

Forum: The United Nations Membership Council (UNMC)

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TOPIC 3: The Membership of Ambazonia

I. Introduction to the Topic

Ambazonia, officially the Federal Republic of Ambazonia, is an unrecognized breakaway state in West Africa. Claiming English-speaking territories in the Northwest and Southwest regions of Cameroon, the Ambazonian people wish to separate themselves from the rest of the Francophone country. It is believed by many that Ambazonia should not have to fight for independence because it already attained it in 1961, when a choice was presented to Anglophone Cameroonians; to join either French Cameroon or Nigeria. The vote showed a preference to join French Cameroon, however, the understanding of many was that this “joining” would be a free association as a federation of two states, in which both would have equal status. However, as of 2017, there has been an outcry for a “restoration of independence”. This is due to claimed political and economic marginalization of Anglophone Cameroonians. This marginalization includes political changes made by the Francophone Cameroonians in control of the government to make all legal, political, and educational systems French. There are also claims of the Cameroonian Army being an “army of occupation”, with soldiers often detaining and harming citizens living in the Northwest and Southwest regions. Representatives of Ambazonia have requested federalism or separation, however, Cameroon does not seem to be willing to give them this. Because of this, there have been violent attacks committed, including burning of schools, kidnappings, beatings, and even murders. According to Article 2 of the UN Charter, “All Members shall settle their international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security, and justice, are not endangered.” This means that if Ambazonia were admitted into the UN, they would be protected from French Cameroon under UN law.

Residents of French Cameroon do not view Ambazonia as an independent country, or a federal state. In fact, they refer to Anglophone protesters as “quasi terrorists”. They have also sent out the Cameroon military to “reinforce security”. This has mainly worked in controlling the more rural Anglophone areas so far, due to the fact that the Cameroon military and government have better access to weapons, and training. They have also detained those living in these rural areas, displacing and harming many others. Overall, French Cameroon sees Ambazonia as insurrectionary and does not approve of anything that they are doing. Additionally, this means that tens of thousands of refugees, approximately 530,000, are pushed into neighboring countries like Nigeria, and displaced.

Globally, what is referred to as the “Cameroon Anglophone Crisis” is viewed by many as a conflict building into a genocide. This is reinforced by Cameroon being placed on the Human

Rights Watch page. It has been stated that an already tense situation is becoming worse due to unnecessary or excessive force and violence during protests, which may put a lot of lives at risk. It is believed by many that colonization is the root cause of this issue, and Ambazonia should have been offered independence from the start, due to the fact that they speak a different language from both Nigeria and Cameroon, countries they were told to combine with. Overall, the general global consensus seems to be that allowing Ambazonia UN membership and separation would be the smartest way to go about saving the Anglophone people in Cameroon from a genocide.

II. Definition of Key Terms & Concepts

Definition of Key Terms

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Anglophone: English-Speaking

Ambazonia was formerly the English-speaking region of Cameroon. Because the people of Ambazonia are English-speaking, the conflict between the two states is often referred to as an “Anglophone Crisis”. The root cause of the conflict between Northern Cameroon and Ambazonia is often considered to be the nations' language barrier and significantly different colonial history.

Federation: A group of states with a central government but independence in internal affairs.

Ambazonia was originally regarded as a federation of Cameroon, with its own Prime Minister and independence as an equal state within the country. However, this was removed from them as French Cameroon slowly attempted to assimilate Anglophone Cameroon into one country. Ambazonia initially requested becoming a federation again, however, that quickly changed into becoming an independent country after French Cameroon refused to comply with their demands.

Marginalization: Treatment of a person, group, or concept as insignificant or peripheral.

Anglophone Cameroon has felt marginalized by French Cameroon for a long time, as they were pushed to the very borders of the country and treated as less than. They also had their

right to a Prime Minister taken away, as well as their right to English speaking schools, and courts.

Breakaway State: An act or instance of breaking away; secession or separation.

Ambazonia is considered to be a Breakaway State because they removed themselves from the country they were once a part of. Once they gain international recognition as a country, they will not be considered a breakaway state anymore.

III. Key Stakeholders

AMF (Ambazonian Military Forces): The AMF is a military organization that fights for the independence of Ambazonia. They have been fighting a guerrilla war against the Cameroonian Armed Forces (CAF) since September 2017. Because they are disadvantaged when it comes to number of soldiers, quality of weapons, and training, they rely on hit-and-runs, rains, and ambushes, using the advantage of familiarity with the terrain of Southern Cameroon. They have mainly been fighting in the Anglophone areas in Cameroon, however in March of 2019, it was announced that they would take the war into the French-speaking parts of Cameroon. After at least five instances in January 2020 in which separatists camps were attacked by angry villages, ADF fighters were given orders to arrest anyone caught terrorizing civilians, including fellow separatists. Later in the month, the Southern Cameroon Restoration Forces abducted 40 ADF fighters, and executed six of them. More recently, they have been protecting the declared Ambazonian border from CAF.

CACSC (Cameroon Anglophone Civil Society Consortium): CACSC is a group made up of Southern Cameroonian lawyers and teachers who are opposing Francophone Cameroon's imposition of French schools and law systems. Because of this, they organized a sit-down strike and peaceful protest in 2016 to which the government responded violently, killing six people and harming more than 100 others. In 2017, CACSC presented a draft proposal for a federal state, which led to them being branded as threats to the unity of Cameroon, and their leaders were arrested. After 2017, the option of federalism was no longer being discussed within Cameroon, and most CACSC members fled the country.

Paul Biya: Paul Biya assumed office as President of Cameroon on the 6th of November 1982. Since then, he has been President for over 40 years and is currently 90 years old. As a French Cameroonian, he regards separatists as “terrorists” and is fixated on pursuing war against them. Because of this, he has allied with the CAF and advocates for violence against Ambazonian citizens.

CAF (Cameroon Armed Forces): The CAF are the government run police force and military of Cameroon. They are the main opposers of AMF and worked to capture and detain separatists when Ambazonia was still a part of Cameroon. They have been monitoring the rural Anglophone regions and detaining separationists since 2017, and now are guarding the borders of Cameroon from the AMF. They have also previously burned houses, destroyed and looted healthcare facilities, and forcibly detained countless others. They have also caused many Southern Cameroonian citizens to flee their homes.

IV. Key Issues including Background Information

Displacement of refugees in Northern Cameroon:

The Anglophone crisis has led to a wave of refugees to arrive in Northern Cameroon. Boko Haram, an Islamic terrorist group partaking in the Anglophone crisis, has been responsible for such displacement. Essentially, since 2013, more than 634,000 refugees have fled to Cameroon to avoid the chaos and violence. As well, in 2020, the Boko Haram killed a multitude of refugees in Cameroon villages and displaced approximately 18,000 villagers. However, as Boko Haram continues inflicting acts of violence, the amount of displaced individuals in Northern Cameroon increases. This means more refugees adding to Northern Cameroon’s population, posing the threat of social and food security. Northern Cameroon is unable to bring sufficient aid to the displaced due to the economic damages made by Boko Haram. Therefore, as there is no consensus for Ambazonia’s independence, more and more begin to endure severe food and income insecurity.

The coping of natural disasters:

Natural disasters like volcanic eruptions and floods are extremely prevalent in Cameroon’s Anglophone region. However, the political instability caused by the Anglophone crisis is not

helpful in averting its natural disasters. During crises like the Anglophone crisis, there is chaos and disarray in a government's structure and systems. This makes systems in accordance with natural disasters ineffective and leads to only a weak recovery and a fractured economy. To emphasize the severity of such a situation, multiple studies have presented the effects on the nexus of political instability and natural disasters. Essentially, the war in Somalia made the government unresponsive to its recurring droughts and floods as a study showed in 2004. Hence, fundamentally, political instability can weaken the governance of social structures and its coping mechanisms to natural disasters. However, if Ambazonia becomes independent, then responses to natural disasters could be more robust - a government less divided and chaotic leads to a more organized and effective system.

The continuation of the Anglophone crisis:

For five years the Anglophone crisis has continued with minimal response from foreign powers. The Norwegian refugee council has titled the crisis to be the most internationally neglected crisis. This is due to its lack of funds or media attention. Considering foreign action, The United States has been one of the only nations being responsive to the crisis. However, in 2019, the US had to cut its investment in the crisis, canceling out the crisis' only foreign intervener. Hence, with the lack of effort from foreign powers, the Anglophone crisis has become even worse with the absence of any intervention or mediation.

V. Timeline of Resolutions, Treaties, and Events

Timeline of Resolutions, Treaties, and Events

Date	Description of event
1858	Britain colonizes Cameroon and establishes it as a British settled colony. Ambazonia is considered to be British territory as well.

- 1910 Germans officially take over Cameroon.
- 1914 Britain administers Ambazonia as an appendage of Nigeria.
- 1919 Britain and France sign a boundary treaty declaring British Cameroon and French Cameroon separate entities.
- 1961 A “Hobson’s Choice” is presented to British, or Southern, Cameroon, telling them to achieve independence by joining either French Cameroon or Nigeria. The preference is for French Cameroon under the condition that it would be a free association in the form of a federation in which the two states would be equal in status.
- 1972 A fraudulent vote abolishing the post of Prime Minister of South Cameroon is passed, leaving only French Cameroonians in governmental power.
- 1984 President Paul Biya changes the name of the country from United Republic of Cameroon to *La Republique du Cameroun*.
- 1993 J. N. Foncha and S. T. Muna, the surviving former Prime Ministers of South Cameroon, visit the United Nations headquarters in New York and request full independence for Southern Cameroon.

2017

Southern Cameroon declares the restoration of its independence, and names the new country the Federal Republic of Ambazonia.

VI. Possible Challenges & Solutions

Displacement of refugees in Northern Cameroon:

Western powers like the United States may accept and provide transport for refugees to their respective nations. In addition, they may provide medical assistance and security for refugees residing in Northern Cameroon. However, with the refugee crisis caused by the Ukraine war, the capacity for refugees may be limited and provide other economic hardships to various nations.

The coping of natural disasters:

If the Anglophone crisis still has not ceased, then foreign powers or intergovernmental organizations like the UN could mediate Cameroon's political systems for a short term. Foreign powers or intergovernmental organizations could send natural disaster relief programs or send officials to provide advice and analyses. Though foreign intervention would be beneficial, Cameroon has been notable to avoid international intervention, meaning collaboration and consensus with its government to be difficult.

The continuation of the Anglophone crisis:

Foreign nations could forward more intervention with stronger measures. Regardless, international responses have been silent, meaning the likelihood of intervention to be dour. As well, there may be issues from Cameroon's side. As a nation who dislikes international intervention, Cameroon may permit or limit foreign aid, making effective solutions to not be exercised.

VII. Recommendations for Resolution Writing including Research

With at least five statements in 2016 and a resolution on human rights in 2021, the United States has provided the most responses to the Anglophone crisis. Thus, the United States could be a strong advocate for Ambazonia's resolution. However, as the crisis is situated in Cameroon, the

US's ideals may shift depending on Cameroon's stance. Additionally, Switzerland has enforced efforts to end the war, meaning it could side with the US. For France, though it could play as a key mediator, it is most likely France will be neutral. France is still extremely involved in Cameroon's oil reserves, minerals, timber, and its military. In general, France has strong links with Cameroon's military and business.

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IX: Additional Resources

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