Tears, Joy and Carnage

Ambazonia Lives!
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Thousands have fled into neighboring Nigeria. When video footage of refugees fleeing from Ekok, on Ambazonia’s western border into the neighboring town of Mfum, on Nigeria’s eastern border was disseminated, a French-speaking supporter of the colonial regime, Thierry Mbooli, slammed the forces deployed to Ambazonia for allowing an escape route. No one should be allowed to leave, he argued. In his Facebook posting - hailed and liked by many other Francophone followers - Thierry Mbooli called on soldiers to kill everyone – even six-year-old children! – he stressed. He explained that the targeted group should be extended beyond Ambazonians to include Nigerian nationals trying to escape the horror. He accused Nigerian nationals based in Ambazonia of actively supporting – if not funding - the Ambazonia Restoration Agenda.

Hostages Continue to be Taken

Hundreds of predominantly young men have been arrested, abducted and deported across the border in military trucks to detention centers, private prisons, and dungeons in the Republic of Cameroon. One plane load of blindfolded young activists, with their hands tied behind their backs, were (like lamb being led to a slaughter house), embarked on a military cargo plane and airlifted on Friday, October 6 from the lone airport of the Northern Zone situated in Bafut, outskirts of Bamenda.

A human rights activist who witnessed part of the scene and filmed the plane just before takeoff estimated the number of those crammed into the plane to be near 200. The destination of these and other hostages is presumed to be Yaounde, capital of the Republic of Cameroon.

Young men are still being hunted down and killed, arrested or abducted on across Ambazonia. Hundreds of arrests were made in Muea, on the outskirts of Buea on Saturday, October 7, as well as in Muyuka, on the highway between Buea and Kumba, all in Ambazonia’s

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1 One security source told MoRISC that while the majority of those arrested from Bamenda have been flown or driven to prisons in Yaounde, at least 200 of those arrested across the Northern Zone are held at the Central Prison in the city of Dschang, West Region.

2 At a press conference on Tuesday, October 10, the spokesperson of the colonial regime, Mr. Issa Tchiroma, reiterated the pledge by the regime to hunt down and bring to book all those he described as “terrorists”, “extremists”, “secessionists”.

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Southern Zone. On Friday and Saturday, October 6 and 7, security forces were carrying out door to door searches and making arrests and abductions in Bamenda, according to several eyewitnesses. Troops in Bamenda could be seen using photographs downloaded and printed from street security cameras which the repressive colonial regime recently installed across the town to identify victims.

As many as 700 people are said to be detained at the Buea Production Prison alone following their arrest last October 1st. Almost 300 detainees, many of them with unattended and open bodily injuries and nearly all of them brought into detention either half naked or completely nude, continue to be held at the Mobile Intervention Unit (BMI) in Buea, according to prison sources. MoRISC saw photographs of hundreds of plates and bowls laid out in the yard of the prison in anticipation of providing a meal to the detainees. Offered by members of two well-known female Christian groups. The meal was, according to prison sources, only the second meal most of the detainees had been served since they first taken into detention a week earlier.

The horrific killings of Sunday, October 1st included the shooting death at point blank range of a mentally challenged and homeless man, known as Awah Nkwei, in Fundong, chief town of Boyo State in Ambazonia’s Northern Zone. According to eyewitnesses, Awah Kwei was executed when he did not respond to orders shouted at him to leave the town center. Mr. Awah Kwei, who was homeless, lived in the open, spending most of his time on a grandstand located at the

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3 The meal was offered by members of Catholic Women’s Association and of Cameroon Women’s Fellowship.
4 With all the prisons in Buea completely packed full and overflowing with detainees, by Tuesday, 10 October, eyewitness accounts said Molyko Soccer Stadium, in one of the neighborhoods of Buea, had been transformed into a makeshift prisoner holding no less than 1,000 people.
heart of Fundong. The killing so infuriated Fundong residents that the town broke down in angry protests. They turned violent when security forces fired tear gas into the crowd and arrested a dozen young men. A vehicle belonging to the colonial administrator of Boyo was torched.

The violence got worse as more Fundong dwellers were roughed up. Reinforcement of about five truck loads of men came in from Bamenda, according to eyewitnesses who saw the convoy drive past neighboring Njinikom. Their deployment led to what one Fundong resident called “mami wata” (monster) state of emergency. Troops have reportedly taken advantage of the deserted city center to loot shops. There are unconfirmed reports that at least one teenage Mbororo girl was raped in Fundong. Eyewitnesses also say more than 40 young men were arrested, beaten, tied up, blindfolded and taken away in the direction of Bamenda.

Sierra Leone All Over Again?

Hundreds of young men have been arrested in villages across the Ndop Plains and in the town of Kumbo, chief town of Bui State in Ambazonia’s Northern Zone, as well as in the town of Eyumojock on the border with Nigeria and in Mamfe, chief town of Manyu State and hometown of the leader of the main separatist movement, Sisiku AyukTabe. Some of those arrested have been brought into their village squares and then asked - each in his turn - to pick which of their legs, or thighs or feet they hate most and would prefer to allow a bullet to be lodged in. The security forces, apparently had fun shooting into the lower limb chosen by each detainee, or into the limb selected by the officers themselves.

Photographic evidence of the horror shared via social media shows the upper or lower limbs of half a dozen victims, predominantly young men, bearing gunshot wounds.

The unfortunate execution of Awah says a lot about the colonial nature of maintaining peace and security across Ambazonia. Troops based in Fundong would have recognized Awah and one life would have been spared. Alas, Awah paid the price of colonialism.

A similar crackdown was visited on Belo, capital of the county of the same name, but MoRISC is yet to confirm the full details.

These crimes remind rights activists of the atrocities of the 1991 to 2002 War in Sierra Leone during which almost 500,000 people were killed or mutilated when rebels asked civilians to choose if they wanted a “long sleeve” or a “short sleeve”. The choice of the former meant the victims had their hands amputated while the latter answer meant their entire forearm was chopped off, often with blunt and rust-infected machetes.
wounds. Those photographed receiving medical attention in a hospital told reporters that they were lucky to have been allowed to head in a direction which could bring them to the hospital. Apparently, soldiers carrying out this exercise in mutilation, prevented some of their victims from going to a hospital to seek medical attention. Instead, they are driven away from their villages into the bushes and forests or onto the hilltops in the Northern Zone, where many risked bleeding to death or risked life-threatening infections.

Young men who did not flee on October 1st now live in terrifying fear, knowing they could be arrested any time with or without cause. They don’t have to have participated in the demonstrations. Escape routes are now sealed. Troops are now enforcing “an around-the-clock” undeclared state of emergency.

The towns of Ambazonia where some of the biggest crowds turned out to celebrate Restoration of Independence – Bamenda, Babangki, Kumbo, Belo, Kumba, Mamfe, Buea, Mutengene, etc. – have witnessed the strictest searches and restrictions. Movement is limited with inhabitants forced to stay within their towns. All movement between some of these towns and neighboring villages remains prohibited.

To prevent circulation, security forces have not hesitated to shoot at anyone driving a car or riding a motorbike. One of the most dramatic incidents occurred in Ngwatkan Naka village on Monday, October 2nd, when two Mbororo8 men riding past a group of security officers were fired at by the latter. The two men were hit on their legs. A pregnant lady who was being conveyed to a maternity by the men was the third person on the bike. She escaped without a gunshot wound. However, she was thrown to the ground when the rider lost control of the bike and they went down. MoRISC has learnt that the pregnant woman continues to do well.

In Mamfe, chief town of Ambazonia’s Manyu State, inhabitants have virtually been held under house arrest since Sunday, October 1st. No one living on the side of town away from the Mamfe

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8 The “Mbororo” (the word means cattle herder in Fulani language) are a sub-group of the Fulani, the largest nomadic people group in the world.
Regional Hospital is being allowed to go to the hospital. No one can leave Mamfe for neighboring Besongabang and vice versa.

Residents of Mamfe were allowed for the first time out of their houses in a week on Sunday, October 8. They were told that the permit to leave home was only valid for the duration of Sunday worship. Residents say they were instructed to return home no later than noon after that first outing. The undeclared house arrest kicked back in place by midday, October 8.

Barrister Felix Agbor Nkongho who hails from Mamfe decried the blind repression targeting so many towns and villages across Ambazonia. “Young and old, men and women are currently arrested from their homes, detained, tortured and subsequently transferred to Yaounde. Some are forced to flee to farms and bushes to seek refuge, homes and properties have been destroyed and businesses reportedly looted”.

Too Many Cases of Prisoners Without Crimes

Young men who fled into the forests remain in hiding, surviving on wild fruits and whatever else they can find. The few who committed the error of not fleeing, now wish they paid more heed to their fears, given the raids in which they are herded into detention. They include the grandson of one grandmother who told reporters that her grandson made the assumption that his well-known support for the ruling CPDM9 party and opposition to separation would spare him arrest, torture and/or deportation. [Above picture is of massive arrests in Wum a year ago].

“I have seen at least three trucks, parked full of blindfolded young men driven out of this village, with wicked-looking soldiers firing into the air as they exit this village,” explained the grandmother, speaking of Kembong village in the outskirts of Mamfe.

9 Short for Cameroon People’s Democratic Movement.
Along with other young men in Ewelle I village, near Mamfe, her grandson was on Wednesday, October 4, rounded up, bound in the back, blindfolded and thrown into the back of one such military truck which drove out of the village headed for an undisclosed destination.

MoRISC could not confirm stories shared on social media alleging that the neighboring village of Ewelle II, also the birthplace of the interim leader of Ambazonia, Sisiku AyukTabe, was razed. 10 “No such thing happened,” several trustworthy sources familiar with the village reassured MoRISC.

The alarmist stories about burning are planted. Supporters of the colonial regime are working desperately online to discredit reporting focused on Human Rights violations over the last few days in Ambazonia. They are feeding fake news to social media as they peddle false alarms. 11

Rape Goes to War on Ambalanders

With power turned off, most likely intentionally, towns and villages of Ambazonia are pitch black at night. This provides perfect cover for the brutal troops to perpetrate crimes. Across towns and villages, inhabitants complain that they can no longer charge their smart phones and, as a consequence, are unable to place phone calls. They do not know what has happened to their relations living just a few homes away; and cannot fully document any atrocities.

Most Ambazonians interviewed by MoRISC for this report describe their life since Sunday, October 1st, as scary, lonely, and frightful.

“You can almost reach out and touch the fear. It is in everyone’s eyes. It is in their voices. It can be seen in the almost ghostly look of disbelief and horror that a majority of people wear. And, sadly, we all believe that things will get worse before they get better – if ever they do...,” said a

10 The two audio messages making the claim have been traced back to someone who lives in Silver Spring, USA.
11 Regime supporters are employing the same tactic with fake photos and video footage shared on social media platforms. Using phone numbers registered in Cameroon, regime supporters claiming to be separatists are advocating violence, blaming interim leaders of Ambazonia for not providing them with weapons, and calling for the abandonment of the non-violent, diplomatic, legal and peaceful approach adopted to this date in favor of an armed insurrection.
university professor based in Bamenda. Speaking under the cover of anonymity, the professor said the horror he has personally witnessed since Sunday has been heart wrenching.

“As one of the few who still believed that our people could co-exist with the people of the Republic of Cameroon, the horror of the past few days,” said the professor, “has opened my eyes wide. The people of Ambazonia are, indeed, considered slaves, conquered in some war and condemned to accept second class citizenship in their own homeland. The last few days have taught me how mistaken I was about federalism ever working. After enduring 56 years of annexation and the horror now unfolding before everyone’s eyes, our people must be liberated from a system which denies them even the right to life, the right to full citizenship, the right to dignity and the pursuit of happiness”.

Of all the accounts shared by the professor, one is most shocking. The professor described an incident in which soldiers kicked down the door of his neighbor’s home as he watched from behind the blinds of his bedroom window. Moments after the break-in, the professor says he heard the loud screams of the teenage daughter of his neighbor (whose voice he recognized without a doubt). Then he heard the voice of his neighbor’s wife as well. The incident unfolded during the night of Sunday, October 1st.

The professor said he has since learnt from the victims themselves that the daughter was raped alongside her mother in their living room. The father of the girl and husband of the woman, who was tortured after a flag of Ambazonia was found in his home, was allegedly forced, at gunpoint, to cheer on as soldiers raped both his daughter and wife. “At one point”, narrates the professor, “the poor man says he was made to call on his daughter and wife to quit resisting their attackers and just focus on enjoying the act”.

**Sexual Abuse Caught on Camera**

Far too many cases of rape have been reported for any right thinking person to still doubt that rape is being used by the security forces of the Republic of Cameroon as an instrument of war. One video clip posted on Monday, October 2nd, referred to an event which unfolded the day before (Sunday, 1st October 2017). Soldiers and riot police officers are shown in the video clip dragging a woman they had just arrested across a street to a waiting pickup truck. The truck is packed almost full with officers in riot gear.

Less than 30 seconds after the woman is thrown onto the back of the pickup truck, a number of soldiers grab and pull down her undergarment. The horrified voice of the videographer comments about the scene as he is filming. He can be heard mentioning to a female voice besides him that the woman arrested is one of their neighbors. As the mobile

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Phone footage rolls on, the voice calls attention to the fact that the soldiers on the truck are reaching out and grabbing the woman. The voice points out that the soldiers are reaching out and grabbing the woman’s breasts.

“Imagine what these animals do to our women once they have them in custody. Imagine what they do to them when they are arrested in the dead of night. If this is what they can in broad daylight, with other officers looking on from a truck parked on a street, just imagine!” exclaimed an infuriated lady journalist. “It is only a matter of time,” she added “before every Ambazonian girl and woman is a victim of sexual abuse at the hands of these beasts”.

“Dogs of War” Treating Citizens as Terrorists

The perpetrators of the atrocities across Ambazonia are special assassination and elite fighting squads taken off the war front in the three northern regions of the Republic of Cameroon, where they have been combating Boko Haram terrorists. These “dogs of war” have clearly been granted immunity for any atrocities they commit. According to many accounts, some of the soldiers deployed for the carnage in Ambazonia were recalled from the Cameroonian contingent to the peacekeeping mission in neighboring Central African Republic. Mercenaries have reportedly been provided by neighboring Chad and Equatorial Guinea.

At least two plane loads of young men abduced by the troops have been taken away from the town of Bamenda, capital of the Northern Zone of Ambazonia. The bulk of the hostages – treated worse than prisoners of war - have been moved by road. The hostages have been taken across the border in open-back lorries. Badly tortured and bruised, the hostages are made to travel with their faces pressed flat on the floor of the trucks; their hands tied to their backs; their eyes blindfolded and their bodies stripped of some of their garments.

Hundreds of hostages have reportedly been taken to gendarmerie and military barracks as well as into prisons and dungeons in the Republic of Cameroon. Without a registrar of those arrested, the fear is that most of them will be “disappeared”.

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Families have been broken up, with parents fleeing homes and their children hiding in caves on hill, on mountain slopes or deep in surrounding forests. The arrests occur even in places of worship. For example, on Sunday, 6 October, troops armed to the teeth stormed Saint Jude Parish, Mile 16, just outside of Buea, and arrested over 200 Christians.  

Internet Shutdown, Famine in the Making

To prevent journalists, human rights activists, citizen journalists and the relatives of victims or fellow victims from documenting the horror on their smart phones and sharing on the World Wide Web, the regime has again shut down the Internet across Ambazonia. The ongoing shutdown of the Internet guarantees the opacity the colonial regime needs to hide the atrocities their security forces are visiting on Ambazonians.

The spokesperson of the colonial government, Issa Tchiroma, told the French language Equinoxe TV that the Internet shutdown was made inevitable because it has become an instrument of insurrection and of destabilization of the country.

By turning off and keeping power off, the regime has made it almost impossible to charge smart phones. By extension, this has made it impossible to shoot and/or share photographic and video evidence of the atrocities on social media platforms. Phones found on citizens arrested or seized from citizens during raids on homes are systematically destroyed or confiscated.

In addition to the disproportionate use of violence and the shutdown of the Internet, the regime is also denying some inhabitants access to drinking water and access to food. Pipe borne water supply has also been turned off in some towns and villages, with one account emerging from the town of Muyuka, in Ambazonia’s Southern Zone, that children sent by their parents to fetch drinking water from nearby public standpipes were turned away at gunpoint by security forces.

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12 Cameroon Concord Newspaper reported that the troops were unfazed despite pleas from the Parish Priest, Rev. Fr. Tobias Bekong – See full report at www.cameroon-concord.com
Food markets have been sealed and the food supply chain bringing fresh vegetables and produce from farmers based in neighboring villages into towns has been cut off thanks to the ban on movement between towns and villages. Shopkeepers who thought they could open briefly and do brisk business have been forced to flee from their business premises without locking the doors of their shops. Security forces have taken full advantage of deserted city and town centers in order to loot shots and destroy property. Some businesses have been torched reportedly by security forces, infuriated by the fact that their owners had opened in violation of the year-long “ghost town” the soldiers joke they have imposed to reward those who wanted the civil disobedience.

The same satanic treatment has been extended even to the elderly, the badly injured, the physically challenged and the sick trying to reach hospitals. One of the most revolting incidents involved the denial by the regime to authorize the medical evacuation to a nearby hospital of Martin Yembe [pictured right], the opposition Social Democratic Front (SDF) Mayor of Ndu, in Ambazonia’s Northern Zone. An outspoken critic of the regime and fervent supporter of the restoration of independence, Mr. Yembe died at a health center on Sunday, October 1st. Sensing that he was tried, Mr. Yembe moved from his home into an apartment, fearing for his life. He was attacked by two security officers in the apartment, mercilessly tortured and forced to suffer through a gas the officers sprayed in his apartment. Besides the torture by the officers and the denial to authorize his evacuation to a hospital in Kumbo, his death was precipitated and aggravated by the gas canisters that were sprayed into his apartment by the two officers.

Audio and Video Tell of the Horror

Despite the shutdown of the Internet, brave Ambazonians continue to get their stories out. A series of audio messages disseminated via WhatsApp capture the violence citizens are living through as security forces break into their homes, brutalized them, extort money, destroy property and arrest whomever they wish. A series of video messages posted on YouTube account of Mao Pascal,13 a rights activist, share the story of some of the wounded at Mbingo Baptist Hospital in Boyo State in Ambazonia’s Northern Zone.

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13 The videos can be viewed at www.morisc.org/countdown
One of the videos shows Mao Pascal’s visit to the 14-year-old, Eileen Wiyfengla [pictured left], the girl who was shot at close range on the right side of her head in her home village in Nso. She, miraculously, survived the gunshot wound.

The second video is that of a young man, Fon Sima, who was shot at Old CENAJES Junction in between Atuakum and Mbantu, in the outskirts of Bamenda. Mr. Fon Sima had gone out of their family compound on Sunday, October 1st to buy medication (paracetamol) for a relation who was down with malaria. Security forces arrested him on the way to the drug store, invited him to turn around because, as they told him, they are here to kill Ambazonians. The said they were going to put a bullet in his butt. When he turned around as ordered, one of the soldiers fired and one bullet hit his thigh, very close to his testicles.

The third video is that of Norbert Afuah, who has already undergone two surgeries to extract bullets from his abdomen. He was shot from close range at Kum, his native village in Bui State of Ambazonia’s Northern Zone.

The fourth video is of Hanslen Ngalim, who has already undergone four surgeries to extract bullets from his chest and abdomen. Mr. Ngalim was shot in Bamenda. He is still in the intensive care unit at Mbingo Hospital in Boyo State.

The fifth video is of Louis Tamajong who says he was shot on the hand at Mendankweh, his native village in the outskirts of Bamenda. The security forces who said he would be given a “short sleeve”, hit him on the left arm. They then dragged him away. Once away from the scene of the shooting, he was further tortured as he bled. He made it to the hospital in time for the arm to be amputated.

**Officers Accepting Bail to Release Those Arrested**

A series of audio messages is making its rounds, too. It describe the invasion of homes by security forces and the ongoing rampant arrests, torture, and looting of property. The first voice mail is that of a young girl giving an eyewitness account of the torture she saw two young men endure at the hands of security forces. This particular account details security forces

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14 Audio messages can be listened to at [www.morisc.org/countdown](http://www.morisc.org/countdown)
beating those arrested with planks, storming and looting the home of a woman who had just lost the mother and, in one case, pulling the gun and threatening to shoot down a young man who had stepped out of their family home to ease himself.

A woman’s voice in the second audio says all men found in her neighborhood by the security forces were mercilessly beaten; sometimes along with the women. The woman says all of the women seating with her as she records the audio message have injuries to their bodies from the beatings they suffered at the hands of the troops. She tells of how the soldiers broke down everything in her home and how their neighbors avoided more of the same only by bribing the security forces. One of the neighbors – a man – who had been arrested and was being taken away with others offered 42,000 francs CFA (just below $100) in bribe before being let go. The lady on the voice mail says her husband offered 10,000 francs CFA (about $25) but the troops considered it too small and, as a result, insisted on taking her husband into detention at a facility unknown to her.

The third audio is that of a man who says when they woke up on the morning of Monday, 2nd October, their neighborhood was surrounded by heavily armed troops. The troops started kicking down the doors into homes and pulling out and arresting people. The man on the audio explains that the police officers who broke into his home were masked. He explains how the police asked for bribes. “They asked us to bail ourselves from arrest”, the man says, adding that he and his junior brother paid a total of just below $100 in order not to be taken away into detention.

The narrator on a fourth audio is a woman who says the troops banged on her door, commandeering her to open. Her terrified husband fled as the knocks rang out on the door and hid himself under their matrimonial bed. After she opened, the troops asked to know where her husband was. She said he had gone out. They asked her son who was there and he told the truth about his father being at home. The troops searched the entire house, found and dragged out her from beneath the bed and roughed him up – big time. “They beat my ‘massa’ (husband) mercilessly”, says the woman. She explains that the troops asked her husband to seat on the bare floor and to stretch out his legs. The police officers then took turns jumping on his knees
and legs. “My husband cannot walk, as I am speaking to you”, says the woman, adding that one of the superintendent of police who led the assault knows her husband very well. It would appear that the senior police officers targeted specific people for the arrests and torture. In the case of this particular home, the woman on the audio says, the soldiers said they were looking for drugs and weapons which they claimed had been imported.

Counting on Genocide Prevention by the United Nations?

So many feared and predicted that the crimes now unfolding across Ambazonia would happen if no conflict prevention measures were adopted. The only thing surprising about the crimes is the fact that they have followed a pattern so closely fitting the genocidal trend which forecasts had tentatively laid out. The colonial regime itself announced the horror it intended to inflict in advance. The government spokesperson said Ambazonians would be treated as terrorists. A video production released on behalf of the colonial armed and security forces outlined in some detail how government troops planned to prevent celebrations by crushing any resistance.\(^\text{15}\)

Prevention could have been applied. Through a litany of petitions and during protests attended by thousands of Ambazonians outside the offices of the United Nations and Western embassies across the globe, the Ambazonian Diaspora warned the international community over a period of ten months of what was being planned. The Diaspora urged the United Nations and Western nations to honor the pledge they made in the mid-1990s to never again stand by and watch the unfolding of another Rwanda-type genocide. One of the last demonstrations brought 3,000 Ambazonians from across the United States and Canada to the United Nations Plaza in New York on 22 September 2017.

The international community maintained what can only be described as criminal silence until more than 24 hours after the genocidal killings had been launched. Even then, the leading world body – the United Nations – issued some of the most confusing statements. In them, the Secretary General stopped short of blaming the colonial regime for the violence. As if totally oblivious of the many demands made for dialogue and ignored by the colonial regime, the

\(^{15}\) Spotting military fatigues with a flag of Cameroon Republic wrapped around his neck, a Silver Spring, Maryland, USA-based amateur filmmaker, Eric Ntang, was featured on the video promising the bloodshed that security forces did not fail to spill.

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United Nations not only called for dialogue, but took sides on what it wants to see as an outcome of dialogue.

The UN did not respond to petitions delivered in a steady stream over the last ten months. For the very first time, the Secretary General on 28 September 2017 issued a first statement, calling for restraint on both sides. That first statement referred to the two parties in conflict, seen by separatists, as a tacit recognition of the “two states, equal in status” arrangement that should have been established under United Nations supervision in 1961, but was never done. Through the UN Spokesperson, the Secretary General stressed the right of citizens to demonstrate peacefully, indirectly calling on government officials to uphold that right.

The statement by the Secretary General was hailed by campaigners for the Restoration of Independence as instructing the regime of President Paul Biya to allow the planned peaceful celebrations of October 1st to proceed, so long as they were non-violent.

Is the United Nations Tainted by its Position?

Two days after the massive demonstrations of 1st of October 2017 were dispersed in bloodshed and tragic loss of lives, the UN Secretary General issued a second statement. It reiterated the need for restraint; condemned violence; and urged the two sides to get into dialogue, offering the good offices of the UN to assist, if needed. Sadly, with the second statement as with the first, the Secretary General appeared to have taken sides in favor of the Republic of Cameroon. The position of the United Nations is worrying on at least two counts.

First, Ambazonians wonder why the Secretary General waited until the atrocities in order to articulate a position which he obviously holds from a long time back. Had the UN Secretary General stated a position several months before – any position – it could have become part of the conflict prevention (in this case, genocide prevention) that is a core mission of the UN.

Second, campaigners wonder why the Secretary General would offer the good offices of the United Nations as a mediator while also taking sides publicly against what is an inalienable right...
to self-determination that Ambazonians are calling for? Unless the UN is stating that Ambazonians foreclosed on this right.

Ambazonians wonder why the Secretary General did not take the same position in favor of a united Sudan when it came to self-determination for the people of South Sudan.

Campaigners are notably frustrated that the UN Secretary General failed to express any concern for the lives of Ambalanders lost during peaceful demonstrations last September 22 and over the years. The grief resulting from the carnage made it impossible to miss the fact that the Secretary General devoted space in his statement to express concern about alleged bomb attacks in the towns of Douala and Bamenda, and that he did not express concern about lives lost. All intelligence reports show that the so-called bomb attacks were faked by the colonial regime in a desperate and ongoing plot to paint a non-violent movement as violent and terrorist.

Sadly, and per intelligence reports, one of the movements campaigning for restoration tried to impress by claiming responsibility for the regime-engineered bomb attack in Bamenda. Everyone involved with the restoration of independence movement knows that it was a joke taken too far by this organization.

Campaigners for Restoration of Independence have drawn the attention of the United Nations to the fact that not all claims of responsibility can be considered credible. For example, some of the Ambazonian organizations claimed that United Nations Peacekeepers had landed in Southern Cameroons. Why would the United Nations consider the claim of responsibility for a fake bomb attack by one organization trying very hard to impress unless it also considers the claim that Peacekeepers were on the ground as credible? A source close to Yaounde has said five containers marked United Nations are bringing arms to destabilize Cameroon. Is it credible to believe that the UN could in on such a plot?
Campaigners are equally disappointed that the United Nations is unable to reference its own resolutions. UNGA1608 (XV) granted independence to Southern Cameroons. Then, there is UNGA1541, setting out the principles under which the political association between the two Cameroons should have become reality or could be terminated. Are these dead resolutions?

The statement from France and the United States focused on decrying violence, calling for restraint on both sides and for dialogue to find a lasting solution to the crisis. The African Union (AU) statement on the crisis included wording hailed by most Ambazonians. The AU reiterated its commitment to Article 4(b) on the sanctity of borders inherited from colonization.

In the context of the two Cameroons, campaigners for Restoration of Independence have never tired from emphasizing that the borders of the Republic of Cameroon were frozen at independence (on the 1st of January 1960). That country, argue campaigners, did not include Southern Cameroons which obtained independence on the 1st of October 1961.

The Ambazonia Problem Made Easy

The solution to the crisis of The Cameroons already exists. Dialogue in itself is a non starter if the dialogue or parties to the dialogue or to the mediation of the dialogue fail to recognize the right of Ambalanders to self-determination and self-rule. Two simple options explain why restoration of independence is the only lasting solution to The Ambazonia Problem.

It is either the case that the adoption of United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution 1608(XV) of the 21st of April 1961 did not grant Southern Cameroons independence effective the 1st of October 1961. If, as the spokesperson of the colonial government of Yaounde

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16 Set up in 1963 primarily to ensure the decolonization of Africa, the AU has traditionally been more supportive than the United Nations of peoples seeking decolonization. An AU-affiliated court based in Banjul, The Gambia, issued a landmark ruling in 2008 in which it recognized Southern Cameroonians as a people, different from the people of the Republic of Cameroon, and with an inalienable right to self-determination.

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argues, Southern Cameroons never obtained independence, it means that the people of Ambazonia are still colonized and their independence is overdue;

The only second option is to make the case that this former United Nations British Trust Territory of Southern Cameroons effectively gained independence on the 1st of October 1961, in which case it is the responsibility of the international community (notably the African Union and the United Nations) to recognize and guarantee Ambazonia’s sovereignty – the right to enjoy independence in peace, free of annexation and recolonization by Yaounde.

The Right to Self-Rule: Not a Crime

The “crime” of the thousands of Ambazonian killed, injured, raped, maimed and/or victimized over the last 56 years and notably over the past few days, is merely the audacity to uphold their right to have a government of their own. A government of the people, for the people, by the people. It is the “crime” of seeking to uphold the right to self-rule; the right to self-determination; the right to enjoy independence as a free people; and the right to commemorate the date of their independence.

Even as the colonial government of Yaounde claims that there are two Cameroons, the evidence from their own archives [as pictured above] cannot be buried.

The other “crime” Ambazonians apparently committed and for which the colonialists in Yaounde condemned so many of them to death by execution during peaceful demonstrations is their insistence in demanding that the two Cameroons be returned, at a minimum, to an

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17 Mr. Issa Tchiroma argued last Friday, 6 October 2017 during a panel discussion on the Voice of America’s Washington Forum that Southern Cameroons never gained independence.

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arrangement which – from 1st October 1961 through 20th May 1972 - allowed the two countries and the two peoples to have their own governments, parliaments, legal systems, etc.

To be clear, the so-called “crime” for which colonial troops of the Republic of Cameroon have massacred thousands of people across Ambazonia over the past 56 years is just the act by peace-loving citizens to call on the African Union and, notably the United Nations, to ensure the full implementation of General Assembly Resolution (1608). The people of Ambazonia did vote to pass UNGA1608(XV). They should not be blamed – especially not by the United Nations – for seeking to enjoy a right provided under such a Resolution, unless the Resolution cited is dead and should no longer be cited as a legal document.

The full blown colonial attitude of the Republic of Cameroon today could have been predicted and was, in fact, predicted by many. Supported by France and all French-speaking African states then independent with the exception of Mali and Guinea-Conakry, the Republic of Cameroon fought hard before the United Nations in 1961 to deny Southern Cameroons independence. They failed. Yaounde advertised its expansionist tendencies when it voted against UNGA Resolution 1608 (XV). The NO vote by the Republic of Cameroon meant, in effect, not only that Yaounde did not want to see Southern Cameroons become independent. By voting NO, the Republic of Cameroon and by extension France, also voted against the political association or union that Resolution 1608(XV) offered between the two countries.\(^{18}\)

Way back then, the United Nations failed the people of Southern Cameroons following that NO vote from the Republic of Cameroon. The UN should have annulled the project of forming a political association of “two states, equal in status” once one party to the future association voted against it.

Instead, and by imposing the lone option on Southern Cameroons to obtain “independence by joining” the Republic of Cameroon, the UN was in the role of the father who forces his daughter to marry a suitor who has rejected her hand in marriage. Perhaps worse than imposing a bride on an unwilling suitor in 1961, here we are – 56 years after – and the bride wants out and the father offers a dialogue with the preconceived outcome that excludes what Ambazonia seeks.

\(^{18}\) Notwithstanding France’s and the Republic of Cameroon’s opposition to independence for Southern Cameroons, the resolution was passed - garnering 64 YES votes, 23 NO votes and 10 abstentions.
Not only did the Republic of Cameroon campaign and vote against independence for Southern Cameroons and against the political association that was embodied in that vote, the United Nations managed to impose an outcome which rewarded the country which lost the vote. If, indeed, the United Nations meant a union of “two states, equal in status”; if it was not colonization; if one party, equal in status, swallows the other party, supposedly equal in status as well, don’t we expect the UN to set the record straight? If the UN promotes or upholds the current arrangement, contested so vehemently by Ambazonians, would the world body – in the role of father - not be telling his abused daughter that although the partners in marriage were equal at the time of marriage, equality no longer applies?

The two countries have never been more apart. While Ambazonians were being hunted down and killed, citizens of the Republic of Cameroon could celebrate 1st October 2017 in peace [The picture above shows the extent to which they excluded Ambazonians, as can be seen from the error in English on the banner]. Never before has a generation of Ambazonians been as sharply aware of the injustice inherent in the current arrangement as this generation. Never has the determination to Restore Independence been so widespread and so shared. Postponing a solution can only compound the problem.

The United Nations is too sophisticated to pretend that it does not know that the Republic of Cameroon did not find it necessary to negotiate, enter into and/or sign the union treaty that is a requirement under Articles 102 and 103 of the Charter of the United Nations. The truth today is still that had the Republic of Cameroon not been guaranteed the support of France and, by extension, the support of the UN, it would have been decried for colonialism ever since.

Colonization Has Never Been Okay

The association of “two states, equal in status”, has culminated in the complete recolonization, illegal military occupation and colonial administration of Ambazonia by the Republic of Cameroon. The latter has not even tried to hide this colonial project. Yaounde has had an “in your face” attitude towards Buea ever since 1961. There was a brief moment of respect for

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Southern Cameroons. During the period 1961-1972, then President, Ahmadou Ahidjo,\textsuperscript{19} would during visits to Southern Cameroons (renamed West Cameroon) insist in his official speeches that he “did not want to meddle in the internal affairs of your state”.\textsuperscript{20}

During the Biya regime, notably after he unilaterally reverted to the name of his country prior to independence – in effect seceding from any association of the two states - the lone goal of the Republic of Cameroon has been to dissolve Ambazonia. It is the project of dissolving Ambazonians like two cubes of sugar in a basin of water.\textsuperscript{21} It is the “francophonization” of the Ambazonians known by the euphemism “national integration”.

Anyone wondering why the heritage of two colonial languages and systems could mean so much, consider the following: how many English-speaking Americans would be satisfied that they have independence or self-rule if they (English-speaking Americans) lived in a country in which it is policy that only Spanish-speaking citizens can rise to the country’s top positions, including the presidency and all top cabinet positions? How many English-speaking Americans would recognize themselves as having full citizenship if they were made to submit to a police force, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, Army and FBI/CIA agents who spoke only Spanish? How many English-speaking Americans would consider that they are in their country as full citizens if they had to go through traffic stops carried out by police officers who spoke only Spanish?

How independent would English-speaking Americans be if the president of the USA since independence and the holders of all major government positions (Department of State, Defense, Treasury, etc.) were all Spanish-speaking and, almost exclusively, spoke Spanish?

\textsuperscript{19} Ahmadou Ahidjo was the first president of the Republic of Cameroon from independence in 1960 to his resignation from power in November 1982. Mr. Biya, then prime minister, took over as the constitutional successor.

\textsuperscript{20} Several examples are documented in the compilation of Mr. Ahidjo’s speeches published under the title “Anthologie des Discours du President Ahmadou Ahidjo”.

\textsuperscript{21} The firebrand ex-Member of Parliament from Bui, Hon. Joseph Wirba, attributed this quotation to Mr. Ahmadou Ali, the then Defense Minister of the Republic of Cameroon.
Would English-speaking Americans or, for that matter, would French-speaking French citizens still consider themselves full citizens of an independent France if the police and gendarmerie in France spoke English? If nearly all officials administering France spoke English?

Would Americans who studied and graduated high school in English consider that their government is not colonial if that government had in place an education system which obliged English-speaking students to attend university in Spanish? Would it be okay for English-speaking American patients had to consult at a hospital with doctors that spoke Spanish? How happy would English-speaking Americans be about self-rule and independence if every police investigation was carried out in Spanish? How many English-speaking Americans would accept for a Spanish-speaking judge, functioning in Spanish, to ask them to make their case in a court of law in Spanish instead of English?

Would English-speaking American parents be happy to send their children to Anglo-Saxon schools in which a growing number of teachers are Spanish-speaking? And made to teach their children in some half-baked English? How many English-speaking Americans would want out of any union with a Spanish-speaking people who considered and treated their so-called English-speaking compatriots as “the enemies within”, “rats”, “dogs”, “roaches” “terrorists” or as individuals owing allegiance to another country (for example, Canada)? How many English-speaking Americans would consider that the Spanish-speaking police force, military, Navy, Air Force, etc. which just killed over 100 English-speaking Americans did so out of love and as a necessary sacrifice to make unity between the two peoples even stronger?

Well – the above is not just a hypothetical. This has been the fate of the Southern Cameroonians since 1961. And these are only few of the many reasons why the recolonization of Ambazonia by the Republic of Cameroon must be put to an end – NOW!