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"Nowhere To Hide": The Impact of The Anglophone Crisis on Children in Cameroon

Dr. Nelson A. Agbor

University of Plymouth, the United Kingdom

Abstract

Since 2016, the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon has escalated into a prolonged armed conflict, displacing more than half a million people and significantly affecting the lives of children in the Northwest and Southwest regions. My paper examines the crisis's impacts on children and young people, drawing on field reports, testimonies, and NGO data to highlight disruptions to education, exposure to violence, psychological trauma, child displacement, and the rise in child labour and recruitment by armed groups. Schools have become battlegrounds, with over 80% of educational institutions in conflict-affected areas closed, depriving children of their right to education for years. Many children have witnessed or survived violent attacks, lost family members, or become internally displaced, often living in insecure conditions with limited access to healthcare, food, or safe shelter. In some cases, children have been forcibly recruited or manipulated into joining armed factions, further increasing their vulnerability. This research calls for urgent, child-centred responses within humanitarian efforts, including psychosocial support, access to safe education, and reintegration programmes. It also calls for greater international attention to the often-overlooked plight of Cameroon's Anglophone children, whose futures are being shaped by violence and neglect. By centring the voices and experiences of affected children, the study underscores the importance of building peace through inclusive, youth-focused strategies that prioritise healing, protection, and long-term resilience.

Keywords: Human rights, Children's rights, Responsibility to protect, Children Education, Armed Conflict, Child labour