

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	220
Land:	Cameroun
Kilde:	Amnesty International
Titel:	Cameroon 2020
Udgivet:	7. april 2021
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	12. april 2021

Document #2048653

AI – Amnesty International

Cameroon 2020

Security forces and armed groups continued to commit human rights violations and abuses. Hundreds of thousands of people were displaced due to violence; and gender-based violence against women was widespread. The government continued to crack down on peaceful dissent and on critics. There were reports of torture and other ill-treatment in detention.

Background

In February, the ruling Cameroon People’s Democratic Movement party won the legislative and local elections. Prior to this, the Cameroon Renaissance Movement, led by Maurice Kamto, called for a boycott of the elections, and for electoral reform. President Paul Biya has been in power since 1982.

On 17 March, the authorities adopted measures to control the spread of COVID-19, including by closing borders. On 31 March, the President made a plea for public solidarity to help fund the health sector. Many critics raised concerns about the lack of transparency surrounding the management of the funds, and about public policies which failed to address hardship resulting from loss of earnings. In April, hundreds of prisoners were released, but severe overcrowding continued to put detainees at increased risk of COVID-19.

Abuses by armed groups

Anglophone separatist armed groups continued to commit serious human rights abuses, and targeted people perceived as government supporters in the North-West and South-West regions.

In the North-West, a man was killed and his father injured on 15 January, near Bamenda city, when they tried to avoid a checkpoint held by armed separatists. On 30 January, four humanitarian workers were abducted by a separatist group which accused them of working for the government. They were released the next day. The organization for which they worked said that three of them were beaten and subjected to psychological torture. On 7 August a humanitarian worker was abducted from his home in the Batibo subdivision by unidentified assailants and later killed. Three days later, armed men killed a teacher in Nkwen district in Bamenda and threw his body into a river.

On 11 August, the body of Confort Tumassang, a 35-year-old woman, was found on a road in Muyuka, a town in the South-West region. She had been beheaded by her attackers who were believed to be separatists. They posted a video of her execution on social media in which they accused her of complicity with security forces.

At least eight students were killed and others injured in an attack on a school on 24 October in the town of Kumba in Mémé division, South-West region. The authorities accused armed separatists.

Meanwhile, in the conflict in the Far North region, armed groups related to Boko Haram carried out hundreds of attacks, committing serious human rights abuses. Some of these amounted to war crimes. Between January and December, at least 312 civilians, including children as young as 10, were killed in at least 412 attacks, according to data compiled from UN bodies, media and other organizations.

Internally displaced people (IDPs) were victims of attacks. In August, at least 18 people were killed and 11 injured when assailants threw an explosive device into a makeshift camp in which they were sleeping, near Nguetchewe village. Eight hundred IDPs had taken shelter in the area. In September, according to UNHCR, the UN refugee agency, a suicide bomb attack killed seven people and wounded 14 others at Koyapé, a village which hosted IDPs.

Also in the Far North region, as of December, at least 124 people, mainly women and children, were victims of abductions by armed groups related to Boko Haram.

Unlawful killings

In the armed conflict with separatist armed groups, the military carried out attacks against villages in which people were unlawfully killed and their homes destroyed. There was a spike in such violence in the run-up to the elections in January and February.

In January, soldiers shot at people in a market in Ndoh village in the South-West region, in a reprisal attack following reports of a soldier being killed in the area. At least 16 people were killed and five injured, including two boys aged 14 and 17.

On 14 February, at least 21 people were killed, including children and two pregnant women, in the Ngarbuh neighbourhood in the North-West region. After NGOs investigated the incident, the government established a Joint Commission of Inquiry which, on 21 April, concluded that 10 children and three women had died during “gunfire exchange” between the army, supported by members of a “vigilante group”, and an armed group. The authorities said that disciplinary procedures would be taken against all soldiers who participated in the operation, while others would face arrest. No official information was available on this at the end of the year.

Internally displaced people

As of November, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), more than 700,000 Cameroonians were internally displaced within or outside the North-West and South-West regions, as a result of violence. A further 60,000 people sought refuge in neighbouring Nigeria. More than 320,000 people were internally displaced in the Far North region.

Gender-based violence

The OCHA recorded 676 incidents of gender-based violence in the North-West and South-West regions in September (compared to 567 cases in August). The organization said that their records may not have reflected the total number of cases due to their limited access to affected communities. Of all reported cases, sexual violence represented 39%. Survivors of gender-based violence crimes were mostly women (64%).

Freedoms of expression and assembly

The authorities continued to crack down on peaceful dissent, banning demonstrations and arbitrarily arresting those who exercised their rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. On 18 September, four members of the Stand Up For Cameroon movement, a coalition of political parties, NGOs and others, were arrested by the gendarmerie in Douala city after attending a meeting at the Cameroon People’s Party headquarters. They were brought before a military court on false charges of attempted conspiracy, revolution and insurrection. The judge ordered their pre-trial detention in New Bell prison where they remained at the end of the year.

Maurice Kamto called for peaceful demonstrations to take place on 22 September to demand the President’s resignation. Governors of the West and Centre regions responded by banning all demonstrations for an indefinite period. The security forces surrounded Maurice Kamto’s house between 22 September and 8 December. At least 500 demonstrators were arrested on 22 September, the majority of whom were members or supporters of the Cameroon Renaissance Movement. According to lawyers, 160 of them remained in detention in the towns of Douala, Yaoundé, Bafoussam and Nkongsamba and, as of 9 December, 13 had been given prison sentences by civilian courts, and 14 had appeared before a military court.

Torture and other ill-treatment

The death in custody of journalist Samuel Ebuwe Ajiekia was finally revealed by independent media on 2 June, and then by the National Union of Cameroonian Journalists. His whereabouts had been unknown for nearly a year, and his death had been kept secret by the authorities. On 5 June, the Defence Ministry confirmed his death and said that he had died of sepsis on 17 August 2019 at the Cameroon Military Hospital in Yaoundé, although photographs of his body showed signs of physical torture and other ill-treatment. Samuel Ebuwe Ajiekia was arrested in Buea, the capital of the South-West region, on 2 August 2019, after he had criticized the government’s handling of the Anglophone crisis. He was initially detained at the Buea police station before being taken to an undisclosed location.

© Amnesty International

ecoi.net summary:

Report on the human rights
situation covering 2020

Country:

Cameroon

Source:

[AI – Amnesty International](#)

Original link:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/africa/cameroon/report-cameroon/>

Document type:

Periodical Report

Language:

English

Published:

7 April 2021

Document ID:

2048653

Austrian Red Cross
Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum
Research and Documentation (ACCORD)

Wiedner Hauptstraße 32, 1041 Wien
T (Telefon) +43 1 589 00 583
F (Fax) +43 1 589 00 589
info@ecoi.net

Contact
Imprint & Disclaimer
F.A.Q.
Data Protection Notice

ecoi.net is run by the Austrian Red Cross (department ACCORD) in cooperation with Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration. ecoi.net is funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Austrian Ministry of the Interior and Caritas Austria. ecoi.net is supported by ECRE & UNHCR.

