



**HIGH-LEVEL LEADERSHIP RETREAT OF SOUTHERN CAMEROONS LEADERS AND STAKEHOLDERS
FACILITATED BY THE COALITION FOR DIALOGUE AND NEGOTIATIONS (CDN).**

OCTOBER 29 - NOVEMBER 1, 2021 | TORONTO - CANADA

TORONTO DECLARATION



WE, the leaders and stakeholders of the former United Nations Trust Territory of the British Southern Cameroons (referred here as the Southern Cameroons), met in Toronto, Canada from October 29 to November 1, 2021.

NOTING that the retreat was attended by delegations some physically or some virtually;

COGNISANT of the 1913 Anglo-German Treaty which defined the international boundary between Nigeria and Kamerun;

WHEREAS the Anglo-French Treaty of 1919 defined and delimited the international boundary between the British Cameroons and French Cameroun, a boundary subsequently confirmed by the League of Nations in 1922 when the two territories were separately placed under the Mandates System;

WHEREAS the territorial demarcation between British Southern Cameroons and French Cameroon was further confirmed by the Anglo-French Treaty of January 9, 1931;

WHEREAS the British connection with the territory that became the British Southern Cameroons goes back from 1833 to 1887 and then from 1914 to 1961;

WHEREAS the period of the British administration of the Southern Cameroons under International tutelage bequeathed the Southern Cameroons an Anglo-Saxon culture, value systems, the English language, educational, legal, administrative, political, governance and institutional systems;

WHEREAS on October 1, 1960, the British Southern Cameroons was separated from Nigeria and endowed with a Westminster type constitution, the Southern Cameroons constitution order in council, and by 1961 had attained full self-government status, except in matters of defense and foreign affairs that remained under Britain as provided in the Southern Cameroons Constitution Order in Council of 1960;

WHEREAS at the 849th meeting of the Fourth Committee of the UN on 25th February 1959, President Ahmadou Ahidjo of the Republic of Cameroon solemnly assured the United Nations: "We are not annexationists. ... If our brothers of the British zone wish to unite with independent Cameroon, we are ready to discuss the matter with them, but we will do so on a footing of equality."

WHEREAS a United Nations mandated plebiscite was held in the Southern Cameroons on February 11, 1961;

WHEREAS the limited choice at the plebiscite was achieving Independence either by joining (Federating) the Independent Republic of Cameroun or the Independent Federation of Nigeria;

WHEREAS, the people of the Southern Cameroons voted to achieve Independence by Federating with the Independent Republic of Cameroon, a concept denoted in the United Nations General Assembly resolution 1514(XV) of 15th December 1960 as a free Association, and that the decision was endorsed by United Nations General Assembly resolution 1608(XV) of 21st April 1961;

HIGH-LEVEL LEADERSHIP RETREAT OF SOUTHERN CAMEROONS LEADERS AND STAKEHOLDERS FACILITATED BY THE COALITION FOR DIALOGUE AND NEGOTIATIONS (CDN).

DETERMINED as a people to assert ourselves as free and to save our future generations from the scourge of colonial domination, deprivation and the forcible attempts over the decades to deprive us of our inalienable rights to self-determination;

REAFFIRM our faith in the strength of our unity and in our ability to realize our goal of self-determination, human and material development, and progress in all fields of human endeavor;

DETERMINED to create for ourselves a democratic society that would ensure the rule of law, respect for human rights and freedoms, and the dignity of all men and women in all communities large and small;

RECALL our long-suffering existence under the Republic of Cameroon, including systematic violence in the form of arbitrary arrests, torture, massacre, spoliation and attempt at assimilating us to the French Culture;

FURTHER RECALLING the ongoing atrocities, and egregious crimes being perpetrated in the Southern Cameroons by Government of Cameroon forces of occupation, which crimes have resulted in internally displacing hundreds of thousands of people, and causing refugee flow tens of thousands of people;

SOLEMNLY pledging our commitment to ensure the realization of the aspirations of the people of the British Southern Cameroons and to intensify our cooperation and efforts to achieve self-determination and a better life for all our people;

RECALLING the request for collaboration among relevant stakeholders in the Southern Cameroons struggle for National Liberation, a request made at the Virtual International Conference on the Armed Conflict in the Southern Cameroons organized by the Coalition for Dialogue and Negotiations from October 30 to November 1, 2020;

RECOGNIZING that the ongoing armed conflict is between the former British Southern Cameroons and the Republic of Cameroon;

NOTING that there are two dimensions of the root causes of the ongoing armed conflict:

- The issue of the decolonization process and the right to self-determination as contained in United Nations Resolution 1514 of December 14, 1960,
- Existential issues on rights abuses, widespread destruction of property, deprivation, assimilation, systematic use of torture and arbitrary arrest and detention.

NOTED over 700,000 internally displaced Southern Cameroonians with limited humanitarian assistance in other parts of Cameroon and took stock of over 70,000 forced to flee their homes, now refugees in Nigeria, Ghana, and other parts of the globe;

ASSEMBLED in Toronto, Canada, for a retreat wherein the Coalition for Dialogue and Negotiation (CDN) facilitated and provided a conducive platform for Southern Cameroons leaders and other major stakeholders to deeply introspect on their roles and genuinely engage with each other in finding a way forward against the apparent divisiveness and stalemate in the leadership and peace process;

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CONDEMN in the strongest terms the horrendous killing of a 5-year old, Carolouise Ndielle, on Thursday October 14th, 2021 in Buea on her way to school, killed by a gendarme officer. The incident, like others that have preceded it, demonstrate a pattern of how Government of Cameroon (GoC) forces take up arms against armless civilians especially children. This brutal killing in Buea of young Caroline Ndielle is not an isolated case and follows similar cases in Kumba (October 24, 2020) and in Ngarbuh (February 14, 2020). Also condemn the many other killings and massacres of an estimated 5000 to 27,500 Southern Cameroonians and over 500 villages burned down since the beginning of the conflict in October 2016;

CONDEMN strongly the arbitrary arrests, extortions, illegal detention, torture, extra-judicial killings, and imprisonment of over 2,000 Southern Cameroonians, including the Nera 10 and a host of others for expressing their universally enshrined rights to self-determination and the urgent need to release them unconditionally;

DENOUNCE the Cameroon Government's culture of impunity and censorship that have bred violence and inhumane treatment of Southern Cameroonians;

ACKNOWLEDGING that all Southern Cameroonians desire to live in a free country where the general will of the people undergirds the governance system. While majority of Southern Cameroonians who took part in different surveys conducted by late Cardinal Christian Wiyghan Tumi, the Coalition for Dialogue and Negotiations, and the Southern Cameroons Civil Society Conclave, chose independence as the means of achieving self-determination, delegates believe a multilateral mediation and negotiation process is a legitimate way to achieve justice and durable peace in the Southern Cameroons.

ADOPTED, under thematic subjects, agreed herein below:

A. On Dialogue and Collaboration within the Leadership of the Struggle.

Accept the call and desire from all Southern Cameroonians to work together in the attainment of their collective aspiration by putting them first so that our shared values are channeled in a constructive and consistent approach,

We agreed;

1. To henceforth work together to build trust, respect, tolerance and courtesy as we work with humility towards consensus during this first stage of the internal dialogue and negotiations;
2. To unify our efforts for the defense of the legitimate rights and aspirations of the people of the Southern Cameroons;
3. Commit to a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on Communications etiquette and the use of social media that would be elaborated on and undertake more information and awareness activities;
4. To minimize the use of aggressive, confrontational, hostile and discourteous language amongst ourselves and Southern Cameroonians, and strive to use language that builds on the gains we have made;
5. To promote team and trust building efforts that seek to bring us together to foster the aspirations of the people of the Southern Cameroons;
6. To set up frameworks and metrics for collaboration among ourselves;
7. To use all appropriate means recognized under international law to pursue the self-determination quest for our people;
8. To set up a Working Platform supported and facilitated by the CDN where the Leadership meets periodically to share views, information and to address disagreements.

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B. On Education, Access to Humanitarian Aid and Human Rights Protection.

Recognizing that over 700,000 children are out of school and less than 30% of schools, especially in rural communities are not operational and that the quest for freedom, the right to life, and the right to education, access to humanitarian aid, and human rights are inalienable,

We agreed to;

1. Promote the rights of children to education, especially through community schools;
2. Encourage parents to consider safety and security conditions in making educational choices for school children;
3. Support provision of access for humanitarian workers and assistance to all victims of the armed conflict and call on aid workers to abide by international humanitarian law, especially in armed conflicts;
4. Safeguard the rights and dignity of all Southern Cameroonians, especial children and women;
5. Meet to elaborate a detailed framework and metrics to enhance the education, humanitarian access, collaboration, and the rights of all Southern Cameroonians.

C. On Guiding Principles for Negotiations

Understanding that our common goal and approaches should be synchronized for the purpose of effectively engaging in any negotiations to ensure justice for our people,

We agreed to;

- Recognize the importance of collective engagement in matters of negotiations founded on trust;
- Explore and enhance avenues to build a team for internal and external negotiations;
- Create space to build from our different strategies to engage in external negotiations as one entity, representing the people of the Southern Cameroons and their ultimate interest;
- Put the Southern Cameroonian people at the center of our engagement within and outside the Southern Cameroons, including any international entity(s);
- Harmonize and standardize strategies for negotiation with the Republic of Cameroon;
- Leverage Southern Cameroonian and external expertise through a process designed and adopted by the stakeholders of the struggle;
- Support and strengthen our platform to enhance collaboration, inclusivity and to defend our shared demands.

D. On Framework for International Mediation.

We discussed the ongoing Switzerland facilitation process and the lack of progress and commitment from the Republic of Cameroon and agreed to:

1. Work together to ensure international mediations are credible and meet internationally recognized standards;
2. Engage to improve the internationally facilitated process by the Government of Switzerland and commit to a multilateral mediation process as a viable way to achieve a genuine resolution of the conflict;
3. Open communication with officials of the Swiss facilitation team and other international parties;
4. Collectively ensure credible guarantors for mediated negotiations with the Republic of Cameroon;
5. Engage to build a framework for international mediation to guide our collective and individual engagements in mediated negotiations;
6. Reconvene to reassess progress in alignment with the collective aspirations of the people of the Southern Cameroons.

HIGH-LEVEL LEADERSHIP RETREAT OF SOUTHERN CAMEROONS LEADERS AND STAKEHOLDERS FACILITATED BY THE COALITION FOR DIALOGUE AND NEGOTIATIONS (CDN).

- We agreed that the Coalition for Dialogue and Negotiations (CDN) should be the platform used to:
1. Facilitate the implementation of these agreements and to lay out a progressive and inclusive plan to build on the gains from Toronto 2021;
 2. Facilitate internal meetings between Southern Cameroons leaders and groups;
 3. Facilitate external meetings between Southern Cameroonian leaders/groups and international stakeholders.

We thank international stakeholders, including governments and international organizations from the United Kingdom, Canada, Switzerland, the United States, Germany, Norway, Ireland, Uganda, and the World Council of Churches for witnessing the proceedings of the retreat. We welcome their continuous engagement to achieve justice and a mediated settlement of the armed conflict.

DONE IN TORONTO, CANADA ON NOVEMBER 01, 2021.

STAKEHOLDER GROUPS



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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ambazonia Governing Council (AGovC) Interim Government - (IG CARE) Ambazonia Military Force (AMF) The Terminators of Ambazonia (TTA) Psalm 91 Bafut 7 Kata Ambazonia Prisoners of Conscience Southern Cameroons Congress of the People (SCCOP) Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC) Southern Cameroons Civil Society Consortium (SCCSC) Indigenous People of Ambazonia (IPOA-GovC) Ambazonia International Policy Commission (AIPC) Southern Cameroons Ambazonia Activists Front (SCAAF) Diaspora Ambazonia Community (DAC) West Cameroon Association (WCA) Southern Cameroon Women’s League (SCAWOL) Southern Cameroons European Women (SCEW) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global Takumbeng South West North West Women’s Taskforce (SNWOT) Southern Cameroons Youth Congress (SCYC) Ambazonia Youth Council (AYC) Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa (CHDRA) Reach Out Cameroon Humanitarian Relief Initiative (CHRI) Bali Cultural Association (BCA) Bui Family Union (BFU) Baptist Church Association of Pentecostal Churches Presbyterian Church Other Clergy Refugees Traditional Rulers The Synergy |
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