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**CONFLICT LANGUAGE, STRATEGIC NARRATIVES AND INTELLIGENCE
INDICATORS IN CAMEROON'S ANGLOPHONE CRISIS.**

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Abstract

The Anglophone crisis in Cameroon has evolved into a complex political and security challenge requiring multidimensional responses beyond conventional conflict-resolution mechanisms. Contemporary security analyses identify multiple challenges confronting Cameroon, including the Boko Haram insurgency in the Far North Region and the separatist conflict in the North-West and South-West Regions, both of which have significant implications for national stability. Socio-political history of the crisis regions in Cameroon cannot be align with Nigeria. Although some scholars draw comparisons between the Anglophone crisis and the Biafra separatist movement in Nigeria, important differences remain regarding historical trajectories, political demands, and institutional arrangements. While some actors advocate secession, others continue to support a federal restructuring of the Cameroonian state. The government of Cameroon opts for decentralization as system of administration for social cohesion and unity. This paper explores a brief history of Cameroon, before delving in to the role of civil society groups, the government of Cameroon strategy for return to peace, and international and continental response. Its main contribution lies in documenting and analyzing the terminology, slogans, and symbolic expressions employed by separatist actors in operational activities, mobilization efforts, and fundraising campaigns. Findings suggest that separatist terminology serves as a mechanism for identity construction, operational coordination, symbolic resistance, and resource mobilization.

Keywords: *Ambazonia, Secession, National Dialogue, Decentralization*

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Introduction

The Anglophone Crisis has emerged as one of the most protracted and complex security challenges confronting Cameroon since reunification. What began as peaceful protests by lawyers, teachers, and civil society actors in the North-West and South-West Regions in 2016 rapidly evolved into an armed conflict involving state security forces and a constellation of separatist movements seeking the independence of a self-proclaimed state known as the Federal Republic of Ambazonia. By early 2017, the peaceful narrative had emerged to an armed conflict, with some Anglophone appealing for secession and others federalism from the majority Francophone Republic of Cameroon. Cameroonian President Paul Biya, ordered an investigation to better have insight of the game in order to restructure and appease the angry mock. According to Pelican M. (2022), the government use disproportionate force, arrested, and jail civilians during the early stage of the crisis. Armed separatists have equally committed grave atrocities; there has been no accountability on either side thereby prolonging the game. Human Rights Watch reports⁵ revealed that over 6,000 people have died; Cameroon also faces a daunting humanitarian crisis, with over 600,000 internally displaced persons and more than 77,000 others seeking refuge in Nigeria.

Cameroon was colonized by the Germany in 1884. Following the defeat of Germany in World War I, Britain and France decided to partition Cameroon in 1916; which France took 80 percent and Britain took 20 percent. The two countries administered their respective spheres as mandated territories under the mandate of the League of Nations. Based on their colonial experiences, the two Cameroons developed different socio-political stance (language, legal practice, and governance). However, French Cameroon gained independence in 1960 as the Republic of Cameroon; British Cameroon achieved its independence in 1961 by voting in a UN-organized referendum to join the Republic of Cameroon, forming a two-state (British West Cameroon and French East Cameroon) Federal Republic of Cameroon. The federation had to conserve⁶ and safeguard the Anglophone legal and cultural identities, including the Anglo-Saxon institutions of West Cameroon, as laid out in the UN resolutions⁷ and Foumban Conference⁸ of 1961. Unfortunately, the deeds were not respected; thus, colonial events largely explain the roots of the Anglophone crisis, now an armed conflict.

Drawing on publicly available reports, policy documents, media sources, and secondary literature, this article examines the terminology, slogans, and communicative practices employed by government actors, civil society organizations, and separatist groups during the Anglophone Crisis. The article argues that these linguistic repertoires serve not merely as rhetorical devices but as instruments of political mobilization, strategic communication, and conflict management. By analyzing the evolution and functions of these narratives, the study contributes to broader

⁵<https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/08/11/cameroon-army-killings-disappearances-north-west-region#:~:text=The%20violence%20has%20caused%20about,to%20become%20refugees%20in%20Nigeria.>

⁶<https://reliefweb.int/report/cameroon/history-explains-why-cameroon-war-itself-over-language-and-culture>

⁷https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/libdocs/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session4/CM/UNPO_CMUR_UPR_S4_2009_UnrepresentedNationsandPeoplesOrganization.pdf

⁸<https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1178&context=jgi>

debates on intelligence, information operations, and civil–military relations in contemporary intrastate conflicts.

The article proceeds in four sections. First, it examines domestic responses to the crisis, including the roles of civil society organizations and the 2019 Major National Dialogue. Second, it analyses the terminology and slogans employed by state and non-state actors. Third, it evaluates international and regional responses to the conflict. Finally, it discusses the implications of these findings for peacebuilding, conflict resolution, and security governance in Cameroon.

Theoretical Framework

Secession

Secession and independence are two terms interdependently used to appeal for sovereignty. Early secessions were, however, generally portrayed as assertions of independence from colonial empires or unions rather than as secessions. International Law laying emphasis to respect of states boundaries and territorial demarcation as an absolute rule, reason separatists tend to exploit the term for validation by international actors. It is worthy of note that, although International Law embraces the principles of self-determination, it does not support right of secession. international law merely tolerates secession in instances of external self-determination, where a people is colonized or oppressed like in the case of Kosovo (Fru Wongbi, 2022).

Beran categories secession struggles into two theories, namely primary and derivative right theory. Primary theory gives provision for a group of people exercise the right of voting to secede. The theory focuses on plebiscitary or choice theory and national self-determination theory to secede. While derivative right theory view secession as a resultant from basic human rights violation, violating public equality of members of a democratic state, violation of intra-state autonomy and unlawful occupation or incorporation of states (Beran, 1988). Ambazonia secessionist agenda is associated to derivative right theory. Collier and Hoeffler examine the cause of rebellion and civil war from their greed and grievance theory. Civil war according to grievance theory is caused by atypically severe grievances, such as high inequality, non-respect of political rights, or ethnic and religious divisions in society. Meanwhile, the rebellion might emerge because of greed and atypical opportunities present for building militia and rebel group or organizations (Fru Wongbi, 2022).

Grievance Theory

In a grievance-rebellion the objective is not predation, but rather to assuage grievance (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004). Grievances are usually emerge from discrimination, non- respect of social values and cohesion, such circumstances include Inter-group hatred (Ethnic hatred or differences), Political exclusion which most often turn to have a negative impact on the economic development of the excluded and generates feeling for vengeance or disassociate from a community.

The Ethnic Factor

Ethnic conflict is a form of conflict in which the objectives of at least one party is defined in ethnic terms, and the conflict, its antecedent, and possible solutions are perceived along ethnic lines. The conflict is usually not about ethnic differences themselves but over political, economic, social, cultural, or territorial matters (Britannica). Two criteria provide for the basis of identifying different ethnic groups; firstly, distinctive cultural trait and secondly, a sense of the fact that those traits distinguishing the group from the general society who do not share this same values. Ethnic theories of civil war and secession turn to relate the likely hood of rebellion and secession to cultural suppression. Cultural, religious, and linguistic heterogeneity of a state are usually claimed to be the underlying factor for secessionist grievances. A government's suppression of certain cultural groups, even in moderately homogeneous national environments, is also alleged to encourage the pursuit of the group's own political future. Numerous scholars uphold the view, the more culturally heterogeneous a country's population is, the more likely they exist grievances and room for self-determination especially if a group feels its culture is threatened. The belief in a distinctive ethnic culture and characteristic is the most common explanation of civil war and secession. Nevertheless, some scholars are opposed to this view of cultural heterogeneity having an impact on secession quest. Sustein postulated that the more heterogenous a state is, the more difficult it is for secessionist tendencies to exist in such diversity (Nfi, 2014). For secessionism to succeed the size of the ethnic group which constitute a people with a distinct culture matter. Also of utmost importance is the concentration of this ethnic group desiring to secede to concentrate in an identifiable territorial space within the existing state from which they intend to gain their sovereignty.

Political Factor

Political science literature has already explored the relationship between conflict and the political rights of a society, which ranges from dictatorial repression to full representative democracy. The econometric studies have found that, unless political repression is extremely severe which could crush those politically excluded, then it turns to increase chances of conflict. (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004) By the econometric principle, a highly authoritarian state would be less susceptible to secession than a democratic state. Secession movements are commonly formed when a small group fear permanent exclusion and turn to form political movement and allegiance based on ethnicity. Even democratic regimes could generate grievances if one voting block is able to dominate consistently and exercises it powers against the minority.

Secessionism according to Brown can be influenced by democracy in two major ways. Firstly, democratic states and regime could provide protection to minority communities and ethnic group, giving them autonomy over their affairs to ensure their voices are heard, in exchange for their loyalty not to secede. Secondly transition to democracy can give opportunity for prevailing grievances to be express and disintegrate the state (Brown, 2010 in Fru Wongbi, 2022).

Economic Factor

Most often than not, political exclusion promotes economic inequality. Although they turn to be no consensus as to how income inequality is associated with secessionist tendencies. Some

authors anticipate and stress on the fact that poorer regions are more likely to break up while others believe wealthier regions than the rest are more likely to build secessionist sentiments easily. Scholars in support of low per capital and slow economic growth rate as determinate which promote secession, base their argument on the fact that poverty increases grievance in most community and reduce the cost of war. Reasoning in the same light Collier and Hoeffler suspect a negative relationship between education and ability of nationalist to motivate secessionist agenda within the local population. Uneducated or less educated citizen easily buy the secessionist rhetoric and embrace nationalist sentiment, making the cost of recruiting less educated male to secession militia groups less costly. Horowitz's affirms Collier and Hoeffler observations by his contention that groups with low skills are unable to compete in the economy and are more likely therefore to seek a protectionist advantage by seceding. Conclusively, irrespective of the income class which suffers inequality, secession arise from the perception of the inequality which encourages the region suffering the effects to reassess the cost and benefit of continuously belonging in the national union.

This study adopts the concept of “strategic narratives theory” as its analytical framework. Strategic narratives are “means for political actors to construct a shared meaning of the past, present, and future in order to shape the behaviour of domestic and international audiences” (Miskimmon, O’Loughlin, & Roselle, 2013)... They are communicative instruments used by political actors to shape perceptions of events, identities, and political objectives. According to this approach, governments, civil society organizations, and insurgent movements construct narratives to legitimize their actions, mobilize supporters, delegitimize opponents, and influence domestic and international audiences.

Applied to the Anglophone Crisis, terms such as “separatists,” “secessionists,” “Amba fighters,” “La République,” and “ghost town” are not politically neutral expressions. Rather, they constitute symbolic representations of competing visions of sovereignty, citizenship, identity, and political authority. Examining these narratives provides important insights into how actors communicate political objectives, mobilize constituencies, sustain conflict dynamics, and influence perceptions of legitimacy. The analysis therefore treats terminology and slogans as components of a broader information environment that shapes both intelligence processes and conflict behaviour.

Internal Response

Civil Society Efforts

Cameroon hosts several vibrant civil society groups in different parts of the country. However, given the government’s authoritarian nature, the civic space is shrinking⁹. A good example is the ninety-day internet shutdown imposed¹⁰ in the Anglophone regions in 2017, which constrained

⁹ Kewir, James Kiven et al. (2021). Shrinking Civic Space and the Role of Civil Society in Resolution of Conflict in Anglophone Cameroon. Report of the Centre for Trust Peace and Social Relations (CTPSR), Coventry University. https://pure.coventry.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/42002302/civic_space_web.pdf (accessed August 9, 2022)

¹⁰<https://qz.com/africa/1349108/cameroons-internet-shutdown-in-blacked-out-documentary#:~:text=Following%20protests%20against%20linguistic%2C%20political,and%20even%20calls%20f>

civil society actors’ freedom and ability to organize effectively. These groups also face financial challenges, competition for scarce resources, poor coordination demonstrated by duplicate efforts, and threats of de-registration or closure by government authorities. Civil society groups also suffer threats from separatist organizations, who accuse them of colluding with government forces and subject members to intimidation, assault, and abduction.

Terms used by government and civil society

No.	Terms	Extended Meaning
01	Separatists	Appellation refers to the Ambazonia leaders
02	Secessionists	Appellation given to separatist fighters of the North West and South West Regions to reflect their ideological stand.
03	Boyses	Appellation used by the minister of territorial administration to refer to the armed separatists in North West and South West Regions of Cameroon.

Source: Obia (2026)

Despite constraints registered by civil society groups, have adopted various approaches to support those affected by the conflict and advocate for a peaceful resolution. These efforts are but not limited to providing humanitarian relief such as food, health services, back to school support and shelter for internally-displaced persons. Civil society groups in the affected regions—northwest and southwest Cameroon—also conduct peace campaigns and education efforts directed at both the government and non-state armed groups, appealing for international discourse on the conflict. These efforts include “stop the killing,” “back-to-school,” “we want dialogue,” and “ceasefire” campaigns mainly led by Southwest/Northwest Women’s Task Force (SNWOT)¹¹.

Southwest/Northwest Women’s Task Force (SNWOT)

No.	Campaigns	Resolution
01	“stop the killing”	The Taskforce crusades against killing of citizens of the country and applaud pardon for unity.
02	“back-to-school”	This campaign appeals for literacy, and uneducated population is vulnerable and can easily be manipulated. The crisis has also increased deviant behavior such as: prostitution, scamming, illicit trade and consumption of illicit drugs. The Taskforce educational campaign is for the emergence of the nation and for sustainable development in line with the African Union agenda 2063.
03	“we want dialogue”	This campaign prone for peace and social coercion
04	“ceasefire”	This campaign prone for unity, non-violence, and human security.

or%20secession.

¹¹ Pelican, Michaela. (2022). The Anglophone conflict in Cameroon –historical and political background. Freiburg: ABI Working Paper Series

Source: Obia (2026)

SNWOT has led demonstrations and organized press conferences in Cameroon's political capital, Yaoundé, demanding an immediate ceasefire and a peaceful resolution to the conflict. The Center for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa (CHRDA) and the Network of Human Rights Defenders in Central Africa based in Cameroon, have continuously documented¹² human rights abuses, including the February 14, 2020 Ngarbuh Massacre¹³ carried out by government security forces in the northwest regions. Thirteen children and one pregnant mother were killed in the incident. Other NGOs have focused¹⁴ on peace education—training for youths and women on mediation skills so that they can educate others in their communities to drop their weapons and embrace peace and unity.

Though the conflict persists, the pressure and activities of civil society groups is evidence. The Ngarbuh Massacre, for example, President Biya set up an independent commission of inquiry that investigated the atrocity and confirmed¹⁵ government security forces' responsibility, undermining original government rebuttals. The conflict has been on the agenda of international discourse at the US Congress, the United Nations and other foreign panels based on the efforts of civil society groups like CHRDA. Additionally, pressure from civil society groups within the country contributed to the first significant internal effort to address the conflict, dubbed the "Cameroon grand national dialogue" of October 2019.

The 2019 Cameroon Grand National Dialogue

On September 10, 2019, President Biya, in an unusual address to the nation, announced¹⁶ a "major national dialogue." Through this narrative, Cameroonians were to reflect on issues of national interest, including "peace, security, national integration, unity, and progress."¹⁷ The coordinated effort by the state and some civil society actors during the national dialogue aimed at reconstruction and ex-combatant reintegration was negated by some based on the implementation and outcome. Several commissions were created to strengthen national unity, peace and social cohesion:

Cameroon 2019 Major National Dialogue Commissions

No.	Commissions	Agenda
01	Bilingualism, Cultural Diversity and Social Cohesion	The promotion of the two official languages (English and French) and social cohesion.
02	Education System	Educational reforms
03	Judicial System	To analyze the constraints link to the rule of law and criminal justice system

¹² <https://www.hrw.org/news/2013/07/01/cameroon-spate-attacks-rights-defenders>

¹³ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/02/14/cameroon-2-years-massacre-victims-await-justice>

¹⁴ <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14678802.2021.1997454>

¹⁵ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/04/24/cameroon-massacre-findings-made-public>

¹⁶ <https://www.africanews.com/2019/09/11/cameroon-president-announces-national-dialogue-the-morning-call/>

¹⁷ <https://www.prc.cm/en/news/3777-the-head-of-state-s-message-to-the-nation-10-sept-2019>

04	Decentralization and Local Development	To strengthen local governance and autonomy of the region.
05	Reconstruction and Development of Conflict-affected Regions	To reconfigure the economy and rehabilitate infrastructures in the North West and South West Regions.
06	Return of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons	To facilitate the return and integration of affected persons.
07	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants	To coordinate, control and reinsertion of ex-combatants, who have dropped their weapons or arms.
08	Role of the diaspora in the crisis and national development	To encourage Cameroonians in foreign nations to contribute for development and public policy during the dialogue.

Source: Obia (2026)

Amalgamating the Anglophone conflict with other internal issues in official government statements had some advantages, especially given the strict social and cultural divisions between Anglophones and Francophones and the increasingly hostile rhetoric they use towards each other.

Derogative terms used by Francophones against the Anglophone

No.	Derogative terms	Extended meaning
01	Anglofools ¹⁸ / Anglofou	The term is used by some francophones to index citizens of the north west and south west regions, that they have a nonchalant behavior or narrative about life.
02	Bamenda/ Graffi	Bamenda is a town and graffi is a term used to describe those from the grassfield, but the francophone use this term to relegate citizens of the two regions.
03	Biafra ¹⁹	Former British Cameroon was part of Nigeria before uniting with East Cameroon. This term is used by some citizens to alinate Cameroonians to Nigeria without knowledge of historic and political culture associated.

Source: Obia (2026)

More so, the national discourse did not resolve all the grievances of English Cameroonians, despite the “special status”²⁰ accorded to the two Anglophone regions at the end²¹ of the 2019 national dialogue. The national dialogue was not considered inclusive as prescribed by president, due to the fact that some separatist leaders based abroad chose to boycott the talks over security

¹⁸ <https://africanarguments.org/2019/09/cameroon-national-dialogue-will-accomplish-nothing-anglophone-crisis/>

¹⁹ KONINGS, PIET, and FRANCIS B. NYAMNJOH. “The Anglophone Problem in Cameroon.”

The Journal of Modern African Studies 35, no. 2 (1997): 207–29. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0022278x97002401>.

²⁰ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-cameroon-separatists-lawmaking/cameroon-grants-special-status-to-anglophone-regions-idUSKBN1YO24S>

²¹ <https://africanarguments.org/2020/01/cameroon-grants-special-status-anglophone-conflict/>

concerns appealing to January 2018 event, in which several separatist leaders were arrested²² in Abuja, Nigeria by Cameroon government security forces in coordination with the Nigerian government and were repatriated to Cameroon, though they had tender asylum applications. They were later tried in the military court of Yaoundé, Cameroon's political capital, and handed²³ life sentences on charges of terrorism.

Separatists financing campaigns

No.	Campaigns to support (financially) separatists
01	Adopt a Freedom Fighter
02	Feed the Nchang Shoe Boys

Source: Agwanda et al. (2020: 7-8)²⁴

Some argued that the discourse neglected some key stakeholders in the conflict. The separatist leaders abducted from Nigeria, incarcerated at the Kondegui prison in Yaoundé, were not part of the talks. The conflict has continued for more than five years since the discussion in 2019, with separatist adopting a new lexico of terms for their operations in the two affected regions.

Separatists/Secessionists/ Amba terms and slogans

No.	Terminology/slogan	Extended meaning
01	Ambe	Amba (from Bafut)
02	Ngvin	Amba (from Kom)
03	Dis boy dem	Amba fighters (CPE)
04	Mboma	Amba (from Mamfe/Nguti)
05	Larrisa	The Republic of Cameroon (la Republic)
06	Manyi	Local bomb (Ngemba language)
07	One for all, all for one	Means your part of them
08	Blacklegs	A person against the struggle or suspected of collaborating with the government
09	Long sleeves & shortsleves	A common way to ask abducted persons how their hand (s) should be chopped up.
10	Ghost Town	Mandated stay-at-home day
11	Ground zero	Two crisis regions
12	Red Zone	Crisis zone
13	This struggle	The crisis

²² <https://www.voanews.com/a/cameroon-separatists-nigeria/4196768.html>

²³ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/aug/20/cameroon-anglophone-separatist-leader-ayuk-tabe-handed-life-sentence>

²⁴ WACC (World Association for Christian Communication) (2019). Media and conflict in Cameroon today. February 28, 2019. <https://waccglobal.org/media-and-conflict-incameroon-today/> (accessed August 9, 2022)./ Agwanda, Billy et al (2020). Cameroon and the Anglophone Crisis. IN The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Peace and Conflict Studies, O. Richmond and G. Visoka (eds.). Cham:Palgrave Macmillan.

14	Popcorn	The sounds produced by the guns
15	Grannut (Groundnuts)	Bullets or cartridges for war guns
16	Ekelebe	La Republic military men (Ibo slang meaning policeman)
17	Kenekene	Problem
18	Y'a place dey	Recognition of efforts at resisting the enemy
19	Sugar cane	Gun
20	Stick	Gun
21	Odeshi	Bullet resistant (a term adopted from Nigerian vocabulary)
22	Bitter kola	Bullets
23	Where dem dey	Anxious to face the La Republic military but in hiding
24	wata na wata	Non-effects of bullets on them (Amba fighters)
25	No dog, no dey	The enemy is light or weak
26	Y'a place dey	Y'a place dey (recognition of efforts at resisting the enemy)
27	Shake, shake, no dey	Resilience
28	Giv him five cutlass e go confirm.	Beating the underfeet with a marchet
29	Chop ekelebe	Eliminated a La Republique military army
30	Chop radar	Spying on La Republique military
31	We don wound ekelebe	They have killed soldiers
32	You go climb Sanini or climb free bike	Means of transportation during abduction
33	We don di wise you since	Monitoring someone
34	Since this struggle start you don giv pikin dem how many sugar cane?	Since the crisis started, how many guns have you supported your children
35	If you no giv three stick now so we go garri your one hand	Provide three guns, or we cut off your hand (demand for ransom)
36	Man pass gun	A bullet cannot infiltrate into their body
37	Dem say your hand dem dirty	You are guilty
38	Your washing hand na one basket bitter kola	Fine to avail you of the crime accused
39	Market	Marijuana commonly known as banga or Jamaican njama njama
40	Jaka	Kid or someone you senoir

Source: Obia (2026)

The government continuous to clamor for peace, unity and social cohesion, for others that now believe this can be achieved through a political reconfiguration of the state and reinforcement of policy to concord with international recommendations.

International Response

Contrary to the narrative that the Cameroon government is not interested in international intervention, several countries have begun redefining the security protocols, several persons align with and sponsoring separatists activities have been arrested in foreign nations, some on trial and others sentenced. Prior to the Norwegian Refugee Council designated²⁵ the conflict as the most neglected crisis worldwide based on “lack of funding, media attention, and political neglect.” Post events have revealed the diplomatic synergy between Cameroon security and that of European nations and the West. This sections examine responses from the West and the rest of the African continent before delving into potential future solutions.

West Response

With the emerging rate of asylum seekers, internally displaced persons and wave of atrocities committed in the North West and South West Regions, the West has reconfigured her security and vetting procedure for issuance of visa. Post discourse of the Grand National Dialogue have seen several investigation and arrest of individuals link to activities happening in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon. Prior to the 2019 dialogue organized by the government of Cameroon, United States House Committee on Foreign Affairs released²⁶ a bipartisan resolution that condemned the violence and human rights abuses perpetrated by government security forces and armed separatist groups. The resolution also urged the conflicting parties to “seek dialogue and [a] peaceful solution for their differences.” However, two years after the major national dialogue, the Committee passed another bipartisan resolution inviting²⁷ the government of Cameroon and the armed separatist fighters to end violence, respect human rights, and pursue genuinely inclusive dialogue to end the conflict, among other statements. This 2021 resolution raised the conflict’s global profile and prompted conversations in Western capitals—including Ottawa, London, and Berlin, which had remained mute²⁸ about the crisis initially.

There is a protein alliance between United States and Cameroon since 1960. Cameroon is not only critical to maintaining stability in the Central African subregion but also a key regional partner in countering terrorist activities in the Lake Chad Basin, which are mainly perpetrated by the Islamic sect Boko Haram. The United States continues to provide substantial security assistance in support of Cameroon. Despite, a review of assistance in 2019, over human rights concerns²⁹ in the territory. The US designation³⁰ of Cameroon for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for 18 months beginning in June 2022, TPS allows Cameroonians who have

²⁵ <https://www.nrc.no/news/2019/june/cameroon-tops-list-of-most-neglected-crises/>

²⁶ <https://bass.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/foreign-affairs-committee-passes-bass-resolution-calling-respect-human>

²⁷ <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/senate-resolution/684?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22Cameroon+anglophone+conflict+resolution%22%2C%22Cameroon%22%2C%22anglophone%22%2C%22conflict%22%2C%22resolution%22%5D%7D&s=4&r=5>

²⁸ <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/cameroon/250-camerouns-anglophone-crisis-crossroads>

²⁹ https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/us-cuts-some-military-assistance-to-cameroon-citing-allegations-of-human-rights-violations/2019/02/06/aeb18052-2a4e-11e9-906e-9d55b6451eb4_story.html

³⁰ <https://www.natlawreview.com/article/cameroon-designated-temporary-protected-status>

resided in the United States since April 2022 to remain and work in the country until the situation in Cameroon stabilizes. However, the dynamics seem to have changed, as several individuals' base in the US have been arrested in connection with the atrocities in Cameroon, some already sentenced and others still on trial.

France Response

Security is a pillar for sovereignty and diplomatic affiliation. Despite the colonial and diplomatic relations between France and Cameroon, some argue the French government have been silent while others believe she supported government's repressive response³¹. The radical political reconfiguration of some former French colonies, an operation base are reasons silent geopolitical narrative in Cameroon. Since France still maintains³² strategic military cooperation with Cameroon ministry of defense, and as well benefits from the rich and diverse mineral and natural resources. The Anglophone regions possess most of Cameroon's natural and mineral resources. Thus, France as a leading force in Cameroon for the appeasement and the end of the crisis will endorse the effective implementation of decentralization—delegation of key decision-making and management from the central government to local administrative authorities—than the validation of federalism, practice by the British after the first world war. The French government appealed for a political solution³³ and encouraged the Anglophone Conference³⁴, which the Cameroon government refused to grant in 2018. However, the 2019 Grand National Dialogue was organized, and French President Emanuel Macron visited³⁵ Cameroon three years after with discussion focused on broader issues facing the country and the subregion, neglecting the crisis still ongoing.

UN and EU Response (from 2017-2019)

With the fragmentation of states, regional and international disputes, non-respect of international humanitarian law and diplomatic missions, are evidence of the fading power of the United Nations. Despite several attempts in other African nations marked with internal wrangling, Cameroon is not isolated from failed multilateral responses. In 2017, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres discussed with the president Paul Biya³⁶ urging both sides to facilitate humanitarian access and engage in inclusive dialogue to end the conflict. Within the same year, the conflict was highlighted at a biannual meeting of the UN Security Council³⁷ in which the United States, the United Kingdom, and other super powers demanded dialogue, investigation of the human rights abuses committed by both sides, and humanitarian access for the UN and other rights organizations. However, even upon the election of former prime minister of the Cameroon as

³¹<https://www.euronews.com/2022/07/26/macron-heads-to-cameroon-for-3-nation-africa-tour-amid-mixed-reception>

³² <https://www.nytimes.com/1996/05/22/world/france-s-army-keeps-grip-in-african-ex-colonies.html>

³³ <https://www.thepostnp.com/french-president-says-on-crisis-in-cameroon-only-through-politics-of-dialogue-reinforcement-reconciliation-can-durable-solutions-be-found/>

³⁴ <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/cameroon/cameroun-la-conference-generale-anglophone-merite-un-soutien-national-et-international>

³⁵<https://www.africanews.com/2022/07/25/macron-in-cameroon-on-his-first-visit-to-africa-after-re-election/>

³⁶ <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/readout/2017-09-22/readout-secretary-general%E2%80%99s-meeting-he-mr-paul-biya-president-republic>

³⁷ <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/cameroon/272-crise-anglophone-au-cameroun-comment-arriver-aux-pourparlers>

president of the UN's general assembly, no recommendation or discourse was centred on peaceful resolution of the conflict.

Cultural diplomacy is a strategic pattern adopted by some European nations to avoid or restraint from interfering in to sovereign nations. The European Union is a significant partner of Cameroon in trade, humanitarian aid, and development, but the organization restraint from political issues such as the Anglophone crisis. However, the organization caution the government on reevaluating its development and humanitarian aid³⁸ if active measures are not adopted to end the crisis³⁹. In 2019, for example, the EU voted for a resolution appealing both sides to engage in dialogue to seek a peaceful political solution to the conflict. More so, EU officials issued⁴⁰ statements calling for, proportionate use of force and punitive measures against perpetrators of violence, especially those who have committed violence against civilians.

Apart from multilateral institutions, international civil society organizations have tried to improve the situation. For example, public policy organization like the Nkafu Policy Institute, and human rights organizations such as Human Rights Watch and International Crisis Group have conducted extensive research and offered policy recommendations to the government of Cameroon, international policymakers, and other key stakeholders on the best ways to end the conflict. In addition, the United States Institute of Peace conducted a rigorous conflict analysis, focusing on Cameroon, and engaged with separatist leaders and stakeholders to better understand the game. The organization later provided policy recommendations to the United States government and other stakeholders reason for strategic response, the arrest of persons resident in the US associated with the conflict either to material support, financial and vocal activities appealing for violence and abduction of persons.

African Responses

For more than a decade, Africa has been engulfed with conflicts, from the fragmentation of states, to military putsch to the exit from regional blocs, and the appeal for political system of governance. The famous mantra “African solutions to African problems” explains why many Western diplomats and Africans expected entities in Africa to play a leading role in addressing the Anglophone crisis. However, the African Union (AU), the foremost African continental institution, has issued only a few statements. In 2017, former Chairperson of the AU Commission, Her Excellency Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, expressed concerns⁴¹ about the crisis and called restraint and encouraged dialogue to resolve the sociopolitical and economic issues of the crisis. She also emphasized respect for the law—in particular, the right to conduct peaceful demonstrations. In 2018, AU Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat was on a two days visit in Cameroon⁴², where he met the president and government officials, discussed on issues affecting the region and Cameroon more broadly, the Chairperson lauded Biya's humanitarian efforts and reiterated the AU's “commitment to the unity and territorial integrity of

³⁸ <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/17419166.2018.1555706>

³⁹ <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/cameroon/250-cameroons-anglophone-crisis-crossroads>

⁴⁰ <https://www.euractiv.com/section/africa/news/eu-calls-on-cameroon-security-forces-to-use-proportional-force/>

⁴¹ <https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20170118-0>

⁴² <https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20180716/readout-visit-chairperson-african-union-commission-cameroon>

Cameroon.” The latter rejected violence and called for inclusive dialogue to facilitate a peaceful resolution which led to the Grand National Dialogue in 2019.

The African continent is under political and economic reconfiguration, with the creation of new blocs or alliances, and entry of new partners in the economy and security structure. Contrary to Nigeria response as peace in other countries, though similar trajectory with Cameroon, but different political configuration. Under Nigeria’s leadership, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has supported⁴³ several African countries, such as Liberia, Guinea-Bissau, and Sierra Leone, in resolving internal conflicts. Similarly, Cameroon’s leadership in the Economic Community for Central African States, she has played a vital role in the transition of power in Central African Republic in resolving internal conflict. Beyond the synergy between Nigeria and Cameroon, both countries cannot allow border issues lead to the fragmentation of their territories by distinct population. The Green Tree Accord sealed Nigeria-Cameroon partnership. Furthermore, Cameroon is a strategic partner of Nigeria in the fight against the terrorism, and part of the Lake Chad Basin Commission. While these factors appear crucial, for Nigeria’s restraint from Cameroon political stance. In 2018, the Nigerian government arrested suspected Anglophone Cameroon separatist leaders in Nigeria and repatriated them to Cameroon. However, a Nigerian court ruled⁴⁴ in 2019 that the arrest and extradition of the separatist leaders was “illegal and unconstitutional” and ordered⁴⁵ their return to Nigeria, which was ignored by the statesmen.

The world is at war, regional and international organizations are losing credibility and authority, with the creation of new regional blocs and partnerships, reason the conflict seem to be neglected. International statements, visits, and diplomatic measures have taken a new twist with continue arrest of those associated with the ideology, sponsoring and appealing to human rights abuse affected zones. However, more robust steps are critical; active measures are needed to restore peace and social cohesion.

Conclusion

Within the past months citizens are amazed by diplomatic intervention of foreign powers in the bid to stop the crisis, by the continuous arrest of individuals associated with separatists activities. Cameroon is a sovereign country, any fragmentation or quest to self-determination requires the respect of international law. With regards to international and national laws, continuous school lock down policy which has been implemented in the Anglophone regions is a gross violation of human rights. The synergy between Cameroon, international organization and other states are aiding in the crack-down of warring parties of the Anglophone crises by providing weapons or finance. The military should increase the number of experts in domain of civil-military relations and crisis management, in order to help the investigations of atrocities committed by government forces, government official, and secessionist both home and abroad by aiding or abetting attacks on civilians to trial.

⁴³ <https://carnegieendowment.org/2018/03/19/regional-cooperation-on-democratization-and-conflict-management-in-africa-pub-75769>

⁴⁴ <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/could-nigerias-court-ruling-ease-the-conflict-in-southern-cameroon>

⁴⁵ <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/317103-court-declares-nigerias-deportation-of-cameroonian-activists-illegal.html>

Moreover, the continuous investigation and using targeted sanctions against those benefiting from and fomenting the conflict on both sides could incentivize peace efforts. International sanctions are gradually changing the narrative of some activists who thought they could attack Cameroon in foreign nations after seeking asylum and claiming political attempt on their life. Many individuals helping to incite the conflict have children in Western schools and exploit foreign territories to sponsor these atrocities in Cameroon. The government of Cameroon should ensure travel bans and repatriation of individuals and families involved in the atrocities in the Anglophone regions. This would change the narrative of others to work toward peace and desist from violence against civilians.

More so, the government of Cameroon should continue prioritizing humanitarian access. The conflict has produced thousands of internally displaced persons and the destruction of property like schools and hospitals, with children and women suffering the most. Foreign governments like Nigeria and multilateral organizations such as the United Nations should strengthen the protection of vulnerable groups and the advancement of children's rights in order mitigate atrocities until more comprehensive political peace efforts to address the crisis. However, the conflict has continued for more than six years, indicating that more robust actions are needed.

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