

PETITION TO THE UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON DECOLONIZATI ON (C-24)

Subject: Urgent Request for Re-inscription of the Former United Nations Trust Territory of the British Southern Cameroons on the List of Non-Self-Governing Territories and for the Completion of its Interrupted Decolonization Process

Submitted by: The Southern Cameroons Self-Determination Council (SCSDC)
(A unified coalition representing the people of the former British Southern Cameroons)

In consultation with:

- The Cameroon Anglophone Civil Society Consortium (CACSC)
- The Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa (CHRNA)
- The Southern Cameroons Diaspora Council (SCDC)

Date: [Date of Submission]

Session: 2025 Session of the Special Committee on Decolonization

Agenda Item: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

I. PREAMBLE

We, the people of the former United Nations Trust Territory of the British Southern Cameroons, respectfully petition the Special Committee on Decolonization (C-24) to rectify a historical injustice that has persisted for over six decades. Our territory, placed under the sacred trust of the United Nations in 1946, was denied its full right to self-determination in 1961 and has since suffered under an illegal annexation and military occupation by La République du Cameroun.

This petition is grounded in:

1. The UN Charter, Chapters XI and XII
2. UNGA Resolution 1514 (XV) (1960) - Declaration on Decolonization
3. UNGA Resolution 1541 (XV) (1960) - Principles defining NSGTs
4. The International Court of Justice's jurisprudence on self-determination

II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: THE INCOMPLETE DECOLONIZATION

A. The Flawed 1961 Process

- The UN-supervised plebiscite of February 11, 1961, violated Article 76(b) of the UN Charter by denying the option of sovereign independence, offering only union with Nigeria or Cameroon.
- UNGA Resolution 1608 (XV) terminated the Trusteeship Agreement on October 1, 1961, without ensuring the promised "federal union of two equal states" materialized in binding form.
- No international treaty of union was ever signed between the UK (Administering Authority), La République du Cameroun, and representatives of the Southern Cameroons, nor deposited with the UN Secretariat.

B. Subsequent Acts of Annexation

- 1972: Unilateral abolition of the Federal Republic via referendum imposed from Yaoundé.
- 1984: Presidential decree changing the country's name back to "La République du Cameroun," erasing all constitutional reference to the 1961 union.
- These acts transformed the purported union into de facto annexation.

III. LEGAL BASIS FOR RE-INSCRIPTION

A. The Territory Never Achieved a Full Measure of Self-Government

According to UNGA Resolution 1541, Principle IV, a territory can be considered self-governing only if:

1. It has attained independence → **NOT ACHIEVED**
2. It has freely associated with another state → **NOT ACHIEVED** (association was not free or informed)
3. It has integrated with another state → **NOT ACHIEVED** (integration was through illegal annexation)

B. The Territory Qualifies as Non-Self-Governing Under UN Criteria:

1. **Geographical Separation:** Distinct from La République du Cameroun (different colonial powers, administrative systems, legal traditions).
2. **Distinct Ethnic/Cultural Characteristics:** Anglophone population with Common Law tradition vs. Francophone population with Civil Law tradition.
3. **Arbitrary Administrative Boundaries:** The 1961 "union" did not reflect organic historical unity but colonial partition lines.
4. **Political Subordination:** The territory is governed from Yaoundé without consent.

C. Continuing Right to Self-Determination

- The right to self-determination is erga omnes and continuous (ICJ, East Timor Case, 1995).
- Violation of this right does not extinguish it; it remains exercisable (Reference re Secession of Quebec, Supreme Court of Canada, 1998).

IV. CURRENT SITUATION: BELLIGERENT OCCUPATION AND ATROCITY CRIMES

Since 2017, La République du Cameroun has waged a war of extermination against our people:

Documented Violations (Annexed):

1. **War Crimes:** Extrajudicial killings (Ngarbuh, Kumba massacres), torture, village burnings (400+ villages), use of child soldiers.
2. **Crimes Against Humanity:** Systematic attacks on civilian population, enforced disappearances, rape as weapon of war.
3. **Acts Bearing Hallmarks of Genocide:** Deliberate infliction of conditions calculated to destroy the Anglophone group through economic blockade, destruction of healthcare, and systematic sexual violence.
4. **Humanitarian Catastrophe:** 6,000+ killed, 800,000+ displaced, 80,000+ refugees, 80% of schools closed.

This situation constitutes a threat to international peace and security under UN Charter Chapter VII.

V. SPECIFIC REQUESTS

We respectfully request the C-24 to:

1. IMMEDIATELY RE-INSCRIBE the former British Southern Cameroons on the List of Non-Self-Governing Territories, recognizing that its decolonization was never completed.

2. RECOMMEND to the UN General Assembly the adoption of a resolution that:

- a. Acknowledges the historical violation of the right to self-determination in 1961.
- b. Affirms the continuing right of the people of the Southern Cameroons to complete their decolonization.
- c. Calls for the urgent appointment of a UN Special Envoy to facilitate a peaceful process toward self-determination.

3. REQUEST the United Kingdom, as the former Administering Authority, to:

- a. Submit information under Article 73(e) of the UN Charter regarding the territory.
- b. Cooperate with the UN in rectifying its historical failure.

4. URGE the Secretary-General to:

- a. Establish a Commission of Inquiry into the historical and legal status of the territory.
- b. Provide humanitarian assistance directly to the territory, bypassing the occupying power.

5. CALL UPON La République du Cameroun to:

- a. Immediately cease all military operations in the territory.
- b. Withdraw its security forces to positions held prior to September 2016.
- c. Engage in good faith with UN-mediated talks on the territory's final status.

VI. PROPOSED PATH FORWARD

We propose a UN-supervised process comprising:

Phase 1: Status Determination (6-12 months)

- UN-supervised referendum on re-inscription as NSGT
- Ceasefire and UN observer mission

Phase 2: Self-Determination Process (12-24 months)

- Comprehensive civic education
- UN-supervised referendum with all options: independence, free association, integration (under valid terms)

Phase 3: Implementation (24 months)

- Transitional administration if independence chosen
- International guarantees for minority rights

VII. CONCLUSION

The situation in the Southern Cameroons represents one of the most protracted and violent failures of the UN decolonization system. Six decades of

illegal occupation, culminating in today's atrocity crimes, stem directly from the incomplete process of 1961.

The C-24 has both the mandate and the moral responsibility to correct this historical wrong. Re-inscription is not merely a procedural act but a necessary first step toward ending a war, preventing genocide, and fulfilling the UN's sacred trust to all peoples seeking self-determination.

We stand ready to provide further documentation, testimony, and cooperation with the Committee.

Respectfully submitted,

[SIGNATORY PAGE FOLLOWS]

ANNEXES

1. Annex A: Historical Documents

- Map of UN Trust Territories (1946)
- UNGA Resolution 1350 (XIII) - 1959 Plebiscite
- UNGA Resolution 1608 (XV) - 1961 Termination
- Foumban Conference Records (1961)

2. Annex B: Legal Analyses

- International Commission of Jurists Report (1964)
- African Commission Decision: *Gunme v. Cameroon* (2009)
- Academic Legal Opinions on the Illegality of the Union

3. Annex C: Documentation of Violations (2017-2024)

- UN OHCHR Reports
- Human Rights Watch/Amnesty International Documentation
- Verified lists of burned villages, mass graves, detention centers
- Photographic and video evidence (provided separately on secure portal)

4. Annex D: Representative Mandate

- Charter of the Southern Cameroons Self-Determination Council
- Letters of support from internal civil society organizations
- Diaspora representation credentials

5. Annex E: Comparative Precedents

- East Timor: Re-inscription after illegal occupation

- Western Sahara: Continued NSGT status despite Moroccan occupation
- South Sudan: Exercise of remedial self-determination after prolonged conflict

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Southern Cameroons Self-Determination Council

Email: [secure email]

Website: [if available]

Representative for UN Matters: [Name, contact information]

CC:

- President of the UN General Assembly
 - UN Secretary-General
 - UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
 - Chairperson, African Union Commission
 - United Kingdom Mission to the UN (as former Administering Authority)
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STRATEGIC NOTES FOR SUBMISSION:

1. **Timing:** Submit 6-8 weeks before C-24's 2025 session (likely February 2025).
2. **Format:** Both electronic and 20 hard copies to C-24 Secretariat.
3. **Follow-up:** Request inclusion in formal agenda and speaking time.
4. **Advocacy:** Simultaneously brief all C-24 member states individually.
5. **Media:** Coordinate with sympathetic media for coverage of petition submission.

This petition establishes the legal-historical case while focusing on the C-24's specific mandate regarding Non-Self-Governing Territories. It strategically frames the issue as "completing decolonization" rather than "secession," making it politically palatable within UN frameworks.