



Home Office

**Border &
Immigration Agency**

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN INFORMATION REPORT

CAMEROON

28 AUGUST 2007

Contents

PREFACE

Latest News

EVENTS IN CAMEROON FROM 24 JULY 2007 TO 21 AUGUST 2007

REPORTS ON CAMEROON PUBLISHED OR ACCESSED SINCE 24 JULY 2007

Paragraphs

Background Information

1. GEOGRAPHY	1.01
Map	1.04
2. ECONOMY	2.01
3. HISTORY	3.01
4. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS	4.01
5. CONSTITUTION	5.01
6. POLITICAL SYSTEM	6.01

Human Rights

7. INTRODUCTION	7.01
National Commission on Human Rights and Freedom (NCHRF).....	7.07
8. SECURITY SITUATION	8.01
9. CRIME	9.01
10. SECURITY FORCES.....	10.01
Police.....	10.03
Arbitrary arrest and detention	10.06
Torture	10.08
Extra-judicial killings	10.12
Armed forces	10.14
Arbitrary arrest and detention	10.17
Torture	10.18
Extra-judicial killings	10.19
Other government forces	10.21
Avenues of complaint	10.22
11. MILITARY SERVICE.....	11.01
12. ABUSES BY NON-GOVERNMENT ARMED FORCES	12.01
Bepanda Nine	12.01
Arbitrary arrest and detention.....	12.03
Torture.....	12.04
Forced conscription.....	12.05
13. JUDICIARY.....	13.01
Organisation	13.03
Independence	13.04
Fair trial	13.05
Penal code	13.10
Code of criminal procedure.....	13.11
14. ARREST AND DETENTION – LEGAL RIGHTS.....	14.01

15. PRISON CONDITIONS	15.01
16. DEATH PENALTY	16.01
17. POLITICAL AFFILIATION	17.01
Freedom of political expression	17.02
Freedom of association and assembly	17.04
Opposition groups and political activists	17.07
18. FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND MEDIA	18.01
19. HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTIONS, ORGANISATIONS AND ACTIVISTS	19.01
20. CORRUPTION	20.01
21. FREEDOM OF RELIGION	21.01
22. ETHNIC GROUPS	22.01
23. LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER PERSONS	23.01
Legal rights	23.01
Government attitudes	23.03
Social and economic rights	23.05
24. DISABILITY	24.01
25. WOMEN	25.01
Political rights	25.01
Legal rights	25.02
Societal ill treatment or discrimination	25.10
Violence against women	25.13
Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)	25.18
26. CHILDREN	26.01
Basic information	26.01
Education	26.12
Child care	26.16
Health issues	26.17
27. TRAFFICKING	27.01
28. MEDICAL ISSUES	28.01
Overview of availability of medical treatment and drugs	28.09
HIV/AIDS – anti-retroviral treatment	28.12
Cancer treatment	28.18
Kidney dialysis	28.19
Sickle cell	28.21
Mental health	28.22
Buruli ulcers	28.23
29. HUMANITARIAN ISSUES	29.01
30. FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT	30.01
31. INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE (IDPs)	31.01
32. FOREIGN REFUGEES	32.01
33. CITIZENSHIP AND NATIONALITY	33.01
34. EXIT/ ENTRY PROCEDURES	34.01
35. EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS	35.01
36. WITCHCRAFT	36.01

Annexes

- Annex A – Chronology of major events
- Annex B – Political organisations
- Annex C – Prominent people, past and present
- Annex D – List of Cabinet Ministers, September 2006
- Annex E – List of abbreviations
- Annex F – References to source material

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 23 July 2007. The latest news section contains further brief information on events and reports accessed from 24 July 2007 to 21 August 2007.
- 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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- 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

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Return to contents
Go to sources

Latest News

EVENTS IN CAMEROON FROM 24 JULY 2007 TO 21 AUGUST 2007

- 20 August The publisher of a local tabloid has been sentenced to two years imprisonment having been found guilty of various media related offences.
The Post Online (Cameroon), Nso Voice publisher to serve two years for misinformation.
<http://www.postnewsline.com/2007/08/nso-voice-publi.html>
Date accessed 24 August 2007
- HIV/AIDS is more prevalent among women in Northwest Province than elsewhere in Cameroon.
The Post Online (Cameroon), High HIV/AIDS prevalence blamed on Northwest women.
<http://www.postnewsline.com/2007/08/high-hiv-aids-pr.html>
Date accessed 24 August 2007
- John Fru Ndi declared that the Social Democratic Front will not join the government.
The Post Online (Cameroon), SDF won't join Biya government
<http://www.postnewsline.com/2007/08/nso-voice-publi.html>
Date accessed 24 August 2007
- 16 August The Vice President of the Mbororo Social and Cultural Development Association requested government and international community assistance.
The Post Online (Cameroon), MBOSCUDA decries marginalisation of Mbororos.
<http://www.postnewsline.com/2007/08/mboscuda-decrie.html>
Date accessed 24 August 2007
- Biya 'invited' opposition parties to join the government.
The Post Online (Cameroon), Biya 'invites' opposition to form national consensus
<http://www.postnewsline.com/2007/08/biya-invites-op.html>
Date accessed 24 August 2007
- President Biya maintained the elections were free and fair.
The Post Online (Cameroon), President Biya declares elections 'free and fair' in nationwide address
<http://www.postnewsline.com/2007/08/president-biya-.html>
Date accessed 24 August 2007
- 13 August A new police service 'Operation Black Dragon' has been launched in Douala.
The Post Online (Cameroon), Police launch 'Operation Dragon Noir'
<http://www.postnewsline.com/2007/08/police-launch-o.html>
Date accessed 24 August 2007
- 11 August The Cameroon People's Democratic Party won the legislative elections on 22 July, gaining 140 of the 180 parliamentary seats. Cameroon's leading opposition party, the Social Democratic Front, gained 14 seats. The Supreme Court ordered a re-run in five constituencies.
The Entrepreneur, Results of parliamentary election proclaimed
<http://www.entrepreneurnews.online.com/2007/08/results-of-parl.html>
Date accessed 21 August 2007

- 9 August The Supreme Court endorsed 'victory' for the CPDM at the recent elections by rejecting petitions in at least 85 constituencies.
The Post Online (Cameroon), Supreme Court endorses CPDM 'victory'
<http://www.postnewslines.com/2007/08/supreme-court-e.html>
Date accessed 24 August 2007
- 8 August Some 26,000 refugees from the Central African Republic, scattered along the eastern Cameroon border are set to receive assistance; UNHCR warned there may be delays.
IRIN news, Help arrives for 26,000 refugees from Central African Republic
<http://www.irinnews.org/PrintReport.aspx?ReportId=73634>
Date accessed 21 August 2007
- 30 July Petitions have been filed to Cameroon's highest court to annul the recent legislative elections.
Yahoo News, 103 petitions to annul Cameroon election results
http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20070730/wl_africa_afp/cameroonvoteopposition_070730191731
Date accessed 1 August 2007
- The National Elections Observatory (NEO) has confirmed that municipal elections on 22 July in Douala were falsified.
Post Online (Cameroon), NEO results sheets confirm CPDM fraud in Douala
<http://www.postnewslines.com/2007/07/neo-results-she.html>
Date accessed 6 August 2007
- The National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms (NCHRF) deployed election observers in each of the ten provinces; some improvement in the processes was noted, compared to previous elections, but significant irregularities and inadequacies occurred.
Post Online (Cameroon), Legislative and municipal elections of 22 July 2007, declaration of the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms
<http://www.postnewslines.com/2007/07/legislative-and.html>
Date accessed 6 August 2007
- 24 July The NEO Coordinator for the Northwest regretted that some irresponsible elites bought voters with huge sums of money.
Post Online (Cameroon), NW NEO coordinator says elites bought voters
<http://www.postnewslines.com/2007/07/nw-neo-coordina.html>
Date accessed 21 August 2007

Return to contents
Go to sources

REPORTS ON CAMEROON PUBLISHED OR ACCESSED SINCE 24 JULY 2007

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

Background information

GEOGRAPHY

- 1.01 The official title of the country is the Republic of Cameroon.
Population – 18,060,382 (July 2007 est).
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] [4a] [CIA World Factbook]
- 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, Adamaoua, 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. [1a] [Europa World online]

For further information on geography, refer to Europa. [1a] [Europa World online]

Return to contents
Go to sources

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 – February 2007]
- 2.02 The economy is mainly agricultural. The principal commercial crops are cocoa, coffee, tobacco, cotton, and bananas. Petroleum products make up more than half of all exports. Timber is also a major export. [6a] [World Bank – Country Brief]
- 2.03 The World Bank Country Brief, updated in March 2007, reported
- “In the early 1980s Cameroon was one of Africa's economic success stories. However, the economic and policy weaknesses were exposed in 1985, when sharp declines in coffee, cocoa, and oil prices led to a 60 percent decline in the external terms of trade. These severe terms of trade shock combined with an over-valued exchange rate, fiscal crisis, and economic mismanagement resulted in prolonged economic stagnation and rapid accumulation of public debt. In January 1994, the CFA franc was devalued, but the government was slow to carry out necessary structural reforms that would have enabled a rapid recovery of the economy following the devaluation”.
- [6a] [World Bank – Country Brief]
- 2.04 The USSD Background Note, June 2007, noted that:
- “In late August 2003, the Board of Directors of both the IMF and World Bank approved Cameroon’s Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) with high marks. The paper integrated the main points of the Millennium Development Goal, which outlined Cameroon’s priorities in alleviating poverty and undertaking strong macroeconomic commitments in the short and long term. By late summer 2004 Cameroon had met most of its PRGF targets. A lacklustre performance in the fiscal arena, however, led the country off track and resulted in Cameroon not achieving the HIPC (Heavily Indebted Poor Countries) completion point. Negotiations are currently underway to create a new program so Cameroon can eventually qualify for HIPC debt forgiveness”.
- [2c] [USSD Background Note – June 2007]
- 2.05 The GDP for 2006 was \$16.37 billion and the annual real growth rate was 4.1 per cent. [2c] [USSD Background Note]
- 2.06 The Economist Intelligence Unit reported in August 2006 that:
- “... the forecast rise in oil production and increased public investment should push GDP growth above 4% in 2006-07”. [8]
- 2.07 The Post Online (Cameroon) reported in November 2006 that:
- “A World Bank study known as the ‘Doing Business Index,’ has ranked Cameroon as one of the countries with the riskiest environments to do business in the world. It also ranks poorly on ease or difficulty of paying taxes. The Chief Executive Officer of Union Bank, Cameroon said that creating a conducive business environment in the post-completion point era in Cameroon

entails putting in place a sound legal regulatory framework to promote private sector investment. He also recommended strengthening governance, stopping bureaucratic inefficiencies and improving access to key financial infrastructure services". [19b] [The Post Online - Cameroon]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

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. [4a] [The World Factbook]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

4.01 **March 2007**

The defence counsel for Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC) leaders in Bamenda Prison since 20 January have criticised gendarmes for obstructing justice. Social Democratic Front (SDF) detainees in Kondengui Prison who hoped to be released on 1 March are being detained for a further six months. The Senior Divisional Officer for Mezam has told of a second attack on Bawcock village by the Balis. The Foundation for Environment and Development has been organising workshops in Northwest Province for stakeholders in criminal justice institutions as a step towards checking rampant human rights abuse. Ten SCNC leaders arrested on 20 January have been released. [19i] [19m] [19n] [19o] [19p]

4.02 **April 2007**

The Cameroon Government and Global Fund recently committed to greater financial resource, FCFA 33,454 billion, to fight against HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. 500 Bawock refugees have been repatriated to their villages. People living with HIV/AIDS will from 1 May 2007 obtain free anti-retroviral treatment from official health centres. The chairman of the National Commission for Human Rights and Freedoms (NCHRF) has said that violence has become normal amongst university students, workers and other groups. Cardinal Tumi, the Archbishop of Douala, has revealed that he has had battles with both the Ahidjo and Biya regimes over various issues. [19q] [19r] [19s] [19t] [19u]

4.03 **May 2007**

Over 300 people whose property was destroyed during the 1992 post-presidential elections violence in Northwest Province are demanding compensation from the government. John Fru Ndi has blamed President Biya and the Transport Minister for an apparent lack of concern about the Kenya Airways plane crash. Visits to the crash site have been restricted because of the health hazards posed by rotting corpses in the mangrove swamps. A regional secretary of the NCHRF says the new Criminal Procedure Code lacks proper guarantees to protect human rights. Members of the SCNC based in the UK staged a demonstration on 20 May in Downing Street. On 25 May President Biya signed a decree extending the mandate of the President and the National Elections Observatory (NEO). [19v] [19w] [19x] [19y] [19z][19aa]

4.04 **June 2007**

Issa Tchiroma split with Bello Bouba Maigari, abandoned the Union Nationale pour la Democratie et le Progres (UNDP), joining Ahmadou Moustapha to form the National Alliance for Democracy and Progress (NADP). The NCHRF recently condemned violations of human rights in the Oku/Mbesa conflict. Traditional medicine practitioners in Cameroon want representation at the World Health Organisation (WHO). [19ab] [19ac][19ad]

4.05 **July 2007 (until 23 July)**

The Cameroon – Nigeria Mixed Commission needs more than \$24billion to complete its demarcation exercise on land and maritime boundaries between both countries. Prime Minister Inoni has come under criticism for allegedly protecting a racket of corruption in the public service. The 'Ngumba', a secret juju society in Bafut, vandalised property of the Cameroon Baptist Convention.

Four people were wounded in a confrontation between Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM) and SDF supporters, ahead of the elections. The NEO Vice President has started an investigation of 14,000 alleged disfranchised voters in Kumba. Polling agents of three opposition parties were chased out of polling stations in Buea. [9ah][19af][19ag][19ah][19ai]

[Return to contents](#)

[Go to sources](#)

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 World Factbook] [5a] [FCO Country Profile]
- 5.02 The United States Department of State Background Note for June 2007 stated that:
- “Following government pledges to reform the strongly centralized 1972 constitution, the National Assembly adopted a number of amendments in December 1995, which were promulgated in a new constitution in January 1996. The amendments call for the establishment of a 100 member Senate as part of a bicameral legislature, the creation of regional councils, and the fixing of the presidential term to 7 years, renewable once. One third of senators are to be chosen by the president and the remaining two thirds are to be chosen by indirect elections. As of September 2005, the government had not established the Senate or regional councils”. [2c][USSD Background Note]
- 5.03 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]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

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 power rests largely 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 USSD report for 2006 noted that:

“The President’s control over the country’s administrative apparatus was extensive. The President appoints all ministers, including the Prime Minister, and also directly appoints the governors of each of the ten provinces. The president also has the power to appoint lower level members of the 58 provincial administrative structures”. [2a]

6.04 This report continued:

“Since 1991 only government bills proposed by the presidency have been enacted by the National Assembly; however, in April 2004 the National Assembly agreed to consider a bill submitted by the leading opposition party. Only parties with representatives in the National Assembly can submit bills for consideration. During its June 2005 session, the National Assembly refused to consider a bill on electoral reform tabled by the SDF, the leading parliamentary opposition party”. [2a]

6.05 It continued:

“The right of citizens to choose their local governments remained circumscribed. The government increased greatly the number of municipalities run by presidentially appointed delegates, who have authority over elected mayors. Delegate-run cities included most of the provincial capitals and some division capitals in pro-opposition provinces; however, this practice was almost non-existent in the southern provinces which tended to support the ruling CPDM party. In municipalities with elected mayors, local autonomy was limited since elected local governments relied on the central government for most of their revenue and administrative personnel”. [2a]

6.06 The USSD report for 2006 noted that:

“In October 2004 President Biya, who has controlled the government since 1982, was re-elected with approximately 70 per cent 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. Fewer than 10, however, had significant levels of support, and only 5 had seats in the National Assembly. The ruling CPDM held an absolute majority in the National Assembly; opposition parties included the SDF, based in the Anglophone provinces and some major cities. The largest of the opposition parties were the National Union for Democracy and Progress, the Cameroon Democratic Union, and the Union of the Peoples of Cameroon.

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 represented in the National Assembly or the Government". [2a]

6.07 The USSD report for 2006 also noted that:

"An estimated 95 per cent of Baka did not have identity cards; most Baka could not afford to provide the necessary documentation to obtain national identity cards, which were required to vote in national elections. In 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 August 2005 the Ministry of Social Affairs launched the Project to Support the Economic and Social Development of Bakas in South Province. The mission of the three-year project was to allow the issuance of birth certificates and national identity cards to 2,300 Bakas, as well as to help register hundreds of students in school". [2a]

6.08 The European Union has called on the Cameroon Government to affect more democratic reforms in the country, particularly regarding the transparent conduct of the forthcoming twin elections. [9ah] [allAfrica.com]

6.09 Cameroon held one-sided parliamentary elections on Sunday 22 July which were expected to strengthen President Paul Biya's 25 year grip on power, although his opponents were already saying the vote was rigged. Biya's Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM) was seeking to increase its 149 seats in the 180 member parliament, amid opposition claims the president wants a landslide to push through constitutional reforms to allow him a new term. With many disillusioned Cameroonians convinced the CPDM will romp to victory, campaigning had been low key in the oil-producing Central African country. Just 5.5 million of Cameroon's 18 million population had registered to vote – well below the 8 million voters needed to make the elections credible, diplomats said. [46] [Reuters]

- 6.10 Cameroon's President Paul Biya said he was confident his ruling party would preserve its overwhelming majority in parliament... He said a victory for the Democratic Rally of the Cameroonian People would help him to 'modernise the country'. [10i] [BBC News]
- 6.11 Cameroon's ruling party won a landslide victory in elections on 22 July 2007, according to provisional results which were released late on Monday 23 July. But opposition parties alleged 'massive fraud' in the parliamentary and municipal polls. The opposition also said that they would challenge the results in court. [10j] [BBC News]

Return to contents
Go to sources

Human Rights

INTRODUCTION

7.01 The USSD report for 2006 noted that:

“The government's human rights record remained poor, and it continued to commit numerous human rights abuses. Security forces committed numerous unlawful killings; they regularly engaged in torture, beatings, and other abuses, particularly of detainees and prisoners. Impunity was a problem in the security forces. Prison conditions were harsh and life-threatening. Authorities arbitrarily arrested and detained Anglophone citizens advocating secession, local human rights monitors and activists, and other citizens. The law provides for the arrest of homosexuals and persons not carrying identification cards. There were reports of prolonged and sometimes incommunicado pretrial detention and infringement on citizens' privacy rights. The government restricted citizens' freedoms of speech, press, assembly, association, and harassed journalists. The government also impeded citizens' freedom of movement. The public perceived government corruption to be a serious problem. Societal violence and discrimination against women; trafficking in persons, primarily children; discrimination against indigenous Pygmies and ethnic minorities; and discrimination against homosexuals were problems. The government restricted worker rights and the activities of independent labour organizations, and child labour, slavery, and forced labour, including forced child labour, were reported to be problems”. [2a]

7.02 The 2007 Amnesty International report stated:

“Nine men and four women were convicted for practising homosexuality. Scores of people were tortured by members of the security forces. Courts convicted some officials of involvement in killings. At least two students were killed and many others detained during clashes with government forces. Several journalists were briefly detained or beaten. Secessionist political activists were arrested and detained”. [14a]

7.03 The USSD report for 2006 noted that:

“A number of domestic and international human rights groups generally operated without government restriction, investigating and publishing findings on human rights cases; however, government officials repeatedly impeded the effectiveness of local human rights NGOs during the year by harassing members of human rights groups, limiting access to prisoners, refusing to share information, and threatening and using violence against personnel. Philip Njaru, a human rights activist and executive director of the Kumba-based Friends of the Press Network, a human rights organization in Southwest Province, reported that police continued to harass him throughout the year”. [2a]

7.04 An oil pipeline running 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 to Cameroon's Atlantic coast. [14c] [AI]

- 7.05 This project has been promoted by investors, agreed to by governments and supported by 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]
- 7.06 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]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

THE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS (NCHRF)

- 7.07 Human Rights Watch in its 2001 report on Cameroon noted that:
- “The NCHRF was created by presidential decree in 1990... It was one of the first bodies to be set up as part of a program towards greater democracy announced through decree by President Biya in December 1990, but its limited mandate and appointments procedures, in particular, reflect his concern to retain tight executive control over all state institutions. The general political climate in Cameroon also, in practice, mitigates against an effective human rights role for the NCHRF.... The NCHRF's mandate includes, among other things, the capacity to ‘conduct all inquiries and necessary investigations on the violation of human rights and freedoms,’ but limits it by requiring it to only ‘report to the President of the Republic’. The NCHRF can conduct human rights studies as well as conduct human rights education and coordinate NGO actions in human rights. It is also empowered to visit detention sites. The commission's powers are extremely weak. It can do no more than make recommendations to the competent authorities, but these are not binding”. [47] [Human Rights Watch]
- 7.08 The Post Online (Cameroon) reported on 20 July 2007, in presenting the NCHRF's report for 2003 to 2006, the President, Dr D C Banda, stated that:
- “According to the report, inadequate financial and material resources and access to information hindered the Commission's work”. [19h][Post Online (Cameroon)]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

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]
- 8.04 The USSD 2006 reported that:
- “The government also took actions to reform security forces including the police and gendarmerie. On June 22, several gendarmerie and police officers completed a four-week training seminar on order preservation, with an emphasis on citizens' rights, human rights, and individual freedoms. The government also sent candidates to attend the International Law Enforcement Academy police training”. [2a]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

CRIME

9.01 The USSD 2006 reported that:

“During the year mob violence and summary justice against persons suspected of theft and the practice of witchcraft continued to result in deaths and serious injuries. The press reported 43 deaths from beatings and burning, the most ever reported.

Douala, the economic capital, had the highest number of mob ‘justice’ incidents. The mob violence was attributed in part to public frustration over police ineffectiveness and the release without charge of many individuals arrested for serious crimes. During the year [2006] there was a notable rise in crime, and authorities responded by purchasing 60 vehicles to increase police efficacy [sic]”. [2a]

9.02 It continued:

“On 19 January, former subjects of Fon Vugah Simon II, the former traditional ruler of Kedjom Keku, a village of Mezam Division in the Northwest Province, beat him to death and then burned his body upon his return to the village after having been deposed two years earlier. They accused him of immorality and destroying their tradition. Shortly after the killing, the gendarmerie arrested 59 persons. Approximately 20 were released and the rest remained in pretrial detention. Hearings began on 28 June and were still ongoing at year’s end. On 4 March, a mob burned to death ... [3 men] whom they caught stealing in the Yaounde neighbourhood of Nsimeyong-Damase. The police initially caught and held the suspects, until a large mob broke into the police station, pulled out the three, and killed them”. [2a]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

SECURITY FORCES

10.01 The USSD report for 2006 noted that:

“Unlike in previous years, 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 beatings and other use of excessive force”. [2a]

10.02 The USSD report continued:

“There were reports that police used excessive force to disperse demonstrators, resulting in the death of several of them”. [2a]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

POLICE

10.03 The USSD report for 2006 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 defence, 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 Defence, 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]

10.04 This report also said that:

“Citizens viewed police as ineffective, which frequently resulted in mob ‘justice’. 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 officials who 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. The Center Province purchased 150 vehicles to improve police effectiveness.” [2a]

10.05 The Post Online (Cameroon) reported on 20 July 2007 that:

“The Chairman of the NCHRF, Dr Divine Chemuta Banda, has called for a review of the recruitment requirements for persons aspiring to join the law enforcement corps in Cameroon.” Dr Banda presented the NCHRF report for

2003 to 2006 in Yaounde on 17 July and commenting on the relationship between the commission and members of the law enforcement corps, said "... it is cordial, noting that some of them have even written training manuals and other documents pertaining to the promotion and protection of human rights. He said that notwithstanding, there are others who have been entangled in repeated cases of human rights violations while some are accomplices with armed robbers. According to the NCHRF Chairman, recruitment conditions for law enforcement officers in Cameroon are not stringent therefore they need to be reviewed for Cameroon to have responsible law enforcement officers who are versed with the rights of the people". [19h][Post Online (Cameroon)]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

Arbitrary arrest and detention

10.06 The USSD 2006 report stated:

"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 on weekends, so individuals arrested on a Friday typically remained in detention until Monday at the earliest. 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]

10.07 The USSD report also noted:

"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 political detainees, including Anglophone citizens advocating secession, local human rights monitors or activists, journalists, and other critics of the government. Police also arrested persons during unauthorised demonstrations invariably releasing them within a few hours unless they engaged in violence". [2a]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to Sources](#)

Torture

10.08 The USSD report for 2006 noted:

"The constitution and law prohibit such practices; however, there were credible reports that security forces continued to 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 accused of torturing a citizen to death in 2005 were detained and investigated. During [2006] there were no reports that persons in police and gendarmerie custody died as a result of torture. 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]

10.09 This USSD report continued:

"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]

10.10 And further said:

"Pretrial detainees were sometimes required, under threat of abuse, to pay 'cell fees', a bribe paid to prison guards to prevent further abuse". [2a]

10.11 Supporting this, Amnesty International's 2007 report said that more than 100 people were reportedly beaten in late October after they were arrested by members of the Rapid Intervention Brigade in and around Maroua, the capital of Extreme North Province. The victims were detained for several days at Salack, where many of them were stripped naked, blindfolded and beaten, then held in a cell with water on the floor. [14a] [Amnesty International]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

Extra-judicial killings

10.12 The USSD 2006 stated that:

"Unlike in the previous year, 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 beatings and other use of excessive force". [2a]

10.13 The report further stated that:

"During the year mob violence and summary justice against persons suspected of theft and the practice of witchcraft continued to result in deaths and serious injuries. The press reported 43 deaths from beatings and burning, the most ever reported". [2a]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

ARMED FORCES

10.14 The country has an army, a navy, which includes naval infantry, and an air force. In 2005 the estimated manpower available for military service was 3,525,307 males and 3,461,406 females between the ages of 18 and 49. [4a] [CIA World Factbook]

10.15 The Cameroonian soldiers deployed facing the threat from Nigerian forces display professional competence and discipline, unlike the rest of the army. Ill discipline and allegations of corruption remain serious problems among the middle and lower ranks. [15] [Jane's]

10.16 The army is estimated to number 12,000. Cameroon is divided into military regions that correspond to the national administrative areas. In each region

there is a military presence and the larger regions such as Centre, Littoral, Nord Ouest and Ouest each have a battalion. Major army bases are located in or near major towns and cities, with particular strengths in the following large towns: Batouri, Douala, Garoua, Kribi, N'Kongsamba (not confirmed), Yaounde. [15] [Jane's]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

Arbitrary arrest and detention

10.17 Please refer to paragraphs 10.06 to 10.09.

Torture

10.18 Please refer to paragraphs 10.10 to 10.13.

Extra-judicial killings

10.19 Please refer to paragraphs 10.14 and 10.15.

10.20 The USSD 2006 stated that:

“During the year mob violence and summary justice against persons suspected of theft and the practice of witchcraft continued to result in deaths and serious injuries”. [2a]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

OTHER GOVERNMENT FORCES

10.21 See para 12.01 below.

AVENUES OF COMPLAINT

10.22 The USSD 2006 stated that:

“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 2005 Mebe Ngo'o rehabilitated the 'police of the 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. During the year Ngo'o also sanctioned at least 17 police officials who violated laws and regulations, including those on corruption and extortion. Seven others were also sanctioned by the courts”. [2a]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

MILITARY SERVICE

- 11.01 The minimum age for enrolment is 18; service is voluntary. [4a] [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]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

ABUSES BY NON-GOVERNMENT ARMED FORCES

BEPANDA NINE

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]

12.02 The Committee that has been seeking the truth about the fate of the ‘Bepanda Nine’ have suspended their initiatives, until further notice. The committee said that its decision was to prevent politicians making political capital out of the issue. [53] [africast.com]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

ARBITRARY ARREST AND DETENTION

12.03 The USSD report for 2006 noted that:

“In the North and Extreme North provinces, the government continued to permit traditional chiefs, or Lamibe, to detain persons outside the government penitentiary system, in effect creating private prisons. Traditional rulers throughout the country derive support and legitimacy from their subjects, many of whom turn to the Lamibe for dispute resolution. 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. Prior to the destruction of the palace prison 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]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

TORTURE

12.04 The USSD report continued:

“Individuals who were found guilty in Garoua were often beaten or subject to other forms of physical abuse. According to members of all the chiefdoms’ palace staffs, individuals accused of serious crimes such as murder were turned over to the local police.” [2a]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

FORCED CONSCRIPTION

12.05 There is no conscription. [4a] [CIA World Factbook]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

JUDICIARY

13.01 The USSD 2006 report stated that:

“The constitution and law provide 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. A constitutional anomaly names the president as ‘first magistrate,’ thus ‘chief’ of the judiciary and the theoretical arbiter of any sanctions against the judiciary, which could influence judicial action. In practice, however, the president has not filled this role. 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. For example, in the Miagougoudom case, the government awarded the victim’s family \$40,000 in damages”. [2a]

13.02 It also stated that:

“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 regarding inheritance and employment, and some traditional legal systems treat wives as the legal property of their husbands”. [2a]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

ORGANISATION

13.03 The USSD 2006 stated that:

“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]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

INDEPENDENCE

13.04 The USSD 2006 stated that:

“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. During the year the government approved a new Criminal Procedure Code and conducted training on the code throughout the country...". [2a]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

FAIR TRIAL

13.05 The USSD report for 2006 stated that:

"The law provides for a fair public hearing in which the defendant is proved innocent. However, this provision often was not respected. 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 indigent 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. The Project for the Improvement of Conditions of Detention continued to engage lawyers to work on prison cases. Trials normally were public, except in cases judged by the Ministry of Justice to have political overtones or to be disruptive to social peace. In practice defendants enjoyed a presumption of innocence and exercised their right to appeal their cases." [2a]

13.06 It further stated:

"There were reports that officials continued to hold individuals in prison beyond the jail term set by the courts. In 2005 the general prosecutor of the Yaounde Superior Court reviewed the files of approximately 150 prisoners at the Kondengui Prison to check their judicial status". [2a]

13.07 It also stated:

"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 through bribes". [2a]

13.08 In 2006 there were 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. A 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 John Kohtem, a district chief for the opposition party. [5b] [FCO Human Rights Report 2006]

13.09 The Post Online reported in July 2007 that:

“Victims of all forms of torture in Cameroon have been encouraged to henceforth take their cases to the African Court on Human Rights based in Banjul, The Gambia. The call was made by Mrs Madeleine Afite of the Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture, ACAT... Observing that Cameroon’s judicial system is virtually grounded, she urged Government to open up and facilitate moves by victims of torture in Cameroon to take their cases to the African court where, she believes, equitable justice could be rendered... She noted that in police and gendarmerie stations across the country, detainees are still forced to pay through self-proclaimed heads of cells, sums ranging from FCFA 2000 to FCFA 15,000 as ‘new man’ tax”. [19i]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

PENAL CODE

13.10 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. [19a] [The Post Online – Cameroon]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

CODE OF CRIMINAL PROCEDURE

13.11 Cameroon’s much heralded new criminal procedure code went into effect on 1 January 2007. Adopted by Parliament in July 2005, the new code is a hybrid system merging key features of the French Civil law and English Common law systems, along with customary law. Before adoption of the new code, criminal procedure was governed in Francophone Cameroon by the French ‘code d’instruction criminelle’ of 14 February 1838 and its subsequent amendments, while in Anglophone Cameroon, it was governed by a variety of common law texts, primarily the Nigerian ‘Criminal Procedure Ordinance’ of 1958. [44a] [Dibussi.com]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

ARREST AND DETENTION – LEGAL RIGHTS

14.01 The USSD report for 2006 noted that:

“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. While this provision was generally respected, 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 Francophone provinces, French legal tradition applies, precluding judicial authorities from acting on a case until the authority that ordered the detention turns the case over to a prosecutor. In practice these processes took between 15 days to a month. In Francophone provinces after a magistrate has issued a warrant to bring a 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; bail was granted infrequently”. [2a]

14.02 This report added that:

“To prepare for the new Criminal Procedure Code [introduced in January 2007] the Ministry of Justice organised training sessions on the code in each of the country’s 10 provinces. 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]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

PRISON CONDITIONS

15.01 The USSD report for 2006 stated that:

“Generally, conditions remained harsh and life-threatening. Prisons were seriously overcrowded, unsanitary, and inadequate, especially outside major urban areas. The government did not provide funds to cover serious deficiencies in food, health care, and sanitation, which were common in almost all prisons, including ‘private prisons’ operated by traditional rulers in the north. Prisoners were kept in dilapidated colonial-era prisons, where the number of inmates was four to five times the intended capacity... In 2005, 800 persons were hired and trained to work in the prison system. In 2004 the government shifted responsibility for administering prisons and detention centers 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. There were reports that prisoners died due to a lack of medical care”. [2a]

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 are chained so that they can only walk. [28] [Cameroon FFM 2004]

15.03 The USSD report for 2006 stated that:

“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 reportedly tortured, beat, and otherwise abused prisoners with impunity. Corruption among prison personnel was widespread. Prisoners sometimes could bribe wardens for favours or treatment, including temporary freedom... There were two separate prisons for women. There were also 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 credible reports that adult inmates sexually abused juvenile prisoners. Pretrial detainees routinely were held in cells with convicted criminals”. [2a]

15.04 The USSD 2006 continued:

“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]

15.05 The Amnesty International 2006 report said that:

“On 3 January [2006], one prisoner was reportedly killed and about 20 injured in a riot in New Bell prison. The fighting between prisoners involved a group known as ‘anti-gang’, which was accused of inflicting harsh discipline in the

prison, including by beatings, at the request of the authorities. Soon after the riot was quelled, the prison director was replaced". [14d]

15.06 The International Committee for the Red Cross reported that detention facilities in the region were, in general, underfunded... Inmates faced fewer health risks following the ICRC's upgrading of water and sanitation facilities in Bamenda prison... In parallel, a variety of programmes were carried out to support the detaining authorities in improving detention conditions. In Cameroon, the authorities, as well as embassies and international organisations involved, regularly received ICRC input on the country's planned penal reforms. In 2006, Cameroon's Justice Ministry increased the budget for prison food and structural maintenance. [18] [ICRC 2006 report]

15.07 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 mirrors 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 tuberculosis here in a 2003/04 joint study. [40] [IRINnews]

15.08 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]

15.09 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]

15.10 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]

15.11 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]

- 15.12 An investigation has been ordered into the Kondengui Prison crisis that led to the death of four people when warders went on strike on 28 December 2006. [19c] [The Post Online (Cameroon)]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

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]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

POLITICAL AFFILIATION

- 17.01 As in previous years, members of the Anglophone separatist movement, the SCNC, were arrested and briefly detained. At least 40 SCNC members were arrested in January whilst meeting in Buea. They were released without charge after several days. A further 29 were arrested in March and also detained. More than 60 SCNC members were arrested in Bamenda on 24 April and released on 1 May. [14a] [AI 2007 report]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

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. [5a] [FCO Country Profile]
- 17.03 Under pressure from the international community to separate electoral organisation from the highly partisan administration, the government, on 29 December 2006 established a body to supervise elections (ELECAM) despite opposition protests concerning its composition (it is to be named by the President) and powers. [5a] [FCO Country Profile]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION AND ASSEMBLY

- 17.04 The USSD report for 2006 stated that:

“The law provided for freedom of assembly; however, the government restricted this right in practice. The law requires organisers of public meetings, demonstrations, or processions to notify officials in advance, but does not require prior government approval of public assemblies and does not authorise the government 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”. Consequently, the government often did not grant permits for assemblies organized by persons or groups critical of the government and repeatedly used force to suppress public assemblies for which it had not issued permits.” [2a]

- 17.05 The report continued:

“Security forces forcibly disrupted the demonstrations, meetings and rallies of citizens, trade unions, and groups of political activists throughout the year. On numerous occasions throughout the year, authorities refused to grant the SCNC, an unregistered political group the government deemed illegal because it advocated secession, permission to hold rallies and meetings, and security forces arrested and detained some activists”. [2a]

- 17.06 It further said:

“The conditions for government recognition of a political party, a prerequisite for many political activities, precluded peaceful advocacy of secession. While more than 180 political parties, together with a large and growing number of civic associations, operated legally, the government continued to refuse to register the SCNC as a political party and harassed and arrested its leaders and members.” [2a]

[Return to contents](#)

[Go to sources](#)

OPPOSITION GROUPS AND POLITICAL ACTIVISTS

- 17.07 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 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]
- 17.08 The SCNC, a separatist movement, was established in 1995 to campaign for the establishment of an independent republic in Anglophone Cameroon. The SCNC proclaimed the establishment of a ‘Federal Republic of Southern Cameroon’ in December 1999, and in April 2000 named Frederick Ebong Alobwede as the president of the self-styled republic. [13] [Political Parties of the World]
- 17.09 Chief Ayamba Ete Oyon is the SCNC’s National Chairman and Nfor Ngala Nfor is the National Vice Chairman according to a July 2006 press statement from the SCNC. [48a] [Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization]
- 17.10 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 schooling and jobs. They are suppressed by the Government and offered bribes to keep quiet about their objectives. Their movements are restricted, are constantly watched by the authorities and fear for their lives. [28] [Cameroon FFM 2004]
- 17.11 The USSD 2006 report stated that:
- “During the year security forces pre-emptively arrested approximately 70 leaders, members, and supporters of the SCNC...” [2a] [USSD 2006]
- 17.12 Many English-speaking Cameroonians feel they have been marginalised by the French-speaking majority since independence and wish to exert more control over their own affairs in the west of the country. The call for independence by this community has long been ignored by the mainly French-speaking authorities. [15] [Janes]
- 17.13 The USSD report for 2006 stated that:

“On 9 March [2006] Douala gendarmes disrupted a gathering of Manifeste Africain pour la Nouvelle Indépendance et la Démocratie (MANIDEM), an opposition party, although the party claimed it had received tacit approval for the meeting from the competent administrative authority. Some benches were broken in the altercation, but MANIDEM resumed its meeting after the gendarmerie group commander intervened and called his subordinates to order.” [2a]

- 17.14 Hearings in the case of Dr Nfor Ngala Nfor, Vice-Chairman of the SCNC and UNPO (Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation) Member representative, have been delayed again. Following the failure of the Presiding Judge, and all prosecution witnesses, to appear in court, hearings have been postponed until 28 August 2007. UNPO consequently remains concerned that the trial of Dr Nfor will be plagued by the same irregularities as bail hearings which left him and other SCNC activists behind bars for more than 50 days without charge earlier this year. [48b] [UNPO]
- 17.15 The SDF is the leading opposition party in Cameroon. It was founded in early 1990 and gained legal recognition in March 1991 after a year in which its anti-government rallies had frequently been subject to official repression. The party contested legislative elections in 2002, but managed to win only 22 seats, compared to 43 seats in the previous election. Despite the losses the party remained in firm control of the English speaking North West Province, where 19 candidates won seats. [13] [Political Parties of the World]
- 17.16 The Political Office, BHC Yaounde, comment that the SDF has been rocked by dissidence since 1994 with many founders complaining about the dictatorial rule of the Chairman Fru Ndi, The latest conflict led to the organisation of separate conventions in May 2006 and violence resulting in the death of one person. Two factions emerged but the state finally recognised the Fru Ndi one. [16c] [BHC Yaounde]
- 17.17 allAfrica.com, in an article dated 30 October 2006, supports this, saying:
- “From last 26 May, Barrister Bernard Muna elected at the Yaounde convention is claiming to be the legal and legitimate SDF National Chairman, while Ni John Fru Ndi elected in Bamenda claims to be the only National Chairman of the SDF... Hon. Ngwasiri Clement on the heat of the primaries and run up to the SDF national convention of 26 May 2006, during a press conference in Yaounde last 13 February, declared that he had taken over control of the party... Meanwhile, last 26 September, the Mezam High Court gave a judgement on the case tabled before it by the Fru Ndi faction of the SDF. Justice Emile Ambo Ezieh ... ordered SDF faction leader, Barrister Bernard Muna to desist from parading himself as the SDF National Chairman as well as warned Hon. Ngwasiri, his agents and supporters from organising meetings and acting on behalf of the SDF.” [9n]
- 17.18 The Alliance of Progressive Forces was formed in mid-2002 by dissident members of the SDF who decided to form their own party citing the ‘autocratic management’ of SDF leader John Fru Ndi. Early in 2007, SDF party faction leader Ben Muna rallied a few other parties made up of dissidents of the SDF ostensibly ‘disbanded’ the SDF and fused into the AFP. Muna was voted as Chairman of the AFP. Most of its members are former SDF supporters and it

is expected to challenge the SDF in its usual fief. [13] [Political Parties of the World][16c][BHC Yaounde]

17.19 The Post Online (Cameroon) reported on 22 November 2006 that:

“A senior Cameroonian politician and parliamentarian [Doh Gah Gwanyin], has been found guilty of murdering a political opponent in the run up of (sic) the country’s 2004 presidential election and jailed for 15 years along with nine others... John Khotem, the district chairman of the opposition SDF party was found dead at a village square in Balikumbat on 20 August 2004. An eyewitness said he saw Doh and other men beat and kill Khotem.” [19k]

17.20 The Union of the Peoples of Cameroon was founded in the late 1940s as a Marxist-Leninist party opposed to French rule, under which it was banned in 1955. In 1996 Augustin F Kodock (UPC secretary-general) was dismissed from party office and then formed a rival UPC faction with himself as leader, this being often referred to as the UPC (K) to distinguish it from the UPC (N) of Ndeh Ntumazah, a UPC founder. UPC (K) won three seats in the 2002 Assembly elections. The faction joined the CPDM controlled government in August 2002. [13] [Political Parties of the World]

17.21 The Cameroon Diaspora Coalition is an international organisation opposed to the current President of Cameroon. Their UK group is led by Brice Nitcheu who is also President of the SDF here. [49o] [Zoom Info]

17.22 The CPDM has a women’s wing (OFRDPC or WCPDM) and a youth wing (YCPDM or OJRDPC). These are not separate political parties but simply wings of the main party. Membership of the youth wing is open to all young persons from the age of 18. [16d] [BHC Yaounde]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND MEDIA

18.01 The USSD report for 2006 stated that:

“The law provides for freedom of speech and of the press, and while the government continued to restrict these rights in practice, media groups were vibrant and active. The government sometimes invoked strong libel laws to silence criticism of government and officials. Journalists, particularly broadcast journalists, often practised self-censorship as a result of real or expected government intimidation, harassment, and criminal penalties for speech-related offences”. [2a]

18.02 It subsequently stated that:

“The government published one of the country’s few daily newspapers, ‘*the Cameroon Tribune*’. The newspaper did not report extensively on protests or political parties critical of the government, overtly criticise the ruling party, or portray Government programmes in an unfavourable light”. [2a]

18.03 It continued:

“During the year approximately 200 privately owned newspapers were published; however, only an estimated 25 were published on a regular basis, primarily for lack of funding. ‘*Mutations*’, ‘*La Nouvelle Expression*’, and ‘*Le Messenger*’ were the only private newspapers. Newspapers were distributed primarily in urban areas, and most continued to criticize the government and report on controversial issues, including corruption, human rights abuses, homosexuality, and economic policies. However, the government used criminal libel laws to inhibit the press by criminalizing the propagation of false information. Despite the large number of private newspapers in the country, the influence of the print media was minimal.” [2a]

18.04 It also said that:

“The Government tightly controlled the broadcast media. Radio remained the most important medium reaching most citizens. There were approximately 20 privately owned radio stations in Cameroon operating in the country... The state-owned CRTV broadcast on both television and radio, and was the only officially recognised and fully licensed broadcaster in the country”. [2a]

18.05 Again it stated:

“The law permits broadcasting of foreign news services but requires foreigners to partner with a national station. The BBC, Radio France International, and other foreign services broadcast in partnership with state-owned CRTV”. [2a]

18.06 The USSD 2006 report further said:

“Television was less pervasive but more influential than print media. The five independent television stations largely avoided criticising the government, although their news broadcasts sometimes focused on poverty, unemployment, poor education, and the government neglect and corruption which the broadcasts said had caused these problems. Like the ‘*Cameroon*

Tribune, CRTV provided broad reporting of CPDM activities, while giving relatively little attention to the political opposition". [2a]

18.07 It continued:

"Security forces, usually acting under the command of local provincial government officials, continued to restrict press freedom by arresting, detaining, physically abusing, threatening and otherwise harassing journalists". [2a]

18.08 It further said:

"On 3 September, officers from the Yaounde military security agency (SEMIL) arrested and detained Duke Atangana Etotogo, publisher of the monthly *'L'Afrique Centrale'*, without a warrant and seized magazine copies that were on sale. Etotogo published a series of analytical reports on the armed forces and their leadership. The purpose of the arrest was to force him to reveal his sources. SEMIL released Etotogo after five days of intensive interrogation". [2a]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

18.09 The USSD 2006 also reported the following:

"On 3 January, gendarmes from the Douala neighbourhood attacked Pius Njawe, a journalist and the publisher of *'Le Messenger'* newspaper". Njawe was driving his car on the Wouri bridge in Douala when he witnessed a car accident. He stopped to take pictures, but the investigating gendarmes barred him from doing so. When Njawe insisted, the gendarmes beat and kicked him, finally pushing him back into his car. Njawe did not file a complaint against the gendarme officers". [2a]

18.10 The USSD 2006 commented:

"The government prosecuted its critics in the print media through criminal libel laws... Local leaders in particular abused this law to keep local reporters from reporting on corruption and abusive behaviour. Various government members and senior government officials filed nine libel suits against journalists". [2a]

18.11 The Committee to Protect Journalists reported on 27 November 2006 that:

"Police in the southwestern town of Buea dragged Ezieh, publisher of the private English language weekly, from his home and subjected him to a brutal beating. Local journalists linked the attack to his newspaper's critical coverage of the police response to student protests at Buea University... Police had killed two students during riots over alleged admission irregularities, according to local and international news reports". [22]

18.12 allAfrica.com reported on 17 November 2006 that:

"The International Federation of Journalists today condemned the recent attack on Cameroon radio presenter Agnes Taile, who was brutally assaulted by unknown men in Douala, and continuing threats against the journalist who has taken over her show". [9am]

18.13 Reporters Without Borders in their 2007 report stated:

“Press freedom began to turn into a reality in this country ruled by President Paul Biya since 1982, even though it remained fragile. Numerous taboos were still in place and anyone who broke them suffered the consequences. But the year 2006 was difficult for the Cameroon press chiefly because of the actions of some unscrupulous editors. Certainly Cameroon is no longer the tense and brutal place it was in the first few years after 2000, when journalists were imprisoned even for poking fun. But it is still dangerous to be a journalist in a country in which the army, secessionist impulses on the part of the English-speaking region and corruption are still sensitive subjects... The year 2006 has been one in which the Cameroon press has been put in every shade of bad light. From the start of January, it was badly shaken by the case of the ‘homosexuals of the Republic’, which caused rifts and provoked disgust within the profession... ”. [23]

18.14 In the light of recent events this report continued:

“Reporters Without Borders has therefore proposed to the Cameroon government that it reforms not only its press law but also its mechanisms for regulating the media. The Communications Minister, Pierre Moukoko Mbonjo, attempted to introduce reform but it was clumsy and inadequate, proposing administrative police powers for the ministry which would allow it to order the seizure of newspapers. This was rejected by parliament and the minister finished by resigning his post in the autumn without having pushed through this reform”. [23]

18.15 Supporting the above comment, Freedom House 2007 reported that there are no legal guarantees on free speech in Cameroon, though there are dozens of private radio stations and several hundred independent, irregularly published newspapers. Self-censorship among broadcast and print journalists is common, partly in response to instances of security forces arresting, physically abusing, threatening, and harassing journalists. The government has not attempted to restrict or monitor internet communication, however. [31] [Freedom House 2007]

18.16 Amnesty International, in its 2007 report, stated that:

“Several journalists were detained or assaulted because of their work. The authorities were not known to have taken any action against those responsible for assaults. [14a] [AI 2007]

18.17 The media consisted of:-

press – ‘*Le Messenger*’, ‘*Cameroon Tribune*’, ‘*Mutations*’, ‘*The Herald*’, ‘*The Post*’, ‘*La Nouvelle Expression*’, ‘*The Chronicle*’

television – Cameroon Radio Television, Canal 2, STV

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

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTIONS, ORGANISATIONS AND ACTIVISTS

19.01 The USSD 2006 reported the following:

“A number of domestic and international human rights groups generally operated without government restriction investigating and publishing findings , on human rights cases; 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]

19.02 “Numerous domestic human rights NGOs operated in the country, including, among others, 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]

19.03 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 new legislation, according to Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation sources. The authorities have become concerned at recent disorder in the NGO sector, because of the laxity with which they operate. [9w] [allafrica.com]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

CORRUPTION

20.01 The USSD 2006 reported that:

“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. According to a Transparency International survey published in December 2005, an average household paid \$205 (113,000 CFA francs) each year in bribes, or more than 20 per cent of the average person’s annual income; the average annual income per person was approximately \$800 (440,000 CFA francs)”. [2a]

20.02 It also reported the following:

“During the year the government took some steps to fight corruption. For example, on 25 January, the government officially launched the activities of the National Agency for the Investigation of Financial Crimes (ANIF). Part of its mission is to fight money laundering, corruption-related enrichment, and the embezzlement of public funds”. [2a]

20.03 “On 3 February, ANIF conducted a working session with the managers of the financial institutions to train them on effectively participating in the fight against corruption”. [2a]

20.04 “On 11 March, the president signed a decree repealing the order that created the National Corruption Observatory and a decree creating the National Anticorruption Commission, which replaced the observatory. The commission is under the president’s authority. Its leading mission was to monitor and evaluate the effective implementation of the government’s anticorruption plan. It also gathered, centralized, and analyzed allegations and information regarding corrupt practices. Findings of the investigations conducted by the commission could lead to disciplinary or legal proceedings”. [2a]

20.05 [President] Biya’s long years in power have encouraged high levels of corruption and cronyism. His bloated administration counts more than 60 government ministries. Key positions in the government and military are generally held by members of Biya’s Bulu-Beti ethnic group, Freedom House reported. [31] [Freedom House 2007]

20.06 Cameroon 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]

20.07 allAfrica also reported on 8 December that over 7,000 ghost civil servants had been unmasked. [9ad] [allAfrica.com]

20.08 The Catholic News Service reported on 30 May 2006 that:

“Catholic schools in Cameroon, a country known for widespread corruption, are piloting a program to teach students to identify and act against dishonesty in their schools and the rest of society... But the pilot program, Fighting

Against Corruption Through Schools, or FACTS, also targets parents. Most civil servants in Cameroon, including teachers, earn low salaries and rely on bribes to feed their families". [50]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

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 one million Protestants. [1] [Europa World Online]
- 21.02 The USSD 2006 Religious Freedom report stated the following:
“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]
- 21.03 “In order to register, a religious denomination must fulfil the legal requirement to qualify as a religious congregation”. [2b]
- 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”. [2b]
- 21.05 “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]
- 21.06 “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]
- 21.07 “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]
- 21.08 “Several religious denominations operate primary and secondary schools”. [2b]
- 21.09 The USSD 2006 Religious Freedom continued, commenting that:
“The Catholic Church operates two of the few modern printing presses and publishes a weekly newspaper, ‘L’Effort Camerounais’”. [2b]
- 21.10 “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]

21.11 “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]

21.12 “Christian and Muslim religious holidays are celebrated as national holidays”. [2b]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

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, Wimbang 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 many 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 Nigerian cultures, 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 many others from eastern Nigeria. 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]
- 22.09 At least eight people died and 14 killed in the far north of Cameroon in ethnic clashes triggered by a local fishing dispute. The fighting between members of the Musgum and Kotoko communities broke out after a quarrel over control of the pool, located inside the Waza National Park in Far North Province. [43] [CNN]
- 22.10 The USSD 2006 Human Rights Report stated that:
- “Northern areas of the country continued to suffer from ethnic tensions between the Fulani (or Peuhl) and the Kirdi. The Kirdi remained socially, educationally, and economically disadvantaged relative to the Fulani in the three northern provinces. Traditional Fulani rulers, called Lamibe, continued to wield great power over their subjects, often including Kirdi, sometimes subjecting them to tithing and forced labor. Isolated cases of slavery were reported, largely Fulani enslavement of Kirdi. [2a]
- 22.11 It continued:
- “Police and gendarmes subjected illegal immigrants from Nigeria and Chad to harsh treatment and imprisonment and often targeted Nigerian and Chadian communities when seeking to identify illegal immigrants. During raids, members of the security forces extorted money from those who did not have regular residence permits or those who did not have valid receipts for store merchandise. Some members of the country's large community of Nigerian immigrants complained of discrimination and abuse by government officials. Authorities repeatedly announced crackdowns on undocumented Nigerian immigrants, and illegal immigrants were subject to harassment on some occasions, although at a lower level than in previous years”. [2a]
- 22.12 allAfrica.com reported on 21 November 2006 that:
- “In the past months alone, ethnic tensions have taken a severe toll. On 17 October [2006], a land dispute in Nyokon in the Centre Province pitted indigenous people against the Bamilekes – who are originally from West Province. The violence caused the death of six persons. Conflict between the Banfaw and the Bororos in Mamfe (south-western Cameroon) on 9 October left three dead. Clashes between the Banyangui and the Bororos in the north-west claimed 13 lives during September, while another 13 were killed in the conflict between the Bagam and the Bameyan in the west, in May. A further bout of inter-ethnic violence that month in the southern town of Kye-Ossi opposed indigenous and non-native peoples, killing two and leaving about 10 seriously injured... However, Charly Gabriel Mbock – an anthropologist from

Yaounde – cautions that there is more to ethnic conflict than meets the eye: 'Most of the so-called ethnic conflicts are the consequences of poorly-studied and poorly-resolved social problems. The conflicts, before they are called ethnic, are initially – and remain essentially – social'. [9aI] [allAfrica]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER PERSONS

LEGAL RIGHTS

23.01 The USSD 2006 reported that:

“Homosexuality is illegal, with a possible prison sentence of between six months and five years and fines ranging from approximately \$40 to \$400. While prosecution under this law was rare, homosexuals suffered from harassment and extortion by law enforcement officials. In addition, false allegations of homosexuality were used to harass enemies or to extort money”. [2a]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

23.02 Planetout reported on 3 July 2006 that:

“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]

GOVERNMENT ATTITUDES

23.03 Pink News reported on 4 May 2006 that:

“The Cameroonian Government has refused to release nine men jailed on charges of homosexuality despite their acquittal, according to the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC)... At their initial trial, no witnesses were called and no proof offered by the prosecution, so Judge Toyne, the magistrate overseeing the case, declared the men innocent of all charges. The men expected to be released from prison quickly but the prosecutor’s office has refused to order their release and has said that the men will be retried”. [55a] [Pink News]

23.04 It further reported on 12 October 2006 that:

“The United Nations has criticised Cameroonian authorities for detaining 11 men on the basis of their presumed sexuality”. The United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention declared that their detention is contrary to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights... [55b] [Pink News]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

SOCIETAL ILL TREATMENT OR DISCRIMINATION

23.05 The USSD 2006 reported that:

“In June the administration of the Douala-based Eyengue Nkongo College, a private high school, expelled 34 students (including 12 females), alleging they were homosexuals. One female student was arrested upon her expulsion. One woman who lived near the school and two former schoolmates were also arrested. On July 7, the Douala First Instance Court released them after giving

them a suspended three-year prison term and a fine of \$50 (25,000 CFA francs) on homosexuality charges". [2a]

23.06 Amnesty International reported on 7 March 2006 that:

"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]

23.07 The same report noted that:

"Eight men and one boy are being tried on charges of practising homosexuality... The nine detainees were arrested at a nightclub in the capital, Yaounde, by gendarmes on 22 May 2005, along with two other boys who were subsequently freed". [14b]

23.08 365gay reported in March 2006 that:

"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]

23.09 Several human rights groups (among them the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC), Human Rights Watch and Doctors of the World) sent a letter to Cameroon's Minister of Justice, urging freedom for 11 men jailed on sodomy charges and to prevent forced medical examinations to discover whether the men had engaged in homosexual activity. The men have been detained since May 2005.

The IGLHRC Director maintained that the pain, humiliation and invasiveness involved in these forced examinations make them a direct violation of human rights norms. Cameroon is a signatory to regional and international agreements that prohibit such treatment. She asked the government to respect its international obligations.

The letter also maintains that Cameroon's sodomy law violates protection of privacy and nondiscrimination in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Cameroon agreed in 1984. [26a] [planetout]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

23.10 The Star.com reported on 4 February 2006 that:

"Tabloid newspapers in Cameroon have started publishing lists and photos of allegedly gay politicians, businessmen and musicians in what their editors say is a crusade against 'deviant behaviour'". It further reported that street vendors have been forced to sell photocopies of the weekly tabloid 'L'Anecdote', such was its popularity.

Another tabloid, '*La Meteo*', launched the campaign to 'out' gays in January 2006, publishing a front page headline 'Homosexuality at the top hierarchy of government' and a dossier naming government and local musicians. [42]

DISABILITY

24.01 allAfrica.com reported on 15 June 2007 that:

“An appeal letter from Global Welfare Association, GLOWA, to the Minister of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation, calls upon the Ministry to ensure that disabled persons are allowed to vote on 22 July. It draws the attention of the Minister to the special needs of people with disabilities in the country... ‘Disabled people in Cameroon are missing out in a number of ways due to their varied impairments. They suffer from exclusion, a violation of their dignity and rights to participate in the public affairs of their country, including elections,’ the letter states”. [9ai]

24.02 The Post Online (Cameroon) states, in an August 2007 article:

“The Minister of Secondary Education, Louis Bapes Bapes, has said disabled children and children born of disabled parents benefiting from free education cannot be considered in any way as enjoying academic favouritism... The Minister was speaking after signing a joint circular relating to identifying disabled children and children born of needy disabled parents enrolled in government colleges and high schools as well as their participation in official examinations... The Minister went on to say that measures would be set up to ensure that disabled children study in comfortable conditions”. [19ae]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

WOMEN

POLITICAL RIGHTS

25.01 The USSD 2006 reported that::

“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, including the ruling CPDM”. [2a]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

LEGAL RIGHTS

25.02 The USSD 2006 reported that:

“There were two separate prisons for women. There were also a few pretrial detention centres for women; however, women routinely were held in police and gendarmerie complexes with men, occasionally in the same cells. The secretary of state in charge of penitentiary administration acknowledged this was a serious problem. Mothers sometimes chose to be incarcerated with their children or babies while their children were very young or if they had no other child care option”. [2a]

25.03 “The law prohibits rape, although rape occurred, police and the courts rarely investigated and prosecuted rape cases, which resulted in some convictions during the year. Official and private media regularly covered rape cases handled by the courts. During the year newspapers covered nine high profile rape cases which resulted in the arrest and detention of the perpetrators, whose pending trials were ongoing. In 2005 a couple of newspapers released special issues on the problem of rape, which was becoming acute, particularly in Douala and Yaounde. According to one of the reports, the Douala courts heard approximately 40 cases per month”. [2a]

25.04 The USSD 2006 report also stated:

“While the law prohibits prostitution, it was tolerated. Prostitution was practised predominately in urban areas and places frequented by tourists”. [2a]

25.05 The same report further stated:

“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]

25.06 The USSD report then said:

“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 the 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]

25.07 The report continued:

"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 are not respected. In the customary law of some ethnic groups, husbands not only maintained complete control over family property, but also can divorce their wives in a traditional court without being required to provide either verifiable justification or alimony. Polygamy is 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]

25.08 It reported further:

"Traditional law normally governs 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, customs grant greater authority and benefit to male heirs than to female heirs. Women were also forced to marry and in some regions 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'. Once a price had been paid, the girl was considered the husband's property. 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 defenseless against these male-oriented customs". [2a]

25.09 The USSD 2006 report stated that:

"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 provided for equal rights and status; however, men may limit women's right regarding inheritance and employment, and some traditional legal systems classified wives as the legal property of their husbands". [2a]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS

25.10 The USSD 2006 report stated that:

"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. 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 the 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]

25.11 The USSD report continued:

"Customary law was far more discriminatory against women, since in many regions a woman was regarded as the property of her husband. Because of the importance attached to customs and traditions, civil laws protecting women are often not respected. In the customary law of some ethnic groups, husbands not only maintain complete control over family property, but also can divorce in a traditional court without being required to provide either verifiable justification or alimony. Polygamy is permitted by law and tradition". [2a]

25.12 The USSD report continued:

"Traditional law normally governs the extent to which a woman's inheritance from her husband in the absence of a will. In many traditional societies, customs grant greater authority and benefit to male heirs than to female heirs. Women were also forced to marry and in some regions 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'. Once a price had been paid, the girl was considered the husband's property. 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... The lack of a national legal code covering such family issues often left women defenceless against these male-oriented customs". [2a]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

25.13 The USSD report for 2006 stated that:

"Domestic violence against women was common. While there were no reliable statistics, a large number of newspaper reports indicated that the problem was widespread. The law does not specifically prohibit domestic violence. While assault is prohibited and is punishable by prison terms and fines, the government did not effectively enforce it in cases 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, even though 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]

25.14 This report continued:

“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]

25.15 “During the year [2006] breast ironing emerged as another form of violence against women, practiced in an effort to protect prematurely well-developed young girls from predatory older men. NGOs were leading public awareness campaigns to combat this practice”. [2a]

25.16 The Mail and Guardian Online stated on 25 June 2006 that:

“Geraldine Sirri was only nine years old when her mother started daily massaging her pre-pubescent breasts with a blazing hot stone to keep them flat – and keep men’s eyes and hands off her daughter. One-quarter of all Cameroonian women are said to have been victims of this painful ‘breast ironing’, as it is known. But, ironically, the tradition was a mystery to many in the West African nation until a recent campaign to stop the potentially dangerous practice, aimed at delaying a young girl’s natural development. Germaine Ngo’o, co-author of a joint Cameroon-German study on the issue says ‘The practice involves using heated objects to massage the breasts to make them disappear’”. [51]

25.17 The article continued:

“The campaign, like the study, is a joint effort involving the German Agency for Technical Cooperation, an international group for sustainable development that works mainly for the German government. The agency works with the National Network of the Association of Aunties (Renata), one of what are said to be many home-grown women’s support groups in this country...”. [51]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

25.18 The USSD 2006 reported:

“The law does not prohibit Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and FGM was not practiced widely; however, it continued to be practised in isolated areas in three of the 10 provinces, including some areas of Far North, Eastern, and Southwest provinces. Internal migration contributed to the spread of FGM to different parts of the country. The severest form of FGM, infibulation, was performed in the Kajifu region of the Southwest Province. FGM was practiced on infants and preadolescent girls. Public health centers in areas where FGM is frequently practiced counselled women about the harmful consequences of FGM; however, the government did not prosecute any persons charged with performing FGM. The Association of Women Against Violence continued to conduct a program in Maroua to assist victims of FGM and their families and to educate local populations”. [2a]

25.19 The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies reported on 16 August 2006:

“In Cameroon, FGM is carried out in a barbarous manner by traditional midwives with no medical training, without anaesthetic and using rudimentary instruments. It can give rise to serious complications, sometimes resulting in death... According to official estimates, Cameroon currently has a population of some 17 million, 52 per cent of them women. The United Nations figures suggest that around 20 per cent of these women are victims of FGM, an experience that can occur at various ages – at birth, during adolescence, just before marriage or even after the birth of their first child. The time of excision depends on the particular community and varies, even for the same ethnic group, from one generation to another... At the present time, the practice of FGM by groups is tending to decline, albeit slowly. This is due to its condemnation by the state, the discreet but effective influence of the NGOs including the Red Cross, and the threat of HIV. However, prohibition has not put an end to the ritual but has driven it underground... ”. [52]

[Return to contents](#)

[Go to sources](#)

CHILDREN

BASIC INFORMATION

26.01 The USSD report for 2006 stated that:

“During the year 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 by the president”. [2a]

26.02 It further said:

“The exact extent of familial child abuse was not known, although children’s rights organisations targeted the problem. Newspaper reports often cited children as victims of kidnapping, mutilation and even infanticide. There were several credible stories of mothers (usually young, unemployed, and unmarried) abandoning their newborns in streets, garbage cans and pit toilets”. [2a]

26.03 The USSD 2006 stated that:

“The law sets a minimum age of 14 for child employment, which is inconsistent with the age for completing educational requirements. The law also bans night work and enumerates tasks that children under the age of 18 cannot legally perform... The prohibition against night work was not effectively enforced”.

“While the minimum legal age for a woman to marry is 15, many families facilitated the marriage of young girls by the age of 12”. [2a]

26.04 And also that:

“An increasing number of children worked as household help and some children were involved in prostitution. In the north, there were credible reports that children from needy homes were placed with other families to do household work for pay. In the nation’s major cities of Yaounde, Douala and Bamenda the ILO estimated that 40 per cent of employed children were girls, of whom seven per cent of these were less than 12 years of age, and 60 per cent had dropped out of primary school”. [2a]

26.05 The USSD report for 2006 noted that:

“Parents viewed child labour as both a tradition and a rite of passage. Relatives often employed rural youth, especially girls, as domestic helpers, and these jobs seldom allowed children time for the children to attend school... The cocoa industry also employed child labourers. According to estimates, up to 8,000 underaged children (between the ages of five and 17) were working in the cocoa industry at year’s end. These children originated, for the most part, from the Northern and Northwestern provinces”. [2a]

26.06 The USSD report for 2006 also said:

“The Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Labour were responsible for enforcing child labour laws through site inspections of registered businesses; however, the government did not allocate sufficient resources to support an efficient inspection program. Moreover, the legal prohibitions do not include family chores, which in many instances were beyond a child’s capacity. In 2005 the government employed 58 general labour inspectors to investigate child labour cases”. [2a]

26.07 It commented that:

“Female Genital Mutilation was performed primarily on young girls”. [2a]

26.08 The same report continued:

“While the minimum legal age for a woman to marry is 15, many families facilitated the marriage of young girls by the age of 12. Early marriage was prevalent in the northern provinces of Adamawa and the North, but was particularly characteristic of the remote Far North province, where many young women as young as 13 faced severe health risks from pregnancies. Anecdotal evidence indicated that some parents might have promised a female baby to an older male in order to begin receiving dowry payments”. [2a]

26.09 The USSD report also said:

“There were reports of child prostitution and trafficking in children during the year”. [2a]

26.10 It confirmed that:

“Although exact numbers were unavailable, the country had a significant number of displaced or street children, most of whom resided in urban areas such as Yaounde and Douala”. [2a]

26.11 The minimum age for military service is 18 years. [4a] [CIA World Factbook]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

EDUCATION

26.12 Since independence, Cameroon has achieved one of the highest rates of school attendance in Africa, but provision of educational facilities varies according to region. Bilingual education 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 seven years, comprising two cycles of four years and three years in Eastern Cameroon and five years and two years in Western Cameroon. Central government education expenditure in 2004 was estimated at 213,143m francs CFA (26.3 per cent of total spending). [1a] [Europa World Online]

26.13 The USSD 2006 report stated that:

“According to 2005 government statistics, 72.2 per cent of girls between the ages of six and 14 were enrolled in school, compared to 81.3 per cent for boys of the same age group. According to the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) the secondary school enrolment ratio (gross) was 36 per cent for boys and 29 per cent for girls. The low education rate continued to be attributed to socio-cultural prejudices, early marriage, sexual harassment, unwanted pregnancy and domestic chores”. [2a]

26.14 It continued:

“A 2004 government study found there is a large gap between the capacity of the schools and the number of potential students. According to the study, preschools served only 16 per cent of the potential student population. Within the 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 combined. The study showed that elementary schools only had enough seats for 1.8 million students, although 2.9 million attended school”. [2a]

26.15 There is a noticeable lack of girls attending schools, especially in Cameroon’s three northern provinces. According to the deputy director at the Ministry of Basic Education, structural adjustment programmes have pushed many poverty-stricken parents to stop educating some of their children. The Cameroon Coalition for the Rights of the Child notes that even though basic education is free, certain parents still allow only some of their children to attend school – giving preference to boys. Figures from the National Institute of Statistics indicate that 58 per cent of girls enrol in primary school, and that only 37 per cent complete their basic education. For boys, the figures are 83 per cent and 60 per cent respectively. [9af] [allAfrica.com]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

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]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

HEALTH ISSUES

26.17 The USSD 2006 report stated that:

“The government provided limited and basic medical care through local clinics and hospitals as well as through a limited number of school doctors. Boys and girls had equal access to state-provided medical care”. [2a]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

TRAFFICKING

27.01 The USSD report for 2006 stated that:

“The law does not specifically prohibit trafficking in persons, but the law does prohibit slavery, prostitution, forced labour and other crimes relating to trafficking in persons and establishes minimum age requirements for workers. Trafficking remained a problem. Courts prosecuted traffickers using various provisions of the Penal Code that address related crimes. The country was a source, transit, and destination point for internationally trafficked persons; trafficking also occurred within the country. The Anti-Child Trafficking Law, drafted by the government in cooperation with the International Labour Organisation (ILO), took effect in December 2005. The Ministry of Labour, Employment, and Social Insurance was primarily responsible for fighting trafficking; however, the ministry was severely underfunded. It was believed that authorities prosecuted several trafficking cases during the year, but actual rates were difficult to determine since traffickers could be prosecuted under various sections of the penal code; there was no system for tracking outcomes”. [2a]

27.02 It continued:

“Women and children traditionally have faced the greatest risk and have been trafficked most often for the purposes of 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. According to anecdotal evidence from the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms (NCHRF), women often were ‘hired’ into hubs of prostitution. The method for trafficking women usually involved a marriage proposition by a foreign businessman. The woman was inducted into servitude upon arrival at a foreign destination. Girls were internally trafficked from the Adamawa, North, Far North, and Northwest provinces to Douala and Yaounde to work as domestic servants, street vendors or prostitutes. Children were also internally trafficked to work on cocoa bean plantations”. [2a]

27.03 It further said:

“During the year the ILO and the Government continued to support an awareness campaign to eradicate child trafficking in airports. Special anti-trafficking embarkation/disembarkation cards continued to be designed and distributed. The cards described the dangers of trafficking and how to recognize the phenomenon”. [2a]

27.04 The USSD Trafficking in Persons Report, June 2007, reported that:

“Cameroonian children are trafficked to Gabon and Equatorial Guinea for domestic servitude, and forced market and agricultural labour. Cameroon is a transit country for children trafficked between Gabon and Nigeria, and from Nigeria to Saudi Arabia. Cameroonian women are sent by trafficking rings to Europe, primarily France, Germany and Switzerland... The Government of Cameroon does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so, despite limited resources... The Government of Cameroon made weak law

enforcement efforts to combat trafficking during the last year [2006]. The GoC demonstrated minimal efforts to protect trafficking victims over the last year".
[2e]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

MEDICAL ISSUES

- 28.01 The Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative 2000 was set up to observe poverty reduction and health problems, concentrating 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 WHO 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. [1a] [Europa World Online]
- 28.07 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]

28.08 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]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

OVERVIEW OF AVAILABILITY OF MEDICAL TREATMENT AND DRUGS

28.09 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]

28.10 Médecins sans Frontières offer free treatment for Buruli ulcers in four centres in Cameroon. [28] [Cameroon FFM 2004]

28.11 Cameroon could lose all its 3,000 practising doctors within three years if the Government does not act quickly to stem a brain drain in the health sector, the national doctors' association says. The vice-president of the ONMC association of doctors stated that if nothing was done between now and 2009 to stop the current exodus, hospitals will be empty. The Government will then be forced to undertake massive recruitment of young doctors. Most doctors are presently clustered in towns and cities, leaving rural areas with one doctor for 40,000 inhabitants. [44b] [Dibussi Tande]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

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, Nevirapin, 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 Cameroon is facing a generalised epidemic, with adult prevalence rates in the range of 4.8 to 9.8 per cent... The most vulnerable groups include sex workers, truck drivers, mobile populations and military personnel. Young people are highly affected – a third of Cameroonians infected are 15-29 years of age... The national plan for decentralising antiretroviral therapy for 2004-5 made provision to increase the number of sites providing treatment from 23 to 83 by the end of 2005. By September 2005, there were 89 sites providing treatment in the country... Geographical coverage of antiretroviral services remains restricted; in September 2005 only 62 of 160 districts in the country had access to antiretroviral therapy services. [27b] [WHO]
- 28.17 The National AIDS Control Committee, (NACC), has reduced the price of HIV/AIDS tests to FCFA 500. Pregnant women, children up to 15 years old, tuberculosis patients, university and secondary school students in both private and public healthcare centres will also have free tests. [19g] [Post Online (Cameroon)]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

CANCER TREATMENT

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

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

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]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

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]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

MENTAL HEALTH

- 28.22 A mental health policy is present. The policy was initially formulated in 1998... Mental health is not part of the primary health care system. Actual treatment of severe mental disorders is not available at the primary level. Mental care in the primary health set-up is being developed as part of the mental health action plan... There are no community care facilities for patients with mental disorders... The following therapeutic drugs are generally available at the primary health care level of the country: carbamazepine, ethosuximide, phenobarbital, phenytoin sodium, sodium valproate, amitriptyline, chlorpromazine, diazepam, fluphenazine, haloperidol, biperiden, carbidopa, levodopa. [27a] [WHO – Mental Health Atlas 2005]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

BURULI ULCERS

- 28.23 Buruli Ulcer is a largely neglected health problem for the people of Cameroon. Medecins Sans Frontieres runs a Buruli Ulcer project in the Akonolinga district of Cameroon, where it is estimated that more than 400 persons are suffering from Buruli in a rural population of close to 100,000... Treatment is organised in the district hospital at the 'Pavilion Buruli' and can last up to several months. [41b] [MSF]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

HUMANITARIAN ISSUES

- 29.01 Nigerians born and bred in Cameroon have requested that the Cameroon Government relax its laws on nationality so that they can have the right of Cameroonian citizenship. [19j] [Post Online (Cameroon)]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

30.01 The USSD report for 2006 stated that:

“The constitution and law provide for these rights; however, security forces routinely impeded domestic travel during the year. Roadblocks and checkpoints, manned by security forces, proliferated in cities and on most highways, making road travel both time consuming and costly. Extortion of small bribes was commonplace at these checkpoints. Police frequently stopped travellers to check identification documents”. [2a]

30.02 It also said:

“The law prohibits forced exile, and the government did not use it; however, some human rights monitors or political opponents who considered themselves threatened by the government left the country voluntarily and declared themselves to be in political exile”. [2a]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to Sources](#)

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. [34a] [Reliefweb.int]
- 31.02 Relief Web in its Internally Displaced Persons Information Bulletin no 1/2007 stated that:
- “On 3 March 2007, a conflict occurred between two agricultural ethnic groups – Bali-Nyonga and the Bawock – in the North West Province of Cameroon. The unrest resulted in the displacement of about 2,309 people, representing almost the entire Bawock community which is a minority in the region. The ethnic unrest started when the Bali-Nyonga, who first arrived in the locality, claimed that they were the legitimate landowners and wanted to chase away the Bawock, with whom they have been sharing the same land for close to half a century. The Bawock in turn consider the Bali-Nyonga as Nigerians who invaded their land. Though the conflict claimed no human life, the material damage inflicted is unprecedented in that locality, which is situated 450 kilometres west of Yaounde, the capital of Cameroon. The Bawocks were violently chased away from their homes, leaving behind all their belongings. The Bali-Nyongas burned down to ashes all houses belonging to the Bawocks after ransacking them one after the other. The internally displaced Bawocks have been welcomed in Bamenda...”. [34b]
- 31.03 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. [34a] [Reliefweb]
- 31.04 Along the borders of Cameroon and Chad – Kousseri, Maroua, Kaele, Mora, Yagoua and Mokolo. [34a] [Reliefweb]
- 31.05 Along the borders of Cameroon and the CAR – Garoua-Boulai and Bertoua, Yokadouma and Gari Gombo, Kentzou and Batouri, Meingaga and Toubouro. [34a] [Reliefweb]
- 31.06 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. [34a] [ReliefWeb]
- 31.07 In the Central African Republic, the number of internally displaced people (IDPs) is reported to have tripled during 2006, from 50,000 in April to an estimated 150,000 at the end of the year. This increase is largely due to persistent insecurity in the north where the government is fighting several rebel groups. Some 50,000 people are estimated to have fled into

neighbouring Chad and another 30,000 into Cameroon. [45] [Internal Displacement.org]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

FOREIGN REFUGEES

- 32.01 Over 41,000 refugees are presently living in Cameroon. This revelation was made [on 19 June 2007] at a UNHCR press conference in Cameroon. The Resident Representative said the year 2006/7 was a difficult one for HCR Cameroon. Even though there is a decrease in the number of refugees and asylum seekers in practically all countries around the world and even in Africa, in Cameroon on the contrary, the number of refugees has increased from 20,000 to over 41,000 in just one year. The situation is blamed on the political instability in neighbouring Central African Republic and Chad and especially, the arrival of 26,000 Mbororo refugees [from the Central African Republic] in the East and Adamawa provinces. [9ak] [allAfrica.com]
- 32.02 The UNHCR stated in its Global Report for 2006 that close cooperation between UNHCR and the Governments of Cameroon and Nigeria led to the successful return of some 10,400 refugees to Nigeria. [35] [UNHCR]
- 32.03 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. [35] [UNHCR]
- 32.04 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] [UNHCR]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

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]

- 33.05 The Post Online (Cameroon) reported on 16 April 2007 that:

“Nigerians born and bred in Cameroon have requested that the Cameroon Government to relax its laws on nationality so that they can naturally, too, have the right of Cameroonian citizenship... Chief Essien [President of the Nigerian Union in Cameroon] was speaking to The Post last week on the eve of the repatriation of 13 Nigerians. Asked why they were going back home, Chief Essien said the repatriates had come to the decision to return them home because they were no longer to pay FCFA 120,000 for residence permits ”. [19] [Post Online – Cameroon]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

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]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS

35.01 The USSD report for 2006 stated that:

“The law allows workers to form and join trade unions; however, the Government imposed numerous restrictions. The law does not permit the creation of a union that includes both public and private sector workers, or the creation of a union that includes different, even closely related, sectors”. [2a]

35.02 It further said:

“The law requires 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. The law provides for prison sentences and fines for workers who form a union and carry out union activities without registration... However, independent unions, especially in the public sector, have found it difficult to register. [2a]

35.03 And then stated:

“Registered unions were subject to government interference. The government chose the unions with which it would bargain; some independent unions accused the Government of creating small non-representative unions amenable to Government positions and with which it could ‘negotiate’ more easily. Some sections of labour law have no force or effect because the presidency had not issued implementing decrees”. [2a]

35.04 And continued:

“In 2005 the government restricted the civil rights of union leaders. For example, in 2005, police arrested and detained Alain Marcellin Mibo (for one hour) the leader of the Primary Education Teachers Association. For several weeks Mibo and his colleagues had been holding sit-ins in front of the prime minister’s office to demand that they be given full-time civil servant status, instead of the part-time or temporary status they were employed under”. [2a]

35.05 The USSD 2006 report further said:

“The constitution and law provide for collective bargaining between workers and management as well as between labour federations and business associations in each sector of the economy. Two formal collective bargaining negotiations took place during the year, one with truck drivers and one in the tourism sector”. [2a]

35.06 And also that:

“The Labour Code explicitly recognised workers’ right to strike but only after mandatory arbitration; and workers exercised this right during the year. Arbitration decisions are legally binding, but often unenforceable because the parties refuse to cooperate”. [2a]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

WITCHCRAFT

36.01 Professor Philip Burnham, Department of Anthropology, University College of London, states:

“It is certainly the case that Bamileke people have strong beliefs in witchcraft of various types. More generally, witchcraft beliefs are very widely held among all Cameroonian peoples, even in the case of persons with substantial degrees of western education... As regards prosecution for witchcraft in the Cameroonian judicial system, this again is quite common in various parts of Cameroon, including the Western Province. Some years ago, Professor Jean Pierre Warnier (now emeritus professor at the Sorbonne in Paris) and Dr Cyprien Fisiy, a legal anthropologist now working for the World Bank in Washington DC, carried out a study of Cameroonian court cases brought against individuals accused of practising witchcraft which showed that such cases were quite common. I myself was present in the town of Meiganga in Adamaoua Province when an individual was prosecuted for causing lightning to strike a house and injuring people through the use of witchcraft. Persons convicted of witchcraft normally receive substantial jail sentences”. [56]

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

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
- 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
- July:** Agreement reached between both countries that Nigerian troops would withdraw from Bakassi
- 2006** **August:** Nigerian troops withdrew from Bakassi
- 2007** **July:** Assembly and Senate elections

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

Annex B: Political organisations

Action for Meritocracy and Equal Opportunity Party (AMEC)

Received less than one 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 Epata
President – Bernard Muna

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 one 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 one 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 1995 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

Chairman: Chief Ette Otun Ayamba

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 Kodock

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

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

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 Elementary Education

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

Ali, Amadou; Deputy Prime Minister

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

Banda, Dr Divine Chemuta; Chairman of the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms (NCHRF)

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)

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

Kouatou, Bethuel; Chairman of the Committee for the Bepanda Nine

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)

Tchiroma, Issa; leader of the National Alliance for Democracy and Progress

Tumi, Christian Wiyghan; Archbishop of Douala

Yeguie, Djibril Cavaye; President of the National Assembly

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to sources](#)

Annex D: List of Cabinet Ministers – September 2006

Prime Minister – Ephraim Inoni
Deputy Prime Minister – Ali Amadou
Minister of State, Culture – Ferdinand Leopold Oyono
MoS, Planning, Programming and Regional Development – AF Kodock
MoS, Territorial Administration and Decentralisation – Marafa H Yaya
MoS, Agriculture and Rural Development – Jean Kuete
MoS, External Relations – Jean Marie Atangana Mebara
MoS, SG at the Presidency – Laurent Easo
MoS, Posts and Telecommunications – Bello Bouba Maigari
Urban Development and Housing – Clobert Tchatat
Sports and Physical Education – Augustin Edjoa
Commerce – Luc Magloire Mbarga Atangana
Elementary Education – Haman Adama
Forests and Fauna – Elvis Ngole Ngole
Transport – Dakole Daissala
State Property and Land Affairs – Louis-Marie Abogo Nkono
Public Health – Urbain Olangouena Awono
Social Affairs – Catherine Bakang Mbock
Public Works – Bernard Messengue Avom
Research and Scientific Innovation - Madeleine Tchuenté
Public Service and Administrative Reforms – Emmanuel Bonde
Employment and Professional Training – Zachary Perevet
Secondary Education – Louis Bapes Bapes
Enterprises of Social Economy and Crafts – Laurent Etoundi Ngoa
Livestock, Fisheries and Animal Industries – Aboubakary Sarki
Communication – Ebenezer Njoh Mouelle
Energy and Water – Jean-Bernard Sindou
Labour and Social Security – Robert Nkili
Women's Affairs and the Family – Suzanne Bomback
Youth – Adoum Garoua
Economy and Finance – Polycarpe Abah Abah
Tourism – Baba Hamadou
Industry, Mines and Technological Development – Charles Sale
Environment and Protection of Nature – Pierre Hele
Higher Education – Jacques Fame Ndongo [54] [Keesings]

Ministers Delegate

Justin Ndioro, Hamadou Moustapha, Victor M A Nkongho, Daniel N Lamare, Lazare E Menye, Nana A Diallo, Remy Ze Meka, Maurice Kamto, Abdoulaye Yaouba, David S E Massoma, Emmanuel Edou, Adoum Gargoum, Gregoire Owona, Gervais M Ze, Joseph D Ngute [54] [Keesings]

Annex E: 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
GLOWA	Global Welfare Association
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
ILO	International Labour Organisation
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
NADP	National Alliance for Democracy and Progress
NEMA	National Emergency Management Agency
NCHRF	National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms
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
UNDP	Union Nationale pour la Democratie et le Progres
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
UNPO	Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USSD	United States State Department
WHO	World Health Organization

[Return to contents](#)
[Go to Sources](#)

Annex F: References to source material

The Home Office is not responsible for the content of external websites.

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Return to contents
Go to sources