



## **Cameroon - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 25 June 2010**

### **Information on the current human rights situation in Cameroon**

An introductory paragraph in the *United States Department of State* review of 2009 published in March 2010 states:

“Human rights abuses included security force torture, beatings, and other abuses, particularly of detainees and prisoners. Prison conditions were harsh and life threatening. Authorities arbitrarily arrested and detained citizens advocating secession, local human rights monitors and activists, persons not carrying government-issued identity cards, and other citizens. There were incidents of prolonged and sometimes incommunicado pretrial detention and infringement on privacy rights. The government restricted freedoms of speech, press, assembly, and association, and harassed journalists. The government also impeded freedom of movement. Other problems included widespread official corruption; societal violence and discrimination against women; female genital mutilation (FGM); trafficking in persons, primarily children; and discrimination against indigenous people, including pygmies, and homosexuals. The government restricted worker rights and the activities of independent labor organizations. Child labor, hereditary servitude, and forced labor, including forced child labor, were problems.” (United States Department of State (11 March 2010) *2009 Human Rights Report: Cameroon*)

Reviewing events of 2009 a report issued in April 2010 by *Freedom House* states:

“The government continued to resist electoral reforms in 2009, and the opposition Social Democratic Front party launched a legal challenge to the nomination of election commissioners who it argued were ruling party loyalists. Restrictions on the press also continued during the year, but the publication of a critical report by the government-created National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms marked a step toward open public discussion” (Freedom House (April 2010) *Freedom in the World - Cameroon (2010)*)

A report by the *International Crisis Group* in May 2010 notes:

“Cameroon’s apparent stability in a turbulent region cannot be taken for granted. The co-option of elites through the distribution of state largesse, and the emigration of many educated young people provide a certain safety valve for tensions, but the failure of reform and continued poor governance mean people no longer believe in the rule of law or peaceful political change. Multiple risks of conflict exist in the build-up to presidential elections in 2011 and beyond” (International Crisis Group (25 May 2010) *Cameroon: Fragile State?*, p. i).

This report also states:

“In many respects, Cameroon is a classic fragile state. On all measures, its institutions are weak – low participation of the population in the political process, very problematic selection of political elites and little functioning oversight of government. Further, the regime still suffers from a significant legitimacy deficit – it is widely seen not as representative of any national aspirations, but as a collection of private interests.” (*Ibid*, p.24)

The overview of the *Amnesty International* report issued in May 2010 covering events of 2009 states:

“Government opponents, journalists and human rights defenders were arrested, detained and tried for offences relating to criticism of the government or its officials. At least one man was detained for alleged same-sex sexual activities. Detention conditions remained harsh and often life-threatening. Members of the security forces implicated in human rights violations in February 2008 continued to enjoy impunity. An unknown number of prisoners were on death row.” (Amnesty International (27 May 2010) *Report 2010, Cameroon*)

## References

Amnesty International (27 May 2010) *Report 2010, Cameroon*

<http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/refworld/rwmain?page=search&docid=4c03a839c&skip=0&publisher=AMNESTY&type=ANNUALREPORT&coi=CMR&advsearch=y&process=y&allwords=&exactphrase=&p;atleastone=&without=&title=&monthfrom=&yearfrom=&monthto=&yearto=&coa=&language=&citation=>

(Accessed 25 June 2010)

Freedom House (April 2010) *Freedom in the World - Cameroon (2010)*

<http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2010&country=7795>

(Accessed 25 June 2010)

International Crisis Group (25 May 2010) *Cameroon: Fragile State?*

<http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/africa/west-africa/cameroon/160Cameroon%20Fragile%20State.ashx>

(Accessed 25 June 2010)

United States Department of State (11 March 2010) *2009 Human Rights Report: Cameroon*

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2009/af/135942.htm>

(Accessed 25 June 2010)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to

the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

### **Sources Consulted**

Amnesty International  
BBC News  
BBC Monitoring  
Electronic Immigration Network  
Europa World Regional surveys of the world  
European Country of Origin Information Network  
Freedom House  
Google  
Human Rights Watch  
Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada  
International Crisis Group  
IRIN News  
Lexis Nexis  
Minority Rights Group International  
Norwegian Refugee Council Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre  
Online Newspapers  
Refugee Documentation Centre E-Library  
Refugee Documentation Centre Query Database  
Reliefweb  
United Kingdom Home Office  
Office of the United Nations High Commission on Human Rights Treaty Body Database  
United States Department of State  
UNHCR Refworld