



Cameroon – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 24 January 2012

Information on the level of police corruption in Cameroon.

A press release from the *Cameroon Center for Democracy and Human Rights* comments on the prevalence of corruption in Cameroon as follows:

“Corruption has eaten so deep into the fabric of the Cameroonian society such that it dictates almost every aspect of life. Misappropriation of public funds run across all state structures and public officials, including the President and his Ministers, the leadership of the National Assembly, and Directors of public corporations. In the same light, bribery has become the order of the day and virtually directs daily activities for civil servants and law enforcement officials who continue to engage in corrupt practices with impunity. The Government’s unwillingness to truly hold corrupt officials accountable for their actions is responsible for the institutionalization of corruption as a norm in Cameroon. Today, it is extremely difficult for anyone of a morally upright character to live and effectively function in the Cameroonian society.” (Cameroon Center for Democracy and Human Rights (25 June 2009) *Government Endorses Corruption by Arbitrarily Sentencing Anti-Corruption and Civil Society Activists in Cameroon*)

The 2011 *US Department of State* country report on Cameroon, in “Section 4 Official Corruption and Government Transparency”, states:

“Police were corrupt. Individuals reportedly paid bribes to police and the judiciary to secure their freedom. Police demanded bribes at checkpoints, and influential citizens reportedly paid police to make arrests or abuse individuals involved in personal disputes. Police were sanctioned for corruption during the year. For example, on January 18, DGSN Director Emmanuel Edou suspended Police Inspector Eric Brice Essama, who served at the public security office in Nkoteng, Center Region, for three months without pay for extortion and indiscipline; legal action was pending at year's end. On May 5, Edou suspended Second Grade Police Officer Zaza Mahamat for three months without pay for embezzlement of public funds and breach of trust; the case was pending prosecution at year's end.” (US Department of State (8 April 2011) *2010 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices – Cameroon*)

An *Amnesty International* report, in a section titled “Extrajudicial executions and excessive use of lethal force”, states:

“In July 2003 Cameroonian human rights organizations and independent newspapers reported that police used excessive and lethal force to break up a demonstration by motorcycle riders in Douala. They shot dead five people and wounded more than 30 others. The demonstrators were protesting against police corruption and extortion, and the beating to death by police of a motorcycle taxi rider who reportedly failed to stop at a roadblock. No action is known to have been taken against the police responsible for using lethal force and causing deaths during the protest, or those responsible for the death of the motorcycle taxi rider.” (Amnesty International (29 January 2009) *Cameroon: Impunity underpins persistent abuse*, p.35)

An *International Crisis Group* report, in a section titled "Indiscipline And Crime", states:

"The various branches of the security forces are affected by this criminalisation. An increasing number of officers have been suspended for corruption, trafficking, influence peddling and embezzlement, although seemingly to little effect. In May 2008, the head of the border police was dismissed for corruption in passport and visa delivery. In November 2008, two policemen were dismissed and charged with cooperating with a foreign intelligence service for accepting money to kidnap a refugee political opponent from Equatorial Guinea and deliver him to the country's embassy in Yaoundé. Even more serious is the fact that police officers are known to rent out their weapons at night to criminals or participate directly in robbery. In 2007 a police officer was suspended for armed assault. In late 2008, a policeman was arrested after robbing a private home in Yaoundé. In the country's forest reserves, some gendarmes rent their weapons to smugglers of protected species." (International Crisis Group (24 June 2010) *Cameroon: The Dangers of a Fracturing Regime*, p.10)

In an article published in an online blog Cameroon journalist *Christopher Ambe Shu* describes his own experience of police corruption and states:

"Cameroon has been rated twice as the most corrupt nation in the world by Transparency International, a Berlin-based good governance watch dog. The police corps is one of the services where corruption is so rife. It is easy to see policemen on control mission on the roads collecting small amount of money (500-2000Fcfa) from defaulting drivers so to let them go. Transporters here know how money-minded police men are, so much so that immediately they are stopped by the police, they just pull out a few coins for settlement. They are different illegal methods the police use to extort money from the public shamelessly. But Cameroon President Paul Biya, who is also the Supreme Commander of the country's police force, is worried about the battered image of the police. He has not only cited the police in his speech as too corrupt but has of late been dismissing some corrupt senior police officials from their posts and even suspending their salaries for months. The president even created a special force, called La police de Police, to check crime within the police force. The fight against corruption in the police is still alive, yet corruption is common. Although the police are supposed to promote human rights, protect lives and property, some Cameroonian policemen have instead been associated with the loss of lives and property and other human rights abuses." (Ambe Shu, Christopher (23 August 2008) *Cameroon's Corrupt Police: Isn't It Time For Repentance*)

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.

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