



CAIC/ACIC

Canadian Action for Integration in Cameroon/ Action Canadien pour
L'intergration en Cameroon

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Executive Summary

To be implemented over a period of six and a half years, the Canadian Action for Integration in Cameroon project, or CAIC, is purposed with fostering a lasting peace between Anglophone Cameroonians and the national government. The project is twofold; consisting of a preliminary mediatory phase that is to be immediately followed by a targeted, institution building endeavor, CAIC strives to provide a foundation that is conducive to peace, and so mitigates the root causes of present conflict. By addressing the primary motives that drive conflict, the project is well positioned to serve as a viable, long term remedy to what ills currently plague the relationship between Anglophone Cameroonians and the predominantly Francophone national government. In particular, CAIC endeavors to increase Anglophone participation in localized governance by way of education investment. Through the construction of an English school in Bamenda (the largest city in the Anglophone region) for public policy and governance, the initiative aims to give a voice to Anglophone Cameroonians through sustainable partnerships with both the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and local community groups and representatives.

Stakeholders/Partners:

Those with a vested interest in the initiative include the Cameroonian central government, representatives of the Anglophone communities in Western Cameroon, the University of Bamenda, Canada, and the United Nations. With respect to the UN in particular, the UNDP and the UN Mediation Support Unit will both serve as stakeholders on behalf of the larger organization. As CAIC is manifestly tasked with the attenuation of what enmity exists between Anglophone Cameroonians and the central government, these two parties will constitute the initiative's participant actors. Both Canada and the UN will serve as facilitators throughout this process, and so provide resources of both material and symbolic natures to the end that conflict be resolved.

Pre-Project Risk Assessment

Preconditions:

At the time of writing, the conflict in Cameroon has yet to progress beyond isolated incidences of violent unrest. With roughly 1,200 casualties having so far been sustained, the conflict stands at the intersection of a crossroads; to one side, preventive resolution is poised as being a social prophylactic.¹ To the other, a slippery slope prevails, and violence continues to mount. Those most affected by the conflict are the Anglophone Cameroonians who reside in the western region of the country, which is where much of the current violence is being perpetrated. This violence, and the conflict more broadly, are informed by Anglophone Cameroonians' disdain for the central government, whom they feel continues to neglect their social and economic needs.

Compared to majority Francophone regions, Western Cameroon suffers from a lack of economic investment, and employment opportunities pursuant to such. The disparity between Francophone and Anglophone regions is perhaps most noted in the case of skewed representation within the civil service, where Anglophones are severely underrepresented. This underrepresentation has served to incite protests within Anglophone regions since 2016, with teachers and lawyers' associations serving to provide a voice for disenfranchised Anglophone communities. These protests have been primarily targeted at linguistic discrimination, with Anglophones feeling that Francophone judges and civil servants are being actively imposed upon them within their own communities.²

The central government responded to these protests swiftly. The military was sent in to make arrests, and leaders and common demonstrators alike were indicted on charges of sedition.³ In turn, some Anglophones have taken to separatism, with small groups advocating for self-determination by way of violence. Tit for tat attacks on and against military targets have incited government response, and so served to bolster military action and presence in Anglophone regions.⁴ At the time of writing, order rests atop a precarious balance between two indignant, if not inimical, groups of people. Some 300,000 people have been displaced as a result of this conflict.⁵

Rational

Why Canada

Given its heritage and bilingual nature, Canada is uniquely suited to facilitate this project. Having long accommodated a linguistic minority that comprises some twenty percent of the population in such a way that has circumvented violence or discrimination, Canada might serve as an example for how a nation is to properly implement accommodative bilingualism in practice. This quality is unique in that Canada, unlike other countries, may provide concrete accounts as to how French-English bilingualism may be workable within a skewed context. Furthermore, Canada has at its disposal an abundance of well-trained, bilingual civil servants who may short of providing an example at least aid in the facilitation of mediatory talks in Cameroon.

Additionally, it must be said that Canada maintains a positive and fruitful relationship with the government of Cameroon. Both members of the Commonwealth of Nations, Canada and Cameroon share strong cultural and economic ties. Furthermore, Canada has an established history of funding educational programs within Cameroon, and contributing significant relief and development aid ancillary to such investment. Beyond this, Canada's majority Anglophone nature is likely to bolster its perception in the eyes of Anglophone Cameroonians, and so eschew the prospect of being viewed as a biased third-party.

As a small-scale, internal conflict, Canada is poised to play a significant role in Cameroon if it so chooses. Whereas no major powers have expressed intent to intervene in Cameroon at the time of writing, Canada is positioned to play an authoritative as opposed to subsidiary role in determining the conflict outcome. This is significant not only in that Canadian autonomy is increased with respect as to how CAIC is to be implemented, but also in that Canada is more likely to be taken seriously as a mediator (and facilitator subsequent to such) should it be acting independently, and of its own volition.

Incentives for Parties to Participate

The conflict in Cameroon is neither deep-seated nor intractable, and so provides ample opportunity for mediatory intervention. There is no significant history of violence between the disputants, and that violence which is present has not yet grown widespread. The conflict is in its early stages, and both Anglophones and the central government would be better off if the conflict was resolved prior to intensification.

It is important to mention that the conflict in Cameroon is not driven by enmity on the basis of language, but rather Anglophone resentment towards the central government. Their quarrel is not directed toward Francophone Cameroonians, but rather the lack of accommodation afforded to them by the central government. Deficiencies in language services, education, and investment have informed what resentment now characterizes the conflict. This being said, the central government neglects to provide these things due to ambivalence more than maleficence. Were the central government to address the concerns of the Anglophone communities, and so eliminate the driving factors of conflict, both sides would be better off. That the issue is one of regional

inequality as opposed to sectional hatred means that interests are not incompatible, and so easily pursued by both sides through projects such as CAIC.

Significant overlap in terms of what ethnicities are represented in both Anglophone and Francophone regions serves not only to highlight the civic (as opposed to ethnic) nature of the conflict in Cameroon, but also presents itself as an incentive for mediation. Groups such as the Sawa, whom are represented to great degree across linguistic lines, have a vested interest in promoting the wellbeing of their people regardless of their language.⁶ As a result of this, the social climate within Cameroon is not so intractable as to render mediation unlikely, but rather seems to be quite conducive to it.

Anglophone Cameroonians have numerous incentives to engage in the mediatory proceedings afforded by CAIC. Commanding little external attention or support, they are unlikely to leverage anything useful to the end that the central government entertain their concerns. The use of violence on the part of Anglophones has so far proven futile, and might explain the relative rarity of its practice currently. As a result of this, mediation appears a viable alternative to the fruitless efforts expended so far by Anglophone Cameroonians in having their concerns be addressed. Whereas violence is likely to induce economic malaise and harsh governmental responses, mediation may better yet foster cooperation and mutual understanding.

Conversely, the Cameroonian government will prove more difficult to persuade. Simply put, CAIC is contingent upon the government's involvement, as the measures of success it delineates are entirely dependent upon Anglophone representation within the civil service. That the Anglophone separatists only represent a small minority, and are not yet viable threats to national infrastructure, means that there is little pressure being exerted by Anglophone leaders that might force the government to the table. This being said, Canada is positioned to leverage economic investment and aid packages to the end that Cameroon engage in mediation, and so may provide the means that the Anglophone communities are currently lacking without resorting to violence, or unduly risking heightened tensions. The conflict itself is also damaging Cameroon economically.⁷

Possible Impacts: CAIC has the potential to reduce tensions between the people of the Anglophone regions and the central government of Cameroon.

Reducing Separatist Tension

The mediation program will allow the concerns and frustrations of the Anglophone community to be meaningfully acknowledged and addressed by the Cameroonian government. This demonstration that the government is willing to hear the concerns of the people of the region, along with a reduction in the harshness of the government's crackdown, would disincentivize Anglophones from participating in violence against the government, as continued violence would jeopardize the gains that can be made through mediation and a potential settlement. Moreover, the second phase of the project will demonstrate tangible investment and commitment in the Anglophone regions by the central government, further helping to reduce tensions.

Reducing Linguistic Tension

CAIC endeavors to increase the amount of Anglophone civil servants represented in the western regions of the country. This is expected to have the effect of reducing tensions by way of permitting Anglophone Cameroonians to engage with local governance in their own language.

Reducing Economic Tension

In providing for a pathway into the civil service, Anglophone Cameroonians will be afforded access to quality government jobs. The stability provided for by this development may also have net positive economic externalities with respect to other industries.

Promoting Equal Rights

The increased presence of Anglophones within the Cameroonian civil service would provide for them a surety; namely, that they will not be subject to discrimination at the behest of Francophones vis a vis their interactions with government.

Relevance to Best Case and Worst Case Scenarios

The best case scenario described in the Cameroon Conflict Diagnostic is as follows:

“Concerns and distress of the Anglophone population are addressed. The central government takes initiatives such as quotas for Anglophone political representation, providing greater access to Anglophone public officials, and increasing public spending, investment, and autonomy in the Northwest and Southwest regions. As a result, the Anglophones address their initial grievances that led to the unrest and halt all protests and insurgencies.”

CAIC serves to realize this scenario. Preliminary mediation will provide a forum through which Anglophone Cameroonians might have their grievances considered by the central government, and so ideally addressed. The second phase of the program, being the creation of an English school for civil servants in Bamenda, would directly facilitate the best-case scenario by alleviating Anglophone concerns about unequal investment, all the while increasing the prevalence of English service in government. As the worst-case scenario is a full-blown civil war, a successful mediation phase would naturally circumvent that outcome.

Operational Decisions and Monitoring

Operational Limitations

This project does carry some risk, as the Anglophone region is currently in a state of conflict (albeit at a low level). However, these risks can be largely mitigated by hosting mediatory proceedings outside of conflict affected regions. The most serious potential hindrance to the project is its dependence on the genuine cooperation of the Cameroonian central government, as

implementing and sustaining this program will not be possible without express consent and financial commitment from the central government.

Timeline

Fact Finding Mission: 6 Months

Mediation Process: 1 Year

(Conflict Assessment 2 years after Mediation Concludes)

School Set Up: 2 Years

(Education and Employment Assessment 5 After first day of School)

Total: 6 years 6 months

Budget

Fact Finding Mission 300,000

Mediation 3.7 Million

Anglophone School and Training 15 Million

Post Project Fact Finding Mission (Conflict Outcomes) 200,000

Post Project Fact Finding Mission (Education and Employment Outcomes) 300,000

Miscellaneous Needs Funds 500,000

Monitoring and Evaluation

Before Program

Prior to the mediation phase, the Canadian government will sponsor a fact-finding mission in collaboration with local universities, and with the consent of the Cameroonian government. This mission will examine the following metrics: deaths related to conflict, incidents of violence against government forces, access to government services in English in the Anglophone region.

After Program

After the project is underway, two separate assessments will be conducted. 2 years after the mediation phase concludes, the metrics on violence and conflict will be reexamined to see if there has been any improvement when juxtaposed against the pre-program assessment. This will help to determine if the mediation was helpful in reducing contempt. 5 years after the school starts training Anglophone civil servants, an assessment will again be conducted to examine if access to services in English, and Anglophone participation in the civil service, has improved.

Sustainability

Once the school has been constructed, the central government of Cameroon will be responsible for the continued funding of teachers' salaries, and the overall maintenance of the school and its programs. The existence of the school and its training programs will help to prevent future violence through signaling to Anglophones that the central government is willing to accommodate them on one hand, and in providing for them jobs and services on the other.

¹ Kindzeka, Moki Edwin. "Cameroon Mobilizes Military Following Boko Haram, Separatist Attacks". VOA. January 22, 2019. <https://www.voanews.com/a/cameroon-mobilizes-military-following-boko-haram-separatist-attacks/4753655.html>

² Atabong, Amindeh Blaise. "Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis Isn't About Language, It's About Economic Deprivation". Quartz Africa. October 9, 2017. <https://qz.com/africa/1097892/cameroons-anglophone-crisis-is-danger-of-becoming-a-full-blown-conflict/>

³ Essa, Azad. "Cameroon's English-speakers call for independence". Al-Jazeera. 1 Oct 2017 <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/10/171001123925310.html>

⁴ Kindzeka, Moki Edwin. "Cameroon Mobilizes Military Following Boko Haram, Separatist Attacks". VOA. January 22, 2019. <https://www.voanews.com/a/cameroon-mobilizes-military-following-boko-haram-separatist-attacks/4753655.html>

⁵ Shaban, Abdur "351,000 displaced in Anglophone Cameroon - UN wants \$219m in aid" Africa News, March 28, 2019. <https://www.africanews.com/2019/03/28/351000-displaced-in-anglophone-cameroon-un-wants-219m-in-aid/>

⁶ Atabong, Amindeh Blaise. "Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis Isn't About Language, It's About Economic Deprivation". Quartz Africa. October 9, 2017. <https://qz.com/africa/1097892/cameroons-anglophone-crisis-is-danger-of-becoming-a-full-blown-conflict/>

⁷ Associated Press. "Cameroon continues its troubling descent". Africa News, March 12, 2019. <https://www.africanews.com/2019/03/12/cameroon-continues-it-s-troubling-descent/>