



# Security Council

## Cameroonian Civil War

Forum: Security  
Council

Issue: Cameroonian  
Civil War (Anglophone Crisis)



Ekansh Talwar

**Student officers:**

Alex Imes

**Position:** Presidents of SC

---

## Introduction

The Anglophone Crisis, which is considered a civil war in Cameroon, erupted in 2016 following protests against perceived marginalization and discrimination by the French-speaking majority government in the two English-speaking regions of the country. The outstanding economic disparities, suppression of culture, and lack of political representation inflamed the conflict into displacement, casualties, and economic retrogression. Despite peace talks, the conflict keeps escalating.

## Definition of Key Terms

### Separatists

Separatists refers to a person or body that supports the separation of a group from a larger body on the basis of ethnicity, religion or gender. In this conflict, the term is used to refer to Armed groups advocating for the independence of Ambazonia from Cameroon.

### Ambazonia

The name adopted by separatist groups for the proposed independent state. This name encompasses the english-speaking regions of Cameroon, specifically the North West and South West regions.

### Humanitarian Crisis

A situation characterized by widespread human suffering due to armed conflict, resulting in lack of access to basic services, displacement, and violations of human rights.

### Self Determination

The principle that a group of people has the right to determine their political status and pursue their economic, social, cultural identity and development.

### Guerilla Warfare

A form of warfare in which small groups use tactics such as sabotages and ambushes against larger military forces.

### Militia Groups



Armed groups formed by local communities or separatists to engage in armed conflict against government forces.

## General Overview

### Historical Context

In the colonial period, the Anglophone regions of Cameroon were administered by the British, while the majority of the country was under French rule. This has been a contributory factor to the linguistic and cultural differences in the country since independence because communities were separated. Since unification in 1961, the English-speaking regions have often felt marginalized and underrepresented within the national government dominated by French-speaking elites.

### Key Issues

The English-speaking minority felt for a long period of time discriminated against with regards to education, employment, as well as the provision of government services. The requirement for having French be the only official language was most contentious. The reason being, the area with the majority language other than French has conventionally dragged a little behind in the pace of economic development compared to other parts of the country, which is essentially French-speaking and located in the northwest and southwest parts. This disparity also contributed to feelings of inequality and marginalization. This has made the English-speaking population feel that their voice is not represented as well as it should be in national government and that their interests are not well catered for.

### Escalation of Violence

The crisis started on September 9, 2017 off with peaceful protests against perceived discrimination and marginalization. It is often heavy-handed, with clashes between security forces and protesters. As the conflict escalated, armed groups cropped up, including the Ambazonian Defense Forces, which have been fighting for the independence of the English-speaking regions. This left hundreds of thousands forced to flee their homes due to the violence. Human rights abuses are alleged against both the government and the armed groups on issues such as extrajudicial killings, torture, and arbitrary arrests. The conflict disrupted economic activities in the affected regions and brought about losses of jobs, poverty, and food insecurity.

## Major Parties Involved

### Cameroon Government



The government of Cameroon is led by President Paul Biya who has been in power since 1982. The government of Cameroon has responded to the separatist movements with extreme military force. The government has been accused of human rights violations against civilians in Anglophone regions.

### **Separatist Groups**

Several armed groups advocate for the independence and recognition of Ambazonia. The separatist groups include Ambazonia Governing Council (AGovC), Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC), Interim Government of Ambazonia (IG), and The Red Dragons. AGovC was established in 2018, it is led by Cho Ayba and controls the Ambazonia Defence Forces (ADF), one of the largest separatist militias in this conflict. SCNC is the oldest prominent separatist group, formed in 1995. The IG

### **France**

France is Cameroon's former colonial power and is established as a key ally, it has maintained cooperation with the Cameroonian government. France has condemned separatist attacks and supported the government's peace efforts. Separatists have accused France of secretly deploying soldiers to fight alongside the Cameroonian Army.

### **United States of America (U.S.A)**

The U.S. has condemned human rights abuses in the conflict. It has cut military aid and removed Cameroon from certain trade benefits such as removing Cameroon from the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), due to ongoing violations. In addition, The US also cut more than \$17 million in security aid and support to Cameroon. The U.S. Congress has called for an intervention regarding human rights abuses.

### **International Organizations**

The United Nations (UN), African Union (AU), and European Union (EU) have limited involvement in the issue of the Cameroon war, calling for dialogue, condemning human rights abuses, and in some cases providing humanitarian assistance. Both the mediation perspective offered by the UN and call to discussion has proved unsuccessful as the conflict remains unsupported by the UN. The African Union has not spoken out about the conflict except for endorsing the Swiss mediation initiative and a few statements on the need to negotiate. The European Union's involvement in trade and provided aid is significant but its effectiveness in aiding the internal political affairs in Cameroon has been weak. The EU has indicated changing its developmental and humanitarian assistance if the government does not take concrete steps towards ending the war.



## Timeline of Key Events

It's important to note that the situation in Cameroon remains fluid, and the conflict continues to evolve. The timeline above provides a general overview of the key events and developments.

Date:	Event:
1961	Southern Cameroons, a former British colony, federated with French Cameroon to form the Republic of Cameroon. This marked the beginning of tensions between the English-speaking and French-speaking regions.
2016-2017:	Peaceful protests by English-speaking lawyers and teachers escalate due to perceived marginalization, linguistic discrimination, and underrepresentation in government.
2017:	The government's heavy-handed response to protests triggers armed resistance from separatist groups, leading to the outbreak of the Anglophone Crisis.
2017-Present:	Ongoing armed conflict between the Cameroonian government and separatist groups, including the Ambazonian Defense Forces (ADF).
2018:	The conflict intensifies, with both sides committing human rights abuses, including extrajudicial killings, torture, and displacement of civilians.
2019-2020:	The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbates the humanitarian crisis in the region, hindering access to healthcare and aid.
2021-Present:	Continued violence and instability, with sporadic clashes between government forces and separatists. International efforts to mediate a peaceful resolution have been largely unsuccessful.

## UN involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

- UN Security Council Discussion- March 31, 2017 (UN Resolution 2349) While focussed on the Lake Chad Basin region and Boko Haram, this resolution expressed concern about the situation in Cameroon.



- Humanitarian Crisis Declaration- May 30 2018 (UN Resolution) A declaration aimed to mobilize international attention and resources to address the humanitarian situation in Cameroon.
- African Union and Security Council Communiqué- November 22 2018 (Statement) Called for dialogue to resolve the crisis and offered African Union (AU) support for mediation efforts.
- Security Council Discussions- May 5 2019 (Informal Meeting) A discussion on the crisis was held at the UN Security Council following appeals from international bodies. No formal resolution was passed due to resistance from member states.
- Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group Statement- May 7 2019 (Statement) Expressed concern for the situation in Cameroon, called for dialogue.
- European Parliament Resolution- April 18 2019 (Resolution 2691) Called on the Cameroonian government to initiate dialogue to resolve the current conflict and urged the EU to increase political pressure on Cameroon.
- Mediation Initiative- June 2019: Switzerland announces its role as a mediator between the Cameroonian government and separatist groups.
- US Senate Resolutions- July 30 2019 (Resolution 292) Calls on the US government to impose sanctions on Cameroonian officials responsible for violations of human rights.
- Summit by the Economic Community of Central African States- November 22 2019 (ECCAS) Discussed the crisis, called for a peaceful resolution.
- International Conference on the armed conflict in the southern Cameroons- October 30- November 1 2019 (Discussions) Brought together various stakeholders in the conflict to discuss solutions to the crisis. Held in Washington D.C.

## Previous Attempts to solve the Issue

There have been many attempts to resolve the ongoing civil war in Cameroon's Anglophone regions but with little to no success. One of the most significant efforts was the national dialogue, encouraged by President Biya in September 2019. The dialogue was an attempt to bring together both sides of the conflict to discuss national interests of peace, security, and unity. This solution was criticized for not including key stakeholders (particularly separatist leaders) and being poorly organized. The Cameroonian government claims that this dialogue was successful and



its resolutions are being implemented in the region. There have also been mediation efforts taken with varying degrees of engagement from both sides. Switzerland attempted to mediate the conflict in collaboration with the “Humanitarian Dialogue.” (a Swiss NGO). The Swiss government has held meetings with separatist leaders and Cameroonian officials since 2019. An issue arose when Cameroonian President Biya failed to acknowledge these attempts at peace talks. In 2023 Cameroon officially withdrew all participation in the Swiss peace talks. Other international actors, including the United Nations, have urged dialogue and offered to mediate, but these efforts have not led to significant progress. In reflecting on past failed solutions it is clear that discussion and mediation is not a viable solution for tackling this issue unless opinions change within both sides of the conflict.

## Possible Solutions

When considering possible solutions for the resolving of the Anglophone Crisis, moving away from encouraging peaceful debate is necessary as those solutions have proved to be futile. Stronger approaches based on smart or hard power techniques. Implementation of targeted sanctions, as suggested by the US Senate Resolution 292, on key Cameroonian or Separatist Officials responsible for human rights violations. These sanctions could include deterring the use of financial platforms (CashApp, GoFundMe, etc.), travel restriction, and asset freezing.

Another solution could be to offer incentive packages for the Cameroon region including debt relief, increased foreign investment, and development aid. This package would be contingent on both sides agreeing to participate in peace talks for the aim of a mutual peace. This contingency package could be included in addition to targeted sanctions for an increase in political pressure on the Cameroonian Government. Another solution to end Cameroon’s civil war could be the establishment of decentralized autonomous regions for the Separatist groups, providing autonomy and some portion of sovereignty. This solution has the potential to not be accepted by either side of the conflict. These solutions would intensify the efforts to bring both the Cameroonian government and the separatist leaders to the negotiation table, utilizing more forceful methods than the previous attempts of encouragement

## Bibliography

“Anglophone Crisis.” *Wikipedia*, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglophone\\_Crisis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglophone_Crisis). Accessed 19 October 2024.

Balgah, Roland Azibo. “The ramification of Cameroon's Anglophone crisis: conceptual analysis of a looming “Complex Disaster Emergency” - *Journal of International Humanitarian Action*.”



*Journal of International Humanitarian Action*, 24 January 2022,

<https://jhumanitarianaction.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/s41018-022-00114-1>. Accessed 19 October 2024.

Hassan, Tirana. "World Report 2024: Cameroon." *Human Rights Watch*,

<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/cameroon>. Accessed 17 October 2024.

"SEPARATIST | English meaning - Cambridge Dictionary." *Cambridge Dictionary*, 16 October 2024,

<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/separatist>. Accessed 19 October 2024.

Sobseh, Emmanuel Yenkong. "The Dynamics of Cameroon's Major National Dialogue and Attempts at Resolving the Anglophone Crisis since 2016: Understanding National and International Responses." *Scholars Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2024, p. 13.

*The University of Bamenda, Cameroon*,

<https://www.saspublishers.com/article/19433/download/>.

"Resolution 2349 (Peace and Security in Africa - Lake Chad Basin) S/RES/2349." *Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect*,

<https://www.globalr2p.org/resources/resolution-2349-peace-and-security-in-africa-lake-chad-basin-s-res-2349/>. Accessed 29 October 2024.

"Security Council." *Security Council*, 31 March 2017,

[https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/S\\_RES\\_2349.pdf](https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/S_RES_2349.pdf). Accessed 29 October 2024.

"Major National Dialogue : Game Changer In Local Governance." *Cameroon-Tribune*,

<https://www.cameroon-tribune.cm/article.html/30045/en.html/major-national-dialogue-game-changer-in-local>. Accessed 29 October 2024.

Mutah, Jude. "Global Responses to Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis: The Inadequate International Efforts to End the World's Most Neglected Conflict - The SAIS Review of International Affairs." *The SAIS Review of International Affairs*, 8 November 2022,

<https://saisreview.sais.jhu.edu/cameroon-anglophone-crisis-global-response/>. Accessed 29 October 2024.

"US removes Cameroon from trade pact over alleged human rights violations." *CNN*, 1 November 2019,

<https://edition.cnn.com/2019/11/01/africa/cameroon-trump-trade-pact/index.html>. Accessed 10





November 2024.

Mutah, Jude. “Global Responses to Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis: The Inadequate International Efforts to End the World's Most Neglected Conflict - The SAIS Review of International Affairs.” *The SAIS Review of International Affairs*, 8 November 2022, <https://saisreview.sais.jhu.edu/cameroon-anglophone-crisis-global-response/>. Accessed 10 November 2024.