

**ROOT CAUSE  
OF THE  
CAMEROON  
VERSUS  
GAMEROUN  
WAR**

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**Primary Thesis:** The **singular, pertinent cause** of the ongoing war and humanitarian catastrophe in the former British Southern Cameroons is **the illegal annexation of the territory by La République du Cameroun in 1961, resulting from a UN-sanctioned violation of the fundamental right to self-determination.** All subsequent grievances, conflicts, and atrocities are downstream effects of this foundational illegal act.

This is not merely a political conflict or a struggle for decentralization; it is the direct consequence of an **unfinished decolonization** process, where a distinct UN Trust Territory was denied sovereign statehood and forcibly incorporated into a pre-existing state without its consent, through a procedurally and substantively flawed process.

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## I. Historical Documentation of the Flawed Process

The historical record from 1959-1962 provides incontrovertible evidence of a process designed to deny sovereignty.

### 1. The Restrictive Plebiscite (UNGA Resolution 1350 (XIII), 1959):

- **Document:** UN Resolution organizing the plebiscite offered only two options: joining Nigeria or joining Cameroon.
- **Analysis:** This was a deliberate exclusion of the independence option. The UK, as Administering Authority, argued the territory was not "viable." This argument was political, not legal, and violated the core purpose of the trusteeship system. The then UN Secretary-General's report on the plebiscite noted concerns but allowed the restricted choice to proceed.

### 2. The Campaign Promises vs. The Foumban Reality (1961):

- **Document:** Campaign literature of the Kamerun National Democratic Party (KNPD) under John Ngu Foncha. Foncha's speeches explicitly promised a "**loose federation of two equal states.**"
- **Document:** The **Foumban "Constitutional Conference"** of July 1961. President Ahidjo arrived with a fully drafted constitution for a strong, centralized state. The Southern Cameroons delegation had limited input. The resulting constitution concentrated power in the federal presidency in Yaoundé.

- **Analysis:** The plebiscite result (70% for joining Cameroon) was a vote for Foncha's promised equal federation, not for Ahidjo's unitary vision. The post-vote negotiations were a unilateral imposition, not a bilateral treaty-making process. This constitutes a breach of the condition under which the vote was won—**a failure of conditionality** that invalidates the consent obtained.

### **3. The Abdication of UN Responsibility (UNGA Resolution 1608 (XV), 1961):**

- **Document:** The resolution terminated the Trusteeship Agreement as of October 1, 1961, upon the Southern Cameroons "joining" Cameroon.
- **Analysis:** The UN failed its fiduciary duty. It terminated its oversight without ensuring the terms of union were legally binding, democratically agreed, or protective of the territory's distinct identity. It treated "joining" as a simple administrative handover, not a complex political merger requiring guarantees. This was an **abdication of the "sacred trust"** mandated by Chapter XII of the UN Charter.

### **4. The Acts of Annexation (1972 & 1984):**

- **Document:** The 1972 Referendum abolishing the federation and creating a "United Republic." The 1984 Presidential Decree reverting the name to "**La République du Cameroun.**"
  - **Analysis:** These were not reforms but **acts of constitutional erasure**. The 1972 act unilaterally dissolved the federated state of West Cameroon. The 1984 act symbolically and legally reinstated the identity of the former French trusteeship as the sole national identity, eliminating any reference to the 1961 union. This completed the process of annexation, transforming a disputed union into a fait accompli of absorption.
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## **II. Legal Documentation and Framework**

International law provides the framework to diagnose the illegality of the current situation.

### **1. Violation of the UN Charter and Trusteeship System:**

- **Law:** UN Charter, **Article 76(b)**: The objective of the trusteeship system is "to promote the political, economic, social, and educational advancement of the

inhabitants...and their **progressive development towards self-government or independence.**"

- **Application:** By denying the independence option and overseeing a process that led to annexation, both the UK (Administering Authority) and the UN (trustee) failed to fulfil this paramount objective.

## 2. Violation of the Right to Self-Determination:

- **Law:** **UNGA Resolution 1514 (XV) (1960), "The Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples."** Article 2: "All peoples have the right to self-determination; by virtue of that right they **freely determine their political status...**"
- **Law:** **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), Common Article 1:** "All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they **freely determine their political status...**"
- **Application:** The 1961 plebiscite did not allow the people to "freely determine" their status. They were forced to choose between two forms of incorporation. This violated a **peremptory norm (jus cogens)** of international law.

## 3. Absence of a Valid International Treaty:

- **Law:** **Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties (1969), Article 2:** Defines a treaty as an international agreement governed by international law.
- **Application:** There is **no treaty** deposited with the UN Secretariat that records the mutual agreement of the UK, Cameroon, and the Southern Cameroons to dissolve the trust territory and transfer sovereignty. The Foumban discussions were about a domestic constitution, not an international agreement. Therefore, the change in status lacks a formal instrument under international law, making Cameroon's sovereignty claim based purely on effective control (occupation), not legal title.

## 4. The Doctrine of Uti Possidetis Juris is Misapplied:

- **Law:** The principle that colonial administrative boundaries become international boundaries at independence.
- **Application:** Cameroon argues that the 1961 union finalized a colonial boundary. This is false. Utu possidetis applies to **successor states** inheriting from a single colonial power. Here, two separate UN Trust Territories (French Cameroun and British Southern Cameroons), administered by different powers for 40+ years, were merged. The Southern Cameroons was not an administrative subunit of French Cameroun; it was a **separate international**

**entity** with its own path to independence, which was blocked. Therefore, *uti possidetis* sanctifies the separate boundaries of the British Southern Cameroons, not its absorption.

## 5. The Situation Constitutes Belligerent Occupation:

- **Law: Hague Regulations (1907), Article 42:** "Territory is considered occupied when it is actually placed under the authority of the hostile army. The occupation extends only to the territory where such authority has been established and can be exercised."
  - **Application:** Given the illegal basis of the annexation, Cameroon's control is not an exercise of sovereign right but of **hostile authority**. The deployment of the military to suppress demands for self-determination, the imposition of administrators from Yaoundé, and the enforcement of laws against the population's will are hallmarks of occupation, not legitimate governance.
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## III. Synthesis: The Causal Chain

The pertinent cause can be mapped as a direct causal chain:

1. **Primary Illegal Act (1961):** The UN/UK-sanctioned denial of the full right to self-determination (via restricted plebiscite) + the failure to secure a treaty of union + the UN's abdication of oversight.
2. **Illegal Outcome (1961):** The de facto annexation of the territory by La République du Cameroun, a pre-existing sovereign state whose international personality continued unchanged.
3. **Consolidation of Illegality (1972-1984):** The unilateral dissolution of the federal structure and the erasure of the territory's political identity, confirming annexation.
4. **Resistance and Suppression (1990s-2016):** Peaceful political and civic activism by Anglophones to address the resulting marginalization, met with state repression and refusal to reform the unitary state.
5. **Open Conflict (2017-Present):** The state's violent response to 2016 protests transforms civic resistance into armed conflict, as the state chooses war to defend the illegal territorial status quo.

### Conclusion:

The **Anglophone Crisis** is not a "problem of governance" or a "secessionist rebellion." It is the **inevitable and ongoing resistance to an illegal occupation that began in 1961**. The war crimes, crimes against humanity,

and potential genocide are the tactics employed by the occupying power (Cameroon) to maintain its illegal hold on the territory, and the retaliatory violence by armed groups is a symptom of the foundational injustice.

Therefore, any solution that does not address this **root cause**—the illegality of the annexation and the unfinished decolonization—is palliative and will fail. Negotiations for "special status" or decentralization are attempts to legitimize the illegal annexation. The only legally coherent and sustainable solution is a **UN-supervised process to complete the self-determination of the British Southern Cameroons**, offering its people the full range of choices—including sovereign independence—that were denied to them in 1961.

Thanks. Our intent is to henceforth draw up, document, and follow up on a process for the complete independence of Southern Cameroon. Please lead us step by step through this process with a clear and defined roadmap, describing each step in detail. Indicate which organization to contact, the steps to follow, the correspondence and the documents to present.