


Failed Decolonization of Africa and the Rise of New States: Cartography of the War in Southern Cameroons Ambazonia

Roland Ngwatung Afungang*

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Introduction

From the 1870s to the 1900s, many European countries invaded Africa and colonized almost the entire continent except Liberia and Ethiopia. African kingdoms at the time fought deadly battles with the imperialists but failed to stop them. The invaders went on and occupied Africa, an occupation that lasted up to the 1980s. After World War II, the United Nations (UN) resolution 1514 of 14 December 1960 (UN Resolution 1415 (1960), accessed on 13 Feb. 2019) obliged the colonial powers to grant independence to colonized peoples and between 1957 and 1970, over 90 percent of African countries got independence. However, decolonization was not complete as some colonial powers refused to adhere to all the provisions of the above UN resolution. For example, the Portuguese refused to grant independence to its African colonies (e.g. Angola and Mozambique). The French on their part granted conditional independence to their colonies by maintaining significant ties and control through the France-Afrique accord (an agreement signed between France and its colonies in Africa). The France-Afrique accord led to the creation of the Franc CFA, a currency produced and managed by the French treasury and used by fourteen African countries (African Business, 2012). CFA is the acronym for “Communauté Financière Africaine” which in English stands for “African Financial Community”. Other colonial powers violated the resolution by granting independence to their colonies under a merger agreement. This was the case of former British Southern Cameroons and Republic of Cameroon, South Sudan and Republic of Sudan, Eritrea and Ethiopia, Senegal and Gambia (Senegambia Confederation, 1982-1989). These decolonized peoples except for Gambia were immediately recolonized by their powerful neighbors leading to renewed fighting for freedom (Ilustração 01). All the above-mentioned states have restored their independence except Western Sahara and Southern Cameroon (Anyangwe, 2009). In the case of Western Sahara, the resistance movement known as the Polisario Front began an insurgency against the colonial master Spain in 1973 and when the Spanish left the country in 1976, Mauritania and Morocco invaded and re-annexed the territory. In 1979 Mauritania also ended her invasion and the Polisario Front continued fierce battles against the Moroccans until 1991 when a cease fire agreement was signed that left large swaths of the territory under Moroccan control. In a similar manner, South Sudan, after years of domination by the

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* CEAUP.

Muslim-led government of Sudan, began hostilities against the Khartoum government in 1955 with the aim of acquiring better representation and autonomy in Sudan. The war ended in 1976 with the establishment of an autonomous region for South Sudanese. However, in 1983 the Sudanese President Gaafar Nimeiry abolished the autonomy of South Sudan and declared Sudan, including the autonomous region, an Islamic state under Sharia law. Another war broke-out and ended with UN ceasefire and a referendum in 2011 that saw South Sudanese voting massively for independence (BBC News, accessed on 10 Jan. 2011). A similar process took place in Eritrea. After Italy's defeat during World War II, the former Italian governorate of Eritrea was claimed by the Ethiopian empire in 1941. Based on claims that the predominantly Christian South wanted a union with Ethiopia against the wish of the predominantly Muslim North that wanted out-right independence, the UN refused Eritrea complete independence and federated Eritrea with Ethiopia in 1950. Tired of Italian colonial domination, Ethiopia's imperialism and military rule, and driven by the desire to pursue self-determination, Eritrean nationalists formed the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) in 1961 (Weldeghiorghis, 2014). Annoyed by this, Ethiopia dissolved the federation and annexed the territory in 1962. A brutal 30-year war ensued until the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) defeated the Ethiopian army in May 1991. In April 1993, Eritreans overwhelmingly voted (99 %) for independence in a referendum supported by the friendly Ethiopian government that took overpower with EPLF support. A similar process is ongoing in the Southern Cameroon. Like Eritrea, Western Sahara and South Sudan, multiple armed groups are fighting the Cameroon military to restore the independence of Southern Cameroons.

In Southern Cameroon, the resistance against cameroon was more diplomatic and peaceful until 2016 when peaceful protects led by common law lawyers and teachers in the English-speaking regions were brutally suppressed by the military forcing Southern Cameroon nationalist movements to call for the use of arms against the French-dominated government. Currently the country once called a "pinnacle of peace in central Africa" is embroiled in deadly battles pitting Cameroon troops and local militias known as "Amba boys" (Ilustração 02). The problems of Southern Cameroon began when the British

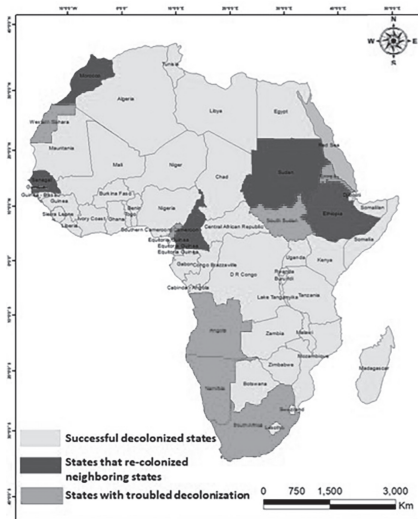


Ilustração 01 – Conflict states out of Decolonization.

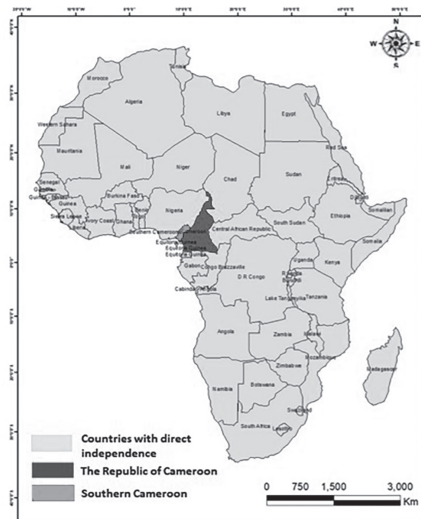


Ilustração 02 – Study area in Africa.

colonial administration violated the UN charter on decolonization by failing to hand unconditional independence to Southern Cameroons. Instead, the British on 30th September 1961 handed over instruments of power over Southern Cameroons to neighboring Republic of Cameroon who by then was an independent country. The latter went in for a federation with Southern Cameroons but later annexed the territory in 1972. Looking at the previous independent struggles cited above and what is going on in Southern Cameroons, the independence saga consists of six main stages: **1.º)** Exit of the colonial master, **2.º)** Re-occupation by a powerful neighboring state, **3.º)** Federation with the neighboring state, **4.º)** Abolition of the federation and annexation, **5.º)** Declaration of independence and War, **6.º)** Liberation and self-rule. Now, Southern Cameroons is at the 6th stage and it's imperative for the international community especially the African Union to intervene before the disaster that took place in South Sudan and Eritrea repeats itself in Southern Cameroons. The examples above clearly show the ineffectiveness of decolonization as it inadvertently failed to render colonized states independent without war.

This paper focusses on the decolonization of the former British Southern Cameroons and the war currently raging in that territory. It is aimed at conscientizing the “community of the willing” about the catastrophic consequences of decolonization in Southern Cameroon and the plight of the people at war. The paper traced in brief the colonization history, decolonization and its mistakes, map changes in Cameroon's boundaries since 1901 and map villages burned down since 2017. This cartography will determine critical war zones in dire need of humanitarian aid and provide information that can speed up the work of human rights/humanitarian organizations and political actors who wish to assess what is happening on the ground.

Materials and methods

Each objective cited above was attained using a set of methods. The history of Southern Cameroon was gotten from varied sources (e.g. history books, scientific articles, nationalist publications, social media activist talk-shows, group discussions and conference presentations). Changes in territorial frontiers were mapped based on historical facts from older maps derived from books, publications and online platform (Google Earth). Damaged and burned-down infrastructure especially buildings were assessed based on social media reported and corroborated using Remote sensing data and Geographic Information System (GIS). To do this, baseline data or imagery captured prior to the event was compared against post-event imagery to determine apparent affected structures. Satellite images from TerraServer Digital Globe and Google Earth were analyzed to get changes in infrastructure before and after the events. Images taken by amateurs using mobile phones cameras and eye-witness accounts through audio recording were used to cross-corroborate what was observed on the aerial photos. The timeline of events provides highlights on the sequence of events including the destruction caused by the war. It contains necessary information that can facilitate prospective assistance and/or intervention by humanitarian groups and experts.

The historical background of Southern Cameroons and the conflict

In 1470, the Portuguese arrived the coastal waters of Cameroon and named the estuary of the Wouri River “Rio dos Camarões” meaning River of the Prawns. The malaria parasite prevented any significant European settlement until 1884 when the Germans finally colonized the territory. Before the Germans, the British from 1858-1887 were in control of



Ilustração 03 – German Kamerun 1900-1911.

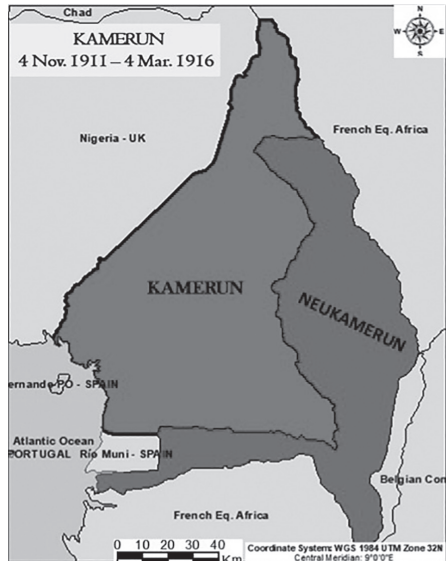


Ilustração 04 – German Kamerun 1911-1916.

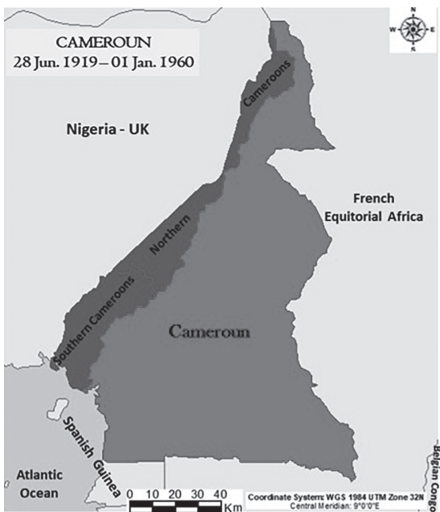


Ilustração 05 – Cameroon Trusteeship period.



Ilustração 06 – Independent Republic of Cameroon.

Victoria, a territory in today's Southern Cameroon named after queen Victoria of England. After the British, the Germans arrived in the territory east of the Mongo (present day Cameroon) in 1884 and colonized it by signing treaties with the coastal chiefs. The Germans in 1887 moved inland to the west of River Mongo to the present-day Southern Cameroons and took over the British protectorate of Victoria. From 1901 to 1911 the German

extended their territorial influence by signing more treaties with local chiefs and moving inland (Ilustração 03). The most significant German expansion was in 1911 when France ceded nearly 300,000 km² of former French Equatorial Africa to Kamerun through the Treaty of Fez following the Agadir Crisis. The newly acquired territory became known as Neukamerun (Ilustração 04). Kamerun remained under the Germans until 1914 when they were defeated in World War I by the allied powers (Britain and France). Before their defeat in 1916, German Kamerun included the western part of Central African Republic, northern part of Gabon and the Congo, far eastern parts of Nigeria and the South-western part of Chad. Following the 28 June, 1919 Treaty of Versailles, the western part of German Kamerun (about 20%) was given to Britain and the eastern part (about 80 %) went to France as mandated territories under the League of Nations (Ilustração 05). Motivated by administrative convenience, the British divided their own share of the territory into two parts and named them, British Northern and Southern Cameroons. They ruled these territories as part of Nigeria. After World War II, the UN transformed all colonial and mandated territories into trust territories under the trusteeship council and obliged the colonial powers to prepare the colonized peoples for self-rule. Following the independence of Nigeria and Cameroon in 1960, the two British territories (Ilustração 06) were not yet independent and had to decide their fate. As such, a plebiscite was organized by the UN on 1st January 1961 in the British territories with two questions: 1.º) Do you wish to gain independence by joining French Cameroon? or 2.º) Do you wish to gain independence by joining Nigeria? A 3rd option to allow the people to vote for full independence was rejected by the UN based on a complaint made by the out-going British colonial administration and the 1959 Philipson Report that the territory couldn't sustain itself as an independent state (Konings and Nyamnjoh, 2003, 230p.). British Southern Cameroons voted to join the Republic of Cameroon while British Northern Cameroons voted to join Nigeria (Ilustração 07). The co-existence of both nations in their new republics was under the form of a federation.

Failures in the decolonization process and causes of the conflict

The failures of decolonization started with the disregard of laws voted by the UN itself and the implementation of the provisions of their resolutions. Denying Southern Cameroons complete independence on grounds that the territory was not self-sustaining violated the following:

- UN General Assembly resolution 1514 of 14 December 1960 point 3, that states that “Inadequacy of political, economic, social or educational preparedness should never serve as a pretext for delaying independence” and point 5 that mandated the colonial masters to “transfer all powers to the peoples of colonial territories, without any conditions or reservations, in accordance with their freely expressed will and desire”.
- UN Resolution 1608 (General Assembly – 15th session) point 2 of 21st April 1961 granted independence to the Southern Cameroons with effect from 1st October 1961.

The United Kingdom and the UN obliged the people of Southern Cameroons to accede to independence by “joining” either the Republic of Nigeria or Cameroon (Fanso, 2014). Many Southern Cameroon scholars, politicians and nationalists have condemned the UN and the United Kingdom's decision to hold a referendum in the Southern Cameroons instead of granting the people independence as stipulated by international law. It is worth noting that, during the UN General Assembly of April 1961, 64 countries voted in favour of the independence of Southern Cameroons and 23 countries voted, against among which were the Republic of Cameroon and France. This thus obliterated any possible federation with

Southern Cameroons (Anyangwe, 2014a; Fonkem, 2014). In the same light, authors like Awasom (1998, 2000; Fossung, 2004), and nationalist gatherings such as the All Anglophone Conference (AAC I) of 1993 that culminated with the “Buea Declaration” and AAC II of 1994 that ended with the “Bamenda Declaration” join the chorus to condemn the UN and the UK’s referendum decision. The two declarations also called for the restoration of the federal system or the complete independence of the Southern Cameroons. The nationalists also questioned why the plebiscite questions decided upon during the Mamfe “All-Party Plebiscite Conference” were not considered by the UN and the United Kingdom. During the Mamfe conference that held from 10-11 August 1959, 67 % of Southern Cameroon leaders voted that the plebiscite questions should be “Integration with Nigeria or Independence for Southern Cameroons” against 33 % for “Integration with Nigeria or Re-unification with Cameroon”. The UN General Assembly rejected both proposals and instead crafted the plebiscite questions as “Integration with Nigeria or Re-unification with Cameroon” under resolution 1352 (Fonkem, 2014). Jumbam in his write-up based reports from Wache Francis and Ekontang Elad (The All Anglophone Conference, April 2-3, 1993, accessed on September 8, 2019) considered the nullification of the Mamfe Plebiscite conference decision by the UN as illegitimate and gross transgression of the people’s rights. The result of the plebiscite as desired by the British and UN was in favor of joining the Republic of Cameroon. Based on point five of the UN resolution 1608, the two Cameroons entered negotiations that culminated with the Fouban Constitutional Conference that defined the terms of the union by federation. The Republic of Cameroon adopted the name East Cameroon and Southern Cameroon adopted the name West Cameroon and the new state became known as “The Federal Republic of Cameroon”. The validity of the decision to join the two states reached at the Fouban conference has equally been challenged by nationalist authors (e.g. Ayim, 2010; Anyangwe, 2014a). They argue that both states did not sign any UNION TREATY which is the binding document in international law that confirms the unity of two states. That such a treaty would have required the following steps:

- 1.º) First, negotiations mandated by international law (UN Resolutions 1352, 1608, 1514 (XV) and a meeting between the Southern Cameroons Prime Minister and French Cameroons president, overseen by both the British government, the French government and the UN.
- 2.º) Second, the drafting and ratification of a “Treaty of Union” by the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly and Republic of Cameroon’s Parliament.
- 3.º) And last, the signing of the “Treaty of Union” by the leaders of both countries.

However, none of these prerequisite steps were followed thus invalidating the legal basis of the federation. Worse still the Southern Cameroons Plebiscite Order in Council (SCOC, 1960) which opposed any form of annexation was not respected. The crossing over of French Cameroon troops into Southern Cameroons on 31 September 1961, after the British withdrawal and the disarming of Southern Cameroon armed police known as the Mobile Wing was an armed invasion (Meyomesse, 2018). The federation was a charade as the then French President Pompidou boosted that Southern Cameroons was a ‘small gift’ from the Queen of England to France (Gaillard, 1994). The federal structure constructed in 1961 was abolished in 1972 by Cameroon’s French speaking government through another referendum that saw the French Cameroon voting to absorb Southern Cameroons. After the abolition of the federation on 20 May 1972, the two territories became known as “United Republic of Cameroon”. In 1985, the Republic of Cameroon’s president (Paul Biya) through a decree once again changed the name of the country from “United Republic

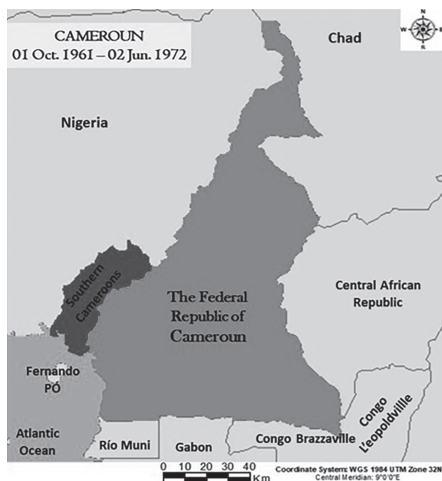


Ilustração 07 – British Cameroon joins Nigeria.

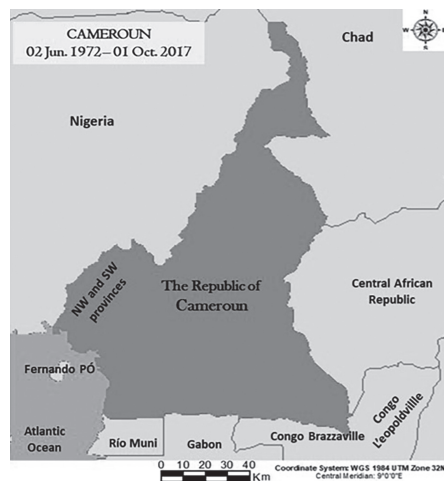


Ilustração 08 – End of Federation and unified Cameroon.

of Cameroon” to “Republic of Cameroon”. This is the same name French Cameroon adopted on 1st January 1960 when it got its independence from France. As explained in the Crawford James report “State practice and international law in relation to unilateral secession” (Crawford, 1997), such an act is synonymous to secession. Political scientists like Ayim (2008, 2010) had argued that the abolition of the federation should have seen both nations restore to their original structures as independent states. Unfortunately, the territory was annexed, divided into two and renamed as the North West and South West provinces of Cameroon (Ilustração 08). Scholars like Anyangwe (2009), Eyango (2018, p. 28) went further to argue that the changing of the federal structure went contrary to the federal constitution. It was regarded as a creeping annexation or re-colonization by some authors (e.g. Benjamin, 1972). In order to maintain its identity, Southern Cameroons was renamed Ambazonia in 2002 by Gorji-Dinka, a Southern Cameroon independence lawyer and activist (see U.N. Doc. CCPR/C/83/D/1134/2002, accessed on October 19, 2020).

Socio-economic pressure and marginalization

Socio-economic problems, marginalization and systematic assimilation of Southern Cameroon is the root-cause of the current crisis. The people believe that the only permanent solution to the current impasse is to restore the statehood of the former British Southern Cameroons. The Republic of Cameroon is ranked 151 on the 2018 Human Development Index, and it is estimated that 48 % of the population lives below the poverty line with 55 percent of the country’s poor living in rural areas. Large parts of Southern Cameroon are rural, and it is among the poorest and highly underdeveloped regions in Cameroon. Despite its abundant natural resources including petroleum, timber, agricultural plantations etc., and the high literacy rate of its population, rural-urban exodus, youth immigration and unemployment remain very high. Harsh taxation policies have scared many industries and companies from setting-up offices in this area. The offices or headquarters of most national and international corporations involved in the exploitation of resources in Southern Cameroons are based in French Cameroon and exploitation benefits are paid to

the councils where the offices are based and not to the councils where the resources are being exploited. For instance, from 1978 – 2015, revenue from oil exports from Southern Cameroon amounted to \$44,929,093,897.00 and oil revenue accounted for about 30 % of the national income (see OECD Details of Public Revenues in Cameroon, accessed on 19 October 2020). Paradoxically, royalties from this oil are paid to the Douala city council, a town in the republic of Cameroon located 120 Km from the area Ndian and Fako division where the oil wells are found. The government argue that the oil trading companies and the port of export are in Douala and thus gives Douala more rights over the royalties than the council where the oil is exploited. This move has left the oil-rich communities very poor with lack of basic amenities such as roads, portable water, and roads. World Bank records for 2012 shows that a total of 7,325 Km long of roads were tarred across the national territory from 1980 to 2010, with less than 300 Km in Southern Cameroons. This is irrespective of the fact that petroleum exploited from Southern Cameroon is highly rich in bitumen, the material used for road construction.

World Bank financial statistics from 1965 to 2015 also shows that Cameroon had an average budget of 1.18 billion U.S. dollars with a minimum of 0.11 billion U.S. dollars in 1965 and a maximum of 3.32 billion U.S. dollars in 2015. Looking at these figures and comparing them with that in table 03, it is clearly shown that oil exports alone exploited from Southern Cameroons contribute over 50 % to the National Treasury. This amount does not include revenue from other resources like timber, bananas, cocoa, coffee, palm oil, pawpaw, and rubber which are also top export products Cameroon. On the other hand, tax revenue kept growing from 390,005 U.S. Dollars in 1993 to 3,214,297.3 in 2014 showing a 10-fold increase despite the high level of corruption in the country. However, the country's infrastructure remains deplorable.

Apart from economic marginalization, social and political discrimination had steadily increased since the dissolution of the federation in 1972. In the 1980s and 1990s, English speaking Cameroonians were often referred to as “Biafrans” (an ethnic group in Nigeria) and in the last decades they were called “Anglo-fools” or “Les Bamenda” meaning foolish people from Bamenda, a town in Southern Cameroons. Citizens from Cameroon believe that the Anglophones were less intelligent or foolish to have trusted Cameroon in the Fouban constitutional conference that brought the two Cameroons together. Very few Anglophones are recruited in the public service or appointed to high offices in Cameroon. For example, Cameroon had 32 Ministers in 2005 and none were from the Southern Cameroons. Although the government have enacted a law banning the use of the terms “Biafrans”, “Anglo-fools” and “Les Bamenda” and have appointed some “Anglophones” in high public offices, the stigma on Southern Cameroonians and the superiority complex of Cameroon citizens remain unchanged.

Political brinkmanship

To destroy the harmony and history of Southern Cameroon, Cameroon in the last 57 years had embarked on the policy of divide and rule and political manipulation. Following the annexation in 1972, Southern Cameroons was divided into two parts (Ilustração 08). They were called the North West and South West provinces of Cameroon (Takougang and Amin, 2018). To further prevent any form of a unified resistance against the government, the political elites manipulated the natives of the South West part to believe that the migrants from the northern part were depriving them of jobs, seizing their lands and exploiting their resources. It should be noted that the southern zone is rich in volcanic soils, two seaports, oil and timber that has attracted thousands of migrants from the northern

Table 01 – Oil Revenue in Cameroon 1978 – 2015

Year	Kilotons	World Price	Million Barrels	Revenue in Dollars
1978	512.068	9	3.657628571	\$32,918,657.14
1979	2032.049	12.64	14.51463571	\$183,464,995.40
1980	3620.981	21.59	25.86415	\$558,406,998.50
1981	4865.155	31.77	34.75110714	\$1,104,042,674.00
1982	5746.317	28.52	41.04512143	\$1,170,606,863.00
1983	5988.663	26.19	42.77616429	\$1,120,307,743.00
1984	8926.21	25.88	63.75864286	\$1,650,073,677.00rs
1985	8918.098	24.09	63.7007	\$1,534,549,863.00
1986	8772.083	12.51	62.65773571	\$783,848,273.80
1987	8837.992	15.4	63.12851429	\$972,179,120.00
1988	8176.867	12.58	58.40619286	\$734,749,906.10
1989	7634.379	15.86	54.53127857	\$864,866,078.10
1990	6926.609	20.03	49.47577857	\$990,999,844.80
1991	6572.724	16.54	46.94802857	\$776,520,392.60
1992	6572.724	15.99	46.94802857	\$750,698,976.90
1993	6065.726	14.25	43.32661429	\$617,404,253.60
1994	5966.355	13.19	42.61682143	\$562,115,874.60
1995	5189.633	14.62	37.06880714	\$541,945,960.40
1996	5527.294	18.46	39.48067143	\$728,813,194.60
1997	6016.04	17.23	42.97171429	\$740,402,637.10
1998	6229.994	10.87	44.49995714	\$483,714,534.10
1999	5827.437	15.56	41.62455	\$647,677,998.00
2000	5863.941	26.72	41.88529286	\$1,119,175,025.00
2001	5302.187	21.84	37.87276429	\$827,141,172.00
2002	5538.448	22.51	39.56034286	\$890,503,317.70
2003	5255.543	27.56	37.53959286	\$1,034,591,179.00
2004	5008.128	36.77	35.77234286	\$1,315,349,047.00
2005	4594.418	50.28	32.81727143	\$1,650,052,407.00
2006	4682.635	59.69	33.44739286	\$1,996,474,880.00
2007	4437.248	66.52	31.69462857	\$2,108,326,693.00
2008	4362.212	94.04	31.15865714	\$2,930,160,118.00
2009	3809.584	56.35	27.21131429	\$1,533,357,560.00
2010	3350.244	74.71	23.93031429	\$1,787,833,780.00
2011	3038.947	95.73	21.70676429	\$2,077,988,545.00
2012	3146.431	94.52	22.47450714	\$2,124,290,415.00
2013	3414.126	95.99	24.38661429	\$2,340,871,105.00
2014	3867.382	87.39	27.62415714	\$2,414,075,093.00
2015	3867.382	44.39	27.62415714	\$1,226,236,336.00
Total	204502.786	1356.35	1460.734186	\$44,929,093,897.00

Source: United States Department of Energy.

zone. This social/political segregation strategy was very successful until the uprising of 2016. The teachers and lawyers uprising in 2016 was the first time the population of the two provinces waved away their differences to fight against the government since 1972. Before 2016, Southern Cameroon nationalists had rose in 2004 and 2007 to restore the federal structure abolished in 1972 but failed as French Cameroon used the military to surprise the protests (Efi, 2018). The uprising of 2016 started when common law lawyers protested on the streets against the posting of French speaking magistrates with no mastery of the common law and English language to courts in the English-speaking regions (Journal du Camerun, 2017). This protest was later joined by the Cameroon Anglophone Teacher's Union (CATU) to protest the posting of French speaking teachers with no knowledge of the English language in English speaking schools in Anglophone Cameroon. As usual, these protests were brutally suppressed. But this time around, the brutal response of the military boomeranged and spurred other civil society organizations and the general public to join the teachers and lawyers to demand for the return of the federal system of government. As the protest worsened, the government was forced to open a dialogue with representatives of the protesters who by then had constituted themselves in what became known as the Cameroon Anglophone Civil Society Consortium. After failing to convince the Consortium leaders to call off the strike action, the government banned the Consortium together with the Southern Cameroon National Congress on 17 January 2017 and arrested the leaders. Internet network was equally suspended from the two English speaking regions. From there on, the nationalist movements whose leaders were based in the diaspora including the Ambazonia Governing Council (AGC), Southern Cameroon National Congress (SCNC), Republic of Ambazonia (ROA), Southern Cameroon Youth League (SCYL) and the Southern Cameroons Peoples Organisation (SCAPO), came together and formed the Southern Cameroons Ambazonia Consortium United Front (SCACUF) with the objective of restoring the lost statehood of Southern Cameroons. SCACUF was later transformed into the Governing Council (GC), and then to an Interim Government (IG) for Southern Cameroons. The Governing Council under the leadership of the Sesiko Ayuk Tabe symbolically declared independence for Southern Cameroons on 1st October 2017. Ambazonia flags were hoisted across the territory and the military responded with hundreds of arbitrary arrests, detentions, manning and killing of protesters using live ammunition and helicopter gunships. The new state adopted the name "Ambazonia", the same name given by Fon Gorji-Dinka (an activist from the Southern Cameroons) who first declared independence for the territory in 1985 (Ilustração 09). Etymologically, Ambazonia is the local name derived from the Ambas Bay (see report from wikipedia.org, accessed on July 11, 2017), an area where the British Baptist missionary Alfred Saker first established his church in 1858 and where the British created a protectorate in 1884 before ceding it to the Germans in 1887. Following these events, the AGC under the leadership of Dr. Ayaba Cho Lucas evoked the right of self-defense enshrined in Article 51 of the UN Charter (Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs, accessed on 20 October, 2020) and formed an armed wing known as the Ambazonia Defence Forces (ADF). The Ambazonia Interim Government joined the AGC to call upon the UN Security Council to evoke the rights of protection for endangered minorities under the UN Charter by imposing travel bans and assets freeze on Cameroon government/military officials. Considering the military's use of helicopter gunships to shoot protesters at point-blank range of the nationalist movements again urged the UN under Resolution 1970 to impose a no-fly zone over Southern Cameroons territory as stipulated by Resolution 1973, earlier applied on Libya during the 2011 crisis. None of these calls were answered. On 1 November 2017, the president of the Republic of Cameroon Paul Biya declared war on Ambazonia and urged the Nigerian government under Muhammadu Buhari to arrest the leaders of the movement



Ilustração 09 – Southern Cameroons – Ambazonia.

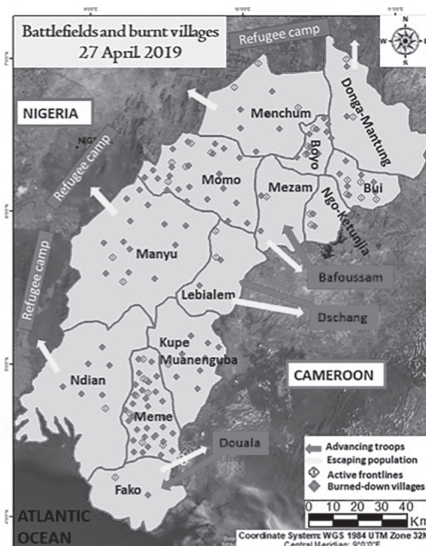


Ilustração 10 – Main battlefields as of June 2019.

living in exile in Nigeria. On 5 January, 2018, the Nigerian government heeded this call and arrested the Ambazonian leadership in Nigeria and extradited them to Cameroon. This act escalated the crisis to a full-blown war that still rages today. The war has chased hundreds of thousands to flee into Nigeria and the Republic of Cameroon based on nearness to safe areas. Most of the refugees in Nigeria are from communities located along the border with Nigeria such as Manyu, Ndian and Ndongo-Mantum divisions (Doctors Without Borders report on Cameroon refugees in Nigeria, accessed on 17 January, 2019). Those in French Cameroon are mainly from towns and villages located close to the border with Cameroon (Ilustração 10). Thousands are also internally displaced within Ambazonia taking refuge in three main cities (Bamenda, Buea and Limbe). The fighting till now is concentrated in the rural areas largely under the control of armed groups while the urban centers above are controlled by the military with sporadic gunfire from time to time between government forces and Ambazonia fighters. The towns cited above have become a hub for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) across the region.

Military activities and events from 2017 to 2019

Following the brutal crack-down on protesters, the banning and arrest of the Anglophone Consortium leaders on 17 January 2017, the ADF chief Benedict Kuah declared the start of armed resistance against the Cameroon military. The objective was to render Ambazonia ungovernable and to increase the cost of the occupation (Amindeh, 2017). On 9 September ADF fighters attacked a military base in Besong-abang killing three gendarmes (Daily Nation, 2017). On 11 and 12 September, an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) controlled from a mobile phone was activated at Mobile Nkwen and Hospital Roundabout in Bamenda respectively targeting government troops causing serious injuries to three police officers. On 11 September, another IED destroyed a dormitory in Sacred Heart College Mankon – Bamenda with no casualties. On 1 October, Ambazonia Independence Day, over a hundred

demonstrators were killed in protest across Southern Cameroons-Ambazonia. On 9 October, Cameroon forces claimed to have prevented hundreds of Nigerians crossing the border to fight alongside the separatists. On 8 November, Ambazonia fighters killed three gendarmes, two of them around Bamenda airport and one in the out-skirts of Bamenda (Reuters, 2017: 8). On 17 November, four soldiers were killed in Kembong village in Mamfe town in the Southern zone and confirmed by the ADF chief of staff, Benedict Kuah, during an interview with Reuters. International monitors reported that at least 20 to 40 people were killed in September alone. By the end of December, about 13 confrontations took place between Cameroon armed forces and Amba fighters (some believed to come from Nigeria) left at least seven Cameroon military dead (Voice of America, 2017). By the end of 2017, the main arms groups including the ADF, SOCADEF, Tigers and allied forces were believed to number between 500 to 1000 man-strong operating in 7 out of the 13 divisions that make up the Southern Cameroons. Most of the fighting took place in the Southern zone with just very few incidents in the Northern zone.

Military activities and events of 2018

On 5 January, the President of the Ambazonia Interim Government Sesiko Ayuk Tabé and eleven others were arrested in Naira hotel Abuja-Nigeria. Thirty-eight others mostly asylum seekers were also arrested in Taraba state by Nigerian authorities. Although the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR, 2019) in Nigeria condemned the arrest and handing over of the asylees to the Cameroonian government, Nigeria still went on to arrest more refugees suspected of supporting the ADF and sent them to Cameroon. Across the border in Southern Cameroon, the violence worsens. On 29 January, Senior government officials were arrested in Kupe Muanenguba division by the “Tigers” of Ambazonia, one of the armed groups fighting for independence. On 25 January, gunmen believed to have crossed from Nigeria engaged Cameroon border post guards at Ekok in a three-hour long gun fight with casualties on both sides. On 1 February, another attack killed three soldiers and was condemned by the French Foreign ministry spokeswoman, Agnes Von der Muhll, when addressing reports following the United States suspension of military aid to Cameroon (Reuters, 2019).

It should be recalled that France is the main international backer of the Biya's regime in Cameroon and French companies control the oil industry, the railway, shipping, timber exploitation and other industries in Cameroon. On 11 January, the Divisional office for Batibo was seized by ADF forces ahead of celebrations marking the 1961 plebiscite day. On 3 March, government forces invaded Batibo forcing over 400 residents from five villages including Korgwe, Effa, Koroko, Ambo and Angie to flee their home. Civilians who could not escape were also arrested, and the abandoned villages were burned down by the Cameroon military. On 4 February, Samuel Ikome Sako was voted in as Acting Interim president of Ambazonia to replace the captured President, Sesiko Ayuk Tabé. The new Interim government leadership adopted self-defense as the main policy for prosecuting the struggle. This Interim Government shift in policy to join the armed faction of the revolution led by the ADF was highly welcomed. On 15 March, three Tunisian civil engineers working on the Kumba-Isangele highway were kidnapped and two were later killed and one rescued. On 25 April, Cameroonian forces were forced to retreat from Belo, a town in the NW region of the country as fighting intensified across Ambazonia with clashes in Mbonge, Muyuka, Konye, Batibo, Bangem etc. This culminated with the killing of at least 30 people by French Cameroon military in Pinyin in the Northern zone. As 20th May celebrations marking the end of the Federation

and annexation of Southern Cameroons approached, Ambazonian fighters opt for the resistance by announcing a complete lockdown of the territory, forbidding all forms of movement. Barricades were mounted on major highways including the Buea-Kumba highway, Widikum-Mamfe road, among others. In August there were deadly clashes in Mabonji and Ediki, Babungo, Zhoa in Wum and Lebialem (Cameroon News Agency, 2019). September saw serious clashes in Muyuka, Chomba, Zhoa and Buea as Amba fighters forced the military to retreat from Balikumbat and Ngo-Ketunjia. By the end of September, fighting was reported in twelve out of the fourteen divisions that make up Ambazonia with 183 clashes recorded between the ADF and French Cameroon forces. Political leaders like the SDF chairman, Ni John Fru Ndi, and some clergy men were attacked. Schools like Presbyterian school Nkwen were equally attacked. November was the peak of the conflict with over 120 Amba fighters killed and over 30 government forces. The violence escalated further on 21 December with the killing of the ADF military commander, General Ivo Mbah, in an ambush in Teke village in Kumba. During President Paul Biya's end of year speech on 31 December, Biya called on the fighters to drop their weapons or be neutralized. On the opposite end of the aisle, the President of the Ambazonia Interim Government promised a switch from a defensive to an offensive strategy to the war and promised hell to Cameroon forces fighting in Ambazonia.

Military activities and events of 2019

As the new year began, fighting continued in Muyuka, Mamfe, Mbonge, Bafut and on 24 January, General Andrew Ngoe, one of the commanders of SOCADEF rebel group was killed in Matoh village by government troops. In anticipation of National Youth Day on February 11, a 10-day lockdown was declared by Amba fighters from 5 to 14 February although the main fighting group, the ADF, argued that it was counterproductive. The celebration was a fiasco across Ambazonia because it was highly boycotted. Two Amba fighters were killed in Bamenda as they tried to disrupt the festivity (Journal du Cameroon, 2019). On 14 March, the military burned-down a village in Dunga Mantung and Menchum killing at least 12 people with some burnt alive in their homes (CNA, 2019). Human Rights Watch has been following the war and confirms that over 170 people were killed and hundreds of houses were burnt by the Cameroon military in the northern zone (Human Rights Watch report, 28 March, 2019, accessed on 27 April 2019). As of 27 April, a total of 14 armed groups with membership of up to 20 000 men and women were taking part in the fighting across the territory. These groups include the ADF, SOCADEF, TSOA, Tigers, 7 KATA, Amba Guerrillas, ARA, Pythons, Red Dragons, SCFR (RK), Red vultures, Black Mambas, Bui Warriors and Makon warriors. These meant a significant increase in armed groups from 2017 to 2019 where the ADF, SOCADEF and the Tigers were the only groups fighting the military. Most recently, fighting has been reported in three French Speaking towns with more than 10 people killed, some believed to be fighters from French Cameroon recruited by the Ambazonia armed groups. In May 2019, the Swiss-based NGO called Humanitarian Development (HD) announced its intention to act as a mediator between Ambazonia and Cameroon to end the conflict. However, this initiative has not progressed much because the government of Cameroon hasn't signed up to the process and some separatist groups like the AGovC and Interim government have also refused to participate. In October 2019, the Cameroon government called for a dialogue that was not attended by the separatists who say their security to travel to Cameroon was not guaranteed. The government rejected calls for a return to federation but instead announced the granting of a special status to Southern Cameroon was outrightly rejected

by the separatists and federalists alike. The dialogue was considered a monologue. The President of Cameroon, Paul Biya, later stated that his intention of absorbing the Southern Cameroon minority into the Republic of Cameroon has failed due to cultural specificities and that is when he is granting them a special status within his country (Andzongo, 2019). As the conflict drags on, high-ranking personalities of international organizations like the European Union, International Human Rights Watch, the Norwegian Refugee Council, the Commonwealth, and United States government officials have visited Cameroon. On 20 April, the European Union parliament passed a resolution accusing Cameroon of human rights abuses and called on the government to initiate dialogue to end the conflict. In May, the EU parliament asked that the conflict be debated at the UN Security Council.

Consequences of the war as of May 3, 2019

In December 2018, the Belgium based International Crisis Group (ICG, 2018) placed the war in Southern Cameroons among the ten most violent conflicts in the world to watch in 2019 (ICG, 2019). National and international organizations have published conflicting reports on the impact of the war. ICG report of 2nd April (2019) states that in the last 20 months 350 000 people have fled Cameroon into neighboring Nigeria, 530 000 are internally displaced and 1850 Southern Cameroonians have been killed in the conflict. The report further states that at least 235 military and police officers, 650 civilians and nearly 1000 Amba fighters have been killed. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) report of October 2018 said that 437 000 people are internally displaced within Cameroon and 35 000 others are registered as refugees in neighboring Nigeria (United Nations High commission for Refugees report, accessed on September 26, 2018). Among these, 246 000 are from the Southern zone, 105 000 from the Northern zone and 86 000 from the Littoral and West



Ilustração II – Location of displaced persons

Source: Adopted from UNHCR 2019 appeal map.

regions of Cameroon. It further says that 35 000 of the refugees are asylum seekers and forecasts that the number of refugees in Nigeria will rise to 50 000 by the end of 2019.

The UN estimates that 1.3 million people need aid because of the conflict. Apart from killings and displacement of persons, political and other opinion leaders are targeted. The EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini termed the arrests and trail of political leaders in military courts as “disproportionate”. Human Rights Watch report of 28 March 2019 said at least 2554 civilians have been killed by the Cameroon military since 2017 in over 220 incidents and at least 170 civilians were killed from October 2018 to March 2019 alone. They have also documented the burning of homes, villages, schools, and churches by Cameroon’s military. Apart from killings, the Cameroon military has used civilian corpses as booby-traps in Bali and Kumbo. In the case of Bali, two civilians were killed and 11 seriously injured as they tried to pick a booby-trapped corpse on the street laden with explosives by the Cameroon military. The Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO) reported a similar abuse again in Bali in November 2018, when Cameroon military killed 42 unarmed civilians and burnt their bodies (UNPO article 21484, accessed on April 29, 2019). This is in violation of the additional Protocol of the Geneva Conventions relating to the “Protection of Victims during Armed Conflicts”, which Cameroon acceded and ratified on 16 March, 1984. Furthermore, Amnesty International (2018) reported that 400 civilians were killed from January to September 2018 alone in about 260 security incidents. They also blamed government forces for the burning of villages, indiscriminate killings, arrests, and torture of dozens of people across Ambazonia. Kidnappings has become rampant, allegedly perpetrated by some Ambazonia armed groups and government militias operating in the restive regions. Amnesty like others also noted that the conflict has displaced thousands of civilians both within Ambazonia, French Cameroon and across the border into Nigeria (Amnesty International, 2018). Caritas NGO on its part has reported that the conflict has forced 160 000 people out of their homes into the bushes, and another 26 000 into Nigeria as refugees and 95 percent of the internally displaced people have less than 3-days food reserves left (Caritas report of July 2018 on Cameroon accessed on 26 May, 2019). The figures reported by these organizations are far below the actual figures as access to the regions and information is restricted by government forces. For instance, Cameroon authorities denied a human rights researcher entry into Cameroon on 12 April, 2019 for fear that she will detail document human rights abuses carried-out in the Southern Cameroons (Human Rights Watch report accessed on May 2 2019).

Apart from foreign organizations, national NGOs such as the Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa (CHRDA) and the Ayah Foundation have been reporting on the conflict. CHRDA 2019 report (CHRDA report of 3 June, 2019, accessed on 16 April, 2019) shows that at least ninety-six villages have been torched by fire in the Southern zone with sixty-seven severely burnt. Out of the eighty villages affected in the Northern zone, forty-eight have been destroyed by burning (Table O2 and O3). The effects of the war are closely reported by local newspapers like The Guardian. An example is the report of the atrocities in Belo, a small town in North West Cameroon (The Guardian Newspaper, 2018).

The role of International lobbyists cannot be underestimated. For instance, Clout Public Affairs lobbying firm whose managing director is U.S. President Donald Trump’s former acting attorney general, Matthew Whitaker, signed a contract to lobby for Cameroon for \$55,000 a month in Washington (Robbie and Jefcoate, 2019). These groups have covered up the abuses committed by government forces by publishing contrary reports on the social media. They have also used their influence to downplay the carnage and convinced the international stakeholders like the UN, EU, African Union (AU), etc. not to intervene in the conflict.

Table 02 – Villages burn-down in the Northern zone of Ambazonia

North West Region

Division	Sub-division	Towns/villages	Damage level	Division	Sub-division	Towns/villages	Damage level	
Bui	Jakiri	Sob	Partial	Momo	Batibo	Batibo	Destroyed	
	Kumbo	Kumbo	Partial			Ashong	Destroyed	
		Mbiame	Destroyed			Bessi	Destroyed	
		Meluf	Significant			Ambo	Destroyed	
		Tadu	Destroyed			Guzang	Destroyed	
		Square	Significant			Kugwe	Destroyed	
		Shisong	Partial			Teiben	Destroyed	
	Oku	Ngemsiba	Destroyed			Efah	Destroyed	
		Mbokevu	Destroyed		Mbengwi	Mbengwi	Significant	
	Mbven	Mbven town	Partial			Njinibi	Destroyed	
		Noni	Djottin			Destroyed	Njindom	Destroyed
	Noni		Noni			Destroyed	Nyen	Destroyed
	Nkum	Kuvlu	Partial		Tudig	Destroyed		
		Tatum	Destroyed		Acha	Significant		
Mbam		Significant	Zen	Destroyed				
Donga Mantung	Nwa	Sabongari	Significant	Njikwa	Njikwa	Destroyed		
		Nfe	Significant		Oshie	Destroyed		
		Mbaw	Significant	Ngwo	Destroyed			
		Sih	Significant	Ngie	Destroyed			
	Ako	****	****	Andek	Destroyed			
	Ndu	****	****		Widikum-Menka	Diche 2	Destroyed	
Misaje	****	****	Bifang	Destroyed				
Nkambe	Mbot	Destroyed	Eka	Destroyed				
Menchum	Wum	Wum	Destroyed	Ngodop	Ngodop	Ndop town	Destroyed	
	Fura Awa	****	****			Bamuka	Destroyed	
	Menchum valley	Befang	Destroyed			Bamali	Significant	
		Fungon town	Significant			Bamessing	Significant	
	Fungom	Esu	Destroyed			Bambalang	Significant	
		Zhoa	Destroyed			Babessi	Significant	
Kuk		Destroyed	Balikumbat	Bamunkumbit	****			
Mezam	Weh	Destroyed	Funding	Funding	Partial			
		Bamenda 1, 2, 3		Mbatu	Significant	Bum	Bum	Partial
	Bali	Bali	Destroyed	Belo	Belo	Significant		
	Bafut	Bafut	Significant		Anjang	Destroyed		
	Santa	****	****		Anyajua	Destroyed		
	Tubah	Bambili	Partial		Djiichami	Destroyed		
		Bambui	Partial		Sho	Destroyed		
	Total NW	34	80		Boy	Belo	Ashing	Destroyed
							Njinkedjem	Destroyed
							Baingo	Destroyed
Jinkfuin							Destroyed	
Ntungfe							Partial	
Fundeng							Partial	
Muwa							Significant	
Anjin							Destroyed	
Acha							Significant	
Fuli				Partial				
Njinikom				Destroyed				
Wombong				Destroyed				
Kikfuini				Significant				

N.B. The villages included in this list are only those villages whose burning-down are corroborated by video recordings taken by amateurs using mobile phones as of 27th April 2019. Villages with ** are those with unconfirmed reports.

Source: Update from the list published by Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa (CHRDA) 2019.

Table 03 – Villages burn-down in the Southern zone of Ambazonia

South West Region

Division	Sub-division	Towns/villages	Damage level	Division	Sub-division	Towns/villages	Damage level	
Fako	Tiko	Mutengene	Partial	Meme (cont.)	Mbonge	Bekondo	Destroyed	
	Limbe 1, 2, 3		****			Kombone mission	Destroyed	
Buea		Muea	Partial			Mbonge	Destroyed	
	Maumu	Destroyed	Nganjo			Destroyed		
Muyuka		Bolifamba (Mile 16)	Significant			Kwa Kwa	Destroyed	
		Ekona	Significant			Ekombe	Destroyed	
		Muyuka	Significant			Small Ekombe	Destroyed	
		Muyenge	Destroyed			Bole Bakundu	Destroyed	
		Ikata	Destroyed			Foe Bakundu	Destroyed	
		Camdev	Destroyed			Bokosso	Destroyed	
		Malende	Destroyed			Bai Panya	Destroyed	
		Bafia	Destroyed			Bakumba	Destroyed	
Yoke	Partial	Big Nghandi	Destroyed					
Idenau – West Coast		****	****			Edikui	Destroyed	
Lebialem	Wabane	****	****			Kuke Mbono	Destroyed	
	Fontem (Menji)	Azi	Destroyed			Bombele	Destroyed	
		Menji	Destroyed			Bangele	Destroyed	
Alou	Alou	Significant	Kumu kumu			Destroyed		
Manyu	Akwaya	Kajifu 1	Destroyed			Mbalangi	Destroyed	
		Kajifu 2	Destroyed			Mofako Butu	Destroyed	
		Beteme	Destroyed			Nake	Destroyed	
		Dadi	Destroyed			Big Massaka	Destroyed	
		Navas	Destroyed			Bongwana kake 1	Destroyed	
		Ngali	Destroyed			Bokoko kake 2	Destroyed	
		Kumku	Destroyed			Maromba 1	Destroyed	
		Manfe	Significant			Big Ekombe	Destroyed	
	Mamfe	Besongabang	Significant			Banga Bakundu	Destroyed	
		Nchang	Significant			Mbongo Balondo	Destroyed	
		Eshobi	Significant			Boa Balondo	Destroyed	
		Upper Bayang	Ekoto			Destroyed	Illoani Balondo	Destroyed
	Kendem		Destroyed			Ekondo Titi	Dipenda	Destroyed
	Gurifén		Destroyed				Kumbe Balue	Destroyed
	Mbeme		Significant	Ekondo Nene	Destroyed			
	Ashum		Significant	Lipenja Barombi	Destroyed			
	Ebensuk		Significant	****	****			
	Tali 1		Significant	Kombo-Abedimo	****			
Tali 2	Significant		Mundemba	Fabe Bima	Significant			
Eyumojock	Kembong	Destroyed		Ndiba Ngolo	Partial			
	Agborkem	Destroyed		Lipendja 2	Significant			
	Njeke	Significant		Fabe	Significant			
	Ossing	Destroyed	Kombo Itindi	****				
Meme	Kumba 1, 2, 3	Mambanda – Teke	Destroyed	Idabato	****			
		Kumba town – kang	Significant	Dikome Balue	****			
	Konye	Konye	Destroyed	Toko	Ikoti Ngolo	Significant		
		Dipenda Bakundu	Destroyed	Nguti	Lipenja 1	Significant		
		Wone	Destroyed		Nguti	Significant		
		Dikomí Bafaw	Destroyed		Babensi	Destroyed		
		Ikiliwindi	Significant	Manyemen	Destroyed			
		Lobange	Destroyed	Kupe Muanenngo	Tombel	Etam	Destroyed	
						Tomel	Destroyed	
					Ebonji	Destroyed		
		Ngusi	Destroyed					
		Bouba 3	Destroyed					
		Bangem	Mombo	Destroyed				
Total SWR				32	96			
GRAND TOTAL				66	176			

N.B. The villages included in this list are only those villages whose burning-down are corroborated by video recordings taken by amateurs using mobile phones as of 27th April 2019. Villages with ** are those with unconfirmed reports.

Source: Update from the list published by Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa (CHRD) 2019.

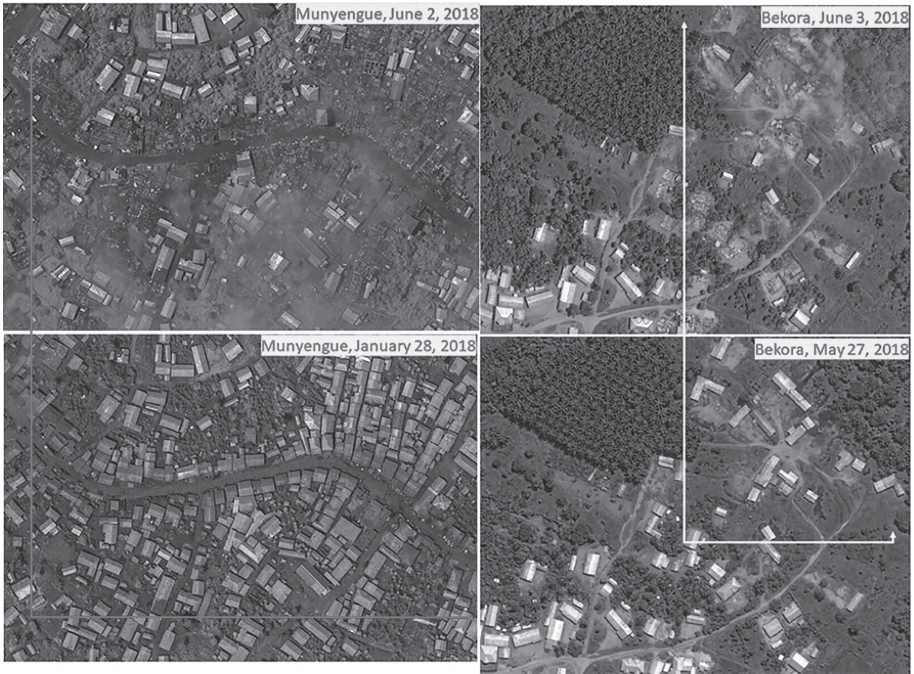


Ilustração 12 – Villages in Southern zone of Ambazonia before and after they were burnt down.

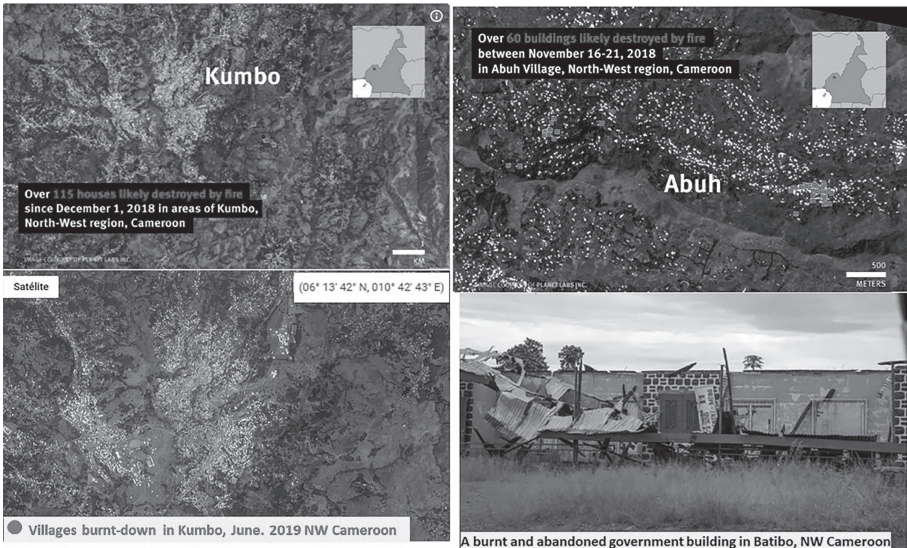


Ilustração 13 – Villages in Northern zone of Ambazonia before and after they were burnt down.

The number of villages destroyed by burning in the northern zone as shown on table 1 corroborates the fact that heavy fighting has been going on in Momo, Boyo and Bui divisions for a long time (Ilustração 10). Most of the burnings are documented by CHRDA in its 3 June 2019 report. Similarly, table 03 shows wide scale burning of villages in Manyu, the birthplace of the armed struggle, Meme and Muanenguba division in the southern zone. A total of 96 villages in 66 sub-divisions have been touched so far with 80 in the northern zone and 96 in the southern zone. The arson perpetrated by French Cameroon's military in Ambazonia forced the few who believed in a united Cameroon to change their stance in favour of full independence for the English regions. Many now consider the independence strive as an existential battle or struggle for survival. Recent clashes have been more violent than previous ones partly due to the increasing sophistication of Amba fighter's weaponry, experience and increasing frustration within the ranks of the military. The government expected a quick victory against the separatists but has been taken aback by the resilience of the population and the inability of the military to surprise the resistance. Southern Cameroonians in the diaspora have launched numerous campaigns (e.g. My Trip to Buea, Pa Che, National AK, Liberation Pins, etc.) to raise funds and sustain the war. They have upgraded the firepower of the Amba fighters by replacing Dane guns with machine guns and sniper rifles. Compelled by their inferior weapons and number, the armed groups have adopted guerrilla warfare tactics to fight the military. Government troops have responded with rampant burning of homes and the adoption of the scorched-earth policy. This military response has been interpreted as a sign of frustration as entire villages whose occupants are believed to be sympathetic with the Ambazonian course have been burned down. This has boomeranged on the state as the homeless population are increasingly joining the ranks of the fighters. It should be noted that the burning of villages in war violates national and international human rights laws and a host of other laws including the classical common article 3 of the 4th Geneva Convention 1949 and the Additional Protocol II to the same Convention dealing with non-international conflicts. There is plenty of substantial information shown by satellite images, aerial photographs, amateur videos, and photos about the destruction caused by the war. The interpretation of satellite images and aerial photographs corroborate onsite reports about the burning

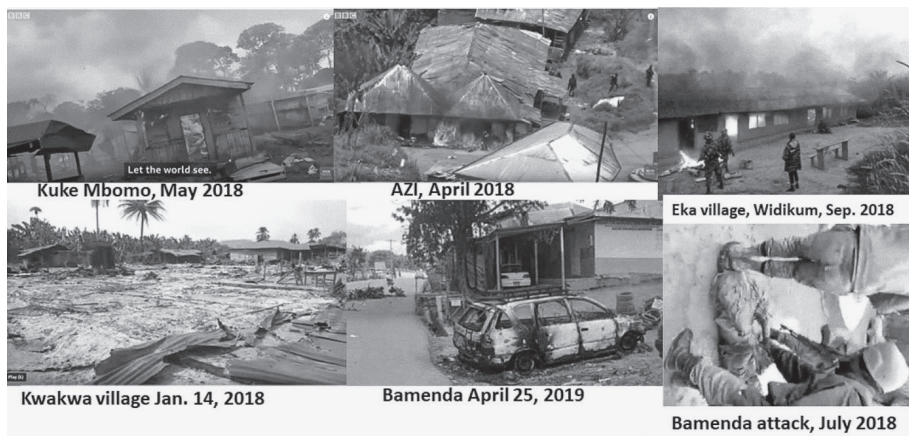


Ilustração 14 – Amateur images showing homes and villages on fire in Ambazonia.

of villages and towns. A visual comparison of the satellite image of Munyengue (Ilustração 12) taken on 28 January and 2 June, 2018 shows several villages and towns raised to the ground by fire. The satellite image of Bekora taken on 27 May and 3 June 2018 shows smoke rising from the village. This is the same for Kumbo and many other towns and villages burnt across Southern Cameroons. The amateur video recordings showing the burning and aftermath of Kwakwa (Amateur video of Kwakwa burning and Kuke (Amateur video of Kuke village burning accessed on 26 May, 2018) are constant reminders of the carnage caused by Cameroon military. From one of the videos taken by a hidden camera in Azi village (Ilustração 13), the photo and video footage show men dressed in Cameroon military wear carrying-out the burning. In a similar video taken in Eka village in Widikum sub-division NW region, the military men confirmed that they burnt the school because it was a hideout for Amba fighters (Ilustração 13). A host of satellite images showing the burned-down villages has been published by Human Rights Watch. Apart from villages and schools, medical facilities have also been burnt. Among them is the Kumba district hospital burned down on 11 February, 2019 killing four people including two patients who could not run. Another hospital located in Muyenge was also burned down on 30 March, 2019. Due to attacks suffered by medical personal and their facilities, health care operations are largely in the hands of Doctors Without Borders (DWF video, accessed on 7 October, 2018). Several churches have also been burned. Clergymen have been caught in the crossfire and some executed by the Cameroon military. A good example is Trumann Wesco killed by the military in NW Cameroon (The New York Times, 2018).

Conclusion

The expansion of German Kamerun from 1911-1916 reflects the way Africa was partitioned. The boundary demarcations were mainly driven by politico-economic motives with little regards to socio-cultural implications. As such, ethnic groups were separated by the artificial boundaries. The division of Neu Kamerun in 1916 divided the Beti-Pahuin people (a Bantu ethnic group) with some living in Cameroon, Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and São Tomé and Príncipe. The Fangs now live in the South Province of Cameroon and across the boundary into Río Muni in Equatorial Guinea and South into Gabon, and Congo. However, families living across the borders continue to interact with each other, but national custom checks and other border restrictions has rendered communication between these tribes difficult.

The annexation of small and weak African states by stronger neighbors was all facilitated by their former colonial masters. In the examples examined in this paper, the European colonial masters violated almost all the provisions of UN General Assembly Resolution 1514 of 14 December 1960 that mandated the colonizers to prepare their colonies for self-rule. They did not transfer powers to the peoples without conditions nor allowed the peoples to freely determine their political status. The annexation of small states by their larger neighbors (e.g. Saharawi and Morocco, Ethiopia and Eritrea, Sudan and South Sudan, Cameroon and Southern Cameroons, etc.) violated point 5 of that resolution which prohibits all forms of interference in the affairs of other states.

Secondly, the forceful bringing together of states that were designated for independence by the UN and the colonial masters has been a recipe for conflicts. For instance, the federation between Ethiopia and Eritrea, Sudan and South Sudan, Cameroon and Southern Cameroons, etc., all failed as the stronger states ended up annexing the smaller ones. Even Senegal and Gambia failed to maintain the Senegambia federation or evolve to a unitary state. War has consumed these states.

The root causes of the Southern Cameroon conflict have never been addressed for fear that the country will regain its sovereignty and take away the resources Cameroon's economy depend on for growth. The fact that the government keeps insisting that the problem lies in differences in language, culture and tradition are all political fabrications aimed at twisting the facts. The root cause lies in the deceitful implementation of UN resolution 1415 of 10 December 1960 and abolition of the 1972 federation that changed the form of the union agreed upon during the Fouban conference of 1961.

The systematic closure of Southern Cameroons institutions after 1961 (e.g. the house of Chiefs, Prime ministerial position), the removal of Southern Cameroons symbols (e.g. the Blue and White flag, the Mobile Wing Police force), the closure of state corporations (e.g. Medino, Power Camp, National Produce Marketing Board, WADA, Amity and Cameroon bank, Tiko Warf and airport, etc.) and the renaming of Southern Cameroons to NW and SW provinces of Cameroon has been a bitter pile for Southern Cameroon nationalists to swallow. Worst still, the twisting of history (e.g. the celebration of 20th May instead of 1st October as independence day), the eradication of the Common Law and English system of educational and the over taxation of top Southern Cameroons entrepreneurs like Niba Auto, Nanga construction, etc. was considered as a means to destroy their businesses and wipe the Southern Cameroons identity.

Despite national and international pressure, the Biya's regime as the Ahidjo regime have remained unapologetic, arrogant, and reluctant to change course by calling for an inclusive dialogue. The national Dialogue held in November 2019 was largely a monologue because Southern Cameroon nationalist movements were absent. The declaration of President Paul Biya during the 2019 Paris Peace conference that his efforts to integrate the anglophone minority into the francophone majority have failed only buttress the fact that Southern Cameroons identity cannot be erased. The African Union and the UN Security Council must step in now to stop the bloodshed. If the current rate of indiscriminate killing, kidnappings and lawlessness continue, this may give room for terrorist organizations already operating in the North of Cameroon to infiltrate the territory and take the struggle. Terrorist groups such as the Islamic States, al-Qaeda and Boko Haram are known to exploit protracted conflicts especially by oppressed populations who feel abandoned by the international community. If this happens, the threat would not be limited to Southern Cameroon but extend to the region and the world at large.

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