



COI QUERY

Country of Origin	CAMEROON
Main subject	<u>People with disabilities</u>
Question(s)	1. <u>Treatment of people with disabilities by state and non-state actors in Anglophone regions</u>
Date of completion	23 July 2021
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Contributing EU+ COI units (if applicable)	N/A

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The target audience is caseworkers, COI researchers, policy makers, and decision making authorities. The answer was finalised on 23 July 2021. Any event taking place after this date is not included in this answer.

COI QUERY RESPONSE - CAMEROON

People with disabilities

1. Treatment of people with disabilities by state and non-state actors in Anglophone regions

Between January and May 2019, Human Rights Watch conducted research to assess the impact that the crisis in the Northwest and Southwest regions of Cameroon had on persons with disabilities. According to their findings, ‘people with disabilities and older people have been among those killed, violently assaulted, or kidnapped by government forces and armed separatists’. HRW mentioned, for instance, the case of a 43-year-old man living with intellectual and hearing disabilities in the village of Ntamru, in the Northwest region, who was shot dead by soldiers from the Rapid Intervention Battalion because ‘he did not answer their questions’. Furthermore, the destruction of their homes and property is ‘leaving them without accessible home environments, shelter, and assistive devices’. HRW referred that they documented ‘numerous cases’ of homes where people with disabilities lived being burned by the security forces. The source mentioned the case of a 41-year-old man with physical disability whose house was burned by soldiers in Kumbo, Northwest region, in December 2018, and who lost his wheelchair as a result.¹ The disability rights director at Human Rights Watch, in an article published on December 2019, stated the following:

‘As the crisis in the Anglophone regions shows no sign of slowing, people with disabilities are struggling to find safety and face heightened risks of attacks, displacement, and abandonment [...] Cameroonian authorities and armed separatists should stop their abuses against civilians, while international organizations should fulfil their promises to those most affected by the crisis, including people with disabilities’.²

A 2020 article by RFI reported on the impact by the Anglophone crisis on people with disabilities, describing how it has ‘badly’ affected them, with some being killed, wounded, or abandoned; noting that it is ‘difficult for them to flee when their communities are under assault’.³

In June 2020, in the capital of Cameroon people with disabilities demonstrated against the COVID-19 measures of social distancing, claiming these measures were leaving them vulnerable to the virus and discouraging the caregiving.⁴

Women

On 1 March 2020, 20 women were raped by Cameroonian soldiers during an attack in the village of Ebam in the South-West region. Four of these women were persons with disabilities.⁵ The 2021 OCHA’s Humanitarian Needs Overview for Cameroon, covering the year 2020, noted that ‘non-State armed groups are reported to be the perpetrators of physical and sexual violence during attacks, of which the most vulnerable targets remain those who cannot flee such as older people and people living with disabilities but also women and girls facing sexual assaults and rapes’.⁶ Furthermore, the

¹ HRW, Cameroon: People with Disabilities Caught in Crisis, 5 August 2019, [url](#)

² HRW, Cameroon: Make Humanitarian Response More Inclusive, 10 December 2019, [url](#)

³ RFI, Challenges faced by Cameroonians living with disabilities aggravated by Anglophone Crisis, 14 November 2020, [url](#)

⁴ VOA, Cameroon Disabled Protest Neglect as Coronavirus Spreads, 15 June 2020, [url](#)

⁵ HRW, Cameroon: Survivors of Military Assault Await Justice, 26 February 2021, [url](#)

⁶ OCHA, Cameroon: Humanitarian Needs Overview 2021, 7 April 2021, [url](#), p.50

overview observed that the most vulnerable groups in the Northwest and Southwest regions are those whose families left them behind due to the forced flee, these are the ‘older people, pregnant and lactating women and people living with disabilities.’⁷ OCHA also added that ‘girls living with disabilities are five times more exposed to sexual violence in the ongoing crisis’.⁸

OCHA’s situation report covering April 2021 recorded an increase in cases of Sexual Based Violence in the Northwest and Southwest regions of Cameroon, with a total of 965 cases (369 cases were recorded in the month of March 2021); 90 % of these cases were women and 1 % were survivors with disabilities.⁹

Children

The UNCHR Child Protection Analysis Situation Dashboard for Cameroon, covering the period January – March 2021, reported that a total of 556 children were at risk, 161 of which concerned disabled children – the second largest category of children at risk, following the category of separated children.¹⁰ A 2021 report by the NGO Street Child on Non-Formal Education (NEF) in Cameroon noticed that people with disabilities [and the married and pregnant girls] ‘were perceived as groups least able to access NFE with the majority of spaces not accommodative to their needs’.¹¹

Ability by the state to provide protection

According to the USDOS 2020 report on Human Rights Practises:

‘The constitution protects the rights of all persons, including persons with disabilities. A 2010¹² law provides additional protection to persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, or mental disabilities. The protections under the law cover access to education and vocational training, employment, health services, information and cultural activities, communications, buildings, sports and leisure, transportation, housing, and other state services’.¹³

USDOS, however, also noted that the government of Cameroon ‘did not enforce these provisions effectively’ and that people with disabilities faced discrimination in employment as they ‘found it difficult to secure and access employment’.¹⁴

⁷ OCHA, Cameroon: Humanitarian Needs Overview 2021, 7 April 2021, [url](#), p.51

⁸ OCHA, Cameroon: Humanitarian Needs Overview 2021, 7 April 2021, [url](#), p.54

⁹ OCHA, Cameroon, Situation Report, Last updated 3 June 2021, [url](#)

¹⁰ UNHCR, Cameroon, Child Protection Analysis Situation Dashboard January- March 2021, 2 May 2021, [url](#)

¹¹ Street Child, Street Child of Cameroon: Non-Formal Education Needs Assessment, 31 March 2021, [url](#), p. 16

¹² You can find the 2010/002 Law on the Protection and Promotion of Persons with Disabilities in Cameroon, [here](#)

¹³ USDOS, 2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Cameroon, 30 March 2021, [url](#), p.38

¹⁴ USDOS, 2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Cameroon, 30 March 2021, [url](#), p.46

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