



# OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE NOTE

## CAMEROON

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#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1** This document evaluates the general, political and human rights situation in Cameroon and provides guidance on the nature and handling of the most common types of claims received from nationals/residents of that country, including whether claims are or are not likely to justify the granting of asylum, Humanitarian Protection or Discretionary Leave. Case owners must refer to the relevant Asylum Instructions for further details of the policy on these areas.
- 1.2** This guidance must also be read in conjunction with any COI Service Cameroon Country of Origin Information at: [http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/country\\_reports.html](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/country_reports.html)
- 1.3** Claims should be considered on an individual basis, but taking full account of the guidance contained in this document. In considering claims where the main applicant has dependent family members who are a part of his/her claim, account must be taken of the situation of all the dependent family members included in the claim in accordance with the Asylum Instructions on Article 8 ECHR. If, following consideration, a claim is to be refused, case owners should consider whether it can be certified as clearly unfounded under the case by case certification power in section 94(2) of the Nationality Immigration and Asylum Act 2002. A claim will be clearly unfounded if it is so clearly without substance that it is bound to fail.

#### **Source documents**

- 1.4** A full list of source documents cited in footnotes is at the end of this note.

#### 2. Country assessment

- 2.1** Cameroon is a republic dominated by a strong presidency. A multi-party system of government was adopted in 1992, but the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM) has remained in power since it was created in 1985. In the early days of multi-party democracy, President Paul Biya's CPDM regime was shaken by widespread protest and political dissent led by the Social Democratic Front (SDF). The first presidential

election under a multi-party system in October 1992 was fiercely contested and controversial with President Biya elected by a narrow margin (39-36%) over John Fru Ndi of the SDF. However since then, the CPDM and President Biya have managed to reassert their dominance over the Cameroonian political scene. The legislative elections of May 1997 were won by the CPDM and the presidential elections of October 1997 were won by Biya with 81% of the vote according to the official results, though the electoral process was denounced by the opposition. The legislative elections of 2002 and presidential elections of 2004 followed a similar pattern. The CPDM consolidated its grip on the national assembly and Biya won the presidential elections of 2004 with 75% of the vote.<sup>1</sup>

- 2.2** Legislative and local elections were held on 22 July 2007. The CPDM further consolidated its grip on power, eventually gaining 153 out of 180 parliamentary seats once elections were re-run in five districts in September 2007. The electoral roll was computerised which aided transparency, but election observers noted widespread irregularities in the electoral system and remained concerned about deficiencies in the electoral process and the low voter turnout. In April 2008, the Cameroonian parliament amended the constitution to allow President Biya to run for a third term in 2011. The opposition condemned the move as a 'constitutional coup'.<sup>2</sup>
- 2.3** In 2008, members of the security forces were reported to have committed unlawful killings, engaged in torture, beatings, and other abuses, particularly of detainees and prisoners. During the year, the authorities were also reported to have arrested and detained citizens advocating secession for the Anglophone areas of Cameroon, and local human rights monitors and activists. There have also been reports of infringement on citizens' privacy rights, and restrictions on citizens' freedoms of speech, assembly, and association. The National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms (NCHRF) continues to function, however, conducting investigations into human rights abuses, visiting prisons, and organising human rights seminars for judicial officials, security personnel, and other government officers. A number of domestic and international human rights groups also generally operate without government restriction, investigating and publishing findings on human rights cases.<sup>3</sup>
- 2.4** Sparked by a combination of political and economic frustrations, violent unrest gripped Douala, Yaoundé, and dozens of other cities in February 2008. During the February 2008 riots and the subsequent government crackdown, members of the security forces shot and killed demonstrators and rioters. While the Government reported forty persons killed, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) stated that the security forces killed over one hundred people.<sup>4</sup>
- 2.5** In August 2008, the Nigerian Government handed over the Bakassi peninsula territory to Cameroon, ending a long-standing dispute. The Nigerian Government had initially challenged the October 2002 International Court of Justice verdict on the boundary, but in 2006 Nigeria agreed to hand over the territory to Cameroon and withdrew its forces from the peninsula.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Home Office Country of Origin Information (COI) Service Country of Origin Information Key Documents: Cameroon March 2009 (Background Information on Cameroon: Recent history), Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Country Profile 2008: Cameroon & U.S. Department of State report on Human Rights Practices (USSD) 2008: Cameroon (Introduction)

<sup>2</sup> COI Key Documents March 2009: Cameroon (Background Information on Cameroon: Recent events and political developments), USSD 2008: Cameroon (Introduction) & British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) News Timeline: Cameroon

<sup>3</sup> COI Key Documents March 2009: Cameroon (Background Information on Cameroon: Human Rights), USSD 2008: Cameroon (Introduction & Section 4) & Amnesty International (AI) Report 2009: Cameroon

<sup>4</sup> COI Key Documents March 2009: Cameroon (Background Information on Cameroon: Human Rights), USSD 2008: Cameroon (Introduction & Sections 1 & 2), AI Report 2009: Cameroon & BBC News Timeline: Cameroon

<sup>5</sup> COI Key Documents March 2009: Cameroon (Background Information on Cameroon: Recent events and political developments), FCO Country Profile 2008: Cameroon, BBC News Timeline: Cameroon

### 3. **Main categories of claims**

- 3.1** This Section sets out the main types of asylum claim, human rights claim and Humanitarian Protection claim (whether explicit or implied) made by those entitled to reside in Cameroon. It also contains any common claims that may raise issues covered by the Asylum Instructions on Discretionary Leave. Where appropriate it provides guidance on whether or not an individual making a claim is likely to face a real risk of persecution, unlawful killing or torture or inhuman or degrading treatment/ punishment. It also provides guidance on whether or not sufficiency of protection is available in cases where the threat comes from a non-state actor; and whether or not internal relocation is an option. The law and policies on persecution, Humanitarian Protection, sufficiency of protection and internal relocation are set out in the relevant Asylum Instructions, but how these affect particular categories of claim are set out in the guidance below.
- 3.2** Each claim should be assessed to determine whether there are reasonable grounds for believing that the applicant would, if returned, face persecution for a Convention reason - i.e. due to their race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion. The approach set out in *Karanakaran* should be followed when deciding how much weight to be given to the material provided in support of the claim (see the Asylum Instruction on Considering the Asylum Claim).
- 3.3** If the applicant does not qualify for asylum, consideration should be given as to whether a grant of Humanitarian Protection is appropriate. If the applicant qualifies for neither asylum nor Humanitarian Protection, consideration should be given as to whether he/she qualifies for Discretionary Leave, either on the basis of the particular categories detailed in Section 4 or on the individual circumstances.
- 3.4** This guidance is **not** designed to cover issues of credibility. Case owners will need to consider credibility issues based on all the information available to them. For guidance on credibility see the Asylum Instructions on 'Considering the Asylum Claim' and 'Assessing Credibility in Asylum and Human Rights Claims'.
- 3.5** All Asylum Instructions can be accessed via the Horizon intranet site. The instructions are also published externally on the Home Office internet site at:  
<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/asylumpolicyinstructions/>
- 3.6 Members of the Social Democratic Front (SDF)**
- 3.6.1** Some applicants may make an asylum and/or human rights claim based on ill-treatment amounting to persecution at the hands of the state authorities due to their membership of, involvement in, or perceived involvement in the main opposition political party: the Social Democratic Front (SDF).
- 3.6.2 *Treatment.*** The SDF was founded in early 1990 and gained legal recognition in March 1991. The SDF is the leading opposition political party and contested the legislative elections in 2007. John Fru Ndi, National Chairman of the SDF told the United Kingdom delegation of a fact finding mission to Cameroon in January 2004 that government officials and the police harassed and intimidated members of the SDF. According to John Fru Ndi, young people whose parents are members of the SDF in particular were harassed and intimidated by the Government. He further stated that many young SDF supporters were also stopped from obtaining jobs or starting up new businesses. Whilst stating that it was difficult for many young SDF supporters to live in Cameroon because of the harassment and intimidation, John Fru Ndi noted that this form of intimidation was not used against all SDF members.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Home Office COI Service Cameroon Country of Origin Information Report January 2008 (Background Information: Political System; Human Rights: Political Affiliation; & Annexes: Annex B – Political organisations) & United Kingdom Immigration and Nationality Directorate: Country Information and Policy Unit. Fact-Finding Mission to Cameroon Report January 2004 (paragraph 3.2)

**3.6.3** In February 2008, the police in Douala disrupted marches organised by the SDF against constitutional reform. The police reportedly used water cannon, trucks, and tear gas to disperse demonstrators in addition to beatings with rubber batons. On one occasion, the police reportedly shot and killed a person when they attacked a crowd gathered for a SDF organised march. Amnesty International has also reported that in 2008 some members of the SDF were arbitrarily arrested and detained. SDF support comes mainly from Anglophones, especially from the North West Region, and from Bamilekes – people whose routes are in the West Region, but who are also numerous in Douala and other towns. They reportedly suffer disproportionately from human rights abuses committed by the Government and its security forces.<sup>7</sup>

**3.6.4 Sufficiency of protection.** As this category of applicants' fear is of ill-treatment/persecution by the state authorities, they cannot apply to these authorities for protection.

**3.6.5 Internal relocation.** Whilst this category of applicants' fear is of ill-treatment/persecution by the state authorities, this does not mean that case owners should automatically presume that internal relocation is not an option. As Lord Bingham observed in Januzi ([2006] UKHL 5):

*"The more closely the persecution in question is linked to the state, and the greater the control of the state over those acting or purporting to act on its behalf, the more likely (other things being equal) that a victim of persecution in one place will be similarly vulnerable in another place within the state. The converse may also be true. All must depend on a fair assessment of the relevant facts."*

**3.6.6** Very careful consideration must be given to whether internal relocation would be an effective way to avoid a real risk of ill-treatment/persecution at the hands of, tolerated by, or with the connivance of, state agents. If an applicant who faces a real risk of ill-treatment/persecution in their home area would be able to relocate to a part of Cameroon where they would not be at real risk, whether from state or non-state actors, and it would not be unduly harsh to expect them to do so, then asylum or humanitarian protection should be refused.

**3.6.7 Caselaw.**

**FK (Cameroon CG) [2007] UKAIT 00047.** The Tribunal found that in the light of the evidence currently available, membership of or actual or perceived involvement with the SDF at any level is unlikely by itself to give rise to a real risk of persecution but some prominent and active opponents of the government in Cameroon may depending on their particular profile and circumstances continue to be at risk.

**3.6.8 Conclusion.** The SDF is the largest opposition party to play a major role in opposition political activity. It is a registered party and therefore being a member is not illegal. Whilst the police have disrupted some marches organised by the SDF and reportedly arrested and detained some members of the SDF, membership of, involvement in, or perceived involvement in the SDF at any level is not likely to amount to ill-treatment that engages the UK's obligations under the 1951 Convention. The grant of asylum in such cases is therefore not likely to be appropriate. As stated in FK, however, some prominent and active opponents of the Government may, depending on their particular profile and circumstances, continue to be at risk. Therefore, the nature of the political activity and level of involvement with any political party, including the SDF, should be thoroughly investigated as the grant of asylum may be appropriate in some cases.

**3.7 Members of the South Cameroons National Council (SCNC) or the South National Youth League (SCYL)**

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<sup>7</sup> USSD 2008: Cameroon (Sections 2 & 5) & AI Report 2009: Cameroon

- 3.7.1** Some applicants may make an asylum and/or human rights claim based on persecution at the hands of the state authorities due to their membership of, involvement with, or perceived involvement with the secessionist groups: the South Cameroons National Council (SCNC) or the South National Youth League (SCYL)
- 3.7.2 *Treatment.*** The SCNC advocates complete secession or full independence of the two southern Anglophone provinces from the Francophone majority. The SCNC is not a political party and is not registered but shares a number of supporters with opposition parties, most notably the SDF. The SCYL is a youth organisation known to be connected to the SCNC.<sup>8</sup>
- 3.7.3** The Government considers the SCNC an illegal organisation because it advocates secession, which the law prohibits. The security forces continue to arrest and detain leaders, members, and supporters of the SCNC. In 2008, for example, the security forces reportedly arrested approximately forty leaders, members, and supporters of the SCNC to prevent them from participating in unauthorised political meetings. However, in accordance with the newly instituted penal code, officials released, pending trial, individuals who were detained for participating in illegal SCNC gatherings. The police have also reportedly put the houses of SCNC officials and activists under surveillance, searched the houses of some SCNC leaders, and disrupted SCNC meetings in private residences. In addition, the authorities have refused to grant the SCNC permission to hold rallies and meetings.<sup>9</sup>
- 3.7.4 *Sufficiency of protection.*** As this category of applicants' fear is of ill-treatment/persecution by the state authorities, they cannot apply to these authorities for protection.
- 3.7.5 *Internal relocation.*** Whilst this category of applicants' fear is of ill-treatment/persecution by the state authorities, this does not mean that case owners should automatically presume that internal relocation is not an option. As Lord Bingham observed in *Januzi* ([2006] UKHL 5):
- "The more closely the persecution in question is linked to the state, and the greater the control of the state over those acting or purporting to act on its behalf, the more likely (other things being equal) that a victim of persecution in one place will be similarly vulnerable in another place within the state. The converse may also be true. All must depend on a fair assessment of the relevant facts."*
- 3.7.6** Very careful consideration must be given to whether internal relocation would be an effective way to avoid a real risk of ill-treatment/persecution at the hands of, tolerated by, or with the connivance of, state agents. If an applicant who faces a real risk of ill-treatment/persecution in their home area would be able to relocate to a part of Cameroon where they would not be at real risk, whether from state or non-state actors, and it would not be unduly harsh to expect them to do so, then asylum or humanitarian protection should be refused.

**3.7.7 Caselaw.**

**MF (Cameroon) [2004] UKIAT 00341.** SCNC member - risk on return. The IAT found that SCNC members are harassed but the objective evidence does not indicate that membership of the SCNC is likely to lead to persecution (paragraph 14). Attendance at a single demonstration in the UK does not indicate the appellant has been an active political supporter in the UK (paragraph 16). 'The fact that an official came out of the embassy and took pictures of all the demonstrators does not of itself indicate that the appellant is likely to

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<sup>8</sup> COIS Cameroon Country Report January 2008 (Human Rights: Political Affiliation & Annexes: Annex B – Political organisations) & USSD 2008: Cameroon (Sections 1 & 3)

<sup>9</sup> COI Key Documents March 2009: Cameroon (Background Information on Cameroon: Human Rights), USSD 2008: Cameroon (Introduction & Sections 1, 2 & 3) & AI Report 2009: Cameroon

be identified by the authorities in Cameroon as a political activist.’ (paragraph 16) ‘...all the activities the appellant undertook on behalf of the SCNC were public and non-violent and nothing that she did was secret. Yet she did not come to the adverse attention of the authorities... Were she to be returned to Cameroon today, and did resume her political activities, we find that there is no reasonable likelihood of the appellant being persecuted for a Convention reason or being subjected to treatment contrary to Article 3 of the ECHR.’ (paragraph 17)

**FK (Cameroon CG) [2007] UKAIT 00047.** The Tribunal found that in the light of the evidence currently available, membership of or actual or perceived involvement with the SDF at any level is unlikely by itself to give rise to a real risk of persecution but some prominent and active opponents of the government in Cameroon may depending on their particular profile and circumstances continue to be at risk.

**3.7.8 Conclusion.** While some leaders, members, and supporters of the SCNC have been arrested and held in temporary detention, there is no evidence that the treatment applied to ordinary members of the SCNC and the SCYL generally amounts to persecution. There is no evidence to suggest that mere membership of, involvement with, or perceived involvement in the SCNC or the SCYL would in itself lead to persecution and a grant of asylum in such cases is therefore not likely to be appropriate. Applicants who have been involved in illegal or criminal activities on behalf of the SCNC or the SCYL are likely to fear prosecution by the authorities rather than persecution. The grant of asylum in such cases is therefore also not likely to be appropriate. As stated in FK, however, some prominent and active opponents of the Government may, depending on their particular profile and circumstances continue to be at risk. Therefore, the nature of the political activity and level of involvement with any political group, including the SCNC and the SCYL should be thoroughly investigated as the grant of asylum may be appropriate in some cases.

### **3.8 Members of human rights organisations**

**3.8.1** Some applicants may make an asylum and/or human rights claim based on ill-treatment amounting to persecution at the hands of the state authorities due to their membership of or involvement with international or local human rights organisations.

**3.8.2 Treatment.** A number of domestic and international human rights groups generally operate without government restriction, investigating and publishing findings on human rights cases. However, the U.S. Department of State has reported that government officials repeatedly impede the effectiveness of local human rights NGOs by harassing their members, limiting access to prisoners, refusing to share information, and threatening and using violence against personnel.<sup>10</sup>

**3.8.3** Despite these restrictions, numerous independent, domestic human rights NGOs operate in the country, including, among others, the National League for Human Rights; the Organization for Human Rights and Freedoms; the Association of Women against Violence; the Movement for the Defense of Human Rights and Freedoms; and the Cameroonian Association of Female Jurists. The Government also reportedly cooperates with international governmental organisations and permits visits by United Nations representatives and other organisations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).<sup>11</sup>

**3.8.4 Sufficiency of protection.** As this category of applicants’ fear is of ill-treatment/persecution by the state authorities, they cannot apply to these authorities for protection.

**3.8.5 Internal relocation.** Whilst this category of applicants’ fear is of ill-treatment/persecution by the state authorities, this does not mean that case owners should automatically presume that internal relocation is not an option. As Lord Bingham observed in Januzi ([2006] UKHL

<sup>10</sup> USSD 2008: Cameroon (Section 4) & AI Report 2009: Cameroon

<sup>11</sup> USSD 2008: Cameroon (Section 4)

5):

*"The more closely the persecution in question is linked to the state, and the greater the control of the state over those acting or purporting to act on its behalf, the more likely (other things being equal) that a victim of persecution in one place will be similarly vulnerable in another place within the state. The converse may also be true. All must depend on a fair assessment of the relevant facts."*

**3.8.6** Very careful consideration must be given to whether internal relocation would be an effective way to avoid a real risk of ill-treatment/persecution at the hands of, tolerated by, or with the connivance of, state agents. If an applicant who faces a real risk of ill-treatment/persecution in their home area would be able to relocate to a part of Cameroon where they would not be at real risk, whether from state or non-state actors, and it would not be unduly harsh to expect them to do so, then asylum or humanitarian protection should be refused.

**3.8.7 *Conclusion.*** There are reports that government officials repeatedly impede the effectiveness of local human rights NGOs by limiting access to prisoners, refusing to share information, and threatening and using violence against personnel. However, domestic and international human rights groups generally operate without government restriction, investigating and publishing findings on human rights cases and the NCHRF also continues to function. Applicants who cite their membership of local or international human rights groups as the basis of their application are unlikely to encounter ill-treatment amounting to persecution within the terms of the 1951 Convention. The grant of asylum in such cases is therefore not likely to be appropriate.

### **3.9 Prison conditions**

**3.9.1** Applicants may claim they cannot return to Cameroon due to the fact that there is a serious risk that they will be imprisoned on return and that prison conditions in Cameroon are so poor as to amount to torture or inhuman treatment or punishment.

**3.9.2** The guidance in this section is concerned solely with whether prison conditions are such that they breach Article 3 of ECHR and warrant a grant of Humanitarian Protection. If imprisonment would be for a Refugee Convention reason, or in cases where for a Convention reason a prison sentence is extended above the norm, the claim should be considered as a whole but it is not necessary for prison conditions to breach Article 3 in order to justify a grant of asylum.

**3.9.3 *Consideration.*** According to the U.S. Department of State, prison conditions remain harsh and life threatening with prisons seriously overcrowded and unsanitary. In 2008, the Government reportedly did not provide funds to improve serious deficiencies in food, health care, and sanitation, which were common in all prisons. However, following significant press coverage of prison conditions and subsequent riots and escape attempts, the Government financed the construction of new prisons across the country including one in Yaounde and one in Moulvoudaye, Far North Region, both of which were operational by year's end.<sup>12</sup>

**3.9.4** Prisoners were kept in dilapidated, colonial-era prisons during 2008, where the number of inmates was reportedly as much as four to five times the intended capacity. Overcrowding was exacerbated by the large number of long pre-trial detentions. Some NGOs released a report claiming that cells meant for 30 or 40 persons held more than 100 detainees.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> COI Key Documents March 2009: Cameroon (Background Information on Cameroon: Human Rights), USSD 2008: Cameroon (Section 1) & AI Report: Cameroon

<sup>13</sup> COI Key Documents March 2009: Cameroon (Background Information on Cameroon: Human Rights) & USSD 2008: Cameroon (Section 1)

- 3.9.5** According to the U.S. Department of State, health and medical care were almost non-existent in prisons and detention cells located in gendarmeries and police stations in 2008. There were also reports that prisoners died due to a lack of medical care. Corruption among prison personnel is reportedly widespread. Prisoners bribe wardens for special favors or treatment, including temporary freedom.<sup>14</sup>
- 3.9.6** There were two separate prisons for women in 2008. There were also a few pre-trial detention centres for women, however, it was reported that in 2008 women routinely were held in police and gendarmerie complexes with men, occasionally in the same cells. According to reports in 2008, juvenile prisoners were often incarcerated with adults, occasionally in the same cells or wards. There were also credible reports that adult inmates sexually abused juvenile prisoners. Pre-trial detainees routinely were held in cells with convicted criminals.<sup>15</sup>
- 3.9.7** The Government permits international humanitarian organisations access to prisoners and both the local Red Cross and the NCHRF make infrequent, unannounced prison visits. The Government also continues to allow the ICRC to visit prisons.<sup>16</sup>
- 3.9.8 *Conclusion.*** Whilst prison conditions in Cameroon are poor with overcrowding, unsanitary conditions, and a lack of medical care being particular problems, conditions are unlikely to reach the Article 3 threshold. Therefore, even where applicants can demonstrate a real risk of imprisonment on return to Cameroon a grant of Humanitarian Protection will not generally be appropriate. However, the individual factors of each case should be considered to determine whether detention will cause a particular individual in his particular circumstances to suffer treatment contrary to Article 3, relevant factors being the likely length of detention the likely type of detention facility and the individual's age and state of health. Where in an individual case treatment does reach the Article 3 threshold a grant of Humanitarian Protection will be appropriate.

#### **4. Discretionary Leave**

- 4.1** Where an application for asylum and Humanitarian Protection falls to be refused there may be compelling reasons for granting Discretionary Leave (DL) to the individual concerned. (See Asylum Instructions on Discretionary Leave) Where the claim includes dependent family members consideration must also be given to the particular situation of those dependants in accordance with the Asylum Instructions on Article 8 ECHR.
- 4.2** With particular reference to Cameroon the types of claim which may raise the issue of whether or not it will be appropriate to grant DL are likely to fall within the following categories. Each case must be considered on its individual merits and membership of one of these groups should *not* imply an automatic grant of DL. There may be other specific circumstances related to the applicant, or dependent family members who are part of the claim, not covered by the categories below which warrant a grant of DL - see the Asylum Instructions on Discretionary Leave and the Asylum Instructions on Article 8 ECHR.
- 4.3 Minors claiming in their own right**
- 4.3.1** Minors claiming in their own right who have not been granted asylum or HP can only be returned where they have family to return to or there are adequate reception, care and support arrangements. At the moment we do not have sufficient information to be satisfied that there are adequate reception, care, and support arrangements in place for minors with

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<sup>14</sup> COI Key Documents March 2009: Cameroon (Background Information on Cameroon: Human Rights) & USSD 2008: Cameroon (Section 1)

<sup>15</sup> USSD 2008: Cameroon (Section 1)

<sup>16</sup> USSD 2008: Cameroon (Section 1)

no family in Cameroon.

- 4.3.2** Minors claiming in their own right without a family to return to, or where there are no adequate reception, care and support arrangements, should if they do not qualify for leave on any more favorable grounds be granted Discretionary Leave for a period as set out in the relevant Asylum Instructions.

#### **4.4 Medical treatment**

- 4.4.1** Applicants may claim they cannot return to Cameroon due to a lack of specific medical treatment. See the IDI on Medical Treatment which sets out in detail the requirements for Article 3 and/or 8 to be engaged.
- 4.4.2** All national hospitals and some provincial hospitals provide specialised care in most medical fields, including cancer, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, cardiovascular disease, eye, ear, nose and throat diseases, as well as many other diseases/illnesses. Anti-retroviral drugs for the treatment of HIV/AIDS are available at the Provincial Day Hospital in Bamenda and at HIV/AIDS treatment centres across the country. Treatment of severe mental disorders is not available at the primary level, but a number of therapeutic drugs are generally available.<sup>17</sup>
- 4.4.3** Where a case owner considers that the circumstances of the individual applicant and the situation in Cameroon reach the threshold detailed in the IDI on Medical Treatment making removal contrary to Article 3 or 8 a grant of Discretionary Leave to remain will be appropriate. Such cases should always be referred to a Senior Caseworker for consideration prior to a grant of Discretionary Leave.

#### **5. Returns**

- 5.1** Factors that affect the practicality of return such as the difficulty or otherwise of obtaining a travel document should not be taken into account when considering the merits of an asylum or human rights claim. Where the claim includes dependent family members their situation on return should however be considered in line with the Immigration Rules, in particular paragraph 395C requires the consideration of all relevant factors known to the Secretary of State, and with regard to family members refers also to the factors listed in paragraphs 365-368 of the Immigration Rules.
- 5.2** Cameroonian nationals may return voluntarily to any region of Cameroon at any time by way of the Voluntary Assisted Return and Reintegration Programme implemented on behalf of the UK Border Agency by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and co-funded by the European Refugee Fund. IOM will provide advice and help with obtaining travel documents and booking flights, as well as organising reintegration assistance in Cameroon. The programme was established in 1999, and is open to those awaiting an asylum decision or the outcome of an appeal, as well as failed asylum seekers. Those wishing to avail themselves of this opportunity for assisted return should be put in contact with the IOM offices in London on 0800 783 2332 or [www.iomlondon.org](http://www.iomlondon.org).

#### **6. List of source documents**

- Home Office Country of Origin Information (COI) Service Cameroon Country of Origin Information Report (dated 16 January 2008).  
[http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/country\\_reports.html](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/country_reports.html)
- COI Service Key Documents: Cameroon (dated 16 March 2009).  
[http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/country\\_reports.html](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/country_reports.html)
- United Kingdom Immigration and Nationality Directorate: Country Information and Policy

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<sup>17</sup> COIS Cameroon Country Report January 2008 (Human Rights: Medical Issues)

Unit. Fact Finding Mission to Cameroon Report January 2004.

[http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/country\\_reports.html](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/country_reports.html)

- U.S. Department of State report on Human Rights Practices (USSD) 2008: Cameroon (released on 25 February 2009). <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/af/118990.htm>
- British Broadcasting Corporation News Timeline: Cameroon (dated 6 May 2009). [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/country\\_profiles/1021488.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/country_profiles/1021488.stm)
- Amnesty International Report 2009: Cameroon. <http://thereport.amnesty.org/en/regions/africa/cameroon>
- Foreign and Commonwealth Office Country Profile 2008: Cameroon (last reviewed 7 January 2008). <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/about-the-fco/country-profiles/sub-saharan-africa/cameroon?profile=all>

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