

KLW BRIEFING

Updates for the Coalition for Dialogue and Negotiation

'Betrayed' Black Asylum Seekers Say Trump Administration is Ramping Up Deportations by Force and Fraud

By Molly O'Toole and Andrea Castillo | November 27, 2020

Owning a small business in Cameroon selling French products was enough to trap the young man between the English-speaking minority and French-speaking majority government in the warring West African nation. In July 2019, he was kidnapped by armed rebels, who tortured him for months in the jungle, demanding \$10,000 ransom from his family, he said. Then, shortly after they paid, government forces arrested and tortured him for another month — for “financing” the separatists. But what shocked him most, he said, was that, after escaping through a dozen countries and claiming asylum at the U.S.-Mexico border, American officials detained him for almost a year, then threatened and assaulted him and put him in solitary confinement before deporting him in late October back to Cameroon. Since last month, lawyers have filed multiple complaints with the Homeland Security documenting the cases of at least 14 Cameroonian asylum seekers at four detention facilities in Louisiana and Mississippi who were allegedly subjected to coercion and physical abuse by ICE to force their deportation. In recent years, Cameroonians have increasingly accounted for one of the largest groups of what U.S. officials term “extra-continental” migrants, amid the widening conflict in Cameroon.

African Champions League: Cameroonian Side PWD Bamenda's Rise Above Adversity

By Al Ross | November 26, 2020

As last season's Champions League finally ends on Friday in Cairo teams across the continent are set to get the next one underway this weekend. Among them is PWD Bamenda who in 2015 were in the fourth tier of Cameroon's football pyramid and will now face South African giants Kaizer Chiefs. Against a backdrop of political tension and violent clashes the club managed to move up the leagues with the club eventually being promoted back to the top-flight at in 2018, after what was a 13-year absence. The city of Bamenda is in the North-West of the country, one of the regions which have been plagued by increasing violence between government



forces and rebels, who have been demanding an independent state for Cameroon's English-speaking minority since 2016. In March 2019, both the coach of local Elite One rivals Yong Sports Academy and an entire university football team were kidnapped in separate incidents. PWD will be hosting its home leg on Sunday in the South-Western city of Limbe partly due to security concerns but mainly because the facilities at their own ground do not meet the competition's requirements. "It's a huge opportunity for a club like ours that has been playing in a region that has been characterized by socio-political upheavals. This club, for us, is the one thing that's most precious to us, and our performances give us a reason to think that people can be able to hope for better days ahead," the club's president Pascal Abude said.

Cameroon: Hopes of a Better Life Washed Away by Rain

By International Committee of Red Cross | November 26, 2020

In the department of Logone-et-Chari, in the Far North Region of Cameroon, heavy rainfall has destroyed 70 per cent of the sorghum, bean and rice fields. Hopes are being washed away in a part of the country where many people are already struggling under the burden of war. Irregular, and sometimes very severe, rainfall has led to cycles of flooding and drought, aggravating the vulnerable situation that displaced people and host communities already find themselves in because of the fighting. This year, the flooding means there will be no rice, bean or sorghum harvest. In order to limit the damage caused by future floods, we hired nearly 250 local people to help us rebuild the dyke in Tildé which should protect around 5,500 people in the area. Flooding has underscored the fault lines between communities, already present because of the conflict. With many households dependent on their herds, tensions are rising between crop and livestock farmers over access to land. In collaboration with the Cameroon Red Cross Society, we have distributed 25,000 kilograms of rice, 5,000 litres of oil and other essential household items to 1,500 households to help them meet their most pressing needs. UNHCR warns second wave of COVID pandemic driving further violence against refugee women and girls.

Cameroon Massacre Trial Set for December 17

By AFP | November 25, 2020

Cameroon's army said Wednesday that three soldiers accused in the massacre of civilians in a troubled anglophone region, a case that triggered an international outcry, would go on trial on December 17. The killing took place on February 14 in the village of Ntumbaw, in the Northwest Region, where anglophone separatists and security forces are embroiled in a bloody three-year-old conflict. According to the government, 10 children and three women died, while the UN has put the toll at more than 23 dead, including nine children aged under five and two pregnant women.

“Three soldiers will appear in Yaounde military court for murder, arson and destruction of property, violence against a pregnant woman and disregard for orders,” army spokesman Colonel Cyrille Atonfack told AFP. The Cameroon authorities denied for two months that its security forces were to blame for any deaths at Ntumbaw. It said the fatalities had resulted from an “unfortunate accident” when fuel was set ablaze during a gunfight between troops and separatists after a patrol came under fire. But Human Rights Watch (HRW), in its own investigation, said civilians had been slaughtered by government forces and an auxiliary militia drawn from the ethnic Fulani community. It based this on interviews with 25 people, including three witnesses to killings and seven relatives of victims, and on satellite imagery taken before and after the attack. In April, as international pressure mounted, President Paul Biya's office acknowledged responsibility by the security forces, saying three soldiers and a self-defense group had “attacked” a separatist base.



Traditional Rulers in West Region Call for Activation of Indigenous Mechanisms to End Anglophone Crisis

By Ariane Foguem | November 25, 2020

Traditional rulers in the West region of Cameroon have urged their peers from the two troubled English-speaking regions of

the country to urgently meet and activate indigenous and customary mechanisms to put an end to the long-lasting Anglophone crisis rocking the regions. The call is contained in a declaration on the socio-political situation of the country signed by members of the Council of Traditional Rulers from the West region of Cameroon, CCTO last November 19. In the declaration, the chiefs point out that the military option taken to end violence in the regions has so far shown its limits. They go further to indicate that the traditional chieftdom has to be involved in the search for a concerted indigenous solution to ensure an effective reconciliation and appeasement of hearts. In line with the above indication, they have called on their peers from the two hard-hit regions to come together without delay and activate traditional and customary mechanisms necessary to resolve such an internal conflict. They have equally called on parliamentarians to take their responsibilities as the people's representatives and put the Anglophone crisis on their agenda during this November parliamentary session to bring their own solutions for a return to normalcy in the two regions.

UNHCR Warns Second Wave of COVID Pandemic Driving Further Violence Against Refugee Women and Girls

By the UN Refugee Agency | November 25, 2020

As the coronavirus pandemic prolongs, a lethal mix of confinement, deepening poverty and economic duress is unleashing a renewed wave of violence against refugee, displaced and stateless women and girls, UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, is warning today. The UNHCR-led Global Protection Cluster, a network of UN agencies and NGOs providing protection to people affected by humanitarian crises, reported increases in gender-based violence in at least 27 countries. The sale or exchange of sex as an economic coping mechanism was also reported in at least 20 countries. In North-West and South-West Cameroon, where the security situation remains volatile, a staggering 26 per cent of gender-based violence incidents logged since the onset of the pandemic relate to children. In the Central African Republic, where a quarter of the population is displaced, one gender-based violence incident is recorded every hour, an estimate based on figures from the humanitarian alert system, which covers 42 per cent of the country. UNHCR is also alarmed by increased risks of child and forced marriages being resorted to as a coping strategy by displaced families buckling under socio-economic pressures. Many countries experiencing conflict or displacement already have some of the world's highest rates of these incidents. Traditional rulers in West region call for activation of indigenous mechanisms to end Anglophone crisis.