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COUNTRY OF ORIGIN INFORMATION REPORT

CAMEROON

27 OCTOBER 2006

RDS-IND

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN INFORMATION SERVICE

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Preface

- i This Country of Origin Information Report (COI Report) has been produced by Research, Development and Statistics (RDS), Home Office, for use by officials involved in the asylum/human rights determination process. The Report provides general background information about the issues most commonly raised in asylum/human rights claims made in the United Kingdom. The main body of the report includes information available up to 30 September 2006. The latest news section contains further brief information on events and reports accessed from 1 October 2006 to 27 October 2006.
- ii The Report is compiled wholly from material produced by a wide range of recognised external information sources and does not contain any Home Office opinion or policy. All information in the Report is attributed, throughout the text, to the original source material, which is made available to those working in the asylum/human rights determination process.
- iii The Report aims to provide a brief summary of the source material identified, focusing on the main issues raised in asylum and human rights applications. It is not intended to be a detailed or comprehensive survey. For a more detailed account, the relevant source documents should be examined directly.
- iv The structure and format of the COI Report reflects the way it is used by Home Office caseworkers and appeals presenting officers, who require quick electronic access to information on specific issues and use the contents page to go directly to the subject required. Key issues are usually covered in some depth within a dedicated section, but may also be referred to briefly in several other sections. Some repetition is therefore inherent in the structure of the Report.
- v The information included in this COI Report is limited to that which can be identified from source documents. While every effort is made to cover all relevant aspects of a particular topic, it is not always possible to obtain the information concerned. For this reason, it is important to note that information included in the Report should not be taken to imply anything beyond what is actually stated. For example, if it is stated that a particular law has been passed, this should not be taken to imply that it has been effectively implemented unless stated.
- vi As noted above, the Report is a collation of material produced by a number of reliable information sources. In compiling the Report, no attempt has been made to resolve discrepancies between information provided in different source documents. For example, different source documents often contain different versions of names and spellings of individuals, places and political parties etc. COI Reports do not aim to bring consistency of spelling, but to reflect faithfully the spellings used in the original source documents. Similarly, figures given in different source documents sometimes vary and these are simply quoted as per the original text. The term 'sic' has been used in this document only to denote incorrect spellings or typographical errors in quoted text; its use is not intended to imply any comment on the content of the material.

- vii The Report is based substantially upon source documents issued during the previous two years. However, some older source documents may have been included because they contain relevant information not available in more recent documents. All sources contain information considered relevant at the time this Report was issued.
- viii This COI Report and the accompanying source material are public documents. All COI Reports are published on the RDS section of the Home Office website and the great majority of the source material for the Report is readily available in the public domain. Where the source documents identified in the Report are available in electronic form, the relevant web link has been included, together with the date that the link was accessed. Copies of less accessible source documents, such as those provided by government offices or subscription services, are available from the Home Office upon request.
- ix COI Reports are published regularly on the top 20 asylum intake countries. COI Bulletins are produced on lower asylum intake countries according to operational need. Home Office officials also have constant access to an information request service for specific enquiries.
- x In producing this COI Report, the Home Office has sought to provide an accurate, balanced summary of the available source material. Any comments regarding this Report or suggestions for additional source material are very welcome and should be submitted to the Home Office as below.

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ADVISORY PANEL ON COUNTRY INFORMATION

- xi The independent Advisory Panel on Country Information was established under the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 to make recommendations to the Home Secretary about the content of the Home Office's country of origin information material. The Advisory Panel welcomes all feedback on the Home Office's COI Reports and other country of origin information material. Information about the Panel's work can be found on its website at www.apci.org.uk.
- xii It is not the function of the Advisory Panel to endorse any Home Office material or procedures. In the course of its work, the Advisory Panel directly reviews the content of selected individual Home Office COI Reports, but neither the fact that such a review has been undertaken, nor any comments made, should be taken to imply endorsement of the material. Some of the material examined by the Panel relates to countries designated or proposed for designation for the Non-Suspensive Appeals (NSA) list. In such cases, the Panel's work should not be taken to imply any endorsement of the decision or

proposal to designate a particular country for NSA, nor of the NSA process itself.

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Latest News

EVENTS IN CAMEROON FROM 1 OCTOBER 2006 TO 27 OCTOBER 2006

- 26 October Two Cameroonians were arrested, by a Liberian Bureau of Immigration and Naturalisation Officer, at the main entry point in Jowah on 25 October, for illegally entering Liberia without proper travel documents.
allAfrica.com, Two Cameroonians arrested
<http://allafrica.com/stories/printable/200610270022.html>
- 25 October Out of over 200 NGOs in Cameroon, only 19 are authorised to operate. Four of them are owned by individuals. The others are operating illegally. The [Biya] administration does not interfere with the internal running of the NGOs but encourages them to conform to the new laws in force, according to sources at the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation. The authorities have become concerned at recent disorder in the NGO sector, because of the laxity with which these associations operate.
allAfrica.com, NGOs must conform to the law
<http://allafrica.com/stories/printable/200610250053.html>
- 20 October A new Provincial Delegate Commissioner of Police has been appointed in the North West. Among the challenges he faces are ensuring social peace and the security of people and property, checking the upsurge of urban criminality and highway robbery and instilling confidence in the population. He was further challenged to avoid causing unnecessary harassment of the population and separating quacks from disciplined police personnel.
allAfrica.com, New police boss commissioned
<http://allafrica.com/stories/printable/200610200339.html>
- 19 October New facilities for the training of doctors and engineers at the University of Douala and a medical facility at the University of Buea. President Biya has also authorised an extension to the Higher Teachers' Training College in Maroua.
allAfrica.com, Faculties of medicines for Douala, Buea – a giant leap forward
<http://allafrica.com/stories/printable/200610190128.html>
- 17 October The President of Rural Women in Minkoameyos spoke at the International Day of the Rural Woman. She said that illiteracy was a hindrance for many rural women as it meant they were unable to increase productivity. Enclavement of agricultural zones caused rural women's crops to perish before reaching the market. Furthermore, socio-cultural barriers prevented women from selling in some towns.
allAfrica.com, Rural women ponder difficulties
<http://allafrica.com/stories/200610170963.html>
- 11 October A UN agency declared: "...that the detention of 11 men in Cameroon on the basis of their presumed sexual orientation constitutes an arbitrary deprivation of liberty contrary to their human rights". The UN further called on the government to adopt measures to remedy the situation, including possible repeal of the offending law. The ruling was a response to a complaint by the International Gay and Lesbian

Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC) and the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ).

afrolnews, UN condemns anti-gay laws of Cameroon

http://www.afrol.com/printable_article/21903

Date accessed 12 October 2006

In 2006 there have been a number of high-profile convictions in Cameroon. Although the law has historically protected MPs and traditional leaders, in a number of recent important cases defendants have been stripped of parliamentary immunity in order to face trial. One particularly significant case involved the conviction and sentencing of the traditional leader of Balimkumbat (also an MP) to fifteen years imprisonment for the murder of a district chief for the opposition party.

FCO, Human Rights Annual Report 2006

www.fco.gov.uk/files-kfile-hr_report2006.pdf

10 October The Chairman of the Bakassi Local Government Area (LGA), has requested that the Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) stop the ongoing registration exercise in Ilang in the Akpabuyo LGA of Cross River State because people purporting to be Bakassi natives, when in fact not, are being registered.

allAfrica, Bakassi LG boss wants INEC to halt registration

<http://allafrica.com/stories/printable/200610100599.html>

Date accessed 11 October 2006

9 October The Southwest Executive Committee of the Social Democratic Front, SDF, has condemned the SCNC struggle for secession, which dwells on preferential rather than national struggle. The provincial Chairman told his executive that, though the SDF recognises the marginalisation of the English-speaking part of Cameroon, the SDF does not align with Anglophone secession.

allAfrica, SW SDF condemns SCNC

<http://allafrica.com/stories/printable/200610030730.html>

Date accessed 4 October 2006

The Nigerian/Cameroon mixed commission has requested immediate deployment of the observer team to start its monitoring and supervisory work in line with the ICJ ruling on the Bakassi peninsula. The request was made at the 15th session of the commission's meeting in Yaounde. The Leader of the Nigerian delegation called for adequate protection of the affected Nigerians in the area.

allAfrica, Commission calls for observer team to start monitoring and supervision

<http://allafrica.com/stories/printable/200610090045.html>

Date accessed 11 October 2006

Prime Minister (PM) Inoni announced the creation of a Maritime and Fishing Academy in Limbe. The PM detailed some problems that hinder development and adversely affect the population in Southwest Province, particularly the road network, and announced planned improvements.

The PM also outlined proposals for the regeneration of the Bakassi Peninsula, including roads, rural electrification and other development projects.

allAfrica, PM Inoni announces ambitious projects for Bakassi

<http://allafrica.com/stories/printable/200610091463.html>

Date accessed 12 October 2006

2 October

The Cameroonian media has been agog about a cabinet reshuffle which took place on 22 September. President Biya, however, has made only cosmetic changes to Ministerial personnel and brought back several ageing cronies.

Anglophones have again received a raw deal. allAfrica.com reports that the Cabinet that emerged was the handiwork of an inscrutable political juggler.

allAfrica, Biya's umpteenth Cabinet reshuffle – new team, old faces

<http://allafrica.com/stories/printable/200610021020.html>

Date accessed 3 October 2006

A nationwide strike of civil servants from 9 to 13 October is intended to paralyse all government offices, schools and the private sector. The aim of the strike is to increase civil servants' salaries (reinstating them to pre-1993 levels), to reduce taxes, fuel prices and prices of other basic commodities. This was the outcome of a meeting of the Confederation of Trade Unions of Cameroon that met on 22 September 2006.

allAfrica, Civil servants, trade unions to paralyse Cameroon in October

<http://allafrica.com/stories/printable/200610020175.html>

Date accessed 3 October 2006

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www.fco.gov.uk

Foreign and Commonwealth Office – Human Rights Annual Report 2006

www.fco.gov.uk/files-kfile-hr_report2006.pdf

Date accessed 19 October 2006

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Background information

GEOGRAPHY

- 1.01 The official title of the country is the Republic of Cameroon.
Population – 17,340,702 (2006 est).
8,710,225 – male; 8,630,477 – female.
Capital city – Yaounde; most populous city – Douala (1.5m).
Official languages – French and English; also around 250 different African languages are spoken.
Currency – CFA franc, which is fixed to the Euro.
Head of State – President Paul Biya.
Prime Minister – Chief Inoni Ephraim. [1a] [Europa World online]
- 1.02 Cameroon is in Western Africa, bordering the Gulf of Biafra, between Equatorial Guinea and Nigeria. Other countries with which it shares a border are Chad, Central African Republic, Republic of Congo and Gabon. Its total area is 475,440 sq km. The administrative divisions are: 10 provinces (Centre, Littoral, West, SouthWest, NorthWest, North, East, South, Admaoua, Far North); 58 departments or divisions; 349 subprefectures or subdivisions.
It has an estimated 250 ethnic groups from five large regional-cultural groups: Western highlanders, including the Bamileke, Bamoun, and many smaller entities in the North-west; coastal tropical forest peoples, including the Bassa, Douala and many smaller entities in the SouthWest; southern tropical forest peoples, including the Ewondo, Bulu, and Fang (all Beti subgroups), Maka and Pgyimies (called Bakas); predominantly Islamic peoples of the northern regions (the Sahel) and central highlands, including the Fulani; and the 'Kirdi', non-Islamic or recently Islamic peoples of the northern desert and central highlands. [3a] [Permanent Committee of Geographical Names for British Use] [4a] [The World Factbook] [5a] [FCO Country Profile] [2c] [USSD Background Note] [1b] [Africa South of the Sahara 2005]
- 1.03 The principal towns are Douala, Yaounde, Garoua, Maroua, Bafoussam and Bamenda. The total country population is 16,038,000. [1] [Europa World online]
- For further information on geography, refer to Europa. [1] [Europa World online]

MAP

1.04



Link to another map: <http://www.unhcr.org/publ/PUBL/3dee2c400.pdf>

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ECONOMY

- 2.01 Cameroon is a member of the following international organisations: the African Development Bank, the African Union, the Central African Economic and Monetary Community, the Commonwealth, the International Organisation of the Francophonie, the International Monetary Fund and the United Nations [5a] [FCO Country Profile – July 2006]
- 2.02 The economy is mainly agricultural. The principal commercial crops are cocoa, coffee, tobacco, cotton, and bananas. Other important crops are rubber, oilseed, grains, and root starches; livestock trade is also significant. Petroleum products and refining, aluminium production, food processing, light consumer goods, textiles, lumber and ship repair are the main industries. [6a] [World Bank – Country Brief]
- 2.03 In the early 1980s Cameroon was one of Africa's economic success stories. However, underlying economic and policy weaknesses were exposed in 1985, when sharp declines in coffee, cocoa and oil prices led to a 60 per cent degeneration in the external terms of trade. In addition to this, severe terms of trade, shock and the over-valued exchange rate up to 1994, fiscal crisis and economic mismanagement brought about Cameroon's economic depression. The Government was slow to carry out necessary structural reforms that would have enabled it to benefit more from the January 1994 devaluation of the CFA franc. [6a] [World Bank – Country Brief]
- 2.04 Since late 1996, Cameroon changed course and committed itself to correcting the years of economic mismanagement. The success of government reforms (forestry, transportation, banking system, and privatisation of public utilities) supported by the IMF and the World Bank translated into better economic performance. Real GDP growth was sustained around 4.7 per cent during 1997–2000, and inflation remained at around 3.5 per cent. The unemployment rate was 30 per cent in 2001. The national currency is the Communauté Financière Africaine franc and the exchange rate in 2005 was 527.47 francs per US dollar. [6a] [The World Bank – Country Brief] [4a] [CIA World Factbook]
- 2.05 Despite the Government's pledge to ensure the stringent management of public finances after Cameroon reached the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries-I completion point, the running of shady deals and financial rackets have continued to be the norm in state corporations. It is estimated that in 2005, state corporations lost over FCFA 100 billion through shady deals masterminded by the managers themselves. The managers virtually turned the corporations into milking cows. It was for this reason that the Economic and Finance Minister virtually summoned board chairmen and general managers of state enterprises, and board chairmen and rectors of state universities to a meeting on 24 August. The meeting was a desperate bid to stem the tides of corruption and mismanagement in the country. [9] [allAfrica.com]
- 2.06 Cameroon is at a turning point. The country has now reached the completion point of the HIPC initiative. While the HIPC completion point provides a huge opportunity to ensure substantial sustainable and equitable growth and significantly reduce poverty, achieving these objectives will require major efforts by the Government and all country stakeholders, including a continued

and stepped-up effort to improve governance through greater transparency and resolve in fighting corruption. [6a] [The World Bank]

2.07 The estimated GDP was \$2,400 and the real growth rate was 2.8 per cent in 2005. [4a] [World Factbook]

2.08 Cameroon will see its external debt reduced by almost US\$3.5 billion after its main creditor countries met in Paris to discuss the country's economic development. The Government was awarded [sic] for its growth-oriented economic reform programme, focusing on privatisation efforts. [7a] [afrol news]

2.09 Cameroon's Minister of Economy and Finance met representatives of his Government's main creditor countries. Together, they agreed on a major package aimed at substantially reducing and restructuring Cameroon's significant debt burden. [7a] [afrol news]

2.10 To qualify for the relief, the Cameroonian Government had to reach a set of benchmarks set by the International Monetary Fund. In April 2006 they reached the completion point under the IMF's enhanced initiative for the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries. [7a] [afrol news]

2.11 The Economist Intelligence Unit reported in June 2006 that:

"The political outlook is expected to remain stable after the re-election of the president, Paul Biya, in October 2004. Political activity will remain muted and pick up only when preparations begin for the parliamentary and municipal elections due in 2007. The IMF has granted Cameroon a new three-year poverty reduction and growth facility (PRGF), which started retrospectively in July 2005. As part of the PRGF, the government is expected to push ahead with structural reforms, in particular the stalled privatisation of state enterprises, as well as measures to open up sectors of the non-oil economy to the private sector. Real GDP growth is forecast to rise to 4.1% in 2006 and 4.3% in 2007, supported by high oil prices and robust non-oil activity. Inflation is forecast to average 2.1% in 2006-07, reflecting tight fiscal and monetary policy." [8]

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HISTORY

- 3.01 The German protectorate of Kamerun was established in 1884. In 1916, during the First World War, the German administration was overthrown and three years later divided into British and French spheres of influence. In 1922 both zones became subject to mandates of the League of Nations, which allocated most of the territory to the French as French Cameroon and the smaller part to British administration as the Northern and Southern Cameroons. Having been converted into trust territories in 1946, growing anti-colonial sentiment made it difficult to resist the UN's promise of eventual self-determination for all trust territories. In 1960, following a short period as an autonomous state within the French community, French Cameroon became fully independent as the Republic of Cameroon. In 1961 a plebiscite was held in British Cameroons. Voters in South Cameroons opted for union with the Republic of Cameroon, while Northern Cameroons voters chose to merge with Nigeria. The new Federal Republic of Cameroon comprised two states; the former French zone became East Cameroon, while the former British portion became West Cameroon. In June 1972 the country was officially renamed the United Republic of Cameroon. [1b] [Africa South of the Sahara 2005]
- 3.02 Cameroon has generally enjoyed stability, which has permitted the development of agriculture, roads, and railways, as well as a petroleum industry. Despite a slow movement toward democratic reform, political power remains firmly in the hands of an ethnic oligarchy headed by President Paul Biya. [4] [The World Factbook]

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RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

- 4.01 At the end of May 2006, Cameroon's major opposition party, the Social Democratic Front, split in two with Ni John Fru Ndi and Bernard Muna heading each of the distinct factions. Fru Ndi was elected at the party's Bamenda Convention, whilst the one held in Yaounde chose Muna to lead what its chief organiser, Clement Ngwasiri, calls the authentic SDF. [9n] [allAfrica.com]
- 4.02 Early in June, the presidents of Nigeria and Cameroon signed an agreement, allowing for the Bakassi Peninsula to be administered by Cameroon, settling a decades-old, sometimes violent, border dispute over this oil-rich area, following intensive mediation by the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, seeking to avert a potential flashpoint in West Africa. [9a] [allAfrica.com]
- 4.03 France has announced a substantial aid package to Cameroon, worth 500m euros over five years. A special committee, involving French and Cameroon officials and aid workers, has been set up to ensure that the French aid is used properly. Some of the money is being earmarked to upgrade the roads in the economic capital, Douala. [10a] [BBC News]
- 4.04 Late in June, a group of 15 men, allegedly gay, and two alleged lesbians were detained at a police station in Yaounde for over one month. They were arrested in a bar frequented by homosexuals and if convicted of homosexual activities they could face up to five years' imprisonment. [7b] [afrolNews]
- 4.05 A nationwide campaign is underway to discourage the widespread practice of 'breast ironing'. Statistics show that 26 per cent of Cameroonian girls undergo it at puberty, as many mothers believe it protects their daughters from the sexual advances of boys and men who think children are ripe for sex once their breasts grow. [10b] [BBC News]
- 4.06 Controversy raged over the cause of a taxi driver's death in the Ndopassi Gendarmerie in Douala on July 22. Gendarmes maintain he committed suicide; family members suspect he died from torture at the gendarmerie station. The victim's family have called on the state counsel to order an investigation into the cause of death. [9b] [allAfrica.com]
- 4.07 Late in July President Biya exacerbated the anti-press sentiments recently expressed in Government circles. In a policy speech during the CPDM extraordinary conference on July 21, the President warned journalists to look away from people's private lives. In a speech earlier this year, the President apparently sided with Ministers who threatened to deal with newspapers that alleged they were homosexuals. Journalists in the country see Biya's recent declaration as being in tandem with the recent spirit in which the Government is struggling to gag the press. [9c] [allAfrica.com]
- 4.08 On July 21 the CPDM in an extraordinary congress in Yaounde re-elected President Biya to direct their party affairs for the next five years. The new National President, in his keynote speech, presented a new plan of action for the ruling party to lead the country on the path to modernity. He stressed his insistence to fight against corrupt practices in government and planned to jump-start the long awaited country growth by making the administration more efficient. This would include building new basic infrastructure such as roads,

ports, bridges, telecommunications, ICTs and maximising the country's financial resources. The President further insisted on the need for tolerance and dialogue in the management of debates with diverse opinions. Media practitioners were enjoined to show some respect for the individual's privacy without sacrificing professionalism. [11] [Republic of Cameroon Prime Minister's Office]

- 4.09 Cameroon gendarmes had launched a series of attacks on some border communities ceded to Nigeria in various parts of Adamawa State, the State Commissioner for Integration and Border Area Development has alerted. He told newsmen that already formal complaints have been forwarded to the Cameroon authorities and the National Boundary Commission. The Commissioner also explained that apart from the physical attacks by the gendarmes, hoodlums from Cameroon have consistently raided border communities, and Nigerian security agents and vigilante groups, attempting to arrest the hoodlums, were physically assaulted and harassed by their Cameroonian counterparts. [9d] [allAfrica.com]

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- 4.10 On 28 July the pilot phase of the poverty reduction programme was relaunched. The Provisional Re-financing fund was retained from the six initial components agreed upon by the Government and the African Development Bank in 2000 as a base on which micro-projects could grow. Far North province was retained as the first province to host the pilot phase. The whole programme will lapse in 2006, except the Re-financing project. [9e] [allAfrica.com]
- 4.11 Hundreds of residents of the Bakassi peninsula claim to have declared independence, days before Nigeria is to start transferring control to Cameroon. The Bakassi Movement for Self Determination would reject Cameroonian sovereignty, the residents said. They have also refused a Nigerian Government offer to relocate them elsewhere in Nigeria. Nigerian forces are due to start leaving the region during week commencing 7 August, after the Government agreed to the handover. [10d] [BBC News]
- 4.12 Most of those who live in Bakassi are Nigerians and are strongly opposed to coming under Cameroonian jurisdiction. A special transitional arrangement will be in place for five years and Cameroon has pledged to respect the culture, language, beliefs, property and fishing rights of the peninsula's people, and not to impose 'discriminatory' taxes. [10d] BBC News]
- 4.13 Nigerian troops have started to leave the peninsula. Up to 3,000 troops will complete their withdrawal by next Monday [14 August 2006], said a Nigerian military spokesman. The withdrawal will be monitored by Germany, the United Kingdom, France and the United States. Bakassi has no proven oil or gas reserves on land, but has offshore oil deposits. [10e] [BBC News]
- 4.14 On 8 August it was reported that outright animosity is rocking the boat of the present Government. The Prime Minister, Ephraim Inoni, is quarrelling with Benjamin Amama Amama, the Minister of Public Service and Administrative Reforms. The bone of contention is that over 300 students who graduated recently from the National School of Administration and Magistracy have been surreptitiously and illegally integrated into the Public Service by the Minister of

- Economy and Finance, with the complicity of the Prime Minister. [9f] [allAfrica.com]
- 4.15 On 14 August it was reported that the first stage of the Bakassi peninsula handover is to be marked by a ceremony in the fishing town of Archibong. The Nigerian troops will complete their withdrawal and transfer the northern part of the territory. [10f] [BBC News]
- 4.16 The ICJ ruling has not gone down well with Nigerians living in the peninsula. Most Archibong residents have said they would rather leave their ancestral land than be governed by Cameroon. Nigerian inhabitants can opt to stay under Cameroon authority or be resettled in Nigeria. But, despite the Government's promises, no accommodation has been set up for those wanting to leave. A few young Bakassi men have said they will stay and fight any Cameroonian attempt to administer the place. [10f] [BBC News]
- 4.17 On 17 August Mr Tony Ene Asuquo, leader of the Bakassi Movement for Self Determination, died in a vehicle accident en route to Calabar where another member of the movement, Richard Ekpeyong was being detained by the State Security Service in Cross River State, allegedly on the orders of the State Governor. [9g] [allAfrica.com]
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- 4.18 Prior to his death, he had challenged the 'Greentree Agreement' at the Federal High Court, Abuja, alongside six other Bakassi chiefs. [9g] [allAfrica.com]
- 4.19 They asked the court for an order of perpetual injunction restraining the Federal Government from expelling or removing them from Bakassi Local Government Area in Cross River State. [9g] [allAfrica.com]
- 4.20 The Federal Government [of Nigeria], led by the Attorney General, ignored the suit. [9g] [allAfrica.com]
- 4.21 On 22 August, Ni John Fru Ndi faced interrogation about the murder of Diboule Gregoire during a confrontation between supporters of the SDF rival factions. [9o] [allAfrica.com]
- 4.22 President Obasanjo said that the [Nigerian] Government would commence immediately the building of the necessary infrastructure needed to make life comfortable for Bakassi indigenes relocating to Nigeria. [9h] [allAfrica.com]
- 4.23 Barely a week after the withdrawal of Nigerian troops from Bakassi, hundreds of Nigerians have raised an alarm over alleged plots by the Cameroonian authorities aimed at livelihood deprivation. According to the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) the alarm was triggered by the sudden increase in the cost of Resident Permits. [9v] [allAfrica.com]
- 4.24 An observer mission to monitor abuses in Bakassi is being set up following allegations that its citizens living in Bakassi and other parts of Cameroon are returning to Nigeria with awful stories of maltreatment by Cameroonian gendarmes. It will be made up of 15 United Nations representatives. Five delegates each from Cameroon and Nigeria have been agreed upon. This was one of the agreed resolutions made during the 15th session of the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission, chaired by the UN Secretary-General

- Special Representative. The Head of the Nigerian Delegation to the Mixed Commission had declared that stories of woes kept on emerging from Bakassi by way of inhuman treatment meted on his compatriots despite his country's military withdrawal from the peninsula. [9k] [allAfrica.com]
- 4.25 Chad's President has threatened to expel Chevron and Petronas, two of the three consortium partners in a World Bank-backed project. The President accused the American and Malaysian companies of failing to pay £240m in taxes and told them to make plans to leave the country. He also suspended three cabinet ministers for their alleged roles in the saga and said Chad would assume the companies' production responsibilities along with the main consortium partner, ExxonMobil. The decision, which is widely viewed as an attempt by the Government to control its oil output, is the latest setback for the controversial £2.6bn Chad-Cameroon pipeline project. Despite Chad's reputation for endemic corruption and opposition from human rights groups, the World Bank agreed in 2000 to back and partly finance a 620-mile pipeline that would run through Cameroon to the Atlantic coast. [12] [The Guardian]
- 4.26 allAfrica.com reported on 20 September 2006 that: "Bakas and Mbororos, both indigenous people in Cameroon, have demanded representation in parliament irrespective of the government in power". The Press Officer of the Mbororo Social and Cultural Development Association, MBOSCUDA, painted a picture of inadequate representation in parliament and municipal councils. He said that they live a type of life and culture that rendered them vulnerable and exposed them to exploitation and marginalisation and that land ownership is a serious problem for indigenous people. [9i]
- 4.27 On 16 September in Yaounde a contingent of armed policemen barred journalists from attending a press conference organised by Ben Muna, faction Chairman of the SDF. Although Muna said he obtained authorisation to hold the press conference, police later stormed the premises and sealed off all entrances to the place. [9p] [allAfrica.com]

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CONSTITUTION

- 5.01 On 20 May 1972 the constitution, which brought in multi-partyism, was approved by referendum, and on 2 June 1972 it was formally adopted. It was revised in January 1996. It provides for a limit on presidential tenure to 2 terms of 7 years, while the 180-member National Assembly is elected every 5 years. It also provides for an Upper Chamber, the Senate, which has not yet been installed. Local councils now exist and there is scope for the Provinces to become Regions with their own elected regional councils, though the latter is not yet implemented. Under laws enacted in 1990-1991, political parties may not be based on regional or tribal support and may not form coalitions for electoral purposes. Registered parties are eligible for financial support from state funds for their electoral campaigns. [4a] [CIA] [5] [FCO Country Profile]
- 5.02 There is universal suffrage for those aged 20 and over, requiring only a relative majority in a single voting round of the Presidential elections. The National Assembly members are elected by proportional representation. [13] [Political Parties of the World]

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POLITICAL SYSTEM

- 6.01 The country is a unitary republic. There is a multi-party presidential regime, where opposition parties were legalised in 1990, but the preponderance of power remains with the president. [4a] [CIA World Factbook]
- 6.02 The main political parties are: the Democratic Rally of the Cameroon People (RDCP) – the ruling party; Cameroon Democratic Union (UDC); Movement for the Defense of the Republic (MDR); Movement for the Liberation and Development of Cameroon (MLDC); Movement for the Youth of Cameroon (MYC); National Union for Democracy and Progress (UNDP); Social Democratic Front (SDF); and Union of Cameroonian Populations (UPC). [4a] [CIA World Factbook]
- 6.03 The President's control over the country's administrative apparatus is extensive. The President appoints all ministers, including the Prime Minister, and also directly appoints the governors of each of the ten provinces. This office is also empowered to appoint lower-level members of the 58 provincial administrative structures. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 6.04 The legislative executive of Cameroon is the National Assembly. Since 1991 only government bills proposed by the presidency have been enacted by the Assembly, although in April 2004 a bill submitted by the leading opposition party was considered. Only parties with Assembly representation can submit bills for consideration. In June [2005] the Assembly refused to consider an electoral reform bill proposed by the SDF, the main opposition party. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 6.05 The President's control is extensive. He appoints all ministers, including the Prime Minister, and directly appoints the ten provincial governors. The President's powers also permit important lower-level appointments within the 58 provincial administrative structures. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 6.06 Citizens' rights to choose their local governments remained circumscribed. The number of municipalities run by presidentially appointed delegates, who have authority over elected mayors, has increased greatly. In the northern provinces, delegate-run cities included most of the provincial and some divisional capitals in pro-opposition provinces; this practice was non-existent in the southern provinces which tended to support the ruling party. In municipalities with elected mayors, local autonomy was limited since elected local government relied on the central government for most of their revenue and administrative personnel. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 6.07 The USSD report for 2005 noted that:
- “In October 2004 President Biya, who has controlled the government since 1982, was re-elected with approximately 70 percent of the vote in an election widely viewed as freer and fairer than previous elections and in which opposition parties fielded candidates. However, the election was poorly managed and marred by irregularities, in particular in the voting registration process, but most international observers deemed that the irregularities did not prevent the elections from expressing the will of the voters. Some observers said progress had been made and called the election transparent;

others, such as the Commonwealth Observer Group, stated that the election lacked credibility. Some opposition parties alleged that there was multiple voting by individuals close to President Biya's party and massive vote rigging. One domestic group described the election as a masquerade. The 2002 legislative elections, which were dominated by the CPDM, largely reflected the will of the people; however, there were widespread irregularities."

There were more than 180 registered political parties in the country; however, fewer than 10 had significant levels of support, and only 5 had seats in the National Assembly.

Members of the Beti ethnic group, including the Bulu subgroup to which the President belonged, figured prominently in the Government, civil service, and the management of state-owned businesses.

Many of the key members of the Government were drawn from the President's own Beti/Bulu ethnic group, as were disproportionately large numbers of military officers and CPDM officials. Pygmies were not members of the legislature or the Government.

An estimated 95 per cent of Baka did not have identity cards and could not afford to provide the necessary documentation to obtain national identity cards, which were required to vote in national elections. In May 2004 Plan International and another NGO launched a programme to educate Bakas about their political rights, which included the construction of a communal radio in the region of Abong-Mbang (Upper Nyong Division, East Province). In July 2004 the Association of Boumba and Ngoko Divisional Councils conducted a campaign through which they were able to issue hundreds of identification cards to Bakas in the East Province, thereby allowing these individuals to register and vote. [2a] [USSD 2005]

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Human Rights

INTRODUCTION

- 7.01 The Government's human rights record remained poor, and it continued to commit numerous serious human rights abuses. The following particular human rights violations were reported: severe limits on citizens' ability to change their government; unlawful killings by the security forces; torture, beatings, and other abuses of persons by security forces; impunity among the security forces; arbitrary arrest and detention of Anglophone citizens advocating secession, local human rights monitors/activists, and others; infringement on citizens' privacy rights; prolonged pretrial detention; restriction on freedom of speech, press, assembly, and association; abuse and harassment of journalists; limits on freedom of movement; corruption; violence and discrimination against women; people trafficking; societal discrimination against indigenous Pygmies, ethnic minorities and homosexuals; restrictions on worker rights and the activities of independent labour organisations; child labour, slavery, and forced labour. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 7.02 Human rights defenders were harassed, assaulted and detained. Individuals were unlawfully detained on account of their sexual orientation. A group of political prisoners, convicted after unfair trials and held in life-threatening conditions that have killed three of their number since 1999, continued to be denied a right of appeal. Investigations were started into a few deaths in police custody that reportedly resulted from torture, but they were not independent or open. Inmates were killed and injured in prison riots stemming from severe overcrowding and harsh discipline. [14a] [Amnesty International 2006 report]
- 7.03 A number of domestic and international human rights groups generally operated without restriction, investigating and publishing findings on human rights cases. Officials repeatedly impeded the effectiveness of local NGOs by harassing human rights group members, limiting access to prisoners, refusing to disseminate information and threatening and using violence against personnel.
The Government co-operated with international governmental organisations and permitted UN visits and those by other groups. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 7.04 In February 2005, an human rights division in the Ministry of Justice was created to investigate and report on all cases of human rights abuses within the Ministry's remit, including prisons, jails and courtrooms. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 7.05 A pipeline transporting oil through Chad and Cameroon poses potential threats to human rights in both countries. A consortium of oil companies is extracting oil from the Doba fields in southern Chad and transporting it over 1,000km by pipeline to Cameroon's Atlantic coast. [14c] [AI]
- 7.06 This project has been promoted by investors, agreed to by governments and supported by lenders such as the World Bank, export credit agencies and banks, some having voluntarily adopted social and environmental standards. The agreements, however, could hold back the two Governments from planning to improve the human rights protection of those affected by the project and make it more difficult to hold the consortium to account for resulting human rights abuses. [14c] [AI]

- 7.07 The following are some of the Non-Governmental Organizations dealing with human rights within Cameroon: Cameroon Community and Empowerment Foundation, Rural Development Front, LUKMEF-Cameroon, Noah's Ark, Cameroon, Cameroon Family Welfare Development Association, Cameroon Hinterlands Development Organisation, NDEF Cameroon, ACAT, Social Organisation for Humanitarian Activities, Cameroon Association for the Protection and Education of the Child, Friends of the Needy Foundation Cameroon, Global Rehabilitation Services, Livelihood, Cameroon Youth Confederation, Cameroon OIC ex-trainees Association, Self-Supporting Rural Development, Association of Human Rights and Torture Defenders, Association for the Protection of Women's and Children's Rights in Cameroon. [38] [idealist.org]

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SECURITY SITUATION

- 8.01 The flawed legislative elections of June 2002 and presidential election of October 2004 consolidated the presidential party's position, giving it over 80 per cent of seats and a seven-year term, and further weakened the divided opposition. Election campaigns continue to provoke energetic public protest, but this no longer appears potentially destabilising for the country. However, this may change as President Biya is believed to be in his final term of office and preparing to manage a possibly difficult succession. Obvious sources of domestic tension remain the Anglophone West and Fulani North, which have lost influence over time. Nigeria still poses the main external threat, although relations have improved markedly since border clashes in 1998. [15] [Jane's Sentinel Security Assessments]
- 8.02 The International Court of Justice ruled in 2002 on the entire Cameroon–Nigeria land and maritime boundary but the parties formed a Joint Border Commission which regularly meets to resolve differences bilaterally and began with demarcation in less-contested sections starting in Lake Chad in the north. Implementation of the ICJ ruling on the Cameroon–Equatorial Guinea–Nigeria maritime boundary in the Gulf of Guinea is impeded by imprecisely defined coordinates. There is a sovereignty dispute with Equatorial Guinea over an island at the mouth of the Ntem River and only Nigeria and Cameroon have heeded the Lake Chad Commission's admonition to ratify the delimitation treaty. [4a] [CIA World Factbook]
- 8.03 The EIU reported in June 2006 that:
- “Social unrest, fuelled by high levels of poverty and declining standards in the government's provision of health and education services, has been on the rise in Cameroon. The recent attainment of completion point under the enhanced HIPC initiative has raised the general public's expectations which may turn into anger and social protest if unfulfilled. One source of discontent is the universities, where students have gone on strike twice in the past two years, demanding the scrapping of registration fees and improvements to dilapidated facilities. Redundant workers from loss-making and liquidated state enterprises have also been pressing the government for payment of salary arrears, compensation and benefits. Transport workers are angry over regular increases in fuel prices and the government's reluctance to authorise higher fares in compensation.” [8] [Economist Intelligence Unit]

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CRIME

- 9.01 A form of mob justice is currently sweeping Cameroon, because ordinary people do not trust the police to bring crime suspects to account. In Limbe, it was reported that a young man who had allegedly robbed an American couple was stoned and attacked by an angry mob. The attackers did not trust the police to bring the suspect to justice. If he gave the police money, he would be freed, the reporter was told. Local television and radio are awash with reports about 'jungle law' around the country. [10c] [BBC News]

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SECURITY FORCES

- 10.01 There were credible reports that security forces continued to torture, beat and abuse prisoners and detainees. In the majority of cases, the Government rarely investigated or punished any of the officials involved. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 10.02 Security forces continued to subject prisoners and detainees to degrading treatment, including stripping, confinement in severely overcrowded cells, and denial of access to sanitation facilities. Police and gendarmes often beat detainees to extract confessions or information on alleged criminals. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 10.03 Security forces, usually acting under the command of local provincial government officials, continued to restrict press freedom. [2a] [USSD 2005]

POLICE

- 10.04 The USSD report for 2005 noted that: “The national police, the National Intelligence Service (DGRE), the gendarmerie, the Ministry of Territorial Administration, the army’s military security department, the army, the minister of defense, and, to a lesser extent, the Presidential Guard are responsible for internal security; the national police and gendarmerie have primary responsibility for law enforcement. The Ministry of Defense, including the gendarmerie, national police, and DGRE, are under an office of the presidency, resulting in strong presidential control of security forces. The national police includes the public security force, judicial police, territorial security forces, and frontier police. In rural areas, where there is little or no police presence, the primary law enforcement body is the gendarmerie.” [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 10.05 “Citizens viewed police as ineffective, which frequently resulted in mob violence. It was widely believed that individuals paid bribes to law enforcement and the judiciary to secure their freedom. Police officers and members of the gendarmerie were widely viewed as corrupt and frequently arbitrarily arrested and detained citizens. Police demanded bribes at checkpoints, and influential citizens reportedly paid police to make arrests or abuse individuals in personal disputes. According to Transparency International’s (TI) 2005 Global Corruption Barometer, citizens viewed the police as extremely corrupt. Impunity remained a problem but was less severe than in previous years. Insufficient funding and inadequate training contributed to a lack of professionalism in the national police.” [2a] [USSD 2005]

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Arbitrary arrest and detention

- 10.06 The law requires police to obtain an arrest warrant except when a person is caught in the act of committing a crime. Police legally may detain a person in connection with a common crime for up to 24 hours and may renew the detention 3 times before bringing charges; this provision was generally respected, although there were unverifiable reports that police occasionally violated it. The law provides for the right to judicial review of the legality of detention only in the country’s two Anglophone provinces, and this provision

was respected in practice. In the country's Francophone provinces, the French legal tradition applies, precluding judicial authorities from acting on a case until the authority that ordered the detention turns the case over to the prosecutor. In practice these processes took between 15 days to a month. In Francophone provinces after a magistrate has issued a warrant to bring the case to trial, he may hold the detainee in administrative or pretrial detention indefinitely, pending court action. During the year such detention often was prolonged, due to the understaffed and mismanaged court system. The law permits detention without charge by administrative authorities such as governors and senior divisional officers for renewable periods of 15 days ostensibly to combat banditry and maintain public order. Persons taken into detention frequently were denied access to both legal counsel and family members. The law permits release on bail only in the Anglophone provinces; however, in practice bail was granted infrequently. [2a] [USSD 2005]

- 10.07 In June the National Assembly passed a Code of Criminal Procedure, which will enter into force in 2006 [allAfrica states 1 January 2007]. The code extends the right of individuals to be released on bail to the whole country. It also allows those arrested and held in police and gendarmerie facilities for investigation to be assisted by a lawyer from the beginning of their detention. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 10.08 Police and gendarmes often arrested persons on spurious charges on Fridays at mid-day or in the afternoon. While the law in the Anglophone provinces provides for a judicial review of an arrest within 24 hours, the courts did not convene sessions on the weekend, so a detained individual who was arrested on a Friday typically remained in detention until at least Monday. Police and gendarmes made such 'Friday arrests' after accepting bribes from persons who had private grievances. There were no known cases of policemen or gendarmes who were sanctioned or punished for this practice. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 10.09 Security forces and Government authorities continued to arbitrarily arrest and detain persons, often holding them for prolonged periods without charges or trials and, at times, incommunicado. There were reports of arrests of political detainees, including Anglophone citizens advocating secession, local human rights monitors/activists, journalists, and other critics of the Government. Police also arrested persons during unauthorised demonstrations. [2a] [USSD 2005]

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Torture

- 10.10 The law prohibits such practices; however, there were credible reports that security forces continued to regularly torture, beat, and otherwise abuse prisoners and detainees. In the majority of cases of torture or abuse, the Government rarely investigated or punished any of the officials involved; however, in at least one case during the year, gendarmerie officers who tortured a citizen to death were detained and investigated. There were reports that security forces detained persons at specific sites where they tortured and beat detainees. Security forces also reportedly subjected women, children, and elderly persons to abuse. Numerous international human rights organisations and some prison personnel reported that torture was widespread; however, most reports did not identify the victim because of fear of government retaliation against either the victim or the victim's family. Most

victims did not report torture for fear of Government reprisal or because of ignorance of or lack of confidence in the judicial system. [2a] [USSD 2005]

- 10.11 Two forms of physical abuse commonly reported by male detainees were the ‘bastonnade’, where authorities beat the victim on the soles of the feet, and the ‘balancoire’, during which authorities hung victims from a rod with their hands tied behind their backs and beat them, often on the genitals. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 10.12 Pretrial detainees were sometimes required, under threat of abuse, to pay ‘cell fees’, a bribe paid to prison guards to prevent further abuse. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 10.13 During the year there were reports that persons in police and gendarmerie custody died as a result of torture. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 10.14 Amnesty International endorsed this. They reported that systematic torture continued of suspects arrested by the police and gendarmerie. Most perpetrators were not held to account, but investigations were opened in a few cases in which suspects died. [14a] [Amnesty International]

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Extra-judicial killings

- 10.15 There were no reports that Government agents committed politically motivated killings. However, throughout the year security forces continued to commit unlawful killings, including killings resulting from torture and excessive force. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 10.16 Prisoners died in custody, in 2005, due to torture and abuse by security forces, harsh prison conditions, and inadequate medical treatment. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 10.17 There were also reports that police used excessive force to disperse demonstrators, resulting in the deaths of protesters. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 10.18 Mob violence and summary justice against those suspected of theft and the practice of witchcraft continued to result in deaths and serious injuries. [2a] [USSD 2005]

ARMED FORCES

- 10.19 The country has an army, a navy which includes naval infantry and an airforce. The manpower available for military service is approximately 3.5m males and 3.5m females between the ages of 18 and 49. [4a] [CIA World Factbook]

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Arbitrary arrest and detention

- 10.20 Please refer to paragraphs 10.07 to 10.19.

Torture

- 10.21 Please refer to paragraphs 10.07 to 10.19.

Extra-judicial killings

- 10.22 Please refer to paragraphs 10.07 to 10.19.
- 10.23 Mob violence and summary justice against suspected thieves and witches continued to result in deaths and serious injuries. [2a] [USSD 2005]

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OTHER GOVERNMENT FORCES

- 10.24 See para 12.01 below.

AVENUES OF COMPLAINT

- 10.25 Edgar Alain Mebe Ngo'o, who in 2004 was appointed Delegate General for National Security (DGSN), took significant steps during the year to investigate, suspend, and prosecute security forces accused of abuses. In March [2005] Ngo'o rehabilitated the 'police of police', an internal affairs unit of undercover agents that had been dormant for many years. By year's end the unit was functioning and had received funding, although there were no public reports of any cases investigated by this unit. At least ten members of the national police force, who violated laws and regulations during the year, were sanctioned by Ngo'o. [2a] [USSD 2005]

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MILITARY SERVICE

- 11.01 The minimum age for enrolment is 18; service is voluntary. [4] [CIA World Factbook]
- 11.02 There is no conscription. Recruitment is on a voluntary basis. The maximum age for recruitment is normally 22 years. There is no legal provision under the law dealing with conscientious objection. For a period up to 30 days, absence without leave [AWOL] is treated as 'irregular' and sanctions range from salary deductions to forced labour. After 30 days continued AWOL is considered desertion. Penalties include military imprisonment for up to six months in the first instance. [16a] [BHC Yaounde]

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ABUSES BY NON-GOVERNMENT ARMED FORCES

12.01 In February 2000 the President set up a joint security command to stop the rising wave of criminality in Douala. The Operational Command was made up of the police, gendarmerie and the army, under the command of a military general. The command managed to reduce the crime wave but it was accused of summary execution of suspects.

On 22 January 2001, eight police and gendarmes reportedly arrested nine young men accused of stealing a bottle of cooking gas from a lady in the Bepanda neighbourhood. The suspects were taken to the headquarters of the operational command and never seen thereafter.

According to military sources they escaped from detention. However, their families and civil groups accused the military of torturing and executing them, alongside 30 to 40 others.

The family members of the 'Missing Nine' led by Bethel Kouatou, the brother of two of the missing persons, supported by some members of the civil society, created the 'Comite pour les neuf disparus de Bepanda' in March 2001.

In March and April 2001, this committee, known as C9, organised a series of protests to pressure the Government to investigate and bring the criminals to justice. Following pressure from the international community and civil organisations, the President replaced the Commanding Officer of the operation, sacked or transferred a number of other officers and the matter was taken to court.

The case opened in the Military Tribunal, Yaounde on 23 April 2001 and reached a verdict on 9 July 2002. Two out of the 8 officers tried were sentenced to 15 and 16 months imprisonment for 'complicity in and violating orders'. Three others were acquitted for 'benefit of doubt' and three others for not having substantial evidence against them. The military's view that the missing persons escaped detention prevailed. Although family and friends of the 'Missing Nine' were not satisfied with the decision, the activities of the C9 died out.

It emerged from press reports and accounts from some civil society organisations that many persons (including families of the Missing Nine), associations and political parties involved in the C9 supposedly collected money and gifts from the state and abandoned action to seek justice.

These revelations, particularly reports that Bethuel Kouatou (the C9 leader) had received money from Government agents and left the country (to go to England) dealt a credibility blow to the committee. Since 2002, the C9 has essentially stopped acting [as a committee] and become moribund.

Apart from a few references in the press, very little has happened since 2002, except

- The local branch of Christian Action for the Abolition of Torture (ACAT) took up the matter to the UN and has maintained contact with the families
- Some international organisations such as Transparency International and the International Human Rights Federation have maintained an interest in the 'Bepanda Nine' story
- A Cameroonian activist, Djeukam Tchameni, has filed a case against the President of Cameroon in a Belgian court
- A Cameroon-based lawyer, Jean de dieu Momo, acting for the families of the alleged victims, is said to have put in a claim for about £1.5m as damages and reparation for the families.

The nine missing persons are Fabrice Kuate, Elysee Kouatou, Charles II Kouatou, Eric Chia, Efcian Chia, Marc Etaha (born 23 January 1964), Chartry Kuete, Frederic Ngouffo (born c1968), and Jean Roger Tchiwan. [16b] [letter from BHC Yaounde [17] [ACAT declaration]

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ARBITRARY ARREST AND DETENTION

12.02 The USSD report for 2005 noted that:

“In the North and Extreme North provinces, the government continued to permit traditional chiefs, or Lambibe, to detain persons outside the government penitentiary system, in effect creating private prisons. Within the palaces of the traditional chiefdoms of Rey Bouba, Gashiga, Bibemi, and Tcheboa, there were private prisons that had a reputation for serious abuse. In Garoua, in the North Province, palace staff estimated that a total of 50 prisoners were held in the palace prison annually, normally between 1 and 2 weeks.” [2a]

TORTURE

12.03 The USSD report continued: “Individuals who were found guilty in Garoua were often beaten or subject to other forms of physical abuse.” [2a] [USSD 2005]

FORCED CONSCRIPTION

12.04 There is no conscription. [4a] [CIA]

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JUDICIARY

- 13.01 The law provides for an independent judiciary; however, the judiciary remained highly subject to executive influence, and corruption and inefficiency remained serious problems. The court system was subordinate to the Ministry of Justice, which was part of the presidency. The constitution specifies that the president is the guarantor of the legal system's independence. He also appoints all judges with the advice of the Supreme Council of the Magistrature. Some politically sensitive cases were never heard by the courts. However, the judiciary showed modest signs of growing independence. During the year the courts found the Government liable for damages in a few human rights cases involving abuses by security officers. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 13.02 The legal system includes both national law and customary law, and many criminal and civil cases can be tried using either one; however, criminal cases are generally tried in statutory courts, and customary court convictions involving witchcraft automatically are transferred to the statutory courts, which act as the court of first instance. Customary law, which is used most frequently in rural areas, is based upon the traditions of the ethnic group predominant in the region and is adjudicated by traditional authorities of that group. Customary law is deemed valid only when it is not 'repugnant to natural justice, equity, and good conscience'. However, many citizens in rural areas remained unaware of their rights under civil law and were taught that they must abide by customary laws. Customary law ostensibly provides for equal rights and status; however, men may limit women's right to inheritance and employment, and some traditional legal systems classify wives as the legal property of their husbands. [2a] [USSD 2005]

ORGANISATION

- 13.03 The court system includes the Supreme Court, a court of appeals in each of the 10 provinces, and courts of first instance in each of the country's 58 divisions. [2a] [USSD 2005]

INDEPENDENCE

- 13.04 Customary courts served as a primary means for settling civil disputes in rural areas, primarily in family-related civil cases, such as in matters of succession, inheritance, and child custody. Divorce cases can be brought to customary courts only if the Government has not sanctioned the marriage through an official license. Customary courts may exercise jurisdiction in a civil case only with the consent of both parties. Either party has the right to have the case heard by a statutory court and to appeal an adverse decision in a customary court to the statutory courts. Most traditional courts also permitted appeal of their decisions to traditional authorities of higher rank. The legal structure is influenced strongly by the French legal system, although in the two Anglophone provinces certain aspects of the Anglo-Saxon tradition apply. In the past this mixed legal tradition led to conflicting court action in cases handled in both Francophone and Anglophone jurisdictions. The new Code of Penal Procedure will be applicable nationwide when it enters into force in 2006. [2a] [USSD 2005]

FAIR TRIAL

13.05 The USSD report for 2005 stated that:

“The law provides for a fair public hearing in which the defendant is proved innocent; however, this provision often was not respected in practice. There is no jury system. Defendants have the right to be present and to consult with an attorney in a timely manner. Defendants generally were allowed to question witnesses and to present witnesses and evidence on their own behalf. Defendants also had access to government held evidence relevant to their cases. Because appointed attorneys received little compensation, the quality of legal representation for indigenous clients often was poor. The Bar Association and some voluntary organizations, such as the Cameroonian Association of Female Jurists, offered free assistance in some cases... Trials normally were public, except in cases judged by the government (Ministry of Justice) to have political overtones or to be disruptive to social peace. Defendants have a right to appeal their cases.” [2a] [USSD 2005]

13.06 There were reports that officials continued to hold individuals in prison beyond the jail term set by the courts. [2a] [USSD 2005]

13.07 Political bias by judges (often instructed by the Government) often stopped trials or resulted in an extremely long process with extended court recesses. Powerful political or business interests enjoyed virtual immunity from prosecution; some politically sensitive cases were settled with a payoff. [2a] [USSD 2005]

PENAL CODE (IF APPLICABLE)

13.08 Among the provisions of the new Criminal Procedure Code are:

- Upon arrest of any individual, the judicial police must show a warrant of arrest and tell the person why he or she is being arrested. The facility to detain anyone for more than 48 hours without the authority of the State Counsel
- People will no longer be arrested at weekends
- It will prohibit the undressing of detainees in a cell
- The examining magistrate will conduct preliminary investigations
- Perpetrators of false imprisonment will be severely punished and the victims compensated
- It will be possible for a court to handle both criminal and civil aspects of a matter at the same time in the Anglophone part of Cameroon
- A law officer cannot be allowed to search somebody's house at night. Besides, people concerned have a right to search the law officer first before they can begin any search in their houses. [19] [The Post Online – Cameroon]

CODE OF CRIMINAL PROCEDURE

13.09 A new Criminal Procedure Code will come into force on 1 January 2007. It will bring landmark changes in the protection of human rights and further project the image of Cameroon as a State of law. This necessitates that all actors in the judiciary sector master, share and adopt an integrated approach to ensure

an error-free implementation of the Criminal Procedure Code when it comes into force. [9] [allAfrica.com]

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ARREST AND DETENTION – LEGAL RIGHTS

14.01 Please refer to paragraph 10.07.

14.02 Please refer to paragraphs 10.07 and 10.08.

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PRISON CONDITIONS

- 15.01 Generally, conditions were harsh and life-threatening. They were seriously overcrowded, unsanitary, and inadequate, especially outside major urban areas. Due to a lack of funds, serious deficiencies in food, health care, and sanitation were common in almost all prisons, including 'private prisons' operated by traditional rulers in the north. Inmates were kept in dilapidated colonial-era prisons, where the number of inmates was four to five times the intended capacity. There were deaths in prisons due to harsh conditions and neglect. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 15.02 At Bamenda Central Prison prisoners are separately accommodated – minors, female, pre-trial detainees and convicted criminals. There was no prison wall. As a form of security and punishment, prisoners that have attempted escape have both feet chained so that they can walk, but not run. [28] [Cameroon FFM 2004]
- 15.03 The New Bell prison in Douala holds both convicted prisoners and those detained awaiting trial. Cell sizes vary from the largest accommodating 150 people to the smallest which houses 20. Inmates sleep on beds, bunk beds and the floor; toilets and shower blocks were recently built. The condition of the building is not good and dust causes respiratory problems. Epidemics spread quickly because of the hot, humid weather. [28] [Cameroon FFM 2004]
- 15.04 There is one free meal a day, consisting of maize and beans; this diet never changes. The prison gets the same annual budget for food, irrespective of the number of prisoners. [28] [Cameroon FFM 2004]
- 15.05 Overcrowding and unsanitary conditions were observed during the FFM visit; numerous cases of open wounds, elephantitis, bullet wounds and generally poor health. There was little control of prisoners and few guards were observed. In one area of the prison, prisoners were observed with whips in their hands to keep other prisoners away from prohibited parts of the prison. [28] [Cameroon FFM 2004]
- 15.06 A recent AI article stated that conditions at the Kondengui Central Prison are said to be overcrowded and unsanitary. The prison diet is reportedly inadequate. Observers reported on 4 August that this prison, built to house 800 inmates, actually held 3,521. During a similar observation on 28 July of the Douala New Bell Prison, the prison administrator said that 3,194 inmates were accommodated in a 700-capacity establishment. [14b] [AI 7 March 2006]
- 15.07 Some prisoners died due to lack of adequate medical care. Health and medical care were almost non-existent in the country's prisons and in its detention cells, which were housed in gendarmeries and police stations. Prison officials regularly tortured, beat, and otherwise abused prisoners with impunity and corruption among prison personnel was widespread. Prisoners sometimes could bribe wardens for favours or treatment, including temporary freedom. There were separate prisons and a few pretrial detention centres for women; however, women routinely were held in police and gendarmerie complexes with men, occasionally in the same cells. Juvenile prisoners often were incarcerated with adults, occasionally in the same cells or wards. There

- were some credible reports of sexual abuse. Pretrial detainees routinely were held in cells with convicted criminals. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 15.08 In the North and Extreme North, the Government continued to permit traditional chiefs to detain persons outside the Government penitentiary system, in effect creating private prisons. Within the palaces of the traditional chiefdoms of Rey Bouba, Gashiga, Bibemi, and Tcheboa, there were private prisons that had a reputation for serious abuse. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 15.09 During the year 800 individuals hired and trained to work in the prison system entered into full-time duty. In December 2004 the Government shifted the responsibility for administering and overseeing prisons and detention centres and all individuals arrested by security forces from the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization to the Ministry of Justice. In addition the Government created a human rights body within the Ministry of Justice to monitor abuses in prisons and jails. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 15.10 The International Committee for the Red Cross regularly visited detention facilities in Cameroon. It gave presentations on its mandate and standard procedures for detention visits during courses for some 560 trainee civil servants at the National School of Penal Administration in Buea. [18] [ICRC 2005 report]
- 15.11 Tuberculosis and AIDS are soaring in prisons in Cameroon. In Edea prison, near Douala, twelve people inhabit a tiny cell adjoining a row of latrines. Regardless of the fact that some are sick with a highly contagious disease, the prison is packed and there is no available quarantine space. The situation in Edea likely resembles the situation in New Bell prison, Douala, one of the largest in the country with 3,000 inmates. On average, two cellmates were found to have TB here in a 2003/04 joint study. [40] [IRINnews]
- 15.12 The spread of AIDS is also a daunting problem. At New Bell, the HIV rate is increasing. In 2005 12.1 per cent of inmates were found to be infected, up from 11.5 per cent in 2004. Very few prisoners, even those with pulmonary TB or TB symptoms, agree to be tested. So the HIV infection is likely to be much higher, the study says. [40] [IRINnews]
- 15.13 The authorities say overcrowding is the prime reason for infections. New Bell's prison is designed for 700, yet 3,000 prisoners are accommodated there. Edea is over double its capacity. Other factors are a failure to isolate contagious prisoners, and the weakening effects of stress caused by the conditions. [40] [IRINnews]
- 15.14 Management at Edea, which has 335 detainees, face constant problems. The prison director stated that "We are abandoned here in these bush prisons – all assistance stops at Douala and Yaounde", adding that there was no budget whatsoever for health care and medicines for more than 300 detainees. Here the detainees have to buy their own medicines and take care of themselves. Often, a prisoner does not have the means so the family must intervene. But, generally, the family is unable or has already abandoned the imprisoned relative. [40] [IRINnews]
- 15.15 The medicine budget in 2004 in New Bell was officially estimated at US\$550 for the 3,000 inmates. [40] [IRINnews]

- 15.16 Officials and health experts are hoping for improvements under a programme launched by GTZ, prison administrators, the Justice Ministry and local NGOs, designed to identify and treat ill prisoners as well as educating prisoners and staff on disease transmission. The study, which is the basis for the programme, recommends creating TB diagnostic and treatment centres in prisons, testing prisoners and staff at least annually and effecting quarantine, where necessary. The researchers also called for an HIV prevention programme, with voluntary testing, to be supervised by the national anti-AIDS council. [40] [IRINnews]

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DEATH PENALTY

- 16.01 Cameroon is now regarded as abolitionist towards the death penalty. The last recorded execution took place in 1988. [20] [Hands Off Cain]
- 16.02 No death sentences were known to have been passed or executions carried out. By the end of 2005 the authorities had still not made public how many prisoners under sentence of death had benefited from a presidential decree issued on 29 December 2004. Under the decree, death sentences were commuted to life imprisonment, except in certain cases, including the killing of a child. The number of prisoners awaiting execution remained unknown. [14a] [AI 2006]

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POLITICAL AFFILIATION

- 17.01 In December 2005 the Appeal Court decided on appeals by imprisoned members of the SCNC against their convictions in 1999 by a military tribunal. Two people who were serving ten-year prison terms had their convictions quashed and were released. Others had their jail terms reduced. These prisoners had been denied an appeal for more than five years. Lawyers lodged a complaint with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and appeal hearings started in January 2005, although these were repeatedly delayed due to the non-production of defendants in court or the lack of interpreters. Peaceful political activities by SCNC members were met with arbitrary and unlawful detentions. [14a] [AI 2006]

FREEDOM OF POLITICAL EXPRESSION

- 17.02 In the early days of multi-party democracy President Biya's regime was seriously shaken by widespread opposition and protest. However, since then the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM) and the President have managed to reassert their dominance over the Cameroonian political scene, although the Social Democratic Front (SDF), led by Ni John Fru Ndi, has established itself as the main opposition party. [5a] [FCO Country Profile]

FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION AND ASSEMBLY

- 17.03 The law provided for freedom of assembly and association, but it is restricted in practice. Organisers of public meetings, demonstrations, or processions are required to notify officials in advance, but public assemblies do not. The Government is not authorised to suppress public assemblies that it has not approved in advance. However, officials routinely have asserted that the law implicitly authorised the Government to grant or deny permission for public assembly. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 17.04 Security forces forcibly disrupted demonstrations, meetings and rallies of citizens, trade unions, and groups of political activists. Some deaths resulted from the excessive force used by the police to disperse demonstrations. On numerous occasions throughout the year, authorities refused to grant

permission to hold rallies and meetings to political groups that the Government deemed illegal. Throughout the year, security forces disrupted Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC) meetings arresting activists and releasing them a couple of days later. Police forcibly dispersed student demonstrations during the year. [2a] [USSD 2005]

- 17.05 The conditions for Government recognition of a political party, a prerequisite for many political activities, were not onerous. More than 180 political parties operated legally, as well as an increasing number of civic associations. [2a] [USSD 2005]

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OPPOSITION GROUPS AND POLITICAL ACTIVISTS

- 17.06 President Biya has not been able to contain the increasingly vociferous calls for secession from Anglophone Cameroon. Over the last decades, political marginalisation and discrimination have grown stronger with pro-secessionist movements such as the Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC) and the Southern National Youth League (SCYL) demanding greater regional autonomy. The simmering conflict was contained briefly following the 1999 crackdown, but activists used the platform of the 40-year unification celebrations in October 2001 to hold peaceful demonstrations in protest against their marginalisation in national politics and to demand greater political rights. Biya again used strong-arm tactics in suppressing the protests, to which Amnesty International responded, urging authorities to respect rights of freedom and expression. [21] [Institute for Security Studies]
- 17.07 The SCNC was established in 1992, following disagreements within the SDF. There are two factions. Southern Cameroon was independent from 1954 to 1961 and since then there has been no dialogue between them and the Government. In March 1999 President Biya proposed a referendum on the issue, but it has yet to be conducted [by 2004]. [28] [Cameroon FFM 2004]
- 17.08 The SCNC say that many of its members are harassed, followed and occasionally beaten by Government security forces, because of their alliance. Members and their families are denied societal privileges, such as schooling and jobs. They are suppressed by the Government and offered bribes to keep quiet about their objectives. Their movements are restricted because they fear for their lives and are constantly being watched by the authorities. [28] [Cameroon FFM 2004]
- 17.09 In August 2005 the prefect of the Mezam division of North West Province banned all public demonstrations, rallies or meetings, even in private, held by the SCNC in the whole division. The Government declared that the SCNC was an illegal organisation fostering secession, an activity prohibited by law. In advance of the annual celebration of Southern Cameroon 'independence' on 1 October, the Government closed down SCNC rallies and meetings, as well as generating propaganda by Anglophone Government officials to counteract SCNC statements. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 17.10 A UNHCR representative stated that although in the past particular groups have been persecuted by the state authorities, this is no longer the case. In the past, members of the SCNC faced harassment and inhuman treatment by the police. [28] [Cameroon FFM]

- 17.11 During the year [2005] security forces arrested approximately 100 leaders, members and supporters of the SCNC, an Anglophone secessionist group. The majority of SCNC members arrested during the year were not charged with any crime and were released after brief detentions. However, during the year police detained seven members of the SCNC leadership for periods of up to three months, and at the end of 2005 all seven remained in detention awaiting trial. [2a] [USSD 2005]

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FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND MEDIA

- 18.01 Legally there is provision for freedom of speech and of the press, but in practice the Government continued to restrict these rights. The Government sometimes invoked strong libel laws to silence criticism of itself and officials. Journals, especially broadcasting journalists, often practised self-censorship as a result of Government intimidation, harassment, and criminal penalties for speech-related offences. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 18.02 The Government published one of the country's few daily newspapers, the *Cameroon Tribune*, which did not report extensively on protests or opposition parties, overtly criticise the Government, or portray Government programmes unfavourably. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 18.03 During 2005 approximately 200 privately owned newspapers were published, only an estimated 25 regularly. The influence of the media was minimal, though, despite the large number of private newspapers. The broadcast media was tightly controlled. Radio remained the most important means of communication with most citizens. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 18.04 The Government tightly controlled the broadcast media. There were approximately 20 privately owned radio stations in Cameroon. The state-owned CRTV broadcast on both television and radio, and was the only officially recognised and fully licensed broadcaster. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 18.05 The Government closed at least one radio station during the year. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 18.06 The law permits broadcasting of foreign news services but requires foreigners to partner with a national station. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 18.07 Television was less pervasive but more influential than print media. The independent television stations largely avoided criticising the Government, although their news broadcasts sometimes focused on issues of poverty, unemployment, poor education, and the government neglect and corruption which the broadcasts said caused these problems. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 18.08 Security forces continued to restrict press freedom by arresting, detaining, physically abusing, threatening and otherwise harassing journalists. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 18.09 In November police in Kumbo arrested an Australian freelance reporter for two London-based dailies. [2a] [USSD 2005]
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- 18.10 In July the Government unsealed the studios of Freedom FM. The Government closed this station in May 2003 because the station owner had not submitted a proper application for operation, although he claimed to have done so. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 18.11 In 2005 the Government was the largest advertiser by far, and could choose from which outlets to buy advertising. It continued to have a certain degree of influence. [2a] [USSD 2005]

- 18.12 The Government prosecuted its critics in the print media through criminal libel laws. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 18.13 Amnesty International, in its 2005 report, supported this finding, saying: “The authorities continued to use criminal libel laws to imprison journalists in cases that appear to be politically motivated”. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 18.14 Local leaders, particularly, abused this to keep local reporters from reporting on corruption and abusive behaviour. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 18.15 In March, the Union of Cameroonian Journalists created the Cameroon Media Council (CMC), an independent body of journalists aiming to promote press freedom, access to information, professionalism and ethical reporting. The CMC, which the Communications Minister said he supported, also aimed to review and discipline media professionals and arbitrate complaints against journalists. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 18.16 Eric Motumu, the publisher of Cameroon’s English language tabloid *The Chronicle*, informed the Committee for the Protection of Journalists that he was beaten unconscious by the bodyguard and driver of an opposition leader, Ni John Fru Ndi, leader of the Social Democratic Front. [22] [Committee to Protect Journalists]
- 18.17 Draconian laws regularly put journalists behind bars in Cameroon. Five journalists, including an Australian reporter and the Reporters Without Borders’ correspondent, spent time in prison. In this hostile climate, several quality titles cling on to survival in a country that is mired in corruption. But in both Yaounde and Douala, there is a profusion of privately owned newspapers, but this is no guarantee of quality or integrity. The courts, frequently prompted by the powerful or the corrupt acting with complete impunity, strike without distinction at journalists who are courageous, those who are badly trained and some who are simply malicious. Harsh jail sentences are systematically handed down. During the year, Reporters Without Borders tried to persuade the Government to de-criminalise press offences to help Cameroonian journalists to become more responsible and professional. This has so far been in vain. [23] [Reporters Without Borders]
- 18.18 Supporting the above comment, Freedom House reported that Cameroonian journalists are forced to work in an adverse and unpredictable political environment; repression remains a serious problem. Police and army officers settled scores with journalists outside the court system, resorting to intimidation or violence, causing journalists to practise self-censorship. However, local journalists observe that overt Government-sponsored harassment is beginning to decrease as officials realise the negative attention such action can attract from the international community. [31] [Freedom House 2006]
- 18.19 The media consisted of:-
- press – *Le Messager*, *Cameroon Tribune*, *Mutations*, *The Herald*, *The Post*, *La Nouvelle Expression*, *The Chronicle* [the latter referred to in para 18.16]
- television – Cameroon Radio Television, Canal 2, STV

radio – Cameroon Radio Television, Radio Reine, Radio Siantou. [10g] [BBC News Country Profile – Cameroon]

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HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTIONS, ORGANISATIONS AND ACTIVISTS

- 19.01 A number of domestic and international human rights groups generally operated without government restriction; however, Government officials repeatedly impeded the effectiveness of local human rights NGOs by harassing members of human rights groups, limiting access to prisoners, refusing to share information and threatening and using violence against personnel. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 19.02 Numerous domestic human rights NGOs operated in the country, including the National League for Human Rights, the Organization for Human Rights and Freedoms, the Association of Women against Violence, the Movement for the Defense of Human Rights and Freedoms, and the Cameroonian Association of Female Jurists. [2a] [USSD 2005]

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CORRUPTION

- 20.01 Corruption remained a serious problem in all branches of Government. The public perception was that judicial and administrative officials were open to bribes in almost all situations. Local and international activists continued to criticise the Government's lack of transparency in managing revenues from an international oil pipeline. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 20.02 In 2005 the Government took some steps to fight corruption. In March, they installed a new computer program to detect fraudulent state employees and to better control the number of civil servants and employees. By the end of the year 3,000 'ghost' employees, or employees fraudulently drawing salaries, were revealed. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 20.03 In June and August 22 potential candidates were hired for the Audit Bench of the Supreme Court. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 20.04 There was a National Corruption Observatory to combat corruption within the Government at all levels; however, it remained severely underfunded. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 20.05 At the end of May President Biya created the National Agency for the Investigation of Financial Crimes. Part of its mission is to fight money laundering, corruption-related enrichment and the embezzlement of public funds. The agency was functioning by the year's end. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 20.06 An article on allAfrica.com explains 'doki' which is a fake document used in different ways within Cameroonian society. The author of the article once saw a doki degree from the University of Buea that looked more genuine than the real thing. The article continues that police stations are some of the most efficient factories of doki. People can approach police officers and Government employees for the doki required. For whatever purposes dokis are used, Western embassies are the biggest consumers, though unwillingly so. [9m] [allAfrica.com]
- 20.07 Cameroonian authorities have discovered they are paying civil service salaries to 45,000 employees who do not actually exist. The 'ghost workers' were uncovered by a census of public servants as part of a drive to stamp out corruption. Foreign donors recently made tackling corruption a condition for cancelling billions of dollars of debt. [10h] [BBC News]

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FREEDOM OF RELIGION

- 21.01 An estimated 53 per cent of the population are Christian, of whom 25.1 per cent are Roman Catholics; 23 per cent have traditional beliefs and 22 per cent are Muslim. There are 1m Protestants. [1] [Europa World Online]
- 21.02 There is no official state religion. The law on Religious Congregations governs relations between the Government and religious groups. The latter must be approved and registered with the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization (MINAT) to function legally; this process is slow. It is illegal to operate without official recognition, but no specific penalties are prescribed. Evidence of this is found in the city proliferation of sects, which their leaders claim are subgroups of some Protestant denominations. Few of them are registered, and all of them operate freely. [2b] [USSD 2006 Religious Freedom]
- 21.03 In order to register, a religious denomination must fulfil the legal requirement to qualify as a religious congregation. [2b] [USSD 2006 Religious Freedom]
- 21.04 The only known registered groups are Christian, Muslim and the Baha’I Faith. In 2002, there are 38 officially registered denominations, most of which are Christian. There are also numerous unregistered small groups operating illegally, but freely. The Government does not register traditional religious groups, stating that traditional religious practice is a private concern observed by members of a particular ethnic, kinship group or the residents of a particular locality. The generally amicable relationship among religious groups in society contributed to religious freedom; however, some religious groups faced societal pressures within their regions. In the northern provinces, especially in rural areas, societal discrimination by Muslims against Christians and those practising traditional indigenous religions continued. [2b] [USSD 2006 Religious Freedom]
- 21.05 The multiplication of new, mostly Protestant, unaffiliated religious groups has led established churches to denounce ‘sects’ or ‘cults’. Leaders of established religious organisations characterise these ‘sects’ as detrimental to societal peace and harmony. Some religious leaders reportedly warn congregations of these groups, during major festivals. [2b] [USSD 2006 Religious Freedom]
- 21.06 Missionary groups are present in the country and operate without impediment. Licensing requirements for foreign groups are the same as those for domestic religious denominations. [2b] [USSD 2006 Religious Freedom]
- 21.07 Several religious denominations operate primary and secondary schools. [2b] [USSD 2006 Religious Freedom]
- 21.08 The Catholic Church operates two of the few modern printing presses and publishes a weekly newspaper, *L’Effort Camerounais*. [2b] [USSD 2006 Religious Freedom]
- 21.09 Potential commercial radio broadcasters must submit a licensing application, pay a fee when the application is approved, and pay an annual licensing fee. Because the Government has been slow in granting authorisation, there are many illegal stations in Cameroon. Two private religious radio stations that had been broadcasting illegally – the Pentecostal Radio Bonne Nouvelle and

Radio Reine, the latter managed by a Catholic priest although not officially sponsored by the Church-continued to broadcast while awaiting authorisation. Radio Veritas has temporary authorisation to broadcast and has been doing so without incident. [2b] [USSD 2006 Religious Freedom]

- 21.10 The state-sponsored television station, CRTV, carries two hours of Christian programmes on Sunday mornings, usually one hour of Catholic Mass, the other an hour from a Protestant church. There is also a dedicated Islam hour on Fridays. Regularly, state sponsored radio broadcasts Christian and Muslim services and radio and television stations periodically broadcast religious ceremonies. [2b] [USSD 2006 Religious Freedom]
- 21.11 Christian and Muslim religious holidays are celebrated as national holidays. [2b] [USSD 2006 Religious Freedom]
- 21.12 The Cameroonian Government was lauded for the right and freedom for people to worship according to their will, by the World President of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church in a speech in Yaounde over the weekend of 19-20 August. [9q] [allAfrica.com]

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ETHNIC GROUPS

- 22.01 Cameroon is divided into three regions: the Muslim north, dominated by Fulani dynasties and the numerous Kirdi or non-Muslim minority groups; the Cameroon highlands with highly structured and hierarchical kingdoms and nomadic Fulani herders; and the southern forest zone with its many independent Bantu groups and a small number of Pygmy groups. [24] [Encyclopedia of the World's Minorities]
- 22.02 In the north, the Fulani also have traditional control over many Kirdi groups that had weak political systems and were unable to resist the expansion of the Fulbe empire in the eighteenth century. Some of the more important of these Kirdi groups are the Gbaya, Duru, Kapsiki, and Mandara. In the extreme north there are many small enclaves of Choa Arabs. [24] [Encyclopedia of the World's Minorities]
- 22.03 USSD's 2006 International Religious Freedom Report expands on the above, stating that:
- “...From time to time the northern region suffers from ethnic tensions between the Fulani, an ethnic (or multiethnic) Muslim group that conquered most of the region 200 years ago, and the Kirdi, the descendents of groups that practiced traditional religions. The Fulani conquered or displaced many Kirdi as part of a westward expansion of Islam in Africa. Although some Kirdi subsequently adopted Islam, the Kirdi have remained socially, educationally, and economically disadvantaged relative to the Fulani. The slavery still practiced in parts of the north is reported to be largely enslavement of Kirdi (both Muslim and non-Muslim) by Fulani.” [2b]
- 22.04 The western highlands (Grassfields) is home to dozens of complex paramount chiefdoms with kings (Fons) and sub-chiefs ruling over their largely agricultural communities. The NorthWest Province, an English-speaking area, includes groups such as the Kom, Bamum, Nso, Bali, Bafut, Wimbum and Oku. The West Province is similar culturally to the NorthWest, but is francophone and home to many independent kingdoms often grouped together as Bamileke. The Bamileke have primarily been successful farmers and as a result they control much of the Cameroon economy. Although this makes them a powerful minority group, the Bamileke and other groups from the Grassfields have been targets of animosity. In this region there have been numerous farmer/herder conflicts. [24] [Encyclopedia of the World's Minorities]
- 22.05 In the southern forest belt, most ethnic groups were classified as Bantu-speaking groups. The Beti, encompassing many related groups, is the dominant group around Yaounde. The Bassa, Douala, Fang and Maka are other major Bantu groups in this region. [24] [Encyclopedia of the World's Minorities]
- 22.06 The Bagyeli, Baka and Bakola are terms labelling former Pygmy groups in the southern regions of Cameroon. These groups are among the most disenfranchised and threatened minority groups. [24] [Encyclopedia of the World's Minorities]
- 22.07 SouthWest Cameroon is the mountainous forest belt bordering Nigeria. Here there are mostly Bantu groups as well as the Bakweri, Bakossi, Balong, and

Mbo. However, several groups including the Efik, Ejagham, and Banyang have additional influences from the cultures of Nigeria, differentiating them from other groups. [24] [Encyclopedia of the World's Minorities]

- 22.08 Cameroon also has a number of immigrants from various countries. Among them are the Ibos, and others from eastern Nigeria are most numerous. Many foreign nationals from France, Lebanon, India, China and other countries have moved to Cameroon to pursue trade, religious, humanitarian or development work. [24] [Encyclopedia of the World's Minorities]

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LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER PERSONS

- 23.01 Homosexuality is illegal, with a possible prison sentence of between six months and five years and fines ranging from approximately \$40 to \$400. Prosecutions are rare, but homosexuals suffered from harassment and extortion by law enforcement officers. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 23.02 In July it was reported that eight men and a 17-year-old boy who were detained in Yaounde in May 2005 because of their alleged sexual orientation were released in June 2006. One of the men died ten days after his release from an illness contracted before his detention. The detainees were arrested at a nightclub in Yaounde on 22 May, along with two other males who were subsequently freed. Those detained were tried on charges of practising homosexuality. Two detainees were acquitted and released on 13 June. The remaining seven were convicted of practising homosexuality and sentenced to ten months' imprisonment. However, they were all released soon after the trial because they had already spent more than ten months in prison. [14b] [AI]
- 23.03 Homophobia is endemic in Cameroon society. In December 2005, the Cameroonian Roman Catholic Church issued a statement denouncing homosexuality and in January 2006 three Cameroonian newspapers published a list of several dozen people, including several Government officials, musicians and businessmen whom they accused of homosexuality. [14b] [AI]
- 23.04 At the end of March 3 of a group of 12 females were expelled from a college in Douala on suspicion of being lesbians and detained, along with a female footballer. The women were released in June after being sentenced to a suspended prison term and fined US\$44. [14b] [Amnesty International]
- 23.05 The hunt for gays in Cameroon has reached colleges and universities. Reports coming out of the country say at least 30 students have been expelled from schools in Douala. The colleges say they have turned over information on the students to police for criminal investigations. Most of the students are female, according to local reports. [25] [365gay.com]
- 23.06 Cameroon has come under fire for more than a year for its treatment of gays. Last December eight international human rights groups, including the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission, demanded the release of a number of men who have been in prison for the past nine months awaiting trial on charges of suspicion of homosexuality. [25] [365gay.com]
- 23.07 Two men in Cameroon were sentenced on Monday 27 February 2006 to year-long jail terms for having sex with each other. They were reportedly trying to resolve a dispute over a stolen cell phone when authorities discovered their sexual affair. [26a] [Planetout.com]
- 23.08 A man sentenced to prison time for homosexuality in Cameroon has died of AIDS-related complications just days after his release from custody. He had spent more than a year in prison awaiting trial under article 347 of the penal code which punishes sex between men. [26b] [Planetout.com]

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DISABILITY

- 24.01 The law provides certain rights to persons with disabilities; access to public institutions, medical treatment, and education. The Government was obliged to bear part of their educational costs, to employ them where possible and to provide necessary public assistance. However, the Government rarely honoured these obligations. There were few facilities for the disabled; lack of care for persons with mental disabilities particularly was acute. Special access provisions to private buildings and facilities for disabled persons are not mandated. [2a] [USSD 2005]

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WOMEN

- 25.01 There are separate prisons for women. Security forces reportedly subject women and elderly persons to abuse. There are a few pretrial detention centres for women. They were routinely held in police and gendarmerie complexes with men, occasionally in the same cell. Customary law ostensibly provides for equal rights and status. However, men may limit women's rights to inheritance and employment. Some traditional systems classify women as the legal property of their husbands, [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 25.02 Women held 18 of 180 seats in the National Assembly, 6 of 61 cabinet posts and a few of the higher offices within the major political parties. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 25.03 Domestic violence against women was common. While there were no reliable statistics on violence against women, a large number of newspaper reports indicated that it was widespread. The law does not specifically prohibit domestic violence, but assault is prohibited and is punishable by prison terms and fines; however, in practice the Government did not effectively enforce it in the case of assault on women. Women's rights advocates reported that the law does not impose effective penalties against men who commit acts of domestic violence. There are no gender-specific assault laws, despite the fact that women were the predominant victims of domestic violence. Spousal abuse is not a legal ground for divorce. In cases of sexual assault, a victim's family or village often imposed direct, summary punishment on the suspected perpetrator through extralegal means, ranging from destruction of property to beating. During the year there were no reports of any convictions, or of any action by the Government to combat domestic violence. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 25.04 The law prohibits rape, although rape occurred, and police and the courts investigated and prosecuted cases of rape, which resulted in some convictions during the year. Official and private media regularly covered rape cases handled by the courts during the year. In June a couple of newspapers released special issues on the problem of rape, which was becoming acute, especially in Douala and Yaounde. According to one of the reports, the Douala Courts heard approximately 40 cases per month. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 25.05 Provisions remained in the Penal Code that exempted a rapist from judicial proceedings if he married his victim, effectively protecting the perpetrator while subjecting the victim to further abuse. [14a] [AI 2005]
- 25.06 While the law prohibits prostitution, it was tolerated. Prostitution was practised predominately in urban areas by locals, and trafficking for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation occurred. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 25.07 While the law prohibits sexual harassment, very few cases were reported or prosecuted during the year. The Government did not conduct any public education campaigns on the subject and there were no statistics available on its occurrence. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 25.08 Despite constitutional provisions recognising women's rights, women did not enjoy the same rights and privileges as men. Some points of civil law were prejudicial to women. The law allows a husband to oppose his wife's right to

work in a separate profession if the protest is made in the interest of the household and the family; a husband may also end his wife's commercial activity by notifying the clerk of commerce tribunal of his opposition based upon the family's interest. Partly for this reason, some employers required a husband's permission before hiring female employees. [2a] [USSD 2005]

- 25.09 Customary law was far more discriminatory against women, since in many regions a woman customarily was regarded as the property of her husband. Because of the importance attached to customs and traditions, civil laws protecting women often were not respected. In the customary law of some ethnic groups, husbands not only maintained complete control over family property, but also could divorce their wives in a traditional court without being required to provide either verifiable justification or alimony. Polygamy was permitted by law and tradition. In cases of divorce, the husband's wishes determined the custody of children over the age of six. While a man may be convicted of adultery only if the sexual act takes place in his home, a female may be convicted without respect to venue. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 25.10 Traditional law normally governed the extent to which a woman may inherit from her husband in the absence of a will, and traditions varied from group to group. In many traditional societies, custom grants greater authority and benefit to male heirs than to female heirs. Women also faced the issue of forced marriage; in some regions, girls' parents could and did give girls away in marriage without the bride's consent. Often the husband, who could be many years older than his bride, paid his wife's parents a "bride price". Since a price had been paid, the girl was considered the property of the husband. When a married man died, his widow often was unable to collect any inheritance, since she herself was considered part of the man's property. Often the widow was forced to marry one of the deceased husband's brothers. If she refused, she had to repay the bride price in full and leave the family compound. In the northern provinces, some Lamibe reportedly prevented their wives and concubines from leaving the palace. The lack of a national legal code covering such family issues often left women defenceless against these male-oriented customs. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 25.11 In May 2004, religious leaders, including Catholics, Protestants, and Muslims, launched a nationwide programme to fight violence against women. [2a] [USSD 2005]

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LEGAL RIGHTS

- 25.12 Many citizens in rural areas remained unaware of their rights under civil law and were taught that they must abide by customary laws. Customary law ostensibly provided for equal rights and status; however, men may limit women's right to inheritance and employment, and some traditional legal systems classified wives as the legal property of their husbands. [2a] [USSD 2005]

POLITICAL RIGHTS

- 25.13 No information available.

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SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS

- 25.14 Despite constitutional provisions recognizing women's rights they did not enjoy the same rights and privileges as men. Some points of civil law were prejudicial to women. A husband is allowed to oppose his wife's right to work in a separate profession if the protest is made in the family and household interest. A husband can also end his wife's commercial activity by informing the clerk of commerce tribunal of his opposition based upon the family's interest. Partly because of this, some employers required a husband's permission before hiring female employees. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 25.15 Customary law was far more discriminatory against women, since in many areas a woman was regarded as the property of her husband. Civil laws protecting women were often not respected, because of the importance attached to traditions and customs. In the customary law of some ethnic groups, husbands not only maintained full control over family property, but also could divorce in a traditional court without providing either verifiable justification or alimony. Polygamy was permitted traditionally and legally.
- 25.16 Traditional law usually governed the extent of a woman's inheritance from her husband in the absence of a will. In many traditional societies, custom granted greater authority and benefit to male rather than female heirs. Women also faced the issue of forced marriage; in some regions, parents could and did give daughters away in marriage without the bride's consent. Often the husband paid his wife's parents a 'bride price', after which the girl would be considered the husband's property. When a married man died, his widow was often unable to collect any inheritance, being herself considered part of her husband's property. Often the widow was forced to marry one of the deceased husband's brothers and if she refused was forced to repay the bride price and leave the family compound. The lack of a national legal code covering such family issues often left women defenceless against these male-oriented customs.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

- 25.17 Domestic violence was common. A large number of newspaper reports indicated that it was widespread. Domestic violence is not specifically prohibited, unlike assault which is punishable by prison terms and fines. However, the Government did not effectively enforce the law in this area. Women's rights advocates reported that effective penalties were not enforced against men who commit domestic violence. There are no gender-specific laws, despite women being the predominant victims. Spousal abuse is not a legal ground for divorce. In sexual assault cases, a victim's family or village often imposed direct, summary punishment on the suspected perpetrator through extralegal means, such as destruction of property or beating. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 25.18 The law prohibited rape but it occurred. Some cases were investigated and prosecuted during 2005, resulting in some convictions. Rape was becoming an acute problem in Yaounde and Douala. [2a] [USSD 2005]

- 25.19 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is neither illegal nor widely practised. However, it continued to be practised in isolated areas of the Far North, Eastern and South West provinces and internal migration contributed to its spreading to other parts of the country. The majority of procedures were clitorectomies; infibulation, the severest form, was performed in the Kajifu region of SouthWest Province and generally the victims were infants and pre-adolescent girls. The Government did not conduct educational programmes to warn about its harmful consequences or prosecute any alleged practitioners. However, the Association of Women Against Violence continued to conduct educational programmes in Maroua to assist victims, their families and local populations. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 25.20 Very few cases of sexual harassment were reported or prosecuted during the year. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 25.21 In May 2004, religious leaders, including Catholics, Protestants, and Muslims, launched a nationwide program to fight violence against women. [2a] [USSD 2005]

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CHILDREN

- 26.01 During 2005 the Government made some efforts to protect children's rights and welfare, including participation in seminars on children's rights. In December the National Assembly passed the Anti-Child Trafficking law, which was then signed into law. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 26.02 Medical care for children was provided by the Government through local clinics and hospitals and a limited number of school doctors. Families with enough financial resources had access to a number of private clinics and hospitals. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 26.03 The exact extent of familial child abuse was not known; however, children's rights organisations targeted the problem. Newspaper reports often cited children as victims of kidnapping, mutilation and even infanticide. There were some credible stories of mothers (usually young, unemployed, and unmarried) abandoning their newborns in streets, garbage cans and pit toilets. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 26.04 An increasing number of children worked as household help. In north Cameroon it was credibly reported that children from poor homes were placed with better-off families to do paid housework. In Yaounde, Douala and Bamenda the ILO estimated that 40 per cent of employed children were girls; 7 per cent of these were less than 12 years old, and 60 per cent had dropped out of primary school. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 26.05 The USSD report for 2005 noted that "Parents viewed child labor as both a tradition and a rite of passage". Relatives often employed rural youth, especially girls, as domestic helpers, which rarely allowed children time to attend school. Many children began work at an early age on rural family farms. Child labour was also used in the cocoa industry. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 26.06 The Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Labour were responsible for enforcing child labour legislation by site inspections of registered businesses; however, insufficient resources were allocated to do this effectively. Also, the prohibitions do not include family chores, which were often beyond a child's capacity. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 26.07 Female Genital Mutilation was performed primarily on young girls. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 26.08 Despite the law that fixed a minimum age of 15 years for a bride, many families facilitated the marriage of girls as young as 12 years. Early marriage was prevalent in the northern provinces of Adamawa and the North, but it was especially characteristic of the remote Far North province, where many young women faced severe health risks from early pregnancies. Uncorroborated evidence suggested that some parents might have promised a female baby to an older male in order to receive dowries. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 26.09 There were reports of child prostitution and trafficking in children during 2005. Particularly in May [2005] police in Yaounde broke up a prostitution ring using young boys, who were lured by the prospect of being signed by famous football clubs in a foreign country. [2a] [USSD 2005]

- 26.10 Cameroon had a significant number of displaced or street children, most of whom lived in urban areas such as Yaounde and Douala. [2a] [USSD 2005]
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BASIC INFORMATION

- 26.11 The law sets a minimum age of 14 for child employment, which is inconsistent with the age for completing educational requirements. It also bans night work and details tasks that children under 18 cannot legally perform. The minimum legal age for women to marry is 15 years, but many families facilitated the marriage of young girls by the age of 12 years. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 26.12 The minimum age for military service is 18 years. [4a] [CIA World Factbook]

EDUCATION

- 26.13 Since independence, Cameroon has achieved one of the highest rates of school attendance in Africa, but provision of educational facilities varies according to region. Education, which is bilingual, is provided by the Government, missionary societies and private concerns. Education in state schools is available free of charge, and the Government provides financial assistance for other schools. Primary education begins at six years of age. It lasts for six years in Eastern Cameroon (where it is officially compulsory), and for seven years in Western Cameroon. Secondary education, beginning at the age of 12 or 13, lasts for a further 7 years, comprising 2 cycles of 4 years and 3 years in Eastern Cameroon and 5 years and 2 years in Western Cameroon. Expenditure on education by the central Government in 2004 was estimated at 213,143m. francs CFA (26.3 per cent of total spending). [1a] [Europa World Online]
- 26.14 According to Ministry of Education statistics 72 per cent of girls between ages 8 and 14 were enrolled in school, compared to 81 per cent of boys in the same age group. UNICEF reported that the secondary school enrolment rate was 36 per cent for boys and 29 per cent for girls. Attributed reasons for the low rate were socio-cultural prejudices, early marriage, sexual harassment, unwanted pregnancies and domestic chores. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 26.15 A study presented by the Ministers for Education and for Youth and Sports in October 2004 revealed a large disparity between potential student numbers and the capacity of schools. Preschools served only 16 per cent of all possible students. Within the entire school system, the northern provinces were the most underprivileged, with only 5.7 per cent of all teachers working in the Adamawa, North and Extreme North provinces. The capacity of the schools was also inadequate. [2a] [USSD 2005]

CHILD CARE

- 26.16 Pari Mutuel Urbain Camerounais, PMUC, has offered support to a newly created NGO in Douala, known as Groupe d'Initiative Commune Socio-economique des Enfants Demunis, GIC-ED, which offers technical training to some handicapped and underprivileged children in society. In the past PMUC has been assisting some of the associations in the country which take care of

underprivileged or disadvantaged children like the handicapped, street children and abandoned children. [9r] [allAfrica.com]

HEALTH ISSUES

- 26.17 Medical care for children was provided by the government through local clinics, hospitals and a limited number of school doctors. Families with sufficient financial resources had access to some private clinics and hospitals. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 26.18 The exact extent of familial child abuse was not known; however, the problem was targeted by children's rights organizations. [2b] [USSD 2005]

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TRAFFICKING

- 27.01 In 2005, trafficking in persons and for commercial sexual exploitation were problems within Cameroon. In December, the Anti-Child Trafficking Law was signed into law by the President. The Government continued to combat trafficking through an interagency committee and a programme targeting the location and return of trafficked children. The Government co-operated with its neighbours Gabon, Nigeria, Togo and Benin by exchanging information and the preparation of common trafficking legislation. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 27.02 Women and children traditionally faced the greatest risk and have been trafficked most frequently for sexual exploitation and forced labour. Most trafficking in children occurred within the country's borders, while most trafficked women were transported out of the country. The method used for women usually involved a marriage proposition by a foreign businessman. The victim became enslaved upon arrival abroad. Girls were internally trafficked from four provinces to Douala and Yaounde, working as domestic servants, street vendors or prostitutes. Children were trafficked for employment on cocoa bean plantations. In June, three traffickers were arrested in the South Province, close to the border with Gabon [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 27.03 During 2005 the International Labour Organisation and the Government supported a campaign to eradicate child trafficking in airports. Special anti-trafficking embarkation/disembarkation cards were designed and distributed. [2a] [USSD 2005]

MEDICAL ISSUES

- 28.01 The Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative 2000 was set up to observe poverty reduction and health problems. It concentrated on the fight against diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis, leprosy, cholera, polio, yellow fever and measles, reproductive health, health promotion and access to essential drugs. Approximately 80 per cent of the population have taken a drug for an illness even though it may not be the correct one, either because the wrong drug is prescribed or, more likely, the patient cannot afford the proper drug. About 40 per cent of the population obtain medicines from street dealers. [28] [Cameroon FFM 2004]
- 28.02 The World Health Organization reported in 1999 that there were 1,952 health centres, providing basic primary health care for minor, uncomplicated diseases (run by senior nurses); 322 district hospitals, having minimum equipment to treat some emergencies and treating some complications not treated at health centres, (run by physicians); 9 provisional hospitals, secondary reference units with most general and some specialised services; and 8 national hospitals, a tertiary reference unit intended to take care of most specialised cases, to limit the number of evacuations to foreign country facilities. There are also a number of private and military hospitals in Cameroon. [28] [Cameroon FFM 2004]
- 28.03 A WHO representative reported that all the national hospitals and some provincial ones provided specialised care in most medical fields, including cancer, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, cardiovascular disease, eye, ear, nose and throat diseases. Essential medicine is generally available in most public

health facilities and non-profit organisations run by the church. Many people cannot afford to pay for their drugs or prefer to go to traditional healers. This is supported by the fact that of all drugs prescribed, only half are dispensed. [28] [Cameroon FFM 2004]

- 28.04 The Government has integrated traditional healers into the health system and 60-70 per cent of the population consult them. There is no national regularisation of them and there is difficulty differentiating between those who are effective and those who are not. [28] [Cameroon FFM 2004]
- 28.05 Major health problems remain throughout the country but steps are being made to improve the water, hygiene and sanitary conditions, housing and national literacy. The determinants are the low purchasing power of the population and a low level of literacy. Key performance problems of the health system are personnel demotivation, an exodus of academics and co-ordinating the health sector. [28] [Cameroon FFM 2004]
- 28.06 Life expectancy in Cameroon is 50 years for males and 51 years for females. [1] [Europa World Online]
- 28.07 There were nearly 3,000 cases of cholera, including 46 deaths from January to June 2004 in the Littoral and West regions. [27] [World Health Organisation]
- 28.08 The major infectious diseases, where the degree of risk is very high, are:
- Food and waterborne – bacterial diarrhoea, hepatitis A and typhoid fever
 - Waterborne – malaria and yellow fever
 - Water contact – schistosomiasis
 - Respiratory – meningococcal meningitis [4a] [CIA World Factbook]
- 28.09 AllAfrica.com reported that: “As part of its effort to weed out quacks from the medical practice in the country, the Cameroon National Medical Council will, by the end of this month [September 2006], make public a list of all the medical doctors authorised to practise in the country.” The President of the Cameroon National Medical Council said that this will go a long way to help the population identify authorised medical practitioners around. He noted that one of the reasons why many of the quacks continue to operate is because many members of the public do not have the opportunity to easily identify who is who in the domain of medical practice. [9s]

OVERVIEW OF AVAILABILITY OF MEDICAL TREATMENT AND DRUGS

- 28.10 Most transmissible diseases, including malaria, can be treated in nearly all health facilities in Cameroon. Treatment for tuberculosis is provided free for patients by the World Health Organization and the Global TB Fund. Cholera can be treated at all levels of the health care system. [28] [Cameroon FFM 2004]
- 28.11 Médecins sans Frontières offer free treatment for Buruli ulcers in four centres in Cameroon. [28] [Cameroon FFM 2004]

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HIV/AIDS – ANTI-RETROVIRAL TREATMENT

- 28.12 The following ARV drugs are available at the Provincial Day Hospital in Bamenda:
- Triomune @ FCFA 3000;
Duovir/Stocrin @ FCFA 7000;
Lamistav/Nevirapine @ FCFA 7000;
Lamistav/Stocrin @ FCFA 7000;
Zidovex @ FCFA 7000.
[9t] [allAfrica.com]
- 28.13 According to information supplied to the British High Commission in Yaounde in September 2005, the following drugs are available at all HIV/AIDS centres in Cameroon, for the monthly fee of 3000 CFA: Zidovudin, Didanosin, Lamivudin, Stavudin, Navirapin, Efavirenz, Indinavir and Nelvinavir. Drugs in fixed combination are available as Lami-S (Lamivudin + Stavudin + Nevirapin), Triomune (Stavudin + Lamivudin + Nevirapin) and Juovir (Lamivudin + Zidovudin). [29] [Federal Republic of Germany letter]
- 28.14 The WHO reported that there were about 20 ARV treatment centres spread throughout the country, ensuring HIV/AIDS case management, including counselling before and after screening; CD4 checks and other examinations before treatment; procurement of ARV drugs at low cost; and follow-up tests. [28] [Cameroon FFM 2004]
- 28.15 Médecins sans Frontières (MSF) assists some of those living with HIV/AIDS or Buruli ulcer. In 2005 11 per cent of the population were HIV-positive, approximately 937,000 people. MSF operated an AIDS project in Yaounde that helps more than 1,200 patients. Almost 800 people were receiving ARV medication. A second prevention and treatment team assisted more than 850 patients in Douala. By the middle of 2005, 550 of these patients were using ARVs. In addition to providing treatment, counselling and related medical care, MSF's staff joined national efforts to find ways to expand access to AIDS treatment. [41] [Médecins sans Frontières]
- 28.16 The high incidence of HIV/AIDS spread in the NorthWest Province has been attributed partly to trafficking in humans, specifically children. The Director of the Centre for Human Rights and Peace Advocacy, CHRAPA, stated that most girls aged between 13 and 20 are employed in chicken parlours where they become prostitutes. The girls submit to unsafe sex for fear their refusal could result in their sacking by employers. When these girls finally contract HIV/AIDS and fall sick, they are sent back to the NorthWest where they spread it for the period they are alive. [9u] [allAfrica.com]
- 28.17 During the year a foreign pharmaceutical company conducted a clinical study of a drug intended to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS among 400 female prostitutes, none of whom had HIV at the beginning of the trial. Local and international NGOs criticised the company and the Ministry of Health for lack of transparency and negligence, asserting that the Government and the company did not sufficiently inform the prostitutes of the risks involved with taking part in the trials. According to Doctors without Borders and a UN press agency, there was no provision for free treatment against HIV/AIDS in the protocol agreement governing the trial and its participants, although free condoms and HIV/AIDS testing were provided. Some of the participants said they believed they had been "vaccinated" by the pills they received and could not contract HIV/AIDS, even though 200 prostitutes had been given placebos.

At least three prostitutes were infected with HIV after having unprotected sex during the trial. In response to the allegations of misconduct, the Ministry of Health suspended the clinical tests in February, citing “dysfunctions” and saying that “certain corrective measures” needed to be taken by the research team. The Minister also set up an independent inquiry, which reported that although allegations about safety made by certain NGOs were not true, new procedures needed to be instituted to ensure more regular reporting and study site accreditation before the trials could resume. By year’s end the trial had not resumed. [2a] [USSD]

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CANCER TREATMENT

- 28.18 Cancer treatment is available, including chemotherapy, but at a cost. [28] [Cameroon FFM 2004]

KIDNEY DIALYSIS

- 28.19 A dialysis centre is operational at the Hopital Generale de Douala. [32] [Global Dialysis]
- 28.20 The Central and General hospitals in Yaounde also have dialysis facilities. [28] [Cameroon FFM 2004]

SICKLE CELL

- 28.21 The effective treatment for Sickle Cell disease and other hemoglobinopathies, the allogenic bone marrow transplantation, remains inaccessible. So far, screening programmes for sickle cell disease are not available in Cameroon. [33] [Geneva Foundation for Medical Education and Research]

MENTAL HEALTH

- 28.22 Mental health illnesses can be treated in Cameroon. Treatment is available in the hospitals in Yaounde and Douala as well as private institutions and military hospitals. Branded drugs are available, but are very expensive. [28] [Cameroon FFM 2004]
- 28.23 Drug treatments for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), specifically Diazepam, Benzodiazepam, Tranxene, Lysanxia and Atarax, are available as are Fluphenazine and Haloperidol to treat Paranoid Schizophrenia. [28] [Cameroon FFM 2004]

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HUMANITARIAN ISSUES

29.01 Even though the Nigerian Government has agreed to hand over the disputed Bakassi Peninsula to Cameroon, the Nigerian majority on the peninsula has continued to stress that it does not want to become part of Cameroon. Given this situation, a withdrawal by Nigeria would be problematic in the run-up to the country's 2007 elections. No quick solution to the problem is in sight and periodic low-level clashes between the two countries' armies cannot be ruled out. President Biya's participation in a regional summit held in Equatorial Guinea in March suggests some improvement in relations between the two countries, which have been soured recently by the mistreatment of Cameroonians living there. Outstanding border disputes, over the limits of both countries' oil-rich territorial waters, remain another potential source of conflict. [8] [EIU]

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FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

- 30.01 Security forces routinely impeded domestic travel in 2005. Roadblocks and checkpoints, manned by security forces, proliferated in cities and on most highways, making road travel expensive and time consuming. Bribery was common at checkpoints. Police frequently stopped travellers to check both personal and vehicle documentation. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 30.02 The law prohibits forced exile. Some human rights monitors or political opponents, considering themselves threatened, left the country voluntarily and declared themselves to be in exile. [2a] [USSD 2005]

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INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE (IDPs)

- 31.01 Since 2005, the political situation and security issues have been of great concern in Chad and the Central African Republic (CAR). There was fear that the socio-political situation was going to deteriorate in Chad, leading to armed conflicts and, in consequence, massive population displacements. However, the presidential elections in Chad were fairly calm; some Chadians who had run into Cameroon have now returned home. In the CAR the situation is more alarming. A significant number of people, especially the Fulani from the north and north west of the CAR are regularly running into Cameroon. Evaluations have revealed that about 10,000 people have found refuges in areas of Cameroon, bordering the CAR. [34] [Reliefweb.int]
- 31.02 Based on the evaluation and assessment done by Cameroon Red Cross Society volunteers, the areas in paragraphs 31.03 and 31.04 were identified as likely to have population displacements. [34] [Reliefweb.int]
- 31.03 Along the borders of Cameroon and Chad – Kousseri, Maroua, Kaele, Mora, Yagoua and Mokolo. [34] [Reliefweb.int]
- 31.04 Along the borders of Cameroon and the CAR – Garoua-Boulai and Bertoua, Yokadouma and Gari Gombo, Kentzou and Batouri, Meingaga and Toubouro. [34] [Reliefweb.int]
- 31.05 The situation along the borders of Cameroon and Chad is presently calm. However, measures have been taken to ensure rapid intervention when needed. CAR refugees, mostly nomads, continue to enter Cameroon in large numbers and on a daily basis. [34] [ReliefWeb]

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FOREIGN REFUGEES

32.01 In 2005 there were 39,290 Chadian refugees, 16,686 Nigerian refugees and 9,634 refugees from the Ivory Coast in Cameroon. [4a] [CIA World Factbook]

32.02 The UNHCR stated in its Global Report for 2005 that its programme in Cameroon in 2005 covered 9,700 Nigerian prima facie refugees settled since 2002 in the north-west of the country and some 41,000 urban refugees settled in Yaounde and Douala, mainly from Chad, the CAR, the DRC, Liberia, the RoC, Rwanda and Sierra Leone. Owing to insecurity in Chad and the CAR in 2005, the number of asylum seekers in Cameroon significantly increased, bringing the total to 6,600. The adoption of a refugee law by Parliament in July 2005 was an important development for which the UNHCR had advocated intensively throughout 2004. A first draft was submitted to the Government in September 2004. Pending the adoption of a decree, the UNHCR carried out the registration of asylum seekers and RSD. In order to improve RSD procedures, many activities were partly or fully transferred from the Cameroon Red Cross to the UNHCR during the second half of 2005. In December new eligibility officers and RSD assistants were recruited and trained.

Following a Project Profile mission in June 2005, the UNHCR started to register urban refugees in its database. This will continue in 2006. Major repatriation movements took place in 2005 for Nigerian refugees recognised on a prima facie basis and who had settled in North West Cameroon since 2002. A tripartite agreement between the two countries and the UNHCR was signed in April 2005. By December 2005, over 7,700 Nigerian refugees had been repatriated and the Project Profile database updated accordingly.

The UNHCR continued to provide domestic and shelter items, health care and basic primary education, and rehabilitated the water system for some 9,700 remaining Nigerian refugees in the north west of Cameroon. The UNHCR provided humanitarian assistance to urban refugees with specific needs in 2005. With the opening of a well-equipped medical centre, health care for this group was improved.

In 2005, support for primary education was provided to almost 3,000 refugee children, while secondary education assistance was extended to 128 refugees and professional skills training to 34 others. Additionally, 36 urban refugees were assisted to return to their countries of origin and 95 others were resettled. [35] [United Nations Commissioner for Human Rights]

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CITIZENSHIP AND NATIONALITY

- 33.01 Citizenship is based upon Ordinance #2 dated 1959 and Ordinance #68 dated 1968. Details of the following can be found at the source link in Annex E – citizenship regulations by birth, descent, marriage and naturalisation. [36] [US Office of Personnel Management Investigations Service]
- 33.02 Dual citizenship is generally not recognised with the exception of a child born abroad of Cameroonian parents, who obtains the citizenship of the country of birth. Upon reaching age 21, one citizenship must be chosen, or Cameroonian citizenship will be lost. [36] [Office of Personnel Management Investigations Service]
- 33.03 Loss of citizenship can be either voluntary or involuntary. [36] [United States Office of Personnel Management Investigations Service]
- 33.04 Traditional marriages are not officially recognised in Cameroon. Even if it is celebrated before the appropriate Cameroonian authority, and regardless of where it is celebrated, a marriage between a Cameroonian woman and a foreigner does not vest the latter with Cameroonian citizenship. To obtain Cameroonian citizenship, a man who lawfully marries a Cameroonian woman must apply to do so after renouncing his citizenship of origin. However, once he is married, he may reside in Cameroon as long as he complies with national laws. In terms of the possibilities of acquiring citizenship through marriage, the only situation covered in Cameroonian law is that of a foreign woman who marries a citizen of Cameroon. [37] [Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada]

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EXIT/ENTRY PROCEDURES

- 34.01 Entry requirements are a passport valid for a minimum of six months. Visas are required by all except nationals of the Central African Republic, Chad, Congo (Rep), Mali and Nigeria for stays not exceeding 90 days. Those in transit continuing their journey within 24 hours provided they hold onward tickets and are not leaving the airport. Evidence of yellow-fever vaccination and current immunisation records are required. [2d] [USSD – Consular Information Sheet] [39] [Republic of Cameroon Embassy]

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EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS

- 35.01 The law allows workers to form and join trade unions; however, the Government imposed numerous restrictions. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 35.02 It also required that unions register with the Government, permitting groups of no less than 20 workers to organise a union by submitting a constitution, internal regulations, and non-conviction certifications for each founding member. Workers who formed a union and carried out union activities without registration face prison sentences or fines. In practice, independent unions, especially in the public sector, have found it difficult to register. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 35.03 Registered unions were subject to Government interference; some independent unions accused the Government of creating small non-representative unions amenable to Government positions. Some sections of labour law have no force or effect because the presidency had not issued implementing decrees. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 35.04 The law provided for collective bargaining between workers and management as well as between labour federations and business associations in each sector of the economy. When labour disputes arose, the Government chose the labor union with which it would negotiate, selectively excluding some labour representatives. Once agreements were negotiated, there was no mechanism to enforce implementation; some agreements between the Government and unions were then ignored by the Government. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 35.05 The Labor Code explicitly recognised workers' right to strike but only after mandatory arbitration; this right was exercised during the year. Arbitration decisions were not enforceable by law and could be overturned or ignored by Government or employers. The provision of the law allowing persons to strike does not apply to civil servants, penitentiary employees, or workers responsible for national security. Civil servants were required to negotiate grievances directly with the minister of the appropriate department and the Ministry of Labour. [2a] [USSD 2005]
- 35.06 The law prohibits anti-union discrimination, and employers guilty of such discrimination were subject to fines up to approximately CFA 1m francs. [2a] [USSD 2005]

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Annex A: Chronology of major events

- 1961** **1 October:** Unification of two former colonies, one British and one French
- 1972** **May:** New constitution endorsed and the federal system replaced by a unitary republic
- 1982** **October:** President Ahidjo resigned and replaced by Paul Biya
- 1986** Poisonous gases escaped from Lake Nyos, killing nearly 2,000 people
- 1994** **January:** Conflict with Nigeria as a result of a border dispute over the Bakassi peninsula
- 1995** **November:** Cameroon admitted to the Commonwealth
- 1996** **January:** Revised constitution adopted
- 1996** **February:** Renewed hostilities in the Bakassi area resulted in several casualties
- 1997** **October:** President Biya re-elected
- 1998** Relations with Nigeria began to improve
- 2002** **October:** The International Court of Justice issued its final verdict on the demarcation of the land and maritime boundary between Cameroon and Nigeria, ruling in favour of the former's sovereignty over the Bakassi peninsula. Nigeria refused to accept the ruling
- 2004** **January:** Presidents Biya and Obasanjo, with UN mediation, agreed to exchange consular envoys and to establish joint security patrols
- 2004** **July:** Agreement reached between both countries that Nigerian troops would withdraw from Bakassi
- 2006** **August:** Nigerian troops withdrew from Bakassi

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Annex B: Political organisations

Action for Meritocracy and Equal Opportunity Party (AMEC)

Received less than 1 per cent of the vote in the 1997 presidential election
Leader – Joachim Tabi Owono

Alliance of Progressive Forces (AFP)

Formed in mid-2002 by dissident members of the SDF who decided to form their own party, citing the autocratic management of John Fru Ndi
Founders – Maidadi Saidou Yaya, Evariste Okusi Foto, Samuel Swinko and Yves Epaata

Cameroon Anglophone Movement (CAM)

Originally a pro-federalist movement; has more recently supported separatist demands for the establishment of an independent republic in predominantly Anglophone provinces
Leader – Vishe Fai

Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM)

Created in March 1985; the successor to the Cameroon National Union
Leader – Paul Biya

Democratic Progressive Party of Cameroon (PDPC)

An observer member of the Christian Democrat International
Leader – Francois Mama Etogo

Democratic Rally of People without Frontiers (RDPF)

Founded in 1997; its candidate received less than 1 per cent of the vote in the 1997 presidential election
Leader – Antoine Demannu

Democratic Union of Cameroon

Gained legal status in April 1991
Leader – Adamou Ndam Njoya

Integral Democracy of Cameroon (DIC)

Its leader received less than 1 per cent of the vote in the 1997 presidential election
Leader – Gustave Essaka

Liberal Democratic Alliance (LDA)

Anglophone grouping launched in 1993 campaigning for speedier constitutional reform
Leader – Henri Fossung

National Union for Democracy and Progress

Founded in 1991 mainly by supporters of ex-President Ahijdo and based in the Muslim community
Leader – Maigari Bello Bouba

People's Solidarity Party (PSP)

Founded by Ngouo Woungly-Massaga in 1991 following break with Union of Peoples of Cameroon: 25 candidates in March 1992 elections without success.

Popular Development Party (PPD)

Founded in 1997. Its candidate received 1.2 per cent of the 1997 presidential election vote

Leader – Albert Dzongang

Progressive Movement (MP)

Legalised in August 1991; in January 1994 joined opposition front with Social Democratic Party of Cameroon, Social Movement for Democracy and other groups

Leader – Jean Jacques Ekindi

Social Democratic Front (SDF)

Founded early 1990 and gained legal recognition in March 1991

Leader – Ni John Fru Ndi

Social Democratic Movement (SDM)

Founded in 1995 by a former secretary-general of the SDF following a split in that party

Leader – Siga Asanga

Social Democratic Party of Cameroon (PSDC)

Legalised in December 1991; in January 1994 joined opposition front with Progressive Movement, Social Movement for New Democracy and other groups

Leader – Jean-Michel Tekam

Social Movement for New Democracy (MSND)

Founded in 1991 by a former Bar Association president who was active in the early pro-democracy movement and served a prison term in 1990; in January 1994 joined opposition front with Progressive Movement, Social Democratic Party of Cameroon and other groups

Leader – Yondo Mandengue Black

Social Programme for Liberty and Democracy (PSLD)

An opposition party whose leader was arrested in February 1995

Leader – Massok Mboua

Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC)

A separatist movement established in Buea in 1993 to campaign for the establishment of an independent republic in Anglophone Cameroon. It proclaimed the establishment of a 'Federal Republic of Southern Cameroon' in December 1999, and in April 2000 named a judge, Frederick Ebong Alobwede, as president of the self-styled republic

Leader – Sam Ekontang Elad (chairman)

Union of Democratic Forces of Cameroon (UFDC)

Legalised in March 1991; boycotted March 1992 Assembly elections in protest against electoral law banning party alliances; parties' leader was detained in November 1992 for alleged anti-government activities.

Leader – Vicotrin Hameni Bialeu

Union of the Forces of Progress (UFP)

Formed in June 2003 by the merger of four opposition parties; the Movement for the Liberalisation and the Development of Cameroon (MLDC), the Alliance of Patriotic Forces (AFP), the Movement for the Defence of Republic (MDR) and the Movement for Democracy and Progress (MDP). Marcel Yondo was elected as secretary-general of the UFP

Union of the Peoples of Cameroon (UPC)

Founded in the late 1940s; banned in 1955, but relegalised at independence in 1960
Leadership – Ndeh Ntumazah and Augustin Frederic Kotock

Note:- all Annex B sourced from Political Parties of the World [13]

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Annex C: Prominent people: past and present

Abah Abah, Polycarpe; Minister of the Economy and Finance

Achu, Simon Achidi; Prime Minister from April 1992 to September 1996

Adama, Haman; Minister of National Education

Ahidjo, Ahmadou; former President from January 1960 to November 1982

Ali, Amadou; Justice Minister of State

Asuquo, Tony Ene; Leader of the Bakassi Movement for Self Determination (recently deceased)

Belinga, Martin; Ambassador to the United Nations

Biya, Paul; President of Cameroon from November 1982 to present date; leader of the 'Rassemblement démocratique du peuple camerounais' (RDPC)

Bombak, Suzanne; Minister of Women's Affairs and the Family (RPDC)

Elad, Sam Ekongtang; leader of the Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC)

Esso, Laurent; Minister of State in charge of External Relations (RPDC)

Fru Ndi, Ni John; leader of the Social Democratic Front (SDF)

Hayatou, Sadou; Prime Minister from April 1991 to April 1992

Inoni, Chief Ephraim; Prime Minister

Mahamad, Soulamane; first Vice-President of the SDF

Maigari, Bello Bouba; former Prime Minister; chair of 'Union nationale pour la démocratie et le progrès' (UNDP)

Mebara, Jean-Marie Atangana; Minister of State and Secretary-General of the Presidency (RPDC)

Mendouga, Jerome; Ambassador to the United States

Musonge, Peter Mafany; one-time manager of the Cameroon Development Corporation; Prime Minister from September 1996 to December 2004

Nlend, Henri Hogbe; Presidential candidate in October 1997; represented the 'Union des populations camerounaises' (UPC)

Yeguie, Djibril Cavaye; President of the National Assembly

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Annex D: List of abbreviations

ACAT	Christian Action for the Abolition of Torture
AI	Amnesty International
C9	Committee for the Bepanda Nine
CAF	Communauté Financiere Africaine
CAR	Central African Republic
CHRAPA	Centre for Human Rights and Peace Advocacy
CMC	Cameroon Media Council
CPDM	Cameroon People's Democratic Movement
CPJ	Committee to Protect Journalists
CRTV	Cameroon Radio and Television
DGNS	Delegate General for National Security
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EIU	Economist Intelligence Unit
EU	European Union
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office (UK)
FFM	Fact Finding Mission
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FH	Freedom House
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIC-ED	Groupe d'Initiative Commune Socio-économique des Enfants Demunis
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICJ	International Court of Justice
ICJ	International Commission of Jurists
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IGLHRC	International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INEC	Independent Electoral Commission
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LGA	Local Government Area
MBOSCUDA	Mbororo Social and Cultural Development Association
MINAT	Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization
MSF	Médecins sans Frontières
NEMA	National Emergency Management Agency
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODIHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
ODPR	Office for Displaced Persons and Refugees
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PMUC	Pari Mutuel Urbain Camerounais
PRGF	Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility
PTSD	Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
RoC	Republic of Congo
RSF	Reporteurs sans Frontières
SCNC	South Cameroons National Council
SCYL	Southern National Youth League
SDF	Social Democratic Front

STC	Save The Children
STV	Cameroon television channel
TB	Tuberculosis
TI	Transparency International
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCHR	United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USSD	United States State Department
WHO	World Health Organization

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