

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	330
Land:	Cameroun
Kilde:	EUAA
Titel:	Treatment of healthcare workers by the state in Northwest and Southwest (Anglophone) regions, including whether healthcare workers are perceived as part of separatist groups by the state
Udgivet:	17. november 2023
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	21. marts 2024



COI QUERY

Country of Origin	CAMEROON
Title	Treatment of healthcare workers by the state in Northwest and Southwest (Anglophone) regions, including whether healthcare workers are perceived as part of separatist groups by the state
Reference period	January 2021 to 16 November 2023
Topic(s)	1. Overview of the situation of healthcare workers in the Northwest and Southwest (Anglophone) regions 2. Treatment on healthcare workers by the state 3. Whether healthcare workers are perceived as part of separatist groups by the state
Date of completion	17 November 2023
Query Code	Q62-2023
Contributing EU+ COI units (if applicable)	N/A

Disclaimer

This response to a COI query has been elaborated according to the [EUAA COI Report Methodology](#) and [EUAA Writing and Referencing Guide](#).

Query responses are produced in response to COI information requests received from asylum authorities within EU+ countries or initiated by EUAA based on COI information needs. Query responses are produced within a limited time period, typically within 5 to 10 days. Within these time constraints, the information provided in this response has been researched, evaluated and processed with utmost care.

All sources used are referenced and cited in the bibliography section. A quality review has been performed in line with the above mentioned COI methodology. This document does not claim to be exhaustive or conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to international protection. If a certain event, person or organisation is not mentioned in the report, this does not mean that the event has not taken place or that the person or organisation does not exist. Terminology used should not be regarded as indicative of a particular legal position.

The information in the response does not necessarily reflect the opinion of EUAA and makes no political statement whatsoever. The target audience is caseworkers, COI researchers, policy makers, and decision-making authorities. Any event taking place after the reference period is not included in this query response.

COI QUERY RESPONSE – Cameroon

Treatment of healthcare workers by the state in Northwest and Southwest (Anglophone) regions, including whether healthcare workers are perceived as part of separatist groups by the state

1. Overview of the situation of healthcare workers in the Northwest and Southwest (Anglophone) regions

The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), in a report covering between the 1st of January to the 30th of June 2023, described that apart from the ‘recent disease outbreaks’, ‘frequent attacks on medical personnel and facilities have made effective healthcare delivery even more challenging’, whilst Insecurity Insight in June 2023, described that the violence has ‘compromised’ access to health care in Cameroon.² The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in a May 2023 report further described that ‘insecurity prompted some health-care personnel to leave, generating heavier loads for remaining staff and reducing or cutting off community-based services’.³

Additional information on accessibility to healthcare in the Southwest region can be found in the EUAA Query response [Impact of the conflict on availability and accessibility of healthcare facilities in the Southwest region](#), published on 14 November 2023.

Additional information on the security situation in the Anglophone regions can be found in the EUAA Query response on the [Security situation in the Far North, Northwest and Southwest regions](#), published on 11 October 2023.

2. Treatment on healthcare workers by the state

The 2022 annual country report by the US Department of State (USDOS) described that ‘there were reports of violence directed against health workers and institutions and of the use of firearms around health facilities by members of security forces and armed separatists’.⁴ The Human Rights Watch (HRW) annual report covering 2021 affirmed that, ‘humanitarian access was restricted in the Anglophone regions and humanitarian workers have been victims of attacks by both government forces and armed groups’.⁵

¹ UNICEF, Humanitarian Situation Report No. 2 - Reporting Period 1 January to 30 June 2023, 22 August 2023, [url](#), p. 3

² Insecurity Insight, Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition, Cameroon: Violence Against Health Care in Conflict 2022, 28 June 2023, [url](#), p. 8

³ UNSC, Protection of civilians in armed conflict; Report of the Secretary-General, 12 May 2023, [url](#), p. 5

⁴ USDOS, 2022 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Cameroon, 20 March 2023, [url](#), p. 20

⁵ HRW, World Report 2022 - Cameroon, 13 January 2022, [url](#)

According to a May 2023 report by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), ‘health care facilities, supplies and workers also continued to be targeted in the North-West and South-West, while civilians in need of medical services continued to be affected by attacks and movement restrictions’. The source added that, in 2022, three healthcare workers were killed. It was reported that ambulances were caught in crossfire, were being searched by state security forces or that non-state armed groups were carjacking ambulances with patients and medical staff. Moreover, ‘reports of hospitals and health posts being occupied by security forces, armed incursions by security forces into hospitals, abductions of health workers by NSAGs, attacks and threats to health personnel as well as the detention of health workers continue to be registered on a regular basis’.⁶

UNOCHA noted that in 2022 the number of incidents on healthcare tripled in comparison to 2021.⁷ According to a report covering 2022 by the Insecurity Insight and Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition⁸, in Cameroon there were 31 incidents of violence against or obstruction of healthcare in 2022 while there were 10 in 2021. The source added that, in 2022, at least 35 healthcare workers were kidnapped, 12 arrested and six killed.⁹ From January to July 2023, at least 12 incidents of violence against or obstruction of healthcare were reported in the Northwest and Southwest regions. The incidents included threats, violence, and kidnappings conducted by ‘various parties’.¹⁰

3. Whether healthcare workers are perceived as part of separatist groups by the state

According to a February 2023 report by Cedoca, defence and security forces have carried out ‘a campaign of reprisals’ against individuals they believe support armed fighters. Humanitarian workers, and health workers were included in categories particularly targeted by violence.¹¹

A 2022 article by On Policy Magazine, a Cameroonian news journal, also illustrated that ‘health workers in high-risk areas are caught between the military and armed separatist groups who pressure them not to treat the opposing party. The inability to comply with the demands of either party has led to the harassment of health workers’.¹²

A report covering 2022 jointly written by Insecurity Insight and Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition indicated that at least 12 health workers were arrested by police and the Cameroonian Armed Forces (CAF) in 2022.¹³ More specifically, five were arrested in the

⁶ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview 2023 (March 2023), 11 May 2023, [url](#), pp. 14-15

⁷ UNOCHA, Cameroon: Situation Report, 26 October 2023, [url](#), p. 2

⁸ This is a group of international nongovernmental organizations working to raise awareness of the problem of attacks on health workers. Source: Insecurity Insight, Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition, Cameroon: Violence Against Health Care in Conflict 2022, 28 June 2023, [url](#), p. 10

⁹ Insecurity Insight, Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition, Cameroon: Violence Against Health Care in Conflict 2022, 28 June 2023, [url](#), pp. 3-4

¹⁰ UNOCHA, Cameroon: Situation Report, 26 October 2023, [url](#), p. 2

¹¹ Belgium, Cedoca, COI Focus: Régions anglophones : situation sécuritaire 20 February 2023, [url](#), p. 37

¹² On Policy Magazine, Implications of Armed Conflict on Healthcare Interventions in Cameroon, 8 March 2022, [url](#)

¹³ Insecurity Insight, Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition, Cameroon: Violence Against Health Care in Conflict 2022, 28 June 2023, [url](#), p. 7

Northwest region in September, and seven international non-governmental organization health workers were arrested in the Southwest region in April and June. Four of the 12 health workers arrested in April were accused of complicity with secessionists.¹⁴ According to the same source, in September 2022, Banso Baptist Hospital in Kumbo, Northwest region, ‘was subjected to threats and violence from CAF forces and separatists, who both accused the hospital of collaborating with the other group on four occasions’.¹⁵ In September 2022, members of the CAF raided the hospital and arrested two health workers and one patient with the accusation of having links to the separatists.¹⁶

The same report further described that the Banso Baptist hospital ‘was warned that it would face “serious consequences” if members of the Ambazonian separatist movement were not turned over to the security forces’.¹⁷ The Executive President of the Cameroonian Baptist Convention, that is responsible for the hospital, stated that ‘we are trapped between two forces [...] we are accused by the one for collaborating with the other, and on the other hand we are accused by the other for betrayal to the one’.¹⁸ A September 2022 article by Voice of America (VOA) News, which also discussed the Banso Baptist hospital, affirmed that ‘Cameroonian authorities have always accused aid groups of helping separatists in the country’s English-speaking western regions’; in which, the hospital has ‘strongly denied, saying its mission is only to save lives’.¹⁹

USDOS indicated that, in 2022, a chief medical officer was arrested in the Northwest region by members of the army for allegedly providing medical services to injured combatants of separatist groups. The Cameroonian Human Rights Commission confirmed the arrest and, according to the report, the chief medical officer was brought to a military tribunal in August 2022. As of December 2022, the chief medical officer remained detained, and the investigation was still ongoing.²⁰ Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by EUAA within the time constraints.

Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) informed that, in December 2022, five of its staff members had been acquitted in Cameroon military tribunal from accusation of complicity with secessionist groups. The international medical organisation stated that the five staff members were arrested in separate incidents between 2021 and 2022 in the southwest region. As a result of these arrests, in May 2022, MSF decided to suspend its medical activities in the southwest region. Since 2020, the Cameroonian authorities suspended MSF

¹⁴ Insecurity Insight, Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition, Cameroon: Violence Against Health Care in Conflict 2022, 28 June 2023, [url](#), p. 7

¹⁵ Insecurity Insight, Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition, Cameroon: Violence Against Health Care in Conflict 2022, 28 June 2023, [url](#), p. 4

¹⁶ Insecurity Insight, Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition, Cameroon: Violence Against Health Care in Conflict 2022, 28 June 2023, [url](#), p. 4

¹⁷ Insecurity Insight, Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition, Cameroon: Violence Against Health Care in Conflict 2022, 28 June 2023, [url](#), p. 4

¹⁸ Insecurity Insight, Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition, Cameroon: Violence Against Health Care in Conflict 2022, 28 June 2023, [url](#), p. 6

¹⁹ VoA News, Cameroon’s Anglophone Hospital Workers Say They’re Victims of Both Military and Separatist Brutality, 27 September 2022, [url](#)

²⁰ USDOS, 2022 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Cameroon, 20 March 2023, [url](#), pp. 4-5



activities in the northwest region accusing some MSF staff members of supporting local armed groups. The suspension had not been lifted as of May 2023.²¹

²¹ MSF, Cameroon: All MSF staff acquitted in military tribunal, 2 May 2023, [url](#)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Belgium, Cedoca, COI Focus: Régions anglophones : situation sécuritaire [Anglophone Region : Security Situation], 20 February 2023, https://www.cgvs.be/sites/default/files/rapporten/coi_focus_cameroun_regions_anglophones_situation_securitaire_20230220.pdf, accessed 10 November 2023

HRW (Human rights Watch), World Report 2022 - Cameroon, 13 January 2022, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2022/country-chapters/cameroon>, accessed 14 November 2023

Insecurity Insight, Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition, Cameroon: Violence Against Health Care in Conflict 2022, 28 June 2023, available at: <https://reliefweb.int/attachments/0443d169-7d44-420b-abc7-8332450f26b5/2022-SHCC-Cameroon.pdf>, accessed 10 November 2023

MSF (Medecins sans frontieres), Cameroon: All MSF staff acquitted in military tribunal, 2 May 2023, <https://www.doctorswithoutborders.ca/cameroon-all-msf-staff-acquitted-in-military-tribunal/>, accessed 10 November 2023

On Policy Magazine, Implications of Armed Conflict on Healthcare Interventions in Cameroon, 8 March 2022, <https://onpolicy.org/implications-of-armed-conflict-on-healthcare-interventions-in-cameroon/>, accessed 14 November 2023

UNICEF (The United Nations Children's Fund), Humanitarian Situation Report No. 2 - Reporting Period 1 January to 30 June 2023, 22 August 2023, <https://www.unicef.org/media/144176/file/Cameroon-Humanitarian-SitRepMid-Year-2023.pdf>, accessed 10 November 2023

UNOCHA (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), Cameroon Humanitarian Needs Overview 2023 (March 2023), 11 May 2023, available at: https://reliefweb.int/attachments/fb6e7f31-3931-463a-b9d6-5d243e9f3071/CMR_HNO_2023_v7_20230405.pdf, accessed 10 November 2023

UNOCHA (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), Cameroon: Situation Report, 26 October 2023, <https://www.unocha.org/attachments/4cace29e-c28c-4a18-a205-7834a5a63f88/Situation%20Report%20-%20Cameroon%20-%202023Oct%202023.pdf>, accessed 10 November 2023

UNSC (United Nations Security Council), Protection of civilians in armed conflict; Report of the Secretary-General, [S/2023/345], 12 May 2023, <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/SG%20report.pdf>, accessed 10 November 2023

USDOS (US Department of State), 2022 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Cameroon, 20 March 2023, https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/415610_CAMEROON-2022-HUMAN-RIGHTS-REPORT.pdf, accessed 10 November 2023

VoA (Voice of America) News, Cameroon's Anglophone Hospital Workers Say They're Victims of Both Military and Separatist Brutality, 27 September 2022, <https://www.voanews.com/a/cameroon-s-anglophone-hospital-workers-say-they-re-victims-of-both-military-and-separatist-brutality/6765075.html>, accessed 16 November 2023

ADDITIONAL SOURCES CONSULTED

Africa News; Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD); Asylum Research Center (ARC); Canada - Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRB); ECOLnet; European Union – EUAA COI Portal; Refworld; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)