

Summary

Recent events in Northwest and Southwest Cameroon reveal escalating violence by Anglophone secessionists. A military treaty signed between the self-proclaimed Ambazonia Republic in Cameroon and the Nigerian separatist group Indigenous People of Biafra, entails that further attacks are very likely to occur, potentially disrupting international maritime trade in the Gulf of Guinea. The Cameroonian government faces the task of addressing multiple threats concurrently, including violence from separatists and Islamist insurgents in northern Cameroon.

Recent events and developments

In their efforts to establish an autonomous state known as Ambazonia in Northwest and Southwest Cameroon, Anglophone secessionists have been engaged in recurrent violent clashes with government forces since 2017. On November 21, these armed separatists carried out an assault on a market in the Bamenyam town in the Francophone region of Bambatous, western Cameroon, killing nine civilians and injuring several others. Furthermore, on November 6, the village of Egbekaw, Southwest Cameroon, endured a massacre by unidentified armed individuals, suspected to be affiliated with Ambazonian fighters from the Tigers of the Manyu faction. More than 20 civilians were killed, seven individuals were injured, and at least 15 others were abducted. The assailants also set fire to 10 houses, and incidents of rape were reported. This assault followed clashes between mercenaries hired by civilians and separatists, as part of an internal power struggle within Ambazonia. On another note, on October 31, in an attempt to invade the Atabong East communities in the Bakassi Peninsula, Southwest Cameroon, elite forces of the Cameroonian armed forces were ambushed by militants loyal to the Biafra Nations League, another secessionist group from Nigeria's Southeast region with the aim of disrupting maritime trade, resulting in the death of 3 soldiers.

Impact assessment

On October 21, Cho Ayaba, the leader of the Ambazonian separatist movement, signed a military treaty with Simon Ekpa, the leader of the Nigerian separatist group Indigenous People of Biafra in Helsinki, Finland, implying further commitment to supporting each other's fights for separatism. Such a treaty would enable Biafra separatists to establish operational camps in Ambazonian territories to orchestrate further attacks on border areas of Cameroon for mutual advantage, as demonstrated on October 31 in the Bakassi Peninsula. Accordingly, coordinated separatists' operations such as the Bakassi ambush would likely be conducted in the Gulf of Guinea. This disruption of international maritime trade in the region is intended to draw attention to the struggles of Ambazonia and Biafra. Thus, in the event of an attack on major cities, Douala is likely to be a target, due to being a port city and its proximity to the Anglophone region. Consequently, in light of the Cameroonian efforts to counter these threats, coupled with the escalating violence from Islamist insurgents in northern Cameroon, the government's attention would shift towards different fronts, leaving non-affected areas as potential targets for opportunistic crime.

Advice from Forth Global

- Make sure all employees traveling to Cameroon undertake a 3-day HEAT training prior to deployment.
- Avoid all non-essential travel to the Southwest, Northwest, and Northern regions. If travel is necessary, plan your journey ahead and check road conditions, and for potential checkpoints roadblocks.
- Liaise with local partners and continuously monitor the news for any major developments.

Customized advice

Please contact us for specific advice:

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