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Chad's President Idriss Déby Dies After Clashes with Rebels

By BBC | April 20, 2021

Chad's President Idriss Déby has died of his injuries following clashes with rebels in the north of the country at the weekend, the army has said. The announcement came a day after provisional election results projected he would win a sixth term in office. The government and parliament have been dissolved. A curfew has also been imposed and the borders have been shut. Déby, 68, spent more than three decades in power and was one of Africa's longest-serving leaders. An army officer by training, he came to power in 1990 through an armed uprising. He was a long-time ally of France and other Western powers in the battle against jihadist groups in the Sahel region of Africa. Déby "breathed his last defending the sovereign nation on the battlefield", an army general said on state TV on Tuesday. He had gone to the front line, several hundred kilometres north of the capital N'Djamena, at the weekend to visit troops battling rebels belonging to a group calling itself Fact (the Front for Change and Concord in Chad). A military council led by Déby's son, a 37-year-old four star general, will govern for the next 18 months. Mahamat Idriss Déby Itno will lead the council but "free and democratic" elections will be held once the transition period is over, the army said in its statement. Ahead of the election on 11 April, Déby campaigned on a platform of bringing peace and security to the region. But there has been growing unhappiness over his government's management of Chad's oil resources.



Republic of Cameroon's Response to Open Letter to United States Secretary of State Antony Blinken on the "Anglophone Crisis" in Cameroon

By Cameroon Members of Parliament | April 9, 2021

Dear Secretary Blinken,

We, the members of Parliament of the Cameroon House of Assembly of the Republic of Cameroon, with reference to the open letter addressed to your esteemed office on the "Anglophone Crisis" dated April 6, 2021 by a collective of organizations based in the United States of America namely,

- Cameroon Humanitarian Initiative
- Coalition for Dialogue and Negotiations
- Consortium of Ethiopian Human Rights Organizations
- JuventudesXLaPaz
- Neustra Agenda/ Our Dialogue
- Presbyterian Church USA
- Refugee Council Australia
- Sam Soya Center for Democracy and Human Rights
- The Global Campaign for Peace and Justice in Cameroon
- Torture Abolition and Survivors Support Coalition International (TASSC International)
- World Council of Churches (WCC)

Would like to provide further information and clarifications on the prevailing situation in the English Speaking regions of Cameroon in order to dispel the inexactitudes and misconceptions contained in the Open Letter to your office by the above mentioned organizations.

Our dear fatherland Cameroon, is witnessing an unprecedented crisis since the late 2016 in which labour, trade and linguistic disputes have morphed into a hitherto unimaginable crisis which has brought untold suffering, misery, desolation, and armed conflict in our once peace loving country.

Mr. Secretary of State, this crisis is threatening the foundations of our nationhood, our national unity, our efforts towards democracy and our territorial integrity. In the past couple of years, the people of Cameroon in general and those of the predominantly English

Freed Cameroon Captives Says Separatists Chopped Off Their Ears and Fingers

By Moki Edwin Kindzeka | April 19, 2021

Cameroon's military has freed nine civilians who say they were held hostage by anglophone separatists for close to two months. Some of the freed hostages say the rebels tortured them, chopping off their ears and fingers. Dozens of people on Monday visited the military camp in the English-speaking town of Bamenda. The visitors said they wanted to find out if their relatives were among the hostages freed by Cameroon's army on Saturday. The military said the nine former hostages are all males between 16 and 27 years old. Peter Atteh, 24, says he was abducted from the village of Pinyin by armed men on March 23. He says separatists accused him of collaborating with the military when he refused to join their cause. Atteh says while in captivity, he endured the worst moments of his life. Atteh said six of his fingers were chopped off with a machete when he made a failed attempt to escape. Separatists have said on social media that the kidnapers were criminals, not their fighters — a claim the military has rejected. All the freed hostages looked tired, hungry and unkempt. Two had parts of their ears chopped off. Two of the former hostages said they spent two months in captivity and that seven captives were freed after their families paid ransom. Atteh said three other captives who agreed to join the fighters were not tortured. The military said Saturday's operation was designed to free kidnap victims in the northwestern towns of Pinyin, Santa and Akum. It said nine hostages were freed and two fighters killed while at least 20 armed men escaped and are hiding in the bush. Mildred Awemo, a 26-year-old former student at Pinyin, says she saw the corpses of two civilians after the military raid. She says the troops arrested many civilians and tortured four who were rushed to a hospital in Pinyin by villagers. "When the military attacks a village, they do not distinguish between the fighters and the civilians," she said. "They just torment everybody. We want to be free but the military has to know who are the civilians, because they are trained to know the civilians and also the fighters. The military is trained to fight those who are holding guns and not the civilians who are harmless." Nka Valere, the commander of troops fighting separatists in the Northwest, denies any wrongdoing by his troops. Nka says his troops will intensify attacks to clean the English-speaking northwestern town of Bamenda and its environs of fighters who are hiding in the community and creating disorder. He says the duty of the military is to ensure that total peace and serenity returns. He says it is imperative for the population to collaborate with the troops by denouncing suspected fighters hiding in the midst of civilians.

speaking Northwest and Southwest regions in particular, have witnessed extremely violent acts of all sought perpetrated by armed militant activists and secessionist each with its own agenda. For the people residing in these regions, they have had in some cases to flee their homes to seek refuge in other towns and in neighboring countries. For a considerable time, schools were shut down and through threats to local businesses, kidnappings and maiming *Ghost towns*, were instituted in these regions. The result was a breakdown in law and order and the reign of anarchy notably in sparsely populated rural areas. Public and private infrastructure was destroyed and arson was utilized to punish members of the public who did not share the views of the violent armed activists who continue to make appeals for an uprising and more violence.

Faced with the threat posed by the lawlessness, and consistent with our constitutional provisions, the Government of Cameroon deployed in the armed services and other law enforcement agencies to these regions to restore peace and security. The combined consequence of this and many numerous other measures aimed at addressing the concerns expressed by the people of the Northwest and Southwest regions is progressively leading our country return to normalcy.

To achieve this return to peace, the people of Cameroon have benefited from the instrumental contributions that the International community. From Governments, International organisations including the United Nations, International civil society organisations as well as much appreciated Mission to Cameroon led by Senator Karen Bass for your country, we, the people of Cameroon have ever so often affirmed our determination for the restoration of peace and our attachment to the universal values of free expression, liberty and zero tolerance for violence and armed conflict.

In response to this unprecedented situation, our government called for a Major National Dialogue in October 2019 with over 1000 participants representing, Trade unions, political parties, civil society organizations, government officials, and armed combatants, religious and traditional rulers. A key recommendation of this process was the endowment of special Status for the English Speaking Northwest and Southwest regions, in conformity with section 62(2) of our constitution. In December 2019, our government tabled a bill to institute the General Code on Regional and local Authority which enshrines the Special status stipulating "the law may take into consideration the Specificities of certain regions with regard to their organization and functioning". This bill was rapidly promulgated into law and a specific organizational and operational regime based on our historical, social, and cultural values was created in our regions. Through this process our government recognized our willingness to play a major role in the formulation of national public policies, our education system, the common law system, the management of public service establishments in our regions and the status of traditional chiefdoms.

These irreversible reforms towards decentralization and the accompanying devolution of powers from the central government to regional executive councils is a product of the firm commitment at the highest levels of the executive branch of government in response to clamoring for change and reforms that led to the outbreak of the crisis in our regions. It is a key aspect of the endogenous resolve to mitigate the consequences of our colonization and path towards

independence and reunification and has furthermore, increased the government's responsiveness to grievances from disgruntled segments of our people.

To further address the issues resulting from the prolonged conflict in our regions, our government instituted a Presidential Plan For Reconstruction and Development PPRD-NW/SW to address the immediate needs of the population of the Northwest and Southwest regions which was signed on 5 May 2020 between the Government of Cameroon and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in a strategic partnership availing 151 million US dollars to fund programs aimed at restoring social infrastructure and revitalize the local economy.

In addition, the government created centers for Demobilization, Disarmament and Reintegration (DDR) as a coordinated political strategy and an integrated approach to peace building consensus and democratic peace. Our government offered full amnesty to combatants who voluntarily drop their weapons and provided incentives for ex-combatants for their reintegration into mainstream society. Vulnerable groups, displaced persons within and outside our national boundaries continue to receive our government's attention throughout the provision of basic needs. Resettlement is ongoing as the climate inhered by reforms continues to improve.

It is against this backdrop that Regional Assembly Elections were held in December 2020. The subsequent changing attitudes towards our government is reshaping the local political landscape towards effective people participation in governance, accountability and public affairs. This is an increase in citizen engagement as we harness local experience and expertise to curb dissatisfaction, fight against partisanship armed violence, and engender trust in leadership and political institutions. As we build our democracy from the ground up and instituting fair and acceptable procedures for public action through our deliberations we continue to seek the support and collaboration of friendly governments to assist us in checking the activities of those members of our diaspora who seek to alter our political system through alternative mechanisms including armed attacks, violence, kidnappings for ransom, fear mongering and transnational criminality to establish legitimacy. These members of Cameroon's diaspora continue to exert pressure through the democratic decision making processes in your country to negatively impact and thwart constructive policy formulation by your leadership.

As members of the National Assembly, we have the responsibility to contribute to our governments balance between security and the political will to strive for a harmonious and peaceful coexistence in a diverse multicultural and linguistic country. We are affording our citizenry an opportunity to invest in the future of our nationhood, and to play a role in the long term effort to attain realistic targets in social justice, reconciliation and sustainable development. We support constitutional order and are opposed to anarchy and civil strife. We are determined to bolster significantly the legitimacy and legality of local leadership in the Northwest and Southwest regions and will defend our institutions against manipulation by those who have been offered the comfort and protection in your country and attempt to discredit our programs, chances and perspectives for peace and socio-economic development.

Black African Lives Should Matter Too

By Rebecca Tinsley | April 20, 2021

The treatment of black people, particularly by law enforcement, has become a principal point of protest in the western world. But little is said about the millions of black Africans mistreated by the ruthless security forces of authoritarian African regimes. If black lives matter regardless of where they are in the world, then it's time to challenge the immensely privileged black African ruling elite that clings to power by persecuting its often-voiceless Black African citizens. The numbers tell the story. An estimated 5.4 million people or 8 per cent of the Democratic Republic of Congo's population died in the 1997-2003 conflict at the hands of government security forces and non-state armed militia. DRC's violence continues today, barely rating a paragraph in newspapers. In Sudan, at least 12 per cent of the population has died, mostly killed by the security forces of governments recognised and financially supported over the decades by wealthy nations (Two million in Sudan 1983-2005; 400,000 in Darfur; 382,000 in the South Sudan civil war). In Mozambique and Ethiopia, 8 per cent of the population at the time probably died in each country during the Cold War and its aftermath. In Uganda, Obote and Amin consigned 7 per cent of their people to a premature death. These are estimates because black African lives matter so little to those in charge, or the international community, that in most cases, no one is keeping count. Now, it is the turn of Cameroon to be ignored. The Norwegian Refugee Council has described the devastation in this central African nation as the world's most neglected displacement crisis for the second year running. Cameroon has been ruled by President Paul Biya, age 88, since 1982. He continues to win

elections that no international monitor considers free and fair, and his country is ranked among the world's most corrupt and repressive by Transparency International and Freedom House, respectively. In 2016, Biya's Francophone-dominated regime tried to impose French-speaking judges and teachers on the English-speaking regions, representing 20 per cent of the population. The peaceful protests of Anglophones, proud of their Anglo-Saxon courts and schools, were crushed with what impartial human rights groups described as 'disproportionate force'. So many villages have been burned that the UN estimates 700,000 civilians (out of six million Anglophones) have fled to the bush and beyond. UNICEF says more than a million children are out of school. Local civil society groups believe 5,000 people have been killed, although the International Crisis Group, University of Toronto Database of Atrocities, and other impartial sources have no accurate casualty numbers. Meanwhile, hundreds of opposition figures are imprisoned without due process. After the brutal suppression of non-violent Anglophone demonstrations, armed militias emerged, demanding a sovereign country called 'Ambazonia'. Rights monitors believe all sides behave with impunity, with unarmed civilians caught in the crossfire. The Biya regime held a meeting between the different sides in 2019, but it was dismissed by most Anglophones as a gesture to appease diplomats. This year, the Vatican offered to mediate peace talks, as has Switzerland's Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, but Biya pursues a military strategy, at huge cost to civilians. On 1 January, the US Senate endorsed the need for targeted sanctions on those implicated in human rights abuses. Yet, the UK and France, Cameroon's former colonial powers, offer toothless appeals to obey international humanitarian law. The developed nations must not hold back from criticizing African leaders such as Biya. The tiny, privileged African elite has little concern for its citizens. There will be no justice while the rich world panders to repressive tyrants, giving aid and signing deals with leaders who persecute their populations, trapping people in injustice, poverty and fear. We can hardly be surprised if bright, ambitious Africans leave these countries, heading for opportunity in Europe. If the death of George Floyd matters, then we must listen to brave black African civil society groups and enforce international human rights laws — such as the 'responsibility to protect', a legal doctrine endorsed by Cameroon and most of the international community. The UK and France must work with partners like the US and Canada to apply diplomatic pressure on the Biya regime. The aim should be inclusive peace talks, mediated by a third party, such as the Swiss and the Vatican. When my African friends suggest there is a global conspiracy allowing African rulers to commit human rights abuses, I offer a harsher truth; the global north just doesn't care. Support for Black Lives Matter is meaningless if the wealthy white world averts its eyes from the suffering of persecuted black Africans like those in Cameroon's Anglophone regions, and indeed, across the continent.

Cameroon Biya Jails Journo Matip Like UNSG Bans Inner City Press Which Asks of Collusion

By Matthew Russell | April 15, 2021

As more and more civilians have been killed by the Cameroon government of Paul Biya, absentee president for 39 years, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres has been silent, other than falsely claiming that he got a ceasefire in Cameroon (while he made a deal with Paul Biya, for UN Budget Committee favors). Now amid Guterres' false claims and continued banning of Inner City Press which has questioned him about it, this: On August 17, 2020, six armed men in plainclothes arrested Mbombog Mbog Matip, director of the privately owned CliMat Social newspaper who also posts political commentary on Facebook, at his home in Yaoundé, the capital, according to a report by the privately owned CamerounWeb news website and a letter from the journalist that was published by local media in February. Mbombog Mbog Matip was held at the State Secretariat for Defense (SED) until September 7, when he was brought before a military court judge, Misse Njone Jacques Baudouin, who charged him with "propagation of false news," and ordered he be detained until March 7, 2021, according to a provisional detention order signed by Baudouin, and Alex Koko à Dang, the president of the National Union of Independent Journalists of Cameroon (SYNAJIC), a local press freedom group, and former editorial advisor of CliMat Social." The above is from CPJ, which has done nothing about Guterres having roughed up and banning Inner City Press amid its questions about Cameroon ... Back on December 9, Guterres' envoy Francois Lourenco told the UN Security Council: "On 6 December, Cameroon successfully held its first ever regional elections aimed at finalizing the decentralization process in the country, including the implementation of a special status for the North-West and South-West Regions." And Guterres and his spokesperson Stephane Dujarric and Melissa Fleming refused all of Inner City Press written questions on Cameroon. Corrupt censors. And the UN Security Council has been failing, too. December's UNSC President South Africa refused Inner City Press' questions, and Jerry Matjila equated Cameroon with

Boko Haram, and praised Guterres' (censoring) work. Things have become so corrupt in the UN that November's President of the UN Security Council St. Vincent and the Grenadines banned Inner City Press from asking Cameroon questions at its Program of Work press conference on November 1. And on the other hand Human Rights Watch, whose Cameroon "expert" blocks Inner City Press, removed it from HRW's Louis Charbonneau's and UNCA's Oct 8 "human rights" presser, here. On October 26 Inner City Press asked Guterres, his spokespeople Stephane Dujarric and Melissa Fleming and Amina J. Mohammed, "On Cameroon, in light of your belated statement, please explain why each of you has refused to answer the Cameroon questions posed in writing by Inner City Press and how your failure to speak has not contributed and led to the current bloodshed." No answer. Nor to this question submitted in writing by Inner City Press: "Please immediately provide the UN system's answer to the question / report that High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. (or Dr.) Michelle Bachelet has misrepresented her (alleged) professional qualifications and that she does not in fact hold a medical degree as she has alleged." But in the Press-less noon briefing Inner City Press was banned from, a retired correspondent Gloria Starr Kin asked if it was in the "German" part of Cameroon. The UN is disgusting. And now this robo-statement from presumptively non doctor Bachelet: "attack on a school on Saturday perpetrated by a group of men armed with guns and machetes resulted in the killing of at least six children between the ages of 9 and 12. The attack on Mother Francisca International Bilingual Academy in Kumba, in the South-West, left another 13 children injured, of whom seven are reportedly in critical condition...We remind the authorities of their obligation to protect access to education. We have also received numerous other reports of serious human rights violations and abuses by separatist groups and security forces. Difficulties in accessing the affected areas makes it very hard to verify the reports" - cannot verify? That's what corrupt Guterres has been saying as he made his vile deal with Cameroon, silence for bureaucratic favors in the UN Budget Committee. There is much more to these killings - but it must be seen the Guterres has made this conflict worse and not better. He should be impeached - and indicted. ... On August 10 Guterres' spokesman Stephane Dujarric, also violating quarantine, issued a rare for the UN statement on Cameroon - but one that has emboldened Biya and his army to kill more civilians. While refusing to answer Inner City Press' written questions about the army's abuses, Dujarric cited the "murder of a young woman in Muyuka in the South-West...We call on armed actors to refrain from attacks against civilians." Following this statement, on which Dujarric allowed no follow up questions from Inner City Press, Biya's BIR has been burning down homes and killing entirely uninvolved civilians in Muyuka, and the UN has said nothing. These truly are Guterres' murders. ... Only *after* diplomats leave Guterres' corrupt UN do they at least answer questions: On July 24, Inner City Press asked the UK's former UN Ambassador - now Ambassador in DC - Karen Pierce, "Why during your tenure at the UN did the UN Security Council do nothing about the slaughter of Anglophones by Cameroon's ruler Paul Biya? What is the UK doing about it? What do you make of UNSG Antonio Guterres' smiling photo-op with Biya?" Ambassador Pierce to her credit at least responded: "Cameroon is not on the UN Security Council's agenda, but there have been several serious discussions of events there, held at the UN. The UK has chaired ARRIA meetings on Cameroon and has also sponsored a resolution at the HRC." Inner City Press has replied / followed up, "Thanks for your response, but I remember from being in the UN - before being ousted and banned Antonio Guterres on & since 3 July 2018 - that pro-Biya UNOCA Envoy Francois Fall has called "separatists" in British Southern Cameroons as 'extremists.'" We'll have more on this. Inner City Press was informed by sources in Guterres' own 38th floor office that Guterres had made a deal with Biya's UN Ambassador Tommo Monthe as chair of the UN Budget Committee for administrative favors in exchange for silence on the slaughter or "subduing" of the Anglophone minority. When Inner City Press asked about it, Guterres used UN Security to rough up Inner City Press right after it interviewed Monthe, and to ban it from entering the UN, 710 days and counting. On June 12, while Guterres' spokesman Stephane Dujarric refused all questions from Inner City Press as pro-Biya envoy Francois Fall's briefing resulted in UNSG "Press Elements" read by Nicolas de Riviere of the French Mission that did not mention Cameroon, this: the Cameroon army raided Mbokam, a village in Cameroon's North West region. Amateur images taken this afternoon show some persons shot to death and buildings razed to ashes. Unconfirmed reports say 11 persons were killed in the raid. We'll have more on this. So what Cameroon issues is corrupt Guterres blocking? How about his friend Paul Biya arresting people handing out COVID-19 masks? This has been happening since May, with no answer from Guterres or Dujarric to Inner City Press. Now it is in German media - but nothing from the German Mission to the UN, complicit in Guterres' censorship. The UN (and EU) become more corrupted every day. Watch this site. On June 2, news that Buea-based journalist Samuel Wazizi a/k/a Samuel Ajiekah Abuwe was killed. According to Equinoxe Television, he died within a few days in detention from wounds and injuries sustained after his arrest - that is, he was killed by Biya's forces. And Guterres' UN has refused each and every question about Cameroon from the Press - Guterres is complicit and corrupt. On June 3, 4 and 5 Inner City Press asked Guterres and his spokesperson Stephane Dujarric and Melissa Fleming in writing about the killing of Wazizi - no answer at all. On June 4 Inner City Press put the question to Guterres himself as he went from mansion to Mercedes, here - nothing. There's widely circulated

video a toddler whose mother was killed in Babanki (Kedjom Ketinguh) in Mezam, in the North West region of Cameroon. Soldiers are responsible, and 10 other civilians have been killed. Meanwhile corrupt Guterres and Catarina Vaz Pinto, the First Lady of Faux Socialism, ran right by Inner City Press loud questions about Cameroon on February 29, into the publicly funded mansion Guterres lives in some of the time. Story here with video. He, and it seems they, are corrupt and complicit. Also: one of the witnesses who exposed the Biya government's mass killing at Ngarbuh, Mallam Danjuma has been killed and dumped in Bui by government forces in Kikaikelaki. And from the UN of Guterres? Nothing. This is Guterres' genocide. He has the only press that ask him about it, even from his propagandaspeech at NYC's The New School.