

CAMEROON

TOK TRU

Propaganda-Free Coverage
of the Anglophone Crisis

JUNE 2021



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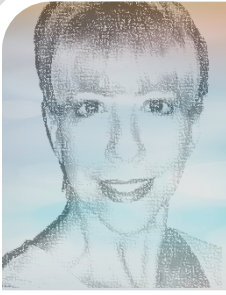
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Editorial

SPEAKING FRANCKLY

by Cece Buckley
Editor-in-Chief

Every weekend you can spot them – groups of young people descending upon towns and villages across Cameroon to champion Franck Biya as the next president of the country. Their message: only by rallying behind the eldest son of the current president will Cameroon have a peaceful transition of power. Their leader, Alain Fidele Owona, insists that the message is one of inspiration, not intimidation.

Owona is National Coordinator of the Citizen Movement of the Franckists for Peace and Unity of Cameroon, arguably the most vocal and best funded of a handful of organizations whose mission is to facilitate the younger Biya’s ascent to power. According to Owona, Franck Biya is the only one who is “capable of continuing the work of President Paul Biya, who has done so much for Cameroon.” Owona’s sentiments are shared by the Citizen Movement’s leader, Mohamed Rahim Noumeau, who emphasizes Franck Biya’s entrepreneurship and discretion as key qualifications.



Emmanuel Franck Biya, son of Paul Biya and, for “Franckists,” the presumed heir to his father’s presidency



Alain Fidele Owona of the Citizen Movement of the Franckists for Peace and Unity of Cameroon

As for Franck Biya’s ability and willingness to carry on the authoritarian legacy of his father (who consistently ranks as one of the world’s top dictators), I have full confidence in the veracity of that claim. Having served as a senior advisor to Paul Biya for the past quarter century, Franck has had full knowledge of – and, as such, has been complicit in – every illegal activity and atrocity committed by the elder statesman, including his unilateral and unlawful dismantling of the country’s constitution, his brutal oppression of any form of political opposition, and his use of the Rapid Intervention Battalion to raze entire Anglophone villages and conduct the targeted killing of thousands of Anglophone citizens. No doubt, Franck is also privy to – as well as a beneficiary of – his father’s countless financial indiscretions. Most notable among such transgressions, per a 2018 investigation conducted by the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project, is the elder Biya’s cumulative misappropriation of nearly \$200,000,000 USD in treasury funds for private travel, including numerous \$40,000 USD per day junkets to Geneva, on which he was regularly accompanied by dozens of family members, politicians, advisors, staff, and butlers.

In addition to Franck Biya's knowledge of and likely participation in his father's financial indiscretions, it would appear from formal allegations and financial records dating back to 1997 that the presidential hopeful has committed his own share of financial improprieties as well. For the sake of brevity, a summary is provided in the sidebar to the right. Interested readers are encouraged to conduct their own research and due diligence.

This brings us to Franck Biya's qualification as an entrepreneur. In my research, I was able to find evidence of only two companies in which Franck Biya has been listed as a legitimate owner or partner: AFRIONE and Forest Engineering. Since the former was allegedly used to funnel profits from securities fraud (see the sidebar), let's focus on the latter.

Beyond the alleged receipt of 2.3 billion CFA francs in illegal credits from Commercial Bank-Cameroon and the evasion of taxes noted in the sidebar, Forest Engineering was also accused of felling trees approximately 1800 hectares outside the boundaries of its concession and engaging in illegal logging. It has also been alleged that, while Franck Biya was owner, a significant percentage of the timber that was exported to the European market may have been produced illegally. In fact, on 24 March 2003, an inspector from Global Witness – an organization commissioned by the EU and the World Bank to monitor logging in Cameroon – observed illegal logging on the fringes of a concession granted to Forest Engineering and began to record the illegal activity. However, the operations manager at Forest Engineering prevented the Global Witness inspector and her team from venturing beyond the perimeter of the concession. Surrounded by guards wielding machetes, the inspector was ultimately forced to relinquish her camera. One must ask: Is this what Mr. Noumeau meant by discretion.

All in all, I must admit that I find myself in agreement with the leaders of the Citizen Movement of the Franckists. If the citizens of Cameroon do indeed want their next president to continue Paul Biya's legacy of pilfering the treasury for personal gain and using violence to suppress opposition, Franck Biya is the candidate of choice.



A SUMMARY OF ALLEGATIONS LODGED AGAINST FRANCK BIYA

- In 1997, the World Bank and IMF gave the government of Cameroon permission to transform the country's domestic debt into securities, which were then sold to private investors as treasury bonds. Per the Alliance for the Defense of the Public Good, Franck Biya used his influence to convince the government to securitize its debt and benefitted personally by purchasing bonds at one-third their value and later redeeming them at face value under the cover of AFRIONE, a company he established for this sole purpose.
- In 2009, Pierre Milla Assouté of the RDCM Party used the platform of La Grande Interview to publicly accuse Franck Biya of creating several fictitious companies for the purpose of issuing fraudulent purchase orders. According to Assouté, who was able to produce nine such purchase orders, the accounts for the companies were held at Commercial Bank-Cameroon.
- In 2011, documents released by lawyers for Yves Michele Fotso, the former Board Chair of Commercial Bank-Cameroon who was later imprisoned for embezzlement, revealed that a company owned by Franck Biya, Forest Engineering, received 2.3 billion CFA francs in illegal credits. Sources close to Fotso confirm that Biya benefitted personally.
- In addition to benefitting from illegal credits through Commercial Bank – Cameroon, Franck Biya's company Forest Engineering allegedly also failed to pay billions of CFA francs in taxes.

The government of Cameroon announced in May that it will sell its 98% of shares in Commercial Bank – Cameroon to an unnamed "strategic partner" and retail investors. The identity of the buyers will be disclosed "in due course."



In May 2018, US Ambassador Peter Henry Barlerin accused Cameroon's government of the "targeted killing" of Anglophone citizens. Since then, many – including Global Justice Journal – have argued that Ambassador Barlerin fell short in his condemnation of the Biya regime by refusing to refer to the indiscriminate slaughter of civilians as genocide. Indeed, in this case, labels are important. While targeted killings carry no obligation for external involvement, genocide does. It is for

this reason that the Clinton Administration refused to label the attempted extermination of Rwandan Tutsis as genocide and, through inaction, allowed the massacre of more than 800,000 human beings. It is likely for this same reason that the Biden administration has purposely turned a blind eye to the atrocities in Cameroon. In part.

The other part of the equation is a bit more complex. To combat genocide, one must name the perpetrators as well as the facilitators. Even when the facilitator is a long-time adversary, such as Russia, political machinations can be tricky. So, imagine the complexities of naming an ally as the facilitator of such an atrocity. Imagine how very awkward it must be for the US to even contemplate naming the Republic of France as a facilitator of genocide, though this was the case in Rwanda in 1994 and continues to be the case in Cameroon today.

Tragically, France's role in the willful oppression and targeted killing of Cameroonian civilians has not always been limited to that of facilitator. As the largest ethnic groups in Cameroon, Bamileke and Bassa voices carried weight during the colonial era and, as such, posed a threat to French rule. As their call for independence grew louder and the number and scope of uprisings increased, France responded with unfettered military force, ultimately wiping out up to 400,000 perceived insurgents between 1959 and 1964, with more than 120,000 Bamileke and Bassa deaths in 1960 alone – the year in which French Cameroon gained independence.

Because records of French military campaigns against the Bamileke and Bassa are not available to the public, researchers must rely heavily on eyewitness accounts. According to such accounts, French military campaigns extended from Kribi to Bafoussam – where the heads of Bamileke and Bassa fighters were prominently displayed on stakes as a warning to others – and resulted in the migration of thousands of Bamileke and Bassa to the British Southern Cameroons. Survivors have also expressed the unanimous belief that the continuation of

the French military's attacks on the Bamileke and Bassa people following the independence of the Republic of Cameroon and the uncontested election of Ahmadou Ahidjo as the country's first president was, in effect, part of the France's successful plot to establish and maintain a puppet government within the resource-rich African republic. When Ahidjo left office, the elaborate puppet show endured for another 39 years with Paul Biya as the star marionette.

Dr. Marie Louise Eteki-Otabela not only shares this opinion but also believes that the current movement to install Franck Biya as his father's successor is fueled by France's perpetual attempts to "make kingdoms of Africa's republics." As she points out, however, Cameroon is not like other States over which the former colonial master continues to covertly assert its influence, in that the people of Cameroon took up arms against a superpower to fight for their



French massacre of the Bamileke and Bassa People

freedom. Dr. Eteki-Otabela is keenly aware of this fact, not because she is a political scholar and the author of eight books on Cameroon, but because she is a survivor of the Bamileke/Bassa genocide described above.

Although Dr. Eteki-Otabela is Francophone, she is acutely familiar with the plight of Anglophones in her beloved homeland. For her, as with the vast majority of people in Cameroon, the Crisis has never been about the inability of Francophones and Anglophones to coexist peacefully. It is about the unwillingness of the Republic of France to remove its knee from the necks of its former subjects. So, when Dr. Eteki-Otabela learned of the Hunger Strike for Peace and the women's demand for the repeal of all unlawful constitutional revisions that led to the eradication of Anglophone sovereignty, she issued a Declaration of Solidarity. Finally, there was a women-led movement that attempted to address the systemic causes of the current Crisis rather than simply calm the symptoms.

Through her Declaration and subsequent heartfelt conversations with GJJ's founder, Cece Buckley, Dr. Eteki-Otabela also inspired the creation of a historic event: the Global Women's Summit for Peace in Cameroon (dates to be announced), which will host up to 20,000 women in Cameroon and the Diaspora. Unlike many movements, however, the Summit will not call for the removal of President Biya. According to Buckley, "These women understand that the real problem lies not in the dictator who is chosen to rule the country – for when one leaves, another can easily take his place – but in the despot behind the dictator: namely, the Republic of France."

The storm that has been brewing in Cameroon is no longer silent. As the thunder of women's voices is heard around the world, it is time for France to finally decide whether it wants to be the facilitator of genocide or peace.

DECLARATION OF SOLIDARITY BETWEEN FRENCH- AND ENGLISH-SPEAKING WOMEN IN CAMEROON IN PURSUIT OF PEACE AND EQUALITY IN THE SOUTHWEST AND NORTHWEST REGIONS

In consideration of the Hunger Strike for Peace organized by the Global Justice Journal on behalf of 1,000 English-speaking women in Cameroon, and in support of the demands set out in the official Notice of Planned Hunger Strike issued on 6 May 2021, the Council on Women's Rights declares our solidarity with our English-speaking sisters in their quest for peace and equality in the South-West and North-West regions.

To this end, we are asking the 1,000 women who joined forces in the hunger strike to temporarily suspend their courageous act of passive resistance so that we can work together to establish an institutional framework for a National Legal and Inclusive Dialogue, which will begin on [a date to be determined during the summer of 2021], and which will include Anglophone and Francophone women in Cameroon and the diaspora. The first meeting under the protection of a private security company in Douala and the second in Brussels. The National Dialogue will be jointly supported by the Council on Women's Rights and the Global Justice Journal to establish a path to peace in Cameroon ... (Continued)



Introducing

La Nouvelle Révolution Française

A movement of women in Cameroon and the Diaspora calling for a boycott of travel to France, French exports, and products manufactured through the use of French exports beginning on la Fête Nationale

14 July 2021

and ending when President Macron agrees to use his influence to usher in an era of peace and equality for all citizens of Cameroon. To date, **10,000 women** have pledged to participate with the objective of growing the movement to more than one million! Learn more at:

NouvelleRevolutionFrancais.com

Harmony in **HUNGER:** How a **DREAM** Became a **MOVEMENT**

It began with a dream. On 19 September 2020, one hundred young people in four regions of Cameroon nervously filed into classrooms, church sanctuaries and neighbors' homes. Most had been denied an education for up to four years because of the ongoing Anglophone Crisis. Many were displaced and orphaned. All clung to the hope that some day there would be peace in their country and, through this program, they might be a part of the solution.

The first week was tough. They were not accustomed to curriculum that challenged them to think outside the box. Inquiry based learning is not taught in Cameroon's government-run schools. The fewer questions the better. However, they embraced the challenge and finished the first day of the program stronger, better informed and with a higher level of confidence than they began

We worried that they might not return for the second week, but that was not the case. In fact, ten additional children joined the Kumba class, hiding in the back of the room in the hope of not being noticed, not being kicked out. They were noticed and, no, they were not kicked out. The truth is we would have embraced one hundred more if they had walked through our doors.

So, together, the children dove in, Anglophone and Francophone alike, learning about extraordinary peace heroes such as Nelson Mandela, Mahatma Gandhi, Mother

Theresa, Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, and Leymah Gbowee through historical texts, music, and poetry. When the children analyzed Maya Angelou's poetry, they described how they, too, felt caged. When they studied Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King, Jr., they shared their own back-of-the-bus stories and their dreams for justice and equality. The most transformative moment, however, was when the children discovered for the first time that the Anglophone regions of Cameroon were originally a separate and equal state within a federation. From that point on, there was no turning back ... for most. Tragically, on 24 October, gunmen stormed Mother Francisca International Bilingual Academy, just two miles from our Kumba campus, killing eight children. Twenty-one students were pulled out of the program by



For 15 weeks, young people gathered every Saturday to participate in the Cameroon Peace Project. Classes were held secretly in four regions of the country, including the Anglophone Southwest (left) and the Francophone North (right)



terrified parents who could not risk their children falling prey to the same fate.

Eighty-nine students returned to class the following week and persevered through their graduation in January 2021, rallying a renewed call for federalism in a bold Resolution for Peace, which would ultimately inspire the organization of a Hunger Strike for Peace by Anglophone women. The dream of eighty-nine had become a movement of a thousand, and through their sacrifice, the women captured the attention of leaders around the world.

Although the women's demands have not been met (yet) and the hunger strike has been placed on a temporary pause, they have not lost momentum. To the contrary, the movement has regrouped and grown exponentially, garnering several invitations for partnerships and collaborations from Francophone and Anglophone groups.

As a result, this summer, up to 20,000 women in Cameroon and the Diaspora will gather virtually and in person for the first-ever Global Women's Summit for Peace in Cameroon, organized and sponsored by Global Justice Journal. Together, the women will determine the most effective path to peace, justice and equality in their homeland and collaborate on strategies for marching forth on that path as a unified, unstoppable force.

What happens when an unstoppable force meets an immovable object? Eventually, and without exception, the immovable object crumbles.



Above, a handful of the courageous 1000+ Cameroonian women who launched a hunger strike on 10 May 2021 to raise public awareness about the Anglophone Crisis and to make their cries heard by world leaders who have the ability to facilitate peace in their war-torn country but who have callously chosen the more convenient path of inaction.

DEBUNKING THE DDR MYTH

No. 2 in a two-part series.

RECAP: Last month, we shared the story of General Jay who, along with 26 other Ambazonian combatants, was brought to Yaounde, lodged at expensive hotels for three months, and given scripts to memorize and recite at the 2019 Grand National Dialogue in exchange for employment that never materialized. Instead, the general and his comrades were brought to DDR camps from which they later escaped. We also told you about Micah, who works as an agent of Elie Smith (Prime Minister Ngute's covert adviser) to traffic arms and lure freedom fighters from the bushes with the promise of vocational training, only to subject them to interrogation and torture at the hands of the BIR. Finally, we revealed our discovery of a secret BIR interrogation center at the Ndawara Tea Plantation in Tole.

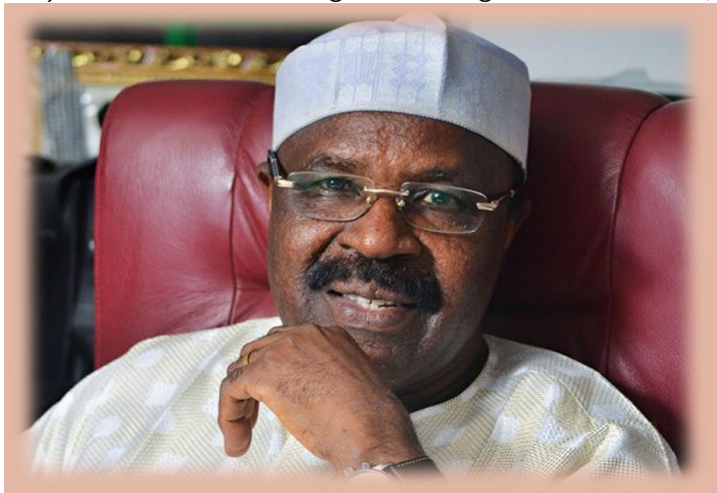
Of the many horror stories our investigators heard regarding deplorable conditions inside the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) Centers, the most troubling accounts came from outside the Centers. Based on reports of the “stench of rotting corpses” from our informants in Buea, we travelled to the tiny village of Tole. Crouched in the back of a transport vehicle, our team went undetected as they passed through each military check-point en route to the Ndawara Tea Plantation. As the gates to the plantation were heavily guarded by BIR soldiers brandishing their weapons, the team ventured deeper into the village to explore the source of the rancid odor – the grizzly site where BIR soldiers regularly dump mutilated bodies. To our horror, it was beginning to appear that our intelligence was accurate: We had discovered the location of a clandestine BIR interrogation center.

According to sources familiar with BIR activities in the area, truckloads of separatist fighters are brought to the plantation for interrogation and drug detoxification before being released to the DDR Center in Buea. On average, former combatants spend three weeks to a month in the “plantation dungeons.” Those who willingly cooperate with their handlers receive three meals per day and humane drug rehabilitation services. Those who are unwilling or unable to provide valuable intelligence to the guards are tortured, mutilated, and ultimately discarded as refuse.



Anytime is torture time at Ndawara Tea Plantation.

Cameroon's tea industry was privatized in 2006 when the Cameroon Development Corporation sold a 65% interest to Bronbon Finex PLC of South Africa with the condition that 5% be returned to employees. The government of Cameroon retained a 10% interest in the business as well as full ownership of the land on which the Tole, Ndu and Djuttitsa plantations were situated. The remaining 25% was reserved for private shareholders. The Chairman of Bronbon Finex, Derrick Garvie, quickly transferred control of the newly formed Cameroon Tea Estate to his business partner, Baba Ahmadou Danullo – a close friend of the Biya family and, according to Forbes, the richest man in Francophone sub-Saharan Africa. It is unclear whether Danullo knows that his plantation is being used as a site of government-sponsored torture.

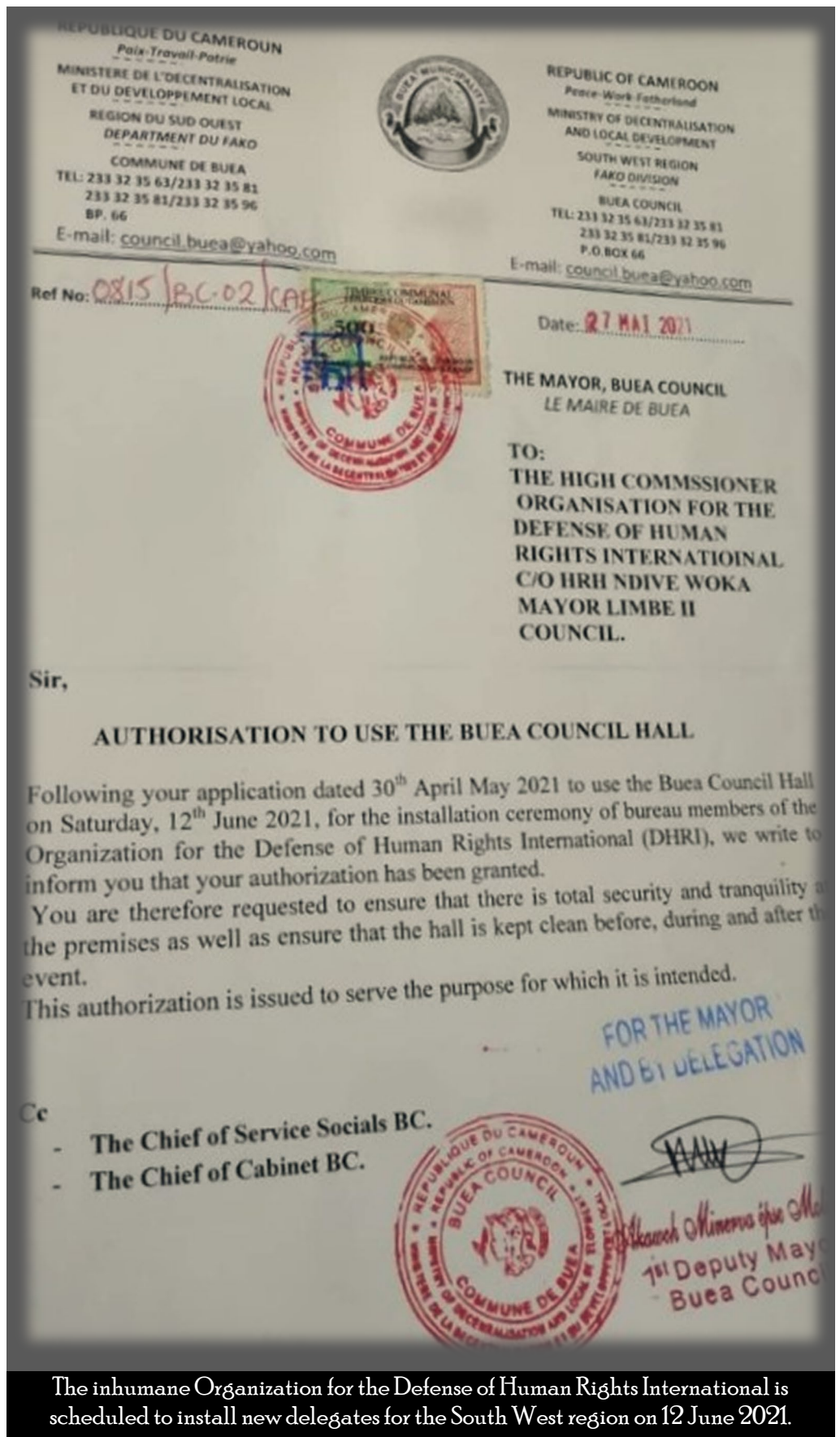


Baba Ahmadou Danullo, owner of Ndawara Plantation

Despite the notoriety of the BIR for its targeted killing of Anglophone citizens and its rampant abuse of detainees at DDR camps, so-called human rights organizations continue to crawl out of the woodwork with the express mandate to lure boys out of the bushes with false promises of a better life. Among the newest of these NGO's is the Organization for the Defense of Human Rights International (DHRI), which has been funded in part by the United Nations.

DHRI delegates are trained by BIR troops and are rewarded with membership cards that grant them unfettered passage through military check points. To date, delegates have been selected in nine of the country's ten regions. On 12 June 2021, delegates for the South West region will be installed at a ceremony in Buea. Their mission: Employ whatever tactics are necessary to entice combatants out of the bushes and into the new DDR Center, which will be built on 30 hectares south of Tiko. Not surprisingly, all of the NGO's documents are in French.

Global Justice Journal condemns DHRI and all would-be human rights organizations that believe eradicating any segment of the population will promote peace. Moreover, we condemn all governmental and nongovernmental entities that support these organizations through word or wallet. As long as leaders continue to attack the symptoms of the disease that has plagued Cameroon for more than a century rather than addressing its root cause, peace will never become a reality.



The inhumane Organization for the Defense of Human Rights International is scheduled to install new delegates for the South West region on 12 June 2021.