

Crisis in the Republic of the Cameroon

An Overview of the Anglophone Crisis

2016-2018



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1. Introduction

As General Director of CABTAL (Cameroon Association for Bible Translation and Literacy), a grassroots non-governmental organization specializing in language-based development, I have contact with numerous community leaders throughout Cameroon. This report is based on my personal experience, having grown up in Cameroon, and having spoken with a wide range of individuals impacted by the crisis.

Cameroon, officially the Republic of Cameroon, is a Central African nation of approximately 24.68 million people (according to worldpopulationreview.com), divided into 10 regions for governance purposes. Eight of these regions have French as their national language, and two (the Southern Cameroons) have English. The central government of Cameroon is located in the francophone part of the country. This paper attempts to describe the plight of these two English speaking regions in their struggle for independence from the current government of Cameroon.

2. General Description of the Problem

Military persecution of the largely unarmed population of the Southern Cameroons has been increasing from 2016 to the present in response to peaceful protests and requests for dialogue. Several small self-defense groups have formed and are fighting back against the government soldiers. All attempts at dialogue between the Cameroon government and separatists have failed so far. Hundreds of people are being held in prisons, and many have been killed. Tens of thousands are refugees, and many more are internally displaced. It seems we are on the road to genocide.

3. Root Causes

The crisis in Cameroon is rooted in the way Cameroon became independent. Both Southern Cameroons and the Republic of Cameroon were UN Trust territories. These territories were handed to the British and the French to administer and guide towards independence. French Cameroon became independent on January 1, 1960 and became known as the Republic of Cameroon (La Republique du Cameroun). On the other hand, British Southern Cameroons was rather given only two options at the UN for independence. They had to choose to become independent by joining the already independent Nigeria or the independent Republic of Cameroon. Even though there was a push for a third option for this territory to become independent and be a country on its own, this option was turned down with the reason being that the population was only 750,000 people and was too poor to stand on its own. Rumors of vote rigging add to the sentiment that people were forced to join the Republic against their will.

The second problem lies in the illegal dissolution of the state of West Cameroon on the 20th of May 1970. On October 1, 1961, the day Southern Cameroons became independent, the Southern Cameroons and the Republic of Cameroon agreed to come together to form a new country called the Federal Republic of Cameroon. The Republic of Cameroon became known as the Federated State of East Cameroon, and Southern Cameroons became known as the Federated State of West Cameroon.

But in 1972, after oil was found in West Cameroon, the Federated State of West Cameroon was abolished by President Ahidjo. Both states were together renamed the United Republic of Cameroon. The state of West Cameroon was divided into two

provinces called North West and South West provinces respectively. Governors and local administrators were sent by Ahijo to govern them. In this administrative structure, these administrators are not accountable to the people in any way. They wield a lot of power and report to their hierarchy in Yaounde. The people of the state of West Cameroon were against this move and started expressing their disapproval. Many were arrested, including a classmate and friend of my father's, Albert Mukong, who spent 6 years in prison. He describes his experience in the book "Prisoner Without a Crime", which he authored. Gendarmes (paramilitary forces) were sent to repress any form of uprising against the dissolution. Many people were brutalized and abused by these forces.

According to John Ngu Foncha, the Southern Cameroons Prime Minister who had led Southern Cameroons into unification with the Republic of Cameroon and Vice President of the Federal Republic of Cameroon, this abolition of the state of Southern Cameroons and dissolution of its institutions, was annexation of the territory of Southern Cameroons by the Republic of Cameroon. So the territory was simply recolonized. According to J. N. Foncha, the Francophone dominated and controlled government started a systematic degrading of the education system, the banking system and most of the things that had been developed in the state of west Cameroon.

In 1984, the current President, who has been in power since 1975 (plus six years as Prime Minister), changed the country's name back to the Republic of Cameroon. This is the name adopted by the Francophone state at independence in 1960. It should be noted that when they agreed to come together in 1961 into a federal union, that name was given up. By reviving that name, many Southern Cameroon leaders understood it as secession from the union that was agreed upon in 1961 (See UN General Assembly resolution 1608 (XV)). What troubled Southern Cameroonian leaders was the fact that the domain of the Republic of Cameroon extended to the former Southern Cameroons. To Southern Cameroonians, this was annexation and therefore unacceptable!

Southern Cameroonian leaders led by Gorji Dinka, President of the Bar Council, challenged the Republic of Cameroon to leave the territory of Southern Cameroons which they have renamed Ambazonia. Gorji Dinka and others were arrested and charged with treason. There has been a peaceful and collective protest against this annexation since 1972. It increased in intensity in 1984 and in the 90s. Changing the country's name back to the Republic of Cameroon is tantamount to secession and legally gave the right to revive the Southern Cameroons.

In the 90s the cities of Buea and Bamenda held All Anglophone Conferences, peacefully seeking to go back to the federal form that was agreed upon in 1961. But the government of the Republic of Cameroon would not listen. They rather made a new constitution in 1996 transforming the provinces into regions. According to the new constitution, the regions are semi-autonomous. But this new constitution has never been implemented.

4. Significant Events

The Anglophone regions in Cameroon are facing what many have termed Paul Biya's dirty war against Anglophones, declared by President Paul Biya in November of 2017.

A number of groups have formed over the years in this resistance movement. The SCNC (Southern Cameroons National Council) led by Nfor Ngala Nfor, formed after the All Anglophone Conferences of the 90s, Southern Cameroons Youth League (SCYL) led by Akwanga Ebenezer, the Ambazonia Governing Council (AGC) led by Cho Ayaba, the outlawed Consortium led by Tassang Wilfred and Movement for the Restoration of the Independence of Southern Cameroons (MORISC) with Boh Herbert as the spokesperson, have been very active. The Southern Cameroons Ambazonia Consortium United Front (SCACUF) formed in 2017 was formed as a governing body to unite organizations fighting for independence. The group adopted the roadmap for independence developed by MORISC. Although some groups like (MORISC), ADC and SYCL left SCACUF in late 2017 it transitioned into an Interim Government of Ambazonia under Interim President Ayuk Tabi. On October 1st Ayuk Tabi declared the restoration of the independence of Ambazonia.

The Lawyers' Protest: It started with a wave of protest initiated by lawyers and teachers of the Anglophone regions. Since the dissolution of the federal system of government, there has been a dysfunction in the legal system in Cameroon due to the fact that common law was practiced in West Cameroon and civil law in East Cameroon. They had a number of grievances pertaining to the fact that judges were trained in the civil law legal system and sent to work in the Anglophone regions that practiced common law. The lack of training for judges in the common law system in the school of magistracy and marginalization in a number of areas. They summed their demands in requesting a return to the two state federation as the best framework to guarantee the coexistence of both legal system, the culture and interest of the people. The government played deaf. When the lawyers staged a peaceful protest walk, the government sent the security forces to do what it does best! Repression! Videos of lawyers being beaten by security forces were shocking.

Three Anglophone teachers' trade unions joined the lawyers with their own grievances and summed it up with a request for a return to the federal system of government as the framework to solve these grievances. They had similar treatment from security forces as the lawyers. The teachers then initiated school boycotts. This was very disruptive and use the government as school boycotts proved very effective.

The University of Buea Student Protest: Around the same period, the students of the university of Buea staged a protest against a number of grievances. The government again did what it does best. Security forces were sent to the university for repression. This was most shocking as videos started emerging on social media on the repression. Students were beaten like snakes, girls dehumanized and made to deep their faces and mouths into very filthy mud. Student rooms were vandalized, sprayed with water canons. There were allegations of looting and rape of students by security forces. Many students were wounded and traumatized as a result of this brutality.

The Coffin Revolution: In Bamenda around the same period, Mancho Bibixy a journalist with a local radio station, stood in a coffin before a large crowd and asked accountability questions of the government. Concerning the poor conditions of roads, the garbage, filth that filled the city and government corruption. According to Mancho, this dysfunction and chronic corruption could not continue unchallenged. His coffin was his readiness to stand up and die for the cause of freedom and change for the Anglophone community. Starting

November 21st 2016, with a series of protests, the crowd stood with Mancho. But the security forces as usual used repression and brutality. Violence broke out and a number of protesters were killed, some injured and many arrested and jailed.

Government Provocation: In the midst of these tensions, the Anglophone elites in the Biya government, in an attempt to show President Biya that he still had the support of the people, decided to organize a march in support of President Paul Biya. They hired buses and shipped in people from neighboring West Region into the heart of the Anglophone protest. This was a recipe for disaster as it was viewed by the local population as provocation. Clashes between the security forces and the population led to more deaths, more people injured, property vandalized and many more arrested.

Hon. Joseph Wirba took to the floor of parliament on 13th December, 2016 and spoke out for the Anglophone community in a now famous speech. He spoke up against the violent repression, brutality of students, rape by security forces, killings etc. ““Our ancestors and forefathers trusted you to go into a gentleman’s agreement. That two people who consider themselves brothers could go to live together. If this is what you show us after 55 years, then those who are saying that we should break Cameroon are right. They are correct! the people of West Cameroon cannot be your slaves. The people of West Cameroon, are not, you did not conquer them in war.” He accused the government of using the security forces as an army of occupation. And made it clear that when the people will rise, even if the French army was added to the Cameroon army the people will not be brought down. “When injustice becomes law, resistance becomes a duty” Wirba said!

Cosmetic Solutions: The Anglophone protesters had regrouped themselves into a very influential consortium made up of various trade unions including teacher, lawyers, journalist, drivers, parents teachers association etc. In December, the school boycott proving very effective and the government running out of ideas to get teachers and kids back in school, opened up for dialogue. The government made some few reforms with a department for the common law at the school of administration and magistracy and a bench for common lay at the supreme court. But completely avoided touching or discussing the root causes of the crisis. The consortium leadership stood their ground on their demand for federation as the only framework to protect the interest and rights of the Anglophone minority. The president’s end of year speech made matters worst when he declared Cameroon was one and indivisible and that the form of the state will not be discussed and will not change.

On January 16, 2017, the Cameroon Anglophone Consortium and the Southern Cameroons National Council were outlawed. An arrest warrant was issued for all the leaders of the Anglophone protest. Some went into hiding and others were arrested including, Mancho Bibixy, Justice Ayah Paul (Deputy Attorney General of the Supreme Court) and charged for terrorism and other crimes. This decision by the government was the catalyst needed to bring in the Anglophone diaspora spread around the world. Leadership of the consortium was handed to Taang Ivo and Mark Baretta both living in the diaspora. Their social media savvy along with other activists and community mobilization skills united the vast majority of Anglophones both in Cameroon and the diaspora into a common cause. The cause for freedom for the people of former Southern

Cameroons. Through their mobilization and education, the Anglophone community observed effective ghost towns, school boycotts and “adopt a teacher program” to raise funds to support teachers from private schools who were not receiving a salary. The government used money and lots of other incentives to get schools and to break the momentum of the ghost towns but failed. The government started to show signs of frustration when it decided on an internet blackout from January to April for the two Anglophone regions. In October 2017, a second targeted social media shutdown was enacted. In total, the shutdown lasted over 150 days. This internet blackout was a collective punishment on the Anglophones and cost many internet based businesses more than 38m\$ according to estimates.

Facing punitive measures, constant harassment, name calling, mockery, arrests and the francophone dominated government condescendence weaved the Anglophone community to stand stronger together. Many became aware of a history that had been hidden from them. They had been annexed but didn't know it! This knowledge and punitive actions by the government brought emancipation and the vast majority who had wanted a return to the federal system of government switched from federalists to restorationists desiring to break away from 56 years bondage and annexation. Instead crushing them, the punitive and repressive measures energized them to stand up for the restoration of their independence and against colonization. The Anglophone community worldwide join in the struggle with protest marches in western cities to create awareness about their cry for the freedom of their people and their homeland.

The Events of September 22 and October 1, 2017: On September 22, as President Paul Biya addressed the 72nd session of the United Nations General Assembly 6000 miles away. People in villages, towns and cities all across Anglophone Cameroon were doing a test run for the restoration of their independence on October 1, 2017. Anglophones in the US gathered in New York to stand with their people and let the world know that they mean business about their freedom. The protest brought together the elderly, children, women, men and youth singing the Ambazonian anthem and carrying the blue and white flag. It proved to be the largest protest so far and was widespread all over the Anglophone areas. This peaceful march by millions of Anglophones both at home and abroad proved the government strategy of repression, denying the existence and playing the ostrich game with the root causes of the Anglophone problem had failed. As they are accustomed to, the government used repression. And even though the protest was largely peaceful with the people holding tree branches and plants as a sign of peace, security forces fired at the population killing some protesters and wounding some. While some were arrested. The killings, repression and arrests, did nothing to dampen their determination for freedom and preparations towards October 1. The government deployed more soldiers including elite soldiers, banned the protest and any gathering on October 1. They also banned the movement of vehicles from one city to another. But on October 1, millions of people all across the Anglophone regions came out with tree branches and the blue and white flags of Ambazonia. It should be noted that at this point, there were two groups the Amazonia Governing Council (AGC) and the Southern Cameroons Youth League that propagated the use of arms and warned that sending people out to proclaim the independence will result in them being killed. This was simply brushed aside.

When they went out to march, as usual with tree branches and flags, the firepower they faced was compared to nothing the unarmed people had faced before. To the Biya government, it was war! Soldiers fired at the crowd killing many protesters in various cities. "Troops and attack helicopters opened fire on protesters at the height of separatist rallies in English-speaking areas of Cameroon over the weekend, killing and wounding people, witnesses and rights groups said. The army dismissed the reports from sources in five towns as "completely false" and said helicopters had only been used for surveillance." It is difficult to know the actual number of people killed on October 1, 2017. Following the events of October 1, the military carried out raids, hunting young men that fit the profile. The atrocities, looting, killings and arrests continued. Young boys and girls took to the bushes hiding for their lives. People realized either you defend yourself or be killed.

Defense groups entered the game following the killings of October 1 and continuous hunting and killing of young people. There were renewed calls to pick up arms against what the Anglophone activist called occupational or colonial forces. Paul Biya's idea of "L'État, c'est moi" ("I am the State"), had created this mess. His actions and intransigence give this statement by John Kennedy all its weight in gold. "Those who make peaceful revolutions impossible will make violent revolution inevitable."

These young people on the run were easy recruits for groups that propagated self defense. Many came together in their communities to form their own defense groups. Young people in various communities came together to form groups to defend the community and enforce the school boycotts and ghost towns. They started ambushing soldiers, killing them and taking arms. The government tagged them terrorists.

The government of Paul Biya bears the ultimate responsibility for perpetuating the escalating violence with its total rejection of dialogue preferring repression. Instead of heeding to both international and national calls to use dialogue to solve the crisis, the government crafted a tall tale of an international conspiracy to destabilize Cameroon through the Anglophones and their diaspora. They used the media to drum up support from the Francophone public opinion for their repressive and punitive expedition in the Anglophone areas. Despite the visit of the UN Secretary General, the Common Wealth Secretary General and other international, the call of the churches and other leaders for dialogue, President Paul Biya was bent on carrying out this dirty war.

On November 10th, 2017, an administrative notice was signed prohibiting the movement of commercial motorbikes from 7PM to 6AM, and suspending all hunting activities using firearms, closure of all license armories, sales of firearms. All owners of any type of gun must present themselves for identification. Traditional rulers and quarter heads were to identify any stranger in their neighborhood and send a report twice a week to the local administration. After this was done, the President declared war in December in a speech at the Yaounde, Nsimalen Airport after returning from a trip.

On January 5th 2018, in one spectacular move, the Biya and the Buhari governments connived to lure the leaders of Ambazonia into a hotel in Abuja, Nigeria for alleged talks and there abducted the leaders. They were later flown to Cameroon against international laws. Some of these leaders had refugee status in Nigeria and others had applied for asylum. For six months, these leaders have been kept incommunicado with no access to family members or lawyers.

According to people I have spoken to on the ground, some local groups have burned schools and attacked individuals who tried to betray the school boycotts. The Principal of St. Bedes Ashing was abducted because the school was operating and released after the school was closed. But appears that the local groups are not the only ones burning schools. According to a victim who shared his story with me, soldiers used bulldozers and brought down a school he had build for the kids in his community recently. There unanswered questions with regard to who burned Secret Heart College in Mankon. But parts of the school was burned while soldiers were protecting it.

Some groups seem to be more disciplined and have protected, provided food and basic needs to populations fleeing military brutality. But with various defense groups coming up everyday, there is a real danger that the leaders may not have control over the situation on the ground.

The local groups, largely armed with hunting guns, sticks and machetes, are no match in face-to-face combat with the well equipped Cameroon military. So they have used guerrilla warfare techniques in the resistance. According to government report on June 11, 84 military personnel and police officers have been killed in 123 attacks since the crisis started. We do not have statistics of how many restoration forces have been killed. Each time a security officer is killed, the local unarmed population of the surrounding areas suffers from the vengeance and terror of the military.

5. Atrocities and Human Rights Violations

By definition, human rights are violated when actors (either state or non state) abuse, ignore or deny basic rights (including civil, political, cultural, social, and economic rights). Violations of human rights also occur when a state or non-state actor breaches the UDHR treaty or other international human rights or humanitarian law.

There have been many killings in communities in the Anglophone regions including children, women and the elderly. Homes completely burned down. Some are hiding in the forest including babies, expectant mothers and the elderly. They live there, exposed to rain, snakes, danger from government soldiers, without food or medicine.

The devastation and pain they have caused is unbelievable. The trauma, fear and hopelessness of the local population facing such atrocities is beyond description. Theses atrocities constitute crimes against humanity and needs to be investigated. As a result of these burnings, the military has cause mass displacement of people and refugees. Thousands of people have been rendered homeless, entire life investments destroyed, family members killed and hiding in the bushes for their dear lives.

What follows is a partial list of violations people have reported to me. These are examples of the kinds of activities being carried out by Biya's military, not an exhaustive list.

A. Internet shut down for the whole Anglophone community:

The Cameroon government shut down internet in the Anglophone regions for over 150 days. This took place between January and April and from October 2017. This cost more than \$38 million in lost income.

B. Mass killings:

The Cameroon military has carried out mass killings in the Anglophone territories. The most recent, was the killing of 27 youths in Mensa-Pinyin. According to Ni John Fru Cameroons main opposition leader who visited the area and spoke with eyewitnesses on the ground. One of the boys who was shot, was taken to a health center in Santa by his two brothers. Soldiers came to the health center took the three back to the village and shot and killed them. Within a period of 48 hours between May 23 to 25th over 40 youths were killed. The military went to Kwakwa and carried out mass killings of unarmed civilians and farmers.

C. Burning of private property, homes and business:

The Cameroon military has burned businesses, markets, private homes and property in more than 70 villages in the Anglophone regions. (Munyenge, Ngwo, Kwakwa, Boa Bakundu, Bole Bakundu, Dipenda Bakundu, Big Ngwandi, Bakumba, Bokosso, Nake, Kombone mission, Kake I, Kake II, Bekondo, Big Massaka, Nganjo, Foe Bakundu, Ekombe, Tadu, Keri, Mbiim, Small Ekombe, Ediki, Kuke, Ebonji, Etam, Nguti, Mongo Ndor, Bello, Anjang, Angin, Anyagwa, Azi, Kumbo, Doti Nobu, Kugwe, Ambo, Efah, Kumku, Ashong, Ngie, Kembong, Ejeke, Mbene, Bati-Numba, Kagifu, Dadi, Gurifen, Muyenge, Bafia, Ekwe, Kumbe-Balue, Ekona Mombo, Batibo, Bafut, Mbalangi, Oshie, Baingo, Bombele Mbonge, Kumu Kumu, Bangele, Konye, Guzang, Widikum, Sarnyar, Babadiehka, Djottin)

When unidentified men killed a para-military officer and wounded another on the Tadu-Oku road, the forces of law and order attacked the villages of Tadu, Keri and Mbiim. About 38 houses were attacked, some set ablaze, business premises vandalized, and it is alleged that goods and money was taken. Things like cement, rice and articles they could not take were simply destroyed.

In Mbiim and Sarnyar the forces of law and order attacked the village development community building and destroyed the chairs, window glasses, tables and took away the tool box for the community water maintenance, destroyed the pipes earmarked for the extension of the water supply to other parts of the village before proceeding to vandalize other houses in the village. One house was set ablaze while the population escaped to the bushes the forces of law and order carried away other items like generators, cutlasses, drinks etc. These villages were deserted as the population escaped to bushes to save their lives. In Tadu an old woman was brutalized and the corn in her barn set ablaze. Motor bikes were destroyed.

The soldiers have a modus operandi. When they attack a village, often they first burn the shops and businesses, then the homes of the people and kill some. It was the case in Kwakwa, in Munyenge, in Kake, in Njikwa, etc. When soldiers invade a village suspected for the support of the local restoration forces, they shops are set ablaze to cut them off from food. Their homes are burned and young people who fit the profile are shot. When soldiers came to Kwakwa, they burned down the shops and homes. Two elderly people who could escape were burned at home. It is the case of Mami Appih and Pa Dan. Miami Appih was burned almost to ashes and Pa Dan succeeded to escape with some burned, but died a few weeks later.

In Kembong village after four soldiers were ambushed and killed by restoration forces, the military invaded the village and houses were burned, farms destroyed with many allegations of rape and looting. Many young people including teenagers were killed by soldiers. The inhabitants were accused for supporting and hiding restoration forces.

According to an eye witness, on May 18, a police officer was killed the Ngwo area. On May 21, soldiers came to the Ngwo area with gun shots and burned down the market square with all the shops. On May 23rd, at about 6AM soldiers invaded the village, shooting and people ran into the bushes. The soldiers killed four men there including the husband of a Bible translation project worker, Mr. Anka Terence. It is alleged that the soldiers took his phone, his money and burned his bike. His widow, 22 with young twins and a baby in hand gathered her children and fled to the bushes. She spent some time in the bushes before they were located and helped.

Another Bible translator's business and two houses were burned. Mrs. Anyi Theodora was shot by the military but survived. Another Bible translator fled when soldiers came to his house shooting and credits God for his safety. The soldiers entered his home scattered the doors and windows and set fire to the house. He had to take refuge in the bushes with his elderly mother, wife and children and had spent many days in the bushes before they were rescued from the bushes.

Mr. Christian and Vitalise were arrested following the death of a paramilitary officer and tortured to death. Zeidin Fondzewong 18, was shot and killed by soldiers who were returning from Mbiame in Dzeng. Cosmos Wirkom was fishing on the banks of river Mbohnso when he was killed. The also break into houses in Mbohnso looted and about 1.653.000frs CFA is alleged to have been taken from the people by the soldiers.

In Ta Mbveh, Soldiers destroyed a shop, looted, arrested and locked up the wife of the shop owner with their ten month old child. The husband had to pay 800.000frs before his family was released. In Ndu, Two boys (Kevin Mburci and Kabiru) were shot and the population rushed them to the Integrated Health Center in Ndu but were later taken away by the soldiers to Nkambe. Mr. Ngala Benjamen and Moni Ivo Bantar were abducted from their homes. On October 1, four men who were in jail were shot dead with the allegation that they wanted to escape.

When soldiers invaded Munyenge shooting, people fled into the bushes for safety. One person Michael, who didn't know what was going was left behind. His leg was shattered by soldiers and left for dead! But was rescued by the Ayah Foundation and his leg was amputated and his is recovering. The soldiers proceeded to burning down the business center, shops, crops, harvested cocoa and private homes and killing some in the process. There has also been allegations of looting by soldiers.

In the Moghamo area, according to witnesses, people have been shot for not having identification papers. Some who had identification papers were also shot and killed. Soldiers took over Ambo village and local Presbyterian pastor who serves as the leader of the community organization leading the Bible translation program had to flee. His church house was taken over by soldiers who have set up a camp in Ambo village. The people and Christians in the Ambo village have fled because of gun battles between restoration forces and the military.

D. Prisoner Abuse:

The military has abused and murdered prisoners in custody. The case of Sam Soya, a disabled man in the Kom area who had a brochette business, was interrogated by soldiers and later murdered in cold blood. Videos exist of his interrogation and pictures of

his murder. On October 29, Afoni Fredoline, a third year student of the university of Bamenda was abducted by soldiers in his worksite in Shisong by the military. He was taken to the military camp in Kumbo and tortured to death. When the parents came to give him food thinking he was still alive, they were sent away. Two military trucks were sent to the compound of the deceased and caused more destruction. It is alleged that they took 25.000frs from the mother's room. On October 30th, the family went out in search of their son. They were informed by the authorities for that their son had died. They had no explanation about the death. The entire community was in shock when they heard the news. His remains were later discovered in a mortuary.

E. Extrajudicial killings, targeted killings and abductions:

On May 4th, 2018, the remains of two unidentified men were found in Kumbo. It is alleged by the neighbors that on the night of 30th April 2018, the military truck was seen heading to the area at about 9 PM, and few minutes after, gun shots were heard. This lasted for few minutes. Shortly after the shooting, the military truck drove back. Four days later, a grazer discovered the corpses already at an advanced state of decomposition and alerted the Mayor of Kumbo.

F. Targeted killing and Torture:

Another victim was arrested in Kom alleged to be an Ambazonian general, videos of his was posted by soldiers on social media. The torture and treatment in the video shock our consciences. This man was tortured to death just like countless others.

G. Brutality by security forces:

Still on that 30th of April 2018, two boys (Honore and Elvis) were arrested by the gendarmes at their residence in Vebarong, a Quarter in Kumbo, at about 2 AM the next morning and taken to Kumbo. Their houses were searched, doors broken and a motorbike taken away by the forces of law and order. At the gendarmerie, the boys were tortured and rendered weak as they sustained severe wounds. There are countless arbitrary arrests and extortion of money from civilians by the forces of law and order. Last week a video emerged allegedly filmed by soldiers themselves of two teenage girls made to swim in mud while the soldiers mocked.

Cameroon authorities have called the restoration forces terrorists. But if you look up the definition of terrorist, you will see the Cameroon military really fits that definition because they are terrorizing the population.

Through this crisis, Anglophones have been confronted with the stark realization that they are indeed second class citizens in Cameroon. The President has not addressed the problem at all except to declare war. Even when opposition parliamentarians staged a strike to discuss the issue in parliament, the Biya controlled parliament refused any discussion on the crisis. The matter has been discussed in other countries' parliaments, but not in Cameroon. The message is clear: Anglophones have no voice and are treated as a conquered people.

6. Obstacles to Resolution

The obstacles to resolution of this crisis are many:

- Rejection of dialogue and negotiations by President Paul Biya
- The use of military force

- Refusal to face the root causes of the Anglophone crisis and denial of its existence by the Biya government
- The fact that the international community, even though aware of the atrocities and crimes against humanity, has looked away
- The government use of anti-terrorism law for political purposes
- About a thousand Anglophone activists have been jailed by the government using the anti-terrorism law.

Without any form of pressure from the international community, these atrocities will continue and genocide is inevitable!

7. Role of the Church

Since the beginning of the problem, both the Catholic Church, the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon (PCC), The Cameroon Baptist Convention (CBC), The Full Gospel Mission and the Apostolic Church have prayed. The PCC, CBC and the Catholic churches have raised money in their churches to support the refugees and the hundreds of Anglophones imprisoned because of the crisis. The churches have made calls for dialogue and expressed their willingness to mediate. But the government party has ignored those calls entirely. The church leaders have made several attempts to meet with the President over the crisis to no avail. The churches have condemned the killings and called for the demilitarization of the Anglophone regions.

When the crisis started even church schools were disrupted. Some church schools were also burned. All the churches called for prayers and dialogue as a way out of the crisis. Their calls fell on deaf ears and the government paid no attention to them. The Catholic Bishops of the Bamenda Ecclesiastical Province that covers the Anglophone regions, presented a memorandum to the President. The memorandum was an elaborate presentation of the Anglophone problem, its origins and impact on the Anglophone community. The church called for respect of human dignity, justice for all and constructive dialogue that addressed the root causes of the crisis as a way out of the crisis. The Council of Protestant Churches in Cameroon also put out a document outlining the history and root causes of the problem. They called for dialogue but have been ignored by the government. Instead, a lawsuit was filed against the denomination leaders of the Anglophone regions by a certain consortium of parents wide seen as a way to intimidate the church leaders. After several months of hearings and adjournments, the case was finally dropped.

I have recently met with various denominational leaders in the country including Cardinal Christian Tumi, The President of the Council of Protestant Churches/PCC Moderator Rev. Fonki, the President of the Cameroon Baptist Convention Rev. Ncham and Arch Bishop Kleda, President of the Episcopal Conference of the Catholic Church, to find out where they see the role of the church in resolving the crisis. They were clear that the church has made clear its position as to the outcome of the crisis. Both sides need to sit on the same table and come to an agreement of the way forward. As to the role of the church in mediating the conflict, no one has approached the church and the church cannot force itself to be a mediator if they have not been invited. But the church will continue to seek to meet with President Paul Biya. The bottom line is that a third party needs to oversee the process of mediation, and discussions must take place on neutral grounds.

Cameroon needs general political sanitation; there is urgent need for political overhaul. The Cameroon Association for Bible Translation and Literacy (CABTAL) has started a process of training and preparing pastors and other leaders in a trauma healing program to assist the people. There is a huge humanitarian crisis going on if nothing is done! It may get worse especially as the people, who are subsistence agriculturalists) have not worked in their fields to prepare a harvest.

8. Recommendations for United States

I urge the United States to communicate to President Biya that continuing US assistance in his military struggle against Boko Haram terrorists in northern Cameroon is dependent upon his complete withdrawal of Cameroon troops from the Anglophone regions. President Biya must immediately redeploy his troops to northern Cameroon to aid in fighting Boko Haram.

Extrajudicial killings, burning down entire villages, shooting unarmed civilians and forced disappearances in South West and North West Regions must be investigated. We urge for an international commission of inquiry to fully investigate these crimes against humanity and bring perpetrators to justice.

Let the United States call for international mediation to resolve the root causes of this territorial dispute and prevent further atrocities and genocide. All those arrested in connection with the crisis must be released.

Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples
Adopted by General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960

The General Assembly,

Mindful of the determination proclaimed by the peoples of the world in the Charter of the United Nations to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Conscious of the need for the creation of conditions of stability and well-being and peaceful and friendly relations based on respect for the principles of equal rights and self-determination of all peoples, and of universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion,

Recognizing the passionate yearning for freedom in all dependent peoples and the decisive role of such peoples in the attainment of their independence,

Aware of the increasing conflicts resulting from the denial of or impediments in the way of the freedom of such peoples, which constitute a serious threat to world peace,

Considering the important role of the United Nations in assisting the movement for independence in Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories,

Recognizing that the peoples of the world ardently desire the end of colonialism in all its manifestations,

Convinced that the continued existence of colonialism prevents the development of international economic co-operation, impedes the social, cultural and economic development of dependent peoples and militates against the United Nations ideal of universal peace,

Affirming that peoples may, for their own ends, freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources without prejudice to any obligations arising out of international economic co-operation, based upon the principle of mutual benefit, and international law,

Believing that the process of liberation is irresistible and irreversible and that, in order to avoid serious crises, an end must be put to colonialism and all practices of segregation and discrimination associated therewith,

Welcoming the emergence in recent years of a large number of dependent territories into freedom and independence, and recognizing the increasingly powerful trends towards freedom in such territories which have not yet attained independence,

Convinced that all peoples have an inalienable right to complete freedom, the exercise of their sovereignty and the integrity of their national territory,

Solemnly proclaims the necessity of bringing to a speedy and unconditional end colonialism in all its forms and manifestations;

And to this end Declares that:

1. The subjection of peoples to alien subjugation, domination and exploitation constitutes a denial of fundamental human rights, is contrary to the Charter of the United Nations and is an impediment to the promotion of world peace and co-operation.
2. All peoples have the right to self-determination; by virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.
3. Inadequacy of political, economic, social or educational preparedness should never serve as a pretext for delaying independence.
4. All armed action or repressive measures of all kinds directed against dependent peoples shall cease in order to enable them to exercise peacefully and freely their right to complete independence, and the integrity of their national territory shall be respected.

5. Immediate steps shall be taken, in Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories or all other territories which have not yet attained independence, to transfer all powers to the peoples of those territories, without any conditions or reservations, in accordance with their freely expressed will and desire, without any distinction as to race, creed or colour, in order to enable them to enjoy complete independence and freedom.

6. Any attempt aimed at the partial or total disruption of the national unity and the territorial integrity of a country is incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

7. All States shall observe faithfully and strictly the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the present Declaration on the basis of equality, non-interference in the internal affairs of all States, and respect for the sovereign rights of all peoples and their territorial integrity.

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