

SUGGESTED REVISIONS OF S. RES. 292

WITH REFERENCES AND EXPLANATORY ANNOTATIONS

**116th CONGRESS
1st Session**

Introduced in Senate (07/30/2019)

S. RES. 292

~~Calling on the Government of Cameroon and armed separatist groups to respect the human rights of all Cameroonian citizens, to end all violence, and to pursue an inclusive dialogue to resolve the conflict in the Northwest and Southwest regions.~~

PROPOSED REWRITE OF ABOVE:

CAMEROON Act of 2019

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

July 30, 2019

Mr. Cardin (for himself, Mr. Young, Mr. Durbin, Mr. Lankford, Mr. Van Hollen, Mr. Markey, Mr. Coons, Mr. Kaine, and Mr. Merkley) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

RESOLUTION

~~Calling on the Government of Cameroon and armed separatist groups to respect the human rights of all Cameroonian citizens, to end all violence, and to pursue an inclusive dialogue to resolve the conflict in the Northwest and Southwest regions.~~

PROPOSED REWRITE OF ABOVE:¹

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

~~Whereas Paul Biya has held office as Cameroon's President since 1982, and won reelection to a seventh term in October 2018;~~

PROPOSED REWRITE OF ABOVE:²

¹ The original text of the resolution deals with democracy and human rights in general than just "the conflict in the NorthWest and SouthWest Regions." The text of the resolution talks about Boko Haram, a questionable electoral process, political and Press freedom in general, and other topics related to human rights and democracy. Second, the language of the current title of the resolution creates a false equivalency of power between the government of Cameroon and the "armed separatist 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 the House, the fundamental problem is that the government of Cameroon is not taking adequate steps to solve this problem (see: 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>. Given that the top US diplomat to Africa has a clear position on this matter, the Senate should incorporate this perspective. The current text of resolution is behind the curve of analysis on this crisis that is now affecting 4 million people (see: 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)

² When narrating the reality that Biya has been president since 1982, some awareness of the incompatibility of this reality with actual democracy must be incorporated in a bill authored by leaders of a nation widely recognized as an international beacon of democratic values. What would we in the US think if Ronald Regan had been "continually re-elected" since 1982, and opposition candidates who came close to winning were jailed shortly after these "elections"? This is the situation in Cameroon. Understanding this gives some capacity to comprehend why a majority of Anglophones are not willing to consider the current conversation about federalism as a viable option.

Whereas Paul Biya has held office as Cameroon’s President since 1982, having abolished the term limit for his office in 2008³, and most recently declared victory for a seventh term in October 2018;

Whereas the leading opposition candidate who also declared victory in October 2018, was jailed for 9 months following the election;

Whereas Cameroon receives United States foreign aid and participates in the Department of State-led Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Partnership (TSCTP) and United States-supported efforts to counter Boko Haram;

Whereas the Government of Cameroon has increasingly cracked down on political expression, including by imprisoning opposition leaders and supporters, banning opposition and civil society conferences, reinforcing troop deployments to deter and disrupt protests, and restricting access to Facebook and other social media platforms;

Whereas the Government of Cameroon has repeatedly restricted freedoms of expression and the media nationwide by shutting down the internet, harassing and detaining journalists, refusing licenses to independent media, and intensifying political attacks against the independent press;

Whereas Boko Haram and an Islamic State-affiliated splinter group have destabilized northern Cameroon since 2014, marked recently by a June 2019 attack on security forces in Far North Cameroon that killed dozens of soldiers and civilians;

Whereas the Boko Haram insurgency in Cameroon’s Far North region has created an estimated 263,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs), causing an escalating humanitarian crisis in difficult to access areas;

Whereas tensions between predominantly Christian farmers and predominantly Muslim Fulani herders have contributed to religious and communal tensions throughout West and Central Africa in recent years, including in the Northwest region of Cameroon;

Whereas members of the Government of Cameroon's Rapid Intervention Battalion (BIR), which receives United States counterterrorism training and support, have been accused of torture and extrajudicial killings and may be in contravention of congressionally mandated “Leahy human rights vetting” requirements;

³ See:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/06/02/cameroon-has-been-in-crisis-for-six-months-heres-what-you-need-to-know/>

Whereas the 2018 Department of State Human Rights Report documented torture and abuse by Cameroonian security forces, “prolonged arbitrary detentions including of suspected Anglophone separatists by security forces,” and violations of freedoms of expression and assembly;

Whereas, following Cameroon's October 7, 2018, elections, the African Union Election Observation Mission stated that “the current [legal] framework needs to be strengthened in order to safeguard the democratic principles of separation of powers, fairness, and independence and impartiality,” which the Department of State echoed, emphasizing that electoral irregularities “created an impression that the election was not credible or genuinely free and fair”;

Whereas Anglophone Cameroonians have long felt marginalized by official actions and policies of the Government of Cameroon;

~~Whereas, while the Government of France has condemned attacks by armed separatists, it has a meaningful role to play in pushing the Government of Cameroon to lift restrictions on freedoms of expression and the media, end arbitrary detention, and engage in inclusive dialogue with Anglophone leaders;~~

PROPOSED REWRITE OF ABOVE:⁴

Whereas French colonial practices in Cameroon in clearly implicated in the creation and perpetuation of this conflict, and whereas the United States has a meaningful role to play in pushing the Government of Cameroon to lift restrictions on freedoms of expression and the media, end arbitrary detention, and engage in inclusive dialogue with Anglophone leaders, and does not need to link its actions to French practices or decisions;

Whereas, beginning in late 2016, protests organized by **Anglophone**⁵ lawyers, teachers, and students were violently repressed by the Government of Cameroon, leading to numerous deaths and imprisonments, including of journalists and lawyers;

Whereas, in January 2017, the Government of Cameroon ordered the suspension of internet services in the **Anglophone**⁶ northwest and southwest regions of Cameroon, the suspension lasting for 93 days and having a major, debilitating effect on the economy, educational institutions, freedom of expression, and social communication of the region's residents;

⁴ We are unsure what the reasons could be for the reference to the Government of France in this Bill that has been brought before the Senate of the United States of America. Does the US wait for France's actions or directions in matters concerning Cameroon? Did the Government of France provide a template for the bill? What will it take for the US to act autonomously based on our nations' principles in this situation? To move toward that, we have suggested language that describes in more precise detail the role of France in this situation, and asserts that the US's right to act is autonomous.

⁵ Proposed addition to clarify location

⁶ Proposed addition to clarify location

Whereas the conflict escalated in late September and early October 2017, when Cameroonian security forces brutally cracked down on unarmed **Anglophone**⁷ civilians peacefully demonstrating, resulting in at least 20 people dying and leaving over 100 injured;

~~Whereas, in 2017, armed separatist groups launched a campaign to pressure school officials in the Anglophone region to go on strike as part of a boycott against the Government of Cameroon, and began burning school buildings and threatening education officials with violence if they did not comply;~~

PROPOSED REWRITE OF ABOVE:⁸

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;

⁷ Proposed addition to clarify location

⁸ This revision puts the violence related to the school boycott in context. 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 action 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 (see: 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&lpg=PA115&ots=saLyVpYxFJ&dq=Cameroon%20and%20%20CAPTAC%20leaders&pg=PP1#v=onepage&q=Cameroon%20and%20%20CAPTAC%20leaders&f=false>). 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 (see: 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/>). 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" (see: 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). 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 (see: June 1, 2018. "Cameroon: Joint 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--joint-statement-of-unicef-and-unesco-on-abduction-of-e.html>)

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;

~~Whereas human rights monitors have documented armed groups killing traditional leaders and targeting civilians who are perceived to be supporting or working with the Government of Cameroon, and armed militants have killed Cameroonian security force personnel;~~

PROPOSED REWRITE OF ABOVE:⁹

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 credible reports from human rights monitors, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, have documented the excessive use of force by Government of Cameroon security forces against Cameroonians living in the Anglophone regions, including the burning of villages, the use of live ammunition against protestors, arbitrary arrest and detention, torture, and sexual abuse;

Whereas the Department of State has expressed serious concern over the Government of Cameroon's use of force to restrict free expression and the use of violence against individuals protesting the government's policies in the Anglophone regions;

~~Whereas both the Government of Cameroon security forces and armed groups have been documented targeting and brutally killing civilians in the Anglophone regions, including women and children;~~

PROPOSED REWRITE OF ABOVE:¹⁰

⁹ The proposed revision improves balance and introduces equity in referencing the victims of this conflict by naming the estimated death toll of Anglophone civilians alongside the estimated death toll of Cameroonian military forces, and by separating out the levels of violence and introducing balance in naming the accused parties.

¹⁰ 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 credible evidence 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. 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 BBC[#], and the

Whereas numerous reports have implicated members of the Cameroon military in the killing women, children, and the elderly — especially the high profile video that went viral a year ago of a point-blank shooting of two women, a young girl, and a baby in the Far North¹¹, as well as in May 2019 in the South-West region¹²;

Whereas in February 2019, the Department of State announced it would withhold some security assistance to Cameroon, citing credible allegations that the Cameroonian military carried out human rights violations;

~~Whereas United States citizen Charles Wesco was senselessly killed near the town of Bamenda, Cameroon, on October 30, 2018, after being caught in what the Department of State has characterized as “cross fire”;~~

PROPOSED REWRITE OF ABOVE:¹³

Whereas United States citizen and Baptist missionary Charles Wesco was senselessly killed near the town of Bamenda, Cameroon, on October 30, 2018, after being caught in what the Cameroon military and the Department of State have characterized as “cross fire”, and which was reported by the press as an assassination by the Cameroon military.

Whereas the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs stated in March 2019 that at least 530,000 were internally displaced in areas affected by the Anglophone conflict;

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.

¹¹ 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/>

¹² 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>

¹³ This edit adds important contextual information that is necessary for a complete understanding of the significance of Wesco’s death. Journalist Mimi Memfo, who was the first to report on Mr. Wesco’s death, reported from sources in the Cameroon military that the military assassinated Mr. Wesco (see: https://www.washingtonpost.com/video/world/a-cameroonian-journalist-covered-an-americans-death-the-government-charged-her-with-fake-news/2018/12/15/54feedeb-91e8-4d45-8c11-bbb9fd249c72_video.html). The government tried to cover it up by imprisoning Memfo, which drew international criticism (see: <https://cpj.org/2018/11/cpj-calls-on-cameroon-to-drop-charges-against-mimi.php>). The perception amongst Anglophone leaders is that Wesco’s killing was an effort to deter sympathetic Western observers, in order to empower the continuation of the culture of impunity. This is why the call for an international fact finding mission that would counter the culture of impunity within which the Cameroon military is currently operating is at the forefront of Anglophone leaders’ demands.

Whereas the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has estimated that \$298,900,000 is required to provide humanitarian assistance throughout Cameroon, and only 21 percent of the appeal has been funded as of July 2019;

Whereas the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reported that it had registered roughly 36,000 Cameroonian refugees from the Anglophone regions in Nigeria as of April 2019;

Whereas some Cameroonian diaspora organizations in the United States and Cameroonian-based civil society organizations are working to address the needs of Cameroonian internally displaced persons on the northwest and southwest regions of the country and refugees in Nigeria;

Whereas 47 Anglophone activists were forcibly returned from Nigerian custody to Cameroonian authorities in January 2018, despite many having reportedly submitted asylum claims in Nigeria;

Whereas 10 of the 47 individuals forcibly returned from Nigeria now face charges before a military court that would be punishable by the death penalty, while the other 37 reportedly remain in detention without charge:

PROPOSED ADDITIONAL TEXT:¹⁴

Whereas the Nigerian High Court ruled in March 2019 that their arrests and forcible return to Cameroon violated Nigerian law and international human rights law, and that they should be immediately returned to Nigeria.¹⁵

Whereas the Government of Cameroon has repeatedly denied human rights investigators access to investigate these allegations¹⁶, including twice denying official requests for access from the UN Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights¹⁷,

¹⁴ 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.

¹⁵ See: <https://www.voanews.com/africa/nigeria-court-says-extradition-cameroon-separatists-illegal> . The reality of the Nigerian court's ruling is another piece of information that puts the call for an international human rights fact finding mission into context.

¹⁶ May 2, 2019. "Cameroon: Human Rights Watch Denied Entry." <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/05/02/cameroon-human-rights-watch-denied-entry>

¹⁷ 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>

Whereas the Government of Cameroon has repeatedly denied international nongovernmental human rights investigators access to investigate these allegations¹⁸, 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 trace¹⁹;

Whereas on May 16, 2019, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Tibor Nagy reminded a Full Committee Hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs in Congress that sanctions should be considered as a possible course of action.²⁰

²¹Whereas 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”²²;

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)²³, 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;

Now, therefore be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) urges all parties to the Anglophone conflict in Cameroon, including political opposition groups, to—

¹⁸ Cameroon: Human Rights Watch Denied Entry

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

¹⁹ September 2018: Enlevement, Sequestration et Detention Arbitraire de Mowha Franklin, Defenseur 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

²⁰ 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>

²¹ 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 be resolved within the confines of the Cameroon state is a political decision and is not consistent with international law of self-determination.

²² 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>

²³ 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>

- (A) agree to an immediate ceasefire;
- (B) guarantee unfettered humanitarian assistance;
- (C) exercise restraint and ensure that protests remain peaceful; and
- (D) engage in inclusive dialogue with civil society to get to a political solution that respects the rights and freedoms of the people of Cameroon;

PROPOSED ADDITIONAL TEXT:²⁴

(E) Immediately allow for 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; and

~~(2) strongly condemns the abuses committed by Boko Haram, state security forces, and armed groups in the Anglophone regions, including extrajudicial killings and detentions, the use of force against nonviolent civilians and protestors, and violations of the freedoms of press, expression, religion, and assembly;~~

PROPOSED REWRITE OF ABOVE:²⁵

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

(3) affirms that the United States Government continues to hold the Government of Cameroon responsible for upholding the rights of all citizens, regardless of their religious beliefs, political views, or the regions in which they reside;

²⁴ The insertion of this demand aligns this document with the many voices of English-speaking Cameroonians and international civil society leaders who 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.

²⁵ This revision removed the reference to Boko Haram. There is no documentation or even argumentation that Boko Haram is active in the Anglophone regions. Given this, adding Boko Haram here could only be driven by the political goal of representing the dissidents in the Anglophone regions in the same “category” as an organization that the international community has deemed a “terrorist.” Doing this would benefit Cameroon immensely: it would allow them not only to silence critiques from the international community over how they have acted with respect to this minority population, but they could also expand their access to international anti-terrorism military funding while they are at it. Colluding with this agenda is not in line with the principled goals that are ostensibly driving this bill.

(4) urges the Government of Cameroon to—

(A) initiate a credible, inclusive, good, and full-faith effort to work with religious, cultural, and community leaders in the Anglophone region and the Cameroonian diaspora to engage in meaningful dialogue and address grievances and seek nonviolent solutions to resolve the conflict, including possibly involving an independent mediator in such negotiations;

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

(C) 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;

(D) investigate all allegations of human rights abuses, including religious freedom 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;

~~(E) promote the rule of law through more transparent accountability mechanisms;~~

PROPOSED REWRITE OF ABOVE:²⁶

(E) transparently investigate and support the investigation of all allegations of human rights violations committed in the Anglophone regions, including by allowing access to internationally recognized independent human rights investigators; take all necessary measures to prevent arbitrary detention, torture, enforced disappearances, deaths in custody, and inhumane prison conditions;

(F) improve election processes and reform electoral institutions;

(G) promptly charge or release all those detained in the context of the Anglophone crisis, including all Anglophone activists arrested in Nigeria, and ensure that any future detainees are treated with due process, in accordance with Cameroon's penal code and international human rights norms;

²⁶ This revision incorporates the clearer and more specific language from H.Res.358 (#4E).

(H) 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;

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

~~(J) work with United States law enforcement to thoroughly investigate and prosecute Charles Wesco's murder; and~~

PROPOSED REWRITE OF ABOVE:²⁷

(J) allow United States law enforcement all necessary access, including within government and military ranks, to thoroughly investigate and prosecute Charles Wesco's murder;

(5) urges the armed groups in Anglophone areas to—

(A) engage with government officials 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, torture, kidnapping, and extortion;~~

PROPOSED REWRITE OF ABOVE:²⁸

(B) Promptly condemn all instances of human rights abuses, including killings of civilians, torture, kidnapping, and extortion; and take all steps necessary to allow for appropriate investigations in situations where such crimes are alleged to have been committed by individuals within your ranks;

²⁷ Since, as noted above, the first news report to be issued on Wesco's killing reported the allegation that the military was responsible, any thorough investigation would need to investigate the military and the government. This needs to be stated specifically rather than the government being referred to as only a partner in the investigation. It is the responsibility of the US Government to put the cause of justice for Wesco and his family over any alliance we may have with the Government of Cameroon.

²⁸ This revision removes the presumption of guilt. 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 situation (see: 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>), 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 Anglophone groups.

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

SUGGESTED REVISION:²⁹

(C) 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; and take all steps necessary to allow for appropriate investigations in situations where there have been allegations of attacks on schools, teachers and education officials; and

~~(D) immediately release all civilians illegally detained or kidnapped.~~

SUGGESTED REVISION:³⁰

(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 kidnapings by members of your organizations.

²⁹ 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 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 inappropriate 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?

³⁰ 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 (See: <https://112.international/article/10-conflicts-to-watch-in-2019-cameroon-35740.html>). 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.