

SUGGESTED REVISIONS OF H. RES. 358

WITH REFERENCES AND EXPLANATORY ANNOTATIONS

116th CONGRESS

1st Session

~~H. RES. 358-Calling on the Government of Cameroon and armed groups to respect the human rights of all Cameroonian citizens, to end all violence, and to pursue a broad-based dialogue without preconditions to resolve the conflict in the Northwest and Southwest regions~~

PROPOSED REWRITE OF ABOVE:

H. RES. 358 - CAMEROON Act of 2019

~~Calling on the Government of Cameroon and armed groups to respect the human rights of all Cameroonian citizens, to end all violence, and to pursue a broad-based dialogue without preconditions to resolve the conflict in the Northwest and Southwest regions.~~

PROPOSED REWRITE OF ABOVE:

To promote democracy and human rights in Cameroon, and for other purposes.

EXPLANATORY ANNOTATION:

The original text is misleading at several levels. First, the bill itself in its original form refers to lack of human rights in other parts of Cameroon, not just in the Northwest and Southwest regions. Second, the language creates a false equivalency of power between the government of Cameroon and the “armed groups.” As noted by U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Tibor Nagy in the May 16, 2019, Full Committee Hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs in Congress, the fundamental problem is that the government of Cameroon is not taking adequate steps to solve this problem¹. Given that the top US diplomat to Africa has a clear position on this matter, Congress should incorporate this perspective. As the original text is written, Congress is behind the curve of analysis on this crisis that is now affecting 4 million people.²

¹ Hearing: Democracy, Development, and Defense: Rebalancing U.S.-Africa Policy. Committee on Foreign Affairs: <https://youtu.be/eL4bu8Ea3G4?t=4016> and <https://youtu.be/eL4bu8Ea3G4?t=7545>

² UN OCHA. CAMEROON: North-West and South-West. Situation Report No. 05 https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/ocha_cmr_sitrep_ndeg5.pdf

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

May 7, 2019

Ms. Bass (for herself, Mr. Smith of New Jersey, Mr. Kind, Mr. Walberg, Mr. Castro of Texas, Mr. Meadows, Ms. Omar, and Mr. Wright) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

~~Calling on the Government of Cameroon and armed groups to respect the human rights of all Cameroonian citizens, to end all violence, and to~~

~~pursue a broad-based dialogue without preconditions to resolve the conflict in the Northwest and Southwest regions.~~

PROPOSED REWRITE OF ABOVE:

To promote democracy and human rights in Cameroon, and for other purposes.

- Whereas many Anglophone Cameroonians have long felt marginalized by official actions and policies of the Government of Cameroon, including the abolishment of a federal form of government, which was the constitutional basis under which English-speaking Southern Cameroons entered into the union, and replacing it with a unitary state dominated by the Francophone majority;
- Whereas, beginning in late 2016, protests organized by lawyers, teachers, and students were violently repressed by the Government of Cameroon, leading to numerous deaths and imprisonments, including of journalists, teachers, lawyers, and an Anglophone judge on the country's Supreme Court;
- Whereas the conflict escalated in late September and early October 2017, when Cameroonian security forces brutally cracked down on peaceful Anglophone civilian demonstrators, resulting in dozens of deaths and leaving over 100 injured;
- ~~Whereas, in 2017, separatists launched a campaign to pressure school officials in the Northwest and Southwest Anglophone regions to go on strike as part of a boycott against the Government of Cameroon, and reportedly began burning school buildings, threatening education officials with violence if they did not comply with a boycott, and kidnapping for ransom children and teachers who defied the boycott;~~

PROPOSED REWRITE OF ABOVE:

- Whereas in 2017 dissent in the Anglophone region escalated into a general strike in which all sectors of civil society declined to participate in work, business and school as a nonviolent expression of resistance;
- Whereas some commentators have made allegations that some separatist leaders have inappropriately pressured and threatened people who chose to break the strike;
- Whereas highly disturbing reports have emerged of the burning of school buildings and the kidnapping of children and teachers, and government and separatist forces accuse each other of being behind these burnings and kidnappings;

EXPLANATORY ANNOTATION:

This edit incorporates information about the ongoing nonviolent resistance to discrimination that the current escalated conflict arises from. The resolution's original language is deeply problematic in that it represents only the allegations of coercion, and omits the fact that the school boycott emerged as part of a mass general strike that was itself a nonviolent expression of dissent. The general strike, which still continues, is known locally as "Ghost Town" after the tactic used by the Union for Democracy & Social Progress (UDPS) in Congo DRC in the 1990s. It is disingenuous for US legislators to call on Anglophone Cameroonians to participate in nonviolent solutions while ignoring and misrepresenting the nonviolent actions they are taking. Many strikes, particularly prolonged ones, often suffer the problem of how to deal with strike-breakers, and many instances of coercive dealings with strike-breakers by strikers are documentable throughout history. It is reasonable for US legislators to decry coercive responses to strike-breakers, but this should not be conflated with a wholesale dismissal of the strike itself. As strikes and boycotts have played deeply important roles in the labor and civil rights movements in US

society, it must be asked, do we think that US citizens have a unique right to these strategies for change?

It may be difficult for the concept of a “school boycott” in specific to be understood by people in the US context. To understand why community leaders chose this action, one must understand that education has been a site of struggle for Anglophone Cameroonians for decades, and that constant defunding and threats to disband educational infrastructure is one of the main ways that the government has acted in disregard of the terms of the 1961 plebiscite to marginalize and oppress the Anglophone population. The general strike and school boycott civil was called by a coalition of civil society organizations including the Teachers Unions & the Federation of Parent Teachers Union (CAPTAC) which have been in the forefront for decades of the fight for resources and empowerment for the English-speaking region’s schools.³ It is our understanding that in a handful of cases that we know of where there have been threats and attacks against those violating the general strike & school boycott, that those actions have been summarily condemned by the Teachers Union and other leaders of the civil society coalition.⁴ This accords with the slogan of the teachers-led Ambazonian movement that dates back to 1961, “The Force of Argument, not the Argument of Force.”⁵ In the only research-based evidence we have found on such alleged attacks, the UNICEF-UNESCO report, the authors refrained from attributing those attacks to any party.⁶

³ Joseph Takougang and Julius A. Amin, eds. *Post-Colonial Cameroon: Politics, Economy, and Society*. Lexington Books, 2018. Pages 115, 408, & 409
<https://books.google.com/books?id=0FZaDwAAQBAJ&pg=PA115&ots=salYVpYxFJ&dq=Cameroon%20and%20%20CAPTAC%20leaders&pg=PP1#v=onepage&q=Cameroon%20and%20%20CAPTAC%20leaders&f=false>

⁴ June 9, 2017. "Anglophone Leaders Condemn Gruesome Attack On Students In Bamenda"
<http://www.cameroonpostline.com/anglophone-leaders-condemn-gruesome-attack-on-students-in-bamenda/>

⁵ Edward Halle, "'The Force of Argument' and the Fight for an Anglophone Identity in Cameroon," November 28, 2014. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2529021

⁶ June 1, 2018. "Cameroon: Join Statement of UNICEF and UNESCO on Abduction of Education Personnel and Attacks Against Schools in the South-West Region of Cameroon."
<http://cm.one.un.org/content/unct/cameroon/en/home/presscenter/communiqués-de-presse/cameroon--join-statement-of-unicef-and-unesco-on-abduction-of-e.html>

- ~~Whereas numerous human rights monitors have documented armed separatists killing traditional leaders and targeting civilians, including women, children, and the elderly, who are perceived to be supporting or working with the Government of Cameroon, and reports indicate that armed separatists have killed scores of security force personnel;~~

PROPOSED REWRITE OF ABOVE:

- Whereas reports indicate that thousands of civilians and scores of military personnel have been killed in these clashes;
- Whereas both armed separatists and government soldiers have been accused of killing traditional leaders and prominent civilians who are working for the other side;
- Whereas numerous reports have implicated members of the Cameroon military in the killing women, children, and the elderly — especially the high profile video which went viral a year ago of a point-blank shooting of two women, a young girl, and a baby in the Far North⁷, as well as just last month in the South-West English-speaking region⁸;

EXPLANATORY ANNOTATION:

The original text is factually inaccurate. We have been following coverage of this conflict with intense scrutiny, both through sources we trust and sources that we find highly problematic. In neither of these types of sources have we ever seen evidence or even argumentation presented that Ambazonian fighters “have been documented targeting and brutally killing ... women and children.” If the authors of the bill have evidence backing up this text, we would appreciate it being shared.

⁷ July 26 2018. “Cameroon is a Close U.S. Ally — and its soldiers carried out a shocking execution of women and children.” <https://theintercept.com/2018/07/26/cameroon-executions-us-ally/>

⁸ May 27, 2019. “Cameroonian soldiers accused of killing baby as family flees.” <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/may/27/cameroonian-soldiers-accused-of-killing-baby-as-family-flees>

We *are* aware of accusations of these sorts against military and paramilitary forces, including and especially the high profile video which went viral a year ago of a point-blank assassinations by Cameroon soldiers of two unarmed and defenseless women, a young girl, and a baby in the North Zone. After being championed by grassroots activists for months it was thoroughly investigated by the BBC⁹, and the Cameroon government was forced to acknowledge the act, retract previous false statements that the soldiers were not from Cameroon, and state publicly that it was taking disciplinary action against the soldiers. Given that it would be almost impossible for an informed and concerned citizen following the news about Cameroon not to be aware of this video, it is disingenuous of US legislators to refer without specifics to accusations against the separatists of killing women and children, while omitting to mention this prominent situation in which Cameroon military forces most clearly DID kill women and children. The proposed revision solves this problem by separating out the levels of violence and introducing balance in naming the accused parties. It also introduces balance by naming the estimated death toll of Anglophone civilians alongside the estimated death toll of Cameroonian military forces.

- Whereas the security forces of the Government of Cameroon have attacked medical facilities and health workers in the Northwest and Southwest regions;
- Whereas numerous credible reports from human rights monitors, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, have documented the excessive use of force by government security forces against Cameroonian civilians living in the Anglophone regions, including the burning of villages, the use of live ammunition against protestors, arbitrary arrest and detention, torture, sexual abuse, and killing of civilians, including women, children, and the elderly;

⁹ September 23, 2018. "Anatomy of a Killing - BBC News"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4G9S-eoLgX4>

ADDITIONAL TEXT:

- Whereas the Government of Cameroon has repeatedly denied human rights investigators access to investigate these allegations¹⁰, including twice denying official requests for access from the UN Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights¹¹,
- Whereas the Government of Cameroon has repeatedly denied international nongovernmental human rights investigators access to investigate these allegations¹², and a nongovernmental human rights investigator from Francophone Cameroon deployed to the Anglophone region by Réseau des Défenseurs des Droits Humains en Afrique Centrale (REDHAC) has disappeared without a trace¹³;
- Whereas on May 16, 2019, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Tibor Nagy told a Full Committee Hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs in Congress that “The best we can do for right now is just work with our allies to really make the Cameroonian government understand the need for a real dialogue. And if that doesn't happen relatively quickly then we have to look at the array of other tools we have in our toolkit because frankly the possibility of sanctions is always there¹⁴.”

EXPLANATORY ANNOTATION:

¹⁰ May 2, 2019. “Cameroon: Human Rights Watch Denied Entry.”

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/05/02/cameroon-human-rights-watch-denied-entry>

¹¹ June 2018: HRC38 report on Cameroon’s refusal of UN’s OHCHR access

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23206&Lang=En> and March 2018:

HRC37 report on Cameroon’s refusal of UN’s OHCHR access.

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/NewsDetail.aspx?NewsID=22772&LangID=E>

¹² Cameroon: Human Rights Watch Denied Entry

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/05/02/cameroon-human-rights-watch-denied-entry>

¹³ September 2018: Enlèvement, Sequestration et Detention Arbitraire de Mowha Franklin, Défenseur des Droits Humains:

http://redhac.info/documents/ENLEVEMENT,_SEQUESTRATION_ET_DETENTION_ARBITRAIRE_DE_MOWHA_FRAKLIN_A_KUMBA_SUD_OUEST_DU_CAMEROUN_DEPUIS_LE_06_AOUT_2018_.pdf

¹⁴ Hearing: Democracy, Development, and Defense: Rebalancing U.S.-Africa Policy. Committee on Foreign Affairs: <https://youtu.be/eL4bu8Ea3G4?t=4016> and <https://youtu.be/eL4bu8Ea3G4?t=7545>

These additions clarify the fundamental inability to appropriately investigate all the allegations discussed previously due to the Cameroon government's unwillingness to welcome human rights investigators. The original text does not articulate the alarming level of Cameroon government's long standing noncooperation and noncompliance behavior vis-a-vis international humanitarian law and accepted norms.

ADDITIONAL TEXT:

- Whereas the International Court of Justice on its July 22, 2010, decision on Unilateral Declaration of Independence of Kosovo stated that “international law of self-determination developed in such a way as to create a right to independence for the peoples of non-self-governing territories and peoples subject to alien subjugation, domination and exploitation” and that “...the scope of the principle of territorial integrity is confined to the sphere of relations between States”¹⁵;
- Whereas the Anglophone conflict can be traced to the mishandling of the implementation of provisions of the plebiscite pact of UN Res.1608 (xv) General Assembly Official Records (GAOR)¹⁶, in particular the conference at which the parameters of the Federation were to be determined was not held according to explicit specifications, which means that the UN Trusteeship Agreement was not properly concluded;

EXPLANATORY ANNOTATION:

This section highlights the fact that the insistence of Cameroon and some international players that all solution to the conflict, despite the root causes, must

¹⁵ International Court of Justice — Reports of Judgments, Advisory Opinions and Orders — Accordance with International Law of the Unilateral Declaration of Independence in Respect of Kosovo — Advisory Opinion of 22 July 2010: <https://www.icj-cij.org/files/case-related/141/141-20100722-ADV-01-00-EN.pdf>

¹⁶ 1608 (XV). The future of the Trust Territory of Cameroons under United Kingdom Administration <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/198/23/IMG/NR019823.pdf?OpenElement>

be resolved within the confines of the Cameroon state is a political decision and not consistent with international law of self-determination.

- Whereas the Department of State has expressed serious concern over the manner in which the government has used force to unlawfully restrict the rights to free expression and peaceful protest that are protected under the Cameroonian Constitution and international law;
- Whereas the government has charged journalists, social activists, and members of political opposition parties with terrorism-related crimes and prosecuted them in military tribunals;
- Whereas the Government of Cameroon arrested opposition leader Maurice Kamto and roughly 150 members of the Cameroon Renaissance Movement party following peaceful protests on January 26, 2019, charging them with crimes that could result in the death penalty and handling their cases at the Military Tribunal even though they are civilians;
- Whereas the Government of Cameroon continued to place bans on Cameroon Renaissance Movement's attempts to hold peaceful protests, and civil society reported that security forces interfered with MRC registration processes in Yaoundé, Douala, and Bafoussam in February 2019;
- Whereas the Government of Cameroon has repeatedly restricted freedoms of expression by shutting down the internet, harassing and detaining journalists, refusing licenses to independent media, and intensifying political attacks against the independent press;
- Whereas the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs stated in April 2019 that more than 530,000 people were internally displaced in areas affected by the Anglophone conflict;
- Whereas the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reports that more than 32,000 Cameroonian refugees have registered in Nigeria;
- Whereas the Department of State has expressly called on the Government of Cameroon to respect the rights, including the right to due process, of 47

Cameroonians forcibly returned in January 2018 from Nigerian custody to Cameroonian authorities, many of whom had reportedly submitted asylum claims in Nigeria; and

- Whereas ten of the 47 Cameroonians forcibly returned from Nigeria now face charges before a military court punishable by the death penalty, while the other thirty-seven reportedly remain in detention without charge: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) strongly condemns the abuses committed in Cameroon's Anglophone regions by the Government of Cameroon security forces and armed groups, including extrajudicial killings and detentions, the use of force against nonviolent civilians and protestors, and violations of the freedoms of press, expression, and assembly;

~~(2) affirms that the United States continues to hold the Government of Cameroon responsible for upholding the rights of all citizens, regardless of political views or beliefs or the regions in which they reside, in accordance with Cameroon's international obligations and Cameroon's own Constitution;~~

PROPOSED REWRITE OF ABOVE:

(2) affirms that the United States continues to hold the Government of Cameroon responsible for upholding the rights of all citizens, regardless of political views or beliefs or the regions in which they reside, in accordance with Cameroon's

international obligations and Cameroon's own Constitution, and that the recent cuts in military aid by the US government¹⁷ are the direct result of Cameroon's failure to adequately fulfill this responsibility, and that if the Cameroon government does not act promptly to redress these errors, further sanctions will be necessary and justified.

EXPLANATORY ANNOTATION:

The added language harmonizes this bill with the recent actions taken by the US Military, and clarifies that there will be implications if the bill is ignored.

(3) urges all parties, including political opposition groups, to exercise restraint and to ensure that protests remain peaceful;

(4) urges the Government of Cameroon to—

~~(A) initiate broad-based dialogue without preconditions and make a credible, full faith effort to work with religious and community leaders in the Anglophone region to address grievances and seek nonviolent solutions to resolve conflict and constitutional reforms that would protect minority concerns, such as reconstituting a Federal system;~~

PROPOSED REWRITE OF ABOVE:

¹⁷ February 6, 2019. "US cuts military aid to Cameroon over human rights concerns." <https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2019/02/07/us-cuts-military-aid-to-cameroon-over-human-rights-concerns/>

(A) accept coordinated offers of international technical assistance and cooperation to help with the initiation of credible, inclusive and purposeful dialogue without preconditions.

EXPLANATORY ANNOTATION:

The original text contradicts itself: the final clause “and constitutional reforms that would protect minority concerns, such as reconstituting a Federal system;” directly contradicts the opening value “without conditions,” since federalism is one political solution being pursued by some parties but rejected by others. The revision removes this contradiction, and centralizes the need for outside technical assistance, which brings the document into alignment with the position taken by a supermajority of the member states of the UN Human Rights Council in its 40th Session.¹⁸

~~(B) follow through on the initiatives developed to address grievances, including the Commission of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism, the Ministry of Decentralization, and the National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration, that currently offer no visible evidence of having played a constructive role in resolving the crisis;~~

PROPOSED DELETION OF ABOVE

¹⁸ The UK expressed its deep concern about the deteriorating human rights situation in North-West & South-West Cameroon, due to high levels of violence, and called on Cameroon to engage fully with OHCHR, 21 March 2019: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/human-rights-council-40-cameroon>

EXPLANATORY ANNOTATION:

These are the institutions U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Tibor Nagy in the May 16, 2019, Full Committee Hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs in Congress, described as Potemkin institutions.¹⁹ They are so discredited it is impossible for them to play any honest role in brokering peace in this conflict seeing they have thus far only exacerbated the conflict.

(C) respect the fundamental rights of all Cameroonian citizens, including political activists and journalists;

(D) ensure that any security operations are conducted in accordance with international human rights standards, including efforts to ensure security forces only use force under appropriate circumstances;

~~(E) transparently investigate all allegations of human rights violations committed in the Anglophone regions and take the necessary measures to prevent arbitrary detention, torture, enforced disappearances, deaths in custody, and inhumane prison conditions;~~

PROPOSED REWRITE OF ABOVE:

(E) allow unfettered access to internationally recognized independent human rights investigators, including and especially a fact-finding mission from the UN, to transparently and accountably investigate all

¹⁹ Hearing: Democracy, Development, and Defense: Rebalancing U.S.-Africa Policy. Committee on Foreign Affairs: <https://youtu.be/eL4bu8Ea3G4?t=4016> and <https://youtu.be/eL4bu8Ea3G4?t=7545>

allegations of human rights violations committed in the Anglophone region. Take the necessary measures to prevent arbitrary detention, torture, enforced disappearances, deaths in custody, and inhumane prison conditions.

EXPLANATORY ANNOTATION:

The insertion of this demand aligns this document with a strong display of international consensus as the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Tibor Nagy told a Full Committee Hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs in Congress on May 16, 2019. In addition, many English-speaking Cameroonian and international civil society leaders are calling for an Independent International Fact Finding Mission on the grounds that such a delegation would send a message that the culture of impunity is coming to an end, and would thus have the immediate effect of reducing violence and saving lives.

(F) promptly charge or release all those detained in the context of the Anglophone crisis, including the Cameroonians forcibly returned from Nigeria, and ensure that any future detainees are treated with due process, in line with Cameroon's penal code;

(G) allow unfettered access to humanitarian and health care workers in accordance with humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence;

(H) release the leaders and members of the Cameroon Renaissance Movement party who were arrested following their peaceful protests, and

ensure that this party, like others, can participate unfettered in upcoming municipal, parliamentary, and regional elections;

(I) release human rights defenders, civil society activists, political prisoners, journalists, trade unionists, teachers, and any other citizens who have been arbitrarily arrested and detained without trial or charge;

(J) ensure that detainees are treated fairly and humanely, with proper judicial proceedings, including a registry of those detained by the Cameroonian security forces, and with full access to legal resources; and

(K) ensure that Cameroon's antiterrorism legislation is used only to prosecute offenses that would be considered acts of terrorism under international legal standards, and cease to use this legislation to sanction activities that are protected by national and international guarantees of freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, and association with others;

ADDITIONAL DEMAND:

(I) Immediately suspend and bring charges against all government officials who are propagating hate speech against Anglophones and other sectors of Cameroonian society, especially and specifically Deputy Minister of Justice Jean de Dieu Momo. Discourage hate speech within Cameroonian civil society which blames whole ethnic groups for the conflict, and issue statements countering any

speech which could be used to justify violence targeted against an entire community.

EXPLANATORY ANNOTATION:

The insertion of this demand creates balance with the demand to separatist forces to desist in hate speech. It is inaccurate and destructive to speak as if the only propagators of hate speech are separatists. As Crisis Group reported on August 2, 2017, “Hate speech and attacks on Anglophones have both proliferated since September, creating a palpably tense atmosphere. In state media, the Southwest’s governor referred to the protesters of 22 September as ‘dogs’ and the minister of communication described them as ‘terrorists’.”²⁰ Other sectors of Cameroonian society are also targets, most notably the Bamileke were recently subject to an extreme form of hate speech by Deputy Minister of Justice Jean de Dieu Momo, who in February 2019 asserted that Jews brought the Holocaust upon themselves through their arrogance, and then asserted that the Bamileke were behaving in a similar manner and thus may suffer a similar fate²¹. This comment came in the wake of the fall 2018 “election” in which Bamileke candidate Maurice Kamto declared victory over Paul Biya who has held the top office since 1982. Would US legislators tolerate such an insinuation about one of its minority ethnic groupings, particularly following an election in which one of its members ran against a three and a half decade incumbent for the highest office?

~~(5) urges the separatist groups to—~~

²⁰ October 19, 2017. "Cameroon's Worsening Anglophone Crisis Calls for Strong Measures." <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/cameroon/130-cameroon-worsening-anglophone-crisis-calls-strong-measures>

²¹ February 5, 2019. "Cameroon apologizes after official says 'arrogant' Jews brought on Holocaust." <https://www.timesofisrael.com/cameroon-apologizes-after-official-says-arrogant-jews-brought-on-holocaust/>

PROPOSED REWRITE OF ABOVE:

(5) urges all separatist groups to—

EXPLANATORY ANNOTATION:

This small change adds emphasis of the reality that there are many such groups and they are not all under one umbrella. The whole movement cannot be summarily condemned for the actions of some individuals which are not coordinated with the leadership of the movement. The leadership has consistently condemned any perceived efforts to stray from the fundamental right to self defense in the face of village burnings and attacks on communities, and that message has and continues to be the driving motivation of the armed struggle.

(A) engage with Cameroonian government officials, as well as civil society and religious leaders, in a broad-based dialogue without preconditions to peacefully express grievances and credibly engage in nonviolent efforts to resolve the conflict;

~~(B) immediately stop committing human rights abuses, including killings of civilians, use of child soldiers, torture, kidnapping, and extortion;~~

PROPOSED REWRITE OF ABOVE:

(B) Support unfettered access to internationally recognized independent human rights investigators, including and especially a fact-finding mission from the UN to transparently and accountably investigate all allegations of human rights violations

committed in the Anglophone region, including the targeting of civilians, use of child soldiers, torture, kidnapping and extortion.

EXPLANATORY ANNOTATION:

This revision brings balance with reference to demand 4E. Especially given the government's blocking access to internationally recognized independent human rights investigators, accusations do not equal proof of guilt. With regard to the alleged targeting of civilians, the government of Cameroon has been exposed for lying in at least one high profile situation²², and civil society leaders assert that this is a pattern. Given this, skepticism is in order when it comes to accusations from the government against the Ambazonian movement.

~~(C) end the school boycott immediately and cease attacks on schools, teachers, and education officials, and allow for the safe return of all students to class;~~

SUGGESTED REVISION:

(C) Support unfettered access to internationally recognized independent human rights investigators to transparently and accountably investigate all allegations of attacks on schools, teachers and education officials. Discourage those within your ranks from coercive actions to enforce compliance with the general strike and boycott, and publicly affirm that students, teachers, and education officials have the right to decide for themselves whether they want to participate in this act of nonviolent civil disobedience.

²² April 4, 2018. "European tourists were not kidnapped in Cameroon, tour operator says." <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-cameroon-security/european-tourists-were-not-kidnapped-in-cameroon-tour-operator-says-idUSKCN1HB17T>

EXPLANATORY ANNOTATION:

This revision brings this demand into alignment with the suggested revision of the “Whereas” statement regarding the boycott, for the same reasons outlined above.

~~(D) end incitement to violence and hate speech on the part of the diaspora; and~~

SUGGESTED REVISION:

(D) Expel from your organizations any individual who tries to propagate hate speech and incitement to violence.

EXPLANATORY ANNOTATION:

This revision speaks to the reality that it is not within any one separatist group’s power to control the behavior of people throughout the diaspora, but they do have the power to enforce standards of membership within their own ranks. This revision makes this demand actionable, whereas the original demand is not actionable by any specific party.

~~(E) immediately release all civilians illegally detained or kidnapped in the Anglophone Northwest and Southwest regions.~~

SUGGESTED REVISION:

(E) Publicly condemn the illegal detention and kidnapping of civilians, and expel from your organizations anyone found to be responsible for such acts. Take all necessary measures to prevent, detentions, torture, enforced disappearances, deaths of civilians, and any form of kidnappings by members of your organizations.

EXPLANATORY ANNOTATION:

This revision speaks to the reality that no separatist groups have claimed responsibility for these alleged kidnaps, as would be typical of a group taking such an action for strategic political ends. It is widely understood within the Anglophone context that these actions are criminal in nature, not political.²³ While the various separatist groups lack the authority to monitor the behavior of all individuals within the territory, they can make clear position statements and enforce standards of membership within their own ranks. This revision makes this demand actionable, whereas the original demand is not actionable by any specific party.

²³ January 11, 2019. "10 Conflicts to Watch in 2019: Cameroon." <https://112.international/article/10-conflicts-to-watch-in-2019-cameroon-35740.html>