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PRESS RELEASE

MAYHEM IN CAMEROON: DIALOGUE NOW

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September 27, 2020
(Toledo, Ohio, USA)

Deeply disturbed by the dreadful situation in the Cameroon, the African Diaspora Congress (ADC) and all friends of Africa around the world, hereby call on the African Union, the UN and other international agencies to act urgently to save the people from the ongoing bloodbath. Since 2016, Cameroon has been embroiled in an armed struggle between English-speaking Cameroon and French-Speaking Cameroon resulting in the death of thousands of people, wanton political detentions as well as displacement of several thousands of people. The Cameroonian government, blamed by Anglo-Cameroonians for complicity in the crisis, has failed to dispense due justice and restore order in the country.

The origins of the crisis have a long history, which dates back to the colonial era, whereby the French Cameroon and British Cameroon inherited separate and divergent colonial legacies. In 1961, a Federal constitution allowing both groups to maintain separate social and political systems was adopted at the Foumban Constitutional Conference. This constitution acknowledged the history and culture of the two regions while giving equal power to both.

In 1972, however, the government of Cameroon organized a controversial referendum which abrogated the 1961 Constitution and the Foumban agreement. Frustrated by this referendum, Anglo-Cameroonians have been demanding for a reversion to the Foumban Constitutional arrangement of 1961 to no avail. Anglo-Cameroonian protests have heightened since 2016 led by several organizations such as lawyers and teachers trade unions that initiated peaceful protests. While lawyers demanded for the common law system instead of the civil law used by the French-speaking magistrate who were not versed with the British common law system, teachers union protested against appointment and posting of French speaking teachers who could not speak English to Anglo-Cameroonian schools. Instead of dialogue, protesters were attacked by the Cameroonian soldiers thereby escalating the situation. Since then, Cameroon has been in a disrupted and bloody turmoil.

The African Diaspora Congress (ADC) is concerned about the human rights violations, detentions and other atrocities taking place in Cameroon. Over 500,000 Anglo-Cameroonians now live in neighboring Nigeria as refugees and as internally displaced persons. Many live in the bushes under unhygienic conditions. More than 50 villages in the English-speaking regions have been razed to the ground, many schools, hospitals burnt down, farms destroyed, businesses attacked, and the situation is getting worse by the day. Clearly, the government of Cameroon has failed to resolve this crisis despite being a signatory to several international agreements including the African (Banjul) Charter on Human and People's Rights, and the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhumane, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.



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As a Pan-African organization that upholds the principles of democracy and respect for human rights, ADC calls on the AU, the UN and other international agencies to explore all means at their disposal to bring all belligerents to the negotiating table. The time is now for the UN to invoke Article 40 of the Security Council and default to the Secretary General of the UN to trigger the A4P (Action for Peace), which will compel the use of its peacekeepers to restore law and order in Cameroon and free all political prisoners. We note that it is within the ambit of the Security Council to apply Article 32 convoking the Cameroon government for discussions relating to the ongoing conflict.

The Cameroon crisis is a litmus test on the leadership of the AU and the UN on crises pertaining to Africa. We are always reminded of the Rwanda apocalypse of 1994. Therefore, the ADC and Africans on the continent, in the Diaspora, and the Six Region urge the African Union, the United Nations and the International community not to stand aloof as matters degenerate in Cameroon. We cannot allow any further delays in resolving this crisis! Africa cannot afford another ethno-linguistic genocide!

Sincerely,

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The African Diaspora Congress (ADC) is a coalition of the various groups and concerned citizens from the African Diaspora and the Sixth Region committed to addressing critical issues affecting Africa and peoples of African descent on a global scale. The Congress brings together great businessmen and women, bankers, doctors, teachers, lawyers, activists of African descent living all over the world, and especially in the Diaspora. ADC reawakens the conscience of all peoples of African descent on the need for the protection of democracy, the rule of law, human rights in Africa as well as investments and knowledge transfer to the African continent.
