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(Original Signature of Member)

115TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES.

Calling on the Government of Cameroon, armed separatist groups, and all citizens to respect human rights and adopt nonviolent approaches to conflict resolution.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Ms. BASS (for herself and Mr. SMITH of New Jersey) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on

RESOLUTION

Calling on the Government of Cameroon, armed separatist groups, and all citizens to respect human rights and adopt nonviolent approaches to conflict resolution.

Whereas Anglophone Cameroonians have long felt marginalized by official actions and policies of the Government of Cameroon;

Whereas beginning in late 2016, protests organized by lawyers, teachers, and students were violently repressed by the Government of Cameroon, leading to numerous deaths and imprisonments, including of journalists, lawyers, and an Anglophone judge on the country's Supreme Court;

Whereas, in January 2017, the Government ordered the suspension of internet services in the northwest and southwest Anglophone regions of Cameroon, the suspension lasting for 93 days and having a major, debilitating effect on the economy, educational institutions, freedom of expression, and social communication of the region's 5 million residents;

Whereas the conflict escalated in late September and early October 2017, when Cameroonian security forces brutally cracked down on unarmed civilians peacefully demonstrating, resulting in dozens of deaths and leaving over 100 injured;

Whereas, in 2017, armed separatists launched a campaign to pressure school officials in the Anglophone region to go on strike as part of a boycott against the Government of Cameroon, and began burning school buildings and threatening education officials with violence if they did not comply with a boycott of schools in the Anglophone regions;

Whereas human rights monitors have documented armed separatists killing tribal chiefs and targeting civilians who are perceived to be supporting or working with the Government of Cameroon, and reports indicate that armed separatists have killed over 80 Cameroonian security force personnel;

Whereas numerous credible reports from human rights monitors, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, have documented the excessive use of force by government security forces against Cameroonians living in the Anglophone regions, including the burning of villages, the use of live ammunition

against protestors, arbitrary arrest and detention, torture, and sexual abuse;

Whereas the United States Department of State has expressed serious concern over the Government's use of force to restrict free expression, and the use of violence against individuals protesting the Government's discriminatory policies in the country's Anglophone regions;

Whereas both the Government of Cameroon security forces and armed separatists have been documented targeting and brutally killing civilians, including women and children;

Whereas the Government of Cameroon has repeatedly restricted freedoms of expression by shutting down the internet, harassing and detaining journalists, refusing licenses to independent media, and intensifying political attacks against the independent press;

Whereas the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said that since December 2017, the violence has resulted in the internal displacement of over 500,000 people across Cameroon;

Whereas the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reports that more than 20,000 Cameroonian refugees have registered in Nigeria;

Whereas emergency officials in Nigeria have reported that the number of refugees having fled from Cameroon since October 2017 exceeds 40,000;

Whereas some of those who have fled to Nigeria have been deported to Cameroon, where they are at risk of unfair trial and torture; and

Whereas the United States Department of State has expressly called on the Government of Cameroon to respect

the rights, including the right to due process, of 47
Cameroonians forcibly returned from Nigerian custody to
Cameroonian authorities, many of whom had reportedly
submitted asylum claims in Nigeria: Now, therefore, be
it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) strongly condemns the abuses committed by
3 the Government of Cameroon, security forces, and
4 armed separatist groups, including extrajudicial
5 killings and detentions, the use of force against non-
6 violent civilians and protestors, and violations of the
7 freedoms of press, expression, and assembly;

8 (2) affirms that the United States continues to
9 hold the Government of Cameroon responsible for
10 upholding the rights of all citizens, regardless of po-
11 litical views or beliefs or the regions in which they
12 reside;

13 (3) urges all parties, including political opposi-
14 tion groups, to exercise restraint and to ensure that
15 protests remain peaceful;

16 (4) urges the Government of Cameroon to—

17 (A) initiate a credible, good, and full faith
18 effort to work with religious and community
19 leaders in the Anglophone region to address
20 grievances and seek nonviolent solutions to re-

1 solve conflict, including possibly involving an
2 independent mediator in such negotiations;

3 (B) respect the fundamental rights of all
4 Cameroonian citizens, including political activ-
5 ists and journalists;

6 (C) ensure that any security operations are
7 conducted in accordance with international
8 human rights standards, including efforts to en-
9 sure security forces only use force under appro-
10 priate circumstances;

11 (D) investigate all allegations of human
12 rights violations committed in the Anglophone
13 regions and take the necessary measures to pre-
14 vent arbitrary detention, torture, enforced dis-
15 appearances, deaths in custody, and inhumane
16 prison conditions;

17 (E) promptly charge or release all those
18 detained in the context of the Anglophone cri-
19 sis, including the 47 Anglophone activists ar-
20 rested in Nigeria, and ensure that any future
21 detainees are treated with due process, in line
22 with Cameroon's penal code;

23 (F) ensure that detainees are treated fairly
24 and humanely, with proper judicial proceedings,
25 including a registry of those detained by the

1 Cameroonian security forces, and with full ac-
2 cess to legal resources; and

3 (G) release human rights defenders, civil
4 society activists, political prisoners, journalists,
5 trade unionists, teachers, and any other citizens
6 who have been arbitrarily arrested and detained
7 without trial or charge;

8 (5) urges the separatist groups to—

9 (A) engage with regional and government
10 officials to peacefully express grievances and
11 credibly engage in nonviolent efforts to resolve
12 the conflict;

13 (B) immediately stop committing human
14 rights abuses, including killings of civilians, tor-
15 ture, kidnapping, and extortion;

16 (C) end the school boycott and immediately
17 cease attacks on schools, teachers, and edu-
18 cation officials, and allow for the safe return of
19 all students to class; and

20 (D) immediately release all civilians ille-
21 gally detained or kidnapped.