

Appendix IV, HRW Letters to Separatist Leaders

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September 22, 2021

To: Dr. Ebenezer Derek Mbongo Akwanga, chairman of the African People's Liberation Movement

Dear Dr. Ebenezer Derek Mbongo Akwanga,

I am writing on behalf of Human Rights Watch to share the findings of our research into attacks on education professionals and institutions in Cameroon's Anglophone regions since 2017. These findings will form the basis of a report being compiled by our organization. We are keen to integrate your perspectives on these attacks and to obtain details of any actions you and your group have taken or will be taking to address them. This information will be included in the upcoming report scheduled for publication in the coming weeks.

Human Rights Watch is an international nongovernmental organization that conducts research and advocacy on human rights in over 90 countries. Human Rights Watch has for many years documented and reported on human rights violations and abuses in Cameroon, including in the Anglophone regions.

Our research documented attacks on students, education professionals, and schools carried out by armed separatist fighters in the North-West and South-West regions between 2017 and 2021. We also documented at least one attack against a school by alleged Cameroonian soldiers. We are examining the consequences of these attacks, which have led to over 700,000 students being denied an education, according to the United Nations. Our research also highlights steps taken by the government of Cameroon to prevent or curtail such attacks as well as remaining gaps. The report will include recommendations for separatist groups, the Cameroonian government, and international partners regarding specific steps that should be taken to end attacks, better protect schools, students, and teachers, ensure that those responsible for the attacks are



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Between November 2020 and September 2021, Human Rights Watch interviewed by telephone a total of 110 people, including former students, teachers, and other education professionals. We also interviewed former separatist fighters, healthcare, social and humanitarian workers, lawyers, journalists, civil society representatives, UN officials, and diplomats.

Human Rights Watch was unable to travel to Cameroon to conduct in person research due to the global Covid 19 pandemic and difficulties obtaining visas. We sought to address the limitations of phone interviews by corroborating our findings through other sources, including reports by Cameroonian human rights groups and international humanitarian organizations, by collecting and examining photographs and video footage, and by reviewing legal and medical records.

Please find further details of our findings in Appendix I and a list of questions for you and your group in Appendix II.

We would be grateful if you could provide us with a detailed reply by October 4, 2021. We would also be grateful for the opportunity to have a conversation with you or any of your representatives to further discuss this matter.

If you have any questions, or if you wish to arrange a time to discuss the content of this letter, please feel free to contact me at [REDACTED] or on [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Sincerely,



Mausi Segun
Executive Africa Director
Human Rights Watch

Appendix I: Summary of Human Rights Watch's Findings

Attacks on students, teachers, and schools have become a hallmark of the crisis in Cameroon's Anglophone regions since 2017, with devastating consequences for an entire generation of young people, as well as their teachers, families, and broader communities.

Attacks on Schools by Armed Separatist Fighters

At least 70 schools have been attacked in the Anglophone regions since 2017, according to reports from United Nations agencies, the World Bank, Cameroonian and international civil society organizations, and media outlets. Human Rights Watch documented in detail 14 attacks on schools by separatist fighters and one attack on a school by security forces between January 2017 and January 2021. Human Rights Watch found that armed separatists made threatening visits to schools, during which they ordered the schools to be closed, and destroyed school infrastructure and property, including with fire. During one attack, gunmen shot and killed seven students.

Kidnapping, Assaults, Threats against Students and Teachers by Armed Separatist Fighters

Human Rights Watch has documented how armed separatists have killed at least three teachers, kidnapped over 268 students and teachers, and threatened, intimidated, harassed, or assaulted hundreds of others in their attempts to force them to stop attending school. In some cases, both in and outside of schools, attackers destroyed or seized students' books and teachers' documents.

Child Recruitment and Use by Armed Separatists

According to Human Rights Watch's research, armed separatists in the Anglophone regions have recruited children into their groups and used them in their operations. Accounts collected by Human Rights Watch from people who have been kidnapped and taken to separatist camps reveal that children are present inside armed separatist groups. Human Rights Watch also reviewed photographs and video footage showing children with guns, standing with other seemingly older separatist

fighters. The ongoing violence, separatists' threats against students and youth, the frustrations caused by military abuses, and the need for survival have all increased schoolchildren's risk of recruitment by separatist armed groups. While living among separatist fighters, children may experience violence, may be required to participate in stressful initiation and training ceremonies, and may be forced to take dangerous drugs.

Armed Separatists' Use of Schools

According to Human Rights watch research, separatist fighters have used schools as bases, held hostages at schools, stored weapons and ammunition in schools, and deployed fighters in and near them. Human Rights Watch documented the occupation of at least six schools by separatist fighters in the North-West region (one in Bali, one in Koppin, one in Mbuluf, one in Tenkha, one in Tan, and one in Mbiplah villages) and three in the South-West region (one in Bai Panya, one in Foe Bakundu, and one in Maromba villages).

Appendix II: Request for Information

We would be grateful if you could provide us with responses to the following questions:

- What is your position with regards to the resumption of classes in the Anglophone regions?
- How do you respond to allegations that armed separatist fighters, including those belonging to the armed groups affiliated to your political organization, have attacked schools, teachers, and students since 2017?
- Could you please provide us with more information regarding how many armed groups have pledged allegiance and/or are fighting on behalf of your political organization? Could you tell us whether they are operating in both Anglophone regions, or just in one of the two?
- Could you please provide us with more information regarding the chain of command within the armed groups which have pledged allegiance and/or are fighting on behalf of your political organization?

- How many, if any, schools in the Anglophone regions have been used by armed groups affiliated to your political organization? Where, when, and why?
- How many, if any, children have been recruited and used by armed groups affiliated with your political organization? Where, when, and why?
- Have you taken any steps to instruct fighters within the armed groups affiliated with your political organization to refrain from attacking schools, teachers, and students? If so, can you describe these actions?
- Have you taken any steps to instruct fighters within the armed groups affiliated with your political organization to refrain from using schools for purposes such as checkpoints and bases? If so, can you describe these actions?
- Have you provided fighters within the armed groups affiliated with your political organization with any code of conduct to guide their operations in the Anglophone regions, including to avoid harming civilians? If so, could you share a copy?
- Have you ever sanctioned fighters within the armed groups affiliated with your political organization for abusing civilians, including students and teachers, in the Anglophone regions? If so, could you please provide more details as per what kind of sanctions, when, where, against how many fighters, and for what kind of wrongdoing?
- Could you please explain what your organization is doing to address the impact of the Anglophone crisis on education, and to ensure protection and access to learning opportunities for students?

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September 22, 2021

To: Dr. Samuel Ikome Sako, President of the Interim
Government of the Federal Republic of Ambazonia

CC: Christopher Anu, head of the communication
department of the Interim Government of the Federal
Republic of Ambazonia

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September 22, 2021

To: Sisiku Julius Ayuk Tabe, President of the Ambazonia
Interim Government

CC: Dabney Yerimah, Vice-president of the Ambazonia
Interim Government

Dear President Sisiku Julius Ayuk Tabe,

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