



COI QUERY

Country of Origin	Cameroon
Questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Background information on the Anglophone crisis2. Information on the situation for Anglophones in Cameroon's Francophone regions and in Northwest/Southwest Cameroon3. Information on the recent security situation in the city of Bamenda4. Information on the availability of state protection for Anglophones in Cameroon
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*The target audience is caseworkers, COI researchers, policy makers, and decision making authorities. The answer was finalised on the **30 January 2018**. Any event taking place after this date is not included in this answer.*



COI QUERY RESPONSE

1. Background information on the Anglophone crisis

In a publication by 'Chatham House' – a non-governmental organisation analysing major international issues – Dr Nkongho Felix Agbor Balla¹ provides an historical background to the current crisis:

'The roots of the recent escalation in the conflict between the francophone and the anglophone populations of Cameroon can be found in the colonial history of the country. Initially a German colony, Cameroon was divided between the British and the French from 1916 onwards'².

International Crisis Group also notes that the Anglophone problem dates back to the independence period:

'Generally little understood by Francophones, the Anglophone problem dates back to the independence period. A poorly conducted re-unification, based on centralisation and assimilation, has led the Anglophone minority to feel politically and economically marginalised, and that their cultural difference are ignored'³.

In an interview with 'The Conversation', a news media founded by Barclays Africa and seven universities in South Africa, history professor Verkijika G. Fanzo (University of Yaoundé), explains the causes of the tensions between English-speaking and French-Speaking Cameroon:

'The current dispute is between the part of the country that was once run by the British, and the larger part where French is spoken and which was once run by the French. In 1972 the original federal structure that post-colonial unification was based on was abrogated. The English-speaking, or Anglophone, West Cameroon was annexed in a united republic, and in 1984 the word "united" was scrapped. The country became Cameroon and the English-speaking region was assimilated into the French-speaking area.

The dignity and statehood of Anglophones was silently destroyed – not by the French-speaking (Francophone) community at large, but by the government led and dominated by Francophones.

¹ Nkongho Felix Agbor-Balla is a human rights lawyer, the African Bar Association (AFBA) Vice President for Central Africa, Fako Lawyers Association (FAKLA) President, and he is the President of the now-banned Cameroon Anglophone Civil Society Consortium (CACSC). He is also the founder and current Executive Director of the Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa (CHRNA). Nkongho Felix Agbor-Balla has consistently worked for the rights of citizens of the Anglophone regions in Cameroon, and was actively involved in organising non-violent civil disobedience to protest conditions in schools and to demand the release of imprisoned students and teachers in late 2016 and early 2017. Source: Frontline Defenders, *Nkongho Felix Agbor Balla detained and charged in military court on eight counts; About Nkongho Felix Agbor Balla*, n.d. ([url](#))

² Chatham House, *The Cameroon Anglophone Crisis: Examining Escalation and Seeking Solutions*, 2 November 2017 ([url](#)).

³ International Crisis Group, *Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis at the Crossroads*, 2 August 2017 ([url](#)).



Being Anglophone or Francophone in Cameroon is not just the ability to speak, read and use English or French as a working language. It is about being exposed to the Anglophone or Francophone ways including things like outlook, culture and how local governments are run. Anglophones have long complained that their language and culture are marginalised. 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 state⁴.

An article published by Al Jazeera on 1 October 2017 states:

'English-speaking Cameroonians make up one-fifth of Cameroon's population of 22 million. They have long accused the central government of discriminating against their community, arguing that they are excluded from employment and forced to speak French in business and official affairs, despite English being one of the country's official languages'⁵.

A source from 'Waging Nonviolence' – a platform for news and analysis on justice and peace around the world – notes:

'Citizens from these regions [i.e. Anglophone regions] have been mobilizing against their marginalization by the Francophone-dominated government. They complain about chronic under-representation in all issues of national life, including political appointments and professional training. They argue that since their reunification over 55 years ago, they have been treated as second-class citizens. Their vibrant economic and political institutions have been completely erased, and their education and judicial systems have being undermined and degraded'⁶.

According to Professor Verkijika G. Fanso, a lawyers's strike, in October 2016, prompted the current crisis:

'In **October 2016** [emphasis added] lawyers went on a strike in an effort to force the government to stop appointing Francophone magistrates who spoke no English and had no training in common law to preside over courts in the Anglophone regions. During peaceful demonstrations in the cities of **Bamenda** [emphasis added] and Buea, the lawyers were roughly manhandled by government security forces.

Teachers soon came out in support of the lawyers. They wanted the government to stop posting Francophone teachers who spoke no English to teach subjects other than French in Anglophone schools. People across professions followed the teachers, and Cameroon's cities became "ghost towns" everywhere on certain days of the week as part of a large-scale stay away⁷.

In a news article referring to the same October 2016 events, the Guardian notes:

⁴ The Conversation, *History explains why Cameroon is at war with itself over language and culture*, 15 October 2017 ([url](#)).

⁵ Al Jazeera, *Cameroon's English-speakers call for independence*, 1 October 2017 ([url](#)).

⁶ Waging Nonviolence, *English-speakers mobilize to end their marginalization in Cameroon*, 12 May 2017 ([url](#)).

⁷ The Conversation, *History explains why Cameroon is at war with itself over language and culture*, 15 October 2017 ([url](#)).



‘What began as a simple request for English to be used in the courtrooms and public schools of the country’s two anglophone regions has escalated into a crisis in which dozens of people have died, hundreds have been imprisoned and thousands have escaped across the border to Nigeria’⁸.

In the same article, a prominent Cameroonian lawyer and activist, Felix Agbor Nkongo, is quoted: “‘The anglophone crisis is the biggest time bomb in Cameroon,” said Agbor Nkongho, who was released by presidential decree seven months after his arrest. “If it’s not addressed, it could break the country””⁹.

‘Quartz Africa’ – a digital news outlet – states the following on the linguistic and economic roots of the crisis in the Anglophone regions:

‘The Anglophone regions of Cameroon erupted in protest in **2016** [emphasis added], with people calling for more autonomy from the majority French-speaking government. While the origin of the crisis is based on the imposition of the French language in English courts and schools, it also has roots in economic marginalization and the allocation of resources’¹⁰.

International Crisis Group notes that the **October 2016** crisis escalated a year later, in October 2017:

‘The crisis in the Northwest and Southwest regions of Cameroon, now one year old, escalated on **1 October 2017** [emphasis added], when militant secessionist groups symbolically proclaimed the independence of Ambazonia. Violence left dozens of protesters dead and over 100 injured. This sharp deterioration in the situation requires an urgent response from Cameroonian President Paul Biya, as well as a strong reaction from international partners. The events of 1 October (a date commemorating the 1961 reunification between the Cameroon under French mandate and the British Southern Cameroons) are the culmination of a new, intensified phase of the crisis. It is marked by the failure of official government missions abroad in August, which led to increased cases of arson and sporadic violence by unidentified splinter groups, violent repression of Anglophone activists by security forces on 22 September, bomb blasts in the Northwest, and a de facto state of emergency from 29 September to 3 October’¹¹.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) notes in a press briefing dated 6 October 2017:

‘Cameroon’s Anglophone regions have seen multiple strikes and demonstrations **over the past year [2017]** [emphasis added] as resentment and tensions have built at what English-speakers see as discrimination against them in favour of the majority French-speaking population’¹².

Commenting on the authorities’ response to the 2017 crisis, OHCHR writes:

⁸ Guardian (The), *Deaths and detentions as Cameroon cracks down on anglophone activists*, 3 January 2018 ([url](#)).

⁹ Guardian (The), *Deaths and detentions as Cameroon cracks down on anglophone activists*, 3 January 2018 ([url](#)).

¹⁰ Quartz Africa, *Cameroon’s Anglophone crisis is threatening to spin out of control*, 14 January 2018 ([url](#)).

¹¹ International Crisis Group, *Cameroon’s Worsening Anglophone Crisis Calls for Strong Measures*, 19 October 2017 ([url](#)).

¹² OHCHR, *Press briefing notes on Cameroon*, 6 October 2017 ([url](#)).

'In response, the Government deployed additional security and defence forces. We urge the authorities to ensure that the security forces exercise restraint and take measures to prevent the use of force when policing demonstrations. People should be allowed to exercise their right to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression, including through having uninterrupted access to the internet'¹³.

2. Information on the situation for Anglophones in Francophones' regions of Cameroon and in Northwest/Southwest Cameroon

Appendix A: Map of Cameroon



Figure 1¹⁴

¹³ OHCHR, *Press briefing notes on Cameroon*, 6 October 2017 ([url](#)).

¹⁴ International Crisis Group, *Cameroon: A Worsening Anglophone Crisis Calls for Strong Measures*, Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°130, 19 October 2017 ([url](#)).



Among the sources consulted and listed, and within the timeframe allocated for this query response, no specific information was found on the situation for Anglophones in Cameroon's Francophone regions.

The consulted sources mainly reflect on the situation in Northwest and Southwest Cameroon, referred to as 'Ambazonia'¹⁵ by Anglophones.

Information is provided in a chronological order (2017-January 2018).

2017

On its webpage 'Peoples under threat', Minority Rights Group International (MRG) states, on the situation in Cameroon covering the year 2017: 'Meanwhile, political and economic discrimination against Anglophones continues to be a major issue. The government responded to protests in **January 2017** [emphasis added] by cutting internet services in the English-speaking regions'¹⁶.

As previously mentioned, the crisis in the Northwest and Southwest regions of Cameroon escalated on **1 October 2017**, 'when militant secessionist groups symbolically proclaimed the independence of Ambazonia'¹⁷.

In an article issued by MRG on 4 October 2017, it is noted:

'According to news reports, in an attempt to suppress demonstrations on **1 October 2017**, [emphasis added] security forces opened fire on protesters calling for the independence of the Anglophone regions, killing at least 17 people. Social media was blocked in the areas, the second time in less than a year, whilst electricity was also cut. MRG and its partner RECODH¹⁸ recently raised concerns over rising tensions and human rights abuses in the Anglophone-majority regions of Cameroon with the UN Human Rights Council'¹⁹.

MRG continues:

'The rights organisations highlighted the government's reaction to social movements and popular protest by teachers and lawyers from the Anglophone minority, which has included detention and alleged torture of peaceful protesters, a three-month internet block affecting only the English-speaking regions earlier this year [**2017**] , and interference in citizens' rights to freedom of association, expression and public demonstration. Though the government

¹⁵ Situated in Southwest Cameroon, the "Federal Republic of Ambazonia" is the name given by Anglophone secessionists to their self-proclaimed state. Source: International Crisis Group, *Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis: Dialogue Remains the Only Viable Solution*, 21 December 2017 ([url](#)). For a map of Ambazonia, see: Government of Ambazonia website, *Map of Ambazonia*, n.d., ([url](#)).

¹⁶ MRG, *People Under Threat, Cameroon*, 2017, n.d. ([url](#)).

¹⁷ International Crisis Group, *Cameroon's Worsening Anglophone Crisis Calls for Strong Measures*, 19 October 2017 ([url](#)).

¹⁸ RECODH: 'Réseau Camerounais des Organisations des Droits de l'Homme' is an organisation that promotes and protects human rights in Cameroon. For more information, see: [url](#)

¹⁹ MRG, *As death toll rises in Cameroon's English-speaking regions, MRG condemns violence, calls for impartial investigation into killings and long-term solutions to ongoing crisis*, 4 October 2017 ([url](#)).



freed some of the leaders of the movement, others are still in jail and little information is available on the exact number of persons detained'²⁰.

On 2 October 2017, Reuters reports on the 1 October 2017 protests: 'Soldiers shot dead at least eight people and wounded others in Cameroon's restless English-speaking regions on Sunday **[1 October 2017]** during protests by activists calling for its independence from the majority Francophone nation, an official and witnesses said'²¹.

In a press release issued on **2 October 2017**, Amnesty International (AI) documents security incidents in several towns of the Anglophone regions in Cameroon: 'Amnesty International can confirm that at least 17 people have been killed by the security forces following yesterday's protests in several towns of the Anglophone regions in Cameroon'²².

In a publication summarising the recommendations of the UN Committee against Torture to the government of Cameroon, AI reports:

'Elsewhere in its concluding observations, the UN Committee also echoed concerns raised by Amnesty International and others in relation to human rights violations committed in the Anglophone regions of the country, including by demanding an investigation into the deaths of at least 20 people killed in **October** [emphasis added] in clashes between the security forces and protestors. The Committee criticized the failure of Cameroon to provide information on the number of people still detained following protests in the regions, or whether investigations had been launched into the excessive use of force'²³.

On 31 October 2017, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reports on the Cameroonian seeking refuge in Nigeria, following the renewed violence early October:

'UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, together with the local authorities in Southwestern Nigeria, is assisting recently arrived Cameroonians seeking refuge and safety. Thousands have fled to Nigeria following renewed violence in Anglophone parts of Cameroon **earlier in October [2017]** [emphasis added]. Together with the Nigerian authorities, we have registered some 2,000 people so far, with the help of our local partners in various locations in Southwestern Nigeria. An additional 3,000 are awaiting registration, while more people might be trapped in forests on the Cameroonian side as they attempt to cross the border'²⁴.

The same source adds that:

'UNHCR is working with the Nigerian government and other UN agencies on a contingency plan, readying humanitarian assistance for up to 40,000 people crossing into Nigeria. Our fear,

²⁰ MRG, *As death toll rises in Cameroon's English-speaking regions, MRG condemns violence, calls for impartial investigation into killings and long-term solutions to ongoing crisis*, 4 October 2017 ([url](#)).

²¹ Reuters, *At least eight dead amid Cameroon Anglophone protests*, 2 October 2017 ([url](#)).

²² AI, *Cameroon: Seventeen killed following protests in Anglophone regions*, 2 October 2017 ([url](#)).

²³ AI, *UN Committee tells Cameroon to put an end to torture by security forces in the fight against Boko Haram*, 6 December 2017 ([url](#)).

²⁴ UNHCR, *Thousands of Cameroonian seek refuge in Nigeria*, 31 October 2017 ([url](#)).

however, is that 40,000 might actually be a conservative figure in a situation where the conflict might continue'²⁵.

In an article titled 'Refugees warn of looming civil war in Cameroon', the Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN) reports: 'Up to 20,000 anglophones have fled into Nigeria amid fears a secessionist struggle is spiralling out of control'²⁶.

On **17 November 2017**, OHCHR formulates recommendations to the Government of Cameroon:

'The Government of Cameroon must engage representatives of the Anglophone population in a meaningful political dialogue and halt renewed violence in the south-west and north-west, where the country's English-speaking minority are reportedly suffering worsening human rights violations [emphasis added], a group of UN experts has warned'²⁷.

International Crisis Group notes an escalation of the situation in **November 2017** when armed attacks were launched against defence forces:

'In August 2017, Crisis Group sounded the alarm about the risk of an insurrection in Cameroon's Anglophone region unless a genuine dialogue, complete with strong measures to defuse tensions, was initiated. The crisis, which has been brewing for the past year, regrettably escalated in **November** [emphasis added] when armed attacks were launched against defence forces. Since then, at least sixteen soldiers and police officers have been killed and some twenty injured during thirteen attacks led by separatists'²⁸.

An article by 'Africa News' dated **17 November 2017** reports: 'The United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) has expressed concerns over the rising spate of deadly exchanges between the Cameroon's security forces and separatists in the country's restive anglophone region'²⁹.

IRIN also refers to a deepening crisis in **November 2017**:

'The secessionist crisis in Cameroon's western region is deepening, with the government promising to crack down hard after anglophone militants shot dead four soldiers and two policemen last week. The soldiers were killed in an ambush on a military convoy outside the town of Mamfe on **29 November** [emphasis added] in Cameroon's anglophone South West Region. The policemen were killed the following night in the nearby town of Eyoumojock'³⁰.

In a news report published on **29 November 2017** by 'Africa News' the November incidents are also described:

'An overnight attack in Cameroon's Southwest region has killed four soldiers. The attack took place specifically in the town of Mamfe. "Four soldiers were killed around 02:00 in the Mamfe

²⁵ UNHCR, *Thousands of Cameroonian seek refuge in Nigeria*, 31 October 2017 ([url](#)).

²⁶ IRIN, *Refugees warn of looming civil war in Cameroon*, 9 November 2017 ([url](#)).

²⁷ OHCHR, *Cameroon human rights must be respected to end cycle of violence - UN experts*, 17 November 2017 ([url](#)).

²⁸ International Crisis Group *Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis: Dialogue Remains the Only Viable Solution*, 21 December 2017 ([url](#)).

²⁹ Africa News, *Upsurge of violence in Cameroon's Anglophone crisis worries U.N.*, 17 November 2017 ([url](#)).

³⁰ IRIN, *Cameroon government 'declares war' on secessionist rebels*, 4 December 2017 ([url](#)).

area," a government source told the AFP news agency. It brings to eight the number of deaths resulting from the activities of secessionists on the security forces. The government confirmed the death of four soldiers in a similar series of attacks **earlier in November** [emphasis added]³¹.

'Voice of America' (VOA) – an international news outlet – also reports on the same incidents, in an article dated **30 November 2017**: 'Five soldiers and five policemen have been killed within 24 hours in Cameroon's two English-speaking regions. Separatists have claimed responsibility'³².

In December 2017, IRIN comments on the government reaction to the secessionist attacks:

'Promising action, Defence Minister Joseph Beti Assomo said on Saturday [**2 December**] that "measures will be taken immediately" to "eradicate this inconvenient situation", without elaborating further. State radio was blunter. "[President] Paul Biya has declared war on these terrorists who seek secession," it announced'³³.

'Deutsche Welle' (DW) – a German news outlet – writes in an article dated **5 December 2017**:

'People fleeing villages in the English-speaking regions of Cameroon accuse government troops of killings, rape and harassment. Thousands are on the run after President Paul Biya declared war on secessionists'³⁴.

The same article quotes a young man named Ayuk, resident of Mamfe, situated in the Anglophone Southwest region of Cameroon:

'Ayuk told DW that many people have lost trace of their relatives, including him: "I have not seen my father and my mother. I have not seen them since yesterday when they started chasing us. Everywhere there are military men. Please, people should help me. Young boys are being killed. They abduct some, now everybody is in the bush," he said'³⁵.

In a news article (**14 December 2017**), Reuters refers to a large number of villagers, in the Anglophone southwest, forced to leave their villages:

'Government repression - including ordering thousands of villagers in the Anglophone southwest to leave their homes - has driven support for a once-fringe secessionist movement, stoking a lethal cycle of violence'³⁶.

On the situation of refugees in Nigeria, Reuters (**14 December 2017**), continues:

'The United Nations refugee agency UNHCR is preparing for up to 40,000 refugees (...) The new arrivals in Nigeria live mainly with host families who have supported them with food,

³¹ Africa News, *Four soldiers killed in Cameroon's Anglophone region*, 29 November 2017 ([url](#)).

³² VOA, *Five Police, Five Soldiers Killed in Cameroon Violence*, 30 November 2017 ([url](#)).

³³ IRIN, *Cameroon government 'declares war' on secessionist rebels*, 4 December 2017 ([url](#)).

³⁴ DW, *Cameroonians flee government troops in English-speaking regions*, 5 December 2017 ([url](#)).

³⁵ DW, *Cameroonians flee government troops in English-speaking regions*, 5 December 2017 ([url](#)).

³⁶ Reuters, *Cameroon's Anglophones flee to Nigeria as crackdown grows*, 14 December 2017 ([url](#)).

clothing and shelter. The integration, a UNHCR official said, was made easier by the pidgin English spoken on either side of the border'³⁷.

A publication issued on **18 December 2017** by the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) documents the arbitrary detention and judicial harassment of a pro-Anglophone writer, particularly vocal on the Anglophone crisis: 'The Observatory has been informed by the Central Africa Human Rights Defenders Network (REDHAC) about the arbitrary detention as well as the judicial harassment of Mr. Alain Patrice Nganang (...)'³⁸.

The same source adds:

'The Observatory expresses its concerns over the arbitrary detention and judicial harassment of Mr. Alain Nganang which appears to be a retaliation of his peaceful and legitimate human rights activities. Consequently, the Observatory urges Cameroonian authorities to immediately and unconditionally release him and in the meantime to guarantee his right to due process and fair trial'³⁹.

On 19 December 2017, UNHCR writes about its concerns regarding the continuous flow of refugees in Nigeria, as the result of the ongoing unrest:

'Since tensions between security forces and pro-independence demonstrators in Cameroon's restive Anglophone region intensified in October [2017], joint UNHCR and government teams have registered some 7,204 arrivals in remote areas of Nigeria's Cross River state. As they report, thousands more are awaiting registration. Some 70 per cent of the registered asylum seekers come from the area of Akwaya in south-west Cameroon [i.e. Anglophone region]. Women and children in their majority, they are hosted by local communities near the border. But, as the unrest in Cameroon continues and more asylum seekers arrive, UNHCR is concerned that the local population's capacity will soon be stretched to its limits'⁴⁰.

On 21 December 2017, International Crisis Group alerts on an 'emerging insurgency': 'A recent spike of violence in Cameroon's Anglophone regions points to an emerging insurgency'⁴¹.

Also in December **2017**, International Crisis Group refers to a 'deteriorated situation' in Cameroon⁴². The source adds:

'Political standoff between govt [government] and minority Anglophones worsened as secessionist insurgency gained momentum. In Manyu division, South West region secessionists clashed with security forces nine times in several places **4-25 Dec[ember]** [emphasis added] killing six gendarmes and one soldier, raising to seventeen the number of security forces personnel killed in English-speaking regions since start of Nov[ember] 2017'⁴³.

³⁷ Reuters, *Cameroon's Anglophones flee to Nigeria as crackdown grows*, 14 December 2017 ([url](#)).

³⁸ OMCT, *Cameroon: Arbitrary detention and judicial harassment of Mr. Alain Patrice Nganang*, 18 December 2017 ([url](#)).

³⁹ OMCT, *Cameroon: Arbitrary detention and judicial harassment of Mr. Alain Patrice Nganang*, 18 December 2017 ([url](#)).

⁴⁰ UNHCR, *UNHCR steps up support to Cameroonians fleeing to Nigeria*, 19 December 2017 ([url](#)).

⁴¹ International Crisis Group, *Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis: Dialogue Remains the Only Viable Solution*, 21 December 2017 ([url](#)).

⁴² International Crisis Group, *Global Overview*, December 2017 ([url](#)).

⁴³ International Crisis Group, *Global Overview*, December 2017 ([url](#)).

The same source furthermore states:

‘Separately armed forces reportedly killed or arrested and beat several civilians and torched dozens of houses in Kembong and Babong in Manyu division [i.e. Southwest Anglophone region] **20-23 Dec[ember] [emphasis added]** in retaliation for killing of security forces; allegedly pro-secession inhabitants of these two villages fled to Nigeria. 10,000 Cameroonian refugees reportedly arrived in Benue state in Nigeria during Dec[ember], adding to 28,000 already in Cross River state’⁴⁴.

2018

On **12 January 2018**, AI reports on the arrest and detention, in Nigeria, of ten leaders of the independence movement from the Anglophone regions of Cameroon: ‘Ten leaders of the independence movement in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon could be at risk of torture and unfair trials if extradited from Nigeria, where they have been arrested and detained in secret for one week, Amnesty International said today’⁴⁵.

AI continues:

‘The pro-independence activists said that they were meeting in Nigeria to discuss the influx of thousands of asylum seekers following protests in October, in which more than 20 civilians were killed by security forces. In recent months, more than 10 members of security forces have also been killed by more radical pro-independence groups. They have always claimed to pursue their aim of independence for the Anglophone regions through peaceful means’⁴⁶.

‘Quartz Africa’, in an article dated **14 January 2018**, notes the intensification of the government crackdown on the pro-independence movement:

‘The fallout from Cameroon’s Anglophone crisis is spiraling, leading to a refugee emergency, escalating tensions with neighboring nations, and threatening to put a dent in global cocoa production. **In recent weeks**, more than 15,000 people have fled the English-speaking Northwest and Southwest regions to neighboring Nigeria, as the government intensifies its crackdown on a pro-independence movement. Dozens of people have also been killed by security forces, with Cameroonian troops even crossing into Nigeria in pursuit of the rebels in **December [2017]**’⁴⁷.

On **22 January 2018**, the ‘Journal du Cameroun’ – a Cameroonian media outlet – writes on the military invading localities in the Anglophone Southwest region:

⁴⁴ International Crisis Group, *Global Overview*, December 2017 ([url](#)).

⁴⁵ AI, *Cameroon: Ten arrested Anglophone leaders at risk of unfair trial and torture if deported from Nigeria*, 12 January 2018 ([url](#)).

⁴⁶ AI, *Cameroon: Ten arrested Anglophone leaders at risk of unfair trial and torture if deported from Nigeria*, 12 January 2018 ([url](#)).

⁴⁷ Quartz Africa, *Cameroon’s Anglophone crisis is threatening to spin out of control*, 14 January 2018, ([url](#)), accessed 23 January 2018.

'Residents of Kwa Kwa, Match⁴⁸, and environs have all fled to the bush after the military invaded the localities and razed down buildings in their attempts to track down separatist forces. The operation also led to several persons dead notably a 96-year old woman who was razed to ashes by the fire reportedly set by the soldiers'⁴⁹.

3. Information on the recent security situation in the city of Bamenda⁵⁰

The following information was found on the security situation in the city of Bamenda, the capital of Cameroon's Anglophone Northwestern region⁵¹.

Information is provided in a chronological order (years 2016-2017).

2016

UNHCR states in publication dated **21 December 2016**:

'Special Rapporteurs Maina Kiai and Rita Izsak-Ndiaye said they were deeply concerned about the worsening violence in the north-west and south-west, which has included the use of force against English-speaking demonstrators protesting against the growing appointment of French-speaking civil servants in their regions. Most of the protests have been led by regional bar associations and teachers' unions'⁵².

The same source adds:

'Mr. Kiai, the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and association, said he was particularly alarmed by reports that security forces used excessive force during demonstrations on 28 November in Buea and **8 December [2016] in Bamenda** [emphasis added]. Sources say that police used live bullets to disperse protesters, leading to the death of at least four people. Dozens more were injured, arbitrarily arrested and allegedly tortured'⁵³.

In its annual report on the state of the world's human rights – covering the period 2016-2017 – AI writes:

'Cameroon's security forces arbitrarily arrested protesters and used excessive force to disperse them. In one example, on **8 December [2016]**, the use of live bullets by security forces led to the deaths of between two and four people during a protest in the northwestern city of **Bamenda** [emphasis added].'⁵⁴

⁴⁸ Located in the Meme division, Southwest (Anglophone) region of Cameroon. For more information, see: [url](#).

⁴⁹ Journal du Cameroun, *Cardinal Tumi condemns military violence in Anglophone regions*, 22 January 2018 ([url](#)).

⁵⁰ Also known as *Abakwa* and *Mankon Town*.

⁵¹ See figure 1 in this query response.

⁵² OHCHR, *Cameroon: UN experts urge Government to halt violence against English-speaking minority protests*, 21 December 2016 ([url](#)).

⁵³ OHCHR, *Cameroon: UN experts urge Government to halt violence against English-speaking minority protests*, 21 December 2016 ([url](#)).

⁵⁴ AI, *Amnesty International Report: The State of the World's Human Rights*, 22 February 2017 ([url](#)), p. 107.

2017

According to an article by the 'Journal du Cameroun' dated 4 October 2017: 'It should be recalled that home-made bombs had exploded in **Bamenda** on **September 18** and September 22 [**2017**] in Douala, Cameroon's economic hub [emphasis added]. The blasts prompted the government to ratchet up its response to anglophone agitation, notably calling the separatists "terrorists"' ⁵⁵.

International Crisis Group, in a briefing dated 19 October 2017, writes on a 'deadly **1 October**', when pro-Anglophone Cameroonians began a peaceful march, proclaiming the independence of Ambazonia, the name given by secessionists to their hypothetical state:

'Defence and security forces responded with disproportionate force, leading to at least 40 deaths and over 100 injured protesters **between 28 September and 2 October** [emphasis added]. This death toll is the result of live ammunition and excessive use of tear gas, including in homes and against the faithful as they left church. Defence and security forces arrested hundreds of people without warrant, including in their homes. They made use of torture and inhuman and degrading treatment. Sexual abuse, destruction of property and looting of homes by soldiers and police, as well as shooting from helicopters at protesters in Kumba, **Bamenda** [emphasis added] and near Buea were reported by a dozen residents, local politicians, senior officials, the press, human rights organisations and the Catholic bishops of the two regions' ⁵⁶.

On the 1 October 2017 events, IRIN states:

'That was on **1 October [2017]**, the day when thousands of Cameroonians in the two English-speaking regions took to the streets demanding secession from the rest of the majority Francophone country. The security forces responded with violence. Just in **Bamenda** [emphasis added], the capital of Northwest Region, Amnesty International said 17 people were killed. There is now mounting concern that Cameroon's "anglophone crisis" is spinning out of control' ⁵⁷.

On this **1 October 2017** incident in **Bamenda**, Reuters writes in a report dated 2 October 2017:

'At least 17 people have died in clashes between security forces and protesters in Cameroon's English-speaking regions, Amnesty International said, as violence broke out in an area where a separatist movement is gathering strength. The clashes began on Sunday after local groups called protests against what they say is their marginalization by the Francophone-dominated government of the country's long-time ruler, Paul Biya. Witnesses said security forces opened fire, often at close range' ⁵⁸.

Another article by Reuters dated **1 October 2017** reports on the incidents in Bamenda:

⁵⁵ Journal du Cameroun, *Another home-made bomb explodes in Bamenda*, 4 October 2017 ([url](#)).

⁵⁶ International Crisis Group, *Cameroon: A Worsening Anglophone Crisis Calls for Strong Measures: Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°130*, 19 October 2017 ([url](#)), p. 2.

⁵⁷ IRIN, *Refugees warn of looming civil war in Cameroon*, 9 November 2017 ([url](#)).

⁵⁸ Reuters, *At least 17 killed in Cameroon separatist clashes: Amnesty*, 2 October 2017 ([url](#)).



‘Businesses were shuttered in the regions’ main cities, Buea and **Bamenda** [emphasis added], where military helicopters circled overhead. The security deployment included troops from the Cameroonian army’s Rapid Intervention Brigade, a unit that typically fights Islamist Boko Haram militants in the country’s north’⁵⁹.

Reuters adds: ‘In **Bamenda** [emphasis added], where a bomb attack blamed on separatists wounded three policemen last week, young men brandishing improvised secessionist flags clashed with security forces who attempted to disperse them with teargas’⁶⁰.

On the same incidents, Reuters notes: ‘Troops and attack helicopters opened fire on protesters at the height of separatist rallies in English-speaking areas of Cameroon **over the weekend [30 September-1 October 2017]** [emphasis added], killing and wounding people, witnesses and rights groups said’⁶¹. The same sources adds: ‘Eight people in the towns of **Bamenda** [emphasis added], Buea, Ndu, Tombel and Kumbo told Reuters that police and soldiers moved in to stop the protests and in some areas, low-flying attack helicopters fired tear gas and live rounds on the crowds’⁶².

The ‘Journal du Cameroun’ reports on **4 October 2017**:

‘A home-made device exploded overnight near a police station in **Bamenda**, reports said on Tuesday **[3 October]** [emphasis added]. According to AFP, no casualty was recorded and there was no claim of responsibility by late afternoon yesterday. The reports state that another device nearby was safely defused by police. The blast came after a weekend of violence in which 17 people were killed in the English-speaking Northwest and Southwest regions as the authorities clamped down on activists. Fourteen died in clashes with security forces, and five were prisoners shot by guards in an attempted jail break at Kumbo, according to an AFP toll’⁶³.

In a statement on prison conditions in Cameroon, dated **13 October 2017**, AI notes:

‘More than 500 people detained in towns including **Bamenda** [emphasis added] and Buea (...) At least 500 people remain detained in overcrowded detention facilities following mass arbitrary arrests in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon, and many wounded protestors fled hospitals to avoid arrest, Amnesty International said today. Those detained were arrested following protests in dozens of towns in North-West and South-West Cameroon on 1 October, in which more than 20 people were unlawfully shot dead by security forces’⁶⁴.

On **8 November 2017**, Reuters reports about attacks perpetrated, on the same date, by Anglophone secessionists in the city of Bamenda:

‘Anglophone secessionists in Cameroon killed at least two gendarmes on **Wednesday [8 November]**, two secessionist leaders and a security official said, signaling an escalation in their protracted dispute with the central government. The attacks in the English-speaking city of

⁵⁹ Reuters, *At least eight dead amid Cameroon Anglophone protests*, 1 October 2017 ([url](#)).

⁶⁰ Reuters, *At least eight dead amid Cameroon Anglophone protests*, 1 October 2017 ([url](#)).

⁶¹ Reuters, *Cameroon army helicopters shot separatist protesters: witnesses*, 6 October 2017 ([url](#)).

⁶² Reuters, *Cameroon army helicopters shot separatist protesters: witnesses*, 6 October 2017 ([url](#)).

⁶³ Journal du Cameroun, *Another home-made bomb explodes in Bamenda*, 4 October 2017 ([url](#)).

⁶⁴ AI, *Cameroon: Inmates ‘packed like sardines’ in overcrowded prisons following deadly Anglophone protests*, 13 October 2017 ([url](#)).

Bamenda [emphasis added] marked the worst fighting in recent years between secessionist militants and government forces in the central African state after a year of mostly peaceful protest⁶⁵.

Africa News reports in a news article dated **13 November 2017**:

‘Four makeshift bombs have exploded in Cameroonian city of **Bamenda** [emphasis added] – capital of the restive North West region. No casualties were recorded except for minor damage. A source quoted by the AFP news agency said “Four home-made bombs exploded in Bamenda, one at 21:00 and the three others at 3:00 am.” The overnight attack comes on the back of a series of attacks last week which killed four members of the security forces according to the government’⁶⁶.

OHCHR writes, in a publication dated **17 November 2017**: ‘The appeal for action comes nearly a year after UN experts publicly urged the Government to halt violence against the English-speaking minority, following reports that Anglophone protesters in Buea and **Bamenda** [emphasis added] had suffered undue force’⁶⁷.

4. Information on the availability of state protection for Anglophones in Cameroon

Among the sources consulted, limited information has been found on the availability of state protection for Anglophones in Cameroon. As a background, information is provided on the functioning and status of the police force and judicial system.

A crime and safety report issued by the Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) dated **7 October 2017** notes:

‘Local law enforcement and security personnel continue to face significant difficulties stemming from crime. Suspects are rarely caught, and police response, if at all, is often delayed. The police and security forces lack training and equipment. In some cases, police forces have perpetrated criminal acts, or they have been complicit with criminal elements. Security roadblocks serve mostly as a venue for police and military gendarmes to extort bribes’⁶⁸.

In its country report on human rights practices in Cameroon, covering the year **2016**, the US Department of State (US DoS) writes:

‘The government took some steps to hold police accountable for abuses of power. Police remained ineffective, poorly trained, and corrupt. Impunity continued to be a problem. Civilian authorities maintained some control over the police and gendarmerie, and the government had somewhat effective mechanisms to investigate and punish abuse and corruption’⁶⁹.

⁶⁵ Reuters, *Cameroon separatists kill at least two gendarmes as Anglophone dispute escalates*, 8 November 2017 ([url](#)).

⁶⁶ Africa News, *Makeshift bombs detonated in Cameroon city of Bamenda*, 13 November 2017 ([url](#)).

⁶⁷ OHCHR, *Cameroon human rights must be respected to end cycle of violence - UN experts*, 17 November 2017 ([url](#)).

⁶⁸ OSAC, *Cameroon 2017 Crime & Safety Report*, 7 October 2017 ([url](#)).

⁶⁹ US DoS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2016 – Cameroon*, 3 March 2017 ([url](#)).



The same report states:

‘Although the constitution and law prohibit arbitrary interference with privacy, family, home, or correspondence, these rights were subject to restriction for the “higher interests of the state,” and there were credible reports police and gendarmes harassed citizens and conducted searches without warrants’⁷⁰.

The GAN Business Anti-Corruption Portal (GANBACP) – providing country risk profiles on corruption – notes in a **May 2017** update:

‘Cameroon's police force is inefficient, poorly trained and plagued by corruption. Bribery is widespread among the police and officers often demand payments at checkpoints and in exchange for granting unlawful freedom to detainees. Further, corrupt police officials arrest and abuse individuals in exchange for monetary rewards from influential entities and individuals. Over half of Cameroonians consider the police to be corrupt’⁷¹.

Global Security notes the following on corruption within the Cameroonian police force:

‘Although police were reportedly sanctioned for corruption, some officers convicted of corruption were relieved of their duties but retained their jobs due to weak accountability and enforcement mechanisms for internal disciplining. Individuals reportedly paid bribes to police and the judiciary to secure their freedom. Police demanded bribes at checkpoints, and influential citizens reportedly paid police to make arrests or abuse individuals with whom they had personal disputes. There were reports that some police associated with the issuance of emigration and identification documents collected additional fees from applicants’⁷².

In addition to the above, US DoS writes about judicial corruption in Cameroon:

‘Judicial corruption was a problem. According to press reports, judicial authorities accepted illegal payments from detainees’ families in exchange for a reduced sentence or the outright release of their relatives. Judges were susceptible to executive influence and often delayed judicial proceedings in response to governmental pressure. In a few instances, the court avoided handling cases for politically motivated reasons. Many powerful political or business interests had virtual immunity from prosecution’⁷³.

The same report notes:

‘The constitution and law provide for an independent judiciary. While the judiciary demonstrated impartiality and independence at times, it was often corrupt and subject to political influences. Individuals reportedly accused innocent persons of crimes or caused trial delays to solve personal disputes. As in 2015 there were no reliable reports that authorities disregarded court orders’⁷⁴.

⁷⁰ US DoS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2016 – Cameroon*, 3 March 2017 ([url](#)).

⁷¹ GANBACP, *Cameroon Corruption Report*, Updated May 2017 ([url](#)).

⁷² Global Security, *Cameroon-Corruption*, n.d. ([url](#)).

⁷³ US DoS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2016 – Cameroon*, 3 March 2017 ([url](#)).

⁷⁴ US DoS, *Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2016 – Cameroon*, 3 March 2017 ([url](#)).

Global Security states: 'Judicial corruption was a problem. According to press reports, judicial authorities accepted illegal payments from detainees' families in exchange for a reduced sentence or the outright release of their relatives'⁷⁵.

The following sources report on the perceived discrimination of Cameroon's judicial system.

A news report published by the Daily Nation – a Kenyan independent newspaper – dated **2 October 2017**, mentions discrimination in the education and judicial system: 'Since November, the anglophone minority has been protesting against perceived discrimination especially in education and the judicial system, where they say the French language and traditions are being imposed on them, even though English is one of the country's two official languages'⁷⁶.

BBC reports in a report dated **9 January 2017**:

'Teachers and lawyers in the Cameroonian city of Bamenda have gone on strike in a dispute about language, bringing streets and classrooms to a standstill. The main cause of discontent is the use of French in courts and schools in English-speaking parts of the country, which include Bamenda'⁷⁷.

The same sources adds:

'English speakers have long complained of discrimination in Cameroon. They say they are often excluded from top civil service jobs and that many government documents are published only in French, even though English is an official language. English-speaking lawyers also object to the employment of court workers who do not understand the application of British common law'⁷⁸.

'News 24' – a South African news outlet – reports on **6 February 2017**: 'The protests began late last year when lawyers asked that French-speaking judges be transferred out of English-speaking regions, saying justice cannot be rendered when the judge, the lawyer and the suspect cannot communicate'⁷⁹.

Reuters reports in an article dated **7 June 2017**:

'A Cameroonian military court on Wednesday threw out a request for bail for three English-speaking activists who could face the death penalty for taking part in a protest against the government of President Paul Biya. The case has stoked opposition to Biya and widened divisions between majority French-speaking and smaller Anglophone populations, the legacy of Cameroon's unique history of being carved up between British and French colonists a century ago'⁸⁰.

⁷⁵ Global Security, *Cameroon-Corruption*, n.d. ([url](#)).

⁷⁶ Daily Nation, *Cameroon Anglophones declare 'self rule'*, 2 October 2017 ([url](#)).

⁷⁷ BBC, *Cameroon: Teachers and lawyers in Bamenda stike over language row*, 9 January 2017 ([url](#)).

⁷⁸ BBC, *Cameroon: Teachers and lawyers in Bamenda stike over language row*, 9 January 2017 ([url](#)).

⁷⁹ News 24, *English vs. French tensions in Cameroon turn deadly*, 6 February 2017 ([url](#)).

⁸⁰ Reuters, *Cameroon court denies bail to Anglophone protesters*, 7 June 2017 ([url](#)).



VOA, in an article dated **17 November 2016**, states: 'More than 1,000 lawyers in English-speaking parts of the country are on strike. They are angry about the widespread use of the French language in the court system. The lawyers are refusing to work until the government acts to reduce the use of French in the courts'⁸¹.

⁸¹ VOA, *Lawyers in Cameroon Are Fighting the Justice System*, 17 November 2016 ([url](#)).

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