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***Commission of the Churches on  
International Affairs (CCIA)***

Direct phone: +41 22 791 6031  
Direct e-mail: [pep@wcc-coe.org](mailto:pep@wcc-coe.org)

To the:

Special Rapporteur on minority issues;

Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons;

Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions

## **Cameroon**

Violence broke out in November 2016 in Cameroon's English-speaking region, the north-west and south-west provinces. The authorities used lethal force against protestors who were complaining about the use of French in Anglophone courts and schools.

Cameroon's English speakers in the south, who were initially only demanding cultural, legal and linguistic recognition, then developed sympathy for the cause of restoration of the once independent state of Southern Cameroons, with plans to rename the country 'Ambazonia'. This area is home to approximately 20% of Cameroon's population of 25 million people.

This conflict has led to over 12,000 deaths, although local sources claim the real number could be double that figure. More than 1,500,000 have lost their homes and become internally displaced.

The World Council of Churches has several member churches in Cameroon, and our constituency is strongly represented in both the Anglophone and francophone areas of the country. We are in close contact with church leaders and counterparts in the affected areas of the country.

The incidence of human rights violations has reportedly increased since May 2020, including acts of violence both by the Government and by armed separatist groups who have killed several civilians, including a humanitarian worker and a teacher.

We welcome reports that representatives of the Government held talks in early July with the main separatist leaders for the first time since the conflict began, but are concerned that the Government has denied that these talks even took place.

During her visit to Cameroon in 2013, the Independent Expert on Minority issues Ms Rita Izsak expressed concerns about violations of the rights of individuals advocating for greater political autonomy or secession for the Anglophone region and made a series of recommendations. We consider that these recommendations have not been implemented, and the situation has greatly deteriorated since her visit.

The attack on 14 February 2020 on the village of Ngarbuh, which left 23 people dead, the majority of them children, and the horrific killing on 11 August 2020 of a 35-year-old woman identified as Confort Tumassang in Muyuka, South-West region, are just two of the many deadly incidents, which have taken place in recent months.

We urge you to call upon the Government of Cameroon and armed groups calling for Anglophone independence to agree to an immediate and full ceasefire, and begin a process of peaceful negotiation.

All those who have committed human rights violations on all sides should be investigated and held to account for what they have done.



Peter Prove,  
Director,  
Commission of the Churches on International Affairs,  
World Council of Churches

Geneva, 7 September 2020