

CONSULTATIVE COMMISSION

FOR THE TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY IN

THE SOUTHERN CAMEROONS (AMBAZONIA)

2024 CONSULTATION REPORT

PRESENTED BY
THE COORDINATION TEAM

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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 (Ambazonia) liberation movement, pointing up why living under French Cameroun (hereinafter known as La Republique du Cameroun) no longer guarantees the safety and wellbeing of the people, sixty-two years after they gained independence 'by joining La Republique du Cameroun.' It also highlights the foundational issues which have stultified the people's quest for freedom and given French Cameroun the leeway to repeatedly evade negotiations. It recommends steps and measures by which Ambazonians can achieve a lasting consensus, specifies the role of 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 (Ambazonia) Conference which will lay the foundation for a safe, democratic and prosperous homeland.

The essence of this consultation process was to bring the masses to share their perspective on the political, economic and socio-psychological dimensions of the conflict, and to determine how best to assert our communitarian interest. It was established that the people in their overwhelming majority want a nonpartisan Consultative Commission which embodies transparency, competency and inclusivity as they search for a permanent peaceful solution to the war imposed on them.

The Coordination Team

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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

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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).

Sequel to the decision arrived at in Washington DC, several meetings were convened to which political organizations and community leaders were invited. However, it soon became obvious that some political organizations wanted to lead and this was threatening to derail the initiative. To resolve the impasse, it was agreed that the services of a third-party international facilitator be solicited. The facilitator convened several meetings where the Southern Cameroons (Ambazonia) parties agreed to sequence their conferences to serve the common cause. Although some organizations refused to be part of any initiative if they did not have steering control, a three-day workshop was organized in Washington DC for delegates representing various organizations and this Coordination Team was formed.

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.

The delegates also agreed to work together to collaborate on consulting the people before organizing any conference, and to evolve a non-partisan process which will attract skilled Southern Cameroonians (Ambazonians), many of whom had been pushed to the fringes by excessive internal wrangling. In all, the Coordination Team pledged to awaken the people of the Southern Cameroons (Ambazonia) to the need for a new approach that will repair past mistakes and put the Southern Cameroons question on the global agenda.

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

1.0. Introduction

Throughout this consultation, our team engaged with a wide spectrum of Ambazonian leaders, diaspora communities, Ambazonian prisoners of conscience/war lawyers, teachers, university professors, local community leaders (including Quarter Heads, traditional rulers), government functionaries, religious leaders, clergymen, politicians (Senators, parliamentarians, Councilors) civil servants, leaders of civil society organizations, journalists, business men and women, women peace activists in the community, relatives of soldiers serving in the army of La Republique du Cameroun among others. The objective of these conversations was to assess the prevailing conditions amid the ongoing conflict, so as to understand the social, political and economic implications, and underscore the urgency of the situation. By talking to this vast array of stakeholders, it was possible to gain insights to the underpinnings of Southern Cameroonian (Ambazonian) liberation movement, the justification for resisting the continued annexation, assimilation and inhumane treatment by French Cameroun. We also identified some of the mistakes we have made and devised strategies to redress them. Furthermore, we unraveled the dynamics of the war imposed on us by La Republic du Cameroun.

1.1. 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.

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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).

1.1.1. 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 at that time. 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.

1.1.2. 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 Liberte, in a social media video, tells a mammoth crowd how intellectually deficient and wholly stupid Southern Cameroonians are. 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.

c. 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.

d. Underfunding of Higher Education Institutions in the Southern Cameroonian

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.

e. 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 12 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.

f. Corruption in the admission procedure of professional schools

Professional schools have for long been the means by which La Republique du Cameroun admits lower and middle level cadres into the public service. The policy gives indigenes of the Southern Cameroons a stipulated quota; but this has never been respected. There are years in which some institutions don't admit Southern Cameroonians. Most often, the English questions in the entrance examinations of these institutions are poorly translated so that candidates end up confused.

Also, corruption has become so institutionalized that these admissions are openly bought and sold without regard for merit. Professional schools in English-speaking universities seem to have caught the virus once thought to be a distinctly French Cameroun disease. Some Southern Cameroonians who spoke to the Consultation Team rate the Higher Technical Teachers' Training College (HTTTC) Kumba and the Higher Teachers' Training College (known by its French acronym ENS) Bambili among the most afflicted by corruption. The general tendency to 'buy admissions' has destroyed the merit system on which the Southern Cameroons was founded.

g. 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, non-professional curricula. Either way, those of them who graduate face a hostile job market designed mainly for French-speaking candidates. This situation accounts for the high number of English-speaking graduates in the informal sector, such as bike-riders, callbox operators and hawkers of all kinds.

h. 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. Indigenous Southern Cameroonians remain on the sidelines while ethnic Francophones eat both halves of the identity cake.

i. 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.

j. 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.

k. 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 sub system. 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 challenges for over sixty years, with no real solutions to show for it. French Cameroun is unrelenting in its resolve to obliterate the Southern Cameroons culture and lifestyle and in its place plant a ruthless, hegemonistic Francophone authority.

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, agro-industrial 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 the ports of Limbe and Tiko

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 French Cameroun 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



b. The Closing Down of the Cameroon Air Transport Company (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, French Cameroun claimed that CAT's portfolio was insignificant, and the company had to go. In a systematic way, strategies were designed to close down any and all ventures likely to sustain economic life in the Southern Cameroons.

With the closure of CAT came the closure of the Tiko International Airport, Besongabang Airport, Bali Airport and the Weh strip. The law-abiding citizens of Southern Cameroons became powerless victims of a system in which they could not seek redress. Even the airport in Bamenda, with uncompleted structures, did not serve any purpose and has become a military base where military onslaughts are planned.

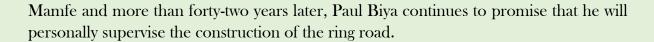
c. Destruction of Banking and Agro-Industrial Infrastructure

Particularly damaging to the economic health of the territory was the closure of the West Cameroon Development Agency and the liquidation of its financial institutions. Cameroon Bank, the territory's flagship bank, and later Amity Bank 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 French Cameroon and its 78 billion Franc reserve 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. Many years later, Tole Tea was given to government cronies with so many workers laid off without compensation.

There have been several attempts to relocate the headquarters of the Cameroon Credit Union League to Yaounde, to plunder it the way they did with the National Produce Marketing Board and the banks. But they were fiercely resisted by the people of Southern Cameroons and the government of La Republique du Cameroun had to back down. But with the people's savings worth several billions of Francs (CFA) still lodged in the cooperatives, the people fear that the French Cameroun government might still be devising another plan to clutch that money.

d. The Plunder of Equipment at the Public Works Department

The Public Works Department which took care of road maintenance was closed down and its equipment transferred to French Cameroun or then abandoned to rot in their different locations in the territory. The extent of the disregard for Southern Cameroonians was seen when Ahmadou Ahidjo inaugurated an untarred road in



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. Whenever a road was tarred, it was usually a very narrow strip which made overtaking very risky. 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.

e. A No-Industrialization Policy

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 Victoria where the refinery is located.

Machines and equipment in Government Technical School Ombe were also gradually dismantled and taken away to Douala to be sold to Francophone industrialists. As a result, a school which was designed for and reputed to train future Southern Cameroonian engineers and technicians for future industries lost its capacity to effectively train the high quality manpower needed for Southern Cameroon's development.

f. Asphyxiation of Private Enterprise

Just like the banks, French Cameroon contrived to destroy Southern Cameroons businesses like Fomenky's Direct Supplies, Nangah Construction Company, Niba Automobile and Kilo Construction by depriving them of credits. Others were hounded with unrealistic taxes and driven out of business.

g. The Refusal to Build a Deep-Sea Port

Many other repressive economic measures were taken that, put together, transformed the Southern Cameroons into wasteland. For example, Victoria had natural deep-sea features suitable for a port. Rather than improve the existing port there, however, the Yaounde Government opted instead to close it down and maintain the Douala port, and this in spite of the latter's high dredging cost. The same government opened

another port in Kribi, still in La Republique du Cameroun, at an even higher cost. In the meantime, Southern Cameroons is still without a port.

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.

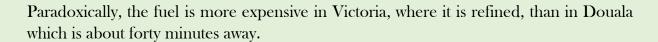
h. Neglect, Infrastructure deficit and Inaccessibility to Communities

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 linking the county to other counties and no hospitals. Corpses are transported on motor bikes, and administrative offices are housed in makeshift fabrications, rented houses, or crumbling colonial structures. The absence of standard, affordable healthcare facilities compels Southern Cameroonians to transport patients to Douala or Yaounde 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. nd

i. Excluding Southern Cameroonians from managing their resources

The National Oil Refinery (known by its French Acronym as SONARA) located in Victoria has never had a General Manager or Southern Cameroons origin. It was built to refine crude oil extracted from the territory. However, about 95% of the managerial staff is French-speaking. They are surrounded with privileges – good lodging, their children attend the prestigious SONARA school, etc. The few senior staff of Southern Cameroons origin occupy peripheral positions with the rest doing menial jobs.



j. Institutionalized Corruption

Southern Cameroonian seniors who spoke to the Consultation Team lamented the degradation of the society in which they now live and longed for the strict, disciplined pre-unification society when integrity was highly prized. They partly attributed the misery and hardship in the Southern Cameroons to a pervasive culture of corruption which has been institutionalized by the government in Yaounde. Local chiefs are bribed to accept the plunder of resources in their communities, nothing is obtained by merit anymore, the customs service intentionally stifles businesses through multiple checkpoints and extortion, tax officers raid small businesses and extort money to resolve their personal social problems. This is so even when business owners have acquitted themselves of all their taxes. Business owners complain that during such raids, even the papers issued by the tax authorities are considered as 'fake.'

At national level, hundreds of billions of Francs are stolen through inflated contracts and raw deals signed by La Republique du Cameroun government ministers. Some parliamentarians who spoke to the Consultation Team said that contracts for the exploitation of minerals were given away for foreign companies in exchange for huge kickbacks, government contracts to build stadiums and roads were often inflated. The national refinery was burnt down because individuals in the government hoped to make personal profit from importation than by refining the crude locally for the benefit of all. Consequently, the citizens have to endure hikes in fuel prices.

Police corruption is epidemic. They set up their checkpoints are everywhere and extort Southern Cameroonian drivers must pay 1000 Frs at each stop. The incidence of this extortion is borne by the passengers who are required to pay high fares in addition to the burden of hikes in fuel prices.

Southern Cameroonians we spoke to believe that such unpatriotic behavior has contaminated some of our people and is reinforcing poverty among the masses. They were nostalgic of the good old days of Southern Cameroons when corrupt behavior could attract a stigma to the corrupt individual and his entire family.

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 (Article 47). It stated specifically that any proposal intended to impair the federation was inadmissible and laid down a special procedure. But French Cameroun did not only disregard the procedure; it held an illegal referendum in 1972 and 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 Cameroons parliamentarians were swallowed up by the French Cameroun 'National Assembly' where their vote had no weight and where they could not articulate their people's needs and concerns.

b. The scrapping of the position of the Vice President of the Republic

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 without consulting the Southern Cameroons party. 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 Southern 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.

c. The decree transforming Cameroun from a United Republic to a Republic

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.

d. 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. The Southern Cameroons joined La Republique du Cameroun as one country, but it was split into two (North West and South West Provinces) and even within the split, French Cameroun continued to fan the flares of ethnic conflict between and among the people causing many communities to hate or kill each other.

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 making financial contributions towards a mass eviction as well as people willing to testify that pogrom was brewing.

e. 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 Southern Cameroons 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. Southern Cameroonians at the service of the French Cameroon government don't speak without thanking the Head of State or giving him credit for things he knows nothing about. This knee-crocking, subservient vassal attitude is what has pushed some politicians to shamelessly argue on television that Southern Cameroonians is better off colonized than self-governing.

f. Caricaturing Southern Cameroonians

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

- fools (anglofous)
- enemies in the (francophone) house (l'ennemi dans la maison)
- Biafrans (les biafrais),
- cockroaches, and
- dogs.

The French Cameroun Government has never condemned these derogatory references used by important political and media personalities, meaning that it subscribes to them. This derisive treatment is typically the way French Cameroun children been brought up to perceive their Southern Cameroons counterparts. A video is circulating in the social media, of a Pentecostal pastor in Yaounde, Caleb Mboa Atangana, in which he explains how foolish and twisted the Anglophone mind is. At a time when the conflict shows no signs of abating, such videos enable and justify the brutal killings perpetrated by the large Beti-Bulu army which has invaded the Southern Cameroons.

Some of the elderly Southern Cameroonians who spoke to the Consultation Team remember, with pain, how French Cameroun gendarmes used to cramp their fathers on the back of Land Rovers trucks because of taxes. Their wives did not like the humiliation of their men, and so had to do everything to bail them.

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, it 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, creating harsh conditions of existence for the Southern Cameroons party. They do not keep to agreements, promises or even the laws passed by their own parliament. From equal partner in 1961, Southern Cameroonians have become second class citizens and are even classified as an ethnic group along side the Bassas, Bamilikes or Bulus. 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 to reinstate the justice and freedom that characterized their daily existence prior to the failed experience with French Cameroun.

23

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, Bali, Bamenda, Ekona, Muyuka, Bambili, Belo, Kumbo, Kwakwa, Belo, Ngarbuh and other places. In response, the Southern Cameroon (Ambazonian) self-defense volunteers emerged to protect their communities.

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.

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. Sisiku Julius Ayuk Tabe was the movement's leader and was recognized as such. However, in January 2018 he and his entire cabinet were abducted and illegally renditioned from Nigeria to La Republique du Cameroun and sentenced there to life in prison. This created a vacuum which spark rivalry as individuals 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 for the consultation is to:

- a. Identify ways to reconcile the differences and dysfunctionalities that have impeded the ability of Southern Cameroonians (Ambazonians) ability to express their nationhood or pursue their collective vision. Ambazonians were required to identify the causes of dysfunction, fragmentations and the acrimonious relations between political factions and within the community, which can hinder the formation of a common vision and a united front.
- b. Re-stitch the community by creating an opportunity for Ambazonians to meet and share their journey through the liberation struggle and by so doing, consolidate our common vision. Through shared experiences and collaborative problem-solving, Southern Cameroonians (Ambazonians) can find common ground and foster reconciliation.
- c. Establish principles that promote greater unity, self-discipline, and constructive engagement by all individuals towards 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.
- d. Create a framework which articulates our collective vision and outlines the implementation process and defines, the role of every Southern Cameroonian (Ambazonian), while ensuring cohesion and effective communication. Based on the identified causes of dysfunctionality, remedies, principles and solutions, Southern Cameroonians (Ambazonians) should develop a viable framework that paves the way forward and systematically addresses present and future challenges.

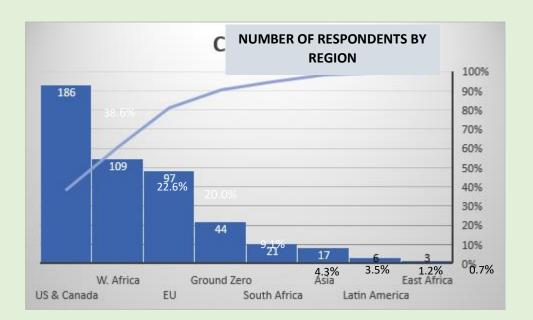
2.3. METHODOLOGY

Data were collected through a combination of methods, including online survey, public meetings structured as 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. Additionally, respondents had the option to write their opinion if their view 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:



It is noteworthy that a significant number of Southern Cameroonians (Ambazonians) in West Africa participated in this survey. This is not surprising because the region has a large refugee population. Their participation reflects their eagerness to contribute to the way forward so that many can return home to resume their livelihoods.

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)		
В	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 conflict as a language problem instead of a situation whereby one country is trying to assimilate the other. Cameroun's loose definition of 'anglophone' as 'anyone who speaks English' not as indigenes of the Southern Cameroons (Ambazonia) obscures the issue thereby complicating the quest for a viable solution.

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		
В	Influence of external forces,	13	3.7
	infiltration and sabotage, etc		

Southern Cameroonians (Ambazonians) largely agree on the diagnoses of causes of disunity in the liberation struggle. Each group aspires to dominate and pursue their individual goals even when their capacity to do so is limited. There is a tendency to prioritize collecting funds and seeking praises without making any substantial progress.

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, it will mitigate their disruptive potential and yield better and faster results than is currently observed.

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 committee	298	61.6
B.	A Liberation Council	122	25.2
C.	Interim Government	18	3.7
D	Transition Government	45	9.5

A consultative commission englobes a process which is more accommodating of diversity because it allows partisans, experts and technocrats to cohabit or work together with the sole objective of achieving results, unlike in the present inflexible partisan system which has pushed technocrats to the fringes. It is a politico-legal structure with the capacity to conduct studies and investigations to provide valuable information to the team coordinating the Southern Cameroons quest for freedom. It is therefore, highly inclusive, technical and suitable, if Southern Cameroonians want to recover from the rivalry and bickering which have impeded their progress in the last five 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 and all	288	60.0
	other dedicated Ambazonians with		
	competencies to work together		
В.	Select competent people with integrity	185	38.0
	in the communities to work with willing		
	political leaders and professionals		
C.	Each group should continue to do their	10	2.0
	thing and collaborate when it is		
	necessary		

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

i. Public Meetings and Workshops

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

ii. Focus Group Discussions and Interviews

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 theme or an extended conversation on identified problems.

On the basis of the survey, the public discussions as well as focus group interactions and interviews, the Coordination Team has gleaned the perspectives and concerns of Southern Cameroonians (Ambazonians), especially the points of convergence on some of the problems which have bogged down our quest for freedom. As a result, it was possible to collectively:

- identify stakeholders in future endeavors;
- identify pitfalls, uncertainties or obstacles to our liberation struggle
- determine possible measures of progress
- establish a framework with mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation

2.3.1. Identification of Stakeholders

- Civil Society initiatives and networks

- Community Heads (Ground Zero)
- Constituted Southern Cameroons (Ambazonia) Communities in the Diaspora
- Diaspora political organizations
- Diaspora professionals 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
- Women peace initiatives (Ground Zero)
- Other initiatives seeking to create a united front

2.3.4. Identification of pitfalls or obstacles to our quest for freedom

It was established that a number of factors were responsible for our inability to forge ahead and score significant progress in our quest for freedom:

- Disruptive competition
- Disunity and the unwillingness to synchronize efforts or have a common vision
- Egotistic drive for power by individuals and groups, and the quest for supremacy
- Kidnapping and extortion
- Lack of accountability leading to distrust
- Lack of consensus driven outcomes
- Lack of guiding principles and frameworks
- Lack of monitoring, evaluation and control mechanisms
- Lack of viable leadership structure
- Multiple, disparate and even mixed messaging
- Self-inflicted pain causing the masses to be exasperated and to push back
- Sporadic and frequent lockdowns
- Lack of international recognition

2.3.5. Identification of Good Performance Indicators

It was established that evidence of progress would be seen if a number of factors would fall in place:

- The adoption of a representation model that ensures transparency, competency and inclusivity.
- The empowerment of communities to serve as a bulwark for mobilization.
- The establishment of a unity framework that is rule-based, with clearly outlined principles and processes to ensure effective coordination and consensus driven decisions.
- Reduced bickering in the social media and coordinated messaging.

- Increased participation and engagement of stakeholders at local and international level and increased international pressure on Cameroun.
- The identification of milestones in the liberation process to ease the measurement of progress
- The willingness of politicians and organizations to prioritize the suffering of the masses over their personal ambitions and egos;
- The rejection by the international community of any initiatives which are not concerted or the result of a collective or unified approach.
- The use of proper project management methodology.

2.3.6. Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms

During the consultation, Southern Cameroonians made it clear that a number of measures also need to be put in place to ensure that the solutions envisaged will be practicable and sustainable.

- Create a framework which pools competencies and report periodically on progress or challenges.
- Carry out periodic assessments, analyses and adjustments if need be.
- Draw up strategic plans for each aspect of the liberation struggle.
- Provide transparent criteria and processes for selection or designation of persons called to serve.
- Outline clear processes to avoid ambiguity and conflict of interest

2.3.7. Recommendations

Following the open, frank and public discussions at large and small group levels, the following recommendations were put together at the preliminary stage of the consultations:

a. Timeliness of the Consultation

The people of the Southern Cameroons (Ambazonia) welcomed the consultation and recommended that stress be laid on the consequences of the conflict on the people, and the need for a quick resolution. 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. Create a 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 initiatives, 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

It was further recommended that the Consultative Commission should:

- Continue as the consultation instrument prior to the grand conference, making recommendations and ensuring the proper discussion of such before implementation.
- Have periodic assessments and take concerted action or decisions as the struggle evolves.
- Adopt a unified messaging system and stem down the dissemination of false information or enemy propaganda.
- Select, prepare and equip a good team of Southern Cameroons (Ambazonia) to represent or speak on our behalf wherever or whenever the need may arise.
- Engage the international community at different levels, La Republique du Cameroun and other movements within the liberation struggle.
- Coordinate / facilitate the hosting of an All-Southern Cameroons (Ambazonia) Conference to lay down 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 our people in distress refugees, IDPs, in prison or wounded
- 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

This section has focused essentially on the perspectives of the people of the Southern Cameroons (Ambazonia) with regard to how or why 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. This in itself is a signal that the top-down approach, bereft of unity, only led to needless rivalry since it created the false impression of rulership of a country which does not yet exist. Due to poor management, it deflated the aspirations of an already traumatized people and created apathy for a genuine quest. As we doubled down on this flawed approach, we experienced stagnation and the exacerbation of our woes. Many Ambazonians who have the competencies needed to foster our quest for freedom gradually withdrew once factionalism and disruptive competition set in. The results of these consultations show that there is a need to reset the clock.



OUR HUMANITARIAN PLIGHT: 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 the lack of potable water

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

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

- Some Ambazonian groups abroad send food exclusively to their loyalists, whether in prisons or in the refugee camps. 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. Poor 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. Limited 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, some of the school needs have been addressed, albeit partially, in the refugee camps, thanks to some educational initiatives carried out by NGOs.

Children have obtained their secondary school certificates and some have gone on to higher education. Others are pursuing vocational training. Some prisoners have learnt new skills in detention and produce little articles for sale. However, these feeble activities do not mask the great and urgent need for a complete overhaul of the educational sector in Ambazonia. Many children, even among those undergoing vocational training, would gladly welcome opportunities for higher education. Similarly, IDPs and APOCs would also appreciate assistance to boost ongoing business initiatives.

3.1.4. The dire fate of children living as 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. Lack 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 co detainees 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. There is need to reorganize the legal representation of Ambazonians within Cameroun's military justice system and in the refugee camps where we are receiving information about increasing brushes with the law.

3.1.6. Inadequate support from the UN

Some of the refugees who spoke to the Consultation Team complained of inadequate support from the UN. The allowance that was promised them is inadequate and irregular. Some refugees complained that they have often provided their personal data on the request of the UNHCR, but have never received any support. Some refugees, the Team was told, had to return to the conflict zone because of the hardship in the refugee camps. For many refugees, the hardship in the camps is compounding the trauma of the war. Others have resorted to indecent practices to make a living. There is a need for sustainable solutions to these livelihood challenges

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 for the nascent Consultation Commission 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 as they relate to educational opportunities, skill training for short and long term gainful employment.
- 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.

3.3. 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 which will take into account the medical, food and legal concerns of the refugees, APOCs and IDPs.

THE DYNAMICS OF CAMEROUN'S WAR ON THE PEOPLE

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 39 were broken into. Soldiers were, therefore, ready to pay up to 300,000 Frs (\$600) to be deployed to Ambazonia. Many are known to have built houses, bought cars, or acquired landed property after a short tour in the war zone.

However, between 2018 and 2019, Ambazonian fighters fought back valiantly and inflicted heavy losses on French Cameroun 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.

4.1.2. 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.

4.1.3. 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.

4.1.4. 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. When this happens, they have to pay huge sums of money to regain their freedom. Agents of money transfer companies also work with gendarmes and police officers to extort money from Southern Cameroonians who receive money from relatives abroad. It suffices to accuse them of sponsoring terrorism. The Secretary General of the Human Rights Council in Buea has had to intervene on several occasions to recover money seized from Ambazonians by gendarmes without cause.

4.1.5. Officials benefitting from the war

On their part, French Cameroun officials benefit financially from the conflict, in the form of countless evaluation missions to the conflict region and the huge accompanying mission allowances. These officials are obstacles to the resolution of the conflict because of the income source it represents for them. The movement of cash for emergency purposes is helping so many people to grow rich illicitly since much of the expenditure is not accounted for.

4.1.6. Bad faith and half measures (Major National Dialogue)

La Republique du Cameroun'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 of such half measures. Convened in 2019, this event was meant to bring stakeholders together with a view to finding solutions to the conflict. 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. Special Status

The 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 National Dialogue and comprised a regional house of chiefs and a regional assembly. Both houses are consultative bodies only. In essence, they are full of CPDM party stalwarts and known stooges and can only be instruments used by the French Cameroun government to tighten control and foster its colonial agenda in the Southern Cameroons. Southern Cameroonians are still deported to Yaounde and tried in military tribunal and common law is still being substituted for civil law.

b. The DDR Centers

Among the lame measures taken by La Republique is the creation of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reinsertion Centers, commonly known as DDR. This is clearly putting the cart before the horse because centers 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 rehabilitation in the DDR centers ends up in private pockets; often of government officials.
- To ensure and eliminate Ambazonian fighters who are known to have given the French Cameroun army tough times. Former Ambazonian fighters who escaped from the DDR centers attest that French Cameroun secretly eliminates them after interrogation.

4.1.7. The phony reconstruction

In the midst of the 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 or roads constructed; and the list goes on. This so-called reconstruction is designed to buy time so that French Cameroun can avoid negotiations.

4.1.7. 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 of La Republique du Cameroun is always quick to explain what happened. There always seems to be a prepared script to explin each incident. The attack on women and children in Ngarbuh, of schools in Kumba and Mbonge, and the burning of the Kumba Divisional hospital, for instance, are all 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. The population knows the truth even if they do not contest the official version of these incidents.

4.1.8. 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. Many of the teachers who have fled the war teach in some of those schools and are paid paltry sums, yet the children pay higher fees in these schools. For some, prolongation of the conflict will buy them more time to pay back the loans used to build the schools

4.1.9. 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 Southern Cameroonian consciousness.

4.2.1. Humiliation, Fear and Impoverishment of the people

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. Many more people are terrified by the thought of being kidnapped and so, many fear to go back home. More and more Southern Cameroonians are being buried in French Cameroun or abroad because of the harassments and huge sums their families have to pay before they are laid to rest. The conflict has left a dent on the collective psyche of the people which will take a long time to heal. There is a need for collective action to end the pain of our people. This movement is meant to free the people; not hurt them

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. Patients acquiesce out of fear of being neglected. In schools, principals collect money for admission. In the course of the consultations, some pensioners reported losing up to thirty percent of their arrears of pension to corrupt social insurance staff in Buea and Bamenda. Corruption is driving up the cost of living in the Southern Cameroons and making an already challenging situation even more so. The people seem to be losing the compassion and hospitality which were once the hallmark of Southern Cameroons society.

4.2.3. Property theft

There are reports of an increase in the number of people selling the landed property of their neighbors who have fled from the violence. Others who found themselves at odds with French Cameroun soldiers or Amba fighters and had to run for their lives are also victims. There is a need to put an end to this phenomenon through public education campaigns. If this persists, this land issue could later become a thorny post-war problem.

4.2.4. Loss of identity and cultural history

The scorching of villages by the French Cameroun army has left a huge scar on the lives of the people. Birth certificates, personal identification papers, academic certificates, arts and craft (which embody the history of families and communities), and the vehicle of respected culture have been destroyed. The absence of counselling and rehabilitation programs has exacerbated the people's psychological woes. Many people find it difficult to move because they could be tagged as Ambazonian fighters and killed. Others who have managed to cross the border find it difficult to register in refugee camps because they are unidentified.

4.2.5. 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. There are several hundreds of people waiting to collect several hundreds of hectares of land bought in Limbe in 2022.

4.2.6. 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.

4.3. 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 also realize that persistent affliction by La Republique du Cameroun without a corresponding push back by those who are supposed to be leaders is dampening the morale of the people. However, a considerable push back is never be possible without unity and proper coordination. 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.

5.2.1. 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 conducive atmosphere for collaboration, away from the disruptive competition now happening.

5.2.2. Issues to be addressed

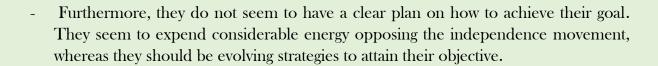
Drawing from the recommendation above, it is obvious that those who genuinely seek an effective coordination of our quest for freedom should not have any difficulties meeting to address the following:

- 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 corporate image?

5.2.3. Other movements

Unlike the Independence Movement which wants external self-determination for the people the Southern Cameroons (Ambazonia), the Federalist Movement is fractured in its demands for internal self-determination through a two, four and 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. Federalism to them, therefore, is a ruse by which to gain total freedom.
- Secondly, when French Cameroun politicians had the opportunity to choose federalism during the drafting of the 1996 Constitution and the so-called Grand National Dialogue, they claimed that they were not familiar with such a system of government and preferred to grant a 'Special Status.'
- Thirdly, the federalists do not seem to agree on the type of federation they want; some want a return to the two-state (confederation), four-state (which require parts of Southern Cameroons to merge with parts of French Cameroun) and a ten-state.



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

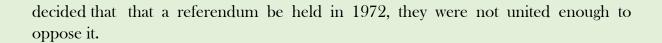
This report recommends that the Consultative Commission should reach out to the federalist movement and work out modalities by which the people of Southern Cameroons can be educated, so that, irrespective of their political leanings, they will be able to eventually decide their future.

5.3. KEEPING SOUTHERN CAMEROONIANS DIVIDED

Why does La Republique du Cameroun fear a united people of Ambazonia? 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 divisions among the people of Southern Cameroons which unfortunately have fractured their destiny, have naively been viewed as diversity. It has made them appear disorganized, confused or disruptive. As a result, even among people with the same aspiration, their inability to speak with one voice has made them unable to converge on the same message. La Republique du Cameroun has always capitalized on this seeming diversity to tell the world that the Southern Cameroonian party was not organized, so they did not have a reliable interlocutor. That is why, the international community has often expressed their frustration over these apparent divisions and has publicly urging Ambazonians to unite.

5.3.1. Disrupting the democratic system in the 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 for survival and not his people. This meant that gradual doses of repression and political highhandedness would be needed, and the persecution did begin. As disunity set in, Southern Cameroonian politicians no longer fought together as one, such that by the time La Republique du Cameroun



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 propaganda machinery. Attempts to use Southern Cameroonian comprador bourgeoisie to discredit the new movement were resisted by the population with Southern Cameroons elite organizations openly calling on La Republique du Cameroun to address the demands of the movement. The Southern Cameroonians in the ruling party dared not speak against their people like before, because the people were united. La Republique du Cameroun decided to arrest the leaders of the Consortium to decapitate the movement and to create a leadership vacuum. From then, it was possible for the state media to 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 and Southern Cameroonians quickly invested their support in the Governing Council and subsequently, the Interim Government led by Sisiku Julius Ayuk Tabe. Frightened by the popular support and galvanizing effect and even the in-roads they were making, La Republique du Cameroun schemed with the Nigerian intelligent services to abduct him and nine others, and illegally rendition them to La Republique du Cameroun. The ensuing fragmentation and the resulting cacophony as various groups disparage each other in the social media serves La Republique du Cameroun's international messaging. They delight in the mutual suspicions between Ambazonian political organizations. The disunity, to them, is a clear depiction of the inability of the people of Southern Cameroons to organize and effectively govern itself. Besides, it offers them justification to buy time or avoid the negotiation table under the pretext that there's no one to talk to.

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 generally lacks good faith

Far back in 2017, La Republique du Cameroun had already shown its true complexion as it relates to negotiations. Government ministers negotiated with teacher unions and the Consortium from 12-13 January 2017 and refused to give a copy of the points agreed on to representatives of unions, but tried to hoodwink the unions into suspending their strike action without any guarantees of implementing the points agreed on. Besides, they refused to allow the unions to sign an agreement and later, 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 on January 17, 2017.

b. Resistance Fatigue

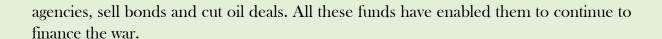
La Republique du Cameroun believes that the Ambazonian resistance is tired of war that is why their clamor for peace negotiations is strong. By delaying negotiations, they hope that the internecine quarrels and fights will deplete the movement and the Southern Cameroons will be reconquered.

c. The 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. With a catalogue of broken promises and illegal moves, the negotiation table will definitely expose the truths which have been hidden rom their citizens.

d. Luring the international community to 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



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 the Southern Cameroons. 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 a 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. Unfulfilled MOUs

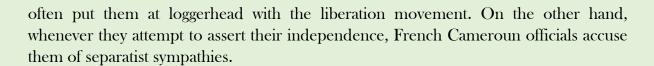
One of the biggest frustrations in Ambazonian politics is the unfulfilled memorandums of understanding. Ambazonian political leaders have been noted for signing MOUs and later backtracking, if the initiative does not serve their egotistic expectations. This has caused many initiatives to crumble, leading to stagnation in our quest for freedom. There must be a framework which is open to all Ambazonian political leaders who believe that they have something to offer to the people and are willing to be accountable. Such a framework should focus on process, goals, results, not serve their selfish interests. Ambazonian leaders should be more realistic and realize that the fight of freedom can only be won collectively. This means being less disruptive and being more consensus driven.

5.6. THE ROLE OF WOMEN

All over the world, women have played a crucial role in bringing about peaceful change or contributed to the peaceful resolution of conflicts. During the consultations, the Team spoke to three distinct groups of women – peace advocates, humanitarian activists and women in politics.

5.6.1. Women peace advocates

These are women whose role has been basically to advocate for the peaceful resolution of the conflict. They organize demonstrations to conscientize the public about the dangers and consequences of war. However, their activities are often infiltrated or hijacked by politicians and have made them look partisan. While their cry is usually for a permanent solution to the conflict, French Cameroun cronies in the Southern Cameroons often successfully twist their narrative to sound like a pro-Cameroun rally. This French Cameroun strategy has mired the women's activities in controversy and



5.6.2. Women Humanitarian Activists

A few women have undertaken to provide humanitarian assistance to refugees, Ambazonian prisoners of conscience and IDPs. Their activities include sourcing for funds and providing the educational needs of children in refugee camps, healthcare for women in detention and general support to women IDPs. These women have done much in the humanitarian domain, although with very limited means. Their passion for their work and the networks they have built suggest that they would do better if they are given the necessary support.

5.6.3. Women in politics

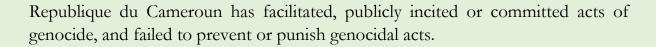
When the topic of Southern Cameroons liberation comes up, it triggers the political instincts of the average Ambazonian. However, there are a few who can be called women political activists. The general attitude of Southern Cameroonian women is that the conduct of women who have militated in partisan politics leaves much to be desired. In addition to the bickering which has been a huge disincentive to many, some women have been involved in many of the scandals which have rocked the liberation movement. As a result, others with the needed experience and competencies have shrunk from participation.

5.6.4. Enhancing Women Participation

Given the importance of women participation in mobilizing the population through advocacy, humanitarian action and politics, there is a need to consciously identify and build the capacity of those willing to work in a nonpartisan way towards the achievement of peace. The Consultative Commission should evolve a strategy which will create the environment for greater support for gender-based initiatives women participation in the established processes in line with UN Resolution 1325, which emphasizes the role of women in peace building and conflict resolution. Women in research should also be given the needed support to assist in understanding the dynamics of the conflict.

5.7. Cameroun's genocidal onslaught

The international community should be sensitive to Cameroun's genocidal onslaught. What is going on in the Southern Cameroons is a human tragedy and all humanity should be concerned. The killing of civilians – mostly women, children, the elderly – is morally repugnant. La Republique du Cameroun has committed and continues to commit acts which amount to violations of the genocide convention. The information garnered during our consultations suggests that La



Article 2 of the Genocide Convention considers as genocide, "Any of the following acts committed directly or indirectly with the intent to destroy in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, such as:

- Killing members of the group;
- Causing bodily injury or mental harm to members of the group;
- Deliberately inflicting on the group, conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group."

Southern Cameroonians in this consultation believe, across the board, that La Republique du Cameroun has carried out acts of genocide by:

- a. Targeting our cultural, political and economic existence by destroying our institutions and infrastructure;
- b. Created hostile conditions of mass existence by weaponizing poverty, depriving the people of water, electricity and internet, and creating general fear through persistent police harassment;
- c. Carried out mass killings in communities (Kumba, Ngarbuh, Mamfe, Bali, Bafut, Kom, etc), schools (Kumba, Mbonge) and enforced disappearances;
- d. Forcefully transferring people arrested in the Southern Cameroons to be tried in La Republique du Cameroun in a language they do not understand;
- e. Burning villages, markets, schools, destroying property and forcing
- f. Southern Cameroonians to migrate to other towns, to La Republique du or to refugee camps.
- g. Burning hospitals and arresting and detaining or killing nurses and doctors Shishong, Kumba, Mamfe, Bamenda and Batibo, etc.
- h. Arresting wounded persons on life-support in hospitals and allowing them to die.
- i. Banned Médecins Sans Frontière to deprive rural communities of basic health services after burning or destroying local dispensaries.

5.8. 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.

SUMMING UP

6.0. Introduction

The purpose of this consultation was basically to identify the perspectives of the people of Southern Cameroons (Ambazonia) with respect to their 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. 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 54 on the population of the Trust Territory would be catastrophic for their political future". 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.

6.2. 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.

6.2. Plunder or 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.

6.3. 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.

6.4. 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 56 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.

6.5. 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.

6.6. Recommendations

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

6.6.1. What Southern Cameroonians need to do

a. A united front

It is indispensable for Southern Cameroons political leaders to pool their effortsand to work as a team. 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.

b. The Consultative Commission

As proposed by Ambazonian masses and encrusted in its framework, the Consultative Commission is a-politico-legal entity which designed to play a technical role. It presents a good chance for all Ambazonian leaders, professionals and technocrats irrespective of sex, ethnic or religious background to work together in a rule-based system that is results-oriented. It will clean up the past chaotic image of the Ambazonian liberation movement and give respectability to the Ambazonian cause on the international stage.

c. Shun partisan politics

Partisan politics 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. In the past, everyone believed that each political organization could do it by themselves and deliver freedom for the people of the Southern Cameroons. But that was only true to the extent of disrupting the oppressor's strategy. Right now, we cannot continue to sing discordant notes and expect a harmonious symphony.

d. 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 refined performance. People must accept only tasks which their time and resources can allow. Besides, integrity is critical to our quest for freedom. Self-respect and respect for others must be intricately woven into our fabric as we move on from now, as the mark of a definite departure from our harrowing experience with French Cameroun.

e. A humanitarian strategy

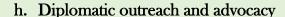
This is necessary to ensure that afflicted communities, IDPs, refugees, APOCs and others affected by the war receive food and healthcare regularly. A massive humanitarian effort is needed to restore hope in the people.

f. Take control of their country

This is a challenge still awaiting the Ambazonian leadership. They can demonstrate it in a positive way, not only by organizing ghost towns, by ensuring that our community moves towards its liberation in a bound and purposeful way. This means making constructive contributions to the lives of the people in ways that will impact them meaningfully. Ambazonians need to start having a foretaste of the country they aspire to.

g. A unified channel of communication

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 and set filters to check the lack of confidentiality.



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 have a listening ear.

i. Kidnapping, extortion and public executions

The humiliation, financial losses and trauma caused by these activities do not endear the liberation movement to our people. We must return to the old relationship and protection our fighters enjoyed among Ambazonian citizens. This can only be possible if there is cohesion.

j. The urge to betray

Those who cannot resist the urge to betray the cause should leave the territory until the annexation ends, so as to avoid the temptation to cause the needless death of fellow Southern Cameroons restoration forces or attracting reprisals for their treachery.

k. The All Southern Cameroons (Ambazonia) Conference

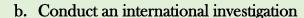
The Consultative Commission should plan and convene the general conference of all Ambazonians to lay the groundwork for the transition to a free, democratic and prosperous homeland. This will create a more orderly process moving forward and forestall the rule of arms on the morrow of freedom.

6..6.2. What the international community needs to do

Since 1961, the international community has been hoodwinked by La Republique du Cameroun. They started by promising that the federal system will never be altered, but sneakily annexed the Southern Cameroons (Ambazonia) in 1972 and proceeded to assimilate the territory. 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 Canadian governments 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:

a. Increased diplomatic pressure and sanctions

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



To deter impunity, an investigation should be conducted into atrocities and acts of genocide against civilians since 2018 so that appropriate action can be taken against perpetrators.

c. The UNDP ad 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.

d. The destruction of Southern Cameroons economic infrastructure

The international community should impress on French 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.

6.7. Conclusion

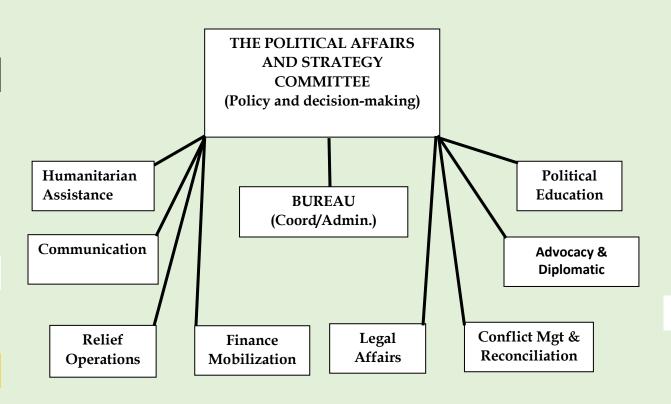
In all, this Consultation has addressed the overarching question of fostering a resilient political stability within the Southern Cameroons (Ambazonia)liberation movement. Southern Cameroonians, in their overwhelming majority want to be free from the strangulation of French Cameroun. However, there is equally a consensus that the manner in which the quest for freedom has been prosecuted leaves much to be desired. The Consultative Commission, the political framework emanating from this consultation, should provide a crucible within which competency, inclusivity and transparency can transform our current woes into a constructive poise.

APPENDIX A

Summary of Persons/Groups Consulted

	Denomination	Gr	oup /Distribution
1.	Southern Cameroons	-	Ebenezer Akwanga (APLM /SOCADEF)
	Political Organizations	_	Iya Marianta (IG)
	<u> </u>	_	Chris Anu (IG)
		_	Consortium
		_	Atam Millan (SCCOP)
		_	Founding members of the Consortium
		_	Ambazonia Coalition Team
		-	Southern Cameroons International Town
			Hall
		-	Stakeholders' Platform (SCPC)
		-	Coalition for Dialogue and Negotiations
2.	Traditional Rulers	-	3 Fons (Northern Zone)
		-	6 Chiefs (Southern Zones)
3.	Local Community Leaders	-	Quarter Heads (NZ)
4	D. C. i. I.	-	Quarter Heads (SZ)
4.	Professionals	-	University Professors
		-	Senior journalists (Union members)
		-	Lawyers (Union members)
		-	Teachers (Union members)
5.	Southern Cameroons	-	Senators
	Politicians in the French	-	Parliamentarians
	system	-	Councilors
6.	Diaspora Communities	-	Southern Cameroons European Union
			Leadership
		-	Southern Cameroons Association, Germany
		-	Southern Cameroons Community, New
			England
7.	Prisoners of Conscience and	-	Southern Cameroons Community, Canada
/.	Refugees	-	Prisons in French Cameroun and camps in Nigeria and Ghana
8.	Heads of Cultural	-	GZ and Diaspora
	Organizations		
9.	Women peace builders	-	Representatives of 13 Humanitarian
			Organizations on GZ
10.	Religious Leaders	-	GZ
11.	General public	-	Through public Consultations
12.	Federalist Movement	-	Diaspora
13.	Southern Cameroons	-	Diaspora
	Activists		

Organigram of the Consultative Commission



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