



West Africa Network for Peacebuilding

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS FOR PEACE

Urgent Attention on Deteriorating Crisis in Cameroon and Its Implication for Stability in West Africa

PRESS RELEASE

Immediate Release

The West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) wishes to express its concern and draw global attention to the deteriorating situation in Cameroon. The current violent agitations going on in Cameroon by the English-Speaking part of the country - North West and South West Regions – have historical origins and regional and international significance. By virtue of its shared history and geographical proximity, Nigeria has the greatest burden, and perhaps more in the quest for a durable solution to the crisis. The influx of more than 40,000 registered refugees, with tens of thousands more living in host communities constitute a huge humanitarian burden to a country that is already grappling with its own internal displacement as a result of the Boko Haram and herders-farmers crisis. Since 2017, hundreds of thousands of Nigerians living in Cameroon following the 1967-70 war and who dominate the trade and commerce landscape are returning to Nigeria in their numbers. About 500,000 have been internally displaced in Cameroon.

According to Cameroon's private sector affiliate, *Groupement inter-patronal du Cameroun* (GICAM) in its September 2018 report, the economic and financial cost of the crisis in the English-speaking part of the country has been enormous: over \$566million loses in business deals; \$4,062 billion infrastructure losses; 6434 formal sector job losses and 8000 jobs in the informal sector. With close to half a million internal displacements, the total losses in the affected villages and remote towns are yet to be ascertained.

Though there is no official number of casualties, reports of a dirty war that is indiscriminately targeting civilians is alarming. Evident by horrific pictures and videos, the military as well as the separatist fighters known as the "Amba Boys", are committing atrocities that amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity – summary executions, indoctrinate arrests, kidnap for ransom, burning of schools and hospitals, and the burning of houses in a typical scorched-earth policy, are taking place on a regular basis. School enrolment has dropped drastically in a region that used to take pride in its exceptional educational records. The allegations that a genocide may be unfolding while the global community watches are worrisome. Several calls for dialogue in resolving the crisis have not yielded any result.

Conscious that Cameroon is still embroiled in the fight against Boko Haram in its Far North Region, and a threatening incursion in its eastern border by Central African Republic militant/rebel groups and is currently facing a post-election challenge by the main opposition group, WANEP wishes to reiterate that hardcore security and military approach cannot resolve this crisis.

In line with the AU resolve to 'Silence the Guns in Africa by the Year 2020 and in accordance with the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework, WANEP:

- Strongly condemns all the atrocities going on in the English-Speaking part of Cameroon by both sides and calls on perpetrators to abide by international laws and conventions;
- Expresses shock at the level of violence going on and the silence of the international community and international media as well as the rather nonchalant attitude of other non-state actors in Cameroon;
- Calls for immediate cessation of hostilities and commencement of a facilitated dialogue by willing partners in the spirit of solidarity and humanity; and
- Calls for an independent investigation into the atrocities and crimes against humanity and for perpetrators to be held to account.

WANEP wishes to recall that Cameroon was a founding member of the WANEP Board in 1998 and therefore expresses her readiness to assist, in whatever way feasible, to work towards a peaceful settlement of the crisis in Cameroon.

For Further Inquiries on this release, please contact WANEP Regional Office:

- ✓ **Email:** wanep@wanep.org
- ✓ **Tel:** +233 302 411638, +233 302 406340
+233-(0)302 426004, 302 408224
- ✓ **Mobile :** +233-55-3147910)