

KLW BRIEFING

Updates for the Coalition for Dialogue and Negotiation

Cameroon Separatists Abduct, Kill Tribal Chiefs

By Peter Kum and Rodrigue Forku |
December 14, 2020

Separatists have kidnapped tribal leaders in Cameroon's English-speaking regions, with at least two left dead, local sources reported Monday. "Separatists attacked the city of Buea this weekend and kidnapped the chiefs of Mile 14, Mile 15, and Mile 16," Bernard Okalia Bilai, governor of the Southwest region told Anadolu Agency on Monday. "We learned that the chiefs of Mile 14 and Mile 15 died [...] while the chief of Mile 16 is believed to still be alive," Bilai said, adding that authorities had recovered the dead bodies of the chief of Mile 14 on Sunday after he died at the hands of his captors. In the Northwest region, another area plagued by conflict since 2016, the fon, a local chieftain, of the Babanki people was also kidnapped Saturday by another group, according to the governor of the region, Adolphe Lele Lafrique. "These kidnappings of traditional chiefs, which take place after the regional elections held on December 6, are the logical consequence of their political commitment. This is proof that the separatists have resolved to follow through on their threats, including terrorizing those who took part in these elections," retired Col. Alfred Fuller told Anadolu Agency.

Judith Nwana is Cameroon Concord Person of the Year

By Soter Tarth Agbaw-Ebal | December 13, 2020

Since 1999, Cameroon Concord News Group has provided our readers the opportunity of chosen a "Person of the Year." It is simply a choice of an individual who has had the most influence over the



news in the last 12 months. Cameroonian football legend Samuel Eto'o, Bishop Emeritus Francis Teke Lisinge, the Southern Cameroons leader President Sisiku Ayuk Tabe, and former Nigerian Head of State, Goodluck Jonathan including French Cameroun dictator Paul Biya have all won the award. Today, Cameroon Concord News and Cameroon Intelligence Report are pleased to announce the winner of the Cameroon Concord News Group Person of the Year. She is Judith Nwana a strong advocate for human rights and a Steering Committee member of CHRI (Cameroon Humanitarian Relief Initiative), helping thousands of Southern Cameroons Refugees in Nigeria, and IDPs and political prisoners in French Cameroun. As a co-chair of The Coalition for Dialogue and Negotiations (CDN), she joins the many voices seeking a peaceful, negotiated settlement to the ongoing "Anglophone" (Southern Cameroons) Crisis in Cameroon. The Coalition for Dialogue and Negotiations finally brought international spotlight to the plight of these Southern Cameroons victims and Southern Cameroons detainees including Southern Cameroons activists arrested, detained and jailed for life after unfair military trials. Judith Nwana's dedication to the Cameroon Humanitarian Relief Initiative and the Coalition for Dialogue and Negotiations all in a bid to bring peace to her Southern Cameroons people is unwavering, undivided, and unassailable. Judith Nwana leads the Delivery, Contracts and Vendor Management of Global Telecoms Links at the World Bank Group and is also a

[Cameroon Condemns Separatists for Abducting Village Chiefs](#)

By Moki Edwin Kindzeka |
December 15, 2020

There has been widespread condemnation of separatists in Cameroon for a string of attacks and abductions of traditional village chiefs. Anglophone rebels released two chiefs on Monday but killed another for defying their demand not to participate in Cameroon's December 6 regional elections. Cameroon authorities say Chief Emmanuel Ngalle Ikome was abducted on December 13 with two other village chiefs – they were freed on Monday unharmed. His daughter, 37-year-old Libonge Epossi, says the anglophone separatists also abducted four family members when they attacked the palace. Epossi says Chief Ikome was abducted along with two other village chiefs who had come for the inauguration of the newly constructed Dibanda palace building. Cameroon's government says rebels abducted four other village chiefs in the northwest region last week. Two were immediately released but the whereabouts of the other two is unknown. Buea lawmaker Donald Malomba Esembe, who visited the bereaved family on Monday, says the rebels killed her father because he took part in Cameroon's first regional elections on December 6.

Vice Chairperson of the World Bank Group – IMF Staff African Society. Judith Nwana has been a powerful voice among the many groups and international stakeholders seeking a peaceful and negotiated settlement to the ongoing crisis in Southern Cameroons. She moonlighted during the fight to #BringBackOurInternet# in Cameroon and worked tirelessly with international organizations such as Access Now and Internet Sans Frontieres in highlighting the ills of internet shutdowns which was decreed by the regime in Yaoundé to cover up the ferocious intensity of its genocidal onslaught in the Southern Cameroons. It is an open secret that Judith Nwana is respectable, knowledgeable and humble. And we of the Cameroon Concord News Group can say without any fear of a counter claim that Judith Nwana is a passionate voice and strong symbol for peace in English speaking Cameroon. The choice of Judith Nwana as Cameroon Concord Person of the Year 2020 is without any difficulty. Cameroon Concord News Group readers in unprecedented numbers overwhelmingly voted for Judith Nwana. To be sure, our readers examined the candidates using every available tool linked to conflict management in the Gulf of Guinea. Our editorial desk critically examined her performance both in the Cameroon Humanitarian Relief Initiative and during the CDN's international conference on the armed conflict in Southern Cameroons that held in the US and we came to the conclusion that Judith Nwana is an African strongwoman who hates the politics of ethnicity and of leaders staying in power dividing and playing one ethnic group against the others in order to compel subservience. Her contributions to Southern Cameroons causes have included getting kids back to school in both Nigeria and Southern Cameroons, support for Southern Cameroons HIV/Aids patients and fostering prevention schemes, abused women's programs, church charities and support for disadvantaged children. Cameroon Concord News Group congratulates the Right Honorable Judith Nwana for the well-merited recognition accorded her by an overwhelming majority of Cameroon Intelligence Report and Cameroon Concord News readers.

[Cameroon: How Much Influence Do Traditional Chiefs Really Have?](#)

By Georges Douguell | December 11, 2020

A growing number of traditional chiefs are occupying leadership positions in government. During regional elections, 20 such chiefs were elected as traditional rulers. However, in reality, their influence has diminished over time. On 2 December, Cameroon's president, Paul Biya, decided to provide "financial support" to traditional chiefs standing for election as regional councillors on 6 December – a handout that was sure to make waves. The government opted to inform the public of their decision by releasing a statement, a method of communication that exempted its author, the minister of territorial

Celestin Djamen Resigns from Kamto's MRC Party

By Journal du Cameroun |
December 14, 2020

Renowned politician Celestin Djamen has announced he is resigning from the Cameroon Renaissance Movement of Professor Maurice Kamto on Monday, December 14 at a press conference in Douala where he said the Cameroon Renaissance Movement has not listened to him. His resignation did not come as a surprise after regularly criticizing the party on its decision to boycott last February Municipal and Legislative elections. Celestin Djamen joined the Cameroon Renaissance Movement on August 9, 2018 after resigning from the SDF who described the move as a non event. After joining the party, he was part of Maurice Kamto's campaign team for the 2018 Presidential election and was later appointed as the party's Secretary for human rights. On January 26, 2019, he was brutalised by security forces in Douala during a protest organised by the Cameroon Renaissance Movement and two days later, he was arrested alongside Maurice Kamto and other bigwigs of the party. They spent eight months in detention at the Kondengui maximum security prison in Yaounde before they were released on Saturday October 5 following a Presidential decision the previous day. Today, he pulled no punches in dumping the party he joined 18 months ago as he looks to begin a new adventure in his political career. "Today, political training is important. When you arrive so late in politics, you have a duty to learn. You need to have political maturity. You have to learn how to correct your mistakes. I am not saying that the President (of the CRM Maurice) Kamto is a political novice," Djamen said. "When we can't properly manage the little COVID-19 funds ... What are we going to do when we have to manage the billions? A year later I draw the political lessons and I have taken the decision to resign from the MRC."

administration, from having to mention the country's law governing such matters. As it happens, Cameroon does have a campaign finance law, but it contains no legal provisions concerning the practice of financing independent candidates like traditional chiefs. Seizing the opportunity afforded by this loophole, the head of state, who also leads the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM) – the ruling party expected to sweep the elections and win the majority of regional council seats – is presenting himself as a benefactor for the "guardians of tradition". If Biya is pulling out all the stops to remain on good terms with traditional chiefs – leaders who exert an outsize influence over their citizens in the moral and spiritual realm – it is because it is in his best interest to do so. He sees it as an investment and expects to get a good return on investment when these rulers, essentially bound to him, become regional council members. The shift from a monolithic single-party system to a competitive multi-party system in the 1990s has driven traditional chiefs to flout their duty of neutrality, with most of them choosing to join the ruling party – including the most renowned traditional ruler in the North-West Anglophone region, Fon Angwafo III, whom Biya propelled to first vice president of the CPDM. The Bamum sultan, whose rule



King Fon Angwafo III is also the First Prime Minister to the CPDM party of President Paul Biya

extends over more than half of the West region, is a member of the CPDM's Politbureau and a prominent figure in the Senate, just like the legislative body's oldest member, Victor Mukete, the supreme leader of the Bafaw people in the South-West Anglophone region. When they do not hold an elected office, these traditional chiefs turned "auxiliaries of the administration" enjoy other perks from the government. For instance, in accordance with a law enacted in 2013, they receive a monthly allowance from the state of 200,000 CFA francs (first class chiefs), 100,000 CFA francs (second class) and 50,000 CFA francs (third class), or the equivalent of \$369, \$185 and \$92, respectively. This financial assistance costs the government more than 1bn CFA francs each month. "The regime is trying to rein in traditional rulers and subjugate them. It's a strategy that helps government leaders retain their grip on power," says Evariste Fopoussi Fotso, a former national press and communications secretary for the opposition party Social Democratic Front (SDF) and author of the book *Faut-il brûler les chefferies traditionnelles ?* (published by Editions Sopecam). The country's politicians have little tolerance for traditional chiefs who go against the tide of the political authorities. In December 2019, the government dismissed Paul Marie Biloa Effa, a traditional leader in Yaoundé and special adviser to Kamto. The two regimes that have ruled the country in the time since it was colonized by the German Empire's

[Journey Into Shadow of Boko Haram Death in Cameroon](#)

By Bible Society of Cameroon | December 15, 2020

In August and September 2020, the Bible Society of Cameroon experienced two tragic losses: Jonas and Joseph, two Parkwa language literacy facilitators, were killed in separate attacks on their village in the Far North region, by Islamic militant group Boko Haram. As the main leader of the Bible Society of Cameroon, I decided to travel to their village in order to comfort the grieving families and to help me to better understand what life is like for the community as they experience repeated attacks by the Boko Haram. We rode for an hour and a half, passing through village after village abandoned due to the abuses of Boko Haram. We arrived in the village at 3pm, just as everyone was leaving to go up to the mountain for safety. People were surprised at our arrival and recognized our courage and love for them. Nobody comes to visit them anymore. Unfortunately, the families had already moved back into their hiding places at the very top of the mountain so I wasn't able to meet them. I asked the translators what conditions people face in the mountains. They explained that there are small huts in the mountains where the women and children sleep, and some adults stay in the caves. People take turns to stay awake and keep watch. From January, things become more difficult in the mountains due to water shortages. I returned very confused and very disturbed by the destruction that Boko Haram is causing in this part of the country, which has so much agricultural potential. It was during that long night that I also realised the great risk I had taken. At 7pm, just a few hours after our departure [and return to Maroua], Boko Haram attacked the villagers sheltering on the mountain. They killed one man, the father of the landlord of one of our translators. Our translator, himself, is on the list of the next victims.

Province of Westphalia have taken a carrot-and-stick approach to keeping traditional chiefs at bay.

[Cameroon: Step Toward Justice for Massacre](#)

By Human Rights Watch | December 14, 2020

The trial of three security force members accused of being involved in the massacre of 21 civilians in Ngarbuh, in Cameroon's North-West region, is due to begin on December 17, 2020. It is expected to be an important step in tackling impunity. The Ngarbuh killings, on February 14, 2020, were one



Memorial ceremony held on February 21, 2020 at the Saint Theresia Cathedral I in Kumbo, North-West region, Cameroon, for victims of the Ngarbuh massacre.

of the worst incidents of abuse by Cameroonian security forces since the crisis in the country's Anglophone regions began in late 2016. Two soldiers and a gendarme have been arrested and charged with murder, arson, destruction, violence against a pregnant woman, and disobeying orders. Seventeen members of a vigilante group and a former separatist fighter have also been charged but remain at large. While senior security force officers who may bear command responsibility have not been arrested or charged. The government initially denied the army was responsible for the killings and embarked on a smear campaign against human rights organizations and media that had exposed the massacre. But on March 1, 2020, following international pressure, including from France, President Paul Biya agreed to create a commission of inquiry. On April 21, the Cameroon government admitted their security forces bear some responsibility for the killings and in June announced the arrest of the two soldiers and a gendarme. Human Rights Watch found that government forces, including members of the Rapid Intervention Battalion, the Israeli-trained elite unit of the Cameroonian army, and armed ethnic Fulani killed 21 civilians in Ngarbuh, including 13 children and a pregnant woman, burned five homes, looted scores of other properties, and beat residents. Witnesses told Human Rights Watch that there was no confrontation between armed separatists and security forces in Ngarbuh and that the killings were deliberate and aimed at punishing a population accused of harboring separatist fighters. Human Rights Watch has expressed concerns over some of the government investigation's key findings, including claims that 5 of those killed were separatist fighters and that 13 civilians were killed in crossfire. The government commission of inquiry said the military attempted to cover up their acts by burning homes and filing a false report. Witnesses and local

human rights activists said that several witnesses were forced to flee Ngarbuh in the days following the attack, after security force members threatened and intimidated them. Some are still living in hiding. The trial will be held at a military court in Yaoundé, Cameroon's capital. Five lawyers are to represent the victims and their families, who may be in the courtroom. But it remains unclear if they will have the resources and protection necessary to make the trip. Their lawyers told Human Rights Watch that they are working on a voluntary basis and are struggling to find the necessary resources to make sure their clients can attend the trial. Cameroonian authorities, with the support of partners, including the United Nations, should work to ensure that civil parties are present in court throughout the trial and guarantee the safety of all those participating in the proceedings, including the defendants, victims, witnesses, and human rights activists and journalists involved with the trial, Human Rights Watch said. Judicial authorities should look beyond the three security force members currently facing charges and seek to investigate and prosecute senior officials who may bear command responsibility, if they knew or should have known about the killings but took insufficient measures to prevent them or punish those responsible, Human Rights Watch said.

The United States Has Failed Cameroonian Asylum-Seekers

By Eli Cahan | December 13, 2020

When William, a former Cameroonian gendarme, disobeyed an order to kill civilians, he was labeled a turncoat. William, whose name has been changed for his safety, was patrolling in Cameroon's Southwest region, which Anglophone separatists regard as part of a breakaway state; his decision not to pull the trigger on behalf of the national government carried a death sentence. With his life in imminent danger under President Paul Biya's authoritarian regime, the soldier had no choice but to flee Cameroon. Within weeks, William, 33, left behind his wife and two young children and flew to Ecuador via Nigeria. He traveled up through Central America to Mexico, braving mountains and jungles. Finally, in October 2019, he surrendered himself to the United States for asylum at the Laredo border crossing. William fled to "pursue a brighter future," said his brother-in-law, Daniel, who lives in the United States and whose name has also been changed. But that isn't what he found. Instead, William spent 13 months in detention at Jackson Parish Correctional Center in Louisiana, denied asylum and parole. His treatment there was "without a conscience," Daniel said. In detention amid the coronavirus pandemic, William faced high-risk conditions—minimal access to medical treatment, no social distancing, no personal protective equipment, and no testing—even as his peers contracted COVID-19. And like other Cameroonian asylum-seekers, William was beaten by immigration officers who forced him to sign his own deportation papers. The inhumane treatment comes despite the role of the United States in Cameroon's civil war. In addition to their colonial legacies, Western countries have fanned the flames of the crisis by indirectly bankrolling the persecution of Anglophones with funds for infrastructure and counterterrorism operations. In 2018, while the White House denounced Biya's administration, the United States donated military helicopters, turboprop jets, and drones to his arsenal. Cameroonians have fled a crisis shaped in part by the West only to be met with hostility on American shores. Since October, ICE has deported dozens of Cameroonians: On Oct. 13, 57 Cameroonians were repatriated and handed over to military custody, and on Nov. 11, 37 more—including William—followed. Placed in maximum-security prisons, none has been heard from since, according to families. Several have gone missing. Advocates say another deportation flight is scheduled for Dec. 15. After the first deportations, several U.S. lawmakers signed letters expressing "grave concerns" over the situation for Cameroonian detainees and ICE's conduct. In November, Rep. Karen Bass introduced a House resolution demanding an immediate halt to the expulsions and a Department of Justice investigation into the allegations. But as the abuses and the deportations continue, the fate of Cameroonian asylum-seekers shows how the politicized U.S. immigration system has chosen militarization over mercy.