

Original Paper

Press Insecurity during Anglophone War Coverage in Cameroon: Ways to Protect Marginalized Journalists

Emmanuel K. Ngwainmbi^{1*}

¹ Independent Scholar, Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

* Emmanuel K. Ngwainmbi, engwainmbi@gmail.com

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Abstract

As the global media community prepares for World Press Freedom Day 2025 culminating and the Academic Conference on Safety of Journalists, attacks on journalists and the profession are diversified as never before. Military regimes and democratic governments prevent journalists from accessing and reporting news correctly. That scenario exists in the Republic of Cameroon (aka LRC), where some eight million predominantly English-speaking people in Cameroon and abroad struggle for recognition as a separate nation from the Republic of Cameroon. The struggle has been disfigured by misinformation on social media platforms, unreliable reporting of the crises, and journalists having limited access to news and information sources. LRC's military and pro-independence fighters often prevent journalists from reaching affected groups, particularly refugee inhabitants facing inhumane treatment by the military, thus possibly fearing backlashes from government officials, human rights advocates, the United Nations Human Rights Council, pro-independence groups, and Free Press Unlimited.

Using straw polls, email surveys, and telephonic surveys carried out periodically between January 2022 and March 2024 on news reporters and journalists serving four independent newspapers in the Anglophone region, this presentation shall highlight newsgathering and reporting practices during the war. This paper offers possible solutions for the gridlock inter-alia: (i) ways of re-establishing integrity in journalism as a credible news bank and (ii) how journalists in nations excluded from mainstream social, economic, educational, and cultural life should be protected against punitive activities facilitated by international partners, particularly donors.

Keywords

war, newspapers, military, journalists, news, source, Anglophone, Cameroon, Ambazonia

1. Introduction

1a. The psychology of news creation and press coverage

News remains the most essential tool human beings have used or relied on to construct, re-construct, adjust, or re-adjust their thoughts, actions, feelings, and decisions. No matter what their cultural orientation, age, race, creed, belief, level of education, geographical location, or time in the history of humanity, homo sapiens capitalize or rely on news to take action or consider immediate, medium, or long-term behavior. Thus, we cannot underestimate news-creating structures. Suppose the journalists, informants, reporters, channels, and language users turn basic information into something new. In that case, we will most likely accept press coverage of any happening as news. What about the conditions under which the happenings are recorded or reported? In fragile conditions like war zones, journalists are expected to be protected if they do not directly participate in the hostilities. Of course, news media, when used for propaganda purposes, must enjoy immunity from attacks, except when they are used for military purposes or to incite war crimes, genocide, or other acts of violence. The fact that easy access to social media platforms has created a tsunami of news and information flows to eager and unwitting audiences and markets alike around the world, with significant implications on users' consumption patterns and attitudes toward the topics shared, determining political outcomes, including in politically fragile nations, emerging communities, and industrialized regions (Ngwainmbi, 2018, p. 29) should alarm traditional sources of credible news—the press—historically credited for connecting publics to information they need to advocate for themselves, make informed decisions, and hold elected officials accountable.

In a statement published online May 3, during the celebration of World Press Freedom Day, the United Nations complained that:

Journalists encounter significant challenges in seeking and disseminating information on contemporary issues, such as supply chain problems, climate migration, extractive industries, illegal mining, pollution, poaching, animal trafficking, deforestation, or climate change. Ensuring the visibility of these issues is crucial for promoting peace and democratic values worldwide (<https://www.un.org/en/observances/press-freedom-day>).

That is also why World Press Freedom Day has been dedicated to the importance of journalism and freedom of expression in the current global environmental crisis.

1b. Press Role in Covering News

Five storylines trigger news coverage—a spontaneous event, senior government official, citizen, press, or medium used. The frequency of use determines its importance: how often it is replicated, shared, received, and consumed. The press has always had a romantic relationship with conflict zones, mainly because each situation potentially has significant news value and is of utmost public interest due to its security implications. Conflict is, thus, the adrenalin of the news media. Similarly, journalists are

trained to trace disagreements and discords, so they find war irresistible. The media's involvement becomes more enthusiastic and extensive when war happens in its locale. Many cases supporting my position have been recorded in history books for centuries, one being the Kargil conflict between India and Pakistan from May to July 1999, which, as Rai (2000) remembers, broke out when the Indian media was better equipped to project it on an unprecedented scale.

Lastly, qualities of nuanced news reporting are observed. In this social media era inundating communication platforms and our minds with vast volumes of unprocessed data and information, journalists are expected to have the skills to identify, observe, gather, assess, record, and share relevant information. They need vital research and writing skills, ethical awareness, and creativity; they must pay attention to detail and remain curious; have the ability to write with clarity, cohesion, and intrigue; be inherently curious; can write captivating articles for the audience and maintain curiosity. They must be prepared to question pieces of information, even in trusted organizations, and they must be persistent and keep going when hunting for information, especially in bureaucratic environments where authorities control information that should be public.

This article analyzes press insecurity in coverage of the Anglophone war in Cameroon, guided by the globally known principles of press freedom. It reviews news stories published on the crises.

1c. Crisis Coverage in Bureaucratic Environments

Journalists, especially community (citizen) ones practicing pure journalism, are easy victims of the oppressor during war or rising political tensions. There has been a remarkable increase in the number of journalists reportedly killed or missing in 2022 alone. Its report stated that 533 journalists were in detention because of their work. Many women journalists are in detention, a record-breaking rise of nearly 30% compared to 2021. According to a Reporters Without Borders report published online in 2022, an international organization that monitors and reports on press freedom violations, advocates for policies and practices that defend the safety of journalists working in dangerous conditions, women now account for nearly 15% of detained journalists, compared to fewer than 7% five years ago. However, member states of the African Union (A.U.) had affirmed Aspiration 3 of the Agenda 2063: "an Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law." Under the aegis of the A.U., the media stakeholders attending the African Media Convention in Arusha in May 2022 canvassed for improved synergies between the media in Africa, governments, internet intermediaries, private and public sectors, civil society, national and regional human rights organizations, and researchers to mitigate the effects of the digital onslaught on journalism and the media. There are documented cases of the press not being given access to crucial information from states and political parties that are in the public interest and are essential for public accountability. The African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP), an African-led, regional non-profit research policy institute established in 2010 to help bridge the gaps between research, policy, and practice in

development efforts in Africa, has proactively beamed the torchlight on persecutors of anti-corruption whistleblowers and supports evidence-based information and press coverage for good governance and government accountability. The governance watchdog that operates in 24 African countries, Cameroon among them, and whose focus areas include governance and accountability, health and wellbeing, and strengthening capacity in evidence-based use for decision-making for Africa to achieve sustained and equitable development is not only concerned with promoting a culture where evidence is actively sought and used routinely in decision-making suitable investments and transformation of people's lives; it also assesses bottlenecks in accessing and publicizing data on marginalized populations, political crises and institutional biases against freedom-seeking groups. Also, Mziwandile Ndlovu, a Research and Policy Analyst working with the African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP), cites cases of African public officials not declaring their finances and political parties not publicly disclosing their funding sources. Ndlovu (2023) points to the growing criminalization of free speech online, primarily using legislation that purportedly aims to combat "fake news" and "false news." He further states that regulatory requirements for digital media outlets and citizen content creators to be licensed by states and to pay fees and levies, coupled with the intimidation, jailing, and brutalization of media workers and online content creators, are some of the pressing challenges facing the media today.

The plight of legitimate news gatherers in situations of armed Conflict continues and cannot be ignored if news consumers want to know the truth about the causes and course of the war in their community.

Accurate reporting is necessary; it requires unfettered access to potential news sources and breaking news and reporting it without coercion. While war correspondents are protected under international humanitarian law and considered civilians under Article 79 of the Second Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions, the warring groups, especially in fragile states, do not guarantee their protection. Explosives, rogue administrations, and disorderly armed groups in the conflict areas are known to ignore the Geneva Convention treaty.

Journalism is fundamental for sustainable development, human rights protection, and democratic consolidation. Still, it remains dangerous and too often deadly. As the global media community prepares to observe another World Press Freedom Day, in tandem with the eighth edition of the Academic Conference on the Safety of Journalists convened in Uruguay and broadcast online, attacks on journalists and abuse of the profession are as diversified and complex as never before. Military regimes and some nations claiming to be democratic harass journalists and prevent them from accessing and reporting news correctly. We must beam some light on the increasing number of internal conflicts, government crackdown on protests, and widespread use of social media in emerging democracies; marginalized communities worldwide have made the work of trained journalists. Countries with weak political structures and deep corruptive practices continue suppressing the press's

ability to properly observe, monitor, record, and report facts to inform affected groups and the human community.

1d. Review of Press insecurity in fragile nations and the plight of marginalized journalists

Press insecurity emanates from the notion that journalists representing the press are human beings. Based on international humanitarian law, all human beings have the right to express their political views and are expected to be protected from violence. Thus, it is illegal for any military or civilian regime to attack journalists and the media, not even in times of armed Conflict. The media law scholar at the University of Paris-Sud, Alexandre Balguy-Gallois, accentuates my position in these summarized words:

The illegality of attacks on journalists and news media derives from the protection granted to civilians and civilian objects under international humanitarian law. Even when used for propaganda, the media cannot be considered military objectives except in exceptional cases. In contrast, no specific status exists for journalists and their equipment. Journalists and their equipment benefit from the general protection enjoyed by civilians and civilian objects unless they effectively contribute to military action (Balguy-Gallois, 2004).

Balguy-Gallois' stance that journalists benefit from protection enjoyed by civilians is, however, utopic in that journalists' rights are not guaranteed in new nations practicing principles of democratic governance; no legal system has successfully prosecuted the military or assassins sponsored to eliminate "marginalized" journalists or suspend operations for media houses that blatantly oppose the regime.

Marginalized journalists operate in extreme conditions. The governments typically restrain the free press without any legal process. The military routinely arrests journalists and newspaper editors and closes their presses; they are locked up with no due process; military tribunals accuse some of the dissension and banish some of them for encouraging resistance.

1f. Cameroon and the Idea of Press Freedom

Cameroon is among 210 countries and territories where people have access to political rights and civil liberties, which means the press, as a critical conduit of democratization, should have unfettered abilities to source and report news and information. Two types of public media operate in Cameroon: government-owned and private press. The former typically covers news and information that favors the regime. Although the Government of the Rep. of Cameroon has allowed individuals and institutions to broadcast and distribute news throughout the country and abroad, the Government clamps down on reporting that "heavily" criticizes the government operations or identifies massive corruption among highly ranked officials, including cronies and persons associated with the presidency. Freedom House's report published in 2023 rates Cameroon as a "not free" country in terms of journalistic and media work. In its report published July 17, 2023, the global organization that monitors threats to press

freedom, freedom of expression, and democracy cited NGOs' call for the protection of journalists in Cameroon ahead of the country's U.N. human rights review submitted to the United Nations by Freedom House, the Committee to Protect Journalists, and the American Bar Association's Center for Human Rights, with the support of Covington & Burling LLP. The report, released ahead of the country's Universal Periodic Review in Geneva later in 2023, included the abduction and killing of a prominent Cameroonian journalist, Martinez Zogo, whose mutilated body was found five days later. The group's submission highlights that the killing, physical attacks, abduction, torture, and harassment of journalists by Cameroonian police, intelligence agencies, military, and non-state actors continue to have a severe chilling effect (Freedom House, 2023).

1g. The character of the "Anglophone crisis" and press demise

"Anglophone" refers to an English-speaking population, especially in a country where two or more languages are spoken. In Cameroon, however, "Anglophone" has been used interchangeably by political scientists, activists, journalists, social media, scholars, and socio-cultural groups as people of multiple socio-linguistic cum cultural backgrounds, most of whom hail from the predominantly English-speaking regions of Cameroon, the Northwest and Southwest provinces (NOSO)—the former British Southern Cameroons. Also, "Anglophone War" and "Anglophone Crisis" are used interchangeably in this article to denote the burgeoning attacks, armed conflict, killings, and forced displacement of civilians in the region.

On December 5, 2016, Aljazeera.com and Reuters reported that thousands of teachers and lawyers in the English-speaking regions of Cameroon were on strike about the Government's imposition of the French language in schools and courts in the NOSO. On November 30, 2017, President Paul Biya, the Republic of Cameroon President, speaking on television, declared war on Anglophone separatists' followed by public demonstrations involving over 1 million people in the NOSO region. The armed military arrested the leaders, and protesters detained them in various prison cells across the Cameroon territory. Following the arrests and detentions in 2017, activists created social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube channels. They began mainly by expressing outrage against the Government of Cameroon. This process culminated in what most English-speaking Cameroonians consider a revolution, a struggle for independence of Southern Cameroon, aka Ambazonia. The Cameroon government announced measures to appease the Anglophone population, including a National Dialogue involving various group leaders within Cameroon and abroad to resolve the Conflict and map a way forward. The Dialogue did not result in meaningful action. Anglophone activists declared Ambazonia's independence and launched a guerilla campaign against the Cameroonian defense forces. In short, the frustrations of Anglophones surfaced dramatically after 2016 when a series of sectoral grievances morphed into political demands, leading to strikes and riots.

The SAIS Review of International Affairs, published by the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Affairs, Foreign Policy Institute, details the Conflict:

The Conflict in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon is a civil war that started in 2017 between Cameroonian security forces and non-state armed separatist groups vying for an independent state they call “The Federal Republic of Ambazonia.” Longstanding grievances in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon, dating back to the colonial era, re-emerged in October 2016 in the form of peaceful protests against marginalization, political exclusion, and the state’s preference for the use of French over English. The demonstrators demanded reforms, primarily in the education and judicial sectors, but the Rep. of Government’s response was brutal. Security forces have continued indiscriminate arrests, killings, and torture of civilians (Mutah, 2022).

Mutah’s (2022) report, as well as Human Rights Watch, the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHCR), Amnesty International, foreign news network giants like Reuters, Associated Press, Agence France Presse, Xinhua News Agency, Africa News, and other documented sources other than 600,000 internally displaced persons and efforts to end the Conflict, have not yielded any meaningful strides. Religious groups, activists, diplomats, pro-and The crisis has rapidly escalated into a secessionist political conflict with the potential to degenerate into a complex emergency, but the timid response from Western superpowers, the United Nations, the African Union, and multilateral corporations with investments and potential interests in the ever-emerging reports of new minerals in that area has only escalating Conflict, promoted propaganda war, and minimized opportunities for peace negotiations. Journalists reporting on the Anglophone crises operate in disguise. They rely on periodic indigenes’ text messages and their observations and information shared discreetly about the war. Reporting is done through themes related to violence and solutions. The heavy presence of armed forces in the war zone prompts potential informants not to share news bits with reporters. The photo below illustrates this point.



Figure 1. A soldier stands guard outside a polling station where Cameroon’s Incumbent President, Paul Biya of the Cameroon People’s Democratic Movement party, casts his vote during the Presidential elections on Sunday, October 7, 2018. [Source: Alamba/A.P.]

Since 2017, the U.N. and human rights groups estimate that over 800,000 people have been displaced. The Conflict has killed over 700,000 people, displaced more than 1 million people, destroyed more than 600,000 homes, and rendered at least 4 million out of an estimated 8 million people of Southern Cameroon origin unemployed, underemployed, or in severe financial and emotional distress. Briefly put, the struggle for independence and maintaining the status quo has been disfigured by misinformation on social media platforms, unreliable reporting of the crises, and journalists’ limited access to news and information sources. Unconfirmed reports reveal that state-instructed Cameroon’s military and pro-independence fighters have been blamed for preventing journalists from reaching affected groups, particularly refugees and inhabitants facing inhumane treatment by the military.

A worrisome aspect of the Cameroon conflict is the lack of attention by international actors. Despite the brutality of violence, in which children have been prime targets, the international response has been worryingly minimal. U.S. Senate Resolution 684 marks a significant turning point. Many researchers and political scientists have succinctly documented the dubbed Anglophone crises, including sources like the Journal of International Humanitarian Action and the University of Oxford Lay Blogs. Using an exploratory, qualitative, analytical, and descriptive case study research tradition involving document/content analysis (Bang & Balgah, 2022) applied the Robert Strauss Centre’s complex emergency framework to investigate the potential of the Anglophone crisis, whose ramifications led to a warning for an impending complex disaster emergency that could heighten humanitarian challenges

unless there is foresight and goodwill by relevant actors to commence a process of adequate contingency planning immediately.

The multilayered, complex nature of the Conflict and gross inequalities continue to exist as Anglophones resist and strive for long-overdue freedom. Dr. Roxana Willis, a researcher at the University of Oxford and Principal Investigator of the Cameroon Conflict Research Group on February 17, 2021, admitted that international state actors have been mainly exploitative and infused with power imbalance (Willis, 2021). For their part, Nembot, Meh, and Beri (2023) have shared harrowing images of the socioeconomic consequences of the Conflict in a report published at OnPolicyAfrica.org (Note 1), insisting that the desire to reinstate the two-state federation that defined the union between the English and French-speaking parts of the country at independence remains sacrosanct among a sizeable number of Anglophones. They reveal that the Conflict cause closure of more than 3,000 out of 6,515 schools; number of secondary school enrolments reduced from 213,277 in 2016-before the crisis to 2,908 in 2018-during the crisis- representing a 98.6% drop rate; that public and private enterprises like PAMOL and the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC), with an employment capacity of about 10,000 people, was partially shut down and 6,434 and 8,000 employees in different sectors lost their jobs. (OnPolicyAfrica.org, Dec. 14, 2023).

Indeed, those conditions deserve a clinical examination because they speak of health and illness in people needing help to develop better ways to prevent, diagnose, treat, and detect the dis-ease affecting their social wellbeing. Thus, data on the psychophysical and social conditions of persons in the war zone is needed to contextualize the role of journalists in the war zone.

To do so, we must first examine the causes of the Anglophone war to gauge conditions for press operations in tandem with human rights violations in that region. The Anglophone crisis can be traced back to the Foumban Conference of 1961, where the former British Southern Cameroons reunited in a federation with French Cameroun after 45 years of Anglo-French partition of German Kamerun. However, Crisis Group Africa, the Associated, Reuters, and other major agencies confirm that the crisis that led to the war began on October 11, 2016.

Here is a snapshot of rapid events exacerbating the crisis.

- ❑ December 2016- Marginalization of Anglophone heritage, cultural activities, and ways of life leads lawyers, teachers, and civilians to protest enhanced. Anglophone lawyers and teachers file complaints about pro-Francophone Lawyers and teachers to the Cameroon government.
 - ❑ October 1, 2017- 17 people are killed; 50 wounded as the blue and white flag of the self-styled Republic of Ambazonia is hoisted in towns across the North West and South West regions to mark a symbolic break from Cameroon.
- Southern Cameroons Ambazonia Consortium United Front (SCACUF) declares the independence of Ambazonia, naming Sisiku Julius Ayuk Tabe as president, and SCACUF

forms the Ambazonia Interim Government. Sisiku creates an interim Government and begins a tour of citizens of Southern Cameroon) in the Diaspora.

- ❑ October 2, 2017-the Republic of Cameroon reprimand protesters, fueling the independence push in Anglophone Cameroon. The crackdown happens after Anglophone insurgents kill soldiers and police officers.
- ❑ November 30, 2017, the Republic of Cameroon President Biya declares war on secessionist rebels. In return, the Anglophones set up an interim government abroad, declared independence for Southern Cameroon in November 2017, and implemented a process called Ghost Town—a once-per-week economic boycott and business activities in the Anglophone region—to weaken the Cameroon economy and forced negotiations to discuss terms of separation. Published scholarship and press reports show that the exploitative socioeconomic structure implemented through the European legal regime of slavery and neo-colonial processes from Cameroon’s partition in 1884 to 1916 (for Germany and France); France and England (1918-1960/61) continues to structure exploitative relationships in the present, albeit in transmuted forms, especially with France’s influence since Cameroon’s checkered independence.
- ❑ Activists create online platforms and begin promoting the Ambazonia independence movement.
- ❑ January, 2018-Sisiku and ten members of his cabinet are arrested at Nera Hotel in Nigeria, extradited to Cameroon, convicted for secession and terrorism by a Rep. of Cameroon military court, and fined \$500 million. They are currently serving a life sentence.
- ❑ 2019-Talks between the pro-Independence groups and Republic of Cameroon representatives mediated by Switzerland ultimately fail.
- ❑ September 2022, President Paul Biya deploys a military commander and special elite forces to NOSO.
- ❑ January 20, 2023, Canada’s foreign minister, Mélanie Joly, announces that the two sides have agreed to start peace negotiations.
- ❑ February 9, 2023, The International Crisis Group announces that Pre-talks between Cameroon’s Government and Anglophone separatists, facilitated by Canada, have opened the door to a long-overdue peace process, but Yaoundé has balked. The Government should embrace these talks, while domestic and external actors should put their full weight behind the initiative. (Crisisgroup.org/Africa, 2023)
- ❑ August 2024- Cameroon is beset with more major violent conflicts—Boko Haram insurgents in Northern Cameroon, “The Anglophone war (in NOSO), political unrest depicted in media broadcasts, and rising ethno-political tensions in the Republic of Cameroon as the 2025

Presidential elections race looms, expected to change the political landscape of the country and ultimately the futures of the Southern Cameroon communities.

Public Dialogue about the Republic of Cameroon government acculturating, marginalizing, and depleting human capital and natural resources in Southern Cameroon (British Cameroon territories) has filled the airwaves and social media platforms for decades, rehashing the argument to resolve the war legally.



Figure 2. November 23, 2017. Anglophone protesters confront security forces, chanting, “How many people will Paul Biya kill?” [Source: Alamba/A.P.]

2. Press Coverage of the Anglophone War

Well-known Cameroon-born journalists and reporters, including John Mbah Akuro, Innocent Chia, Bou Herbert, Remy Ngono, Innocent Chia, Mimi Mefo, Chris Anu, Michel Biemtong, and Boris Bertolt, have been disseminating meaningful coverage of the Anglophone war in the Diaspora. Some use YouTube, Twitter, and WhatsApp channels to broadcast news on the crises. However, major global news agencies have overlooked the war in Cameroon, including local government officials attempting to undermine the regional and international significance of the crisis for political reasons. Although most local news agencies have not been able to finance reporters’ travel expenses to the war zone, the international press has produced lukewarm coverage of the war because it operates on a cash-flow reporting mentality. The crisis-laced news farm with a big economy and diplomatic clout in the United Nations deliberation floor gets global media attention. Comparing the Ukraine-Russia war that started in February 2022 and Israel’s launching of an ongoing invasion of the Gaza Strip in October 2023 with the civil war in Cameroon—U.N. member countries like China and France—on the conflict, living would expect the global press to spotlight the crisis. A few Reuters, Aljazeera, Xinhua News Agencies,

and Agence France Presse reporters have periodically filed stories on the “Anglophone War”, but it has not received adequate media attention or the type of support from the international community.

To assess the extent of press insecurity in the unfolding Conflict in former British Southern Cameroons, which some media outlets, diplomats, politicians, pundits, and political scientists have described as “Anglophone war”, “Anglophone conflict”, “Southern Cameroon Independence Movement”, “Separatists movement”, “Terrorists”, “(NOSO)-Northwest-Southwest War”, or “war in the Anglophone region in Cameroon”, we must contextualize the term ‘Anglophone’ and briefly explain the root cause of the Conflict.

2.1 NewsMedia Challenges in Reporting the Anglophone War in Cameroon

The Cameroon government has habitually controlled free speech since the country gained independence from its colonial masters, Germany, France, and Britain. On January 27, 2017, Aljazeera reported that the Government had ordered a cut-off of internet access from the Northwest and Southwest communities internet blackout after protests against the marginalization of English speakers. The move prevented the local population from using online social network groups to exchange information about the protests. As public demonstrations spread, including naked older women marching to prevent troops and security forces from harassing protesters, the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications in Cameroon fought back by ordering mobile phone operators (MTN, Orange) to warn users not to circulate “false information” on social networks about the crisis. On January 25, 2017, Reporters without Borders, an international non-profit and non-governmental organization focused on safeguarding the right to freedom of information headquartered in Paris, France, published an article online condemning the Cameroonian Government for multiple violations of freedom of information amid protests by the country’s English-speaking minority community. However, the private press, especially radio and television networks, have, since 2017, on-the-scene and analytical reports of war proceedings. Broad-readership newspapers include *Le Messager*, *Le Jour*, *The Guardian Post*, *La Voix du Centre*, and *Radio Equinoxe*. *Web*, *Radio Balafon FM 90.3*, *Spectrum*, *Canal 2*, and other private national television stations have produced loud headline captions and grinding pro-independence and pro-unitary ideologies about the ongoing war against the so-called separatists.

The private media and on-location persons are more aggressive than the government-controlled media in Cameroon in terms of coverage of the war. Local newspapers, especially in the northwest province (also described by Ambazonians as the ‘northern zone’), are adept at providing daily headlines on the war. YouTube channels created mainly through pro-independence activists in the Diaspora also provide daily coverage. WhatsApp is the most common channel to spread news and information, usually unverified or fake, about the war because of its capacity to carry or store videos and the ease of allowing anyone to create content (texts, images). Facebook and YouTube are also standard tools used by activists who support or oppose independence. However, articles published by local private

newspapers, opinion leaders, and videos shot with iPhones by pro-independence fighters, the military, and government media go viral.

Over Eighty percent (80 %) of stories about the Anglophone war have been developed and shared online by pro-independence fighters, public relations representatives, or activists. They make running commentary, take pictures of the unfolding fight, record audio messages and videos of themselves on location, and forward them to persons on their contact list, who, in turn, forward them to other people using their iPhones. Simply put, activists have been using social media to alert, confuse, inform, blackmail, or fact-check, seemingly oblivious to repercussions for the freedom fighters, civilians, or military bodies.

2.2 The Demise of Journalists

Since the dubbed “Anglophone War” started, some journalists covering it went into exile in America, Europe, and Asia. They have been using YouTube and other online channels to disseminate news and information about the Anglophone war alongside other media outlets. Local journalists covering the war have increasingly faced physical, psychological, and emotional reprisals from the government-back military and intelligence sources, forcing some to flee the country while some journalists on location (also known as Ground Zero) have been tortured, imprisoned, assassinated, or coerced to publish news and information denouncing the war and favoring the position of the regime in power.

However, the diaspora-based veteran pro-liberation Southern Cameroon journalist John Mbah Akuro has narrated numerous incidents in which the Minister of Territorial Administration assembled newspaper editors and journalists and offered them money and a government press release to publish that discredited Southern Cameroon independence movement (Mbah-Akuro, February 8, 2023). Innocent Chia, another diaspora-based veteran citizen journalist and a former reporter at Cameroon government’s main broadcasting network, CRTV, has consistently used tweets and other e-media resources sensitizing various publics on the perils of the dubbed Anglophone War with a view to mobilizing a conscientious collaborative effort to actuate and validate the independence of Southern Cameroon—Ambazonia.

Other reports, especially on YouTube, Facebook, and WhatsApp accounts, and some privately owned newspapers detail how journalists disguised themselves and sneaked across the Cameroon border seeking political asylum in neighboring Nigeria, South Africa, the United States, France, and Norway.

In the article published online on July 7, 2022, Amnesty International stated that activists received death threats for exposing human rights violations and abuses in Anglophone regions. The Cameroonian authorities did not ensure that human rights groups could work without intimidation and reprisals. A famous journalist from Cameroon’s restive Anglophone region was arrested and charged with propagating false information and terrorism, arrested and jailed for four days. The arrest of

Equinoxe television journalist Mimi Mefo was an attempt to silence media outlets that reported on the crisis in that region. Various media outlets, including Africa News and World Forum for Democracy, reports show the investigative journalist had opted for the right to remain silent after the gendarmerie, an armed military unit with law enforcement duties among the civilian population, accused her of reporting false information when Mefo revealed the army had killed civilians in violence, not armed separatist fighters, as the military had alleged.

Some recognizable news agencies have documented reports of journalists covering the war. Here is a summary:

➤ Moki Edwin Kindzeka published this report on November 08, 2018, at 3:27 PM

A famous journalist from Cameroon's restive Anglophone region remains in jail after she was arrested and charged with propagating false information and terrorism.

➤ Media rights groups say the arrest of Equinoxe broadcast journalist Mimi Mefo is an attempt to silence outlets that report on the crisis in that region.
<https://www.voanews.com/a/cameroon-journalist-jailed-in-anglophone-unrest/4650515.html>

➤ The Al Jazeera Media Institute documents Jean-Marie Ngongsong, a journalist and radio operator, who experienced this at Voice in Bamenda during the crisis.

"I reported everything without fear before the crisis in 2016. I had easy access to news sources and did my work with zest. Since the crisis escalated into an armed conflict with heavy militarization of the region, fear of arrest and kidnapping has placed a chokehold on my work. Besides the fear of arrest, anti-terrorism laws have also added to the burden of journalists".

(Al Jazeera Journalism Review, <https://institute.aljazeera.net/en/ajr/article/1911>, retrieved 02/08/2023)

Podcasts by activists also mention local informants bribed by some Ministers of the Republic of Cameroon intentionally misinform journalists.

Given the importance of journalists as frontline workers during crises and the well-documented experiences of reporters in similar situations elsewhere, this author has documented journalists' experiences during the ongoing war in Southern Cameroon to help us understand their predicament in marginalized environments and possibly find ways of protecting journalistic integrity in such environments.

3. Method

3.1 Methodology Frameworks

This article is built on the premise that the press is a voice that allows the collection and sharing of newsworthy information with anyone else; it protects the right to spread ideas, thoughts, news, and perspectives by publishing them. Freedom of the press protects the right to spread opinions, ideas, news,

and views by publishing them in a mass-oriented format. Press freedom implies the following conditions: (i) there should be no interference from an overreaching state; (ii) the press can seek and preserve its rights through the constitution and other known legal forms of protection and security. Free press is not paid press, where communities, police organizations, civic organizations, businesses, institutions, and governments pay to get their news published or are paid for their copyrights.

3.2 Data Collection Techniques Used

This author used electronic tools like telephone surveys and mediated forms like WhatsApp and press reports to reach sources. This researcher assembled a WhatsApp contact list through social interactions and college times in Cameroon to reach informants in the Northwest and Southwest regions. The informants were five local citizen journalists, three former classmates of this author, two priests, and six local businesspeople. A questionnaire sought answers to the following questions.

- How people get information about the crisis
- How people share information
- How people use the information they get

The study's main goal was to discern how the Republic of Cameroon used tactics to prevent the private press from harvesting news and obstructing observers from sharing data on victims and at-risk persons. This author also wanted to know how state officials coerce private newspapers (e.g., photojournalists, reporters, and managing editors) to publish content to protect national interests and promote the Government's agenda before offering solutions for the gridlock, among others: (i) ways of re-establishing integrity in journalism as a credible news bank and (ii) how journalists in nations excluded from mainstream social, economic, educational, and cultural life should be protected against punitive activities facilitated by international partners, particularly donors.

Table 1. Questionnaire for Journalists in Anglophone War Zone

Name of your newspaper _____

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Questions</u>
Item A: Accessing news	Tell us how you collect information on the war in the northwest/southwest provinces-- about the skirmishes between the military and 'separatist' fighters to write your news article.
Item B: Reporting news	1. Describe the challenges you face when preparing your article to be published. a. Does the Editor ask you not to include some data? 2. Describe any financial difficulties you have during production i. e.g., when printing the paper, ii. tools you lack to collect information and news about the war

-
- Item C: Press security
1. Has the military or any secret government agent visited your office?
 2. Have you ever been banned from going where the military is assaulting civilians?
 3. Have pro-independence fighters prevented you from interviewing anyone? If so, why?
 4. Have pro-independent fighters prevented you from interviewing civilians? Why?
 5. Who has threatened you since you started interviewing people and publishing stories about the political crisis here? Amba boys or the military or thugs representing a particular group?
 6. Describe any tactics the LRC government uses to limit access to the private press from harvesting and breaking news and obstructing observers from sharing data on victims and at-risk persons.
 7. Have you ever been harassed? By whom?
 8. Has your home, office, or family been threatened? By whom?
 9. Explain how local officials coerce your newspaper into publishing articles that protect national interests and promote the Government's agenda.
 10. Has any informant you interviewed been killed or arrested by government officials?
 11. Has any informant you interviewed been killed or arrested by Amba boys?
 12. Has any informant you interviewed been killed or thugs representing a particular group?
-

3.3 Clarification on Survey Questions Used

Q.1: Tell us how you collect information on the war in the northwest/southwest provinces- about the skirmishes between the military and 'separatist' fighters to write your news article.

This question sought to know whether the military or separatist fighters ("Amba Boys") used force and intimidation methods to block journalists' access to news. For reference, Article 4 A (4) of the Third Geneva Convention and Article 79 of the additional Protocol stipulates that journalists are entitled to all rights and protections granted to civilians in international armed conflicts. Moreover, Shield laws statutes provide journalists the absolute and qualified privilege to refuse to disclose sources used or information obtained during news gathering. Thus, journalists were expected to have unfettered access to news sources anywhere in that region.

On the issue of Item B: reporting issues, questions 1 and 2 sought to know whether journalists living in the war zone were coerced due to limited access to economic resources and conditions such as 'Ghost Town' (every Monday and sometimes more days, all businesses in NOSO do not operate). The press house administration may have relied on other sources, like government-led financial assistance, to publish government propaganda instead of hard news.

Item C: Press Security had more probes (12 questions) to assess the extent of press insecurity in the region properly. Social media platforms and local newspaper reports seemed to show increasing signs of harassment, torture, and intimidation of news sources—journalists and their informants.

4. Results

4.1 Description

i. Summary of how people access news and information on the Anglophone War

- Social media platforms (YouTube channels, Facebook, WhatsApp messages, Instagram)
- Newspaper, radio, and television reports
- Spokespersons: Government and “separatist” groups
- Hearsay (two-step flow)
- Public gatherings (bars, church, birth/death celebrations, etc.)
- Conversations in the bar
- Conversations at home/interpersonal conversations

ii. How private journalists gather and report information and news about the crisis

- Eyewitness accounts
- Local informants—with phone contacts of reports
- Amateur videos posted online by Amba fighters and military
- Stories from social media (e.g., Facebook)
- Trained “Undercover” Indigenous correspondents
- Coverage by journalists in the Diaspora
- Eyewitness accounts
- Local informants—with phone contacts of reports
- Amateur videos posted online by Amba fighters and military
- Stories from social media (e.g., Facebook)
- Trained “Undercover” Indigenous correspondents
- Coverage by journalists in the Diaspora
- Reporting:
 - Printed papers, radio/T.V. broadcasts, podcasts, online newspapers, online T.V. channels

iii. How government journalists gather and report news and information about the crisis:

- Government communications (press releases/alerts)
- Official appearances of public officials (organized meetings, working sessions)
- Appointed Military officials at crisis grounds reporting to the hierarchy in the Ministry of Territorial Administration

The study found that 80 % of stories about the Anglophone war have been developed and shared online by pro-independence groups; almost 60% of news is fake.

The three assistants visited news houses to interview journalists about how they collected and reported the news during the war and explain their challenges. They used questionnaires (See Figure 1).

Figure 1: Transcript of the interviews:

Transcript 1: Interview 1 with local journalist recorded by the Assistant: Saturday, February 4, 2023

Assistant: I visited the Eden Newspaper office in Bamenda and chatted with the manager, a journalist.

Question: What are the challenges you face when preparing your article to be published

Concerning the Anglophone war in Southern Cameroon?

Answer:

- Are you a spy?

- Are you living in Cameroon?

- Have you not heard of the killing of a prominent journalist in Yaoundé? Where is Wazi Zi, who was convoked to report to a police station and, after respecting

the convocation, his whereabouts up to the day is not known even by his own family. However, one year later, the Government announced that he died in Yaoundé Please, I don't want to lose my life. Leave my office because I cannot take any risk in discussing or answering any questions from you.

Other reports on social media and privately owned television stations in Cameroon also discussed the journalist's sudden disappearance.

Transcript 2: Tuesday, January 24: Visit the Post newspaper office in Bamenda

Assistant: Have you ever been harassed by military or Government officials while discharging your duties regarding information about the Anglophone crisis?

Journalist's response: (name withheld): Go and get authorization from the Administration, the governor, the Senior Divisional Office, or the Divisional Office

Assistant: Why?

Journalist: So I can talk without fear. If not, you are a spy and want to destroy my life.

Assistant: (He knew I could not get this document, so this was a simple way of sending me away.)

Transcript 3: Visit to Lifetime (a private newspaper) November 30, 2022

Assistant: Good afternoon, sir. (Managing Editor). Please tell me how you collect information on the war in the northwest/southwest provinces—the skirmishes between the military and “separatist” fighters—to write your news article and whether you're facing challenges.

Managing Editor: Turns softly; casts a suspicious look. “Are you a journalist?”

Assistant: No.

Managing Editor: Why? What do you want to do with this information?

Assistant: Pleading: I am collecting this information so that someone can help us Ambazonians so accurate information can help

Managing Editor: OK, let's wait until everyone leaves the office

Assistant: OK, I'll go outside and wait until you usher me back in

Managing Editor Enters his car and drives off. His secretary declines to give any information since the “patron” (manager has left).

The Assistant: I immediately left the area, worried the manager might contact separatist fighters to pick her up. "They could take me and kill me without asking questions", her voice recording states. Realizing the difficulty of collecting data, the researcher recorded a directive message for Assistant #3, who has lived in the region and served as a public health officer for forty years.

Transcript 4: Recorded by Assistant #3.

Researcher interview instructions were recorded and sent to Assistant #3 on Friday, January 3, 2023, via WhatsApp in vernacular and mixed with English to ensure privacy

"Visit a newspaper, like The Guardian. Record your interview in the following manner:

- *Went to the manager. Record whatever they said. Write down the difficulties you are facing reaching the journalists.*
- *Document how often you have visited them and the difficulties you and they are facing. Give me their feedback.*

Assistant #3 (recording for the researcher): "Hey! You said certain words in English. I was scared while listening to your voice message. My neighbor is a police officer who rented the flat a few weeks ago. Most of them rent houses to listen to private conversations. Things are tough here, new. The phone company gave secret police lengthy phone numbers belonging to international owners from France, the U.S., and the U.K. The Government has had to rent rooms to listen to private conversations and arrest people. I heard people chit-chatting about this while at church last weekend.

After killing Martinez Azogo, they killed another journalist called Rev. Jean Jacques Ole Bebe, who dared also criticize the Government for launching an unjust war in the Anglophone zone and killing many innocent people. The story is on Facebook. Go check it".

Source: WhatsApp voice message received by this researcher, January 6, 2023

Transcript 4: Recorded by Assistant #4.

These researcher's interview instructions were recorded and sent to Assistant #4 on Friday, January 3, 2023, via WhatsApp, disguised in the vernacular and mixed with a few English language verbs and adjectives to ensure privacy

"Visit a newspaper, like The Guardian. Record your interview in the following manner:

- *Went to the manager. Record whatever they said. Write down the difficulties you are facing reaching journalists.*
- *Document how often you have visited them and the difficulties you and they are facing. Give me their feedback.*

Assistant #3 (recording for the researcher): "Hey! You said certain words in English. I was scared while listening to your voice message. I heard people chit-chatting about this plan while at church last weekend. Can you imagine my neighbor is a police officer who rented this flat a few weeks ago? They rent houses to track our private conversations and arrest us. Things are tough here. The phone

companies (Orange & MTN) gave the secret police phone numbers belonging to international owners in France, the U.S., the U.K., etc. The Government has rented rooms throughout this town for the ununiformed police to listen to private conversations and arrest people. People are just disappearing. Every day, people find a dead body on the street. We mind our business. If you complain, you might be arrested at night”.

After killing Martinez Zogo, you know. He is Ewondo, one of their people; they killed another journalist last Friday. His name is Rev. Jean Jacques Ole Bebe. He dared criticize the Government for launching an unjust war in the Anglophone zone and killing many innocent people. The story is on Facebook. Go check it”. Source: WhatsApp voice message received by the researcher, January 6, 2023

Transcript 5: Cameroon Panorama

Accessing News

1. I have cultivated sources in parishes across the regions. When there is an incident where I cannot reach them, I call them to ascertain the facts. I call many people for the same thing to establish the facts. Sometimes, I rely on official sources like government communiqués or separatists’ communiqués. However, I verify the facts from my sources very well because the communiqués are often full of propaganda from both sides. Sometimes, when it is secured, I go to the field. Still, it is always tricky because we are not protected either by the state forces or separatist forces.

Reporting news

1. I have to make many calls to confirm the facts. Sometimes, it takes work to get to my sources. Government sources, too, are most often unwilling to accept interviews. I must ensure I do not fall into social media news, which delays the stories. Sometimes, victims are afraid to speak because people have spoken the truth and have been arrested by either Government or separatist forces.

a) If the data is not verifiable, I am asked to leave it out.

b) i) The cost of printing is very high and unstable with the changing price of paper and printing materials.

ii) Most of my sources don’t have good phones to snap pictures and record interviews that I could use. I have to assist many of my sources in getting pictures and interviews. Few graphic designers are available, and those who are available don’t know about journalism, so I have to stay with them throughout the magazine layout to be done correctly.

c) Yes, but we prevented them from having access.

d) Yes, I have been prevented several times from getting to the scene by the military, which claimed it was not safe for me to go there.

e) i) No. That I should give them money first.

ii) Not directly. Some civilians are afraid of some of them to speak.

iii) Anonymous callers who are suspected to be government agents had called and threatened me.

- c) *There is no freedom of information in Cameroon. Government sources hardly release information. They always tell you they need authorization from Yaoundé to talk. Some of them refuse interviews from primate media organs.*
- i) *Yes. By the military and called for questioning by the government secret agents.*
- ii) *Yes, by government forces.*
- d. *Sometimes, they send out official communiqués. Once you don't publish them, they remove the newspaper from government subvention that comes once in a while. Newspapers were not invented to cover government events.*
- e. *Yes. But I cannot ascertain that he was killed because of the interview he granted our magazine.*
- f. *I am not aware of any.*
- g. *I am not aware of anyone.*
- h. *To be assured that I will not be killed or arrested by the state forces or Amba boys if I report credible information. I should not be forced to reveal my sources as well.*

Transcript 6: Radio Evangelicum: Jumbo Diocese (summarized)

Since the outbreak of the Anglophone crisis in 2017, news collection has not been accessible for those of us exercising journalism in the crisis-hit areas. As a radio, several factors compound issues significantly. The radio does not make much money, and movement is thus tough.

To make matters worse, journalists have been viewed with much suspicion by both camps- the Government and the separatists; all ears of the warring parties feel that a report did not favor them, and threats are issued to the radio. The authorities, I mean the local authorities in Kumbo in 2018, tried to shoot us up by inviting our reporter to appear before the Senior Divisional Officer with copies of the news report. This happened on four occasions before there was an order for the military to get hold of the particular reporter. Fortunately, the plot leaked, and the reporter went into hiding. The military, however, did not visit the Radio House. It is worth mentioning that the four times the reporter appeared before the authorities and the military without papers, he argued his way out. However, he didn't leave without receiving verbal warnings, never to mention anything on the history of the Southern Cameroons, and never again to interview top historians who have a good knowledge of the political evolution of Cameroon, particularly the history of the British Southern Cameroons.

Our reports have never been offered protection by the state authorities at the local level. The military threatens when a reporter appears at a scene where a circular or civilians are being assaulted. Our reporter was forced to lie looking face upwards in the blazing sun. This happened even though he identified himself as a journalist working for Radio Evangelical. He would accompany his Bishop on a Pastoral Visit to one of the Parishes. The reporter was insulted, bullied, and threatened by the military, who even accused him of collaborating with the Amba Boys. According to the military, the reporter should have warned the military of the Amba soldiers' imminent attack on the military.

On the other hand, the pro-independence fighters have not made it easy for our reporters to function. Like the state military, they ask for identification papers and collect the reporter's phone, not without threats. They once brutalized our reporter for daring to intervene on behalf of his boys. The reporter lost a tooth in the assault.

The most significant difficulty in reporting during this war came from the state side. The authorities and the military hardly accept granting interviews. Unfortunately, the reporters are often considered sympathizers of the independentists (freedom fighters of pro-Southern Independence fighters, "Amba Boys").

We are a private media platform. Since the private sector journalists are not given state protection, few-breaking news becomes secondhand news from some eyewitnesses who survived the hot atmosphere. Therefore, we are left to refer to our sources rather than eyewitness reports.

Occasionally, our reporter may stumble on a government official, but getting the official to talk about the war situation is like trying to squeeze water out of a rock. We are functioning in an area considered one of the war's epicenters. As such, he can't function like reporters elsewhere. We remain targets for suspicion. No side wanted to talk to our centers unless it came to warning the reporter while recording any voice or against taking autographs.

Under normal circumstances, reporters of the private sector should have been accorded the media personnel. Here, I am thinking of state protection using the military, especially when we must travel to the war front. One of our reporters made a 2018 suggestion for prime protection. These men and women of the fourth estate should be given free and ready information from the local authorities, the local authorities, and the military. Things have begun to change their mind. Local politicians, by standards and as a matter of conscience, should be blamed for the U-turn of those who, unlike the Amba, are better placed to give out information on the evolution of the war. The local politicians tagged some reporters as the opposition. Those who were and are not with the party in power or are not in support of the state's decision to use force.

It has been an uphill task for the local press to give the people fresh and up-to-date news reports on the war situation because of a lack of trust in the men and women who are said to be the nation's fourth estate.

5. Discussion

Political pundits, the private press, and internet platforms discuss sensitive issues, but the media in Cameroon is not entirely free. The Cameroon Constitution guarantees press freedom, but in practice, threats from government censors, including ministers, directors, municipal councilors, mayors, and divisional officers, weaken opposition viewpoints and prevent them from being broadcast in the government-controlled media. Independent newspapers actively practice yellow journalism, especially

concerning the ongoing “NOSO” war. Daily newspapers are replete with eye-catching headlines and exaggerations about “separatist fighters”, soldiers, and pro-independence activists in the Diaspora, mainly for increased sales, scandal-mongering, and sensationalizing the events to make the war a current event and prolong financial investments by the opposing parties in prosecuting the war. In addition, local informants use their mouths and cell phones to share news tips with journalists. Still, they lack access to sources to collect and report news properly. Journalists are trained to collect and distribute news for socio-political public-interest matters due to public non-confidence against journalists, fear of repression from the Government, and disguised government informants. Government soldiers and officials, suspicious of journalists, do not grant interviews, depriving the latter of harvesting and delivering news. These obstacles expose happenings in the war zone to social media networking communities and other unreliable sources to infect the public’s conscience on the real reasons for the protracted, underreported “Anglophone” war, visibly ignored by the international community.

Based on the analyses above, including transcripts from the journalists on location, we find that the news media in Cameroon, even when used for propaganda purposes, enjoy limited immunity from attacks and protection granted to civilians under international humanitarian law. The absence of public trust in journalists and their insecurity propagated by state authorities who have fed the public with espionage fears and reprimand threats has severely diminished the potential for journalists and reporters on-location to access and distribute news and data that could help significant news outlets worldwide to have an accurate account of the silenced war that has claimed over 35,000 lives, destroyed over 600 villages, retarded education for over 1 million young people and cost over \$500 million in the local economy within seven years. Without a repertoire established for news products such as press releases, verified photographs, and interview transcripts) on the ground operations and related communications, peace advocates, human rights agencies like the UNHCR, and international bodies, including the U.N., may not have a comprehensive record of the “Anglophone Crisis.”

6. The Way Forward

I propose options needed for the protecting journalistic integrity and marginalized journalists cognizant of the notion that countries, especially those in developing countries like Cameroon that decided to practice democracy, struggle to balance their principles with those of social and economic security and are not well equipped psychologically and financially to implement the steps shared in this article effectively. I once stated that redefining our local space, group dynamics, and any change in a globalized world requires learning how electronic media and its networked communities create, dismantle, and shape our identity (see Ngwainmbi, 2023). The learning process includes investing

human capital and financial resources, training citizen journalists, and providing funds that do not benefit the funding agency.

No matter the financial standing, environment, or risks in accessing and broadcasting news in the war zone, journalistic integrity drives, defines, actuates, and prepares the ground for public consumption of true stories that could influence policymakers and increase advocacy and the public's actions. For journalistic integrity to be protected in marginalized communities, particularly those operating in war-torn regions like Cameroon, immediate short-term intervention actions are required to allow constructive messages to be shared and proper solutions to the dubbed "Anglophone" crisis to be addressed.

To wit, the UNESCO, in collaboration with UNHCR, civil rights groups, Reporter Without Borders, and the Cameroon Association of Media Professionals, should

- ▶ Engage social networking company executives (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok) to help filter social media content on events associated with the crisis.
- ▶ Those companies, directed by UNESCO experts, should create a databank on the Anglophone Crises for foreign and local media to extract and report on its content.
- ▶ They should create a list of qualified journalists and reporters with verifiable credentials from the API, Reuters, Agence France Presse, and UPI, maybe Xinhua News Agency, and empower them to post content in the databank—e.g., videos, stories, Press releases, news tips, etc.
- ▶ Set up paid watchdogs to monitor potential obstacles against local informants and journalists.
- ▶ Enforce international justice systems to impose penalties against the state (Cameroon) government. For example, the IMF, World Bank, and African Development Bank should impose financial sanctions against Cameroon to prevent journalists from collecting and reporting on the Anglophone crisis.
- ▶ Each country should provide protection using the military, especially when journalists travel to the war front.
- ▶ Each country should hold workshops and train its municipal staff, local law enforcement authorities, and local journalists on international media laws, threat mitigation methods, how to provide first aid and secure communications methods,
- ▶ Local authorities should have 24-hour hotlines, safety funds, safety equipment, and safe houses, and provide legal assistance and emergency assistance to journalists injured during work.
- ▶ The International Federation of Journalists, Reporters Without Borders & CAMP should lobby the 'influencers' (international financial institutions) to help implement policies that allow unfettered access to news and information on the ongoing Anglophone crisis.

The private press should receive technical and financial support to process and distribute news about the crises-news is power. Accurate reporting can help parties in Conflict correctly resolve their problems.

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Note

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