



Foreign Affairs Committee

Committee Office House of Commons London SW1A 0AA
Website www.parliament.uk

Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP
Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
London, SW1A 2AH

11 December 2018

Dear Foreign Secretary,

I am writing with regards the current situation in Cameroon. The Foreign Affairs Committee has heard various reports of violence and conflict particularly in the North-West and South-West regions which concerns us greatly. I am writing therefore to ascertain your understanding of the situation currently and the UK's current and planned response.

We will be placing this letter and your response in the public domain.

Tom Tugendhat MP
Chair

16 January 2019

Tom Tugendhat MP
Chair, Foreign Affairs Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA



Foreign &
Commonwealth
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King Charles Street
London SW1A 2AH

Secretary of State

Dear Tom,

I am writing to update you on the situation in Cameroon, in particular on the worsening violence in the Anglophone North-West and South-West regions.

The UK has a longstanding relationship with Cameroon and we value our shared history and cooperation. The UK and Cameroon cooperate closely in the fight against Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa. Cameroonian armed forces participate in the Multinational Joint Task Force's campaign against these terrorist groups who are active in the Lake Chad Basin, including the extreme north of Cameroon. We also enjoy a commercial relationship beneficial to both nations and close people to people ties.

I am, however, deeply concerned about the deteriorating situation in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon. These areas suffer from high levels of violence, deaths and human rights abuses and violations perpetrated by both security forces and armed separatists.

Violence and security incidents in the Anglophone regions have increased over the course of 2018. The roots of the current crisis are found in decades of perceived and real marginalisation of the two Anglophone regions by the Government of Cameroon, as well as growing dissatisfaction with Cameroon's highly centralised system of Government.

As the Committee is aware, the recent violence began in 2016 when protests by Anglophone teachers and lawyers, against the imposition of Francophone curricula and legal system, were met with a heavy-handed response by security forces. Armed separatist attacks on security forces and civilians, radical voices in the diaspora and growing criminality are now playing a significant role risking further deterioration.

A UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) report in July 2018 highlighted an increase in targeted assassination or abduction of state officials and security and defence forces by separatist groups, along with subsequent retaliation by state security forces. Civilians have been severely affected by the

deteriorating violence. As of November 2018, the conflict in the Anglophone regions has displaced over 437,500 persons internally (including over 30,000 registered refugees in Nigeria), about 10% of the region's population. Many civil servants have left the regions and thousands of children are into their third year without education.

The UN launched a flash appeal in May 2018 for support for the Anglophone regions. DFID have contributed £2.5m to address immediate humanitarian and medical needs identified by the appeal, and have also provided a humanitarian protection specialist to UN OCHA.

I, my predecessor, and the Minister of State for Africa, Harriett Baldwin MP, have been actively engaged on this issue and have made clear to the Government of Cameroon the urgency of tackling the underlying issues in the Anglophone regions. I welcome President Biya's recognition that there needs to be dialogue, and rapid decentralisation. The UK believes that the Government of Cameroon also needs to take appropriate action to restore law and order; charge or release all Anglophone detainees currently held without charge and, crucially, enter into a meaningful, inclusive, and purposeful dialogue to address the core Anglophone grievances. The absence of a political process risks worsening the crisis further. We have offered to support credible dialogue efforts where appropriate, drawing on our experience in Northern Ireland, and call on all parties to engage.

I agree with the Committee that the situation in the Anglophone regions is of real concern. The UK will continue to work alongside the international community, including the UN, to encourage and support efforts to resolve the crisis. Our recent statement (<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/preventing-further-conflict-in-cameroon-and-the-lake-chad-basin>) at the UN Security Council during the UN Office for Central Africa briefing set out our increasing concerns and included recommendations for action and the offer of support.

It is vital that all parties now work together to secure a peaceful future for all Cameroonians.

Yes
JH

THE RT HON JEREMY HUNT MP