

CONFLICTS

There are two main sites to violence in Cameroon. First, a twin challenge is faced across the Far North, where jihadist group Boko Haram seeks to establish a caliphate and refugee inflows from the Central African Republic meet porous borders and farmer–herder clashes over land and water. Second, the Anglophone crisis in the North-West and South-West has gone from spurring protests in 2016 to now being a full-blown secessionist war after decades of unfulfilled promises on decentralisation from the Francophone government. Further, intertribal warfare in the Far North and border conflicts with neighbouring countries undermine education and healthcare infrastructures. All this unfolds within a highly centralised, authoritarian system that downplays conflict while hampering reform-minded actors.



THE THREE PILLARS OF PEACE



PHYSICAL INTEGRITY

In the Far North, communities face jihadist insurgent raids and the forced recruitment of youth; due to the secession conflict in the North-West and South-West, thousands of people – civilians, security personnel, and non-state armed actors alike – have died. Elsewhere, violence is less intense but remains a persistent feature of intercommunal land and resource disputes. Several qualitative interviews mention the central government's downplaying of these conflicts and its political opportunism in seeking to remain in power in perpetuity. Brief windows of quiet often mask coercive control rather than durable protection, and the availability of space for humanitarian actors and similar to carry out their work is dependent more on local security initiatives than on national policy per se.



HUMAN RIGHTS

The protection of rights is weak and unevenly enforced. Instances of torture, indiscriminate killing, early marriage, and illegal detention are frequent. These violent episodes disproportionately affect women, children, and the disabled. Even with authoritarian rule and terrorist activity combining to restrict the availability of civic space, trade unions, media, and human rights defenders work to combat poor governance, electoral fraud, and diverse forms of violence regardless. Two-thirds of survey participants identified non-state actors as those primarily responsible for undermining human rights, while 40 per cent conversely noted government forces to be so.



CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

The possibility for conflict transformation in Cameroon was described in the qualitative interviews as resting more on traditional institutions and their leaders than on the centralised state. Local leaders are valued because they live among villagers, understand land and marriage disputes, and can calm farmer–herder clashes quickly. But this authority does not prevail everywhere. In the country's Anglophone regions, some chiefs are seen as aligned with the government; others have fled their palaces or are even blamed for killings, meaning their legitimacy is damaged. On both the side of the central government and of Anglophone separatists, there is still more support for victory achieved through force than pursuing a negotiated settlement.

NOTIONS OF PEACE

For our Survey Results in Cameroon scan:



Fieldwork done between 2019-2022