



AN MDDT-OSAF
ADVOCACY
INITIATIVE

protect our own



Engaging Stakeholders in Civilian Protection and the Right to Security in the Anglophone Regions of Cameroon

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Letter From the Editor

Dear Reader,

On behalf of MDDT Cameroon, the Movement for Democracy, Development, and Transparency (MDDT), I greet you all.

The project sponsored by MDDT and OSAF (Open Society Initiative Africa), termed, "**Strategic Advocacy on Civilian Protection and the Right to Security in the Anglophone Regions of Cameroon**" gave rise to this newsletter, known as "Protect Our Own." In the context of the current Anglophone Crisis, this advocacy initiative aims to disseminate best practices and to promote, enlighten, and educate on civilian protection and the right to security.

Its goal, like that of previous MDDT publications, is to keep government agencies, IGOs, diplomatic missions, regional and global NGOs, CSOs, and others inspired to keep up the pressure for a responsible resolution to the situation.

As a result, it centers on the "Anglophone Crisis" and all attempts by interested parties to put a stop to the hostilities towards restoring peace in Cameroon's North West and South West regions, which have been plagued by armed conflict for more than six years, primarily between separatist factions and the state's defense and security forces, at the expense of millions of civilian lives.

This being the second edition, our foremost goal is to present and appraise MDDT's perception of "strategic advocacy" as the recommended approach to addressing the fallouts of the Anglophone crisis. In this light, this edition provides MDDT's assessment of driving effective advocacy amidst the conflict in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon. This assessment is accentuated by an article on the ongoing MDDT-OSAF joint initiative on

strategic advocacy on civilian protection and the right to security in the North West and South West regions. We have also projected certain youth voices, highlighting recommendations on some prevalent aspects touching on civilian protection and the right to security in the conflict-infested regions of the country. These recommendations are meant to appeal to the goodwill of primary actors in the conflicts and constitute proposals on reducing the killings, abductions and other human rights violations.

We intend, as before, to demonstrate the significance of respecting and implementing these notions within the context of the current crisis, as an armed conflict.

As always, we are happy to continue using this newsletter to share our thoughts and actions with you, in the pursuit of a peaceful end to the Anglophone conflict, of course, as part of our joint efforts to promote peace and development. In light of this, MDDT Cameroon and her partner, OSAF, remain grateful to all the contributors of this edition and to you, our readers, who continue to support MDDT's mission and initiatives.

Sincerely,

Shashan.mbinglo

Walters Shashan B. Mbinglo
(Editor)



**OPEN
SOCIETY
AFRICA**

**"Strategic Advocacy on
Civilian Protection and the
Right to Security in the
Anglophone Regions of
Cameroon"**



STRATEGIC ADVOCACY

THE RECOMMENDED APPROACH TO ADDRESSING THE FALLOUTS OF THE ANGLOPHONE CRISIS *by Clifford N. Akonteh, Esq.*

In a time when the Anglophone regions are plagued with insecurity, exposing civil society actors, traditional leaders, religious leaders, and community advocates of change to recurrent victimization since 2016, there continues to be a shrinking space for advocacy and civil society actions towards the call for a ceasefire, civilian protection, and the right to security. There is therefore an urgent need to create safe spaces to amplify constructive voices and actions towards discarding the ills propagated by the crisis.

Over the last seven years, the North West and South Regions have registered gross human rights violations, killings, kidnappings, abductions, arbitrary arrests, and the burning of protected infrastructure such as hospitals, schools, and churches, aggravating the infringement on the right to security and civilian protection in the crisis regions. In spite of efforts by CSOs, community and traditional leaders, the state, and diplomatic missions to advocate for a peaceful resolution of the Anglophone crisis, there continue to be acts of human rights violations, especially by diaspora actors and in the hotspot villages in the NW and SW regions, prompting the need

for more innovative methodologies in terms of advocacy, or in other words, strategic advocacy.

This article aims at educating readers on what advocacy is, the various types of advocacy, what strategic advocacy is, and its relevance in times of conflict. The Alliance for Justice defines advocacy as any action that speaks in favor of, recommends, argues for a cause, supports, defends, or pleads on behalf of others. Advocacy is about seeking systemic change. It is a tool for influencing policies, programs, laws and regulations, and even funding allocations. Advocacy is powerful, but it requires a well-thought-out approach to promoting a specific issue with a clear understanding of the surrounding social and political context. There are various forms of advocacy: Education and sensitization advocacy means providing information on an issue through rallies, media, and entertainment programs such as music, sports, concerts, etc. Policy advocacy is another fundamental form of advocacy aimed at driving policy changes. This is mainly done through lobbying. There are three fundamental types of advocacy: Self-advocacy, Systems advocacy, and Individual

advocacy. Self-advocacy includes you as the advocate. You are the one who stands up for yourself. You know your needs and defend your rights, and you promote your beliefs, interests, and feelings. With self-advocacy, you can be assertive. You can make your own decisions since you are responsible for your life's choices. In systems advocacy, you join others to tackle public issues. You project the public's views and help make major decisions. You influence others to change policies. With these changes, the public's lives improve. While in individual advocacy, you speak for others. You defend their rights and assert their needs.

However, in an environment plagued with political hostilities and a probability of victimization of actors of advocacy such as Human Rights Defenders (journalists, lawyers, and

activists) and civil society activists, strategic advocacy becomes primordial in achieving the objectives of a successful advocacy campaign. The advocacy team must therefore : determine a clear objective; do thorough research on the subject; build technical, social, and political partnerships to advance the cause; develop grass-roots strategies; know your audience; maximize digital and media outlets; train the campaign team; make national issues a local one; and engage communities through trending community activities such as sports, cultural events, and entertainment.

MDDT, in driving strategic advocacy for civilian protection and the right to security, is utilizing cultural jamborees to penetrate hotspots in the NW and SW regions to sensitize local communities and create civic hubs.





DRIVING EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY IN TIMES OF CONFLICT: Safeguards and Challenges in the Anglophone Regions of Cameroon by Shalo Hedwig Yondu

Introduction

In the midst of conflict, effective advocacy becomes a lifeline for those affected. The Anglophone crisis has created a challenging environment for advocates, making it crucial to examine the safeguards and challenges they face in driving change. This article aims to explore these aspects and provide insights on navigating the obstacles.

Understanding the Context

The Anglophone regions of Cameroon are currently grappling with a protracted conflict that has resulted in significant human rights abuses, forced displacement, and loss of life. In such a volatile environment, advocacy becomes a powerful tool to amplify the voices of affected communities, raise awareness about their rights, and mobilize support for their protection.

Safeguards for effective Advocacy

First and foremost, it is crucial to grasp the context surrounding the conflict in the Anglophone regions. By immersing ourselves in the relevant history, politics, and culture, we can tailor our strategies to resonate with the local population and put better safeguards in place. This requires a solid foundation of accurate and well-documented information. Gathering and presenting credible evidence of human rights violations, displacement, and other injustices so as to strengthen advocacy efforts and bring attention to the conflict.

Primarily, effective advocacy begins with engaging directly with the communities affected by the conflict. It is crucial to involve local leaders, civil society organizations, and community members in the advocacy process. By valuing their insights, experiences, and perspectives, advocates can shape their

strategies and increase community ownership, ensuring that their advocacy efforts are relevant and impactful.

Also, when advocating in conflict zones, creating safe spaces becomes paramount. These spaces allow individuals and communities to come together, share their experiences, and strategize for advocacy. Safe spaces promote inclusivity, trust-building, and the exchange of ideas, laying the foundation for effective advocacy campaigns. Mddt Cameroon and Open Society Africa have taken the initiative to provide platforms for people to voice their concerns and aspirations, fostering dialogue and understanding.

Empowering youth is another key aspect of effective advocacy. Young people possess unique perspectives and energy that can drive transformative change. By equipping them with tools, knowledge, and platforms, we can amplify their voices and ensure their participation in decision-making processes. Mddt Cameroon and Open Society Africa have actively mobilized Cameroonian youths, encouraging them to reject radicalization and advocate for dialogue, a ceasefire, and a peaceful resolution of the crisis.

Collaboration and partnerships equally play a vital role in strengthening advocacy efforts. By bringing together civil society organizations (CSOs), human rights defenders (HRDs), and community leaders, a unified front can be

formed to amplify advocacy messages, share resources, and coordinate actions. Then again, engaging stakeholders such as government officials, policymakers, security forces, humanitarian organizations, and diplomatic missions is essential to driving change as it creates a shared responsibility for the well-being of the affected population. The Protect Our Own project, initiated by MDDT Cameroon and Open Society Africa (OSAF) embraces this collaborative approach, providing safe spaces for CSOs, HRDs, and community leaders to amplify their advocacy efforts.

Finally, utilizing various media platforms, including social media, can help raise awareness and disseminate information about the conflict. It is essential to leverage credible media sources to counter misinformation and highlight the human rights violations occurring in the region.

Challenges

However, the pursuit of advocacy in conflict zones is not without challenges. Security risks pose a significant threat to advocates and organizations operating in these areas. The Anglophone crisis has witnessed violence and targeted attacks against individuals involved in advocacy work. Prioritizing the safety of advocates through careful planning, risk assessments, and security protocols becomes crucial in addressing these risks.





Limited access to conflict zones and affected communities also hampers advocacy efforts. Movement restrictions, government-imposed limitations, and infrastructure challenges make it difficult for advocates to reach those most in need. Overcoming these limitations requires innovative approaches, such as leveraging technology and partnering with local organizations to facilitate access and connect with marginalized communities.

Another challenge lies in the existence of polarized narratives and misinformation surrounding the conflict. Fake stories and propaganda have fueled radicalization and hindered dialogue between opposing sides. Advocates must navigate these narratives, counter misinformation with accurate information, and promote dialogue and understanding among different stakeholders.

Fragmentation within civil society organizations can equally undermine the effectiveness of advocacy efforts. Conflicts often lead to divisions among different groups. Fostering collaboration and unity is essential. By overcoming internal divisions and working towards shared goals, advocates can enhance the impact of their advocacy initiatives.

Addressing humanitarian needs is another critical aspect of effective advocacy. Conflict often results in a significant humanitarian crisis, with displaced populations and limited access to basic services. Advocacy efforts must strike a balance between addressing immediate humanitarian needs and advocating for long-term solutions. Providing comprehensive support to affected communities contributes to their resilience and well-being.

Lastly, advocacy in conflict situations requires navigating complex political dynamics. The Anglophone regions of Cameroon have both domestic and international political dimensions that must be carefully considered. Sensitivity to political dynamics ensures that advocacy strategies are effective, impactful, and conducive to positive change.

Navigating these Challenges

To navigate these challenges, it is essential to strengthen security measures. Ensuring the safety of advocates and partners should be a priority, with organizations implementing robust security protocols, providing training, and establishing effective communication channels for emergencies.

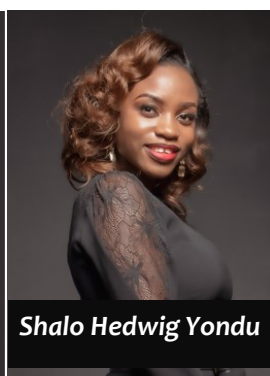
Innovative communication strategies are also crucial. Embracing platforms such as social media and mass messaging systems can help overcome limited access and reach a wider audience. These channels enable advocates to disseminate accurate information, engage with communities, and mobilize support for their cause.

International support and solidarity are vital components in driving effective advocacy in conflict zones. The international community, including governments, non-governmental organizations, and individuals, should stand in solidarity with advocates in Cameroon's Anglophone Regions. Offering support through funding, capacity-building initiatives, and diplomatic efforts can bolster advocacy endeavors.

Conclusion

Driving effective advocacy in times of conflict is undoubtedly challenging but remains crucial for safeguarding human rights and fostering peace. In driving effective advocacy in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon, a multi-faceted approach is crucial. Unity, collaboration, local empowerment, credible documentation, international solidarity, media utilization, and addressing challenges head-on are all vital components. Through safe spaces, em-

powering youth, and fostering collaboration, Mddt Cameroon and Open Society Africa are making a positive impact in the Anglophone Regions. Despite the numerous obstacles, sustained and strategic advocacy efforts have the power to promote peace, justice, and reconciliation in the region. Let us stand together, raise our voices, and work towards a brighter future for the people of the Anglophone regions of Cameroon.



Shalo Hedwig Yondu

Shalo Hedwig Yondu is a dedicated and passionate Communication Assistant who volunteers for MDDT, managing their social media accounts. With a background in research and a Master's of Science degree, Hedwig brings a unique blend of analytical thinking and creative communication skills to empower positive change. Through strategic content creation and engagement, Hedwig amplifies the voices of the organization, reaching a wide audience and fostering meaningful dialogue. Committed to making a difference, Hedwig combines their expertise in research with a youth-driven perspective to drive impactful social media campaigns that inspire and engage.



MDDT-OSAF COLLABORATION ON STRATEGIC ADVOCACY ON CIVILIAN PROTECTION AND THE RIGHT TO SECURITY IN THE NORTH WEST AND SOUTH WEST REGIONS *by Besong Christelle Engwei*

INTRODUCTION:

MDDT Cameroon, in collaboration with OSAF (Open Society Africa), is undertaking a significant project titled "Strategic Advocacy on Civilian Protection and the Right to Security in the Northwest and Southwest regions of Cameroon". This comprehensive initiative aims to address the pressing issues of civilian protection and the right to security in these regions, which have been affected by ongoing conflicts. The project involves various activities such as hotspot identification, focal point training, cultural and religious engagements, regional symposiums, roundtable discussions with stakeholders, school sensitization campaigns, and the establishment of civic hubs. These efforts are crucial in enhancing civilian protection and the right to security in the North West and South West regions of Cameroon.

• Hotspot Identification:

One of the primary steps taken by MDDT Cameroon is identifying ten hotspots within the Northwest and Southwest regions of Cameroon. These hotspots include Mamfe, Muea, Bafia, Muyuka, Tombel, Kumba, Nkwen, Bafut, Bali, Wum. These hotspots are areas that have experienced a high incidence of violence, conflict, or human rights abuses. By pinpointing these locations, MDDT focuses its efforts on ad-

ressing specific challenges faced by the communities. The identification process involves thorough research, data collection, consultation with local authorities, and engaging with community leaders and members to gain insights into their experiences.

• Focal Point Training:

To ensure effective implementation of the project's objectives at the grassroots level, MDDT Cameroon has conducted training sessions with two people from each hotspot. These individuals act as focal points within their respective communities, serving as liaisons between the organization and local residents. The training equipped them with knowledge about civilian protection, human rights, conflict resolution techniques, advocacy strategies, and community engagement methods. By empowering these focal points, MDDT Cameroon aims to create sustainable change from within the communities themselves.

• Cultural and Religious Activities

Recognizing the significance of cultural and religious activities in shaping community values and behaviors, MDDT Cameroon has actively engaged with these communities. Through dialogue, workshops, and collaborative initiatives, it aims to promote a culture of peace, tolerance,

and respect for human rights. By involving religious leaders, traditional authorities, and cultural groups, the project seeks to leverage their influence to foster positive change within the communities. Through this activity, MDDT was able to reach out to 3283 people, who were also incorporated into our database.

- **Regional Symposiums**

To facilitate broader discussions on civilian protection and the right to security, MDDT Cameroon, in collaboration with OSAF, organized two regional symposiums, one in Buea and the other in Bamenda. These symposiums brought together various stakeholders, including government officials, civil society organizations, community leaders, academics, and international partners. The symposiums provide a platform for exchanging ideas, sharing experiences, identifying challenges, and formulating strategies to address the complex issues faced by the regions. It is worth noting that during these symposiums, we had over 829 people in the southwest regional symposium and 542 in the northwest.

- **School Sensitization Campaigns:**

Recognizing the importance of educating future generations about their rights and responsibilities regarding civilian protection and security, MDDT Cameroon and OSAF plan to carry out school sensitization campaigns; 20 schools have already been identified. These campaigns aim to raise awareness among students about their rights as individuals and members of society. Through interactive sessions, workshops, presentations, and creative activities, students will be empowered with knowledge about civilian protection, the right to security, human rights principles, peaceful coexistence, and responsible citizenship. By targeting schools as hubs for change,

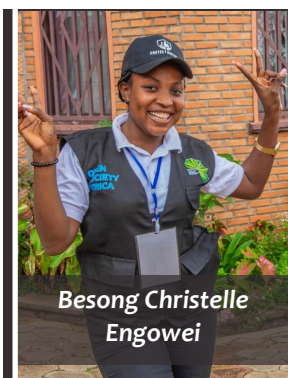
this initiative aims to create a ripple effect that extends beyond the classroom. And this will be done through the establishment of civic hubs.

- **Roundtable Discussions with Security Officers:**

Recognizing the importance of collaboration with security forces in promoting civilian protection and security, MDDT Cameroon and OSAF plan to organize roundtable discussions with security officers operating in the Northwest and Southwest regions. This will take place in Buea on November 2, 2023. These discussions aim to enhance mutual understanding, cooperation, and coordination between security forces and local communities. By fostering dialogue and sharing perspectives, MDDT Cameroon seeks to address any existing gaps or challenges in the relationship between security officers and civilians. This collaborative approach is crucial for building trust, improving accountability, and ensuring effective protection of civilians.

Conclusion

The project strategic advocacy on civilian protection and the right to security in the Northwest and Southwest regions of Cameroon undertaken by MDDT Cameroon in collaboration with OSAF is a comprehensive initiative aimed at addressing the pressing issues faced by these communities. Through hotspot identification, focal point training, cultural and religious engagements, regional symposiums, round table discussions with stakeholders, school sensitization campaigns, and the establishment of civic hubs, this project seeks to promote peace, security, and the well-being of the local populations. By involving various stakeholders and adopting a multi-faceted approach, MDDT Cameroon and OSAF are working towards sustainable change that will benefit generations to come.



Besong Christelle Engowei is a dedicated project coordinator for MDDT CAMEROON, experienced in organizing regional symposiums and leading peacebuilding initiatives. With a Master's degree in International Law, she effectively promotes peace and stability. Her volunteer work includes organizations like Reachout, HUMFRIE, Bodytalk International, YALDA-UB, and being Miss FREEMIND Center. Through these diverse engagements, she advocates for the respect for human rights, peace, youth advocacy, peer counseling, and humanitarian activities. Overall, Besong is a devoted advocate for peace and positive change.

GALLERY

MDDT-OSAF Project Activities in the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon





YOUTHS SPEAK OUT: Recommendations to Stakeholders on Civilian Protection and the Right to Security in the Conflict – Infested Regions of Cameroon

by BIDIAS A. ZOCK Manuela, MUNDI Prisca Ewonkem & Aissatou OUMAR M. AVARAMLA



Introduction: Africa is now experiencing an awakening of consciousness through the recent upsurges in populations rising up to fight for socio-political change, a trend that is causing a lot of damage. The Anglophone Crisis is one of such violent upheavals and can be aptly described as the *“survival of the unfittest.”* All those who have the courage to do so are physically sound and are going off to be shot; those who survive are morally and physically weaker, a fact that does not favour the next generation. The far north region of Cameroon has been shaken since 2013 by Boko Haram, which originated in the north-easter parts of Nigeria and spans four countries: Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon, and Niger.

According to a report by the Africa Center for Strategic Studies, Boko Haram has killed more than 5,000 people in Cameroon since the militant Islamist violence began. The same report also states that Boko Haram attacks have led to new population displacements within Cameroon, bringing the total number of internally displaced Cameroonians in the Far North region to 321,900 as of September 2020. Another source from Voice of America says that Boko Haram attacks in April 2023 left thousands of people homeless in

the Far North region. The North West and South West Regions of Cameroon are equally plagued by the “Anglophone Crisis.” 4000 people have been allegedly killed, 790,000 people have been forcibly displaced, and there have been abductions, kidnappings, and a plethora of human rights abuses and violations compromising civilian protection, as reported by the World Organization Against Torture. The UN reports that *“4 million people need humanitarian support while about 600,000 children have been deprived of effective schooling because of the Anglophone crisis.”* Serious compromises can prevent more bloodshed and violence, but unfortunately, as Franklin D. Roosevelt once said, *“Older men declare war, but it is youth that must fight and die. And it is youth who must inherit the tribulation, the sorrow, and the triumphs that are the aftermath of war”.*

There is no universal definition of who a youth is, but the Cameroon National Youth Policy (2006) defines a youth as a person between the ages of 15 and 35, and as a result, these youths constitute over 70% of the population. Youths are not only the future; they are a continuous

force and machinery for economic and political stability with a burgeoning potential to contribute to innovation and positive change in sustainable development. Unfortunately, there is a growing narrative of youth radicalization: Youth recruitment into armed groups as agents of extrajudicial killings, kidnapping, and torture, propelling insecurity and compromising civilian protection in times of conflict.

The aim of this article is to unveil youth voices on possible solutions and recommendations to stakeholders on reducing the violation of the right to security and disregard for civilian protection in the Anglophone Regions of Cameroon. MDDT Cameroon, in collaboration with Open Society Africa, is therefore utilizing the "Protect Our Own" newsletter initiative as a sensitization and advocacy mechanism to amplify youth voices in engaging policy agencies in the call for civilian protection and the right to security.





Recommendations to primary actors in the Anglophone Crisis

by BIDIAS A. ZOCK Manuella & MUNDI Prisca Ewonkem

SEPARATIST GROUPS

Parties need to agree to respect human rights, international humanitarian law, and a ceasefire.

- End the school boycott as well as attacks on schools, students, and teachers. Separatists need to allow children to go back to school and stop attacking education facilities.** The construction of schools is primarily beneficial for a community. It is an asset that should be protected rather than destroyed. These institutions will train the youth to be the leaders of tomorrow who will come up with new ideologies and necessary change. If teachers are taking the stand to protect and advocate for our students' learning conditions, our bargaining rights, and public education, then why attack them? If education is considered a powerful weapon that can be used to change the world, then how will the world change when youths are deprived of this basic right to education? Thus, an end to school boycotts as well as attacks on teachers, students, and educational institutions will effectively put an end to this crisis.

- End Human Rights Abuses:** Human rights violations have been witnessed in these regions through rape, destruction of properties, and even killing. Human rights considerations imply that each and every individual should be treated with respect, dignity and equality. Thus, this will reduce the number of deaths and other cases of human rights violations in the affected regions.
- Cease the Destruction of Properties:** This is equally an aspect of human rights that is causing more harm than good. The razing of entire villages and the burning of private residential properties and businesses, as well as public structures, during a crisis can have devastating consequences. It can lead to the forced displacement of people and the loss of lives. Sometimes, it can also lead to the loss of cultural heritage and equally, the displacement of indigenous communities. In summary, burning villages during a crisis is not only inhumane but also counterproductive. It can lead to more violence and suffering for those affected by the crisis.

- **Respect for the humanitarian principles of distinction, proportionality, and precaution, and to avoid targeting or harming civilians, humanitarian workers, and civilian infrastructure.** These principles are found in the international humanitarian law that applies to all parties in an armed conflict and are equally essential to protecting the dignity, prosperity and well-being of the affected population.
- **Engage in a constructive dialogue with the government of Cameroon and other stakeholders, such as civil society, religious leaders, and traditional authorities, to seek a peaceful and lasting solution to the conflict.** Dialogue is the most reasonable and, one might also say, the only viable way to address the root causes and grievances that continue to fuel the crisis. Under the current circumstances, it remains the most recommended path to achieve a political settlement that respects the rights and aspirations of all Cameroonians.
- **Unite under one umbrella as separatist groups and factions and overcome the internal divisions and rivalries that cause further violence and suffering among the civilian populations.** A peaceful, unified, and coherent vision, engagement, and strategy are necessary to advance any cause, and in the present case, they are necessary to negotiate effectively with the government and other stakeholders.

LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS:

In order to reduce the Anglophone crisis in the Anglophone regions and in the Far North regions with Boko Haram, the following recommendations can be very important for law enforcement officers:

Ensure security operations in these regions and abide by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) Resolution: It prohibits the excessive use of force by law enforcement officers in African States and the United Nations Basic Principles on the use of firearms, respecting principles of necessity and proportionality, and deploying military judicial

police officers on operations to monitor the conduct of security forces, report abusive members to commanding officers, and advise commanding officers on human rights issues.

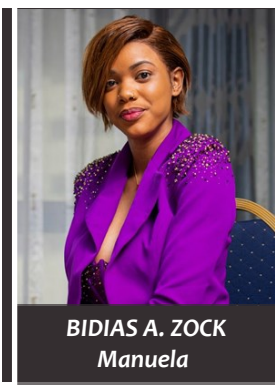
- Effectively investigate, for the purpose of prosecution, government agents, members of the security forces, separatist leaders and fighters responsible for human rights offenses committed in the Anglophone regions, including attacks on students, teachers, and schools.
- **Cooperation between law enforcement officers and the population:** These law enforcement officers are supposed to take care of the population rather than oppress them to the point where the population considers them threats and prefers serving the interests of separatist groups, mainly as informants. Government authorities must endeavor to create a conducive atmosphere between these law enforcement officers and the population.
- Establish wider security perimeters in neighborhoods around schools rather than directly outside schools. This is to minimize disruption to children's education and avoid compromising the civilian status of educational institutions during security tasks related to their protection. The presence of defense and security officers within the premises of educational institutions must be avoided.
- **Effective Reinsertion and Rehabilitation of IDPs and Militia:** Reinserting internally displaced persons (IDPs) and militias back into society is a complex process that requires a multi-faceted approach. As it can have significant negative impacts on various aspects of social, economic, and political life in society. These impacts arise due to several factors such as the presence of armed groups, the potential for security risks, a lack of accountability for past crimes, social tensions and conflicts, economic challenges, and psychological and trauma-related issues. These potential impacts have to be properly addressed to effectively reinsert and reintegrate these groups into society. To mitigate these negative consequences, it is crucial to carefully plan and

implement reintegration programs that address security concerns, accountability, social tensions, economic challenges, and psychological support. International organizations can play a crucial role in facilitating the reintegration process and reducing the potential negative impacts in the following ways:

- **Support community-led initiatives:** Foster community ownership of the reintegration process by supporting local initiatives. This can be done by providing funding, technical expertise, and capacity-building programs to help communities design and implement their own reintegration strategies. This does not only guarantee ownership of the process but also ensures sustainability.
- **Collaborate with other stakeholders:** Engage with other relevant actors, such as non-governmental organizations, and local civil society groups. Collaboration and coordination between different stakeholders can ensure a holistic and comprehensive approach to reintegration, avoiding duplication of efforts and maximizing impact.
- **Promote reconciliation and social cohesion:** Facilitate dialogues and reconciliation processes between IDPs, militias, and host communities. Encourage the participation of

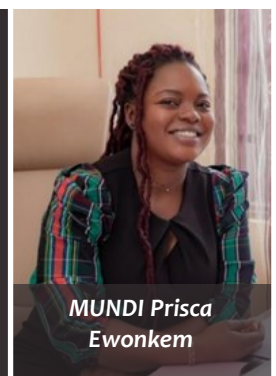
all stakeholders in these discussions to promote understanding, build trust, and mitigate tensions. Social cohesion programs, such as inter-community sporting events or cultural exchanges, can also help foster unity and integration.

- **Focus on sustainable livelihoods:** Livelihood-support programs should be an integral part of the reintegration process. Providing vocational training, job placement assistance, and microfinance opportunities can enable IDPs and militias to earn a living and become economically self-sufficient. This will reduce the likelihood of them resorting to violence or joining armed groups for economic reasons.
- **Provide psychosocial support:** Many IDPs and militias have experienced traumatic events as a result of the crisis, which can have long-lasting mental health effects. The reintegration process must address the psychological support and trauma healing needs of these individuals. Without adequate support, individuals may struggle to cope with their experiences, leading to mental health issues and a potential for further violence. International organizations should prioritize the provision of psychosocial support services, including counseling and trauma healing programs, to address these needs.



BIDIAS A. ZOCK Manuela is a youth civic and peace activist with a grounded academic background in research, political sciences and conflict resolution and management. She is the executive director of Cameroon Student For Peace Network aimed at diluting cultural differences in school milieu. Bidias is passionate about youth inclusion in diplomacy, governance and politics as sustainable measures to consolidate the tenets of democracy and peace across Africa. She gave out the following recommendations to separatist groups and law enforcement officers aimed at contributing to reduce the disregard for the right to Civilian Protection and the Right to Security.

Mundi Prisca Ewonkem is a young peace activist from the South West region of Cameroon. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Women Studies and has pursued further education with a postgraduate Diplomat in Peace and Humanitarian Action. Mundi has been actively engaged with the Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration Commission (DDRC) at the Regional Center Buea. Here, she played a vital role as the administrative assistant and program officer, closely involved with former combatants of the Anglophone crisis.



- Establish monitoring mechanisms:** Put in place mechanisms to monitor the reintegration process and ensure the well-being of IDPs and militias. This can involve regular assessments to track progress, identify challenges, and make necessary adjustments to the reintegration strategies. Monitoring should also include feedback mechanisms to allow the affected populations to voice their concerns and suggestions.

By implementing these recommendations, international organizations can contribute to reducing the negative impacts of reinsertion and reintegration of IDPs and militias while promoting stability, peace, and development in conflict and post-conflict settings. Prioritize reconciliation, justice, and long-term stability to ensure a peaceful transition for IDPs and militias back into society.





Reducing Abductions and Killings in the Conflict-infested Regions of Cameroon *by Aissatou OUMAR MAGRA AVARAMLA*

In order to reduce kidnappings and abuses committed by separatist groups in the NW and South West Regions plagued by the Anglophone Crisis and Terrorist Groups of the Boko Haram in the Far North region, several measures must be taken at the local, national, and sub-regional levels.

At the sub-regional level:

- Strengthen collaboration between countries affected by the crisis, particularly as regards the security and protection of communities;
- Increase peace agreements and negotiations with unarmed state groups;
- Respect the principles of taking women into account in peace negotiations and dialogues in order to ensure that the vulnerabilities of girls, women and young people are considered and thus be able to ensure their protection.

At the national level

- Strengthen security mechanisms within communities;
- Strengthen the participation and involvement of communities in security

mechanisms and systems at the community level;

- Strengthen the humanitarian response policy to protect populations from recruitment into separatist and terrorist groups;
- Strengthen the consideration of gender in the policy for the protection of civilian populations, with particular regard to women and young girls, who represent the most vulnerable people and the main victims of kidnappings;
- Ensure the socioeconomic recovery of the region;
- Fast-track the construction and effective operation of DDR centers, and render them motivating enough to attract trust and the laydown of weapons by armed groups.
- Strengthen security measures around educational establishments and other environments that constitute the main places in which removals are carried out;
- finance income-generating activities within communities that target youths;

- Establish new crisis exit policies, making it possible to put an end to the conflict;
- Propose lasting peace solutions in order to avoid the resumption of the conflict;
- Provide lasting economic, social and political solutions to the root causes and structural concerns of the various crises.
- Place emphasis on the fight against political and religious radicalism.
- Fight against the recruitment of young people, women and girls and violent extremism within communities.

At the local level


- Strengthen state security mechanisms within communities;
- Strengthen traditional security systems within communities;
- Promote living together through awareness-raising actions within communities;
- Encourage the return of people associated with Boko Haram to their communities of origin.
- Increase dialogues of peace, tolerance, and living together between populations within communities;

In conclusion, we have presented the voices and perspectives of the youth in Cameroon who are affected by the anglophone crisis and the Boko Haram insurgency. We have analyzed the root causes, the impacts, and the possible solutions to these complex and interrelated conflicts. Based on our findings, we have proposed recommendations for the stakeholders. These recommendations are not only feasible and realistic, but also urgent and necessary. If implemented effectively, they can contribute to ending the violence, restoring peace, and fostering development in Cameroon. The youth are not only the victims of these conflicts but also the agents of change. They have shown resilience, creativity, and courage in facing the challenges and expressing their aspirations. They deserve to be heard, supported, and empowered by the stakeholders. We urge you to act now and make a difference for the future of Cameroon.





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