

THE IMPACT OF THE TWO WEEKS LOCKDOWN DECLARED BY THE SEPERATIST LEADERS ON THE CIVILIAN POPULATION OF THE NW and SW REGIONS OF CAMEROON.

INTRODUCTION

The English-Speaking Regions of Cameroon continue to witness crucial Human Rights Abuses- recording disturbing increase and barbaric methods of killings, most especially during the recent two weeks lock down. On the third week of August 2023, Separatists announced on social media a 2 weeks' lockdown to take effect on Saturday, September 2nd 2023. This was one of the numerous lockdowns that separatist fighters have imposed on the population ever since the advent of the socio-political crisis in October 2016 which has now resulted in an armed conflict between the separatist fighters and the state armed forces. The population of the Northwest and Southwest Regions have been compelled to unwillingly succumb to these lockdowns out of threats and fear of losing their lives and having witnessed many people died, lose their loved ones and properties.

The escalation of this violence directly affect the civilian population. The Bihndumlem Humanitarian Association of Peace and Hope (BIHAPH) in Cameroon has taken upon themselves to bring to light the most recent cases of Human Right Violation/Abuses during the two weeks lock down. This report involves atrocities committed by Defense and Security Forces (DSF), Non-State Armed Groups (NSAG) and general community including individuals who are taking advantage of the situation.

Reason: To Boycott AND DENOUCE GOVERNMENT OFICIAL School resumption for the Academic year 2023/2024- A STRATEGY TO MAKE THE GOVERNMENT UNGOVERNABLE.

Social effects.

Children are the most affected; they have lost up to 80 hours of learning while their peers in the other 8 regions of the country continue learning. These students suffer for a crime they know nothing about. The rate of social ills in these regions always skyrockets during lockdowns. This is manifested in increased theft, child sexual abuse, and several rape cases reported. Worst of all is the loss of lives on both conflicting sides and the general public

Also, during the September lockdown , an upsurge in hunger was observed given that families stayed indoors with little or no activity to keep them distracted. Multiple online news agencies reported the case of a man who died of starvation during this period in Bamenda. Cries of babies

could be heard echoing in the neighborhood. A majority of parents reported suffering from psychological trauma as they see their children stay indoors while their peers attend school in other regions.

Economic effects

Business persons paid the price while the abandonment of farms increased hunger and poverty is contributing to crippling the economy of these two regions in particular and Cameroon in general. The West and Northwest regions are the heart of agriculture in the country and so, when the Northwest was locked for 2 weeks, the West region and other regions could not meet the food consumption of the population as reported by some newspapers. This has exorbitantly contributed to a hike in food prices suffocating the vulnerable population. A lockdown is directly proportional to a slump in economic activities as traders lose business opportunities. They traded just for 14 days in September, yet they got bills to pay at the end of the month. All of these have contributed to rising poverty and increasing the number of needy persons in these regions.

Political effects

The political climate in Cameroon these days is very tense. The civil disobedience in the North West and South West Regions, the effective implementation of ghost towns, the divided opinions among members of government, and the silence of the crown on the killings in the North West and South West regions have created more animosity and uncertainty in the political landscape.

Most public offices remained closed throughout the lockdown period and most administrators were never found in public. No official statement was made by the government. Instead, it was the state broadcaster that tried to paint the picture of normalcy in the country however, their efforts to paint a deceptive narrative was watered down by the private media and citizen journalist who flooded social media with pictures of empty streets as well as atrocities perpetrated during this period as seen below.

ATROCITIES PERPETRATED DURING THE TWO WEEKS SEPTEMBER 2023 LOCKDOWN IN THE NW AND SW REGIONS OF CAMEROON

NORTH WEST: AMBA SEPARATISTS BURN SCHOOLS, ATTACK FON'S PALACE

Uncertainty looms in Zhoa, a town in Menchum Division in the restive North West Region after Ambazonia separatists reportedly attacked and burned down school buildings in the area.

Reports say the armed separatists attacked and set ablaze some school buildings alongside some shops early Tuesday, September 19, as schools struggled to reopen in the English-speaking Regions after a two-week separatist lockdown.

The Amba Boys are also reported to have molested a woman, after mistaking her for a teacher at one of the schools they set ablaze.

Ambazonia separatists have been waging a fight against education in the Anglophone Regions of Cameroon since 2017, and hundreds of school buildings have been destroyed and thousands of students have missed school as a result.

Earlier this month, separatist fighters killed two head teachers in the Boyo Division of the North West, for promoting school resumption.

SOURCE: MMI

POPULATION STRANDED AS SEPARATISTS BAN SOME TRAVEL AGENCIES.

The population of Bamenda, located in the North West Region of Cameroon, is currently facing uncertainty due to conflicting messages from separatist groups. The confusion arises because numerous travel agencies have been prohibited from operating. Although some agencies were not explicitly mentioned in the ban, they have also chosen not to operate. This decision may be due to concerns about potential repercussions or as a show of solidarity with the banned agencies.

On the morning of September 19, there were no vehicles from any travel agency that entered or left Bamenda.

During MMI's visits to some of the banned agencies, it was observed that no activity was taking place. When visiting various parks, one notable difference is the absence of the usual struggle for tickets, loading, and offloading of goods and passengers

On September 12, a separatist fighter, who goes by the name 'Colonel Amour Car', released a video in which he declared that seven agencies would be prohibited from operating starting from September 19. However, he did not provide any reasons for this decision.

He went even further by issuing death threats to civilians who use the Amour Mezam, Vatican Express, Diamond Express, Guaranti Express, The People's Express, and Moghamo travel agencies.

The video does not provide any reasons, but many people have quickly associated it with an attempt to drive away businesses that are not owned by residents of the

SOURCE: CNA, MMI, LNR

NDIAN DIVISION: SEPARATISTS REPORTEDLY KILL FOUR AT PAMOL'S LOBE ESTATE

Ambazonia fighters are said to have killed four people at PAMOL Plantations' Lobe Estate in the Ndian Division of the South West Region of Cameroon.

PAMOL's release stated that the armed men stormed Pamol's Lobe Estate Camps I and VI and shot dead four people on Sunday.

Among them are Foin Ernest, a heavy-duty mechanic, and his son, Foin Marcel; Tiah According to reports, "FM Focus" and other Ambazonian separatist fighters were behind the attack.

In a video posted on the separatists' propaganda site on Facebook this morning, the self-proclaimed "FM Focus" could be seen warning civilians to evacuate the Lobe Estate of Pamol. In the video that was apparently shot at night, he said the date was September 17, 2023, and that they wanted to turn the Pamol Estate into a camp.

He said that the attack was "just a sample" and that it followed Pamol's refusal to evacuate the estate for him and his fighters.

The company urged its entire workforce to remain resolute and steadfast during the tough times currently faced by the company.

Rita and Sakwe Olga, wives of a Lobe Mill worker, and a retired Research employee.

SOURCE: MMI

AMBA FIGHTERS KILL BUSINESSWOMAN IN BELO FOR SELLING TO SOLDIERS

Ambazonia separatist fighters killed a businesswoman in Belo, in the restive North West Region of Cameroon, on Wednesday, 13 September 2023 for selling drinks to Cameroonian military officers

The separatists, our source said, had repeatedly warned and threatened her against selling drinks to military men who are maintaining security in the area, but she defied the warnings.

The killing of Marceline Bih is one amongst many cases of summary killings Ambazonia separatists have perpetrated on civilians in Anglophone Regions of Cameroon during the last weeks.

Human rights groups have also faulted both the military and separatists in the past for repeatedly targeting civilians during the past six years of armed conflict in Cameroon's Anglophone regions.

SOURCE: MMI

ANGLOPHONE CRISIS: TWO KILLED, ONE INJURED IN SEPARATIST ATTACK IN BUEA

Two civilians were shot dead and one other injured on the morning of September 15, 2023, after armed men believed to have been Ambazonia separatist fighters attacked a private vehicle around Mile 15, Buea.

The two people who died were identified as Kum Louis and Bernard, both residents of Muea, Buea. MMI could not immediately obtain the identity of the injured victim.

Reports say they were attacked on their way back from the Douala International Airport, where they had gone to escort a friend. Separatist fighters are reported to have attacked and shot them for violating an ongoing lockdown imposed on the two English-speaking Regions.

The attack comes one week after Ambazonia separatists attacked and killed three civilians in Muea, Buea, for violating their lockdown calls. Several civilians have been killed in the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon since separatist fighters started enforcing a two-week lockdown in the two Regions last week.

SOURCE: CNA, MMI

SEPARATIST FIGHTERS BURN A VEHICLE IN BAFUT FOR VIOLATING 'LOCKDOWN

Ambazonia separatist fighters operating in Bafut, a town located a few kilometres from Bamenda in the North West Region of Cameroon, burned down a pickup on Monday for operating during a lockdown they have imposed on the two English-speaking Regions.

A video that emerged online showed gunmen, who identified themselves as separatist fighters in Bafut, setting a vehicle on fire. MMI could not independently authenticate the footage.

The fighters claimed to have intercepted the vehicle at about 3 a.m. on Monday, September 11, as it was transporting beer and soft drinks to Wum, in the Menchum Division of the North West.

The gunmen accused the vehicle's driver of violating an ongoing two-week lockdown they are enforcing in the English-speaking Regions of Cameroon.

SOURCE: MMI

FAKO SDO IMPOSES MOTORBIKE RESTRICTIONS FOLLOWING DEADLY ATTACKS

Following a series of deadly Amba attacks, the Senior Divisional Officer (SDO) of Fako has implemented restrictions on the use of motorbikes in the cities of Buea, Limbe, Tiko, and Muyuka.

Mr. Chaibou, the SDO for Fako Division in the South West Region of Cameroon, recently signed the prefectorial order. This order imposes restrictions on the operation of commercial motorcycles in certain areas of Fako Division.

On Saturday, September 9, 2023, a decision was made in response to a series of deadly attacks within the division. The Ambazonia Separatist fighters, who purport to be fighting to establish an English-speaking state in the two Anglophone regions, claimed responsibility for these attacks.

According to the prefectural order, starting from the date of signature, there will be restrictions on the circulation of motorbikes in the cities of Buea, Limbe, Tiko, and Muyuka. These restrictions will be in effect from 8 p.m. to 6 a.m.

On Tuesday, September 5, 2023, a tragic incident occurred in Alou, Lebialem division of the south West Region. Armed separatist militants detonated an improvised explosive device (IED), resulting in the destruction of a military truck. Tragically, this act claimed the life of a civilian mother of five.

The next day, the fighters forcefully implemented a two-week lockdown in Muea, Buea and its environs

During the operation, three individuals were killed and several vehicles were set ablaze. The victims were all civilians going about their daily lives.

Furthermore, a woman was tragically killed during a crossfire between Ambazonia fighters and the Cameroonian military in Muyuka.

On the night of September 9, 2023, a local bomb exploded in Limbe, resulting in the tragic death of a commercial motorbike rider and leaving several others injured.

The future of the Anglophone region remains uncertain.

SOURCE: MMI

CAMEROON: SEPARATIST FIGHTERS BURN GENDARMERIE BRIGADE, PICKUP AT BORDER VILLAGE

In one of the videos, a group of armed men who identified themselves as members of the Ambazonia Defence Forces (ADF) in Buea and Donga Mantung brandished several items they said were “harvested” from the gendarmerie brigade.

Among the items were rifles, bullet-proof vests, two motorcycles, solar panels, military uniforms, helmets, and identification documents, among others.

The fighters said they seized control of the border village on September 6 after three days of fierce confrontations with the gendarmes.

The dislodging of gendarme officers from Lus means separatist fighters will be the new administration in the area.

For the civilian population, this may not be anything to celebrate. In one of their videos, the separatists said they had “cleared the border between Cameroon and Nigeria” and that they were freeing the area from the gendarmes.

SOURCE: MMI, CNA

EXPLOSION KILLS ONE, INJURES OTHERS IN LIMBE, CAMEROON

An explosive that went off the night of September 08 has killed one person and injured others in Limbe, in the restive South West Region of Cameroon

The explosive was detonated at Soccer City at Half Mile, Limbe, in the early hours of today. The deceased victim is said to be a motorcycle rider.

A Limbe resident told MMI they heard a loud explosive sound around 4 a.m. and later discovered it killed one person and injured others.

Many are still confused about who detonated the bomb, but some have blamed it on Ambazonia separatists, who imposed a two-week lockdown on Cameroon’s English-speaking Regions earlier this week.

SOURCE: MMI

BATIBO: PRINCIPAL PAYS 100,000FRS TO FREE FROM AMBA CAPTIVITY

The principal of a government college in Batibo subdivision of Momo division - North West region has finally been released from the camp of suspected Amba fighters recently. With names withheld, it is reported that the principal was severely and mercilessly beaten by his abductors in Batibo while returning from a coordination meeting on August 29th, 2023 in Batibo to prepare for the start of the academic year 2023/2024. According to our source, the principal was

removed from a public transport vehicle and taken to the bush and after all the torture melted on him, he had to pay a hundred thousand cfa to secure his release. At publishing time, the principal was receiving treatment in a health facility in Bamenda.

SOURCE: Makatinews

BIG BABANKI: TROOPS KILL AMBA FIGHTERS, COUPLE WITH MIX FEELINGS ON THE PRESENCE OF TROOPS IN THE VILLAGE.

Government forces stationed in Big Babanki Kejom Keku have shot and killed two Amba fighters on September 17 2023 at the Babanki Market.

According to information gathered by Makatinews, the two Amba fighters were on a verge of ambushing military men who were patrolling in the market. Given that Friday September 17th, 2023 was a market day in Big Babanki, the fighters found their way into the village and took a safeguard targeting the troops, but unfortunately, they were spotted by a market vendor who alerted the security forces of haven seen Amba fighters around the market.

The troops are reported to have surrounded the entire market and the area is reported to be where the fighters were.

According to our source, two fighters were killed while others are reported to have escaped. Gun firing in Big Babanki market during the act scared many people who were in the market as many had to park and leave for home.

It should be recalled that government troops were stationed in Big Babanki early June 2023, following a call from the Fon of the village, Fon Benjamin Vutsiboung requesting troops in the village, following the beating of old mothers in the village on May 20th 2023, as the women protest what they said was exorbitant tax Levy by Amba fighters to villagers. In a document which Makatinews has a copy and that went viral on social media, signed by the village Fon, he requested for creation of a security post in the village.

There have been mix feelings regarding the request of troops to Babanki. Many villagers contradict those who say, the troops were requested by the people of Babanki. They question who the people of Babanki is given that the document was never signed by the traditional authority of the village called (The Kwifon) that represents the village and its people. Those who hold this view argue that the document was signed by the fon, but not Kwifon, and so it carries his name not Babanki people.

The government is reported to have responded with the deployment of troops to the village without any notice if the troops would be permanent or just for a while.

The presence of troops in Big Babanki has seen the escape of Amba fighters and normal life on track, but already the villagers are beginning to call for the withdrawal of the troops given excesses committed by the troops in Babanki. The troops are said to be sexually abusing young girls and married women, a case in hand are seven young girls reported to have been hospitalized in Mbingo hospital in Kom, Boyo division after being raped by the troops, according to eyewitnesses in Mbingo.

SOURCE: Makatinews

SEPARATISTS RELEASE TWO CAPTIVES AFTER RECEIVING RANSOM, KEEP OTHERS HOSTAGE

Suspected separatist fighters have released two ladies who were kidnapped in Akum, Santa Sub Division, of the North West Region of Cameroon.

Separatist fighters are said to have intercepted their vehicle while they were en route to the West Region on September 5, 2023. The kidnappers dropped the ladies off at Santa on Thursday, September 7, 2023.

A source close to one of the victims stated that they paid an undisclosed amount of money but refused to disclose the exact sum.

SOURCE: MMI

BUEA SHRIEKS INTO LOCKDOWN AFTER WIDESPREAD GUNSHOTS, KILLINGS ON THURSDAY

Schools remained closed, and most shops and transport activities were grounded in Buea on Friday, September 8, after widespread gunshots in the city on Thursday killed at least three, and injured others.

From Muea, where the killings happened on Thursday morning, to Molyko, the city center of Buea, most shops remained visibly closed, and a considerably small number of vehicles could be seen on the road this morning.

Denizens were taken aback when armed separatists invaded neighborhoods in the city on Thursday morning, sparking clashes with the military.

The Thursday gunshots happened on the outskirts of the city in neighborhoods like Muea and Bwitingi and were heard in popular localities like Mayor's Street, Sandpit, and Dirty South.

In Muea, three people were killed, including two taxi drivers, and their vehicles burnt. This morning, the neighbourhood is quiet: shops and entertainment spots are closed; school buildings are locked and very few commercial taxis are driving to the locality.

SOURCE: MMI

MOTHER OF FIVE DIED IN LEBIALEM EXPLOSION

Madame Atabong, a mother of five, is one of those who died on Tuesday, September 5th, 2023, when Separatists attacked a military convoy in Alou, Lebialem Division, of Cameroon's restive South West Region.

A faction of the Separatist armed group in Lebialem Division claimed responsibility for blowing off a military truck with an improvised explosive device (IED) in a shocking video that MMI published.

Alou is one of the hardest-hit areas in the Anglophone Crisis, which started in 2016. It is also one of three administrative Subdivisions, including Fontem and Wabane.

Madam Atabong was one of the civilians onboard the military truck when it exploded.

According to reliable sources, Madam Atabong died on the spot. Many others were injured.

SOURCE: MMI

AMBAZONIA FIGHTERS ASSAULT TRAVELERS ALONG BATIBO-WIDIKUM ROAD

Armed men suspected to have been members of the Ambazonia Defence Force (ADF) assaulted travelers and collected sums of money from them as they halted tens of vehicles along the Batibo-Widikum road in the Northwest Region on Sunday, September 3.

A traveler told MMI the armed men mounted a roadblock around Nnen village near PHS Batibo, where they charged road users FCFA 10,000 for men and FCFA 5,000 for women. Those who resisted were brutalised.

Many of the occupants of the vehicles that used the road that day were traders who were headed for the Widikum market.

SOURCE: MMI

NORTH WEST: TWO TEACHERS KILLED IN BOYO AHEAD OF SCHOOL RESUMPTION

Two primary school teachers have been killed in Boyo Division of the North West Region as calls intensify for effective school resumption in the restive English-speaking Regions of Cameroon.

Fonjang Eric Denis, Head Master of GS Soalam in Mbessa, was killed alongside another teacher, Ndim John Budji on Saturday, September 2.

The two teachers are the latest victims among thousands of students and teachers who have been forced by armed separatists to pay the price for advocating for children to go to school.

Local sources in Boyo say the teachers were targeted and killed after attending a meeting concerning school resumption in Belo Subdivision, the administrative unit of Boyo Division.

SOURCE: CNA, MMI

SOUTHERN CAMEROONS CRISIS: 5 AMBA FIGHTERS KILLED IN MEME DIVISION

Cameroon's army said on Tuesday that its troops have killed five separatist fighters in the country's English-speaking region of Southwest, where a prolonged armed separatist conflict is in progress.

The Rapid Intervention Battalion, the country's elite force, raided a hideout of the fighters in the Mofako Butu locality of the region late Monday.

Among those killed was a "dreaded" separatist commander who called himself "General Bitter Cola," said Chamberlin Ntou'ou Ndong, senior divisional officer for Meme division where the hideout is located.

"He terrorized civilians, killing some. We are calling on all other fighters still in the bush to drop their weapons and embrace peace," Ndong said.

Separatists have been fighting to create an independent nation in Cameroon's Anglophone regions of Northwest and Southwest since 2017.

SOURCE: Cameroonconcordnews.com

CONCLUSION

Approximately more than 30 persons have been brutally killed as a result of the latest 2 weeks' lockdown in the North West and South West Regions as the armed conflict of Cameroon

continue to escalate. Poverty is at an all-time high while fear and uncertainty continue to grip the denizens of these regions. Some families have lost their loved ones while many more have been displaced. An all-inclusive dialogue is the popular opinion to bring the crises to an end, however, the government of Cameroon continues to insist in using the military option in upholding the sovereignty of the state and so they will not dialogue with terrorists. The separatist fighters on their parts are holding tight on their claims on using violence and killings to secede the English speaking regions from the rest of the country and form an independent state called Ambazonia. With many more deaths recorded, pundits wonder for how long the common man will continue to suffer in this war.

The above gross, barbaric inhuman human rights violation is not only as a result of the continuous escalation of the conflict but as day goes by violence in English speaking is not only committed by members of Defense and Security, Non State Armed Group afflict pain on the community but individuals as well take part in afflicting pain on the people while hiding behind the crisis. IT CAN BE DESCRIBED AS REAL TERROR AND A NEAR HUMANITARIAN DISASTER.

BIHAPH in documenting this inhumane act calls on all parties to uphold all the principles that dignify human life. Furthermore, children are still not allowed to go to school freely as schools are held from reopening in these regions, this act is violating right to education which is a fundamental human right therefore, BIHAPH sends this paper to serve as an eye opener to both state, international bodies and the population on ground to know the stage in which these two regions exist. Human life precedes all state entitlement and should be respected by all.