



**United States Senate Resolution 684: International Implications and Opportunities
WPPJ Position Statement
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The Coalition for Dialogue and Negotiations US Senate Resolutions 684: The international implications, opportunities, and contributions of parliaments to peace and security

The year 2021 ushered in many things. On a purely human level, it signaled the end of a year that rightly should live in infamy and ushered in another full of hope for humankind in a battle against the deadly Nova Coronal virus. On a less fanfare style, in the early days of 2021, the 116th United States Senate quietly passed Resolution 684 calling both the Government of Cameroon army and the separatist armed groups to end all violence, respect human rights and pursue genuine inclusive dialogue to resolve the Anglophone problem. For indigenes of the Former British Southern Cameroons—Northwest and Southwest Regions of the Republic of Cameroon, for others, a self-declared Amazonia state is currently engaged in a war of self-defense against large scale military aggression perpetuated by La Republique du Cameroun, under the leadership of Paul Biya. As many rejoiced at the passing of Sen. Res. 684, many are mainly cautiously optimistic. For the later, a deeper reflection is called for on just how the resolution can be an instrument for peace and security in the region.

The following are reflections by WPPJ.

This is a conflict in which international actors have decided to ignore the grievances of one of the parties; to insist and persist in their own narration unfounded in any facts; to buy the propaganda of the other party wholesale; to refuse to verify any facts; to ignore truth, justice, rule of law and yet hope to find a solution! And so, the international community has put itself in a position from which a solution is simply impossible, because no one can resolve a conflict by accepting the unsubstantiated claims of one side and refusing to hear from the other. It is also a practice that whatever are the grievances and claims on both sides, a referendum has always been the best way to resolve such conflicts, whatever they are. But again, international actors are mute even on this idea. They beat about the bush hoping by some miracle to turn falsehood into truth! Do they fear to end annexation, just in this case? Do they fear to verify the facts? Are they in a life and death struggle to keep the two incompatible Cameroons together despite everything? Are they willing to reverse all known international principles and offer the Southern Cameroons on a golden platter to be annexed and colonized by Cameroon before which they all bow and tremble to speak the truth?

Yet this is a case whose facts and the extent of Cameroon's violations would shock every conscience! To occupy another country without the slightest instrument permitting it; bottle and choke its people for close to sixty years and when the matter comes out in daylight, the world looks the other way saying: "We are willing to sacrifice the people of the Southern Cameroons; they are not part of our world; we do not wish to offend Cameroon; do with them what you will, we are all behind Cameroon!"

Despite its failings on fundamental points, S. Res 684 has some powerful recommendations which if followed through, will have the potential to advance a solution. All recommendations not made directly to Cameroon or the separatist groups have a potential positive impact. The question remains to know who will trigger action before the UN, AU, Economic Community of Central African States and so on to address the issue. So far, the African Union has 2 treated the conflict at arm's length, not even being willing to enforce its own principles. No actor should wait for anything from the African Union!

In the circumstance, the American government has the leverage and power to begin the implementation of all actions in the resolution that depend on it, such as targeted sanctions, limiting security assistance to



Cameroon, investigations into the killing of Chares Wesco, pushing for humanitarian access to the war zone, introduction of the matter on the UNSC agenda, and so on. Once it does so, many other things are likely to follow.

We shall list the fundamental flaws of the Resolution and then highlight the points that may be implemented in spite of the flaws.

1. What is Res. 684's source of information on the grievances of the people of the Southern Cameroons? Did it consult the Southern Cameroons nationalist movements? Who did the writers of the Res. consult to obtain information about the grievances of the people of the Southern Cameroons?
2. Did Res. 684 consider the grievances of the people of the Southern Cameroons at all? Was the Res ignorant of the fact that the people of the Southern Cameroons declared the restoration of their independence on 1 October 2017 with full reasons?
3. Res. 684 takes off, like other international efforts, with the very erroneous presumption that (1) Cameroon has sovereignty over the Southern Cameroons/Ambazonia; (2) that the war is an internal affair of Cameroon; (3) consequently, that third-party mediation is only optional. Did the writers of the Res. verify these presumptions? Have the Senators or the American government ever found any instrument showing that the Southern Cameroons/Ambazonia is a legal part of Cameroon? Would anyone who has found such an instrument graciously publish it for all to see? Even the alleged federation: has the US government ever found out if a genuine federation was created or that the federation was a unilateral act of one of the federated states?
4. S. Res. 684 sets out to make recommendations to end the conflict. How can it resolve the conflict when it begins by buying the unverified claims of one of the parties to the conflict, claims which are at the core of the conflict itself, and completely ignores the grievances of one of the parties? 3
5. The Res still relies on the aggressor country, Cameroon, "to initiate a credible, inclusive, good-faith effort to end the armed conflict in the Northwest and Southwest regions of Cameroon by addressing the root causes of the crisis and grievances". How do you ask the aggressor who had no reason to declare war in the first place to credibly show good faith or address the root causes of the war? By what miracle can the aggressor country preside over a solution to its own aggression? Which examples exist in history to confirm this approach? Is this not a violation of a fundamental principle of common sense that no one can be party and judge in their own case?
6. The people of the Southern Cameroons see themselves as the rightful owners of the Southern Cameroons' territory. They have never bargained away their sovereignty over their territory. They are bound to defend the territorial integrity of their country; they see the international community as colluding with Cameroon to steal their territory; they have no choice but to use every means available under international law, including the right of self-defense, to protect themselves against Cameroon's aggression. They cannot play dead to allow Cameroon slaughter them gratuitously. They must deny the aggressor its rule over their territory! What is called violence by the international community is to them self-defense. Does Res 684 recognise the right of the people of the Southern Cameroons to their territory and to self-defense?
7. Does Res 684 recognise the fact that Cameroon's claims over the territory of Ambazonia are disputed by the people of Ambazonia?



8. The aggressor country, Cameroon, has no option but violence. Why? Because annexation, colonization and illegal occupation are systems based on violence. The sole purpose of the war is to enforce annexation and illegal occupation. To accept truth and non-violence would be to give up annexation, colonialism and illegal occupation, which Cameroon would not voluntarily do. If Ambazonians believe that they are only engaged in self-defense and Cameroon sees that it has no way of giving up violence, because that would be to give up its illegal claims over Ambazonia, how does Res 684 envisage nonviolence in this situation, especially when third-party mediation is not obligatory, according to it? 4

9. Does Res 684 recognise the right to self-determination of the people of the Southern Cameroons, and as the fountain of all human rights? Does it include the right to self-determination in its definition of human rights? The people of the Southern Cameroons/Ambazonia have declared that they are not Cameroonian; they are Ambazonians. The Res however insists on calling them “Cameroonians”. How does that help the peace process?

10. America is a founding member of the UN; the two countries at war were brought together in 1961 under UN auspices; UNGA Res. 1608(XV) of 21 April 1961 called for the implementation of the agreed and declared policies of the parties. Throughout the Res. there is not a word on justice, truth, rule of law, compliance with UN Charter provisions. How can the conflict be resolved without reference to truth, justice and rule of law? The call on Cameroon to “respect the rule of law and the constitutional rights of all Cameroonians” confines the idea of rule of law to Cameroon’s constitution, which is an instrument of the illegal occupation of the Southern Cameroons.

11. The Res makes third-party mediation optional for Cameroon and therefore there will be no way to address the root causes. Cameroon has no interest in the root causes and has avoided any reference to the root cause since the conflict began! The Res calls on Cameroon to follow through on initiatives developed to address the grievances that sparked the conflict, including the Commission on Bilingualism, the resolutions of the Major National Dialogue, etc. The Res fails to see that all these unilateral measures were attempts by the Cameroon government, not to solve the crisis, but to hide it from the international community. They are simply not credible! The Senators do not even know that “Anglophones” are denied the right to use their own language (English); they are imposed the French language against their will and that is what is called bilingualism. It is nothing like what you find in Canada or Switzerland! At the same time, the Res is calling for credible good faith efforts by the Government of Cameroon to end the conflict. The Senators at least know that the Major National Dialogue was a sham. How then is it possible for the government of Cameroon to follow its unilateral actions and follow dialogue when the two are contradictory, especially when the Res makes third-party mediation optional? 5

12. The Res also calls for greater decentralization. If the writers had verified the facts, they would know that you cannot ask a country to decentralize another country over which it has no jurisdiction. Decentralisation has never been a solution to annexation and colonization! How can it be in this case? There are international boundaries between the two countries, which boundaries have never been adjusted and so are still in force! Are the Senators asking Cameroon to reject its international boundary with the Southern Cameroons?

13. The Res has also fallen in the illusion of by-standers and observers in war situations. Which Western country has fought a war without atrocities against civilians? In war situations, civilians are inevitably drawn in! Civilians who are considered as accomplices, enablers, informants, spies, traitors will be attacked, for war is a life and death affair! We deceive ourselves to allow wars to happen and then seek to protect civilians. We must only seek to stop all wars from even starting and to end them by all means if they have started! So all this talk about not attacking civilians will never help. The only solution is to hold



those who start a war responsible. Cameroon should be held squarely responsible for the atrocities happening; for continuing the war despite the calls for a ceasefire; for rejecting third-party mediation. It accounts for more than 80% of the blame! Without the war, there would be no atrocities; the party promoting the war is the party to be held principally accountable. It is therefore a great mistake for the Res to be treating the two parties as equally responsible.

THE GREAT OPPORTUNITIES OF RES 684

1. Holding Cameroon responsible for the security situation, safety and constitutional rights of all citizens;
2. Calling for an independent investigation into the atrocity crimes and human rights violations;
3. Release of all political prisoners and cessation of all arbitrary arrests, detentions, torture, etc.
4. Work with United States to investigate the killing of Charles Wesco;
5. Targeted sanctions against individual government and separatist leaders for internationally recognized human rights violations; 6
6. Press for unfettered access for humanitarian assistance to vulnerable populations in the Anglophone regions;
7. Continue to limit security assistance to Cameroon and ensure that United States training and equipment is not being used to facilitate human rights abuses in the Northwest and Southwest regions;
8. Push for a discussion of the Anglophone crisis in international forums, especially the UNSC;
9. Pressure the Government of Cameroon and separatist armed groups, including through the use of available diplomatic and punitive tools, to immediately conclude and uphold a ceasefire, participate in an inclusive and meaningful dialogue to address the root causes of the conflict;
10. Mobilize and coordinate funding for local and international organizations to provide humanitarian and development assistance, including to fight coronavirus, to communities affected by the crisis in the Northwest and Southwest regions of Cameroon;
11. Leverage bilateral relationships to encourage key partners of Cameroon, particularly France, to help foster a peaceful resolution to the crisis in the Northwest and Southwest regions of Cameroon;
12. The use of regional and international forums to push discuss the crisis and push for a cessation of violence.

All the above recommendations are capable of far-reaching consequences if pursued. But it needs some country to begin acting on some of these recommendations; otherwise, they will remain just one of the many shows of concerns without ever any action. We believe America is in the best position to lead the war.

About WPPJ

Women for Permanent Peace and Justice (WPPJ) is committed to seeking true and lasting peaceful resolution of conflicts based on justice. W4PPJ will work to amplify the voices of women, girls, and children in arenas that traditionally deny or limit their participation, particularly where they are directly



Women for Permanent Peace & Justice Tel: +1 518 577-9930

Email: info@w4ppj.org

affected by war. W4PPJ believes in 3rd party-mediated processes supported by the international Community as credible pathways to sustainable permanent peace in intractable conflicts around the world. As such, W4PPJ will work with all current and ongoing governmental, organizational, and regional peace initiatives to ensure the participation and concerns of women are taken into account. W4PPJ will devote its resources in waging peace, peace advocacy, and international mobilization of grassroots women organizations as key stakeholders in peace processes.

W4PPJ's initial focus is on the women, girls, and children in Southern Cameroons / Ambazonia, a self-declared state, internationally considered an autonomous English-speaking state of the UN-created Cameroon federation of 1961. Southern Cameroons / Ambazonia is currently engaged in a war of self-defense against large scale military aggression perpetuated by La Republique du Cameroun, under the leadership of Paul Biya

Vision

A world where all women, men and children have the right to participatory self-determination, and live a dignified life.

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