



**The Republic of Cameroon (LRC) Is Again Drowning in Thoughts and Prayers. Meanwhile, The International Community Knows LRC Lacks the Legal Framework to Investigate War Crimes, Crimes Against Humanity and Genocide in Its Seven-Year War of Choice.**

The Republic of Cameroon (LRC) is a country that has never known peace. The systematic killings of innocent civilians are getting worse in a seven-year war of choice declared in 2017 by President Paul Biya in what is called its Northwest and Southwest Regions or simply “NOSO”.

The recurrent massacre of civilians within civilian and military operational command areas in the Southern Cameroons is a clear indicator that the military option by the Yaoundé regime over these past seven years has failed miserably. The massacre of 15 civilians within two days in the heart of Bamenda, the military and civilian command heartbeat of the Cameroon’s military, is one too many massacres in the escalating armed conflict in the Southern Cameroons –what is called its Northwest and Southwest Regions or simply “NOSO”. The civilian and military command of the Republic of Cameroon must accept responsibility for these massacres because they occurred with its vital defense command area.

Many in this largely neglected war-torn region had pinned their hopes first on the failed Swiss-Led Peace process and later, a Canadian exploratory talks that one would bring them some much needed peace if not, at least, the prospect of a timeline for negotiations that address root causes of the conflict not prescribed edicts. But the Yaoundé government prefers a war mongering path.

Following recent weeks of targeting killings of civilians and counter-insurgent attacks from armed separatists, dubbed “Amba Boys” as expected, international human rights organizations and the international community are quick to offer a deluge of thoughts and prayers and urge the Cameroon government to conduct investigations and bring the perpetrators to book without first asking what happened to several other investigations they called for in the past seven years of a genocidal war. The fact is that not only does The Republic of Cameroon not have the political will to carry out independent and fair investigations, but it also lacks the legal framework to investigate war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. This responsibility to intervene and investigate therefore, falls on the international community to kick-start its multilateral treaty framework to protect, prevent, investigate and punish the perpetrators of crimes within the civilian and military command structure of the Cameroon military.

The responsibility for these massacres falls fully on the Cameroon military who are deployed in urban and rural civilian settlements. Consistent with war propaganda, the Republic of Cameroon and its allied propaganda machinery blame the Restoration Forces fighting for an independent state of Ambazonia for some of the atrocity crimes just as the ‘*Amba Boys*’ lay equal blame on the military for recent killings of 10 civilians in Bamenda on July 17, 2023. Following from the propaganda is a well-controlled demonstration by some civilians and military in civilian uniforms, sometime ferried in from outside the war zone.

Considering these growing inhumane acts, civil society organizations and the religious performing rituals for the dead should use the pulpit and their moral authority to gather evidence for international transitional justice mechanisms to hold perpetrators of the crimes to account.



Our penchant theatrics of praying away the victimization of victims who are dead, for insisting on negative peace at all costs while there were amply opportunities to play a leadership role in securing permanent peace and justice through internationally mandated mediation, flies in the face of reason. The world must note that such conduct again shows the inability of local mechanisms to bring lasting peace and justice required to end the escalating conflict and the bloodletting it is engendering.

Whatever purpose the demonstration may hope to attain, one clear message to the international community can be discerned—a message of desperation and a message of failure. The masses are desperate for permanent positive peace and yearn for justice. The international community must read the demonstration as an invitation to quickly intervene to address the root causes of the conflict to end the agony of helpless civilians and prevent genocide.

The message is loud and clear that the propaganda of normalcy for refugees and IDPs to go back to their homes, many burnt to the ground, in the war zones of 'NOSO' is a mere ruse to lure them to the slaughter and atrocity crimes by the genocidal military of the Republic of Cameroon. Normalcy with thousands of youths scattered in distant prisons far from their homelands in the Francophone areas is yet another ruse.

The lack of the political will of the Government of the Republic of Cameroon to investigate and punish its military, has been demonstrated even in cases for which it admitted criminal responsibility of its military:

- Deportation of civilians in 13 settlements in Manyu to Nigeria,
- The burning down of civilian settlements in Azi Fontem which was captured on video and admitted over the BCC by General Milingui,
- Massacre of women in Batibo,
- The Ngarbuh Massacres children and pregnant mother which Cameroon admitted was committed by its soldiers and allied Fulani cattle raiders,
- The rape of a girl in Bamenda,
- The massacre of civilians in Wototo village near Muyuka;
- And many others.

In these as in other cases, the Cameroon Government first denied responsibility and later promised to carryout investigations, but no reasonable outcome of such investigations has been made public. There is no accountability for crimes against humanity.

The investigation of cases of massacres of civilians in the July 17, 2023, killings in Bamenda, where weapons and ammunitions were used, is easily carried out by forensic and ballistic experts. In the case of Baby Martha, the girl who was massacred near a Military encampment in Muyuka, the St Francisca College massacres in Kumba, the American missionary, Charles Wesco killed in Bambui, and others, WFPJ again calls for an international commission to intervene and to carry out a forensic and ballistic investigation of the bullets which killed the victims. WFPJ again calls for an international investigation of these massacres and all the other massacres in this escalating armed conflict.

WFPJ reiterates its call for an internationally mandated intervention to address the root causes of this conflict and to find a lasting solution which conforms to the wishes of the people of the Southern Cameroons.