



Home Office

Country Policy and Information Note

Cameroon: Anglophones

Version 1.0

March 2020

Preface

Purpose

This note provides country of origin information (COI) and analysis of COI for use by Home Office decision makers handling particular types of protection and human rights claims (as set out in the [Introduction](#) section). It is not intended to be an exhaustive survey of a particular subject or theme.

It is split into two main sections: (1) analysis and assessment of COI and other evidence; and (2) COI. These are explained in more detail below.

Assessment

This section analyses the evidence relevant to this note – i.e. the COI section; refugee/human rights laws and policies; and applicable caselaw – by describing this and its inter-relationships, and provides an assessment of, in general, whether one or more of the following applies:

- A person is reasonably likely to face a real risk of persecution or serious harm
- The general humanitarian situation is so severe as to breach Article 15(b) of European Council Directive 2004/83/EC (the Qualification Directive) / Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights as transposed in paragraph 339C and 339CA(iii) of the Immigration Rules
- The security situation presents a real risk to a civilian's life or person such that it would breach Article 15(c) of the Qualification Directive as transposed in paragraph 339C and 339CA(iv) of the Immigration Rules
- A person is able to obtain protection from the state (or quasi state bodies)
- A person is reasonably able to relocate within a country or territory
- A claim is likely to justify granting asylum, humanitarian protection or other form of leave, and
- If a claim is refused, it is likely or unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

Decision makers **must**, however, still consider all claims on an individual basis, taking into account each case's specific facts.

Country of origin information

The country information in this note has been carefully selected in accordance with the general principles of COI research as set out in the [Common EU \[European Union\] Guidelines for Processing Country of Origin Information \(COI\)](#), dated April 2008, and the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation's (ACCORD), [Researching Country Origin Information – Training Manual, 2013](#). Namely, taking into account the COI's relevance, reliability, accuracy, balance, currency, transparency and traceability.

The structure and content of the country information section follows a [terms of reference](#) which sets out the general and specific topics relevant to this note.

All information included in the note was published or made publicly available on or before the 'cut-off' date(s) in the country information section. Any event taking place or report/article published after these date(s) is not included.

All information is publicly accessible or can be made publicly available, and is from generally reliable sources. Sources and the information they provide are carefully considered before inclusion. Factors relevant to the assessment of the reliability of sources and information include:

- the motivation, purpose, knowledge and experience of the source
- how the information was obtained, including specific methodologies used
- the currency and detail of information, and
- whether the COI is consistent with and/or corroborated by other sources.

Multiple sourcing is used to ensure that the information is accurate, balanced and corroborated, so that a comprehensive and up-to-date picture at the time of publication is provided of the issues relevant to this note.

Information is compared and contrasted, whenever possible, to provide a range of views and opinions. The inclusion of a source, however, is not an endorsement of it or any view(s) expressed.

Each piece of information is referenced in a brief footnote; full details of all sources cited and consulted in compiling the note are listed alphabetically in the [bibliography](#).

Feedback

Our goal is to continuously improve our material. Therefore, if you would like to comment on this note, please email the [Country Policy and Information Team](#).

Independent Advisory Group on Country Information

The [Independent Advisory Group on Country Information](#) (IAGCI) was set up in March 2009 by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration to support him in reviewing the efficiency, effectiveness and consistency of approach of COI produced by the Home Office.

The IAGCI welcomes feedback on the Home Office's COI material. It is not the function of the IAGCI to endorse any Home Office material, procedures or policy. The IAGCI may be contacted at:

Independent Advisory Group on Country Information

Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration

5th Floor

Globe House

89 Eccleston Square

London, SW1V 1PN

Email: chiefinspector@icibi.gov.uk

Information about the IAGCI's work and a list of the documents which have been reviewed by the IAGCI can be found on the Independent Chief Inspector's pages of the [gov.uk website](#).

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Assessment

Updated: 12 March 2020

1. Introduction

1.1 Basis of claim

- 1.1.1 Fear of persecution and/or serious harm by state actors because the person is an Anglophone and/or an actual or perceived Anglophone separatist.

1.2 Points to note

- 1.2.1 An Anglophone is primarily distinguished from other Cameroonians by the fact that they speak English, or a dialect of English. However the distinction is not simply linguistic – around 20% of the population speak English but perhaps 50% speak ‘pidgin’ English, not all of whom are considered Anglophone. Instead being ‘Anglophone’ may also encompass other aspects of a person’s background including belonging to or having a shared culture, history and being from an ethnic group with its origin in the North-West and South-West regions (which were formerly UN mandated territories administered by the UK and have a legal system derived from UK-common law) (see [Who is an Anglophone?](#)).
- 1.2.2 This note is an assessment of the risk for Anglophones and does not represent the policy position of the British Government on the crisis in the North-West and South-West (Anglophone) regions of Cameroon.

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2. Consideration of issues

2.1 Credibility

- 2.1.1 For information on assessing credibility, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).
- 2.1.2 Decision makers must also check if there has been a previous application for a UK visa or another form of leave. Asylum applications matched to visas should be investigated prior to the asylum interview (see the [Asylum Instruction on Visa Matches, Asylum Claims from UK Visa Applicants](#)).
- 2.1.3 Decision makers should also consider the need to conduct language analysis testing (see the [Asylum Instruction on Language Analysis](#)).

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2.2 Exclusion

- 2.2.1 Decision makers must consider whether one (or more) of the exclusion clauses of the Refugee Convention and Qualification Directive are applicable. Each case must be considered on its individual facts and merits.
- 2.2.2 There are reports that armed separatist groups have perpetrated human rights abuses including using violence, targeting killings, committing arson, and been involved in kidnapping and abductions to further their aims in the Anglophone region (see [Separatists’ actions](#)).

- 2.2.3 If there are serious reasons for considering that the person has been involved in such activities, then decision makers must consider whether one of the exclusion clauses is applicable.
- 2.2.4 If the person is excluded from the Refugee Convention, they will also be excluded from a grant of humanitarian protection.
- 2.2.5 For further guidance on the exclusion clauses and restricted leave, see the [Asylum Instruction on Exclusion: Article 1F of the Refugee Convention](#) and the [Asylum Instruction on Restricted Leave](#).

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2.3 Refugee convention reason

- 2.3.1 The person's membership of a particular social group – Anglophones are distinguished by their shared culture, history, language and geographical and ethnic origins – and/or actual or imputed political opinion.
- 2.3.2 Establishing a convention reason alone is not sufficient to be recognised as a refugee. The question to be addressed in each case is whether the particular person has a well-founded fear of persecution on account of their actual or imputed convention reason.
- 2.3.3 For further guidance on Convention reasons see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.4 Risk

- 2.4.1 Cameroon's English-speaking minority of 5 million make up approximately 20% of the country's total population. They largely live in the two 'Anglophone' regions of the North-West and South-West (NWSW). The regions are referred to officially as Western Cameroon but as 'Southern Cameroon' by pro-(Anglophone) independence supporters. There are, however, English speakers throughout Cameroon, with Anglophone populations living in Yaoundé and Douala while Anglophones are represented across Cameroonian society, notably Prime Minister Joseph Dion Ngute (see [Historical situation for Anglophones](#) and [Situation of Anglophones outside of South-West and North-West regions](#)).
- 2.4.2 Cameroon was administered as two separate UN trust territories under the UK and France between 1922-1960/61. In a referendum in 1961 'Anglophone' Cameroon choose to join newly independent 'Francophone' Cameroon in a federation, instead of the other option, joining Nigeria. Anglophone Cameroon continued its separate language, education and justice systems. The federation was abolished in 1972 and Cameroon became a unitary state (see [Historical situation for Anglophones](#) and [The Cameroon crisis – 2016 -2020](#)).
- 2.4.3 There has been some periodic expression of Anglophone discontent over these changes since 1972. The most recent phase of discontent began in October 2016 when Anglophone lawyers and teachers protested about the growing number of Francophone judges and teachers in the Anglophone regions. The Government responded by deploying troops, including using live ammunition. On 1 October 2017, separatists declared an independent

state called the 'Republic of Ambazonia' (see [Background to North-West / South-West conflict](#) and [Declaration of Independent 'Republic of Ambazonia'](#)). Separatists then announced a boycott of schools. By mid-2019 more than 80% of schools remained closed, mainly enforced through violence against teachers and attacks on school buildings by separatist armed groups. Around 700,000 children have been deprived of an education for the last four school years (see [School closures and boycotts](#)).

- 2.4.4 The separatists are structured around two main political bodies - the Interim Government of the Federal Republic of Ambazonia (IG) and the Ambazonia Governing Council (AGC). Linked to these political parties are more than 20 armed groups. Their size and capacity is unclear. Many separatists are based outside the country (see [Separatist / militia groups](#)).
- 2.4.5 Since October 2017, there have been many violent clashes between the security forces and armed separatist groups. The civilian population has suffered killings, village burnings, shootings, kidnappings and torture at the hands of different actors in the conflict (see [State response](#) and [Separatists' actions](#)).
- 2.4.1 The humanitarian impact has been extensive. Hundreds of thousands of people have been internally displaced and tens of thousands have sought refuge in Nigeria. One in 3 people in the Anglophone regions are in need of humanitarian aid. Many of the internally displaced persons (IDPs) remain in the Anglophone regions, hiding in remote bush areas. Sexual assault, exploitation and rape are frequently reported by female IDPs (see [Humanitarian situation](#) and [Situation of Anglophones outside of South-West and North-West regions](#)). Humanitarian assistance is hampered by the volatile security situation, especially in remote areas. Many Anglophones have moved to other areas of Cameroon including neighbouring West and Littoral regions (see [Humanitarian situation](#) and [Situation of Anglophones outside of South-West and North-West regions](#)).
- 2.4.2 In September 2019 the President of Cameroon announced that a 'national dialogue' would take place to allow all Cameroonians the opportunity to submit proposals to resolve the security crisis in the NWSW regions. Violent clashes between the military and pro-independence fighters occurred in the lead up to the talks in late September and several key separatists did not attend. The national dialogue resulted in a number of proposals, which included changing the country's name back to the 'United Republic of Cameroon' and the adoption of a Special Status for the two Anglophone regions. Afterwards President Biya freed more than 300 people who had been arrested in connection with the NWSW crisis (see [Release of prisoners](#)). Key figure Julius Sisiku Ayuk Tabe, who was extradited from Nigeria, remains in prison (see [National dialogue – 2019](#)).
- 2.4.3 In December 2019, legislation was passed on decentralisation including Special Status for the NWSW regions. Reactions to the granting of Special Status for the NWSW regions have been mixed. Steps need to be taken by the Government to implement the legislation (see [National dialogue – 2019](#)).
- 2.4.4 Legislative and municipal elections took place in Cameroon on 9 February 2020. There were reports of violence and allegations of electoral fraud. Voter

turnout was low in the Anglophone regions (see [Legislative and municipal elections - February 2020](#)).

- 2.4.5 Anglophones in the NWSW regions and elsewhere in Cameroon face discrimination including accessing education and the labour market, the available country information does not indicate that the government is targeting Anglophones for arrest, harassment or other serious human rights violations. In general, being an Anglophone is not sufficient, in itself, to give rise to a level of treatment which, by its nature and/or repetition, or by a combination of measures that amount to serious human rights violations, puts a person at real risk of persecution (see [Situation of Anglophones outside of SW and NW regions](#)).
- 2.4.6 However, sources indicate that the government has arrested and detained those who are or it perceives to be Anglophone separatists, some of whom may have experienced ill-treatment during detention (see [State response](#)). In addition to separatists within Cameroon, Diaspora groups supporting a federal or separate Anglophone Cameroon are active outside of the country in Europe, the USA and Canada. There are reports that some have provided funding to armed groups. Sources note that Anglophones living in the Diaspora who criticise or are perceived to oppose the government and advocate secession may face arrest and detention on return depending on their profile and the nature of their views. One source cited in a Canadian information response suggested that Anglophones generally are not safe on return as they 'might' be taken from the airport to prison or an unknown destination and 'can be' imprisoned and fined unless they bribe their way out. However this assertion is not supported by specific examples or corroborated by other sources. Nor is there consistent, recent and cogent evidence that unsuccessful asylum seekers per se are at risk on return. The available information, when considered in the round, does not indicate the government has an adverse interest in all returning Anglophones, but may have in those it perceives to support or to be linked to secessionist activities (see [Diaspora / sur place activities](#) and [Treatment on return](#)).
- 2.4.7 Persons who are Anglophones and have been, or are perceived to have been, involved in activities opposed to the government, including advocating greater autonomy or secession for Anglophone areas, are likely to be of adverse interest to the state. Whether a person is at risk of persecution will depend on their profile and activities. Factors to take into account include:
- the nature, aims and methods of the group they support or are linked to
 - the role, nature and profile of their activities for the organisation they represent or are linked to
 - whether it has a presence in Cameroon as well as outside of the country and any evidence that it is monitored by the government
 - if they are not part of a particular group their role and activities in opposing the government, such as organising demonstrations or publicly criticising the government via conventional or social media, both in-country and also in the country of seeking asylum

- whether they have come to the attention of the authorities previously, and if so, the nature of this interest

2.4.8 Decision makers must consider whether there are factors specific to the person which would place them at real risk. Each case must be considered on its facts with the onus on the person to demonstrate that they would be at real risk from the state.

2.4.9 For further guidance on assessing risk, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.5 Protection

2.5.1 Where the person has a well-founded fear of persecution from the state, they are unlikely to be able to avail themselves of the protection of the authorities.

2.5.2 For further guidance on assessing the availability of state protection, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.6 Internal relocation

2.6.1 Where the person has a well-founded fear of persecution from the state, it is unlikely to be reasonable to expect them to relocate to escape that risk.

2.6.2 For further guidance on internal relocation see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.7 Certification

2.7.1 Where a claim is refused, it is unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

2.7.2 For further guidance on certification, see [Certification of Protection and Human Rights claims under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 \(clearly unfounded claims\)](#).

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Country information

Section 3 updated: 12 March 2020

3. Historical situation for Anglophones

3.1 Who is an Anglophone?

- 3.1.1 In a 2014 research paper, Joseph L. Nfi – a Senior Lecturer with the Department of History, University of Buea – noted that ‘Scholars disagree about the concept of Anglophone in Cameroon’¹ Nfi argued that:

‘According to Ndobegang (2009) an Anglophone in Cameroon is not just someone who speaks English; not just someone whose parents lived in the former British Southern Cameroons; not just someone who has acquired Anglophone education or culture but precisely someone whose ancestry is Southern Cameroonian. Bobda (2001) clearly indicates that the term Anglophone, as it is understood in Cameroon, has mostly an ethnic connotation. It has very little to do with knowledge of the English language as an Anglophone in the Cameroonian sense does not need to know a word of English. This definition is more relevant because in Cameroon the concept Anglophone is more ethnic, cultural and regional than linguistic... Anglophones are those Cameroonians whose ancestral origins and ethnic bases are in the former British territory of the Southern Cameroons whether they speak the English Language or not. The term is therefore exclusionary and limited to people of a defined territory, culture and history.’²

- 3.1.2 A House of Commons briefing paper, dated 17 April 2019, stated that:

‘...There continue to be important differences between Anglophone Cameroon and the rest of the country that it opted to join in 1961. The main difference centres on language. French dominates the public realm in Cameroon, despite a long-standing official policy of bilingualism. Most Southern Cameroonians characterise the region as still predominantly English-speaking.

‘However, while there is much truth in this statement, a bit of caution may be justified on this count. A 2008 academic study noted that, in a country of over 250 African languages, a significant minority of Cameroonians spoke neither French nor English. But it also acknowledged that “pidgin English” was the lingua franca in the bulk of the country, with at least 50% of the population speaking it. It added there was also an emerging “Camfranglais” or “Francamglais” amongst the young in Cameroon’s two main cities, Yaoundé and Douala.[...]

‘These observations suggest that the “Anglophone”/“Francophone” linguistic distinction may be more blurred in everyday life for ordinary Cameroonians than contemporary advocates for the independence of Southern Cameroon might suggest.

‘Another important difference is the legal system in Southern Cameroon, which is based predominantly on UK-derived common law. But critics of the

¹ Joseph L. Nfi, ‘The anglophone identity in Cameroon 50 years after reunification’, Jan 2014, [url](#)

² Joseph L. Nfi, ‘The anglophone identity in Cameroon 50 years after reunification’, Jan 2014, [url](#)

central government argue that the autonomy of this legal system has been progressively eroded, with the use of French increasingly being imposed in local courts. There are similar complaints about the marginalisation of English in schools and universities.’³

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3.2 Historical context to Anglophone situation

3.2.1 Cameroon was administered as two separate UN trust territories under the UK and France between 1922-1960/61^{4 5}.

3.2.2 The Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa (CHRNA) and the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights’ joint report, Cameroon’s Unfolding Catastrophe, 3 June 2019, reported that: ‘The crisis in Cameroon is commonly characterized as a linguistic one, with politically marginalized Anglophones opposing the government, but language is only part of the crisis, which is deeply rooted in the local and institutional culture and history of decolonization.’⁶

3.2.3 The March 2019 Congressional Research Service ‘In Focus’ report stated: ‘Current-day Cameroon was formed through the merger of French and British colonial territories in 1961; in 1972, the central government unilaterally replaced a federal system with a unitary state. Northwest and Southwest provinces (formerly UK-held “Southern Cameroons”) remain predominantly English-speaking, with distinct educational and legal systems.’⁷

3.2.4 A House of Commons briefing paper, dated 17 April 2019, stated that:

‘Relations between the largely Anglophone regions of Cameroon and the country’s dominant Francophone elite have long been fraught...

‘The tensions originate in a complex and contested decolonisation process in the late-1950s and early-1960s, in which Britain, as one of the colonial powers, was heavily involved...

‘Many Anglophone Cameroonians argue that they were denied the right to meaningful self-determination at the time of independence and that federal arrangements introduced at the time were subsequently illegitimately dismantled by the Francophone-controlled central government. Many also claim that the central government privileges the majority Francophone population. They complain (with some justification) that they have been marginalised within the state, including in the education and judicial systems. Finally, they complain that they do not benefit much from the oil which has been found in the region.’⁸

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³ HoC, ‘The Anglophone Cameroon crisis...April 2019 update’ (p7), 17 April 2019, [url](#)

⁴ UN Library, ‘Trusteeship Council – Trust territories introductions’, last updated 9 October 2019, [url](#).

⁵ UN Library, ‘Trusteeship Council – Cameroons under...’, last updated 9 October 2019, [url](#).

⁶ CHRNA, ‘Cameroon’s Unfolding Catastrophe’, (p18), 3 June 2019, [url](#)

⁷ CRS, ‘In Focus – Cameroon’, 12 March 2019, (section Anglophone crisis), [url](#)

⁸ HoC, ‘The Anglophone Cameroon crisis...April 2019 update’, (summary), 17 April 2019, [url](#)

3.3 Demography

3.3.1 The English-speaking minority make-up approximately 20% (or 5 million)⁹ of the total population (of around 25.5 million)¹⁰ and are concentrated in the Anglophone North West / South West (NWSW) regions¹¹.

3.3.2 Douala and Yaoundé are also home to Anglophones; an open source search shows that there are bilingual schools listed in the [Douala](#) and [Yaoundé](#) areas^{12,13}. An Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada response of August 2018 citing various sources noted:

‘The International Crisis Group representative said that the Anglophone population is "dominant in several neighbourhoods" in Douala and in Yaoundé... Other sources similarly indicate that there are Anglophone communities in Douala... and Yaoundé... A July 2018 commentary published by International Crisis Group [3] notes that many Douala natives are fluent in Pidgin English and some barely speak French. A lot of people here are bilingual in English and French, sometimes due to marriages between Anglophones and Francophones. Bilingualism is also enhanced by education. Children of Francophone homes are a majority in many Anglophone schools...

‘Similarly, NDH-Cameroun noted that there are [translation] "numerous" bilingual and Anglophone schools in Yaoundé and Douala...’¹⁴

3.3.3 Anglophones are represented beyond the NWSW regions¹⁵. President Biya appointed an English-speaking prime minister, Joseph Dion Ngute in January 2019¹⁶. The previous prime minister Philomen Yang also came from the English-speaking northwest¹⁷. In March 2018 two cabinet ministers were appointed, Nalova Lyonga from Cameroon’s English-speaking southwest region became the minister of secondary education and Paul Atanga Nji from the English-speaking northwest region took up the job of minister of territorial administration¹⁸. Joshua Osih, the ‘flag-bearer’ of the main opposition party, Social Democratic Front, is ‘a member of parliament representing the Central Wouri constituency (Douala), though he is originally from the Southwest region.’¹⁹

3.4 Anglophone regions

3.4.1 There are 2 Anglophone regions in Cameroon: South-West and North-West²⁰, known as ‘Southern Cameroon’ and ‘Western Cameroon’

⁹ BBC News, ‘Cameroon’s Anglophone crisis’, 4 October 2018, [url](#)

¹⁰ CIA, ‘The World Fact Book, Cameroon’, (section: population), updated 26 August 2019, [url](#)

¹¹ Refugees International, ‘Crisis denied in Cameroon’, 29 May 2019, [url](#)

¹² Google search, ‘bilingual schools in Douala Cameroon’, October 2019, [url](#)

¹³ Google search, ‘bilingual schools in Yaoundé Cameroon’, October 2019, [url](#).

¹⁴ IRBC, Information response, ‘Cameroon: Situation of Anglophones...’, 24 August 2018, [url](#)

¹⁵ FP, ‘Cameroon Must Make Concessions to End the Anglophone Crisis’, 27 September 2019, [url](#)

¹⁶ FP, ‘Cameroon Must Make Concessions to End the Anglophone Crisis’, 27 September 2019, [url](#)

¹⁷ VOA, ‘Cameroon’s President Adds Anglophones to Cabinet’, 6 March 2018, [url](#)

¹⁸ VOA, ‘Cameroon’s President Adds Anglophones to Cabinet’, 6 March 2018, [url](#)

¹⁹ ICG, ‘Dialogue is essential to unite Cameroons disparate voices’, 27 July 2018, [url](#)

²⁰ ICG, ‘Cameroon’s Anglophone Crisis: How to get to Talks?’, 2 May 2019, [url](#)

respectively by pro-independence supporters²¹, which the map below illustrates²²



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3.5 Discrimination

- 3.5.1 A December 2016 statement by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN OHCHR) read: 'English speakers have long complained that they face discrimination and marginalization, and are excluded from top civil service positions and public services. They also claim their access to justice is limited because the majority of legislation and judicial proceedings are in French.'²³
- 3.5.2 The UN Economic and Social Council in March 2019 also expressed concern regarding the de facto discrimination and marginalization faced by some ethnic and linguistic minorities, including the English-speaking

²¹ HoC, 'The Anglophone Cameroon crisis...April 2019 update', (p5), 17 April 2019, [url](#)

²² ICG, 'Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis: How to get to Talks?', (p30), 2 May 2019, [url](#)

²³ UN OHCHR, 'UN experts urge Government to halt violence ...', 21 Dec 2016, [url](#)

minority, which hinders their effective enjoyment of their economic, social and cultural rights. As well as the difficulties faced by English speaking persons (among other groups) in gaining access to the labour market, including employment in government service²⁴.

- 3.5.3 The Refugees International report published 29 May 2019 stated that: 'The Anglophone minority, mostly concentrated in the North-West and South-West regions (NWSW), has been marginalized, discriminated against, and economically disenfranchised since a referendum ended federalism and joined the two populations in a full political union in 1972.'²⁵

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Section 4 updated: 12 March 2020

4. The Cameroon crisis – 2016 to 2020

4.1 Background to North-West / South-West conflict

- 4.1.1 A Deutsche Welle (DW) article of 30 September 2019 'Who are Cameroon's self-named Ambazonia secessionists?' which included material from a number of interviews reported that:

'In the run-up to their independence, residents of British-administered Southern Cameroon, which included the northwest and southwest regions, held a referendum on 30 September 1961 under the auspices of the United Nation. The question was whether they wanted to belong to the newly Independent Federal Republic of Nigeria or to French-administered Cameroon. Under promises of a federal state and English as the official language, English-speaking Southern Cameroon joined the majority French-speaking East [Cameroon]. Despite the agreement, Cameroon became a unitary state in 1972. "Many think that if we had remained faithful to the Federal Republic of Cameroon we would not have had the problems we have now", Cardinal Christian Tumi tells DW.

'In the 1990s, anglophone parties issued threats of declaring independence unless the old constitution was re-instated. They felt marginalized by the majority francophone government. Joseph Wirba, self-exiled Cameroonian MP, explains to DW: "We joined a nation that did not want our freedom and they presumed that they had to eliminate our culture gradually, to reduce us to second class citizens. That neglect pushed people gradually over the years to that extreme to say: no, we cannot continue to be treated that way."'²⁶

- 4.1.2 A January 2017 Deutsche Welle article explained the background to the protests, which started as strikes by lawyers and teachers. 'The lawyers complained that the influence of the French language was overbearing and wondered why French-speaking judges who don't understand English have been transferred to English-speaking regions. Thousands of English-speaking teachers, lawyers and students then joined the strikes to protest a perceived marginalization.'²⁷

²⁴ UN – ECOSOC, 'Concluding observations...', 25 March 2019, [url](#)

²⁵ Refugees International, 'Crisis denied in Cameroon', 29 May 2019, [url](#)

²⁶ DW, 'Who are Cameroon's self-named Ambazonia secessionists?', 30 September 2019, [url](#)

²⁷ Deutsche Welle, 'Cameroon widens clampdown to curb Anglophone protests', 30 Jan 2017, [url](#)

4.1.3 The Conversation reported on 24 June 2018 that:

‘Roughly 20% of the country’s population of 24.6 million people are Anglophone. The majority are Francophone. The unfair domination of French-speaking politicians in government has long been the source of conflict.

‘Activists in the country’s Anglophone western regions are protesting their forced assimilation into the dominant Francophone society. They argue that this process violates their minority rights, which are protected under agreements that date back to the 1960s. Anglophone political representation and involvement at many levels of society has dwindled since the Federal Republic of Cameroon became the United Republic of Cameroon in 1972. There are growing calls for the Anglophone region to secede from Cameroon.’²⁸

4.1.4 The Refugees International report, *Crisis Denied in Cameroon*, published 29 May 2019, stated that:

‘Since the country’s independence from colonial powers in the 1960s, the NWSW has experienced political and social tensions, driven largely by grievances over the marginalization of the Anglophone population. In October 2016, instability gave way to violence when protests against the government’s imposition of Francophone teachers and lawyers in Anglophone schools and courts were met with military action. The reaction to the protests fuelled already existing separatist sentiment and dozens of non-state armed groups formed to retaliate against Cameroonian security forces and institute and enforce school boycotts.’²⁹

4.1.5 Responsibility to protect (R2P) reported in their bi-monthly bulletin of 15 September 2019 that:

‘Political conflict over cultural rights and identity have escalated in Cameroon’s Anglophone regions since 2016 when English speaking lawyers, students and teachers began protesting against their under-representation and cultural marginalization by the Francophone-dominated government. Violent repression by the security forces resulted in arbitrary arrests, sexual violence and the killing of civilians in the north-west and southwest regions. The crisis deepened after October 2017 when Anglophone separatists proclaimed independence, declaring a new state of “Ambazonia.” Since October 2017 at least 650 civilians, 235 members of the security forces and nearly 1,000 alleged separatists have been killed as a result of armed conflict and, according to OCHA, 530,000 people have been displaced.’³⁰

4.1.6 Human Rights Watch in their World report 2019 claimed:

‘In 2016 and 2017, government security forces used excessive force against largely peaceful demonstrations organized by members of the country’s Anglophone minority who were calling for increased autonomy for their region. During demonstrations in late 2017, government forces used live

²⁸ The Conversation, ‘Cameroon’s Anglophone crisis threatens...’, 24 June 2018, [url](#)

²⁹ Refugees International, ‘Crisis denied in Cameroon’, (Section: Background), 29 May 2019, [url](#)

³⁰ R2P, ‘Monitor- bi-monthly bulletin’, (p9), 15 September 2019, [url](#)

ammunition, including from helicopters, against demonstrators and bystanders, killing at least a dozen people and injuring scores. Some individuals detained in the context of the demonstrations were subjected to torture and ill-treatment.

'In October 2017, separatist leaders unilaterally declared independence of the North West and South West regions, and the formation of a new nation, Ambazonia. The following month, President Biya announced that Cameroon was under attack from terrorists and vowed to "eradicate these criminals." The pace and scale of separatists' attacks against security forces, government workers, and state institutions increased, especially following the arrest and deportation of 47 suspected secessionist activists from Nigeria in January 2018.'³¹

4.1.7 Human Rights Watch 2020 report, considering events in 2019, stated:

'Cameroon's Anglophone regions have been engulfed in crisis since late 2016, when English-speaking lawyers, students, and teachers began protesting what they saw as their under-representation in, and cultural marginalization by, the central government.

'The response of government security forces has included killing civilians, torching villages, and using torture and incommunicado detention. Armed separatists have also killed, tortured, and kidnapped dozens of civilians, including teachers, students, and government officials.

'On September 10, amid increasing violence and following sustained international pressure, President Biya called for a "national dialogue," a series of nationwide discussions aimed at addressing the Anglophone crisis. The dialogue ended with the adoption of a special status for the two Anglophone regions and the release of hundreds of political prisoners, including Maurice Kamto, leader of the opposition Cameroon Renaissance Movement (MRC), and other people arrested in connection with the unrest in the North-West and South-West regions.'³²

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4.2 Declaration of independent 'Republic of Ambazonia'

4.2.1 A February 2018 article on Africa News reported that 'The secessionists declared an independent state called Ambazonia on Oct. 1 [2017].'³³

4.2.2 Africa News reported in February 2018 that Sako Ikome Samuel had been named leader of the so-called 'Republic of Ambazonia' following the arrest and deportation of Julius Ayuk Tabe in January 2018³⁴.

4.2.3 A Deutsche Welle (DW) article 'Who are Cameroon's self-named Ambazonia secessionists?' which included material on a number of interviews reported:

'On 1 October 2017, separatists declared an independent state, which they named Ambazonia. The government sent in forces, and large-scale fighting broke out. Bullets and tear gas were unleashed onto civilian population...

³¹ HRW, 'World Report 2019 events of 2018, Cameroon events of 2018', 17 February 2019, [url](#)

³² HRW, 'World Report 2020 events of 2019, Cameroon events of 2019', 14 January 2020, [url](#).

³³ Africa News, 'Cameroon govt creates new military region based in Bamenda', 22 Feb 2018, [url](#)

³⁴ Africa News, 'Cameroon's new separatist leader declares 'era of self defense'', 11 Feb 2018, [url](#)

According to Amnesty International, 17 people were killed and hundreds more were wounded.

‘Reverend Thomas Mokoko Mbue, from the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon, says in a DW interview: "It was the beginning of a radical movement towards armed struggle. The argument was that the government had attacked their people who were unarmed and that they needed to defend them, so armed groups were formed."'”³⁵

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4.3 Security situation

- 4.3.1 The UN Economic and Social Council remarked in their report ‘Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of Cameroon’ in March 2019 that it was deeply concerned by:

‘...the widespread violence being witnessed in the North-West and South-West Regions, where most of the population belongs to the English-speaking community, and by reports that acts of violence leading to the destruction of hospitals, schools and entire villages in those Regions have been committed by non-State armed groups and by members of the State party’s security forces. The Committee is concerned about the serious impact of these situations on the enjoyment of the economic, social and cultural rights of the persons concerned, including women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons.’³⁶

- 4.3.2 A House of Commons briefing paper, dated 17 April 2019, stated that: ‘There has so far been no improvement in the situation during 2019. If anything, levels of violence have increased. At least 100 people – a combination of civilians, armed separatists and government forces – were reportedly killed in violent incidents during February [2019] alone. Both sides continue to be accused of committing human rights abuses.’³⁷

- 4.3.3 The Norwegian Refugee Council, in a report, Cameroon Tops List of Most Neglected Crises, published 4 June 2019, declared that:

‘Cameroon tops the Norwegian Refugee Council’s annual list of the world’s most neglected displacement crises launched today.

“The international community is asleep at the wheel when it comes to the crisis in Cameroon. Brutal killings, burned-down villages and massive displacement have been met with deafening silence,” warned the Secretary General of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Jan Egeland.

‘Conflict has so far uprooted half a million people in South-West and North-West Cameroon. Hundreds of villages have been set ablaze. Hospitals have been attacked. Health workers fear being abducted or killed. Over 780,000 children have seen their schools close and thousands of people, currently hiding in the bushes, have received no humanitarian relief. Still there has

³⁵ DW, ‘Who are Cameroon’s self-named Ambazonia secessionists?’, 30 September 2019, [url](#)

³⁶ UN – ‘ECOSOC, ‘Concluding observations...’, (section C4), 25 March 2019, [url](#)

³⁷ HoC, ‘The Anglophone Cameroon crisis...April 2019 update’, (section 4), 17 April 2019, [url](#)

been no major mediation efforts, no large relief programmes, minimal media interest and too little pressure on parties to stop attacking civilians.’³⁸

4.3.4 This OCHA report for July 2019 added:

‘The humanitarian situation in NWSW continues to deteriorate with serious protection incidents, including excessive violence against civilians by all parties to the conflict being noted. Displacement of civilians continues to increase with destruction of houses and villages by fighting parties. Impunity for crimes and acts of violence against civilians throughout the NWSW is a hallmark of the crisis.

‘...Security continues to worsen in the conflict hit regions. Human rights violations continue to be committed by both parties to the conflict. Arbitrary arrest, burning of villages and indiscriminate killing of civilians are on the rise. Women were reportedly used as human shields during hostilities. Those most affected by the violence are civilians including Persons with Disabilities, women, children and the elderly.’³⁹

4.3.5 International Crisis Group (ICG) reported in September 2019 that:

‘Since 2017, the rebels have battled security forces, with both sides reportedly committing abuses against the population, including burning villages, closing down schools and killing civilians. Violence has claimed around 3,000 lives, displaced half a million people within Cameroon, compelled another 40,000 to flee to Nigeria, deprived 700,000 children of schooling in their home areas and left one in three people in the Anglophone regions in need of humanitarian aid. On 20 August [2019], the government sentenced ten prominent separatist leaders to life in prison; separatists responded by upping their attacks. In early September [2019], they imposed a “lockdown” (general strike), which has again blocked the start of the new school year – nearly all schools in the area have been shuttered for most of the last three years as separatists have enforced, sometimes violently, a school boycott.’⁴⁰

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Section 5 updated: 12 March 2020

5. Humanitarian situation

5.1 Internally displaced persons (IDPs)

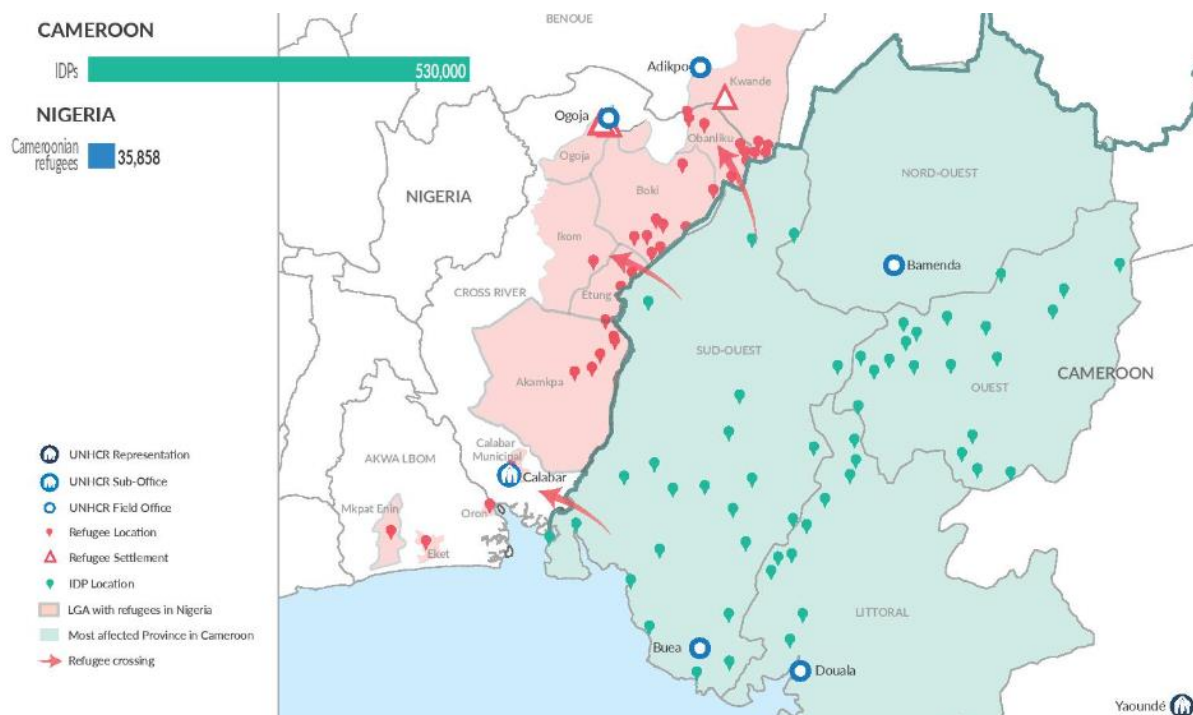
5.1.1 An April 2019 ACAPS overview on the Anglophone crisis provided the following map⁴¹ of IDP locations which shows pockets of IDP locations both within the NW-SW regions and in the neighbouring Ouest (West) and Littoral regions, in addition to refugee locations in Nigeria:

³⁸ NRC, ‘Cameroon tops list of most neglected crises’, 4 June 2019, [url](#)

³⁹ OCHA, ‘Cameroon: North-West and South-West’, (Security section), 31 July 2019, [url](#)

⁴⁰ ICG, ‘Cameroon’s Anglophone Dialogue: A Work in Progress’, 26 September 2019, [url](#)

⁴¹ ACAPS, ‘Cameroon, overview, Anglophone Crisis’, 30 April 2019, [url](#)



5.1.2 The March 2019 Congressional Research Service ‘In Focus’ report stated:

‘In 2016, Anglophones protested over state appointments of Francophone lawyers and teachers to English-speaking areas. The government granted minor concessions but cracked down on unrest, arresting hundreds (including peaceful activists, some of whom were charged with terrorism) and deploying the military to affected areas.

‘In October 2017, protesters marked the anniversary of Cameroon’s 1961 unification by symbolically proclaiming the secession of Anglophone areas. Some groups also took up arms in the name of an independent state of Ambazonia. The ensuing conflict between government forces and a fractious array of rebel groups has featured widespread abuses against civilians. Security forces have been accused of torture, extrajudicial killings, indiscriminate arrests, and burning of villages. Armed groups have reportedly carried out assassinations, kidnappings, mutilations, and attacks on schools and teachers. Attackers have targeted health facilities, spurring a mounting health crisis. As of late 2018, at least 437,000 Cameroonians were internally displaced due to the conflict, with a further 29,000 living as refugees in Nigeria, per U.N. agencies. Civil society-led efforts to convene talks to resolve the crisis have stalled amid a lack of support from government and armed secessionists.’⁴²

5.1.3 The International Crisis Group stated in their May 2019 report:

‘The conflict in the Anglophone regions is causing a major humanitarian crisis, with 530,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) and 35,000 refugees in Nigeria, mostly women and children.

‘Humanitarian assistance to IDPs is insufficient to meet needs, according to the UN. This is due to under-funding, difficult access and security risks.

⁴² CRS, ‘In Focus – Cameroon’, 12 March 2019, (section Anglophone crisis), [url](#)

Cameroon's authorities initially obstructed international humanitarian assistance and opposed the presence of UN and humanitarian NGOs in affected areas. In July 2018, the government reacted to increased UN pressure for access to Anglophone regions by announcing its own Humanitarian Response Plan. Distribution of aid is all the more difficult because few IDPs are accommodated in dedicated sites. Some are hosted by families; others live in the forest where access is difficult. International aid is focused on Anglophone regions, where three quarters of IDPs are living. Only a few of the 86,000 displaced in Francophone regions (Douala and the West) are receiving assistance, even from NGOs. The same is probably true for thousands of non-identified IDPs in Yaoundé.⁴³

- 5.1.4 The United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) reported in May 2019 that Cameroonian IDPs suffer from 'Protection incidents continue to be reported mostly by women in the 18-59 years-of-age bracket but also by unaccompanied and separated minors, people with disabilities, and lactating and pregnant women. The most frequently reported security incidents include destruction of homes and other domestic properties, extortion, torture and inhumane treatment including rape, sexual assault and sexual exploitation'.⁴⁴
- 5.1.5 The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported in their situation report, Cameroon: North-West and South-West as of 31 May 2019 that: 'The volatile and unpredictable security situation hampers access to all locations of IDPs and affected communities, particularly those hiding in remote areas and in the bush. The numerous lockdowns and ghost town days greatly hinder humanitarian and protection activities in the fields in both regions. The insecurity also increases transportation costs of relief items.'⁴⁵
- 5.1.6 Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa (CHRDA) and Raoul Wallenbergs report Cameroon's Unfolding Catastrophe, 3 June 2019, reported that:

'Mass displacements in the Anglophone regions have forced civilians to flee following attacks on villages and high levels of insecurity that prevail in both regions. The crisis has forced the displacement of half a million people.

'Internally displaced persons (IDPs) are mostly situated in the bush in remote areas and therefore have little or no access to medical assistance. Limited or no access to potable water has resulted in dysentery and diarrhoea, especially among children. Most IDPs are suffering from malaria after sleeping rough with no protection. Girls and young women have no access to sanitary pads or basic hygiene products and are forced to use whatever is available in their surroundings, resulting in serious infections. Most IDPs are women and children who abandoned their farms and have limited access to food. They are also in need of shoes, clothing, and other basic items necessary for survival.

⁴³ ICG, 'Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis: How to get to Talks?', (section B), 2 May 2019, [url](#)

⁴⁴ UNHCR, 'Cameroon Situation: Responding to the needs of IDPs...Jan-Dec 2019, March 2019, [url](#)

⁴⁵ OCHA, 'Cameroon: North-West and South-West', (Gaps and constraints section), 31 May 2019, [url](#)

'In a critique of the government's 18-month humanitarian action plan adopted in June 2018, the CHRDA's Salim Sango [[Cameroons abandoned IDPs](#)] denounced the government's lack of will to protect the rights of IDPs and refugees whose homes were burned down: the government had budgeted for 10,000 homes for rehabilitation within 18 months, but the commitment had not been delivered by April 2019, making it difficult for thousands of refugees and IDPs to return to their homes.'⁴⁶

5.1.7 OCHA reported in their situation report, Cameroon: North-West and South-West as of 31 August 2019 that:

'In August [2019], significant displacement was observed as people fled violence and the potential consequence of the lockdowns announced by the NSAGs [non-state armed groups]. Also, many people moved to other areas of Cameroon to avail of schooling opportunities. The continuous burning of houses in villages increased the need for shelter and NFIs [emergency shelter / non food items] in both regions. 70% of IDPs interviewed in both regions expressed the need for NFI assistance. Displaced persons in the bushes also have difficulty in accessing essential services such as water, healthcare and food.

'During the reporting period 1,240 persons received NFI assistance making a total of 75,991 people who have been supported with NFI assistance since January. 280 households benefited from shelter assistance in August. A total of 65,969 persons have been reached with shelter assistance since the beginning of this year. More than half of them with light shelter kits (tarpaulin and rope, without tools), while less than 40% have received standard shelter kits.

'The Shelter/NFI response in the NW is significantly smaller compared to the SW, despite the needs being much higher, due to lack of funding. UNHCR plans to distribute an additional 3,000 shelter kits in the SW and 4,000 in the NW in the coming months and 3,000 NFIs in the NW and 2,000 in the SW.'⁴⁷

5.1.8 OCHA reported in their situation report, Cameroon: North-West and South-West as of 30 June 2019 that:

'The humanitarian situation in the NWSW regions of the country continues to deteriorate. At least 1.3 million people are in need of assistance and over 530,000 people are internally displaced. Access to people in need is becoming increasingly difficult for the humanitarian community due to rising insecurity. Access constraints hamper humanitarian assessments and prevent assistance reaching those most vulnerable. The conflict is characterized by violations of international humanitarian law with civilians, particularly women and children most vulnerable. Funding for the humanitarian response from the international community falls very short of meeting the increasing needs.'⁴⁸

⁴⁶ CHRDA, 'Cameroon's Unfolding Catastrophe', (section D), 3 June 2019, [url](#)

⁴⁷ OCHA, 'Cameroon: North-West and South-West', (Shelter section), 31 August 2019, [url](#)

⁴⁸ OCHA, 'Cameroon: North-West and South-West', (Humanitarian section), 30 June 2019, [url](#)

5.1.9 A Deutsche Welle (DW) article dated 27 August 2019 describes the situation for Anglophones fleeing their home regions. The article included statements from civilians fleeing the Anglophone region and stated:

‘Thousands of people are hastily exiting Cameroon's conflict-torn Anglophone regions as repercussions of the jailing of separatist leaders by the Francophone-led government begin to take hold.

‘Separatist factions demanding the release of their leaders have begun locking down the north-west and south-west regions and urging a boycott of a “back to school” campaign supported by the Francophone-led state and civil society groups.

‘Thousands of people have already fled their homes in cities like Bamenda, Buea and Kumba - at the epicenter of the conflict. Some have sought to hide out in the bush to escape the wrath of both the security forces and armed separatists.

‘Travel agencies in the cities of Bamenda and Buea have been crowded and chaotic as residents try to make arrangements to leave, mainly by road. Fares have doubled or even tripled in some instances.

‘Celine Tanui bought bus tickets for a trip to the city of Bafoussam in West Region, where she plans to enroll [sic] her three children in school. "The sentencing of Julius Sisiku Ayuk Tabe has worsened things here in Bamenda."

‘Tanui said she was shocked by the court ruling and the separatists' vow that schools will not resume until they are released. "I have to carry my kids to the West so that they should go to school there," she told DW.

‘The exiled chief of staff of the self-declared Ambazonian interim government, Elad Kizito told DW the lockdown was already in place in various villages. "The Republic of Cameroon is trying to use the school resumption to deceive the international community that everything is normal and that things have been normalized in the so-called Anglophone region."

‘People who supported the Anglophone struggle are happy with the lockdown, while those who "live on the crumbs of the Republic of Cameroon" are disgruntled with it, Kizito said.

‘"Yes, it's painful, it's hard for the people. But we have made provision for those who are in dire need to be served in hospitals, childcare or emergencies." Emergency services would be available in major centers such as Buea, Bamenda and Victoria," he told DW.

‘What about those fleeing? "Those are not people who are not happy with the lockdown, those are people who have experienced the brutal terrorist republic militia in their houses. They now don't want it anymore and they are leaving."’⁴⁹

5.1.10 The Human Rights Council stated in August 2019 that: ‘Approximately half a million civilians have been forcibly displaced. Many internally displaced persons have relocated to remote bush areas with inadequate access to

⁴⁹ DW, ‘A new surge of people fleeing Cameroon's Anglophone regions’, 27 August 2019, [url](#)

food, potable water, clothing, basic hygiene, or medical assistance for resulting diseases, including dysentery and malaria.’⁵⁰

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5.2 Socio-economic decline

5.2.1 The International Crisis Group in an article on the Anglophone crisis stated in May 2019:

‘The conflict has also devastated the local economy, which accounts for about one fifth of the country’s GDP.’ Major state-owned companies, such as the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC) and Pamol, which employ tens of thousands of people in the Anglophone regions, are experiencing serious problems. There is no thorough assessment of the conflict’s economic impact, but in July 2018 the Cameroon Employers’ Association (GICAM) estimated the value of losses at FCFA 269 billion (€410 million). It also calculated that 6,434 jobs had been lost in the formal economy and a further 8,000 jobs were under threat.’⁵¹

5.2.2 Responsibility to protect (R2P) reported in their bi-monthly bulletin 15 September 2019 that: ‘The targeting of individuals based upon their cultural identity poses a direct threat to both Anglophone and Francophone civilians. As a result of ongoing violence and insecurity in Cameroon, 4.3 million people are in need of emergency assistance.’⁵²

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5.3 Food shortages

5.3.1 The Refugees International report published 29 May 2019, stated that ‘The majority of the displaced population previously relied on agriculture or raising livestock for both food and income. Forced to flee their villages, they now lack access to fields and markets. This circumstance has increased the threat of food insecurity for IDPs in the NWSW. According to OCHA, 1.5 million people in the region are food insecure’.⁵³

5.3.2 Reuters, reporting on farmers who have fled English-speaking Southwest and Northwest regions in July 2019, found that:

‘Thousands of small-scale farmers in Cameroon’s English-speaking Southwest and Northwest regions have been forced off their land by armed conflict between government forces and Anglophone separatists seeking to form an independent state called Ambazonia.

‘...Meanwhile, abandonment of farms will likely increase hunger and poverty, and cripple the economy, warned Celestin Tawamba, president of the Cameroon Employers’ Association, GICAM.

“The food scarcity in the country since the beginning of the Anglophone crisis is of an unprecedented scale,” Tawamba said in an interview in Yaoundé.

⁵⁰ UN HRC, ‘42nd session - Human Rights catastrophe in Cameroon’, (p3), 21 August 2019, [url](#)

⁵¹ ICG, ‘Cameroon’s Anglophone Crisis: How to get to Talks?’, (section II, p. 6) 2 May 2019, [url](#)

⁵² R2P, ‘Monitor- bi-monthly bulletin’, (p9), 15 September 2019, [url](#)

⁵³ Refugees International, ‘Crisis denied in Cameroon’, 29 May 2019, [url](#)

‘...More than 560,000 displaced people, mostly women and children, are sheltering in makeshift refugee camps in French-speaking towns in Cameroon and in neighboring [sic] Nigeria, relying on food assistance to survive.

“‘It’s unfortunate - food producers have become food beggars,” said Mary Ajong, a vegetable farmer from Tiko in the Southwest, now living in Douala.’⁵⁴

- 5.3.3 The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported in their situation report, Cameroon: North-West and South-West as of 30 June 2019 that:

‘Humanitarian access to persons in need throughout NWSW continues to be a challenge with armed groups often blocking access as well as threatening humanitarian personnel. Although the crisis is characterized as a protection crisis, severe and growing needs have been noted in health, education, shelter, food security and WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene). Despite the severity of the crisis funding for the humanitarian response remains at 15% as of the end of July of the total required for 2019.’⁵⁵

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5.4 ‘Ghost’ or ‘Dead’ Towns (general strikes)

- 5.4.1 The State Secretariat for Migration (SEM), Switzerland in their report on the conflict and human rights situation in Anglophone regions, 25 September 2018, noted that: ‘Bamenda and Buea, the two largest towns in the English-speaking region, are periodically subject to curfews. Every Monday, militant separatists call on shops to remain closed and road traffic is interrupted.’⁵⁶

- 5.4.2 In the same report and during a phone interview with an inhabitant of Buea, an interviewee said:

‘Ghost towns [general strikes] happen every week, on Monday. During a ghost town, taxis and most private cars are not moving. Shops and markets are closed. In a part of Buea, some businesses are operating, but not elsewhere. Most people stay at home or they move by foot in their neighbourhood. Government offices are open. The universities of Bamenda and Buea are functioning, but regarding primary schools, 10 % to 20 % are functional: it is difficult to tell why and it depends to who you ask. Most people would like their children to go to school, but the enrolment for exam is very low.’⁵⁷

- 5.4.3 The FCO’s travel advice, aimed at UK nationals, which was updated on 6 March 2020 and remained current as of 11 March 2020 noted that ‘General strikes (or “ghost towns”) are called in the North West and South West (Anglophone) regions for each Monday, with additional days often called in particular periods including February, May and October. Violence and travel disruption is regularly reported on these days.’⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Reuters, ‘Cameroon conflict turns climate-stressed farmers into ‘food beggars’, 30 July 2019, [url](#)

⁵⁵ OCHA, ‘Cameroon: North-West and South-West’, (Situation overview section), 31 July 2019, [url](#)

⁵⁶ SEM, ‘Report on the conflict...’, (section: Main findings, p4) 25 September 2018, [url](#)

⁵⁷ SEM, ‘Report on the conflict...’, (section: Annex 1) 25 September 2018, [url](#)

⁵⁸ FCO, ‘Foreign travel advice: Cameroon’ (summary), updated 28 August 2019, [url](#)

5.5 School closures and boycotts

- 5.5.1 Human Rights Watch in their report of 28 March 2019, 'To enforce boycotts of schools following protests by Anglophone teachers against perceived discrimination by the Francophone-dominated national government, separatist groups attacked and burned dozens of schools, threatened teachers, students and parents, kidnapped principals and violently attacked teachers and students.'⁵⁹
- 5.5.2 The UN News stated on their website on 21 June 2019 that the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) had reported: 'More than 80 per cent of schools in the English-speaking North-West and South-West regions of Cameroon are closed, as the security situation and living conditions continue to deteriorate due to the three-year conflict between the Government and armed groups.'⁶⁰
- 5.5.3 United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, (OCHA) reported similar findings in their July 2019 situation report on the North West and South West regions of Cameroon:

'Attacks against school buildings, teachers, parents and children continue. More than 700,000 children, representing almost 9 out of every 10 children, have been out of school for nearly three years with 80% of schools closed. Children forced to flee to bush areas have been left without access to any form of education. Children out of school face a myriad of severe protection risks including sexual exploitation and abuse, gender-based violence, harassment, recruitment by armed groups, arbitrary arrest, early marriage, pregnancy, and child labor. Children have also been separated from their families during displacement or have had to head households as a result of their parents or care givers being killed during conflict. Most children require psychosocial support and structured playbased learning to prepare them for re-entry into the school system. Schools that remain operational are significantly under-resourced. There is a need to provide textbooks and other scholastic materials to children. Most teachers are now out of work and the majority are not receiving any salary. Those who are still able to work require training for teaching in a crisis context, including how to provide psychosocial support to children.

'In July, education partners were able to reach 1,068 children (480 boys; 588 girls) with education activities across 11 divisions in the NWSW regions. The Education Cluster is launching a 12-month Education Cannot Wait funded program beginning in August 2019. Under this funding, more than 18,000 children will be supported with learning activities. To support partners in securing funds for their projects, the Education Cluster is continuing to deliver trainings on project development. Coordination mechanisms have been established for key education stakeholders. Education Cluster meetings are taking place monthly in both Buea and Bamenda; the Education Strategic Advisory Group meets regularly and on an ad-hoc basis.

'To date, only Education Cannot Wait (ECW), the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE)

⁵⁹ HRW, 'New Attacks on Civilians By Troops, Separatists', 28 March 2019, [url](#)

⁶⁰ UN News, 'Over 80 per cent of schools...', 21 June 2019, [url](#)

have funded the response. The situation is aggravated by the politicization of education with NSAGs declaring that children should not go to school until a political solution is agreed. It is imperative that education is politically nullified and that its status as a non-derogable human right is recognized.’⁶¹

- 5.5.4 The same report also stated: ‘State authorities and some anglophone civil society organizations are advocating for schools to resume in September 2019. However, armed groups continue to threaten those attempting to reopen schools. In a communique dated 12 July 2019 a group called the Ambazonian Prisoners of War (APOW) declared school can only resume if the problems that underpinned the crisis are resolved.’⁶²
- 5.5.5 DW news reported on 27 August 2019 that: ‘Most children in the English-speaking part of Cameroon have now stopped going to school. For the past three years, those who have dared to go have been brutally targeted by separatists calling for a boycott of all government-run institutions.’⁶³
- 5.5.6 VOA News reported on 2 September 2019 that:
‘The new school year in Cameroon begins this Monday [2 September 2019] with the government determined to reopen at least 4,500 schools closed in its English-speaking regions as a result of the separatist crisis. But the separatists, who have warned that they will not allow any school to be opened unless their leader, Ayuk Tabe and nine others given life jail sentences by a military tribunal, are freed, have already attacked and wounded at least nine teachers for defying their instructions.’⁶⁴
- 5.5.7 VOA News reported on 18 October 2019 that:
‘Separatist groups in parts of Cameroon have opened what they call community schools, to replace government-run schools that have been shut down for the past three years. However, the government is urging parents and students to stay away from the separatist-run facilities.
‘...This week, the separatists said they have opened nine community schools, which occupy empty public spaces while the separatists negotiate to take over abandoned school buildings owned by Christian denominations.
‘Farmer Paul Jua, 37, is happy his kids will be able to attend school, though he says the community schools are not enough.
“I want to beg on them [separatists], the community schools cannot cover [are not enough for] the children who are back home. So, therefore, they should also try to encourage private institutions to open their doors,” Jua said.
‘The government, which opposes the separatist-run schools, insists the public schools that are open are protected and safe.
‘Wilfred Wambeng, Cameroon’s basic education chief for the English-speaking Northwest region, says the government has asked families to send

⁶¹ UNOCHA, ‘Cameroon: North-West and South-West’, (Education section), 31 July 2019, [url](#)

⁶² UNOCHA, ‘Cameroon: North-West and South-West’ (Political section), 31 July 2019, [url](#)

⁶³ DW News, ‘Cameroon children attacked for going to school’, 27 August 2019, [url](#)

⁶⁴ VOA News, ‘Separatists Warn Against Reopening Schools in Crisis Zones’, 2 September 2019, [url](#)

their children only to public, private and religious schools recognized by the government, as only those schools have qualified teachers.

"We have had meetings, especially with our lay private education agencies. ... We advise them to embark on an aggressive campaign [against separatist schools]," Wambeng said.⁶⁵

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Section 6 updated: 12 March 2020

6. Situation of Anglophones outside of SW and NW regions

6.1 Treatment by society

6.1.1 International Crisis Group's Giustra Research Fellow, Tanda Theophilus, reported in the July 2018 commentary [Dialogue is essential to unite Cameroons disparate voices](#)

'Douala is the country's economic hub. Its inhabitants include not only a large number of Anglophones, but also people from all of Cameroon's ten regions. Contrary to my expectations, many Douala natives are fluent in Pidgin English and some barely speak French. A lot of people here are bilingual in English and French, sometimes due to marriages between Anglophones and Francophones. Bilingualism is also enhanced by education. Children of Francophone homes are a majority in many Anglophone schools.

'At a government bilingual primary school in town, the complexity of the crisis and its likely long-term consequences again strike me. Mrs Jane, the class 5 (nine- to ten-year-old children) teacher of the Anglophone section, is happy to see me but generally looks worried. She says many pupils from the Northwest and Southwest regions have enrolled in the school since the beginning of the crisis. With the recent arrival of displaced Anglophones, schools in Douala are overcrowded and new ones are opening to accommodate English-speaking pupils.

'...Douala is considered a stronghold of the main opposition party, the Social Democratic Front. The party originates in the Northwest region and draws support in part from the many migrants from that area who have taken up residence in Douala. Its cosmopolitan nature means it has mayors and members of parliament who originate from other regions, a relative rarity in Cameroon. The flag-bearer of the Social Democratic Front for the presidential election, Joshua Osih, is a member of parliament representing the Central Wouri constituency (Douala), though he is originally from the Southwest region.

'Douala, like other towns in Cameroon, has seen violence between communities beyond the Anglophone-Francophone tensions. The country's diversity goes far beyond its two official languages, English and French, with many ethnic groups and a vast array of languages. In recent months, the country has witnessed a rise in hate speech and ethnic tension mainly pitting the Bamileké and the Northwest region as a whole against the Sawa and Beti tribes (the Beti are found in the Centre, South and East regions; it is the

⁶⁵ VOA News, 'Cameroon Separatists Open 'Community Schools'', 18 October 2019, [url](#)

ethnic group of President Paul Biya). Political parties are now viewed along tribal lines.

'...Douala, especially Bonaberi neighbourhood, is increasingly subjected to checks by security forces as its Anglophone population grows. But English speakers have not fled the patrols and, in general, inhabitants have welcomed newcomers with open arms. Many people displaced from the Northwest and Southwest live with relatives who have been in the Littoral region for years...

'Although Douala has its flaws, it remains a point of reference for peaceful coexistence in Cameroon. As the Anglophone crisis deepens and tensions between other identities worsen, Douala shows a way out of the conflict. The fact that people with diverse ethnic and linguistic backgrounds coexist there with few discrepancies shows that a solution is possible. As Crisis Group has said since the beginning of the Anglophone crisis, some form of dialogue between the government and Anglophone leaders, with local autonomy on the table is likely the only path to resolving the conflict.'⁶⁶

- 6.1.2 The Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada in a query response, of 24 August 2018, on 'the situation of Anglophones, including returnees, in Bamenda, Yaoundé and Douala' and citing Nouveaux droits de l'homme Cameroun (NDH-Cameroun) and a representative from the International Crisis Group (ICG) and other sources stated that:

'The International Crisis Group representative explained that "[m]ost people escaping violence in the predominantly Anglophone regions" find refuge with their relatives in Anglophone-dominant neighbourhoods, for example in Bonaberi in Douala and in Obili in Yaoundé. Other sources similarly indicate that displaced people escaping violence between separatist and security forces in Cameroon's Anglophone regions have fled to Douala and Yaoundé. An International Crisis Group report on the Anglophone crisis indicates that "some tradespeople and business owners are moving to Douala" due to the crisis.

'NDH-Cameroun indicated that displaced people who arrived in Douala and Yaoundé are [translation] "overall well received" by the population. According to the same source, as it was the case in the past, [translation] "cohabitation between Cameroonians, whether they are Anglophones or Francophones, remains friendly and fraternal"; interactions have always been "peaceful, except in exceptional cases". The International Crisis Group representative said that Anglophones in Yaoundé or Douala currently "live without any major security threat from Francophones". The same source further explained that "people treat Anglophones based on their understanding of the Anglophone crisis. Many Francophones support the cause, while many do not. People are generally very afraid to talk about it, so as to avoid military brutality"... NDH-Cameroun noted that for the majority of Francophones [translation] "the Anglophone problem is a reflection of national problems: centralism, bad governance and the generation gap" and

⁶⁶ ICG, 'Dialogue is essential to unite Cameroons disparate voices', 27 July 2018, [url](#)

that, at the national level, tribal identification plays a "more important" role than language.’⁶⁷

- 6.1.3 The USSD human rights report for 2019, covering events in 2019 noted ‘There were credible reports that for politically motivated purposes the government attempted to exert bilateral pressure on other countries aimed at having them take adverse legal action against specific individuals, including Anglophones separatists and other political opponents.’⁶⁸

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6.2 Treatment by authorities

- 6.2.1 International Crisis Group, following a number of interviews with 30 Anglophone residents of Yaoundé, stated, in a report entitled ‘Cameroon’s worsening Anglophone crisis calls for strong measures’, published 19 October 2017:

‘After 22 September [2017], Anglophones living in the Francophone parts of the country, particularly in Yaoundé and Douala, have been targeted: arbitrary arrests in taxis, house searches without warrants, and mass detentions of Anglophones have taken place in Yaoundé neighbourhoods with large English-speaking communities such as in Biyem-Assi, Melen, Obili, Biscuiterie, Centre administratif and Etoug-Ebe. Many of these arrests were made by police officers and gendarmes on 30 September [2017]. A number of Anglophones have reported being insulted by Francophones in the markets. In their places of work, Francophones have asked them “what were they still doing in Yaoundé and why didn’t they go back home to their filthy Bamenda?”’⁶⁹

- 6.2.2 The Immigration and Refugee board of Canada in a query response of 24 August 2018 on the situation of Anglophones and citing a representative from the International Crisis Group (ICG) stated that:

‘In Yaoundé and Douala, Anglophones live without any major security threat from ... the government (for now). They are under the same conditions like Francophones who find it difficult to exercise certain rights. ... However, during these few past days [August 2018], security checks have been intensified in Yaoundé and Douala, with security forces checking several vehicles in the two cities. During their patrols, when they meet someone they identify as an Anglophone, the check is more intense (without any reported abuse).’⁷⁰

- 6.2.3 The same report further noted that

‘According to a July 2018 article by CamerounWeb, sources confirmed that [translation] "mass arrests" occurred in the Bonaberie neighbourhood of Douala, where 68 Anglophones, including 9 pregnant women, were arrested "without any crime being committed" and sent to detention camps (CamerounWeb 10 July 2018). The same source further states that additional arrests were planned for the following days, including in Yaoundé

⁶⁷ IRB, ‘Query response on the situation of Anglophones, including returnees...’, 24 August 2018, [url](#)

⁶⁸ USSD, Human rights report 2019 (section 1e), 11 March 2020, [url](#)

⁶⁹ ICG, ‘Cameroon’s worsening Anglophone crisis calls for strong measures’, 19 October 2017, [url](#)

⁷⁰ IRB, ‘Query response on the situation of Anglophones, including returnees...’, 24 August 2018, [url](#)

(CamerounWeb 10 July 2018). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response. According to BaretaNews, a pro-separatist website "that believes in the restoration of Southern Cameroons Statehood" (BaretaNews n.d.), an Anglophone was arrested by the police at the end of June 2018 in Bonamoussadi in Douala "after his Francophone neighbors allegedly reported him to the police as [a] suspected secessionist" because he was "always speaking [the] English [l]anguage in his interactions with neighbors and family and ha[d] never been heard speaking in French" (BaretaNews 3 July 2018).⁷¹

- 6.2.4 No further information was identified in the sources consulted about the treatment of Anglophones in areas outside of the NWSW region (see [Bibliography](#)).

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Section 7 updated: 12 March 2020

7. State response

7.1 National dialogue - 2019

- 7.1.1 A September 2019 article on Al Jazeera reported that the President Paul Biya had announced that 'national dialogue' would be organised for the end of September 2019 on the crisis facing Cameroon, including the violence and killings in Anglophone regions.

'The 86-year-old on Tuesday night [10 September 2019] also called on all separatists in the English-speaking regions to surrender and be forgiven, or face military action.

'Before Biya's address late on Tuesday, there were expectations that the president might grant amnesty to arrested separatists and political leaders as a way to bring peace to the country.

'But Biya, who has been in power since 1982, said he has already made great efforts trying to solve the separatist crisis and denied any marginalisation of the English-speaking regions, adding that he has always appointed ministers from there.'⁷²

- 7.1.2 BBC monitoring reported on 19 September 2019 that to ensure the participation of all Cameroonians in the national dialogue announced by President Paul Biya, the site www.nationaldialogue.com has been created on the initiative of Prime Minister Joseph Dion Ngute. The aim is to allow all Cameroonians to contribute to the national dialogue. The digital platform has been set-up so that Cameroonians can submit proposals to resolve the security crisis in the North-West and South-West regions. The debates are scheduled to take place in Yaoundé's Palais des Congres from 30 September 2019 to 4 October⁷³.
- 7.1.3 Journal de Cameroun and CIN reported on 20 September 2019 that 6 armed Ambazonia separatist kingpins had been invited to attend a pre-dialogue

⁷¹ IRB, 'Query response on the situation of Anglophones, including returnees...', 24 August 2018, [url](#)

⁷² Al Jazeera, 'Cameroon to hold 'national dialogue' on separatist crisis', 11 September 2019, [url](#)

⁷³ BBC monitoring, 'Cameroon launches ...', 19 September 2019, subscription only.

meeting in Kumba on Saturday 21 September 2019, to be held before the Major National Dialogue at the end of September 2019. Attendees expected to attend the pre-dialogue meeting at Kumba City Council hall included members of civil society, traditional rulers, religious authorities and union groups. The 6 Ambazonia generals were named as Obase Ekeku of Dieni, Mokube Mbamene alias Boss Divine of Marumba, Masango Mukete Karl alias Buscard of Malende, Sam of Small Ekombe, Efang of Teke and Bitu Cola of Metta Quarte^{74,75}.

7.1.4 VOA news reported on 24 September 2019 that:

‘New violence has flared in Cameroon as preparations intensify for a national dialogue called by President Paul Biya to end the conflict that has killed at least 2,000 people in the country’s English-speaking regions. Scores of people have been killed in recent days and electricity has been cut, mostly in English-speaking towns, when attackers set fire to power distribution equipment. The military has been deployed to replace teachers who are, once again, escaped to safer places.

‘...Separatist groups have, on social media, called the dialogue a non-event. They say they became a sovereign state called Ambazonia on October 1, 2017 when Ayuk Tabe, their leader declared their independence. They want the international community to intervene and press the government in Yaoundé to order its troops out of Ambazonia.’⁷⁶

7.1.5 International Crisis Group, in an article on 26 September 2019, stated:

‘The dialogue could be an opportunity for his government and Anglophone leaders to table potential solutions. As proposed, however, it will neither include separatist leaders nor leave much room for Anglophones who support federalism within Cameroon’s borders. It thus risks further frustrating Anglophones, widening the gulf between the two sides and empowering hardliners.

‘... Anglophone separatists, who hold sway in large areas of those regions, will not attend. Neither they nor the government has shown much appetite for reconciliation. Embryonic informal contacts between the two sides took place this year, but an internationally-led mediation attempt recently slowed down in the face of intransigence by both sides. On 22 September, the main separatist leaders abroad restated their willingness to talk with the government, but rejected the planned dialogue as “purely internal”. They gave no sign of easing their conditions for talks: international mediation, a location outside the country and an agenda focused on the terms of separation. The government has offered no concession that could persuade them to reconsider. It has not called for a ceasefire; issued invitations and safe passage to separatists for dialogue; or made any move to release Anglophone prisoners (though Biya has not dismissed the possibility of pardons for separatist leaders at a later stage).

‘Even more conciliatory Anglophones fear being left out. These include federalists, whose calls for a return to the constitutional arrangements of

⁷⁴ Journal du Cameroun, ‘Six “Ambazonia Generals” invited...’, 20 September 2019, [url](#)

⁷⁵ CIN, ‘Ambazonia “Generals” invited to attend’, 20 September 2019, [url](#)

⁷⁶ VOA News, ‘Cameroon’s Separatists Intensify Attacks...’, 24 September 2019, [url](#)

1961 to 1972, which united one Francophone state and one Anglophone state in a federal system, are popular among Anglophones. Some federalist leaders are deeply sceptical of President Biya's intentions, but others welcome the dialogue in principle. These include the influential Catholic leader Cardinal Christian Tumi, head of the Anglophone General Conference (AGC), which was created in July 2018 and involves Catholic, Protestant and Muslim Anglophone leaders. The AGC has participated in Prime Minister Ngute's consultations and will attend the dialogue.⁷⁷

7.1.6 Aljazeera, commenting on the national dialogue which is due to start on 30 September 2019 reported that key rebel leaders have refused to participate in the talks and some activists have been arrested. Quoting separatist leaders in the Anglophone region Aljazeera highlight the scepticism around the talks and the doubts that exist with regard an effective or satisfactory outcome for the region⁷⁸.

7.1.7 Reuters reported on 30 September 2019 that:

"No Ambazonian will take part in Biya's charade," said Cho Ayaba, a leading member of the Ambazonian Governing Council.

'The council has called for a withdrawal of the army from the English-speaking Southwest and Northwest regions, for international arbitration over the crisis and for the release of all arrested separatists.

'Cameroon's main opposition party is also refusing to attend until the government releases its leader and former presidential candidate Maurice Kamto, who was arrested in January [2019] and could face the death penalty for leading protests against an election last year that he denounced as fraudulent.

'... Opposition parties, civil society groups and representatives of the Catholic Church were present in the main conference centre in the capital Yaoundé on Monday [30 September 2019].

'Prime Minister Joseph Dion [Ngute], an Anglophone appointed early this year [2019] in part to jump-start negotiations, was also present.'⁷⁹

7.1.8 Following the national dialogue talks the BBC News reported on 5 October 2019 that:

'The National Dialogue made a series of proposals:

- 'the adoption of a special status for the two Anglophone regions
- 'the restoration of the House of Traditional Chiefs
- 'the election of local governors
- 'the immediate relaunch of certain airport and seaport projects in the two regions
- 'the rapid integration of ex-combatants into society

⁷⁷ ICG, 'Cameroon's Anglophone Dialogue: A Work in Progress', 26 September 2019, [url](#)

⁷⁸ Al Jazeera, 'Cameroon dialogue starts as Anglophone separatists pull out', 30 September 2019, [url](#)

⁷⁹ Reuters, 'Cameroon peace talks falter as separatists, politicians boycott', 30 September 2019, [url](#)

- ‘the name of the country be returned to former name, the United Republic of Cameroon
- ‘implement the law that government officials declare their assets, in order to tackle corruption.’⁸⁰

7.1.9 An article by Cheryl Hendricks, Executive director, Africa Institute of South Africa, Human Sciences Research Council and Gabriel Ngah Kiven, PhD candidate in Political Studies at the Department of Politics and International Relations, University of Johannesburg posted on The Conversation website on 20 October 2019 stated:

‘During the national dialogue chaired by prime minister Joseph Dion Ngute, eight commissions were formed to respond to the grievances of Cameroon’s English speakers. The commissions were asked to address bilingualism, cultural diversity and social cohesion, education, justice, reconstruction and development, decentralisation and local development, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration, and the diaspora.

‘...The National Dialogue resulted in a number of proposals that go some way in addressing Anglophone concerns. These include changing the country’s name back to the United Republic of Cameroon, the adoption of special status for the two Anglophone regions, restoration of the House of Traditional chiefs, the election of local governors, and the rapid integration of ex-combatants.

‘But the dialogue was flawed from the beginning. The agenda was pre-determined by the government. And key members of the Anglophone separatist movement who live in the diaspora didn’t attend. They were afraid of being detained once in the country. Others walked out in protest against the perceived stage managing of the talks. They believed that their main issue – autonomy – would not be properly addressed.

‘The proposals won’t resolve the crisis as they don’t deal with the core issues of Cameroon’s separatists. Separatist fighters known as the Amba boys have vowed to continue fighting until “Ambazonia is freed”.

‘The failure of the dialogue shows that there is still a need for comprehensive conflict management in Cameroon. This must address issues of federalism, autonomy, marginalisation, respect for diversity and human rights. There is also a need for justice and reconciliation to address the many atrocities and abuses that have been committed.’⁸¹

7.1.10 Reuters reported in December 2019:

‘Cameroon’s parliament granted special status on Friday to two English-speaking regions to try to calm a separatist insurgency that has killed 2,000 people, but the separatists said only independence would satisfy them.

‘The law, passed in a special session of parliament, says the Anglophone Northwest and Southwest regions “benefit from a special status founded on their linguistic particularity and historic heritage”.

⁸⁰ BBC News, ‘Cameroon’s conflict: Will the National Dialogue make any..?’, 5 October 2019, [url](#)

⁸¹ The Conversation, ‘Why Cameroon must move beyond dialogue...’ 20 October 2019, [url](#)

'It mentioned schools and the judiciary system as part of the special status — a delayed response to protests in 2016 by teachers and lawyers...

"This is a law unique in the world," said senator Samuel Obam Assam, from the ruling Cameroon People's Democratic Movement, the majority group in the Senate. "It is an answer to our fellow countrymen's concerns."

'But Jean-Michel Nintcheu, a congressman from the main opposition party, said he did not believe the law would solve the crisis.

"The Anglophones, even the moderate ones, want a federal state. This law is not the result of a dialogue.. we were against it," he said.

'The reforms were recommended at the end of national talks organized by Biya in October to chart a way out of the conflict.

'But separatists boycotted that dialogue, saying they would negotiate only if the government released all political prisoners and withdrew the military from the Northwest and Southwest.

"We want independence and nothing else," said Ivo Tapang, a spokesman for 13 armed groups called the Contender Forces of Ambazonia.

'He said the special status made no difference as no law passed in the Cameroonian parliament should be imposed in Ambazonia.'⁸²

7.1.11 Arrey Elvis Ntui a senior analyst on Cameroon and writing for the International Crisis Group commented in February 2020:

The government-controlled national dialogue, which commenced in Yaoundé at the end of September 2019, has done little to prevent the Anglophone crisis from deepening. Separatists, most of whose leaders are based outside the country or are in prison in Yaoundé, took no part in the conference, which they viewed as a government ploy to deflect international criticism. Even those Anglophones who seek a federalist solution rather than their own state, and who largely eschew violence, were given little room to present their views. For example, the government offered participants no chance to discuss the recommendations that Prime Minister Joseph Ngute, who convened the dialogue, transmitted to President Biya. These included a recommendation to confer "special status" on the Anglophone South West and North West regions under the decentralisation provisions of the 1996 constitution.

'As it stands, even the "special status" recommendation – which parliament approved in December and which President Biya has touted as a working solution to the crisis – seems destined to have limited impact. The new status would, on paper, provide for the central government in Yaoundé to consult Anglophone regional assemblies concerning decisions about the formulation of educational policy and the application of common law in their regions. But the provisions lack details on what kind of consultation is required or how the measures would be implemented, leaving many Anglophones frustrated, and bolstering the separatist narrative that division of the country is the only solution to English speakers' marginalisation.'⁸³

⁸² Reuters, 'Cameroon grants special status to Anglophone regions', 20 December 2019, [url](#).

⁸³ ICG, 'Cameroon: Elections Raise Prospect of Further Ruling-party...', 8 February 2020, [url](#).

7.2 Overview of human rights violations

- 7.2.1 This sub-section and the following sub-sections primarily covers events in the NWSW (Anglophone) region.
- 7.2.2 Further details of alleged human rights violations between January and May 2018 can be found in Amnesty International's June 2018 report '[A turn for the worse](#)' which documented interviews carried out with victims and witnesses to human rights violations by security forces and armed separatists.
- 7.2.3 Human Rights Watch in their events of 2018 report, published 17 February 2019, noted that:

'In the South West and North West, government security forces have committed extrajudicial executions, burned property, carried out arbitrary arrests, and tortured detainees. A Human Rights Watch report documented a range of abuses by both sides in the Anglophone regions, including arson attacks on homes and schools. According to the International Crisis Group, government forces and armed separatists killed over 420 civilians in the regions since the crisis escalated in 2017...'

'While the government maintained it did not tolerate serious crimes committed by security forces, it failed to demonstrate progress in investigating and punishing them...'

'In 2016 and 2017, government security forces used excessive force against largely peaceful demonstrations organized by members of the country's Anglophone minority who were calling for increased autonomy for their region. During demonstrations in late 2017, government forces used live ammunition, including from helicopters, against demonstrators and bystanders, killing at least a dozen people and injuring scores. Some individuals detained in the context of the demonstrations were subjected to torture and ill-treatment...'

'Government forces responded to the growing separatist insurgency by carrying out abusive security operations against communities suspected of supporting secessionist groups. Security forces committed extrajudicial executions, used excessive force against civilians, tortured and abused suspected separatists and other detainees, and burned homes and other property in scores of villages.

'During attacks documented by Human Rights Watch, security forces allegedly shot and killed over a dozen civilians, including at least seven people whom witnesses said had intellectual, psychosocial or physical disabilities who did not flee because they were unable or refused to. At least four older women died, burned alive, after security forces set their homes on fire.

'Human Rights Watch also documented three cases where security forces detained people suspected of supporting the secessionist cause, and then tortured and killed them in detention. In a fourth case, Human Rights Watch

analyzed evidence of torture filmed by perpetrators, who appear to be gendarmes. On September 24 and 27 [2018], a total of nine men were allegedly executed by security forces in the town of Buea, according to videos reviewed by Human Rights Watch and a report by the Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa, a local nongovernmental organization (NGO).'⁸⁴

- 7.2.4 Human Rights Watch in their report of 28 March 2019, 'New Attacks on Civilians by Troops, Separatists' stated that: 'Government forces in Cameroon's Anglophone regions have killed scores of civilians, used indiscriminate force, and torched hundreds of homes over the past six months [Oct 2018 -Mar 2019].'⁸⁵
- 7.2.5 Human Rights Watch reported also in March 2019 that 'Human Rights Watch research shows that since October, security forces, including soldiers, members of the Rapid Intervention Battalion (BIR), and gendarmes, killed civilians, used force indiscriminately, and destroyed and looted private and public property... The government's near-total lack of prosecutions for crimes by security forces in the Anglophone regions has protected those responsible and fueled abuses'.⁸⁶
- 7.2.6 Human Rights Watch in their report of 23 May 2019, 'Promised Investigation Should Be Independent' stated that: 'Unlawful killings and destruction of private property by the Cameroonian security forces have been rife since the crisis started [2016]. Human Rights Watch has documented extensive burning of villages by members of the security forces between 2017 and 2019 in both the North-West and South-West regions, as well as killings of civilians.'⁸⁷
- 7.2.7 The same report went onto describe that:
- 'Cameroonian soldiers went on a rampage in the English-speaking North-West region on May 15, 2019, burning over 70 homes in Mankon, Bamenda...
- 'Human Rights Watch interviewed 15 residents of Mankon, including 10 witnesses, who described how soldiers from the Air Force and the Rapid Intervention Battalion coordinated the attack. Human Rights Watch also reviewed satellite imagery showing over 70 buildings affected by fire and photographs and videos showing extensive destruction of property...
- 'On May 15 [2019], following the killing of two Air Force soldiers by suspected armed separatists, security forces killed Nwacha Christopher Neba, a 41-year-old mechanic, and burned down scores of private homes and shops across Alachu, Matsam, and Muwatsu, three neighborhoods in Mankon, in what appears to be retaliation against residents perceived as sympathetic to separatists. A witness said that the military went to Neba's house in Alachu, "broke down the door, pulled him out, and beat him

⁸⁴ HRW, 'World Report 2019: Cameroon events of 2018', 17 February 2019, [url](#)

⁸⁵ HRW, 'New Attacks on Civilians By Troops, Separatists', 28 March 2019, [url](#)

⁸⁶ HRW, Cameroon: New Attacks on Civilians By Troops, Separatists, 28 March 2019, [url](#)

⁸⁷ HRW, 'Promised Investigation Should Be Independent', 23 May 2019, [url](#)

savagely.” The witness then heard gunshots. He said the man’s body was found in the street shortly afterward, shot in the head and the back.

‘Ten witnesses said soldiers looted homes and shops and killed domestic animals.’⁸⁸

7.2.8 The International Crisis Group in a May 2019 article on the Anglophone crisis stated:

‘The situation in the Anglophone regions continues to deteriorate. At the end of 2017 and throughout 2018, the government deployed thousands of military and police reinforcements, an elite army unit (Rapid Intervention Battalion, BIR), and newly created special forces. It also increased its firepower in the area, deploying armoured vehicles and helicopters recently bought from the United Arab Emirates, Ukraine and Israel. These reinforcements helped the security forces inflict significant losses on the separatists, who have suffered heavy casualties and lost several of their field commanders since September 2018. But the army is unable to guarantee security in the towns or retain full control of rural areas. More than 200 incidents have taken place in the last six months (attacks and kidnappings by separatists, arson and other operations by the security forces).’⁸⁹

7.2.9 The Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa (CHRNA) and Raoul Wallenbergs report Cameroon’s Unfolding Catastrophe, 3 June 2019, reported that:

‘The human rights violations and crimes against humanity described in this report have taken place in violation of the Republic of Cameroon’s own constitution, international conventions to which it is a State party, and customary international law. The Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect places Cameroonian populations at imminent risk and has also signalled evidence of crimes against humanity. Significantly, the evidence in this report supports a conclusion that crimes against humanity have been perpetrated, including acts of:

- murder,
- deportation or forcible transfer of populations,
- imprisonment or other severe deprivation of physical liberty in violation of fundamental rules of international law,
- torture,
- rape and sexual violence, and
- persecution of the Anglophone minority.

‘As previously noted, the State has had to confront violence perpetrated by non-state groups that have figured prominently in the conflict. These groups must be denounced; those that have committed criminal offences must be punished in accordance with due process and the rule of law. However,

⁸⁸ HRW, ‘Promised Investigation Should Be Independent’, 23 May 2019, [url](#)

⁸⁹ ICG, ‘Cameroon’s Anglophone Crisis: How to get to Talks?’, (section II), 2 May 2019, [url](#)

serious human rights violations and crimes against humanity cannot be justified, even in times of internal conflict.’⁹⁰

7.2.10 The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported in their situation report, Cameroon: North-West and South-West as of 31 May 2019 that: Attacks on students, parents, teachers and other education personnel are occurring regularly, with 59 attacks reported as of 31 May for the 2018 / 2019 academic year.’⁹¹

7.2.11 The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported in their situation report, Cameroon: North-West and South-West as of 30 June 2019, that:

‘Parties to the conflict continued targeting and killing both their opponents and civilians. Fighting between NSAGs [non-state armed groups] and security forces on 5 June [2019] reportedly led to the death of three people in Ndekwa (SW) and three in Babungo (NW). On June 12 and 13 [2019], fighting between NSAGs and the military led to the death of one member of a NSAG and a civilian in Santa (NW). On 12 June [2019] clashes between the military and NSAG in Jakiri (NW) led to several deaths. A local market and houses were burnt during the confrontation. Several villagers fled to the bushes for safety. On 14 June [2019] six people were found dead in Babanki village (NW) with no clear indication of who killed them. On 15 June, four Government forces were allegedly killed, and others wounded after their vehicle was blown by an explosive in Otu (SW). In a statement released the same day, the Minister of Communication accused opposition armed groups of conducting the attack with Improvised Explosive Devices (IED). Although this is the first time the Government is admitting to such a loss in the region resulting from IEDs, it is not the first-time separatist fighters have announced that they are using IEDs. Continuous use of IEDs will worsen conflict dynamics. On 27 June [2019], the military reportedly shot at least four people in Sabga (NW). On 17 June [2019] NSAGs declared that humanitarian assistance sent from Yaoundé by the Government was allegedly poisoned and that such governmental convoys should be attacked. On 23 June, allegedly NSAGs burnt down trucks carrying WFP supplies in Pinyin (NW). However, the humanitarian convoy was not marked with UN or partner logo.’⁹²

7.2.12 OCHA in their situation report, Cameroon: North-West and South-West as of 31 July 2019, reported that: ‘Security continues to worsen in the conflict hit regions. Human rights violations continue to be committed by both parties to the conflict. Arbitrary arrest, burning of villages and indiscriminate killing of civilians are on the rise. Women were reportedly used as human shields during hostilities. Those most affected by the violence are civilians including Persons with Disabilities, women, children and the elderly.’⁹³

7.2.13 Human Rights Watch reported in their report ‘Security Forces kill civilians, rape woman’ of 22 July 2019 that: ‘Cameroonian security forces have killed

⁹⁰ CHRDA, ‘Cameroon’s Unfolding Catastrophe’, (Executive Summary), 3 June 2019, [url](#)

⁹¹ OCHA, ‘Cameroon: North-West and South-West’, (Highlights section), 31 May 2019, [url](#)

⁹² OCHA, ‘Cameroon: North-West and South-West’, (Security section), 30 June 2019, [url](#)

⁹³ OCHA, ‘Cameroon: North-West and South-West’, (Political section), 31 July 2019, [url](#)

at least four civilians and raped one woman since mid-June 2019 during security operations in the North-West region. Those killed include an elderly man with a physical disability and a young man with a mental disability.’⁹⁴

- 7.2.14 Responsibility to protect (R2P) reported in their bi-monthly bulletin 15 September 2019 that: ‘As the conflict has intensified, there has been growing evidence of the security forces perpetrating extrajudicial killings and torture, as well as burning Anglophone villages...The deteriorating situation in Cameroon has received little international attention despite systematic and widespread attacks on civilians, potentially amounting to crimes against humanity.’⁹⁵

- 7.2.15 The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported in their situation report, Cameroon: North-West and South-West as of 30 June 2019 that:

‘Harassment and torture were also recurrent this month [June 2019]. A video circulated on social media, showing the military harassing a group of men (reportedly from Kurt – Nwa, NW). These men were reportedly found dead after the incident. On 13 June [2019], armed men cut off the leg of a teacher in Mungo village (SW). The teacher survived but was in critical condition. This tragic event illustrates the growing attacks against education activities and personnel. On 21 June, the military reportedly took away a patient that an NGO had evacuated into a Baptist hospital in Mutengene (SW). The patient was reportedly later found dead in Tiko (SW).’⁹⁶

- 7.2.16 A 30 September 2019 article by the Cameroon news website Mimi Mefo News Agency (via BBC Monitoring) stated that:

‘Several persons have been reported dead following fierce confrontations this weekend between the military and pro-independence fighters.

‘Some villages were stormed by security forces, while locals were still asleep, Mimi Mefo Info has learnt.

‘Munyenge in the South-West Region was allegedly raided by members of the armed forces for the second time in less than ten days.

‘The military’s incursion of Sunday (29 September) is said to have targeted the forest where local people from the village had fled to for safety.

‘Last week’s attack in Munyenge, locals say, left five dead and nine more wounded, alongside burnt houses and business premises.

‘In Muyuka, several denizens either remained indoors or sought refuge in the bush. Soldiers stormed Bafia where one person was reportedly shot dead. About five others including women were injured.’⁹⁷

- 7.2.17 The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported in their situation report, Cameroon: North-West and South-West covering September 2019, that:

⁹⁴ HRW, ‘Security Forces kill civilians, rape woman’, 22 July 2019, [url](#)

⁹⁵ R2P, ‘Monitor- bi-monthly bulletin’, (p9), 15 September 2019, [url](#)

⁹⁶ OCHA, ‘Cameroon: North-West and South-West’, (Security section), 30 June 2019, [url](#)

⁹⁷ BBC Monitoring, ‘More violence in southwest Cameroon...’, 30 September 2019, subscription only

‘Security continues to deteriorate in the NWSW. Attacks on civilians, humanitarian supplies and personnel are on the rise. On 2 September, gunmen shot at an ambulance of the Archdiocese of Bamenda at Akum, Mezam division and there was another incident on 28 September when NSAGs burnt a truck carrying WFP aid supplies in Bambili, Mezam division. Three female students from the Catholic school at Ngongham were reportedly kidnapped by suspected NSAGs while they were heading to school. Government security forces continue to be associated with attacks against civilians and burning and looting of villages.’⁹⁸

7.2.18 An Oxford University October 2019 report to the UK House of Lords Select Committee noted:

‘...the Government has engaged in a continued practice of ‘forced disappearances’ where individuals are arrested and held incommunicado without any formal charges being laid against them or their families/legal representatives being informed of their whereabouts. There are also a number of reports that lawyers have been denied access to their clients during the pretrial and then trial process, and sometimes face threats and physical violence if they insist on upholding their clients’ legal rights.

‘...the Security forces have been utilising a detention centre operated by the State Defence Secretariat (SED) in the nation’s capital to routinely torture prisoners held there illegally incommunicado. The organisation further reports credible allegations of torture being used routinely against prisoners, including beatings, drownings, electrocutions, denial of medical provisions, overcrowding and restrictions of fresh air and access to clean water.

‘...For those human rights abuses perpetrated since 2016, there is little evidence that remedial measures have been taken by the Cameroon State in the form of equal and effective access to justice; adequate, effective and prompt reparation for harm suffered; and reparation mechanisms.’⁹⁹

7.2.19 A Human Rights Watch report from February 2020 reported:

‘Government forces and armed ethnic Fulani killed at least 21 civilians in Cameroon’s Ngarbuh village, including 13 children and 1 pregnant woman, on February 14, 2020. They also burned five homes, pillaged scores of other properties, and beat residents. Some of the bodies of the victims were found burned inside their homes. The government denies that its troops have deliberately committed crimes.

“The gruesome killings of civilians, including children, are egregious crimes that should be effectively and independently investigated, and those responsible should be brought to justice,” said Ilaria Allegrozzi, senior Africa researcher at Human Rights Watch. “Denying that these crimes have occurred adds another layer of trauma to survivors and will only embolden government troops to commit more atrocities.”

‘Human Rights Watch interviewed 25 people, including 3 witnesses to the killings and 7 relatives of victims, about these events that took place in Ngarbuh, Donga Mantung division, in the North-West region...

⁹⁸ OCHA, ‘Cameroon: North-West and South-West’, (Security section), 30 September 2019, [url](#).

⁹⁹ University of Oxford, ‘Human Rights Abuses...’ (paras 64, 67 and 110e), 30 October 2019, [url](#).

‘Witnesses said that between 10 and 15 soldiers, including members of the Rapid Intervention Battalion, the elite unit of the Cameroonian army, and at least 30 armed Fulani first entered Ngarbuh 1, a neighborhood in Ngarbuh, on foot at about 11 p.m. on February 13, looting scores of homes. Some of these forces then continued to the Ngarbuh 2 neighborhood, looting homes and beating civilians. At around 5 a.m. on February 14, a group of soldiers and armed Fulani attacked the Ngarbuh 3 neighborhood, killing 21 civilians in four homes, then burning the houses.

‘Human Rights Watch made several attempts to contact a senior member of the government but did not receive a response. Cameroon’s defense minister issued two statements on February 17. He first announced that the government had opened an investigation and that its findings would be made public. In a second statement later that day, he stated that the investigation findings “could be published at an appropriate time.” Both statements asserted that armed “terrorists” attacked government security forces and that the fighting led to an explosion of fuel containers, which destroyed several homes and killed one woman and four children. This assertion was restated on February 18 in a news release from the communication minister.

‘However, witnesses and residents with whom Human Rights Watch spoke said that there was no confrontation between armed separatists and security forces, that they heard no explosions, and that the killings were deliberate.

‘Residents said the attack was to punish civilians suspected of harboring separatist fighters. Twelve witnesses said that, after the killings, the military addressed residents in Ngarbuh 2, warning that their village would be destroyed if they continued to shelter separatists.’¹⁰⁰

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7.3 Destruction of homes and villages

7.3.1 Human Rights Watch reported in March 2019 that ‘Government forces in [Cameroon's](#) Anglophone regions have killed scores of civilians, used indiscriminate force, and torched hundreds of homes over the past six months.’¹⁰¹

7.3.2 Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa (CHRDA) and Raoul Wallenbergs report Cameroon’s Unfolding Catastrophe, 3 June 2019, reported that:

‘Burning and razing homes and villages are established military tactics and the signature human rights violation perpetrated in the conflict. Civilians have been killed and mistreated as a result of military raids, which have forced hundreds of thousands to flee. Homelessness, a humanitarian crisis, and food insecurity are direct results of these tactics.

‘The CHRDA has reported 206 settlements raided and partially destroyed by state defence forces during attempts to crack down on armed separatists, 134 of which have been severely damaged. Several villages in Mbonge and Konye Subdivision have been completely emptied of their populations.

¹⁰⁰ HRW, ‘Cameroon: Civilians Massacred in Separatist Area’, 25 February 2020, [url](#).

¹⁰¹ HRW, ‘Cameroon: New Attacks on Civilians By Troops, Separatists, 28 March 2019, [url](#).

‘The government has frequently denied these allegations. Civilian witnesses say that army attacks are routinely followed by the ransacking of houses and shops, the destruction of food stocks, and the rounding up and mistreatment or killing of civilians, often as reprisals for the killing of a member of the defence and security forces.

‘Anglophone villages suspected of harbouring separatists or arms have been burned and pillaged in both the South West and North West regions. Homes have been burned to ashes, sometimes with their inhabitants.’¹⁰²

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7.4 Enforced disappearance

7.4.1 The United States Department of State Human Rights report 2018 (US SD HR report 2018) noted that:

‘Government security forces were widely believed to be responsible for disappearances of suspected Anglophone separatists, with reports of bodies dumped far from the site of killings to make identification difficult. According to credible nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), the government did not readily account for some of the activists arrested in connection with the Anglophone crisis. Family members and friends of the detainees were frequently unaware of the missing individuals’ location in detention for a month or more. For example, authorities held incommunicado Ayuk Sisiku Tabe, the “interim president” of the so-called Republic of Ambazonia, along with 46 other Anglophone separatists, from January 29 until late June [2018] when they were allowed to meet with their lawyers and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).’¹⁰³

See also [Arrests and detentions](#) below

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7.5 Extrajudicial killings

7.5.1 An article by the privately owned news website Mimi Mefo (via BBC monitoring) reported on 6 October 2019 that:

‘Soldiers invaded the village [Bali Town, Mezam Division North-West Region] during and after the 1 October [2019] commemoration, the day Southern Cameroons independent state of Ambazonia was declared, by separatist leaders and fighters.

‘In Sang, a Bali neighbourhood, several persons, notably civilians are feared dead.

“The people fled to the bush to seek refuge but returned yesterday, not knowing soldiers were still there,” a source told Mimi Mefo Info.

“The population of Bali Nyonga since yesterday are under gradual extermination. Sang Will soon [be] finish[ed]. The military doing what they know best,” said another source.

¹⁰² CHRDA, ‘Cameroon’s Unfolding Catastrophe’, (section C), 3 June 2019, [url](#)

¹⁰³ USSD, ‘Human Rights Report 2018, (section B)’, 13 March 2019, [url](#)

“Many of those killed in Sang, are from the Mbalang compound,” the source added.

‘This Saturday 5 October 2019 after the... National Dialogue talks and incessant calls for peace, the military again stormed Jam-Jam, Mbatmandet quarters.

‘Many Bali residents have fled for safety.

‘Mimi Mefo Info could not confirm reports that Ambazonian fighters are amongst those killed in Bali.

“The fighters made a tactical withdrawal yesterday. The military took advantage of the withdrawal to massacre those civilians who returned home, nine civilians were killed, the number may increase” a source said.

‘The Fon of Bali, HRH Fon Doh Ganyonga III said at the close of the national dialogue that the people should be patient, as the head of state has pledged to address the proposals tabled during discussions.

‘He also called on the Ambazonian fighters inside and outside of the village to lay down their weapons.’¹⁰⁴

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7.6 Arrests and detentions

7.6.1 The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) reported on 9 April 2018 about the arrest of radio presenter Mancho Bixiby, who is said to have reported on the ‘rights of the Anglophone minority in Cameroon with a focus on their social and economic marginalisation.’¹⁰⁵ Cameroon Info-net reported on 27 June 2019 that ‘Mancho Bibixy is currently serving a 15 year jail term at the Yaoundé Central Prison. He was arrested on January 19, 2017 in Bamenda and was tried at the Yaoundé Military Court on charges of terrorism, secession among others.’¹⁰⁶

7.6.2 HRW, in a report entitled ‘These Killings Can Be Stopped’, published 19 July 2018, noted that:

7.6.3 ‘In early January 2018, Nigerian authorities arrested 47 Cameroonian Anglophone activists in Nigeria, including the “interim president” of the “Republic of Ambazonia” and members of his cabinet. Nigeria then handed them over to Cameroonian authorities. According to credible reports, which the Cameroonian government confirmed, the 47 were held incommunicado for six months. In June, the Cameroonian government allowed some of them to meet their lawyers and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) met them all for the first time.’

‘Following the arrests in Nigeria, armed separatists mobilized more members and resources and began to ambush security forces or shoot at their bases in a more regular and organized fashion. In response, government security forces carried out abusive counterinsurgency operations that over a dozen of villagers consistently described in individual interviews as including

¹⁰⁴ BBC Monitoring, ‘Several villagers reportedly killed...’, 5 October 2019, subscription only

¹⁰⁵ FIDH, ‘Ongoing detention and judicial harassment of Mr. Mancho Bibixy Tse, 9 April 2018, [url](#)

¹⁰⁶ CIN, ‘Cameroon – Mancho Bibixy launches online campaign’, 27 June 2019, [url](#)

wholesale attacks on villages, the burning and destruction of property, and the killing of civilians, including older persons and people with disabilities who were left behind when others fled.’¹⁰⁷

- 7.6.4 The US Department of State’s (USSD) annual terrorism report covering 2018 noted that ‘Cameroon prosecutes suspected terrorists pursuant to its 2014 anti-terrorism law, which provides exclusive jurisdiction to military tribunals, prolongs investigative detention periods, and provides for the death penalty. ... Cameroon continued to use the anti-terrorism law to suppress criticism and freedom of expression by arresting journalists and activists in connection with the ongoing crisis in the Anglophone regions. The government released 289 low-level detainees arrested on suspicion of being Anglophone separatists and facing misdemeanor charges. However, hundreds of others remain in detention. The government continued to characterize people espousing separatism for the Anglophone regions as terrorists.’¹⁰⁸
- 7.6.5 OCHA in their situation report, Cameroon: ‘North-West and South-West as of 31 May 2019 noted that: In the SW young men and boys, suspected of being members or accomplices of NSAGs, are frequently arbitrarily arrested. Reasons for their arrests include non-possession of identification documents.’¹⁰⁹
- 7.6.6 BAMF – Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (Germany): Briefing Notes 2 September 2019, 2 September 2019 reported that:
‘A military court in the capital Yaoundé sentenced ten members of the opposition to life imprisonment on 20 August 2019. Among them was the leader of the separatist group SCNC, Sisiku Ayuk Tabe. According to media reports the court found them guilty of rebellion, terrorism and separatist pursuits. The charges were motivated by opposition-organized protests against the controversial re-election of President Paul Biya in October 2018.’¹¹⁰
- 7.6.7 Al Jazeera reported on 11 September 2019 that:
‘On August 20 [2019], a Cameroon military tribunal handed down life sentences to separatist leader Julius Ayuk Tabe [Sisiku] and nine others on convictions of secession, "terrorism" and hostility against the state.
‘The defence counsel boycotted the trial, claiming bias.
‘Those sentenced had been arrested in neighbouring Nigeria and extradited to Cameroon in January 2018 along with 46 others alleged to have supported a separatist Anglophone state in Cameroon, known as Ambazonia...’¹¹¹
- 7.6.8 Human Rights Watch in an article of 3 September 2019, ‘Separatist Leaders Appeal Conviction’, reported that:

¹⁰⁷ HRW, “‘These Killings Can Be Stopped’”, 19 Jul 2018, [url](#)

¹⁰⁸ USSD, ‘Country Reports on Terrorism 2018: Cameroon’, (p. 17), October 2019, [url](#)

¹⁰⁹ OCHA, ‘Cameroon: North-West and South-West’, (Protection section), 31 May 2019, [url](#)

¹¹⁰ BAMF, ‘Briefing Notes 2 September 2019’, (section Cameroon), 2 September 2019, [url](#)

¹¹¹ Al Jazeera, ‘Cameroon to hold 'national dialogue' on separatist crisis’, 11 September 2019, [url](#)

‘Ten leaders of the separatist Ambazonia Interim Government in Cameroon lodged an appeal on August 26, 2019, against their August 20 [2019] convictions and life sentences by a military court following a trial that raises serious concerns of due process and violations of fair-trial rights...

‘Sisiku Ayuk Tabe, head of what is known as the “Ambazonia government,” and nine other leaders had been arrested in January 2018 in Nigeria’s capital, Abuja, and forcibly returned to Cameroon, in an extrajudicial transfer that was denounced by the United Nations Refugee Agency as violating the fundamental principle of non-refoulement – the practice of not forcing refugees or asylum seekers back to a country where they risk persecution, torture, or other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment. The forced return of the 10 leaders was also declared illegal by a Nigerian court in March 2019. The men were then held in incommunicado detention at the State Defense Secretariat detention facility (Secrétariat d’état à la défense, SED) for six months, during which they had no access to their lawyers and families. Human Rights Watch has documented that torture and other abuses are endemic at the SED.’¹¹²

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7.7 Treatment of separatists in detention

7.7.1 A June 2018 House of Commons library briefing paper cited a May 2018 Africa News article¹¹³ that ‘After video evidence emerged, the authorities have admitted that one separatist leader in detention was brutally mistreated and have promised to bring those responsible to justice.’¹¹⁴

7.7.2 Human Rights Watch interviewed former detainees from the State Defense Secretariat (Secrétariat d’Etat à la défense, SED). The former detainees (a mix of separatist fighters and civilians) described physical abuses that amounted to torture between January 2018 and January 2019. It was reported that Gendarmes and other security forces used torture and other ill-treatment to force detainees to confess to crimes, or to humiliate and punish them. The interviewees said that they were forced to sign statements they were not allowed to read or could not read because they were in French¹¹⁵.

7.7.3 HRW reported in an article, ‘Detainees Tortured’, published 20 August 2019: ‘Cameroonian authorities held over 100 detainees incommunicado and tortured many of them in a detention facility in Yaoundé, Cameroon’s capital, from July 23 to August 4, 2019.

‘The detainees were transferred to the facility, the State Defense Secretariat (Secrétariat d’état à la défense, SED), the morning after inmates in Yaoundé’s Central Prison rioted on July 22 in protest at overcrowding, dire living conditions, and delays in their cases getting to trial. Many were in detention on suspicion of being involved with or supporting armed separatist groups operating in English-speaking regions of Cameroon...

¹¹² HRW, ‘Separatist Leaders Appeal Conviction’, 3 September 2019, [url](#)

¹¹³ Africa News, ‘Cameroon govt to probe brutality meted out to separatist leader’, 16 May 2018, [url](#)

¹¹⁴ HoC, ‘The Anglophone Cameroon crisis...April 2019 update’, (p10), 6 Jun 2018, [url](#)

¹¹⁵ HRW, ‘Routine torture, incommunicado detention’, 6 May 2019, [url](#)

‘Human Rights Watch interviewed 14 detainees held at the SED, all of whom said they were tortured and held incommunicado during their time there, and heard credible accounts that scores more were also tortured. Human Rights Watch also spoke with family members of detainees and six lawyers who provided information about their clients and detention conditions.’¹¹⁶

- 7.7.4 Responsibility to protect (R2P) reported in their bi-monthly bulletin 15 September 2019 that: ‘...The government is detaining hundreds of people with alleged separatist ties in the capital, Yaoundé, where they are reportedly subjected to torture and ill-treatment.’¹¹⁷
- 7.7.5 Human Rights Watch on 7 October 2019 stated: ‘Human Rights Watch has previously documented the widespread use of torture and incommunicado detention at the SED, mainly of detainees suspected of ties to armed separatist groups. The prison has been used to hold people incommunicado and as a place of torture since at least 2014. Torture is pervasive across the country, in both official and unofficial detention centers’.¹¹⁸
- 7.7.6 The USSD human rights report for 2019 noted: ‘Although the constitution and law prohibit such practices, there were reports that security force members tortured or otherwise abused citizens, including separatist fighters and political opponents. Amnesty International and HRW documented several cases in which security forces severely mistreated political opponents, and others where armed separatists mistreated civilians and members of defense forces.’¹¹⁹

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7.8 Sexual and gender-based violence

- 7.8.1 The United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) reported in May 2019 that Cameroonian IDPs suffer from ‘Protection incidents continue to be reported mostly by women in the 18-59 years-of-age bracket but also by unaccompanied and separated minors, people with disabilities, and lactating and pregnant women. The most frequently reported security incidents include destruction of homes and other domestic properties, extortion, torture and inhumane treatment including rape, sexual assault and sexual exploitation’.¹²⁰
- 7.8.2 The Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa (CHRDA) and Raoul Wallenbergs report Cameroon’s Unfolding Catastrophe, 3 June 2019, reported that:
- ‘In the 24 months following the escalation of the crisis, CHRDA conducted fact-finding missions and carried out interviews in the affected regions with women and girls in relation to gender-based violence and sexual assault, including interviews with detained women and young girls. More than 75 percent of women interviewed had experienced physical or sexual violence. Military and security forces have mistreated female IDPs and sexually

¹¹⁶ HRW, ‘Detainees tortured’, 20 August 2019, [url](#)

¹¹⁷ R2P, ‘Monitor- bi-monthly bulletin’, (p9), 15 September 2019, [url](#)

¹¹⁸ HRW, ‘Cameroon: Political Opponent Freed’, 7 October 2019, [url](#)

¹¹⁹ USSD, ‘Human Rights Report 2019’, (section 1c), 11 March 2020, [url](#).

¹²⁰ UNHCR, ‘Cameroon Situation: Responding to the needs of IDPs...Jan-Dec 2019, March 2019, [url](#)

exploited female refugees travelling without national identity cards in exchange for letting the women through security checkpoints. In the North West region, the governor established a curfew of 6 p.m., which affects women involved in informal businesses. The curfew may have encouraged corrupt and sexually exploitative practices, such as women being asked for sex in exchange for permission to travel past roadblocks and security checks after curfew. CHRDA has reported that female students at the University of Buea were molested and physically assaulted by state forces. At least one female student was raped on November 28, 2016, in Buea by a police officer. No concrete steps have been taken to identify or hold accountable the perpetrators.¹²¹

7.8.3 Responsibility to protect (R2P) reported in their bi-monthly bulletin of 15 September 2019 that:

‘Political conflict over cultural rights and identity have escalated in Cameroon’s Anglophone regions since 2016 when English speaking lawyers, students and teachers began protesting against their under-representation and cultural marginalization by the Francophone-dominated government. Violent repression by the security forces resulted in arbitrary arrests, sexual violence and the killing of civilians in the north-west and southwest regions.’¹²²

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7.9 Release of prisoners

7.9.1 France24 reported on 5 October 2019 that:

‘Cameroon’s president on Thursday [3 October 2019] freed more than 300 separatist fighters from the country’s anglophone regions in an effort to calm a conflict that has killed nearly 3,000 people in the past two years.

‘President Paul Biya made the decision “in a bid to ensure that peace returns to Cameroon’s restive English-speaking regions,” according to a statement by Secretary General Ferdinand Ngo.

‘The order discontinues court proceedings against 333 fighters accused of misdemeanours but does not apply to their leaders who were sentenced to life in prison by a military tribunal in August.’¹²³

7.9.2 Human Rights Watch, in a report ‘Cameroon: Political Opponent Freed’ published on 7 October 2019 reported that:

‘President Paul Biya ordered the release on October 4, 2019 of a prominent opposition leader, Maurice Kamto. The president also ordered the release of other members and supporters of Kamto’s party, the Cameroon Renaissance Movement (MRC). Kamto and the other detainees were released on October 5.

‘Kamto, along with over 200 MRC members and supporters, was arrested between January 26 and 28 after countrywide peaceful protests. At least 350 more party members and supporters, including its vice president Mamadou

¹²¹ CHRDA, ‘Cameroon’s Unfolding Catastrophe’, (p. 33), 3 June 2019, [url](#)

¹²² R2P, ‘Monitor- bi-monthly bulletin’, (p9), 15 September 2019, [url](#)

¹²³ France24, ‘Cameroon’s president releases more than 300 anglophone...’, 4 October 2019, [url](#)

Mota, were arrested between June 1 and 2 after they tried to hold demonstrations across the country...

'In another case, Abdul Karim Ali, an outspoken Anglophone activist and political analyst, was arrested on September 25 [2019] and denied access to a lawyer for five days, in violation of Cameroonian law.

'Abdul Karim Ali was taken to the State Defense Secretariat (Secrétariat d'État à la défense, SED) in Yaoundé. His whereabouts were finally made public on September 30 when he was taken before the Yaoundé Military Court and charged with acts of terrorism, financing terrorism, and secession.'¹²⁴

- 7.9.3 The USSD human rights report for 2019 noted 'On October 3, President Biya announced the pardoning of 333 lower-level Anglophone detainees, and on October 5, the Military Tribunal ordered the release of Kamto and hundreds of his associates.'¹²⁵

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7.10 Treatment on return

- 7.10.1 The UK and other western states have returned both failed asylum seekers and non-asylum migration cases to Cameroon. A number of persons, including those who have claimed asylum, have also voluntarily returned to Cameroon. The available data does not indicate, however, the reasons why a person claimed asylum.
- 7.10.2 The number of people returned from European Union states as recorded by Eurostat between 2014 and 2018 is tabulated below. The data does not indicate if the persons were failed asylum seekers or non-asylum cases or whether returns were voluntary or involuntary.

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total
France	100	95	90	95	85	
United Kingdom	110	115	90	70	45	
Bulgaria	10	0	0	5	5	
Austria	:	:	:	5	5	
Estonia	:	:	5	5	0	
Ireland	:	0	0	0	0	
Croatia	0	0	0	0	0	
Latvia	0	0	0	0	0	
Luxembourg	:	:	0	0	0	
Hungary	0	0	0	0	0	
Malta	:	0	0	0	0	

¹²⁴ HRW, 'Cameroon: Political Opponent Freed', 7 October 2019, [url](#)

¹²⁵ USSD, Human rights report 2019 (section 1e), 11 March 2020, [url](#)

Portugal	0	0	0	0	0	
Slovenia	0	0	0	0	0	
Slovakia	0	0	0	0	0	
Liechtenstein	:	:	0	0	0	
Belgium	40	30	:	:	:	
Italy	0	0	0	5	:	
Poland	:	5	0	0	:	
Sweden	:	:	10	10	:	
Total	260	245	195	195	140	1,035

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- 7.10.3 The Home Office's own statistics indicate that in the period 2014 to 2018 of the 430 returns from the UK recorded by Eurostat, 87 were failed asylum seekers¹²⁷.
- 7.10.4 The Home Office data covering the period January 2004 to June 2019 (after which published statistics no longer segregate returns by asylum or non asylum cases) recorded 566 failed asylum seekers were involuntarily returned to Cameroon, and 184 returned voluntarily¹²⁸.
- 7.10.5 An Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada request response (quoting a range of sources including oral and translated sources) on the issue of treatment of returnees, published 24 August 2018, noted:

'The researcher [representative from the International Crisis Group (ICG)] stated that "authorities in Yaoundé say that those in the diaspora are the ones spearheading the war," most notably in Canada, Belgium, South Africa and the US... Similarly, the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), "a South Africa-based civil society organisation working throughout Africa", notes that some state officials asserted that the protests in Cameroon's Anglophone regions were "fomented from abroad".

'...According to NDH-Cameroun, Anglophone Cameroonians who live abroad and have a link with the crisis will be [translation] "tracked down and arrested, wherever they are," as "officially" stated by the Ministry of Administration (ministère de l'Administration)... The [ICG] researcher said that "[a]nyone in the diaspora who is vocal against the authorities faces death or torture and imprisonment if they go to Cameroon"... Regarding the "exile of Anglophone activists," International Crisis Group reports that "[m]any want to return home but are understandably frightened by the government's continued imprisonment of Anglophone militants"... The International Crisis Group representative indicated that the Cameroonian authorities have issued arrest warrants against a number of known separatists who have fled the country, although "[t]hey are not many"... According to the same source, this "implies that they would be

¹²⁶ Eurostat, Third country returns by destination and citizenship, updated 24 February 2020, [url](#)

¹²⁷ Home Office, Immigration statistics, Returns table, vol 5, 22 August 2019, [url](#)

¹²⁸ Home Office, Immigration statistics, Returns table, vol 5, 22 August 2019, [url](#)

arrested if they return [to Cameroon]"... Similarly, the news website Journal du Cameroun reports that the Cameroonian government requested the arrest and deportation of separatist activists in the diaspora (in Belgium, Norway, the US, Austria, Nigeria and South Africa)...The BBC also indicates that the authorities issued international arrest warrants for separatist leaders...Sources note that Cameroonian separatist leaders have been deported back to Cameroon by Nigerian authorities... According to a summary of statements made by a UNHCR representative during a press briefing, there are reports of "arrests of Cameroonian nationals in Nigeria, including at least one asylum seeker at the beginning of March [2018]".

'...The International Crisis Group representative said that "most of those who advocate for federalism or [who] have not been tagged as sponsors or supporters of armed separatists, move in and out of Cameroon as they wish"...However, according to the researcher, since October 2016, "there is danger across the national territory" for all Anglophones.

'According to sources, Patrice Nganang, a [Francophone] Cameroonian writer [living in New York], was arrested at Douala airport and imprisoned in Yaoundé for "speaking in defence of the Anglophones"...or after writing "a piece critical of the government's handling of [the] separatist crisis in its Anglophone region"; his lawyer said that he was accused of insulting the president...He was released after being detained for [a few] weeks...A January 2018 article by Reuters indicates that a [Cameroonian] former businessman "seen as a moderate voice in the separatist movement and [who] has in the past promoted dialogue over violence" has been "target[ed]" by the Cameroonian authorities; from Nigeria, he told Reuters that in December 2017, "his family home in Anglophone Cameroon was surrounded by government troops".

'The researcher indicated that Anglophone Cameroonians returning to Yaoundé or Douala are "not safe," as they "might be taken from the airport to prison to an unknown destination"... According to the same source, Anglophone deportees, including failed asylum seekers, "can be imprisoned and fined, unless [they] brib[e] [their] way out"... A 2015 Sciences Po Paris academic paper on post-deportation risks reports that returnees from Europe face threats of detention or imprisonment in Cameroon, and that failed asylum seekers can be submitted to violence upon their return...' ¹²⁹

- 7.10.6 The 2015 Sciences Po paper by Blondel, Charlotte, et al, referred in the IRBC response - Post-Deportation Risks: Criminalized Departure and Risks for Returnees in Countries of Origin - is based on a review of available published material on returns to a number of countries including Cameroon undertaken in 2015. In reference to failed asylum seekers, the paper summarises the contents of a Danish Fact Finding Mission report of 2001, in turn based on a number of local sources:

'The Danish Immigration Service reported that rejected asylum seekers deported in handcuffs and accompanied by a foreign police officer risk detention by the Cameroonian police. If the Cameroonian authorities know

¹²⁹ IRBC, 'Query response on the situation of Anglophones...', 24 August 2018, [url](#)

that the returnee has sought asylum abroad, he/she is suspected of having discredited Cameroon. Asylum seekers for economic reasons are released.

'The Danish Immigration Service reported that if the Cameroonian authorities know that the returnee has sought asylum abroad, he/she is at risk of ill treatment or torture.'¹³⁰

- 7.10.7 However, the Sciences Po summary of the Danish Immigration Service (DIS) fact finding mission report, based on interviews of a range of sources in Cameroon in January / February 2001, does not reflect the views of all the sources interviewed by the DIS mission on the topic of return and selects only certain perspectives. A number of sources, mostly representatives of the foreign missions of western Embassies some of which returned failed asylum seekers, were not aware of problems on return. The relevant section in full stated:

'A western diplomatic source believed that a rejected asylum applicant forcibly returned to Cameroon would not be at risk. He was not aware of the Cameroonian authorities detaining Cameroonian citizens who had been deported after their asylum applications had been rejected, simply because they had sought asylum abroad. He did not know of cases where a returned rejected asylum applicant had had problems with the authorities as a result of being deported. He pointed out that the authorities were not informed that people were rejected asylum applicants.

'Gemuh Akuchu confirmed that rejected asylum applicants who returned to Cameroon voluntarily were not at risk of being detained by the police on their return.

A rejected asylum applicant who was deported in handcuffs and was accompanied by a foreign policeman who handed him over to the Cameroonian authorities at the airport risked detention by the police. This would be to investigate his background. If the Cameroonian authorities were aware that he had sought asylum abroad he would be suspected of having discredited Cameroon. If the authorities merely found that he had sought asylum for economic reasons he would be released. The editor of the Messenger also believed that asylum applications abroad were seen as damaging Cameroon's image.

'The same source reported that in December 2000 a returning Cameroonian had been detained by the airport police in Douala because he was on a list of wanted persons. No official reason was given for his arrest, but it was probably on political grounds. The returning Cameroonian had been active in an English-speaking Cameroonian group in the USA. He was released after 12 hours. Such detentions were short, usually a day or half a day.

'Several sources said that there were cases of Cameroonians coming over the land border from Nigeria to avoid the risk connected with arriving at airports.

'T. Asonganyi reported that if the authorities knew that someone was a rejected asylum applicant they would arrest him as, by applying for asylum,

¹³⁰ Blondel, Charlotte, et al, 'Post-Deportation Risks...' (p9), May 2015, [url](#)

he would be suspected of harming Cameroon's reputation abroad. He would also risk being ill-treated or even tortured.

'Akuchu said that the forcible or accompanied deportation of a rejected asylum applicant would not cause problems if the authorities were not informed that the individual was a rejected asylum applicant. The best way to deport a rejected asylum applicant was for accompanying policemen to wear civilian clothes as though they were travelling with any other person.

'None of the diplomatic sources consulted by the delegation were aware of any cases in which the return of rejected asylum applicants had led to serious problems for those involved. Several sources said that no such cases had been mentioned by Amnesty International or by human rights organisations in the relevant western countries. They took this as a sign that there were no cases of rejected asylum applicants having problems with the Cameroonian authorities because of their asylum applications.

'One western diplomatic source reported that their local legal adviser had stated that there was no legislation in Cameroon providing for prosecution for seeking asylum abroad. However, in practice things could be very different. His country had known a number of cases of rejected Cameroonian asylum applicants marrying nationals while their asylum applications were pending. The rejected asylum applicants had then voluntarily gone home to Cameroon to wait for family reunification from there under existing rules. The source saw this as a sign that rejected Cameroonian asylum applicants were not persecuted when they returned home. If the contrary was the case, they would have been persecuted while they were in Cameroon waiting for their applications for family reunification to be processed. None of the individuals concerned had reported to the representation in Cameroon that they had been persecuted because of their asylum application abroad. The source added that rejected asylum applicants who returned voluntarily were not known to be such in Cameroon. The Cameroonian authorities would not be able to tell whether deported Cameroonians were rejected asylum applicants or had, for example, been deported because their visas had expired.

'Another western diplomatic source reported that last year one European country returned nearly 200 people to Cameroon. They were escorted by police, and none of them had reported problems of a political nature in Cameroon. Some were rejected asylum applicants and others had committed minor crimes.

'The same source commented that Cameroonians who had left on a false passport and been returned to Cameroon would not be punished as a result. Someone who tried to enter on a false passport would be able to do so without problems.'¹³¹

- 7.10.8 The Sciences Po paper also cited a 2014 paper of Dr Jill Maybritt Alpes, noting: 'Returnees that committed fraud are subject to imprisonment (Art. 205, Cameroonian Penal Code). Although in practice there is no imprisonment, at times deportees can face threats of imprisonment.'¹³²

¹³¹ DIS, FFM report 2001 (section 8.1.2), 1 March 2001, [url](#)

¹³² Blondel, Charlotte, et al, 'Post-Deportation Risks...' (ps9-10), May 2015, [url](#)

- 7.10.9 No more detailed or up-to-date information about returns generally and those of Anglophones in particular is available in the sources consulted in this note (see [Bibliography](#)).

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7.11 Media and internet disruptions

- 7.11.1 The BBC's January 2019 profile on Cameroon's media stated that:

'Cameroon has a busy media environment. State-run CRTV operates national TV and radio networks and provincial radio stations. There are dozens of private radio and TV stations and hundreds of press titles.

'Journalists reporting on sensitive subjects face pressure and the risk of detention or arrest, says US NGO Freedom House. It says the authorities have clamped down on media coverage of protests and unrest in Cameroon's English-speaking regions.

'Reporters Without Borders (RSF) says officials have "imposed a climate of fear and self-censorship".

'The Anglophone crisis led to the emergence of separatist media, including online and satellite TV outlets, in response to the government crackdown on coverage.

'BBC World Service radio is available via local relays (98.4 FM in Yaoundé).

'There were around 6.1 million internet users by the end of 2017 (InternetWorldStats.com). Facebook is the leading social media platform.

'Amid protests in English-speaking regions, internet access in these areas was suspended for three months in early 2017. The authorities went on to impose targeted restrictions on social media and messaging applications.

'RSF said the curbs were an attempt to prevent local people from exchanging information about protests.'¹³³

- 7.11.2 BBC Monitoring stated in their media guide of 29 May 2019 that: 'The Anglophone crisis has led to the emergence of separatist media in response to a systematic government crackdown on private media and journalists in the regions.'¹³⁴

- 7.11.3 The USSD human rights report for 2018, covering events for 2018 stated that:

'According to Internet World Stats (IWS), there were 6,128,422 Internet users in December 2017, representing penetration rates of 24.8 percent. There are currently no credible reports that the government monitored private online communications without appropriate legal authority. The government, however, has repeatedly disrupted access to the internet.

'The country experienced its first internet shutdown in January 2017, after Anglophone teachers, lawyers, and students went on strike over alleged social bias in favor of Francophones. The government issued a countrywide internet shutdown, which lasted 93 days. Educational, financial, and health-

¹³³ BBC News, Cameroon profile – media, 22 January 2019, [url](#)

¹³⁴ BBC Monitoring, Media Guide, 29 May 2019, subscription only

care institutions as well as businesses that relied on internet access were stunted. International bodies applied pressure to the government to restore internet access. Despite internet access being restored in April 2017, there were continuing reports of network instability.

'In October 2017 the government effected a second internet blockade, targeting social media and apps such as WhatsApp and Facebook. This continued to affect the country economically, and many citizens were forced to travel back and forth to regions with internet access for business or information.'¹³⁵

- 7.11.4 The USSD human rights report 2019, covering events in 2019 stated that: 'No credible reports indicated that the government monitored private online communications without appropriate legal authority. The government occasionally disrupted access to the internet.'¹³⁶

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7.12 State response to human rights reporting

- 7.12.1 On 15 June 2018, Pakistan Today cited Cameroon's Communications Minister Issa Tchiroma Bakary as having said Amnesty's report [[A turn for the worse: Violence and human rights violations in Anglophone Cameroon](#)] was '[...] stuffed with crude lies, hasty deductions (and) slanderous, unacceptable manoeuvring, which are part of a strategy of harassment and destabilisation of our country in its fight against the terrorist threat,' [...] The government "rejects this supposed report with the greatest firmness".¹³⁷
- 7.12.2 The USSD human rights report for 2018, covering events in 2018 noted that 'The government criticized reports from international human rights organizations, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and the International Crisis Group, accusing them of publishing baseless accusations with the intention of discrediting the government and military. Despite these restrictions, numerous independent domestic human rights NGOs continued operations to the best of their ability, although many reported that government threats and intimidation limited their ability to operate in the country.'¹³⁸
- 7.12.3 The Government of Cameroon issued a [detailed response](#) to a Human Rights Watch's report '[These Killings Can be Stopped](#)' in July 2018 on the situation in the North West and South West regions.
- 7.12.4 Human Rights Watch report 'Promised investigation should be independent', published 23 May 2019, found that:
- 'The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights requested permission to investigate abuses in the Anglophone regions in 2018. The government has not yet granted permission. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights visited Cameroon in early May and raised

¹³⁵ USSD Human Rights Report 2018, (section 2), 13 March 2019, [url](#)

¹³⁶ USSD, 'Human Rights Report 2019', (section 2), 11 March 2020, [url](#).

¹³⁷ Pakistan Today, 'Cameroon blasts Amnesty for 'crude lies' on anglophone crisis', 15 Jun 2018, [url](#)

¹³⁸ USSD, Human rights report 2018 (section 5), 13 March 2019, [url](#)

the lack of access for both international and national human rights activists and humanitarian agencies.

'The Cameroon government denied a Human Rights Watch researcher entry to the country on April 12, two days after Human Rights Watch published a report on a deadly attack by soldiers, gendarmes, and members of the Rapid Intervention Battalion on a village in the North-West region.'¹³⁹

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Section 8 updated: 12 March 2020

8. Separatist / militia groups

8.1 Overview of groups

8.1.1 In their June 2018 report, 'A Turn for the Worse', Amnesty explained how they '[use] the phrase "self-proclaimed armed separatists" to describe a spectrum of groups embracing an armed struggle for secession from Cameroon in order to create an independent state of "Ambazonia"', that 'One of the most prominent groups is the Ambazonia Defense Forces (ADF)' ¹⁴⁰.

8.1.2 The International Crisis Group, in an article of 2 May 2019 on the 'Anglophone crisis', stated:

'Seven armed militias present on the ground have a total of between 2,000 and 4,000 combatants. They recruit mainly from the Anglophone community, but also among the security forces and include dozens of Nigerian mercenaries, who generally bring their own weapons and ammunition and are deployed as trainers or combatants. Some are former combatants or those out of work after agreements between the Nigerian government and political-military groups in the Niger Delta. Others are simply criminals who fled to Cross River state to escape the Delta Safe 1 Operation launched in 2016 by the Nigerian army to fight crime in the Delta. Dozens of Cameroonian police officers and soldiers, mostly officers, and retired or discharged soldiers have also joined the militias. Most militias have female combatants, some of whom are local leaders.

'In 2018, the militias gradually took control of some rural and urban periphery areas. Since September 2018, they have had to adapt their deployments to security force offensives but, despite suffering losses, they retain a position of strength in most of these areas, maintaining roadblocks and security checkpoints. They have even managed to organise attacks on towns such as Buea (Southwest) and Bamenda (Northwest), which suffered about twenty attacks in 2018. They are equipped mostly with locally made traditional firearms, but also carry modern firearms and a few machine guns and RPGs. Many of these weapons were seized from the security forces, while others were acquired in Nigeria from paramilitary or criminal groups in the Delta.

'Initially funded almost exclusively by the diaspora, the militias have become more autonomous. Last year, they carried out many more kidnappings for ransom, extorted shopkeepers and certain sectors of the population and

¹³⁹ HRW, 'Promised investigation should be independent', 23 May 2019, [url](#)

¹⁴⁰ Amnesty, 'A Turn for the Worse' (p10), 12 Jun 2018, [url](#)

imposed “taxes” on companies. This relative financial independence allows them to cut themselves free from political organisations in the diaspora. Ignoring orders to respect the rights of civilians, they commit abuses and are gradually alienating the residents. As the population becomes less cooperative, they have greater recourse to violence to ensure obedience.’

‘The separatists are structured around two main political bodies, both with armed wings. The Interim Government of the Federal Republic of Ambazonia (IG) and the Ambazonia Governing Council (AGC) both claim to be the legitimate government of Southern Cameroons, the name of the Anglophone regions under British trusteeship and mandate. There are also several smaller separatist organisations.

‘Most of the separatist organisations are based abroad. At the start of the crisis, not all of them were convinced of the need to take up arms. But as the violence intensified, they prepared for a “liberation” struggle. Today, the separatist current includes seven main armed militias.’¹⁴¹

8.1.3 Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa (CHRNA) report Cameroon’s Unfolding Catastrophe, 3 June 2019, reported that:

‘During the crisis, bands of armed civilians have evolved to become more structured and organized defence and insurgent groups, and have taken control of certain parts of Cameroonian territory. The main civilian organizations are the Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC), Southern Cameroons Anglophone People’s Organization (SCAPO), Southern Cameroons Youth League (SCYL), Movement for the Restoration of the Independence of Southern Cameroons (MORISC), and the Southern Cameroons Ambazonia Consortium United Front (SCACUF), which identifies itself as the interim government of the Federal Republic of Ambazonia.

‘The most active armed groups are the Southern Cameroons Defence Forces and the Ambazonia Defence Forces (ADF is the military arm of the Ambazonia Governing Council). In addition, there are numerous local cells with hundreds of fighters, not only from Cameroon but also Nigeria. Other groups include the Ambazonia Restoration Army in Belo/Boyo, the Nso Liberation Army in Bui, the Tigers of Manyu in Manyu Division, and the Red Dragons of Lebialem Defence Force in the locality of Lebialem. According to the International Crisis Group, armed separatist groups have between 2,000 and 4,000 fighters.’¹⁴²

8.1.4 A DW article of 30 September 2019, ‘Who are Cameroon’s self-named Ambazonia secessionists?’, based on interviews with an Anglophone human rights lawyer, an activist and Human Rights Watch employee, reported that:

‘...Multiple separatists groups have formed in the southwest and northwest of the country.

‘Agbor Balla, an Anglophone human rights lawyer, tells DW: “I think each county or each community is coming up with its own groups. There are about ten groups, including the Ambazonia Defence Forces, the Tigers, and groups working for the interim government of Ambazonia.” All of these

¹⁴¹ ICG, ‘Cameroon’s Anglophone Crisis: How to get to Talks?’, (section IV), 2 May 2019, [url](#)

¹⁴² CHRNA, ‘Cameroon’s Unfolding Catastrophe’, (section H), 3 June 2019, [url](#)

groups serve one purpose: the fight for independence. It is a struggle that has a long history.

‘...Freedom fighters, radicals, or Amba-boys – nowadays, the separatists have many names. Mark Bareta, a Cameroonian activist in the diaspora fighting for Ambazonia, explains: "At the moment we have different groups, different structures: Those who decided to pick up arms and are fighting the republic, those doing diplomacy and those providing support to those in the bushes."

‘The groups don't have a chain of command. "You cannot really identify how they operate", Balla says.

‘...Some of the armed groups are led and funded by Cameroonians living in the diaspora, Balla says. "The diaspora, these are Cameroonians. Some want to see things changed, some of them want to have an independent state, some of them might have had their issues with the government. Some of them might have been blacklisted and they cannot come back to the country. So some hope to come back to an independent state." However, most groups survive through kidnappings and ransom.

‘The fights have become increasingly brutal, schools, hospitals and whole villages are burned down, people murdered and intimidated. "At the beginning, abuses were mostly and largely committed by government forces. Now the line between the bad and the good is really blurred and we see these separatist groups attacking and targeting civilians", explains Ilaria Allegrozzi from Human Rights Watch. "Civilians are really being caught in the middle of this crisis and paying the highest price."¹⁴³

8.1.5 Another DW article dated 30 September 2019 said that:

‘The conflict is becoming increasingly brutal. Young men, called Amba boys, fight in the bush against the army...

‘How many Amba boys there are is hard to say. Estimates range from 200 to more than 2000. They split into competing groups, mostly from the diaspora in the US and Norway. "Some of these boys are not even 15 years old," says Thomas Mokoko [Presbyterian priest]. "It is heartbreaking that these young people, who are an essential part of our society, are dying for a pointless war."

‘...many of the secessionists — in the bush as well as in the Diaspora — are probably afraid of what might happen to them. Some of them, like Ebenezer Akwanga, who once escaped from a Cameroonian prison, fear being arrested. Others do not have a valid residence permit in the country where they live. According to various sources, separatist leaders abroad are also losing influence.’¹⁴⁴

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¹⁴³ DW, ‘Who are Cameroon's self-named Ambazonia secessionists?’, 30 September 2019, [url](#)

¹⁴⁴ DW, ‘Cameroon holds dialogue on Anglophone crisis’, 30 September 2019, [url](#)

8.2 The Interim Government of the Federal Republic of Ambazonia (IG)

8.2.1 The International Crisis group, in 'Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis: How to get to Talks?', published 2 May 2019, reported that:

'Considered by most separatists and many Anglophones to be the government of Ambazonia on its creation in June 2017, the IG was weakened politically by the arrest in January 2018 in Nigeria of its figurehead, Julius Ayuk Tabe. Several separatist activists accuse the new leadership under Ikome Sako of incompetence and misappropriation of funds. Some activists now see the IG as just a separatist organisation among many others.

'Grouping several organisations, it nevertheless remains the most politically credible and best-funded separatist organisation.

'It [IG] established an Ambazonia Security Council (ASC), a kind of platform for cooperation between the armed militias within its field of influence, such as Tigers 2 and Red Dragons, and an embryonic parliament called the Ambazonia Recognition Coalition (ARC). It has ten ministerial departments, including the Department of Health and Social Services, which assists Cameroonian refugees in Nigeria. The IG, whose monthly budget reportedly varies from tens of thousands to a hundred thousand dollars, is mainly funded by donations from the diaspora, including a significant number of women, but business people and shopkeepers in Cameroon allegedly also contribute in order to protect their premises from vandalism.' ¹⁴⁵

8.2.2 Based on interviews with separatist leaders the same report also noted: 'The IG's official objective is the "restoration of the independence of Southern Cameroons". The conditions put forward for a dialogue with the Cameroonian state include international mediation by the UN, the African Union (AU) or the U.S., negotiations to take place on neutral territory and an agenda covering the practical details of separation'. ¹⁴⁶

8.2.3 A BBC monitoring biography gave the following information:

'Julius Sisiku Ayuk Tabe is a Cameroonian separatist leader who was sentenced to life imprisonment on 20 August 2019. He was convicted of charges including terrorism and secession by a military court in Yaoundé. Until his arrest in January 2018, he was interim president of the Federal Republic of Ambazonia. Before that he was the chairman of the Southern Cameroons Executive Council (SCACUF), an organisation that called on English-speaking Cameroonians to rise up against the government. The trial of Ayuk Tabe and nine co-accused started in December 2018. During the hearing sessions he repetitively rejected his Cameroonian citizenship and described the proceedings as a sham trial.' ¹⁴⁷

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¹⁴⁵ ICG, 'Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis: How to get to Talks?', (section IV), 2 May 2019, [url](#)

¹⁴⁶ ICG, 'Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis: How to get to Talks?', (section IV), 2 May 2019, [url](#)

¹⁴⁷ BBC Monitoring, 'Biography - Julius Sisiku Ayuk Tabe', 31 August 2019, subscription only

8.3 Ambazonia Governing Council (AGC / AGovC)

- 8.3.1 International Crisis Group stated, in 'Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis: How to get to Talks?', published 2 May 2019, that:

'The IG's rival, the Ambazonia Governing Council (AGC), was founded in 2013 by its president, Ayaba Cho Lucas.' '...The AGC is more hardline than the IG. Ayaba Cho, who lives in Norway, is its undisputed leader and takes decisions practically alone, contrary to the relatively collegial way of making decisions in the IG. It aims to make the Anglophone regions ungovernable until the government realises that the cost of fighting the armed militias is greater than the benefits accruing from exploitation of the regions' natural resources.'¹⁴⁸

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8.4 Ambazonia Defence Forces (ADF)

- 8.4.1 The Ambazonia Defence Forces (ADF) are an armed group who are led by Benedict Kuah and are affiliated to the AGC¹⁴⁹.
- 8.4.2 In their June 2018 report, A Turn for the Worse, Amnesty International explained how they use the phrase "self-proclaimed armed separatists" to describe a spectrum of groups embracing an armed struggle for secession from Cameroon in order to create an independent state of "Ambazonia", that 'One of the most prominent groups is the Ambazonia Defense Forces (ADF),'¹⁵⁰

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8.5 Ambazonia Military Forces (AMF)

- 8.5.1 The website of Foreign Policy (FP), part of an American conglomerate holding company, reporting on Cameroon's separatist movement on 29 May 2017, stated that:

'The AMF is the product of an attempted merger between several other groups. Its members have fashioned a logo for themselves, built a command structure, and amassed hundreds of fighters, but the composition of the group is constantly changing. Some of the AMF's ranks even claim multiple allegiances. A soldier might belong to the AMF and claim membership in other groups such as the Red Dragons, or the Southern Cameroons Defense Forces at the same time. Others are ready to be associated with any group fighting the Ambazonian cause.

'What the AMF has attempted to offer its ranks is a glimmer of a more cohesive, organized Ambazonian fighting force. However, at this point, the manpower of Ambazonian separatists is still being undercut by their lack of access to weapons.

¹⁴⁸ ICG, 'Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis: How to get to Talks?', (section IV), 2 May 2019, [url](#)

¹⁴⁹ ICG, 'Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis: How to get to Talks?', (section IV), 2 May 2019, [url](#)

¹⁵⁰ Amnesty, 'A Turn for the Worse' (p10), 12 Jun 2018, [url](#)

‘Fighters in the AMF routinely take on well-equipped and heavily armored soldiers from Cameroon’s military with rusty hunting rifles, or even single-shot pistols. It isn’t unheard of for members of the AMF to share firearms.’¹⁵¹

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8.6 Ambazonia Recognition Collaboration Council (ARCC)

8.6.1 The Ambazonia Recognition Collaboration Council (ARCC) are also affiliated to the AGC¹⁵².

8.6.2 According to Amba News 24:

‘ARCC is a collaborative platform of six Ambazonia liberation movements, which include the Ambazonia Governing Council (AGovC), Ambazonia Mobilization Initiative, China (AMIC), the Ambazonia People Restoration Movements (APERM), the Movement for the Restoration of the Independence of Southern Cameroons (MoRISC), the Republic of Ambazonia Nation (RoAN), and the Southern Cameroons Women Movement (SCWM).’¹⁵³

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8.7 Smaller separatist groups

8.7.1 In February 2018, Reuters reported that ‘The ADF has been joined by newer armed groups made up mostly of young men. The Vipers has claimed responsibility for burning government buildings. The Manyu Tigers says its ranks are growing and it has carried out attacks on military checkpoints.’¹⁵⁴

8.7.2 International Crisis group, in May 2019, listed the smaller separatist organisations as:

- Ambazonia People’s Liberation Movement (APLM) – Led by Ebenezer Akawanga
- Southern Cameroons People’s Organisation (SCAPO) – Led by Milan Atam, former IG general secretary.
- Southern Cameroons Youth League (SCYL)
- Southern Cameroons Defense Forces (SOCADEF) – Military wing¹⁵⁵

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8.8 Size of groups

8.8.1 The ICG, in May 2019, produced the following 2 grids¹⁵⁶ estimating the number of members attributed to a separatist group.

Armed militias

Group	Leader	Stronghold	Numbers (estimate)

¹⁵¹ FP, ‘Cameroon’s separatist movement is going international’, 13 May 2019, [url](#)

¹⁵² ICG, ‘Cameroon’s Anglophone Crisis: How to get to Talks?’, (section IV), 2 May 2019, [url](#)

¹⁵³ Amba News 24, ‘ARCC adopts tough resolution on any negotiations...’, 28 June 2019, [url](#)

¹⁵⁴ Reuters, ‘Exclusive: ‘We are in a war’ - Cameroon unrest confronted by ...’, 8 February 2018, [url](#)

¹⁵⁵ ICG, ‘Cameroon’s Anglophone Crisis: How to get to Talks?’, (section IV), 2 May 2019, [url](#)

¹⁵⁶ ICG, ‘Cameroon’s Anglophone Crisis: How to get to Talks?’, (p32-33), 2 May 2019, [url](#)

Manyu Tigers	Martin Ashu	Manyu division (Southwest)	500
Southern Cameroons Defense Forces	Ebenezer Akwanga	Meme Department (Southwest)	400
Ambazonia Defense Forces	Benedict Kuah	Both regions	200-500
Red Dragons	Olivier Lekene Fongunueh (alias Field Marshall)	Lebialem division (Southwest)	200
Seven Kata		Batibo town and Momo division (Northwest)	200
The Sword of Ambazonia (TSOA)		Meme division	200
Ambaland Quifor	Silas Zama	Mezam division	200

Small armed groups

Group	Leader	Stronghold	Numbers (estimate)
	"General" Nyambere	Kupe-Manenguba division (Southwest)	50
Southern Cameroons Restoration Forces	"General" RK	Boyo division (Northwest)	100
	"General" Satan	Fundong town and Boyo division (Northwest)	Few dozen
Warriors of Nso	Warriors of Nso	Bul division (Northwest)	100
White Tigers		Bafut, Bamenda (towns) and Mezam division (Northwest)	50
Menchum Fall Warriors		Menchum division (Northwest)	Few dozen
Ten-Ten	"General" Ten	Buea (town) and Fako division (Southwest)	50
	Eugene	Muyuka town and Fako division (Southwest)	50

	"General" Obi		50
Dongang Mantung self defense group			
Vipers			Few dozen
Ambazonia Restoration Army (ARA)			Few dozen

8.8.2 The notes to this grid added that:

'It is difficult to estimate the numbers in these armed groups in the Anglophone part of Cameroon because they tend to claim higher numbers than they really have. For example, SOCADEF's leader said that his group had more than 3,500 active combatants, but he appears to have no more than 500. International Crisis Group has only listed groups with at least 200 members, an official name and an identifiable leader. About 20 smaller semi-criminal, semi-separatist groups also exist and have a few dozen members. Finally, the attacks in the Francophone West Region (Noun, Bamboutos and Menoua divisions) seem to be the work of a few small groups based in Ngoketunjia division (Babessi, Bambaland, Bamessing and Bamali) in the Northwest region.'

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8.9 Diaspora / sur place activities

8.9.1 The website of Foreign Policy (FP), reporting on Cameroon's separatist movement in May 2019, stated that:

'... A particularly active diaspora is increasingly funneling resources into Cameroon's separatist armed groups and courting foreign states for support.

'One of the actors moving into this now crowded field is Marshall Foncha. Based in the United States, Foncha serves as the chairman of the 'Ambazonia Military Council, the AMF's political wing. In an interview with Foreign Policy, he said he has attempted to source arms from two foreign powers in a deal that is being mediated by sympathetic officers in the Nigerian Army.

'From Foncha's vantage point in the United States, a steady weapons supply will help bring an end to the fragmentation of Cameroon's array of Anglophone separatist movements and help to galvanize support from military factions behind the council.

'On social media, diaspora activists have been promoting fundraising campaigns for Kalashnikovs and other firearms, and there is an increasing, if uncoordinated, effort to get guns to those willing to fight the Cameroonian government. These resources are already reshaping the realities of the Anglophone separatist movement on the ground, however fragmented it may be.'

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¹⁵⁷ ICG, 'Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis: How to get to Talks?', (p33), 2 May 2019, [url](#)

¹⁵⁸ FP, 'Cameroon's separatist movement is going international', 13 May 2019, [url](#)

8.9.2 A BBC Monitoring 'Organisation' post, of 9 October 2019, gave the following information:

'The Brigade Anti-Sardinard is a diaspora movement, which was formed after the Cameroon's 7 October 2018 presidential election. The movement aims at challenging all those who, directly or indirectly, support the 27-year-old Paul Biya regime.

'The Brigade Anti-Sardinard supports the Movement for the Renaissance of Cameroon (MRC), whose leader, Maurice Kamto unsuccessfully challenged President Paul Biya in the October 2018 presidential election and challenged the election's results arguing that he was the rightful winner of the pol.

'The choice of the name Anti-Sardinards comes from the fact that sandwiches made of bread and canned sardines were regularly distributed to the population during the meetings of the ruling party, the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM).

'The Brigade Anti-Sardinard movement stages anti-government peaceful march in Paris and Berlin. During the protests, the Cameroon's embassy in Paris and Berlin are ransacked, 19 January 2019.

'The Brigade Anti-Sardinards movement stages a mass anti-Biya regime protest in Geneva, during the visit of President Paul Biya in Switzerland on 29 June 2019. The movement says that it will organise a similar protest in Yaoundé on 8 July 2019.

'The Brigade Anti-Sardinards movement hails the release of political detainees including [Maurice Kamto](#). The group goes on to call for the release of separatist leader [Julius Sisiku Ayuk Tabe](#) and his co-accused.¹⁵⁹

8.9.3 There are a number of Cameroonian community organisations in the UK (see [africancultureblog](#)) including [South Cameroons National Council \(SCNC\) UK](#). SCNC (UK) describe themselves as 'a group advocating for self determination aiming at obtaining independence for the former British Southern Cameroons. It is a non violent and a non political group of activists with its motto; "The Force Of Argument Not The Argument Of Force".'¹⁶⁰

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Section 9 updated: 12 March 2020

9. Separatists' actions

9.1 Separatist and military clashes

9.1.1 Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) in their regional overview dated 23 July 2019 stated:

'In Cameroon, despite on-going mediation efforts by Switzerland, Ambazonian Separatist and military forces continued to clash in the Nord-Ouest [North-West] and Sud-Ouest [South-West] regions this week. Fighting

¹⁵⁹ BBC Monitoring, 'Organisation - Brigade Anti-Sardinards (BAS)', 9 October 2019, subscription only

¹⁶⁰ SCNC, website, (homepage), [url](#)

in Mbiam resulted in six fatalities, while clashes in the Sud-Ouest between separatists and police forces in Muea led to four fatalities. Both sides also continued to carry out attacks on civilians. This week, three civilians were killed by security forces in Bui, while a lawyer who represents Ambazonian leaders was abducted by an unidentified group in Bamenda. A video also emerged showing Ambazonian Separatists assaulting three women, two of who were carrying small children. While both groups actively target civilians, military forces have been responsible for the majority of reported civilian fatalities in the region since January 2019. Such abuses by security forces create further mistrust and grievances amongst Anglophone communities.¹⁶¹

9.1.2 ACLED reported in their regional overview dated 10 September 2019 that:

'In the Anglophone region of Cameroon, Ambazonian Separatists and military forces continued to clash. On September 3rd [2019], they battled in Nchouboh with four bodies discovered after the battle. Both sides target the civilian population in the region. While schools resumed this week, pupils in the Anglophone region continue to be caught between the fighting, as Ambazonian Separatist oppose the national education system, which they view as an illegitimate extension of the Francophone government. Since September 2018, there have been 29 recorded events targeting teachers and students in the Anglophone region. Unidentified Armed Groups and Ambazonian Separatists, were responsible for the majority of the recorded incidents. With the resumption of schools this week, some civilians have reported being threatened by military forces if they do not send their children to school, leaving families with school children as targets by both sides. Children in the Extreme-Nord also remain vulnerable, as Boko Haram abducted 15 children abducted from Amchide, Kolofata this week.'¹⁶²

9.1.3 A September 2019 article by News Ghana reported that a commander of the Ambazonia Defense Force (ADF), popularly known as 'Boss Agaba', and one other armed separatist were killed in a clash in the Northwest. It was reported that the army had said that the 2, who had defected from the government forces to join the armed group, were on their way to carry out an attack when they were ambushed and killed by the military. The Ambazonia Governing Council confirmed the deaths¹⁶³.

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9.2 Targeted killings - Government 'collaborators'

9.2.1 In testimony to the US House of Representatives hearing on the crisis in Cameroon, Hans De Marie Heungoup – Central Africa Senior Analyst at the International Crisis Group – stated on 27 June 2018, that 'Armed Anglophone militants have killed more than a dozen civilians (termed "black legs"), suspected of collaborating with the Cameroonian security services.'¹⁶⁴

¹⁶¹ ACLED, 'Regional overview – Africa', 23 July 2019, [url](#).

¹⁶² ACLED, 'Regional overview – Africa', 10 September 2019, [url](#)

¹⁶³ News Ghana, 'Armed separatist commander among two killed...', 16 September 2019, [url](#)

¹⁶⁴ Hans De Marie Heungoup, 'Crisis in the Republic of Cameroon' (p3-4), 27 Jun 2018, [url](#)

- 9.2.2 A June 2018 article on Radio France Internationale (RFI) – based on an interview with journalist Emmanuel Freudenthal – reported on targeted killings by separatists¹⁶⁵.
- 9.2.3 A March 2019 article on Journal du Cameroun website reported that a man had been killed by suspected separatist fighters, the report claimed that separatists had described the man as a “black leg” due to his relationship with security officers in the area¹⁶⁶.
- 9.2.4 A May 2019 Human Rights Watch article documenting cases of abuses separatists in the South-West and North-West regions stated that:
- ‘In January [2019], at least 10 armed separatists abducted and tortured an ethnic Fulani man near the village of Alabukam, North-West region. They accused him of collaborating with the military. Human Rights Watch analyzed a video that surfaced in April showing at least three separatists with machetes and sticks threatening and torturing the man, who was naked and tied up on the ground.
- ‘A friend of the victim told Human Rights Watch that he has been missing since the kidnapping and recognized him in the video: “I think he’s dead. I think the Amba [separatists] killed him. The Amba target the Mbororo [ethnic Fulani]. They accuse them of informing the soldiers.” All sources who spoke to Human Rights Watch about this case said that the attackers were from the separatist group Ambazonia Defense Forces. However, the separatist group has denied any responsibility. Human Rights Watch has documented at least 10 other cases involving abuses by separatists against ethnic Fulani since December 2018.
- ‘On February 4 at about 7:45 a.m., about five armed separatists attacked a 24-year-old woman in Buea, South-West region. They accused her of opening a restaurant on the day the separatists declared a general strike. They cut in her right leg with a machete and repeatedly stabbed a 23-year-old man in the back with a fork.’¹⁶⁷
- 9.2.5 The Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa (CHRDA) and Raoul Wallenbergs report Cameroon’s Unfolding Catastrophe, 3 June 2019, reported that:
- ‘Armed factions in the North West and South West regions have killed and kidnapped members of the military, as well as government officials. Non-state forces have caused havoc by seizing ammunition and burning down military posts, vehicles, and prisons...
- ‘Traditional chiefs have been attacked by armed separatists for allegedly collaborating with the Cameroonian government’.¹⁶⁸

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¹⁶⁵ RFI, ‘Cameroon: I spent a week embedded with Anglophone armed separatists’, 14 Jun 2018, [url](#)

¹⁶⁶ Journal du Cameroun, ‘Man beheaded by suspected separatist fighters...’, 11 March 2019, [url](#)

¹⁶⁷ HRW, ‘Routine Torture, Incommunicado Detention’, 6 May 2019, [url](#)

¹⁶⁸ CHRDA, ‘Cameroon’s Unfolding Catastrophe’, (p. 35 and 37), 3 June 2019, [url](#)

9.3 Targeted profiles – schools, teachers and students

- 9.3.1 Human Rights Watch reported in March 2019 that ‘Witnesses said that separatists assaulted government workers, teachers, and students, preventing them from going to work or to school’.¹⁶⁹
- 9.3.2 Human Rights Watch in their report of 28 March 2019, ‘To enforce boycotts of schools following protests by Anglophone teachers against perceived discrimination by the Francophone-dominated national government, separatist groups attacked and burned dozens of schools, threatened teachers, students and parents, kidnapped principals and violently attacked teachers and students.’¹⁷⁰
- 9.3.3 The Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa (CHRDA) and Raoul Wallenbergs report Cameroon’s Unfolding Catastrophe, 3 June 2019, reported that:

‘Education has become an instrument of the struggle and has been terribly affected by the ongoing crisis in the North West and South West regions of Cameroon. According to the CHRDA, several schools are used by ASGs as military bases and hideouts, preventing children from pursuing their education.’

‘Violence against educational institutions and teachers, as well as students, has led to school closures, in some cases for two years. Hundreds of thousands of school-aged children are affected, especially in rural areas. Students are afraid to go to school because some of them are attacked on the way, while others are beaten or ridiculed. Teachers and students who have not abided by boycott operations have been threatened and attacked. Separatists and self defence groups have targeted and kidnapped both students and teachers on their way to school.’¹⁷¹

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9.4 Killing, kidnapping and disappearances

- 9.4.1 BBC news reporting on the release of 170 kidnapped students in February 2019 stated that:
- ‘Cameroonian students and school staff who were kidnapped on Saturday have been freed, the Bishop of Kumbo has told the BBC. A total of 176 people, mostly students, were kidnapped by unidentified gunmen at Saint Augustin’s College in Kumbo, in the North West region of Cameroon. They were released on Sunday after negotiations. It is the largest school kidnapping in Cameroon’s English-speaking regions since separatist unrest began in 2017. Human Rights Watch has accused rebel groups of being behind the kidnapping but they have not yet commented. They have said previous abductions were staged by the government to damage their reputation.’¹⁷²
- 9.4.2 Human Rights Watch reported also in March 2019 that in the past six months ‘Armed separatists have assaulted and kidnapped dozens of people

¹⁶⁹ HRW, ‘New Attacks on Civilians By Troops, Separatists’, 28 March 2019, [url](#)

¹⁷⁰ HRW, ‘New Attacks on Civilians By Troops, Separatists’, 28 March 2019, [url](#)

¹⁷¹ CHRDA, ‘Cameroon’s Unfolding Catastrophe’, (p. 35), 3 June 2019, [url](#)

¹⁷² BBC News, ‘Cameroon kidnap: 170 students freed’, 18 February 2019, [url](#)

...executing at least two men, amid intensifying violence and growing calls for secession of the North-West and South-West regions.. Kidnappings by separatists have also surged, including more than 300 students under age 18 kidnapped in at least 12 incidents. All were released, most after a ransom was paid.’¹⁷³

9.4.3 The BBC also reported in March 2019 that:

‘An entire university football team has been kidnapped in the Anglophone region of Cameroon. Gunmen abducted the 15 students from the University of Buea, in the southwest of the country, on Wednesday morning.

‘It is not clear who is responsible for kidnappings, which have become frequent amid tensions between separatist groups and government troops.

‘On Tuesday, a football coach was kidnapped in Bamenda and later freed.’¹⁷⁴

9.4.4 The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported in their situation report, CAMEROON: North-West and South-West as of 30 June 2019 that:

‘Kidnapping rates increased again in June [2019]. On 7 June [2019], gunmen kidnapped the owner of a travel agency in Bamenda (NW) before releasing him hours later. In mid-June gunmen abducted three students of a Teachers Training College in Bambili (NW) and the proprietor of a high school in Limbe (SW). Following the construction of some bridges in Wum (NW), gunmen kidnapped dozens of people who embarked on the road on 18 June. They were freed days after. On 23 June, gunmen abducted the Mayor of Ndu (NW) before releasing him the next day. On 25 June, an armed group reportedly abducted the Archbishop of Bamenda in Belo (NW) before releasing him the next day. On 28 June, armed men abducted the chairperson of the Social Democratic Front (SDF), the leading party in the predominantly Anglophone regions, in Bamenda (NW). He was released on 29 June. The chairperson, Ni John Fru Ndi, is very vocal about the crisis. This is not the first time he is a victim of abduction.’¹⁷⁵

9.4.5 Responsibility to protect (R2P) reported in their bi-monthly bulletin 15 September 2019 that: ‘Armed separatist forces have also perpetrated abuses, including kidnappings and killing civilians. Due to a ban on government education by armed separatists, 80 percent of the schools in the two regions have closed and at least 74 have been destroyed.’¹⁷⁶

9.4.6 On the Africa pages of Xinhuanet online news site, it was reported on 15 September 2019 that:

‘An official and a journalist were kidnapped on Saturday in Bamenda, the largest city in Cameroon's crisis-hit Anglophone region of Northwest, according to local authorities. Tebeck Mbah, regional manager of state-owned Cameroon Telecommunications, and Pamela Miye, journalist of state

¹⁷³ HRW, ‘New Attacks on Civilians By Troops, Separatists’, 28 March 2019, [url](#)

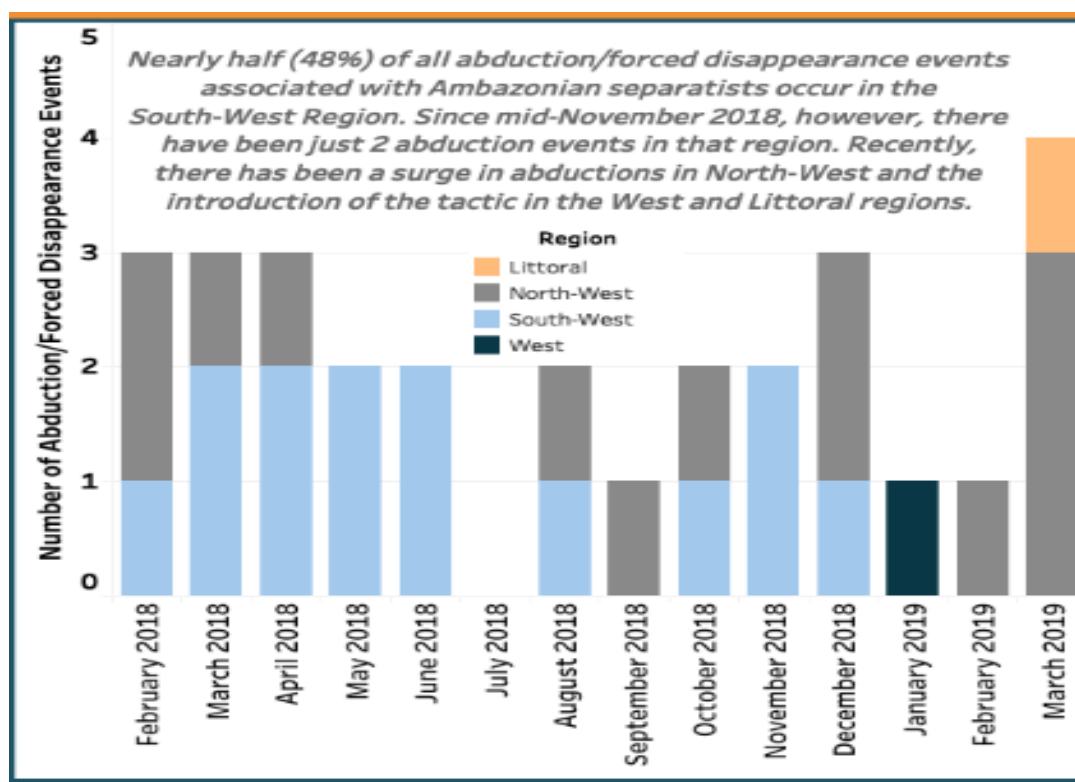
¹⁷⁴ BBC News, ‘Student football team abducted in Anglophone Cameroon’, 20 March 2019, [url](#)

¹⁷⁵ OCHA, ‘Cameroon: North-West and South-West, (Security section)’, 30 June 2019, [url](#)

¹⁷⁶ R2P, ‘Monitor- bi-monthly bulletin’, (p9), 15 September 2019, [url](#)

media Cameroon Tribune, were abducted by armed separatists, according to security reports. "They came to our compound well armed, threatened to kill him and took him to unknown destination. We were really frightened," a family member of Mbah who asked not to be named told Xinhua.¹⁷⁷

- 9.4.7 ACLED reporting on increasing abductions in Cameroon by Ambazonian separatists between February 2018 and March 2019 produced the following graph and comments¹⁷⁸:



'The Anglophone separatists (also called Ambazonian separatists) have increasingly targeted civilians. In 2017, there were no reported instances of violence against civilians. In 2018 and 2019 to date respectively, 22% and 31% of the events associated with the separatists have targeted civilians.

'Abductions and forced disappearances (in which the abductees are not killed, which would be coded as an attack) are an increasingly common form of violence against civilians practiced by the separatists. The highest number of abduction/forced disappearance events thus far occurred in March 2019. In the month thus far, there have been four abductions of more than 30 people total. One of these events was the abduction of 20 employees of a state-run pineapple plantation.

'Mass abductions by separatists, however, are relatively rare. Of all 29 of the abduction events 21 consisted of the abduction of one or two people. Community leaders and those perceived not to support the cause of independence for Anglophone Cameroonians have frequently been abducted.'¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷ Xinhuanet, 'Official, journalist abducted in Anglophone region', 15 September 2019, [url](#)

¹⁷⁸ ACLED, 'Abductions and spreading violence in the Ambazonian...', March 2019, [url](#)

¹⁷⁹ ACLED, 'Abductions and spreading violence in the Ambazonian...', March 2019, [url](#)

9.4.8 Amnesty International reported in February 2020:

‘Armed separatists continue to commit serious crimes, including killings, abductions and extorsions.

‘On 30 January [2020], four staffs of a humanitarian organisation were abducted by an armed separatist group, which accused them of working for the government. They were released a day later after three of them were beaten and subjected to psychological torture, according to the organisation. On 15 January [2020], a young man was killed, and his father injured near Bamenda (North-West), as they tried to avoid checkpoints held by armed separatists.

‘On 3 December 2019, three people including a doctor were abducted by armed separatists between the village of Bambili and the town of Bamenda (North-West). Abductors started asking for a ransom of 5000 euros before reducing it to 100 euros. Before their release, the persons were blindfolded, and guns pointed at them while they were yelling.

Armed separatists have also asked aid workers to stop their activities during the 6 to 11 February 2020 planned lockdown they have ordered in the Anglophone regions. Only Emergency health services can continue with their activities during this period.’¹⁸⁰

9.4.9 Human Rights Watch in February 2020 and following the February 2020 elections in Cameroon stated:

‘The SDF, one of Cameroon’s largest opposition parties, is led by John Fru Ndi. Founded in early 1990, it has, since its establishment, had a close connection with groups advocating the rights of the Anglophone minority. The party remains rooted in the North-West region, where it has significant support. The government views the party as too close to the Anglophone cause. While the party does not support secession like separatist groups, the government depicts the party as destabilizing. The SDF did not boycott this latest round of elections.’

‘Ahead of the February 9, 2020 elections, armed separatists targeted the party, seeing it as betraying Anglophones by not withdrawing its elected members from parliament in solidarity with separatists. Joseph Mbah Ndam, a member of parliament for the party, said: “SDF did not start its campaign on time in the Anglophone regions, because of the prevailing climate of intimidation and insecurity. Our members are being targeted by armed separatists. They have been kidnapped and threatened.”

‘Armed separatists in the Anglophone regions have kidnapped hundreds of people, including at least 100 SDF members since December 2019, according to the party’s vice president, Joshua Osih. All but six were released, mostly after paying ransom. Most were held for several days. Fru Ndi, the party leader, was kidnapped twice in 2019, on April 27 and June 28.’

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¹⁸⁰ AI, ‘Cameroon: Rise in killings in Anglophone regions...’, 6 February 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸¹ HRW, ‘Cameroon: Election violence in Anglophone regions’, 12 February 2020, [url](#).

10. Legislative and municipal elections - February 2020

10.1.1 Arrey Elvis Ntui a senior analyst on Cameroon and writing for the International Crisis Group commented in February 2020:

'In November 2019, President Paul Biya called elections for Cameroon's National Assembly and local councils, to be held on 9 February. The elections should have been held in 2018, when these bodies' five-year terms came to a close, but the government has put them off twice. In 2018, the government argued that it was logistically impossible to hold them at the same time as the presidential polls that year, and in 2019 it cited a tense political and security atmosphere, including in Anglophone areas, as justification for further delay. Now Biya is moving ahead with the vote, however, perhaps in order to keep up appearances after the national dialogue held in September and October 2019 [...] failed to bring an end to the Cameroonian government's conflict with Anglophone separatists. [...]

'Conditions for the legislative and municipal elections are hardly ideal. Residents in Anglophone areas are unlikely to vote in significant numbers, given both the ongoing violence on the ground and their view that the government lacks legitimacy. Although the government has assured Anglophones that they will be able to cast ballots, and has deployed troops and clustered polling centres to better secure them, voters will still be unable to travel safely on election day. At the same time, separatists have stepped up attacks on election offices, contributing to a general sense of insecurity.'

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10.1.2 Al Jazeera reported in February 2020:

'Polls have closed in Cameroon's long-delayed parliamentary and municipal elections, held for the first time in seven years amid security concerns and political division.

'Sunday's polls witnessed a low turnout of voters in the English-speaking Northwest and Southwest Regions, the epicentre of separatist violence that has displaced hundreds of thousands of people.

'A clash occurred in Muyuka, a rebel stronghold in the Northwest Region, although fighting takes place almost daily in both English-speaking regions bordering Nigeria.

'There was also a shooting at Buea, the main town in Southwest region, and in Kuma in the same region, witnesses said.

'In the country's French-speaking regions, voting proceeded normally. The elections were being held with a heavy military presence.

'"For the opposition, if there is a low turnout, that means much of the same. Most of these elections that have happened under President Paul Biya have been called into question by the opposition," Al Jazeera's Nicolas Haque reported.

¹⁸² ICG, 'Cameroon: Elections Raise Prospect of Further Ruling-party...', 8 February 2020, [url](#)

‘Speaking from Douala, Cameroon's biggest city and economic hub, Haque said there were no long queues outside the polling stations.’¹⁸³

10.1.3 VOA news reported on 13 February 2020:

‘Claiming massive fraud, Cameroonian opposition political parties are calling for the results of the February 9 local elections that gave the ruling People's Democratic Movement of long-serving President Paul Biya a landslide victory to be discarded. Meanwhile, results of the parliamentary polls are still expected.

‘Denis Kemlemo, spokesperson of the opposition Social Democratic Front, says his party has petitioned the constitutional council to totally discard the results of the February 9 local and national assembly elections, which he says were characterized by many irregularities.

“Among some of these reasons is massive fraud, corruption of voters. Troops sent from other regions voted on behalf of the local population,” he said. “Other reasons include gun violence, low voters participation, and there were also a lot of threats, which made some candidates to even desist or withdraw their bids.”

‘Kemlemo said besides the petition submitted by his party, individual candidates had also asked the constitutional council to ignore the elections in their constituencies. He said some of his party's candidates were scandalized that troops the government said it had sent to the English-speaking Northwest and Southwest regions to protect civilians from separatist fighters who had vowed to disrupt the polls were instead stuffing ballot boxes to favor the ruling CPDM [Cameroon People's Democratic Movement] party. The military has denied the allegations, saying troops were there solely for security.

‘The constitutional council said in a release that 22 parties, including the National Union for Democracy and Progress, the United Democratic Party, the Cameroon Democratic Union and the National Salvation Front, have filed petitions asking for either a partial or total cancellation of the local polls the ruling CPDM party of president Paul Biya won with a landslide majority.

‘According to the results published by vote-counting commissions in all the country's administrative units, the CPDM won more than 300 of the country's 380 councils. The party was unchallenged in about 200 of the councils.

‘The results also indicate that less than 30% of the close to 8 million voters actually voted, and voter participation in the English-speaking regions, where separatist fighters had promised to disrupt the polls, was less than 10%.

‘The CPDM party has called on supporters to respect the verdict of the elections as announced by competent authorities.’¹⁸⁴

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¹⁸³ Al Jazeera, ‘Polls close in Cameroon's parliamentary, municipal elections’, 9 February 2020, [url](#).

¹⁸⁴ VOA News, ‘Claiming massive fraud, Cameroon opposition challenges...’, 13 February 2020, [url](#)

11. Freedom of movement

11.1.1 The USSD human rights report for 2019 noted that:

‘Although the constitution and law provide for freedom of internal movement, foreign travel, emigration, and repatriation, at times the government restricted these rights. Growing concerns over the entry of armed groups into Cameroon from the Central African Republic (CAR) and the conflict with Boko Haram in the Far North Region appeared to have prompted the government to adopt a more restrictive approach to refugee movement. The government made it more difficult for refugees, asylum seekers, and stateless persons to move freely in the country.

‘In some instances, the government worked with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other humanitarian organizations to provide protection and assistance to refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons, and other persons of concern. The government sometimes failed to respect its obligations under relevant international laws. There were instances where it forcibly returned asylum seekers to their countries and did not readily provide humanitarian organizations such as the United Nations access to asylum seekers before refouling them.

‘In-country Movement: Using minor infractions as a pretext, police and gendarmes at roadblocks and checkpoints in cities and on most highways often extorted bribes and harassed travelers. Police frequently stopped travelers to check identification documents, vehicle registrations, and tax receipts as security and immigration control measures. Unaccompanied women were frequently harassed when traveling alone. Authorities restricted movements of persons and goods, including motorbikes, especially in the Northwest and Southwest Regions, citing security concerns. Armed Anglophone separatists also restricted the movements of persons and goods in the two Anglophone regions, sometimes in a deliberate attempt to harass and intimidate the local population. Humanitarian organizations cited difficulty in accessing certain areas and in some instances were harassed and denied passage by government authorities.

‘On June 14, Governor Adolphe Lele Lafrique of the Northwest Region lifted the curfew placed in the region since November 2018. The curfew, which lasted eight months, restricted movement of persons and property in the Northwest Region between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m.’¹⁸⁵

11.1.2 The Refugees International report, *Crisis Denied in Cameroon*, published 29 May 2019, stated that ‘both Cameroonian forces and non-state armed groups severely restrict freedom of movement, preventing local populations from accessing their land and basic services’.¹⁸⁶

11.1.3 The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported in their situation report, *Cameroon: North-West and South-West*, as of 30 June 2019 that: ‘Restriction on movement increased from

¹⁸⁵ USSD, ‘Human Rights Report 2019’, (section D), 11 March 2020, [url](#).

¹⁸⁶ Refugees International, ‘Crisis denied in Cameroon’, 29 May 2019, [url](#)

39% to 58% [in June 2019 compared to previous month] according to the respondents consulted on the field.’¹⁸⁷

11.1.4 CEDOCA in their 1 October 2019 report ‘La crise anglophone : situation sécuritaire’ stated [translated from French] that:

‘An article published in the Journal du Cameroun in June 2018 describes the regular blocking of roads connecting cities in English-speaking regions by suspected secessionists. Dams are erected along certain roads that paralyze traffic for days and block access to cities or even departments. These actions immobilize the population and traders in their daily activities.

‘According to the NGO AMEF [Authentic Memorial Empowerment Foundation] contacted by Cedoca by email in March 2019, checkpoints are also drawn up by the authorities. In this regard, AMEF explains the following

‘Risk of movement due to high level of insecurity. Since many civilians have lost identification documents and majority being burnt in their houses, they are afraid to travel from one urban town to another for fear of intimidation and arrest in police check points. Courageous ones are forced to pay high sums of money in these police check points to get their way in to cities.’¹⁸⁸

11.1.5 Quoting an unknown source from civil society CEDOCA also reported [translated]

‘... [with] regard the controls and safety conditions prevailing on the roads to be taken from the French-speaking area to the English-speaking area:

“Avoid making the journey on a ‘ghost town’ day, or ‘lockdown’. For now, it is on every Monday of the week. You will meet regular law enforcement officials on the way who control persons and goods but [...] you may fall into attacks or violence perpetuated by armed groups without any notice, particularly between Mile 14, 15, 16 and 17. These are small towns located at the entry into Buea. As concerns access to Bamenda, the same recommendations apply. Avoid ‘ghost town’ days, or ‘lockdown’ as you may be a victim of unannounced attack or violence by armed groups between the town of Santa, about 40 Kilometres to Bamenda town, despite the regular movement of law enforcement officials on the public highway.”¹⁸⁹

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¹⁸⁷ OCHA, ‘Cameroon: North-West and South-West’ (Protection section), 30 June 2019, [url](#)

¹⁸⁸ CEDOCA, ‘Cameroun La crise anglophone : situation sécuritaire’, 1 October 2019, [url](#)

¹⁸⁹ CEDOCA, ‘Cameroun La crise anglophone : situation sécuritaire’, 1 October 2019, [url](#)

Terms of Reference

A 'Terms of Reference' (ToR) is a broad outline of what the CPIN seeks to cover. They form the basis for the [country information section](#). The Home Office's Country Policy and Information Team uses some standardised ToRs, depending on the subject, and these are then adapted depending on the country concerned.

For this particular CPIN, the following topics were identified prior to drafting as relevant and on which research was undertaken:

- Historical situation
 - Demography
 - Anglophone regions
 - Who is an Anglophone?
- Current situation
 - Events that led to tensions
 - Strikes
 - School closures
 - Declaration of independence 'Republic of Ambazonia'
 - Security situation
 - Humanitarian situation
- Separatist groups
- Separatist actions
- State response
 - Arrests and detention
 - Court cases and legal proceedings
 - Human rights/NGOs
 - Media, internet and freedom of press
 - Human rights violations

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Version control

Clearance

Below is information on when this note was cleared:

- version **1.0**
- valid from **18 March 2020**

Changes from last version of this note

New CPIN

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