Home Office
UK Border Agency

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE NOTE

CAMEROON

CONTENTS

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

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 Instruction 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. Despite adopting a multi-party system of government in 1992, the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM) has remained in power since the early years of independence from the British and French in 1960-1. 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.[1]

2.2 Legislative and local elections were held on 22 July 2007. The CPDM further consolidated its grip on power, maintaining its overwhelming majority in parliament and increasing its dominance in municipal councils. Election observers such as the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms (NCHRF) noted irregularities and inadequacies in the election process and opposition parties filed petitions to the country's highest court to annul the election results. The Supreme Court ordered election re-runs in five constituencies, but rejected petitions in at least 85 constituencies. Despite the reports of voting irregularities, the elections monitoring body, Observatoire National des Elections (ONEL), declared the elections free and fair. In April 2008, parliament voted to scrap presidential term limits, enabling President Biya to seek re-election in 2011.[2]

2.3 The Government's human rights record remains poor, and in 2006 and 2007 the security forces were reported to have committed unlawful killings, engaged in torture, beatings, and other abuses, particularly of detainees and prisoners. During 2006 and 2007, the authorities were also reported to have arrested and detained Anglophone citizens advocating secession, local human rights monitors and activists, and other citizens. There have also been reports of infringement on citizens' privacy rights, and restrictions on citizens' freedoms of speech, assembly, and association. The Government is showing signs of improvement, however, and in 2006 steps were reportedly taken to investigate, suspend, and prosecute security forces accused of abuses. The NCHRF continues to function and in 2007 a number of domestic and international human rights groups also generally operated without government restriction, investigating and publishing findings on human rights cases.[3]

2.4 A taxi strike to protest fuel prices led to violent clashes in Douala on 24 February 2008, which spread to other cities including Bamenda and the capital Yaoundé even after the taxi strike officially ended on 26 February. Anti-government demonstrations on the streets followed and the police tear gassed stone-throwing youths in the capital who had set up burning barricades. On 29 February, the official death toll was reported as having risen to 17 in Yaoundé, with 3 deaths reported in Bamenda.[4]

2.5 Cameroon and Nigeria have a long-running dispute over their border, including the oil-rich Bakassi Peninsula. This has occasionally escalated into armed clashes. In October 2002, the International Court of Justice issued its final verdict on the boundary, ruling in

[1] Home Office COI Service (COIS) Cameroon Country of Origin Information Report 2008 (Background Information: History & Political System & Human Rights: Political Affiliation), Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Country Profile 2008 & U.S. Department of State report on Human Rights Practices (USSD) 2007 (Introduction)

[2] COIS Cameroon Country Report 2008 (Background Information: Political System & Human Rights: Political Affiliation), COIS Cameroon Country Report 2007 (Preface: Latest News), USSD 2007 (Introduction & Section 3), British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) News 'Protests against Cameroon's Biya' dated 21 April 2008 & BBC News 'Cameroon makes way for a king' dated 11 April 2008

[3] COIS Cameroon Country Report 2008 (Human Rights: Introduction, Security Forces & Human Rights Institutions, Organisations and Activists) & USSD 2007(Introduction & Section 4)

[4] BBC News 'Deadly violence rages in Cameroon' dated 29 February 2008, BBC News 'Cameroon head blames opposition' dated 28 February 2008, IRIN 'Cameroon: Unrest spreads to Yaoundé even after taxi strike ends' dated 27 February 2008 & IRIN 'Cameroon: Douala burns as taxi strike turns into general rioting' dated 25 February 2008

favour of Cameroon's sovereignty over the peninsula. Nigeria initially refused to accept the ruling, but Nigerian forces withdrew from the Bakassi peninsula in August 2006.[5]

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 instructions 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 Instructions on Assessing Credibility in Asylum and Human Rights Claims).

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 their 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 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.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/ind/en/home/laws___policy/policy_instructions/apis.html

3.6 Members of the Social Democratic Front (SDF)

3.6.1 Some applicants will 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 harass and intimidate members of the SDF. According to John Fru Ndi, young people whose parents are members of the SDF in particular are harassed and intimidated by the Government. He further stated that many young SDF supporters are also stopped from obtaining jobs or starting up new businesses. Whilst stating that it is difficult for many young SDF supporters to live in Cameroon because of the harassment and

[5] COIS Cameroon Country Report 2008 (Annexes: Annex A - Chronology of major events) & FCO Country Profile 2008: Cameroon

intimidation, John Fru Ndi noted that this form of intimidation is not used against all SDF members.[6]

3.6.3 There were no reports that the security forces broke up or disrupted gatherings of the SDF during 2006, however, administrative authorities reportedly banned marches and meetings that the SDF wanted to conduct in Douala and Limbe on public order grounds. In March 2007, the SDF was refused permission to hold a press conference in Yaoundé. Since 1991 only government bills proposed by the presidency have been enacted by the National Assembly, however, in April 2004 the National Assembly agreed to consider a bill submitted by the SDF. Only parties with representatives in the National Assembly can submit bills for consideration. During its June 2005 session, the National Assembly refused to consider a bill on electoral reform tabled by the SDF. Natives of the Anglophone provinces in the North West and South West tend to support the SDF and reportedly suffered disproportionately from human rights violations committed by the Government and its security forces in 2006 and 2007.[7]

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.*** The principle of internal relocation is not excluded where the persecution feared in one part of the country emanates from the state. All must depend on a fair assessment of the relevant facts. However, the reach of the state authorities in Cameroon extends to all parts of the country, and they are sufficiently systematic and organised to preclude a finding that a risk of ill-treatment at the hands of, or with the connivance of state agents, could be sufficiently mitigated by internal relocation within Cameroon.

3.6.6 ***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.

3.6.7 ***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 administrative authorities reportedly banned some marches and meetings that the SDF wanted to conduct in 2006 and 2007, 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).

3.7.1 Some applicants will 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

[6] COIS Cameroon Country Report 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)

[7] COIS Cameroon Country Report 2008 (Background Information: Political System & Human Rights: Political Affiliation) USSD 2007 (Section 5) & USSD 2006: Cameroon (Section 5)

involvement with the secessionist groups: the South Cameroons National Council (SCNC) or the South National Youth League (SCYL).

3.7.2 ***Treatment.*** The SCNC represents the interests of the Anglophone community and has advocated 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.[8]

3.7.3 During 2006 and 2007, the security forces continued to arrest and detain leaders, members and supporters of the SCNC. In 2006, for example, approximately 70 leaders, members and supporters of the SCNC were reported to have been arrested by the security forces. The Government considers the SCNC an illegal organisation because it advocated secession, which the law prohibits. According to reports, the majority of SCNC members arrested in 2006 and 2007 were not charged with any crime and were released after brief detentions, however, some SCNC activists have reportedly been detained for longer periods.[9]

3.7.4 The SCNC has alleged that many of its members are harassed, followed and occasionally beaten by Government security forces, because of their allegiance. In 2007, the police 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. The authorities also refused to grant the SCNC permission to hold rallies and meetings on numerous occasions during the year. According to the SCNC, members and their families are also denied schooling and jobs.[10]

3.7.5 ***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.

3.7.6 ***Internal relocation.*** As this category of applicants' fear is of ill-treatment/persecution by the state authorities, relocation to a different area of the country to escape this threat is not feasible.

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 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

[8] COIS Cameroon Country Report 2008 (Human Rights: Political Affiliation & Annexes: Annex B – Political organisations)
[9] COIS Cameroon Country Report 2008 (History: Recent Developments & Human Rights: Political Affiliation) & USSD 2007 (Sections 1 & 2)
[10] COIS Cameroon Country Report 2008 (Human Rights: Political Affiliation) & USSD 2007 (Sections 1 & 2)

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.*** SCNC and SCYL affiliates continue to be held in temporary detention and some SCNC members have reportedly encountered discrimination or harassment at the hands of the authorities. However, 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 party, 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 will 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.*** In 2007, a number of domestic and international human rights groups generally operated without government restriction, investigating and publishing findings on human rights cases. However, it was reported that government officials repeatedly impeded the effectiveness of local human rights Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) during the year, limiting access to prisoners, refusing to share information, and threatening and using violence against personnel.[11]

3.8.3 Numerous domestic human rights NGOs operated in the country during 2007, 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. There were no reports in 2007 that the Government arrested NGO members. The Government also reportedly cooperated with international governmental organisations and permitted visits by United Nations representatives and other organisations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).[12]

3.8.4 Philip Njaru, a human rights activist and executive director of the Kumba-based Friends of the Press Network, a human rights organisation in Southwest Province, reported that the police continued to harass him throughout 2006. Access by international NGOs to prisons has reportedly improved, but the activities of virtually all of these groups were limited by a shortage of funds and trained personnel in 2007. During the year, observers continued to criticise the country's NGO laws for giving the Government the opportunity to deny authorisation to operate and eliminate NGOs by decree.[13]

3.8.5 The National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms (NCHRF) has the authority to summon witnesses and publish reports and the findings of its investigations. In July 2005, the President signed the implementing decree for a law passed by the National Assembly in July 2004 that expanded the powers of the NCHRF. It also created a permanent secretariat, and a division in charge of the protection and promotion of human rights and freedoms. While the NCHRF reportedly remained hampered by a shortage of funds during 2007, it conducted a number of investigations into human rights abuses, visited prisons,

[11] USSD 2007 (Section 4)
[12] USSD 2007 (Section 4)
[13] COIS Cameroon Country Report 2008 (Human Rights: Introduction) & USSD 2007 (Section 4)

and organised several human rights seminars aimed at judicial officials, security personnel, and other government officers. Although the commission infrequently criticized the Government's human rights abuses publicly, its staff reportedly intervened with government officials in specific cases of human rights abuses by security forces, attempted to stop 'Friday' arrests, and sought to obtain medical attention for jailed suspects in specific cases. In February 2005, the Government created a division of human rights in the Ministry of Justice to investigate and report on all cases of human rights abuses in the areas under the ministry's responsibility, including prisons, jails, and courtrooms.[14]

3.8.6 ***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.

3.8.7 ***Internal relocation.*** As this category of applicants' fear is of ill treatment/persecution by the state authorities, relocation to a different area of the country to escape this threat is not feasible.

3.8.8 ***Conclusion.*** There were reports in 2007 that government officials repeatedly impeded 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 that 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.*** Prison conditions remained harsh and life threatening in 2007 according to the U.S. Department of State. Prisons were reportedly overcrowded, unsanitary, and inadequate, especially outside major urban areas. Due to a lack of funds, serious deficiencies in food, health care, and sanitation were common in almost all prisons, including 'private prisons' operated by traditional rulers in the north. Prisoners were kept in dilapidated colonial-era prisons, where the number of inmates was reported to be four to five times the intended capacity.[15]

3.9.4 In 2005, 800 individuals were hired and trained to work in the prison system. In 2004, the Government shifted the responsibility for administering prisons and detention centres and all individuals arrested by security forces from the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization to the Ministry of Justice. In addition, the Government created a human rights body within the Ministry of Justice to monitor abuses in prisons and jails.[16]

[14] COIS Cameroon Country Report 2008 (Human Rights: Introduction), USSD 2007 (Section 4) & USSD 2006 (Section 4)
[15] USSD 2007 (Section 1)
[16] COIS Cameroon Country Report 2008 (Human Rights: Prison conditions)

3.9.5 The U.S. Department of State reported that in 2007 health and medical care were almost non-existent in the country's prisons and in its detention cells, which were housed in gendarmeries and police stations. There were reports that prisoners died in 2007 due to a lack of medical care. Corruption among prison personnel was reportedly widespread in 2007 with prisoners able to bribe wardens for special favours or treatment, including temporary freedom.[17]

3.9.6 There were two separate prisons for women in 2007. There were also a few pre-trial detention centres for women, however, it was reported that in 2007 women routinely were held in police and gendarmerie complexes with men, occasionally in the same cells. According to reports in 2007, juvenile prisoners often were 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.[18]

3.9.7 In the North and Extreme North provinces, the Government continued in 2007 to permit traditional chiefs to detain persons outside the government penitentiary system, in effect creating private prisons. Within the palaces of the traditional chiefdoms of Rey Bouba, Gashiga, Bibemi, and Tcheboa, there were private prisons that had a reputation for serious abuse.[19]

3.9.8 The Government permitted international humanitarian organisations access to prisoners in 2007. Both the local Red Cross and the NCHRF made infrequent, unannounced prison visits during the year. The Government also continued to allow the ICRC to visit prisons. In 2007, the ICRC stated that the Government allowed international NGOs to have increased access to prisons.[20]

3.9.9 ***Conclusion.*** Whilst prison conditions in Cameroon are reportedly 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 or her 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 AI 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

[17] USSD 2007 (Section 1)
[18] USSD 2007 (Section 1)
[19] USSD 2007 (Section 1)
[20] USSD 2007 (Section 1)

claim, not covered by the categories below which warrant a grant of DL - see the Asylum Instructions on Discretionary Leave and 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 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 favourable 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 (ARV) 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.[21]

4.4.3 Where a case owner considers that the circumstances of the individual applicant and the situation in the country 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. The Article 3 threshold will not be reached in the great majority of medical cases and a grant of Discretionary Leave will usually not be appropriate.

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 (VARRP) implemented on behalf of the Border and Immigration 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. Cameroonian nationals wishing to avail themselves of this opportunity for

[21] COIS Cameroon Country Report 2008 (Human Rights: Medical Issues)

assisted return to Cameroon should be put in contact with the IOM offices in London on 0800 783 2332 or www.iomlondon.org.

6. List of source documents

- Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Country Profile: Cameroon (last reviewed on 7 January 2008). http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/about-the-fco/country-profiles/sub-saharan-africa/cameroon
- Home Office COI Service (COIS) Cameroon Country of Origin Information Report (dated 16 January 2008). http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/country_reports.html
- Home Office COI Service (COIS) Cameroon Country of Origin Information Report (dated 28 August 2007). http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/country_reports.html
- United Kingdom Immigration and Nationality Directorate: Country Information and Policy Unit. Fact-Finding Mission to Cameroon Report January 2004. http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/country_reports.html
- U.S. Department of State report on Human Rights Practices 2006: Cameroon (released on 6 March 2007). http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78723.htm
- U.S. Department of State report on Human Rights Practices 2007: Cameroon (released on 11 March 2008). http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100470.htm
- IRIN 'Cameroon: Unrest spreads to Yaoundé even after taxi strike ends' dated 27 February 2008. http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=76932
- IRIN 'Cameroon: Douala burns as taxi strike turns into general rioting' dated 25 February 2008. http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=76999
- British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) News 'Protests against Cameroon's Biya' dated 21 April 2008. http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/7358201.stm
- BBC News 'Cameroon makes way for a king' dated 11 April 2008. http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/7341358.stm
- BBC News 'Deadly violence rages in Cameroon' dated 29 February 2008. http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/7268861.stm
- BBC News 'Cameroon head blames opposition' dated 28 February 2008. http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/7267731.stm

Performance Directorate
11 July 2008