

KLW BRIEFING

Updates for the Coalition for Dialogue and Negotiations

[Two Cameroonian Policemen Injured by Roadside Blast in Restive Anglophone Region](#)

By Xinhua | January 26, 2021

At least two policemen were injured by a roadside improvised explosive device in Cameroon's restive Anglophone region of Southwest overnight into Tuesday, according to local officials. The members of security were conducting a routine security patrol in the seaside resort town of Limbe when the device exploded, officials said. They were taken to Limbe Regional Hospital for treatment. There was no word on their condition. Armed separatists, who claimed responsibility for the attack, released a video of the blast on social media early Tuesday stating that it was part of their strategy to disrupt the Africa Nations Championship (CHAN) which is underway in the Central African nation. Residents said, the streets have been deserted and most of the CHAN matches in the town played in scanty stadiums after separatists announced a lockdown last week.

[The Coalition Congratulates Antony J. Blinken on his Confirmation as the 71st Secretary of State](#)

By Coalition for Dialogue and Negotiations | January 26, 2021

Washington, London, Berlin - The Coalition for Dialogue and Negotiations congratulates Secretary Antony John Blinken for



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his Senate confirmation today as the 71st Secretary of State of the United States. Secretary Blinken is deeply qualified and is no stranger to Africa and the situation in Cameroon. During his Senate confirmation hearing he spoke in great detail on the importance of deepening United States engagement with Africa. Regarding the escalating conflict in the Southern Cameroons, we particularly welcomed Secretary Blinken's commitment to being fully engaged in seeking a durable solution. The Coalition for Dialogue and Negotiations reiterates its deep commitment in working with Secretary Blinken and the entire United States government in seeking a lasting, negotiated solution that addresses the root causes of this armed conflict. We offer our heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to the Secretary as he undertakes a very difficult challenge.

[The Brexit Effect: Trade Deals Outrank Human Rights Concerns](#)

By Steve Shaw | January 21, 2021

[Bamenda-Based Journalist Kidnapped by Unidentified Gunmen](#)

By Journal du Cameroun | January 20, 2021

The whereabouts of Fung John Ngum, radio host and reporter based in Bamenda, chief town of the restive North West region of Cameroon remain unknown hours after his abduction by unidentified gunmen. No armed group has claimed his kidnap and neither has his family members nor his friends been hinted on his whereabouts. According to reports, the journalist who is co-host of Press and Associate, a flagship programme of Bamenda-based Ndefcam radio was taken away early Wednesday January 20 around Che Street Ntarikon in Bamenda as he set out for work. The Cameroon Association of English-speaking Journalists (CAMASEJ) to whom he belongs has issued a press release demanding for his immediate release stressing that journalism is not a crime. The association considers his kidnap as an attack on press freedom and the right of media professionals to practice without fear or favour, threats and molestation.



Cameroon has become a country divided by language. The African nation is on the brink of civil war and the French-speaking Government has claimed that the cause is violent English-speaking separatists who want to create their own nation. But many English speakers and human rights groups have claimed that, in reality, the Government is behind much of the violence. Witnesses have documented soldiers shooting civilians indiscriminately, schools being attacked and homes torched. The UN Human Rights Office has said that this has caused the displacement of 700,000 people and, on New Year's Day, the US Senate passed a bipartisan resolution which condemned the French-speaking Government of President Paul Biya. It accused Biya of repressing English speakers politically and economically for decades – and of using excessive force in crushing protests. But, as this has been taking place, the UK Government has been celebrating one of its latest post-Brexit trade deals – with Cameroon. The Department for International Trade released a statement that praised the deal for allowing businesses to trade “without any additional barriers or tariffs” while the Minister for International Trade Ranil Jayawardena praised it for reinforcing Britain's commitment “to supporting developing countries” – as well as Cameroon's “economic development”. It was quietly signed-off without any scrutiny from MPs, who were not even allowed to read its contents. Deals with brutal regimes are set to continue after the Government narrowly won a vote this week to remove an amendment to the Trade Bill, which would have forced ministers to withdraw from deals with nations the UK High Court ruled are guilty of mass killings. The amendment saw 33 Conservative MPs side with the opposition, including former party leader Iain Duncan Smith. Speaking in the House of Commons, Duncan Smith said it would have been “a sound legal basis for the Government to engage with its obligations under genocide prevention in a way that is consistent with long-standing UK policy”. He was backed by fellow Conservative MP Tobias Ellwood, who said that the debate showed “a temporary absence in clarity” about what Britain stands for and what it is willing to defend: “The world watched and hesitated when genocide took place in Rwanda and indeed in Syria; let's not hesitate again. Let's have the moral courage to stand tall in what we believe in and what we are willing to defend.” But the majority of Tory MPs argued that such an amendment would remove the Government's power to make decisions on trade policy. Conservative MP Liam Fox – who has often argued in favour of arms deals with repressive regimes such as those in the Middle East – said that he would not support the amendment because “trade policy should be conducted via the elected government”. He also argued that he voted for Britain to leave the European Union “to take back control” – but this principle should not involve giving “more power to judges in the United Kingdom”.... Britain's rupture from the world's liberal, democratic nucleus will compel it to strike deals with these regimes and tolerate the crimes of repressive administrations in exchange for trade.... “Anyone who cares about the human

Justice for Detained Cameroon Journalist Paul Chouta

By Bob Koigi | January 25, 2021

Paul Chouta, an independent journalist and a fierce critic of President Paul Biya's government in Cameroon, has been detained without trial for more than 600 days - his case having been postponed 16 times. So far, the courts have failed to provide credible reasons as to why they continue to detain him and infringe on his right to freedom from arbitrary detention. The journey leading to the arrest of the journalist who runs an online news platform, Cameroon Web, and manages a famous Facebook page called Le TGV de l'info, has been long and painful. At one time, Chouta was attacked, beaten and stabbed near his house by unknown people. In 2019, he was detained for what police called publishing defamatory content and fake news. He has been vocal in criticising the government and has written extensively on corruption and police abuse. Freedom of speech is sacrosanct. As media freedom continues to thin in Cameroon, with journalists being detained without trial, taken to court on frivolous charges, threatened, beaten and even murdered, the international community must amplify the call to the Cameroon government to respect and allow journalists to do their work without fear or favour. Both the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) have clearly spelled out the right to freedom of expression, and Paul and thousands of other Cameroon journalists must be allowed to unequivocally enjoy that right. The world should demand the immediate release of Paul.

rights record of China must also care deeply about the records of Egypt, Turkey and Cameroon or Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Brazil," Labour MP Emily Thornberry said in the debate. "The [US] Senate resolution condemned with great force the atrocities committed by the Anglophone separatist militias and it speaks with equal power about the actions of the Cameroon Government, including torture and sexual abuse, massacres and burnings of villages, use of live ammunition against protesters, arbitrary arrests and unlawful detention, forced disappearances and deaths in custody, attacks on journalists and the regular killing of civilians including women, children and the elderly." Thornberry said she wondered what senators in the US would think if they knew that "on that very same day" the UK had celebrated a new trade agreement with Cameroon. "A trade deal agreed by ministers, apparently with no consideration and clearly no concern for the persistent gross violations of international human rights that are taking place in Cameroon," she continued. "A trade deal which none of us in this House bar ministers on the bench opposite have even been allowed to read let alone debate or approve." The Government won a narrow victory in the Commons – by 319 votes to 308 – that will allow it to continue signing trade deals with nations accused of genocide. However, it is expected that a further amendment may later be approved by MPs, allowing judges to advise the Government about whether a nation has committed genocide, after which ministers can make their decision. Given the economic pressures wrought by Brexit, it seems unlikely that the Government will be guided by human rights and a belief in moral leadership.

Why Cameroon is Obsessed with Hosting the Afcon

By Daniel Ekonde | January 22, 2021

The central African country [Cameroon] is desperate to host the continent despite the many challenges it has faced since being given the right to stage the 2019 Africa Cup of Nations (Afcon). They were stripped of that right when they were deemed unprepared, but given the 2021 edition instead. And then the Covid-19 pandemic hit, pushing the men's continental showpiece to 2022. The country's readiness to host the Afcon is being tested in the African Nations Championship – the Afcon for home-based players – that started on 16 January 2021, and will go on until 7 February. The country's obsession with hosting the continental competition might be motivated by the benefits it derived from it in the past. It hopes for a replication of these advantages. Cameroon hosted the competition in 1972. And two stadiums were built then: the Ahmadou Ahidjo Stadium (named after Cameroon's first president) and Douala Reunification Stadium. And, until 2016 when the country hosted the women's edition of Afcon, these were the only facilities to meet international standards. Now that the country has an

Boko Haram Attack Leaves Two Dead in F/N Region

By Journal du Cameroun |
January 26, 2021

At least two persons have been killed in Ziguouagué, Far North Region of Cameroon, following a deadly attack carried out by suspected elements of the Boko Haram group. The attack occurred on Monday, January 25 as armed men stormed the locality, burning down houses and property before shooting down a student who was returning from school and a community leader, His Majesty Modou Cheriou. The assailants later took off with some of the villagers' property even before defense and security forces could be alerted by members of the vigilante committee. Attacks by Boko Haram fighters have increased in recent months with dozens of soldiers, villagers killed and houses torched as Cameroon continues to grapple with the violence up North.

opportunity to host another Afcon, the government has built footballing infrastructure in many regions. Five of the country's 10 regions now have over 30 stadiums and training pitches to be used for the Afcon. "We want to be one of the best in Africa," says tournament manager, Michel Dissake Mbarga. Moreover, with improved facilities, the country's football fraternity – league strength and competitiveness – improves. This results in local teams performing better in continental competitions. But this Afcon could do more than just improve the country's infrastructure, it could also be a vehicle to heal a divided and wounded nation. On a cold grey night on 5 February 2017, in Cameroon's Southwest region's capital, Buea, there were countless groups of Cameroonians watching their national team play in the Afcon final. This despite the Anglophone region being involved in calls and actions for secession. Buea, the centre of the Anglophone community, had just seen its university students beaten up and some raped because they called for school reforms. This later escalated to a call for separation from the country's Francophone majority, who make up 80% of Cameroon. However, Vincent Aboubakar's 88th minute goal, which gave Cameroon a 2-1 win over Egypt in the final, changed the atmosphere from anger to joy and fanfare. There even was the clacking of pots and pans in celebration throughout the national territory, even in English-speaking regions. That victory served as a good propaganda tool for President Paul Biya. Cameroon's Anglophone region had recently been protesting and calling for their own state, saying they are being marginalised by the country's Francophone majority. Cameroon, then, won the Afcon at just the right time. President Biya ordered the trophy to be paraded in the capital towns of Cameroon. There was a similar national tour of the Indomitable Lions' Afcon trophy in 1984 when he faced an attempted coup. "Sports and politics are intertwined. Periods of sports domination always have helped in consolidating political power," said Enow. "It's an opportunity to thank the government of Cameroon, especially the head of state for all the efforts that have been put. People don't imagine what effort it is to build stadiums, to ameliorate infrastructure: roads, hospitals..." Seidou Mbombo Njoya told the press after CAF postponed the 2021 Afcon to 2022. Using sport, especially major tournaments, to pacify an angry nation is nothing new. Many authoritarian leaders across the globe have done this. The overall mission for Biya is to win back the hearts of Cameroon's youthful majority. Cameroonians aged 37 and below have known just one president. And under his leadership, the country has been battered by ethnic divisions and conflicts.

Queen Mothers Pursue Quest for Peace in Anglophone Regions

By Journal du Cameroun | January 25, 2021

Queen Mothers in the North West Region of Cameroon have once again continued with their unstoppable quest to see peace return to the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon. On Sunday January 24, 2021, the Mafors and mothers of the North West again converged on the Bamenda Grand stand to mourn and deplore the killings resulting from what has come to be known today as the Anglophone crisis. They came from Bambili, Bambui, Nkwen, Mendankwe, Ndu and Akum just



to name but these. As usual they prayed, mourned and sent messages to the belligerents in their local languages. Peace they said is the only thing they want. And added that the ongoing crisis is only taking us as a region backwards. In her exhortation, Rev Caroline Memo urged the various churches to speak out against this scourge which has imposed untold suffering on our people. She warned that by not speaking out we are encouraging the war. Meanwhile in recognition of the efforts and sacrifices made by Mafor Yah Sunday Epse Achidi to organise the morning exercise since November 2020 following the Kumba school killings of October 24, 2020, the Mafors and women offered a special supplication to God requesting him to keep special watch over her as well as protect her from every danger so she can continue with her good works. The event ended with a peaceful March on the commercial avenue with women brandishing placards with messages specially crafted for the context. It is worth noting that today's event was the third since inception following the Kumba school killings of October 24, 2020. At the first edition in November, the mourning ended with a solidarity visit to the DDR center in Bamenda with Mafor Yah Sunday Epse Achidi offering the ex-fighters foodstuff and cash. On December 24, 2020 she ended the ceremony with a Christmas come together with physically challenged IDPs resident in Bamenda 2 subdivision during which she handed them foodstuff for Christmas. Sunday January 24's event held in the absence of its vision bearer Mafor Yah Sunday Epse Achidi who was held back by other very pressing work-related issues. But the mobilisation and turnout confirmed the fact that the Mafors and mothers of the region are committed to the cause and ready to stop at nothing until peace returns.