 2020

<sup>120</sup> UNOCHA, ‘[Cameroon: North-West and South-West](#)’, last updated 2 November 2020



## 7.10 Education

- 7.10.1 Amnesty International in their report on the human rights situation covering 2019 stated: 'As of December [2019], 17 % of schools were functional and 29% of teachers were able to work, according to the UN.'<sup>121</sup>
- 7.10.2 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) stated in their Humanitarian Needs Overview Cameroon 2020 issued in June 2020: 'The second term of the 2019/2020 academic year began on 6 January. 19% of basic and secondary public schools (1,010 basic schools and 168 secondary schools) are functional in the NWSW. This shows progress (31%) as compared to the beginning of the academic year in September 2019 (from 807 schools in September 2019 to 1,178 schools in January 2020).'<sup>122</sup>
- 7.10.3 In April 2020 OCHA reported: 'In the NWSW, some 6,379 schools (3,692 in NW and 2,687 in SW) and about 4,200 community learning centers (2,436 in NW and 1,764 in SW) have been closed to contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. Authorities have announced a re-opening of schools on 1 June. Meanwhile, an estimated 50-60% of affected children continue education through distance learning in the both regions through radio, TV and printed materials.'<sup>123</sup>
- 7.10.4 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) stated in their Humanitarian Needs Overview Cameroon 2020 issued in June 2020 stated:  
  
'The crisis in the North West and South West has had a major impact on the Education Sector. Over the past three years, insecurity, displacement of teachers, threats and attacks on infrastructure and education personnel have left 850,000 school-aged children out of school. In November 2019, 90% of public primary schools and 77% of public secondary schools remained closed or ceased to operate. It is estimated that in October 2019, 30,000 pupils were integrated into primary schools in neighboring regions (Littoral and Ouest), which resulted in an overload of the existing educational capacity in these regions, with classrooms of up to 200 children. The hard-gained progress in access to learning, over the last year, has been reversed by the COVID-19 outbreak. In an attempt to contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, all 6,400 schools and 4,200 community learning centers in the two regions have been temporarily closed since 18 March 2020. An estimated 1,033,000 school aged children are forced to stay at home due to the COVID-19 outbreak and the ongoing conflict.'<sup>124</sup>
- 7.10.5 In August 2020 OCHA reported:  
  
'The national reopening of schools, including in the NWSW, is scheduled for 5 October 2020. Schools have been closed since 18 March to contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. In preparation of schools reopening, education cluster partners were able to support learning of 32,222 conflict and COVID-19 affected children (15,545 boys and 16,677 girls) in the NWSW through distance learning, provision of psychosocial support and

<sup>121</sup> AI, '[Human Rights in Africa: Review of 2019 – Cameroon](#)', 8 April 2020

<sup>122</sup> UNOCHA, '[Cameroon: North-West and South-West #15](#)' (Education section), 31 January 2020

<sup>123</sup> UNOCHA, '[Cameroon: North-West and South-West #18](#)' (Education section), 30 April 2020

<sup>124</sup> UNOCHA, '[Cameroon Humanitarian Needs Overview 2020](#)' (p14), revised June 2020

provision of water and sanitation in schools and learning centres. This also includes access to education for 3,894 children (1,716 boys and 2,178 girls) affected by the dual emergencies of conflict and COVID-19 through e-learning and radio programme in both regions.

'Education authorities continued preparing children who were sitting for general certificate examinations (GCE) amidst increased risks and threats from NSAGs to students and teachers. These attacks are expected to rise in the weeks before and after school reopening, based on previous trends. The education cluster, with the support of OCHA, is scaling up efforts in advance of the start of the school year to depoliticize education and ensure that all sides in the crisis refrain from using learning as a political tool in the crisis. Cluster partners are also exploring safer learning modalities that reduce the exposure of children and teachers to the risk of attacks.'<sup>125</sup>

#### 7.10.6 OCHA reported that

'In September 2020 there were reports of attacks on education facilities and personnel, including the kidnapping of students, the burning of schools and the military use of non-operational schools. This was likely linked to the general school reopening planned for 5 October. From January to September 2020, ten attacks on education were reported, including the killing of a teacher and injuring of primary and secondary school pupil/students. The majority (9 out of 10) of incidents took place in the NW region. The number of incidents reported in 2020 is less than in 2019 however this is likely due to schools being closed because of COVID-19 and therefore not being targeted. NSAGs reportedly kidnapped four primary school children in Keyon at Elak-Oku (Bui division) in the NW. All four of them were rescued the same day. However, during the rescue a father of one of the children was shot and injured. The alleged burning of a non-operational primary school building being used by military at Nchum (Mezam division) in NW region was reported. Another similar incident of military use and damage of non-operational school buildings was reported in Bafut (Mezam division) in the NW.'<sup>126</sup>

#### 7.10.7 After schools in Cameroon were closed to stop the spread of COVID-19, many re-opened on 5 October 2020<sup>127</sup>.

#### 7.10.8 VOA news reported:

'Civilians in Cameroon's restive English-speaking regions have braved separatists' threats and reopened close to 140 of about 475 schools closed by fighters in the last four years.

'Some Anglophone activists have, for the first time since the crisis began, backed the civilians in the initiative to reopen closed schools, while some fighters are threatening to abduct teachers and students who resume classes. But hundreds of children, who have been deprived of education, and their teachers are returning to the schools despite threats.'<sup>128</sup>

<sup>125</sup> UNOCHA, '[Cameroon: North-West and South-West #22](#)' (Education section), 31 August 2020

<sup>126</sup> UNOCHA, '[Cameroon: North-West and South-West](#)', last updated 2 November 2020

<sup>127</sup> VOA, '[Cameroon reopens schools after 7 month COVID closure](#)', 5 October 2020

<sup>128</sup> VOA, '[In Cameroon's Anglophone regions, some schools reopen after 4 year...](#)', 9 October 2020

#### 7.10.9 See also:

- [Refugees International, 'Crisis denied in Cameroon', 29 May 2019.](#)
- [DW News, 'Cameroon children attacked for going to school', 27 August 2019](#)
- [VOA News, 'Cameroon Separatists Open 'Community Schools'', 18 October 2019](#)
- [UN News, 'Over 80 per cent of schools in Anglophone Cameroon shut down as conflict worsens', 21 June 2019](#)
- [UN OCHA – Humanitarian Response Plan: Cameroon, June 2020](#)

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Section 8 updated: 1 December 2020

## 8. Security situation

8.1.1 The Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) Global Peace Index (GPI) ranks 163 independent states and territories according to their level of peacefulness. Cameroon ranked the 31st least peaceful country in the world in 2018<sup>129</sup>, the 26<sup>th</sup> least peaceful country in the GPI 2019<sup>130</sup> and the 23<sup>rd</sup> least peaceful country in 2020<sup>131</sup>.

8.1.2 The Norwegian Refugee Council in its 2020 report similarly stated:

'Mounting violence, political paralysis and an aid funding vacuum contributed to Cameroon topping the list of the world's most neglected crises for a second year running.

'Tensions in the English-speaking North-West and South-West regions turned violent in 2017, spawning a humanitarian emergency which intensified during 2019. Government forces carried out large-scale offensives and armed groups retaliated. Civilians were trapped in the middle. Over 3,000 people have been killed in the violence since the crisis began in 2016. Unlawful killings, torture and razing of villages were widely reported by human rights groups.'<sup>132</sup>

8.1.3 The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported in their situation report, Cameroon: North-West and South-West as of 30 June 2020 stated: 'Protection continues to be a major humanitarian concern in the NWSW. Civilians continue to be caught in crossfire while summary execution of civilians by both the military and NSAGs is on the rise.'<sup>133</sup>

8.1.4 Janes noted on their website page for Cameroon:

'The government's military response to an insurgency in Cameroon's Anglophone regions is unlikely to stop despite growing international condemnation, particularly of human rights abuses carried out by security

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<sup>129</sup> IEP, '[Global Peace Index 2018](#)', (page 9), June 2018

<sup>130</sup> IEP, '[Global Peace Index 2019](#)', (page 2), June 2019

<sup>131</sup> IEP, '[Global Peace Index 2020](#)', (page 9), June 2020

<sup>132</sup> NRC, '[The World's most neglected displacement crises](#)' 10 June 2020

<sup>133</sup> UNOCHA, '[Cameroon: North-West and South-West #20](#)', (situation overview), 30 June 2020

forces against civilians and limited political concessions made by President Biya in December 2019. The insurgency has further strengthened relations with Nigeria, which has extradited Anglophone leaders to face trial and will continue to limit cross-border militant activity. Risks of inter-state war with other neighbours such as Central African Republic will remain low due to co-operation on cross-border security issues.

'The insurgency in the Anglophone Southwest and Northwest regions shows little sign of abating, with regular lethal armed exchanges between secessionist militant groups and the security forces. Secessionist groups are mostly armed with AK47 variants and focus on attacking military patrols, as well as killing individuals accused of collaboration or being informants, and carrying out kidnaps for ransom. Groups have also attacked agricultural processing facilities and have allegedly disrupted telecommunications infrastructure on the Bakassi Peninsula. Secessionists also claim to have caused an explosion that suspended operations at a state-owned oil refinery in Limbe in May 2019 and shot at a government-owned Camair passenger aircraft on December 2019 using small arms. Secessionist groups have recorded only several small-scale attacks against private businesses, likely for economic gain through looting and kidnap for ransom. Their increased intent to attack in French-speaking areas or places heavily populated by Anglophone civilians is probably a response to increasing raids on secessionists' camps by security forces. For example, in February 2020, Ngarbuh, a secessionist village, was attacked by the national security forces, which caused 22 fatalities. In March 2020, suspected secessionists remotely detonated an IED in downtown Bamenda and carried out simultaneous attacks with between 20 and 60 fighters against gendarmerie and police outposts in Galim, West region, near the border with the English-speaking Northwest region.'<sup>134</sup>

#### 8.1.5 See also

- [UN OCHA – Humanitarian Response Plan: Cameroon, June 2020](#)
- [ACLEED – Regional overview: Africa](#)

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## 8.2 Security incidents and civilian casualties

8.2.1 The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project, [ACLEED](#) provides a 'dashboard' of the number of 'events' and a summary of the security situation.

8.2.2 ACLED state in an Infographic covering 1 January 2018 – 9 February 2019 that: 'Though violence occurs throughout Anglophone Cameroon, it is particularly concentrated in Buea and Bamenda, the capitals of the South-West and North-West regions.'<sup>135</sup>

8.2.3 Data presented by ACLED and based on media reports, recorded events (battles, violence against civilians and explosions) and fatalities. The numbers presented below include both civilians and combatants and refer to

<sup>134</sup> Janes, Cameroon: Security, last updated 26 October 2020, subscription only

<sup>135</sup> ACLED, '[Crackdowns, "Ghost towns" and violence against civilians in Cameroon...](#)', 2019

the North-West/South-West regions (population 1,702,559 and 1,153,125 respectively<sup>136</sup>)

- 3 October 2017 – 3 October 2018 - 301 security related events and 758 fatalities
- 3 October 2018 – 3 October 2019 - 398 security related events and 985 fatalities
- 24 October 2019 – 24 October 2020 - 432 security related events and 781 fatalities. Of those 303 events and 505 fatalities occurred within the North West region and 129 events and 276 fatalities occurred within the South West region<sup>137</sup>.

8.2.4 Over half (220) of security incidents during the same 12 month period October 2019 – October 2020 were from violence against civilians, 184 were battles and 16 were from explosions /remote violence or riots<sup>138</sup>.

8.2.5 Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index (BSTI) Country report 2020 stated: 'In Anglophone regions, it is estimated that [since 2016] over 100 villages have been destroyed and between 800 and 1,500 civilians have been killed. There are also credible reports of rampant human rights abuses.'<sup>139</sup>

8.2.6 ACLED in a May 2020 report stated

'While organized violence in the mostly Anglophone regions of North-West and South-West has remained lower than the 2020 peak in early February (see graph by ACLED below), this is part of a longer trend of reduced violence in the region that started before the SOCADEF ceasefire. Overall, organized violence in North-West and South-West has continued since SOCADEF's announcement, demonstrating the limited impact of a ceasefire made by only one group among many. In the absence of a ceasefire agreement between the Ambazonia Defense Forces and the military, Cameroon is unlikely to see a sustained drop in violence.'<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Republic of Cameroon, '[Cameroon: Presentation of Cameroon](#)', undated

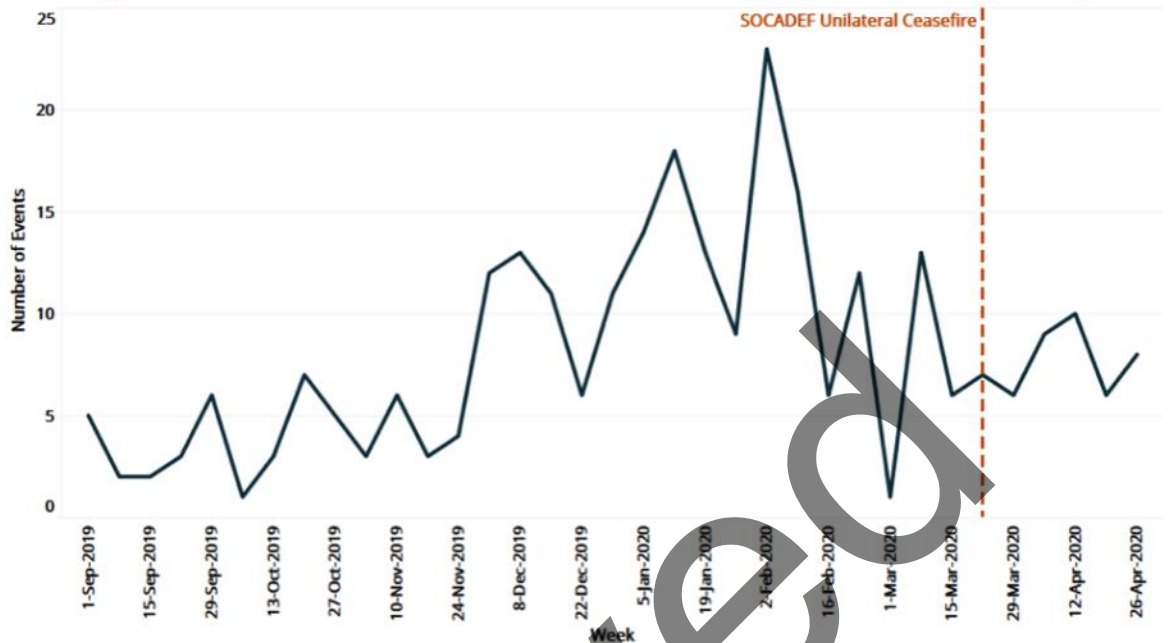
<sup>137</sup> ACLED, '[Dashboard – Cameroon](#)', undated

<sup>138</sup> ACLED, '[Dashboard – Cameroon](#)', undated

<sup>139</sup> BSTI, '[2020 Cameroon Country Report](#)' (p35), 29 April 2020

<sup>140</sup> ACLED, '[Call unanswered: A review of responses to the UN appeal for a global...](#)', 13 May 2020

*Organized Violence in Nord-Ouest and Sud-Ouest (1 Sep 2019 - 2 May 2020)*



8.2.7 Using data collated by ACLED from publicly available secondary reports, ACCORD<sup>141</sup> reported that 108 incidents involving violence resulted in 165 fatalities in the North-West and South-West regions between April and June 2020.

‘In Nord-Ouest, 83 incidents killing 127 people were reported. The following locations were among the affected: Baba, Babanki, Bafanji, Bafut, Bali, Balikumbat, Bambili, Bambui, Bamenda, Bamessing, Batibo, Besi, Fundong, Jakiri, Kikaikom, Kugwe, Kumbo, Mankwi, Mbengwi, Mbiam, Menda Nkwe, Ndop, Ndu, Ngarum, Nkambe, Ntamruh, Ntumbaw, Nwa, Oku, Pinyin, Santa, Tadu, Tatum, Widikum, Zoa.

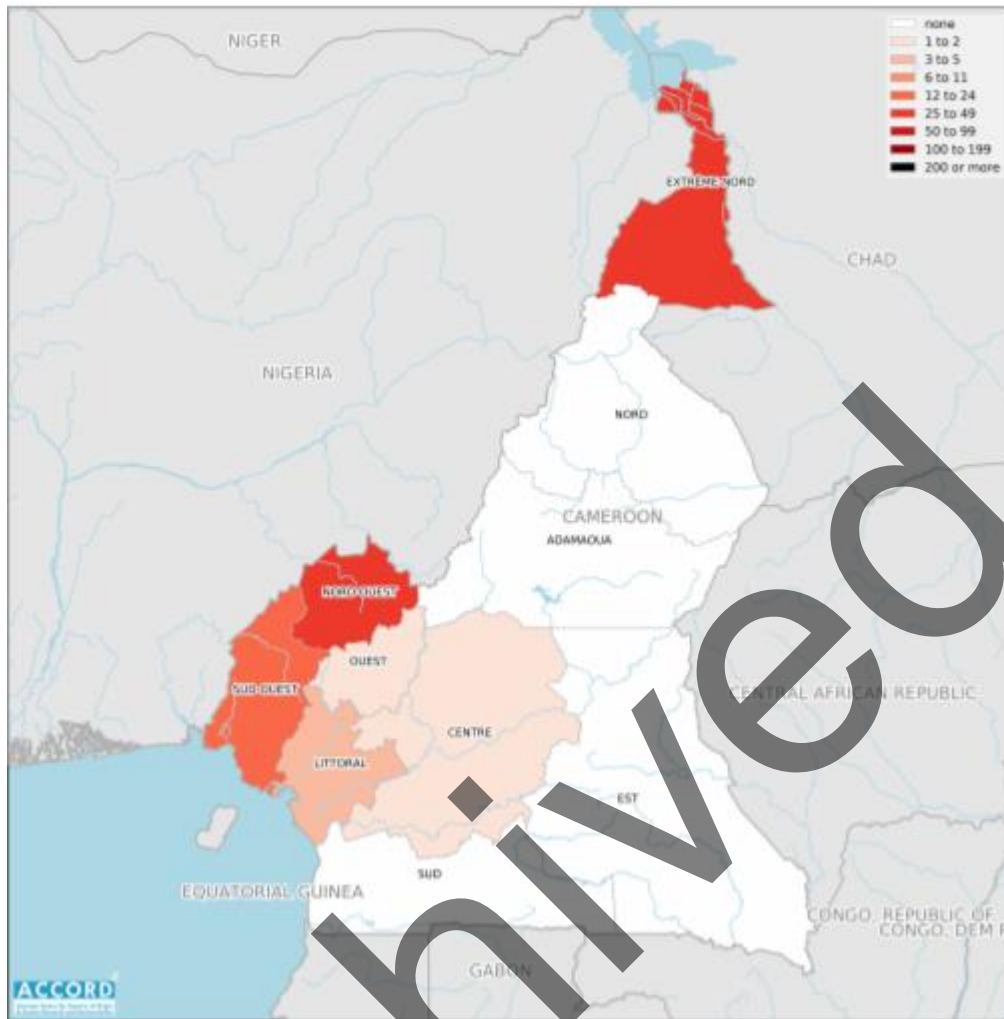
‘In Sud-Ouest, 25 incidents killing 38 people were reported. The following locations were among the affected: Baba, Bakebe, Buea, Eshobi, Idabato, Kumba, Mamfe, Manyu Division, Menji, Muambong, Muyuka, Otu, Owe, Tombel.’<sup>142</sup>

8.2.8 ACCORD created the following map and table<sup>143</sup> based on ACLED data covering the period June 2018 to June 2020. The map illustrates the number of reported incidents with at least one fatality.

<sup>141</sup> ACCORD, ‘[Cameroon, second quarter 2020: Update on incidents...](#)’, 30 October 2020

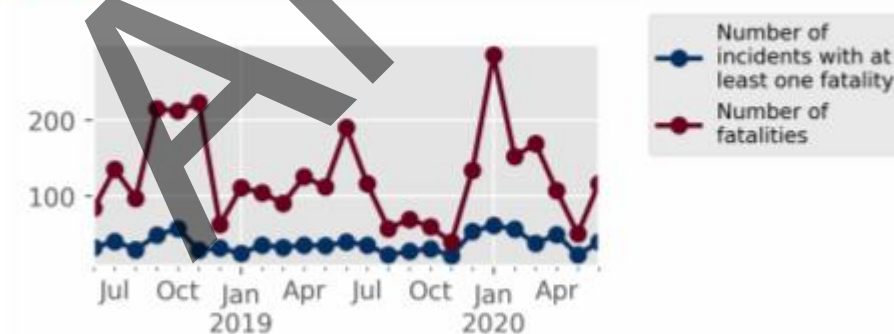
<sup>142</sup> ACCORD, ‘[Cameroon, second quarter 2020: Update on incidents...](#)’, 30 October 2020

<sup>143</sup> ACCORD, ‘[Cameroon, second quarter 2020: Update on incidents...](#)’, 30 October 2020



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### Development of conflict incidents from June 2018 to June 2020



This graph is based on data from ACLED (datasets used [ACLED, 3 October 2020](#)).

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8.2.9 International Crisis Group (ICG) in August 2020 reported a number of violent incidents from August 2020:

<sup>144</sup> ACCORD, '[Cameroon, second quarter 2020: Update on incidents...](#)', 30 October 2020

<sup>145</sup> ACCORD, '[Cameroon, second quarter 2020: Update on incidents...](#)', 30 October 2020

'Violence continued unabated in Anglophone South West and North West regions... Amid persistent conflict between separatists and military in North West',

- 7 August 2020 – Local aid worker killed in Batibo town, assailants unknown.
- 7 August 2020 – Separatists beheaded woman they accused of collaborating with military in regional capital Bamenda;
- 10 August 2020 – Separatists killed member of vigilante group in Bamunka village.
- 13 August killed – Security forces killed suspected separatist and unidentified individual in Kumbo area.
- 11 August - suspected Anglophone separatists beheaded woman they accused of collaborating with military in Muyuka locality, South-West region;

'Amid wide circulation of beheading video on social media, NGO Human Rights Watch 14 Aug called on UN Security Council to impose targeted sanctions on separatists.'

- 'In following days, soldiers reportedly retaliated by killing about seven individuals and arresting about 200 in Muyuka area.
- 'Unidentified gunmen 27 Aug reportedly abducted 15 in Ekok town'.<sup>146</sup>

8.2.10 The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported in their situation report, Cameroon: North-West and South-West as of 31 August 2020 that: 'Protection monitors issued 80 flash alerts related to incidents including deadly attacks on civilians, burning of houses, kidnapping, arbitrary arrests and other serious protection violations against civilians in August 2020.'<sup>147</sup>

8.2.11 The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported in their situation report, Cameroon, as of 8 October 2020 that:

'The protection environment in the NWSW continued to deteriorate in August due to increasing insecurity with attacks on humanitarian workers, frequent clashes between NSAGs and government security forces as well as destruction of properties, killing and threats against the civilian population. In addition, the poor road network after heavy rains is making humanitarian access more difficult as the rainy season gets to its peak. 80 flash alerts (60 in the NW and 20 in the SW) and other significant incidents were reported in August, including homicides on civilians leaving community members in high protection risks and daily fear.

'In August 2020, 579 protection incidents were recorded through the UNHCR and INTERSOS protection monitoring project in the NWSW regions. It should be noted that the incident reports collected each month refer to

<sup>146</sup> ICG, '[Cameroon: Crisis watch, tracking conflict worldwide](#)', August 2020

<sup>147</sup> UNOCHA, '[Cameroon: North-West and South-West](#)', 31 August 2020



incidents which have happened at any time since the crisis began and are not indicative of any protection trends...

'The situation in the North-West and South-West (NWSW) regions of Cameroon deteriorated in August compared to the previous three months with an upsurge in violence and attacks against civilians. Non-State armed groups (NSAGs) have increased the use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) with increasing numbers of civilian casualties. The deteriorating security situation has resulted in multiple population displacements across the NWSW with over 11,718 people forced to flee their homes to seek shelter in nearby bushes and villages. The NW region has been more affected with over 10,200 displaced people. These movements are often temporary and the displaced return to their homes once the security situation allows...

'The protection environment in the NWSW continued to deteriorate in August due to increasing insecurity with attacks on humanitarian workers, frequent clashes between NSAGs and government security forces as well as destruction of properties, killing and threats against the civilian population. In addition, the poor road network after heavy rains is making humanitarian access more difficult as the rainy season gets to its peak. 80 flash alerts (60 in the NW and 20 in the SW) and other significant incidents were reported in August, including homicides on civilians leaving community members in high protection risks and daily fear. In August 2020, 579 protection incidents were recorded through the UNHCR and INTERSOS protection monitoring project in the NWSW regions. It should be noted that the incident reports collected each month refer to incidents which have happened at any time since the crisis began and are not indicative of any protection trends.'<sup>148</sup>

#### 8.2.12 Human Rights Watch noted in July 2020 that:

'Security forces and armed separatists have both attacked hospitals and medical staff on multiple occasions. On July 6, separatists killed a Doctors Without Borders community health worker working for in the South-West region, after accusing him of collaborating with the military. Security forces damaged a health facility in the North-West region on June 30 and arbitrarily arrested seven health workers in the South-West region on July 6.

'On June 10, at 2 p.m., following clashes between separatists and soldiers, including some from the Rapid Intervention Battalion (BIR), a grenade was fired into the courtyard of the district hospital in Bali, North-West region, leading to the death of one cardiac patient, injuring at least four others, and destroying four vehicles.'<sup>149</sup>

#### 8.2.13 The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported in their situation report, Cameroon: North-West and South-West as of 31 July 2020 stated: 'The security environment continues to degrade with a steady increase in the intensity of clashes between armed elements putting the lives of civilians at risk in the NWSW.'<sup>150</sup>

<sup>148</sup> UNOCHA, '[Cameroon: North-West and South-West](#)'(p2&6), 8 October 2020

<sup>149</sup> HRW, '[Cameroon: Civilians Killed in Anglophone Regions](#)', 27 July 2020

<sup>150</sup> UNOCHA, '[Cameroon: North-West and South-West #21](#)', (protection), 31 July 2020

8.2.14 R2P in a report from August 2020 stated: ‘Since 2016 at least 3,000 civilians and hundreds of security forces have been killed in the Anglophone regions.’<sup>151</sup>

8.2.15 The BBC reported on 24 October 2020: ‘Gunmen have stormed a private school in a restive area of Cameroon killing at least six children and wounding a dozen others, officials say.

‘Officials in the south-western city of Kumba blamed Anglophone secessionists for the attack. This has not been independently confirmed.

‘A local education official said the victims were aged between 12 and 14.’<sup>152</sup>

8.2.16 OCHA reported in their November 2020 situation report, Cameroon: North-West and South West that

‘The situation in the North-West and South-West (NWSW) regions of Cameroon remains dire in September 2020 with continuous attacks against civilians and their properties. There were several reports by human rights organizations of summary execution of civilians in both regions by non-state armed groups (NSAGs) and government security forces. It was reported that at least 11 unarmed civilians were killed by government security forces between 21 and 22 September [2020] in the two regions. On 24 September, members of the Cameroon Bar Association addressed a complaint to the Attorney General of the NW Region condemning atrocities by NSAGs and government security forces in events related to the “Bamenda Clean” security operation.’<sup>153</sup>

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### 8.3 Sexual and gender-based violence

8.3.1 The Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa (CHRDA) and Raoul Wallenbergs report Cameroon’s Unfolding Catastrophe, 3 June 2019, reported that:

‘In the 24 months following the escalation of the [NWSW] crisis, CHRDA conducted fact-finding missions and carried out interviews in the affected regions with women and girls in relation to gender-based violence and sexual assault, including interviews with detained women and young girls. More than 75 percent of women interviewed had experienced physical or sexual violence. Military and security forces have mistreated female IDPs and sexually exploited female refugees travelling without national identity cards in exchange for letting the women through security checkpoints. In the North West region, the governor established a curfew of 6 p.m., which affects women involved in informal businesses. The curfew may have encouraged corrupt and sexually exploitative practices, such as women being asked for sex in exchange for permission to travel past roadblocks and security checks after curfew. CHRDA has reported that female students at the University of Buea were molested and physically assaulted by state forces. At least one female student was raped on November 28, 2016, in

<sup>151</sup> R2P, ‘[Monitor – bi-monthly bulletin](#), (p3), 15 September 2020

<sup>152</sup> BBC, ‘[Cameroon: Children killed in attack on school in Kumba](#)’, 24 October 2020

<sup>153</sup> ‘[Cameroon: Situation report](#)’, last updated 2 November 2020

Buea by a police officer. No concrete steps have been taken to identify or hold accountable the perpetrators.<sup>154</sup>

8.3.2 Responsibility to protect (R2P) reported in their bi-monthly bulletin of 15 September 2019 that:

‘Political conflict over cultural rights and identity have escalated in Cameroon’s Anglophone regions since 2016 when English speaking lawyers, students and teachers began protesting against their under-representation and cultural marginalization by the Francophone-dominated government. Violent repression by the security forces resulted in arbitrary arrests, sexual violence and the killing of civilians in the north-west and southwest regions.’<sup>155</sup>

8.3.3 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) stated in their Humanitarian Needs Overview Cameroon 2020 re-issued in June 2020 ‘With the escalation of conflict in the North West and South West regions, civilian populations are facing serious human rights violations. Women and children are at particular risk of facing incidents of sexual and gender-based violence as well as abuse, neglect and exploitation.’<sup>156</sup>

8.3.4 The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) stated in its Humanitarian Needs Overview Cameroon 2020 that

‘Widowed women, who represent 31% of households in the South West and 38% of households in the North West (an increase of about 10% compared to 2017/16), not only face economic hardship but are also at particular risk of gender-based violence, including sexual exploitation and abuse. People with disabilities are more likely to be exposed to danger from attacks, including because of barriers to escaping and staying out of harm’s way, and because of the degradation of the support systems which existed before the crisis. ..GBV incidents, affecting women and girls in particular, were reported, as well as situations of arbitrary detention and risks of recruitment into armed groups, mainly affecting men and boys. Young men, women and girls flee rural areas to urban centres in search of security and employment. In this context of crisis-induced socio-economic fragility, the use of sex as a negative coping mechanism is reported. Women who have lost their partners face more responsibilities as heads of households, making them even more vulnerable.’<sup>157</sup>

8.3.5 The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported in their situation report, Cameroon: North-West and South-West as of 31 August 2020 that: ‘567 Gender Based Violence (GBV) incidents were reported, with survivors receiving assistance, in August 2020 in the two regions.’<sup>158</sup>

8.3.6 See also

- [UN OCHA – Situation reports and Humanitarian Bulletins](#)

<sup>154</sup> CHRDA, ‘[Cameroon’s Unfolding Catastrophe](#)’, (p. 33), 3 June 2019

<sup>155</sup> R2P, ‘[Monitor- bi-monthly bulletin](#)’, (p9), 15 September 2019

<sup>156</sup> UNOCHA, ‘[Cameroon Humanitarian Needs Overview 2020](#)’ (p49), revised June 2020

<sup>157</sup> UNOCHA, ‘[Cameroon Humanitarian Needs Overview 2020](#)’, revised June 2020

<sup>158</sup> UNOCHA, ‘[Cameroon: North-West and South-West](#)’ (highlights), 31 August 2020

## 8.4 Ceasefire talks

### 8.4.1 The UNOCHA humanitarian needs overview of June 2020 noted:

'On 23 March, the UN Secretary-General urged warring parties across the world to lay down their weapons in support of the bigger battle against COVID-19. He highlighted that the ceasefire would allow humanitarians to reach populations that are most vulnerable to the spread of COVID-19. In the North West and South West regions, one non-state armed group declared its adherence to the Secretary-General's call. Other non-state armed groups rejected a unilateral ceasefire, demanding a negotiated ceasefire also applicable to the Cameroon defense forces.'<sup>159</sup>

### 8.4.2 Similarly ACLED reported on 13 May 2020 that:

'...Southern Cameroons Defense Force (SOCADEF) declared a unilateral ceasefire for 14 days to allow coronavirus aid to enter its area of control .... However, the largest Ambazonian separatist group, the Ambazonia Defense Forces, has declared that it will not observe a ceasefire, and the Government of Cameroon has not announced any plans for a truce .... While the ceasefire in Cameroon only includes one actor, and not even the largest Ambazonian separatist group, the UN has described SOCADEF's ceasefire as an example of a successful response to their call.'<sup>160</sup>

### 8.4.3 BAMF – Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (Germany): Briefing Notes 6 July 2020 reported that:

'On 03 July 2020 Ayuk Tabe, the most prominent representative of the anglophone separatists, announced that talks had been held between government representatives and the most important representatives of the separatists for the first time since the armed anglophone conflict broke out in 2017. According to Tabe another nine separatist leaders attended the talks on 02 July 2020 discussing the options for a ceasefire. Official government representatives have not yet commented on these talks, which the United Nations had urged the parties to the conflict to hold. Tabe and nine other separatist leaders had been sentenced to life imprisonment for terrorism, rebellion and separatist ambitions by a Cameroon court martial in August 2019.'<sup>161</sup>

### 8.4.4 The New Humanitarian in July 2020 stated:

'Calls for a ceasefire and an end to the war have been longstanding. An early step towards dialogue was dubbed the "Swiss process" – an attempt to unify the secessionists as a precursor to talks with Yaounde.

'The negotiations were facilitated by the Geneva-based Center for Humanitarian Dialogue – a conflict mediation NGO. While the groups in ACT are committed to the process, the IG Sisiku alliance refused to participate, questioning the integrity of the negotiations and the Cameroon government's commitment to peace. No meetings have taken place since late 2019.

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<sup>159</sup> UNOCHA, '[Cameroon Humanitarian Needs Overview 2020](#)' (p10), revised June 2020

<sup>160</sup> ACLED, '[Call unanswered: A review of responses to the UN appeal for a global...](#)', 13 May 2020

<sup>161</sup> BAMF, '[Briefing notes – 6 July 2020](#)' (section Cameroon), 2 July 2020

'Sisiku, from his prison in Yaoundé, strongly opposed the "Swiss process" and jokingly referred to it as the "Swiss chocolate talks." Ayaba of the AGovC described the dialogue as a "Trojan horse" aimed at handing victory to the government.

'So, the involvement of Sisiku and a handful of his men now in direct talks with the Cameroon authorities is all the more surprising. The step is seen as the result of both the resilience of the Ambazonia movement and the impact of sustained international pressure on the Cameroonian government.

'The two rounds of "pre-talks" – the last reportedly on 2 July – have been held outside the Kondengui Central Prison where Sisiku is being held and are seen as "confidence-building" steps.

"We have given Cameroon a list of action items, and the ball is now in their court," said IG Sisiku vice president Dabney Yerima, speaking to TNH from The Netherlands.

'The demands include demilitarisation of the anglophone regions, the release of prisoners, and an amnesty to enable leaders in the diaspora to return home. Ayaba, the head of AGovC, has indicated he will abide by a ceasefire if the government agrees to one.

"Our commitment to end the war and bloodshed is evident, but we hope Cameroon shares that vision," said Yerima.<sup>162</sup>

- 8.4.5 R2P in a report from August 2020 stated: 'On 2 July some separatist leaders met with government officials to discuss a ceasefire agreement. However, the security situation in the Anglophone regions has continued to deteriorate.'<sup>163</sup>

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## 8.5 Conflict's impact on infrastructure, governance and human rights

- 8.5.1 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) stated in their Humanitarian Needs Overview Cameroon 2020 issued in June 2020:

'In the North West and South West regions, high levels of insecurity continue. The presence of national security structures - police, gendarmerie, army - is concentrated along the main roads and cities while non-state armed groups are more present in rural areas.'<sup>164</sup>

- 8.5.2 OCHA also stated: 'Governance issues and more specifically the rule of law [in the North-West/South-West] remain a major concern. The justice system is weak, inter alia, due to difficulties in accessing justice services.'<sup>165</sup>

- 8.5.3 UN OCHA continue:

'The ongoing conflict between armed forces and non-state armed groups has had a significant impact on the security situation, protection and access to services and has considerably increased the vulnerability of the

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<sup>162</sup> The New Humanitarian, '[Ahead of peace talks, a who's who of Cameroon's separatist...](#)', July 2020

<sup>163</sup> GCR2P, '[Monitor – bi-monthly bulletin](#), (p3), 15 September 2020

<sup>164</sup> UNOCHA, '[Cameroon Humanitarian Needs Overview 2020](#)' (p10-11), revised June 2020

<sup>165</sup> UNOCHA, '[Cameroon Humanitarian Needs Overview 2020](#)' (p66), revised June 2020

population. Insecurity, including prolonged periods of lockdowns, clashes or the prospect of a possible confrontation between armed actors, protection risks and the absence of State authority are the main causes of population movements. According to protection monitoring carried out, 5,187 protection incidents were recorded between January and September 2019. Attacks on villages, burning of houses and killings have been recorded. House destruction alone accounted for 41% of the incidents recorded and homicides for 7.5%.’<sup>166</sup>

8.5.4 The USSD human rights report for 2019 stated: ‘Although the government took some steps to identify, investigate, prosecute, and punish officials who committed human rights abuses, it did not do so systematically and rarely made the proceedings public. Some offenders, including serial offenders, continued to act with impunity.’<sup>167</sup>

8.5.5 Al Jazeera reported on 11 June 2020:

‘Three soldiers have been charged with murder after a massacre earlier this year in western Cameroon where security forces are fighting Anglophone separatists.

“The three Cameroonian soldiers have been placed in provisional detention in Yaoundé military prison,” army spokesman Colonel Cyrille Atonfack Guemo told AFP news agency, adding they had been charged with “murder”.

‘At least 23 civilians, including 15 children and two pregnant women, were killed on February 14 in the village of Ngarbuh, in what the United Nations, called “a shocking episode in the ongoing crisis that has afflicted the country’s Northwest and Southwest regions for the past three years”.

‘The military initially denied any role in the killings and said the deaths resulted from an “unfortunate accident” that happened when fuel containers exploded in the crossfire between separatists and troops.

‘As the international outcry amplified, President Paul Biya ordered an investigation...’<sup>168</sup>

8.5.6 The New Humanitarian stated: ‘The separatists have maintained a long-running school boycott, arguing that the education system is biased against anglophone students. They have also repeatedly instituted so-called lockdowns – demanding a halt to all business activity.’<sup>169</sup>

8.5.7 See also

- [Human rights violations, Destruction of home and villages, Enforced disappearance, Extrajudicial killings and Humanitarian situation.](#)

8.5.8 For information on the accountability of security forces see [Country profile and information note – Cameroon: Actors of Protection.](#)

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<sup>166</sup> UNOCHA, ‘[Cameroon Humanitarian Needs Overview 2020](#)’ (p42), revised June 2020

<sup>167</sup> USSD, ‘[Human rights report 2019 \(section 1D\)](#)’, 11 March 2020

<sup>168</sup> Al Jazeera, ‘[Three Cameroon soldiers charged with murder for village massacre](#)’, 11 June 2020

<sup>169</sup> The New Humanitarian, ‘[Ahead of peace talks, a who’s who of Cameroon’s separatist...](#)’, July 2020

## 9. Situation of Anglophones outside of NW and SW regions

### 9.1 Demography

9.1.1 Douala and Yaoundé are also home to Anglophones; an open source search shows that there are bilingual schools listed in the [Douala](#) and [Yaoundé](#) areas<sup>170,171</sup>. An Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada response of August 2018 citing various sources noted:

'The International Crisis Group representative said that the Anglophone population is "dominant in several neighbourhoods" in Douala and in Yaoundé... Other sources similarly indicate that there are Anglophone communities in Douala... and Yaoundé... A July 2018 commentary published by International Crisis Group notes that many Douala natives are fluent in Pidgin English and some barely speak French. A lot of people here are bilingual in English and French, sometimes due to marriages between Anglophones and Francophones. Bilingualism is also enhanced by education. Children of Francophone homes are a majority in many Anglophone schools...

'Similarly, NDH-Cameroun noted that there are [translation] "numerous" bilingual and Anglophone schools in Yaoundé and Douala...'<sup>172</sup>

9.1.2 Anglophones are represented beyond the NWSW regions<sup>173</sup>. President Biya appointed an English-speaking prime minister, Joseph Dion Ngute in January 2019<sup>174</sup>. The previous prime minister Philomen Yang also came from the English-speaking northwest<sup>175</sup>. In March 2018 two cabinet ministers were appointed, Nalova Lyonga from Cameroon's English-speaking southwest region became the minister of secondary education and Paul Atanga Nji from the English-speaking northwest region took up the job of minister of territorial administration<sup>176</sup>. Joshua Osih, the 'flag-bearer' of the main opposition party, Social Democratic Front, is 'a member of parliament representing the Central Wouri constituency (Douala), though he is originally from the Southwest region.'<sup>177</sup>

9.1.3 OCHA in a situation report dated 2 November (see [map at 8.3.1](#)) stated that of the estimated 705,800 IDP's from NWSW regions, 162,700 are in the West region and 80,900 are in the Littoral region <sup>178</sup>.

9.1.4 CPIT was not able to find information about the size and distribution of the Anglophone population outside of the North-West and South-West regions (see [Bibliography](#) for sources consulted).

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<sup>170</sup> Google search, '[bilingual schools in Douala Cameroon](#)', October 2019

<sup>171</sup> Google search, '[bilingual schools in Yaoundé Cameroon](#)', October 2019

<sup>172</sup> IRBC, Information response, '[Cameroon: Situation of Anglophones...](#)', 24 August 2018

<sup>173</sup> FP, '[Cameroon Must Make Concessions to End the Anglophone Crisis](#)', 27 September 2019

<sup>174</sup> FP, '[Cameroon Must Make Concessions to End the Anglophone Crisis](#)', 27 September 2019

<sup>175</sup> VOA, '[Cameroon's President Adds Anglophones to Cabinet](#)', 6 March 2018

<sup>176</sup> VOA, '[Cameroon's President Adds Anglophones to Cabinet](#)', 6 March 2018

<sup>177</sup> ICG, '[Dialogue is essential to unite Cameroons disparate voices](#)', 27 July 2018

<sup>178</sup> UNOCHA, '[Cameroon: North-West and South-West](#)', last updated 2 November 2020

## 9.2 Humanitarian situation outside of areas of conflict

9.2.1 A February 2020 Unicef report stated that 2,000,000 children are in need of humanitarian assistance in Cameroon.<sup>179</sup>

9.2.2 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) stated in their Humanitarian Needs Overview Cameroon 2020 issued in June 2020:

‘In 2020, 6.2 million people in Cameroon need humanitarian assistance. The COVID-19 pandemic, which broke out in Cameroon in March 2020, affects the whole country, increasing the number of people in need of assistance and exacerbating the needs of people already affected by humanitarian crisis...

‘The COVID-19 pandemic travel restrictions by the Government affect operational mobility and constitute a further humanitarian access constraint. This concerns both movement into and within the country. In addition, access by the population to their livelihoods and to markets are also deeply affected by the pandemic, as is access to and availability of health care...’<sup>180</sup>

9.2.3 UN OCHA continued

‘In the east, basic social services do not have the capacity to meet the demand of the entire population, including that of Central African refugees. Since the refugee’s arrival, the existing centers, already few, have been overcrowded and are experiencing insufficient human and material resources. Extreme poverty prevents vulnerable people from paying the costs necessary for health care. Drinking water supply - in quantity and quality - remains precarious. In basic sanitation, the latrines are insufficient and insecure, with people favoring open defecation, resulting in poor personal and community hygiene practices.’<sup>181</sup>

9.2.4 The same UN OCHA report stated:

‘In the Eastern regions, 770,000 people suffer from problems related to their physical and mental wellbeing. Sexual exploitation, child marriage, rape and physical and emotional violence continue to be perpetrated against women and girls. Some forms of violence are rooted in cultural and social norms of gender inequality, poverty, ignorance and lack of respect for women’s rights. Children are also confronted with non-schooling, school dropouts, family separation, and economic exploitation, with, for example, child labour in mines to help their families in a context of socio-economic insecurity and reduced assistance.

‘Furthermore, an increase of food insecurity and malnutrition among the refugees and host community members is observed since the arrival of the refugees and the reduction of food rations. Statistics available reveal chronic malnutrition rates of 41% in the North and 37% in the East. Pregnant and lactating women, children and the elderly are most affected by malnutrition. The increase in the vulnerability in the East is leading to child labor to the

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<sup>179</sup> Unicef, ‘[Cameroon Humanitarian Situation Report No. 02](#)’, February 2020

<sup>180</sup> UNOCHA, ‘[Cameroon Humanitarian Needs Overview 2020](#)’ (pages 7&12), revised June 2020

<sup>181</sup> UNOCHA, ‘[Cameroon Humanitarian Needs Overview 2020](#)’ (p15), revised June 2020



detriment of education. These needs were further exacerbated with the arrival of COVID-19. Food insecurity previously affecting 240,000 is now leading 392,000 people in need of live-saving Food Security assistance, and Child Protection needs have more than doubled. A large increase can also be observed with regards to Health needs related to physical and mental wellbeing, affecting newly over half a million people in comparison to 190,000 before the disease outbreak.’<sup>182</sup>

- 9.2.5 For more information about human rights, prison conditions, COVID-19, and the socio-economic situation see [Cameroon Country Background Note](#) as well as the Cameroon CPIN on [Sexual orientation and gender identity or expression](#).

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### 9.3 Security

- 9.3.1 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) stated in their Humanitarian Needs Overview Cameroon 2020 issued in June 2020:

‘Insecurity is widespread in the Lake Chad region, due to incursions and attacks by non-state armed groups (by the Islamic State in the West African Province in the Lake Chad Basin area and further south by the group Jama’atu Ahlus-Sunnah Lidda’Awati Wal Jihad (JAS), also known as Boko Haram). In late 2019 and 2020 the security situation in the Far North further deteriorated, with an increase in attacks by Boko Haram, including suicide attacks. In the North West and South West regions, high levels of insecurity continue. The presence of national security structures - police, gendarmerie, army - is concentrated along the main roads and cities while non-state armed groups are more present in rural areas.

‘Other parts of Cameroon remain stable and offer relative security, therefore welcoming many refugees and internally displaced persons from other regions (including people from the North West and South West regions fleeing violence) and neighboring countries. However, there has been an increase in incidents including urban crime, kidnappings, the phenomenon of robbers and community clashes. Certain incidents such as kidnappings are mainly reported in the border area with [Central Africa Republic] CAR. The loss of jobs and income due to Government measures taken to combat COVID-19 poses an additional security threat, especially in major towns and cities, as it could encourage banditry in the absence of mitigation measures.

‘The loss of jobs and income due to Government measures taken to combat COVID-19 poses an additional security threat, especially in major towns and cities, as it could encourage banditry in the absence of mitigation measures’

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### 9.4 Treatment of opposition groups generally

- 9.4.1 The Congressional Research Service paper of March 2019 noted

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<sup>182</sup> UNOCHA, ‘[Cameroon Humanitarian Needs Overview 2020](#)’ (p21), revised June 2020

<sup>183</sup> UNOCHA, ‘[Cameroon Humanitarian Needs Overview 2020](#)’ (p10-11), revised June 2020

‘Cameroon’s political system endows the head of state with strong executive powers, including the ability to appoint and dismiss the prime minister, cabinet, judges, generals, and governors. Numerous parties compete in elections and the local press is diverse, but opposition activism is constrained by restrictions on political freedoms and the media. Repression has escalated in the context of the Boko Haram conflict and the Anglophone crisis, as authorities have detained journalists and imposed a “climate of fear” on the media, per Reporters Without Borders.’<sup>184</sup>

9.4.2 HRW in its report on events in 2019 noted: ‘Cameroonian authorities cracked down on the political opposition, violently broke up peaceful protests, and arrested hundreds of opposition party leaders, members, and supporters.’<sup>185</sup>

9.4.3 The USSD report for 2019 noted:

‘There were reports of newly identified political prisoners or detainees, but no comprehensive or accurate statistics were available. Political prisoners were detained under heightened security, often in SED facilities and at the Principal and Central Prisons in Yaoundé. Some were allegedly held at DGRE facilities. The government did not readily permit access to such persons.

‘There were allegations that the government falsely charged peaceful dissidents with violence, including former presidential candidate Maurice Kamto. In a statement signed in March, Kamto and four of his supporters, including campaign manager Paul Eric Kingue, Albert Zongang of the La Dynamique political party, Penda Ekoka of the Mouvement Agir, and popular singer Gaston Philip Abbe, popularly known as Valsero, all of whom were detained at the Kondengui prison, claimed they were political prisoners, along with their 160 supporters in other prisons throughout the country.

‘On October 3, President Biya announced the pardoning of 333 lower-level Anglophone detainees, and on October 5, the Military Tribunal ordered the release of Kamto and hundreds of his associates.

‘Former minister of state for territorial administration Marafa Hamidou Yaya, who was convicted in 2012 on corruption charges and sentenced to 25 years’ imprisonment, remained in detention despite a June 2016 decision of the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention describing Marafa’s detention “a violation of international laws.” The government did not respond to repeated requests for members of the diplomatic community to meet with Marafa... There were credible reports that for politically motivated purposes the government attempted to exert bilateral pressure on other countries aimed at having them take adverse legal action against specific individuals, including Anglophones separatists and other political opponents.’<sup>186</sup>

9.4.4 See [Cameroon Country Background Note](#) for more information about the political system and treatment of opposition groups.

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<sup>184</sup> CRS, ‘[In Focus – Cameroon](#)’ (page 1), 12 March 2019

<sup>185</sup> HRW, ‘[World Report 2020 events of 2019, Cameroon events of 2019](#)’, 14 January 2020

<sup>186</sup> USSD, ‘[Human rights report 2019](#)’ (section 1e), 11 March 2020

## 9.5 Treatment of Anglophones by authorities

- 9.5.1 International Crisis Group, following a number of interviews with 30 Anglophone residents of Yaoundé, stated, in a report entitled 'Cameroon's worsening Anglophone crisis calls for strong measures', published 19 October 2017:

'After 22 September [2017], Anglophones living in the Francophone parts of the country, particularly in Yaoundé and Douala, have been targeted: arbitrary arrests in taxis, house searches without warrants, and mass detentions of Anglophones have taken place in Yaoundé neighbourhoods with large English-speaking communities such as in Biyem-Assi, Melen, Obili, Biscuiterie, Centre administratif and Etoug-Ebe. Many of these arrests were made by police officers and gendarmes on 30 September [2017]. A number of Anglophones have reported being insulted by Francophones in the markets. In their places of work, Francophones have asked them "what were they still doing in Yaoundé and why didn't they go back home to their filthy Bamenda?"'.<sup>187</sup>

- 9.5.2 The Immigration and Refugee board of Canada in a query response of 24 August 2018 on the situation of Anglophones and citing a representative from the International Crisis Group (ICG) stated that:

'In Yaoundé and Douala, Anglophones live without any major security threat from ... the government (for now). They are under the same conditions like Francophones who find it difficult to exercise certain rights. ... However, during these few past days [August 2018], security checks have been intensified in Yaoundé and Douala, with security forces checking several vehicles in the two cities. During their patrols, when they meet someone they identify as an Anglophone, the check is more intense (without any reported abuse)'.<sup>188</sup>

- 9.5.3 The same report further noted that:

'According to a July 2018 article by CamerounWeb, sources confirmed that [translation] "mass arrests" occurred in the Bonaberie neighbourhood of Douala, where 68 Anglophones, including 9 pregnant women, were arrested "without any crime being committed" and sent to detention camps (CamerounWeb 10 July 2018). The same source further states that additional arrests were planned for the following days, including in Yaoundé (CamerounWeb 10 July 2018). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response. According to BaretaNews, a pro-separatist website "that believes in the restoration of Southern Cameroons Statehood" (BaretaNews n.d.), an Anglophone was arrested by the police at the end of June 2018 in Bonamoussadi in Douala "after his Francophone neighbors allegedly reported him to the police as [a] suspected secessionist" because he was "always speaking [the] English [l]anguage in his interactions with neighbors and family and ha[d] never been heard speaking in French" (BaretaNews 3 July 2018)'.<sup>189</sup>

<sup>187</sup> ICG, ['Cameroon's worsening Anglophone crisis calls for strong measures'](#), 19 October 2017

<sup>188</sup> IRB, ['Query response on the situation of Anglophones, including returnees...'](#), 24 August 2018

<sup>189</sup> IRB, ['Query response on the situation of Anglophones, including returnees...'](#), 24 August 2018

9.5.4 Human Rights Watch in an article of 3 September 2019, ‘Separatist Leaders Appeal Conviction’, reported that:

‘Ten leaders of the separatist Ambazonia Interim Government in Cameroon lodged an appeal on August 26, 2019, against their August 20 [2019] convictions and life sentences by a military court following a trial that raises serious concerns of due process and violations of fair-trial rights...

‘Sisiku Ayuk Tabe, head of what is known as the “Ambazonia government,” and nine other leaders had been arrested in January 2018 in Nigeria’s capital, Abuja, and forcibly returned to Cameroon, in an extrajudicial transfer that was denounced by the United Nations Refugee Agency as violating the fundamental principle of non-refoulement – the practice of not forcing refugees or asylum seekers back to a country where they risk persecution, torture, or other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment. The forced return of the 10 leaders was also declared illegal by a Nigerian court in March 2019. The men were then held in incommunicado detention at the State Defense Secretariat detention facility (Secrétariat d’état à la défense, SED) for six months, during which they had no access to their lawyers and families. Human Rights Watch has documented that torture and other abuses are endemic at the SED.’<sup>190</sup>

9.5.5 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) stated in their Humanitarian Needs Overview Cameroon 2020 re-issued in June 2020

‘The persistence of the crisis in the North West and South West regions, the hardening of the positions of the parties to the conflict in managing the crisis and the low interest of the international community have aggravated the impact on the lives of the civilian population. The number of internally displaced persons in the two crisis-hit regions increased from 350,920 in December 2018 to 450,264 in August 2019, an increase of 28.3%. In addition to these figures, it is estimated that at least 123,309 people moved to the West region, 76,880 to the Littoral region and 5,301 to Adamawa, who, although located in stable and secure areas, face protection issues such as access to documentation, survival sex and risks of stigmatisation.’<sup>191</sup>

9.5.6 No further information was identified in the sources consulted about the treatment of Anglophones in areas outside of the NWSW region (see [Bibliography](#)).

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## 9.6 Treatment of separatists in detention

9.6.1 A June 2018 House of Commons library briefing paper cited a May 2018 Africa News article<sup>192</sup> that ‘After video evidence emerged, the authorities have admitted that one separatist leader in detention was brutally mistreated and have promised to bring those responsible to justice.’<sup>193</sup>

<sup>190</sup> HRW, ‘[Separatist Leaders Appeal Conviction](#)’, 3 September 2019

<sup>191</sup> UNOCHA, ‘[Cameroon Humanitarian Needs Overview 2020](#)’ (p42), revised June 2020

<sup>192</sup> Africa News, ‘[Cameroon govt to probe brutality meted out to separatist leader](#)’, 16 May 2018

<sup>193</sup> HoC, ‘[The Anglophone Cameroon crisis...April 2019 update](#)’, (p10), 6 Jun 2018

- 9.6.2 Human Rights Watch interviewed former detainees from the State Defense Secretariat (Secrétariat d'Etat à la défense, SED). The former detainees (a mix of separatist fighters and civilians) described physical abuses that amounted to torture between January 2018 and January 2019. It was reported that Gendarmes and other security forces used torture and other ill-treatment to force detainees to confess to crimes, or to humiliate and punish them. The interviewees said that they were forced to sign statements they were not allowed to read or could not read because they were in French<sup>194</sup>.
- 9.6.3 HRW reported in an article, 'Detainees Tortured', published 20 August 2019: 'Cameroonian authorities held over 100 detainees incommunicado and tortured many of them in a detention facility in Yaoundé, Cameroon's capital, from July 23 to August 4, 2019.
- 'The detainees were transferred to the facility, the State Defense Secretariat (Secrétariat d'état à la défense, SED), the morning after inmates in Yaoundé's Central Prison rioted on July 22 in protest at overcrowding, dire living conditions, and delays in their cases getting to trial. Many were in detention on suspicion of being involved with or supporting armed separatist groups operating in English-speaking regions of Cameroon...
- 'Human Rights Watch interviewed 14 detainees held at the SED, all of whom said they were tortured and held incommunicado during their time there, and heard credible accounts that scores more were also tortured. Human Rights Watch also spoke with family members of detainees and six lawyers who provided information about their clients and detention conditions.'<sup>195</sup>
- 9.6.4 Responsibility to protect (R2P) reported in their bi-monthly bulletin 15 September 2019 that: '...The government is detaining hundreds of people with alleged separatist ties in the capital, Yaoundé, where they are reportedly subjected to torture and ill-treatment.'<sup>196</sup>
- 9.6.5 Human Rights Watch on 7 October 2019 stated: 'Human Rights Watch has previously documented the widespread use of torture and incommunicado detention at the SED, mainly of detainees suspected of ties to armed separatist groups. The prison has been used to hold people incommunicado and as a place of torture since at least 2014. Torture is pervasive across the country, in both official and unofficial detention centers'.<sup>197</sup>
- 9.6.6 The USSD human rights report for 2019 noted: 'Although the constitution and law prohibit such practices, there were reports that security force members tortured or otherwise abused citizens, including separatist fighters and political opponents. Amnesty International and HRW documented several cases in which security forces severely mistreated political opponents, and others where armed separatists mistreated civilians and members of defense forces.'<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> HRW, '[Routine torture, incommunicado detention](#)', 6 May 2019

<sup>195</sup> HRW, '[Detainees tortured](#)', 20 August 2019

<sup>196</sup> R2P, '[Monitor- bi-monthly bulletin](#)', (p9), 15 September 2019

<sup>197</sup> HRW, '[Cameroon: Political Opponent Freed](#)', 7 October 2019

<sup>198</sup> USSD, '[Human Rights Report 2019](#)', (section 1c), 11 March 2020

## 9.7 Treatment by society

### 9.7.1 International Crisis Group's Giustra Research Fellow, Tanda Theophilus, reported in the July 2018 commentary [Dialogue is essential to unite Cameroons disparate voices:](#)

'Douala is the country's economic hub. Its inhabitants include not only a large number of Anglophones, but also people from all of Cameroon's ten regions. Contrary to my expectations, many Douala natives are fluent in Pidgin English and some barely speak French. A lot of people here are bilingual in English and French, sometimes due to marriages between Anglophones and Francophones. Bilingualism is also enhanced by education. Children of Francophone homes are a majority in many Anglophone schools.

'At a government bilingual primary school in town, the complexity of the crisis and its likely long-term consequences again strike me. Mrs Jane, the class 5 (nine- to ten-year-old children) teacher of the Anglophone section, is happy to see me but generally looks worried. She says many pupils from the Northwest and Southwest regions have enrolled in the school since the beginning of the crisis. With the recent arrival of displaced Anglophones, schools in Douala are overcrowded and new ones are opening to accommodate English-speaking pupils.

'...Douala is considered a stronghold of the main opposition party, the Social Democratic Front. The party originates in the Northwest region and draws support in part from the many migrants from that area who have taken up residence in Douala. Its cosmopolitan nature means it has mayors and members of parliament who originate from other regions, a relative rarity in Cameroon. The flag-bearer of the Social Democratic Front for the presidential election, Joshua Osih, is a member of parliament representing the Central Wouri constituency (Douala), though he is originally from the Southwest region.

'Douala, like other towns in Cameroon, has seen violence between communities beyond the Anglophone-Francophone tensions. The country's diversity goes far beyond its two official languages, English and French, with many ethnic groups and a vast array of languages. In recent months, the country has witnessed a rise in hate speech and ethnic tension mainly pitting the Bamiléké and the Northwest region as a whole against the Sawa and Beti tribes (the Beti are found in the Centre, South and East regions; it is the ethnic group of President Paul Biya). Political parties are now viewed along tribal lines.

'...Douala, especially Bonaberi neighbourhood, is increasingly subjected to checks by security forces as its Anglophone population grows. But English speakers have not fled the patrols and, in general, inhabitants have welcomed newcomers with open arms. Many people displaced from the Northwest and Southwest live with relatives who have been in the Littoral region for years...

'Although Douala has its flaws, it remains a point of reference for peaceful coexistence in Cameroon. As the Anglophone crisis deepens and tensions

between other identities worsen, Douala shows a way out of the conflict. The fact that people with diverse ethnic and linguistic backgrounds coexist there with few discrepancies shows that a solution is possible. As Crisis Group has said since the beginning of the Anglophone crisis, some form of dialogue between the government and Anglophone leaders, with local autonomy on the table is likely the only path to resolving the conflict.<sup>199</sup>

9.7.2 The Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada in a query response, of 24 August 2018, on 'the situation of Anglophones, including returnees, in Bamenda, Yaoundé and Douala' and citing *Nouveaux droits de l'homme Cameroun* (NDH-Cameroun) and a representative from the International Crisis Group (ICG) and other sources stated that:

'The International Crisis Group representative explained that "[m]ost people escaping violence in the predominantly Anglophone regions" find refuge with their relatives in Anglophone-dominant neighbourhoods, for example in Bonaberi in Douala and in Obili in Yaoundé. Other sources similarly indicate that displaced people escaping violence between separatist and security forces in Cameroon's Anglophone regions have fled to Douala and Yaoundé. An International Crisis Group report on the Anglophone crisis indicates that "some tradespeople and business owners are moving to Douala" due to the crisis.

'NDH-Cameroun indicated that displaced people who arrived in Douala and Yaoundé are [translation] "overall well received" by the population. According to the same source, as it was the case in the past, [translation] "cohabitation between Cameroonians, whether they are Anglophones or Francophones, remains friendly and fraternal"; interactions have always been "peaceful, except in exceptional cases". The International Crisis Group representative said that Anglophones in Yaoundé or Douala currently "live without any major security threat from Francophones". The same source further explained that "people treat Anglophones based on their understanding of the Anglophone crisis. Many Francophones support the cause, while many do not. People are generally very afraid to talk about it, so as to avoid military brutality"... NDH-Cameroun noted that for the majority of Francophones [translation] "the Anglophone problem is a reflection of national problems: centralism, bad governance and the generation gap" and that, at the national level, tribal identification plays a "more important" role than language.

'However, according to the International Crisis Group report, in Francophone parts of the country, 'a number of Anglophones have reported being insulted by Francophones in the markets.'<sup>200</sup>

9.7.3 The USSD human rights report for 2019, covering events in 2019 noted 'There were credible reports that for politically motivated purposes the government attempted to exert bilateral pressure on other countries aimed at having them take adverse legal action against specific individuals, including Anglophones separatists and other political opponents.'<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> ICG, '[Dialogue is essential to unite Cameroons disparate voices](#)', 27 July 2018

<sup>200</sup> IRB, '[Query response on the situation of Anglophones, including returnees...](#)', 24 August 2018

<sup>201</sup> USSD, '[Human rights report 2019](#)' (section 1e), 11 March 2020

## 10. Freedom of movement

### 10.1 In-country travel

10.1.1 The Refugees International report, *Crisis Denied in Cameroon*, published 29 May 2019, stated that ‘both Cameroonian forces and non-state armed groups severely restrict freedom of movement, preventing local populations from accessing their land and basic services’.<sup>202</sup>

10.1.2 The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported in their situation report, *Cameroon: North-West and South-West*, as of 30 June 2019 that: ‘Restriction on movement increased from 39% to 58% [in June 2019 compared to previous month] according to the respondents consulted on the field.’<sup>203</sup>

10.1.3 CEDOCA in their 1 October 2019 report ‘La crise anglophone : situation sécuritaire’ stated [translated from French] that:

‘An article published in the *Journal du Cameroun* in June 2018 describes the regular blocking of roads connecting cities in English-speaking regions by suspected secessionists. Dams are erected along certain roads that paralyze traffic for days and block access to cities or even departments. These actions immobilize the population and traders in their daily activities.

‘According to the NGO AMEF [Athentique Memorial Empowerment Foundation] contacted by Cedoca by email in March 2019, checkpoints are also drawn up by the authorities. In this regard, AMEF explains the following

‘Risk of movement due to high level of insecurity. Since many civilians have lost identification documents and majority being burnt in their houses, they are afraid to travel from one urban town to another for fear of intimidation and arrest in police check points. Courageous ones are forced to pay high sums of money in these police check points to get their way in to cities.’<sup>204</sup>

10.1.4 Quoting an unknown source from civil society CEDOCA also reported [translated]

‘... [with] regard the controls and safety conditions prevailing on the roads to be taken from the French-speaking area to the English-speaking area:

“Avoid making the journey on a ‘ghost town’ day, or ‘lockdown’. For now, it is on every Monday of the week. You will meet regular law enforcement officials on the way who control persons and goods but [...] you may fall into attacks or violence perpetuated by armed groups without any notice, particularly between Mile 14, 15, 16 and 17. These are small towns located at the entry into Buea. As concerns access to Bamenda, the same recommendations apply. Avoid ‘ghost town’ days, or ‘lockdown’ as you may be a victim of unannounced attack or violence by armed groups between the

<sup>202</sup> Refugees International, ‘[Crisis denied in Cameroon](#)’, 29 May 2019

<sup>203</sup> UNOCHA, ‘[Cameroon: North-West and South-West](#)’ (Protection section), 30 June 2019

<sup>204</sup> CEDOCA, ‘[Cameroun La crise anglophone : situation sécuritaire](#)’, 1 October 2019



town of Santa, about 40 Kilometres to Bamenda town, despite the regular movement of law enforcement officials on the public highway.”<sup>205</sup>

10.1.5 The USSD human rights report for 2019 noted that:

‘Although the constitution and law provide for freedom of internal movement, foreign travel, emigration, and repatriation, at times the government restricted these rights. Growing concerns over the entry of armed groups into Cameroon from the Central African Republic (CAR) and the conflict with Boko Haram in the Far North Region appeared to have prompted the government to adopt a more restrictive approach to refugee movement. The government made it more difficult for refugees, asylum seekers, and stateless persons to move freely in the country.

‘In some instances, the government worked with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other humanitarian organizations to provide protection and assistance to refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons, and other persons of concern. The government sometimes failed to respect its obligations under relevant international laws. There were instances where it forcibly returned asylum seekers to their countries and did not readily provide humanitarian organizations such as the United Nations access to asylum seekers before refouling them.

‘In-country Movement: Using minor infractions as a pretext, police and gendarmes at roadblocks and checkpoints in cities and on most highways often extorted bribes and harassed travelers. Police frequently stopped travelers to check identification documents, vehicle registrations, and tax receipts as security and immigration control measures. Unaccompanied women were frequently harassed when traveling alone. Authorities restricted movements of persons and goods, including motorbikes, especially in the Northwest and Southwest Regions, citing security concerns. Armed Anglophone separatists also restricted the movements of persons and goods in the two Anglophone regions, sometimes in a deliberate attempt to harass and intimidate the local population. Humanitarian organizations cited difficulty in accessing certain areas and in some instances were harassed and denied passage by government authorities.

‘On June 14, Governor Adolphe Lele Lafrique of the Northwest Region lifted the curfew placed in the region since November 2018. The curfew, which lasted eight months, restricted movement of persons and property in the Northwest Region between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m.’<sup>206</sup>

10.1.6 Bertelsmann Stiftung’s Transformation Index (BSTI) Country report 2020 covers the period from February 1, 2017 to January 31, 2019. The report noted:

‘Many civil rights are frequently violated, especially those of political opponents. The government restricts freedom of association, assembly, and expression. As in previous years, supporters of the Anglophone secessionist movement are increasingly targeted. Likewise, the government has declared states of emergency and imposed curfews in Anglophone areas and parts of

<sup>205</sup> CEDOCA, ‘[Cameroun La crise anglophone : situation sécuritaire](#)’, 1 October 2019

<sup>206</sup> USSD, ‘[Human Rights Report 2019](#)’, (section D), 11 March 2020

northern Cameroon, which has significantly restricted freedom of movement.<sup>207</sup>

- 10.1.7 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) stated in their Humanitarian Needs Overview Cameroon 2020 issued in June 2020: ‘The weekly “ghost town” days, set up by non-state armed groups, particularly affect displaced persons and host communities, limiting their movements and therefore their economic and agricultural activities.’<sup>208</sup>
- 10.1.8 For further information see Country Policy and Information Note on [Cameroon: Internal relocation](#).

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## 10.2 Refugees

- 10.2.1 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) stated in their Humanitarian Needs Overview Cameroon 2020 issued in June 2020: ‘Signing of the tripartite agreement between UNHCR, Cameroon and CAR for the return of Central African refugees. The voluntary repatriation of a first group of 4,000 Central African refugees was planned for 2019. As of 11 March 2020, 3,809 refugees had been repatriated by UNHCR to CAR. 3,309 were repatriated in 2019 and 500 in 2020. With the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, UNHCR put the repatriation process on hold.’<sup>209</sup>

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## 10.3 Treatment on return

- 10.3.1 The UK and other western states have returned both failed asylum seekers and non-asylum migration cases to Cameroon. A number of persons, including those who have claimed asylum, have also voluntarily returned to Cameroon. The available data does not indicate, however, the reasons why a person claimed asylum.
- 10.3.2 The number of people returned from European Union states as recorded by Eurostat between 2014 and 2019 is tabulated below. The data does not indicate if the persons were failed asylum seekers or non-asylum cases or whether returns were voluntary or involuntary.

TIME	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total
Belgium	40	30	:	:	:	15	45
Bulgaria	10	0	0	5	5	0	10
Estonia	:	:	5	5	0	0	10
Ireland	:	0	0	0	0	0	0
France	100	95	90	95	85	85	450
Croatia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Italy	0	0	0	5	:	5	10

<sup>207</sup> BSTI, ‘[2020 Cameroon Country Report](#)’, 29 April 2020

<sup>208</sup> UNOCHA, ‘[Cameroon Humanitarian Needs Overview 2020](#)’ (p37), revised June 2020

<sup>209</sup> UNOCHA, ‘[Cameroon Humanitarian Needs Overview 2020](#)’ (p37), revised June 2020

<b>Latvia</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Luxembourg</b>	:	:	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Hungary</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Malta</b>	:	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Austria</b>	:	:	:	5	5	0	10
<b>Poland</b>	:	5	0	0	:	0	5
<b>Portugal</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Slovenia</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Slovakia</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Sweden</b>	:	:	10	10	:	:	20
<b>United Kingdom</b>	110	115	90	70	45	30	350
<b>Liechtenstein</b>	:	:	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>							910

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- 10.3.3 The Home Office's own statistics indicate that in the period 2014 to 2018 of the 430 returns from the UK recorded by Eurostat, 87 were failed asylum seekers<sup>211</sup>.
- 10.3.4 The Home Office data covering the period January 2004 to June 2019 (after which published statistics no longer segregate returns by asylum or non asylum cases) recorded 566 failed asylum seekers were involuntarily returned to Cameroon, and 184 returned voluntarily<sup>212</sup>.
- 10.3.5 An Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada request response (quoting a range of sources including oral and translated sources) on the issue of treatment of returnees, published 24 August 2018, noted:
- 'The researcher [representative from the International Crisis Group (ICG)] stated that "authorities in Yaoundé say that those in the diaspora are the ones spearheading the war," most notably in Canada, Belgium, South Africa and the US... Similarly, the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), "a South Africa-based civil society organisation working throughout Africa", notes that some state officials asserted that the protests in Cameroon's Anglophone regions were "fomented from abroad".
- '...According to NDH-Cameroun, Anglophone Cameroonians who live abroad and have a link with the crisis will be [translation] "tracked down and arrested, wherever they are," as "officially" stated by the Ministry of Administration (ministère de l'Administration)... The [ICG] researcher said that "[a]nyone in the diaspora who is vocal against the authorities faces death or torture and imprisonment if they go to Cameroon"... Regarding the

<sup>210</sup> Eurostat, '[Third country returns by destination and citizenship](#)', updated 8 April 2020

<sup>211</sup> Home Office, '[Immigration statistics, Returns table, vol 5](#)', 22 August 2019

<sup>212</sup> Home Office, '[Immigration statistics, Returns table, vol 5](#)', 22 August 2019

"exile of Anglophone activists," International Crisis Group reports that "[m]any want to return home but are understandably frightened by the government's continued imprisonment of Anglophone militants" ... The International Crisis Group representative indicated that the Cameroonian authorities have issued arrest warrants against a number of known separatists who have fled the country, although "[t]hey are not many" ... According to the same source, this "implies that they would be arrested if they return [to Cameroon]" ... Similarly, the news website Journal du Cameroun reports that the Cameroonian government requested the arrest and deportation of separatist activists in the diaspora (in Belgium, Norway, the US, Austria, Nigeria and South Africa) ... The BBC also indicates that the authorities issued international arrest warrants for separatist leaders ... Sources note that Cameroonian separatist leaders have been deported back to Cameroon by Nigerian authorities ... According to a summary of statements made by a UNHCR representative during a press briefing, there are reports of "arrests of Cameroonian nationals in Nigeria, including at least one asylum seeker at the beginning of March [2018]" .

'... The International Crisis Group representative said that "most of those who advocate for federalism or [who] have not been tagged as sponsors or supporters of armed separatists, move in and out of Cameroon as they wish" ... However, according to the researcher, since October 2016, "there is danger across the national territory" for all Anglophones.

'According to sources, Patrice Nganang, a [Francophone] Cameroonian writer [living in New York], was arrested at Douala airport and imprisoned in Yaoundé for "speaking in defence of the Anglophones" ... or after writing "a piece critical of the government's handling of [the] separatist crisis in its Anglophone region"; his lawyer said that he was accused of insulting the president ... He was released after being detained for [a few] weeks ... A January 2018 article by Reuters indicates that a [Cameroonian] former businessman "seen as a moderate voice in the separatist movement and [who] has in the past promoted dialogue over violence" has been "target[ed]" by the Cameroonian authorities; from Nigeria, he told Reuters that in December 2017, "his family home in Anglophone Cameroon was surrounded by government troops".

'The researcher indicated that Anglophone Cameroonians returning to Yaoundé or Douala are "not safe," as they "might be taken from the airport to prison to an unknown destination" ... According to the same source, Anglophone deportees, including failed asylum seekers, "can be imprisoned and fined, unless [they] brib[e] [their] way out" ... A 2015 Sciences Po Paris academic paper on post-deportation risks reports that returnees from Europe face threats of detention or imprisonment in Cameroon, and that failed asylum seekers can be submitted to violence upon their return...' <sup>213</sup>

- 10.3.6 The 2015 Sciences Po paper by Blondel, Charlotte, et al, referred in the IRBC response - Post-Deportation Risks: Criminalized Departure and Risks for Returnees in Countries of Origin - is based on a review of available published material on returns to a number of countries including Cameroon undertaken in 2015. In reference to failed asylum seekers, the paper

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<sup>213</sup> IRBC, '[Query response on the situation of Anglophones...](#)', 24 August 2018

summarises the contents of a Danish Fact Finding Mission report of 2001, in turn based on a number of local sources:

'The Danish Immigration Service reported that rejected asylum seekers deported in handcuffs and accompanied by a foreign police officer risk detention by the Cameroonian police. If the Cameroonian authorities know that the returnee has sought asylum abroad, he/she is suspected of having discredited Cameroon. Asylum seekers for economic reasons are released.

'The Danish Immigration Service reported that if the Cameroonian authorities know that the returnee has sought asylum abroad, he/she is at risk of ill treatment or torture.'<sup>214</sup>

- 10.3.7 However, the Sciences Po summary of the Danish Immigration Service (DIS) fact finding mission report, based on interviews of a range of sources in Cameroon in January/February 2001, almost 20 years ago, does not reflect the views of all the sources interviewed by the DIS mission on the topic of return and selects only certain perspectives. A number of sources, mostly representatives of the foreign missions of western Embassies some of which returned failed asylum seekers, were not aware of problems on return. For further detail see DIS, '[FFM report 2001](#)' (section 8.1.2), 1 March 2001
- 10.3.8 The Sciences Po paper also cited a 2014 paper of Dr Jill Maybritt Alpes, noting: 'Returnees that committed fraud are subject to imprisonment (Art. 205, Cameroonian Penal Code). Although in practice there is no imprisonment, at times deportees can face threats of imprisonment.'<sup>215</sup>
- 10.3.9 No more detailed or up-to-date information about returns generally and those of Anglophones in particular is available in the sources consulted in this note (see [Bibliography](#)).

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<sup>214</sup> Blondel, Charlotte, et al, '[Post-Deportation Risks...](#)' (p9), May 2015

<sup>215</sup> Blondel, Charlotte, et al, '[Post-Deportation Risks...](#)' (ps9-10), May 2015

# Terms of Reference

A 'Terms of Reference' (ToR) is a broad outline of what the CPIN seeks to cover. They form the basis for the [country information section](#). The Home Office's Country Policy and Information Team uses some standardised ToRs, depending on the subject, and these are then adapted depending on the country concerned.

For this particular CPIN, the following topics were identified prior to drafting as relevant and on which research was undertaken:

- Historical situation
  - Demography
  - Anglophone regions
  - Who is an Anglophone?
- Current situation
  - Events that led to tensions
  - Strikes
  - School closures
  - Declaration of independence 'Republic of Ambazonia'
  - Security situation
  - Humanitarian situation
- Separatist groups
- Separatist actions
- State response
  - Arrests and detention
  - Court cases and legal proceedings
  - Human rights/NGOs
  - Media, internet and freedom of press
  - Human rights violations
- Humanitarian conditions
  - general well-being of the population described by age, gender, particular groups, prevalence of disease, levels of nutrition, literacy
  - socio-economic situation, including access and availability to:
    - food
    - water for drinking and washing
    - accommodation and shelter
    - employment
    - healthcare – physical and mental
    - education

- support providers, including government and international and domestic non-government organisations
  - Whether conditions (and treatment of groups) varies by location or group
  - Whether the government is purposely withholding or not delivering support services
- Internally displaced persons (IDPs) – numbers, trends and location of IDPs
- Security situation
  - Actors in conflict – number, size, intent and capacity
  - Geographical scope of conflict
  - Nature of violence - methods and tactics, including targeting of groups (age, sex, ethnicity, religion, disability, etc)
  - Number of security incidents
    - frequency and density in relation to local population
    - variation by place, time and groups affected
  - Number of civilian casualties, including
    - fatalities and injuries (also as a proportion of total population)
    - variation by place, time and group
  - Conflict-induced displacement
  - Indirect impact of violence on
    - law and order
    - prevalence of crime
    - human rights
    - socio-economic situation and basic services including health, education and essential infrastructure

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# Version control

## Clearance

Below is information on when this note was cleared:

- version **2.0**
- valid from **14<sup>th</sup> December 2020**

## Changes from last version of this note

Updated country information and assessment

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Archived