



COI QUERY

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Question(s)	Brief update on the security and human rights situation in the Anglophone regions, following the 2018 presidential elections (22 October 2018 – 10 December 2019)
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The target audience is caseworkers, COI researchers, policy makers, and decision making authorities. The answer was finalised on the 16 December 2019. Any event taking place after this date is not included in this answer.



COI QUERY RESPONSE

Brief update on the security and human rights situation in the Anglophone regions, following the 2018 presidential elections (22 October 2018 – 10 December 2019)

During the observed period of 22 October 2018 – 10 December 2019, the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) data indicated 224 events of violence against civilians, 160 battles and 10 protests in the North-West and South-West (NWSW) regions of Cameroon.¹

1. Result of the election

On 22 October 2018, Cameroon's President Paul Biya won a seventh term with 71% of the vote, after that a Constitutional Council that he appointed rejected all legal challenges to the election.²

Due to security threats, voter turnout in the country's two Anglophone regions was low,³ with 15% turnout in the Southwest and 5% in the Northwest provinces.⁴ Low participation rate, in Anglophone regions, was also due to the boycott of the elections by the separatists.⁵

Human Rights Watch noted that the Constitutional Council's decision to validate Biya's victory was immediately contested by the political opponent, Maurice Kamto, who claimed the results had been altered. According to the same source, in early November 2018, 'dozens of pro-Kamto protesters were arrested in Bafoussam, Western region'.⁶ According to International Crisis Group (ICG), Kamto 'has some support among Anglophones' although few 'cared about the election'.⁷

2. Security incidents

Freedom House indicated that 'in 2018 authorities continued to repress protesters in the Anglophone regions'. The same source stated that 'on 1 October, which is considered by Anglophone separatists as their symbolic independence day, authorities imposed a 48-hour curfew in the Anglophone regions and prohibited gatherings of more than four people'.⁸

On 2 May 2019, International Crisis Group reported on the deterioration of security situation in Anglophone regions. The same source stated that 'more than 200 incidents' have taken place in the last six months in Anglophone regions including 'attacks and kidnappings by the separatists, arson and

¹ ACLED, Dashboard, Cameroon, Filters, [url](#). To calculate the aforementioned figures the following filters were applied: Event types (Battles, Violence against civilians and protests), Actor types (All), Date range (22 October 2018 – 10 December 2019), Fatalities (All), Admin1 (South-West and North-West), 10 December 2019. For more information on the definition of violence against civilians, battles and protests, please see: ACLED, ACLED introduces new event types and sub-event types, 14 March 2019, [url](#)

² AP, Cameroon's Biya easily wins 7th term; low Anglophone turnout, 23 October 2019, [url](#)

³ BBC, Cameroon President Paul Biya wins seventh term, 22 October 2019, [url](#)

⁴ AP, Cameroon's Biya easily wins 7th term; low Anglophone turnout, 23 October 2019, [url](#)

⁵ ICG, Uncertainties Deepen in Cameroon after Divisive Election, 5 November 2018, [url](#), p. 3

⁶ HRW, World Report 2019 – Cameroon (Events of 2018), 17 January 2019, [url](#)

⁷ ICG, Uncertainties Deepen in Cameroon after Divisive Election, 5 November 2018, [url](#), p. 3

⁸ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2019, [url](#)



other operations by the security forces'.⁹ In addition, International Crisis Group stated that 'there are seven armed militias in Anglophone regions with a total number of 2,000 and 4,000 fighters'.¹⁰

According to Deutsch Welle (DW), in August 2019, thousands of people fled their homes in Anglophone regions (Bamenda, Buea and Kumba cities) for fear of new violent clashes between the security forces and armed separatists.¹¹ A military court verdict 'sentenced Anglophone separatist leader, Julius Sisiku Ayuk Tabe and nine of his followers to life in prison'.¹² As a result, separatist factions have started locking down parts of the south-west and north-west regions, and called for a boycott of the government's 'back-to school' campaign.¹³

The following security incidents in Anglophone regions with civilian casualties were reported within the given time frame:

On 21 October 2018, soldiers and gendarmes attacked Rom village and the neighbouring Nsah locality 'forcing residents to flee into the bush and killing at least four civilians'.¹⁴

On 21 November 2018, unknown gunmen killed the Vice Principal of the Government bilingual High School in front of his residence in Belo, Boyo Division of the North West region. The incident caused violence in Belo including clashes between security forces and separatist fighters and burning of houses.¹⁵

On 11 September 2019, Cameroonian security forces 'killed four civilian men' during a search operation for 'armed separatists' in "Number One Water" locality near the town of Muyenge in South-West region.¹⁶

On 30 October 2019, HRW reported that soldiers from the 'Rapid Intervention Battalion (BIR) have reportedly destroyed at least seven homes, including the house of a 65-year-old farmer in Nchum village, in North-West region'. The same source reported that the 'Rapid Intervention Battalion burned homes in a village near by Muchweni in retaliation for an ambush to a military convoy by the separatists on October 23'.¹⁷

On 4 November 2019, ICG observed the following incidents in the North West region: 4 November, security forces killed twelve motorbike taxi drivers in Mbot by claiming they were separatists. On 9 November, four people died due to the clashes between the security forces and separatists in Ngoketunjia. On 10 November, Alleged separatists killed at least one and kidnapped eight in North West capital Bamenda. On 21 November, two people died in an army raid in Menchum. On 29 and 30 November, unknown men kidnapped seven people including aid worker that they later killed. Additionally, the aforementioned source reported incidents in South West region: on 4 November 2019, security forces attacked separatist camp in Muyuka killing eight people. On 27 November 2019, security forces killed five civilians by claiming that they were separatists.¹⁸

On 1 December 2019, ACAPS reported that the separatist 'Ambazonia Governing Council (AGC) shot a commercial plane landing in NW'. The same source reported that on 30 November 2019, an armed

⁹ ICG, Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis : How to get to talks?, 2 May 2019, [url](#), p. 2

¹⁰ ICG, Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis : How to get to talks?, 2 May 2019, [url](#), p. 2

¹¹ DW, A new surge of people leaving Cameroon's Anglophone regions, 27 August 2019, [url](#)

¹² DW, Cameroon: separatist leader and followers handed life sentences, 20 August 2019, [url](#)

¹³ DW, A new surge of people leaving Cameroon's Anglophone regions, 27 August 2019, [url](#)

¹⁴ HRW, Cameroon : new attacks on civilians by troops, separatists, 28 March 2019, [url](#)

¹⁵ Journal du Cameroun, Cameroon : Vice Principal of GBHS Belo Killed, 22 November 2018, [url](#)

¹⁶ HRW, Cameroon: Make humanitarian response more inclusive, 10 December 2019, [url](#)

¹⁷ HRW, Cameroon : Make humanitarian response more inclusive, 10 December 2019, [url](#)

¹⁸ ICG, Tracking conflict worldwide, 4 November 2019, [url](#)



group abducted and killed an aid worker in Anglophone regions. The same source further reported on the deterioration of access in the North-West and South-West regions due to the hostilities between Anglophone separatists and the government and the presence of non-state armed groups that have mounted insecurities such as 'roadblocks, demanding exchanges for relief, confiscating aid'.¹⁹

3. Government peace talks

On 10 September 2019, 'President Paul Biya proposed a national dialogue between his government and the Anglophone separatists to address the two-year conflict'.²⁰ On 20 November 2019, Sako Ikome, the separatist leader, who is also the president of self-declared Federal Republic of Ambazonia, expressed his wish to engage with President Biya in talks mediated by Switzerland.²¹

In October 2019, AP reported that Cameroon's President released more than '300 separatist fighters from the Anglophone regions to calm a conflict that killed nearly 3,000 people in the past two years'.²²

For more information, a COI Query response by the Irish Refugee Documentation Centre on the current security situation in Cameroon Anglophone region is available for consultation at the following link: [url](#).²³

¹⁹ ACAPS, Cameroon, Latest developments, Humanitarian access, 5 December 2019, [url](#)

²⁰ ICG, Cameroon's Anglophone dialogue, A work in progress, 26 September 2019, [url](#)

²¹ ICG, Crisis Watch, Tracking conflict worldwide, Cameroon, 4 November 2019, [url](#)

²² AP, Cameroon's President orders the release of 300 separatists, 3 October 2019, [url](#)

²³ Ireland, RDC, Information on the current security situation in the Anglophone region, 4 March 2019, [url](#)



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