

At-Issue

Engaging Both Sides: Dual Track Diplomacy and Dialogue in Cameroon

NGUH NWEI ASANGA FON and EMMANUEL ACHIRI

Abstract: The crisis in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon that began as a protest by teachers and lawyers trade unions in late 2016 is becoming an intractable conflict which if not addressed risks destabilizing the entire Central African sub-region. Using Zartman's "ripeness" as a theoretical premise, this paper analyses the evolution of the conflict and proposes dual track diplomacy as a possible solution to break the present deadlock. Given the difficulties for both sides to escalate their way to victory and the growing, unsustainable cost of a prolonged confrontation, the present situation shows significant traces of a mutually hurting stalemate that we propose can be exploited by actors interested in resolution of the conflict. The need for and possible policy implications of pursuing a dual track diplomatic approach is explored here. It is obvious that dual track diplomacy can contribute greatly to bringing a lasting solution to the Anglophone crisis.

Keywords: Anglophone crisis, ripeness theory, dual track diplomacy, Cameroon.

Introduction

The crisis in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon which began as a protest by teachers and lawyers trade unions in late 2016 is becoming an intractable conflict which if not addressed risks destabilizing the entire Central African sub-region. This paper explores possible pathways to engage both parties and arrive at a lasting solution to the crisis. The first part traces the historical roots of the Anglophone problem to present day. In the second part, we analyze different theoretical frameworks in the field of conflict resolution and provide reasons as to why Zartman's ripeness theory is more suitable for the ongoing crisis in Cameroon. The third part highlights the attempts at mediation by international organizations as well as other state parties, while the fourth section focuses on our proposed intervention of dual-track diplomacy as a possible mediation strategy for the resolution of the conflict.

Background and the Current Crisis

When the current president of Cameroon Paul Biya changed the name of the country from the United Republic of Cameroon to the Republic of Cameroon in 1984, a prominent Anglophone lawyer and first president of the BAR Association, Fon Dinka, called for the independence of

Nguh Nwei Asanga Fon and **Emmanuel Achiri** are both pursuing their doctorates at Eastern Mediterranean University and are coordinator and research consultant (respectively) for Stop the War in Cameroon Coalition initiative.

<http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v20/v20i2a5.pdf>

the English-speaking North West and South West regions of Cameroon under the name Republic of Ambazonia.¹ The reason for this reaction lies in the history of Cameroon. With the defeat of Germany at the end of World War 1, the German colony Kamerun was partitioned between the French and British as protectorates. While the French administered eastern Cameroon as a territory in its own right, the British divided the western part into two—British Southern and British Northern Cameroons—and administered these as part of Nigeria. At the time of independence, British Northern Cameroons chose to remain as part of Nigeria, while British Southern Cameroons voted in a referendum to join the Republic of Cameroon (the French-administered territory which had just gained its independence in 1960).²

This referendum is often criticized by Anglophone activists who decry the lack of a real choice. Leaders of the British Southern Cameroons preferred an independent territory, but opposition from Pan-African movements as well as the British government forced the UN to offer British Southern Cameroons only two choices to gain independence by either joining the Federal Republic of Nigeria or the Republic of Cameroon. Faced with this choice, the peoples of British Southern Cameroons, led by John Ngu Foncha, chose to ‘try their chances’ in a loose federation with the French-speaking Cameroons, thereby becoming West Cameroon in the newly-formed Republic of Cameroon in 1961.³

Unknown to the leaders of West Cameroon, President Ahmadou Ahidjo viewed this federal structure as “an unavoidable stage in the establishment of a strong unitary state.”⁴ In 1972, Ahidjo called for another referendum, and on May 20 the Federal Republic of Cameroon was abolished, replaced by the United Republic of Cameroon.⁵ In 1984, President Paul Biya changed the name again to the Republic of Cameroon despite heavy criticism from Anglophone activists who pointed out that the new name was the name the French-speaking part of Cameroon had at its independence.⁶ Following this, Anglophone activists and elites continued to decry a continuous economic, political, and cultural marginalization of the Anglophone community by a Francophone-dominated central government.

Complaints of marginalization by the Anglophone community dating back to the 1970s and 1980s continued through the 1990s with the rise of Anglophone political leaders like Ni John Fru Ndi and the Social Democratic Front (SDF), the organization of the All Anglophone Conferences (AAC), and the emergence of the Southern Cameroons National Council. Into the 21st century, this idea of marginalization has been kept alive and manifested in different forms that current movements have built upon.⁷

On the 13 December 2017, François Louncény Fall, Special Representative of the Secretary General for Central Africa and the Head of the UN Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), called on the international community to pay attention to the burgeoning crisis in Cameroon dubbed ‘the Anglophone problem.’ He decried the violent turn which the situation had taken, calling for inclusive and fundamental dialogue for the resolution of this crisis. Although as shown, the matter has a long-standing history, the most recent manifestation can be traced to November 2016 when English-speaking lawyers and teachers began protesting against the marginalization of the Common Law and Anglophone educational systems by a Francophone-dominated government. The government’s initial response of arresting protest leaders and shutting down the internet in western regions further intensified the resolve of

many Anglophones, as well as radicalized some who saw this as further evidence of marginalization.

On 1 October 2017, Anglophones in the North West and South West took to the streets to protest against marginalization. The Southern Cameroon Ambazonia Consortium United Front (SCACUF) issued a statement on Facebook that said "Today, we reaffirm our autonomy over our heritage and over our territory."⁸ These events prompted the establishment of secessionist armed groups, most prominently the Ambazonia Defense Forces (ADF) of the Ambazonia Governing Council. The Cameroonian government reacted by branding secessionist armed groups as terrorists.⁹ State radio announced that "President Paul Biya has declared war on these terrorists who seek secession."¹⁰

Even though the government later took some measures toward addressing concerns of the lawyers and teachers, this was too little too late. A further escalation followed the events of September 22 and October 1 which saw the deaths of about thirty protesters.¹¹ Conflicts intensified and by the end of 2017 there were several insurrections in the Manyu division of the South West region. The government responded by militarizing the region which led to skirmishes and loss of life for Anglophone secessionists and state security forces. This also caused a refugee crisis with many Manyu residents fleeing into neighboring Nigeria.

Since October 2018, violence has intensified in the Anglophone regions. At the start of 2020, Human Rights Watch reported that over 3000 civilians had lost their lives and another half million have been displaced following large-scale security operations as well as attacks by separatists.¹² A heavy-handed government approach has seen security forces which include soldiers, gendarmes, and BIR (Rapid Intervention Battalion) kill civilians, torch villages, and detain/torture suspected separatists. On the other hand, separatists ransack schools in an attempt to enforce lockdowns, engage in kidnapping for ransom, as well as kill both civilians and security forces.¹³

In 2019-20 alone, human rights organizations have reported a number of human rights violations by government security forces.¹⁴ In August 2019, ten leaders of the Ambazonian Interim Government headed by Sisiku Ayuk Tabe were tried and given life sentences at a military court despite outcries by human rights organizations that these trials violated due process as well as the right to fair trial.¹⁵ On the other hand, armed separatists have kidnapped, tortured, and killed dozens of people including teachers, students, clergy, and local administrative authorities. They have also been accused of destroying property and using sexual violence in a violent campaign to enforce a boycott of schools in the Anglophone regions.¹⁶ In October 2020 at a school in the South West region, eight schoolchildren were killed. Both sides have refused to claim responsibility and blame the atrocity on the other party.¹⁷

Due to international pressure, there have been attempts at ceasefire and negotiations. In September 2019, President Biya called for a national dialogue. This series of nationwide discussions culminated in the adoption of a 'special status' for the two Anglophone regions and the release of three hundred political prisoners.¹⁸ In March 2020, the Southern Cameroons Defense Forces (SOCADEF) called for a ceasefire following the outbreak of COVID-19, and in June 2020, further talks were held between the government and the separatist faction led by Sisiuku Tabe.¹⁹ Despite these talks, both sides have not stopped the violence. Since January 2020, 285 civilians have been killed by government security forces and armed separatists.²⁰

Theoretical Approaches

Scholars have developed different theories and approaches to analyze conflicts. In Azar's protracted social conflict theory, a combination of both inter-state and ethnic conflicts have the following characteristics:

They do not permit change in the fundamental grievances, and continually reduce the chances for dealing with conflict settlement issues. They tend to generate, reinforce, or intensify mutual images of deception. They tend to increase the likelihood of confusion in the direct and indirect communications between the parties and their allies. They increase the anxieties of the parties to the conflict, and they foster tension and conflict-maintenance strategies. In the protracted conflict situation, the conflict becomes an arena for redefining issues rather than a means for adjudicating them; it is therefore futile to look for any ultimate resolution. The conflict process becomes the source rather than the outcome of policy.²¹

In the context of the Anglophone crisis, protracted social conflict theory has limited value as a framework to understand the conflict. While the current war being waged by secessionist forces against government forces or the military can be categorized as an inter-state conflict despite its domestic setting, it would be deeply flawed to identify it as an ethnic conflict because the cleavages on both sides are politico-linguistic rather than ethnic.

Consociational theory focuses on the management of conflicts between groups within a deeply divided but democratic society with "extremely unfavorable conditions for a democratic government."²² According to Rupesinghe, "Consociational theory relates to a situation with two or more collective actors that cannot be integrated (for one reason or another) to form one unified actor, but who realize (for one reason or another) that they have to co-exist within and delegate some sovereignty to a common institutional framework."²³ Whilst, consociational theory elucidates the disparity among the two main actors in the Anglophone crisis, there is no shared conviction between both parties "to co-exist and delegate some sovereignty to a common institutional framework." Besides, consociationalism is more suitable as a conflict management approach and not the conflict resolution approach needed at the current stage of a crisis which has all the makings of a full-blown civil war.

An institutional approach focuses on mechanisms such as legal safeguards or constitutional guarantees to protect minorities, or informal community organizations as a means to broker peace.²⁴ This approach is not suitable to understand or address the conflict given the tendency among belligerent parties to engage in revisionist history to substantiate claims plus the current constitutional framework does not provide any possibility for secession. Such a provision will violate territorial integrity and national integration which so far, the government has been unwilling to entertain discussions on. This renders the institutional theory of conflict inefficient when it comes to conflict resolution analysis in the context of the Cameroon Anglophone crisis.

The inadequacies of the theoretical frameworks above to provide a suitable analytical tool in understanding the nature of the conflict leads us to Zartman's ripeness theory. This theory gives importance to the timing of the resolution initiative or effort as a key element to the success of conflict resolution. Successful conflict resolution hinges fundamentally on the willingness of the parties to engage in resolution efforts, whether negotiation or mediation. This is preconditioned on a situation "when alternative, usually unilateral, means of achieving a

satisfactory result is blocked and the parties find themselves in an uncomfortable and costly predicament."²⁵ This imposes a mutually hurting stalemate (MHS) under which neither party can escalate itself to victory or continue to endure the pain of the deadlock.²⁶ Another important element of MHS is the perception of a possibility of a mutually acceptable remedy to the conflict.²⁷

Ripeness theory has seen continuous usage by conflict resolution scholars and professionals in explaining successful peace negotiations like the Oslo Talks and the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh.²⁸ Zartman's theory fits well the context of the Cameroon Anglophone crisis. First, victory or the prospect of victory has eluded both sides as the conflict has become protracted and costly. For the government, there are mounting casualties as well as a toll on the administration which has to continuously respond to international pressure. Though the government has for a long period ceased revealing the number of fatalities amongst its soldiers, the last reports were alarming. By June 2018, the number of soldiers and police killed had risen above one hundred, along with a rise in the number of soldiers kidnapped.²⁹ Government forces have also witnessed a rise in the number of wounded. In June 2019, the military and police hospitals in Yaounde and Douala reported receiving thirty-two and fourteen wounded respectively.³⁰ A 2019 report by the International Crisis Group (ICG), which has been monitoring the conflict since its inception puts the total number of casualties among government forces (soldiers and police) at 235.³¹ Also concerning to the government was the revelation by a wounded government soldier that secessionist fighters had started using more modern weapons.³²

Furthermore, the conflict is having a significant toll on the economy. An assessment report of the consequences and impact on business enterprises operating in the North and South West regions published in 2019 by the Cameroon Employers' Association (better known by its French acronym GICAM), reveals some very troubling statistics. The report estimates the value of the overall economic losses from the conflict at over 269 Billion XAF which also implies a loss of almost 6 billion XAF in tax revenue for the state.³³

In terms of food security, the crisis has caused many farmers in the Anglophone regions to abandon their farms. The president of the Cameroon Employer's Association, Celestin Tawamba, has underscored that the "abandonment of farms will likely increase hunger and poverty, and cripple the economy" and that "the food scarcity in the country since the beginning of the Anglophone crisis is of an unprecedented scale."³⁴ The October 2019 GICAM report details the effect on production and marketing activities in the North West and South West regions. The cumulative number of workdays lost by companies from the lockdowns imposed in the two regions during the conflict is 159 for the South West region and 141 for the North West region over 2018 and 2019.³⁵ These figures are equivalent to 30.6 percent for the South West and 27.1 percent for the North West in terms of the total working days lost per year.³⁶

The ongoing crisis also produced a significant foreign policy setback for the government as Cameroon was suspended from the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) by the Trump Administration at the beginning of 2020. In a letter addressed to the US Congress, President Trump cited "persistent gross violations of internationally recognized human rights" linked to extrajudicial killings of its citizens by government armed forces involved in a conflict

with Anglophone secessionists.³⁷ The Trump Administration also ended over 17 million USD in security assistance to Cameroon.³⁸

There has been additional mounting pressure from the international community for the government to engage in dialogue with the Ambazonian separatists. In November 2019, a tripartite mission consisting of the Chairperson of the African Union, Moussa Faki Mahamat, the Secretary General of the Commonwealth, Patricia Scotland, and the Secretary General of the International Organization of 'La Francophonie', Louise Mushikiwabo, visited and held meetings with Cameroonian authorities including President Paul Biya and Prime Minister Dion Ngute. Three key international organizations—of which Cameroon is a member—reiterated that dialogue is the preferred means for the restoration of peace.³⁹ In June 2020, a group of Nobel Peace Prize winners, including former South African President Frederick W. de Klerk and 2018 laureate Dr. Denise Mukwege, called on the government and the separatists to observe a COVID-19 ceasefire.⁴⁰ During a video conference held in December 2020, the UN Security Council called on both sides to engage in constructive dialogue.⁴¹ It is evident that this crisis has indeed become a thorn to the government, particularly as the prospects of a military victory still appear far-fetched.

For the Ambazonian separatists, there are also clear signs of a hurting stalemate. They have lost close to a thousand fighters.⁴² So far, they have not been able to achieve any international recognition of their declared statehood either at the sub-regional, continental, or global level. Key separatist leader Sisiku Julius Ayuk Tabe, the self-proclaimed President of Ambazonia, is currently serving a life sentence at the Yaounde maximum security prison despite calls for his release by activists and human rights organizations.⁴³

The Anglophone struggle for independence is also bedeviled by division and infighting. The Ambazonian separatist movement has witnessed a split leading to two rival factions: the 'Ambazonia Interim Government' led by Sisiku Julius Ayuk Tabe and another led by a US-based former pastor, Samuel Ikome Sako.⁴⁴ The Sisiku faction entered into ceasefire talks with the government in July 2020.⁴⁵ These talks have been disavowed by other Anglophone separatists at home and in the diaspora, who maintain that Tabe has not been mandated to negotiate on behalf of Anglophones.⁴⁶ This lack of a unified leadership has set the stage for conflicting voices among the separatist movements on possible pathways towards achieving their desired cause.⁴⁷

Mediation Intervention: Dual Track Diplomacy

Both parties are reeling from the protracted nature of the conflict and the prospects of a military victory for either side appears elusive. We therefore see this mutually hurting stalemate making the conflict ripe for mediation via dual track diplomacy. 'Track one' diplomacy has been defined by De Magalhaes as "[a]n instrument of foreign policy for the establishment and development of contacts between the governments of different states through the use of intermediaries mutually recognized by the respective parties."⁴⁸ It is a formal process that takes place at state-to-state level and perceived as basic conflict resolution mechanism in the foreign policy of a state.⁴⁹ The term 'track two' diplomacy was coined by Montville as:

an unofficial, informal interaction between members of adversary groups or nations that aims to develop strategies, influence public opinion, and organize

human and material resources in ways that might help to resolve their conflict. ...[It] is a process designed to assist official leaders to resolve or, in the first instance, to manage conflicts by exploring possible solutions out of public view and without the requirements to formally negotiate or bargain for advantage.⁵⁰

Rather than being alternatives, 'track one' and 'track two' diplomacy are complementary. To this end, Montville underscores that track two diplomacy should not be conceived as a replacement to 'track one' diplomacy. He maintains that track two diplomacy is "designed to assist official leaders by compensating for the constraints on them imposed by the psychologically understandable need for leaders to be, or at least be seen to be, strong wary and indomitable in the face of the enemy."⁵¹ Dual track diplomacy is simply the combination of two diplomatic tracks of conflict resolution and is most suitable for the resolution of the Cameroon conflict.

Efforts towards Resolution

To date, efforts towards the resolution of the conflict have centered predominantly on track one diplomacy, i.e. putting pressure on the government to engage in dialogue towards a sustainable solution that tackles the root causes. At the level of the African Union (AU), there has been an apparent unwillingness to intervene in the conflict. At the early stage of the crisis in January 2017, AU Commission chairperson Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma issued a statement calling for restraint and encouraging the continuation of government-initiated dialogue to find a solution to what were a series of minor protests at the time.⁵² Her successor Moussa Mahamat Faki paid a visit to Cameroon in July 2019 and called for an inclusive dialogue involving all stakeholders and "based on national leadership and ownership."⁵³

The efforts of the AU to handle the conflict has been sharply criticized by human rights groups and other observers. The ICG pointed out that the AU has been "surprisingly reserved" on this crisis, evident by its absence on the agenda of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) and being perceived as an "internal matter."⁵⁴ Amnesty International Africa Director, Netsanet Belay, blames the conflict on "the persistent inability of the AU to marshal the determination, political will and courage to hold member states to account for clear violations of AU principles, values and standards on especially human rights."⁵⁵ Not surprisingly then, most African countries have either remained silent or taken stances against UN intervention. African non-permanent members of the UN Security Council (Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Cote D'Ivoire, and South Africa) all voted against attempts to bring the crisis up for discussion.⁵⁶ Nigeria clearly expressed its support for the government in its fight against the separatists. President Muhammadu Buhari stated unequivocally "Nigeria will take necessary measures within the ambit of the law to ensure that its territory is not used as a staging area to destabilise another friendly sovereign country."⁵⁷

In contrast, the European Parliament adopted a resolution in April 2019 which "calls in particular for the Government to organise an inclusive political dialogue aimed at finding a peaceful and lasting solution to the crisis in the Anglophone regions" and "urges the African Union and the Economic Community of the Central African States to push for the organisation of such talks and calls for the EU to stand ready to support this process."⁵⁸ The United States has also been involved in some track one diplomacy. In March 2019, the U.S. Undersecretary of State for African Affairs, Tibor Nagy, visited Cameroon and held talks with President Paul Biya.

In an interview with RFI, Mr. Nagy underscored that the government needed to be "more serious in their management of the Anglophone crisis."⁵⁹ Meanwhile, in July 2019 the U.S. House of Representatives passed Resolution 358 calling on the belligerent parties to: "respect the human rights of all Cameroonian citizens, to end all violence, and to pursue a broad-based dialogue without preconditions to resolve the conflict in the Northwest and Southwest regions."⁶⁰

Discussion

So far, efforts mustered by various actors towards a resolution of the conflict have been mostly track one diplomacy. The aforementioned actors and stakeholders have so far failed to resolve the on-going conflict or seriously engage the parties. We do not propose to abandon efforts at track one diplomacy. Rather, a critical understanding of this conflict presents an opportunity wherein 'ripeness' can be effectively exploited through pursuance of a dual track diplomatic option—a combination of track one and track two diplomacy in efforts to resolve this crisis.

An Auspicious Moment

The ongoing conflict shows significant elements of a mutually hurting stalemate. For the military, the war has not turned out to be the easy ride they had anticipated, given their overwhelming military advantage, as they have also registered a large number of casualties. Public opinion and support has also withered to its lowest level given the military's adoption of a scorched earth policy, pushing civilians to seek refuge in neighboring countries, towns, and villages. Allegations of rape, targeted killings, and other violations of human rights on the part of soldiers have also not helped the government's image nationally and internationally. The prospect of an interminable conflict may only cause further damage in terms of loss of soldiers and the government's image and reputation. A protracted conflict also risks losing rights to the African Cup of Nations which Cameroon is scheduled to host in 2021.

On the other side, lack of coordination and infighting within the separatist forces, undermines their chances of achieving their goals. A power struggle seems to have emerged between members of the caretaker government of Samuel Sako and the Ambazonia Interim government of Sisiku Julius Ayuktabe. The latter dissolved the caretaker government from his prison cell and was later impeached by members of the Sako camp (under the banner of the Restoration Council).⁶¹ Kidnapping for ransom and other actions against civilians have undermined the support from the local population. Furthermore, lack of support or backing from regional or international powers has thwarted any serious paths to ultimate victory in the establishment of an independent state.

A Dual Track Diplomatic Approach

In light of the aforementioned, it is obvious that both sides have reached a moment when it is both difficult to escalate their way to victory—the conflict appears to have reached a mutually hurtful stalemate. This presents a window of opportunity for third party intervention(s). Given the failure of previous initiatives predominantly focused on track one diplomacy, a dual track approach a more rational and effective option. The merits of a dual track approach come from its ability to engage both sides simultaneously and progressively towards a cease-fire and a

final agreement. While track one is designed for governments and state representatives, track two is well adapted to reach out to non-state actors in a conflict given its unofficial, informal nature which leads to more flexibility and inclusivity. Track two diplomacy can be used in the pre-negotiation stage to understand grievances and demands that can be viable for both parties during negotiations.

Fischer's dual track strategy of unofficial problem-solving workshops which focuses on bringing together politically influential individuals to contribute towards "the process and outcomes of official negotiations" is highly commendable. This strategy takes place at the pre-negotiation stage and focuses on building an enabling environment for negotiation through "the opening up of communication, the improvement of attitudes, the analysis of conflict issues and dynamics, the development of frameworks, the creation of options directed toward resolution."⁶² Hottinger underscores the importance of adding track two in the context of a conflict that has as one of its belligerents, an armed group:

Like most organizations, armed groups do not appear spontaneously and remain stable until the end of their existence. Because armed groups are highly volatile organizations, building up an understanding of them can take many years. Track two actors can help build this gradual understanding. One of the essential tasks of any mediator interested in an armed group is to watch and measure the phases within an armed group's life, so as to understand its intentions, reasoning, strategy and evolution in such a way as to be in a position to help prevent the situation from deteriorating, or occasionally to help set the venue and agenda within pre-negotiations. This has been the case in Burundi, for example, where a number of NGOs sustained contact with the Forces for the Defence of Democracy–National Council for the Defence of Democracy (FDD-CNDD), while discussing issues with them, organizing seminars and trying to help them build a political agenda solid enough to deal with the Burundian government. The FDD-CNDD eventually decided to negotiate in 2000.⁶³

On the other hand, ignoring a dual track approach risks ensuring the continuation of the status quo or even worsening the humanitarian crisis and extending the conflict to other regions of the country.

Efforts towards resolving the crisis have been entirely based on track one diplomacy: encouraging or putting pressure on the government to engage in dialogue with the separatists. Since the conflict began, the heads of all the main international and regional organizations in which Cameroon holds membership have visited the country and held talks with the government. But none of them have visited the regions under conflict or held talks with the separatists (either those on the ground or their allies and representatives in the Diaspora). The outcome of this limited track one pursuit has to date not been successful in bringing both sides to the negotiation table.

Policy Implications and Recommendations

Engaging in dual track diplomacy should engender a number of outcomes that facilitate resolution of the ongoing conflict. First, it would avail actors and entities engaged in peace-making or conflict resolution initiatives the possibility to reach out simultaneously to both

sides. It is crucial to have a balanced understanding of the perceptions, grievances, and expectations of belligerents and other key stakeholders. The foundation of effective conflict management and resolution is a comprehensive understanding of the conflict. Second, it would provide an opportunity to sound out potential solutions or remedies and refine proposals adapted to the needs of both sides. Third, track two strategies would help build confidence and create an enabling environment for track one strategies to thrive and lead to lasting solutions. Lastly, dual track diplomacy would also help enlist a wider range of expertise and resources including non-governmental organizations and conflict resolution/mediation experts who can bring their competences to bear in enhancing the pre-negotiation process as well as subsequent official negotiations.

Conclusion

The crisis in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon which began as a protest by teachers and lawyers trade unions in late 2016 risks destabilizing the entire Central African sub-region. Using Zartman's ripeness as a theoretical premise, this paper proposes dual track diplomacy as a solution to break the present deadlock. Given the difficulties for both sides to escalate their way to victory and the growing and unsustainable cost of a prolonged confrontation, the present situation shows significant traces of a mutually hurting stalemate that can be exploited by actors interested in a resolution of the conflict. The possible policy implications of pursuing a dual track diplomatic approach has been explored in this paper. It is obvious from the foregone analysis that dual track diplomacy can contribute greatly to bring a lasting solution to the Anglophone conflict.

References

- African Union. 2017. "AU expresses concern on the situation in Cameroon." <https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20170118-0>
- _____. 2019. "Readout of the visit of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission to Cameroon." <https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20180716/readout-visit-chairperson-african-union-commission-cameroon>
- Aljazeera. 2020. "Cameroon admits army role in February massacre of civilians." <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/4/21/cameroon-admits-army-role-in-february-massacre-of-civilians>
- Arthur, P. 1990. "Negotiating the Northern Ireland problem: Track one or track two diplomacy?" *Government and Opposition* 25.4: 403-18.
- Azar, E. et al. 1978. "Protracted Social Conflict; Theory and Practice in the Middle East." *Journal of Palestine Studies* 8.1: 41-60.
- Bone, R. 2020. "Ahead of peace talks, a who's who of Cameroon's separatist movements." *The New Humanitarian*. <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/analysis/2020/07/08/Cameroon-Ambazonia-conflict-peace-whos-who>.

- Butenschøn, N. A. 1985. "Conflict Management in Plural Societies: the Consociational Democracy Formula." *Scandinavian Political Studies* 8.1-2: 85-103.
- Chothia, F. 2018. "Red Dragons and Tigers - Cameroon's English-speaking rebels." <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-45723211>
- Daily Trust*. 2018. "Nigeria Will Not Be Used to Destabilise Cameroon - President Buhari." <https://allafrica.com/stories/201802130004.html>
- Durmaz, M. 2019. "The African Union's core values are under threat with Sisi at the helm." <https://www.trtworld.com/africa/the-african-union-s-core-values-are-under-threat-with-sisi-at-the-helm-24102>
- Ekonde, D. & B. Adebayo. 2019. "US removes Cameroon from trade pact over alleged human rights violations." <https://edition.cnn.com/2019/11/01/africa/cameroon-trump-trade-pact/index.html>.
- European Parliament. 2019. "Joint Motion for A Resolution on Cameroon." http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/RC-8-2019-0245_EN.html
- Essa, A. 2017. "Cameroon's English-speakers call for independence." <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/10/171001123925310.html>
- Fisher, R. 2006. "Coordination between Track Two and Track One Diplomacy in Successful Cases of Prenegotiation." *International Negotiation* 11.1: 65-89.
- GICAM. 2018. "Insécurité dans les régions du Sud-Ouest et du Nord-Ouest: Consequences Economiques et Impacts sur L'activite des Entreprises." <https://www.legicam.cm/index.php/d/1872>.
- _____. 2019. "Insecurity in the North West and South West regions: Economic Consequences and Impacts on Corporate Activity." <https://www.legicam.cm/media/upload/2019051/updated-assessment-report-pdf.pdf>.
- Govtrack. 2019. "Text of H.Res. 358: Calling on the Government of Cameroon and armed groups to respect the human rights ... (Passed the House version)." <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/116/hres358/text>
- Home Office. 2020. *Country Policy and Information Note Cameroon: Anglophones*. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/873402/Cameroon_-_Anglophones_-_CPIN_-_v1.0__March_2020_.pdf.
- Hottinger, J. T. 2005. "The relationship between track one and track two diplomacy." *Accord: an International Review of Peace Initiatives* 16: 56-59.
- Human Rights Watch. 2020. "World Report 2020. Cameroon Events of 2019." <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2020/country-chapters/cameroon>>
- _____. 2020. "Cameroon: Massacre Findings Made Public." <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/04/24/cameroon-massacre-findings-made-public>

_____. 2020. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/07/27/cameroon-civilians-killed-anglophone-regions>

International Crisis Group. 2019. "Eight Priorities for the African Union in 2019." <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/eight-priorities-african-union-2019>

_____. 2019b. "Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis: How to Get to Talks?"

<https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/cameroon/272-crise-anglophone-au-cameroun-comment-arriver-aux-pourparlers>

_____. 2019c. "Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis: How to Get to Talks?" *Africa Report* N°272.

Retrieved 2 May 2019. [D2071andvip0wj.cloudfront.net](https://d2071andvip0wj.cloudfront.net).

https://d2071andvip0wj.cloudfront.net/272-cameroon-anglophone-crisis_0.pdf.

_____. 2017. "Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis at the Crossroads" *Africa Report* N°250. Retrieved 12 August 2019 from https://d2071andvip0wj.cloudfront.net/250-cameroons-anglophone-crisis-at-the-crossroads_0.pdf

International Federation for Human Rights. 2017. "Cameroon: Death toll rises in Anglophone regions after severe repression" <https://www.refworld.org/docid/59e4c4994.html> [accessed 29 December 2020].

Jalloh, A. 2020. "Nobel Prize laureates call for Cameroon ceasefire." Retrieved 17 December 2020. <https://www.dw.com/en/nobel-prize-laureates-call-for-cameroon-ceasefire/a-53901189>.

Journal du Cameroun. 2019. "Cameroon: UN Security Council to discuss Anglophone crisis." <https://www.journalducameroun.com/en/cameroon-un-security-council-to-discuss-anglophone-crisis/>

_____. 2019. "Cameroon: Separatist hardliners react after impeachment of detained Ambazonia leader." <https://www.journalducameroun.com/en/cameroon-separatist-hardliners-react-after-impeachment-of-detained-ambazonia-leader/>

Kindzeka, M. 2019. "Cameroon War Victims: Casualty Figures High Because Fighters Are Well Armed." <https://www.voanews.com/africa/cameroon-war-victims-casualty-figures-high-because-fighters-are-well-armed>

_____. 2019b. "Cameroon War Victims: Casualty Figures High Because Fighters Are Well Armed." <https://www.voanews.com/africa/cameroon-war-victims-casualty-figures-high-because-fighters-are-well-armed>.

_____. 2018. "Cameroon says Military Casualties Mounting."

<https://www.voanews.com/africa/cameroon-says-military-casualties-mounting>.

_____. 2019c. "Commonwealth, AU, OIF Call for Peace and Unity in Cameroon." *Voice of America*. Retrieved 17 December 2020, from <https://www.voanews.com/africa/commonwealth-au-oif-call-peace-and-unity-cameroon>.

Konings, P. & F.B. Nyamnjoh. 1997. "The Anglophone Problem in Cameroon." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 35.2: 207-29.

- Liliane, N. 2020. "Résolution de la crise anglophone : l'Onu demande à Yaoundé et aux Ambazoniens de faire un dialogue constructif - actualité du Cameroun." <https://agencecamerounpresse.com/politique/diplomatie/r%C3%A9solution-de-la-crise-anglophone-l%E2%80%99onu-demande-%C3%A0-yaound%C3%A9-et-aux-ambazoniens-de-faire-un-dialogue-constructif.html>.
- Lunn, J., & Brooke-Holland, L. 2019. "The Anglophone Cameroon Crisis: April 2019 Update." <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-8331/>.
- Maclean, R. 2019. "Cameroon Anglophone separatist leader handed life sentence." <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/aug/20/cameroon-anglophone-separatist-leader-ayuk-tabe-handed-life-sentence>.
- Mapendere, J. 2005. "Track One and a Half Diplomacy and the Complementarity of Tracks." *Culture of Peace Online Journal* 2.1: 66-81.
- Mbom, S. 2017. "Cameroon government 'declares war' on secessionist rebels." <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5a2540fe4.html>
- Mooradian, M. and D. Druckman. 1999. "Hurting Stalemate or Mediation? The Conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh, 1990-95." *Journal of Peace Research* 36.6: 709-27.
- Mules, I. and J. Ngong Song. 2020. "Cameroon: Schools targeted in Anglophone crisis." <https://www.dw.com/en/cameroon-schools-targeted-in-anglophone-crisis/a-55521637#:~:text=Cameroon's%20volatile%20Anglophone%20region%20is,teachers%20to%20tor%20and%20violence>
- Nchanji, N. 2019. "Ambazonia Leader Sisiku Ayuktabe Dissolves Sako Caretaker Government, Re-installs Own Cabinet – Cameroon News Agency." <http://cameroonnewsagency.com/ambazonia-leader-sisiku-ayuktabe-dissolves-sako-government-re-installs-own-cabinet/>
- Ngoh, V. J. 1979. "The political evolution of Cameroon, 1884-1961." M.A. thesis, Portland State University.
- Pommerolle, M. E. & H. Heungoup. 2017. "The Anglophone Crisis: A Tale of the Cameroonian Postcolony." *African Affairs* 116.464: 526-38.
- Pruitt, D. G. 1997. "Ripeness theory and the Oslo talks." *International Negotiation* 2.2: 237-50.
- Rupesinghe, K. 1987. "Theories of Conflict Resolution and their Applicability to Protracted Ethnic Conflicts." *Bulletin of Peace Proposals* 18.4: 527-39.
- Segun, M. 2019. "Africa Should Not Fail Cameroon." <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/06/28/africa-should-not-fail-cameroon>
- Tantoh, M. 2019. "Cameroon: U.S. and Europe Turn Up the Heat on Govt." <https://allafrica.com/stories/201903060683.html>
- University of Oxford. 2019. "A Report on the Cameroon Anglophone Crisis." <http://ohrh.law.ox.ac.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Cameroon-Anglophone-Crisis-Report-.pdf>

US Department of Justice. 2020. "Country Policy and Information Note - Cameroon: North-West/South-West crisis." <https://www.justice.gov/eoir/page/file/1345186/download>

Zartman, I. W. 2000. "Ripeness: The Hurting Stalemate and Beyond." In Stern et al. (eds.) *International Conflict Resolution after the Cold War* (Washington: National Academy Press) 225-250.

_____. 2008. "Ripeness: The Importance of Timing in Negotiation and Conflict Resolution". *E-International Relations*. <https://www.e-ir.info/2008/12/20/ripeness-the-importance-of-timing-in-negotiation-and-conflict-resolution/>

_____. 2008b. "Conflict and Resolution." In Bercovitch et al. (eds.) *The SAGE Handbook of Conflict Resolution*.

Notes

1 Konings and Nyamnjoh 1997, p. 213.

2 Konings and Nyamnjoh 1997.

3 Pommerolle and Heungoup 2017, p. 527.

4 Konings and Nyamnjoh 1997, p. 210.

5 Ngoh 1979, p. 100.

6 Konings and Nyamnjoh 1997.

7 Pommerolle and Heungoup 2017, p. 529.

8 Essa 2017.

9 Chothia 2018.

10 Mbom 2017.

11 International Federation for Human Rights 2017. 12 Human Rights Watch 2020.

13 Human Rights Watch 2020.

14 Human Rights Watch, 2020.

15 University of Oxford 2019.

16 Human Rights Watch 2020.

17 Mules and Ngong Song 2020.

18 US Department of Justice Report, p. 9.

19 Human Rights Watch 2020.

20 Human Rights Watch 2020.

21 Azar Jureidini and McLaurin 1978.

22 Butenschøn 1985, p. 86.

23 Rupesinghe 1987, p. 534.

24 Rupesinghe 1987.

25 Zartman 2000, p. 225.

26 Zartman 2008.

27 Zartman 2008b.

- 28 Pruitt 1997. Mooradian and Druckman 1999.
- 29 Kindzeka 2018.
- 30 Kindzeka, 2019b.
- 31 International Crisis Group 2019c, p. 1
- 32 Kindzeka, 2019b.
- 33 GICAM 2018, p.11.
- 34 Home Office 2020, p. 24.
- 35 GICAM 2019.
- 36 GICAM 2019.
- 37 Ekonde and Adebayo 2019.
- 38 Ekonde and Adebayo 2019.
- 39 Kindzeka 2019c.
- 40 Jalloh 2020.
- 41 Liliane 2020.
- 42 International Crisis Group 2019.
- 43 McClean 2019.
- 44 Bone, 2020.
- 45 Aljazeera 2020.
- 46 Bone 2020.
- 47 Lunn and Brooke-Holland 2019.
- 48 Mapendere 2005, p. 67.
- 49 Mapendere 2005.
- 50 Hottinger 2005, p. 56.
- 51 Arthur 1990, p. 403. 52 African Union 2017.
- 53 African Union 2019.
- 54 International Crisis Group 2019.
- 55 Durmaz 2019.
- 56 International Crisis Group 2019b; Segun 2019;
- 57 Journal du Cameroun, 2019 57 DAILY TRUST 2018.
- 58 European Parliament 2019.
- 59 Tantoh 2019.
- 60 Govtrack 2019.
- 61 NCHANJI 2019. Journal du Cameroun 2019b.
- 62 Fisher 2006.
- 63 Hottinger 2005, p. 58.