



A TURN FOR THE WORSE:

VIOLENCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN ANGLOPHONE CAMEROON

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**ORIGINAL AMNESTY REPORT WITH HIGHLIGHTS AND ANNOTATIONS
DELINEATING SOME OF THE ISSUES WE HAVE WITH THE REPORT. COMPILED BY:**

- + Sam Soya Center for Democracy and Human Rights, South Africa
- + Ambazonia International Policy Commission, Germany
- + Ambazonia Prisoners of Conscience Support Network, UK and US



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Cover photo: Demonstration of Cameroons in Rome to protest against the perceived discrimination of the Anglophone minority in Cameroon.

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GLOSSARY

WORD	DESCRIPTION
ADF	AMBAZONIA DEFENCE FORCES
BIR	Battalion d'intervention rapide
UN	United Nations
INGOS	International Non-Governmental Organizations

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

-The report denies the people of Ambazonia their identity by insisting on calling them “Cameroon’s Anglophone regions”

How would the human rights community have reacted if in the struggle for the independence of Namibia from Apartheid South Africa, which called Namibia South West African region of South Africa, if Amnesty issued a report in which they insisted on calling Namibia South West Africa?

Since late 2016, Cameroon's Anglophone regions – whose grievances date back to the early 1960s - have endured turmoil and violence in what has become a human rights crisis. In October and November of 2016, protests and strikes were organized by groups including teachers, lawyers and students in opposition to what they viewed as the further marginalization of the Anglophone minority. Lawyers took to the streets to demand the translation into English of legal texts, and protest against the appointment of French-speaking judges unfamiliar with the Common Law system. Teachers went on strike to condemn the appointment of French-speaking staff in schools and universities. Thousands of ordinary people, including students, joined these demonstrations to express solidarity and to air other grievances.

Although largely – but not always – peaceful in nature, these initial protests were met with fierce and sustained repression from the Cameroonian authorities and security forces. The security forces arrested hundreds of people, including human rights defenders, journalists and activists. The authorities banned civil society organizations, suspended the internet and cut phone lines for about six months in 2017. Security forces were responsible for the killing of at least 10 peaceful protesters between October 2016 and February 2017. Anglophone activist groups responded using civil disobedience tactics, including school boycotts and “ghost town” protests. The severity of this human rights violation really needs to be addressed more directly. In the case of the Arab Spring, the human rights community understood that the 1-month internet shutdown was a travesty to the cause of democracy, and the United Nations went out of their way to clarify that the voluntary interruption of internet as a violation of fundamental rights and freedoms enshrined in UN text. In this case, the internet was off for more than 8 months and since returned only intermittently, and Amnesty makes just 2 passive mentions of it in a human rights report.[1]

At the same time, moderate voices began to be eclipsed as armed separatist groups, calling for secession and advocating for an armed struggle, grew in profile and support. They began to carry out violent attacks against the Cameroonian security forces and state emblems, and also perpetrated violent acts impacting the civilian population. [On what facts is this statement based off of? Is amnesty reporting human rights violations or making political value judgments. If Judgements why is amnesty not concerned about the fact that the French neocolonial regime in Cameroon is the longest running dictatorship on earth?][2]]

Armed separatists have attacked security forces, especially gendarmes and police, killing at least 44 of them between September 2017 and May 2018, in both the North West and South West regions. In one of the most recent attacks, on 1 February 2018, in the locality of Mbingo, in the North West region, two gendarmes manning a checkpoint were stabbed to death by a group of young armed separatists.

Ordinary people have been targeted too. Teachers and students accused of not participating in the boycott have been physically assaulted, and at least 42 schools have been attacked by armed separatists from February 2017 to May 2018 in both the North West and South West regions. Cases documented by Amnesty International include two schools seriously burnt in arson attacks in the town of Menji as well as armed attacks on teachers in the towns of Ntungfe and Njinikejem in January and February 2018 respectively.

In addition, armed separatists have attacked ordinary people – including traditional chiefs - perceived as

How would the human rights community have reacted if in the fight against Apartheid Amnesty described the ANC in these terms below?

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being informants of the Cameroonian security forces. Amnesty International documented at least three cases of arson, including the residence of a traditional chief in the village of Myerem, in the South West region in February 2018

The escalation of such violence by the armed separatists by the end of 2017 coincided with the militarization of the Anglophone regions, the creation of a new 5th military region with its headquarter in Bamenda, and the military's launch of large-scale security operations in parts of the North West and South West regions. On 1 December 2017, the Senior Divisional Officer of Manyu Division, South West region, issued a communiqué ordering people living in 15 villages of the area to "relocate to safer neighbourhoods of their choice in the hours that follow, failure of which they will be treated as accomplices or perpetrators of ongoing criminal occurrences registered on security and defence forces". Before this communiqué was withdrawn the following day, residents of the cited villages had already fled. When the security forces entered some of these villages, they used excessive force to locate and arrest those who had stayed behind.

Lots of contradictions and confusion which seems intended to confuse the issues

This paragraph contradicts the methodology statement on page 8. The latter states that there were 150 interviewees for this report and that all of them provided evidence against the "armed separatists" only. When you compare this paragraph with the methodology page, it appears that Amnesty undertook this report for the sole purpose of finding evidence against the armed fractions of the resistance movement, and added critiques of the regime only as a way to appear legitimate in the eyes of the international human rights community.

-There are these euphemisms that seem to be intended to avoid naming the war crimes of Cameroon regime

[Targeted killings" becomes extra-Judicial executions, "burning of villages," becomes "distraction of private property, "general harassment of the population or collective punishment becomes "excessive force," or arbitrary arrests and torture. [3]

This report is based on interviews carried out between January and May 2018 with more than 150 victims of and eyewitnesses to human rights violations by the security forces and to violence by the armed separatists, as well as families of victims. It documents the human rights violations, including unlawful killings and extra-judicial executions, destruction of private property, arbitrary arrests and torture committed by the Cameroonian security forces during military operations. In one case documented in this report, members of the Rapid Intervention Battalion and the regular Army unlawfully killed at least four unarmed men during an operation in the village of Dadi, in December 2017. In another case, also from December 2017, the same forces shot dead three unarmed men in the village of Kajifu.

Satellite images and photographic evidence obtained by Amnesty International presented in this report also show the complete destruction of the village of Kwakwa, in the South West region, which was burnt to the ground by Cameroonian security forces during an operation conducted in December 2017 in connection with the killing of two gendarmes by suspected armed separatists.

The report also establishes that in some instances, security forces arrested people during these operations and tortured them. For example, at least 23 people--including minors and -- two men with mental disabilities arrested by the security forces in Dadi on 13 December 2017, were brought to the village Community Hall where they spent three days in incommunicado detention and were tortured. Victims described being blindfolded and severely beaten with objects such as sticks, ropes, wires, guns, as well as being shocked with electricity and burnt with hot water. Some were beaten until they lost consciousness, and Amnesty International documented that at least one of them died at the Buea Central Prison - where those arrested in Dadi were eventually transferred.

As a result of these security operations and the consequent violence over 150,000 people became internally displaced and more than 20,000 fled to Nigeria where they are living in remote locations, requiring humanitarian support. [This paragraph confuses the assertions in paragraph 4 above, creating a situation for plausible deniability for the Cameroon regime. I winning proposition for them.]

Cameroonian security forces have a long track record of abusive conduct, both in the Anglophone regions and in other parts of the country. Amnesty International has documented numerous cases in the Far North where the security forces have arbitrarily killed, or arrested civilians suspected of supporting Boko Haram, and made widespread use of incommunicado detention and torture, including in illegal detention facilities such as military bases and offices of the intelligence services. The impunity with which such acts were committed in the Far North region, may have been a significant contributing factor to the commission of similar violations in the Anglophone regions. It is unhelpful and distracting to assert that the current crackdown on Ambazonia is somehow causally linked to the crackdown on Boko Haram. As Amnesty itself has noted, the grievances of Ambazonians date back to 1960. Biya's regime has behaved with impunity toward Ambazonians from the moment they invaded, disbanded the Ambazonian police force, and assassinated the Ambazonian prime minister Augustin Ngom Jua. This is the nature of this regime.

Far from resolving the crisis, the clampdown on any form of dissent and the heavy-handed response by the Cameroonian authorities and security forces appear to have empowered and created space for more radical and violent movements to emerge, with a focus on secession and armed struggle. The human rights violations committed by the Cameroonian security forces and authorities have also contributed to creating a pervasive climate of fear, which some observers say has led to a growing sense of alienation among communities in the Anglophone regions.

Cameroon has the right and obligation to conduct law enforcement and security operations in any part of its territory in order to identify and detain suspected criminals, seize illegal weapons and protect the population. However, as the cases documented in this report illustrate, its forces have failed to uphold their obligations under international human rights law to only use lawful and necessary force, and particularly to use

This statement is egregious. How would the human rights community reacted if in the middle of the Namibian and ANC struggles against Apartheid, Amnesty wrote a report that stated like above that "South Africa has the right and obligation to conduct law enforcement and security operations in any part of its territory in order to identify and detain suspected criminals, seize illegal weapons and protect the population"??

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potentially lethal force only in immediate defence of the right to life, and to respect and protect other human rights. Because of a lack of accountability, victims and their families also face slim likelihood of redress.

Human rights violations need to stop. Attacks on public officials, security forces and ordinary people are serious crimes. Cameroon has an obligation to investigate and prosecute such crimes and to do so while respecting Cameroonian and international human rights laws. At the same time, the Cameroonian government must take lawful steps to ensure that all those who have committed crimes and human rights violations are held accountable.

This report recommends steps the Cameroonian authorities should take to avoid excessive and unnecessary use of force, end arbitrary arrests and detention, prevent deaths in custody as well as torture and other ill-treatments, ensure accountability, and provide effective remedies to victims of human rights violations.

2. METHODOLOGY

Amnesty International's delegates visited Nigeria in February 2018 and conducted research in the capital Abuja, as well as in several localities in Cross River state where Anglophone Cameroonian asylum seekers and refugees have settled, including in Ajassor, Agborkem Waterfall, Amana, Bashua, Blajoua, Calabar, Danare, Ikom, Obudu Ranch, Utanga. [Thank you for clarifying that you had researchers on the ground only a month after

Amnesty Nigeria, in a posting on January 12, 2018, joined other human rights groups and the US State Department to condemn Nigeria's violation of non-refoulement by forcibly returning 10 Ambazonian community leaders to Cameroon[4]. Why did you not direct these researchers to investigate this situation?

Why do you only mention this assault on a foundational pillar of international humanitarian law once (on the next page), and then only in reference to a Cameroon minister calling the leaders "terrorists"??

Research was also undertaken in several towns and villages of the South and North West regions of Cameroon, including in Bamenda, Belo, Mbongo, Fundong, Njinikejem, and Ntungfe (in the North West region), Alou, Banga Bakundu, Bekondo Buea, Bole Marumba, Mamfe, Menji, Muyengue, Mundemba, Kembong, Kombone, Kumba, Lewoh, and Nguti (in the South West region).

[The burning of the highlighted villages was left out of the report it seems from the methodology because amnesty West Africa could not attribute it to the "armed separatists" see paragraph 3 and 5 below[5])]

Amnesty International interviewed more than 150 victims of and eyewitnesses to human rights violations and violence perpetrated by armed separatists, and families of victims, in addition to a wide range of key informants from different sectors. These include lawyers, journalists, religious and traditional leaders, academics, human rights defenders, members of civil society, political leaders and activists within the separatist movement and groups, national and international human rights and security experts, and staff of the United Nations (UN) and International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs)[The phrase "more than 150 victims of

and eyewitness to human rights violations and violence" turned out to be a lie intended to exaggerate the number of interviewees, as Samira Daoud of Amnesty West Africa posted on twitter that they interviewed exactly 150 individuals, and this number also included a so-called "threatened" category not just "victims and witnesses of human rights violations as written above.[6]

Interviews with victims and eyewitnesses were conducted individually, with the exception of a small number of focus groups. All agreed that their statements would be used in this report and requested that their names, as well as other identifying information, would be redacted to protect them from intimidation and threats.

Amnesty International also reviewed information in local and international media, as well as examined photographs, videos and satellite images providing information about human rights violations and violence carried out by armed separatists. Details were corroborated through the testimonies of victims, relatives and witnesses, eye-witness and residents of concerned villages and cities while the authenticity of materials was verified by experts. Images of injuries and deaths were analysed by a forensic expert.

The methodology of the report clearly indicates that Amnesty West Africa's primary focus was NOT an impartial reporting of the human rights situation in Cameroon or Ambazonia or both, but rather a quest for "information about human rights violations and violence carried out by [what they prefer to call] armed separatists."

It leaves one wondering what would've been the reaction of the human rights community if in the days of the struggle against Apartheid in South Africa, Amnesty had issued a report whose methodology singled out ANC to specify as the focus for Amnesty's research and forensic teams to get "information about human rights violations and violence carried out by the ANC."

The last paragraph seems to clarify why though Amnesty West Africa was in a position to know about the burning down of several villages, the report seemed to only mention the burning down of one village, Kwakwa, for which there is a rumor that Cameroon forces were acting in response to previous attacks by Ambazonian activists that killed 2 gendarmes. The report repeats this particular incident in 4 different places extensively along with the rumor, covering about 1/7 of the whole report content; altering it a little each time as if the intention is to give the impression to people unfamiliar with the case that these are different incidents. Per the methodology, Amnesty West Africa seems to have excluded from the report the burning of Belo, Muyengue, Kembong and Nguti, because there was no apparent justifications by Cameroon soldiers for burning down those villages, as is with most of the other 80 plus villages burnt to the ground thus far—war crimes committed in the process of collective punishment, a violation of international law in its own right. [4]

3. BACKGROUND

ANTECEDENTS AND ROOTS OF MARGINALIZATION

This is not “revival of age-old political grievances” — it is a response to an escalation of abuses that started in 1960 The Anglophone regions of the Cameroon – the South West and North West, which make up approximately 20% of the country’s population - have experienced large-scale dissent and protest since at least late 2016.

Yet, the current crisis appears to be a **revival of age-old political grievances**. The “Anglophone problem” can be traced back to the independence period. ‘Political elites of the French and British territories that make up the current Republic of Cameroon agreed on a federal state in 1961.¹

in the service of neo-colonial political agendas. The use of this phrase, “age-old,” -- even when it itself contradicts your statement in this very paragraph -- seems designed to harness racist narratives of Africans always fighting with each other for no real reason. These ideas and words need to be rooted out and replaced with a will to be accountable to the continued destruction of Western supremacy . For example: The latest escalation of grievances were triggered by the Ambazonian peoples horrified responded to an attempt by the Cameroonian regime to replace their common law based legal system with what amounts to a French colonial legal system. We won’t comment on the use of the term “Anglophone problem.” However, the reunification process and the following period were marred with much controversy and lack of genuine and equal participation of political actors, which led to what the Anglophone communities perceived as a forced and unfair “assimilation” into the Francophone-dominated state. This precipitated the widespread sense of political, social, and economic marginalization on the part of Cameroon’s Anglophone minority.² Despite the emergence and continued demand of several Anglophone political and social movements, including successive protests and symbolic proclamations of independence in 1999 and in 2009, the country saw continued centralization and further weakening of Anglophones’ political strength at the national level.³

PROTESTS AND GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Towards the end of 2016, the two Anglophone regions were rocked by demonstrations and strikes, initially led by lawyers, teachers, students and eventually involving a wider section of the population. They protested against what they viewed as the growing marginalization of the Anglophone linguistic, cultural, educational traditions and systems in various sectors including the failure to: use the Common Law in courts, implement English in classrooms, and improve representation in politics⁴. Some protesters also called for greater autonomy for the Anglophone regions.

Although largely – but not always - peaceful in nature, these protests were met with sustained repression from the Cameroonian authorities and security forces. Some peaceful protesters were killed during demonstrations, hundreds of people were arrested from October 2016 to early 2017, civil society organizations (CSOs) were banned, and the internet and phone lines were interrupted for several months in 2017.⁵ Anglophone activist groups responded using civil disobedience tactics, including school boycotts and “ghost town” protests – effectively a general strike where people would stay at home rather than go out or to work or school. Some activists were also charged under Cameroon’s anti-terror law, tried and sentenced before military courts.⁶

¹ Piet Konings and Francis Nyamnjoh, ‘The Anglophone Problem in Cameroon’, *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 35, 2 (1997), pp. 207±229, Cambridge University Press

² International Crisis Group, ‘Cameroon’s Anglophone Crisis at the Crossroads’, Africa Report N°250 | 2 August 2017

In 2017, there was only one Anglophone among 36 ministers with portfolio.

⁴ International Crisis Group, ‘Cameroon’s Anglophone Crisis at the Crossroads’, Africa Report N°250 | 2 August 2017

⁵ Amnesty International, Cameroon: Excessive force that led to deaths of protesters must be urgently investigated, 9 December 2016, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2016/12/cameroun-excessive-force-that-led-to-deaths-of-protesters-must-be-urgently-investigated/> (accessed on 6 April 2018); Amnesty International, Cameroon: arrest and civil society ban risks inflaming tensions in English speaking regions, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/press-releases/2017/01/cameroun-arrests-and-civil-society-bans-risk-inflaming-tensions-in-english-speaking-regions/>, 20 January 2017 (accessed on 8 April 2018)

⁶ Amnesty International, Annual Report 2017/2018, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/africa/cameroun/report-cameroun/> (accessed on 14 May 2018); BBC, Cameroon military court jails Anglophone activists, 26 May 2018, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-44263218>, accessed on 1 June 2017

-This is the part of the report that will go down in the history books as one of the lowest points in the history of Amnesty as a human rights organization. It will be quoted again and again as proof of a time when amnesty did not just ignore the excesses of the world's longest dictatorship in Cameroon, but went out of its way to provide the regime's surrogates with talking points.

It is absurd for amnesty to make such a claim that the formation of a commission and a few appointments of individuals is proof that the regime, known for burying public requests with commissions, has "tried to resolve the crisis." The commission and appointments have been called a sham by the Cardinal, the National Episcopal Conference, leading opposition party leaders, and most civil society leaders in Ambazonia and Cameroon; except for members of the ruling party of the president — and now amnesty West Africa.

[7]

One needs to stop for one moment and consider the idea that Amnesty international is running a rink of informants to gather/verify information for them against the Ambazonian movement resisting the world's longest dictatorship. Does amnesty also have informants in the government? or just in the activists community.

Most readers would have no choice but to accept Amnesty's decision to portray these groups and leaders as representative of the Ambazonian struggle, and therefore to accept the narrative that this struggle is deadly, matching or maybe surpassing the violence of the Cameroon regime. But in reality the groups are tiny formations.

Since January 2017, however, the Cameroonian government has tried to resolve the crisis by establishing a National Commission on the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism;⁷ appointing Anglophone magistrates and bilingual teachers,⁸ and releasing from prison some Anglophone civil society leaders and activists.⁹ Yet, these moves were viewed by the Anglophone movements as being too limited and did little to halt the protests.

ESCALATION: EMERGENCE OF VIOLENCE AND SELF-PROCLAIMED ARMED SEPARATIST GROUPS

The crisis intensified in late 2017 because the government repressed protests and failed to establish an effective dialogue with political and social groups. Large-scale protests were organized in cities and towns across the two regions between 22 September and 1 October 2017, a date chosen by the Anglophone communities to symbolically proclaim the independence of "Ambazonia".¹⁰

SELF-PROCLAIMED ARMED SEPARATIST GROUPS

In this briefing, Amnesty International uses 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".¹¹

One of the most prominent groups is the Ambazonia Defense Forces (ADF), which emerged in early 2017 and which claims to command hundreds of fighters operating in southern Cameroon.¹² But there are numerous other groups¹³ which also claim to be in active armed struggle in different locations across the North West and South West regions, which appear heterogeneous and splintered in nature, often acting at local levels, in the absence of a co-ordinated, unified structure and political leadership.

Additionally, Amnesty International has documented violence perpetrated by individuals or groups of individuals, who acted on their own initiative, but having expressed support to or known by their communities as acting in sympathy with a self-proclaimed armed group or the armed struggle for secession. As a result, it is often difficult, if not impossible, to verify most claims of responsibility by self-proclaimed armed separatists for the different attacks documented in this report. As such, this report does not aim to establish responsibility for violence by any self-proclaimed armed separatist group, unless specifically mentioned by the people Amnesty International spoke to.

A number of Anglophone groups also began calling for secession and embraced an armed struggle to achieve their objectives, leading to a rise in violent actions against state security forces, civilian authorities, schools, traditional leaders and local residents. Between September 2017 and May 2018 at least 44 members of the security forces were killed in attacks at checkpoints, in the streets, or on their duty stations.¹⁴ For example, in one attack documented by Amnesty International, two gendarmes manning a checkpoint were stabbed to death on 1 February 2018 in the locality of Mbingo, in the North West region, by a group of young men armed with knives and machetes, and suspected to belong to separatist groups.¹⁵

⁷ Presidential Decree 2017/013 to lay down the establishment, organizations and functioning of the National Commission on the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism, <https://www.prc.cm/files/b1/00/4d/114edab0eb8fab5df54955177eff43d3.pdf>, 23 January 2018 (accessed on 11 May 2018).

⁸ Camernews, Revendications des avocats anglophones: la réponse du chef de l'Etat, <https://www.camernews.com/revendications-des-avocats-anglophones-la-reponse-du-chef-de-letat/>, 31 March 2017 (accessed on 11 May 2018).

⁹ Amnesty International, Release of Anglophone leaders a relief, but others still languish in prison, 30 August 2017, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/press-releases/2017/08/cameroun-release-of-anglophone-leaders-a-relief-but-others-still-languish-in-prison/> (accessed on 12 May 2018).

¹⁰ 1 October 1961 marks the independence of British Cameroon, and the reunification of the two Cameroons (former French and British Cameroons). Also, "Ambazonia" is the name given by secessionists to their symbolic independent state. See: Fon Gorji Dinka, The New Social Order, 1985

¹¹ See footnote n.6

¹² Created in 2017 and led by Benedict Nwana Kuah, the ADF is considered to be the armed wing of the Ambazonia Governing Council (AGC), the largest secessionist group, headed by Ayaba Cho Lucas (see <https://www.agcfreearmazonia.org/>). According to its leaders, interviewed by Amnesty International, the ADF counts up to 350 fighters and operates throughout South Cameroon, with strongholds in Bui, Fako, Lebialem, Manyu, Meme, Mezam, and Momo.

¹³ Some include: the Southern Cameroons Defence Forces (SOCDAEF), commanded by Ebenezer Derek Mbongo Akwanga, and the Southern Cameroons Defence Forces (SCDF), led by Nso Foncha Nkem. See: International Crisis Group, Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis: Dialogue Remains the Only Viable Solution, Statement, 21 December 2017

¹⁴ Figures have been collected and verified by Amnesty International through informants on the ground in Cameroon, as well as open sources.

¹⁵ Interviews NW 2-7 and NW 10-13.

On what grounds does Amnesty West Africa permit itself to use such derogatory language as "Self-Proclaimed armed Separatists Groups" to describe Ambazonian activists ??

Amnesty still calls Hamas and Fatah by the names they call themselves. Even ISIS is called the Islamic State (IS) in Amnesty reports. Why is Amnesty portraying a handful of small groups as

representation of the Ambazonian struggle, thereby undermining the well known larger groups like the interim Government (IG), which the international press from RFI to BBC and beyond turn to for the movement's opinion on events on the ground? Amnesty seems eager to paint the movement as

violent, and the struggle as just one other African senseless war with crimes equally committed by both sides. This exact narrative is what destroyed the pro-democracy movement in Congo led by the Union for Democracy and Social Progress(UDPS).

Amnesty and others increased the profile of fringe violent groups into being the face of the movement, destroying the international coalition the UDPS had cobbled together at the onset of the Congolese pro-democracy revolt in the 1980's

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Amnesty International and political leaders call government commission a sham :http://www.afrifromenews.com/exclusive-interview-with-his-eminence-christian-cardinal-tumi/ https://cruxnow.com/global-church/2017/07/25/cameroun-bishops-reject-governments-bilingual-commission/ http://www.cameroun-info.net/article/cameroun-anglophone-crisis-fru-ndi-rubbishes-musonge-commission-says-cannot-solve-anglophone-problem-322563.html

8-Amnesty calls them Hamas, Fatah and ISIS not some pet name that some amnesty staff makes up for them

https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2017/07/at-any-cost-civilian-catastrophe-in-west-mosul-iraq/ https://www.amnesty.org.uk/press-releases/new-report-slams-hamas-and-fatah-over-human-rights-abuse-factional-fighting/ https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2017/07/at-any-cost-civilian-catastrophe-in-west-mosul-iraq/

At the same time as amnesty West Africa is calling Ambazonian activists by the name that serves the best PR value for the Cameroon regime against Ambazonian activists, they are going out of their way to sanitize the regimes violent activities with euphemisms like “security operations.” Military activities which the US ambassador essentially described as war crimes and the Guardian of London captured in a now historic May 30, 2018 article titled ““This is a genocide’: villages burn as war rages in blood-soaked Cameroon[9]”

At the same time, the government further clamped down on protests and intensified security operations in the South West and North West regions, including through a surge in military deployment, committing numerous human rights violations in the process.¹⁶ More than 20 people were killed during the 1 October 2017 protests in several cities, such as Bamenda, Buea, Mamfe, Kumba, including unarmed people shot in the back, and over 500 were arbitrarily arrested.¹⁷

In his address to the nation, on 31 December 2017, Cameroon’s President stated that he had issued instructions that all those who “encourage violence” should be “fought relentlessly … but without excesses” and held accountable for their crimes.¹⁸ Other senior members of the government, including the Minister of Communication, have described Anglophone political activists - including 10 leaders of the independence movement who were extradited from Nigeria to Cameroon in January 2018¹⁹ and armed separatists, as “terrorists”.²⁰ Just when you think this report couldn’t get more ridiculous, it puts a reference to Amnesty Nigeria’s

report on the forcible return of Ambazonian refugees and community leaders from Nigeria to Cameroon in violation of international humanitarian law. But Amnesty West Africa seems less interested in highlighting this violation of international law, and rather eager to help the Cameroon Minister of Communications by substantiating his use of the word “terrorist” to describe Ambazonian activists. Whereas most progressive readers would know that the word “terrorist” is a political epithet and would question its accuracy, the term “armed separatists” seems logical. By linking them, the report undercuts the suspicion that readers might generate to the regime’s panting of the Ambazonian movement as “terrorists.” And it seems that this was the goal. All this when what Amnesty should have been doing is discussing the violation of human rights that these ACTIVISTS were subject to.

People in the Anglophone regions have been caught up in the increased violence from individuals and groups suspected of sympathizing with or supporting the armed struggle on the one hand, and in the human rights violations committed by security forces on the other hand. Many continue to flee the Anglophone regions into neighbouring Nigeria and to other regions in Cameroon. By April 2018, the UN refugee agency reported that over 20,400 Cameroonians had sought asylum in Nigeria²¹, while over 150,000 Anglophone Cameroonians were believed to be internally displaced.²²

Residents, especially those perceived to collaborate with the Cameroonian authorities and security forces, have been targets of violence, including beatings, harassment and destruction of their properties. Schools have been attacked, private and public property destroyed, and public officials killed or kidnapped.²³ Amnesty International has specifically documented patterns of attacks on schools, teachers and those perceived as “collaborators”. Emblematic cases of such attacks and testimonies of victims are presented in sections below.

⁹-The Guardian: This is a genocide’: villages burn as war rages in blood-soaked Cameroon
https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2018/may/30/cameroun-killings-escalate-anglophone-crisis?CMP=twt_gu
-Cameroun – Crise anglophone : La duperie francophone en neuf péchés capitaux
<https://www.apnews.com/d2d56dc3c9475db1068b019b975adc>
-TV5Monde: Cameroun: Patrice Nganang et “la révolte anglophone”
https://youtu.be/QumitTMpWQg?list=PLdeL1gXKY5_nTBmvuzG475-gRdW5ZBYtZ
-U.S. accuses Cameroon of ‘targeted killings’ of Anglophones
<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-cameroun-usa-u-s-accuses-cameroun-of-targeted-killings-of-anglophones-idUSKCN1IJ23Y>

¹⁰-Ambazonians struggle for independence from Cameroon amid military takeover
<https://wagingnonviolence.org/2018/06/ambazonians-struggle-independence-cameroun-military-takeover/>
-Opening statement and global update of human rights concerns by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein at 38th session of the Human Rights Council [see section on Cameroon]
<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23206&LangID=E>
-The Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa (CHRDA)’s report on the burning to the ground of 60 villages by the Cameroon Military (18 ,May 2016)
https://twitter.com/AbgorNkonghoF/status/997554501342187524?ref_src=twcamp%5Eshare%7Ctwsrc%5Eandroid%7Ctwgr%5Ewhatsapp%7Ctwcon%5E7090%7Ctwterm%5E3
-Press Statement: Centre for Human Rights calls for independent investigation of sustained allegations of crimes against humanity in Cameroon
<http://www.chrup.ac.za/index.php/centre-news-a-events-2018/2121-press-statement-centre-for-human-rights-calls-for-independent-investigation-of-sustained-allegations-of-crimes-against-humanity-in-cameroun.html>
-Cameroon: Mr. Mancho Bibixy Tse sentenced to 15 years in prison
[@USEmbYaounde called out #Cameroon military for “summary executions, … and village burnings... #WarCrimes per Rome Statute. <http://bit.ly/crmWarCrs>](https://www.fidh.org/en/issues/human-rights-defenders/cameroun-mr-mancho-bibixy-tse-sentenced-to-15-years-in-prison)

¹⁶ See chapter 4. A series of major military-led security operations were conducted in December 2017 in villages of the Manyu division (South West region). Also, the military presence in the North West and South West regions was strengthened in February 2018, following a Presidential decree that created a “5th military region” with its headquarters in Bamenda Africanews, <http://www.africanews.com/2018/02/22/cameroun-govt-creates-new-military-region-based-in-bamenda/> (accessed on 14 April 2018)

¹⁷ In Buea alone, the capital of the South West region, at least 300 people have been arrested following the protests of 1 October 2017. On Sunday 8 October 2017, for example, police arrested up to 100 people walking to church in the Mile 16 area of Buea, and entered the building to arrest church staff. Some have now been released. Amnesty International, Cameroon: Inmates ‘packed like sardines’ in overcrowded prisons following deadly Anglophone protests, 13 October 2017, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2017/10/cameroun-inmates-packed-like-sardines-in-overcrowded-prisons-following-anglophone-protests/> (accessed on 8 April 2018).

Head of State’s End-of-Year Message to the Nation, 31 December 2017
<https://www.prc.cm/en/news/13-speeches/2623-head-of-state-s-end-of-year-message-to-the-nation> (accessed on 11 May 2018)

¹⁹ Amnesty International, Cameroon: Ten arrested Anglophone leaders at risk of unfair trial and torture if deported from Nigeria, 12 January 2018, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/01/cameroun-ten-arrested-anglophone-leaders-at-risk-of-unfair-trial-and-torture-if-deported-from-nigeria/> (accessed on 11 May 2018)

²⁰ Cameroon: Attack in the SW - Government Condemns Violence, 30 November 2017, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201711300973.html> (accessed on 11 May 2018); See also: News24, Cameroon Anglophone separatist leader extradited from Nigeria, 30 January 2018,
<https://www.news24.com/Africa/News/cameroun-anglophone-separatist-leader-extradited-from-nigeria-20180130> (accessed on 11 May 2018)

²¹ UNHCR, Flash update, 9-20 April 2018, <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/63470> (accessed on 11 May 2018)

²² ECHO, Cameroon | Humanitarian Crises - May 2018, Daily Map | 15/05/2018, <https://reliefweb.int/map/cameroun/cameroun-humanitarian-crises-may-2018-dg-echo-daily-map-15052018>

²³ Africanews, Cameroon separatists kidnap another government official near Bamenda, 28 February 2018 (accessed on 4 April 2018)
<http://www.africanews.com/2018/02/28/cameroun-separatists-kidnap-another-govt-official-near-bamenda/>

Now this is where Amnesty West Africa crosses over from stretching the truth to outright lying. There are thousands of reports by diplomats and local, regional and international media [9] outlets on the ongoing crisis in Ambazonia. ALL of them point to the fact that the people are fleeing violence at the hands of the Cameroon military. The idea that people are fleeing violence from “individuals suspected of sympathizing with the armed struggle” is simply a lie. No one, not even the Cameroon regime, has presented such a thesis. See Phil Wilmot’s article from WagingNonviolence [10] and the attached briefing from the International Crisis group for a few responsible portrayals of this causality. It seems Amnesty West Africa is pitching in again to help with a narrative of “another senseless African war.” Just as it was accused of undermining the democratic efforts of the Congolese Union for Democracy and Social Process (UDPS) by perpetuating this narrative of “a senseless African conflict with violence on both sides,” a narrative which helped the regime in place to avoid international pressure to allow the democratic process to continue.

ATTACKS ON SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS

Schools have been one of the primary sites of protests, contestations and boycotts in the Anglophone regions since late 2016. Government's failure to respect and enable the "Anglo-Saxon" tradition of schools and universities, including the lack of competent Anglophone teachers was perceived by many as a symbol of the marginalization of the English language by the state.²⁴ A widely followed boycott of schools was in place since late 2016, but since early 2017, school administrators and teachers perceived as not enforcing the boycott have faced increasing attacks by individuals and groups of individuals, acting on their own or in support of self-proclaimed armed separatist groups. Between February 2017 and May 2018, for example, at least 42 schools in the regions were attacked, including 36 that were damaged by arson attacks, 11 damaged by other types of attacks, as well as two school buses burnt down and various harassments and attacks on students and teachers. At least three teachers were killed during the same period²⁵ and two school principals kidnapped²⁶. These attacks on schools and harassment of teachers and students have caused massive disruption of education in the two regions.

ARSON ATTACK ON THE GOVERNMENT BILINGUAL HIGH SCHOOL (GBHS), MENJI, FONTEM SUBDIVISION, LEBIALEM DIVISION, SOUTH WEST REGION

On 24 November 2017, late at night, the entire administrative block and a classroom in the French section of the GBHS were burnt down by a large group of young people. Eyewitnesses and local residents that Amnesty International spoke to believe the attackers are affiliated with armed separatist groups. But Amnesty International is unable to corroborate these allegations. All school records were destroyed and the remainder of the school was saved only because local residents rushed to the scene put the fire out.

"That night I was informed that the school had been attacked. I rushed there with other people, but before we could put out the fire the entire administrative block was gone."²⁷ – a resident said.

The arson attack followed a meeting earlier the same day, in which the local authorities summoned various civic and political figures to discuss ways to resume school in the entire Fontem subdivision. This meeting, however, was abruptly albeit non-violently interrupted by a group of young people believed by local residents to be associated with the ADF.

On 17 December 2017, one man and a 17-year-old boy were arrested by gendarmes in Menji in connection with the Fontem school attack. The two individuals told Amnesty International that they were tortured during their detention, including through simulated electrocution and drowning, in order to force a confession that they carried out the school and other arson attacks. Amnesty International, however, has not been able to independently verify these allegations of torture. **This is pretty pathetic. Amnesty goes out of its way to say it questions the testimony of people who are testifying that the Cameroon regime tortured them. But it accepts all of the testimony that implicates the armed fractions of the movement. This knowing that the motivation to lie against a highly brutal regime is low, whereas the motivation to lie against movements is always bolstered by payoffs and other forms of pressure.**

²⁴ International Crisis Group, Cameroon: A Worsening Anglophone Crisis Calls for Strong Measures, Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°130, 19 October 2017, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/cameroon/130-cameroun-worsening-anglophone-crisis-calls-strong-measures>

²⁵ Figures have been collected and verified by Amnesty International through informants on the ground in Cameroon, as well as open sources.

²⁶ HRW, Cameroon: Armed Separatists Holding School Principal, 29 May 2018, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/05/29/cameroon-armed-separatists-holding-school-principal>, accessed on 1 June 2018

²⁷ Interview n.10SW. Amnesty International spoke with three people who arrived at the school when it was still on fire, and with two detainees at the Buea Central Prison who have been arrested as suspected arsonists.



This picture taken on 2 March 2018 shows the ruins of the GBHS Fontem Administrative Block. By 30 March 2018, the block had been repaired thanks to money contributed by the parents and teachers' association. ©Amnesty International.

ARSON ATTACK ON THE CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL IN MENJI, FONTEM SUBDIVISION, LEBIALEM DIVISION, SOUTH WEST REGION

On 17 October 2017, late in the evening, one of the sections of the Catholic Primary School in Menji was burnt down by a mob of hundreds of youths. The school had over 400 students enrolled before boycotts started in late 2016, but fewer than 50 were in attendance by September 2017, and none following the fire.

One of the local residents who rushed to the school to help extinguish the fire told Amnesty International:

“Although we managed to put out the flames on time, the youth managed to burn down the ‘plank’ section of the school using fuel.”²⁸

Eyewitnesses and local residents told Amnesty International that the arsonists are known to be members or sympathizers of the armed separatist group ADF, but Amnesty International is unable to corroborate these allegations.

Again, Amnesty West Africa has no concern putting in accusations against activists that it can't corroborate. At the same time as Amnesty Staff Brian Castner's response to why amnesty did not report about a given crime of the regime is that "Verifying every crime is challenging, and though we work hard to investigate, we only report incidents we can independently verify." [11]

²⁸ Interview n.17SW

11-Biran Castner “we only report incidents we can independently verify.”
https://twitter.com/Brian_Castner/status/1008686754700976128

ASSAULT OF A TEACHER AT THE GOVERNMENT PRIMARY SCHOOL IN NTUNGFE, BELO SUBDIVISION, BOYO DIVISION, NORTH WEST REGION

On 30 January 2018, around 9:20am, an unidentified man stormed the Government Primary School in Ntungfe and assaulted a teacher as punishment for failing to observe the school boycott ongoing at the time. The assailant, armed with what was described as a locally made gun, shot one of the three teachers at the school. The teacher, sitting in his classroom at the time, was severely wounded with pellets in his knees and thighs. The assailant, whose face was concealed by a mask, also set the head teacher's motorbike on fire using a bottle of petrol before escaping. Amnesty International interviewed the wounded teacher:

"There was no student in my class that day, so I sat on my table to read. At about 9:20am, I heard someone say 'hey' from the door. As I raised my head, I saw a masked gentleman about 1.5 metres in height. He was alone and dressed completely in black, masked, gloved and pointing a locally fabricated short gun at me. He told me that I was still coming to school in defiance of calls for a school's boycott and asked me to bring my phone to him. He spoke in the English language. As I approached him, he asked me to drop my phone on the ground and return to my seat. I did it ... He then asked me to raise my hands, but before I could raise them, he shot me. I fell to the ground."²⁹

The teacher told Amnesty International that 143 pupils were enrolled in the school prior to November 2016, but since 2018 the highest number of pupils attending was 13. The school was closed at the end of April 2018.



↑ The picture on the left, taken on 7 March 2018, shows the legs of the teacher shot by an armed separatist with a locally fabricated short gun on 30 January 2018 at GS Ntungfe; the photo on the right, taken on 7 March 2018, shows the pellets removed from the teacher's legs. ©Amnesty International.

²⁹ Interview n.9NW

ASSAULT OF A TEACHER AT THE BAPTIST COMPREHENSIVE HIGH SCHOOL, NJINIKEJEM, BELO SUBDIVISION, BOYO DIVISION, NORTH WEST REGION

Just so we are clear Belo is one of the villages burnt to the ground by Cameroon troops for “sympathy with the activists cause” and Amnesty West Africa didnot include the village burning in their report.

On 1 February 2018, at 3:30pm, a man entered the Baptist Comprehensive High School in Njinikejem and introduced himself to the principal as a parent coming to withdraw his child from school. As the principal invited him into the matron’s office for a discussion, the man removed a knife from his jacket and accused the principal of not enforcing the school boycott. The principal described how he was injured as he defended himself: “No sooner had he entered the office than he blocked the door and pulled out a knife about 30 centimetres long and pointed the knife at me. I held the knife and, as we wrestled over the knife, he pulled it leaving deep wounds in my hands.”³⁰

The attacker, who has not been apprehended, also tried to burn the matron’s office using a bottle of petrol. But he fled when neighbors and students saw smoke and rushed to help.

Before the start of the Anglophone crisis, the school catered to over 950 students, but had just 250 at the time of the attack - as representatives of the school administration told Amnesty International. Following the attack, parents were asked to withdraw their children, but two weeks later they were asked to come back. By late March 2018, only 75 students were in attendance.

ATTACKS ON SUSPECTED ‘COLLABORATORS’

Either by error or by choice Amnesty West Africa did not say a word of the number of chiefs and their families that regime forces have murdered, nor does Amnesty mentions the number of residencies of chiefs and other elites that have been burnt down by regime forces.

‘Chiefs have been badly hit by the crisis. They have abandoned their villages, as they have been targeted by the extremists. Chiefs are suspected of taking problems to the military or the administration and are being intimidated not to do so. The chiefs are also expected to support the separatists financially. This puts them at a crossroads.’

A 51-year-old man from the South West region³¹

Cameroon’s intelligence services and security forces rely, in part, on informers to pinpoint the whereabouts, movements and activities of individuals linked to armed separatists. In response, many people have been intimidated, beaten or killed for being perceived to be collaborating with security forces and secret services.

Among those most targeted are traditional chiefs. Their residences were often the sites of demonstrations and marches held in October 2017 across dozens of communities in the two Anglophone regions. People marched and raised Ambazonian flags atop the residences of the traditional chiefs and independence was symbolically declared by the protesters there.

Amnesty International has documented five such attacks.

ARSON ATTACK ON THE RESIDENCE OF THE TRADITIONAL CHIEF OF MYEREM, AKWAYA SUBDIVISION, MANYU DIVISION, SOUTH WEST REGION

On 13 February 2018, the residence of the traditional chief of Myerem was burnt down by a group of at least seven men. Local residents and sources, interviewed by Amnesty International, believe the house belonged to ADF. According to eyewitnesses, the assailants accused the chief of collaborating with Cameroonian authorities and providing information about “the separatists” to the security forces. An eyewitness told Amnesty International:

³⁰ Interview n.8NW

³¹ Interview n.22 SW

"They found me in the street with three of my friends. They were dressed in plain clothes and were all armed with machetes and guns. After having beaten us up, they forced us to walk to the palace. There, they kept beating us and began breaking everything in the house. Then they poured fuel all over, in all the rooms. They set the house on fire, also using the mattresses, the mosquito nets and other items they found in the house to provoke the fire. I was still inside when the fire started. Luckily for me, a biker came and said that the Army was coming. So the Ambazonian fighters left and I could escape."³²

Another eyewitness told Amnesty International: "The chief's palace was burnt because the *Ambazonia* fighters suspected him of collaborating with *La République* forces."³³

ARSON ATTACK ON THE RESIDENCE OF THE INTERIM TRADITIONAL CHIEF OF NGUTI, NGUTI SUBDIVISION, KUPE MUENEGUBA DIVISION, SOUTH WEST REGION

'I supported wholeheartedly the quest for independence, but I think when the government forces were in charge there was order. People would still be exploited and money extorted from them but to an extent there was organization. But with the militia there is no order and they could just come and torture anyone under the pretext that the person is an informant.'

A 41-year-old trader from Nguti³⁴

Nguti is another village the Cameroon military burnt ground which is not mentioned in this Amnesty West's report

Around noon on Saturday 24 February 2018, about 25 armed men burnt down the residence of the interim traditional chief in Nguti. Four eyewitnesses and other local residents told Amnesty International that the assailants were known to be either members or sympathizers of a local armed separatist group,³⁵ and they targeted the residence because they accused him of collaborating with the government. One of the eyewitnesses, a 41-year-old trader from Nguti, recalled: "The chief had a big compound with many rooms. They boys poured petrol on the house and burnt it. No villager could say a word because the extremists are very brutal."³⁶

Another eyewitness explained what happened:

"The secessionists suspected the regent chief of giving the names of the boys to the government for arrest. That hot afternoon, at around 12pm, we were around the interim chief's palace at Cassava Farm Quarters when a group of boys, about 25 of them, came in with bikes and drove directly to the interim chief's palace. They had machetes, local guns, and sticks. We followed behind, and when they got to the interim chief's palace, they were informed that the chief was not around. So they beat up seven elders who were around. It was public thrashing. And they warned them never to co-operate with the government again. After trashing the elders, they started singing victory songs, poured fuel on the interim chief's palace and set it ablaze before leaving. Those of us who had gathered around quickly put out the fire for fear that the gods may be angry, however the front of the palace had been completely burnt. That same day, we were later informed that the boys attacked the Nguti Council, kidnapped its Secretary General and took him to an unknown destination."³⁷

³² Interview n.106

³³ Interview n.130

³⁴ Interview n.6SW

³⁵ Amnesty International was not able to confirm the assailants were members of an armed separatist group.

³⁶ Interview n.21SW

³⁷ Interview n.20SW

ARSON ATTACK ON TWO PRIVATE RESIDENCES IN MENJI, FONTEM SUBDIVISION, LEBIALEM DIVISION, SOUTH WEST REGION

'It has now become a routine that once you differ with the Ambazonian sympathizers in any way, you are immediately tagged a sell-out and they will target you.'

A 51-year-old man from Menji³⁸

RE FOOTNOTE #40
The entire section is written around the assumption that they are, so this would be more than a footnote!

Between 2pm and 4pm on 17 October 2017, two private homes in Menji were destroyed by the same group of youths that had attempted to burn down the town's primary school earlier during the day³⁹. The two owners, one of whom was also severely beaten, were accused by the assailants – believed by local residents to be sympathizers or members of the ADF⁴⁰ – of being informants to state authorities. According to five eyewitnesses and other local residents, over 100 youths, some armed with machetes and sticks, gathered in an area of Menji known as "Three Corners Nchenfem" and then beat up several students at the Seat of Wisdom College and burnt down the two houses. An eyewitness to the arson attack which destroyed one of the two houses told Amnesty International:

"After the beatings at the College, instead of diminishing, the crowd swelled to over 100 youths who went straight to the residence. They poured petrol all over the rooms and set them ablaze. The fire destroyed almost everything. The security forces could not intervene because the youth had outnumbered them, so there was no way out." ⁴¹

Amnesty International also spoke to a family member of the second man whose residence was burnt down the same day. The family member arrived at the house when it was already on fire:

"They had taken two mattresses, which were drying outside, into the house, along with the chairs that were in the parlour, poured petrol thereon and set the house on fire. Almost all the belongings were destroyed including a gas plate and bottle, a fridge, plates, pots, clothes, everything." ⁴²

³⁸ Interview n.14 SW

³⁹ See incident described earlier in this chapter: Arson attack on the Government bilingual high school (GBHS), Menji, Fontem subdivision, Lebialem division, South West region

⁴⁰ Amnesty International was not able to confirm the assailants were members of an armed separatist group.

⁴¹ Interview n.15SW

⁴² Interview n.13SW

4. HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS BY THE CAMEROONIAN SECURITY FORCES

In contrast to section 3 that focuses on accusations against Ambazonian activists, all the accusations made against Cameroon forces in section 4 of this report have been corroborated and verified. Section 3 contains:

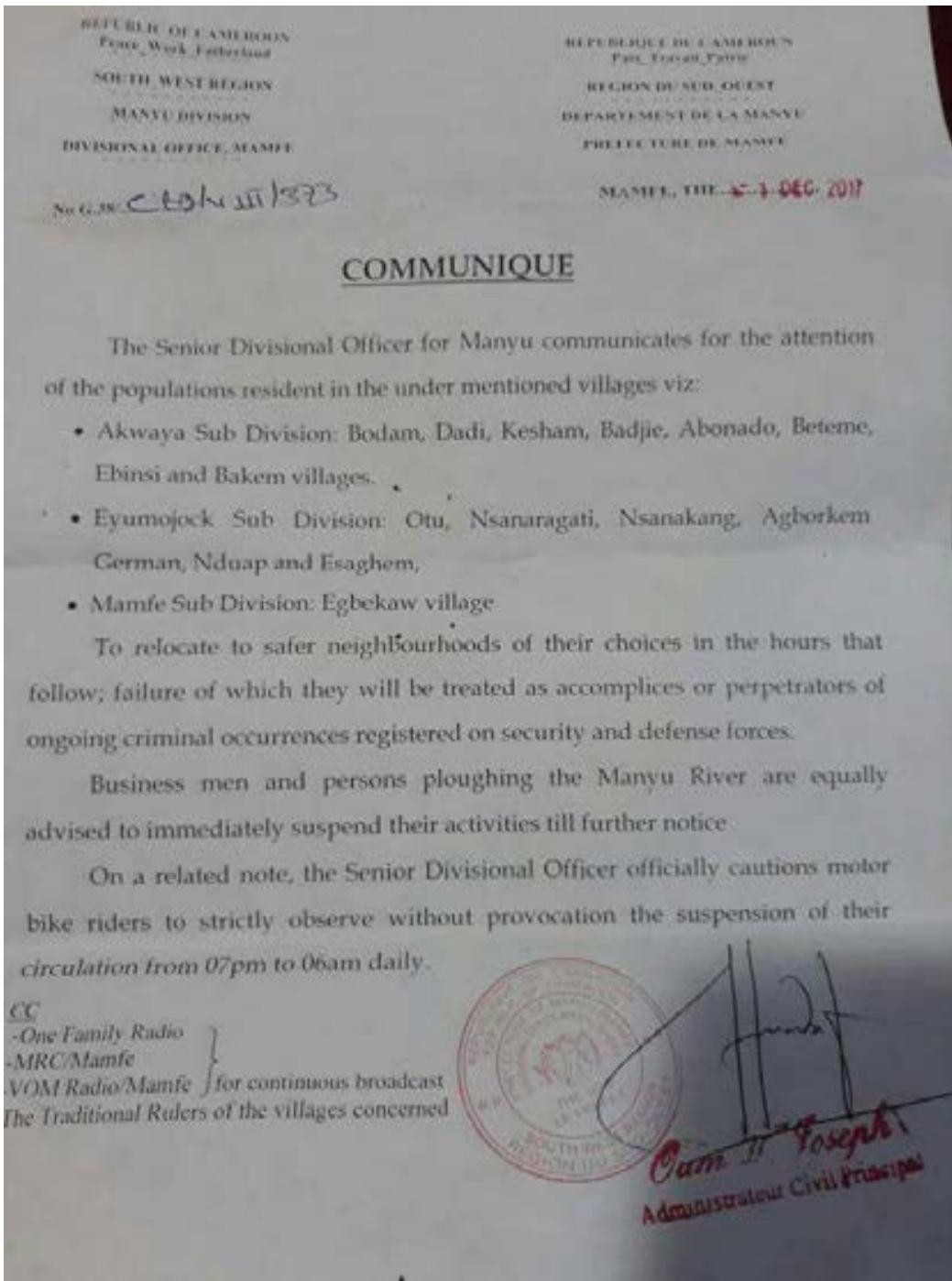
- 1 accusation that could NOT be corroborated,
- 1 accusation that could not be confirmed
- 1 accusation that could not be verified as highlighted.

This is despite the fact that Brian Castner from Amnesty has been tweeting the old line that “we only report incidents we can independently verify.”[11]

Throughout the current crisis, Cameroonian security forces including the police, gendarmerie and military have committed repeated human rights violations, particularly when responding to protests and/or during security operations following attacks on their personnel. The killing of over 20 peaceful protesters between 22 September and 1 October 2017 marked an escalation of the crisis,⁴³ which intensified even further following a series of major military-led operations conducted in December 2017 in various villages of the Manyu division (South West region). These operations followed a communiqué issued by the Senior Divisional Officer of the area telling residents to evacuate 15 villages or be considered as accomplices to the separatist groups.⁴⁴

⁴³ Amnesty International, Cameroon: Inmates ‘packed like sardines’ in overcrowded prisons following deadly Anglophone protests, 13 October 2017, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2017/10/cameroun-inmates-packed-like-sardines-in-overcrowded-prisons-following-anglophone-protests/> (accessed on 8 April 2018)

⁴⁴ Cameroon: South West Region, Manyu Division, Communiqué (01.12.2017) <https://minbane.wordpress.com/2017/12/01/https-wp-me-p1xtig-61/>, accessed on 27 March 2018



↑ Communique issued on 1 December 2017 by the Senior Divisional Officer, ©Amnesty International

The military presence in the North West and South West regions was strengthened in February 2018 following a Presidential decree that created a “5th military region” with its headquarters in Bamenda.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Africanews, <http://www.africanews.com/2018/02/22/cameroun-govt-creates-new-military-region-based-in-bamenda/> (accessed on 14 April 2018)

Amnesty International has previously documented widespread human rights violations committed by security forces in other parts of Cameroon, most notably in the Far North region in the context of operations against the armed group Boko Haram.⁴⁶ Amnesty International's research further indicates that none of the violations previously documented has been thoroughly and impartially investigated, nor perpetrators held to account, demonstrating a widespread and entrenched culture of impunity. This report documents similar patterns of violations by security forces in the Anglophone regions, including those committed during similar types of cordon, search-and-arrest operations.

4.1 SECURITY OPERATION IN DADI, AKWAYA SUBDIVISION, MANYU DIVISION, SOUTH WEST REGION

Around late afternoon on 13 December 2017, Cameroonian soldiers, including those from the Rapid Intervention Battalion (BIR), sealed off the village of Dadi to conduct a search-and-arrest operation. The military claimed that there was an ADF training camp in the village.⁴⁷ According to information collected by Amnesty International, this operation resulted in at least four unlawful killings, 23 arbitrary arrests and destruction of property. Those arrested faced incommunicado detentions and torture, and one died in custody.

More than 20 victims and eyewitnesses described to Amnesty International how up to 70 soldiers of both the regular Army and the BIR carried out the operation in Dadi. John (not his real name), a teacher, recalled what happened:

"The Army and the BIR arrived in Dadi on foot. They used speedboats from Mamfe till Badje on the Manyu River, and then they walked till Dadi and invaded the village. They were many, up to 70, heavily armed. There was no demonstration in Dadi that day, no danger, the soldiers just came to attack us. When people saw the soldiers, they started running away, and the soldiers shot at them."⁴⁸

4.1.1 UNLAWFUL KILLINGS AND DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY

Amnesty International received and corroborated the names of the four men, between 27 and 33 years old, who were killed by security forces in Dadi. Three were shot as they were returning to Dadi from their farms on motorbikes, and one as he attempted to flee towards the bush out of fear on 13 December 2017. All witnesses confirmed that those killed by the military were unarmed. Richard (not his real name), a 30-year-old farmer from Dadi, witnessed one of the killings:

"It was a very confusing situation. Soldiers were shooting and people were escaping. I was fleeing too when I saw the soldiers firing at a motorbike and its driver. They killed him. He was returning home from the farm, carrying bananas, he didn't know the soldiers had invaded Dadi. He was caught by surprise."⁴⁹

Another eyewitness told Amnesty International that while he was fleeing the village, he watched the soldiers kill a man who was also riding a motorbike. "He was returning home from his fields. He was carrying cocoa on his bike. The soldiers shot at him, and he fell,"⁵⁰ the eyewitness said.

In addition, witnesses say that six other people, including a 9-year-old girl, were also killed during the 13 December 2017 military operation in Dadi, but Amnesty International has not been able to independently verify the information.

⁴⁶ Amnesty International, Cameroon's secret torture chambers: Human rights violations and war crimes in the fight against Boko Haram, (Index: AFR 17/6536/2017), <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr17/6536/2017/en/> (hereinafter: Amnesty International, Secret Torture Chambers); Amnesty International, Right cause, wrong means: Human rights violated and justice denied in Cameroon's fight against Boko Haram, (Index: AFR 17/4260/2016), <http://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr17/4260/2016/en/> (hereinafter: Amnesty International, Right Cause, Wrong Means); Amnesty International, Human rights under fire: Attacks and violations in Cameroon's struggle with Boko Haram, 16 September 2015, (Index: AFR 17/1991/2015), <http://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr17/1991/2015/en/> (hereinafter: Amnesty International, Human Rights Under Fire)

⁴⁷ Jeune Afrique, Cameroun: plusieurs morts lors d'une opération de l'armée dans une localité du sud-ouest anglophone, 15 December 2017, <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/502775/politique/cameroun-plusieurs-morts-lors-dune-operation-de-larmee-dans-une-localite-du-sud-ouest-anglophone/> (accessed 17 March 2018); Journal du Cameroun, Crise anglophone: plusieurs factions sécessionnistes armées actives sur le terrain, 20 February 2018, <https://www.journalducameroun.com/crise-anglophone-plusieurs-factions-secessionnistes-actives-terrain/> (accessed 17 March 2018).

⁴⁸ Interview n.48

⁴⁹ Interview n.79

⁵⁰ Interview n.48

Eyewitnesses also described how security forces broke the doors and windows of their houses, while supposedly searching the premises.

A woman, who fled Dadi on 13 December 2017 with her 4-month-old baby, told Amnesty International: “When the army came, they started shooting all over the place and destroying our home, smashing doors and breaking the windows.”⁵¹

Following the military operation, almost all remaining residents abandoned the village and sought refuge elsewhere, especially in Nigeria.⁵²

4.1.2 ARBITRARY ARREST, INCOMMUNICADO DETENTION, TORTURE AND DEATH IN CUSTODY

On the basis of more than 20 interviews of eyewitnesses, victims and other informants, Amnesty International has corroborated the names of 23 people (including two minors, five Nigerian nationals and two people with mental health disabilities) arbitrarily arrested in Dadi on 13 December 2017 and then held in the Buea Central Prison. Although many witnesses estimated that up to 40 people had been arrested, Amnesty International was unable to verify this claim.

The victims were all arrested by the BIR at various places in Dadi on 13 December 2017, between 4pm and 5:30pm. Most of them were returning from their farms and/or were in front of their homes. They were first taken to the community hall in Dadi where they were held for three days without any access to the outside world, tied up, blindfolded and tortured by members of the BIR. A victim told Amnesty International:

“At the community hall I received the beatings of my life. I was beaten for three days by the BIR with wires and belts and hit with a gun. I was also electrocuted by connecting a cable on a generator and plugging it on my body. They further poured hot water on my body and this has affected my hearing ability. A whitish liquid is exuding out of my left ear.”⁵³

Torture was used against them to extract “confessions”, to force them to admit having supported the “Ambazonia fighters”. As one of the victims recalled to Amnesty International:

“On 13 December 2017, I went to the farm with my cousin and around 5pm, while we were taking a bath in a stream in Dadi, some 30 BIR, heavily armed, picked me and my cousins up. We were naked and they did not allow us to put our clothes on. They spoke French and some broken English when communicating with us because we didn’t understand French. They asked us where the Ambazonian soldiers were, where their camps were, and how we managed to come back to the village. They started beating me and my cousin right from the stream. First, they tied our hands behind our backs, gagged us and tied our faces with our towels and shorts, which they tore. They then made us lie in the water face down for about 45 minutes. Then they took us to the community hall, the building is in the heart of the village of Dadi. During these three days, they beat us with shovels, hammers, planks, and cables, kicked us with their boots and poured hot water on us. We slept on the floor for the three days. On the second day, very early in the morning, they made me lie down on my back and three of them stood on me. Immediately, I defecated and when I tried to move and shouted, one of them used the cigarette he was smoking to burn me in my anus. I shouted and one of them took a knife and tried to cut off my penis but he only made some marks and left me. They did not allow us to use the toilet and when we told them we were pressed, they refused. So, we defecated and urinated on the floor where we stayed.”⁵⁴

Those arrested were subjected to different forms of torture, including severe beatings with various objects, such as belts, guns, wires; electric shocks using a generator and a cable; and burning with hot water. Another victim told Amnesty International:

“I was arrested on 13 December 2017 by the BIR in Dadi and taken to the community hall where I received the most inhuman treatment as a Cameroonian by these forces. I was hit repeatedly for three days with a machine gun and belts, and water was thrown on me. I am still having very serious pain on my right ribs and I fear that I may have some broken ribs. I have neither been to Court nor to the hospital and none of my family members have contacted me.”⁵⁵

⁵¹ Interview n.47

⁵² Interviews with Anglophone refugees in Nigeria, and key informants in Cameroon.

⁵³ Interview n.5D.

⁵⁴ Interview n.12D

⁵⁵ Interview n.6D

Victims were kept at the Dadi community hall from 13 to 16 December 2017, when they were transferred to either the gendarmerie brigade or the police station in Mamfe, and then brought to the Buea Central Prison on 18 December 2017.

Of the 23 men who were brought to the Buea prison, at least one has since died, most likely as result of injuries from torture inflicted by the BIR soldiers while in detention at Dadi community hall; and one has been released without trial.

One of those arrested told Amnesty International:

"I was arrested on 13 December 2017 at around 4pm in Dadi. I was taken to the community hall where I was tied up and blindfolded and beaten for over three days with my brother. They hit us with a gun and belts. My brother later died at the Buea Central Prison four days after we arrived there. My brother was 70 years old. He died due to the very acute pains from his wounds resulting from torture. He had wounds all over his body. I don't know the whereabouts of his corpse. When he died in prison, prison officials carried his corpse out of the cell. I don't know whether he has been buried or not. I don't know the whereabouts of my family either."⁵⁶

As of 30 March 2018, of the remaining survivors, 15 have appeared before the Military Tribunal in Buea and all pleaded not guilty to charges of secession, incitement of civil war and terrorism. Eight have never appeared before any court, and are in prison awaiting charges and trial.

4.2 UNLAWFUL KILLINGS, EXTRA-JUDICIAL EXECUTIONS AND DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY IN BODAM, AKWAYA SUBDIVISION, MANYU DIVISION, SOUTH WEST REGION

Between 5:30am and 6am on 14 December 2017, the day after the operation in Dadi, a mix of regular Army and BIR soldiers moved to Bodam village, about 3km from Dadi. Eyewitnesses told Amnesty International how the soldiers cordoned the village and started shooting indiscriminately as people attempted to flee. A farmer told Amnesty International how events unfolded:

"The soldiers came early in the morning. I was in my house with my family. I saw them coming, some were wearing black uniforms, others were wearing camouflage gear. They surrounded the village and started firing all over the place. There was heavy gunfire. As the soldiers were shooting around, I couldn't do anything but flee with my whole family, my six children and wife. We ran and all the village ran with us. We hid in the bush for a week before crossing into Nigeria from Bashu."⁵⁷

At least one person, an elderly man of about 60 years old, was extra-judicially executed outside his house. An eyewitnesses told Amnesty International:

"He was sitting outside his house when he got shot. He was an old man. He couldn't walk well. The soldiers told him to stand up, so he used his wooden stick to help himself standing and the military shot at him like this."⁵⁸

Eyewitnesses reported that the soldiers damaged several houses, breaking doors, windows and roofs.

4.3 UNLAWFUL KILLINGS AND DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY IN KAJIFU, AKWAYA SUBDIVISION, MANYU DIVISION, SOUTH WEST REGION

Amnesty International has documented another security operation in the village of Kajifu, sometime in early December 2017⁵⁹. Eyewitnesses said that up to 50 soldiers of the regular Army and the BIR crossed the Manyu river and entered the village between 6am and 8am. Eyewitnesses described the forces as heavily

⁵⁶ Interview n.4D

⁵⁷ Interview n.72

⁵⁸ Interview n.83

⁵⁹ Six eyewitnesses and over 10 residents of Kajifu interviewed by Amnesty International recalled this operation happened on 8 or 9 December 2017. Three eyewitnesses and five other residents said the operation took place sometime in mid-December 2017, without being able to specify an exact date.

armed, wearing bullet-proof vests and helmets, some wearing masks, and hauling handcarts with mounted machine guns.

Eyewitnesses described how the security forces started shooting indiscriminately as soon as they entered the village, as residents were attempting to flee. A 28-year-old man who was in Kajifu when the operation unfolded recalled how the soldiers killed a man:

"As the soldiers started their operation, he took his bike, he could not run because he had a problem with his leg. So the soldiers shot at the bike, and he fell, then they shot at him. When we buried him, some three days later, when we came back to the village after hiding in the bush, we found that his body was full of cuts; he must have been stabbed with knives. We buried him at the edge of the village."⁶⁰

Amnesty International corroborated that at least three unarmed men, between 25 and 30 years old, were unlawfully killed as a result of gunshot wounds and other injuries sustained as they attempted to flee.

In addition, eyewitnesses and residents of Kajifu provided a list of nine other men who they say were killed during the operation, but Amnesty International has not been able to confirm the information.

"When I came back to the village to bury the dead I saw the bodies of two people who had been shot by the military. They were lying on the ground, face down. I turned them and saw that they were my friends. They had bullet wounds on their chests and thighs. The wrists had been cut and hanging by the flesh. Their necks appeared to have been broken because as I turned them, I saw that they turned more than they should, as if there were no bones."⁶¹

Eyewitnesses also said soldiers damaged houses, and stole valuable items and money. According to Marius (not his real name), a 35-year-old man from Kajifu:

"The day following the attack, I sneaked back to Kajifu to pick things up from my house. When I got there I was shocked: my money, 800,000 FCFA (USD 1,440), and motorcycle were gone. I had planned to use the motorcycle to move my family to Nigeria. Other houses in the village had been affected – doors, roofs, windows were all destroyed."⁶²

4.4 THE DESTRUCTION OF KWAKWA, MBONGE SUBDIVISION, MEME DIVISION, SOUTH WEST REGION

On 14 January 2018, between 3am and 7am, over 100 security forces, including soldiers from the regular Army and the BIR, entered the village of Kombone to conduct a security operation, following the killing there of two gendarmes in the village two days earlier by young men suspected to belong to a group promoting armed struggle and secession.⁶³ According to the witnesses Amnesty International spoke to, there were armed clashes between the Army and suspected armed separatists and those clashes resulted in casualties on both sides. Following this, eyewitnesses described to Amnesty International how the security forces destroyed and looted private property, including houses and businesses, and beat people.

The following morning, on 15 January 2018, the security forces who carried out the operation in Kombone moved to the nearby village of Kwakwa, surrounded it and conducted a security operation which resulted in massive destruction of houses and property. Amnesty International spoke with three eyewitnesses who explained how the security forces set almost the entire village on fire, and corroborated their testimonies with satellite images clearly showing the scale of the destruction.

Ric (not his real name), a 59-year-old cocoa farmer who used to live in Kwakwa until he was forced to run for his life and take refuge in Kumba, told Amnesty International:

"At around 8AM, about four military trucks full of BIR soldiers arrived in the village. They were so many that I could not count them. My house is just close to the market square, so I could see everything through my window. The town had been deserted, even flies had left for the forest. After a while, the BIR divided themselves into

⁶⁰ Interview n.69

⁶¹ Interview n.76

⁶² Interview n.76

⁶³ Interviews n.7SW, 8SW, 22SW, 23SW, 24SW. Eyewitnesses and key informants told Amnesty International that, on 12 of February 2018, some 25 young men suspected of belonging to a separatist group walked to the Gendarmerie checkpoint of Kombone (manned by seven officers), pretending to have caught "a thief"; two gendarmes accompanied the youth to catch the alleged thief and, just a few metres from the checkpoint, were disarmed and shot.

groups of about 10 men and started breaking into houses.

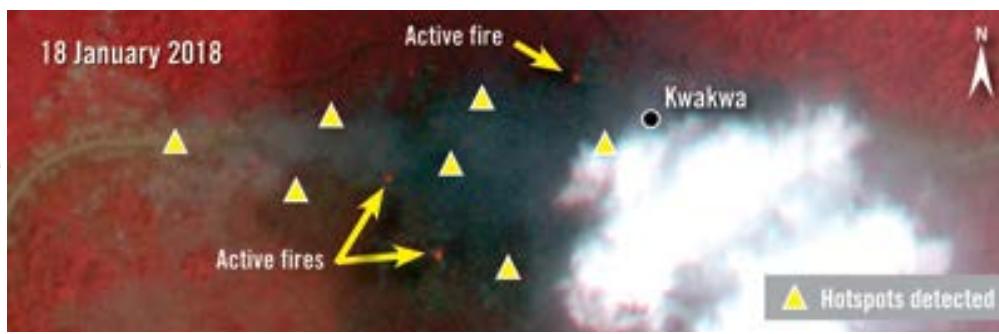
"They broke into my house, pulled me out on the floor and beat me up very well. After this torture, one young military guy came to me and spoke in Pidgin English demanding that I show them the houses of the Ambazonia boys and give their names. I told him that we don't have any Ambazonia boys in our village. They beat up me further and right in front of me, they went into my plank house, took out my items and poured petrol on it. Again they threatened me that if I don't confess they will set my house ablaze. Since I did not know any Ambazonia boys, they set my house on fire despite me pleading with them."⁶⁴

An elderly woman, who had remained in Kwakwa because she was too weak to flee, explained to Amnesty International how soldiers proceeded to burn the village:

What is the purpose of this highlighted part of the testimony? It almost sounds like an attempt at explaining the burning as spontaneous rather than premeditated. Almost as an advance defense in a future War Crimes trial, seeing that intentional burning down of villages is a known war crime. This suspicion is furthered by the report's preference for describing the burning of villages as "destruction of property" or "buildings destroyed." This is even as the caption of the second picture reads "Kwakwa almost completely razed."

"The military could easily burn down the houses because most of the youths had constructed wooden boxes of about 1 cubic meter in front of their houses, by the roadside, where fuel is stored in plastic containers and sold. The military simply destroyed the boxes, got out the fuel and used it for their operations."⁶⁵

These reports from eyewitnesses were corroborated by satellite imagery showing dozens of buildings destroyed in Kwakwa around the time of the operation.



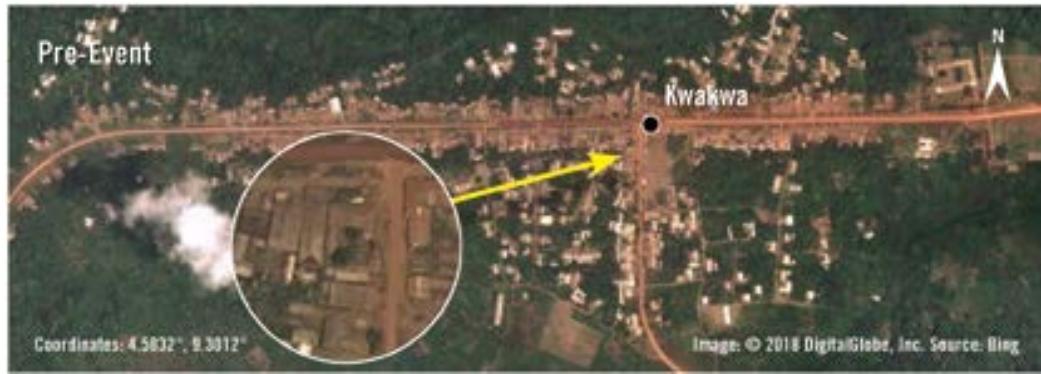
On 18 January 2018, seven hotspots were detected with remote environmental sensors. Planet, 3-metre resolution imagery, was captured the same day and shows three active fires in Kwakwa. The false-colour image highlights the near-infrared band. Healthy vegetation appears red, while unhealthy or burnt vegetation appears black or brown. Fires appear bright orange. Cloud cover in the image prevents full area analysis. ©Amnesty International.



High resolution imagery captured on 21 January 2018 shows Kwakwa has been almost completely razed. White ash blankets the areas where structures once stood. Again, cloud cover prevents full analysis of the area. ©Amnesty International.

⁶⁴ Interview n.18SW

⁶⁵ Interview n.19SW



↑ Kwakwa is a village in Cameroon approximately 17 km of Kumba. The area is often very cloudy and high-resolution imagery is rarely captured. Imagery acquired before the reported events shows Kwakwa with many structures along the main road from Kumba. ©Amnesty International.

4.5 SECURITY OPERATION IN BELO, BOYO DIVISION, NORTH WEST REGION

In the early hours of 2 February 2018, over 40 members of the security forces, including gendarmes, BIR and regular Army soldiers, conducted operations in Belo,⁶⁶ particularly focusing on the area known as Acha. According to eyewitnesses and local residents, the goal was to recover two guns seized the day before by suspected armed separatists who killed two gendarmes at a checkpoint⁶⁷. At least one unarmed man was shot in the back and killed by security forces, dozens were beaten and arbitrary arrested and four died in custody.

4.5.1 EXTRA-JUDICIAL EXECUTION

Three independently interviewed eyewitnesses told Amnesty International that on 2 February 2018, at about 6 am, a 26-year old man was fatally shot at Acha quarter in Belo town as he attempted to run from security forces - a mix of regular Army soldiers, BIR and gendarmes - around his residence.

One eyewitness explained how the man was shot in the back, and how security forces opened fire on others too – although Amnesty International has been unable to verify reports of further deaths:

"I wasn't far from where the killing [that] happened in the Acha quarter. The security forces shot him from a range of about 15 metres. That day, the security forces shot other people in Acha. They focused their operation there because of information they got that a noted pro-Ambazonia activist had taken refuge there, with custody of the guns seized the day before by the extremists from the two gendarmes killed."⁶⁸

Another eyewitness, who confirmed that the victim was unarmed, added:

"The soldiers fired from close range. I heard at least one shot and I saw the young man falling on the ground."⁶⁹

He was later buried near his house by neighbors and relatives.⁷⁰

4.5.2 BEATINGS AND ARBITRARY ARRESTS AT CHECKPOINT

On the same day, 02 February 2018, early in the morning, gendarmes and regular Army soldiers set up a checkpoint at the Belo motor park. Several vehicles arriving in Belo town were stopped, passengers removed, humiliated and beaten, and their valuables stolen. At least 25 people were arbitrarily arrested and briefly detained at the Belo Gendarmerie Brigade before being released without charges. The security forces also torched one vehicle and a motorbike, and destroyed at least two other vehicles.

⁶⁶ Belo has a gendarmerie brigade regularly manned by four gendarme officers and a police station regularly manned by two police officers.

⁶⁷ Interviews NW 2-7 and NW 10-13.

⁶⁸ Interview n.12NW

⁶⁹ Interview n.13NW

⁷⁰ Interview n.13NW

One of the drivers, Fabius (not his real name), described what happened to him and his six fellow occupants:

"When I got to Belo Motor Park, at about 5:30am, I was stopped by the security forces. They told me that everyone in the vehicle would need to get out. Before we could do so, they used the butts of their guns to destroy the windscreen, the head lamps, and break lights and all the windows of my vehicle. They also took the sound system. Every valuable item, including mobile phones, was taken. They stole 106,000 FCFA (USD 190) from my pocket. Then, they started beating us all over using batons and guns, and by kicking."⁷¹

"After that they took us to the gendarmerie brigade of Belo where we were asked to lie down on our stomachs on the bare ground, in the courtyard. I was released at about 10am only after having paid money to the gendarmes. I have submitted a complaint to the Divisional Officer, but have not received any response from the administration."⁷¹



←  Picture showing a destroyed Toyota Carina. ©Amnesty International

One of the passengers, Max (not his real name), a teacher from Fundong, also described how the security forces broke his arm as he was beaten and detained:

"They asked us to lie on the ground face down and hold our identity cards. Then they asked us to follow them on foot towards the Belo Square. There we saw a military truck with about 30-40 soldiers on board and some 20 soldiers standing around. When we got to the truck they collected our identity cards while slapping some of us. After a little while, they returned our identity cards and asked us to lie down, face down. When we were all lying down they started battering us with wooden planks and pouring water on us. My right arm got fractured during the beatings. After battering us, the soldiers took us to the gendarmerie brigade where we saw some other 25 people, men and women, who were all lying on the ground within the precincts of the brigade. These were passengers who had been removed from other vehicles. By 10am, I was released without paying anything."⁷²

Max added that, after his release, as he walked back, he saw a vehicle on fire a few metres from the Belo motor park: "It was a Toyota Picnic. There were soldiers around the burning vehicle. That was the same spot where we had been removed from our vehicle."⁷³ Two bus drivers confirmed that the vehicle (see pictures) was set ablaze by the security forces manning the checkpoint at the Belo motor park.

⁷¹ Interview n.4NW

⁷² Interview n.5NW

⁷³ Interview n.5NW



Pictures taken at the beginning of March 2018 in Belo, showing a burnt Toyota Picnic. According to evidence collected by Amnesty International, the vehicle was set ablaze by security forces manning a checkpoint at the Belo motor park on 2 February 2018. ©Amnesty International.

4.5.3 DEATH IN CUSTODY OF FOUR MEN

A serious concern here is, the 2 videos mentioned in this section are about the Sam Soya case. Sam Soya is an Ambazonian beheaded by Cameroon soldiers, with pictures of his beheading posted all over the internet.[13] But this amnesty West Africa report does not make a single mention of this crime that Amnesty rightfully describes elsewhere as "ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment." [14] This report only goes as far as the part where Sam Soya is being accused of involvement in the killing of two gendarmes at Mbinglo. It stretches logic to imagine that none of the 4 witness Amnesty interviewed did not mention the beheading or that the verification of the facebook obtained videos of Sam Soya did not call attention to his gruesome murder.



Screenshots of the men being interrogated by gendarmes at an unidentified location. ©Private.

On 3 February 2018, the corpses of four men were found at the Bamenda Regional Hospital mortuary, and later identified by family members as the same men who were arrested by a group of gendarmes, regular Army soldiers and BIR in Belo the previous evening. The families described to Amnesty International how they found the bodies bloodied with marks on their necks.⁷⁴

Four eyewitnesses confirmed to Amnesty International that the four men – between 28 and 45 years old – had been arrested between 6pm and 8pm on 2 February 2018. Three of the men were arrested in a liquor store in Belo Square, and the other at a nearby residence⁷⁵.

Amnesty International also obtained and analyzed a video⁷⁶ filmed at the Bamenda Regional Hospital and showing a woman identifying the corpses of the four men by their names or nicknames.

Another video obtained and verified⁷⁷ by Amnesty International shows one of the men being interrogated by gendarmes in an unidentified location, with another detainee next to him claiming the first man was involved in the killing of two gendarmes at Mbinglo on 1 February 2018.⁷⁸ The detainee also refers to two others

⁷⁴ Interviews n.6NW and 7N

⁷⁵ Interviews NW6-7, NW15-16

⁷⁶ Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/borisbertolt.vonsiandje/videos/1804796092877458/> (accessed on 27 March 2018). Amnesty International's experts analyzed the metadata of the video, while residents of Belo, eyewitnesses and key informants corroborated its content.

⁷⁷ Amnesty International verified the authenticity of the video through local sources and IT experts.

⁷⁸ Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/borisbertolt.vonsiandje/videos/1802142686476132/> (accessed on 27 March 2018).



14-Picture from the internet of Cameroon Soldier beheading Sam Soya

“lying outside”⁷⁹.

Amnesty International also spoke to the wife of one of the four victims.⁸⁰ She told Amnesty International that on the day the four men were arrested, she had fled Belo, then returned the following day and discovered that her house had been ransacked: “The house had broken doors and windows. Furniture was destroyed and clothes littered all over. It was all messed up. It dawned on me that the security forces had invaded our home.”⁸¹

Less than a week later, she was summoned to the gendarmerie in Belo, taken to her home, beaten and asked to produce her husband’s gun. “The gendarmes took me home and asked me to produce the gun that my husband had given to me. I told them I had no gun, so they got me well beaten with belts and hands, by slapping and whipping me all over my body.”⁸² She was released without charges the same day.

⁷⁹ This could possibly indicate that two other people had already been killed and were lying outside the ‘interrogation room’.

⁸⁰ Interview n.7NW. She confirmed that her husband was one of the four found dead.

⁸¹ Interview n.7NW

⁸² Interview n.7NW

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

TO THE CAMEROONIAN AUTHORITIES

Ensuring accountability

- Conduct prompt, thorough, independent and impartial investigations into all allegations of human rights violations detailed in this report;
- Ensure that those identified as responsible for any human rights violations are promptly and fairly prosecuted in accordance with international fair-trial standards;
- Take all legal measures to ensure accountability for crimes committed by the armed separatists.

Preventing arbitrary arrest and detention

- Ensure that arrests and detentions are conducted in compliance with international human rights standards and domestic law, and that all security forces are trained on and understand these norms;
- Ensure that there are sufficient, recognizable and precise grounds for arrest and that evidence is appropriately gathered. A suspect must only be arrested if there is a reasonable suspicion that he or she may have committed a crime. If there are insufficient grounds for arrest, the person must be immediately released;
- Ensure that detainees are promptly brought before an independent civilian court that upholds international fair-trial standards, are informed of the charges against them, and have knowledge of and access to legal procedures allowing them to challenge the legality of their detention.

Preventing incommunicado detention, torture and death in custody

- Ensure that all detained suspects are treated in accordance with international human rights standards, which includes access to a lawyer of their choice, family, medical assistance, to be held in a legal detention facility, in humane conditions free from cruel, inhuman, degrading treatment and torture;
- Publicly order the security forces to end the practice of detaining and interrogating people in unofficial detention sites;
- Ensure that confessions or other evidence obtained through torture will never be invoked in legal proceedings;
- Grant independent international monitors, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), unhindered access to all persons deprived of their liberty and allow them to carry out unannounced inspections of all detention facilities to investigate and monitor conditions;
- Improve conditions in detention facilities and preserve prisoners' physical and psychological integrity by providing all detainees with professional medical care, adequate food, water, lighting, and ventilation, in accordance with international standards.

Avoiding excessive and unnecessary use of force

- Ensure that security forces abide by international policing standards, including the UN Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials and the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms, when responding to protests, and in particular restricting the use of firearms to situations of imminent threat of death or serious injury, or the equivalent;
- Issue clear orders to the military, the gendarmes and the police commanders to immediately cease the use of excessive force in the context of cordon, search-and-arrest operations, as well as during public demonstrations;
- Respect and protect the right of all persons to peacefully assemble and to associate with others.

Providing effective remedies to victims

- Ensure that all victims of human rights violations and abuses are granted reparation including measures of restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction and guarantees of non-repetition.

Promoting dialogue

- Restore the confidence between state representatives and the Anglophone communities by initiating an inclusive dialogue and consult with Anglophone population to address their concerns;
- Address deeply-entrenched human rights violations, such as marginalization and exclusion, to prevent the escalation of the crisis and the resurgence of other social conflicts that often generate violence.

TO STATES PROVIDING MILITARY AND OTHER ASSISTANCE TO CAMEROON

- Condemn human rights violations by Cameroonian security forces and the violence carried out by the armed separatists and publicly call on the Government of Cameroon to urgently initiate thorough, independent, impartial investigations into allegations of human rights violations detailed in this report;
- Urge Cameroonian authorities to investigate the human rights violations and abuses outlined in this briefing and to take the measures outlined to prevent unlawful killings, arbitrary and incommunicado detention and torture, and excessive use of force during security operations;
- Ensure that any military co-operation with Cameroon, including training or technical advice, does not contribute to the perpetration of human rights violations;
- Ensure that the humanitarian response aimed at addressing the needs of those affected by the violence, including refugees and internally displaced, is adequately funded;

TO THE NIGERIAN AUTHORITIES

- Ensure that refugees'rights are respected in line with the 1951 Refugee Convention and additional protocols, particularly the right to seek asylum, and uphold the principle of non-refoulement;

TO THE AFRICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES' RIGHTS

- Issue a public statement expressing concern regarding the serious allegations of human rights violations documented in this report, including unlawful killings and torture, and the use of unnecessary and excessive force committed by the Cameroonian security forces in the two Anglophone regions;
- Call on the Cameroonian authorities to urgently initiate thorough, independent and effective investigations into all human rights violations detailed in this report;
- Request, pursuant to its protective mandate, a fact-finding mission to the two Anglophone regions of

Cameroon. If and when the g visit is granted, the mission should be composed of the relevant special mechanisms of the African Commission.

6. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

6.1 EXCESSIVE USE OF FORCE BY SECURITY FORCES

The UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials state: "Law enforcement officials, in carrying out their duty, shall, as far as possible, apply non-violent means before resorting to the use of force and firearms. They may use force and firearms only if other means remain ineffective or without any promise of achieving the intended result."⁸³ The Basic Principles also outline that any unavoidable use of force must be in proportion to the seriousness of the offence and the legitimate objective to be achieved, while minimizing damage and injury, and respect and preserve human life. That force should be "exceptional", proportional and only used when "reasonably necessary". Such provisions are reinforced by the Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials⁸⁴. On the national level, Section 30 of the Code of Criminal Procedure states: "No bodily or psychological harm shall be caused to the person arrested."⁸⁵

6.2 LEGAL PROVISIONS RELATED TO THE PROHIBITION OF ARBITRARY ARREST OR DETENTION

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Cameroon is a state party since 1984, prohibits arbitrary arrest or detention⁸⁶. It states that, among other provisions, arrested persons shall be brought promptly before a judge and shall be entitled to trial within a reasonable time or be released⁸⁷. These and other rights apply at all times and enable individuals to challenge their detention if they believe it is unlawful or unfounded. The Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Fair Trial and Legal Assistance in Africa state that "arrest, detention or imprisonment shall only be carried out ... pursuant to a warrant, on reasonable suspicion or for probable cause."⁸⁸ The Human Rights Committee stated that "delays must not exceed a few days" before being brought before a judicial body.⁸⁹ The Cameroonian Criminal Procedure Code outlines that suspects should be brought before a court within 48 hours⁹⁰, and states that the time

⁸³ UN, Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials, adopted by the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, Havana, Cuba, 1990, para. 4, <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/UseOfForceAndFirearms.aspx> (accessed 25 March 2018).

⁸⁴ UN General Assembly, Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials, G.A. res. 34/169, annex, 34 U.N. GAOR Supp. (Nº 46) at 186, UN Doc. A/34/46 (1979), para. 5, <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instree/i1ccleo.htm> (accessed 26 March 2018)

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⁸⁶ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (adopted 16 Dec. 1966, entered into force 23 March 1976), 999 UNTS 171, Article 9.

⁸⁷ ICCPR, Article 9 (2). This provision is also similar to Article 7 (4) of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights; Principle 10 of the UN Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment and Section M (2)(a) of the ACHPR Principles on fair trial and legal assistance in Africa.

⁸⁸ Section M (2) (a) of the Principles on Fair Trial in Africa, http://www.achpr.org/files/instruments/principles-guidelines-right-fair-trial/achpr33_guide_fair_trial_legal_assistance_2003_eng.pdf (accessed 26 March 2018).

⁸⁹ Human Rights Committee, General Comment 8, Article 9 (Sixteenth session, 1982), Compilation of General Comments and General Recommendations Adopted by Human Rights Treaty Bodies, UN Doc. HRI/GEN/1/Rev.1 at 8 (1994), para. 2, <https://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/gencomm/hrcom8.htm> (accessed 27 March 2018).

⁹⁰ Section 119 of the Cameroon Criminal Procedure Code (CPC), <http://www.ila.up.ac.za/images/un/use-of-force/africa/Cameroon/Criminal%20Procedure%20Code%20Cameroon%202005.pdf> (accessed 17 March 2018).

allowed for remand in custody is 48 hours, renewable twice.⁹¹ Under offences covered by the new anti-terror law, however, suspects can be held without charge for a period of 15 days, renewable indefinitely.

6.3 FREEDOM FROM TORTURE AND OTHER ILL-TREATMENT

Cameroon is a party to three international treaties that prohibit torture, as well as cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment: the Convention against Torture (CAT), the ICCPR, and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. Moreover, Cameroon's Constitution⁹², Penal Code⁹³, and Criminal Procedure Code⁹⁴ forbid the use of torture and other treatment that violates human dignity and integrity. Under the CAT, a state party must "take effective legislative, administrative, judicial or other measures to prevent acts of torture in any territory under its jurisdiction".⁹⁵ Among other measures, this requires the Cameroonian authorities to regularly oversee interrogation practices and procedures with the aim of preventing torture⁹⁶. Furthermore, the CAT requires a state party to conduct a prompt and impartial investigation "wherever there is reasonable ground to believe that an act of torture has been committed in any territory under its jurisdiction"⁹⁷. A state must also ensure that a victim of torture "obtains redress and has an enforceable right to fair and adequate compensation"⁹⁸. Cameroon's own Constitution provides that "under no circumstances shall any person be subjected to torture, to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment"⁹⁹ while Cameroon's Penal Code criminalizes the use of torture to induce a person to confess to an offence or to offer statements or related information¹⁰⁰. In its concluding observations published in December 2017, the UN Committee against Torture expressed deep concerns about the use of torture in Cameroon, and called for effective, independent and impartial investigations into all allegations of torture¹⁰¹.

6.4 INCOMMUNICADO AND SECRET DETENTION

All persons deprived of their liberty have the right to communicate with the outside world, especially with their families, lawyers, medical professionals and other third parties¹⁰². Although the right to communicate with the outside world might sometimes be reasonably restricted¹⁰³, the denial of this right may amount to incommunicado detention, which violates the right to liberty and the right not to be subjected to torture or other ill-treatment. According to Section 122 of the Cameroonian Criminal Procedure Code, while in detention people may at any time be visited by their counsel, members of their family, and any other person following their treatment while in detention¹⁰⁴. According to international human rights standards, people deprived of their liberty must be held only in a place of detention that is officially recognized.¹⁰⁵ Cameroon's

⁹¹ Section 119 of the Cameroon CPC.

⁹² Cameroon's Constitution of 1972 with Amendments through 2008 www.wipo.int/wipolex/fr/text.jsp?file_id=315586

⁹³ Journal Officiel de la République du Cameroun, Code Pénal Loi n° 67/LF/1 12 Juin 1967, www.genevaacademy.ch/RULAC/pdf_state/CODE-PENAL.pdf

⁹⁴ Law n°2005 of 27 July 2005 on the Criminal Procedure Code, www.icla.up.ac.za/images/un/use-of-force/africa/Cameroun/Criminal%20Procedure%20Code%20Cameroun%202005.pdf

⁹⁵ Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

⁹⁶ Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, Article 11.

⁹⁷ Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, Article 12.

⁹⁸ ICCPR, Article 9(5).

⁹⁹ Cameroon's Constitution of 1972 with Amendments through 2008 www.wipo.int/wipolex/fr/text.jsp?file_id=315586

¹⁰⁰ Journal Officiel de la République du Cameroun, Code Pénal Loi n° 67/LF/1 12 Juin 1967, www.genevaacademy.ch/RULAC/pdf_state/CODE-PENAL.pdf

¹⁰¹ UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, CAT/C/CMR/CO/5, 18 December 2017, Concluding Observations, http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2fC%2fCMR%2fCO%2f5&Lang=en (accessed on 01 May 2018)

¹⁰² International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 14(3)(b); Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, Rules 37 and 79 and Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment, Principle 19.

¹⁰³ Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment, adopted by UN General Assembly resolution 43/173 of 9 December 1988, Principle 19

¹⁰⁴ Cameroon's Criminal Procedure Code, Law n°2005 of 27 July 2005, Section 122.

¹⁰⁵ Human Rights Committee General Comment 20, §11, [www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Education/Training/Compilation/Pages/a-GeneralCommentNo20Prohibitionoftortureorothercruel,inhumanordegradingtreatmentorpunishment\(article7\)\(1992\).aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Education/Training/Compilation/Pages/a-GeneralCommentNo20Prohibitionoftortureorothercruel,inhumanordegradingtreatmentorpunishment(article7)(1992).aspx) ; Special Rapporteur on torture, UN Doc. E/CN.4/2003/68 (2002) §26(e), http://repository.un.org/bitstream/handle/11176/241989/E_CN.4_2003_68-EN.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y.

Criminal Procedure Code also states that for police custody, a suspect shall be detained "in a judicial police cell wherein he remains for a limited period available to and under the responsibility of a judicial police officer"¹⁰⁶.

6.5 DEATHS IN CUSTODY

State responsibility for deaths in custody arises not only when state actors perpetrate abuses on prisoners that result in death, but also when the state does not respect its obligation to protect the rights of detainees. Violations of the right to life are therefore committed where prisoners die from poor prison conditions or a lack of medical treatment or following attacks from other prisoners (when the prison officials have failed to protect them).¹⁰⁷ The standards contained in the Principles on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-Legal, Arbitrary and Summary Executions recall the obligation to ensure "thorough, prompt and impartial investigations" into suspected unnatural deaths.¹⁰⁸ Such investigations should include an autopsy and collection of evidence and witness statements to ascertain the cause, manner and time of death and ensure those responsible are held accountable. The results and methodology should be public.

¹⁰⁶ Cameroon's Criminal Procedure Code, Law n°2005 of 27 July 2005, Section 118 (1).

¹⁰⁷ Under international human rights instruments, the right to life imposes both an obligation to abstain from arbitrarily depriving individuals of life ("negative obligation", see ICCPR, Article 6; ACHPR, Article 4) and to take all appropriate measures to protect and preserve human life ("positive obligation", see the HRC, General Comment N°.6, Article 6). States are thus required to ensure adequate conditions of detention for all those deprived of their liberty, which includes providing access to sufficient food and water and medical care.

¹⁰⁸ The UN Principles on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-Legal, Arbitrary, and Summary Executions, para. 9, at <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instree/i7pepi.htm> (accessed 15 March 2018).

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A TURN FOR THE WORSE:

VIOLENCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN ANGLOPHONE CAMEROON.

Since late 2016, Cameroon's Anglophone regions have endured turmoil and violence in what has become a human rights crisis.

This report - based on interviews with more than 150 victims of and eyewitnesses - documents the human rights violations, including unlawful killings, destruction of private property, arbitrary arrests and torture committed by the Cameroonian security forces during military operations conducted in the Anglophone regions. It also documents how armed separatist groups calling for secession and embracing an armed struggle, carried out violent attacks against the Cameroonian security forces, state emblems, including schools, and ordinary people.

Far from resolving the crisis, the clampdown on dissent and the heavy-handed response by the Cameroonian authorities appear to have empowered radical and violent movements, as well as created a climate of fear.

The Government of Cameroon has the right and duty to protect its citizens from the violence committed by armed separatists, yet it must also respect the human rights of its population in doing so.