



CHRDA REPORT ON HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES COMMITTED BY ARMED SEPARATISTS IN THE NORTH-WEST AND SOUTH-WEST REGIONS OF CAMEROON BETWEEN MARCH 2020 AND MARCH 2021

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report contains details of human rights abuses committed by non-state actors, including local armed groups, who also bear much responsibility for the violence in the two restive English-speaking regions of Cameroon.

The report focuses on events from March 2020 to March 2021. It outlines atrocities committed by armed separatist fighters who are battling government forces, and attacking not just the military, but also civilians whom they believe are collaborating with the government, as well as others whom they accuse of violating “Amba Rules.” Criminal gangs and thugs are also wreaking havoc on the civilian population. Abuses by non-state actors include: murder, torture, arson of schools and villages, wanton destruction of property, retaliatory attacks, the use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), kidnapping for ransom, hostage-taking, harassment and extortion, attack on students and teachers, the use of child soldiers, attacks on aid workers, rape, theft, maiming and beheading of soldiers and civilians, and other forms of violence which seriously and disproportionately affect women and children.

The report focuses on a case-by-case analysis of the situation, including the murder of Comfort Tumasang in Muyuka Subdivision, the bombing at the Bamenda Grandstand and the attacks on the Galim police and Gendarmerie post, the murder of aid worker Tanjoh Christopher in the North-West Region, as well as atrocities committed in recent months, including among others: the November 5 abduction of Cardinal Tumi and the Fon of Nso, the murder of Chief Francis Molinga of Liwu la Malale Village in Buea, the attack on the vehicle of a Catholic priest in Santa, and the abductions of the Fon of Mbessa in Belo and the Fon of Kedjom Keku in Tubah Subdivision for taking part in the regional council elections. Non-state actors also abducted and killed many chiefs in relation to the regional council elections.

Three chiefs were abducted in Buea on December 10, and the Chief of Dipanda Mile 14 was killed in custody. In Lebialem, three chiefs of the Essoh-Attah Fondom were also abducted and killed for taking part in the regional council elections.

There have also been targeted attacks against the military, including using IEDs, which have led to the killing of not only military personnel but also civilians who were caught up in the blasts. Some incidents include the attack on the convoy of the Divisional Officer for Momo Division that led to the killing of Mrs. Liwusi Rebecca Jeme and three soldiers in Mbenwi, the attack at the checkpoint between Matazem and Batchoua in Santa, the use of IEDs to disrupt the smooth organisation of African Nations Championship (CHAN) in Limbe, attacks on schools and abduction of teachers, and attacks against unarmed civilians and humanitarian workers, including the February 4 attack on an ambulance in a Doctors Without Borders convoy in Muyuka.

The report ends with CHRDA condemning these gross human rights abuses and violations, and also providing some recommendations for stakeholders, most especially an all-inclusive dialogue with a third-party mediator to find a lasting solution to the crisis, and to hold perpetrators of violence accountable for their crimes.

INTRODUCTION

Armed separatists continue to perpetrate acts of violence against the civilian population, including killing, maiming, kidnapping and torturing in the North West and South West Regions. They also carried out deadly skirmishes against the military in locations inhabited by civilians, which most times resulted in civilian casualties. They were equally involved in forceful recruitment and extortion of civilians. CHRDA documented many cases of violence against civilians committed by armed separatists in the North-West and South-West Regions within this period, March 2020 and March 2021.

1. THE BOMBING AT THE BAMENDA GRANDSTAND AND THE ATTACKS IN GALIM

The International Women's Day Celebration in Bamenda, capital of the North-West Region, on March 8, 2020, was marred by an attack allegedly perpetrated by armed separatist fighters. At the ceremonial ground, a locally made explosive is said to have detonated, causing severe injuries to about eight soldiers of the state Defence and Security Forces and burning down several shops around the Commercial Avenue neighborhood in Bamenda. The attack was carried out in an attempt to disrupt the International Women's Day Celebration, and came after separatist fighters had issued previous warnings against the event and instituted a 'ghost town' prior to the celebration (from March 7 to March 8).

Before this attack at the Bamenda Grandstand, a similar attack had taken place on the night of March 8, 2020, at a locality in the Bamboutos Division of the West Region called Galim. This attack is alleged to have been carried out by armed separatist fighters who crossed over from Ngokentunjia Division in the North-West Region to perpetrate it.



Figure 1: Aftermath of the Bamenda Grandstand attack.

Figure 2: Ammunition and rifles allegedly taken from Galim.

2. THE MURDER OF MR. AKWO GABRIEL MAKIA, A 41-YEAR-OLD CIVILIAN, BY ARMED SEPARATIST FIGHTERS IN IKILIWINDI, AND OTHER ATTACKS ON CIVILIANS AND CIVILIAN PROPERTY IN SPRING 2020

On Sunday, May 31, 2020, Mr. Akwo Gabriel Makia, a 41-year-old shoe mender by profession and an elder of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon, Kumba-town Congregation, was shot and killed along the Kumba-Mamfe road by armed separatist fighters. This incident occurred at about 5:00am in the locality of Ikiliwindi, Konye Subdivision, Meme Division of the South-West Region. Makia was shot while on his way to Batibo in Momo Division of the North-West Region for his traditional wedding ceremony.

Makia was in a car with a family member accompanying him to his traditional wedding when the car came under attack by armed separatist fighters, allegedly belonging to the Southern Cameroons Defence Forces (SOCADEF) faction. Sources recounted that the fighters heard the sound of the car, a green RAV4, and opened fire on it, assuming it was a vehicle belonging to the Cameroonian military. The bullets penetrated the back door and got Makia on his lower abdomen, and he died of the bullet wounds after bleeding profusely.

Worthy of note is the fact that in late March, SOCADEF was the only one of the armed separatist groups that adhered to the call of UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres for a global ceasefire in areas of armed conflict around the world, so as to create access for the fight against COVID-19. This declaration was only temporary, and the murder of Makia confirms that they later resumed hostilities.

Unarmed civilians have remained targets of hostilities and horrific murders committed by separatist fighters. In early April, separatist fighters shot and killed a man at Ediki in the South-West Region. Before his death, they had visited him in his house, demanding to use his Sanili motorbike for an operation they planned on undertaking, and he resisted. Instantly, they shot him dead and took away his bike.

In May, separatist fighters abducted two unarmed civilians in two separate operations in the North-West Region and beat them up. In one incident, they kidnapped a female councillor of Ngie Council in Momo Division of the North-West Region, allegedly for taking part in the February 9 elections. In the other incident, on May 4, they kidnapped a businessman in Mile 3 Nkwen, Bamenda, for selling Brasseries du Cameroun products in his snack bar. In both instances, the captives were filmed by their captors in amateur videos released on social media.

Furthermore, cases of malicious damage to civilian property were also recorded in the month of May, allegedly perpetrated by armed separatist fighters. Between May 10 and 14, humanitarian aid aimed at combatting COVID-19 came under attack in Mbengwi, and toolkits donated by the Meta Cultural and Development Association to help curtail the spread of COVID-19 in Meta, Momo Division of the North-West Region, were set on fire. In the South-West Region, a building in the Limbe 3 Council in Fako Division was partly consumed by fire with council property greatly destroyed. On May 29, the Commander in Chief of the Ambazonian Defence Forces (ADF), Ayaba Cho Lucas, acknowledged the action on his Facebook page and praised his fighters for committing it.

Before the arson of Limbe Council, separatist fighters in Lebialem Division of the South-West Region in April conducted an operation in the village of Bangang and destroyed the entire village. They burnt to ashes more than 50 homes in the small settlement. Even plantains and crops were cut down with machetes. In a video circulating on social media, the fighters are seen setting fire on houses and cutting down crops, accusing the villagers of collaborating with the military against them.

These atrocities committed against civilians and civilian property constitute grave breaches of international law. The Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilians prohibits in totality all acts of violence launched indiscriminately against the civilian population, whether committed in offence or defence.

3. THE TORTURE OF A 44-YEAR-OLD FARMER IN MAMFE, MANYU DIVISION, FOR WEARING A FACEMASK

At about 5:00am on Friday, May 15, a group of farmers left Mile 19 in Mamfe in a car, and as they drove towards Manyeme (situated in the boundary between Nguti and Mamfe in Manyu Division), their car was stopped by armed separatist fighters at a checkpoint.

In the car were five men on their way to the farm; three of them had facemasks and the other two did not. The separatist fighters brought out the three who had facemasks and started beating them up. They accused them of trying to import coronavirus into Manyeme Village. They let go of those without facemasks, but those with masks were told to pay a sum of **five thousand (5000 francs CFA)** each before they could regain their freedom, as they were told they had no right to put on a facemask within the separatists' territory of command.

To document this case, CHRDA interviewed one victim and two other witnesses who narrated that, while he and two others were seated on the ground and struggling to plead for pardon from the separatists, a military truck emerged from behind and started shooting at the separatists from a distance. As they drove closer, the separatists abandoned the victim and fled into the bush. The victim recounts further that it was a market day and separatists always conduct searches at that same checkpoint. The military knew this, and that is why they started shooting at a distance even before reaching the point. As the shooting went on, the victim lay low on the ground and raised his hands up, but was shot more than four times on his legs up to his waist.

When the military drove closer, they realized that a civilian had been shot but did not take him to the hospital. Instead, they abandoned him in a pool of his blood and drove away. It was his colleagues who came out from the bush and found him bleeding profusely and then took him to the hospital, where he underwent a series of surgeries and was still under medical care at the time of CHRDA's August report.

4. THE TORTURE OF A MAN AND EXTORTION OF TWO MILLION FRANCS

On June 15, armed separatist fighters under the command of a man known as ‘**Animal**’ in Mamfe, Manyu Division of the South-West Region, took a young man hostage, tortured him, and shot him on the leg. Before the escalation of the crisis, this young man had established a business in Mamfe operating a snack bar. When the security situation worsened in the village, he entrusted the business to a relative and ran to Buea with his 5-year-old daughter. When his father died, the man, age 28, left Buea for Mamfe to attend the burial, and he was taken and savagely tortured to near death by the armed men. They requested a sum of two million FCFA before they could bury his father, and he was able to pay.

After the burial, he went to check on how his business was doing, and a group of armed separatist fighters, about 30 in number, attacked and beat him up. They took his phones—Samsung Galaxy S6 and Tecno Spark—and a sum of 85,000 FCFA which he had on him that moment. They also took his ID card and never returned any of the items. They questioned him and asked why he did not come to pay homage at their camp when he arrived in the village.

They said he was disrespectful and started beating him with the bottoms of their guns. They also kicked him with their boots and beat him on the head with empty bottles of beer; they broke the bottles on his head, and used the broken pieces to slice open some wounds on his body. The victim told CHRDA the reason why they attacked him is that at the beginning of 2018, he was a sympathizer of the struggle, and decided to join those boys as a freedom fighter, but in the fall of 2018, he realized that they had diverted their attention away from the main goal of the struggle and were instead involved in criminality and violence, so he resigned and left the village to Buea. When he resigned, the furious gang members burnt down

his brother's house and continued to brutalize his family as a means to punish him for abandoning the struggle. When he went back for his father's funeral, they started insisting he must rejoin the struggle and fight till the end; when he refused, they tortured him and shot his leg.

They beat him up and shot a bullet on his right leg twice, and the bullets passed in between his bones, hurting him badly. While they were beating him, there was a crowd watching, but nobody could come close to stop them as they had assault-type weapons and appeared ready to kill anyone. They brought out three bottles of whisky (Dry Gin) and gave them all to him to drink. They forced the alcohol down his throat, and he went unconscious after consuming the three bottles. He only realized himself in oxygen after three days in a hospital in Mamfe.

While in the hospital, two surgeries were carried out on his leg, which cost him 850,000 FCFA. He then left the hospital in Mamfe and went to Douala, where he is currently being prepared for the next surgery on the leg. After the torture, he could not carry himself upright and was coughing and spitting blood. At the time of CHRDA's August report, the situation was still very bad, as he lived on injections received every two days. One of those injections costs 13,500 FCFA, and at that time, he had spent 1.3 million FCFA on his hospital bills. He sold his property to meet up with the expenses.

On the same day he was shot, the assailants abandoned him and moved to the next quarter in the village called Eyang Nchang, where they pulled a man out from a house whom they accused of being an informant to the government troops, and shot him to death. After killing him, they moved to another village called Ewele and killed another man whom they also accused of being an informant to the military.

5. THE FORCEFUL RECRUITMENT OF CHILD SOLDIERS

On Friday, July 24, armed separatist fighters under the lead of a man known as Field Marshal—the head of an armed group known as the Red Dragons—conducted an operation in a local market in the village of Essoh-Attah, in Fontem Subdivision, Lebialem Division of the South-West Region. In this operation, he rounded up close to 80 boys and men and forced them to join the armed struggle as fighters.

To document this case, CHRDA spoke to two eyewitnesses and two victims who narrated that on the said date, they were in a market in an area called ‘Foreke Down,’ and Field Marshal came with his boys and picked up all the vibrant young men and boys between the ages of 16 and 37, stripping them naked in the market. He then poured water on them and rubbed them in mud. He asked them to keep singing and jumping, and told the villagers to wave them goodbye for they would be off to war.

He then asked his boys to lead the abductees to their camp in the bush, but on their way, a number of abductees, who outnumbered the gunmen, escaped and ran into the bush. While escaping through the bush, 30-year-old Manyang (not his real name) was bitten by a snake. He managed to reach his house where his brother was quick enough to evacuate him on a motorbike to Dschang in the West Region, where he received treatment.

The rest of those whom the assailants were able to take were finally released a few days later. Note should be taken that this mass abduction in Lebialem was the second in a short space of time, occurring just few days after another General, known as Ayeke, kidnapped 67 children and started demanding ransom from their families.

6. THE MURDER OF A WOMAN IN MUYUKA AND THE ABDUCTION AND TORTURE OF A MAN ON TUESDAY, AUGUST 11, 2020

On Tuesday, August 11, armed separatist fighters in Muyuka, Fako Division of the South-West Region, beheaded a 35-year-old mother of four children and dumped her body in the middle of the road. The incident happened in the Makanga neighbourhood in Muyuka town. The woman, named Comfort Tumasang, was allegedly accused of being a spy, termed a **‘blackleg,’** owing to the fact that she spent the weekend with a soldier, an act seen by separatist fighters as a betrayal. This incident was recorded on video and released on social media. CHRDA received and analyzed the video, in which a gang of boys is seen beating a woman with her hands tied behind her while she rolls on the ground. The woman in agony struggles to beg for mercy, and one fighter lifts a machete and cuts her on the neck two times. Another fighter then pulls her body and dumps it at the middle of the main road with blood oozing out of her neck, and another one could be heard in the background calling on all fighters to escape.

It is worthy to note that this is just one among many cases of violence against women, occurring especially in rural communities, committed by separatist fighters against the civilian population. Last year, in 2019, separatist fighters in like manner abducted and killed Ayafor Florence in Santa Subdivision of the North-West Region.

Still on August 11, another video emerged online, depicting a man being interrogated by armed separatist fighters on a cocoa farm in Muyuka. They accused him of being a blackleg (traitor) who was leaking information to the military, since he worked as a security officer in a petrol station (BOCCOM) where the military

usually came and sat. From the video, the man could be seen with swelling on his face. Apparently, he was beaten savagely by his captors. At the time of this report, his whereabouts are yet to be known.

7. THE USE OF EXPLOSIVE DEVICES IN THE NORTH-WEST REGION

In the North-West Region, violence has increased, and civilians continue to be victims. Within a few weeks in August, non-state armed groups implanted explosive devices in four separate operations in the town of Bamenda, and in one blast, a civilian was severely injured. This incident happened on Sunday, August 2, at the entrance to Sisia in Nkwen. The following morning, Monday, August 3, another bomb exploded at Miss Ngeng Junction and destroyed civilian property (this particular place divides Mankon and Nkwen). In another incident, they also planted a bomb at a quarter known as Travellers, which exploded and destroyed civilian property (business premises). In the morning of August 8, the military were able to dislodge a bomb before it could explode, implanted for the second time at Travellers. These are civilian-inhabited locations and do not constitute military targets.

8. THE MURDER OF A YOUNG LADY

On August 3, footage from two amateur videos emerged on social media. In one video, a young lady could be seen dancing and twerking to a song by Naira Marley of Nigeria. In the 27-second video, which has been received and analyzed by CHRDA, the lady was having fun with some young men at a drinking spot while wearing a Gucci dress, and faces of two young men, both with heavy mustaches, could be seen singing with her.

In the second video, which was apparently filmed sometime after the twerking scene, the same girl emerged with the same clothes, this time in a pool of blood, allegedly murdered by armed separatist fighters. In the 25-second video, some voices of young men could be heard, speaking over her body while holding and struggling to film her face and saying in Pidgin English “...**any rubbish wey it di come for this town we de enam ya...we no dey for here for di chop shit...we no need black leg them for this struggle...**” This is a rhetoric mostly used by armed separatist fighters, as they accused her of being a **blackleg** (traitor).

From several sources, CHRDA has received her name to be **Treasure**, and the location in which the killing took place is Mile 90, situated somewhere in Bamenda town. From sources which CHRDA could not independently verify, some say she was murdered for dating a military officer, and others say she was an agent paid to seduce the armed separatist and lure them to a location where soldiers could carry out a raid and capture them, and it was during her conversation on phone with the military that her plan was uncovered and she was later murdered.

Violence against women perpetrated by armed separatist fighters has been on the rise. They continue to carry out targeted abductions and eventual killings of women. It should be noted that in the fall of 2019, an 18-year-old girl by the name of Diana Efon was abducted and buried alive in Kumba, Meme Division of the South-West Region, and another known as Lydia in Muyuka, Fako Division. Both ladies were accused of dating military men and playing the role of informants.

9. THE MURDER OF A HUMANITARIAN WORKER IN BATIBO

In the morning of August 7, armed separatist fighters in Batibo, Batibo Subdivision in the North-West Region, abducted a man by the name of Tanjoh Christopher, and murdered him. Mr. Tanjoh Was an aid worker, serving with COMINSUD as a field

agent for general food distribution to affected populations and IDPs in the cluster of Guzang, supported by the World Food Program (WFP). Mr Tanjoh was also serving as a clergyman with the Apostolic Church in Batibo.

In a statement released on August 8, the Coordinator of COMMISUD in the North-West Region condemned the killing of the aid worker, and recounted while quoting family sources that he was abducted from his home by armed men at 9:00am, and by 11:00am, he was found abandoned at the entrance to the St John of God Hospital Batibo, in a pool of his blood. The Coordinator further recounted that he was abducted and killed for openly denouncing atrocities committed against the civilian population by armed separatist fighters. As per the Coordinator of COMINSUD, before the murder of Mr. Tanjoh, he had previously made an audio message in the Moghamo language which he sent to one of the separatist captains through WhatsApp in which he advised against ills committed against the civilian population, such as hostage-taking and extortion.

After this message, the separatists attacked and killed him. Mr. Tanjoh was buried on Saturday August 8, 2020, the same day he was born in 1965, and this day was to mark the 55th anniversary of his birth.

10. THE MURDER OF A TEACHER IN MILE 4 NKWEN

In the morning of August 10, the corpse of a man was found in a river, dumped beside his motorbike under a bridge in Mile 4 Nkwen, Bamenda, in the North-West Region. The man was identified as **Mr. Piayu Ibrahim**, a chemistry teacher of Government Technical High School (GTHS) Santa, Mezam Division. It is alleged that he was killed by separatist fighters for non-respect of the ghost town and for failure to observe the school boycott order, as he was allegedly attacked on his way

to supervise the written session of the GCE. CHRDA is still investigating this case, as other sources have accused the military for shooting him in the skull, stating that the bridged is situated just about 150 meters away from the Gendarmerie post at Mile 4, and it is impossible for separatists to carry out any operations there. At the moment, we are still to speak to credible sources and therefore cannot independently name the perpetrators.

Still in the North-West, a mutilated body of a man identified as Peter Njakah Chuisih, was found along the banks of a river in Ndop, Ngokentunjia Division, with his head chopped off, both of his arms and his genitals also chopped off, and his body exposed with no clothes.

This incident happened on Monday, August 10, and was allegedly committed by armed separatist fighters. It is said that the victim was murdered for being a member of a vigilante group that works in collaboration with the military.

The civilian population has largely been targeted by armed separatist fighters and in most instances, they name victims as blacklegs, traitors, enablers and/or facilitators. These labels happen most often when an individual does not agree with their quest for secession, and the consequence is that they are targeted and killed or abducted and maimed. In such occasions, victims are tortured and interrogated while being filmed on smartphones, and the videos are shared on social media with the aim to cause fear in the population, so they are aware that anybody who does the same thing will be treated in like manner.

11.THE TORTURE OF ASHU BLESS IN KOSALA, KUMBA

On May 27, 2020, 18-year-old Ashu Bless was seen by separatist fighters to be sweeping the Gendarmerie post in Kosala, a locality in Kumba, Meme Division of

the South-West Region. It should be noted that this was not the first time he went there to sweep. He usually does that and gets some little tips from the officers at the post, his grandfather revealed, saying that this happens without his permission, mostly at times when he has left for the farm. On that day, on his way back home after he had finished sweeping, Ashu was apprehended by some armed men who he said were many in number, some of whom carried guns, sticks and machetes. They took him to an unknown destination where he was beaten to near death. He was considered to be an informant to the Gendarmerie officers due to his frequent visits to their post. He went unconscious and was dumped at Government Primary School Kosala by his torturers. At about 6:30pm on the same day, he was found and identified by a woman who works with Doctors Without Borders. With the aid of a truck driver, he was taken to his grandfather, still in his unconscious state. He was rushed to the Kosala Health Centre for emergency medical attention, where he spent the night, and the next morning was referred to the Manyemen General Hospital.

On June 2, 2020, the patient was transferred to the Buea Regional Hospital where he arrived unconscious and had been undergoing treatment for close to three months as of the time CHRDA conducted this interview. CHRDA also spoke with one of the medical doctors in charge of Ashu, who disclosed to CHRDA that as a result of the severe torture, the patient was suffering from spinal cord injury, constipation, and severe bed sores. He also uses a neck-collar. The patient is unable to move his hands, legs and his entire body. As a result, he defecates on the bed and urinates with the aid of a catheter. His grandfather is charged with feeding him, moving his body and changing his sleeping positions on regular basis.

His grandfather confirmed that on daily basis he has to undergo physiotherapy to enable him regain fitness and ability to move his body. His medical bills within the

hospital are paid by Doctors Without Borders, while food and all other medical services gotten from outside of the hospital are burdened on the patient's grandfather. The grandfather complained to CHRDA that all of the most expensive drugs, are unfortunately not found in the hospital's pharmacy, and this forces him to get them elsewhere. The cost of food is also a great challenge for him since he is a struggling farmer.



Figures 3 and 4: Ashu Bless on the hospital bed (photos taken by CHRDA).

12. THE ABDUCTION OF A TEACHER IN BAMENDA AND CHILDREN IN LEBIALEM

Hostage-taking and extortion have been tactics used by the armed separatist groups since the escalation of the crisis. The domain of education has been used especially by separatist armed groups as a weapon of war. On Monday, July 20, 2020, armed separatist fighters abducted Mr. Shey Polycarp, a teacher in the North-West Region, and kept him in their custody. Amateur footage went viral on social media, depicting the teacher seated on the ground without a shirt, save an innerwear, while being interrogated by the separatist fighters in Pidgin English. The abductors accused him of violating the Monday ghost town and the ban on school resumption imposed by the non-state actors in the two English-speaking regions.

Polycarp was on his way to G.B.H.S Down Town, Bamenda, to supervise the computer practical session of the General Certificate of Education Examinations (G.C.E.) before being abducted by the separatists. The 2-minute, 54-second video ended with the abductors promising to kill Mr. Polycarp, and telling him that he would pay with his “blood” for being a traitor. They also chanted a slogan, “eyooh eyooh,” meaning “no joy for the wicked.” At the time of this report, the teacher is still being held by his kidnappers.

The abductions of teachers and students by non-state actors pose a serious threat to the domain of education and have caused thousands of children to remain at home, most especially in rural areas, since the beginning of the crisis in 2016.

The abduction of Mr. Polycarp in the North-West Region follows the abduction of about 60 children in the Lebiale Division of the South-West Region, allegedly committed by a certain separatist fighter known as **General Ayeke**. It is reported the average ages of these children ranged between 14 and 16 years. According to the local administrator in the Division, 12 of these children escaped from captivity and the kidnappers were demanding ransom from the parents before they would release the remainder.

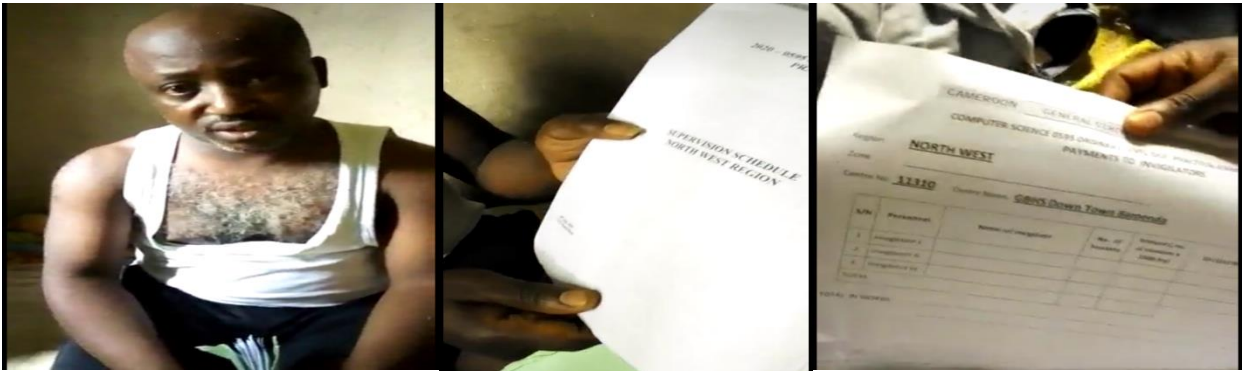


Figure 5: Screenshot of Polycarp from the video.

Figure 6: Screenshots of official supervision schedule documents from the video.

13. THE TORTURE AND EVENTUAL KILLING OF A MAN IN BANGA, MUYUKA SUBDIVISION OF THE SOUTH-WEST REGION

Between August and September 2020, the human rights situation in the English-speaking regions further deteriorated due to the activities of separatist armed groups. They continuously launched attacks against the Cameroon military, killing several soldiers and, in reprisal, the military has retaliated and shot unarmed civilians.

The gruesome murder of Comfort Tumasang, whose head was chopped off on a seemingly busy street of Muyuka in the South-West Region on August 11, 2020, by armed separatist fighters who labelled her a blackleg, was widely condemned by the human rights community, including the spokesman of the UN Secretary-General during a press briefing on August 14, 2020. After this act, leaders of armed groups were called upon to discipline their fighters and take steps to put an end to the gross human rights abuses perpetrated against unarmed civilians by non-state armed groups. Unfortunately, these condemnations and exhortations seem to have fallen on deaf ears as an even more shocking video emerged online on September 7, 2020, depicting a group of armed separatist fighters gradually chopping off the limbs of a man and slowly killing him while he yells out in agony and begs for mercy with blood oozing out of several machete wounds in his body. They accused him of being a blackleg.

In the 1-minute, 18-second video, the killers are heard telling the victim: “Show that hand, let him cut it off. Put it on the bench. Shut your mouth and cover your face.” Another person can also be seen in the video asking the victim angrily: “Do you know how many of your brothers have died because of you? Here you are

crying, you shall eventually die anyway. This is the starting point of your death.” After saying these words, they chopped off his limbs and left him to die.

On August 22, 2020, armed separatist fighters in Sob Village, situated in Ndu Sudivision of Donga Mantung Division in the North-West Region, assaulted a third-class traditional chief, who later died of excessive bleeding from his wounds. He was attacked in the farm by armed separatist fighters and butchered with a machete. They accused the traditional leader, who was also a nurse and worked in a clinic in Sob Village, of collaborating with the Divisional Officer.

Similarly, in Belo, Boyo Division, non-state actors shot a civilian, **Isaac Ngam**, in the leg on September 28, 2020, after they had accused him of being a blackleg. They shot him at his compound at Acha for cleaning the compound of the Mayor who they said was a government collaborator. A witness told CHRDA that the victim was employed as caretaker by the Mayor of Belo Council, who resides in Bamenda. He went to cut down tall bushes which had grown in the compound and separatist fighters warned him not to do so. He did nevertheless. In the night, the separatist fighters came and shot his leg, which had to be amputated at Mbingo Baptist Hospital. Before being taken to the hospital, he had bled profusely as he had been abandoned by his assailants in a pool of his own blood. At the time of this report, Bobe Isaac Ngam is still in a coma. The shooting of Isaac Ngam was the second in under one week, as another old man was also shot in the leg in the locality of Jinkfuin in Belo Subdivision for calling the separatists illiterates.

Before the shooting of Isaac Ngam in the leg by separatist fighters, Boyo Division had become the epicentre of violence in the last weeks of July 2020, as the army battled to flush separatists out of the area. On July 25, 2020, the military launched

a week-long operation in Belo that led to many civilian casualties, including the arson of homes, theft, and arbitrary arrest, as well as murder.

The military launched an offensive attack at a separatist camp in the village of Aboh, where they were met with stiff resistance from the separatists. In the course of the battle, the military recorded some casualties and separatists also retreated. In reprisal, the military burned down some houses at Anyajua while looting phones, a piano, sewing machines, beer and potatoes. They also arrested many people and took them to Bamenda where they presented them to the public as terrorists, even though most of them were civilians. Among those arrested was **Yuh Kuma Toh**, a farmer who works in Makenene in the Central Region, and who had arrived in Belo only two days before the military invaded. The young man went to the village for the funeral of his younger brother, Kuma Dickson, who was shot and killed in Bole-Bakundu in Meme Division of the South-West Region by the military, before being arrested in Belo.

When the military eventually left the village on July 31, the separatists came out to prove that they still existed and blocked the roads between Mbingo and Bamenda, so that patients could not get to Mbingo Baptist hospital for treatment. The lockdown on that stretch of the road was originally intended to last only for a few days, but instead lasted for weeks as they also wanted to deter the Governor of the North-West Region from visiting Fundong, the headquarters of Boyo Division. In the midst of the fighting, the civilian population suffered the most. A resident of Bamenda told CHRDA that the lockdown prevented him from reaching Fundong to give his diabetic father his monthly delivery of medication, leading the old man to die. Another witness told CHRDA that they had left Bamenda with the body of their relative whom they were going to bury in the village in Boyo. At the checkpoint where the road was blocked around Mbingo, they were sent back to

Bamenda with the dead body, leading them to incur additional costs for keeping the body in the mortuary for more days than they had planned to.

On August 27, separatist fighters shot and killed a Muslim cleric in Bamessing, Ngoketunjia Division of the North-West Region, after his persistent refusal to be recruited into an armed separatist group. A witness told CHRDA that the victim, Ban Malam Yahaya, had been beaten by the assailants a few months back and had sustained a serious eye injury. This time, they shot and killed him for refusing to join their group, being the only male youth left in the village. Before the killing of this Muslim cleric in Bamessing, armed separatist fighters had conducted an offensive raid on August 21, 2020, against the Mbororo community in Ntombuw, situated in Ndu Subdivision of the North-West Region, and razed the entire community to ashes.

On August 18, 2020, Mr. Njamsi Nelson Ndi, a teacher in the North-West Region, was shot and killed by armed separatist fighters after a failed attempt to kidnap him and his daughter. He was shot while driving home after picking up his daughter, who had just finished writing her GCE examination paper for the day before their car came under attack by the armed men. They wanted to seize his daughter for going against their orders for a school boycott and, while trying to protect his daughter, the men opened fire and the teacher was fatally injured. He later died while receiving medical attention in a hospital in Bamenda. Similarly, on August 28, separatist fighters in Limbe, Fako Division of the South-West Region, abducted a lawyer, Barrister Agbor Benjamin Jomo, and made a ransom demand of 1,500,000 FCFA. He was only released after the Bar Council threatened to boycott all proceedings pending before military courts against Anglophone detainees incarcerated in connection with the crisis in the two English-speaking regions.

On September 11, 2020, a group of young men alleged to be members of a vigilante group in Mile 5 Bamenda, North-West Region, were captured by armed separatist fighters. According to witnesses, the vigilante group had discovered the path used by the armed separatist fighters from Bafut to Bamenda and thus went to capture them, but things turned out sour as they were instead captured by the separatists. The said separatist fighters have since subjected the captured vigilante group to inhumane and degrading treatment. A three-minute video received and analysed by CHRDA depicts members of the vigilante group being asked to crawl in mud on their bellies over a very long distance with their faces blindfolded. Another source told CHRDA that the separatist fighters are asking Cameroonian Defence and Security Forces to release one of their colleagues in exchange for the vigilante group members.

14. THE ABDUCTION OF CARDINAL TUMI AND THE FON OF NSO, AND A BAN ON REGIONAL COUNCIL ELECTIONS

On September 7, 2020, the President of the Republic, Paul Biya, signed a decree authorizing the first-ever election for members of regional councils across the ten regions of Cameroon, including the two restive North-West and South-West Anglophone regions. The elections, which were provided for in the 1996 constitution of Cameroon in a move towards decentralization but not yet implemented, were planned for December 6, 2020. The elections were largely boycotted by opposition political parties in Cameroon, especially the SDF of Ni John Fru Ndi, which said it would boycott the election unless there was a ceasefire in the restive regions. In response to this move, non-state armed groups warned that no individual in the two regions should dare participate in the elections. This

warning was followed up by strict implementation of a three-day lockdown in the regions from December 4 to the 7, 2020.

The traditional ruler of Nso, Fon Mbinglo II, who had been living in exile in Yaoundé since 2019 after separatist leaders attacked his palace and killed two of his sons, decided to return to Nso to take part in the regional election and to launch his campaign. He was accompanied on his journey home by Cardinal Tumi. On November 5, 2020, the convoy was intercepted at the village of Baba I by non-state armed groups. The two men were abducted and taken to an unknown destination, where they spent several days before being released.



Figure 7: Photos of Cardinal Tumi and His Royal Highness the Fon of Nso

While in captivity, they were forced to disavow any plans of taking part in the regional council elections. This incident was captured on amateur videos, filmed and circulated on social media by the captors. The two men were later set free on two different dates after widespread condemnation of the attack from the local and international community.

To further their plans to sabotage the elections, separatist fighters launched numerous attacks targeting anyone participating, and they also enforced the three-

day lockdown. In Santa Subdivision in the North-West Region, the vehicle of a Catholic priest was attacked by gunmen who fired shots and injured the priest and a mass servant. Still in Santa, a heavy-duty truck was intercepted and burnt down by the gunmen, and the driver and his assistant were abducted.

On election day, the Fon of Mbessa in Boyo Division was kidnapped in Belo by separatist fighters after taking part in the election. The Fon of Kedjom Keku in Tubah Subdivision, Mezam Division, was also abducted days after taking part in the election. In the South-West Region, the chiefs of Mile 14 Buea, the chief of Dibanda, the chief of Bolifamba, and the chief of Lower Bokuva were abducted on December 10. The chief of Dipanda was killed in captivity while the others were released a day after their abduction.

The death of the chief of Dibanda Mile 14 followed that of Chief Francis Molinga, who was attacked and killed in his Palace in Liwu la-Malale Village.

15. THE MURDER OF CHIEF FRANCIS MOLINGA OF LIWU LA-MALALE VILLAGE, BUEA

On November 6, 2020, unknown gunmen attacked the village of Liwu La-Malale, a farming settlement situated in the outskirts of Buea, in Fako Division of the South-West Region. This attack came after the October 26, 2020, attack perpetrated by Defence and Security Forces that left six people dead, including three separatist fighters and three unarmed civilians.

To document this case, CHRDA interviewed eyewitnesses and community members of the village who all gave a detailed account of what transpired. On that day, the chief of the village, Molinga Francis, and his wife returned from a visit to Bokwaongo (a locality in Buea), at around 4:00pm. When they came back, there

was a calmness in the village, as people were going about their daily activities. Witnesses said that at around nightfall, the chief’s wife was in the sitting room and feeding her children, when suddenly, they heard a hard knock on the door. She inquired who was at the door, but the voice was heard saying in Pidgin English in a terrifying tone, *“open this door very fast or we go brokam enter and you go regret.”* The eyewitness added that the chief’s wife was half-naked, so she hastily put on a T-shirt with the loin she tied and rushed to open the door. At the door were two armed men, alleged to be separatist fighters, who forced their way into the palace. The two men, armed with rifles, began harassing the queen and her children, demanding to see the chief. Immediately the chief heard the noise at the door. He then came out from his room and was ordered to go outside and sit on the ground.

While the chief and his family obeyed the orders of the armed men and sat on the ground, another witness told CHRDA that *“their other colleagues were going round the village rounding up the villagers and bringing them to the palace and they were all gathered there in fear. They said to us that ‘we be don say we go burn down this palace nor, make wuna cam see wit wuna eyes now.’ When the armed men said this, they then set the palace on fire.”*



Figure 8: Photo of the Palace of Malale Village.

When the palace was set ablaze, they immediately opened fire on the chief and he was shot three times in his chest. They shot him in the presence of his wife, two children of three and two years old respectively, and the entire village. His wife was threatened not to make any move, or cry, or else they would kill her too. After killing him, they left the scene, and the villagers ran away in fear for their lives.



Figure 9: The remains of Chief Francis Molinga.

Another source told CHRDA that it was rumored in the village after the first attack of October 26 (when three separatists were killed alongside three civilians) that the chief was suspected to have been the one who called in the military. Family and friends of the chief advised him to leave the village for some time, and return after everything returned to normalcy. Chief Molinga denied all the allegations and also refused the advice of leaving the village because he thought such an action would give the people more reason to think that he was guilty of the accusations.

This attack that cost the life of the chief also caused all the villagers to flee to neighboring villages. It should be noted that this village hosted hundreds of IDPs, and due to these recent attacks, the IDPs alongside all the villagers have further

moved to other areas. A source told CHRDA that about a few days after the attack, only two persons were left in the village, both of whom were physically challenged: a blind old man and a lame man.

Chief Molinga Francis was the second traditional ruler in Fako, and the third in the South-West Region, to have been killed in the four-year existence of the Anglophone Crisis. In July 2018, seven Fako chiefs were abducted by alleged separatist fighters, and one of them, Chief Mbanda Njie Williams of Lysoka Moliwe Village, died while in the custody of the abductors. On August 12, 2018, His Royal Highness Itoh Esoh, Paramount Ruler of the Balondo people in Ndian Division of the South-West Region, was shot dead on his way home from church after a Sunday service.

16. THE MURDER OF THREE CHIEFS IN LEBIALEM AND THE ABDUCTION OF THE FON OF KOM

On the night of Saturday, February 13, 2021, armed separatist fighters in Lebialem Division of the South-West Region, belonging to the group known as the Red Dragons of Lebialem and under the command of Lekeaka Oliver, known also as Field Marshal, carried out a raid in the village of Esoh-Attah which led to the murder three chiefs and one civilian, and also included the abduction of 27 men. To document this case, CHRDA spoke to a survivor of the attack who narrated how the incident transpired on the eve of Valentine's Day in Lebialem.

According to this witness, Field Marshal and his boys came to a locality in the village known as 'Foreke Down' in Esoh-Attah Fondom and removed one commercial bike rider at gunpoint from his house at about 9:00pm. They ordered him to take his bike and move to wherever they asked him to. Field Marshal had on

his hand a long list of persons whom he needed to kill that night. He then called out the names of four chiefs and sent the bike rider, accompanied by one separatist fighter with a gun, to go the houses of those chiefs, one after the other, and bring them to where they were sitting at Foreke Down. The bike rider left with the gunman to bring the chiefs, and Field Marshal proceeded with his raid in the neighborhood. He kidnapped 27 men, both old and young, locked them up in the house with their hands tied, and also tortured them.

The biker and the gunman brought the four chiefs to Field Marshal and he started interrogating them. He accused them of participating in the December 6, 2020, regional council elections in Menji, in which he had warned that no person in Lebialem should take part. Among the four chiefs, three of them denied that they participated in the elections and only one accepted that he voted. Field Marshal immediately shot those who denied having participated in the elections and spared the one who said he voted. **The chiefs who were executed were Fualasoeh Peter, Simon Forzi and Formin Benedict, all of Essoh-Attah Fondom in Lebialem Division.**



Figure 10: Photo of the three chiefs killed in Lebialem.

After the chiefs were executed, their bodies were taken and dumped in a river and retrieved the next day by villagers. The witness further narrated that Field Marshal also sent the bike rider to bring him a person who had been constructing bridges in Lebialem and enabling soldiers to cross with military vehicles and commit atrocities. The bike rider was unaccompanied this time by the gunman who has been following him around, so when the bike rider said he had been sent by Field Marshal to come and carry the person, he was able to escape.

At this time, the military was already alerted, and they arrived in Foreke Down at about 5:00am. Field Marshal escaped with his boys, abandoning the 27 men he had kidnapped and locked in the house. At the time when the military arrived at the premises where the men were being kept, one of the men had stepped out to ease himself, and the military thought it was a separatist fighter and opened fire at him. He was shot in the hand and later died due to profuse bleeding. The rest of the captives were liberated and taken to the market square at Foreke Down.



Figure 11: Photo of captives set free by the military from Field Marshal's camp.

In all, three persons were killed by Field Marshal and one by the military. On the same day, that these chiefs were killed in Lebialem in the South-West Region, the **Fon of Kom, Fon Vincent Yuh II** and his entourage in Boyo Division of the North-West Region were briefly abducted by separatists in Fundong while returning from a church service in Njinikom. They were released just a few hours after the abduction due to excessive pressure mounted on the abductors by the entire Kom population, both at home and abroad. As with public administrators, traditional rulers have been targeted in the Anglophone Crisis by separatist fighters. Most of them have been victims of abductions and many have died in captivity.

17. TARGETED ATTACKS ON MILITARY AND THE USE OF IEDs

At the beginning of the year 2021, armed separatist fighters conducted several targeted attacks against the Defence and Security Forces of Cameroon that resulted in many deaths, injuries, and the destruction of military installations and vehicles. Unarmed civilians were also caught in such attacks and killed. These attacks were either conducted through gun battles or with the use of IEDs.

On January 7, there was gunfire throughout the night in the town of Bamenda between the non-state armed groups and the Defence and Security Forces. In one security checkpoint at the boundary between Matazem in Santa in the North-West Region and Batchoua in Babadjou in the West Region, the non-state armed groups launched a well-coordinated attack against the military and shot dead two gendarme officers, one police officer, and wounded one gendarme in the head. Two civilians also lost their lives in the attack—a truck driver and his assistant.

This attack at Matazem follows a series of attacks that occurred at the beginning of the year, including one in Fundong in Boyo Division and one in Ndop in Ngokentunjia Division in the North-West Region. The attack against the military in Fundong led to the killing of two soldiers and a student who was caught by stray bullets. **The most outstanding of these attacks is that which occurred on the convoy of the Divisional Officer of Momo Division in Mbengwi.** The convoy was attacked by a roadside blast that killed five persons on the spot, including four soldiers and the Momo Divisional Delegate of Communication **Mrs. Liwusi Rebecca Jeme.** Three persons were also severely injured and rushed to the hospital in Mbengwi, and there was huge material damage. The convoy was attacked while returning from the installation ceremonies of the newly appointed Divisional Officers of Andek and Njikwa in Momo Division and was heading towards Mbengwi before the incident happened. This attack that led to the death of Momo Divisional Delegate of Communication was widely condemned by the human rights community, including foreign embassies in Cameroon.

After these attacks, the Minister of Territorial Administration **Paul Atanga Nji** chaired a security meeting in Bamenda on January 18, 2021 where he vehemently stated that the President of the Republic had already won the war against the armed separatist fighters and only a few stubborn boys were left in the bush whom the military would soon neutralize. After this statement, the days that followed in the two restive regions witnessed even more explosions.

On January 19, 2021, another IED exploded by the roadside in Mile 17 Mbengwi, the same town near which the convoy had been attacked a few days prior, killing five persons. According to eyewitness testimony, the new attack was conducted by armed separatist fighters who buried the IED in the ground to target a military truck heading toward Ngyen Mbo Checkpoint in Momo Division. In the

explosion, no person was injured, but the military in reprisal of the attack launched a rebel search operation in the town of Mbengwi where they arrested all men and boys, including school children seen in the area that day, and took them to the Gendarmerie Brigade in Mbengwi. This action provoked women and mothers of the town to stage a street protest in which they marched to the Divisional Officer's and Mayor's offices, demanding the immediate release of their innocent children and husbands. The Divisional Officer promised to see to it that those among them who were innocent would be released.

On January 24, separatist fighters planted another bomb which detonated around Half-Mile Limbe in Fako Division of the South-West Region. This was at the time when Group C Matches between Togo and Rwanda of the **African Nations Championship (CHAN)** were ongoing amidst a lockdown instituted by the non-state armed groups in Fako Division, as part of their strategy to disrupt the games from taking place in the Anglophone regions. The person who planted the device was heard speaking in a video circulating on social media, claiming responsibility for the attack. He also mentions that he is a member of the Fako Action Forces. **After the first explosion, another roadside blast blew up on two policemen while on patrol still in Limbe on January 26, 2021.** The two men were severely wounded and rushed to the regional hospital in Mile 1 Limbe. Eyewitnesses also stated that the matches were played in empty stadiums and empty streets as residents were warned to stay home and respect all the ghost town days instituted by the separatists. Some drivers who did not respect the ghost towns in Buea, Limbe, and Tiko had their vehicles set ablaze by separatists.

Before the end of the year 2020, armed separatist fighters had warned the government of Cameroon and the **Confederation of African Football CAF** not to organize any sporting activity in the Anglophone regions. The warning was

followed by even more serious consequences, as the separatists began attacking football officials in Cameroon. On December 20, 2020, a retired referee and team manager of Young Sports Academy (**YOSA**), a local football club in the North-West Region, was brutally murdered by armed separatist fighters at his residence in the locality of Old Town, Bamenda. Family sources told CHRDA the victim, **Mr. Ndifon Alphones**, who had been part of the management team of YOSA since its creation in 2004, was removed from his home and shot at close range. The YOSA club stated that the death of the manager was a bitter pill to swallow and a big blow to the Elite One Football Club in the region.

Equally, on January 27, 2021, the Deputy Security Chief of the Ambazonia Defence Forces (ADF) in a Facebook post claimed responsibility for a double explosion which occurred in the early morning on the said date at around T-Junction and Travellers Quarters in Bamenda, killing at least four soldiers. Still in Bamenda, there was another blast at Mile 4 Market on Saturday, January 30, where two unarmed civilians were injured. The implantation of IEDs in Bamenda was part of a strategy to enforce a three-day lockdown to prevent a warm reception to the Vatican Secretary of State **His Eminence Cardinal Pietro Parolin** who was visiting to celebrate a mass at the St Joseph Cathedral in Bamenda.

On February 4, separatist fighters attacked the military in Mbalangi on the Kumba-Buea highway and wounded 2 soldiers. They also blocked the road for several hours, preventing vehicles and civilians from passing. Four days after the Mbalangi attack, the military ambushed and shot two separatist fighters, Ambe Augustin also known as ‘General Above the Law,’ and Wache Celestine also known as ‘T BOY.’ These two fighters are believed to have led the operation that injured two soldiers on February 4, as they were seen on a video filmed and circulated on social media,

mocking the military and saying they were still alive, before their deaths on February 8.

On February 14, armed separatist fighters ambushed and killed three soldiers, injuring one, at the locality of Bafumar in Ekondo Titi, Ndian Division of the South-West Region. The soldiers, identified as Ebot Ayuck, Konyunyu Peter, and Matelot Lapioma, were killed on the spot, while soldier Schoume was injured. In the North-West Region, separatist fighters on February 15 ambushed and killed Captain Thierry Engbwe while they were returning from an operation in Kumbo, Bui Division.

Still in Bui Division, separatist fighters on February 25 attacked a military truck in Kumbo and killed two soldiers, destroying the vehicle with bullet shots.



Figure 12: The attack on a military vehicle in Kumbo.

The truck rolled over an IED planted on the road by the separatist fighters before they fired shots at it, killing two soldiers, and injuring several more. In reaction to this attack, General Valère Nka of the Cameroon Defence and Security Forces in the North-West Region launched a counter-attack in Bui Division in reprisal, and killed about 13 separatist fighters. In the operation, a hospital in Kikaikelaiki was burnt down. The walls of the Catholic Church in Bamkikai were also shattered with bullets while civilians were taking refuge in the church. This violates the Geneva Conventions and International Humanitarian Law, as hospitals and churches are not targets and must never be attacked in armed conflicts.

18. ATTACKS ON SCHOOLS

The domain of education has been hit hard by the Anglophone Crisis since it began in 2016. Whether as players or pawns, teachers and students have played a key role since the start of the crisis. In October 2016, teachers' and lawyers' trade unions organized peaceful demonstrations to denounce decades of government marginalization and to end French domination. These demonstrations were soon joined by students by the end of November of 2016, leaving schools empty. The leaders of the demonstrations under the banner of the Anglophone Civil Society Consortium who had called for school boycott and civil disobedience were arrested.

Some members of the teachers' trade union called for school resumption but other members of the Consortium refused, and the few schools that resumed faced reprisals. The use of violence against schools which reopened was encouraged by activists abroad, and that pattern continued until 2020, with a vast majority of students still unable to attend school in the Anglophone regions. The official

reason given by members of the separatist groups for opposing school resumption is that it is not safe for students to return to school due to the ongoing conflict.

At the beginning of the academic year 2020, some factions of the separatist movement began to change their stance. Sisiku Ayuk Tabe announced that parents may send their children to school if they determine it to be safe. Some fighters on the ground also accepted some limited form of schooling. Other activists, such as Mark Bareta, Tapang Ivo, and Eric Tataw, also pledged their support for school resumption. The Ambazonia Governing Council (AGovC) of Ayaba Cho Lucas rejected the idea of government schools resuming but supported community and mission schools to resume. Only Samuel Sako of the Interim Government of Ambazonia rejected school resumption but accepted it if it is backed by an international negotiation to put an end to the conflict.

19. THE KILLING OF AT LEAST SEVEN CHILDREN IN A SCHOOL IN KUMBA

Due to these calls for school resumption by separatists, many students began attending school again for the first time in four years and felt secure doing so. The government of Cameroon did not agree with separatists allowing only for community schools to resume and began forcing students to attend only government schools, especially in areas where separatists have permitted community schools to resume. However, everything changed with the Kumba School Massacre.

On Saturday, October 24, 2020, unidentified armed men launched an attack at the Mother Francisca International Bilingual Academy, a school that hosts both primary and secondary sections in the same campus in Fiango-Kumba, Meme

Division of the South-West Region. Sources told CHRDA that unidentified gunmen invaded the campus, and opened fire on the children, killing at least seven and severely injuring over ten more.

In the aftermath of the attack, the Cameroon government through the Divisional Officer for Meme Division, Ntou’u Ndong Chamberlain, was quick to speak about the attack and said it was committed by separatist fighters. The separatist fighters rejected the claim and said it was done by agents of the Cameroonian military to tarnish the separatists’ reputation.

The government of Cameroon reacted again to this attack by condemning it. On October 27, 2020, an inter-ministerial delegation went to Kumba to condole with the bereaved families and to analyze the security situation of Meme Division. On October 28, 2020, the President of the Republic signed a decree, making October 31, 2020, a National Day of Mourning for all the deceased of the Kumba Massacre.



Figure 13: Photos of children massacred in Kumba.

According to the Human Rights Officer at CHRDA, **Akem Kelvin Nkwain**, “regardless of who was responsible for the attack, the Kumba Massacre

underscores the fact that educational institutions have been a target throughout the crisis since it began in 2016 and must be condemned as it violates children’s rights to education.”

As for the perpetrators, CHRDA cannot say for sure who committed the act. Both the government forces and separatist fighters, as well as thugs and criminal gangs operating in the conflict area, are suspects in this case, and only a genuine committee set up to investigate the incident can identify who exactly committed the act.

20. THE KILLING OF THE PEDAGOGIC INSPECTOR FOR THE WEST REGION

Following the Kumba School Massacre, several other atrocities were committed against students and teachers in the restive Anglophone regions, one of which is the murder of a pedagogic inspector of economics for the West Region on Tuesday, October 27, three days after the Kumba Massacre. The victim, Dr. Luciano Keafoon, was shot and killed in Mbefi, a locality in Nkwen-Bamenda, North-West Region.

Sources revealed that the victim came to Bamenda for a visit to his family. He was abducted at around 7:30pm of the said day by gunmen who identified themselves as members of an “Amba” group.



Figure 14: The remains of Luciano Keafoon.

They tied him on their bike and took him away. While on their way to the unknown destination, they had an accident, and inhabitants of that area are said to have heard the victim calling out for help in a loud voice. As he was crying and calling for rescue, the gunmen opened fire and killed him.

21. THE ABDUCTION OF ELEVEN TEACHERS IN KUMBO

Just less than two weeks after the Kumba Massacre, armed separatist fighters abducted at least eleven teachers from the Presbyterian Primary School Kumbo, Bui Division of the North-West Region. The gunmen invaded the school at about 10:00am and took with them all the staff members present on the campus at the time. An eyewitness told CHRDA that before leaving with the teachers, the armed

men threatened the children and told them to go home and never return to school again.

CHRDA spoke with several other witnesses in the area who narrated that the school had been functioning well since the start of the academic year 2020, though timidly because of some threats from the non-state armed groups, who had previously told the authorities to close down the school, before the eventual abduction of the teachers.

22. THE ATTACK ON KULU MEMORIAL COLLEGE, LIMBE

Following the abduction of eleven teachers in Bui Division, unidentified gunmen suspected to be separatist fighters launched an attack on Wednesday, November 4, 2020, at the campus of Kulu Memorial College in Limbe, Fako Division of the South-West Region, and set the structure on fire, threatening students and forcing them to run home nude.

The perpetrators, who numbered about three, with masked faces, a machete, and a gun attacked the students in the class. While filming them, they ordered the students, both male and female, to strip naked and remain that way until they were filmed.

Using Pidgin English, they threatened to burn down the classroom with the students in it. The students were asked if they still wished to go to school or not. In fear of their lives, they unanimously denied that they would continue schooling again. After this conversation, the assailants then ordered the students to run home naked—the worst humiliation any human being can endure.

When the students were out of the class, the armed men, who identified themselves as members of the “Omega Squad,” then set the administrative block and other classrooms on fire. The incident was recorded in a 1-minute, 35-second video and another 30-second video circulated on social media.



Figure 15: Photos of the attack at Kulu Memorial College.

On the same day, CHRDA received reports of the abduction of at least six students in Fundong, Boyo Division of the North-West Region by armed men, alleged to be armed separatist fighters. Sources revealed that the students were on their way to school when they were intercepted by armed men and taken to an unknown destination.

The educational sector in the two crisis-hit regions has been greatly targeted by separatist fighters.

23. THE ATTACK ON HUMANITARIAN WORKERS IN MUYUKA

On February 4, 2021, armed separatist fighters in the locality of Muyuka in the South-West Region **attacked a Doctors without Borders ambulance and fired shots at it**. The ambulance was responding to a call in Muyuka, and the nurse inside it was severely injured. Following this attack, a second ambulance was sent to pick up the patient in a critical condition. This attack was condemned by Doctors Without Borders in the South-West Region as it is against the principles of International Humanitarian Law for belligerents to attack healthcare facilities, including ambulances.

24. THE HARASSMENT AND TORTURE OF A LADY IN BAMENDA

On October 5, 2020, CHRDA received and analyzed two videos of a lady who was estimated to be in her late 20s being interrogated at night by alleged separatist fighters. The first video, which lasted for 3 minutes and 3 seconds, showed the lady sitting down naked in a bushy environment. A voice was heard from behind the camera, questioning her about having an intimate relationship with a military officer. She had scars on her swollen breasts and this shows that she was beaten with either a cane or ropes which left some lines on her breasts and other parts of her body. The lady said that she hails from Ngongham, a locality in Mankon in the Mezam Division of the North-West Region. She was abducted because her abductors spotted her being offered a lift by a military that drove her to the house. To the armed men, it is taboo for any lady in the two Anglophone regions to be engaged in any kind of relationship with members of the Defence and Security Forces as they are considered to be “blacklegs.”



Figure 16: Photos of a lady allegedly tortured by armed separatists.

The accent of the interrogator behind the camera was that of a perfect French speaker. The interrogator questioned the lady using both French and Pidgin English. She was asked if she brought her military boyfriend for the “Amba Boys” to kill, which she accepted. The interrogator went further to say the military escaped and she was the one who was abducted. She was further accused that they (girls who date military) are the ones providing the military with information about separatist fighters. She was reminded of a tragic incident of another girl who was beheaded in Muyuka Subdivision because of her relationship with a member of the military.

In the second video which lasted for 2 minutes and 44 seconds, the lady was seen rubbed in the mud. The same voice of the interrogator was heard behind the camera. The victim was asked for how long she had been dating the military officer whose name she gave as Aramin, and how many times they had sexual intercourse. The interrogator addressed Aramin, the supposed boyfriend of the

victim, telling him that his girlfriend would be killed. The voice passed a general warning to all other girls in Bamenda who are in relationships with members of the Defence and Security Forces, promising them that they will all be killed.

This was one among several cases of violence against women and girls perpetrated by the separatist fighters. Women being attacked on the claims of being ‘blacklegs’ has been a great call for concern.

25. THE KILLING OF MR. FANG DENIS IN NDU

On Wednesday, October 28, 2020, Fang Denis, a man estimated to be about 50 years old was discovered dead in Ndu, Donga-Mantung Division of the North-West Region. He is said to have been killed by alleged separatist fighters. An eyewitness recounted that the previous day, Denis was on his way from Ndu to Bamenda, where he intended to board a bus for Yaoundé for the funeral of his uncle’s son. While on his way to Bamenda on a bike, he and the bike rider were stopped by armed men suspected to be separatist fighters. The fighters took him away to Mbongso but left the bike rider.



Figure 17: Photo of Mr. Fang Denis.

The victim was the Senior Field Assistant at the Ndawara Tea Estate in Ndu, where he had served for over 15 years. Sources explained that his killing was as a result of his continuous work at the tea estate after separatists had warned for work to stop at the estate. CHRDA was informed that Denis had had several encounters with the separatist fighters in which his bikes were seized twice, with the last seizure in July 2020. All these caused him to move his wife and three children out of the region to another region which he considered safer because foresaw his encounters with the separatist fighters as early warning signs for unknown danger for him and his household. A close family source revealed that *“severally, he had been advised to leave the region and join his family, which he kept promising to do. Unfortunately, he did not live to fulfil the promise.”*

26. THE KILLING OF A COUNCILLOR IN BAMALI

On October 31, 2020, alleged separatist fighters in Bamali killed a councillor by the name of Jokam Emmanuel. The victim was a councillor from Ndop, Ngokentunjia Division of the North-West Region. Sources said that the “Amba Boys” killed him because of his alleged collaboration with the military. A source told CHRDA that *“the councillor was considered to be a ‘blackleg’ that was why the separatist killed him. They do not tolerate anyone that seems to be friends or has any links with the military.”*

27. THE ABDUCTION, TORTURE AND RANSOM DEMAND OF FOUR MILLION FRANCS FROM REVEREND TEMBENG EMMANUEL

On Friday, March 12, 2021, armed separatist fighters in Foe Bakundu, Meme Division of the South-West Region, shot and shattered the thigh bone of the Presbyterian Secretary for Ndian, Reverend Tembeng Emmanuel, and also shot his driver in his arm. The incident took at about 9:00pm, and the victims were taken and detained in the bush with their bullet wounds for the whole night, while the separatists demanded a ransom payment of 4 million francs. A sum of 3 million francs was paid to the assailants on Saturday 13 before the captives were set free. At the time of this report, they were currently following up with treatment in a hospital in Douala.

28. THE ABDUCTION OF A JOURNALIST IN MUEA, BUEA, SOUTH-WEST REGION

On the night of Saturday, March 13, 2021, unidentified armed men abducted Mrs. Fame Bonyuy Ayisse in front of her house in Buea, and took her to an undisclosed location. They also made a ransom demand of about 300,000 FCFA before she could be released. Mrs. Fame is a journalist working with the national state Media, CRTV in Buea. After her abduction, the Cameroon Journalists Trade Union

(CJTU) issued a press statement on the incident, condemning the act and calling for her immediate release. The statement further stated that journalists are watchdogs of society and their activities are meant to build a safe and accountable community for all, and therefore they should not be subjected to any attacks.

RECOMMENDATIONS

CHRDA emphatically abhors these gross human rights atrocities and reminds all stakeholders of the necessity to urgently prevent further violence and to protect all civilians from grave violations of International Humanitarian Law and human rights law. We also call on the Cameroonian government to immediately discharge its primary responsibility to protect its population by addressing the root causes of violence and ensuring that victims of the attacks are provided with the appropriate protection and assistance.

As it started in December 2020 with the trial of the three soldiers who massacred over 21 civilians including 13 children in Ngarbuh, and the payment of 5 million FCFA each as reparation to the families of the victims, the government should fully investigate and hold accountable those responsible for the serious violations and abuses that have been committed from the beginning of the crisis, and also indemnify the victims' families for property loss and injuries suffered.

We urge the President of the Republic and the entire Cameroonian government to ensure full respect for human rights, including the rights of women and children, and to ensure that the humanitarian needs of civilians are met.

We urge the separatist fighters to stop all forms of violence against unarmed civilians, including humanitarian aid workers.

We also call on all stakeholders to get engaged in frank and veritable dialogue, to find a lasting solution to the crisis as soldiers and armed men continue to commit human rights atrocities.