

KLW BRIEFING

Updates for the Coalition for Dialogue and Negotiation

Cameroonians Displaced by Crisis Return on New Year

By Moki Edwin Kindzeka | January 02, 2021

Hundreds of Cameroonians displaced by the country's separatist crisis, especially along the Nigerian border, have, with the new year, returned to their communities for the first time since the beginning of the conflict, now in its fourth year. Humanitarian groups, churches and local councils have been giving aid to returnees in need. The returnees tell stories of their mistreatment in the hands of both the military and separatist fighters, but both the troops and separatist deny wrongdoing. About 300 people displaced by Cameroon's separatist conflict assembled in the English-speaking town of Mamfe, 30 miles east of the Nigerian border, to receive food and mattresses from the government and humanitarian agencies. Mamfe's mayor, Robertson Tabechong Ashu, says among the 300 are 120 civilians returning from Nigeria. He spoke on Cameroon state media CRTV. "During the crisis, these people were seriously touched. They traveled to Nigeria for safety and today they have come back because of the peace and serenity and apart from this, they have also registered in the presidential plan for reconstruction and development. That means their household equipment will be given back to them," said Ashu. In April, the government announced what it called the Presidential Plan for the Reconstruction and Development of the English-speaking Northwest and Southwest regions. The reconstruction and development plan envisages the construction and equipping of 12,000 private homes and public buildings destroyed by four years of fighting. The separatists encourage people returning but warn them against collaborating with the military and the central government in Yaoundé.

Risch, Cardin, Colleagues Applaud Senate Passage of Their Resolution Condemning Violence in Anglophone Cameroon

By Chairman's Press | January 05, 2021

U.S. Senators Jim Risch (R-Idaho), chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and Ben Cardin (D-Md.), ranking member of the Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere, Transnational Crime, Civilian Security, Democracy, Human Rights, and Global Women's Issues, along with 18 other senators, applauded the Senate's recent passage of their resolution calling on the Government of Cameroon and separatist armed groups from the English-speaking Northwest and Southwest regions to end all violence, respect the human rights of all Cameroonians, and participate in genuinely inclusive international mediation toward resolving the ongoing civil conflict in Anglophone Cameroon. "While the bipartisan support shown by the U.S. Senate conveys our concern for the human suffering and ongoing marginalization experienced by civilians in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon, it is only a first step in the role the international community, including the United States, must play in encouraging both the Government of Cameroon and armed separatist groups to engage in dialogue, address grievances, end the conflict, and importantly, seek accountability for the atrocities that have been committed," said the senators. "Due to the leadership shown by the U.S. Senate, we look forward to the United States taking new, concrete steps to encourage real participation in conflict resolution processes, so that the people of the Northwest and Southwest regions of Cameroon can begin to recover from this dark period." S.Res.684 was agreed to in the Senate with an amendment and an amended preamble by unanimous consent on January 1, 2021. Key provisions of the resolution include encouraging all parties of the Anglophone conflict in Cameroon to:

- Conclude and uphold an immediate ceasefire.
- Guarantee unfettered humanitarian access and assistance to the Northwest and Southwest regions.

[Buea Holds Ecumenical Service to Pray for End of Anglophone Crisis](#)

By Journal du Cameroun | January 04, 2021

Heads of religious institutions like the Catholic Church, Presbyterian Church in Cameroon, Cameroon Baptist Convention as well as the Muslim faith all led the population in prayers at the Molyko Omnisports stadium. The gathering fell in line with the ecumenical week of prayers for peace and Justice in Cameroon launched by this group of faith-based denominations. To start the day, the various religious leaders led the population in a peace march through the streets of Molyko to the Omnisports stadium where prayers were conducted. The gathering held under the slogan “Farmers of peace; plant peace and harvest peace”, the population was called upon to shun hate, promote peace through their words and actions. Addressing the crowd gathered, the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon, the Right Reverend Samuel Fonki told the population that their roles as farmers of peace should be to sow seeds in whatever they do for all to harvest peace. He told the population they will either be remembered for creating or solving a problem thus their actions should always be guarded by principles of peace. On his part the Imam of Buea, Alhaji Mohammed Abubakar urged the population to adopt peace and justice as their main virtues. He added that for society to strive, God’s word must be preached peacefully. In the name of every religion, let peace be the focus, he said. Other rallying calls from the Roman Catholic Church as well as the Cameroon Baptist Convention called on the population not to pay evil with evil but to “put the sword” back in its place and show the path of peace to all “evildoers”.

- Exercise restraint and ensure that political protests are peaceful.
- Establish a credible process for an inclusive dialogue that includes all relevant stakeholders to achieve a sustainable political solution that respects the rights and freedoms of all of the people of Cameroon.

[Cameroon’s President Praises Return to Peace](#)

By Moki Edwin Kindzeka | January 01, 2021

Cameroonian President Paul Biya said in a December 31 address to the nation that newfound collaboration between his military and civilians has greatly



contributed to bringing about peace in the troubled English-speaking regions of the country. In a message broadcast on all local radio and TV stations, Cameroonian President Paul Biya said for over 10 years, his country has faced several external threats. He said the incursions of rebels fighting to topple the government of the neighboring Central African Republic is causing untold suffering among civilians on Cameroon’s eastern border. Biya said that although Boko Haram’s ability to attack on a large scale has been drastically reduced, the Nigeria-based terrorist group still remains a menace to civilians in northern Cameroon, where kidnappings and suicide bombings have been rampant. Biya said the most dangerous security threat the country is facing is in the western regions, where separatists are fighting to create an English-speaking state out of the French-speaking majority country. Biya accused fighters of beheading civilians, killing children at school and torching public buildings. He said such crimes are a shock to human consciences. He says his military will relentlessly hunt all the perpetrators and make sure they are brought to justice. He says he is happy that public opinion, particularly in the two English-speaking regions, have now realized that the so-called separatists are actually nothing more than murderers, and murderers of innocent children. Biya congratulated the military for what he said was a significant reduction observed in the activities of separatist fighters. He expressed his gratitude to the population for collaborating with the troops by reporting suspected fighters hiding in local communities. Biya said it has been difficult to completely stop the fighters because of support, he says, that comes from Cameroonians living outside

the country. Biya says he is appealing to all friendly countries to help stop the massacres in Cameroon by bringing to book all suspected sponsors and the organizations financing and running armed gangs in English-speaking regions of his country. He says a majority of those sponsoring the killing in Cameroon are hiding in Western countries. He says it is the wish of Cameroon that all those identified at the end of investigations as initiators or accomplices be punished. Cameroon has always accused Western countries, including the United States, of harboring sympathizers of the separatist crisis. Separatists have described Biya's message on social media as a non-event and said they will fight until they achieve independence. General Valere Nka is commander of Cameroon troops fighting the separatists in the English-speaking North-West region. He says while Biya's message was being delivered, Cameroon's troops were battling separatists. "We have to continue to clear [rebel] camps to make sure that all those Amba Generals [fighters] are neutralized and then the population will live in peace," said Nka.

A New Year Glimmer of Hope for Cameroon

By Rebecca Tinsley | January 04, 2021

After four years of conflict, people living in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon may finally have reason to be optimistic. On New Year's Day, the US Senate passed a strongly-worded resolution paving the way for punitive sanctions on those responsible for atrocities in Cameroon. In a rare bipartisan motion, the US Congress slammed the Francophone-dominated government of President Paul Biya, accusing it of repressing Anglophone citizens both politically and economically for decades. The Senators also cite the Yaounde administration's corruption and allegedly fraudulent elections. The resolution calls for targeted smart sanctions against armed actors implicated in human rights abuses, it demands unfettered humanitarian access to the conflict zone, it calls for the Biya government to participate in mediated talks to address the root causes of the conflict, and it commits the US to continue to limit its security assistance to Cameroon. Lord Alton of Liverpool has raised the Anglophone issue in Parliament since the outbreak of the conflict. Commenting on the US Congress resolution he said, "This now puts additional pressure on the British government, as the former colonial power in the Southern Cameroons. The UK must apply targeted smart sanctions against armed individuals implicated in human rights abuses in this devastating conflict. It is no longer possible for Britain to maintain a detached position while millions of Africans who cherish their English legal and school systems, and the English language, are asking for our moral support. The UK must exercise its diplomatic influence to press the regime of President Biya to attend mediated peace talks." In an interview with Independent Catholic News, Dr Chris Fomunyoh, senior director for Africa at the National Democratic Institute in Washington DC, and a native of Cameroon, commented, "One of the innovations with Resolution 684 is its reference to targeted sanctions against perpetrators and proponents of violence, whether in uniform or among civilian leadership or among the armed groups. Certainly, the killings and atrocities that have become the hallmarks of this conflict can no longer be condoned." The Congressional resolution condemns the excessive force used by Cameroon armed forces in crushing peaceful protest against the imposition of French laws and schooling in the Anglophone regions. The US resolution notes the burning of villages, live ammunition used against non-violent protestors, and the arbitrary arrest, detention and torture of opposition leaders.