Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis at the Crossroads

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Translation from French

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Executive Summary

The Anglophones of Cameroon, 20 per cent of the population, feel marginalised. Their frustrations surfaced dramatically at the end of 2016 when a series of sectoral grievances morphed into political demands, leading to strikes and riots. The movement grew to the point where the government's repressive approach was no longer sufficient to calm the situation, forcing it to negotiate with Anglophone trade unions and make some concessions. Popular mobilisation is now weakening, but the majority of Anglophones are far from happy. Having lived through three months with no internet, six months of general strikes and one school year lost, many are now demanding federalism or secession. Ahead of presidential elections next year, the resurgence of the Anglophone problem could bring instability. The government, with the support of the international community, should quickly take measures to calm the situation, with the aim of rebuilding trust and getting back to dialogue.

Generally little understood by Francophones, the Anglophone problem dates back to the independence period. A poorly conducted re-unification, based on centralisation and assimilation, has led the Anglophone minority to feel politically and economically marginalised, and that their cultural difference are ignored.

The current crisis is a particularly worrying resurgence of an old problem. Never before has tension around the Anglophone issue been so acute. The mobilisation of lawyers, teachers and students starting in October 2016, ignored then put down by the government, has revived identity-based movements which date back to the 1970s. These movements are demanding a return to the federal model that existed from 1961 to 1972. Trust between Anglophone activists and the government has been undermined by the arrest of the movement's leading figures and the cutting of the internet, both in January. Since then, the two Anglophone regions have lived through general strikes, school boycotts and sporadic violence.

Small secessionist groups have emerged since January. They are taking advantage of the situation to radicalise the population with support from part of the Anglophone diaspora. While the risk of partition of the country is low, the risk of a resurgence of the problem in the form of armed violence is high, as some groups are now advocating that approach.

The government has taken several measures since March – creating a National Commission for Bilingualism and Multiculturalism; creating new benches for Common Law at the Supreme Court and new departments at the National School of Administration and Magistracy; recruiting Anglophone magistrates and 1,000 bilingual teachers; and turning the internet back on after a 92-day cut. But the leaders of the Anglophone movement have seen these measures as too little too late.

International reaction has been muted, but has nevertheless pushed the government to adopt the measures described above. The regime in Yaoundé seems more sensitive to international than to national pressure. Without firm, persistent and coordinated pressure from its international partners, it is unlikely that the government will seek lasting solutions.

The Anglophone crisis is in part a classic problem of a minority, which has swung between a desire for integration and a desire for autonomy, and in part a more

structural governance problem. It shows the limits of centralised national power and the ineffectiveness of the decentralisation program started in 1996. The weak legitimacy of most of the Anglophone elites in their region, under-development, tensions between generations, and patrimonialism are ills common to the whole country. But the combination of bad governance and an identity issue could be particularly tough to resolve.

Dealing with the Anglophone problem requires a firmer international reaction and to rebuild trust through coherent measures that respond to the sectoral demands of striking teachers and lawyers. There is some urgency: the crisis risks undermining the approaching elections. In that context, several steps should be taken without delay:

- The president of the republic should publicly recognise the problem and speak out to calm tensions.
- The leaders of the Anglophone movement should be provisionally released.
- Members of the security forces who have committed abuses should be sanctioned.
- The government should quickly put in place the measures announced in March 2017, and the 21 points agreed on with unions in January.
- The government and senior administration should be re-organised to better reflect the demographic, political and historical importance of the Anglophones, and to include younger and more legitimate members of the Anglophones community.
- The National Commission on Bilingualism and multiculturalism should be restructured to include an equal number of Anglophones as Francophones, to guarantee the independence of its members and to give it powers to impose sanctions.
- The government should desist from criminalising the political debate on Anglophone Cameroon, including on federalism, in particular by ceasing to use the anti-terrorism law for political ends and by considering recourse to a third party (the church or international partner) as a mediator between the government and Anglophone organisations.

In the longer term, Cameroon must undertake institutional reforms to remedy the deeper problems of which the Anglophone issue is the symptom. In particular, decentralisation laws should be rigorously applied, and improved, to reduce the powers of officials nominated by Yaoundé, create regional councils, and better distribute financial resources and powers. Finally, it is important to take legal measures specific to Anglophone regions in the areas of education, justice and culture.

Cameroon, facing Boko Haram in the Far North and militia from the Central African Republic in the East, needs to avoid another potentially destabilising front opening up. If the Anglophone problem got worse it would disrupt the presidential and parliamentary elections scheduled for 2018. Above all, it could spark off further demands throughout the country and lead to a wider political crisis.

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Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis at the Crossroads

I. Introduction

Since October 2016, protests around sectoral demands have degenerated into a political crisis in Cameroon's Anglophone regions. This crisis has led to the re-emergence of the Anglophone question and highlighted the limits of the Cameroonian governance model, based on centralisation and co-optation of elites.[1]

The Anglophone area consists of two of the country's ten regions, the Northwest and the Southwest. It covers 16,364 sq km of the country's total area of 475,442 sq km and has about 5 million of Cameroon's 24 million inhabitants. It is the stronghold of the main opposition party, the Social Democratic Front (SDF) and plays an important role in the economy, especially its dynamic agricultural and commercial sectors. Most of Cameroon's oil, which accounts for one twelfth of the country's gross domestic product (GDP), is located off the coast of the Anglophone region.[2]

The politicisation of the crisis and the radicalisation of its protagonists is mainly due to the government's response (denial, disregard, intimidation and repression), the diminishing trust between the Anglophone population and the government and the exploitation of the identity question by political actors who have aggravated the population's resentment to the point that probably most Anglophones now see a return to federalism or even secession as the only feasible ways out of the crisis.[3]

What is the Anglophone crisis about? Who are the protagonists? How is it perceived by Francophones? What is the government's response? How has the international community reacted? What role are the Anglophone diaspora and religious actors playing? In order to reply to these questions, Crisis Group has relied on documentary research and conducted around a hundred interviews during several visits to the Anglophone regions, Yaoundé and Douala, between December 2016 and May 2017. The report analyses the structural factors that caused the crisis in the Anglophone regions, the strategies and motivations of the actors, and the political and economic consequences. It formulates recommendations aimed at breaking the deadlock and rebuilding trust, with a view to facilitating a genuine dialogue and identifying sustainable solutions.

[1] See Crisis Group Africa Report N°160, *Cameroon: Fragile State?*, 25 May 2010; Piet Konings, Francis Bernard Nyamnjoh, *Negotiating an Anglophone Identity* (Leiden, 2003).

[2] The oil is in national waters, but Anglophone activists stress that if Anglophone Cameroon were independent, the oil would belong to it, and even in a federal system, a redistribution of profits to the benefit of the region could be on the agenda. "Annuaire statistique du Cameroun", Institut national de la statistique (INS), 2015, p. 383.

[3] Almost all Crisis Group's Anglophone interlocutors support federalism or regional autonomy. A minority favours secession. Crisis Group interviews, Anglophone elite and population, Northwest and Southwest regions, 2016-2017.

II. The Roots of the Anglophone Problem: Colonial Legacy and Failure of the Centralised Model

A. *The Colonial Legacy*

The German government and the traditional Douala chiefs signed a treaty in July 1884, establishing a protectorate called Kamerun. Its territories were shared out after the German defeat at the end of the First World War. The League of Nations appointed France and the UK as joint trustees of Kamerun. The Anglophone problem and a number of other weaknesses in present-day Cameroon have their roots in the colonial period.

During the period of the mandate and the trusteeship, each colonial power shaped their territories in their own image.[4] This resulted in major differences in political culture. English was the official language in the territory under British administration. The justice system (Common Law), the education system, the currency and social norms followed the British model. The system of indirect rule allowed traditional chiefdoms to remain in place and promoted the emergence of a form of self-government to the extent that freedom of the press, political pluralism and democratic change in power existed in Anglophone Cameroon prior to independence. The territory was administered as though it were part of Nigeria and several members of British Cameroon's Anglophone elite were ministers in the Nigerian government in the 1950s.

In contrast, the Francophone territory was directly administered by France following the assimilationist model, although colonisers and the traditional elites also practised a form of indirect government, especially in the north of the country. French was spoken and France's social, legal and political norms shaped the centralist political system of successive regimes. Bogged down in a total war against the nationalist movement (*Union des populations du Cameroun* – UPC), which challenged French presence, the Francophone territory was less democratic.[5]

B. *Independences and Reunification: Different Dreams in the Same Bed*

The process leading to the reunification of the two Cameroons is at the heart of the Anglophone problem. The Francophone territory gained independence on 1 January 1960, becoming the Republic of Cameroon. The British territory comprised Southern Cameroons and Northern Cameroon. In the referendum held on 11 February 1961, Northern Cameroon chose to join Nigeria and Southern Cameroons chose to join the

[4] Although France and the UK treated Cameroon as a colony, it was legally in fact an administered territory. Article 22 of the League of Nations Covenant of 28 June 1919 states that the international "mandate" status applied to "colonies and territories" that, as a consequence of the war, had "ceased to be under the sovereignty of the States which formerly governed them" and that "are inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves". The regime of "trusteeship", introduced in 1945 by the newly created UN, granted more rights to former colonies and territories and was consistent with the UN's wish to gradually end colonisation.

[5] From 1955 to 1971, between 30,000 and 150,000 were killed in the war of independence in Cameroon and the insurrection that followed and hundreds of thousands of people were displaced. Thomas Deltombe, Manuel Domergue and Jacob Tatsitsa, *Kamerun! Une guerre cachée aux origines de la Françafrique, 1948-1971* (Paris, 2011); Meredith Teretta, *Nation of Outlaws, State of Violence. Nationalism, Grassfields Tradition, and State Building in Cameroon* (Athens, 2013).

Republic of Cameroon. Southern Cameroons became independent on 1 October 1961 when it joined the Republic of Cameroon.

At the time of the 1961 referendum, the political landscape in Southern Cameroons was already dynamic.[6] According to reputed historians, the majority of the population aspired to independence. But the UK and some developing countries were against it on the grounds that Southern Cameroons would not be economically viable and that it was best to avoid the creation of micro-states. They advocated a vote in favour of joining Nigeria. The UN therefore excluded the independence option and limited the referendum to a choice between joining Nigeria and reunification with the Republic of Cameroon.

The main figures among the Anglophone political elites, Emmanuel Mbella Lifafa Endeley, John Ngu Foncha, Solomon Tandeng Muna and Agustine Ngom Jua, pleaded at the UN for an independent state of Southern Cameroons, or alternatively for temporary independence during which time it would negotiate the terms of unification from a better position. The UN's rejection of the independence option left two opposing camps during the referendum. Endeley, the leader of the Kamerun National Congress (KNC), campaigned in favour of joining Nigeria. Foncha, the leader of the Kamerun National Democratic Party (KNDP), who left the KNC in 1955, Muna and Jua campaigned in favour of reunification with the Republic of Cameroon. Influenced by these prominent political leaders and by a certain fear of being absorbed by the Nigerian giant, the vote went in favour of reunification.[7]

Representatives of Southern Cameroons and the president of the Republic of Cameroon, Amadou Ahidjo, met at Foumban in the west of Francophone territory from 17 until 21 July 1961 to negotiate the terms of reunification. Even today, the failure to keep the promises made at the Foumban conference, which did not produce a written agreement, is among the grievances of Anglophone militants. The Anglophone representatives thought they were participating in a constituent assembly that would draft a constitution guaranteeing an egalitarian federalism and a large degree of autonomy to federated states,[8] but Ahidjo imposed a ready-made constitution that gave broad powers to the executive of the federal state to the detriment of the two federated states (West Cameroon and East Cameroon).[9] The Anglophones, who were in a weak position, accepted Ahidjo's constitution and only obtained a blocking minority by way of concession.[10]

The National Assembly of the Republic of Cameroon approved the federal constitution in August 1961 and Ahidjo promulgated it on 1 September, while Southern

[6] Joseph Ebune, *The Growth of Political Parties in Southern Cameroons 1916-1960* (Yaoundé, 1992).
[7] Anthony Ndi, *Southern West Cameroon Revisited 1950-1972* (Buea, 2014).
[8] Crisis Group interviews, university academics and researchers, Buea and Limbé, March 2017. Piet Konings, "The Anglophone Problem in Cameroon", *The Journal of Modern and African Studies*, vol. 35, no. 2 (1997), pp. 207-229.
[9] The Anglophone territory was called West Cameroon and the Francophone territory was called East Cameroon. The federal president appointed the prime ministers of the federated states. However, in the Anglophone part, until 1968, this appointment only validated the prior election of the prime minister by the parliament of West Cameroon.
[10] The blocking minority means that laws applying to the two federations can only be adopted by the federal assembly if a majority of deputies in both federated states vote for them. Article 47 of the constitution of 1 September 1961.

Cameroons was still under British trusteeship. The constitutional process for reunification and abandonment by the British left Anglophones with the impression of having been deceived by the Francophones, and also explains the bitterness of Anglophone militants toward the UK.[11]

C. *The Centralist Model and the Emergence of Anglophone Grievances*

Since 1961, unification and centralisation have been the political dogmas of the Ahidjo (1960-1982) and Paul Biya (1982-) regimes. After reunification on 1 October 1961, Cameroon became a federal republic, but in practice inherited a shaky federalism with an unequal distribution of power between the two federated states in the federal assembly and in the government.

Amadou Ahidjo was the federal president and John Ngu Foncha was both vice president of the country and prime minister of West Cameroon, in line with the constitutional provision according to which the vice president must be from West Cameroon if the federal president comes from East Cameroon, and vice versa. At the time of reunification, Ahidjo already had a near political monopoly in East Cameroon. Only West Cameroon represented a serious obstacle to his hegemonic ambitions. In 1961, he set about bringing West Cameroon under control through a mixture of repression and exploitation of divisions among Anglophones.[12] At the federal level, despite the constitutional guarantee that English and French would both be official languages, French was the administration's language of preference.

On 20 October 1961, Ahidjo signed a decree reorganising federal territory into six administrative regions, including West Cameroon, and appointed a federal inspector for each region, who was to report to the federal president. That provoked discontent among Anglophones, because West Cameroon could not at the same time be a federated state according to the constitution and an administrative region by decree. The federal inspector had more power than the elected prime minister of West Cameroon and showed it on a daily basis by humiliating members of the federated government and parliament.[13]

In 1962, Ahidjo signed several orders limiting public freedoms. With the war against the UPC still at its height in East Cameroon, the arbitrary arrest and detention of opponents and trade unionists accused of subversion became common. Although these arrests took place mainly in the Francophone part of the country, Anglophone leaders became concerned about the repressive direction that the federal executive

[11] Carlson Anyangwe, *Betrayal of Too Trusting a People. The UN, the UK and the Trust Territory of the Southern Cameroons* (Buea, 2009).

[12] Jean-François Bayart, *L'Etat au Cameroun* (Paris, 1985); Nicodemus Fru Awasom, "Anglo-saxonism and Gallicism in Nation Building in Africa: The Case of Bilingual Cameroon and the Senegambia Confederation in Historical and Contemporary Perspective", *Afrika Zamani*, nos. 11 and 12 (2003-2004), pp. 86-118.

[13] Gendarmes under the authority of the federal inspector often set up road checks or summoned members of the West Cameroon government and parliament simply to affirm their power. Konings, Nyamnjoh, *Negotiating an Anglophone Identity*, op. cit., p. 53. "Rectification of certain matters tending to hinder the smooth and effective functioning of the federal Republic", secret letter from John Ngu Foncha to Amadou Ahidjo, 4 October 1962.

was taking.[14] Other measures, such as the introduction of driving on the right-hand side of the road, the imposition of the metric system and the FCFA as currency took place during the 1960s. The change in currency entailed a reduction in the purchasing power of the Anglophone population by at least 10 per cent. Ahidjo also demanded that West Cameroon cut all links with the UK with the result that it lost several export duty advantages afforded to Commonwealth countries.[15]

The federated states did not have financial autonomy and depended on grants from the federal state. Understanding where the real power was located, the Anglophone elites competed with each other for positions in the federal government, spending more time trying to please Ahidjo than defending the Anglophone population. Ahidjo took advantage and manipulated the rivalries among the elites and the ethnic and cultural divisions between Grassfields in the north, which had cultural and linguistic links with the Bamilékés of the west Francophone region, and the Sawa in the south, who had cultural and linguistic links with the Francophone coast.[16] The result was political chaos in West Cameroon, including a split between Foncha and Muna, who left the Kamerun National Democratic Party (KNDP) in 1965 to form the Cameroon United Congress (CUC).[17]

In 1965, in order to further weaken Foncha, who he believed to be less accommodating on the Anglophone question, Ahidjo tried to use his constitutional powers to appoint Muna as prime minister rather than Ngom Jua, Foncha's heir apparent in the KNDP, the majority party in the West Cameroon parliament. He was unsuccessful in this because of strong opposition from the federated parliament. But one year later, taking advantage of divisions among the Anglophones, Ahidjo called for the creation of a single party in the two Cameroons, in the name of national unity. Strengthened by the support of some Anglophone leaders, such as Endeley and Muna, who saw an opportunity to dethrone Foncha, he succeeded in his objective. The Cameroon National Union (CNU) was formed in 1966 and the other parties were dissolved. Foncha, Jua and Bernard Fonlon (assistant general secretary at the presidency) were initially opposed but changed their views for fear of losing their positions in the federal government. The single party resulted in the Anglophones losing all their institutional leverage to plead their cause. In 1968, Ahidjo was able to appoint his new ally, Muna, as prime minister, replacing Jua.

Once the single party was formed, Ahidjo intensified centralisation, going so far as to suppress federalism on 20 May 1972, when Cameroon became the United Republic of Cameroon, following a referendum. Anglophones continued to challenge the legality of this change on the grounds that the 1961 constitution did not provide for any alteration in the form of state and stipulated that only parliament could

[14] Crisis Group interviews, academics, Buea, March 2017.

[15] This reduction was in part due to the exchange rate imposed by Ahidjo, who set it at £1 to FCFA692, even though £1 was in fact worth FCFA800. Crisis Group interviews, members of the Commission for Bilingualism and Multiculturalism, Yaoundé and Buea, March 2017; confidential letter from Foncha to Ahidjo, 14 September 1963, seen by Crisis Group.

[16] Rivalries between the two regions go back a long way. Natives of the Southwest, such as the Bakweris, feel they have been invaded and economically and politically marginalised by people from the Northwest who settled there from the 1960s onwards.

[17] Martin Zachary Njeuma, "Reunification and Political Opportunity in the Making of Cameroon's Independence", *Paideuma*, no. 41 (1995), pp. 27-37.

amend the constitution.[18] Anglophone militants also consider that the referendum should not have taken place throughout the country and should have been limited to West Cameroon, which had the most to lose. Finally, they claim that it was not possible to hold a free and transparent referendum in the context of the time and that the ballot was marred by serious irregularities.[19]

It was also in 1972 that Anglophones really began to challenge their marginalisation. At the CNU National Congress in 1972, Bernard Fonlon publicly criticised the creation of the unitary republic. Other prominent Anglophones, such as Albert Mukong and Gorji Dinka were also fiercely opposed. Foncha and Jua wrote privately to Ahidjo and expressed their opposition in the official media.[20]

When Paul Biya succeeded Ahidjo in November 1982, he further centralised power. On 22 August 1983, he divided the Anglophone region into two provinces: Northwest and Southwest. In 1984, he changed the country's official name to the Republic of Cameroon (the name of the former Francophone territory) and removed the second star from the flag, which represented the Anglophone part of the country.

Anglophones formed movements and associations to resist their assimilation. In 1994, they protested in vain when the government, under pressure from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), announced the privatisation of the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC), which played a major economic and social role in the Anglophone part of the country. In that same year, the government's move to standardise the Anglophone and Francophone education systems provoked strong resistance from teachers' unions and the parents of pupils and it finally had to create an independent General Certificate of Education (GCE) Board by presidential decree.

Unification left Anglophones with a sense that their territory was in economic decline, because it entailed the centralisation and/or dismantling of West Cameroon's economic structures, such as the West Cameroon Marketing Board, the Cameroon Bank and Powercam, as well as the abandonment of several projects, including the port of Limbé, and airports at Bamenda and Tiko, with investments in the Francophone part of the country winning out.[21]

In particular, unification left the impression of a democratic setback, cultural assimilation and a downgrading of political status.[22] Many Anglophones are convinced that the Francophone part of the country followed a strategy to marginalise Southern Cameroons and are still not sufficiently aware of the disastrous impact the economic crisis of the 1980s also had on several Francophone regions. When the multiparty

[18] Article 47 of the constitution of 1 September 1961. Some observers believe that Ahidjo decided to hold a referendum to avoid Anglophone parliamentarians using the blocking minority mechanism to hold up legislation. The date of 20 May became Cameroon's main national day of celebration. Crisis Group interviews, Bamenda University teachers, Bamenda, April 2017. Mufor Atanga, *The Anglophone Cameroon Predicament* (Buea, 2011); Martin Ayong Ayim (eds), *Former British Southern Cameroons: Journey Towards a Complete Decolonization, Independence, and Sovereignty* (Bloomington, 2008).

[19] Crisis Group interviews, members of Southern Cameroons National Council, Bamenda, April 2017.

[20] Konings, Nyamnjoh, *Negotiating an Anglophone Identity*, op. cit.

[21] Crisis Group interviews, academics, Buea and Bamenda, March-April 2017.

[22] Before 1972, the second most senior government official was Anglophone, but the Anglophone prime minister is now the fourth or fifth most senior official after the president of the Senate, the president of the National Assembly and the president of the yet to be created Constitutional Council.

system was restored in the 1990s, the Anglophones seized the opportunity to make their grievances heard. On 26 May 1990, the Social Democratic Front, a new pro-federalism opposition party, with a national vocation but with a strong contingent of Anglophones, was formed in Bamenda. It gained ground in the Anglophone part of the country before extending its influence into Francophone provinces. It then participated in the October 1992 presidential elections and came close to winning it.[23]

With the prospect of a review of the constitution to adapt it to the multiparty system, the Anglophones organised the All Anglophone Conference (AAC) in 1993 and called for a return to federalism.[24] The Consultative Committee for Review of the Constitution rejected this option in favour of decentralisation. Meanwhile, after resigning in 1990 from the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM), the name adopted by the single party in 1985, Foncha and Muna, yesterday's rivals, resigned from the consultative committee in 1994 and openly criticised the assimilation of Anglophones.[25] In that same year, a second All Anglophone Conference (AAC2) was organised in Bamenda and some of the participants called for a two-state federal system or secession.

During this period, Muna and Foncha launched diplomatic offensives at the UN to demand independence for Southern Cameroons. The position of the Social Democratic Front, which rejected secession and proposed, in the context of Francophone opposition to a two-state federal system, a four-state federal system, was judged to be ambiguous by some Anglophone militants, who in 1995, formed movements calling for two-state federalism or secession:[26] the most well-known was the Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC), the youth wing of which, Southern Cameroons Youth League (SCYL), resorted to low-intensity violence. Since 1996, the SCNC has taken further diplomatic initiatives at the UN, the African Court of Banjul, the Commonwealth and national embassies.

After the golden age of the 1990s, dissent weakened and the focus switched to the Anglophone diaspora's advocacy in the international community and the creation of an Anglophone consciousness through the education system, writings of Anglophone intellectuals, the churches, associations and the local media. However, SCNC militants continued to organise protests in the Anglophone regions every 1 October and spectacular actions such as the proclamation of independence by the Ambazonia Republic on radio Buea in 1999 and in 2009. Despite the emergence of Anglophone

[23] In 1992, the CPDM obtained 39 per cent, the SDF 37 per cent, the National Union for Democracy and Progress (NUDP) 19 per cent and the Cameroon Democratic Union (CDU) 3.6 per cent. The SDF believes it was robbed of victory and many observers said that the votes for the CPDM and the SDF were inverted. Crisis Group interviews, Ni John Fru Ndi and academics, Yaoundé, Douala and Bamenda, March-April 2017.

[24] Buea Declaration, AAC, 1993.

[25] Foncha, "Lettre de démission du RDPC", 9 June 1990; Muna, "Lettre de démission du Comité consultatif constitutionnel", May 1994.

[26] The other movements were the Cameroon Anglophone Movement (CAM), the Free West Cameroon Movement (FWM), the Southern Cameroons Restoration Movement (SCRM) and the Ambazonia Movement. In 1999, some secessionist militants replaced the name of Southern Cameroons with Ambazonia Republic, derived from the name given by the Portuguese to the region's coast, Ambas Bay, in order to get rid of any reference to Cameroon. Group interviews, SCNC militants, Bamenda, April 2017.

movements, centralisation continued and Anglophones lost even more political strength at the national level. In 2017, there was only one Anglophone among 36 ministers with portfolio.

The roots of the Anglophone problem lie in a badly-organised reunification that was based on centralisation and assimilation, and in economic and administrative marginalisation.[27] Personal and ethnic ambitions and rivalries among the elites did not help matters. They have not always been able to present a common front to defend an increasingly heterogeneous Anglophone cause. Since the 2000s, the Anglophone question has deeply divided society. It finds expression in the mutually negative perceptions of the Anglophone and Francophone populations and the occasional reciprocal stigmatisation.[28] The current crisis represents an especially worrying resurgence of this old problem. Never before has the Anglophone question manifested itself with such intensity.

[27] The Anglophones believe that they are under-represented in the government administration and the security forces, because the entry examinations for the major schools and the police force are weighted in favour of Francophones. For example, in 2016, only two Anglophones were among the 138 admitted to the National Youth and Sports Centre (*Centre national de la jeunesse et des sports*, Cenajes) in Bamenda, which is, however, located in the Anglophone region. Crisis Group interviews, Anglophone students and teachers, Buea and Bamenda, April-May 2017.

[28] Crisis Group interviews, members of the elite and local population, Yaoundé, Douala, Bamenda, December 2016 and April 2017.

III. From Sectoral Mobilisations to the Resurgence of the Anglophone Problem

A. *From the Strike to the Crisis*

The current crisis began on 11 October 2016 in Bamenda when lawyers from the Northwest and the Southwest went on strike. Their demands, ignored until then by the justice ministry, were related to the justice system's failure to use the Common Law in the two regions. The lawyers demanded the translation into English of the Code of the Organisation for the Harmonisation of Business Law in Africa (OHADA) and other legal texts. They criticised the "francophonisation" of Common Law jurisdictions, with the appointment to the Anglophone zone of Francophone magistrates who did not understand English or the Common Law, and the appointment of notaries, to do work done by lawyers under the Common Law system.[29] A lack of trust in the government and the brutality of the security forces aggravated the problem and radicalised the public.

On 8 November 2016, the lawyers mobilised hundreds of people for a march in Bamenda and reiterated their demand for the full restoration of the Common Law system as it was at the time of the federal system. They added a demand for federalism.[30] While the march was taking place peacefully, gendarmes violently dispersed the crowd, manhandled some lawyers and arrested some motorbike taxi drivers ("Okada boys"). In response, some youth and Okada boys set up barricades at several crossroads and clashes between demonstrators and gendarmes left several wounded.[31]

On 21 November, teachers went on strike as well. They organised a rally against the lack of Anglophone teachers, the appointment of teachers who did not have a good command of English and the failure to respect the "Anglo-Saxon" character of schools and universities in the Anglophone zone.[32] At the rally, several thousand people joined teachers to express grievances ranging from the lack of roads in the North-

[29] OHADA was formed in 1993, has seventeen member states and is dominated by Francophone countries. The law forms part of one of very few areas that Yaoundé has until now avoided standardising. The first Francophone magistrates were appointed to posts in the Anglophone part in 2002 and this trend intensified in 2014. Common Law lawyers had asserted the same demands to the justice ministry in the past without obtaining any concessions; for example in May 2015, 700 Anglophone lawyers called for federalism and the creation of an autonomous Anglophone Bar. Crisis Group interviews, magistrate, Anglophone and Francophone lawyers, Douala, Buea and Bamenda, March-May 2017; and email correspondence, president of the Northwest Lawyer's Association (NOWELA), 29 May 2017.

[30] That includes the creation of an autonomous Anglophone Bar, the appointment of magistrates in the Anglophone zone by a federal parliament and the adoption of English as the only language in Common Law jurisdictions. Crisis Group interviews, Anglophone lawyers and local population, Bamenda, April 2017.

[31] Crisis Group interviews, CNDHL members, mayors, Bamenda, April 2017.

[32] These teachers understand Anglo-Saxon universities to mean universities where English is the only teaching language, that encourage the presence of student associations and teachers' unions and that respect and value university independence from central government, the election of rectors and faculty deans and the autonomy of faculties to recruit teachers. Crisis Group interviews, president of the national union of higher education teachers (*Syndicat national des enseignants du supérieur*, SYNES) and the Catholic University of Cameroon (CATUC), Buea-Bamenda, March-April 2017.

west to the marginalisation of Anglophones. The police and the army violently dispersed the demonstrators. Several people were severely beaten, dozens of others were arrested and at least two people were shot dead, according to a report by the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms the (*Commission nationale des droits de l'Homme et des libertés*, CNDHL).[33] Several other incidents took place in Bamenda at the end of November, leading to riots

On 28 November, the crisis, which had until then been limited to the Northwest, spread to the Southwest. Students at Buea University organised a peaceful march on the campus to call for the payment to students of the president's achievement bonus, denounce the banning of the University of Buea Student Union (UBSU) in 2012 and protest at the introduction of a penalty for late payment of education fees and the additional fee charged for accessing examination results.[34] The university rector's response was to call the police onto the campus. They brutally repressed the students and arrested some of them in their homes. Female students were beaten, undressed, rolled in the mud and one was allegedly raped.[35]

The most violent confrontation took place on 8 December in Bamenda when the CPDM tried to organise a pro-government rally in the Anglophone regions. The angry crowd prevented the rally from taking place. In violent clashes, four died, several were wounded and around 50 arrested. Demonstrators set fire to a police station, government buildings and vehicles.[36] The prime minister, the CPDM secretary general, the governor of the Northwest region and the national security adviser, who were due to attend the rally, had to hide all day in the governor's residence to escape the violence. The government responded to these demonstrations by militarising the region, causing the social climate to deteriorate even further.

The violence in Buea on 28 November and in Bamenda on 8 December aggravated the crisis and led to extensive media coverage. Images of abuses by the security forces quickly spread on the internet and on to international television channels. They had a decisive impact on public opinion and opened the Pandora's box of the Anglophone problem.

Further incidents took place in January and February 2017 in Bamenda and other towns such as Ndop. They led to riots that left at least three dead, while government buildings and vehicles were set on fire. From October 2016 to February 2017, at least nine people were killed and more sustained gunshot wounds. There were 82 arrests, including of journalists and lawyers, according to the communications minister and about 150 according to the SDF. They appeared before a military court under the terrorism law. The security forces also arrested and intimidated prominent Anglophones. For example, Paul Abine Ayah, a judge at the Supreme Court, was arrested

[33] Crisis Group has had access to this unpublished report, sent to the presidency of the Republic on 30 November 2016.

[34] They brandished placards with slogans against violence and the politicisation of their problems. But they believed that the entry examinations held by the major schools and even by Buea University and the higher education institutions located in the Anglophone zone discriminate in favour of Francophone students and against Anglophones. Crisis Group observations, Buea, November 2016; and interviews with students and officers of student associations, Buea and Bamenda, April-May 2017.

[35] Crisis Group interviews, humanitarian actors, students and human rights observers, Buea, March-May 2017.

[36] CNDHL report, February 2017.

without a warrant in March on charges of funding the Anglophone campaign. He has since remained behind bars.

B. *The Government and Anglophone Actors: Strategies and Motivations*

Faced with the Anglophone crisis, the government tried to maintain the status quo. However, realising there were limits to what it could achieve with repression, it began talks with the striking unions. At the end of November, the prime minister formed an ad hoc inter-ministerial committee charged with leading negotiations. It comprised four Francophone ministers and was placed under the supervision of the prime ministry's cabinet director. At the start of December, the lawyers and teachers formed the Cameroon Anglophone Civil Society Consortium (CACSC, "the Consortium"). It was initially formed by four lawyers' associations and several teachers trade unions, with Félix Khongo Agbor Balla as president, Fontem Neba as secretary general and Wilfred Tassang as treasurer.[37]

On 25-26 November, the prime minister unsuccessfully conducted a first mission to Bamenda to open negotiations. He arrived without concrete proposals, perhaps expecting that the promise of dialogue and his presence would be enough to end the strike. This visit was an early sign of the divisions within the Anglophone elites working within government institutions in Yaoundé. While the prime minister recognised the existence of the Anglophone problem and invited the trade unions for talks in Bamenda, other prominent Anglophones, such as the minister and permanent secretary at the National Security Council told the media in Yaoundé that there was no Anglophone problem. This inflamed opinion in the region, making the prime minister's mission impossible and, especially, confirming the Anglophone belief that the prime minister, a post occupied since 1996 by an Anglophone, had no real power.[38]

From December 2016 to January 2017, the ad hoc committee conducted several missions to Bamenda. The list of union demands increased from eleven to 25 between November and January but negotiations nearly reached an agreement, with the government saying it was ready to meet 21 of the 25 demands.[39] However, on 13 January, police abuses, against a backdrop of rumours, provoked riots in Bamenda and the negotiations collapsed. On 14 January, the Consortium cancelled a meeting with the committee, condemned the violence perpetrated by the security forces and declared a two-day Operation Ghost Town in the Northwest and the Southwest. The government responded by shutting down the internet in the two regions on 17 January, banning the Consortium and the SCNC and arresting Consortium leaders and several

[37] The ad hoc committee officially negotiated with the teachers' union rather than the Consortium, which included lawyers, although it discussed matters with the latter in private. Crisis Group interviews, Consortium members, Buea and Yaoundé prison, May 2017.

[38] These concerns were partly justified, because the executive is centred on the presidency and the general secretary of the presidency de facto occupies the role of prime minister. This is apparent on a daily basis in the form of irreverent remarks by ministers to the prime minister. Crisis Group interviews, Anglophone and Francophone academics, Yaoundé and Buea, December 2016, March 2017.

[39] These 21 demands were exclusively linked to the education sector. The other four covered issues such as the release of people arrested during the demonstrations, the adoption of an equitable five-year development plan and federalism. "Grève des enseignants Anglophones: le professeur Ghogomu met fin à sa mission", cameroon-info.net, 17 January 2017.

activists such as Mancho Bibixy, claiming that the Consortium had conditioned agreement on the introduction of federalism.

Crisis Group has gathered many witness statements, some contradictory, of the 13 January 2017 events, which marked a decisive break in attempts at dialogue. Some said that the security forces opened fire at point-blank range on motorbike taxis. Others said that Anglophone movement radicals tried to introduce the issue of secession into the debate, with the result that both sides hardened their positions.[40] Although these incidents contributed to the failure of negotiations, they were not the only reason. In fact, the tension in the two regions, the repression by the security forces and the radicalisation of public opinion had put Consortium leaders in a difficult position. They were forced to go beyond their own sectoral demands – especially as the 21 points accepted by the government only included the teachers' demands, not the lawyers' demands – and to deal more broadly with the Anglophone problem. According to a Consortium leader, "repression by the regime has opened a Pandora's box and the public has forced us to put the Southern Cameroons issue on the table".[41]

Negotiations were difficult because of the deep distrust between the government and representatives of the Anglophone community. The ad hoc committee did not inspire much confidence, because most of its members were Francophones. Consortium members did not believe that the government would keep its promise to meet 21 of its 25 demands. So they proposed federalism in order to guarantee implementation of reforms and achieve a more general solution. Meanwhile, the government believed that the trade unions had a hidden agenda involving secession and that this was why they continually added to their list of demands.[42]

Probably to avoid the crisis spreading to the Francophone part, the government brandished the spectre of secession by conflating Anglophone grievances and the division of the country. Some Francophone intellectuals said that federalism was only a step on the road to secession.[43] There were some indications, such as the positions taken during the negotiations and confirmed in several interviews, that some members of the regime in Yaoundé tried to strengthen the position of the more radical Anglophones with the aim of presenting the Anglophone contestation as a dangerous attempt to divide the country. The government also claimed there was a plot, presenting the Anglophone strike as an initiative funded by the diaspora and supported by groups who were trying to destabilise Cameroon.[44]

After the arrest of Consortium leaders on 17 January, continued school closures and an intensification of Operation Ghost Town, the government took measures in the justice and education sectors to try to calm the situation. In December 2016, it had already announced the recruitment of 1,000 bilingual teachers, a FCFA2 billion (€3 million) grant to private schools and the redeployment of Francophone teachers away from Anglophone regions. On 23 January 2017, the president of the Republic

[40] Crisis Group interviews, diplomats, Consortium members, government officials, Northwest and Southwest, 2017.
[41] Crisis Group interview, Consortium member, Buea, May 2017.
[42] Crisis Group interviews, senior justice ministry officials, mayors, Yaoundé, Buea and Bamenda, 2017.
[43] Crisis Group interviews, academics and researchers at the Paul Ango Ela Foundation, Yaoundé, March-May 2017.
[44] Crisis Group interviews, senior officials and officers, Yaoundé, December 2016, March 2017.

created a National Commission for Bilingualism and Multiculturalism.[45] But Anglophone militants criticised this as too little too late and regretted that nine of the commission's fifteen members were Francophones, that most of them belonged to the older generation and that several were members of the CPDM. The commission is handicapped by its remit, which gives it no power to impose punitive measures, and restricts it to preparing reports and advocating for bilingualism and multiculturalism. Some of its members have recognised this weakness.[46]

The government announced other measures on 30 March, including the creation of new benches for Common Law at the Supreme Court and new departments at the National School of Administration and Magistracy (Ecole nationale d'administration et de magistrature, ENAM), an increase in the number of English language teachers at ENAM, the recruitment of Anglophone magistrates, the creation of a Common Law department at Francophone universities and provisional authorisation for Anglophone lawyers to act as notaries in the Northwest and the Southwest regions.[47] On 20 April, the government turned the internet back on after a 92-day cut. Although these measures were a significant first step, they did not meet the concerns of the trade unions or resolve the political component of the Anglophone question.[48] They were made rather late in the day, when the public were already calling for the release of detainees and negotiations on constitutional reform with the aim of introducing federalism.[49]

Anglophones continued to take action. When the internet was cut, protesters used text messages and phone calls to organise protests. When it was restored they reverted to mainly using WhatsApp.[50] More recently, the campaign has nevertheless weakened, especially in the Southwest, partly because the economic consequences have become hard to bear for the public and also because of government pressure. New radical groups are using intimidation, threats and violence to maintain support for the movement. The public, elected representatives, parliamentarians and religious leaders regularly receive text messages and calls from Cameroon and abroad, informing them of Ghost Town days, now called Country Sundays. For example, a Francophone teacher at the University of Buea received eleven text messages and six telephone calls in a single day after ignoring a call to take part in Operation Ghost Town.[51] Country Sundays take place every Monday and every national holiday or commemoration day. Anyone not adhering to the movement faces harassment and threats.

Threats are sometimes carried out. Between January and June 2017, dozens of shops in markets at Bamenda, Buea and Limbé, about fifteen government buildings

[45] Decree 2017/013 of 23 January 2017 on the creation of the National Commission for Bilingualism and Multiculturalism.
[46] Crisis Group interviews, members of the Commission for Bilingualism, Yaoundé, Douala, Buea, 2017.
[47] "Revendications des Anglophones: la réponse du chef de l'Etat", *Cameroon Tribune*, 31 March 2017.
[48] Article by Scacuf, "Biya's common law measures: too little too late", cameroonjournal.com, 1 April 2017. Crisis Group interviews, Francophone and Anglophone law teachers, Buea University, 31 March 2017.
[49] Crisis Group interviews, Anglophone population, Northwest and Southwest, April-May 2017.
[50] Crisis Group interviews, Anglophone population, Northwest and Southwest, 2017.
[51] Many messages of this kind have come to the attention of Crisis Group. Crisis Group interviews, police officers, Buea, March-May 2017.

and vehicles and a dozen schools were set on fire for not observing Country Sundays.[52] These violent incidents have fuelled the government's strategy of demonising the Anglophone campaign, all the more so as exiled Consortium representatives distanced themselves late and rather timidly. The authorities and the security forces also used tough methods to break the movement, intimidating the public and printing companies that produced pamphlets, and threatening heads of schools and business owners with revoking their licences if they took part in the strikes. The security forces worked with telephone companies and money transfer agencies to identify and arrest the local contacts of secessionists in exile and block the transfer of funds from abroad to the Anglophone regions.

The two sides have made abundant use of propaganda. The government as well as Anglophone militants have circulated false information on the internet and in text messages and pamphlets.[53] In particular, the government has exploited the idea of false news to sow doubt and avoid responsibility for human rights violations by casting doubt on their veracity, even in confirmed cases.

The Anglophone diaspora did not initiate this crisis, contrary to previous challenges to the government. It only took a dominant role after the 17 January arrest of Consortium leaders.[54] Internet-based campaigns contributed to mounting public anger and increased the popularity of secessionist ideas. The diaspora helped to give the crisis a higher profile at the international level by organising demonstrations outside the parliaments of Western countries and through diplomatic initiatives, such as commissioning the American law firm Foley Hoag to call for the independence of Southern Cameroons. This crisis also marked a generational renewal within the Anglophone movement and the diaspora. The historic standard-bearers of the Anglophone question who were members of the SCNC, the Cameroon Anglophone Movement or the AAC were not centre stage. Militants of the 1990s from Cameroon University, who emigrated in the period after 1995, were succeeded by young people from Buea University and the University of Buea Student Union, who left Cameroon more recently.

Although the great majority of the Anglophone diaspora probably supports the current protest movement, a minority has reacted in a hostile manner to calls for secession and to the movement as a whole, to the extent of sometimes writing to the

[52] Compilation by Crisis Group on the basis of interviews with Anglophone militants and government officials and monitoring of publications by leaders of the movement on social networks from October 2016 to June 2017.

[53] For example, the Anglophone movement claimed the UN was on the point of conceding independence to Southern Cameroons, and that the Southern Cameroons Defence Forces were in the process of liberating the region. Crisis Group has seen these messages. Meanwhile, the government claimed that Ayah Paul Abine had been arrested at the Nigerian border in possession of a large sum of money. It also leads people to believe it can monitor WhatsApp communications.

[54] The Consortium's provisional leadership was entrusted to Mark Bareta in Belgium and Tapang Ivo in the U.S. Other Consortium members went into exile in Nigeria, South Africa and the U.S. Nkhongo Felix, "Press briefing: transfer of consortium operations to Europe and month-long ghost towns", 17 January 2017; Crisis Group interview, president of SYNES, Buea, May 2017.

authorities of the countries where the leading exponents of the secessionist current are living to call for their expulsion.[55]

The movement is also weakening because of internal divisions over ideology, strategy and actions. Some Consortium leaders, such as Wilfred Tassangand Harmony Bobga, respectively in exile in Nigeria and the U.S., broke with the official federalist line and formed the Southern Cameroons Ambazonia Consortium United Front (SCACUF), which advocates secession. Even the Consortium's interim leaders in the diaspora, such as Mark Bareta and Tapang Ivo, now support secession.

Within the secessionist movement, divergences persist about strategy and operational methods. Some want to prioritise diplomatic offensives, while others put the emphasis on supporting Operation Ghost Town. There are also differences about whether to use violence, which are intensified by rivalries and the struggle for power. Since March, several small violent groups have been formed. On social networks, they circulate contact details of people and organisations failing to observe Ghost Town operations, as well as those of local authorities and senior Anglophone officials hostile to the strike. They call on the public to burn down their properties. These groups also call on citizens not to pay tax and encourage attacks on Francophones.[56]

Christian denominations supervise most schools and universities in the Anglophone regions. At the beginning of 2016, the Catholic bishops of the two regions wrote to President Biya and travelled to Yaoundé to meet him, but he did not receive them. On 22 December, they published their letter in the form of a memorandum listing most of the Anglophone grievances.[57] The government accused them of fuelling the crisis and began to intimidate members of the clergy and the heads of schools, calling on them to open their schools, which had been closed since the beginning of the crisis. In April, a fictitious association of parents lodged a complaint against the bishops and ministers, making the government more unpopular in this zone where religious leaders are respected. However, though the latter back the Anglophone cause, the fear of reprisals from the instigators of Operation Ghost Town rather than support for the strike explains the decision of Catholic and Protestant institutions to not resume their courses.[58]

The Anglophone protest movement also caused division among Francophones and Anglophones within the National Episcopal Conference of Cameroon (NECC). In January 2017, at a meeting in Mamfé, Francophone bishops criticised their counter-

[55] "The role of Mr. Mark Bareta, a Belgian resident, in ongoing destabilization of Cameroon", email from Benjamin Akih to the Belgian deputy prime minister and security and interior minister, consulted by Crisis Group, 24 May 2017.

[56] Most of these messages are public and accessible on Facebook and YouTube. More violent messages also circulate in WhatsApp groups to which Crisis Group has had access.

[57] Crisis Group interview, Bishop of Buea, May 2017; "Memorandum presented to the head of State on the current situation of unrest in the Northwest and Southwest regions of Cameroon", Bamenda Provincial Episcopal Conference, 22 December 2017.

[58] Religious leaders, managers of educational establishments, teachers and parents of pupils receive threats from unidentified individuals and groups on a daily basis and are victims of violence. Between January and April, the chancellor of a Catholic University received an average of one hundred text messages every day, telling him not to open the university; a bishop received about fifty calls and one teacher received text messages and calls describing her home and telling her not to teach courses. Crisis Group interviews, bishops, priests, teachers and the university chancellor, 2017.

parts for not opening their schools, while the latter regretted the Francophone clergy's ignorance of the Anglophone problem and the threats to which they had been subjected. In April, the archbishop of Douala and NECC president published a statement deploring the legal proceedings against the bishops but calling on them to open their schools. This statement, criticised by Anglophone militants, undermined the legitimacy of the archbishop, who had been mentioned in January as a possible mediator.[59]

One year from the next presidential elections, the governing elites in Yaoundé fear that the crisis will spread to Francophone regions, which share some of the socio-economic difficulties experienced by Anglophones and where frustration took a violent turn in 2008. As the government perceives the crisis as a threat to its survival, it considers intimidation, violent repression and the internet shutdown as a risk worth taking, despite possible pressure from the international community. It feels the economic consequences and the possible electoral slump of the CPDM in the Anglophone regions at the next elections are a reasonable price to pay, because they are limited from a national point of view.[60]

C. *The International Community's Response*

The international response has been led by the U.S., multilateral organisations and international civil society. On 28 November 2016, the U.S. State Department published a communiqué calling for dialogue in the Anglophone regions and calling on the government of Cameroon to respect fundamental freedoms.[61] In December, the UN Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa condemned the violence and asked Cameroon to respect minorities. On 18 January 2017, the president of the African Union Commission expressed concerns about acts of violence, arbitrary arrests and detentions and called on the government to seek dialogue. The UN Special Representative for Central Africa visited Yaoundé in February and April. He met Consortium leaders in prison and signed a communiqué calling for the release of prisoners, the restoration of internet and dialogue.

On 23 March, during President Biya's visit to the Vatican, the Pope invited him to pursue dialogue and respect minorities.[62] These statements helped to secure an end to internet shutdown in March, but did not result in any moves toward the structural and constitutional reforms requested by Anglophones.

Bilateral responses and the European Union (EU)'s response has been the weakest. Except for the U.S., Cameroon's Western partners, such as France, the UK, Germany, Canada and the EU have not made any public statement, saying they are exercising

[59] "Cameroun: les évêques lancent un appel à l'unité", Radio France Internationale (RFI), 1 May 2017; "Mgr. Samuel Kleda: selling ignorance and sacralization of temporal power", cameroon-journal.com, 11 May 2017.

[60] Crisis Group interviews, senior officers and senior presidency officials, Yaoundé, December 2016, March 2017.

[61] Some European diplomats have criticised the U.S. position citing as an example the fact that the firm that is helping the Cameroonian government to monitor and filter social media sites is American. Crisis Group interviews, European diplomats, Yaoundé, July 2017.

[62] "Cameroun: Paul Biya confronté à la triple pression de l'ONU, des Etats-Unis et du Vatican", *Jeune Afrique*, 13 April 2017.

discreet diplomatic pressure on Yaoundé.[63] The strongest reactions have come from international civil society, especially from the UK Bar and organisations like Amnesty International.[64]

The lack of coordination of the international response has undermined new initiatives. Several European countries planned to publish statements but, in the end, remained silent, clearly for fear of finding themselves isolated. Other partners with economic interests in Cameroon probably preferred to tacitly support the regime, which protects them against Chinese competition. In February, some European countries wanted the European Union to issue a joint statement on the Anglophone question, but the initiative was blocked by other member states anxious to avoid criticising Cameroon too openly because of its role in the fight against Boko Haram.[65]

This relatively timid reaction can be partly explained by diplomats' hesitation to intervene in a crisis whose consequences are limited to the country in question, without repercussions in the sub-region, and which remains less acute than other crises in Africa. Although limited, the gains made by discreet pressure confirm them in their opinion that private diplomacy is the best strategy.[66] More generally, Western countries have tended to deal with Cameroon in the context of its relative stability compared to other Central African countries and the low risk that the Anglophone crisis will lead to partition of the country. Cameroon's role in the fight against Boko Haram reinforces this attitude.[67]

The government of neighbouring Nigeria has not got involved in the current crisis. Moreover, it is wary of the Anglophone protest movement, because it fears that an independent Anglophone Cameroon could act as a base for separatist Nigerian movements. Nevertheless, some inhabitants of south-eastern Nigeria sympathise with Cameroonian Anglophone activists, although this probably does not amount to any substantial support.[68]

[63] Officials from the European Commission nevertheless met members of the government in Yaoundé in April. There have also been meetings in February and April between European ambassadors and Cameroonian authorities. These were formal demarches, although deliberately discreet. Crisis Group interviews, Western diplomats, Yaoundé, Washington and New York, February-July 2017.
[64] "Open Letter to His Excellency Paul Biya", The Bar Council of England and Wales, 24 March 2017; "Cameroon: arrests and civil society bans risk inflaming tensions in English-speaking regions", Amnesty International press release, 20 January 2017.
[65] Crisis Group interviews, Western diplomats, Yaoundé, February-May 2017.
[66] To the question as to whether a more public reaction would be appropriate, one ambassador in Yaoundé replied "I don't know, but this is a question we ask ourselves every day". Crisis Group interview, May 2017.
[67] Crisis Group interviews, Western diplomats, Yaoundé, March 2017. See Crisis Group Africa Report N°241, *Cameroon: Confronting Boko Haram*, 16 November 2016.
[68] Crisis Group interviews, Cameroonian and Nigerian diplomats and Anglophone militants, Yaoundé, Buea, March-May 2017.

IV. A Political, Economic and Social Crisis

A. *The Political Consequences*

The current crisis has increased support to federalism among the Anglophones population – which most probably was already high – and reinforced support for secessionism.[69] This new configuration shows the depth of the Anglophone problem. Ghost Town operations and school closures could not have continued for nine months without the adherence of a large proportion of the population.[70] As the population becomes more frustrated and disappointed, its desire for fair integration and willingness to coexist with Francophones is eclipsed by aspirations for autonomy.

Although most Anglophones want federalism, there is no consensus about the number of states in a future federation. A two-state federation, as before unification, or a four or six-state federation to better reflect the sociological composition of the country and make the idea of federalism acceptable to Francophones, or ten states to copy the current pattern of Cameroon's ten regions? Some people insist that however many federated states are created, the federal capital Yaoundé should not be included in any of them.[71] For some Anglophone activists, federalism seems to be a maximalist negotiating strategy. They raise the bar high in order to obtain at least an effective decentralisation, with genuine autonomy for the country's ten regions, starting with improvements to and the full application of current laws on decentralisation.[72]

The debate on the shape of the federation also reveals divisions that often undermine the Anglophone movement – between the Northwest where the "Grassfields" ethnic groups, close to the Bamiléké, are in the majority, and the Southwest, dominated by Sawa ethnic groups.[73] Most Anglophones in the Northwest favour a two-state

[69] Crisis Group interviews, academics and population, Southwest and Northwest, 2017.

[70] The campaign involves almost all segments of the Anglophone population. Only the Anglophone government elite distances itself from the movement, yet it stands accused of hypocrisy and double standards by Francophone ministers. Several Francophone police officers have said that Anglophone police officers support the Anglophone cause. Only loyalty to their uniform and institutional discipline dissuade them from publicly expressing their support. Crisis Group interviews, police inspector and technical advisor to the presidency, Yaoundé, Douala, Buea, 2017.

[71] Crisis Group interviews, academics and trade unionists, Bamenda, April 2017.

[72] See Law 2004/17 of 22 July 2004 on guidelines for decentralisation; law 2004/18 of 22 July 2004 setting rules applicable to communes; law 2004/19 of 22 July 2004 setting rules applicable to the regions; law 2009/11 of 10 July 2009 on financial arrangements for decentralised local authorities. The militant minority says that decentralisation should mean the drastic reduction of the central government's presence in the regions and more administrative and financial powers for local elected bodies. Crisis Group interviews, Anglophone militants, students and Consortium members, Bamenda, Buea and Yaoundé prison, April, May 2017; Crisis Group email correspondence, militant in the diaspora, June 2017.

[73] The Bamiléké and the Sawa are two important ethnic groups in Cameroon. They are present in both Francophone and Anglophone zones. The "Grassfields", better known as the Bamiléké, are originally from Francophone West regions and some of them from the Anglophone Northwest region. The Sawa are originally from Francophone and Anglophone coastal regions, including the Francophone city of Douala and the Anglophone towns of the Southwest, such as Limbé and Buea. In the Anglophone Southwest, several indigenous ethnic groups, such as the Bakweri, are closely related to the Duala from the city of Douala, and are all part of the Sawa group. Similarly, several ethnic

federation, as in 1961. The southern elites and indigenous groups have always denounced the demographic, political and economic domination and monopolisation of their lands by Northern migrants, and therefore tend to prefer a ten-state federation in order to preserve their autonomy. Some of them, notably the Bakweri minority, would even form a federated state with the coastal Sawas (the Douala) rather than with the Grafis of the Northwest. Other southerners propose a federation with several states or a two-state federation with genuine decentralisation within the two regions of the Anglophone federated state.[74]

The Anglophone protest movement has tried, with some success, to go beyond these old divisions, partly because several members of the Consortium are southerners.[75] However, when, at the end of January, the traditional chiefs of the Northwest wrote to the president of the republic to ask him to release prisoners as a goodwill gesture, the traditional chiefs of the Southwest responded by sending a motion of support to the government and calling on the youth of the Southwest to break with the disorder caused by northerners.[76] However, the public has not shown itself to be very divided. Although Ghost Town operations are reducing in intensity, they are also observed in the Southwest and are sometimes stronger in towns like Kumba, where young people have denounced the ethnic rhetoric of their elites.[77]

The crisis has revealed the gap between the concerns of the Anglophone population and the Anglophone elite, which has for a very long time tried to mediate between them and Yaoundé and sometimes even supported a firmer repressive position.[78] In fact, the prime minister and the Anglophone elite, which tried to mediate at the start of the crisis, have been jeered by crowds.

The lack of legitimacy of Anglophone leaders is also true, to a lesser degree, of opposition leaders. In November 2016, the president of the Social Democratic Front was booed in Bamenda when he tried to calm an angry crowd. The crisis caused tension in the SDF between a more radical group that, like the deputy Wirba, calls for a two-state federation or for secession, and a more traditional group that wants a four-state federation or, for the most moderates, effective decentralisation.[79] To better reflect

groups from the Anglophone Northwest are effectively the same as the Bamiléké of Western Francophone regions, and all form part of the Grassfield group.

[74] Crisis Group interviews, local elites and elected representatives, Buea, Limbé, Kumba, March-May 2017.

[75] Contrary to widespread belief, the Anglophone movement is not limited to the Northwest. The first and main ideologues of the Anglophone movement come from the Southwest and it was there that the first All Anglophone Conference was held.

[76] "Crise anglophone: la libération des prisonniers divise", *Mutations*, 17 February 2017; "At South West elite forum in Buea: speakers launch xenophobic attacks on North Westerners", *The Guardian Post*, 3 February 2017.

[77] Crisis Group interviews, students and young people from the Southwest, Buea, Limbé and Kumba, March-May 2017.

[78] Most of the Anglophone elites in government advocated a hard line, hoping to please the president of the Republic. Crisis Group interviews, senior officials, Anglophone diplomats and elites, Yaoundé, March-May 2017.

[79] Deputy Wirba has resolutely supported the Anglophone cause and made a speech in parliament, criticising the government. He then went into exile. Crisis Group interview, senator SDF, Yaoundé, March 2017; "Wirba joseph Cameroonian Parliamentarian defies speaker of the house on Anglophone problem", YouTube, 13 December 2016, http://bit.ly/2f7lUTi; "Crise Anglophone: Joseph Wirba

opinion in its electoral base, the SDF strengthened its commitment to a four-state federation in 2017, while also taking symbolic steps such as not attending the 20 May march in solidarity with Anglophone detainees. Even in the governing party, the CPDM, Anglophone deputies have expressed their concerns to the government. In March 2017, they begged the head of state to at least restore internet access and release Anglophone political detainees.[80]

The Anglophone crisis is a classic case of a dissatisfied minority while at the same time the result of structural problems. First, it reveals major governance failures, with a lack of decision-making capacity accentuated by the all-powerful president's prolonged absences from the country, a false decentralisation, the lack of legitimacy of local elites, tension between generations, a political system that relies on co-opting traditional chiefs and local elites, and a policy of regional balance that has been hijacked to their own advantage by families close to the regime.[81]

Second, the crisis is prolonging restrictions on civil liberties which have become more pronounced since 2013: a ban on demonstrations, the arrest and beating up of political party militants, journalists and researchers. It has even served as a pretext for greater repression, with the use of anti-terrorist legislation for political ends, greater control over social media and threats against journalists.[82] Finally, the regime's refusal to negotiate on fundamental questions and its sometimes brutal response highlight its authoritarian nature.

The crisis could have an impact on the 2018 elections and even on the African Cup of Nations football competition in 2019.[83] If the present situation persists, it will be difficult to organise peaceful elections in the two Anglophone regions. But when elections take place, the stance of Anglophone militants who have gained in popularity during this crisis will be crucial. Anything seems possible at the moment: a boycott, support for the SDF or the emergence of new movements.[84] In 2016, the SDF appointed

charge Fru Ndi", *Le Messager*, 6 April 2017. On the SDF's position, Crisis Group interviews, SDF militants, population, academics and European diplomats, Yaoundé, Douala, Buea and Bamenda, March-May 2017.

[80] "Cameroun: des parlementaires du parti au pouvoir appellent Paul Biya à envisager la libération des leaders Anglophones", *Jeune Afrique*, 16 February 2017.

[81] See Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°101, *Cameroon: Prevention is Better than Cure*, 4 September 2014; and Luc Sindjoun, *L'Etat ailleurs: entre noyau dur et case vide* (Paris, 2002). See decree 75/496 of 3 July 1975, decree 82/407 of 7 September 1982 and decree 2000/696/PM of 13 September 2000, which institutionalised the policy of regional balance. Gabriel Jürg Martin, "Cameroon's Neopatrimonial Dilemma", *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, vol. 17, no. 2 (1999).

[82] In January, the posts and telecoms minister signed an order imposing fines and prison sentences on anyone advocating federalism in the media and social networks. The minister and the National Communications Council (CNC) kept up the pressure thereafter. "Crise Anglophone: le SNJC demande aux journalistes d'ignorer les injonctions du CNC", camerpost.net, 22 January 2017. The authorities send text messages regularly to the public to warn them of the penalties for publishing fake news and advocating federalism. Crisis Group interviews, journalists, Yaoundé, December 2016, March 2017. "Des médias camerounais dénoncent les pressions de Yaoundé sur le traitement de la crise Anglophone", *Le Monde*, 22 February 2017.

[83] The ruling party dominates the political landscape. Paul Biya received 78 per cent of votes in the 2011 presidential elections. In the 2013 general elections, the CPDM obtained 148 out of 180 deputies, 82 of 100 senators and 303 of 360 mayors.

[84] Crisis Group observations, Anglophone groups, WhatsApps and Facebook, 2016-2017.

a Francophone secretary general for the first time in an attempt to start rebuilding a national base, but then immediately radicalised and moved closer to the Anglophone position because of the crisis. Will it again moderate its positions and try to gain support among Francophones, which it has not managed to do since 1997, or will it prioritise the Anglophone zone, in the hope of improving on its performance in the last elections?[85] Whatever happens to the SDF, the CPDM and the Francophone parties are henceforth in a weak position in the Anglophone regions.

B. *The Economic Consequences*

Economic marginalisation has played a major role in provoking discontent among Anglophones. Even though the two Anglophone regions are suffering no more than some Francophone regions from the prolonged economic crisis, Anglophones feel their potential is not being realised (or is being deliberately wasted) and feel abandoned.[86]

No serious economic study has been published on the economic impact of the crisis, but there is no doubt that the isolation for several months of these two regions, which contribute around 20 per cent of Cameroon's GDP, has had an impact on them as well as on the national economy.[87] In 2016, the Anglophone regions were among the most digitally connected in Cameroon, just behind Douala and Yaoundé. Shutting down the internet paralysed several sectors of the local economy, notably banking and microfinance. The local economy is based on the oil sector (9 per cent of GDP), timber (4.5 per cent), intensive agriculture, including large plantations owned by the Cameroon Development Corporation and other smaller plantations that supply Douala and the countries of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community, as well as cocoa, rubber, etc.[88]

Anglophones and Southerners in particular often complain about the low proportion of Anglophones in the workforce and in decision-making posts in state oil companies, such as the National Refining Company (*Société nationale de raffinage*, Sonara), based in the Southwest, and the National Hydrocarbons Corporation (*Société nationale des hydrocarbures*, SNH).[89] The crisis has hit all sectors of the local economy, except for hydrocarbons and forestry, which has had an impact on some commercial

[85] The SDF only has eighteen deputies (fourteen in the Anglophone zone), fourteen senators out of 100 and 23 mayors (eighteen in the Anglophone zone) out of 360. At the last presidential elections in 2011, it only received 10.8 per cent of votes. "Cameroun: SOS SDF", *Jeune Afrique*, 26 February 2017.

[86] Cameroon's poverty rate was 37.5 per cent in 2014 according to the INS. It was 74.3 and 67.9 per cent in the Far North and North regions. In the Anglophone zone, it was 55.6 and 18 per cent in the Northwest and Southwest respectively. Anglophones are therefore no poorer than people in the north and east, but they are much poorer than people in Douala and Yaoundé with who they often compare themselves and where the rate is 4.2 and 5.4 per cent respectively. "Tendances, profils et déterminants de la pauvreté au Cameroun entre 2001 et 2014", INS (Yaoundé, 2015).

[87] Crisis Group interviews, economists and statisticians, Yaoundé, December 2016, March 2017.

[88] "Ventilation de l'économie camerounaise", INS, 2016. The other important sectors are commerce, banking and microcredit, services, small and medium sized industries and transport. The Southwest is considered to be the economic motor of the zone, because of its timber industry, the CDC and oil production-related industries.

[89] Crisis Group interviews, Anglophone populations, Buea, Bamenda, March-May 2017.

sectors and industries in the Francophone regions. Several estimates put the direct cost of cutting access to internet alone at CFA2 billion (€3 million).[90]

C. *The Social Consequences*

The crisis has revealed the divisions between Francophones and Anglophones in Cameroon. Francophones are generally unaware of the reasons for the Anglophone problem and view Anglophones who are calling for federalism or secession with a mixture of curiosity and suspicion and even make fun of them. Anglophones are critical of Francophones for their lack of solidarity. While many Francophones say they support the Anglophones' demands,[91] the latter believe that this support is in word only and that Francophones do not really understand the problems that stem from being a minority. In fact, very few representatives of Francophone civil society organisations and political parties have visited the Northwest and the Southwest since October 2016. Francophone teachers did not come out in support for their ill-treated Anglophone colleagues. When Anglophone lawyers were beaten up and illegally arrested, support from the Bar was tardy and limited, leading some Anglophone lawyers to call for the creation of their own Bar.[92]

Another stumbling block is that most Francophones are opposed to federalism and prefer effective decentralisation.[93] Some Francophones also criticise Anglophones for "tribalising" issues and making it sound like they are the only ones affected by problems that are, in fact, national. They point out that some Francophone regions are less well off than Anglophone regions.[94] Francophone teachers in the Anglophone zone complain about discrimination in the universities, while Francophone citizens complain about their stigmatisation and the calls for violence against them issued since January 2017.[95] Some Francophones make fun of Anglophones and support government repression. There are of course exceptions, such as Abouem Atchoyi, former higher education minister and former governor of the Southwest and the Northwest, who published a long article in January 2017 asserting the legitimacy of Anglophone demands.[96]

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[90] Yonatan Morse, "Cameroon has been in crisis for six months. Here is what you need to know", *The Washington Post*, 2 June 2017.

[91] Crisis Group interviews, Francophone academics and trade union leaders, December 2016 and March 2017.

[92] Crisis Group interviews, former presidents of the Bar, Yaoundé, May 2017.

[93] Crisis Group interviews, presidents of Francophone NGOs and political parties, Yaoundé and Douala, 2016-2017.

[94] One of the most virulent criticisms of the Francophones is against the "tribal" attitude of Anglophones in the Northwest and Southwest.

[95] Crisis Group interviews, Francophone officials, teachers and taxi drivers, Buea, March-May 2017. Max Saintclair Mbida, "Dynamique contestataire et déviance démocratique: approche compréhensive et configurationnelle des mobilisations estudiantines à l'université de Buea", in Jean-Emmanuel Pondi (dir.), *Citoyenneté et pouvoir politique en Afrique centrale: état des lieux* (Paris, 2016), pp. 297-322.

[96] Crisis Group interviews, youth, Yaoundé, Maroua, Douala, December 2016-May 2017. David Abouem Atchoyi, "Le problème Anglophone pourrait devenir le nouveau Boko Haram", *Le Jour*, 10 January 2017.

However, the crisis has also raised awareness. Some Anglophones said that public services in Yaoundé treat them better and that official communications pay greater attention to bilingualism.[97] The crisis has highlighted the economic resilience of the Anglophones, which is essentially based on the solidarity of Anglophones living in the Francophone zone and abroad.[98] However, it has also caused social problems that were not anticipated by the strikers: for example, the boycott of schools has entailed extra childcare demands, which falls mainly on women, and increases in juvenile delinquency, teenage pregnancies and school dropout.[99]

[97] Crisis Group observations at several ministries, Yaoundé, March-May 2017.
[98] Crisis Group interviews, political party president and political militants, Douala, March and May 2017.
[99] Crisis Group interviews, priests, girls and young women, Buea and Bamenda, March-June 2017.

V. Ending the Crisis: Resume Dialogue and Deal with the Real Problems

Even though the violence, which raged from November 2016 to January 2017, has come to a halt, aspects of the crisis remain: radicalisation of the diaspora and a segment of the population, a loss of confidence in the government and targeted social violence. The trial of Anglophone militants is flawed in ways that illustrate persistent problems: it has been repeatedly postponed and conducted in French, with only rough translations provided if at all, and this for offences committed by Anglophones in Anglophone regions.

If a lasting solution is not found, the next resurgence of the Anglophone problem could be violent. The haughty attitude and cynicism of senior government officials, notably when they say that "as long as the Anglophones do not take up arms, the current strike does not worry [us] unduly", could promote instability.[100] "What can the Anglophones do? If they don't want to go to school, so much the worse for them", added a senior official.[101] They are mistakenly relying on the strike losing impetus and the emergence of divisions among strikers, because although the campaign has weakened since May and even if it fizzles out, the fundamental problem will remain and people will continue to feel dissatisfied.

Within the secessionist movement, although the official objective remains independence through non-violence, there are growing calls for violence. Messages calling for the armed struggle circulate among WhatsApp groups and instances of targeted social violence have been recorded (intimidations, arson, beatings). On Facebook and YouTube, the Southern Cameroons Defense Forces regularly announce their imminent arrival to liberate Ambazonia. In July 2017, an Ambazonia Governing Council made its appearance online and Sisiku Ayuk Tabe was elected prime minister in an online vote. All this needs to be taken seriously, all the more so as some secessionist groups have circulated videos encouraging violence, for example, explaining how to make Molotov cocktails.[102]

Partisans of armed violence have not yet put their ideas into practice because they do not have either the resources or enough support from abroad. They are still a small minority, even among those in favour of secession. But questioning of the central principle of non-violence, inherited from the SCNC, gives cause for concern. The reason why the crisis has not descended into armed violence is also that the main actors have not wanted it to. Neither did they expect a crisis of such scale and duration.[103]

[100] Crisis Group interview, senior official at the presidency, Yaoundé, December 2016.
[101] Crisis Group interview, Yaoundé, March 2017.
[102] Crisis Group interviews, senior police officers, Buea, March-May 2017; WhatsApp discussions, secessionist militants, March-July 2017; and "SCDF , Southern Cameroons Defense Forces updates", YouTube, 28 March 2017, http://bit.ly/2tYX4r3; and "Resistance Speech by the FAGC Leader Ayaba Cho Lucas", YouTube, 22 June 2016, http://bit.ly/2wl4xlo.
[103] A member of the Consortium said: "We did not initially start the strike in support of federalism or secession and much less of the armed struggle. Talks with the government were rather cordial. Which is why none of us were preparing for any kind of guerrilla war. We did not try to identify rearbases outside the country, because all we wanted to do was to discuss the situation. We did not prepare our escape to Nigeria. But at least we've now got the message and we know what we need to do in the future". Crisis Group interviews, Consortium members, Buea, May 2017.

A lasting solution to the Anglophone problem requires measures to calm the situation and rebuild trust between the government and Anglophone actors, coherent measures to respond to sectoral demands and institutional reforms to address the national governance problem of which the Anglophone issue is symptomatic. It is unlikely that any of these measures will be taken without international pressure.

A. *Take Conciliatory Measures, Rebuild Trust and Launch a Genuine Dialogue before the Elections*

It is difficult to envisage a credible dialogue unless the government takes conciliatory measures and until trust is rebuilt between the parties. A discourse of tolerance, openness to dialogue and recognition of the Anglophone problem by the head of state would constitute a first important gesture. This should be immediately followed by several measures to calm the situation: release members of the Consortium; invite exiles to return to the country; halt legal proceedings against Anglophone clergy; open legal proceedings against security forces responsible for abuses; reshuffle the government and senior officials to increase the political representation of Anglophones and replace the senior officials whose actions have exacerbated tensions; and restructure and reconstitute the Commission for Bilingualism and Multiculturalism.[104] Finally, the President of the Republic should visit the Anglophone regions.

The government could then go on to reconstitute the ad hoc interministerial committee, this time with parity for senior Anglophone officials, and broaden its remit beyond dealing with sectoral demands. This would require decriminalising the political debate, including on federalism, and considering recourse to a third party (Catholic Church or an international partner) to mediate.

B. *Respond to Anglophone Concerns*

Once negotiations have begun, the government should make concessions with a view to improving the political and administrative representation of Anglophones. The government should also increase public and economic investment in the Anglophone zone and ensure that the majority of the security forces and administrative and legal authorities deployed there are Anglophones. Finally, it should apply the measures it has announced or that were decided with the Consortium and take additional measures to strengthen the semi-autonomous character of Anglophone educational and legal systems.

C. *Reform Governance in the Medium Term*

The Anglophone crisis has showed the limits presidential centralism and a governance system that depends on co-optation. Implementation of effective decentralisation

[104] The commission's president and members who are close to the ruling party and hold several posts should be replaced by a younger team with greater legitimacy and composed of an equal number of Francophones and Anglophones, including Consortium members, as well as broadening its remit to include powers to impose sanctions on ministerial departments and government bodies that do not respect bilingualism and that discriminate against Anglophones. It should also have greater independence from the executive.

could mitigate this problem at the national level. It appears to be the only alternative to federalism and has the advantage of being able to satisfy Francophones, the vast majority of whom reject a two-state federal system and, at the same time, moderate Anglophones, who are open to the idea of a ten-state federation or decentralisation.

The executive and the senior levels of the administration are the only real opponents of decentralisation. That is understandable: it would take away the presidency's complete control over the regions and could – by opening the way for local democratic experiences with possible national impact – threaten the regime's absolute power.[105] But there is a serious risk that the crisis could deteriorate and, in time, destabilise the country. A government-backed decentralisation could provide a more consensual and peaceable future. A genuine decentralisation could even encourage a healthy process of renewal within the CPDM. Several Francophone leaders and some senior government officials are favourable to such a development.[106]

Decentralisation could take place on the basis of the ten current regions. It would require full application and the improvement of existing laws. At the moment, decentralisation is deficient: government-appointed representatives run the big cities, play the role of super mayor and only report to the President of the Republic, rendering town councils inoperative. The latter have to wait for their budgets to be allocated by the government representatives, which provokes discontent among both opposition mayors and those belonging to the ruling party.[107] The transfer of financial resources (the percentage of which is not detailed in legal texts) has only increased from 4 to 7 per cent in 13 years, while it is 20 per cent in other decentralised unitary states like Kenya and Ghana. Other powers are not always transferred and remain in the hands of authorities appointed by Yaoundé.[108]

If a new attempt at decentralisation is going to be acceptable and effective, it must reduce the powers of administrators appointed by Yaoundé by creating regional councils, introducing elected regional presidents, transferring significant financial resources and powers, and implementing measures that are already provided for in law. It should also take legal measures specific to Anglophone regions in the areas of education, justice and culture (not currently covered by legislation).

D. *A Firmer International Response*

A firmer response from the international community could help to avoid the conflict from deteriorating and threatening the stability of this pivotal Central African country. It could begin by emphasising the right of Anglophones to discuss their future and that of their country, to better political representation and to expect greater official willingness to take into account cultural and linguistic differences. Public condemnation of the use of anti-terrorism laws for political ends would also be an important first step.

[105] Crisis Group interviews, senior officials, Yaoundé, 2017; prefects and deputy prefects, North Cameroon and Yaoundé, 2016-2017.
[106] Crisis Group interviews, CPDM leaders and senior officials, Yaoundé, December 2016.
[107] In 2017, there was a six-month delay before government representatives began to transfer funds. Crisis Group interviews, CPDM and SDF mayors, Yaoundé, Douala, Kumba, May 2017.
[108] Crisis Group interviews, teachers at the Catholic University of Central Africa and researchers at the Paul Ango Ela Foundation, Yaoundé, December 2016.

The UN, the UK, the U.S., France and the African Union should speak up on behalf of the international community. The UK and the UN are historic actors in this process. France is a strategic partner for Cameroon, and the biggest aid donor in Anglophone Cameroon. But Anglophones believe that it acts as a brake on the international community's response, even though it has sought to promote multilingualism and multiculturalism within Francophonie. The Cameroon government does listen to the U.S., Cameroon's most important security partner and home of the largest part of the Anglophone Cameroon diaspora. The first major international actor to react to this crisis, it should keep up the pressure. These countries and organisations should encourage the Cameroonian government to take measures to calm the situation, engage in a genuine dialogue and reform the governance model, including the implementation of decentralisation. It should also make itself available to mediate if necessary during negotiations, if the parties so desire.

VI. Conclusion

The violence that was rife between November 2016 to January 2017 in Cameroon's two Anglophone regions and the support for the Operation Ghost Town that followed, showed that the Anglophone problem is deep-rooted. It will not be resolved by denying it exists or by repression, but by dialogue and institutional reform. In the context of pressure from the government and the financial difficulties of continuing the strike, some people have disassociated themselves from the movement and more would do so if it were not for the threats of secessionists. However, they are still dissatisfied. After sacrificing an academic year and resisting pressure from the government and secessionist militants, the risk is that they will become increasingly bitter if no reasonable progress is made, especially on educational reform and governance.

The government is wrong to bet on the crisis running out of steam. The threat of a second year of school closures hangs over the beginning of the next academic year. With a year to go before the next presidential and general elections, it would not be politically sensible to ignore the dissatisfaction and anger of a fifth of its population, especially as Francophones share some Anglophone grievances. Above and beyond the electoral question, the sporadic violence of the last few months and the use of social networks have shown that some secessionists are ready for the armed struggle. The opening of a front in the West could prove to be dramatic for Cameroon, which already faces Boko Haram in the Far North and militias from the Central African Republic to the East.

Nairobi/Brussels, 2 August 2017

Appendix A: Map of Cameroon

Appendix B: Timeline

July 1884
Kamerun becomes a German protectorate following the signing of a treaty between Germany and the Duala traditional chiefs.

1915
End of German rule.

1919
The London declaration divides Cameroon into two – one part ruled by the UK and the other by France.

1922
The League of Nations mandates France and the UK to administer the two territories.

1946
The two territories become Trust territories of the UN administered by France and the UK.

1 January 1960
French Cameroon gains independence under the appellation "The Republic of Cameroon".

11 February 1961
In a referendum organised in the British part, Northern Cameroon votes to join Nigeria while Southern Cameroons votes to join the "Republic of Cameroon".

July 1961
Foumban Constitutional Conference.

1 October 1961
Independence of British Cameroon and reunification of the two Cameroons. Cameroon officially adopts the appellation "The Federal Republic of Cameroon". It is then composed of two federated states: East Cameroon (former French Cameroon) and West Cameroon (former British Southern Cameroons).

1966
Creation of the Cameroon National Union as the sole political party in the country.

20 May 1972
Cameroon becomes a unitary state by referendum and officially adopts the appellation « United Republic of Cameroon ».

22 August 1983
West Cameroon is divided into two provinces: the Northwest and the Southwest.

1984
Constitutional amendment and change of the country's name. It becomes the "Republic of Cameroon".

1990
Resignation of John Ngu Foncha and Solomon Tandeng Muna (two historic Anglophone leaders) from the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement.

26 May 1990
Creation of the Social Democratic Front.

1992
The Social Democratic Front almost wins the presidential elections. Today, it still claims it won the elections.

1993
All Anglophone Conference 1

1994
All Anglophone Conference 2

1994
Resignation of John Ngu Foncha and Solomon Tandeng Muna from the Constitutional Committee.

1995
Creation of the Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC).

1996
A constitutional law provides for decentralisation.

2004
Promulgation of three laws on decentralisation.

2008
Revision of the constitution to remove presidential term limits.

11 October 2016
Common Law lawyers begin a strike.

21 November 2016
Anglophone teachers on strike, followed by a students' strike and a general uprising.

End of November 2016
Creation of the Cameroon Anglophone Civil Society Consortium.

25 November 2016
The prime minister and the inter-ministerial ad hoc committee embark on a first session of dialogue in Bamenda.

08 December 2016
A Cameroon People's Democratic Movement gathering is interrupted and violence erupts.

December 2016
In a speech at the National Assembly, Honourable Wirba (member of parliament representing Mbui department in the Nortwest) reaffirms the existence of an Anglophone problem.

22 December 2016
The Catholic Bishops of the Bamenda Episcopal Conference send a Memorandum to the president of the Republic on the crisis in the Northwest and Southwest regions.

17 January 2017
The government bans the Cameroon Anglophone Civil Society Consortium and the SCNC. Negotiations fail, many Anglophone militants are arrested and the internet is shut down.

20 January 2017
A communiqué from the National Communication Council threatens to suspend media houses suspected of promoting federalism and secession.

23 January 2017
Creation of the National Commission on the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism.

10 February 2017
President Biya's speech against "extremist and separatist organisations preaching hate and violence".

14 February 2017
The president of the National Commission for Human Rights and Freedoms issues a communiqué denouncing the lack of freedom of expression, of association and manifestation, internet shutdown, disproportionate use to force, acts of torture, detention of minors, abusive recourse to administrative detentions and to the law on terrorism.

4 March 2017
The Social Democratic Front's pro-federalism gathering in Douala is banned.

14 March 2017
Secessionist militants set the Bamenda market ablaze, resulting in an estimated loss of about FCFA100 million.

30 March 2017
The government announces a series of measures to address the problem.

20 April 2017
Internet is restored in the Northwest and Southwest regions.

31 May 2017
The case of the Anglophone crisis is brought to the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights.

11 June 2017
The National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms condemns the intimidations and violence against students and schools which do not respect the call for strike.

3 July 2017
Law creating a Common Law section in the Supreme Court.

27 July 2017
Fourth adjournment of the Anglophone leaders' trial.

Appendix C: Glossary

AAC	All Anglophone Conference
CACSC	Cameroon Anglophone Civil Society Consortium
CAM	Cameroon Anglophone Movement
CATUC	Catholic University of Cameroon
CDC	Cameroon Development Corporation
Cemac	Communauté économique et monétaire de l'Afrique centrale (Central African Economic and Monetary Community)
Cenajes	Centre national de la jeunesse et des sports (National Centre for Youth and Sports)
NECC	National Episcopal Conference of Cameroon
CNC	Conseil national de la communication (National Communication Council)
NCHRF	National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms
CUC	Cameroon United Congress
ENAM	Ecole nationale d'administration et de magistrature (National School of Administration and Magistracy)
IMF	International Monetary Fund
FWM	Free West Cameroon Movement
GCE	General Certificate of Education
INS	Institut national de la statistique (National Institute of Statistics)
KNC	Kamerun National Congress
KNDP	Kamerun National Democratic Party
NOWELA	Northwest Lawyer's Association
OHADA	Organisation pour l'harmonisation en Afrique du droit des affaires (Organisation for the Harmonization of Business Law in Africa)
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
CPDM	Cameroon People's Democratic Movement
SCACUF	Southern Cameroons Ambazonia Consortium United Front
SCDF	Southern Cameroons Defense Forces
SCNC	Southern Cameroons National Council
SCRM	Southern Cameroons Restoration Movement
SCYL	Southern Cameroons Youth League
SDF	Social Democratic Front
SNH	Société nationale des hydrocarbures (National Hydrocarbons Corporation)
Sonara	Société nationale de raffinage (National Refining Company)
SYNES	Syndicat national des enseignants du supérieur (National Union of Teachers of Higher Education)
UBSU	University of Buea Student Union

CDU	Cameroon Democratic Union
UNC	Union nationale camerounaise (Cameroon National Union)
UNDP	Union nationale pour la démocratie et le progress (National Union for Democracy and Progress)
UPC	Union des populations du Cameroun (Union of the Peoples of Cameroon)

Appendix D: About the International Crisis Group

The International Crisis Group (Crisis Group) is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organisation, with some 120 staff members on five continents, working through field-based analysis and high-level advocacy to prevent and resolve deadly conflict.

Crisis Group's approach is grounded in field research. Teams of political analysts are located within or close by countries or regions at risk of outbreak, escalation or recurrence of violent conflict. Based on information and assessments from the field, it produces analytical reports containing practical recommendations targeted at key international, regional and national decision-takers. Crisis Group also publishes *CrisisWatch*, a monthly early warning bulletin, providing a succinct regular update on the state of play in up to 70 situations of conflict or potential conflict around the world.

Crisis Group's reports are distributed widely by email and made available simultaneously on its website, www.crisisgroup.org. Crisis Group works closely with governments and those who influence them, including the media, to highlight its crisis analyses and to generate support for its policy prescriptions.

The Crisis Group Board of Trustees – which includes prominent figures from the fields of politics, diplomacy, business and the media – is directly involved in helping to bring the reports and recommendations to the attention of senior policymakers around the world. Crisis Group is chaired by former UN Deputy Secretary-General and Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Lord Mark Malloch-Brown. Its Vice Chair is Ayo Obe, a Legal Practitioner, Columnist and TV Presenter in Nigeria.

Crisis Group's President & CEO, Jean-Marie Guéhenno, served as the UN Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations from 2000-2008, and in 2012, as Deputy Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States on Syria. He left his post as Deputy Joint Special Envoy to chair the commission that prepared the white paper on French defence and national security in 2013.

Crisis Group's international headquarters is in Brussels, and the organisation has offices in ten other locations: Bishkek, Bogota, Dakar, Kabul, Islamabad, Istanbul, Nairobi, London, New York, and Washington, DC. It has presences in the following locations: Abuja, Algiers, Bangkok, Beirut, Caracas, Gaza City, Guatemala City, Hong Kong, Jerusalem, Johannesburg, Juba, Mexico City, New Delhi, Rabat, Sanaa, Tblisi, Toronto, Tripoli, Tunis, and Yangon.

Crisis Group receives financial support from a wide range of governments, foundations, and private sources. Currently Crisis Group holds relationships with the following governmental departments and agencies: Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Austrian Development Agency, Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP), Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, French Development Agency, French Ministry of Defence, French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, German Federal Foreign Office, Global Affairs Canada, Irish Aid, Principality of Liechtenstein, Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign Affairs, New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs.

Crisis Group also holds relationships with the following foundations: Carnegie Corporation of New York, Henry Luce Foundation, Humanity United, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Oak Foundation, Open Society Foundations, Ploughshares Fund, Robert Bosch Stiftung, and Wellspring Philanthropic Fund.

August 2017

Appendix E: Reports and Briefings on Africa since 2014

Special Reports

Exploiting Disorder: al-Qaeda and the Islamic State, Special Report N°1, 14 March 2016 (also available in Arabic and French).

Seizing the Moment: From Early Warning to Early Action, Special Report N°2, 22 June 2016.

Counter-terrorism Pitfalls: What the U.S. Fight against ISIS and al-Qaeda Should Avoid, Special Report N°3, 22 March 2017.

Central Africa

Fields of Bitterness (I): Land Reform in Burundi, Africa Report N°213, 12 February 2014 (only available in French).

Fields of Bitterness (II): Restitution and Reconciliation in Burundi, Africa Report N°214, 17 February 2014 (only available in French).

The Security Challenges of Pastoralism in Central Africa, Africa Report N°215, 1 April 2014 (also available in French).

The Central African Crisis: From Predation to Stabilisation, Africa Report N°219, 17 June 2014 (also available in French).

Cameroon: Prevention Is Better than Cure, Africa Briefing N°101, 4 September 2014 (only available in French).

The Central African Republic's Hidden Conflict, Africa Briefing N°105, 12 December 2014 (also available in French).

Congo: Ending the Status Quo, Africa Briefing N°107, 17 December 2014.

Elections in Burundi: Moment of Truth, Africa Report N°224, 17 April 2015 (also available in French).

Congo: Is Democratic Change Possible? Africa Report N°225, 5 May 2015.

Burundi: Peace Sacrificed? Africa Briefing N°111, 29 May 2015 (also available in French).

Cameroon: The Threat of Religious Radicalism, Africa Report N°229, 3 September 2015 (also available in French).

Central African Republic: The roots of violence, Africa Report N°230, 21 September 2015 (also available in French).

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