

Crisis in the Republic of Cameroon
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**Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and
International Organizations**

**U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN
AFFAIRS**

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Good afternoon, Chairman Christopher Smith, Ranking Member Karen Bass and Esteemed Members of the Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights and International Organisations. Thank you for this opportunity to make a statement before you. Thank you as well for highlighting the crisis in Cameroon. The people of Southern Cameroons and all Cameroonians will highly appreciate this hearing on the prolonged crisis.

I am Felix Agbor Nkongho, a human rights lawyer, nonviolent activist and founder of the Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa (CHRDA). The views I express in this testimony are my own and will represent shared sentiments from Southern Cameroonians and Cameroonians.

Over the last 20 months, Cameroon has been the focus of a nation sliding into civil war in Africa, from what started in November 2016 as legitimate grievances by English-speaking lawyers, teachers, students and civil society over the prolonged marginalisation of Southern Cameroonians but peaceful protests turned deadly when the government military shot at peaceful protesters, wounding many and killing several. In my capacity as leader of the lawyers, teachers and civil society organisations who presented the government with grievances, we equally made ourselves available to dialogue for a quick solution. Unfortunately, during the dialogue process, the government rejected talks over a return to federalism which existed from 1961-1972 which guaranteed bilingualism, biculturalism, bijuralism, equal opportunity for all, and provided constitutional provisions for power sharing, economic independence and freedoms. To the dismay of the national, regional and international community, the Cameroon government began arresting activists and leaders including myself. Internet was shut down for 3 months and all forms of dissent were stifled, forcing hundreds into exile. I was charged before the military court with several counts including terrorism, which carried the death penalty. This sparked

radicalization of the population and reignited the quest for complete independence of the territory, Southern Cameroons. After several months of protests and calls for the release of all detainees, François Lonseny Fall, Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) visited the maximum security prison where we had a meeting, after which he called on the government to release leaders and other detainees.

In August 2017, President Paul Biya ordered the release of several detainees including myself but avoided dialogue prompting mass protest in September 2017 with estimated 500,000 people. The government's response was a brutal crackdown which led to a declaration of independence on October 1, 2017. While approximately 900,000 unarmed protesters were celebrating this declaration, government troops shot at thousands with automatic rifles and helicopters, this marked the start of military attacks upon villages, orders for villages to be evacuated, mass exodus of villagers into Nigeria creating 50,000 refugees and 200,000 internally displaced persons today. All of these prompted an armed campaign by civilians to defend their villages and homes, leading to full-blown armed insurgency.

Cameroon has many features of crisis ridden countries, including its hyper centralized government, weak institutions, endemic corruption, regional tensions, political manipulations, rigged elections and a personalized leadership. While Boko Haram remains a threat to stability and security, the Southern Cameroons crisis represents a more deadly and serious armed conflict which could last longer if not solved. Boko Haram has killed 200 soldiers, gendarmes and policemen including 1900 civilians in 4 years but the Southern Cameroons crisis has killed 90 soldiers, gendarmes and policemen including 3000 civilians in 8 months of armed conflict.

A solution to the Southern Cameroons crisis does not represent a solution to the Cameroon problem, likewise a solution to the Cameroon problem does not address and solve the Southern Cameroons crisis.

Background of the Southern Cameroons crisis

The birth of the Federal Republic of Cameroon on 1st October 1961 marked the reunification of two territories that had undergone different colonial experiences since World War I. The erstwhile German Kamerun was partitioned between the French who practiced assimilation and the British with indirect rule. Cameroon is a country in Central Africa often described as Africa in miniature but has come to the spotlight lately due to crisis of identity and cultural assimilation of the minority English-speaking people. The Southern Cameroons problem popularly known as the Anglophone Crisis is as old as the country Cameroon. It is the expression of a poorly managed decolonisation process, that saw two distinct (British Southern Cameroons and French Cameroon) people come together to form a country void of any real foundations that could

guarantee coexistence. A country that has only had two presidents since independence in 1961 with the present Head of State spending close to 4 decades in office.

Cameroon holds a strategic position in the gulf of guinea (rich in crude oil and critical for the stability of West and Central Africa) and is also the main link between these two regions of Africa. Marred with extensive corruption, authoritarian rule, absence of any form of civil rights, poor governance and innate nepotism, the call for greater autonomy by Southern Cameroonians (Anglophones) has never been this resounding as it is today. The Southern Cameroonians otherwise called by the central government as Anglophones, have come to realise that, their place in the failed union with the majority French Cameroon has been nothing less than recolonization characterised with systematic marginalisation, discrimination and subhuman treatment.

History of Southern Cameroons

The Southern Cameroons has a surface area of 43,000 sq. km and a current population of about 8 million people. It is thus demographically bigger than at least 60 UN and 18 AU Member States, and spatially bigger than at least 30 UN and 12 AU Member States. The territory was originally British from 1858-1887. It was ceded to Germany and subsequently incorporated into the contiguous German protectorate of Kamerun, which had been acquired earlier in 1884.

Relation with the British

The Southern Cameroons was thus under British rule from 1858 to 1887, and then from 1915 to 1961, a total period of nearly 80 years. That long British connection left an indelible mark on the territory, bequeathing to it an Anglo-Saxon heritage. The territory's official language is English. Its educational, legal, administrative, political, governance and institutional culture and value systems are all English-derived.

Up to 1960, the Southern Cameroons though under international tutelage was administered by Britain as part of her contiguous colonial territory of Nigeria. But its distinct identity and personality, separate from Nigeria, remained unassailable. UN Resolution 224 (III) of 18 November 1948 protected the Trust Territory from annexation by any colonial-minded neighbour. While acknowledging that the Trusteeship Agreement makes allowance for 'administrative union', the Resolution provides that "Such a union must remain strictly administrative in its nature and scope, and its operation must not have the effect of creating any conditions which will obstruct the separate development of the Trust Territory, in the fields of political, economic, social and educational advancement, as a distinct entity."

Self Rule

In 1954 the Southern Cameroons became a self-governing region within Nigeria and gradually asserted its distinct identity and its aspiration to statehood through increased political and institutional autonomy.

In 1958 the British Government stated at the UN that the Southern Cameroons was expected to achieve in 1960 the objectives set forth in Article 76 b of the UN Charter. Since the Southern Cameroons had already attained self-government status four years earlier in 1954, the objective to be attained in 1960 could only have been full independence. General Assembly Resolution 1282 (XIII) of 5 December 1958 took note of the British statement. The people of the Southern Cameroons therefore legitimately expected to be granted full independence in 1960 given that their country had been self-governing since 1954.

Basic self-government institutions were in place: a Government headed by the Premier as Leader of Government business; a bicameral parliament consisting of a House of Assembly and a House of Chiefs; an Official Opposition in parliament; a Judiciary headed by a Chief Justice; a Civil Service; and police force. The system in place was a democratic and accountable dispensation. In 1959 when the term of office of the incumbent Premier came to an end, peaceful free fair and transparent elections were organised. The opposition won and there was an orderly transfer of power to the in-coming Premier. Consistent with the parliamentary system of government the outgoing Premier became Leader of the Opposition in parliament.

On 1st October 1960 the Southern Cameroons was separated from Nigeria. The Southern Cameroons Constitution Order in Council came into force. By 1960 the Southern Cameroons had attained a full measure of self-government. Indeed, from 1 October 1960 up to 30 September 1961 it was a full self-governing territory fully responsible for all its internal affairs, except for defense over which matter, along with foreign affairs, Britain continued to exercise jurisdiction.

History of French Cameroon

On 1st January 1960, the attached territory of French Cameroon, also a class B trust territory, achieved independence from France, though with a chronic ongoing anarchy and terrorism there notwithstanding. The French had decided that 1960 was to be the year of independence for its African colonies.

French Cameroun achieved independence under the name and style of La Republique du Cameroun (Present day name of the country) with Mr. Ahmadou Ahidjo as its President. It was admitted to membership of the United Nations on 20 September 1960. The name 'Republique du Cameroun' is variously translated into English as 'Republic of Cameroon' or sometimes simply as 'Cameroon'.

Plebiscite Recommended by United Nations

On 13 March 1959 the General Assembly adopted Resolution 1350 (XIII) recommending a plebiscite in the Southern Cameroons instead of the granting of independence right away. This was followed by another General Assembly resolution, 1352 (XIV) of 16 October 1959, ordering a plebiscite to be held in the Southern Cameroons “not later than March 1961”. The people of the Southern Cameroons were to pronounce themselves on ‘achieving independence’ by the two dead-end alternatives of ‘joining’ Nigeria or Republic of Cameroon.

Still that same year, some perceptive minds in the Trusteeship Council expressed concerns that after attaining independence on 1 January 1960 Republic of Cameroon could try to annex the Southern Cameroons. The Premier of French Cameroun, Mr. Ahidjo, denied any such intention or the possibility of any such action on the part of independent Republic of Cameroon. At the 849th meeting of the Fourth Committee of the UN, Mr. Ahidjo took the floor and gave the UN the solemn assurance that Republic of Cameroon is not annexationist. He declared: “We are not annexationists. ... If our brothers of the British zone wish to unite with independent Cameroon, we are ready to discuss the matter with them, but we will do so on a footing of equality.” Of course this is the reverse on the field.

The United Nations, on April 21, 1961, voted for the independence of the British Southern Cameroons. According to the United Nations Resolution 1608(XV), the Southern Cameroons had a right to sovereignty. The UN General Assembly session voted an overwhelming 64 votes against 23 and 10 abstentions for independence of the Southern Cameroons to take effect on October, 1961. The United States voted for an independent Southern Cameroons. However, France hoodwinked the British and other state to push for the UN coordinated plebiscite.

Plebiscite Process Set in Motion

On 31 March 1960 the Trusteeship Council adopted Resolution 2013 (XXVI) requesting the UK Government “to take appropriate steps, in consultation with the authorities concerned, to ensure that the people of the Territory are fully informed, before the plebiscite, of the constitutional arrangements that would have to be made, at the appropriate time, for the implementation of the decisions taken at the plebiscite.”

The Secretary of State put forward the following interpretation as consistent with the plebiscite alternative of ‘joining’ Republic of Cameroon: “the Southern Cameroons and the Cameroon Republic would unite in a Federal United Cameroon Republic. The arrangements for the union would be worked out after the plebiscite by a conference consisting of representative delegations

of equal status from the Republic and the Southern Cameroons. The United Nations and the United Kingdom would also be associated with this conference.” Both the Southern Cameroons and Republic du Cameroon agreed to this interpretation

The signed and published Agreement between the Southern Cameroons and Republic of Cameroon provided that in the event of the plebiscite vote going in favour of “achieving independence by joining” Republic of Cameroon, the following would be the broad terms of the ‘joining’:

1. The Southern Cameroons and Republic of Cameroon would unite to create a Federal State to be called the ‘Federal Republic Cameroon’, outside the British Commonwealth and the French Community;
2. The component states of the Federation would be the Southern Cameroons and Republic of Cameroon, legally equal in status;
3. Each federated state would continue to conduct its affairs consistently with its colonially-inherited state-culture, with only a limited number of subject matters conceded to the union government;
4. Nationals of the federated states would enjoy Federal Cameroon nationality;
5. The Federation would have a bicameral Parliament consisting of a Federal Senate and a Federal National Assembly; and
6. Federal laws will only be enacted in such a way that no measures contrary to the interests of one state will be imposed upon it by the majority.

The Agreement also stipulated as follows:

1. Constitutional arrangements would be worked out after the plebiscite by a post-plebiscite conference comprising representative delegations of equal status from the Southern Cameroons and Republic of Cameroon, in association with the United Kingdom Government and the United Nations;
2. The post-plebiscite conference would have as its goal the fixing of time limits and conditions for the transfer of sovereignty powers to an organisation representing the future federation;

3. Those entrusted with the affairs of the united Cameroon would put the would-be federal constitution to the people of the Southern Cameroons and Republic of Cameroon to pronounce themselves on it; and

The phrase “to achieve independence by joining Republic of Cameroon” was therefore clearly understood by all concerned (the UN, the UK Government, the Southern Cameroons Government, and the Republic of Cameroon Government) to mean that the Southern Cameroons would attain independence and then form, on the footing of legal equality, a federal union with Republic of Cameroon under an agreed federal constitution as defined in Resolution 1514(XV).

On 11 February 1961 the UN-supervised limited plebiscite took place in the Southern Cameroons. The vote was a plebiscite on political status to enable the people of the Southern Cameroons progress from full measure of self-government to national independence. The vote went in favour of achieving independence ‘by joining’ Republic of Cameroon rather than Nigeria.

Two months after the plebiscite vote, on 21 April 1961, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 1608 (XV) to give effect to the intention expressed by the people of the Southern Cameroons at the plebiscite. Republic of Cameroon, through its Foreign Affairs Minister, Mr. Charles Okala, made a protest against the taking of a vote on the independence of the Southern Cameroons and then voted against Resolution 1608. It speaks volumes that the overwhelming UN vote on the independence of the Southern Cameroons did not go down well with Republic of Cameroon.

In Resolution 1608 (XV) the General Assembly:

1. Endorsed the results of the plebiscite that “the people of the Southern Cameroons decided to achieve independence *by joining* the independent Republic of Cameroon”;
2. Considered that “the decision made by them through a democratic process under the supervision of the United Nations should be immediately implemented”;
3. Decided that “the Trusteeship Agreement of 13 December 1946 concerning the Cameroons under United Kingdom administration ... be terminated, in accordance with Article 76 b of the Charter of the United Nations ... with respect to the Southern Cameroons, on 1 October 1961, upon its joining the Republic of Cameroon”; and
4. Invited “the Administering Authority, the Government of the Southern Cameroons and the Republic of Cameroon to initiate urgent discussions with a view to finalizing before 1

October 1961 the arrangements by which the agreed and declared policies of the parties concerned will be implemented.”

These said ‘agreed and declared policies’ were not and have never been finalized.

The Present Crisis and the Federal Constitution

Article 1 of the Federal Constitution of 1961 reads

“1.1. With effect from the 1st October 1961, the Federal Republic of Cameroon shall be constituted from the territory of the Republic of Cameroon, hereafter to be styled East Cameroon, and the territory of the Southern Cameroons, formerly under British trusteeship, hereafter to be styled West Cameroon.”

Since 1961 when southern Cameroons decided to join La Republic of Cameroon to form a federation of two equal states, it has been nothing less than a nightmare for Southern Cameroonians. From systematic discrimination, institutional marginalisation, economic exploitations, the identity of the southern Cameroonian in the country has been on a steady and intentional destruction by the majority French Cameroon. The Southern Cameroonian have sought to find out in the most peaceful and civil of ways who he is in Cameroon and the response has always been heavy. Joseph B Ebune (2016) posits in his article on *the dilemma of the federal system in West Cameroon* “If there was one area where federalism was most negatively exercised in West Cameroon, it was in the economic domain. At independence, the economy of East Cameroon was based on entrepreneurship and industrialisation, and between 1967 and 1971, about 20 billion francs were invested in about 700 industrial firms which included food, chemical, textile, aluminium industries, water and electrical power production (Ekali, 2004). In West Cameroon, only 27 industrial firms mainly plants for agricultural products were operational showing that investment in the industrial sector was low (Ebune, 2016).

Immediately after the reunification process was closed on the 1st of October 1961, the then president of Cameroon Immediately launched his process to annex and recolonise Southern Cameroons.

1. He abolished all political parties in Cameroon by 1965 bringing the country to a one party system. At this time, there was no longer any legitimate organisation to carry on the aspirations of the Southern Cameroons
2. The worst and darkest day in the union, was when in March 1972, president Ahidjo declared that there would be a referendum in Cameroon in May of the same year to change the country from a federation into a unitary state.

- a. This was against the Federal constitution which stated in article 47 that “The amendment may be passed by a simple majority of the membership of the Federal Assembly: Provided that such majority include a majority of the membership elected from each Federated State.”
 - b. After banning most political parties, no organisation was allowed to carry and defend the aspirations of the people
 - c. The vote was against the spirit of the Constitution and the UN led plebiscite in the fact that, it was opened to all Cameroonians. This was intentional and deliberate, given the population disparity in the country at the time. It must be mentioned that, only southern Cameroonians voted for the plebiscite.
 - d. More so, the voting was marred by fact that, there were not enough ballot papers to say *NO*. In fact, in Southern Cameroons that referendum is still considered today as a vote between “Yes and Yes”.
3. Fast tracked to 1984, two years after President Paul Biya (Prime Minister from 1975-1982) took office from Ahmadou Ahidjo. He unilaterally changed the name of the country from United Republic of Cameroon (and also removed one star from the flag which represented Southern Cameroons) and imposed The Republic of Cameroon as the official name of the country.

At that moment, the Southern Cameroons Emancipation struggle was officially born by this decision. First, The Republic of Cameroon, was the name of the French part of Cameroon before the Union. Thus, going back to that name meant two things to Southern Cameroonians.

- a. The French part of Cameroon has seceded from the union; and/or
 - b. They have just annexed or recolonised Southern Cameroons.
- The Southern Cameroons Identity became more glaring. That was when a sitting magistrate who was a southern Cameroonian (Gorji Dinka) took the state of Cameroon to task at the AFRICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES’ RIGHTS. He then created the Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC).
 - In 1990, there was a wave of political awareness across sub Saharan Africa which led to the creation of the first opposition political party (SDF) in Cameroon. This Party was

created in Bamenda with the principal objective of politics for the identity of Southern Cameroons.

- The first multiparty presidential elections took place in 1992 and it was widely claimed to have been won by the opposition SDF party. But that victory was never to be given and again, it added another block to the frustrations of Southern Cameroonians.
- In 1993 and 1994 a historical All Anglophone Conference was held in Buea and Bamenda Respectively. The resolutions of the conference have never been implemented and one of it was a return to a federal system of governance.
- The French Led central Government decided to dilute the calls for a return to federation by calling for an inconsequential tripartite meeting. The meeting was boycotted by the main opposition party in Cameroon (SDF) and none of the proposals of Southern Cameroonians were considered. The Francophone majority decided to distract Anglophones and opted for a unitary decentralised state. It is worth mentioning that, as we speak, 22 years after the 1996 constitution, nothing has been implemented.

Immediate Causes

Tensions started to gain momentum in May 2015, when Common Law lawyers (after a meeting in Bamenda) sent a memorandum to the head of state asking him to review the Southern Cameroons identity in the union. This was a direct consequence of the systematic and continuous dilution of the common law practice in Southern Cameroons by civil law trained magistrates who couldn't speak or understand the English language. It is worth mentioning that, English language is the natural language of expression in the Anglophone regions. Thus dispensing justice in a language the people do not understand was tantamount to injustice.

The letter of the lawyers saw no response, neither in action or administrative formalities. One year later, the lawyers met in Buea and made a second declaration reaffirming that initial declaration made one year ago. Still, there was total silence, nonchalance and disregard.

In October 2016, the Common Law Lawyers decided to call for an indefinite peaceful strike. They were met with heavy repression from the central government. Lawyers were beaten and professional regalia seized. The people were still on the watch and were totally disappointed with the treatment given lawyers.

By November 21st 2016, after a series of warnings, the teachers of the English Educational subsystem decided to down their tools for an indefinite strike. At this point, it had moved from Common Law Lawyers to teachers and again due to the high handedness of the regime, no solution was given to the request of the teachers. It soon moved into a community problem for all

Southern Cameroonians. There were many questions than answers. The police brutality and political denial of the problem further estranged the people.

The crisis reached its peak and collective acceptance from all Southern Cameroonians in December 2016 when an Anglophone Civil Society Consortium was formed to speak on behalf of the Southern Cameroons which I was the president. On the 8th of December 2016, some 4 protesters were killed in Bamenda raising more questions from the people. Government then started dialogue with Consortium leaders in December 2016. But after failing to convince them of any concrete and factual decision taken, the government turned around and arrested these leaders from Buea and Bamenda and were taken to Yaoundé and tried in a military court. It must be mentioned here that, these people were arrested from an Anglophone region and deported to a Francophone region where the language of expression is French, thereby validating the very grievances raised by Anglophones.

These leaders were arrested alongside many other peaceful activist majority of whom have been sentenced to 15 years in jail. Thousands of such activists are still in prison in Yaounde and across the countries, some missing or in mass graves. Some have had their fate decided using the inhumane anti-terrorism law giving them heavy jail terms. Within this period, there were still continuous arrests and killings.

Centre for Human Rights and Democracy has documented more than 1200 detainees in several prisons across the country all linked to peaceful protests or activism.

Two Crucial Moments

1. On October 1st, 2017 the people of Southern Cameroons in their millions peacefully went out to symbolically declare independence from The Republic of Cameroon. It was a peaceful demonstration that saw the young, the old, women and children come out to create a new country called AMBAZONIA. This day goes down in history as very symbolic for the people and also very bloody. The military responded by shooting unarmed civilians at close range and according to amnesty, over 44 people were shot dead that day, however Centre for Human Rights and Democracy documented almost 1000 killed. This was done under the control and coordination of an interim government.
2. On January 5th, 2018 some leaders who formed an interim government were arrested in Nigeria and deported to Cameroon. They have since been held incommunicado. Nobody has seen them, no sign of life and no access to lawyers, or family members. The Red Cross has not been able to have contact with them. This further intensified a military campaign by civilians, supported by the diaspora to fight for their rights, protect the

innocent people that were been killed, protect families that were burnt in houses by the Cameroonian military.

Human Rights Abuses

Over the last 5 months, the armed conflict between both belligerents have given rise to several human rights abuses. While the government of Cameroon bears a huge responsibility including several crimes considered against humanity, armed groups have also committed several crimes.

As confirmed by the US Ambassador to Cameroon, Peter Henry Barlerin, the government has burned down entire about 87 villages, burned down houses with several old people burnt to death, shot civilians, targeted killings, torture and several cases of extrajudicial execution. Meanwhile, armed groups have kidnapped several administrators and traditional rulers, burned administrative buildings and schools, killed several people in revenge killings for allegedly cooperating with the government, collected ransom in exchange for freedom and killed government soldiers.

The Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa has documented thousands of cases including testimonies from victims. We are willing to share these confidential reports with Congress, Foreign Affairs Committee and the subcommittee.

Risk of Imminent Genocide

Some people in the Anglophone regions had long declared that there is a genocide happening in Cameroon and yes, there are signs of a genocide. The fact that people are indiscriminately killed just because they are English speakers points clearly that there is a risk that genocide is imminent. If we go by Amnesty International's report and the declarations of US Ambassador to Cameroon, Peter Henry Barlerin, it is safe to say that the conflict in Southern Cameroons have more ingredients of a genocide.

Looking at the 10 stages of a genocide as defined by Gregory H. STANTON, we can easily notice that these stages are already evident with the crisis:

1. CLASSIFICATIONS: People are divided in the crisis as "us" against "them".
2. SYMBOLISATION: People are forced to identify themselves. We give names as Anglophones, Biafra, Bamenda, separatists, terrorist, extremist, etc;

3. **DISCRIMINATION:** A dominant group uses law, custom, and political power to deny the rights of other groups. That is what the majority led French central Government is doing on the minority Anglophones using the anti-terrorism law.
4. **DEHUMANISATION:** One group denies the humanity of the other. This has been seen on several occasions. The governor of the Southwest region referred to Anglophone protesters as Dogs. Even journalists on a local TV station have in a generalised manner called Anglophones as rats;
5. **ORGANISATION:** Genocide is always organised, usually by the state, often using militias to provide deniability of state responsibility. In Cameroon, the BIR is a specialised ethnic unit for this task. Trained and equipped by the Israelites and US governments respectively. We have seen anti-terrorism equipment given by the US used on armless civilians in the Anglophone regions.
6. **POLARISATION:** The government broadcast propaganda to turn the population against Anglophones. This is very particular of state television CRTV and Vision 4 television where Francophones are invited to debate about the Anglophone problem. The obvious is that they rain insults and derogatory statements towards Anglophones with impunity.
7. **PREPARATION:** They often use euphemisms to cloak their intentions, such as referring to their goals as “counter-terrorism.” They have built armies, bought weapons and trained their troops and militias to fight “Terrorist”. But who are these terrorist?
8. **PERSECUTION:** Beginning of murders, theft of property, trials and massacres like we have seen in Menka Pinyin and recently in Mbengwi;
9. **EXTERMINATION:** When it is sponsored by the state, the armed forces often work with militias to do the killing. Sometimes the genocide results in revenge killings by groups against each other, creating the downward whirlpool-like cycle of bilateral genocide (as in Burundi). Already dead bodies are dismembered; rape is used as a tool of war to genetically alter and eradicate the other group. Destruction of cultural and religious property is employed to annihilate the group’s existence from history. This is the case of the over 87 villages burnt down with ancestral and sacred places destroyed. We have seen images of the military killing and displaying human remains as a sign of victory as to say, we have killed the animals.
10. **DENIAL:** Cameroon, several credible international organisations and the international community are still in denial of what is happening. It is worth recalling that the

government of Cameroon has refused to provide access to the UNHCR for investigations and Red Cross. It is among the surest indicators of further genocidal massacres. Alleged mass graves have been discovered in many localities in the Anglophone Regions (Tinto, Kwakwa, Mbonge, Lebialem, Munyenge, Batibo, Bali etc). The recent killings of 34 in Santa (Menka-Pinyin) is a crystal example where every person on the scene was killed and the only survivor who was later taken to the hospital due to bullet wounds was pulled out of hospital by the military with his two brothers and executed. Leaving no trace of what happened. If we still think this is not a planned and coordinated genocide, then what else can it be?

Contextualisation and Why United States Must Intervene

The international community and the United States in particular must intervene to stop this conflict before it gets to the broader sphere. The conflict in these regions have the potentials to explode into a sub-regional crisis that will generate more poverty and political problems for the future. The following situational awareness must be considered so as to initiate a timely and efficient intervention:

1. The Anglophone regions (Southern Cameroons) is situated at the Gulf of Guinea which is rich in crude oil;
2. The region is so volatile with armed conflicts in many countries such as Central Africa Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Nigeria, etc;
3. The Anglophone regions (Southern Cameroons) is between West (ECOWAS) and Central (CEMAC) Africa. Thus, a strategical link for commerce, trade and business;

Why must the United States be worried about the Southern Cameroons crisis?

America is looked upon as the ideal place in the world where human rights are respected, where freedoms are guaranteed and human dignity assured. Besides, America voted in favour for UN Resolution 1608 of an independent Southern Cameroons. Moreover, many people had erroneously thought that, with the heavy military artillery of the Central Government in Yaoundé, the Anglophone people will be beaten to submission within days. However, it is seemingly clear that, the fight to self-determination is real and might last a long time if solutions are not achieved early enough.

Several factors indicate that this conflict might last a long period of time.

1. The crisis has moved from guerrilla tactics to direct confrontations;
2. There is a multitude of armed groups all fighting for the Independence of the Southern Cameroons;
3. The objective for Independence is very clear to most of the people and the population supports it;
4. The Anglophone diaspora are in full support of an armed struggle and finance it.
5. Most parts of Southern Cameroons are totally inaccessible by road, telephone and even Radio and TV signals. It is thus easy for pockets of resistances to exist in such places for a longer period;
6. The Government's refusal to initiate dialogue with legitimate Anglophone leaders;

Considerations to Be Made

The longer the crisis persists, there is a likelihood of other bi-products of conflict. Given that, Cameroon has been an example for peace in Africa for decades and the above situational analysis, America must intervene so as to:

1. Reduce the influx of political refugees and asylum seekers as a result of the conflict (21000 Refugees already registered with UNHCR and Nigerian authorities confirming about 50,000 refugees in Nigeria and over 160,000 internally displaced persons);
2. Schools in this territory have been closed, as the lack of education persists, this creates a risk for youths to join armed groups;
3. With the proliferation of arms and armed groups, insecurity in the region is very high and could easily fuel hostage taking, theft and other crimes;
4. Economic stagnation, poverty, and famine in the regions;
5. Many armed groups signal the risk to disarm these groups in the long run;

6. The likelihood of epidemics as a result of lack of social amenities. Today, women are in the rainforest, beaten by snakes and there are no vaccines. They are having children in bushes, which is unhealthy and dangerous should there be any outbreak of an epidemic;
7. The future of youths not pursuing education has been compromised and it will have a huge social impact.

Recommendations to Congress

The Anglophone Crisis

- Pressure the Cameroon government to allow independent investigations into alleged crimes against humanity and gross abuses of human rights by credible international bodies, regional partners and national civil society organisations.
- Reexamine the current defense and development aid especially in cases of government security using weapons meant for the fight against Boko Haram in the Anglophone regions and on civilians.
- Urge Congress to hold frequent hearings on Cameroon including a full committee hearing, Centre for Human Rights and Democracy is willing to testify before congress with regards to the crisis.
- Insist to the Cameroon government to engage in inclusive dialogue on Federalism and Independence of Southern Cameroons with legitimate leaders of the people without preconditions.
- Help identify possible national mediators and support civil society actors including the Catholic Church.
- Urge for all parties to negotiate for a ceasefire as a confidence building measure towards negotiations for the end of this conflict.
- Engage with the The United States Ambassador to the United Nations to bring this crisis for debate at the UN Security Council.
- Provide humanitarian support to refugees and internally displaced persons.
- Support an international process for a referendum to listen to the voice of the people on the desire regarding the form of the State.
- Call for the release of all prisoners linked to sentences from the anti-terrorism law.
- Call on the government to release 47 Cameroonians deported from Nigeria.
- Engage with US allies such as Israel to review military support and cooperation with Cameroon's elite army BIR in cases of human rights violations by troops trained and supported by them.

- Collaborate with US allies, France, Britain, Israel, European Union to pressure the Cameroon government to seek dialogue and negotiations in order to end conflict.
- United States to place travel restrictions and sanctions on government members fueling the crisis.
- Continue to condemn all forms of violence on both sides.

Upcoming Elections

- Continue to urge president Paul Biya to think about his legacy and also put forward a clear succession path to avoid a power vacuum or crisis in case of incapacitation or death.
- Increase international support, attention and monitoring as elections in Cameroon are marred by fraud and rigging. The need for more international credible observers on the ground to monitor polling stations and weigh on legitimacy of results.
- Pressure the government of Cameroon to engage in negotiations to end the conflict prior to elections, otherwise there is a high risk for no voting in Anglophone regions.
- Increase support for civil society organisations due to the lack of a strong opposition and media censorship.