

SOUTHERN CAMEROONS (AMBAZONIA) CONSULTATION COMMISSION

FOR THE TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY

2023 CONSULTATION REPORT

PRESENTED BY
THE COORDINATION TEAM

NOVEMBER 30, 2023

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This final report is the product of four months of intense consultations with Southern Cameroonians (Ambazonians) at home and abroad. The report recapitulates the political and historical trajectory of the Southern Cameroons (Ambazonian) liberation movement and highlights the foundational issues which have stultified the people's quest for freedom and given French Cameroun (herein after known as La Republique du Cameroun) the leeway to repeatedly evade negotiations. It recommends steps and measures by which Ambazonians can achieve a lasting consensus, specifies the role of different local and international stakeholders, and charts the path Ambazonians must take to throw off the yoke of colonial strangulation by La Republique du Cameroun.

This consultation is a non-partisan initiative undertaken by individuals from diverse political platforms and organizations with the overarching goal of establishing an appropriate context for the effective execution of the Southern Cameroons (Ambazonia) liberation struggle. It is hoped that this collaborative effort will leverage third party mediation to achieve self-determination for the people of Southern Cameroons (Ambazonia) and so end the devastating war imposed on our people by La Republique du Cameroun.

The Coordination Team held consultations with concerned Southern Cameroonian communities in the diaspora, and with a cross section of other actors on the ground, in order to:

- a. Regroup our fragmented communities and rekindle the liberation spirit.
- b. Awaken the international community to the situation in our homeland,
- c. Provide a viable framework within which to anticipate and deal with our present and future challenges.
- d. Identify and assemble the elements needed for an eventual All Southern Cameroons (Ambazonian) Conference.





1.1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful to all those whose support and participation were instrumental to the success of this consultation.

Our special thanks go to the Southern Cameroonians (Ambazonians) in the diaspora whose substantial participation greatly enriched the content and depth of this consultation.

We are indebted to those in the homeland who trusted in us and talked to our Team; and this in spite of justifiable misgivings fed by previous experiences. Your enriching contributions are immensely appreciated.

The Consultation Team remains faithful to its privacy engagements and to its resolve to ensure the safety of our resource persons.

We also thank our international partners for their perspectives and questions, many of which provided useful insights into the work before us.

The Consultation Team is grateful to all Ambazonians whose encouraging words, suggestions and pressing inquiries inspired us to work relentlessly. The task of consulting with our fellow citizens and writing this report greatly humbled us. We thank you for trusting us with this landmark assignment.

The Coordination Team

Robert Fondi Gertrude Kisob Nji Ban Emile Enongene Michael Fusi Roland Takang, Elvis Kometa Richard Tanguh

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INTRODUCTION

This report is the outcome of an intensive four-month consultation conducted from August to November 2023, under the aegis of the Southern Cameroons (Ambazonia) Consultation Team. The beginning of this process dates back to December 14, 2022, when Southern Cameroonians (Ambazonians) staged a protest in Washington DC against Paul Biya's presence at the US-Africa Summit there. On account of the success and impact of the protest, participants urged the Protest Organizing Committee (POC) to call a unity conference that would chart a new way forward for the liberation of the Southern Cameroons (Ambazonia).

Following the decision arrived at in Washington DC, several meetings were convened to which political organizations and community leaders were invited. As the meetings progressed, however, leadership tussles also appeared that threatened to derail the initiative. To resolve the threat, it was agreed that the services of a third-party international facilitator be solicited, which was done. The facilitator convened several meetings, the basic outcome of which was the commitment of the Southern Cameroons (Ambazonia) parties to serve the common cause. Even so, some organizations refused to be part of the initiative if they were not firmly in the driver's seat and solely in control. This notwithstanding, a three-day workshop was organized in Washington DC that produced two notable results; namely, the creation of the present Coordination Team, and a bigger push towards non-partisan action.



HOW WE GOT HERE: REMOTE AND IMMEDIATE CAUSES OF THE CONFLICT

1.1. Introduction

Throughout this consultation, our team engaged with a wide spectrum of Ambazonian representative voices both at home and in the diaspora, the objective being to assess the prevailing conditions in the ongoing conflict in the Southern Cameroons {Ambazonia}. By talking to this array of stakeholders, it was possible to gain insights into the underpinnings of the Southern Cameroonian (Ambazonian) liberation struggle within the context of the continuing annexation, assimilation and inhumane treatment of our people by La Republique du Cameroun. We also identified mistakes we have made and how to redress them. Even more importantly, we punctured the dynamics of the war imposed on us by La Republic du Cameroun.

1.2. A RETROSPECTIVE

It is important to examine, however briefly, the sociological, psychological and political mechanisms employed over the years by la Republique du Cameroun to annex, assimilate, strangulate and marginalize the Southern Cameroons. The hallmarks of these mechanisms were poverty, unemployment, political insignificance and social inferiority.

Southern Cameroons gained independence on October 1, 1961, by joining La Republique du Cameroun in a new construct known as the Federal Republic of Cameroon. In 1972 that construct was dismantled, purportedly to make way for a unified, stronger country. But as experience proved down the line, the dismantling of the federal system was not designed to unify and strengthen the country as claimed by La Republique du Cameroun. The actual objective was to dismantle the

viable social, political and economic system of the Southern Cameroons (Ambazonia) and to assimilate its people into the more chaotic French Cameroun system. They got down to the exercise with grim purpose. Consequently, and despite its immense economic and human resource potentials, Southern Cameroons sank inexorably into poverty. Natural resources, government institutions and job opportunities were carried away across the River Mungo to La Republique in what was termed legitimate government action. The barrenness left behind prepared the stage for the war currently raging in the Southern Cameroons (Ambazonia).

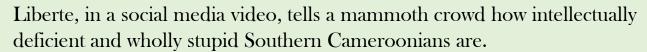
1.2.1. The Annexation Strategy

At reunification with La Republique in 1961, Southern Cameroons had a vibrant democratic culture, judged to be one of the most advanced in Africa. Like much else in the Southern Cameroons, this political gem, too, was seized. In 1966, Ahmadou Ahidjo, President of the Federal Republic of Cameroon, unilaterally collapsed all existing parties under one umbrella, the Cameroon National Union, with himself as Leader. With political power now concentrated in his hands, he could appoint government officials at will. He used this power to foment discord among political actors in the Southern Cameroons, thereby making the territory easy prey to annexation.

1.2.2. The Cultural Assimilation Strategy

a. Bullying and Stigmatization of Southern Cameroonians

French Cameroun children were raised to view their Southern Cameroons counterparts as foolish, clumsy, and backward. Consequently, these children often publicly derided or mocked their Southern Cameroonian peers, labeling them as "Anglofools." To the Southern Cameroonian children, this pervasive taunting was traumatizing and alienating. And continues to be. As late as very recently, Caleb Mboa Atangana, a French Cameroun Pentecostal pastor of the Tabernacle de la



Systemic bullying of this kind by French Cameroun has led Southern Cameroonians to view themselves, whether directly or otherwise, as second-class citizens caught in the trap of French Cameroun assimilation.

b. Lack of Higher Education Opportunities and Forced Emigration

Education was one main sector which highlighted the neglect of the Southern Cameroons. East of the Mungo, in La Republique, the educational infrastructure kept pace with demands at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels. At the same time, the picture in Southern Cameroons was the direct opposite: primary education was sparse and of low quality, secondary schools were few and far between, and there were no higher education institutions at all. In this connection, the lone university opened in 1961 was in Yaounde, the French-speaking capital of the Federal Republic, and teaching there was in French, mainly. This meant that prospective students from the Southern Cameroons had to study a foreign curriculum in a foreign, visibly hostile language. The result was that the institution became an academic graveyard even for the most intelligent among them. Many had to quit to seek opportunities in other English-speaking countries like Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Gambia, Liberia, Kenya and Tanzania. And even when they finished their studies, often brilliantly, in these familiar settings and returned to Cameroon, professional insertion and ascension remained an uphill task as they were viewed as misfits, even as unwelcome outsiders.

The corrupt, nepotistic management of Commonwealth scholarships did not help matters. Although these scholarships were intended for students of the English-speaking subsystem, the mainly French-speaking officials in the Ministry of Education made sure only students of La Republic extraction studying in the English subsystem benefited from them. Even today, Commonwealth scholarships intended for English-speaking students continue to be awarded principally to students of francophone extraction studying in the English subsystem.

Forced Brain Drain of Southern Cameroonians

The principal corollary of the inauspicious educational and professional atmosphere in the country was sustained brain drain among youth of the Southern Cameroons. Those of them who managed to study abroad chose permanent exile rather than a return to a country in which all was done to stifle their rights and aspirations. To the francophone government in Yaounde, this trend was welcome since it deprived Southern Cameroons of a strong intellectual base that could formulate and articulate the people's claims to equality and justice.

c. Underfunding of Higher Education Institutions in the Southern Cameroons

In 1993, French Cameroun authorities took some half-hearted measures with the opening of a university in Buea. A University Centre had existed in Buea since 1986. It was this Centre that was upgraded in 1993 to a university. At the same time as this was done, funding was either withheld or insufficient. To assuage this situation, the Buea University Management created the University of Buea Development Fund (UBDEF), to raise funds for development projects. The drive proved a great success and by so doing attracted the disruptive attention of the Yaounde Government. Just a few years into existence, the Fund was terminated, and the University returned to the hazards of whimsical funding. Although the University was styled after the Anglo-Saxon model, oversight by Francophone authorities saw to it that scientific and management procedures remained firmly within prescribed limits. What obtains today is a university with serious identity issues, lost as it is between an Anglo-Saxon system it cannot apply, and a Francophone system it is not part of; at least not yet.

d. Downgrading of University Curriculum Standards

The French Cameroun government is leaving no stone unturned to obliterate the English-speaking subsystem of education. The Trojan horse of this onslaught is harmonization. Surreptitiously, but steadily, the Government is doing what it terms 'harmonization of curricula' across state universities. On the surface of it, this practice is intended to enable credit transferability from one university to the other across the national territory; but in fact, it is intended to bring the English-speaking subsystem into alignment with the majority Francophone subsystem.

Student admission and faculty recruitment also feed the assimilation drive. When it comes to admission into universities in the English-speaking part of Cameroon (there are two such universities now – one in Buea and one in Bamenda), priority is given to Francophone students, most of whom are with little or no English language proficiency. English language courses are designed specifically for them; but the reverse is not true for English-speaking students seeking admission into French-speaking universities. This latter group are abandoned to their own devices and treated with derision.

Faculty recruitment follows the same pattern as student admission.

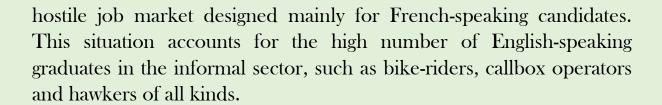
Francophone faculty are recruited and deployed to

English-speaking universities to teach either in French or in any linguistic concoction of their choice. Knowledge transmission and quality assurance in such cases become anybody's guess.

d. Graduates and Unemployment:

The priority treatment mentioned above gains more clout when it comes to admission into professional schools. Entrance examinations into these schools are set in French and then translated with sloppy nonchalance into incomprehensible English, with the result that English-speaking candidates fail even before writing.

Because access to professional schools is for the most part denied them, English-speaking students are left with no choice but to go on exile or enroll in local universities known for their poor quality, nonprofessional curricula. Either way, those of them who graduate face a



e. Dilution of the Southern Cameroons Identity

One astute method by which French Cameroun subverts the Southern Cameroons identity is by giving it a language rather than a cultural/historical meaning. To the ruling class in Yaounde, anyone who speaks English, and this irrespective of extraction, is an Anglophone. French-speaking Cameroonians therefore send their children into the English-speaking subsystem where they acquire the language and (where possible) the culture. As a result, most of the Anglophones in any kind of meaningful employment are at base French-speaking. Ethnic Anglophones remain on the sidelines while ethnic Francophones eat both halves of the identity cake.

f. The Forced Teaching of French to Southern Cameroonian children

For over five decades, Southern Cameroons children have been compelled to learn French, in contrast to their counterparts in French Cameroun for whom, until very recently, English has been a dispensable option. While high school students in Southern Cameroons were required to study French classics such as *Horace*, *Britannicus*, and prose works like *Eugenie Grandet*, *Therese Desqueroux*, *L'Etranger*, *Ville Cruelle*, their French Cameroun counterparts were not saddled with Shakespeare, Chaucer, Henry Fielding, Charles Dickens, Ben Jonson, etc. The result of this discrepancy in treatment has been a growing disaffection for French language and literature among English-speaking learners.

g. The Special Bilingualism Program in Ambazonian schools

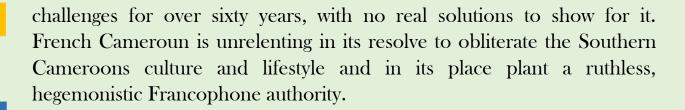
Quite recently, intensive French, sports (in French), citizenship (taught in French), manual labor and French literature are being forced on Southern Cameroonian children with a high IQ. Remarkably, this imposition is done without parents' knowledge, much less opinion; and yet these parents are required to cover the cost of related textbooks. This Special Bilingualism Program is part of a scheme designed to hoodwink English-speaking children with the argument that Francophone language and culture are superior ideals worth pursuing.

h. Continuous Deployment of French Cameroun Judges and Teachers

One of the immediate causes of the 2016 protests which escalated into the ongoing war in the Southern Cameroons was the deployment of French Cameroun teachers and judges to the Southern Cameroons in the grand scheme to take over the educational and legal systems of the latter. That policy is still being pressed, despite the resistance.

Even when English-speaking candidates are admitted into professional schools, priority is still given to students of Francophone extraction. As part of its conciliatory measures, Government has recently opened a Common Law section at the National Advanced School of Administration and Magistracy, (better known by its French acronym ENAM), to train magistrates for the common law system in practice in Southern Cameroons courts. However, about 95% of those admitted into the program are citizens of French Cameroun educated in the English subsystem. Similarly, more than 70% of the bilingual teachers recruited to teach in Southern Cameroonian schools are of French Cameroon extraction.

It looks like, every time English-speaking Cameroon identifies an existential problem, French Cameroun counters it with phony solutions that serve no useful purpose than to obstruct the search for lasting solutions. Consequently, we have been caught in the same cycle of



1.2.3. ECONOMIC STRANGULATION OF THE SOUTHERN CAMEROONS

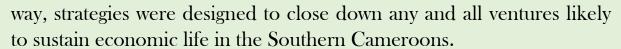
Before joining La Republique du Cameroun in 1961, the Southern Cameroons had a thriving economy. with seaports, airports, banks, agroindustrial complexes, factories, businesses, an air transport company, a hydro-electric plant, and, to top it all, a vibrant, hardworking people. Once the joining became effective, La Republique started a scheme to destroy economic life in the Southern Cameroons, and for reasons as ludicrous as they were cynical. Several instances underscore this economic asphyxiation:

a. The closure of Victoria and Tiko ports.

The Victoria port, with its natural deep-sea features, provided ideal conditions for maritime activity which placed it among the leading ports in the Gulf of Guinea. Tiko wharf, for its part, though not so well provided, played an important support role to the port. These advantages notwithstanding, the Francophone government in Yaounde claimed that the Douala port in their own part of the country was enough for the country's maritime demands; and so proceeded to close down Victoria and Tiko. Overnight, the two bustling towns became ghost towns. Tiko, especially, has never recovered from the loss of its wharf.

b. The closing down of the Cameroon Air Transport (CAT)

CAT, with its sane and profitable management, operated international and local flights that put the Southern Cameroons resolutely on the world map. Here again, Yaounde claimed that CAT's portfolio was insignificant, and the company had to go. In a systematic



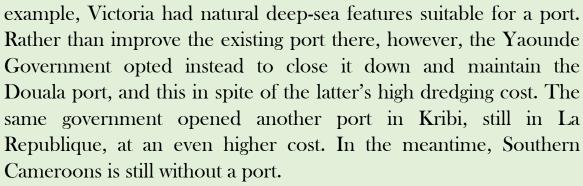
Particularly damaging to the economic health of the territory was the liquidation of its financial institutions. Cameroon Bank, the territory's flagship bank, and later Amity Bank, UBA and NFC, all were either liquidated or taken over by Francophone interest groups. The National Produce Marketing Board which protected farmers against whimsical market fluctuations was taken over by the Francophone government, looted, then liquidated. Some flourishing agricultural estates, among them Santa Coffee Estate and Ndu Tea Estate, were just closed down and their crops allowed to grow back into bushes.

The Public Works Department which took care of road maintenance was closed down and its equipment transferred to Yaounde or then abandoned to rot in their different locations in the territory. With the roads neglected, movement within the territory now became a nightmare. To go from Victoria in the southern part of the territory to Bamenda in the northern part, for instance, one had to endure a long detour through neighboring Francophone regions.

Similarly, the territory's hydroelectric plant in Yoke that ensured its energy self-sufficiency was shut down, so that the territory now had to depend on energy from a distant plant in Edea in Francophone Cameroun.

These moves were all part of a no-industrialization policy designed to relocate all Southern Cameroonian industries and jobs to French Cameroun and prevent the creation of industries in the Southern Cameroons, for whatever reason. Where such creation was unavoidable, like in the case of SONARA in Limbe, management had to be Francophone and taxes paid to the nearest Francophone town, in this case Douala, and not to Limbe where the refinery is located.

Many other repressive economic measures were taken that, put together, transformed the Southern Cameroons into wasteland. For



This economic hostility extends even to English-speaking expertise. Promising professionals from the territory are denied opportunities. Those who succeed are often charged with fictitious crimes and imprisoned. The General Manager of the Chantier Naval (Cameroon Industrial Shipyard), for example, built the company into a flourishing industrial complex. This success didn't seem to go down well with the Government. Imaginary charges of embezzlement were brought against him, and he was caught and locked up in prison. He is still there. His main, not to say only, crime was his origin and competence: he is from the Southern Cameroons, a brilliant engineer, and a sterling manager.

c. Poor infrastructure and inaccessibility of communities.

Most communities in the Southern Cameroons lack adequate healthcare facilities and good roads, and are usually inaccessible in the rainy season. In Ndian, for instance, where oil is extracted, there are no roads and no hospitals. Corpses are transported on motor bikes, and administrative offices are housed in makeshift fabrications, rented houses, or crumbling colonial structures. Absence of standard, affordable healthcare facilities compels Southern Cameroonians to transport patients to Douala for every medical emergency. Until 2021, any patient who needed a CT-Scan in the Southern Cameroons had to go to Bafoussam or Douala. The bad roads and prohibitive cost of healthcare has led to the death of

many people. In the entire Southern Cameroons with a population of 8 million people, there are currently only two CT-Scan machines and two dialysis machines (one each in Buea and Bamenda).

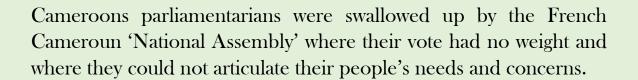
The above picture points to an existing scheme to undermine the quality of life in the Southern Cameroons, mainly through plunder and exploitation of the territory's rich and abundant natural resources. This strategy also aims to erode the people's Southern Cameroonian (Ambazonian) identity. These conditions have forced some Southern Cameroonians to yield to their second-class condition, with all the accompanying humiliation and dehumanization. In essence, though, the people of the Southern Cameroons (Ambazonia) have reached breaking point and are resolved to take their destiny into their own hands.

1.2.3. POLITICAL SUBJUGATION AND MARGINALIZATION

Many Southern Cameroonians (Ambazonians) to whom the Consultation Team spoke believe that since joining La Republique du Cameroun in 1961, their lives have been a nightmare, expressed mainly in political terms. The political plot against the people of the Southern Cameroons can be summarized as follows:

a. The scrapping of the Federation

In 1972 (after oil was discovered in the Rio del Rey Basin) the federal structure of the country was abrogated through an illegal referendum that was never sanctioned by the United Nations. The federal constitution of 1961 specified that the federation was inviolable. French Cameroun did not only hold an illegal referendum; it took part in it against all good sense and their numerical strength of 5:1 drowned the wishes of the people of the Southern Cameroons. The United Republic to which the referendum gave birth did nothing but destroy the political culture of the people of the Southern Cameroons, founded on democracy and mutual trust. The West Cameroon House of Assembly which emblematized that democracy was dismantled and Southern



b. The scrapping of the position of Vice President.

At reunification, the two top offices were those of President and Vice President. The federal constitution allowed that the two offices would be held by the two composite federated states. In other words, if the president was anglophone, the vice-president would be francophone. At reunification, the president was francophone (Ahmadou Ahidjo) and the vice president anglophone (John Ngu Foncha). But soon after reunification, the post of vice-president was scrapped. Over the next forty years, the highest position given to a Southern Cameroonian would be that of Prime Minister, fourth on the state protocol list. The process of alienation from the power base for English-speaking Cameroonians was now in motion. When the union was contracted, both parties were equal partners, but as time went on, French Cameroun began to act unilaterally to dismantle the system. Southern Cameroonians were reduced to junior ministers, were not allowed to head strategic ministries, and could not head parastatals.

The 1984 decree transforming Cameroun from a United Republic to a Republic signaled French Cameroun's determination to wipe out every trace of the Southern Cameroons as a political entity and force.

c. Divide and Rule.

This is an old practice employed by annexationists throughout human history to fragilize conquered people and ensure their permanent subjugation. For a long time, French Cameroun has played Southern Cameroonians (Ambazonians) against each other politically and culturally. To do this, they resort to ethnic and/or regional confrontation and selective inducement.

In the course of this consultation, we were informed that the former Prime Minister, Peter Mafany Musonge, who hails from Fako and is the Chairperson of the National Bilingualism and Multiculturalism Commission, has secretly been plotting a violent revolt of the Bakweris against their brothers from the Northern Zone and in the process reclaim lands sold to the latter. This plot is said to be orchestrated by the French Cameroun government with the coordination of the francophone governor, Bernard Okalia Bilai. We obtained a long list of people willing to testify that a mass eviction and pogrom was brewing.

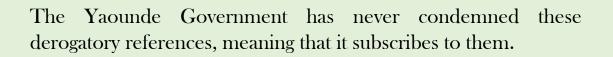
d. The emasculation of Southern Cameroonians.

Over the years, anglophone consciousness has come to view its people as perpetual assistants whose role is to play second fiddle to francophones. Even the position of Prime Minister and Head of Government, habitually reserved for anglophones, is stripped of all power, much of which is invested in the Secretary General, invariably a francophone. Weak and powerless, the Prime Minister cannot be of any help to the suffering anglophone population. Prior to the teachers' and lawyers' strike in 2016, trade unions wrote to the Prime Minister, then Yang Philemon, six times but did not get any response. He surely did not want to hurt his political career by meddling in this thorny problem.

e. Caricature of Southern Cameroonians.

Popular French Cameroun imagination views Southern Cameroonians (Ambazonians) invariably as:

- enemies in the (francophone) house,
- biafrans,
- cockroaches, and
- dogs.



Conclusion

The picture painted above speaks to the difficult conditions Southern Cameroonians (Ambazonians) have endured since they joined La Republique in 1961. One would expect that, amid the ongoing conflict, French Cameroun would seek to address the longstanding issues that brought about the uprising in the first place. That has not been the case.

Instead,

has reinforced its determination to resolve the conflict through military force.

Throughout the relationship between the two peoples, social, economic and political exploitation, marginalization and exclusion have been rife. These realities have created challenging conditions for the people

of the Southern Cameroons (Ambazonia), and have prompted their resolve in 2016 to put an end to the torture and trauma and reinstate the justice and freedom that characterized their daily existence prior to the failed experience with French Cameroun.

LA REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN'S WAR ON AMBAZONIA AND THE CALL FOR UNITY

2.0. Introduction

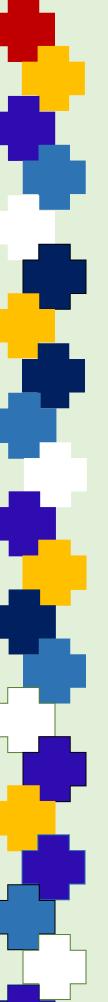
In 2016, the people of Southern Cameroons (Ambazonia) rose against six decades of colonial oppression and abuse by La Republique du Cameroun. In characteristic style, French Cameroun undertook to bribe trade union leaders. When this failed, they resorted to intimidation, interlaced with fake negotiations; all in a bid to assuage local and international pressure. When these tactics proved ineffective, they resorted to brute force and mass arbitrary arrests, culminating in the declaration of war on Southern Cameroons by Paul Biya on November 30, 2017. Thousands of La Republique Cameroun troops were deployed to the Southern Cameroons. The result was mass killings, destruction of homes, and the razing to the ground of entire villages in Mamfe, Bamenda, Ekona, Muyuka, Bambili, Belo, Kumbo, Kwakwa and other places. In response, the Southern Cameroon (Ambazonian) self-defense volunteers emerged to protect their communities.

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2.1. THE PROBLEM

The war in the Southern Cameroons (Ambazonia) has entered the sixth year, and the toll is devastating. Over twenty-five thousand people have been killed, more than one million are internally displaced, and an additional one million are refugees in neighboring countries.

1.2. At the onset of the crisis, Southern Cameroonians spoke with one voice and with one purpose: the liberation of the Southern Cameroons from the annexationist claws of La Republique. Sisikou Julius Ayuk Tabe was the movement's leader and was recognized as such. However, in January 2018 he and his entire cabinet were



extradited from Nigeria to La Republique and sentenced there to life in prison. This threw the leadership position open and rival groups contended for it. The leadership question still affects the movement in very negative ways. Under these circumstances, it has become imperative for Southern Cameroonians (Ambazonians) to unite around shared goals and build a strategic consensus that can lead to a lasting resolution of the conflict. To achieve this, a series of consultations have been conducted since August 25, 2023 in order to establish a transparent and inclusive liberation agenda.

2.2 OBJECTIVES/PURPOSE OF THE CONSULTATION

The main purpose of the consultation is to:

a. Identify ways to reconcile the differences and resolve the dysfunctionalities that have impeded the ability of Southern Cameroonians (Ambazonians) to express their nationhood or pursue their collective vision.

Ambazonians were asked to identify the causes of the dysfunction and fragmentation of their liberation struggle, and the acrimony between political factions and within communities.

- b. Reunite the community by creating opportunities for Ambazonians to meet and share their journey through the liberation struggle and by so doing, consolidate their common vision. Through shared experiences and collaborative problem-solving, Southern Cameroonians (Ambazonians) can find common ground on which to foster reconciliation.
- c. Establish principles that promote greater unity, self-discipline, and constructive engagement in a shared vision. By acknowledging our shortcomings and identifying pitfalls in our journey to freedom, we can

collectively propose measures, rules or processes to prevent similar negative experiences in the future.

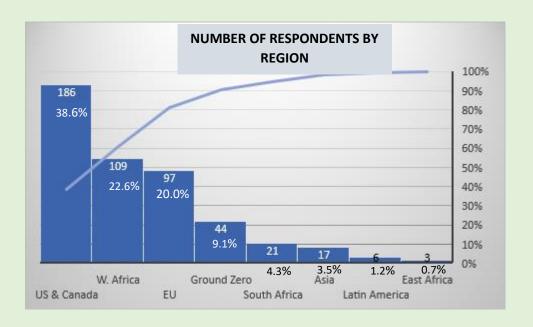
2.3. METHODOLOGY

Data were collected through a combination of methods, including online survey, workshops and focus group discussions facilitated by the Coordination Team.

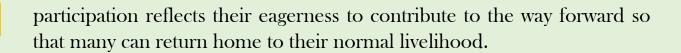
The Survey

Respondents were required to answer a number of questions by choosing the option which best aligned with their opinion. They also had the opportunity to include their opinion if it was not represented on the list of options.

Participants were categorized according to their regions of residence. The 483 respondents who participated in the month-long survey were distributed as follows:



A significant number of Southern Cameroonians (Ambazonians) in West Africa participated in this survey. This is not surprising because the region has a large Southern Cameroonian refugee population. Their high



Question 1: Who is a Southern Cameroonian (Ambazonian)?

	Option	No	%
A.	Anyone who is an indigene of an	474	98.4
	ethnic group in Southern		
	Cameroons (Ambazonia)		
B.	Anyone who lives in Southern	3	0.4
	Cameroons (Ambazonia)		
C.	Others	6	1.2

It was crucial to clarify the identity of a Southern Cameroonian (Ambazonian), because of French Cameroun's frequent distortion of the narrative. They present the identity question as a language question. To them, anyone who speaks English is an anglophone, irrespective of their origin. This reductionist view obscures the core of the problem and renders the search for a viable solution that much more difficult. Southern Cameroonians view their identity in essentially cultural terms. To them, a Southern Cameroonian is anyone whose roots are planted in the territory known as the former British Southern Cameroons; and this irrespective of the language one speaks.

Question 2:

Why are Ambazonians unable to form a united front and speak with one voice?

	Option				No	%
A.	Group	rivalry,	selfishness,	greed,	470	97.3

egotism and ignorance of our collective potential		
Influence of external forces,	13	3.7
infiltration and sabotage, etc		

Southern Cameroonians (Ambazonians) largely agree on the diagnoses. Each group wants to dominate the others and bring them under its authority. There is a tendency for each group to prioritize collecting funds and currying praises for no verifiable achievement.

Question 3:

A United Front will yield greater progress in our struggle.

	Option	No	%
A.	Agree / Strongly Agree	483	100
B.	Disagree /Strongly Disagree	00	0
C.	Others	00	0

Respondents unanimously agree that if Ambazonians work together, they will mitigate their disruptive potential and produce better and faster results.

Question 4:

In what format should the united front be to ensure the effective coordination of our liberation struggle?

	Option	No	%
A.	A broad-based consultative	298	61.6
	committee		
B.	A Liberation Council	122	25.2
C.	Interim Government	18	3.7
D.	Transition Government	45	9.5

A consultative commission is more accommodating of diversity because it allows partisans, experts and technocrats to cohabit, with the sole objective of achieving results. It is a political and legal structure with the capacity to conduct studies and investigations to provide valuable information to the team coordinating the Ambazonian freedom struggle. It is, therefore, inclusive, technical and highly recommended for Ambazonians if they want to recover from the rivalry and bickering which have impeded their progress for the past six or so years.

Question 5:

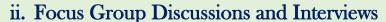
How do we create an effective and well-coordinated United Front for our quest for freedom?

	Option	No	%
A.	Bring the willing political leaders	288	60.0
	and all other dedicated		
	Ambazonians with competencies to		
	work together		
B.	Select competent people with	185	38.0
	integrity in the communities to work		
	with willing political leaders and		
	professionals		
C.	Each group should continue to do	10	2.0
	their thing and collaborate when it is		
	necessary		

In responding to question 5, Ambazonians confirm their preference for inclusivity, competency and integrity as upheld by the Consultative Commission in Question 4 above.

i. Public Meetings and Workshops

The meetings were designed as scenario building workshops in which participants built consensus around a common vision. The steps required that Southern Cameroonians (Ambazonians) work together to find common solutions, thereby building consensus.



These were consultations with small groups of individuals or a single person to obtain information or their perspective on a particular issue. The conversation was usually on a given point or problem.

On the basis of the survey, public discussions and focus group interactions and interviews, the Coordination Team has been able to gather the perspectives and concerns of Southern Cameroonians (Ambazonians) on some of the problems bogging down the liberation struggle. As a result, it has been possible to collectively:

- identify bona fide stakeholders in the struggle;
- identify pitfalls, uncertainties and obstacles to the liberation struggle;
- determine possible enabling measures;
- establish a monitoring and evaluation framework.

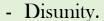
2.3.1. Bona fide Stakeholders

- Civil Society actors and networks
- Ground Zero Community Heads
- Southern Cameroons (Ambazonia) Communities in the Diaspora
- Diaspora political organizations
- Professional groups at home and in the diaspora (Lawyers, teachers, medical personnel, Scholars, etc).
- Media practitioners
- Southern Cameroons (Ambazonia) Prisoners of Conscience
- Refugees and IDPS
- Religious leaders
- Ground Zero Women peace initiatives.
- Other unidentified initiatives seeking to contribute to the cause.

2.3.2. Pitfalls and obstacles

The following pitfalls and obstacles to the cause were identified:

- Disruptive competition.



- Egotistic thirst for power.
- Kidnapping and extortion.
- Lack of accountability.
- Lack of principles and frameworks.
- Lack of control mechanisms.
- Lack of viable leadership structure.
- Communication rivalry.
- Ground Zero frustration.
- Lockdown controversies.
- Absence of international recognition.

2.3.3. Performance Indicators

- Representation models that ensure transparency, competency and inclusivity.
- Community empowerment.
- Rule-based unity framework.
- Healthy social media practice.
- Coordinated communication.
- Local and international stakeholder engagement.
- Clear progress evaluation methods.

2.3.4. Monitoring and Evaluation

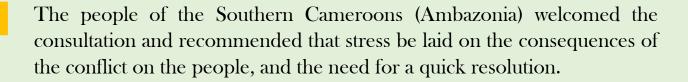
The following monitoring and evaluation mechanisms were identified:

- Pooled competencies and periodic progress reporting.
- Strategic plans for each aspect of the liberation struggle.
- Transparent criteria for selection of persons called to serve.

2.4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Following the open, frank discussions in large and small groups, the following recommendations were put together:

a. Timeliness of Consultation:



It was also recommended that an inclusive **consultative body** be created to coordinate the affairs of the struggle. Such a body would address all the critical aspects relating to our conflicting interests.

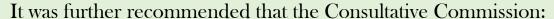
b. Non-partisan agenda

The consultation should continue on a non-partisan basis and should extend to all identified stakeholders and stakeholder organizations. They should make inputs towards a common vision to fix dysfunctionalities and repair the errors of the past.

c. Viable Institutional Framework

A Consultative Commission should be created after the current exercise to include:

- Representatives of constituted communities, political organizations, professionals and civil society actors, gender-based groups, individuals with competencies, etc;
- Committees to consult, coordinate, make recommendations and implement decisions on different aspects of the liberation struggle, namely:
 - i. Humanitarian Assistance
 - ii. Relief Operations
 - iii. Communication and public orientation
 - iv. Political education and mass mobilization
 - v. Revenue mobilization and financial management
 - vi. Advocacy, diplomatic outreach and relations with the international community
 - vii. Peace Negotiations
 - viii. Leadership, coordination and political strategy
 - ix. Reconciliation and Internal Conflict Resolution



- Continue as the consultation instrument leading up to the grand conference,
- Make periodic assessments and take concerted action as the struggle evolves.
- Adopt a unified messaging system and stem the dissemination of false information or enemy propaganda.
- Build a team of Southern Cameroons (Ambazonia) to represent or speak on our behalf wherever or whenever necessary.
- Engage the international community, La Republique du Cameroun and other movements in the conflict resolution process.
- Coordinate and facilitate the hosting of an All-Southern Cameroons (Ambazonia) Conference to lay the foundation for a peaceful transition to democracy in the homeland.
- Mobilize diaspora, refugee and homeland communities towards a greater sense of nationhood.
- Provide legal assistance to APOCS and legal support in case of litigation.
- Coordinate and ensure humanitarian and relief support for people in distress, like refugees, IDPs, prisoners of conscience, wounded freedom fighters, etc.
- Set up mechanisms for conflict prevention and resolution to anticipate and deal with internal problems in real time.
- Lay out processes and procedures which will lead to the general amelioration of quality and standard of operation in our quest for freedom.

CONCLUSION

Section 2 has focused essentially on the perspectives of the people of the Southern Cameroons (Ambazonia) with regard to how our quest for freedom lost steam. These diagnoses and the recommendations indicate a rift between the people's expectations and delivery by a fragmented leadership. For the most part, needless rivalry consumed



the different movements and installed apathy in the people. The result was stagnation, exacerbation and a growing decline in interest.



THE FATE OF PRISONERS, REFUGEES AND IDPs

3.0. INTRODUCTION

The humanitarian situation in the Southern Cameroons (Ambazonia) is dire. La Republique du Cameroun is doing all in its military powers to obliterate the Ambazonian dream. Whole villages are reduced to rabble, men, women and children are burnt in houses and those who attempt to flee are gleefully gunned down. Death in Ambazonia is a daily and rampant occurrence.

In this difficult situation, Ambazonian stakeholders have not quite risen to the occasion, as this consultation has revealed. The consultation has laid bare the inherent difficulties and lack of readiness to come to the assistance of women, children, the elderly and prisoners. The target groups with whom we spoke were convinced that support for victims had been personalized, individualized, and transformed into political capital. Our engagement with these groups enabled us to identify the problems they face and the envisaged solutions.

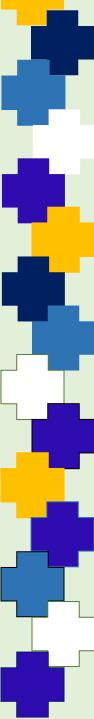
3.1. HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

The Coordination Team consulted with refugees, IDPs, prisoners, detainees in La Republique du Cameroun and humanitarian and rights groups at home. The following issues were identified as critical to the lives of the affected groups:

3.1.1.Poor nutrition and lack of potable water

Ambazonian prisoners of conscience or war are held in the following French Cameroun prisons:

- Kondengui Central Prison, Yaounde
- Kondengui Principal Prison, Yaounde
- New Bell Prison, Douala
- Central Prison, Bafoussam
- Mfou Prison





- Yoko

All the inmates in these detention centers have a major problem with food and drinking water. The prison ration is small and tasteless, the water impure and the cause of repeated typhoid epidemics among the prison population.

Diaspora rivalry in food supply muddles the situation even further.

- Ambazonian groups abroad send food exclusively to their Ground Zero loyalists. This selective distribution promotes discrimination and exacerbates divisions among APOCs.
- Other groups make meagre donations amid loud political propaganda.

All these unhealthy practices have had the effect of drying up food donations and exposing the needy populations to even greater precarity.

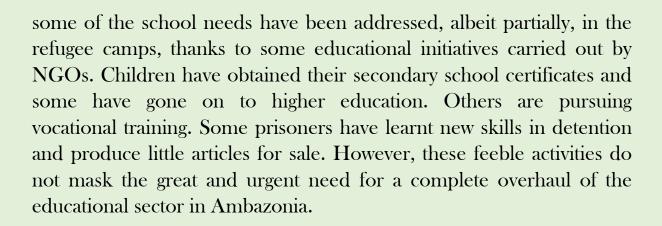
3.1.2. Access to healthcare and medication

Many Ambazonians have died in detention because French Cameroun prison clinics are poorly equipped. Medication is scarce, and where it exists, detainees are required to pay money or bribe infirmary staff to access it.

The situation in rural communities is not very different. French Cameroun soldiers have burnt many hospitals and arrested or killed many nurses. Others have been forced to flee. People have to trek long distances to find a health center; and often, they are too sick to make it.

3.1.3. Access to education and vocational training

Many of the young Ambazonians in prison, refugee camps or living as IDPs were in school when the war struck. Today, most of those schools have been closed down at best, burned down at worst. The school system has to be revived and modernized. In the meantime,

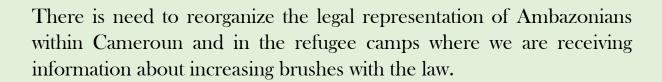


3.1.4. The fate of IDPs

Many children IDPs have abandoned school completely and are working as houseboys, house girls and hawkers in towns like Douala and Yaounde where they suffer all kinds of sexual and physical abuse and exploitation. STDs and early pregnancies are rampant among the girl children; and so is illiteracy. There is need to bring gender-based organizations on board to provide assistance to these vulnerable categories.

3.1.5. Absence of proper legal representation

When Sisiku Ayuk Tabe and nine others were abducted from Nera Hotel in Nigeria and renditioned to Cameroun for trial, many Southern Cameroonian Lawyers readily stepped up and provided moral and legal support. But their defense of the leader and his codetainees did not save them from heavy prison terms; in Ayuk Tabe's case a life sentence. This outcome severely dampened public enthusiasm. Funds dried up and legal assistance all but stopped. Ambazonians detained around the country on account of the war in the Southern Cameroons are today abandoned to themselves and exposed to the wrath of the La Republique judiciary. Invariably, they are handed long sentences and denied any avenues for redress. Military prosecutors extort money from them in exchange for mild sentences.



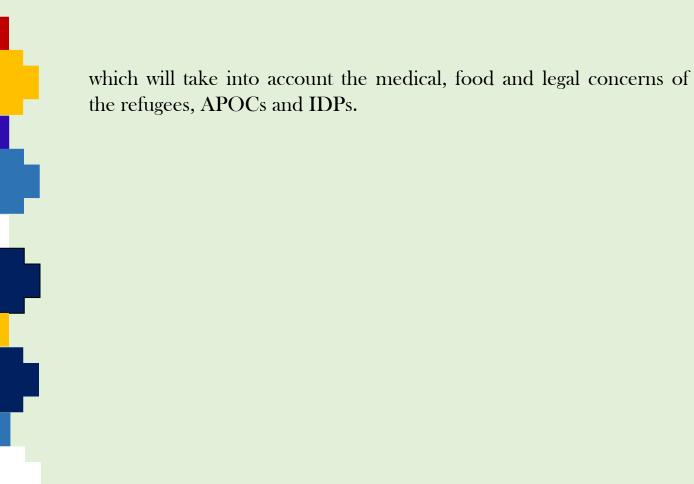
3.2. Recommendations

From the foregoing, the coordination of humanitarian activities with respect to Ambazonian prisoners and detainees, refugees and IDPs needs an overhaul.

- a. There is need to address the concerns of affected groups in a collective and coordinated manner. This will require a broad-based humanitarian strategy to identify and deal with all the issues.
- b. Internal coordination structures should be instituted among refugees and prisoners of conscience where they are lacking or reinforced where they exist. This will ease the management of refugees and APOCs and stave off political manipulation.
- c. Ambazonians in the diaspora, on their part, should avoid exploiting these vulnerable groups for political ends. They should stop relating directly with the groups concerned and work with humanitarian NGOs to avoid dragging refugees and APOCs into partisan politics.
- d. There is need for a general strategy to address the burning issue of IDPs, especially as it relates to the exploitation of boys and girls of school going age.
- e. There is currently no legal strategy to assist Ambazonians trapped in the war. There is need for a legal strategy which will put the Southern Cameroons story in the international spotlight.

CONCLUSION

The humanitarian needs of our people are real. These needs arise from systemic problems within our liberation movement, and require practical solutions which our good will can afford. It will therefore be imperative for the Consultative Commission to lay out a clear strategy





THE DYNAMICS OF CAMEROUN'S WAR ON THE PEOPLE OF THE SOUTHERN CAMEROONS

4.0. INTRODUCTION

Paul Biya declared war on the Southern Cameroons (Ambazonia) on November 30, 2017, in an unexpected but totally characteristic show of impudence. He had the option to negotiate with the Southern Cameroons which was demanding greater rights and more say in state affairs. Instead, he chose war and has remained in the war logic since then. The result has been mass destruction of property, streams of displaced populations, and a death toll running close to thirty thousand.

4.1. DYNAMICS OF THE WAR

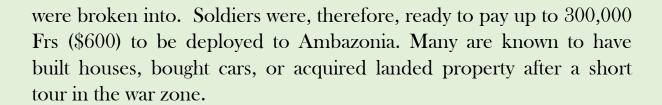
A number of dynamics have been found to underpin the prosecution of the war against Southern Cameroons by La Republique du Cameroun:

4.1.1. Drafting into the army

Between 2017 and 2023, the government of Cameroon has carried out close to eight recruitment exercises into the military. While some people believe that this is just normal practice, others ascribe it to the high rate of mortality and desertion in the war in the Southern Cameroons. Some sources place the La Republique du Cameroun death toll at 4000 and more, mainly soldiers. The number of wounded is equally high. It is believed that more than seventy percent of the La Republique soldiers in Ambazonia are from Mr. Biya's tribe, which tells just how personally he is taking the standoff.

4.1.2. Corruption in uniform

From the outset, the war took on the nature of business. Civilians were rounded up arbitrarily, detained, and freed in exchange for money. Shops were looted under the guise of emergency controls, and banks



However, between 2018 and 2019, Ambazonian fighters fought back valiantly and inflicted heavy losses on Camerounian troops, turning the tides in the process. French Cameroun soldiers now began to pay money to be redeployed elsewhere, and deserting en masse. The trend is still observable.

4.1.3.Looting in uniform

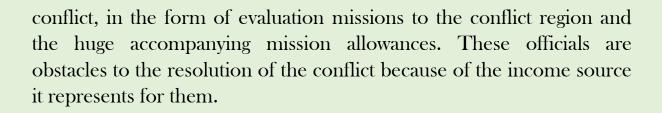
French Cameroun soldiers loot without fear or shame. In the day, they carry out reconnaissance missions under the guise of regular military patrols. In the night, they break into stalls and set markets on fire after looting. This has been the case in Bamenda where the market has been torched repeatedly. La Republique du Cameroun soldiers have killed commercial bike riders and taken away their motor-bikes to Francophone towns; mainly Douala and Bafoussam.

4.1.4. Torture and extra-judicial killings

French Cameroun soldiers have built a sinister reputation for extrajudicial killing. Many innocent Southern Cameroonians have been killed on the simple suspicion of being an Amba fighter. Civilians have been arrested, tortured or detained because they are related to Amba fighters. Amba fighters, too, have carried out public executions in the presence of children.

4.1.5. Harassment and Extortion of Ambazonians living in French Cameroun

Speaking English in French Cameroun these days can be dangerous. In towns like Yaounde and Douala, Ambazonians have been arrested on the suspicion of being separatists, simply because they speak English. On their part, French Cameroun officials benefit financially from the



4.1.6.Bad faith and half measure

La Republique's attitude to the war has been one of bad faith, demonstrated in half measures and spurious solutions to imaginary problems.

The *National Dialogue* is one such half measure. Convened in 2019, this event was meant to bring stakeholders together with a view to finding solutions to the crisis. But what one saw was a CPDM jamboree in which government officials and handpicked party militants sang the glory of the system and the sacrosanct oneness of the country. This was the case of one side in a conflict talking to itself and expecting its monologue to transform, as if by fiat, into a meaningful dialogue. It never happened. The main goal of the Dialogue was to fend off international pressure by creating the impression that something was being done. It is for this reason that key Ambazonian actors were left out of the scene. At the end nothing was achieved, as subsequent days proved.

a. The 2019 Grand National Dialogue hatched something called Special Status. Up to this day, no-one, least of all the government officials themselves, knows what it is. It was granted to the Southern Cameroons (Ambazonia) by the *Grand National Dialogue* and comprised a regional house of chiefs and a regional assembly. Both houses are consultative bodies only. In essence, they are instruments used by the French Cameroun government to tighten control and foster its colonial agenda in the Southern Cameroons.

b. Among the lame measures taken by La Republique is the creation of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reinsertion Centers, commonly known as DDR. Centres of this kind are opened at the end of the war, not in it. Under the circumstances, they serve no useful purpose. La Republique uses them to:

- deceive the international community that the conflict is ending.
- gather intelligence on Amba fighters. The boys who surrender are used to obtain information about other fighters. Amba fighters who were supposed to have surrendered have been seen on board armored trucks, dressed in French Cameroun combat fatigues and going to fight their former companions.
- line the pockets of corrupt regime officials. Money meant for training in the DDR centers ends up in private pockets; often of government officials.

The best exemplification of answers to non-existent problems is provided by the National Bilingualism and Multiculturalism Commission. Until 2017, cultural cohabitation was a reality in Cameroon. Cultures coexisted in harmony and mutual respect. The Bilingualism and Multiculturalism Commission therefore seemed to lack a field of application. Like other instruments before it, the Commission turned into a sinecure given to French Cameroun elite and their Southern Cameroons cronies to create jobs for their family members.

4.1.7. The phony reconstruction

In the midst of war, French Cameroun has been deceiving the international community that the war has ended and reconstruction is going on. About twelve billion cfa in donor money has been embezzled barefacedly. It is believed that the Program for Reconstruction and Development has spent about 8.9 billion cfa but no schools, hospitals or markets have been rehabilitated, no bridges built; and the list goes on. This so-called reconstruction is designed to buy time so that French Cameroun can avoid negotiations.

4.1.8. French Cameroun proxy forces

One of the ways French Cameroun has tried to sully the image of the Ambazonian freedom movement has been through the creation of proxy forces who dress like Ambazonian self-defense volunteers and commit atrocities in the territory. They raid communities, loot, and carry out kidnappings for ransom. Whenever they operate, the government is always quick to explain what happened. The attack on women and children in Ngarbuh, of schools in Kumba and Mbonge, and the burning of the Kumba Divisional hospital, for instance, all these atrocities were the handiwork of the French Cameroun government, working with their proxy forces and embedded soldiers. More recently, the Egbekaw massacre is believed to have been perpetrated by boys in the DDR centers with the logistical support of the French Cameroun army. It will be necessary to carry out an impartial international investigation to determine the perpetrators of these crimes so that appropriate action can be taken.

4.1.9. Profiteering and conflict of interest

Apart from the illicit profit derived from war time administrative activities, the closure of schools in the Southern Cameroons has created a thriving education industry in nearby francophone towns like Mbouda, Bafoussam Douala and Yaounde. It is believed that many French Cameroun Administrators like the two colonial governors, Okalia Bilai and Lele Lafrique, have invested in private education and now have business interests thriving because of the war.

It is even believed that some of the attacks on schools in Southern Cameroons are orchestrated by investors who want more and more children to migrate towards those centers where they have invested. For some, prolongation of the conflict will buy them more time to pay back the loans used to build the schools.

4.1.10. Using the conflict to settle personal scores

The war has caused the suppression of free speech and the use of the conflict to settle scores. It is commonplace for bosses to accuse dissenting staff of having Ambazonian affiliations. The Vice Chancellor of the University of Buea especially has used the conflict to suppress academic freedom in the university and to suspend or sack academic staff who hold different political opinions. This phenomenon is also common in the regional delegations and government schools where pro-Ambazonian views are regarded as seditious.

4.2. THE SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF THE CONFLICT

The war has not only done physical and material damage. It has also scarred the minds of the population in a lasting way.

The continuous humiliation, degrading treatment and killing of Southern Cameroonian by French Cameroun soldiers, but also, occasionally, by Amba fighters, these crimes are cut deep into the Ambazonian consciousness.

4.2.1.Impoverishment of families

Abductions by the military or Amba fighters have ruined many families financially and forced some to sell their estates to free a loved one from captivity.

The agrarian life of the people has been disrupted by the war and caused food shortages, poverty and health problems.

4.2.2. Hyper-corruption in the public sector

The conflict has unleashed corruption in the entire Southern Cameroons in ways that the people had never seen before.

In the hospitals, nurses extort patients; consultation and lab fees are inflated. In schools, principals collect money for admission. Corruption is driving up the cost of living in the Southern Cameroons and making an already challenging situation even more so.

4.2.3.La Republique du Cameroun land scams

Even government officials like Governors and DOs now openly get involved in scams. The French Cameroun administration appoints chiefs and collude with them to sell land. After the Governor and DO have collected their share of the money, the administration announces that the chief was fake and the DO is redeployed to another locality. This is common in Fako where the Governor Benard Okalia Bilai and successive DOs, own vast expanses of land.

4.2.4. Mass massacres

Mass civilian massacre by La Republique du Cameroun soldiers is a strategy designed to turn the people against the liberation movement. The killers usually dress like Ambazonian restoration forces, and the official report of such crimes always accuses liberation fighters. Most often, the people know the real authors of the crimes but remain quiet for safety reasons. There is need for an international humanitarian investigation into these massacres so that appropriate action can be taken against the perpetrators.

Conclusion

The humanitarian situation in the Southern Cameroons is dire. The international community must recognize this and take appropriate action. The Ambazonian liberation movement in the diaspora should realize that persistent affliction by La Republique du Cameroun without corresponding action by leaders is dampening the morale of the people. It is imperative not only for the diaspora to put order in its ranks, but also to make strong moves to shift the needle diplomatically.

THE URGENCY OF THE MOMENT

5.0. INTRODUCTION

From the people's experience of the war, one can say with certainty that a humanitarian catastrophe is on in the Southern Cameroons (Ambazonia). There is need for urgent action by both Ambazonians and the international community. French Cameroun does not want the root causes of this conflict to be addressed. It knows all too well that going to the roots of things will expose the hollowness of its claims and the solid basis for Ambazonia's right to freedom.

5.1. MULTIPLE INITIATIVES

The clamor for unity has triggered a number of initiatives aimed at bringing our people together. Here are two such initiatives:

5.1.1.The SCPC

The Southern Cameroons People's Conference which met in Canada was a constellation of civil society groups and political organizations which came together under the stakeholders' platform. Their activities are facilitated by the CDN which helped them put a conference in Canada together and assisted them with setting up a post-conference secretariat.

5.1.2. The Hudson Institute Initiative

Early in 2023, the Hudson Institute invited a number of Southern Cameroonian political, community leaders and the CDN to brainstorm on what Ambazonians could table as a common position. This became necessary because it was evident that Southern Cameroonians seemed to diverge on their goal every time they made a presentation to the international community. After some consultations, they agreed that a Referendum would be an intersection point between the independence and the federalist movements. A series of public discussions were held to enlighten Southern Cameroonians on the subject.

5.2. THE WAY FORWARD

The initiatives mentioned above attest to our people's desire to find a permanent solution to the present stalemate. However, these initiatives require time, money and effort, and so must be carefully harnessed to achieve maximum results.

Recommendation:

It is imperative for stakeholders to come together and chart a common vision. Ambazonians need to be able to iron out any existing divergences and put an end to the bickering and infighting. This way, it will be possible to create a favorable atmosphere for collaboration, away from the disruptive competition now happening.

5.2.1. Issues to be addressed:

- What is common to us all?
- How do we differ?
- How can we overcome our differences?
- What should we do or not do?
- How do we improve on our international image?

5.2.2.Other movements

Unlike the Independence Movement which wants external self-determination for the people of the Southern Cameroons (Ambazonia), the Federalist Movement is fractured in its demands for internal self-determination through a two, four or ten state federation. While the federalist movement may see itself as a better alternative to the movement for total independence, and therefore likely to succeed in their quest, many French Cameroun elite do not trust them for several reasons.

- Firstly, they suspect that the federalist movement could be a Trojan horse by which Southern Cameroons hopes to regain their freedom.

- Secondly, when French Cameroun had the opportunity to choose federalism during the so-called Grand National Dialogue, they claimed that they were not familiar with such a system of government and opted instead to grant a 'Special Status' to the Southern Cameroons (Ambazonia)
- Thirdly, the federalists do not seem to agree on the type of federation they want. Some want a return to the two-state federation, others a four-state, which would require parts of Southern Cameroons merging with parts of French Cameroun, and yet others a ten-state federation roughly corresponding to the present regions. Furthermore, they do not seem to have a clear plan on how to achieve their goal. They seem to expend considerable energy opposing the independence movement, whereas they should be evolving strategies to attain their objective.

Be that as it may, the people of the Southern Cameroons will decide their future, ultimately, in an exclusive referendum organized and supervised by the international community. It is important for all stakeholders to realize this and adopt a more constructive and collective approach in the search for a permanent and peaceful solution to

the conflict.

Recommendation

This report recommends that the Consultative Commission reach out to the federalist movement and work out modalities by which the people of Southern Cameroons, irrespective of their political leanings, will eventually decide their future.

5.3. KEEPING SOUTHERN CAMEROONIANS DIVIDED

La Republique du Cameroun leaders have always understood that the best way to keep the people of the Southern Cameroons permanently subjugated, marginalized and assimilated is by keeping them divided. The internal divisions, which unfortunately is frustrating their destiny, has naively been viewed as diversity.

La Republique du Cameroun has capitalized on this confusion to tell the world that the Southern Cameroonian stakeholders are not organized and so it does not know who to dialogue with.

The international community has expressed frustration over these divisions and has urged Ambazonians to unite.

5.3.1. Disrupting the democratic system in Southern Cameroons

The first thing La Republique du Cameroun did to sow division, distrust and suspicion among Southern Cameroonian politicians was to disrupt the vibrant democratic culture of the people. In 1968, Ahmadou Ahidjo appointed a Prime Minister whose party did not win the elections to the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly. The appointment of someone who did not have a strong political base meant that he would depend on La Republique du Cameroun, and not on his people, for survival; and would close his eyes to the repression and political highhandedness to 3 come. Disunity set in. Southern Cameroonian politicians no longer fought together as one; and so, when La Republique du Cameroun decided that a referendum be held in 1972, they were not united enough to oppose it.

5.3.2. The arrest of the Consortium leaders

The emergence of the Consortium as a rallying force and the revival of Southern Cameroons unity posed a serious threat to La Republique du Cameroun's assimilationist agenda. Attempts to use Southern Cameroonian comprador bourgeoisie to discredit the new movement were resisted by the people. La Republique decided to arrest the leaders of the Consortium, and went ahead to do so; the aim being to decapitate the movement and create a leadership vacuum. With those arrests, the state media could now churn out lies without fearing an organized rebuttal.

5.3.3. The abduction of Sisiku Ayuk Tabe and nine others

After the arrest and detention of the leaders of the Consortium, things evolved fast. The Southern Cameroonians invested its powers, first in the Governing Council, then in the Interim Government led by Sisiku Julius Ayuk Tabe. Frightened by the popular support and galvanizing effect the interim government was making, La Republique du Cameroun colluded with the Nigerian intelligence services to abduct him and nine of his officials and illegally rendition them to La Republique du Cameroun. The result was leadership fragmentation and cacophony as various groups disparaged each other in the social media. La Republique has exploited this confusion to its advantage, especially in presenting it as proof of Ambazonia's inability to govern itself.

5.4. WHY LA REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN AVOIDS NEGOTIATIONS

At the Paris Peace Forum, on October 11 November 2019, Mr. Paul Biya revealed to Mo' Ibrahim that the conflict raging in the Southern Cameroons (Ambazonia) was the result of a failed assimilation of the people of Southern Cameroons. In spite of this grim revelation, La Republique du Cameroun has resisted international calls for dialogue to address the root causes of the conflict. In 2019, the Swiss international NGO, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD) attempted to broker peace talks between the warring parties. But La Republique du Cameroun remained indifferent. In 2022, the government of Canada succeeded in bringing both parties together to build confidence, but La Republique backtracked at the last minute. Several reasons account for their behavior:

a. La Republique du Cameroun lack of good faith

Far back in 2017, La Republique du Cameroun had already shown its true colours in matters of negotiations. Government ministers negotiated with teachers' unions and the Consortium from 12-13 January 2017, but refused to share the results with union representatives. Instead, they tried to deceive the unions into

suspending their strike action. Later, they altered the points agreed on and published a communique stating falsely that all the issues raised by the striking unions had been addressed. There was no allowance for a follow-up committee as it had initially been agreed. Frustrated by the inability to break the strike, La Republique decided to arrest union and consortium leaders; and did so on January 17, 2017.

b. Resistance fatigue

La Republique du Cameroun believes that the Ambazonian resistance is worn out and is therefore clamoring for peace. It also hopes that the internecine quarrels and fights will destroy the movement and the status quo will be maintained.

c. Fear of history

La Republique du Cameroun arrogantly believes that it is their right to subjugate the people of the Southern Cameroons. This is typically the belief among the Bulu-Beti elite which has dominated politics in that country for the last more than 41 years. They are fully aware of the illegality of their actions and so avoid any reference to the name "Southern Cameroons" because that name encapsulates the truth. They know that the 1972 referendum was a violation of the 1961 federal constitution, and so was the decree of 1984 changing the United Republic of Cameroon into La Republique du Cameroun; an act which amounted to secession from the union.

d. Luring the international community into complacency

La Republique has tried a new trick every time there has been mounting international pressure for an inclusive dialogue to address the root causes of the conflict. By some tour de force, La Republique has been able to maintain the trust of the international community in spite of the atrocities it has committed in the Southern Cameroons. It has still been able to obtain loans from the World Bank, IMF and other multinational agencies, sell bonds and cut oil deals. All these funds have enabled them to continue to finance the war.

e. Buying time

La Republique's focus is on buying time and entrenching its illegality in the Southern Cameroons. At the same time as it is avoiding the negotiation table, it is pushing the influx of its citizens into Ambazonia. Francophone administrators in Southern Cameroons are tearing down CDC palm, rubber and banana plantations in Fako and selling the land to their citizens at give-away prices.

From Likomba to the tollgate, shanty towns are springing up. In Bamenda, lands reserved for administrative use by the government of Southern Cameroons are being sold to an large populations of La Republique du Cameroun citizens as part of a strategy to falsify referendum results if it came to that. Ambazonians must realize the self-destruction and long-term effects of their inability to work together.

5.5. FAILED MOUs

One of the biggest frustrations in Ambazonian politics is the unfulfilled memorandums of understanding. Ambazonian political leaders have been noted for signing MOUs and later backtracking if the initiative does not serve their egotistic purposes. This has caused many initiatives to crumble, with the concomitant stagnation in our quest for freedom. There must be a framework open to all Ambazonian political leaders with something to offer and who are willing to be accountable. Such a framework should focus on process, goals, results, and not serve selfish interests. Ambazonian leaders should stop showing off and acting as if we are already in control of our country. The truth on the ground is that La Republique du Cameroun is still there killing civilians and plundering what is left of the territory's resources.

Conclusion

The need for Southern Cameroonians (Ambazonians) to come together cannot be over-emphasized. It is important that all the initiatives which seek to unify our people come together and forge a common vision. La Republique is exploiting the fractures to break the



spirit of the liberation movement. If Ambazonians aspire to a free and democratic country, they must begin to practice what they preach and be seen to be moving away from the very context which wrecked their lives for sixty-two years in La Republique du Cameroun.

6 SUMMING UP

6.1. Introduction

The purpose of this consultation was basically to identify the perspectives of the people of Southern Cameroons (Ambazonia) with respect to our quest for freedom. The coordination team promoted free speech and ensured that those who volunteered to speak did so safely.

This consultation exercise has unraveled the inherent difficulties Ambazonians face as a people living in the clutches of an aggressive and violent neighbor, La Republique du Cameroun. The scale of the humanitarian challenge created by this situation is equally daunting. The information gathered so far sufficiently illuminates the reasons why the people of the Southern Cameroons (Ambazonia) want self-determination. La Republique du Cameroun is busy manipulating the international community in the hope that a military solution will somehow tilt things in their favor. It is time for Ambazonians to take a decisive stand and refocus the liberation movement in a way that advances the people's collective aspirations. They must not surrender themselves to the whims and caprices of partisan politics.

6.1.1.An accident of history

It is an accident of history that Southern Cameroons got her independence 'by joining' another country. Had our forebears been patient and insisted on having the UN do things the right way, the catastrophe unfolding in our homeland would have been averted. From the outset, several international personalities expressed their fears, among them the following:

Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, the Nigerian Prime Minister ominously declared that Southern Cameroons was walking into 'poverty and hardship'. Speaking at the 96th UN General Assembly meeting of 6 August 1961, Clement j. Zablocki (Former Chair, House Foreign Relations Committee) said: "...The results of a hurried choice imposed



More recently, Luc Sindjoun, a political scientist and citizen of La Republique du Cameroun, stated: "...the federation was a strategy used by the Cameroun Republique to annex the British Southern Cameroons and merely a make-believe ploy used successfully to hoodwink both the United Nations and the Southern Cameroons leadership." The position of Dag Hammaskjold (UN Secretary General 1953-1961) is perhaps the strongest and aptly foretold the current events: "Uniting the Southern Cameroons to the Cameroun Republic is like forcing a balloon under the seas. One day it will come out".

If the Southern Cameroons must break the shackles of colonization, it will require coordinated action, discipline and above all, a common vision, without which a second and more disastrous annexation will seal their fate.

6.1.2. Political, social and economic woes

Throughout the sixty-two years of the union with La Republique du Cameroun, the people of the Southern Cameroons have been abused, exploited, impoverished, killed, marginalized, forced to speak French and treated worse than second class citizens. La Republique citizens are taught from childhood that Southern Cameroonians are inferior mentally and socially. They continue to do so to this day. Even resources allocated for development projects in the territory are looted or embezzled. The people are deprived of basic amenities – water, electricity and healthcare. Keeping the people of the Southern Cameroons divided, poor and miserable ensures the continuous domination of La Republique du Cameroun. It is the right of the people of the southern Cameroons (Ambazonia) to seek psychological stability and this can best be achieved if the people are allowed to decide their future in an exclusive referendum.

6.1.3. Plunder and destruction of our cultural heritage

As the war rages on, La Republique du Cameroun consciously destroys culture of the Sothern Cameroons. The Fons and chiefs who have always been the spiritual and temporal heads of the community have been dragged into partisan politics. Many of them have been killed, many more forced into exile. Those of them who have braved it have been put through untold humiliation, like marching, appearing before gendarmes and policemen. Many villages have been emptied of their men and have reduced women to grave diggers. Our cultural values have been plundered and our traditions trodden underfoot.

6.1.4.Ruse, deceit and the manipulation of the international community

La Republique du Cameroun continues its annexationist and destructive mission. They continue to deceive the international community in much the same way as they did the UN in 1961. To do this, they employ half measures which they know to be ineffective. The Major National Dialogue, for instance, was a circus concocted to deceive the international community; the National Bilingualism and Multiculturalism Commission, poorly copied from Canada, is just a sinecure for cronies and family. They continue to avoid negotiations and scuttle every opportunity to find a sustainable solution. The DDR Centers are a smokescreen for trapping and executing Ambazonian fighters weary of war, and a recruitment point for proxies. The proxy forces disguise as Ambazonian fighters and wreak havoc in rural communities to sully the territory's international image. The goal here is twofold: justify financial assistance from multilateral agencies, and break the morale of the people.

6.1.5. Shooting ourselves in the foot

Ambazonians have also contributed to the difficulties our quest for freedom has encountered. The lack of a unified leadership has promoted bickering, with severe consequences on our collective morale. When Ambazonian activists started bullying, kidnapping, extortion, embezzlement, that chaotic pathway provoked anger, resentment and bitterness in the people, and caused donations to plummet. Lack of accountability and sometimes brazen embezzlement have also contributed to the frustration of the people, forcing Ambazonians who could have provided the competencies needed for the liberation movement to take a back seat. Also, lies, slander, illicit deals with the colonizer, fratricidal quarrels resulting in the deaths of Ambazonian fighters have not helped the cause. Furthermore, some Ambazonians claim atrocities committed by La Republique proxy forces in a false show of bravery. Others carry out public executions. None of such acts does the cause any good.

6.1.6. Humanitarian challenges and the need for urgent aid

Southern Cameroonians (Ambazonians) fleeing from the war have become refugees and IDPs. Most live in appalling conditions characterized by chronic shortage of food and medicine for children and the elderly. Even the APOC in La Republique du Cameroun detention facilities need urgent medical and food assistance.

6.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

From the issues addressed in this report and the suggestions made by Ambazonians, we recommend as follows:

6.2.1.A united front.

Political organizations as individual entities in the liberation struggle, have not achieved anything significant in terms of mass mobilization compared to the Consortium and the Governing Council. Without a unified front, Ambazonians will continue to fight each other and expend valuable time and energy on needless quarrels and fights for supremacy. A united front is therefore an urgent necessity.

6.2.2. The Consultative Commission

Such a political and legal entity can play a technical role in the struggle. It constitutes a good chance for Ambazonian leaders, professionals and technocrats to work together in a rule-based, result-oriented system. It can clean up the chaotic image of the liberation movement and give respectability to the Ambazonian cause on the international stage.

6.2.3. Partisan politics

This must be shunned, and leaders encouraged to work together to build and deliver a common vision through consensus-driven outcomes. Quarrels have only alienated the people. It is time to win everybody back through self-discipline, good conduct and a unified approach with shared responsibilities.

6.2.4. New standards.

Everyone called to serve the people must realize the need for honesty, discipline, team spirit, and be ready to build capacity so as to enhance output and performance.

6.2.5. Humanitarian strategy

This is necessary to ensure that afflicted communities, IDPs, refugees, APOCs and others affected by the war receive food and healthcare regularly.

6.2.6. Control of the country

This is a challenge still awaiting the Ambazonian leadership. They can demonstrate it in a positive way, not only by organizing ghost towns. They can make constructive contributions to the lives of the people in ways that will impact their lives meaningfully. Ambazonians need to start having a foretaste of the country they aspire to.

6.2.7.A unified communication channel

A channel of this nature tells the international community that we are one people with one vision and redirects all Ambazonians to act in unison. Everybody wants a democratic Ambazonia, but we must take the country back first from its foreign occupiers. Political education of the people will enable them to understand the need for them to behave in a particular way.

6.2.8. Diplomatic outreach and advocacy. This will be possible when the Consultative Commission goes operational. A good diplomatic strategy will make negotiations inevitable and end the tricks La Republique du Cameroun has played in the last six years. As a united front, we will be better able to engage diplomatic circles more effectively and end the free for all social media wars.

6.2.9.Kidnapping and public executions. The humiliation, financial losses and trauma caused by these activities do not endear the liberation movement to the people. We must return to the old relationship and protection fighters enjoyed in the early days of the struggle.

6.2.10. The Consultative Commission should plan and convene the All Ambazonia General Conference to lay the groundwork for the transition to a free, democratic and prosperous homeland.

6.3. WHAT THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY NEEDS TO DO

The international community has been deceived by La Republique du Cameroun since 1961. They started by promising that the federal system would never be altered, but sneakily annexed the Southern Cameroons (Ambazonia) in 1972, then proceeded to secede from the union in 1984. All through this war, as it has been illustrated, La Republique has refused to address the root causes of the conflict and

even bungled attempts by the Swiss and Canadians to facilitate peace talks. The international community cannot continue to condone La Republique du Cameroun's cavalier attitude without being complicit to the atrocities going on. Therefore, the following actions need to be taken:

6.3.1.Increased diplomatic pressure and sanctions on La Republique du Cameroun.

This will restrict multilateral financial agencies from giving La Republique loans or selling bonds to raise money for the war. Much of the money La Republique du Cameroun has borrowed in the last six years has been used to finance the war.

6.3.2. International investigation. This must be conducted into atrocities against civilians since 2018 and appropriate action taken against the perpetrators.

6.3.3. The UNDP and the Reconstruction and Development Program The UNDP should desist from encouraging La Republique du Cameroun in its deceptive reconstruction game in the Southern Cameroons. The program is unrealistic because the war is still raging on, so reconstruction cannot take place. Besides, most of the contracts have been awarded to companies from La Republique du Cameroun. Many of them are linked to the colonial Governors. These companies have collected money but have abandoned more than 70% of the projects.

6.3.4. The international community should impress on La Republique du Cameroun to stop destroying palm, rubber and banana plantations to sell the land to citizens of La Republique du Cameroun. The destruction of plantations is the continuation of their agenda of economic sabotage so as to keep Southern Cameroons Ambazonia impoverished and subjugated.

