

Theme: Minority Youth - Towards Diverse and Inclusive Societies

The Case of the Southern Cameroonian Youth: [Education and Media](#)

The Southern Cameroons has a total population of around eight (8) million people, with a median age of 19. This makes it a very youthful population, with enormous potential. This potential is revealed everyday through the ingenuity and outstanding performance of Southern Cameroonian youths at home. In February 2017, 17-year-old Nji Collins Gbah became the first African to win the Google Coding Challenge. This young Southern Cameroonian achieved this feat in the midst of a 3-month internet shutdown throughout the Southern Cameroons earlier this year, imposed by the government of the Republic of Cameroun. Two weeks ago, another young Southern Cameroonian, 10-year-old Stacey Fru, grabbed news headlines when she launched her second book. The town of Buea, which is the Capital of the Southern Cameroons, has in recent years, become renowned for its cluster of IT start-ups. This has earned it the nickname “Silicon Mountain”, alluding to the Silicon Valley in San Francisco and the fact that Buea sits on the slopes of the majestic Mount Fako. There are numerous examples of young Southern Cameroonians achieving technological breakthroughs and performing at the highest levels in the arts, science and technology. Despite these prevalent manifestations of brilliance and creative genius, which is the legacy of a glorious past when Southern Cameroons was among the most democratic states in Africa and operated one of the best educational systems, the government of the Republic of Cameroon has for the past fifty-six (56) years pursued policies aimed at stifling the voices and potentials of the Southern Cameroonian youth.

Permit us recount that English-speaking Southern Cameroons was not a part of the Republic of Cameroun when the later gained its independence in 1960. In September 1961, the Republic of Cameroun began an illegal occupation of Southern Cameroon, despite **neither** parliament of both countries establishing any binding agreement or treaty as was required for the implementation of UN General Assembly Resolution 1608 (XV) of 21 April 1961. Just like every colonised territory, the ensuing fifty-six (56) years have been that of brutal repression and economic exploitation of Southern Cameroonian youths. Fifty-six (56) years on, the socio-economic, legal and political institutions of Southern Cameroons are in ruins, despite it being an important oil producer in the Gulf of Guinea. The education sector has not been spared either. Schools are either underfunded or not funded at all, the curricula are increasingly being censored and degraded, and English (which is the first official language of the Southern Cameroons) is tactically being phased out by the massive deployment of French-speaking teachers to Southern Cameroonian schools, at the expense of quality education. Southern Cameroonian youths have been grossly underrepresented in the public media space, especially state-run media. As we speak, Southern Cameroon is suffering a second internet shutdown since January 2017. The government of the Republic of Cameroun is currently arresting and extrajudicially detaining Southern Cameroonian youths found using social media platforms to participate in discussions on the socio-political revolution currently happening in their country. Republic of Cameroun’s military arbitrarily profiles and seizes the telephones, laptop computers, and other electronic gadgets of Southern Cameroonians. These military break into homes of Southern Cameroonians and destroy television sets and TV satellite dishes in order to stop access to foreign TV channels. The English Language has been so marginalised that Southern Cameroonians are often denied service or treated very poorly in public offices for speaking in English.

After years of peacefully demanding for the respect of their rights and identity without success, Southern Cameroonian youths see no other alternative to resolving these issues than to regain total control of their country prior to September 1961. We, therefore, call on the UN to impress it on the government of the Republic of Cameroun to respect the human rights of Southern Cameroonian youths and end the present genocidal campaign, to ensure a peaceful process of restoration of the independence of Southern Cameroon. Such independence restoration would ensure a optimal conditions for Southern Cameroonian Youths to benefit from and contribute to the greatest digital revolution of our times.