



L'INTÉGRALITÉ DU MESSAGE DU REPRÉSENTANT DES ÉTATS UNIS AUC NATIONS UNIES QUI DEMANDE UN CESSEZ-LE-FEU ET UN DIALOGUE SANS CONDITIONS ENTRE LES DIFFÉRENTES PARTIES.

Remarks at a UN Security Council Briefing on the Central African Region

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Merci, Monsieur Le Président.

Special Representative Fall and Director Ghelani, thank you for your briefings today. Your work is vital to a region facing a wide range of political, economic, and social challenges, particularly in Cameroon, on which I will focus my remarks.

The security and humanitarian conditions in Cameroon's northwest and southwest regions

have significantly deteriorated since the last UNOCA briefing to the Security Council in June. Violence continues to escalate, obstructing vital humanitarian aid delivery to over 430,000 IDPs and blocking health and education services to rural children.

Mr. President, October was the most violent month on record in Cameroon in recent years, and judging from anecdotal reports, we fear that November will surpass October as the bloodiest month on record. We don't want to see that horrible trend continue again this month, December. The violence must stop now.

Violence between government and Anglophone separatists has resulted in killings and abductions of civilians, including a U.S. missionary who was killed on October 30. Faced with mounting insecurity, tens of thousands of Cameroonians have fled to neighboring Nigeria, as we've heard, while hundreds of thousands have been internally displaced and need humanitarian assistance.

The stakes in Cameroon are too high for this crisis to continue unaddressed. Cameroon remains an essential security partner in the fight against Boko Haram and the Islamic State in West Africa, including as a member of the Multi National Joint Task Force. The continuing crisis threatens to detract from our mutual security objectives in the Lake Chad Basin.

Mr. President, the United States calls for an immediate and broad-based reconciliatory dialogue, without pre-conditions, between the Government of Cameroon and separatists in the Northwest and Southwest Regions. We urge all sides to forswear violence, to restore peace, and to resolve their grievances through political dialogue.

We note that in his inaugural address on November 6, President Biya expressed confidence that "there is an honorable way out in everyone's interest." We encourage President Biya to make good on his commitment to accelerate the decentralization process and adopt the recommendations of the Cameroonian Commission on Bilingualism and Multiculturalism.

The creation of a government-led humanitarian assistance coordination center is a promising development. However, the government has done little to address concerns over its own lack of respect for humanitarian principles of neutrality and impartiality and the guarantees of unhindered access to conflict-affected populations. We urge the Government of Cameroon to prioritize respect for humanitarian principles and to ensure unobstructed access for UN agencies and humanitarian NGOs assisting conflict-affected populations.

Mr. President, the United States believes that UNOCA – through the good offices of Special Representative Fall – could provide technical assistance and mediation support to facilitate a broad-based reconciliatory dialogue without pre-conditions. We hope that ECCAS, the AU's Peace and Security Council, and the AU Commission will enhance their efforts to support the peace process, and we encourage them to coordinate with UNOCA in this effort.

A peaceful and stable Cameroon is critical to regional stability in Central Africa and both deserves and requires the continued and close attention of this Council. As noted by our Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs last week, the last thing we need, given the challenges in the region, is for a disproportionate response by security forces to result in the

growing radicalization and hardening of separatist groups.

Mr. President, in our August PRST, the Security Council called for a strategic review of UNOCA's mandate by August 1, 2019. We look forward in the coming months to further discussions to make sure that UNOCA's mandate is appropriately focused on the most pressing political challenges in the central African region and well-coordinated with the four UN missions operating in the same geographic area to ensure that our efforts have maximum impact and maximum efficiency.

Thank you, Mr. President.
