



# MDDT SPARKS

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The Movement for Democracy, Development & Transparency  
**ISSUE NO. 7**

**SEP 2020**

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### **EDITORIAL COLUMN**

MDDT SPARKS is a medium that MDDT uses to communicate information on its activities and to circulate news concerning global development. It is published once every two months by MDDT and is distributed online and in hard copy to members, partners, stakeholders and everyone else who is interested in development.



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**NON-VIOLENCE**  
**PRO-DIALOGUE**

# **“PROMOTING YOUTH ADVOCACY & REDUCING YOUTH RADICALIZATION IN THE ANGLOPHONE REGIONS”**



**National Endowment  
for Democracy**  
*Supporting freedom around the world*



# Letter From the National Coordinator

Dear MDDT Partners, Members of MDDT, Most Faithful Volunteers, MDDT Stakeholders, Fellow Readers of MDDT Sparks, on behalf of the MDDT Family I greet you all.

In its usual fashion, MDDT is sharing best practices and leveraging grounds for partnerships and collaboration with Local NGOs, International Corporations, Diplomatic Missions, Government agencies and Local Communities.

This decade in 21st Century Cameroon, calls for urgent Civil Society Action towards reconstructing Cameroon's Democratic Values, Human Rights Foundation, Political Rights, and Access to Justice as facets of peace to erase the early warning signals as a prevention of a multiplying effect on conflict across the national territory.

Despite the "Grand National Dialogue", the creation of a Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) Commission, the Creation of a Bilingualism and Multiculturalism Commission, the Deployment of Military forces across Divisions and subdivisions and the unwarranted use of Force, the Anglophone Regions of Cameroon continue to be plagued with Killings, Kidnappings, gross Human Rights violations, untold suffering, population displacement and recruitment of youths into armed groups.

MDDT continues to create safe spaces for youths in a bid to amplify youth advocacy on a ceasefire, dialogue, and a peaceful resolution of the Anglophone Crisis. MDDT is using National Endowment for Democracy Funding to open up advocacy spaces amidst ongoing hostilities in the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon through a culture and entertainment approach with focus on music, sports, and digital tools. The Project Team is creating civic advocacy clubs in churches and hostile communities to run the #LetDialogueLead campaign, engaging youths and their voices in the call for a ceasefire.

This edition of MDDT SPARKS will inform readers on the infringement on human rights by primary actors of the crisis as well as government actions towards



resolving the crisis. It will give you a synopsis of the government's decision to create a reconstruction committee in tandem with the call for a ceasefire. It will further cite various human rights violations that are being considering the degenerating crisis.

Considering that an exact forecast/prediction cannot be made on the lifespan of the Anglophone crisis, MDDT finds the peace literacy programs for peace very relevant to construct a positive mindset in children, freeing them from early radicalization. MDDT hence celebrated the day of the African in Bafia and Itaka, one the most hostile and conflict infested villages in the South West region of Cameroon.

It is MDDT's fervent wish that you get inspired to contribute your quarter in diluting hate, violence, war, through amplifying your voices on a ceasefire.

May the spirit of living in peace and harmony overcome.

**#LetDialoguelead**

**#EndTheAnglophoneCrisis**

# MDDT CREATING SAFE SPACES FOR YOUTH ADVOCACY ON A CEASEFIRE AND DIALOGUE THROUGH SPORTS AND MUSIC



Despite government measures and Civil Society actions to stop the ongoing Anglophone crisis, hostilities continue to prevail in the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon. Hostilities against civilians by armed groups and military forces are far from coming to a halt. Civilian protection has become compromised especially in indigenous communities in the Anglophone Regions, making life unbearable for local inhabitants in these areas. The possibility of promoting peace actions and amplifying voices on the call for a ceasefire and Dialogue are shrinking by the day. Political figures and human rights Activists are tagged as “Blacklegs”, “Spies” or “informants” and threatened with death. They are further intimidated with arrests for offenses such as insurrection, false reporting, etc. and has witnessed the arrest of lawyers, journalists, and civilians driving advocacy campaigns for inclusive dialogue with all primary actors and without preconditions and a ceasefire - a dialogue that will silence Article 64 of the Cameroonian constitution giving room for open and frank talks on the Form of the State.

MDDT in collaboration with the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) is mobilizing youths to advocate for a ceasefire and inclusive dialogue for a peaceful resolution of the Anglophone Crisis.

MDDT Cameroon, in a bid to achieve its objective

has created a digital platform linked to all their social platforms and a phone application. The application and platforms tagged, **“#Letdialoguelead”** and **“#PeaceisPossible”** serve to debunk false media narratives used to incite the radicalization of youths, hence exacerbate the Anglophone crisis. The digital platform has further been used as a medium to mobilize, engage, and sensitize youths on the political and security issues in the regions.

In collaboration with community leaders, youth groups, and traditional councils, MDDT is creating safe spaces for youth advocacy through inter-community sporting, religious and cultural events for peace. MDDT is carrying out mass sensitization on non-violence with the use of hashtags and slogans such as **#SilencingTheGunsWithBalls**, **#SingforPeace**, implanting structures and youth hubs in various communities to sustain youth actions on the call for a ceasefire and dialogue.

In the months ahead MDDT will be organizing a round table with CSOs, Members of Parliament, and government officials on the urgent need to advocate for a ceasefire and an inclusive dialogue, and a means to end the Anglophone crisis.



Despite the COVID Challenges, MDDT in the last 6 months has been able to sensitize over 10,000 youths through sporting, Musical and cultural events, and church-organized activities. Through Social Media platforms, MDDT has been able to reach out to over 500,000 youths in a bid to dilute hate speech, violence and incite government actions towards the calling for a ceasefire.





# THE ANGLOPHONE CRISIS: THE DARK SPOTS OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The North West and South West regions of Cameroon have become the epicenter of gross human rights abuses with several scenes of horror as the military and non-state armed groups continue the protracted violent conflict. Since the outbreak of the conflict in 2016 several cases of human rights violations and abuses have sought national and international attention with counter-accusations from both the Government and separatists.

## The Threat to the Right to Life: Inhumane killings

According to Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Preamble of the Cameroon Constitution, ***“Everyone has the right to life, liberty, and the security of a person. Under no circumstances shall any person be subjected to torture, to cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment”***. This a fundamental human right.

However, the ongoing Anglophone crisis depicts glaring situations of the violation of the right to life. The most viral has been the shooting of many youths in several rural areas in the NW region, suspected of belonging to separatist groups. The gruesome murder of a wardress by name Ayafor Florence by separatist fighters in Bamenda, the Ngarbu massacre in the Donga- Matung Division in the NW region, the shooting of a three months old baby in Ekona in the SW region and the recent gruesome murder of a 34-year-old lady by name Tumasang Comfort in Muyuka in the SW region by separatists fighters amongst others are gruesome examples.



Image credit: [africablogging.org/Anglophone-crisis-cameroon/](http://africablogging.org/Anglophone-crisis-cameroon/)

## Violation of the right to freedom of movement:

Arbitrary arrest and prolonged detention of suspects without trial is a daily routine in the two regions with several persons feared death as no account is rendered about their whereabouts.

## Victimization of the right to the Freedom of Expression:

Human rights defenders and journalists are equally targeted especially as stringent measures are imposed by the government to sanction freedom of expression. The peculiar case of a TV journalist popularly known as WAZIZI who was arbitrarily arrested in Buea and transferred to Yaoundé is still making news as he was declared dead just recently by military officials. It is alleged that following his arrest he was tortured and he sustained injuries that led to his death in the military hospital in Yaoundé. Following his arrest, his lawyers made several attempts to visit him in jail but were never granted permission.

## Lack of shelter:

Perpetual attacks and burning of homes, kidnappings caused many people to flee other localities. Data from UNHCR and OCHA indicates that the Anglophone crisis has affected over 700000 Internally Displaced Persons since its inception. Most of these persons are women and children who have taken up new residences in bushes and farmlands. Living under very deplorable conditions as they are deprived of their shelter rights.

## Insecurity:

Many civilians especially women and youths have been caught in crossfires as the military continues to crack down on separatists' fighters. The death toll of civilians continues to increase day-by-day, a phenomenon that caused residents to live in perpetual fear of insecurity. Kidnappings for ransom or punitive

measures for civilians tagged as “Blacklegs”, meaning they act as government agents or carry out actions to block the Separatist path to independence.

### **Limitations on the Right to Access to justice**

Growing concerns from local and International Non-Governmental Organizations and human rights defenders have been on access to justice for victims. The trial of civilians in connection to the Anglophone crisis in the military court has been seen by many as a gross human rights violation especially as a majority of the victims were denied the right to have a defense counsel.

As a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights (ACHPR), Cameroon has legal obligations to adopt measures that effectively ensure rights to liberty, pre-trial release, the presumption of innocence, legal representation, fair trial before an independent, impartial and competent tribunal and freedoms from illegitimate prosecutions, arbitrary

detention, and torture.

### **Conclusion**

Human rights abuses continue to happen because of the total neglect to a call for a ceasefire and inclusive dialogue with primary actors and without pre-conditions. MDDT has been actively engaging youths to advocate for a ceasefire to bring an end to the Anglophone crisis through her slogan **#letdialoguelead**.



*Article by Kihkiyshi Kenneth,  
a dedicated MDDT promoter*

## **THE PRESIDENTIAL PLAN FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE ANGLOPHONE REGIONS.**

In conformity with some of the recommendations of the Major National Dialogue to ensure national equality and development, the Cameroon Government and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) signed a financial agreement worth 8.9billion FCFA (10% of the overall budget) on the 5th of May 2020, dubbed the “Presidential Plan for the Reconstruction and Development of the Northwest and Southwest regions (PPRD-NW/SW) and to be implemented over two years. The key stakeholders comprised of the Minister of the Economy, Planning and Regional Development, Alamine Ousman Mey who signed on behalf of the government of Cameroon, the Resident Representative of the UNDP who signed for his organization, National Coordinator Paul Njukang Tasong and Donatus Njong Fonyuy the deputy National Coordinator appointed by

ORDER No 032/CAB/PM of 3rd of April 2020. The PPRD is a component of the National Development Plan 2020-2030, aimed at reducing the effects of the socio-political and security crisis of the affected communities in the NW/SW regions, with given priority to communities with fewer security challenges. The PPRD is articulated around three core pillars;

- Rehabilitation and development of basic infrastructure (to reconstruct 12000 houses, 350schools, 115 health centers, 40 bridges, 400 water points, 600km rural roads),
- Economic revitalization of 45 markets, 25000 hectares of land, livestock for grazers), approximately 300,000 citizens)
- Promotion of social cohesion (to reestablish lost administrative documents for internally displaced persons and refugees.





*Image credit: <http://www.minepat.gov.cm>*

For close to 4 years, the NW and SW regions have been very hard hit by the continuous violent incursion of the ongoing socio-political crisis leading to thousands of internally displaced persons, refugees who now live in host communities or countries, and, slow rate of rural and urban development. With state authorization, the PPRD team commenced with a two weeks sensitization plan to raise awareness on the importance of the PPRD-NW/SW initiative, gaining assistance from administrative, political, traditional, and religious authorities in the Anglophone regions. In retaliation, the PPRD received heavy criticisms from public opinion holders, resistance and backlash from Non-State Armed groups claiming no real grievance tabled by Southern Cameroonians were addressed to the satisfaction of the Southern Cameroonian population. They further condemned the UNDP Country Representative and Coordinator of Humanitarian Action in Cameroon for approving a call for reconstruction without an end to the conflict, hence risking the safety of their health and humanitarian workers in the Anglophones regions.

According to international norms, the PPRD-NW/SW defies international treaties instituted in the framework for conflict resolution, peace-building, and peace maintenance. In a conflict arena, reconstruction and rehabilitation are linked to “post-conflict” to emphasize that only after a sustainable

truce could a nation move to the reconstruction phase. The militarization of social life, politics, and economy as well as the deep traumatization of individuals and communities have been the gravest legacies of the conflict. Therefore, the process of reconstruction and rehabilitation is criticized because it focuses primarily on repairing the physical damage rather than addressing the root causes of the protracted conflict. The Presidential Plan for the Reconstruction and Development of the Northwest and Southwest Regions of the country may be part of the government's response to restore peace in Southern Cameroons, but with the ongoing hostilities, its timing leaves much to be desired.

In conclusion, after several interventions and actions by the Government of Cameroon to dilute growing threats to the Nation's sovereignty, the PPRD-NW/SW remains at a stalemate with the withdrawal of the UN office from the signed agreement as an implementing partner in Cameroon's reconstruction plan without a ceasefire and cessation of hostilities.



*Image credit: 237 Daily news/Bamenda-Babadjouroad: a nightmare for the masses*



*Image credit: 237 Daily news/Bamenda-Babadjouroad: a nightmare for the masses*



*Image credit: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa>- The destruction of KukeMbomo Village*



# THE CEASEFIRE DIALOGUE



The aggravating nature of the ongoing Anglophone crisis has sought the attention of foreign bodies to condemn the violation and abuse of human rights and appeal for a call for a ceasefire in Cameroon. On March 23, 2020, the United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres called for a global ceasefire in all conflicts around the world to enable every individual to effectively deal with the Covid-19 pandemic, especially the provision of health services to persons affected by armed conflicts. This was later adopted by the unanimous United Nations Resolution 2532 on July 1, 2020, calling for a global ceasefire of hostilities for at least 90 days, hence the endorsement of a Global Campaign for Peace and Justice in Cameroon.

The Global Campaign for Peace and Justice in Cameroon is made of a group of Nobel Peace Laureates and former heads of states to urge the African Union, the Commonwealth, and La Francophonie to call on the government of Cameroon to declare a COVID-19 ceasefire. This initiative towards peace talks and ceasefire negotiations was commended by the Coalition for Dialogue and Negotiations, a U.S. based organization of professionals with ties or origins in the Southern Cameroons. The Coalition believes in the protection of human rights and negotiation as the single most reliable form of engaging warring parties for sustained peace in the Southern Cameroons.

"The Cameroon Anglophone crisis is one of the most neglected crises of recent times. While people in West Africa and Cameroon are very aware of the suffering and hardship that has been endured for such a long time, it's to the discredit of the United Nations Security Council that it has not formally addressed the conflict there and it has not been covered widely on media," said Dr. Simons Adams, Executive Director of Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect.

Following the call to a ceasefire, the government of Cameroon released a mandate appointing a representative of the military tribunal, Léopold Maxime EkoEko to find out the conditions set by the separatist movement to support an effective ceasefire in the English-speaking zone. On the 8th of July 2020, the Ambazonia Separatist Movement signed a petition addressed to the Cameroonian government containing conditions for which they will participate in negotiations for peace in the Anglophone region. The said conditions included:

- The declaration of a cease-fire by the Cameroonian government
- Demilitarization of the Anglophone regions
- The granting of amnesty to Anglophone Cameroonians in the diaspora, to enable them to peacefully return home



- The release of all persons connected to the Anglophone crisis
- Acceptance of the Cameroonian government to participate in genuine negotiations without conditions on neutral ground and with a mediator defined by mutual agreement"

The Ceasefire dialogue was the initial official contact and preliminary talks between the Government of Cameroon and, key separatist leaders detained in Yaoundé's Central prison to achieve a ceasefire in the North -West and South-West regions. Though the discussions were not disclosed to the public, some separatist groups in Cameroon and abroad condemned the dynamics of the government of Cameroon with arguments that the dialogue was another situation of "picking and choosing" who gets to speak on behalf of Ambazonians. Meanwhile, sensitive to any public notion of deal-making, the government in a communiqué released by the minister of communication denied talks of their participation in the ceasefire dialogue, albeit affirming that they were ready to seek "peaceful solutions".

The persistent violence, killings and violations/abuse of human rights has also urged actors such as US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Tibor Nagy, the Roman Catholic Organization, the Women's Task Force of the Southwest and Northwest region of Cameroon, the Movement for Democracy, Development and Transparency Cameroon (MDDT) and many other local organizations to appeal to both warring parties to adhere to the call for a ceasefire under the UN Security Council Resolution 2532.

The way forward to a commendable Ceasefire dialogue

MDDT's "Let Dialogue Lead" campaign continues to advocate for an inclusive dialogue and a call to ceasefire through the mobilization of youths to reject radicalization and round table discussions with key stakeholders on potential solutions to the ongoing crisis. MDDT strongly affirms the recommendations of the Coalition of Dialogue and Negotiation to address the controversy about the ceasefire dialogue in Cameroon.

#### 1. The Government of Cameroon and the leader-

**ship of all Southern Cameroons armed groups** should commit to an open, genuine, and transparent adherence to United Nations Security Council Resolution 2532.

**2. On Human Rights Abuse and Humanitarian Response:** The Government of Cameroon should adhere to the global call for the unconditional release of all Southern Cameroonians incarcerated within the context of the armed conflict as a show of good faith for genuine ceasefire negotiations. In the same vein, the Cameroon Government forces and the Southern Cameroons armed groups must commit to fully adhere to humanitarian law.

**3. Political Parties:** At this critical juncture all political engagement must be geared towards encouraging the warring parties and credible international stakeholders to implement a negotiated ceasefire.

**4. The International and Diplomatic Corp** in Yaoundé should commit to advancing the implementation of Resolution 2532. Their collective support is needed for the Cameroon Government to commit to genuine mediated negotiations for a ceasefire and its effective implementation.

**5. UNDP Cameroon** should ensure an enabling environment for sustained development and peace before commencing the implementation of the recovery plan. UNSC Resolution 2532 provides an opportunity to leverage UNDP's expertise to ensure a ceasefire and peace agreement in line with UNDP's core values.

#### 6. To the United Nations Security Council and the UN Secretary-General

- Hold a UN Security Council meeting to begin addressing the root causes of the armed conflict.
- Mediate and Monitor Ceasefire: Empower in-country UN Chief to ensure any negotiated ceasefire adheres to recognized international norms and instruments with guarantees for an effective implementation.



# MDDT PROJECT TEAMS





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