



MDDT SPARKS

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The Movement for Democracy, Development & Transparency

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EDITORIAL COLUMN

MDDT SPARKS is a medium that MDDT uses to communicate information on its activities and to circulate news concerning global development. It is published once every two months by MDDT and is distributed online and in hard copy to members, partners, stakeholders and everyone else who is interested in development.



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Evaluating the "ANGLOPHONE CRISIS" and the MDDT-NED Project



an MDDT Cameroon Publication



NON-VIOLENCE
PRO-DIALOGUE

**“PROMOTING YOUTH ADVOCACY & REDUCING
YOUTH RADICALIZATION IN THE
ANGLOPHONE REGIONS”**



**National Endowment
for Democracy**
Supporting freedom around the world



Letter From the National Coordinator

Dear readers of MDDT Sparks, MDDT members and Partners, on behalf of the MDDT team, I am once again delighted to share with the MDDT communities, best practices and exemplary actions towards promoting peace, access to justice and human rights protection.

The Republic of Cameroon is currently plagued with the Anglophone Crisis in the North West and South West Regions, the Boko Haram Crisis in the Northern Region, the insecurities in the Eastern borders, and Political upheavals stemming from electoral controversies and pressure from opposition parties. Cameroon's political stability and democracy are under threat, with increased early warning signals, human rights abuses and insecurity across the nation. Despite government efforts to dilute the quest of secession and Federation, the Anglophone crisis is degenerating.

This edition of MDDT Cameroon will update MDDT communities on government endeavors towards resolving the Anglophone crisis, publishing MDDT's Statement on the outcome of the National Dialogue with a critical analysis of its impact. It shall criticize the declaration of "A Special Status" for the North West and South West regions and its influence on the call for a ceasefire in the Anglophone Regions.

MDDT continues to sensitize its communities via the **#LetDialogueLead** project, promoting advocacy and reducing youth radicalization in the Anglophone

Regions of Cameroon. This edition will give a synopsis of the last phase of execution of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) grant.

Dear partners, there is an urgent need for joint efforts towards meaningful and positive advocacy to promote peace, amplify the call for a ceasefire and advocate for inclusive dialogue without pre-conditions or constitutional restriction around Article 64 of the Cameroonian Constitution.



ENGAGING GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, CSOs and STAKEHOLDERS IN ADVOCACY FOR A CEASEFIRE AND AN INCLUSIVE DIALOGUE

The “**Let Dialogue Lead**” Campaign has capitalized on the urgent need for a more inclusive dialogue that goes beyond the consultation of the Major National Dialogue. MDDT has held meetings with Senators, parliamentarians, members of the Bilingualism and multi-culturalism commission, to take actions, opening multiple windows and doors to advocacy in the corridors of decision makers on the call for an inclusive dialogue, without preconditions and with no restrictions by Article 64 of the Cameroon Constitution.

Article 64:

“No procedure for the amendment of the Constitution affecting the republican form, unity and territorial integrity of the State and the democratic principles which govern the Republic shall be accepted for a call for a revisit of Article 64 of the Cameroon Constitution reading”

The conceptualization of this project visualizes article 64 above as a major stop bar to government decision to hold meaningful and inclusive dialogue with primary and secondary actors without pre-conditions.



MDDT therefore held a round table with relevant ministerial workers at the Hotel Des Deputes in Yaounde in January 2020, on the relevance and role of government officials, Civil society, members of parliament and senate in advocating for a ceasefire and peaceful resolution of the Anglophone Crisis.

The CSOs recommended a synergy of peace actors to amplify the call for a ceasefire and collaboration with statesmen and members of parliament to kick start a campaign along the corridors of government.





EVALUATING THE GRAND NATIONAL DIALOGUE

Introduction: The Anglophone Crisis

The Anglophone Crisis as it is called today was ignited when peaceful protests by lawyers and teachers in October 2016 and later by civilians in December 2016 were countered by disproportional and excessive force by the government of Cameroon through the armed forces. Following a series of unfortunate events spanning through 2017 to 2018, in what can be considered a crackdown on leaders of the then "Consortium", peaceful protesters and innocent civilians, characterized by arbitrary arrests, random raids and assaults, indiscriminate killings, the burning of homesteads, cutting off the internet etc. many Anglophones, comprising mostly the youths, were forced into radicalization, taking up arms in what was initially construed as acts of self-defense but later transforming into guerilla militia groups who till date are fighting for what has been described as the restoration of the independence of the former Southern British Cameroons. This is how the crisis escalated to what has been referred to in recent years as the 'Anglophone Struggle for Independ-

ence' or the war for an Independent "Ambazonia" as others would prefer referring to it; a war which is founded on the fundamental argument by some Separatists that since the replacement of the 1961 federal system of governance by a United Republic in 1972, the largely centralized francophone power has neglected and discriminated against the Anglophone minority. It is estimated that the Anglophone minority make up about 20 percent of Cameroon's overall population.

The cycle of violence that has characterized the Anglophone Crisis since its escalation in the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon has not only witnessed countless clashes between the Armed Anglophone separatist forces and government troops for over three years now, but has taken the entire population of both English-speaking regions hostage, claiming thousands of lives and displacing over half a million people.

In a bid to address the crisis and foster a path of peace and harmony amidst international pressure,

socio-economic setbacks, political upheavals etc, the Head of State, His Excellency President Paul Biya, on 10 September 2019, convened a Major National Dialogue from 30th September to 4th October 2019 in Yaounde, under the chairmanship of H.E. Chief Dr Dion NGUTE, Prime Minister, Head of Government. While used to decry the violence, killings, abductions, destruction of livelihoods, private and public property , the Major National Dialogue was construed as a call for Cameroonians to set aside their differences and political party affiliations and work together for peace in the Anglophone regions and to reinstate normalcy in Cameroon.

This Grand National Dialogue (GND) was preceded by broad-based consultations organized by the Prime Minister towards soliciting opinions, gathering contributions, and ascertaining the most suitable context for the GND. The consultations targeted political leaders, religious authorities, lawyers, teachers, civil society actors, trade union officials, student organizations and independent personalities, Cameroonians abroad and even separatist groups.

Over 500 participants were invited to the GND which focused on eight key themes namely: **Bilingualism, cultural diversity and social cohesion; the educational system; the judicial system; the return of refugees and internally displaced persons; the reconstruction and development of conflict-affected areas; the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants; the role of the diaspora in the crisis and in the country's development; decentralization and local development.**

Worthy of note is the fact that most separatist leaders dismissed the initiative and boycotted the GND (despite the government's attempts to lure them to the talks) on grounds that their demands had not been met. Participants at the GND were divided into several commissions created in accordance with the dialogue themes.

As reported by the Rapporteur General of the Major National Dialogue, a brief highlight of some outstanding recommendations that emerged from the deliberations of the various commission include:

“Grant a SPECIAL STATUS to the North-West and South-West Regions, in conformity with Section 62 Sub 2 of the Constitution; Take specific measures to ensure equality of English and French in all aspects of national life; Reinforce the autonomy of Decentralized Local Entities; Improve upon the infrastructure of judicial services throughout the country; Strengthen the Humanitarian Assistance Program to better serve internally displaced persons; Institute a special plan to reconstruct the conflict affected areas; Popularize the Head of State's offer of amnesty to combatants who drop their weapons and enter the reintegration process; and, Create a team responsible for mediation with radicalized members of our Diaspora.”



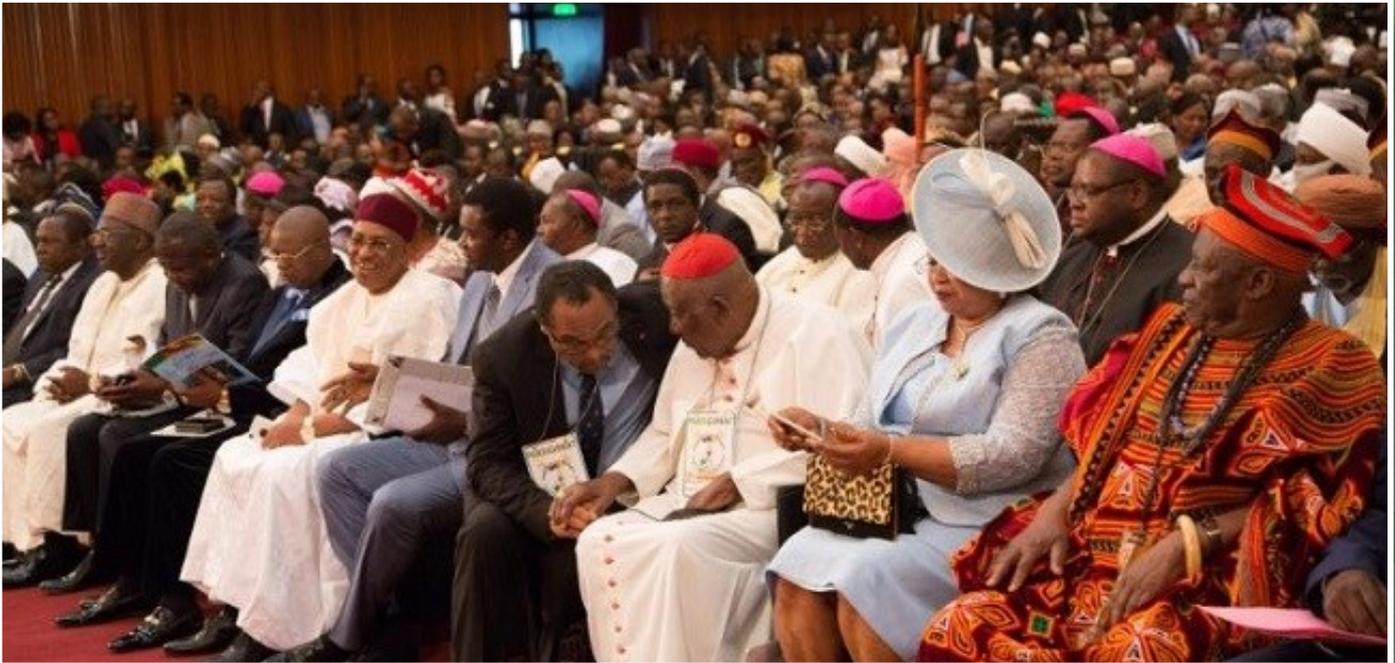


Image credit: [www.cameroonintelligencereport.com \[https://www.cameroonintelligencereport.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Grand-National-Dialogue.jpg\]](https://www.cameroonintelligencereport.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Grand-National-Dialogue.jpg)

What has the GND achieved so far and what is yet to change?

Despite the anticipation and hype following the recommendations of the GND which were forwarded to the Head of State, the main convener, and despite measures engaged so far by the Cameroonian government, Cameroonians, especially Anglophones and particularly pro-separatists have criticized the initiative as largely inconsequential. It is worth noting that the Cameroonian Head of State, His Excellency Paul Biya who had applauded the resolutions of the GND as rich and diverse, had also undertaken to focus on and diligently examine the recommendations with a view to implementing them. It must also be restated that the underlying objective of the GND was to determine a framework under which Cameroonians regardless of their differences and political party affiliations, could work together to restore peace in the Anglophone regions and reinstate normalcy in Cameroon.

Many critics of the GND today, however, consider the initiative as a failed project; in fact, like a child crippled from birth. With the Anglophone regions still engulfed in violence several months after the GND, the much awaited prospects of peace and socio-economic stability seem all the more distant.

In terms of achievement, one can cite the spokesman for the GND, George Ewane, who had stated sometime in November 2019 that 58 separatists in the South West region had laid down their arms,

implying some positive feedback from the GND. However, some separatist leaders have decried these pronouncements as a staged and fake.

In October 2019, President Paul Biya ordered the release of 333 detainees linked to the Anglophone crisis, together with some 102 political opposition activists arrested in 2018.

In December 2019, the Cameroonian parliament granted "special status" to the two English-speaking regions in a bid to calm the violence that is still ongoing. However, the separatists are stuck on the view that only independence would bring an end to the violence. According to them, independence is the only satisfactory solution to the crisis. This in line with the opinions of some experts who had been skeptical that the "special status" package would end the crisis. They, like the separatists have argued that there is only one lasting solution to the ongoing violent conflict – a change in the form of the state which should grant some autonomy to the English-speaking regions. In their opinion, a federation is the answer.

What is yet to be achieved by the GND?

While some political activists have applauded the follow-up moves to the recommendations of the GND, others like the Senator Kemende Henry consider some of the moves as coming "... **too little, coming too late**". This is the view shared by



Image credit: www.cameroon-tribune.cm [https://www.cameroon-tribune.cm/administrateur/photo/normal_a733cde.jpg]

many other critics who have concluded that nothing concrete has changed following the GND and the implementation of certain initiatives arising from its resolutions.

They have argued that the population in the crisis-affected regions is still confronted with the same challenges that prevailed before the GND. More so, schools in large parts of both English-speaking regions remain inaccessible and closed while the routine Monday “ghost-town” protests and occasional “lockdown” protests in the Anglophone regions imposed by the separatist forces are still being observed. In addition, several deployments have been effected over the past weeks while attacks by armed separatist factions and clashes with government forces have been frequent, particularly in the North West Region.

In all these, the Anglophone population which seems to have lost all confidence in the government, has remained skeptical about any positive outcomes despite the various moves undertaken following the GND. This skepticism is shared even by political activists. In fact, opposition leader, Maurice Kamto, has been of the opinion that any initiative that falls short of engaging the separatists adequately in frank and transparent talks, and which fails to address the form of the state is a futile endeavor; meanwhile renowned separatist leader, Julius Ayuk Tabe, currently in jail, also declared the GND as a non-event.

Nevertheless, the government of Cameroon considers the GND as a successful and commendable initiative that was not only inclusive but transparent and binding, as well as one whose fruits shall be enjoyed in the short, mid and long term.



Image credit: media.gettyimages.com [[https://media.gettyimages.com/videos/cameroonian-president-paul-biyas-grand-national-dialogue-gets-under-video-id1179515626?=&from_view=video&from_open_view=true&from_play=true&from_search=true](https://media.gettyimages.com/videos/cameroonian-president-paul-biyas-grand-national-dialogue-gets-under-video-id1179515626?=&from_view=video&from_open_view=true&from_play=true&from_search=true&from_view=video&from_open_view=true&from_play=true&from_search=true)]



MDDT-NED PROJECT: LET DIALOGUE LEAD

#CeaseFire

The ongoing Anglophone crisis in Cameroon has resulted in the deaths of thousands of civilians and security forces, displaced hundreds of thousands of civilians, and ended all dialogue between Anglophone representatives and government authorities. Increasingly false and misleading media narratives and propaganda have caused both sides to become more extreme in their positions and have left few people remaining in the middle to advocate for a sensible, compromise solution. Many Anglophone youths have become radicalized and inspired to fight the government forces as a result of these false stories. The Movement for Democracy, Development, and Transparency (MDDT) used up National Endowment for Democracy (NED) funding for promoting youth advocacy and mobilizing Cameroonian youth to reject radicalization, and calling for dialogue, ceasefire, and a peaceful resolution of the Anglophone crisis.



ENGAGING YOUTHS IN ADVOCACY

MDDT in the last 12 months, MDDT has created civic advocacy clubs at six high schools and two universities throughout the North West and South West regions. Via these clubs, students have been enrolled into the mass messaging database and are updated on the security situation in the regions. This has served as a safe space to mobilize youths across the two Anglophone regions to advocate for a restraint from violence, call for a ceasefire and propose potential solutions to the Anglophone crisis. The project team so has established 8 civic advocacy hubs in eight chiefdoms spread across the Anglophone regions hosting cultural events, mobilizing traditional councils and local youths to advocate against the ills of the Anglophone crisis call out for a ceasefire and genuine dialogue.



Assessing the Humanitarian Situation of the Cameroon Anglophone Crisis.

Overview of the Anglophone Crisis

While the COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions pose new threats to communities across Cameroon, there is still an urgent need of humanitarian assistance as a consequence of violence and conflict. Cameroon with a relatively diversified economy faces concurrent and complex humanitarian situations in three of its regions: Boko Haram violence in the Far North region; the influx of refugees from the Central African Republic into the eastern regions (Adamawa, North and East); violence in the North West and South West regions with spillover effects in the West and Littoral regions.

The protracted grievances in the in Northwest and Southwest regions due to marginalization of the minority English-speaking regions by the francophone-dominated government escalated into widespread protests and strikes in late 2016 and now the most violent crisis ever recorded in the nation. This socio-political crisis, now in its fourth year, has led to massive population displacements, increasing the vulnerabilities of people who have often left their local communities to live in the bush since the beginning of the crisis. As of August 2019, 450,000 internally displaced persons have been registered in the region, as well as 204,000 returnees. As of 31 December 2019, 52,000 Cameroonians were registered as refu-



Image credit: <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2018/may/30/cameroon-killings-escalate-anglophone-crisis>

gees in Nigeria. The largest numbers of IDPs were registered in the divisions of Meme (South West), Mezam (North West), Ngo-Ketunjia (North West) and Fako (South West). Women make up 52% of displaced persons. According to the latest Multi-Sectorial-Needs-Assessment (MSNA) (August 2019), 44.5% of IDPs are children (96,472 girls and 95,031 boys). It is also estimated that 200,000 have fled to the neighboring regions of Littoral and the West.



Image credit: <https://www.journalducameroun.com>

The impact of the Crisis on social and economic service delivery

The crisis in the North West and South West has had a major impact on the education sector. Over the past three years, insecurity, displacement of teachers, threats and attacks on infrastructure and education personnel have left 850,000 school-aged children out of school. In November 2019, 90% of public primary schools and 77% of public secondary schools remained closed or ceased to operate.

In the health sector, attacks on medical personnel and infrastructure have become another feature of the crisis with the closure of more than 35% of all health facilities and many of the remaining not functioning at full capacity. As a result, maternal and child mortality rates have increased, and an average of only 12% of women give birth in health centers. Children's nutritional status continuously deteriorates due to multiple health and food insecurity issues. People living with HIV who were on Antiretroviral (ARV) drugs can no longer access drugs when they take refuge in the bush, increasing the risk of infection. People in rural or hard-to-reach areas are most affected due to limited or no access to basic medical services. This highly at risk population is mainly composed of women and children. In terms of access to WASH infrastructure, it should be noted that IDPs often share shelters, water points, latrines and showers with host populations. The increased proximity does not give girls and women the necessary privacy, exposing them to the risk of violence.

Impact on Humanitarian Access

Access constraints identified in both regions include a number of logistical challenges (for example, terrain, poor infrastructure, network issues), challenges related to a lack of community acceptance, active hostilities, military operations and insecurity; restrictions of movements of humanitarian personnel, goods and assets within the country (during ghost towns/lockdowns, check-points, road blocks), and violence against humanitarian personnel (kidnapping, threats). Local NGOs, as 'frontline' responders are particularly affected. While both regions face the same type of constraints, the North West is significantly more impacted by these challenges and access is reported as more difficult to establish and maintain due to a more volatile and precarious security environment. Access constraints often translate into delays, partial response to humanitarian needs and increased operational costs for humanitarian partners.

In parallel, access to basic social services by the affected population remains a critical concern in the two regions as fear of violence and lack of civil documentation limits movement. Disrespect for the sanctity of health care services and disruption of education services is equally worrisome. Non-state armed groups have increased their presence in hard-to-reach areas, particularly in the North West. People in these regions find themselves cut-off from basic services and economic opportunities. Areas that were hard-to-reach before the crisis have become even more isolated, increasing their vulnerability. The weekly "ghost town" days, set up by non-state armed groups, particularly affect displaced persons and host communities, limiting their movements and therefore their economic and agricultural activities. All humanitarian actors (United Nations agencies, local and international NGOs) must strengthen their ability to negotiate and maintain access to rural and bush areas through advocacy, programming and increased presence.

Consequences of the Humanitarian Crisis

As a result of the continuing conflict, violence against and abuse of the civilian population are the most pressing concerns for the people in affected areas. The United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) has documented widespread protection issues such as lack of documentation, high rate of insecurity, restricted movements, loss of income, reduced numbers of health practitioners, and human rights violations, including the burning of property, kidnapping, rape and sexual assault, child labor and abuse, and illegal arrests. Women, children, and people with disabilities reported the highest numbers of protection concerns.

Education as an instrument of the crisis, has led to developmental gaps in literacy and numeracy, hence long-term illiteracy. Lower educational levels are associated with high protection risks, increase in child pregnancies, higher child and maternal mortality rates, and reduced incomes.

Economic hardship is imposed on the population as a result of the numerous unprecedented economic shutdowns and curfews, burning of dwelling and place of work. Increase in food prices and standard of living, restricted movements to farmlands and job sites, low investment opportunities, constant fear of the unknown and displacement has resulted to a loss of resources for food self-reliance. It primarily affects the access to land to

cultivate, the loss of livestock and of the families' productive assets.

Many IDPs and communities affected by the conflict are in need of psychosocial support. The UN estimates that more than 266,000 children need care after experiencing trauma, losing family members, engaging in the conflict, or finding themselves separated from their families. In addition, there is a significant increase in sexual and gender-based violence in the NWSW, where survivors need urgent medical care and psychosocial support.

Low living standards and lack of access to essential services, particularly for those displaced, has significantly increased women's workload, due to a rise in morbidity and to the fact that children are out of school, resulting in increased care.

The needs for shelter and non-food items are also extremely pressing. Many IDPs are living in makeshift shelters or repurposed agricultural facilities. These poor living conditions expose them to health issues such as malaria and respiratory disease, and the situation is expected to decline further with the upcoming rainy season.¹⁵ Many IDPs who have.

Due to transportation challenges, destruction of facilities and insecurity, IDPs and rural host communities are turning to alternative healthcare in the form of traditional healers.

Conclusion

The humanitarian crises in Cameroon are likely to persist, as conflict and displacement show no sign of slowing down and the multiple conflicts remain unresolved. Continued conflict is likely to drive food insecurity and constrain humanitarian access. The crisis

in the Northwest and Southwest has seen the greatest deterioration over the past years and government-led dialogue efforts have not secured valid ideas from many key parties to the crisis. The failure of the Cameroonian state to engage effectively in the NWSW has created a gap in the humanitarian response that donors and foreign governments have yet to fill.



MDDT carrying out humanitarian works in Bamenda (NWR) to support IDPs with food supplies and basic needs.



THE WAY FORWARD ON THE ANGLOPHONE CRISIS

Introduction

The ongoing Anglophone crisis is a resurgence of the controversies, resistance, and opposition as to the legality of the independence of Southern Cameroons by joining "La Republic du Cameroun", into the independent Federal Republic of Cameroon in 1961. The 2016 crisis was incited by neglect and underestimation of the peaceful protests of lawyers and teachers on judicial setbacks to access justice and educational system gaps respectively. Voices on media and social media decried that for over half a century the Anglophone regions have suffered gross inequality, marginalization, and unfair distribution of power and wealth in the "Unitary" state. This has degenerated with the increasing insurgency in the North West and South West regions of Cameroon, resulting in the deaths of thousands of civilians and security forces, thousands of arrested youths, displaced hundreds of thousands of civilians, and ended dialogue between Anglophone representatives and government authorities.

False and misleading media narratives, social media, and youth radicalization propaganda have caused both sides to become increasingly extreme in their positions and have left few people remaining in the middle to advocate for a sensible, compromise solution.

Interventions and Attempted Actions

Since 2016 the government of the Republic of Cameroon has attempted several steps to dilute the growing threat to the nation's sovereignty and patriotism with an increasing quest for secession by secessionist groups and an undying request for a revert to the Federal Republic of Cameroon.

In January 2017, the Cameroonian government created an Adhoc inter-ministerial committee to enter a dialogue with members of the Cameroon Anglophone Civil Society Consortium (CACSC). CACSC consisted of lawyers and teacher trade unions of common law origin and "Southern Cameroons". They opposed what they considered threats against the language and common law system in the Anglophone regions, particularly

the use of French in schools and courtrooms. On 6th October 2016, the organization started a sit-down strike, Limbe, Buea, and Bamenda with Mondays set out for "Ghost Town", solidarity and civil disobedience as a strong voice of the Anglophone population. The government of Cameroon hence created a committee to dialogue with the CACSC Leaders, who vehemently denied engaging in dialogue unless all arrested Anglophones were released. This ended dialogue and led to the arrest of Barrister Agbor Felix Nkongho President of the CACSC and Neba Fontem Secretary-General of CACSC. A criminal suit was opened against them but later granted clemency by the President of the Republic. Unfortunately, resilience had become more intense.

The militarization of the North West and South West Regions

The government militarized the North West and South West Regions in a bid to guarantee security and meltdown, separatist armed groups. This however over the years led to a cross-fire between the Military and Separatists with civilians becoming victims from stray bullets, burning of villages, deaths, arrests, and displacement of families into bushes and neighboring Nigeria. However, Military Presence in major towns such as Buea, Limbe, Mamfe Town, etc over time has reduced the level of insecurity, violent extremism, and deaths.

The Creation of the Bilingualism Commission

Considering the quest for language equity, on the 23rd of January 2017, a National Commission on the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism was established by decree No: 2017/013. Under the authority of the President of the Republic, the Commission is responsible for promoting bilingualism and multiculturalism in Cameroon to maintain peace, consolidation of the country's national unity and strengthening its people's willingness and day to day experience for living together. But Anglophone militants criticized this as too little too late and regretted the commission was not adequate to resolve a deep-rooted Anglophone problem.

The government further introduced other palliative measures on the 30th of March, including the creation of new benches for Common Law at the Supreme Court and new departments at the National School of Administration and Magistracy (Ecole Nationale d'Administration et de magistrature, ENAM), translation of the Organization for the Harmonization of Business Law in Africa (OHADA) Uniform Acts into English, an increase in the number of English language teachers at ENAM, the recruitment of Anglophone magistrates, the creation of a Common Law department at Francophone universities and provisional authorization for Anglophone lawyers to act as notaries in the Northwest and the Southwest regions, the recruitment of English speaking trainee court clerks and acceleration of the decentralization process with the addition of a dedicated Ministry; the Ministry of Decentralization and Local Development. Moreover, the government prepared a 'Government Emergency Humanitarian Assistance Plan in the North West and South West Regions' and a Humanitarian Coordination Center to implement the plan

The Arrest of Ambazonian Leaders

In an attempt to quench the multiplication of armed groups, violence extremism, rising deaths, burnings etc The government of the Republic of Cameroon arrested Sisiku Ayuk Tabe, head of what is known as the "Ambazonia government," and nine other leaders were arrested in January 2018 in Nigeria's capital, Abuja, and in an extrajudicial transfer, were forcibly returned to Cameroon. The men were 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. However this was in violation of the fundamental principle of "non-refoulement". The arrests of the Ambazonian leaders further triggered protests in the diaspora and further proliferation of armed separatists in the Anglophone regions. In response, government security forces retaliated through abusive counterinsurgency operations.

Creation of the National Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration Committee (CNDDR).

On November 30, 2018, Cameroon's President signed a decree to create a national committee to disarm, demobilize and reintegrate (DDR) secessionists in the English-speaking regions and former Boko Haram militants in the Far North. Strategically, the purpose of the CNDDR is to gather and disarm former Boko Haram militants and armed secessionists and help them be reinserted into civilian life. The government opened up DDR centres in the South West and North West Regions to rehabilitate ex-combatants of separatist movements, develop their skills through vocational training and reintegrate them into society.

This move, while welcomed by some observers who consider it a step forward towards achieving peace in the concerned regions, on the other hand, was regarded too early, for the English-speaking parts of Cameroon. This is because, DDR operations often result from an agreement or process initiated by parties involved in a conflict, to peacefully resolve the latter. Yet, no agreement or process in the case of the crisis with secessionists in Cameroon has been put in place.

From a strategic point of view, the DDR committee in this context would be futile and could even aggravate the conflict since armed groups involved perceive it (the operation) as a stratagem of the government to resolve the situation and not giving them what they want.

International intervention

Since the inception of the Anglophone Crisis, there has been a series of interventions from international bodies. From 2018, the Anglophone Crisis drew increasing international attention and became a challenge to Cameroon's foreign relations as it developed into an armed conflict. A majority of African countries have been largely silent on the issue and generally opposed to any non-African interference. While Cameroon enjoys support from some African and foreign states, and France in particular, no country has openly supported the Ambazonian independence movement. However, many western nations, regional and international organizations have put pressure on the Cameroonian government to engage dialogue with the separatists to resolve the crisis.

a) Regionally

- On 18th January 2017, the African Union issued a press statement to express concern about the situation in Cameroon and indicated its willingness to assist in its resolution.
- African Charter on Human Peoples Rights ACHPR/Res. 395 (LXII) condemns the human rights abuses by both parties and calls for dialogue in the 62nd Ordinary Session (April - May 2018).
- AU Supports Switzerland mediation in 2019.

b) Internationally

- European Parliament adopted a resolution in April 2019 for the crisis to be considered by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).
- France, Russia and China as permanent members blocked the motion for UNSC to meet on the crisis on grounds that AU was best suited to handle the crisis (Article 52(2) UN Charter)
- Arria-Formula was held instead on 13th May 2019 to consider the human rights situation.
- UNSC supported the Switzerland mediation attempt.

The Major National Dialogue (MND)

The Government instigated the major national dialogue initiative as a move towards enhancing peace and stability in the restive Anglophone regions. As reported by the Rapporteur General of the Major National Dialogue, a brief highlight of some of the major recommendations that emerged from the deliberations of the various commission include: "Grant a SPECIAL STATUS to the North-West and South-West Regions, in conformity with Section 62 Sub 2 of the Constitution; Take specific measures to ensure equality of English and French in all aspects of national life; Reinforce the autonomy of Decentralized Local Entities; Improve upon the infrastructure of judicial services throughout the country; Strengthen the Humanitarian Assistance Program to better serve internally displaced persons; Institute a special plan to reconstruct the conflict affected areas; Popularize the Head of State's offer of amnesty to combatants who drop their weapons and enter the reintegration process; and, Create a team

responsible for mediation with radicalized members of our Diaspora."

The MND is commendable and appreciated as part of the peace process organized by the government. However, the results on the ground prove that the MND did not conform to international standards of negotiating a violent conflict.

MOVING FORWARD

Recommendations at the level of the government of Cameroon

The recurrent and ongoing hostilities against the state, civilians lavishing in bushes in indigenous communities, recruitment of youths into armed groups, ghost towns etc. in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon, only depicts that all attempts at resolving the Anglophone Crisis have been unsatisfactory and not concrete enough to address the root causes of the Crisis, unable to quench separatist quest for self-determination and an Independent Federal Republic of Ambazonia. There is still a need for a properly mediated process by a foreign entity or third party that brings together all Primary Actors in a mutually agreeable Venue, and with a pro-active and pre-negotiated agreement.

A dialogue without pre-conditions and not limited by Article 64 of the Cameroon Constitution.

Article 64:

"No procedure for the amendment of the Constitution affecting the republican form, unity and territorial integrity of the State and the democratic principles which govern the Republic shall be accepted."

An open dialogue open to discussions on the form of state be it secession, federalism, or decentralization.

To stop the violence and killings, the government of Cameroon and non-state armed groups needs to put in place structures and incentives for a ceasefire which is of utmost importance before institutionalizing the DDR committee. The question now is, "What would incentivize both the state armed groups and NSAGs to drop-down arms? Without controversy, the Ambazonia Defense

Forces/Fighters are generously funded by both their diaspora and national leaders (especially those behind bars) from whom they take instructions. The diaspora collaboration is of utmost importance if their collaborators freed from prison, hence a greater probability for a ceasefire.

After a successful ceasefire process, the state forces can demilitarize the Anglophone regions in order not to incite violence and retaliation from the NSAGs, leaving the usual Police officers for legitimate security concerns. A training toolkit for military peacebuilders should be initiated and redeployed To ensure effective civilian collaboration and reconstruction with the military.

While undergoing peacebuilding, government authorities must conduct thorough and impartial investigations into human rights abuses on all sides, subject all perpetrators to a fair trial and compensate victims of human rights abuses. Also, life-enhancing opportunities such as trauma healing, counseling, psychosocial support should be readily made available to victims of the crisis.

Recommendations for the Pro-independence Movement

- *Stop all forms of political propaganda that enhance the incitement to violence*
- *Stop all forms of arbitrary kidnaps and abduction*
- *Stop all forms of Human Right Abuses*
- *Stop economic shutdowns (Ghost towns)*
- *There is no stable and developed economy without the presence of solid educational institutions. Stop infringing on the rights to education.*
- *Seek nonviolence as a means of conflict resolution:*

Recommendations at the Regional level

The African Union Peace and Security Council (AU PSC), per the AU Constitutive Act and Article 4(b) of the PSC Protocol, should have Cameroon on its agenda of discussion since the ongoing Anglophone crisis threatens an already unstable region. It should not neglect Cameroon especially since the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the body to which Cameroon belongs, has not acted in any visible

way concerning the crisis. The AU PSC and African leaders should, therefore, end their silence on the Anglophone crisis and step in to prevent further escalation and spillover of the crisis into the region.

The African Charter on Human and People's Rights must request to undertake a fact-finding mission in the Anglophone regions according to its mandate.

Recommendations at the international level

The United Nations Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council, as the apex bodies for peace and security internationally and regionally, need to intervene before more lives are lost. And the UN should establish a commission to provide a long-lasting solution to the question of self-rule for the former British Southern Cameroonians.

In the meantime, the protection of lives, humanitarian assistance for refugees and internally displaced people, and respect for human rights are paramount.



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