



Genocide Watch
The Alliance Against Genocide

Genocide Emergency: Cameroon August 2020

Since the 1960s, Cameroon's Francophone-dominated government has [instituted policies](#) aimed at marginalizing the country's minority Anglophone community. In late 2016, state [security forces cracked down](#) on Anglophone lawyers and teachers as they peacefully led civil rights demonstrations. This government repression animated [Anglophone nationalism](#) and led to both the formation and mobilization of an armed separatist movement.

The separatist movement fractured into a number of smaller militias, including the Ambazonia Defense Forces (ADF) and the Southern Cameroons Defense Forces (SOCADEF). In October 2017, the separatist groups collectively [declared independence](#) for the breakaway Republic of Ambazonia. President Paul Biya responded with force, [declaring war](#) on the secessionist movement and its supporters, which he labeled as "terrorists" and "extremists".

Since 2016, fighting between government forces and militant separatists has claimed more than [3,000 lives](#) and displaced more than [679,000 Anglophones](#), with at least [60,000](#) Anglophones fleeing as refugees to neighboring Nigeria. The conflict has also decimated critical infrastructure in the Anglophone regions, with many schools and hospitals shuttered and nearly [two million Anglophones](#), one-third of the total Anglophone population, now in dire need of humanitarian assistance.

The violence currently shows no signs of abating as [attacks continue](#) by both government forces and separatists. In February 2020, government officials and allied militia members slaughtered [21 civilians](#), including 13 children in Ngarbuh village in Northwest Cameroon. So far in 2020, fighting has killed an [estimated 285 Anglophone civilians](#).

Genocide Watch recognizes the alarming situation in Cameroon's Anglophone regions as **Stage 9: Extermination** and **Stage 10: Denial**. The government maintains that it has not engaged in a systematic campaign of targeted violence against perceived separatist supporters, despite [widespread evidence to the contrary](#), claiming any violence is a result of legitimate counterterrorism operations.

As violence by both security forces and armed separatists continues, Anglophone civilians are at an increased risk for future genocidal massacres. Genocide Watch recommends:

- International actors recognize the urgency of the Anglophone crisis and encourage the government of Cameroon and separatist groups to reach a diplomatic resolution through the implementation of targeted sanctions on those most responsible for ongoing violence.
- Both the government and separatist groups follow UNSG Guterres' call for a global ceasefire to help combat COVID-19, and immediately end attacks on civilians and reach a ceasefire agreement.
- Both the government and separatist groups agree to participate in mediation efforts, sponsored by a third-party, aimed at achieving meaningful dialogue.

- An investigation be launched in conjunction with the AU or UN into crimes against humanity and other international crimes committed during the Anglophone crisis to end the ongoing cycle of impunity.
- Humanitarian channels be reopened to allow for the inflow of necessary medical supplies, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as essential aid for Anglophones suffering as a result of the continued violence and destruction of critical infrastructure.