

# Human Rights First

## Discrimination, Detention, and Deportation: Immigration & Refugees

**<https://www.humanrightsfirst.org/resource/cameroonian-asylum-seekers-increasingly-detained-denied-asylum-under-trump-administration>**

### Policy Issue Resources

Work With Asylum Seekers

If you are seeking asylum, we can help

Areas of Focus

Current Initiatives

Between fiscal years (FY) 2010 and 2019, more than three-quarters of Cameroonian asylum seekers (76 percent on average) were granted asylum in U.S. immigration courts. Refugees from Cameroon are fleeing what the U.S. State Department human rights reports describe as egregious human rights violations, including torture, carried out by Cameroonian government officials, police, and armed forces, the continued persecution of women and LGBTQ persons, and serious abuses committed by armed groups.

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In late 2019, immigration judges increasingly denied asylum to Cameroonians as well as Cubans, Congolese (DRC), Eritreans, Guatemalans, Hondurans, Salvadorans, and Venezuelans, among others, after the Trump Administration issued its [third-country transit asylum ban](#). The transit ban bars refugees who travel through third countries en route to seek protection at United States southern border. The administration also used the transit ban to effectively raise the standard in preliminary fear screenings to block thousands of refugees from even applying for asylum. In June 2020, a federal court [vacated](#) the transit ban, and in a separate suit, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit [upheld](#) a preliminary injunction against it. However, the same month, the Trump Administration [proposed](#) additional regulations, which, if finalized, would revive and expand a variation on the asylum transit ban to apply to asylum seekers regardless of where they sought protection in the United States.

Thousands of asylum seekers, including many Cameroonians, are currently unable to seek protection at the U.S.-Mexico border. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is blocking and expelling asylum seekers under a highly flawed and roundly criticized [order](#) issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (over [objections](#) of senior CDC officials and following [instructions](#) by Trump administration officials) that effectively bans people seeking humanitarian protection at the border. Additionally, as the DHS [Office of Inspector General](#) recently confirmed, beginning in 2018, the administration instituted a policy to reduce and limit the number of asylum seekers processed at southern border ports of entry. As a result of this metering policy U.S. border officers have turned away many asylum seekers, including [Cameroonians](#), forcing them to wait, often for months, in dangerous areas of the Mexican border region.

In October 2020, amid the COVID-19 pandemic and despite [continuing](#) violence in Cameroon, DHS deported at least [50](#) people to Cameroon, including asylum seekers who reported having been [forced to sign deportation orders](#) after being pepper-sprayed and assaulted, and Cameroonian asylum seekers with pending complaints against the Irwin County Detention Center for subjecting them to [forced gynecological procedures](#). At least one Cameroonian asylum seeker initially placed on the [deportation](#) flight had not passed a fear screening interview due to the [asylum transit ban](#).

As this factsheet demonstrates, the Trump Administrations regulations and increased jailing of Cameroonian asylum seekers, among other factors, have eroded the ability of Cameroonians to gain U.S. asylum protection.

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