

## **Open Letter to President Macron about Human Rights Abuses in Cameroon**

November 12, 2019

Honourable Emmanuel Macron  
President of the Republic of France  
Palais de l'Élysée, rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré  
75008 Paris, FRANCE

Dear President Macron:

We, the undersigned scholars, writers, and human rights advocates, write to plead with France to up its engagement in resolving Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis, described by some analysts as "Rwanda in slow motion".

Specifically, we respectfully urge France to use its considerable influence with the government of President Paul Biya to encourage Cameroon to openly embrace the Swiss-led peace talks, as a means of ending the killings and atrocities being committed in the North West and South West regions of the country. A lasting solution must come from a mediated process that includes Anglophone armed-separatist groups and non-violent civil-society leaders.

This is urgent; the dehumanizing violence in Cameroon must not reach the scale of what happened in Rwanda in 1994. While armed non-state groups and bandits use machetes to maim, torture, and behead, government forces are committing crimes against humanity such as extrajudicial executions and burning of villages. Journalists, opposition politicians, and other civilians are wrongfully detained. Over half a million Anglophones are displaced as they flee the violence. Hundreds of thousands of children have missed school for more than three years, and according to recent United Nations reports, 1.4 million people are at risk of famine.

France and the international community may be aware that Cameroon's recent Major National Dialogue did not adequately address the Anglophone Crisis as violence persists in the Anglophone regions since the close of the dialogue on October 4.

The Major National Dialogue and release of political prisoners were steps in the right direction. However, the dialogue did not address the conflict's root causes; it excluded discussion on alternative forms of governance, and did not provide enough security guarantees for the diaspora and separatist leaders to attend. The dialogue did not stop atrocities, or generate an acceptable or viable political solution for the Anglophone regions. The Swiss-led talks now appear to be the only path to an appropriate political solution through an inclusive negotiating table.

Mr. President, we trust that you personally, and your country France, value your historical relationship and continued ties with Cameroon, and wish for peace to return to that country. We trust that France does not want to be complicit in another genocide in Africa after Rwanda, and will take all measures possible now. Please promote the Swiss talks so that the violence is brought to an end, human rights are respected, and normalcy returns to both Anglophone and Francophone Cameroon.

Cameroonians, friends of Cameroon in France, and the world, are waiting.

1. Alphonsus B. M. Gbanie, Executive Secretary, Human Rights Defenders Network – SL, Sierra Leone
2. Awada Ali Yakhoub, Président National de l’AECPEM, Association pour l’enseignement coranique et la protection des enfants mouhadjirine, Tchad
3. Centre for Human Rights, Faculty of Law, University of Pretoria, South Africa
4. CLEEN Foundation, Nigeria
5. Consortium of Ethiopian Human Rights Organizations – CEHRO, Ethiopia
6. Cory Williams, Co-Founder, Darfur and Beyond, USA
7. Defenders Coalition (National Coalition of Human Rights Defenders – Kenya), Kenya
8. Dr. Al Sutton, Africa Freedom Coalition, USA
9. Dr. Charlotte Walker-Said, John Jay College, City University of New York, USA
10. Dr. Elisa von Joeden-Forgey, Dr. Marsha Raticoff Grossman Associate Professor of Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Stockton University; Former President, Genocide Watch; Former First Vice-President, International Association of Genocide Scholars, USA
11. Dr. Gerald Bareebe, Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Political Science, University of Toronto – Scarborough, Canada
12. Dr. Gregory H. Stanton, Founding President, Genocide Watch, USA
13. Dr. James Angove, Lecturer in Moral and Political Philosophy, University of Oxford, UK
14. Dr. Lynn Cockburn, Assistant Professor, University of Toronto, Canada
15. Dr. Manjeet Ramgotra, Lecturer in Law, SOAS, University of London, UK
16. Dr. Michael Minch, Peace and Justice Studies, Utah Valley University, USA
17. Dr. Piet Konings, Honorary Fellow, African Studies Centre, University of Leiden, The Netherlands
18. Dr. Robert K. Hitchcock, Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of New Mexico, USA
19. Dr. Roxana Willis, Researcher in Law and Criminology, University of Oxford, UK
20. Dr. Samuel Totten, Professor Emeritus, University of Arkansas, USA
21. Eric Cohen, Chairperson and Co-Founder, Investors Against Genocide, USA
22. Esther Sprague, Director, Sudan Unlimited, USA
23. Francis Kpatindé, Maître de conférences, Sciences Po Paris, France
24. Fred Muvunyi, Editor, Germany’s international broadcaster DW; Consultant, Freedom House; Op-Ed contributor, The Washington Post, Germany
25. Gabriel Stauring, Stop Genocide Now, USA
26. George Shirinian, Executive Director, Zoryan Institute, Canada
27. Jeffrey Smith, Executive Director, Vanguard Africa, USA
28. Jonathan Osei Owusu, Executive Director, POS Foundation; Vice Chairman, Ghana Human Rights NGOs Forum; Convener, West Africa Human Defenders Network – Ghana chapter and UN UPR, Ghana
29. Kim Klett, Educators’ Institute for Human Rights, USA
30. Kyle Matthews, Executive Director, Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies, Canada
31. Lauren Fortgang, Director and Co-Founder, Never Again Coalition, USA
32. Lawyers’ Rights Watch Canada
33. Linda Melvern, Author: A People Betrayed – The role of the west in Rwanda’s genocide; Conspiracy to Murder – The Rwandan genocide, UK
34. Mme Mama Koité Doumbia, Présidente du Réseau MUSONET/Mali; Représentante Afrique au Trust Funds pour les Victimes de la Cour Pénale Internationale/CPI; Membre de FemWise Africa/Union Africaine; Présidente de la Plateforme des Femmes leaders du Mali; Membre du Groupe Consultatif ONU Femmes Afrique Ouest et Centre; Membre du Réseau Francophone Egalité Femmes Hommes/OIF, Mali

35. Martha Boshnick, Co-chair, Darfur Interfaith Network, USA
36. Ndifuna Mohammed, Executive Director, Justice Access Point – Uganda (JAP), Uganda
37. Pearl Eliadis, human rights lawyer and Adjunct Professor of Law, Faculty of Law, McGill University, Canada
38. Professor Adam Jones, Political Science, University of British Columbia, Canada
39. Professor Amanda Hammar, Director, Centre of African Studies, University of Copenhagen; President, Africa-Europe Group for International Studies (AEGIS), Denmark
40. Professor Arshin Adib-Moghaddin, SOAS, University of London, UK
41. Professor David Livingstone Smith, University of New England, USA
42. Professor Elisabeth Weber, University of California – Santa Barbara, USA
43. Professor Gareth Austin, Professor of Economic History, University of Cambridge, UK
44. Professor Ian Taylor, School of International Relations, University of St Andrews, UK
45. Professor the Lord Alton of Liverpool, Liverpool Hope University, UK
46. Professor William Felstiner, Cardiff University, UK
47. Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights, Canada
48. Rebecca Tinsley, Founder, Waging Peace, UK
49. Sam Weller, Canadians for Peace in Cameroon, Canada
50. Terry Nickelson, Executive Director, Our Humanity in the Balance, USA