



## **AAG Letter template to Governments and Organizations**

To His Excellency, **Hon, etc (as appropriate)**  
**Organization**

Your Excellency (Honorable, or simply Sir or Madame):

I come to you on behalf of the Anglophone Action Group (AAG) to draw your attention and the attention of the international community to the plight of the people of West Cameroon.

### **Background:**

The people of west Cameroon, formerly the British Trust Territory of Southern Cameroons, gained their independence on 1<sup>st</sup> October 1961 by choosing to unite with the then independent country of République du Cameroun (Republic of Cameroon) following a United Nations-supervised plebiscite, thus forming the Federal Republic of Cameroon. This federation comprised two states of equal status: West Cameroon and East Cameroon. In 1972, the federation was illegally dissolved by then President Amadou Ahidjo to form the United Republic of Cameroon, which was subsequently dissolved by a presidential decree from current President Paul Biya in 1984 to revert to the pre-federation East Cameroon name of Republic of Cameroon.

### **The Problem:**

The brief historical background above is meant to give you a gist of the Anglophone Problem in Cameroon, which is the root cause of the current crisis. Briefly, the Anglophone problem is a result of 55 years of systematic assimilation and marginalization of the Anglophone minority by the Francophone-dominated governments. The following facts succinctly illustrate the Anglophone problem:

- French-speaking lawyers who have no notion of the common law system that obtains in West Cameroon and can barely understand or speak English are assigned to West Cameroon courts.
- French-speaking teachers with no knowledge or experience in the Anglo-saxon system of education are assigned to teach non-language subjects in West Cameroon.
- Virtually all administrators (District Officers, Senior District Officers, Governors, etc) and military/police commanders posted to West Cameroon are French-speaking and many of them cannot speak English.
- The lone language of instruction in the military academy and all the higher professional schools that train government cadres is French, whereas the constitution guarantees French and English as two official languages of equal status.

**Current situation:**

Fed up with the institutionalized assimilation, marginalization and francophonization of West Cameroon, contrary to letter and spirit of the 1961 constitution of the Federal Republic of Cameroon, two West Cameroon trade groups (lawyers and teachers) recently went on strike. First, in October 2016 the lawyers staged peaceful public marches in Bamenda and Buea. Second, in December 2016 teachers implemented a sit-in strike throughout the territory of West Cameroon. In both cases, the government repressed these peaceful lawful protests by brutalizing the protesters: lawyers were shoved, pushed, tear-gassed and their wicks confiscated; police shot and killed or wounded dozens of peaceful marchers; students were dragged out of their hostels and beaten, raped, and tortured in broad day light. Subsequently, the trade associations and civic society groups formed the Cameroon Anglophone Civil Society Consortium which called for negotiations with government while maintaining the strike actions and implementing ghost towns on Monday and Tuesday throughout West Cameroon. Negotiations with the government delegation broke down on Jan. 16, 2017 and on Jan. 17, 2017, the government issued a decree banning the very Consortium with which it was negotiating up until the previous day. This decree was preceded by militarization of the entire West Cameroon with thousands of police, gendarmes, army, and special forces. Since then, several West Cameroonian leaders have been arrested and the government has clamped down on free speech in the country by ordering news media to refrain from discussing federalism or any change it what it calls the “form of the government” (la forme de l’état). Also, internet connectivity to the entire West Cameroon has been shut down by the government since Jan. 18, 2017.

**Our appeal:**

The situation in West Cameroon is currently very tense and could potentially explode into full-blown civil war and genocide if the international community, starting with the United Nations, does not step in urgently to diffuse the “bomb”. Dozens have been killed, wounded, tortured, arrested, raped, or are missing. The population of West Cameroon needs to be rescued from this ordeal by the international community to avoid another Rwanda in Africa. It is in this regard that we appeal to your high office (substitute with “Government”, “Organization”, etc, as appropriate) to help restore basic human rights and dignity to Cameroon. In particular, considering that the nation of Cameroon, was formed by two separate and equal peoples (Southern Cameroons and Republic of Cameroon) that came together to form the Federal Republic of Cameroon, we strongly believe that the only long-lasting solution to the Anglophone Problem in Cameroon is a return to a federal structure, which guarantees that each of the two equal states (West Cameroon and East Cameroon) can have a high degree of autonomy to manage its internal affairs in matters such as education, practice of law, local government, and law enforcement. We plead for your help.

Sincerely,

Your name, email, etc