Towards the Sustainable Integration of Internally Displaced Anglophones in the West Region of Cameroon

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Abstract

This paper explores the repercussions of the on-going Anglophone conflict in the North West and South West regions of the Republic of Cameroon. One of these consequences has been the forceful massive displacement of the Anglophone population to other regions as a result of the violent armed confrontation between government security forces and multiple separatist groups. The paper analyses the state of the social integration of Anglophone internally displaced persons in the West region of Cameroon. Since the beginning of the conflict in October 2016, the government in collaboration with humanitarian actors has been instrumental in providing assistance and protection to Anglophone IDPs seeking refuge in the West region. However, despite these efforts, the state of the social integration of Anglophone IDPs has not been efficient and sustainable.

This paper argues that the ineffectiveness of humanitarian assistance deployed so far can be explained by a series of socio-cultural, economic and institutional predicaments. The paper suggest that an effective and sustainable solution towards the effective integration and mitigation of IDPs in Cameroon and particularly Anglophone IDPs, requires two urgent fundamental measures; the creation of a National Coordination Program to support the efficient integration of IDPs (NCP-IDPs) and the sustainable resolution of the Anglophone problem through sincere and frank dialogue to ensure the autonomization of Anglophone IDPs willing to return to their original homes after cease-fire and return of peace.

Keywords

Anglophone conflict; IDPs; Social integration; Cameroon

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Contents

1 Introduction.......................................................................................................................... 4
2 Methodology .......................................................................................................................... 8
3 Brief History to the on-going Anglophone Armed Conflict.............................................. 9
   3.1 Constitutional violations ................................................................................................. 10
   3.2 Socio-Cultural and Economic Marginalisation ............................................................... 13
   3.3 Excessive Political Centralisation .................................................................................. 14
   3.4 Bowling over of the Anglophone Problem ..................................................................... 14
4 Situating the West Region of Cameroon .......................................................................... 16
5 Analytical Framework of Anglophone IDPs in Cameroon................................................ 18
6 Situation of IDPs in the West Region .................................................................................. 18
7 Efforts towards the Social Integration of Anglophone IDPs .............................................. 21
   7.1 Government social services ............................................................................................. 21
   7.2 Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) .................................................................... 24
   7.3 Local governments and faith-based organizations ......................................................... 26
   7.4 Faith based organizations ............................................................................................... 26
8 Accessing the Sustainability of the Social Integration of Anglophone IDPs ...................... 27
   8.1 The Problematic of National Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance .................... 27
   8.2 Bad Governance Practices ............................................................................................... 28
   8.3 The Problematic nature of Assistance .......................................................................... 28
   8.4 Inter-community conflict ................................................................................................. 29
9 Conclusion and Recommendation ....................................................................................... 29
1 Introduction

The social integration of displaced persons is one of the most challenging moments for victims of forced migration. Forced displacement as a result of violence conflict like the case in the two English speaking regions of Cameroon have ruined and exposed thousands to intense vulnerability. According to Assessment Report No. 28 by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in February 2021, more than 700,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) have been recorded as a result of the socio-political crisis in the Anglophone North West and South West regions. The report further indicates that out of 700,000 Anglophone IDPs present in Cameroon, 162,000 are homeless and seriously need assistance in the West region of Cameroon, the area studied by this paper. It is worth noting that Cameroon is one of the most neglected displacement crises.

The consequences of forced displacement of Anglophones Cameroonians from their homes as a result of the raging conflict between government security forces and several armed separatist groups has exposed them to vulnerable situations in their host communities. In the West region of Cameroon which is one of the largest host community to Anglophone IDPs, it common to see IDPs being engaged in exploitative house jobs, prostitution, robbery and drug consumption. The government and some local NGOs have spontaneously provided assistance to these IDPs in the West region by offering food items, and some household equipment which at times are not of urgent and necessary use to them. For instance, providing raw food items without a home or utensil with which to prepare does not make assistance sustainable. That is why, the researcher during field investigation discovered that IDPs sold the items they received from government in the form of assistance in a give-away price in the local market to get what is urgent and necessary to them. With this situation, the question of the sustainability of this assistance becomes eminent. The main objective of this paper is not only to create awareness of the crisis and to inform national and international humanitarian actors of the situation but also to examine the degree of sustainability of humanitarian assistance provided so far to IDPs in some localities of the West region of Cameroon.

The relevance of researching on the social integration of IDPs in Cameroon stems from lack of appropriate structures to house and effectively ensure the social integration of IDPs. Most African countries including Cameroon do not have adequate structures as they do not usually possess pre-planned dispositions for sudden occurrences like forced internal displacement. Within the framework of the on-going war in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon and the

3 Interview with two anonymous police inspectors and one police officer at the regional delegation for national security in West region.
persistent attacks from the Boko haram terrorist in the Far North region of Cameroon, where there seems to be no apparent solution to these conflicts, which is why it is all the more relevant to work on the integration of IDPs in Cameroon. This study aims at investigating the weaknesses related to the management of IDPs observed in the West region and to suggest sustainable response measures not only to ensure the social integration of IDPs but also solutions towards curbing the armed conflict and human insecurity responsible for forced migration.

Historically, the manifestation of the violent armed conflict presently on-going in the two English speaking regions of North West and South West of the Republic of Cameroon is as old as modern Cameroon. Initially, a German protectorate from 1884-1916, the entity known today as Cameroon was placed under the mandate of France and Britain in 1919, following the ousting of the Germans from Kamerun after the First World War by the Allied Powers in 1916. After the defeat of the Germans, Britain and France established a condominium to temporary governed the seized territory. However, the condominium was short-lived due to strategic, financial and balance of power discrepancies between Britain and France. As a result, the territory was provisionally partition into British and French spheres on 17 March 1916 and subsequently formalised at the Versailles Treaty in 1919.

The partition of Cameroon in Versailles can be considered as the origin of the differences and antagonism strongly rooted in what is known in Cameroon today as Francophone Cameroon and Anglophone Cameroon. In the partition, France took possession of 4/5 of the eastern territory which it administered separately, while Britain, who claimed the smaller portion in the west (1/5) further split it into ‘British Northern’ and ‘British Southern Cameroon’ and administered as integral parts of the Northern and Eastern Regions of the Federation of Nigeria.

It is important to note that both the British and the French colonial authorities administered Cameroon as personal colonial territories and not as mandate or trust territories. Article 22 of the League of Nations Covenant of 28 June 1919 stated that the international ‘mandate’ status applied to ‘colonies and territories’ that, as a consequence of the war, had ‘ceased to be under the sovereignty of the States which formerly governed them’ and that ‘are inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves’. According to the role assigned to the mandated powers, their

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4 According to the United High Commission for Refugees factsheet on Cameroon of January 2021, the Far North is host to 321, 886 Internally Displaced persons caused by the terrorist attacks perpetrated by Boko haram terrorist group on Cameroon’s territory. For more details see the Multi-country Operation (MCO) on the unhcr in Cameroon at www.unhcr.org. Accessed on September 24, 2021.
8 Marcel Ngbwa Oyono, Colonisation et Rivalité Ethniques au Cameroun, Yaounde, Presse des Universités Protestantes d’afrique centrale, 2011, p.112.
10 International Crisis Group,
mission consisted of accompanying the territories under the supervision of the League of Nations towards political maturity and eventual autonomy. Unfortunately, Britain and France went further in managing the mandate territories as their conquered colonies.

During the period of the mandate and the trusteeship, each colonial power shaped their territories in their own image. Although France and the UK treated Cameroon as a colony, it was legally in fact an administered territory. After the Second World War and the creation of the United Nation, the regime of ‘trusteeship’, introduced in 1945 by the newly created UN, granted more rights to former colonies and territories and was consistent with the UN’s wish to gradually end colonisation\textsuperscript{11}. This resulted in major differences in political culture.\textsuperscript{12}

English was the official language in the territory under British administration. The justice system (Common Law), the education system, the currency and social norms followed the British model\textsuperscript{13}. The system of indirect rule allowed traditional chiefdoms to remain in place and promoted the emergence of a form of self-government to the extent that freedom of the press, political pluralism and democratic change in power existed in Anglophone Cameroon prior to independence\textsuperscript{14}. The territory was managed as though it was part of Nigeria and several members of British Cameroon’s Anglophone elite were ministers in the Nigerian government in the 1950s.

In contrast, French Cameroon or the Francophone territory of Kamerun was directly administered by France. The French colonial authorities adopted the colonial policy of assimilation to govern their own spheres of Cameroon although the French colonial authorities and the traditional elites also practised a form of indirect government, especially in the north of the country\textsuperscript{15}. French was spoken and France’s social, legal and political norms shaped the centralist political system of successive regimes\textsuperscript{16}. British and French Cameroon evolved politically, economically and socially under their respective mandated powers until October 1, 1961, when both entities decided to reunite by forming the Federal Republic of Cameroon. Prior to the reunification, French Cameroon gained her independence from France on January 1, 1960; in the meantime, British decided to settle the political future in Cameroon through a plebiscite organised by the United Nations in 1961.

The problems that have contributed to the Anglophone conflict since 2016 started with the reunification process that started in October 1961. The Francophone territory of Cameroon gained independence on 1 January 1960, thus becoming the Republic of Cameroon. The fate of British territory comprising of Southern Cameroon and Northern Cameroon was decided through

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{15} In crisis group
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.
a referendum. In a referendum held on 11 February 1961, Northern Cameroon chose to join Nigeria and Southern Cameroons chose to join the Republic of Cameroon\textsuperscript{17}. Southern Cameroons thus became independent on 1 October 1961 by joining French Cameroon that had earlier gained independence in 1960 with the appellation; ‘Republic of Cameroon’. With the two Cameroons reunified, the political elites of former British and French Cameroons decided to adopt federalism as the new form of State to govern the two Cameroons.

The reunification and putting in place of the federal system of government in October 1961 was principally geared at preserving the colonial legacies of British and French Cameroon and greeted with much euphoria. However, just some few years after the reunification of British and French Cameroon, socio-political, and cultural problems linked to the colonial legacy of both territories began to surface since 2016\textsuperscript{19}, which in the long run (55 years) contributed to the outbreak of the violent armed conflict which is currently on-going between government forces and armed separatist movements in the North West and South West regions. One of the

\textbf{Figure 1: Maps showing the historical trajectory of British and French Cameroon}\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{19} Secret letter from John Ngu Foncha to Amadou Ahidjo, 4 October 1962 titled; ‘Rectification of certain matters tending to hinder the smooth and effective functioning of the federal Republic’, obtained by the International crisis group during its preliminary research on the causes of the Anglophone conflict in 2017.
outcomes of the conflict has been the massive displacement of Anglophone Cameroonians from their homes to other regions of Cameroon notably the dominantly French speaking regions of West and Littoral. To better understand the social integration of Anglophone IDPs in the West region of Cameroon, the paper starts by describing the methodological approach. This is followed by a presentation of the state of Anglophone IDPs in the host community and the geographical and administrative presentation of the West region.

Furthermore, the causes of the Anglophone conflict, humanitarian efforts and weaknesses towards the integration of IDPs are examined. The paper ends with a conclusion and recommendations for the sustainable integration of IDPs and their autonomization.

2 Methodology

This study adopted a desk-based approach, fundamentally based on facts obtained from primary and secondary sources. In the course of field research, primary sources consulted were mainly in-person interviews conducted with humanitarian actors and non-humanitarian actors who were in constant and daily interaction with Anglophone Internally Displaced Persons in the area of study. These actors were: representatives of Government Institutions, Local Government Authorities, Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), and Religious Institutions. Oral interviews were conducted using an unstructured interview guide. Seventeen representatives of institutions assisting Anglophone IDPs in their social integration were interviewed. These included four NGOs, one priest, three local government representatives in three municipal councils in the West region, four central government workers in the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Territorial Administration, one head teacher and one secondary school principal. These informants were selected on the basis of their constant interaction with IDPs in the field. Two different interview guides were drafted, one that was meant for NGOs and the church, and the other for government and local government institutions. The differentiated interview guide aimed at gathering diverse views and opinions on the deployment of assistance to Anglophone IDPs in the West region. Also, different interview guides were used because humanitarian actors are generally more transparent, objective, and critical in providing facts than government institutions that might refuse providing some sensitive information on the situation of IDPs which will be interpreted as a failure on her part for not playing its role.

Unstructured interviews were the preferred methodology, because it allowed the researcher to obtain the necessary information through interactions with individuals who had eyewitness account information on IDPs as result of their daily interaction with them. It also allowed questions that needed follow-up to be duly addressed for better clarification. This facilitated the in-depth understanding of the situation of IDPs in the West region. The interviews revealed diverse information on the state of IDPs in the West region as discussed in section six of this study. The research was carried out with strict barrier measures against the current COVID-19 pandemic.
The questions posed were aimed at collecting information about the situation of Anglophone IDPs in the West region as well as about efforts and challenges encountered in their social integration in the West region. Oral interviews conducted were both recorded and transcribed or notes were taken by the researcher. Each interview was analysed, and relevant contributions were deduced from the analysis.

Additionally, secondary sources in the form of textbooks, journal articles, unpublished dissertations, and magazines were obtained and analysed from academic institutions such as the University of Yaoundé 1, the International Relations Institute of Cameroon and from libraries of the Ministry of Territorial Administration, Ministry of Basic Education, Ministry of Secondary Education and the Ministry of Social Affairs. Secondary sources collected, mostly articles and dissertations provided a clear historical and sociological background of the factors that provoked the Anglophone conflict and metastasized to massive forced internal migration over time. The choice of these sources was in relation to the subject matter as most of them fundamentally dealt with the origins and the evolution of the Anglophone conflict, information on government measures towards assisting Anglophone IDPs was obtained from the websites of the Ministry of Territorial Administration, Ministry of Basic Education, Ministry of Secondary Education and the Ministry of Social Affairs.

3 Brief History to the on-going Anglophone Armed Conflict

The factors that triggered the forced internal displacement of Anglophones following the outbreak of the Anglophone conflict in October in 2016 can be traced back to the institution of the system of government that was instituted in 1961. Today, the on-going Anglophone conflict that has provoked the forcible internal displacement of many families is actually a long historical process that started several years back characterised by peaceful protestations of Anglophone activist groups against what they considered as an Anglophone problem. Many scholars specialised on the Anglophone problem have conceptualised it as a series of socio-political, economic and cultural grievances manifested by the people of the former British mandate territory of Southern Cameroon community today known as the North West and South West regions of Cameroon against the central government of the Republic of Cameroon. Corroborating this assertion, Kwabena Nkansah Simpeh opines that the Anglophone Problem is a vestige of the colonial legacy of Cameroon. It is a socio-political issue which intermittently pits residents of the country’s Northwest and Southwest regions against the Government of Cameroon20.

After the reunification of British and French Cameroons on 1 October 1961, Cameroon became a ‘federal republic’, but in practice inherited a shaky federalism with an unequal distribution of power between the two federated states in the federal assembly and in the government. Few days after the adoption of the Federal form of government, On 20 October 1961, Ahidjo signed a

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decree reorganising federal territory into six administrative regions, including West Cameroon, and appointed a federal inspector for each region, who was to report to the federal president. That provoked discontent among Anglophones, because West Cameroon could not at the same time be a federated state according to the constitution and an administrative region by decree. The federal inspector had more power than the elected prime minister of West Cameroon and showed it on a daily basis by humiliating members of the federated government and parliament.

However, the fundamental reasons that culminated into the outbreak of the Anglophone war are the constitutional, excessive centralisation of political authority and the socio-cultural and economic marginalisation of Anglophone Cameroonians\(^{21}\).

3.1 Constitutional violations

Following the decolonisation process in Africa, Britain, unlike other European powers, decided to grant independence to their former colonies. In the case of the British Southern Cameroons, which were successively placed under British mandate and eventually trusteeship, the British decided to allow the UN to organise a plebiscite in order to determine the political fate of the territory. It was against this background that the UN organised a vote on February 11\(^{th}\), 1961, to allow British Southern Cameroonians to decide on their independence by posing two questions:

‘A-Do you wish to achieve independence by joining the

Independent federation of Nigeria?

OR

B-Do you wish to achieve independence by joining

the independent republic of Cameroon?\(^{22}\),

The majority of British Southern Cameroonians voted for the second option to achieve independence by joining the independent Republic of Cameroon. Once the elections were over, it was time to decide on the form of state that both political entities were going to adopt. This led to the Foumban reunification conference of 1961. During the conference, the delegation of British Southern Cameroon politicians lead by John Ngu Foncha (British Southern Cameroon Prime minister) and the delegation from independent Republic of Cameroon lead by Ahmadou Ahidjo (French Cameroon President) meet in Foumban from 17-21 July, 1961 to discuss and agree on the modalities of the federation\(^{23}\). The outcome of the conference was the adoption of a federal constitution to transform British Southern Cameroon and the independent Republic of Cameroon


into two equal federated states with the appellation ‘Federal Republic of Cameroon’. The constitution went into effect on 1st October 1961 with Ahmadou Ahidjo (former president of the republic of Cameroon) becoming the first president of the Federal Republic of Cameroon and John Ngu Foncha (former Prime Minister of British Southern Cameroon) becoming Vice President of the Federal Republic of Cameroon. October 1st, 1961 officially marked the withdrawal of British troops and the end of United Kingdom Trusteeship over British Cameroon.

Unfortunately, the federal constitution that bound the two federated states witnessed a significant modification in 1972. Eleven years (1961-1972) after the unification of Cameroon as a federation of two equal states, President Ahmadou Ahidjo on the 6th of May, 1972 unilaterally made clear his intention to transform the state from a federal republic to a ‘unitary state’, provided the electorate supported the idea in a referendum to be held on 20th, May 1972.

The desire of modifying the Federal constitution of 1961 laid the foundations of discord between Anglophone and Francophone Cameroonians as it was immediately perceived as an attempt to complete assimilate British Southern Cameroon by French Cameroon. But to Ahidjo and French Cameroonians, the modification of the constitution was simply an attempt to consolidate the unity of Cameroon that was hampered following the partition of the country in 1916. According to some Cameroonian historians like Victor Julius Ngoh and Verkijika Godfrey Fanso, one of the main reasons advanced for the abandonment of the federal system was the, it was so costly especially for a young state like the federal republic of Cameroon. This was because the federal republic had four different assemblies: the French Cameroon assembly, the British Cameroon assembly, the British Cameroon House of Chiefs and the Federal assembly.

Before the modification, certain acts posed by Ahidjo such as several orders limiting public freedoms, notably with the arbitrary arrest and detention of opponents and trade unionists accused of subversion became common. Although most of the arrest occurred in the francophone part of the country, Anglophone leaders became concerned about the repressive direction that the federal executive was taking. To make matters worse, the federal executive headed by Ahidjo, introduced the driving on the right-hand side of the road, the imposition of the metric system and the FCFA in replacement of the British pounds as currency took place during the 1960s. The change in currency entailed a reduction in the purchasing power of the Anglophone population by at least 10 per cent. Ahidjo also demanded that West Cameroon cut all links with the UK with the result that it lost several export duty advantages afforded to Commonwealth countries.

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24 Ibid.
27 Crisis Group interviews conducted by International Crisis group with academics in Buea on March 2017.
28 Crisis Group interviews, members of the Commission for Bilingualism and Multiculturalism, Yaoundé and Buea, March 2017; confidential letter from Foncha to Ahidjo, 14 September 1963, seen by Crisis Group.
It is worth noting that the population of British South Cameroons at moment of the federation was estimated at 20%, while that of French Cameroon was estimated at 80%\textsuperscript{29}. On November 12, 2019, the current president of Cameroon, Paul Biya during the second edition of the Peace Forum in Paris reaffirmed these estimations in his discourse during forum\textsuperscript{30}.

Despite the protestations, mostly by Anglophone Cameroonians against the modification of the federal constitution, Ahidjo succeeded to manoeuvre and organised a constitutional referendum on the May 20, 1972. During the referendum vote, 3,326,280 voted ‘YES’ while 176 voters voted ‘NO’ giving a soviet approval score of 99.9% approving the modification of the federal constitution which transform the appellation from ‘Federal Republic of Cameroon’ to the ‘United Republic of Cameroon’\textsuperscript{31}.

By so doing, Ahidjo abrogated clause 1 of article 47 of the federal constitution which read: ‘any proposal for the revision of the present constitution, which impairs the unity and integrity of the Federation shall be inadmissible’\textsuperscript{32}. Piet Konings and Francis B. Nyamnjoh noted that even if the constitution were to be amended it should not have been done by referendum, because of clause 3 of article 47, which stipulated ‘that proposals for revision shall be adopted by simple majority vote of the members of the Federal Assembly, provided that such majority includes a majority of the representatives…of each of the Federated States’ (British Cameroon and French Cameroon)\textsuperscript{33}.

In-person interviewed carried by the researcher on the way the referendum was conducted revealed that people were intimidated to vote for the modification of the federal constitution\textsuperscript{34}. To corroborate this affirmation, Koning and Nyamnjoh remarked that the autocratic nature of Ahidjo’s regime explains why the majority of the inhabitants of Cameroon voted for the draft constitution, and hence the immediate establishment of the United Republic of Cameroon\textsuperscript{35}. As if that was not enough, on January 25 1984 the Government under the leadership of President Paul Biya changed the official name of the country from the ‘United Republic of Cameroon’ to simply the ‘Republic of Cameroon’ despite strong protests that this was what independent Francophone Cameroon had been called by Ahidjo before reunification\textsuperscript{36}. With this new transformation of name, the office of the prime minister was abolished. 

In 1985, a prominent Anglophone lawyer, Fon Gorji Dinka, was arrested after distributing a statement declaring the Biya Government to be unconstitutional and calling for the Southern

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{31} Ngoh, History of Cameroon, p.251.
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{34} Anonymous Interview with an IDP in Yaounde, 79 years old.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{36} Ngoh, History of Cameroon, p.287
Cameroons to become independent and baptised as the Republic of ‘Ambazonia’. This explains why secessionist movement in the North West and South West region today claimed they are fighting for the restoration of the republic called ‘Ambazonia’.

3.2 Socio-Cultural and Economic Marginalisation

As for the socio-cultural and economic marginalisation, it is worth emphasising that with the institution of the Unitary State, all human and material resources were transferred from British Cameroon to Yaoundé, the capital of Cameroon. English language which was the main colonial legacy for Anglophone Cameroonians was relegated to a second language despite the fact that the constitution recognised ‘English and French’ languages of equal value. The educational system that was purely Anglo-Saxon witnessed some changes with the central government trying to harmonise the educational system by adulterating the Anglo-Saxon education system in British Cameroon. For instance, the primary school section in the English system in British Cameroon went from classes one to seven, whereas in the French system, it went from (*s'il a cours élémentaire deux*), that is classes one to six. The education system was eventually harmonised to six classes for both Anglophones and Francophone Cameroonian primary school pupils. At the secondary school level, the attempt by government to fuse to one entity the Cameroon General Certificate of Education Board (GCE) with the French Office du Baccalauréat meet with fierce protest from Anglophone Cameroonians. Also, the frustration of Anglophone university students in the lone Francophone dominated University of Yaounde where the main teaching language was French, forced many Anglophones to move to Nigeria to further their university education.

Concerning the judiciary, most law courts in the English-speaking regions of Cameroon were headed by French speaking judges and magistrates who could neither speak nor understand English. So, it became very difficult to trust the justice system that could pass fair judgement if stakeholders could not linguistically understand themselves.

Economically, all companies that had existed in British Cameroon before the unitary state were either dissolved or their headquarters transferred to Yaounde. Again, the few companies that could not be relocated were managed by French speaking Cameroonians. Oil revenues were alleged to be used by French Cameroonians in power to feed ‘the bellies’ of their allies, and to stimulate the economy in other regions. For example, the *Société nationale de raffinage* (Sonara), the oil refinery near Limbe in the South West region, continued to be headed and predominantly staffed by Francophone Cameroonians. There was also great anxiety in Anglophone Cameroon that its major agro-industrial enterprises, especially the Cameroon Development Corporation

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37 Ibid.
39Piet and Nyamnjoh citing, Rotcod Gobata, The Past Tense of Shit (Limbe, Nooremac Press, 1993), and his follow-up volume, I Spit on Their Graves (Bellingham, Kola Tree Press, 1996)
(CDC) and *Plantations Pamol du Cameroun* Ltd (Pamol), would be either liquidated or sold to Francophone or French interests during the on-going structural adjustment programme. In general, British Cameroon in the unitary state lacked basic infrastructures such as roads, hospitals, professional schools and was far less developed than other French speaking regions such as Douala, Yaoundé and Bafoussam.

**3.3 Excessive Political Centralisation**

The last and not the least cause of the Anglophone conflict is the centralisation of political power in Yaoundé. More than 20 years after the constitutional modification of 1996 that provided for decentralisation as means of implicating the remote populations and regions in the management of state affairs, the central government had been adamant in transferring the necessary competence and resources for effective decentralisation. The inability of the local population to manage their local affairs without necessarily waiting for orders from the central authority further aggravated the situation.

All these factors favoured the spirit of radicalisation among some Anglophones political and intellectual elites. Protest against Anglophone marginalisation was frequently suppressed especially on every 1st of October when an Anglophone activist movement known as the Southern Cameroons National Council made it a point of duty to manifest by putting up a flag as a sign of secession and declaration of independence. Most members of this movement were arrested and jailed, and other went on exile. The movement had in the past engaged diplomatic petitions in international organisations such as the United Nations Organisation, African Union, European Union, and Commonwealth Organisation and with some great powers such Great Britain and the United States of America. Despite all these protestations, no attempt was made towards the sustainable resolution of the problem.

**3.4 Bowling over of the Anglophone Problem**

On October 11 2016, lawyers from the Northwest and the Southwest went on strike. Their demands, ignored until then by the justice ministry, were related to the justice system’s failure to use the Common Law in the two regions. The lawyers demanded the translation into English of the Code of the Organisation for the Harmonisation of Business Law in Africa (OHADA) and other legal texts. They criticised the ‘francophonisation’ of Common Law jurisdictions, with the appointment to the Anglophone zone of Francophone magistrates who did not understand

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English or the Common Law, and the appointment of notaries, to do work done by lawyers under the Common Law system.

This was followed on 20 November, by teachers strike. They organised a rally against the lack of Anglophone teachers, the appointment of teachers who did not have a good command of English and the failure to respect the ‘Anglo-Saxon’ character of schools and universities in the Anglophone zone\(^43\). At the rally, several thousand people joined teachers to express grievances ranging from the lack of roads in the North West to the marginalisation of Anglophones. The police and the army violently dispersed the demonstrators. Several people were severely beaten, dozens of others were arrested and at least two people were shot dead\(^44\).

In response to the degrading social atmosphere, the government of Cameroon dispatched the Prime Minister to listen and find a solution for teachers and lawyers who had constituted themselves to a consortium\(^45\). Unfortunately, no deal was reached between the Prime Minister and his delegation and the members of the consortium. On November 21\(^{st}\), 2016, a local radio newscaster sparked a popular movement that was later referred to as the ‘Coffin Revolution’. The radio broadcaster known as Mancho Bibixy went to one of the busiest roundabouts in the city of Bamenda in the North West region of Cameroon and symbolically stood in a coffin criticising the government for the socio-economic and infrastructural negligence of the North West region\(^46\).

This event was followed by student protest at the University of Buea in the South West region of Cameroon on November 28\(^{th}\), 2016. Among their grievances were the failure of the government to remit education grants for students in their final year and the insistence of the university administration that all students must pay a fee to check their results at the university’s online portal system\(^47\). It should be noted that government reaction to these manifestations was arrest and detention. Both students of the University of Buea and members of the consortium were arrested and charged with crimes of revolution, insurrection and public disorder\(^48\).

\(^{43}\) Crisis Group interviews, members of the Commission for Bilingualism and Multiculturalism, Yaoundé and Buea, March 2017

\(^{44}\) The National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms Crisis Group has had access to this unpublished report, sent to the presidency of the Republic on 30 November 2016.

\(^{45}\) The consortium was a circumstantial working group created in 2016 and constituted of Anglophone teachers and lawyers put in place to carry the revendications of the Anglophone teachers and lawyers to the government for solutioning.

\(^{46}\) Voice of America news broadcast of May, 26, 2018, English speaking activists in Cameroon given jail sentences. Accessible at: [https://allafrica.com/stories/201805280447.html](https://allafrica.com/stories/201805280447.html), accessed on September 25, 2021

\(^{47}\) Agwanda, Nyadera and, Asal, ‘Cameroon and the Anglophone Crisis’, p.5

It also important to note that in the face of these outcries, the government attempted to provide some solutions, which some Anglophones judged as insignificant and cosmetic\textsuperscript{49}. Some of these solutions carried out by government include the translation from French to English of the OHADA business code, the opening of an English section for the training of Anglophone magistrates at the National School of Administration and Magistracy, and the recruitment of 1000 bilingual teachers to be deployed in Anglophone regions of North West and South West.

These events organized by Anglophone Cameroonians to show their defiance to the Francophone-dominated central government and the response of the government through brutal arrests, and torture of protesters led to the declaration by of independence on October 1\textsuperscript{st}, 2017, by some activists who went and hoisted flags in major cities of the North West and South West regions to symbolise their freedom and sovereignty.

The explicit declaration of independence and hoisting of the ‘Ambazonia’ flag was perceived by the government as act of subversion and destabilisation of the State. Government security forces were deployed in the two English speaking regions to normalise the situation, but unfortunately the situation degenerated to a confrontation between government forces and the demonstrating population. The outcome was fatal as scores of deaths, injured and arrest persons were registered\textsuperscript{50}. It is very difficult to ascertain the number of people injured, killed or arrested as the area has been under conflict for close to five years. Also, most eyewitnesses and potential informants have fled out of the area.

In the course of the confrontation some government forces were killed in the South West region of Cameroon by a non-state armed group. This was the event that sparked proper military intervention in the North West and South West regions. This event also marked the emergence and propagation of numerous separatist groups claiming secession. The violent armed confrontation between the belligerents forced many Anglophones to flee their homes to seek refuge in other regions of the country, notably the West region of Cameroon.

4 Situating the West Region of Cameroon

The West region of Cameroon is one of the highest regions host to more than 162,000 Anglophone Internally Displaced Persons since the outbreak of the Anglophone war in late 2016\textsuperscript{51}. The region has an estimated land surface of 13,892 km\textsuperscript{2} and located in the central-western portion of the Republic of Cameroon. It borders the North West region to the northwest,
the Adamawa region to the northeast, the Centre region to the southeast, the Littoral region to the southwest, and the South West region to the west. (See map 1)

![Map showing the West Region of Cameroon](image)

*Figure 2: Map showing the West Region of Cameroon*[^52]

The West region is the smallest of Cameroon's ten regions in area, yet it has the highest population density. Both the North West and South West regions are theatres of violent conflict which explains why there are many Anglophone IDPs in the West region as a result of its proximity with the two regions. The West region in 2015 had a population of 1,921,600 inhabitants and a population density of 138.3/km² following the last population census carried out by the National institute of Statistic in Cameroon. The advent of the Anglophone IDPs has increased the population and basic needs of the population of this region.

Administratively, the headquarters of the West region is Bafoussam, which is placed under a governor who represents the President of the Republic in the region. The region is further divided into eight administrative divisions namely, Bamboutos, Haut-Nkam, Haut-Plateaux, Koung-Khi, Ménoua, Mifi, Ndé, and Noun Divisions. IDPs in the West Regions are mostly hosted in the Bamboutos, Ménoua and Mifi Divisions.

5 Analytical Framework of Anglophone IDPs in Cameroon

Paragraph 2 of the United Nation's (UN) Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement refers to Internally Displace Persons as ‘persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border’.\(^{53}\) This definition clearly captures the situation or status of Cameroonian Anglophones from the North West and South West regions who as a result of fear and danger have been forced to flee from their original homes invaded by belligerents to other parts of the country without crossing international boundaries.\(^{54}\) This is illustrated by the presence of thousands of Anglophone IDPs in other French dominated regions sharing administrative boundaries with the North West and the South West like the West region which is the area of study.

If there is one feature that characterises IDPs in contrast to the host population, it is their vulnerability; as such they need urgent and immediate assistance and protection from the State and humanitarian actors. This is because their forceful displacement necessarily led to disruption or separation of family groups and expose women and children to assume non-traditional roles or face particular vulnerabilities. Anglophone IDPs in the West region have been exposed and continue to be unprotected due to a lot of challenges as explained below.

6 Situation of IDPs in the West Region

People forced out of their original settlements are generally confronted with a lot of challenges. The first of such is generally trauma caused by violent scenarios and the fact that they are in a completely new environment. This is exactly the situation that Anglophone IDPs in the West Region are confronted with.

The representative of *Hearts of Hope NGO* revealed to us that, as a result of the forceful displacement of Anglophone IDPs to the West region, the social organisation of displaced communities has been damaged by the act of physical displacement. In fact, the representative of *Hearts of Hope NGO* assisting Anglophone IDPs confined to us that several family groups seeking refuge in the West region have been disrupted as a result of conflict. Some IDPs seeking refuge in the West region today do not know the whereabouts of their relatives. Given that the majority of Anglophone IDPs are women and children; their vulnerable situation has forced them to assume non-traditional roles and exposed them to danger.

According to the communication officer of *Value Health Africa* (VAHA), most Anglophone IDPs present today in the West region of Cameroon, notably aged people, children and pregnant

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\(^{54}\) Ibid.
Researching Internal Displacement – Working Paper

women, are deeply affected by psychosocial distress related to displacement and the horrors witnessed in their course of fleeing for safety.\(^{55}\)

Schooling for children and adolescents has been disrupted. It is important to stress the fact, that for the past four years since the outbreak of the conflict, schools have been disrupted. Thousands of Anglophone children and adolescents have migrated to other regions of the country to seek for education. This is because schools in the North West and South West regions have often been targeted by belligerents and in some cases, children have been killed either on their way to school or in classrooms. In some remote areas of the regions at war, some schools have simply been burnt down.

Most young IDPs who were forced to abandoned school as a result of war are not schooling. Some have been out of school for four years and counting. Parents are unable to provide for the daily sustenance for the children talk less of affording for children education. To make ends meet, most IDPs school dropouts have been forced to engage to dangerous and exploitative activities for survival in the cities of Bafoussam, Mbouda and in Dschang all in the West region.

An in-person discussion with the founder of Mother of hope NGO showed that Anglophone IDPs in the West region have been confronted with uncivil and inhospitable behaviour from some local inhabitants in host communities.\(^{56}\) For instance, IDPs are stereotyped as ‘refugees.’ Some host population have even attributed the increase in criminality and urban disorder to the advent of these IDPs in their communities. The exploitation of IDPs for very meagre wages is very rampant in host communities. Parents are confronted with all sorts of challenges as they are unable to find jobs to provide for their numerous families. A close interview with a worker at the Council of Bafoussam III revealed that most adult Anglophone IDPs are hired to work in farmlands, house chores, and other odd jobs with very insignificant wages.\(^{57}\) Pay per working day (8 am - 5pm) varies from 1500-2000 FRS per day, which is less than USD 3 a day. To make things worse for these IDPs, most of them only understand and speak the Pidgin-English or English language, which in French dominated regions, makes communication quite difficult for IDPs in the area.

Another complex situation with which Anglophone IDPs have been confronted with in the West region is the of lack identity documents essential to receiving benefits or legal recognition from the government or humanitarian actors. In reality, as a result of the raging armed conflict between government and separatist forces, houses and schools were burnt down alongside with important documents. Some IDPs, in the course of fleeing for their lives, forgot or misplaced their identification documents. In some instances, unfortunate Anglophones who were kidnapped and later release by separatist groups lost their identification documents in retention camps. There have also been cases where some separatist groups systematically collected and destroyed

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\(^{56}\) Interview with Mbah Adah, CEO of Mother of Hope NGO, September 13, 2021.

\(^{57}\) Anonymous group interview with municipal workers in Bafoussam 3, August 21, 2021.
national identity cards of civilians. Some social service personnel at the regional delegation in the West region confirmed to us that more than 80% of IDPs they have registered have no official documents and it became difficult to identify who is an IDP and who is not one. And without these identification documents children cannot be identified or registered in schools. In fact, the constant kidnapping of civilians for ransom by some separatist armed groups contributed in separating families in the North West and South West regions of Cameroon.

Again, Anglophone IDPs in the West region are confronted with the problem of shelter. Many IDPs in the West region have lost contact with other members of the family. As a result of lack of appropriate emergency settlement camps or housing, many Anglophone IDPs in the West region resorted in living in abandoned buildings and church premises, unoccupied public buildings and marketplace. This is the case with the Casablanca Market in the city of Bafoussam where they are hundreds of Anglophone IDPs. The fortunate IDPs who escaped the war with little financial means have been able to rent houses for shelter. It is common to see a two-bedroom house hosting more than 15 people in the West region. This is the case with a quarter like Tyo-ville in the city of Bafoussam where more than seven people occupy a single sleeping room.

As a result of the Anglophone conflict, many children have and been exposed social ills, notably young girls with ages varying from 12-18 years who have become house helps in other to survive. It is commonplace to see some of them hawking around markets squares and travelling agencies present in the region. The unlucky ones have resorted to prostitution and sexual exploitation for survival. For male children, some have joined the jobs of motorcycle riders, bricklayers and car-washers. Those without jobs are indulged in drugs consumption and armed robbery. The frustrations of Anglophone IDPs in the West region are so many as they have to battle to survive in a strange land which is not theirs. Their vulnerable situation has further been complicated by the uncivil behaviour of some host populations against IDPs. The fact that they are called ‘Anglophone refugees’ creates among Anglophones IDPs the sense discrimination and marginalisation. Faced with all these challenges, the government in collaboration with humanitarian organisations have been able to provide assistance and protection to ensure the social integration of Anglophone IDPs in the West region as seen below.

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58 Outcome of my in-person interview with Mih Bibiana Mbei Dighambong, chairlady of the Bihndumlem Humanitarian Association of Peace and Hope (BIHAPH), NGO on September 24, 2021.
59 Ibid.
60 Gilbert Tagné Safots, ‘Internally Displaced and Refugee Students in Cameroon: Some Pedagogical Proposals’, Canadian Center of Science and Education, English Language Teaching; Vol. 13, No. 11; 2020, pp.140-144.
61 Interview with a Social Worker at the Regional Delegation of the Ministry of Social affairs of the West region, August 23, 2021.
62 Ibid.
7 Efforts towards the Social Integration of Anglophone IDPs

Internal displacement occurs when there are situations like armed conflict, persecution, situations of widespread violence, natural and human-made disasters and, more recently, large-scale development projects. Forced internal displacement is a direct consequence of insurgency and violent armed conflict as it is the case in the North West and South West regions of the Republic of Cameroon since late 2016. When people are forcefully displaced out of their original homes, they become vulnerable and frustrated. Such persons need to be assisted and protected by the State and humanitarian actors; one of the most urgent actions to take for such people is to facilitate their social integration in host communities.

Maria Amparo Cruz-Saco defines social integration as the process of creating unity, inclusion and participation at all levels of society within the diversity of personal attributes so that every person is free to be the person she wants to be. Personal attributes include socio-economic class, age, gender, sexual preference and expression, political ideas, ethnicity and cultural traits, religion, citizenship (national origin) and geographical region of origin and so on. Social integration enables persons, regardless of their attributes, to enjoy equal opportunities, rights and services that are available to the so-called mainstream group. Social integration can be considered to be antonym to social exclusion, which is broader than poverty and deprivation, and which neglects people’s rights.

From Maria Amparo Cruz-Saco description, we shall attempt to examine in what ways the government of Cameroon and humanitarian actors have been able to contribute towards the effective social integration of Anglophone IDPs in the West region of Cameroon. As such, actions of government, NGOs, local governments and religious organisations in the integration process of IDPs in the West region of Cameroon shall successively be examined.

7.1 Government social services

Cameroon is a party to the Geneva Conventions and its two protocols. Under international humanitarian law, national authorities have the obligation to provide assistance and protection to vulnerable people. In fact, protection and assistance are the two indivisible pillars of humanitarian action. Protection referring to ‘All activities aimed at ensuring full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the

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65 Ibid.
relevant bodies of law’ and assistance ‘seeks to save lives and alleviate suffering of displaced people, including delivering services (such as food, water, health, shelter, education, etc.).’

It is within this perspective that the government of the Republic of Cameroon in collaboration with inter-governmental international humanitarian actors has been engaged in providing humanitarian assistance to IDPs from the Anglophone conflict. The various actions carried towards the social integration of IDPs in the West region have been done through some government institutions such as the Ministry of Social Affairs, The Ministry of Basic Education, the Ministry of Secondary Education and the Ministry of Territorial Administration.

Following an in-person interview conducted with the delegate of social affairs in Bafoussam III in the West region, it was revealed that great efforts towards the social integration IDPs in Bafoussam have been carried out by the government. According the delegate, their task in the past four years in assisting Anglophone IDPs has consisted mostly of welcoming, counselling, orientating, registering and identification of the needs of IDPs. Upon identifying their needs, a correspondence is sent to various competent Ministries in Yaounde for the needs to be provided. The Delegate remarked that, since 2016 more than 16000 Anglophone IDPs have been received and assisted. In the same perspective, some workers at the divisional delegations of Social Affairs in Ménoua and Bamboutos divisions affirmed that they have in the past four years; welcomed and registered more than 8000 IDPs.

Even though most divisional and sub-divisional Social Affairs delegations in the West region express some difficulties in assisting IDPs, much has been done towards the social integration of students and pupils. To facilitate the acceptance of children of IDPs in schools, the Social Affairs intervened by issuing administrative papers recognizing them as IDPs to facilitate their registration in schools. This is because some of these pupils and students lost all academic documents to justify that they are students and pupils. In the same vein, the same privilege has been issued to adult Anglophone IDPs especially pregnant women, to facilitate their health assistance in public hospitals. In fact, the ministry of Social Affairs through its deconcentrated social affairs services in the West region have been able in their own way to facilitate the social integration of IDPs in the region.

As a far as the Ministry of Secondary Education and the Ministry of Basic Education are concerned, both ministers had since 2017 given instructions that all Anglophone IDP pupils and students should be received and registered in all public schools without asking for school fees.

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66 Interview with the divisional delegate of social security in Yaounde, recently transferred from the West to the Center region, August 25, 2021.
68 Interview with the divisional delegate of social security in Yaounde, recently transferred from the West to the Center region, August 25, 2021.
69 Anonymous interview with some personnel of the Ministries of Basic and secondary education, September 7, 2021.
In the course of our field work in the Ménoua, Bamboutos and Bafoussam 3, most Government schools directors confirmed that the instructions have been strictly applied for the past years. Some school directors even showcase some IDPs students who have been able to score good marks in the Advanced level certificate, Ordinary level and First School leaving certificate exams in the past years in their institutions.

The Ministry of Territorial Administration since the outbreak of the Anglophone conflict has constantly been on the field to comfort the displaced and providing them with assistance. During the 2019/2020 academic year lunch in Cameroon, the Minister of Territory Administration on a field evaluation visit on the situation of Anglophone IDP in the West region of Cameroon instructed head teachers and principals of primary and secondary schools respectively in the West region to privilege Anglophone IDP students and pupils in school admission and without demanding any registration fees70. During the same occasion the Minister of Territorial Administration handed relief aid to Anglophone IDPs made up of consignments of relief materials which consisted of 1400 blankets, 1400 bags of rice, 700 mattresses, and 234 cartons of vegetable oil, 100 cartons of mackerel fish and 34 cartons of sugar71.

![Marketplace](image)

*Figure 3: Marketplace*72

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70 Television report presented by the Cameroon Radio Television Journalist Elvis Teke on August 28, 2019
71 Ibid.
7.2 Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

The role of Non-Governmental Organizations\(^{73}\) in facilitating the social integration of Internally Displaced Persons into communities around the world is very significant. Since the liberation of the political space in Cameroon in 1990 and which gave way to freedom of speech associations, NGOs became an inescapable part of the development landscape. Increasingly capable, confident and interconnected, they have challenged governments, multilateral organizations, and the private sector on major policy issues that will enhance sustainable infrastructure in the State\(^{74}\). Non-Governmental Organizations are now increasingly viewed as critical contributors to economic growth and provision of infrastructures needed by the people\(^{75}\).

Since the outbreak of the Anglophone conflict and the migration of Anglophone IDPs to the West region, NGOs have played important roles in the protection and reports of violations of IDPs’ human rights, provision of health, water, food, shelter and education, investigation of complaints particularly regarding discrimination against IDPs. As a matter of fact, the roles played by local NGOs in assisting Anglophone IDPs have been very significant. This is the case with NGOs like; Value Health Africa, Give a Smile, Single Parents and Children Management Association and Hearts of Hope.

The first NGO the researcher visited and discussed with was Value Health Africa (VAHA). Its mission is to add value to life by improving health and wellness in Cameroon. Its engagement is focused on reducing premature mortality from communicable and non-communicable diseases and fostering sexual and reproductive health, through strengthening access to primary health care, policy advocacy and research. Since the outbreak of the Anglophone conflict, VAHA has been very active in assisting IDPs by providing health care especially pregnant women and young girls. According to the representative of VAHA, a total number of 890 women and children have been assisted by their organisation. Majority of those assisted were Women (especially disabled and pregnant) and children. This is because women face huge challenges in getting jobs while children are dependents.

The expenditures of these IDPs mostly in the West region of Cameroon were solely borne by the VAHA given that most pregnant women present in the West region lacked the means to pay for health care in public hospitals. At the moment we were having this discussion; VAHA was currently taking charge of 347 IDPs. From a general point of view, VAHA has been involved in

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\(^{73}\) The term ‘nongovernmental organization’ generally refers to organizations that are; (i) not government based; and (ii) not profit oriented. They are entirely or largely independent of government and that have primarily humanitarian or cooperative rather than commercial objectives. They are private organizations in developed nations who render international development support; they may also be local or indigenous groups who are regionally or nationally organized; or a small group of people in villages. (see Joseph Shodeinde & Benjamin Otabor, p. 15)

\(^{74}\) Joseph Shodeinde & Benjamin Otabor, ‘Social Integration of Internally Displaced Person into the Community: The Role of Non-Governmental Organization’, Bachelor of Social Services (UAS), Diaconia University of Applied Sciences, Helsinki, 2018.

\(^{75}\) F. Fukuyama, ‘Social capital, civil society and development’. Third World Quarterly. 22(1), 2011, pp. 7–20.
providing assistance to IDPs in building their capacity for self-reliance while meeting their immediate needs especially in skills such as building capacity in marketable skills such as dress making, hair design, cookery, agriculture. This is because the VAHA believes that the social integrating IDPs will only be successful if they can meaningfully operate in their hosts communities enjoying all facilities without limitation. Besides capacitating IDPs, VAHA has provided psychosocial support to IDPs undergoing psychological trauma and partnered with private local health facilities to offer free consultations. Additionally, VAHA has so far related IDPs with certain skill set to employers for job opportunities. VAHA has equally provided assistance towards the acquisition of identification papers for IDPs who lost their identification document in the course of escaping from the war.

Another dynamic NGO that has been strongly involve in the integration of Anglophone IDPs is Mother of Hope Cameroon (MOHCAM) MOHCAM is a non-profit woman and youth led organization focus on promoting human rights education, peace-building, democracy, good governance, development & health. It aims to advocate and promote the Rights of women and youths, and to empower and transform women and youths who are victims of domestic violence in particularly and gender base violence in general for a better world. Within the framework of assisting IDPs, MOHCAM concentrated her assistance on the girl children who are one of the most vulnerable groups in the Anglophone conflict. MOHCAM had assisted in sponsoring dozens of girls in private schools. Again, MOHCAM has also provided hundreds of sanitary pads to young girls especially orphan of the Anglophone conflicts.

Among the multiple NGOs assisting Anglophone IDPs in the region, one of them that caught our attention was the Give a smile NGO. This NGO is specialized in identifying, training and facilitating access to jobs for IDPs. They are specialized in linking IDPs to fast training such as carpentry, mechanics, hair dressing, tailoring, cooking, driving and agriculture. Since the outbreak of the conflict in the Anglophone regions, Give a Smile has been able to train and find jobs to more than 311 IDPs. As of now, the NGO is presently training more than 1000 IDPs. This is because IDPs continue to move out of the Anglophone region as a result of the escalating situation in the past months.

Finally, Hearts of Hope NGO specialized in child education have been very active in promoting the ‘back to school’ campaign to ensure that children of IDPs that have been out of school for several as a result of displacement should start going to school. Statistic indicates that more than 2700 schools have been close in the North West and South West regions as a result of the

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76 Interview with the CEO of Give a smile, September 9, 2021.
conflict and as of the year 2020 more than 458000 students and pupils were deprived from access to the fundamental right of education\textsuperscript{78}.

7.3 Local governments and faith-based organizations

Local governments and the Church through their various humanitarian organizations have been very instrumental in ensuring the social integration of IDPs in the West region of Cameroon. In Cameroon, local governments represent regional and municipal councils with financial and administrative authority as prescribed in the Code of Decentralization in Cameroon. The influence and role of local government authorities in the social integration of Anglophone IDPs in the West region is invaluable. As the main competent authority responsible for all local public services, land and settlement issues, local governments especially in the Bamboutos, Ménoua and Mifi division had outstandingly provided settlement land and living space for more than 796\textsuperscript{79} Anglophone IDPs in their municipalities even though with limited land and space. These municipalities have often identified, registered and forwarded to competent authorities the needs of the IDPs.

An in-person with council works in the Bamboutos, Mifi and Ménoua division revealed that a total of 67908 IDPs have been identified but unfortunately less than 24% have been able to receive assistance and land for settlement or living space\textsuperscript{80}. Municipalities with the support of local elites had often provided didactic material to children of Anglophone IDPs settled in the various municipalities.

7.4 Faith based organizations

Beside the actions of local government, the church through religion-driven charitable contributions have been and remain the main source of welfare and providers of basic social services to the poor in Cameroon even before the outbreak of the Anglophone crisis. Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) in the West region has always served as a religious instrumentality of social transformation. Given that the Catholic, the Presbyterian, Baptist and Muslims are the dominant religious institutions in the West region, we decided to visit each of these dominations in the area. From our findings, it was discovered that one of the first places where Anglophone IDPs escaping the conflict ran to was in church premises and institutions (schools and hospitals) own by the church. In fact, IDPs had transformed empty classrooms and church premises to habitat.

\textsuperscript{79} Combination of figures obtained from the various local government authorities in the West region from August 17-19, 2021.
\textsuperscript{80} Interview with workers of the department of social affairs of councils in the Bamboutos, Menoua and Mifi Divisions.
In response to the humanitarian situation of IDPs, the church and Christians had been offering diverse assistance to these displaced persons. First schools owned by the church accepted to enrol a good number of pupils and students. Again, some Christians with large home accepted to lodge and carter for families by providing them food and shelter. Some faith-based humanitarian organisations like the Jesuit Refugee Service have been very committed in providing assistance in the form of basic necessities and education to IDPs in the West region. Through fund raising in churches meant for IDPs in the West region by the Jesuit Refugee Service was estimated a sum of 300,000FRS, from the 2021-2022 harvest thanksgiving for IDPs.

8 Accessing the Sustainability of the Social Integration of Anglophone IDPs

There is no gainsaying that since the outbreak of the Anglophone conflict, the state in collaboration with humanitarian actors have been strongly involve in facilitating the social integration of IDPs in the West region of Cameroon. However, despite the efforts, the assistance and protection has not been able to effectively ensure the sustainable integration of IDPs. This can be explained by a series of factors explained below.

8.1 The Problematic of National Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance

Since 2013 Cameroon has been confronted with serious forced migration in almost all corners of the national territory. The post-electoral crisis and rebel attacks crisis in the Central African Republic forced thousands of migrants to cross over to Cameroon since the country share a long boundary with the Central African Republic. In the Far North region of Cameroon, terrorist attacks orchestrated by the Islamic terrorist group Boko Haram operating in the Sahel forced many Nigerians to seek refuge in the Northern regions of Cameroon. Also, Boko haram attacks on Cameroon soil has contributed to more than 321,000 IDPs who need assistance today. Finally, the Anglophone conflict that has provoked more than more 700,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) have been recorded as a result of the socio-political crisis in the Anglophone North West and South West regions with more than 162,000 seeking refuge in the West region of Cameroon.

Against this background, government and humanitarian actors have individually initiated assistance and protection initiatives without knowing what the other is doing. It is commonplace to notice that on the field, NGOs are offering the same services and in the same region. Whereas they are areas with IDPs that have not yet received the attention of NGOs except the local government authorities. This of course poses a problem of a national coordination strategy towards assisting and protecting IDPs in Cameroon. Unfortunately, such a coordination strategy does not exist and by so doing, it has undermined most efforts towards the social integration of IDPs in Cameroon notably Anglophone IDPs in the West region.

81 See the local newspaper ‘l’oeil du Sahel’ no. 1558 of September 13, 2021, p.1.
82 Assessment Report No. 28 published by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in February 2021
8.2 Bad Governance Practices

Bad governance practices have seriously challenged the effectiveness of the sustainable integration of Anglophone IDPs in the West region of Cameroon. For instance, the non-respect for instructions on measures prescribed by the government is visible on the field. In reality, the government through the Ministries of Basic and Secondary education instructed principals and head teachers of government schools to prioritize Anglophone IDPs pupils and students in school admissions and without any charges. But unfortunately, some school authorities transformed the plight of IDPs into a money making enterprise. For instance, a local new paper investigated and revealed that government school authorities demand a sum of 100,000CFA FRS as bribe in other to admit IDP students in schools.\(^83\) The sum can double in case the pupil or student does not have academic records to prove that he or she had been schooling. Unfortunately, most Anglophone IDPs students and pupil have lost not only their previous academic report cards but also their birth certificate in the course fleeing from conflict. The situation is further worsened by children that have been out of school for more than three years following the destruction of schools in their former places of residence.

In the same manner, some NGOs anonymously confided to the researcher that material and financial assistance meant for IDPs send by the government and its partners has regularly be embezzled or misappropriate by some authorities. In fact, it was revealed that food items and basic necessities meant for IDPs sometimes end up in the homes of some of these authorities. Also, the regional and divisional social services of the state also noted the administrative bottleneck and lateness in channelling assistance from the central administration in Yaounde right down to remote areas. At times, it takes 3-6 months for the request and needs of IDPs submitted to the hierarchy in Yaounde. In general, poor governance practises has been one of the main impediments towards the sustainable integration of IDPs Cameroon as a whole.

8.3 The Problematic nature of Assistance

The first thing that any displaced person would like to have at his disposal is a home for shelter even if he lacks basic needs. It is important to note that most humanitarian assistance provided by government has generally consisted of items that are not the immediate needs of IDPs. Food items or mattresses cannot be given to IDPs when they don’t have a shelter and beds on which to put mattress or kitchen utensils to cook the food. Again, very few NGOs have been able to provide psychological assistance to IDPs whereas it is supposed to be one of the first priorities for people that have witnessed and escaped the horrors of conflict.

\(^83\) For more details. See ‘le Jour’ local newspaper No.3490 of August 30, 2021, pp. 2-3. [www.ekoisque.cm](http://www.ekoisque.cm)
8.4 Inter-community conflict

Inter-community conflict has been a major problem for the social integration of Anglophone IDPs in the West region. In general, all regions witnessing the presence of IDPs or refugees have been characterised by inter-community conflicts between the host population and immigrants. For example, in the Far North region of Cameroon where IDPs and refugees escaping the terror of Boko haram are found, conflicts have often emerged among the host population and the immigrants over natural resources like water and grazing space for cattle. On the September 11, 2021, a conflict breakout between Anglophone IDPs and the host population in the Nyong et So’o Division in the Center region as a result of land resources.

Narrowing down to our area of study, the host population in the West region warmly welcome Anglophone IDPs in their communities and in some cases provided settlement land and jobs to some. However, with the escalation of the war in the English-speaking regions, more IDPs added to those already existing in the area and thus resources became very limited. The advent of more IDPs in the West region also brought about an increase in some social ills such as theft and public harassment. This does not imply that before the coming of IDPs there was no cases of theft and harassments in host communities, on the contrary the phenomenon is becoming recurrent and has even provoked inter-community conflict. For example, on September 08, 2021, a host citizen in the Ndé Division in the West region was violently harassed and killed by an Anglophone IDP84. In retaliation, the host population decide to seek vengeance by lynching the aggressor. The situation suddenly changed to a general confrontation between the host population and the IDP community. It was thanks to the timely intervention of the forces of law and order that the situation was calmed.

9 Conclusion and Recommendation

For close to a decade now, one of the major challenges the Republic of Cameroon has been confronted with is the question of internally displaced persons. The Far North region, the East region and the Anglophones regions of the North West and South West have become very insecure regions thus provoking internal displacement of persons to more secured regions. The common denominator of IDPs from these three regions is the fact that their displacement is forced and most of them are confronted with the problem of social integration in their host communities.

The difference among these IDPs is the fact that the forceful factors responsible for internal displacement in the Far North and East regions are purely exogenous (Boko haram terrorism in the Far North, and the anti-Balaka and Seleka militia groups from the Central African Republic in the East region of Cameroon. As for the IDPs from the Anglophone regions, the main push-
factor is an internal cause. It is an ethno-national conflict between part of a state and its citizens seeking secession through armed conflict.

 Forced migration and the increasing number of IDPs especially in the case of Anglophones translate the failure of government policy in preventing and finding sustainable solution to national problems. Despite multiple efforts by the government and humanitarian actors towards the social integration of Anglophone IDPs in the West region, the social integration of IDPs in this region and other regions is far from being satisfactory. This can be explained by a series of socio-political, economic and institutional factors as explained in the paper. In fact, these weaknesses have gradually metastasised into very dangerous social problems such as inter-community conflicts over resources and space that has the risk of further jeopardising Cameroon’s national unity and integration prone by the government for decades.

 In such a situation, it important for the government and its development partners to take necessary and urgent responses to ensure the sustainable social integration of IDPs. From findings, some of the most urgent measures would be the crafting and putting in place of a national coordination program for IDPS, the resolution of the Anglophone problem and the autonomization of IDPs for self-reliance.

 Findings from the field reveal that the provision of assistance and protection to IDPs in Cameroon and particularly in the West region is done in a disorderly manner by the various humanitarian actors. This unorganised functional humanitarian system practised by humanitarian actors has led to the duplication of assistance and at times neglects other needs of IDPs. A solution to this problem requires the creation of a national coordination programme by the government of Cameroon with the necessary material and human resources to face the increasing number of IDPs in Cameroon as a whole. Even though there exist a Department of Civil Protection at the Ministry of Territory Administration, its impact has not really been felt in the assistance and protection of IDPs in Cameroon. As such, a national coordination programme should be put in place by the government under the supervision of the Department of Civil Protection.

 Forced migration within the case of Anglophone IDPs can only be mitigated by frank and sincere dialogue between the government and its citizens. Albeit a Major National Dialogue organised by government took place in 2019 to find solutions to the Anglophone problem, the conflict has not stopped and the number of IDPs keeps increasing. The Anglophone conflict that is outcome of a historical process ought to have been resolved by correcting the historical mistakes that has culminated into an armed conflict between the State of Cameroon and part of its territory.

 In terms of recommendation, it is important that both parties in the on-going Anglophone conflict declare immediate and unconditional seize-fire. This should be followed by an inclusive dialogue alongside socio-economic projects that will facilitate the autonomization of IDPs returning to their homes. In sum, the mitigation of forced migration and the vulnerability of IDPs
require a joint-coordinated collaboration between government and development partners with focus on targeting the root causes of forced migration and addressing its consequences.
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