

CAMEROON PEACE INITIATIVE (CPI)

Annexes to the Washington MEMORANDUM on the Anglophone crisis/conflict

The basis for a peaceful settlement of the crisis through a comprehensive and inclusive Cameroonian National Dialogue¹

The Anglophone Crisis

Annex I

Historical Context

Relations between the English-speaking regions of Cameroon and the country's government have long been fraught with suspicion and discontent. These economically important regions cover 9% of the surface area the country and currently comprise about 20% of the country's population. The tensions originate in a complex and contested decolonization process from the late-1950s and early-1960s. Box 1 (below) presents a summary of key historical events.

Box 1: Key dates for the administrative evolution of the Cameroons

In 1884, the German protectorate of Kamerun was established in Douala. From Douala, the Germans went hinterland and designed a country of about 760 000 km² by 1911.

In 1919, following the German defeat in World War I, Kamerun was divided into British and French spheres of influence.

In 1922, both zones became mandates of the League of Nations, which allocated four-fifths of the territory to French administration as Cameroun, and one-fifth, comprising two long areas along the eastern Nigerian border, to British administration as the Northern Cameroons and Southern Cameroons.

In 1946, the mandated territories were converted into United Nations (UN) trust territories, still under their respective French and British administrations. Growing anti-colonial sentiment, however, soon made it difficult for France and Britain to resist the UN Charter's promise of eventual self-determination for all inhabitants of trust territories.

In 1960, the French Trust territory of Cameroun achieved independence from France and UN with the name "La République du Cameroun".

In 1961, Southern Cameroons achieved independence from the UK and UN by joining La République du Cameroun to form The Federal Republic of Cameroon. This came as a result of a UN-supervised plebiscite held in February 1961 in both parts of the British trust territory (Northern and Southern Cameroons) where two options were presented: achieve independence by joining Nigeria or union with La République du Cameroun. Voters in the Southern Cameroons opted to join La République du Cameroun, while Northern Cameroons voters chose to join Nigeria. (The British government of the day opposed an independent state as a 'third option' for British Cameroon voters at the time of the 1961 plebiscite, arguing that an independent Southern Cameroons would not be economically viable. This stance was supported by other governments at the UN).

¹ Definitions of the main expressions are in Appendix 1.

Professor Verkijika Fanso, a historian in the University of Yaounde, shed some light on the situation in a 2017 write-up for The Conversation Africa: Anglophones have long complained that their language and culture are marginalized. They feel their judicial, educational and local government systems should be protected. They want an end to annexation and assimilation and more respect from the government for their language and political philosophies. And if that doesn't happen, they want a total separation and their own independent state. Speaking about an anglophone push for autonomy, he refers to a UN resolution passed in April 1961 that defines the joining of the two former territories as a federation of two states, equal in status and autonomous.

In 1972, on May 20th, a controversial referendum to end the federal system in force took place and yielded a majority. In June 1972 the country was officially renamed the United Republic of Cameroon, thereby dissolving the federal state and eliminating the powers of the sub-national states of West Cameroon and East Cameroon. The powers of the presidency increased significantly, at the expense of the Government and Parliament, and Cameroon became a highly centralized state. This referendum was controversial as it was perceived as a violation of article 47 of 1961's constitution which states, "No bill to amend the Constitution may be introduced if it tends to impair the unity and integrity of the Federation." The referendum was also done in a single electoral college, hence diluting the voice of the minority Anglophones.

On 4 February 1984, the United Republic of Cameroon was renamed "the Republic of Cameroon" (thus reverting to French Cameroon's name upon achieving independence in 1960) after a revision of the constitution adopted by the National Assembly.

Source: *The historical context above is mostly pulled from Europa World Plus and will help to make sense of the current crisis in Anglophone Cameroon.*

The reunification of Cameroon in 1961, was seen as a great achievement for the Cameroon people and Elite. For the people, it allowed families along the Mungo river, both sides of Kupe and Manengouba mountains, and of the grassfields to reunite and to live in the same country once more. For the Cameroonian Elite, it was also perceived as a major success as reunification demonstrated its ability to successfully table a strategic request in the international arena.

Over the years, English-speaking Cameroonians felt increasingly marginalized as their identity was corroded, their institutions compromised and their infrastructure neglected. Frustrations grew and in 1990 the Social Democratic Front (SDF) party was created by Anglophones and supported by many Cameroonians as a vehicle to usher in an improved Cameroon that will serve the interests of all Cameroonians.

In 1992, a highly competitive multi-party presidential election was held but was marked by substantial irregularities and outright fraud. Official results showed that President Biya (CPDM political party) was re-elected with 39.9% while SDF Candidate Chairman Fru Ndi lost with 35.9% of the vote. The President of the Supreme Court, Dipanda Mouelle, in announcing the results, pointed out that there had been irregularities in the process but, he noted, "my hands are tied."

In April 1993, the first All Anglophone Conference (AAC1) was held in Buea by to adopt a common stand on constitutional reform and examine several other matters related to the welfare of Anglophones in Cameroon. Resolutions and declarations from that conference were communicated to the government. Anglophone frustrations grew again, however, as their demands and concerns failed to be addressed by the government.

Recent developments and Current State of the Crisis

To fully appreciate the complex nature of the current Anglophone crisis, it is important to revisit the course of recent events. For the sake of brevity, we will mainly reference sources that have already done in-depth research on the crisis.

Box 2: Key developments and references on the current crisis.

In November 2016, lawyers of the Anglophone regions of Cameroon, who had tried unsuccessfully to obtain audience and bring their grievances to the Minister of Justice and Keeper of the Seals, started a strike to officially request the respect of their specificities. Teachers soon joined them in their demand for action to stem the crowding out of English in schools, courts and society in general in Anglophone Cameroon. The Government, after a failed dialogue with representative of a Consortium constituted by the lawyers and teachers, tried to suppress the grievances by arresting and imprisoning the leaders. Some members of the Consortium leadership succeeded in escaping to other countries in Africa and beyond. The government proceeded with internet shut-down in the two regions.

The absence of leadership on the ground quickly shifted the locus of the struggle to the diaspora, and quickly resulted in a radicalization of the situation. The new exiles found not only a growing number of sympathetic Anglophones who were willing to reassess their understanding of the situation in their country but also the leaders of the Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC), an organization that had fought unsuccessfully for constitutional reform in Cameroon and finally settled for nothing less than autonomy and even independence for Southern Cameroons.

On October 1, 2017, a team of Southern Cameroons' diaspora leaders, now called the "Ambazonia" Interim Government (AIG), declared the restoration of the Southern Cameroons/ "Ambozonia" statehood in the two Anglophones regions. Given that the declared objective of the AIG is to arrive victorious in Buea after a revolutionary war, its members and related organizations started to respond to attacks by the forces of law and order with the hope of making the two Regions ungovernable by the government in Yaoundé. The situation has since escalated and by July 2018, most of the districts and divisions of Anglophone Cameroon have experienced episodes of gun-related violence.

The death toll in this crisis has continued to rise since November 2017. International institutions such as Amnesty international and the International Crisis Group have documented the killings in various towns and villages in the two regions, especially in Manyu, Momo, Meme, Boyo, Lebialem, and Fako divisions. The burning of villages has also risen to the level of international concern.

Every week, newspapers and social media platforms report killings of policemen, gendarmes and soldiers on the one hand, and unarmed men, women and children on the other. The number of people kidnaped with request for ransom is also on the rise. It is generally suspected that "Ambazonia" armed groups are responsible for most of this but the role cannot be discounted of groups of unemployed youth willing to seize the opportunity to make money. The reports also point to public and private properties burnt down by militias and Cameroon Security Forces. The situation has further escalated since June 2018 with no sign of a slowdown.

Sources:

August 2018—Cameroon Government Emergency Humanitarian Assistance Plan in the North West and South West Regions 2018-2019

July 2018 - Human Rights Watch report on the crisis:

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/07/19/cameroon-killings-destruction-anglophone-regions>

July 2018 - Government's Response to the Human Rights Inquiry:

https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/supporting_resources/response_cameroon_to_hrw.pdf

July 2018: Voice of America (VOA) on recent Separatist Kidnappings:

<https://www.voanews.com/a/cameroon-separatists-embark-on-kidnapping-spree/4486444.html>

June 2018 – BBC Documentary showing government soldiers burning villages

(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ct_SLnAGDuM)

May 2018 – The Guardian interviews victims and gets insight on the Ambazonia strategy from one of the Ambazonia high ranking officials:

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2018/may/30/cameroon-killings-escalate-anglophone-crisis>

August 2017 – A very detailed report on unfolding events of the crisis up to when the report was published:

<http://www.genocidewatch.com/single-post/2017/08/02/Cameroon%E2%80%99s-Anglophone-Crisis-at-the-Crossroads>

Annex II

The Anglophone Problem as Defined by Catholic Bishops

On 22 December, 2016, in a letter to President Biya, the Bishops of the Ecclesiastical Province of Bamenda² defined the Anglophone problem as follows:³

- The failure of successive governments of Cameroon, since 1961, to respect and implement the articles of the Constitution that uphold and safeguard what British Southern Cameroons brought along to the Union in 1961.
- The flagrant disregard for the Constitution, demonstrated by the dissolution of political parties and the formation of one political party in 1966, the sacking of Augustin Ngom Jua and the appointment of Solomon Tnadeng Muna in 1968 as the Prime Minister of West Cameroon (Southern Cameroons), and other such acts judged by many in West Cameroon to be unconstitutional and undemocratic.
- The cavalier management of the 1972 Referendum which took out the foundational element, Federalism, from the 1961 Constitution.
- The 1984 Law amending the Constitution, which gave the country the original East Cameroon name (The Republic of Cameroon) and thereby erased the identity of the West Cameroon from the original union. West Cameroon, which had entered the union as an equal partner, effectively ceased to exist.
- The deliberate and systematic erosion of the West Cameroon cultural identity which the 1961 Constitution sought to preserve and protect by providing for a bi-cultural federation.

² This Ecclesiastical Province covers the entire Anglophone regions of Cameroon.

³ <http://www.cameroonintelligence.com/anglophone-problem-roman-catholic-bishops-send-memorandum-to-president-biya/>
<https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/cameroon/250-cameroons-anglophone-crisis-crossroads>.

Annex III

Desired Outcomes by Key Stakeholders

The following four positions have been articulated by various parties in the crisis as desirable outcomes

- **Maintaining the Status Quo.** The position held by the Cameroonian Government so far is that the current form of state is not negotiable.
- **Changing the country's leadership in order to improve governance and accelerate the decentralization process.** There are those who agree that there is an Anglophone problem but they do not feel that splitting Cameroon is the solution. They argue that many of the frustrations expressed by anglophones also plague the francophones communities. These people typically see a change in leadership and a change in the current government structure in favor of a more decentralized system of government as a viable solution.
- **Returning to the 1961 federation.** Many in the country agree that there is an Anglophone problem and project that the solution is in the return to the founding constitution of 1961 which prescribed a two-state federal republic.
- **Separate Cameroon into two independent states.** “Southern Cameroon/Ambazonia” leaders argue that they cannot trust the Cameroon government in any form of Union and are seeking to achieve an Independent Anglophone State called “Ambazonia”.

1. Appendix

2. -- Definitions

Cameroon	The current Republic of Cameroon that consists of ten Regions, including Southern Cameroons and French Cameroon.
Cameroonian	All Citizens of the current Republic of Cameroon
French Cameroon	French Cameroons was a League of Nations Mandate territory in Central Africa. It now forms part of the independent country of Cameroon. For the purposes of this document, we will use this reference to identify this region as it stands today.
Southern Cameroons	Southern Cameroons was the southern part of the British Mandate territory of British Cameroons in West Africa. Since 1961 it has been part of the Cameroon, where it makes up the Northwest Region and Southwest Region. For the purposes of this document, we will use this reference to identify this region as it stands today
Anglophone	A Cameroonian whose heritage and socio-cultural orientation identify with the <i>Southern Cameroons</i> .
Francophone	A Cameroonian whose heritage and socio-cultural orientation identify with the <i>French Cameroon</i> .

Ambazonia	Ambazonia is a self-declared state by some Anglophones who are seeking a separation from the current Cameroon.
Ambazonian	Anglophone separatists who want to create an independent country called Ambazonia covering the territory of Southern Cameroons.
Cameroon Security Forces	This will reference Cameroon's Rapid Intervention Battalion, security forces and military in the context of this crisis.