

# KLW BRIEFING

## Updates for the Coalition for Dialogue and Negotiations

**The Southern Cameroons Incident Tracker:** <https://reportscatrocities.info>

### **Ambazonia Fighters Ambush Two Soldiers in Restive NW Region**

By Journal du Cameroun |  
February 26, 2021

At least two soldiers have been killed and several others injured in Kumbo, Bui Division following an ambush laid by Ambazonia separatist fighters, sources have said. According to sources, the soldiers were on patrol during the night on Wednesday, February 24 when their vehicle landed on an improvised explosive device. Though it did not produce serious damage, the soldiers came down to vehicle to assess the situation and were caught by surprise with gunshots from neighbouring bushes. After long exchange of fire, two of their colleagues; Nkoa Kede and Divine Mussongue were killed while others were injured before the attackers took off. The incident created panic early on Thursday in Kumbo as soldiers invaded several neighbourhoods in search of separatist fighters as gunshots were heard flying in some neighbourhoods which forced residents to remain indoors.

### **Dr. Christoph Hoffmann, German Member of Parliament Joins the Advisory Board of the Coalition**

By Coalition for Dialogue and Negotiations | February 28, 2021

The Coalition for Dialogue and Negotiations today announces the addition of Dr. Christoph Hoffmann, member of the German Parliament, to its Advisory Board of trusted advisors. The Advisory Board includes well renown leaders who help inform the strategy of the Coalition, working closely with the Steering Committee. **Dr. Christoph Hoffmann** has since 2017 been a member of the German Bundestag, member of the Committee for Economic Cooperation and Development, Chairman of the parliamentary group on Central Africa, deputy member of the committee for food and agriculture development, policy spokesman for the FDP parliamentary group, chairman of the working group on economic cooperation and development, deputy chairman of the working group on local politics, Member of the parliamentary group West Africa and the parliamentary group Ukraine, member of the parliamentary circles rail noise, aircraft noise and rail traffic. Dr. Hoffmann is a board member of the German



## NW Queen Mothers Cry Louder for Peace in Anglophone Regions

By Journal du Cameroun | February 25, 2021

Queen mothers in the North West Region have reiterated their commitment to mourn the deaths as well as make their voices louder for an end to the killings in the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon. They were out again on Wednesday, February 24 for a public demonstration in Bamenda to denounce the recent killing as well as pray for peace and stability in the two troubled regions as well as the entire nation. The past weeks have been bloody in the North West and South West Regions, notably the brutal killing of three traditional rulers in Essoh Atah, Lebialem Division while an 87-year old woman was killed in Nwa. Meeting at the Bamenda ceremonial ground to mourn these killings, the Queen mothers condemned these acts and reiterated calls for children still in the bushes to drop their weapons. Though not present at the mourning because of other duties, the organizer of the event, Mafor Judith Yah Sunday sent a message to comfort affected communities and reiterated her resolve to push on with the initiative until sustainable peace is attained. "I cannot be happy while my sisters, mothers, from the NW and SW Regions are suffering. Children are killed day and night. I cannot sit in Yaounde comfortably when blood is being shed. My sisters cannot go to the farms. They cannot go to the markets to do business. They cannot send their children to school," Mafor Yah Sunday said in a message read by her personal representative, Benedict Ndinwa. The Queen mothers equally used the opportunity to praise Mafor Yah Sunday for the initiative which they said is bearing fruits as more children are dropping their weapons and leaving the bushes.

Africa Foundation, deputy member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, deputy member of the Interparliamentary Union (IPU), member of the World Food Working Group of GIZ GmbH, member of the advisory board for population and development of German Foundation for World Population (DSW), member of the ASA program advisory board of Engagement Global gGmbH, member of the Mittelstand Alliance Africa of the Federal Association of SMEs (BVMW), and member of the Friends of Walter Scheel eV. "We are honored to have Dr. Hoffmann join our Advisory Board to help steer CDN in seeking for a mediated and negotiated settlement to the armed conflict" said Judith Nwana, Co-Chair of the Coalition for Dialogue and Negotiations. "In addition to his tremendous advocacy and engagement, Dr. Hoffmann brings with him a wealth of experience in parliamentary involvement in ending the civil war." Dr. Hoffmann joins a Board that includes Former Liberian President **H.E Amos Sawyer**, Former United States Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs **Ambassador Herman J. Cohen**; Former Resident Representative for Sierra Leone & Liberia of the African Development Bank **Dr. Margaret Kilo**; Former U.S. Ambassador to Liberia and Uganda **Ambassador Deborah Malac**; Senior Associate and Regional Director National Democratic Institute **Dr. Christopher Fomunyoh**; and Founders of Pave The Way Foundation **Gary and Meredith Krupp**.

## Soldiers in Cameroon, A Close U.S. Ally, Commit Mass Rape, Report Says

By Nick Turse | February 26, 2021

IN THE PREDAWN hours of March 1, 2020, more than 50 Cameroonian soldiers entered the village of Ebam and conducted an atrocity-filled raid that included the rape of at least 20 women, according to a new report from Human Rights Watch. Over three hours, the soldiers systematically broke into 75 homes, looting money and goods, arrested 36 men, and later tortured a number of them. The soldiers also executed one of those men. This raid appears to be the worse case of mass rape committed by a U.S. ally in Africa in recent years. Over the last decade, the United States aided Cameroon's security forces to the tune of almost \$224 million, according to Security Assistance Monitor, which tracks U.S. security aid and arms sales. Over that same span, U.S. troops trained elite Cameroonian forces and even saw combat alongside them. The U.S. military also built up a network of outposts integral to drone operations in the region. In the wake of revelations of

## MPs Face Backlash Over Letter to US Congress

By Journal du Cameroun | March 02, 2021

Some Members of Parliament who recently addressed a letter to the US Congress on the situation in Cameroon have come under heavy criticism from political actors, the civil society and the public. In the letter, the members of the lower house of parliament accused the US Congress of misleading the public on the situation in Cameroon. They accused the US Congress of fueling the crisis in the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon with their critical position. However, the letter has not gone down well with the population since it was released to the public. Jean Michel Nintcheu, Member of Parliament of the Social Democratic Front hit out at his peers for addressing the letter describing it as gross disregard to the sufferings of the people of the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon. Surprisingly, SDF parliamentarian, Honourable Joshua Osih signed the letter and has since come out to defend himself in the face of heavy criticisms.



atrocities by Cameroonian forces in recent years, the U.S. government continued to voice strong support for its military partners there. More recently, however, the U.S. scaled back security assistance due in part to Cameroon's troubled human rights record. Documents obtained by The Intercept via the Freedom of Information Act also show that two U.S. bases in Cameroon may be closed. The documents show that U.S. Africa Command recommended the closure of the outposts in the north of the country — a drone base at Garoua and a separate outpost in Maroua. The documents are vague about the reasons, noting only that the bases were “no longer operationally required” due to a “termination of activities or lack of requirements.” Ebam, where the 2020 attack took place, lies about 570 miles south of Garoua. The Human Rights Watch report provides graphic evidence from survivors. “One of them removed my dress and raped me on the ground,” a 45-year-old woman from Ebam told HRW. “He abused me for over 15 minutes. He searched my clothes, took my phone and money, and left.” She was one of 35 people — 20 of them rape survivors — with direct knowledge of the crimes to speak to HRW. There has reportedly been no Cameroonian government investigation, much less accountability, for these atrocities. “Sexual violence and torture are heinous crimes that governments have an obligation to immediately, effectively, and independently investigate and to bring those responsible to justice,” said Ida Sawyer, deputy director of HRW's Africa division. “One year on, survivors of the Ebam attack are desperate for justice and reparations, and they live with the disturbing knowledge that those who abused them are walking free and have faced no consequences whatsoever.” The Cameroonian government did not respond to questions from HRW about the abuses. The Cameroonian Embassy in Washington, D.C., similarly ignored The Intercept's repeated requests for comment. The attack on Ebam occurred in Cameroon's South-West region. Four men from Ebam who were arrested by government forces said they were taken to a military base in Besongabang, about five miles from their village, and tortured by soldiers in an effort to force them to admit to supporting the armed separatists. “The military beat us with their hands and other objects,” one of the victims told HRW. “I was hit many times. While they beat us, they accused us of sheltering the Amba boys [separatists]. We had no answers to give about the Amba, so they beat us even more strongly. I had bruises on my back and buttocks for over two weeks and was in pain.” The testimony echoes a 2017 investigation conducted by The Intercept and the London-based research firm Forensic Architecture which found that a Cameroonian military base known as Salak, which was home to American personnel and drones, was also the scene of illegal imprisonment, brutal torture, and even killings by Cameroonian troops. Nearly 60 victims held there described being subjected to water torture, beaten with electric cables and boards, or tied and suspended with ropes, among other abuses. Last year, the U.S. Department of State issued a report

that chronicled “unlawful or arbitrary killings, including extrajudicial killings” by Cameroon’s security forces as well as atrocities by separatists. After this article was published, a State Department spokesperson told The Intercept via email, “We are aware of a number of military operations in early 2020 that resulted in allegations that government forces killed and/or raped civilians and destroyed homes or other properties. We condemn in the strongest terms any targeting of civilians with violence and extend our condolences to all those who may have been affected. Such behavior by security forces undermines both public faith in authorities and efforts to end this conflict. We strongly urge the government of Cameroon to investigate allegations of human rights violations and hold those responsible to account.” According to the spokesperson, the U.S. has “significantly reduced security assistance because the government of Cameroon had not responded to credible accusations of gross violations of human rights by its security forces.” Nonetheless, between fiscal years 2019 and 2020, the State Department still earmarked \$7.2 million in military assistance for Cameroon, including support for intelligence activities, surveillance and reconnaissance platforms, and small boat training. “We continue to review security assistance on a case-by-case basis so that assistance we provide aligns with U.S. interests, including promotion of human rights,” the spokesperson said. “U.S. law requires those receiving our security assistance be vetted prior to receiving assistance.” According to HRW, more needs to be done. “We call on the United States, as well as on Cameroon’s other international partners, to express concern about the human rights abuses we documented, including sexual violence, and urge Cameroon’s government to ensure a rights-respecting counterinsurgency strategy in the Anglophone regions,” said Ilaria Allegrozzi, the senior Central Africa researcher at HRW. “As a member of the United Nations Security Council, the U.S. should press to add the situation in the Anglophone regions as a priority item into the agenda of the Security Council so that human rights abuses committed by soldiers and by armed separatists can be addressed and perpetrators held accountable.”

## **Calls for Vatican to Join Mediation Efforts in Cameroon Conflict**

By Rebecca Tinsley | March 02, 2021

Civil society groups in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon are urging the Vatican to join a Swiss-led peace process, as the security situation in the central African nation deteriorates further. Local activists believe that Pope Francis has more influence over the Cameroon leadership than any other leader or country. Their plea follows a recent visit by the Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Pietro Parolin to Cameroon's president, Paul Biya, and the Anglophone North West and South West. Cardinal Parolin met President Biya on January 29th, followed by a visit to the Anglophone region. The Papal envoy celebrated Mass with Archbishop Andrew Nkea Fuanya in the mainly Anglophone Bamenda archdiocese in the North West and South West. The Cardinal also attended a meeting at which local people described the atrocities being endured by unarmed civilians. He told the audience, "How can the body of Christ be neutral in the midst of injustice?" He conveyed Pope Francis's concern, offering to mediate negotiations. Anglophone journalist Mimi Mefo writes, "By this very act, the Holy See has departed from the condemnations made by the international community for the last four years, to take concrete action on the ground." The Swiss NGO, Humanitarian Dialogue (Swiss HD), is trying to bring the Yaounde authorities and Anglophone representatives together in peace talks. Initially, Yaounde denied the country was in crisis. More recently, the government has refused to negotiate with armed groups which it labels terrorists. Africa Intelligence reports that officials around Biya continue to believe their military strategy will prevail. Consequently, the government is transferring weapons from the Far North, where Cameroon is fighting Boko Haram, to the Anglophone regions (as reported in Foreign Policy). This policy leaves civilians in the Far North vulnerable to attack by Islamist militants. Local civil society groups (who must remain anonymous for their own safety) are calling on the Vatican to join and actively support Swiss HD in offering to mediate inclusive peace negotiations. In addition, the Ambazonian Coalition Team has

written to the Vatican, urging The Holy See to engage fully with the Swiss HD mediation process. In 2019, Catholic bishops from around the world lobbied Biya to stop the bloodshed and enter talks. The government has previously declined an offer by local bishops to mediate. According to Anglophone media sources, Christians are no longer free to attend Mass in some mission stations, and all sides are accused of harassing the church and priests. Anglophone priests have been kidnapped, and several have been killed. Judith Nwana, co-chair of the Coalition for Dialogue and Negotiations, comments, "The Cameroon government has never committed in good faith the willingness to negotiate. They will only accept international mediation and negotiations if pressured by the international community. The Vatican can leverage its influence within the international, political and diplomatic arena to make that happen because the atrocities being committed on Southern Cameroonians is no other than a genocide. The Coalition for Dialogue and Negotiations is hopeful that Southern Cameroonians and armed leaders would accept a multilateral mediation initiative led by the Vatican, the United States, and other allies for a negotiated settlement to be reached, one that is credible, without any pre-conditions and addresses the root cause(s) of the civil war."