



The Honorable President Joe Biden  
President of the United States  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Antony Blinken  
U.S. Secretary of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20037

The Honorable Vice President Kamala Harris  
Vice President of the United States  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
301 7th Street SW  
Washington, DC 20024

Ambassador Susan Rice  
Director of the Domestic Policy Council  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Jake Sullivan  
National Security Advisor  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

October 25, 2021

**RE: OVER 200 ORGANIZATIONS CALL FOR IMMEDIATE DESIGNATION OF TEMPORARY PROTECTED STATUS (TPS) OR DEFERRED ENFORCED DEPARTURE (DED) FOR CAMEROON**

Dear President Biden, Vice President Harris, Secretary Blinken, and Secretary Mayorkas:

Today, the 204 undersigned organizations write to ask that the Biden Administration urgently designate Cameroon for either Temporary Protected Status (TPS) or Deferred Enforced Departure (DED). Cameroon is eligible for an immediate designation of either DED or TPS under INA § 244(b)(1)(C), due to “extraordinary and temporary conditions” impacting most regions of the country, which combined make safe return to Cameroon impossible for Cameroonians in the U.S. These “extraordinary and temporary conditions” include three concurrent humanitarian crises, one of which (in the Far North region) constitutes an “ongoing armed conflict” under INA § 244(b)(1)(A). Both the conflict in the Far North and a second, separate humanitarian crisis in the Anglophone North-West and South-West regions are characterized by widespread violence and human rights abuses by both government forces and armed groups, as well as massive internal displacement. A third humanitarian crisis impacting the country is a refugee crisis in the East, near the border with the Central African Republic. An overarching context of state-sponsored human rights violations, such as restriction of freedom of expression and association, crackdowns on political opposition and dissent, and frequent use of incommunicado detention and torture, also make return to Cameroon unsafe.

Furthermore, given the numerous formal complaints and allegations of violence and other human rights abuses against Cameroonians in Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) custody, all affected individuals should be protected from deportation in order to remain available to participate in ongoing investigations by the United States government.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., July 2021 Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (“CRCL”) Complaint filed with the Department of Homeland Security, alleging that ICE personnel at Pine Prairie ICE Processing Center and Allen Parish Public Safety Complex threatened Cameroonian and other Black immigrants in detention with punitive solitary confinement in retaliation for peacefully expressing their rights and for their support of the Black Lives Matter movement, available at [https://www.splcenter.org/sites/default/files/28\\_july\\_2021\\_complaint\\_and\\_call\\_to\\_close\\_pine\\_prairie\\_and\\_allen\\_parish.pdf](https://www.splcenter.org/sites/default/files/28_july_2021_complaint_and_call_to_close_pine_prairie_and_allen_parish.pdf); June 2021 CRCL Complaint filed by Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights and 15 other organizations on abusive solitary confinement at Pine Prairie ICE Processing Center, including testimony from Cameroonian and other Black migrants who alleged they experienced physical and psychological abuse, available at <https://rfkhr.imgix.net/asset/RFK-Human-Rights-Pine-Prairie-DHS-Complaint.pdf#asset:190280>; and October 2020 CRCL complaint by SPLC and other groups, with testimonies from Cameroonians detained at Jackson Parish detention center in

Congress established TPS and DED to provide life-saving protection to people who, if deported, would be at imminent risk of harm or death.<sup>2</sup> These protections are grounded in the principle of *non-refoulement* under international law: the obligation not to return people to countries where they would face threats to their lives, safety, or freedom, or other serious human rights abuses.

Citing risks linked to armed conflict, crime, kidnapping, armed robbery and carjacking, the U.S. State Department has issued “Do Not Travel” warnings for six regions: the North, Far North, North-West, South-West, and parts of Adamawa and East.<sup>3</sup> In its most recent human rights report on Cameroon, the U.S. State Department identified an extensive catalogue of human rights abuses against Cameroonian civilians, including extrajudicial killings, torture, arbitrary detention, violence against women and children, and targeted attacks against members of the LGBTQ+ community.<sup>4</sup> The State Department and Congressional officials have also called for the Cameroonian government to comply with human rights norms and laws. For example, in September 2020, the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations announced a resolution condemning violence and human rights abuses by Cameroonian security forces, including suppression of free speech, detention of government critics, sexual violence, torture, extrajudicial killings, and the burning of entire villages.<sup>5</sup>

The United Nations estimated in its 2021 Humanitarian Needs Overview that 4.4 million people in Cameroon were in need of humanitarian assistance.<sup>6</sup> According to the latest available updates, over 1 million people were internally displaced in Cameroon (as of September 2021)<sup>7</sup> and 67,000 Cameroonian refugees were displaced in Nigeria (as of August 2021).<sup>8</sup>

## **I. TEMPORARY PROTECTED STATUS (TPS) AND DEFERRED ENFORCED DEPARTURE (DED)**

TPS is a statutory status given to nationals of a certain country who are currently living in the United States if conditions in that country make safe return impossible. The Secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) may designate a country for TPS if conditions in that country meet requirements regarding ongoing armed conflict, natural disaster, or other extraordinary and temporary conditions that prevent safe return. Section 244(b)(1)(A) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) permits DHS to designate a country for TPS if there is an “ongoing armed conflict” such that the return of nationals to that country would “pose a serious threat to their personal safety.” Likewise, Section 244(b)(1)(C) permits the designation of TPS when other “extraordinary or temporary conditions” prevent people from safely returning home, as long as it is not against the national interest of the United States to allow them to remain. Those granted TPS are eligible for a work permit and a stay of deportation for as long as their home country remains designated for TPS.

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Mississippi alleging that ICE officials used violence and excessive force and attempted to force them to fingerprint deportation-related documents, available at:

[https://www.splcenter.org/sites/default/files/crcl\\_complaint\\_ice\\_s\\_pattern\\_of\\_torture\\_in\\_signing\\_of\\_deportation\\_documents\\_for\\_cameroonian\\_migrants.pdf](https://www.splcenter.org/sites/default/files/crcl_complaint_ice_s_pattern_of_torture_in_signing_of_deportation_documents_for_cameroonian_migrants.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Congressional Research Service Report, Temporary Protected Status: Overview and Current Issues (Updated April 1, 2020), available at [http://www.everycrsreport.com/files/20200401\\_RS20844\\_234bceecdf5e83dc354590e7862953603997186b.html](http://www.everycrsreport.com/files/20200401_RS20844_234bceecdf5e83dc354590e7862953603997186b.html)

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs, Cameroon Travel Advisory (August 9, 2021), available at <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/cameroon-travel-advisory.html>

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, Cameroon 2020 Human Rights Report (March 2021), available at <https://www.justice.gov/coir/page/file/1387181/download>

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, “Risch, Cardin Lead Colleagues in Condemning Violence in Anglophone Cameroon” (September 8, 2020), available at

<https://www.foreign.senate.gov/press/chair/release/risch-cardin-lead-colleagues-in-condemning-violence-in-anglophone-cameroon>

<sup>6</sup> UN OCHA Cameroon 2021 Humanitarian Response Plan (March 2021), available at

<https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Cameroon%20Humanitarian%20Response%20Plan%20%28March%202021%29.pdf>; OCHA, Cameroon Humanitarian Bulletin Issue N°23 (August 2021), available at

<https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Cameroon%20Humanitarian%20Bulletin%20Issue%20N%C2%B023%20-%20August%202021.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> UNHCR, Cameroon Multi-Country Office (MCO) global statistics - September 2021 (published October 2021), available at <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/89030>

<sup>8</sup> UNHCR Operational Update: Cameroonian Refugees in Nigeria - August 2021 (published September 2021), available at <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/88749>

DED was established to provide the President with a critical tool in U.S. foreign policy and is designed to protect foreign nationals in the U.S. from civil, political, and humanitarian crises in their home country that make it unsafe for them to return, or whose suspension of deportation serves other U.S. foreign policy or domestic interests. DED provides similar protections as TPS but DED does not require a registration process and is triggered when an individual is identified for removal. Therefore, a DED designation uses minimal administrative resources and has an immediate effect for those who qualify for its protections. An estimated 38,790 Cameroonians currently living in the United States would benefit from a DED or TPS designation for Cameroon.<sup>9</sup>

## II. ONGOING ARMED CONFLICT IN THE FAR NORTH REGION

The Far North region of Cameroon has been severely impacted by an armed conflict between government forces and the armed Islamist group Boko Haram and its splinter faction, the Islamic State in West Africa Province. The Boko Haram insurgency, which began in Nigeria in 2009 and spread to Cameroon in 2014, has led to the deaths of more than 3,000 Cameroonians and has resulted in the internal displacement of over 340,000.<sup>10</sup> Human Rights Watch has stated that “Boko Haram’s attacks are often indiscriminate, including suicide bombings in crowded areas,” such as schools, mosques, and refugee camps, “that appear designed to maximize civilian deaths and injuries.”<sup>11</sup> Such attacks constitute war crimes under international law. The organization also noted a rise in violent incidents in the Far North Region since the beginning of 2021, with almost daily killings, kidnappings, thefts, and destruction of property attributed to Boko Haram, which has also used child soldiers in violation of international law. A spike in Boko Haram attacks in the last two years has resulted in Cameroon suffering more attacks against civilians than Nigeria, Niger, and Chad combined in 2020.<sup>12</sup>

In connection with this ongoing armed conflict, the government has accused many residents of supporting Boko Haram, meaning that Cameroonian civilians from the Far North risk arbitrary arrest and detention, torture, other inhuman and degrading treatment, and harassment if forced to return. Amnesty International has documented how Cameroonian security forces have arbitrarily arrested hundreds of individuals accused of supporting Boko Haram, detained them in inhumane conditions, and subjected hundreds to torture, incommunicado detention, or enforced disappearance.<sup>13</sup>

## III. OTHER TEMPORARY AND EXTRAORDINARY CONDITIONS AND RISKS ACROSS THE COUNTRY

### A. Humanitarian Crises

Cameroon is facing three separate humanitarian crises affecting nearly all of the country’s ten regions: conflict with the armed Islamist group Boko Haram in the Far North region, as described above; a political and humanitarian crisis in the Anglophone North-West and South-West regions; and a refugee crisis in the East, near the border with the Central African Republic.

### ***Political and Human Rights Crisis in the Anglophone North-West and South-West Regions***

Since late 2016, Cameroon, a bilingual country with eight Francophone and two Anglophone regions, has faced a protracted human rights crisis in its Anglophone North-West and South-West regions

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<sup>9</sup> CLINIC, Backgrounder: TPS for Cameroon (Updated January 25, 2021), available at <https://cliniclegal.org/resources/humanitarian-relief/temporary-protected-status-and-deferred-enforced-departure-4>

<sup>10</sup> UNHCR Operational Data Portal: Refugee Situations, Cameroon (Updated August 31, 2021), available at <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/country/cmr>

<sup>11</sup> Human Rights Watch, “Cameroon: Boko Haram Suicide Bombers Strike Displacement Site” (August 25, 2020), available at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/08/25/cameroon-boko-haram-suicide-bombers-strike-displacement-site>

<sup>12</sup> Africa Center for Strategic Studies, “Boko Haram Violence Against Civilians Spiking in Northern Cameroon” (November 13, 2020), available at <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/boko-haram-violence-against-civilians-spiking-in-northern-cameroon/>

<sup>13</sup> Amnesty International, “Secret Torture Chambers in Cameroon” (2021), available at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2017/07/cameroon-torture-chambers/>; Amnesty International, “Cameroon: Right cause, wrong means: human rights violated and justice denied in Cameroon’s fight against Boko Haram” (July 14, 2016), available at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr17/4260/2016/en/>

resulting in the internal displacement of more than 712,000 civilians and the displacement of over 67,000 Cameroonian refugees across the border to Nigeria.<sup>14</sup> In October and November 2016 Anglophone lawyers, teachers and activists took to the streets to protest against what they perceived as the central government's attempts to marginalize and assimilate Anglophone courts and schools into the Francophone system. In response, government security forces cracked down on protests. Moderate voices began to fade, and armed separatist groups were formed. Both government forces and armed separatist groups have committed serious human rights abuses. As a result of this crisis, at least 4,000 civilians have been killed in the Anglophone regions alone.<sup>15</sup> Human rights organizations have documented how government security forces have killed civilians,<sup>16</sup> raped women,<sup>17</sup> and arbitrarily arrested and tortured alleged members of armed separatist groups;<sup>18</sup> while armed separatist groups have attacked aid workers and schools,<sup>19</sup> and killed, tortured, assaulted, and kidnapped civilians,<sup>20</sup> and both groups have destroyed civilians' homes and property.<sup>21</sup> In October 2020, unidentified gunmen killed 7 children and injured at least 13 others at a school in Kumba, in the South-West region. No one claimed responsibility for the killings, but the government has accused armed separatist groups who have called for a boycott of education in the Anglophone regions since 2017.<sup>22</sup>

Anglophone Cameroonians, if forcibly returned to Cameroon, face a serious risk of abuse by government security forces because they may be assumed to have links to armed separatist groups. The threat to them at the hands of government security forces is nation-wide. Anyone returning to the Anglophone regions also risks harm from armed separatist groups. This violence in Cameroon's Anglophone regions severely escalated in early 2021, taking an increasingly heavy toll on civilians with renewed attacks against schools and a series of recent extrajudicial killings and incidents involving improvised explosive devices (IEDs).<sup>23</sup>

### ***Refugee Crisis and Insecurity in the East Near the Border with Central African Republic***

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<sup>14</sup> UN OCHA, "Cameroon: North-West and South-West: Situation Report No. 33," July 31, 2021, available at [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/ocha\\_cmr\\_nsw\\_sitrep\\_july2021.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/ocha_cmr_nsw_sitrep_july2021.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> Jess Craig, "Violence in Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis Takes High Civilian Toll," Al Jazeera, April 1, 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/4/1/violence-in-cameroon-anglophone-crisis-takes-high-civilian-toll.text=At%20least%204%2000%20civilians%20have.an%20armed%20campaign%20since%202014>.

<sup>16</sup> Human Rights Watch, "Cameroon Security Forces Kill Civilians, Rape Woman" (July 22, 2019), available at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/07/22/cameroon-security-forces-kill-civilians-rape-woman>; Human Rights Watch, "Cameroon: Civilians Massacred in Separatist Area" (February 21, 2021), available at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/02/25/cameroon-civilians-massacred-separatist-area>

<sup>17</sup> Jess Craig, "Sexual Violence Pervasive in Cameroon's Anglophone Regions" (April 29, 2021), available at <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/4/29/gender-based-violence-pervasive-in-camerouns-anglophone-regions>

<sup>18</sup> Human Rights Watch, "Cameroon: Routine Torture, Incommunicado Detention" (May 6, 2019), available at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/05/06/cameroon-routine-torture-incommunicado-detention>

<sup>19</sup> UN OCHA, "Cameroon: North-West and South-West: Situation Report No. 32," June 30, 2021, available at <https://reliefweb.int/report/cameroon/cameroon-north-west-and-south-west-situation-report-no-32-30-june-2021>; Human Rights Watch, "Renewed Attacks on Aid Workers in Cameroon" (June 4, 2020) available at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/06/04/renewed-attacks-aid-workers-cameroon>; Human Rights Watch, "Targeted for Going to School in Cameroon" (March 12, 2020), available at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/03/12/targeted-going-school-cameroon>

<sup>20</sup> Human Rights Watch, "Cameroon: Video shows Separatists Torturing Man" (June 24, 2019), available at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/06/24/cameroon-video-shows-separatists-torturing-man>; Human Rights Watch, "Kidnappings Endemic in Cameroon's Anglophone Regions" (July 11, 2019), available at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/07/11/kidnappings-endemic-camerouns-anglophone-regions>

<sup>21</sup> Human Rights Watch, "Cameroon: New Abuses by Both Sides" (August 2, 2021), available at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/08/02/cameroon-new-abuses-both-sides>; Human Rights Watch, "World Report 2021: Cameroon" (2021), available at <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021/country-chapters/cameroon>; UNHCR Operational Data Portal: Refugee Situations, Cameroon (Updated August 31, 2021), available at <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/country/cmr>; UNHCR Operational Data Portal: Refugee Situations, Nigeria (Updated August 31, 2021), available at <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/country/nga>

<sup>22</sup> The New York Times, "At Least 6 Children Killed in Attack on School in Cameroon" (October 24, 2020), available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/24/world/africa/cameroonian-school-killing.html>; Human Rights Watch, "Cameroon: Gunmen Massacre School Children" (November 2, 2020), available at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/11/02/cameroon-gunmen-massacre-school-children>

<sup>23</sup> Jess Craig, "Violence in Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis Takes High Civilian Toll," Al Jazeera, April 1, 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/4/1/violence-in-cameroon-anglophone-crisis-takes-high-civilian-toll>

Conflict in the neighboring Central African Republic (CAR) has also impacted Cameroon, which currently hosts over 330,000 refugees from the CAR in its East, Adamawa, and Northern regions, after a new wave of refugees crossed the border following election-related violence in CAR in late 2020.<sup>24</sup> The influx of refugees has put significant pressure on the already limited natural resources and basic social services in host communities, severely exacerbating pre-existing vulnerabilities and leading to increased incidents of criminality, kidnappings, and inter-communal violence.<sup>25</sup>

## **B. Other Issues Creating Risks For Returnees**

In addition to the above three humanitarian crises, other contexts and issues create risks and threats to safety across the country. Inter-communal violence has affected at least two regions (the Far North and North-West). The Cameroonian government's continued crackdowns on political opposition and dissent, as well as security forces' documented use of incommunicado detention and torture, create risks for anyone deported to Cameroon. Notably, deportees from the United States risk being targeted by authorities for actual or imputed opposition to the government,<sup>26</sup> and have experienced arbitrary detention and other abuses upon return, as detailed below. LGBTQ+ people also face additional risks.

### ***Inter-Communal Violence in the Far North and North-West regions***

In August 2021 in the Far North Region, clashes between ethnic Choa Arab herders and ethnic Mousgoum fishermen and farmers killed at least 32, injured at least 74 people, and burned down at least 19 villages, representing the worst inter-communal violence recorded to date in Cameroon. The violence internally displaced 7,300 people and forced 11,000 people from both groups to flee to Chad, 85% of whom are women and children.<sup>27</sup> Similar tensions between the Mbororos (ethnic Fulani nomadic herders) and non-Mbororos (local farmer communities) in the North-West Region have led to increasingly violent clashes.<sup>28</sup>

### ***Government Repression of Political Opposition and Dissent***

The government has continued restricting freedom of expression and association and has become increasingly intolerant of political dissent.<sup>29</sup> In particular since 2020, authorities have cracked down on opponents of President Paul Biya and his ruling party, limiting political space. Hundreds of opposition party members and supporters were arrested in September 2020 following demonstrations calling for, among other things, a peaceful resolution to the crisis in the Anglophone regions. The government charged hundreds of peaceful protestors with "terrorism and rebellion," using the COVID-19 pandemic as a pretext to silence opposition and prevent dissent.<sup>30</sup>

### ***Government Security Forces' Use of Torture and Incommunicado Detention***

Human rights groups have documented use of torture by government forces in official and unofficial detention centers, including military bases, where many people have been held incommunicado. Security forces have severely beaten and used near-drowning to extract confessions from detainees

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<sup>24</sup> UNHCR Operational Data Portal: Refugee Situations, Cameroon (Updated August 31, 2021), available at <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/country/cmr>; UNHCR, "Number of Central African refugees soars as violence intensifies" (January 15, 2021), available at <https://www.unhcr.org/news/briefing/2021/1/600152d24/number-central-african-refugees-soars-violence-intensifies.html>

<sup>25</sup> [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/cmr\\_hno\\_2020\\_print1.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/cmr_hno_2020_print1.pdf) ; <https://data2.unhcr.org/fr/documents/download/86262>

<sup>26</sup> Human Rights Watch, "US: Protect Cameroonians from Deportation" (December 18, 2020), available at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/12/18/us-protect-cameroonians-deportation>

<sup>27</sup> <https://reliefweb.int/report/chad/intercommunal-clashes-cameroon-force-11000-people-flee-chad>; <https://www.voanews.com/a/africa-cameroon-says-fight-over-water-leaves-many-dead-or-wounded/6209578.html>; <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/fisher-herder-conflict-northern-cameroon-kills-least-12-2021-08-12/>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/19376812.2020.1720755?journalCode=rafq20>

<sup>29</sup> Human Rights Watch, World Report 2021, "Cameroon: Events of 2020," available at <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021/country-chapters/cameroon>

<sup>30</sup> Ibid; Human Rights Watch, "Cameroon: Opposition Leaders, Supporters Detained" (October 19, 2020), available at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/10/19/cameroon-opposition-leaders-supporters-detained>



suspected of ties to armed separatist groups.<sup>31</sup> In its latest human rights report on Cameroon, the U.S. State Department listed arbitrary arrests, “torture and cases of cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment by the government” (among others), and “harsh and life-threatening prison conditions” among the “significant human rights issues” in Cameroon.<sup>32</sup>

### ***Human Rights Abuses in Cameroon Against Cameroonians Deported from the United States***

There are currently over 100 Cameroonians in the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) custody with final orders of removal, meaning they could be deported at any given moment.<sup>33</sup> On three known deportation flights in October, November 2020, and October 2021, ICE deported an estimated 80-90 Cameroonians en masse.<sup>34</sup> According to news articles and deportees, some members of the Cameroon Advocacy Network have spoken with, Cameroon authorities confiscated the identification documents of many Cameroonians deported on the October and November 2020 flights. Under Cameroonian law, failure to possess an identity card is a punishable offence resulting in up to one year imprisonment and fines.<sup>35</sup> Those with confiscated IDs risk harassment and arrest, and face barriers to freedom of movement, obtaining employment, registering for a SIM card, sending or receiving money, and finding housing. Many fear arrest by the government. News articles have reported cases of arbitrary detention and abuse of Cameroonians deported from the US.<sup>36</sup>

The COVID-19 pandemic has only intensified the above humanitarian crises and human rights issues in Cameroon, where violence and heavy rains have catastrophically degraded infrastructure essential to the delivery of humanitarian aid and pandemic relief. Citing limited medical resources and a high risk of contracting the virus, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have warned against all but essential travel to Cameroon.<sup>37</sup> The Cameroonian government has also been criticized for its lack of transparency on the misuse of millions of dollars in pandemic relief funds.<sup>38</sup> Medical workers report that hospitals have seen no additional aid or construction for new facilities, resulting in a lack of

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<sup>31</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/africa/west-and-central-africa/cameroon/report-cameroon/>;  
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/press-release/2019/07/cameroon-opposition-members-tortured-by-security-forces/>;  
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr17/6536/2017/en/>;  
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/05/06/cameroon-routine-torture-incommunicado-detention>

<sup>32</sup> U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, Cameroon 2020 Human Rights Report (March 2021), available at <https://www.justice.gov/coir/page/file/1387181/download>

<sup>33</sup> Julia Ainsley, “More than 40 Members of Congress Ask Biden to Halt Deportation of Cameroonians to Unsafe Homeland,” NBC News, (February 17, 2021) available at: <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/immigration/more-40-members-congress-ask-biden-halt-deportation-cameroonians-unsafe-n1258103>

<sup>34</sup> Julian Borger, “US to send asylum seekers home to Cameroon despite ‘death plane’ warnings,” The Guardian, (November 9, 2020) available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/nov/09/us-to-send-asylum-seekers-home-to-cameroon-despite-death-plane-warnings>

<sup>35</sup> Loi no 90-42 du 19 décembre 1990 instituant la carte nationale d'identité, art. 5, <https://www.gredevel.fr/index.php/2016-03-14-13-30-24/2016-03-14-13-59-43/file/185-loi-n-90-42-du-19-dec-1990-instituant-la-carte-nationale-d-identite?start=20>

<sup>36</sup> See *The American Prospect* (November 9, 2020): “When the [Cameroonian] police questioned G.N. [after deportation from the US], they found a member’s card for the Southern Cameroons National Council...they arrested him... detained him for six days and beat him. He was released when his uncle paid a \$1,000 bribe, he said.” Available at: <https://prospect.org/justice/deported-cameroonian-asylum-seekers-fear-for-their-lives/>; See also *The Nation* (November 9, 2020): “A lawyer and advocate in Cameroon [said] he could account for at least 13 who remain in detention almost a month after their deportation... many of the deported Cameroonians who were released had to pay bribes for their freedom. Some went straight into hiding... another deported asylum seeker... remains in a maximum-security prison in Cameroon.” Available at: <https://www.thenation.com/article/politics/cameroon-asylum-deportation-immigration/>; *Net Afrique*, “Cameroon: Deserting officers from the army and separatists repatriated by the USA” (October 19, 2020) (reporting that according to a confidential source, 30 out of the 57 individuals deported back to Cameroon were taken into custody upon their forced return) available at <https://netafrique.net/cameroon-des-officiers-deserteurs-de-larmee-et-des-separatistes-rapatries-par-les-usa/>.

<sup>37</sup> CDC, COVID-19 in Cameroon (August 9, 2021), available at <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/covid-1/coronavirus-cameroon>

<sup>38</sup> Moki Edwin Kindzeka, “Cameroon Investigates Missing \$335 Million in COVID Funds,” *VOA News* (May 31, 2021), available at <https://www.voanews.com/a/africa-cameroon-investigates-missing-335-million-covid-funds/6206445.html>; Sarah Saadoun (Human Rights Watch), “In Cameroon, Government Secrecy in the Management of Funds Destined for COVID-19 Response,” *Le Monde* (August 2020), available at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/09/24/cameroon-government-secrecy-management-funds-destined-covid-19-response>

personal protective equipment, limited bed space, and an inability to treat patients.<sup>39</sup> Some attempts to distribute masks, hand sanitizer, and other protective materials by non-governmental groups have even been politicized and prevented by the ruling party.

### III. CONCLUSION

Cameroon is in the midst of multiple humanitarian crises, including an armed conflict in the Far North and widespread violence in the North-West and South-West, characterized by war crimes, massive internal displacement, serious human rights abuses by both government forces and armed groups, and critical shortages of essentials including water, food, housing, and healthcare. Because these conditions make safe return to Cameroon impossible, we call on the United States government to act immediately to extend protection from deportation to Cameroonians living in the U.S.

Please contact Daniel Tse at [dtse@haitianbridge.org](mailto:dtse@haitianbridge.org) and Sarah Decker [decker@rfkhumanrights.org](mailto:decker@rfkhumanrights.org) to discuss this urgent matter at your earliest opportunity.

Sincerely,

1. ABISA: African Bureau for Immigration and Social Affairs
2. Adelanto Visitation & Advocacy Network
3. Adhikaar for Human Rights and Social Justice
4. Advocate Visitors with Immigrants in Detention (AVID) in the Chihuahuan Desert
5. AFL-CIO
6. African Bureau for Immigration and Social affairs
7. African Communities Together
8. African Diaspora for Good Governance
9. African Legal Concierge, PLLC
10. AFSC Colorado
11. Ahri Center
12. Al Otro Lado
13. Alamo Bay Press
14. Aldea - The People's Justice Center
15. Alianza Americas
16. America's Voice
17. American Friends Service Committee
18. American Immigration Lawyers Association
19. Amnesty International USA
20. Arriba Las Vegas Worker Center
21. Asian American Pacific Islanders - Christians for Social Justice
22. Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC
23. ASISTA
24. Asylum Seekers Sponsorship Project
25. Bellevue Program for Survivors of Torture
26. Black Alliance for Just Immigration
27. Black and Brown United in Action
28. Black LGBTQIA+ Migrant Project - BLMP
29. Blumenau Law, PLLC
30. Border Organizing Project
31. Border Organizing Project
32. Brooklyn Immigrant Community Support

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<sup>39</sup> Human Rights Watch, "Cameroon: Investigate, Distribute Health Fund" (June 12, 2020), available at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/06/12/cameroon-investigate-distribute-health-fund>

33. California Immigrant Policy Center
34. Cameroon Advocacy Network - CAN
35. Cameroon American Council
36. Cameroonian Association of Northern New England
37. Capital Area Immigrants' Rights Coalition (CAIR)
38. CASA
39. Casa de Maryland
40. Casa Ruby
41. Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc.
42. Center for Gender & Refugee Studies
43. Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
44. Center for Popular Democracy
45. Center for Victims of Torture
46. Center for Worker Justice
47. Charo - Young Bhutanese of New York
48. Christian Reformed Church Office of Social Justice
49. Church World Service
50. Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)
51. Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition
52. Comunidades Unidas
53. Congregations Organized for Prophetic Engagement
54. Connecticut Shoreline Indivisible
55. Contigo: An Interfaith Ministry for Immigration Justice
56. Cooperative Baptist Fellowship
57. Courageous Resistance of the Desert
58. DC Volunteer Lawyers Project
59. Deported Asylum Seekers Assistance Project
60. Detention Watch Network
61. Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries
62. East Bay Sanctuary Covenant
63. Engagement for TPS
64. Equal Justice Center
65. Espacio Migrante
66. Faith in New York
67. Families For Freedom
68. FANM: Family Action Network Movement
69. Fellowship Southwest
70. First Focus on Children
71. Florence Immigrant & Refugee Rights Project
72. Free Migration Project
73. Freedom for Immigrants
74. Freedom Network USA
75. Friends of Angola
76. Friends of Immigration
77. Global Justice Clinic, Washington Square Legal Services
78. Global Social Work, LLC
79. Granite State Organizing Project
80. Guadalupe Presbyterian Detention Ministry
81. Guatemala Presbyterian Church
82. Haitian Bridge Alliance
83. HI Coalition for Immigrant Rights



84. HIAS
85. Hispanic Federation
86. Hope Border Institute
87. Houston Immigration Legal Services Collaborative
88. Human Rights Campaign
89. Human Rights First
90. Human Rights Initiative of North Texas
91. Human Rights Watch
92. Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights
93. Immigrant Defenders Law Center
94. Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project
95. Immigrant Legal Resource Center
96. Immigrants Rising, a Project of Community Initiatives
97. Immigration Hub
98. Immigration Support Circle
99. Immigration Working Group of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod
100. Immigration Working Group, SWPA Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
101. Inland Coalition for Immigrant Justice
102. Interfaith Community for Detained Immigrants
103. Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity
104. Interfaith Welcome Coalition
105. International Association of Black Lawyers
106. International Mayan League
107. International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP)
108. Iowa Migrant Movement for Justice (Iowa MMJ)
109. ISLA: Immigration Services and Legal Advocacy
110. Jewish Activists for Immigration Justice of Western MA
111. Justice Action Center
112. Justice at Work Pennsylvania
113. Justice for Our Neighbors El Paso
114. La Raza Community Resource Center
115. Leadership & Advocacy for Women Africa Fellowship Program
116. Legal Aid Justice Center
117. Louisiana Advocates for Immigrants in Detention
118. Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service
119. MA Jobs with Justice
120. Mainers for Humane Immigration
121. Make the Road Nevada
122. Make The Road New York
123. Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition
124. Michigan United
125. Migrant Center for Human Rights
126. Mississippi Center for Justice
127. MomsRising/MamásConPoder
128. Morongo Basin Coalition for Social Justice
129. National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations In America
130. National Council of Jewish Women
131. National Employment Law Project
132. National Immigrant Justice Center
133. National Immigration Law Center
134. National Network for Immigrant & Refugee Rights

135. National Partnership for New Americans
136. Nebraska Appleseed
137. Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala (NISGUA)
138. NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
139. New American Leaders Action Fund
140. New Bridges Presbyterian Church
141. New Life Christian Church of Fontana
142. New York Immigration Coalition
143. NH Conference United Church of Christ Immigrant and Refugee Support Group
144. Nikkei Progressives
145. Northwest Immigrant Rights Project
146. NYCD16 Indivisible
147. Oasis Legal Services
148. OneAmerica
149. Orange County Equality Coalition
150. Orange County Rapid Response Network (OCRRN)
151. Oxfam America
152. Planned Parenthood Federation of America
153. NH Helps Immigrants
154. Pax Christi New Jersey
155. Presbyterian Church USA
156. Presbytery of the Pacific
157. Presente
158. Progressive Leadership Alliance Of Nevada
159. Project Blueprint
160. Public Counsel
161. Pulso
162. Quixote Center
163. RAICES
164. Rainbow Beginnings
165. Rapid Defense Network (RDN)
166. Refugee Congress
167. Rights and Democracy
168. Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights
169. Rocky Mountain Immigrant Advocacy Network
170. San Fernando Valley Indivisible
171. SIREN
172. Southern Poverty Law Center
173. Southwest Asylum & Migration Institute "SAMI"
174. Student Clinic for Immigrant Justice
175. St. Francois Foundation
176. Sunflower Community Action
177. Sur Legal Collaborative
178. Tahirih Justice Center
179. TASSC International
180. The Advocates for Human Rights
181. The Resurrection Project
182. The Rhizome Center for Migrants
183. The United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society
184. Transcend Arizona
185. U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI)

186. UCOM
187. UndocuBlack Network
188. Unidad Latina en Acción CT
189. Unidos MN
190. Unitarian Universalist Association
191. Unitarian Universalist Service Committee
192. Unite Here
193. Unite Oregon
194. United African Organization
195. United Stateless
196. United We Dream
197. Venice Resistance
198. Voice for Refuge Action Fund
199. We Are All America
200. Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center
201. Witness at the Border
202. Women's Refugee Commission (WRC)
203. Woori Juntos
204. World Relief