



Genocide Watch
The Alliance Against Genocide

Cameroon Genocide Emergency August 2023

Genocide Watch is reissuing its Genocide Emergency for Cameroon. Since 2016, security forces and armed separatists have engaged in a civil war in Cameroon's Southwestern Anglophone region. At [At least 4,000 civilians](#) have died. Boko Haram continues to target civilians in Cameroon's Northwest.

[The Anglophone crisis began in late 2016](#) when Cameroonian security forces responded to peaceful protests in the English-speaking Northwest and Southwest regions with a [violent crackdown](#). Anglophone lawyers and teachers launched the protests to demand an end to perceived political and social marginalization by the Francophone-dominated government in Yaoundé.

The Biya government's repressive response to Anglophone grievances resulted in a separatist movement. Armed groups loosely united to declare an independent "Federal Republic of Ambazonia."

The civil war has internally displaced [at least 712,800 Cameroonians](#) and forced another 67,400 to flee as refugees to Nigeria. Many schools have been closed for over four years. [The UN estimates](#) that three-quarters of the four million people in Cameroon's Southwest and Northwest regions are affected.

Armed separatists have attacked Federal police posts. They have also attacked Anglophone civilians who oppose their quest for independence. The separatists have even attacked [Anglophone schools](#) that refused to close. Separatists have employed [widespread sexual violence](#) and have increasingly relied on indiscriminate tactics affecting civilians, including the use of IEDs. Use of IEDs is a war crime.

Since December 2020, the [Cameroonian Government has banned Médecins Sans Frontières \(MSF\)](#) in the Northwest region. Through the intentional suppression of health care, the Cameroonian government is increasing the likelihood of death for civilians, which is also a war crime.

Boko Haram is the world's deadliest terrorist organization, killing [more than 40,000 people](#) in northeast Nigeria since 2009. Since 2014 Boko Haram has spilled over into adjacent Cameroon, terrorizing civilians in the Northwest region and killing more than 3,700 people in Cameroon, according to [ACLED](#).

From December 2020 to April 2021, Boko Haram killed more than [80 civilians in Northwest Cameroon](#). Cameroon security forces have also committed serious [human rights violations](#) as part of their counterterrorism operations, including extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detention, and torture.

An influx of refugees from the Central African Republic and Nigeria has exacerbated insecurity in Cameroon. Cameroon had [437,000 refugees and one million](#) internally displaced persons in March 2021.

Genocide Watch considers Cameroon to be at **Stage 6: Polarization, Stage 8: Persecution, and Stage 9: Extermination**.

Genocide Watch Recommends:

- The Cameroonian Government should uphold its original historical and constitutional commitment to the semiautonomous status of Anglophone Southwestern Cameroon, including full rights of political, cultural, and linguistic expression by Anglophone citizens.
- The UN should establish a commission of inquiry under the UN Security Council or an independent fact-finding mission under the UN Human Rights Council to recommend ways to end the civil war in Cameroon.
- UN peacekeepers should be deployed to protect civilians in the Southwest and Northwest.
- All external funding and arming of the Cameroon military should end immediately, including funding and training by the United States and France.
- Local leaders in the Anglophone region should repudiate the separatist groups.