Refugee Review Tribunal
AUSTRALIA

RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE

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This response was prepared by the Research & Information Services Section of the Refugee Review Tribunal (RRT) after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the RRT within time constraints. This response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. This research response may not, under any circumstance, be cited in a decision or any other document. Anyone wishing to use this information may only cite the primary source material contained herein.

Questions
1. Are you able to find any information on Cameroon Resort and Technology Incorporated?
2. Are you able to find any information on Rainbow company in Nimbin?
3. Is there any information relating to document fraud in Cameroon?
4. What information is there that low level SDF or SCNC members are arrested or detained simply because of their membership or in this case, involvement in teaching classes?
5. Is there any relevant information about Kumba, in particular whether this is an SCNC area or particularly targeted by the authorities?
6. Is there any information on whether activists subject to warrants could leave the country without being questioned by authorities?

RESPONSE

1. Are you able to find any information on Cameroon Resort and Technology Incorporated?

Two websites were found in the sources consulted for the Cameroon Resort and Technology Incorporation: http://www.cameroonresort.bravehost.com/ and http://essser7.freehostia.com/. The website http://essser7.freehostia.com/ also operates under the url http://www.cameroonresorts.tk/. Information contained on these websites indicates that the Cameroon Resort and Technology Incorporation (CRTI) provides a number of functions including the marketing of Cameroon businesses for overseas clients, the organisation of overseas educational internships for Cameroon students, the provision of certified diploma courses and the operation of tourist services within Cameroon. The CRTI brave host website also lists the Mbonge solar energy project as an "upcoming contract award project" and provides detailed information on the project. The CRTI website lists Mr Ndifor Humphrey Chicka as the Technical Director for the company. No information was found in other

sources consulted regarding CRTI or the Mbonge solar energy project. However, a recent posting on an e-commerce website indicates that CRTI has urgently requested solar power equipment for the Bakassi region from "Europe, USA, Canada, New Zealand and Australia" ('About Us' (undated) Cameroon Resorts and Technology Incorporation brave host website http://www.cameroonresort.bravehost.com/about%20us.htm – Accessed 7 September 2009 – Attachment 1; 'Cameroon Resorts and Technology Incorporation's Project' (undated) Cameroon Resorts and Technology Incorporation brave host website http://www.cameroonresort.bravehost.com/contracts.htm – Accessed 9 September 2009 – Attachment 2; 'BOD [Board of Directors]' (undated), Cameroon Resorts and Technology Incorporation brave host website http://www.cameroonresort.bravehost.com/staff.htm – Accessed 9 September 2009 – Attachment 3; 'Solar Panels/Solqr Equipments' 2009, Alibaba website, 3 September http://www.alibaba.com/buyofferdetail/102596322/solar_panels_solqr_equipments.html?indexid=0&idlist=102596322-102370145&totalcount=2&currentid=102596322 – Accessed 9 September 2009 – Attachment 4).

For a more detailed examination of the above reports and sources please see the following information.

The Cameroon Resorts and Technology Incorporation brave host website provides the following detailed overview on the history and various services provided by the company:

> Cameroon Resorts and Technology Incorporation is a registered, informative, educational, consultancy and technological support company based in the Republic of Cameroon.
>
> **History**
>
> This company started in June 1994 as a Non Governmental organization and changed its status to a Company on the 26th of September 1997 to widen its scope of activities.
> This company was created with the following motives:
>
> - Influence people to travel to Cameroon, and make traveling to Cameroon easy and fun to foreign visitors including for events;
> - Influence Cameroonians and foreigners to travel throughout Cameroon to show case the natural beauty and cultural heritage of the country;
> - Help foster a sustainable tourism industry in Cameroon; and
> - Help increase the economic benefits to Cameroon from tourism.
> - Develop tourism and tourism education in Cameroon.
> - To foster sustainable Environmental Management and Agricultural Development as mean to alleviate poverty and sustainable livelihood.
> - To build Websites and Voice over Internet Protocol Technologies to Companies that wish to sell their products in the global market.
> - To create international business relationship between Cameroon and the rest of the world through our consultancy service.
> - To sell the image of Cameroon and its products via e-commerce websites.
> - To offer Education and Technological support and Consultancy service for development projects in poor or marginal communities.
>
> In October 1998 following our National safari tour, we realized a wide majority of our tourist being business men from different corners of the world who came through tourism to source raw materials for their home industries.

Due to the business attachment to most of our safari programmes, on December 14th 1998, a Department of Business Consultancy with an Import/Export sector, was created to foster business relationship between Cameroon and the rest of the world.

This department has been involved in the sales and exportation of Cameroon's Natural resources for the benefit of the country's economy till date.

Services

Education

Cameroon Resorts and Technology Incorporation runs Certified Diploma courses and Programmes in the field of;
*****Tourism and Hospitality Management,
*****Economics and Business Administration,
*****Communications and Information Technology

Working in collaboration with some highly reputable institutions of Higher learning in Cameroon, our highly qualified and reputable staff supervise students academic research and field works, of students from other institutions for academic credits merits in their various institutions in the field of;
*****Tourism and Hospitality Management,
*****Economics and Business Administration,
*****Communications and Information Technology.

We also organize international exchange and internship programmes with foreign organizations and Institutions.

We build, host and manage website of Schools and other institutions of higher learning. While we do so we train some selected students in these institutions on web designing techniques so as to continue the management of their school website.

…**Business Services**

We Build Websites and Voice Over Internet Protocol Technologies to Companies that wish to sell their products in the global market.

Cameroon Resorts and Technology Incorporation does not only build your website. We build, host and market your products to your prospective client overseas.

We have an award winning marketing team that delivers positive result to our clients. Our state of the arts computer systems scan the global market in seconds to pin point potential customers for your products.

…We help people to sell their products via e-commerce websites on our portal and distributed by a global network of partners, volunteers and post, providing an opportunity for many to have an international demand of their product thus benefiting from an increase in their living standards ('About Us' (undated) Cameroon Resorts and Technology Incorporation brave host website http://www.cameroonresort.bravehost.com/about%20us.htm – Accessed 7 September 2009 – Attachment 1).

The CRTI brave host website also provides detailed information on the Mbonge solar energy project which it lists as an "upcoming contract award project". The website states the project was undertaken with the Government of Cameroon in order to provide solar energy

infrastructure in the Mbonge municipality initially for government offices and at a later date, for villages. According to the report "the first phase of the project is expected to be completed in November 2009". The report states that the "CRTI will be obliged to source a minimum of 75% of components from Europe or Asia (China or India)". The website does not describe any liaison with Australian companies in relation to this project. The following is an extract of some of the information provided on the Mbonge solar energy project:

> Cameroon Resorts and Technology Incorporation (CRTI) have been supplying equipment and systems to rural development projects for over 5 years as part of the company's commercial business. In remote locations, particularly for poor, un-electrified communities, solar products and services can be a highly effective means of meeting essential needs such as lighting, telecommunication, fresh drinking water and vaccine refrigeration.
>
> In Cameroon, CRTI undertook the Municipal Solar Infrastructure Project (MSIP), in conjunction with Government of Cameroon. This rural infrastructure project uses solar energy as an "enabling technology" to target specific needs and upgrade basic facilities in remote un-electrified communities.
>
> On completion this development project will provide health, education and governance benefits to 5 Government offices in 18 government infrastructures in Mbonge Municipality of Cameroon, and in future the project will be extended to the electrification of the villages in the Mbonge municipality. In addition, 50-70 people will be trained as part of this program. The project, will be one of the largest solar contracts in the Province an[d] in future may stand as the largest solar electrification project ever setup in the country. The first phase of the project is scheduled to be completed by November 2009 with an estimated running cost of 75.000.000 Frs. CFA approximately US$ 174.418.60.
>
> **…Project Detail**
>
> This rural development project will provide health, education and governance benefits directly to more than 50,000 poor Cameroonians in the municipality. Upon completion of the Solar Electrification project the community's facilities will be upgraded and will be provided with a packaged solar system as follows:
>
> - 1 District Hospitals: The Mbonge District hospital will benefit from the electrification project.
> - 2 Rural Health Centres: The 2 government Rural Health Centres will receive solar electrification from the project.
> - 5 Potable Water Supply Systems in the five villages that make up the municipality of Mbonge.
> - 1 Municipal Halls (Mbonge municipal hall).
> - 5 Government offices (Ministry of Health, Education, Communication, Territorial Administration, including Mbonge Municipal Council).
> - 7 Government Schools in the five within the municipality.
>
> CRTI will be obliged to source a minimum of 75% of components from Europe or Asia (China or India). In addition some of the construction materials will be sourced from Cameroon such as cement for the solar system foundations, as well as wood and taps, amongst a number of others ('Cameroon Resorts and Technology Incorporation's Project' (undated) Cameroon Resorts and Technology Incorporation brave host website http://www.cameroonresort.bravehost.com/contracts.htm – Accessed 9 September 2009 – Attachment 2).

Please note that Attachment 2 contains further detailed information on the Mbonge solar energy project. The report contains information on the objectives, challenges and community expectations involved with the project. The report also contains information regarding the administration of the project such as the "social preparation phase", "provision of systems", "training" and "infrastructure" ('Cameroon Resorts and Technology Incorporation's Project' (undated) Cameroon Resorts and Technology Incorporation brave host website http://www.cameroonresort.bravehost.com/contracts.htm – Accessed 9 September 2009 – Attachment 2).

The CRTI website lists Mr Ndifor Humphrey Chicka as the Technical Director of the company. The CRTI website provides the following information on their Board of Directors:

> Dr Felix Molango Abimbot
> Board Chairperson
>
> Dr Ashu Tahr Agbortahr
> Assit. Board Chairperson
>
> Mr Tabe Ewow Daniel
> Director
>
> Mr Essomo Essomo Serge
> Assistant Director
>
> **Mr Ndifor Humphery Chick**
> **Technical Director**
>
> Mr Erick Folefack Tanya
> Finance Manager
>
> Mrs Yamna Nghuedieu Blanch
> Personel Manager
>
> Mr Ngando Paul Ateba
> Commercial Manager
>
> Mrs Linda Tama
> Administrative Sectary ('BOD [Board of Directors]' (undated), Cameroon Resorts and Technology Incorporation brave host website http://www.cameroonresort.bravehost.com/staff.htm – Accessed 9 September 2009 – Attachment 3).

A posting located on Alibaba.com, an international e-commerce website, states that on 3 September 2009 the CRTI urgently requested solar power equipment from "Europe, USA, Canada, New Zealand and Australia" for the Bakassi region. The following advertisement was posted on Alibaba.com on 3 September 2009:

> *We are Cameroon Resorts and Technology Incorporation, based in the Republic of Cameroon. We are in urgent need of supply of Hight quality solar system equipment (Solar panels, Solar batteries, Inverters and Solar lights) from Europe, USA, Canada, New Zealand and Australia.
>
> *We need this equipment for a Government municipal Solar Electrification Contract awarded to our Company for the Electrification of the Oil rich Bakassi region in Cameroon.

*We need 3 stand alone off-grid systems, each supplying 9000wp of Electricity.

*We need your most favourable quote for the 3 off-grid stand alone systems FOB price ('Solar Panels/Solqr Equipments' 2009, Alibaba website, 3 September http://www.alibaba.com/buyofferdetail/102596322/solar_panels_solqr_equipments.html?indexid=0&idlist=102596322-102370145&totalcount=2&currentid=102596322 – Accessed 9 September 2009 – Attachment 4).

2. Are you able to find any information on Rainbow Company in Nimbin?

The Rainbow Power Company website states that the company was "incorporated in 1987 to design, manufacture, sell and install renewable energy equipment based on solar, wind, hydro and biomass energy sources". According to the website the company is "one of the largest distributors of solar panels and batteries in the country" and has also "exported up to 30% of its products and services to over two dozen overseas countries". Some of the exports projects listed on the website include the provision of solar power technology to Somalia, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and France. The Rainbow Power Company website also states that one of the aims of the company is "to aid developing countries of the world in improving their living standards by educating and trading with them in renewable energy products". The website provides the following relevant information:

> Rainbow Power Company Ltd is an unlisted public company, incorporated in 1987 to design, manufacture, sell and install renewable energy equipment based on solar, wind, hydro and biomass energy sources.
>
> The company is one of the largest and most experienced Renewable Energy companies in Australia, with a workforce of experienced and dedicated staff.
>
> ….Rainbow Power Company performs a number of functions based on social ethics and environmental sustainability. Our aims and objectives include the following:
>
> - To manufacture, wholesale, retail and demonstrate by example all manner of devices powered by Renewable Energy sources.
> - To trade in only high quality, user friendly, efficient, cost effective products, supported by reliable up-to-date advice and after sales service.
> - To educate the general public in all aspects of using energy from renewable sources, and living and developing in a sustainable way.
> - **To aid developing countries of the world in improving their living standards by educating and trading with them in renewable energy products.**
>
> …Domestic Sales
>
> The company's domestic sales are handled by a variety of re-sellers around the country (wholesale), and through our shop-front and mail order services (retail).
>
> With access to the latest technologies and excellent support from a variety of major suppliers Rainbow Power Company is able to be competitive in all its products and services.
>
> **The company is proud to have a reputation for being one of the largest distributors of solar panels and batteries in the country.**

> Overseas Sales
>
> The Rainbow Power Company has exported up to 30% of its products and services to over two dozen overseas countries.
>
> Re-sellers have been established in several overseas countries to ensure adequate local support for clients in remote locations.
>
> Export projects have included:
> - Village solar water pumping in PNG
> - Emergency communications solar power supply for Somalia
> - Hydro generation for village and community electrification in Equador
> - Solar power for giant clam farms in Solomon Islands
> - Solar electric fences for France
> - Solar power for medical clinics in Rabaul
>
> Summary
>
> Rainbow Power Company is proud to have been a major protagonist of the increased use of Renewable Energy both in Australia and in overseas countries. Our unparalleled commitment to education, demonstration and innovation provides Australia with a display that receives over 50,000 visitors a year ('Who is Rainbow Power Company' 2006, Rainbow Power Company website http://www.rpc.com.au/company.html – Accessed 9 September 2009 – Attachment 5).

No information was found in the Rainbow Power Company website regarding the Mbonge solar energy project. A reference to the exporting of products to Cameroon was found in a company newsletter dated December 2003. The newsletter states that "this year we shipped to Brazil, West Indies, Cameroon's and more". No other references were found in the Rainbow Power Company website to Cameroon ('RPC Newsletter #67' 2003, Rainbow Power Company website, 18 December http://www.rpc.com.au/news/newsletters/67dec03.html – Accessed 9 September 2009 – Attachment 6).

The Australian Exporters website provides brief information on the Rainbow Power Company. The website states that:

> Rainbow Power Company Ltd are a company based in Nimbin in the Australian state of New South Wales. Their main business area is renewable energy products.
>
> Rainbow Power Company Ltd have 10 members of staff, and have achieved revenues of AU$1-3 mil of which export revenues have accounted for AU$1-3 mil International companies interested in importing from Australia are welcome to use the contact details below ('Rainbow Power Company Ltd' (undated), Australian Exporters website http://www.australianexporters.net/companyID5485.htm – Accessed 9 September 2009 – Attachment 7).

On 2 April 2008 the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported on the Rainbow Power Company and it's owner Peter Van der Wyk, also known as "Peter Pedals". The report states that:

> Thirty years ago in Nimbin, Peter Pedals was not happy with the pollution caused by energy production. Wanting to find a way to create clean energy, he thought about working with simple leg-power.

> …He used an exercise bike to drive a generator for his spin-dryer and other appliances. It was so successful that people soon called the Dutchman "Peter Pedals" instead of "Peter Van der Wyk".
>
> Today, that is the name the solar systems designer is still known by at the Rainbow Power Company which he founded in 1987.
>
> The company evolved in a suitably organic manner. Starting as a stall at Channon market selling solar batteries and switches, it now employs 19 people and supplies solar technology as far away as Somalia.
>
> "I'd always been technically inclined but often found that being employed meant doing things which weren't environmentally ethical," Pedals says. "The best way to avoid that was to create a business I believed in."
>
> …And the Government's solar rebates have been a boost in the competitive energy market.
>
> "In the past, our customers were out in the bush, not connected to the electricity grid so their only option was solar. But now, we're installing solar panels in houses connected to the grid," Pedals explains.
>
> ...When Carmel and Jorgen Spark moved from Sydney to Rylstone, their remote location meant that solar power was the smart way to go.
>
> …She attended a course run by the Rainbow Power Company to study the links between the amp hours that solar energy is measured in and the voltage that appliances run on. She now enjoys sustainable power ('Peddling green goods' 2008, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 April http://www.smh.com.au/news/energy-smart/peddling-green-goods/2008/04/01/1206850912454.html – Accessed 9 September 2009 – Attachment 8).

3. Is there any information relating to document fraud in Cameroon.

Information referred to by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC)

DIAC makes reference to the following three reports regarding the falsification of documentation in Cameroon:

- The DIAC decision record provides information on document fraud in Cameroon from a 2001 Danish Immigration Service report titled *Fact-finding mission to Cameroon 23/1-3/2 2001*. Section 9 of this report provides detailed information on problems with ascertaining the authenticity of documents from Cameroon and the prevalence of document fraud. The report states that:

  > Several sources pointed out that it is particularly difficult to assess whether documents from Cameroon are genuine as all sorts of forgery may occur. Bribery, a lack of pre-printed blank documents and the existence of local variants mean that it is really only possible to assess whether documents are genuine by using a lawyer (Danish Immigration Service (undated), *Fact-finding mission to Cameroon 23/1-3/2 2001*, Section 9 http://www.nyidanmark.dk/nr/rdonlyres/194f77bf-84fb-4cc4-a6aa-e053d9765f17/0/factfindingmissiontocameroon2001.pdf – Accessed 14 June 2002 – Attachment 9).

- In May 2007 the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) reported that fraudulent "convocations", a French translation of summons, and other types of

documents are easily obtainable in Cameroon. The DFAT report contains the following relevant advice:

> R. 2 F. Are fraudulent convocation documents easily obtainable in Cameroon?
>
> Yes, it is also the case for other types of documents (DIAC Country Information Service 2007, *Country Information Report No. 07/42 –Cameroon: Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC)* (sourced from DFAT advice of 11 May 2007), 11 May – Attachment 10).

- The DIAC decision refers to a 2004 report from the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration titled *Report from a fact-finding trip to Cameroon (Yaounde and Bamenda)*. This report was however, not able to be located on CISNET, the Departments information database or on the internet.

Additional Reports

Social Democratic Front Membership and Documentation Fraud

In January 2004, the UK Home Office undertook a fact-finding mission to Cameroon which included an interview with the National Chairman of the Social Democratic Front (SDF), Ni John Fru Ndi. The interview contains the following advice on fraudulent SDF membership cards:

> 3.3 According to Fru Ndi, genuine SDF members carry a membership card. The membership card includes the party logo, the motto and a ward. False membership cards however, can be obtained, usually by theft and occasionally from people that have lost their position in the party but do not return their documents but instead sell them to someone. SDF membership cards have also been obtained fraudulently in other countries. Fru Ndi has received reports that there is a business in Washington, USA that duplicates the membership cards then sells them for approximately US $1,000 to people wanting to strengthen their asylum case.
>
> 3.4 Fru Ndi advised the delegation that SDF membership cards have been known to be used as part of the asylum claim for drug traffickers, criminals, and Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM) members. Fru Ndi is now the only one that checks the authenticity of SDF membership cards and endorses, if need be, asylum claims.
>
> 3.5 Fru Ndi added that people do occasionally ask to join the SDF just so they can get a membership card to improve their asylum claims in other countries. However, Fru Ndi stated that he refuses membership to such people (UK Home Office 2004, *Report of Fact-Finding Mission to Cameroon 17-25 January 2004*, 12 May http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs06/cameroon_ffm_020306.doc – Accessed 14 September 2009 – Attachment 11).

A 1998 report by the SDF provides information regarding the forging of SDF membership for various reasons including asylum claims. The report provides samples of authentic and false SDF membership cards. The report also discusses false publications in newspapers and false letters from SDF officials in support of asylum claims (Social Democratic Front 1998, 'Abuse of Membership of Social Democratic Front (SDF) by Asylum Seekers', Social Democratic Party website http://www.sdfparty.org/english/references/466.php – Accessed 14 October 2008 – Attachment 12).

General Information on Document Fraud

On 12 May 2008, *The Post Newsline* reported that the US Embassy in Cameroon had donated five computer systems to various councils in order to combat false documentation. The report states that "according to the Chief of the Consular Section of the US Embassy, William Swaney, about 30 out of every 100 files deposited at the Embassy for visas are made up of fraudulent documents" (Wirdze, E. 2008 'Cameroon: U.S. Embassy Combats Visa Fraud', *The Post Newsline*, 12 May, All Africa.com website http://allafrica.com/ – Accessed 14 September 2009 – Attachment 13).

On 28 November 2007, *The Cameroon Tribune* reported on the outcomes of a two day seminar held from 21 to 22 November on the functioning of the "national civil status system". The report describes the lack of modern processes for the issuing of birth and death certificates in Cameroon which has led to corruption and fraud in these areas. The report states that "there is a gang of fraudsters now called "dockimen", who have specialised in forging [birth] certificates for fabulous sums of money". The report contains the following relevant information:

> Cameroonians are generally agreed that there is something wrong with the national civil status system. Prime Minister Ephraim Inoni while chairing the opening ceremony of the seminar on civil status reforms quoted the Head of State in his address to the nation on 31 December 2002: "archaic methods of identification of the population, methods which have to be absolutely modernised". The national civil status system specialises in the issuing of birth, marriage and death certificates.
>
> The main problem with the issuing of these certificates is the fact that the process is not computerised, archives poorly kept and there is also no central unit where it is possible to verify the certificates issued in different parts of the country. **The consequence of the obsolete and archaic methods of issuing birth, marriage and death certificates are corruption and fraud. There is a gang of fraudsters now called "dockimen", who have specialised in forging certificates for fabulous sums of money.**
>
> These criminals issue fake birth certificates to people who want to change their ages in order to qualify to write competitive entrance examinations into government institutions and marriage certificates, mostly to people who want to use the fake marriages to travel abroad. The fraudsters sell the Cameroonian nationality obtained through birth certificates to any foreigner who can afford the money. The local councils and special civil status registration centres with the mission to issues the civil status certificates tend to compete with "dockimen". More often, people who prefer fake certificates have an axe to grind with government officials when the said certificates are discovered in their quest to obtain certified true copies (Kendmeh, E. 2007 'Cameroon: Cleansing the Civil Status System of Corruption', *Cameroon Tribune*, 28 November, All Africa.com website http://allafrica.com/ – Accessed 14 September 2009 – Attachment 14).

A February 2007 report by the Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) provides information on documentation fraud in Cameroon. The report provides the following relevant information:

> The March 2005 Swiss Refugee Council (Organisation suisse d'aide aux réfugiés, OSAR) report on identity documents in various African countries states that:
>
> > [translation]
> >
> > [t]he falsification of documents is widespread in Cameroon. Birth documents, identity cards, marriage certificates, certificates of arrest, and certificates of release are

regularly falsified. There is an open trade in blank documents, although it is clearly illegal.

There is no official template for documents. Authentic documents, issued by the authorities, differ in their appearance. If the authorities run out of official forms, they use copies or use a typewriter to draw up documents. Authentic documents can therefore appear to have been falsified. Only a lawyer can assess, to some extent, a document's authenticity.

French and English are the official languages of Cameroon. Consequently, the various administrations have both French and English names. Official documents are often bilingual. The English version appears below the French. (Mar. 2005, 7) (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2007, *CMR102449.FE – Cameroon: The existence of fraudulent national identity cards and the possibility of obtaining one (2000 – 2007)*, 23 February http://www2.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/research/rir/?action=record.viewrec&gotorec=451059 – Accessed 3 September 2007 – Attachment 15).

4. What information is there that low level SDF or SCNC members are arrested or detained simply because of their membership or in this case, involvement in teaching classes.

Information for the question has been provided under the following two subheadings:

- Social Democratic Front
- Southern Cameroons National Council

Social Democratic Front

Available information indicates that the SDF is the leading opposition political party in Cameroon and that membership is not illegal. Nonetheless, the most recent US Department of State (USDOS) report on human rights practices in Cameroon states that individuals in the north west and south west regions of Cameroon, as a result of their tendency to support the SDF, "suffered disproportionately from human rights abuses committed by the government and its security forces". A January 2009 report on Cameroon by Amnesty International states that many SDF members have been arrested and detained after being accused of supporting secession. However, the report also states that "although government suspicions against the SDF have persisted, there have been far fewer detentions of its members in recent years". Reports indicate recent incidences in which SDF supporters and members have been mistreated by government authorities. The USDOS has reported that SDF protestors were attacked by security forces while demonstrating in February 2008. Amnesty International have reported that SDF supporter, Pierre Roger Lambo Sandjo who wrote a song critical of constitutional changes was sentenced to three years imprisonment in September 2008. Reports also indicate that a group of 23 SDF members were detained without trial from May 2006 until their release in November 2008 (US Department of State 2009, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2008 – Cameroon*, 25 February, Section 2.b – Attachment 16; Amnesty International 2009, *Cameroon: Impunity Underpins Persistent Abuse*, January, pp 8 -9 http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/AFR17/001/2009/en/126d20cd-de59-11dd-b660-fb1f16ee4622/afr170012009en.pdf – Accessed 15 September 2009 – Attachment 17; UK Home Office 2009, *Operational Guidance Note – Cameroon*, 1 June, Section 3.6 http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/policyandlaw/countryspecificasylumpolicyogns/cameroon.pdf?view=Binary – Accessed 14 September 2009 – Attachment 18).

The most recent USDOS report on human rights practises in Cameroon provides the following information of the treatment of SDF members and supporters:

> On February 26, during a visit to the Yaounde Kondengui Central Prison, Divine Chemuta Banda, chairman of the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms (NCHRF), learned that many of the SDF militants incarcerated in 2006 in connection with the death of Gregoire Diboule had been treated inhumanely and denied medical care.
>
> ...The law provides for freedom of assembly; however, the government restricted this right in practice, particularly during and after the February demonstrations and riots.
>
> …On February 13, in the Bessengue neighborhood the Douala GMI disrupted an SDF march to protest against constitutional reform. The police used water cannon, trucks, and tear gas to disperse demonstrators in addition to beatings with rubber batons.
>
> During the February riots, which spread to 31 localities including Yaounde and Douala, and the subsequent government crackdown, security forces shot and killed demonstrators and rioters. While the government reported 40 persons killed, NGOs such as La Maison des Droits de l'Homme claimed that security forces killed over 100 persons.
>
> For example, on February 23, Douala police shot and killed Lovet Ndima Tingha, a meat vendor, while police attacked a crowd gathered for a march organized by the SDF leading opposition party. The march protested President Biya's intention to remove constitutional term limits. The press reported that SDF organizers had decided to disband for fear of violence and that police attacked while the crowd dispersed. Human rights organizations assisted Tingha's family in filing a complaint against the police; no further information was available at year's end.
>
> ...Natives of the North West and South West regions tended to support the opposition party SDF and consequently suffered disproportionately from human rights abuses committed by the government and its security forces. The anglophone community was underrepresented in the public sector. Although citizens in certain francophone areas--the East, Far North, North, and Adamaoua Regions--voiced similar complaints about under-representation and government neglect, anglophones said they generally believed that they had not received a fair share of public sector goods and services within their two regions. Some residents of the anglophone region sought greater freedom, equality of opportunity, and better government by regaining regional autonomy rather than through national political reform, and have formed several quasi-political organizations in pursuit of their goals (US Department of State 2009, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2008 – Cameroon*, 25 February, Section 2.b – Attachment 16).

In January 2009 Amnesty International published a report titled *Cameroon: Impunity Underpins Persistent Abuse*. The report provides the following information on the situation for SDF members in Cameroon and the detention of 23 SDF members without trial from May 2006 until November 2008:

> The Social Democratic Front (SDF) is the leading opposition political party in Cameroon. It draws most of its support from the predominantly anglophone South-West Province and North-West Province. The government has invariably accused the SDF of being separatist, like the SCNC. As a result, many members of the SDF have been arrested and detained after being accused of supporting secession for the two provinces.
>
> Although government suspicions against the SDF have persisted, there have been far fewer detentions of its members in recent years. However, a dispute between two rival factions of

> the SDF culminated in the arrest and long-term detention without trial of at least 23 members of the main faction of the party, who were accused of killing Grégoire Diboulé, a prominent member of the dissident faction, on 26 May 2006. Those arrested, who were held without trial until November 2008, include retired army colonel James Chi Ngafor who was not present when Grégoire Diboulé died.
>
> …When they appeared in court on 5 November 2008, the High Court in Yaoundé ordered the provisional release of 20 of the 21 detainees because they had been unlawfully detained far in excess of the period allowed by the Cameroonian Code of Penal Procedure.
>
> …According to Article 221 of the Cameroonian Code of Penal Procedure, pre-trial detention should not exceed six months, unless it is prolonged for up to six months with legal justification by an examining magistrate. These detainees should not have been held beyond May 2007 without trial (Amnesty International 2009, *Cameroon: Impunity Underpins Persistent Abuse*, January, pp 8 -9 http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/AFR17/001/2009/en/126d20cd-de59-11dd-b660-fb1f16ee4622/afr170012009en.pdf – Accessed 15 September 2009 – Attachment 17).

The above Amnesty International report also states that in April 2008 Pierre Roger Lambo Sandjo, an SDF supporter, was arrested for singing songs critical of the President's proposed amendments to the constitution. According to the report Sandjo was charged with damage caused by a protest in February 2008 and sentenced to three years imprisonment. The report states that:

> Musicians and political activists, Pierre Roger Lambo Sandjo (also known as Lapiro de Mbanga and Joe de Vinci Kameni (also known as Joe La Conscience) were arrested in March and April 2008, respectively, after singing songs that were critical of President Biya's move to amend the Constitution to abolish the limit on the time he may remain in power.
>
> …Sandjo, 51, is a member of the SDF. He was arrested on 9 April 2008 in Mbanga city and was brought to Nkongsamba High Court chained to Paul Eric Kingué, the mayor of Njombé Penja, who was himself facing charges connected to the February 2008 protests. After he was transferred from the Mbanga central prison to Nkongsamba for trial, Sanjo's health is reported to have deteriorated due to poor sanitary conditions in the prison. According to his relatives, he developed chronic back pains and respiratory infections. He appeared before the court on 23 July and pleaded not guilty. On 24 September, the High Court found him guilty of "complicity in looting, destruction of property, arson, obstructing streets, degrading the public or classified property, and forming illegal gatherings". The court sentenced him to three years' imprisonment and ordered him to pay a total of 280 million CFA francs (approx US$640,000) as compensation for damage caused to several private businesses and a government department whose property the court claimed he had caused to be destroyed. Human rights defenders in Cameroon told Amnesty International that Sanjo had not used or advocated violence, and that the sentence was government retaliation for his criticism. He appealed against the conviction and sentence. The appeal was still pending at the end of 2008 (Amnesty International 2009, *Cameroon: Impunity Underpins Persistent Abuse*, January, p.11 http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/AFR17/001/2009/en/126d20cd-de59-11dd-b660-fb1f16ee4622/afr170012009en.pdf – Accessed 15 September 2009 – Attachment 17).

On 6 February 2009, *The Post Newsline* reported that the Cameroon government "has expressed reservation" regarding the 2009 report by Amnesty International. The report also contains advice from Godfred Byarohanga, a "guest on BBC Network Africa Studio" who is cited as stating that ""if you are an opposition member or a journalist in Cameroon, life is probably tough for you. You could be arrested and put through a rigorous or an unfair trial;

intimidated and even have death threats made against you". The report contains the following information:

> The government of Cameroon has expressed reservation for the recently published report by Amnesty International (AI) on poor Human Rights situation in the country.
>
> …However, Godfred Byarohanga, who was guest on BBC Network Africa Studio, Thursday, January 29, said: "If you are an opposition member or a journalist in Cameroon, life is probably tough for you. You could be arrested and put through a rigorous or an unfair trial; intimidated and even have death threats made against you."
>
> …"Last February, more than 100 people were killed by the forces of law and order because they demonstrated against the high cost of living and government attempts that succeeded in changing the constitution to allow President Paul Biya to stand for another election in 2011," Byarohanga noted.
>
> …Many times when the opposition or students demonstrate when it is their right to do so, they are arrested, beaten up and imprisoned.
>
> For example, the report says, in 2006, more than 30 members of the Social Democratic Front, SDF, were arrested, beaten up and imprisoned. AI described Cameroon's prison conditions as horrific, overcrowded, lack of food, morbid toilet systems and so on.
>
> "Very often, the detainees are reported to have died in custody because of lack of food, water and because of lack of sanitation and, of course, many are tortured in custody," Byarohanga opined.
>
> Asked by BBC where he gets his evidence, Byarohanga says they have built up a network of contacts within Cameroon made up of human rights and civil society organisations. He says the groups give them information at their own personal risk and there are friends or relatives of the people who are suffering human rights violations, who contact Amnesty International, which they verify (Mbunwe, C. 2009 'Cameroon: Government Refutes Poor Human Rights Report', *The Post Newsline*, 6 February, All Africa.com website http://allafrica.com/ – Accessed 15 September 2009 – Attachment 19).

Amnesty International Annual Report 2009 – Cameroon states that "political opponents of the government" including SDF members, have been arbitrarily arrested and detained. The report states that:

> As part of a strategy to stifle opposition, the authorities perpetrated or condoned human rights violations including arbitrary arrests, unlawful detentions and restrictions on the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly.
>
> …Political opponents of the government were arbitrarily arrested and detained. Those targeted included members of the Social Democratic Front (SDF), the main opposition party, and the Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC) – a group supporting independence for anglophone provinces (Amnesty International 2009, *Amnesty International Annual Report 2009 – Cameroon* http://thereport.amnesty.org/en/regions/africa/cameroon – Accessed 15 September 2009 – Attachment 20).

The June 2009 UK Home Office *Operational Guidance Note – Cameroon* includes SDF members in its examination of categories of claims. The operational guidance note provides the following information:

3.6.2 *Treatment.* The SDF was founded in early 1990 and gained legal recognition in March 1991. The SDF is the leading opposition political party and contested the legislative elections in 2007. John Fru Ndi, National Chairman of the SDF told the United Kingdom delegation of a fact finding mission to Cameroon in January 2004 that government officials and the police harassed and intimidated members of the SDF. According to John Fru Ndi, young people whose parents are members of the SDF in particular were harassed and intimidated by the Government. He further stated that many young SDF supporters were also stopped from obtaining jobs or starting up new businesses. Whilst stating that it was difficult for many young SDF supporters to live in Cameroon because of the harassment and intimidation, John Fru Ndi noted that this form of intimidation was not used against all SDF members.

In February 2008, the police in Douala disrupted marches organised by the SDF against constitutional reform. The police reportedly used water cannon, trucks, and tear gas to disperse demonstrators in addition to beatings with rubber batons. On one occasion, the police reportedly shot and killed a person when they attacked a crowd gathered for a SDF organised march. Amnesty International has also reported that in 2008 some members of the SDF were arbitrarily arrested and detained. SDF support comes mainly from Anglophones, especially from the North West Region, and from Bamilekes – people whose routes are in the West Region, but who are also numerous in Douala and other towns. They reportedly suffer disproportionately from human rights abuses committed by the Government and its security forces.7

…3.6.8 *Conclusion.* The SDF is the largest opposition party to play a major role in opposition political activity. It is a registered party and therefore being a member is not illegal. Whilst the police have disrupted some marches organised by the SDF and reportedly arrested and detained some members of the SDF, membership of, involvement in, or perceived involvement in the SDF at any level is not likely to amount to ill-treatment that engages the UK's obligations under the 1951 Convention. The grant of asylum in such cases is therefore not likely to be appropriate. As stated in FK, however, some prominent and active opponents of the Government may, depending on their particular profile and circumstances, continue to be at risk. Therefore, the nature of the political activity and level of involvement with any political party, including the SDF, should be thoroughly investigated as the grant of asylum may be appropriate in some cases (UK Home Office 2009, *Operational Guidance Note – Cameroon*, 1 June, Section 3.6 http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/policyandlaw/countryspecificasylumpolicyogns/cameroon.pdf?view=Binary – Accessed 14 September 2009 – Attachment 18).

For background information on SDF party structure, policies and the mistreatment of members, up to 2006 see questions one and two of *Research Response CMR30526* (RRT Research & Information 2006, *Research Response CMR30526*, 4 September – Attachment 21).

Southern Cameroons National Council

Sources consulted indicate that the Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC) is illegal in Cameroon as it is a secessionist organisation. According to the *Political Handbook of the World: 2007* the SCNC is "the leading vehicle for expression of secessionist sentiment in the former British Cameroons region". A 2009 UK Home Office operational guidance note states that "the SCNC advocates complete secession or full independence of the two southern Anglophone provinces from the Francophone majority".Reports indicate that SCNC members found to be participating in group meetings have been arrested and detained. In May 2007 the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) advised that an indiviudal could be served with a court summons, known in Cameroon as a convocation, if found to be carrying a SCNC membership card. The DFAT report also states that it is likely, though not confirmed, that the

Cameroon authorities maintain a list of individuals wanted for arrest due to their SCNC membership as opposed to their position within the SCNC (US Department of State 2009, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2008 – Cameroon*, 25 February, Sections 1.f, 2.b, 3 – Attachment 16; UK Home Office 2009, *Operational Guidance Note – Cameroon*, 1 June, Section 3.7 http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/policyandlaw/countryspecificasylumpolicyogns/cameroon.pdf?view=Binary – Accessed 14 September 2009 – Attachment 18; Banks, Arthur S., *et al*. 2007, *Political Handbook of the World: 2007*, CQ Press, Washington DC, p.203 – Attachment 22; Amnesty International 2009, *Cameroon: Impunity Underpins Persistent Abuse*, January http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/AFR17/001/2009/en/126d20cd-de59-11dd-b660-fb1f16ee4622/afr170012009en.pdf – Accessed 15 September 2009 – Attachment 17; DIAC Country Information Service 2007, *Country Information Report No. 07/42 – Cameroon: Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC)*, (sourced from DFAT advice of 11 May 2007), 11 May – Attachment 10).

The USDOS *Reports on Human Rights Practices 2008 – Cameroon* reports that SCNC is illegal and that individuals found to be participating in SCNC meetings have been arrested. The report states that "during the year security forces preemptively arrested approximately 40 leaders, members, and supporters of the SCNC to prevent them from participating in unauthorized political meetings". The report contains the following relevant information:

> During the year police put the houses of Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC) officials and activists under surveillance, searched the houses of some SCNC leaders, and disrupted SCNC meetings in private residences. The SCNC is an anglophone group the government considers illegal because it advocates secession.
>
> …Authorities refused to grant the SCNC permission to hold rallies and meetings, and security forces arrested and detained some activists.
>
> …The law prohibits organizations who advocate for any type of secession, leading government officials to disrupt meetings of the SCNC on the grounds that the purpose of the organization rendered their meetings illegal.
>
> …The government considered the SCNC illegal because it advocates secession and authorities refused to register it as a political organization. During the year security forces preemptively arrested approximately 40 leaders, members, and supporters of the SCNC to prevent them from participating in unauthorized political meetings.
>
> For example, on February 9, Bamenda police preemptively arrested 19 SCNC activists gathered in a private residence. Police arrested the activists to prevent them from celebrating the Day of Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization. On February 13, the Bamenda prosecutor released them on bail, pending formal charges and eventual trial.
>
> In accordance with the previsions of the newly instituted penal code, officials released, pending trial, individuals who were detained for participating in illegal gatherings of the SCNC (US Department of State 2009, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2008 – Cameroon*, 25 February, Sections 1.f, 2.b, 3 – Attachment 16).

A January 2009 report by Amnesty International titled *Cameroon: Impunity Underpins Persistent Abuse* provides a section on "violations of the rights of SCNC members". The report states that SCNC members have been arrested and detained when found to be attending group meetings. The report states that "by December 2008, nearly 40 members of the SCNC

were still awaiting trial on charges ranging from wearing SCNC T-shirts to agitating for secession". The report provides the following relevant information:

> The Cameroonian authorities have arbitrarily arrested and unlawfully detained members of the SCNC in violation of their right to peaceful assembly and association.
>
> On 21 and 22 September 2004, around 20 members of the SCNC were reportedly arrested and briefly detained in the towns of Mutengene, Tiko and Kumba in western Cameroon. Their reported arrests occurred as they met to prepare a celebration of the anniversary of southern Cameroon's independence from Britain on 1 October 1961.
>
> As many as 40 members of the SCNC, including their leader Henry Fossung, were arbitrarily arrested and unlawfully detained on 15 January 2005 by members of the gendarmerie's *Groupement mobile d'intervention* (GMI, Mobile Intervention Unit) in Buéa, capital of South-West Province. Those arrested included women who were preparing food for other members of the SCNC meeting at the home of Henry Fossung, who had just returned from a trip abroad. When Henry Fossung protested against the arrests, he was reportedly beaten and had his shirt and trousers torn by members of the GMI. The women were released late on the day of their arrest, while the men were released over the subsequent two days. None of those arrested were charged with any offence, although a government minister reportedly accused this group of members of the SCNC of holding a clandestine meeting.
>
> SCNC prisoners sentenced by a military tribunal in October 1999 to lengthy prison terms, waited for five years to be allowed to appeal against their conviction, and sentences. They had been charged with violent offences, including murder, attempted murder, grievous bodily harm, illegal possession of firearms, arson and robbery, in connection with armed attacks in North-West Province in March 1997. Amnesty International considered their trial to be unfair. The defendants were denied access to legal counsel in pre-trial detention and were tried by a court controlled by the Cameroonian Ministry of Defence. Soon after they were convicted, Amnesty International issued a news release in favour of a retrial of those convicted.
>
> …In its decision of 16 December 2005 pertaining to the prisoners' appeal, the Court of Appeal in Yaoundé acquitted two of the prisoners, confirmed prison terms for two others and reduced sentences for a further six.
>
> …More than 60 SCNC members were arrested on 24 April 2006 and released without charge on 1 May 2006. Fidelis Chinkwo, Emmanuel Emi, Priscilla Khan, Elvis Bandzeka and Cleus Che were arrested while meeting in Bamenda on 16 September 2006. They were released several days later without charge.
>
> About 40 members of the SCNC were arrested on 20 January 2007 as the organization's National Vice-Chairman, Nfor Ngala Nfor, was about to address a press conference in Bamenda. Several SCNC members, including Nfor Ngala Nfor, were reportedly injured during the arrests. Although most of those arrested were released within a few hours, Nfor Ngala Nfor and at least 12 others were detained without trial for nearly two months. By December 2008, nearly 40 members of the SCNC were still awaiting trial on charges ranging from wearing SCNC T-shirts to agitating for secession. In December 2007, the case against those arrested on 20 January 2007 was dismissed by the court after the prosecution failed to produce witnesses.
>
> Members of the security forces arrested at least seven SCNC members on 11 February 2008. They had been meeting in a Presbyterian Youth Centre at Azeri Old Church junction in Mankon, Bamenda. A day earlier, some 20 SCNC members, including SCNC Assistant National Organizing Secretary Fidelis Chinkwo Ndeh, had been arrested in Bamenda. Ten of

> them were detained at a GMI detention centre, while 10 others were detained at a police station in the town (Amnesty International 2009, *Cameroon: Impunity Underpins Persistent Abuse*, January, pp. 6-8 http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/AFR17/001/2009/en/126d20cd-de59-11dd-b660-fb1f16ee4622/afr170012009en.pdf – Accessed 15 September 2009 – Attachment 17).

In May 2007 DFAT provided advice on the treatment of SCNC members. The report contains the following questions and answers:

> R. 1 A. Is it likely that SCNC members who were arrested and found to be carrying their SCNC membership cards be issued with a 'convocation' to attend a particular police station within a certain period of time?
>
> Yes
>
> R. 1 B. Do the Cameroon authorities maintain a list of those wanted for arrest because of their being a general SCNC member, rather than just for those holding a particular position within the organisation?
>
> It is likely, however, this information has not been confirmed.
>
> R. 1 C. Would citizens who had been identified as SCNC members have difficulty in obtaining a Cameroon passport?
>
> Confirmation that citizens who had been identified as SCNC members have difficulty obtaining a Cameroon passport has not been possible. Some members, however, are attending international conferences outside of Cameroon. It is an indication, which tends to demonstrate that they are entitled to obtain a Cameroon passport.
>
> R. 1 D. Are all citizens resident in the southern Cameroons region generally suspected of membership or of support for the SCNC by virtue of their residence in that region?
>
> No, government officials tend to demonstrate that SCNC is marginalised in Cameroon and that SCNC members represent the voice of a minority (DIAC Country Information Service 2007, *Country Information Report No. 07/42 – Cameroon: Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC)*, (sourced from DFAT advice of 11 May 2007), 11 May, para. R.1 B – Attachment 10).

The *Freedom in the World 2009 report- Cameroon* by Freedom House reports that "meetings of the banned SCNC are routinely disrupted". The report also states that "in October 2008, the chairman of the SCNC, Chief Ayamba Ette Otun, and 24 other members were arrested during a meeting" (Freedom House 2009, *Freedom in the World 2009 report- Cameroon* http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2009&country=7580 – Accessed 16 September 2009 – Attachment 23).

On 4 September 2008, *The Post Newsline* reported that on 26 August police detained 14 SCNC activists (Mbunwe, C. 2009, 'Cameroon: SCNC Faction Leaders Arrested', *The Post Newsline*, 4 September, All Africa website http://allafrica.com/- Accessed 16 September 2009 – Attachment 24)

The UK Home Office's June 2009 operational guidance note for Cameroon expresses the view that "while some leaders, members, and supporters of the SCNC have been arrested and held in temporary detention, there is no evidence that the treatment applied to ordinary

members of the SCNC and the SCYL generally amounts to persecution". The guidance note provides the following information:

> **3.7.2** ***Treatment.*** The SCNC advocates complete secession or full independence of the two southern Anglophone provinces from the Francophone majority. The SCNC is not a political party and is not registered but shares a number of supporters with opposition parties, most notably the SDF. The SCYL is a youth organisation known to be connected to the SCNC.
>
> **3.7.3** The Government considers the SCNC an illegal organisation because it advocates secession, which the law prohibits. The security forces continue to arrest and detain leaders, members, and supporters of the SCNC. In 2008, for example, the security forces reportedly arrested approximately forty leaders, members, and supporters of the SCNC to prevent them from participating in unauthorised political meetings. However, in accordance with the newly instituted penal code, officials released, pending trial, individuals who were detained for participating in illegal SCNC gatherings. The police have also reportedly put the houses of SCNC officials and activists under surveillance, searched the houses of some SCNC leaders, and disrupted SCNC meetings in private residences. In addition, the authorities have refused to grant the SCNC permission to hold rallies and meetings.
>
> **…3.7.8** ***Conclusion.*** While some leaders, members, and supporters of the SCNC have been arrested and held in temporary detention, there is no evidence that the treatment applied to ordinary members of the SCNC and the SCYL generally amounts to persecution. There is no evidence to suggest that mere membership of, involvement with, or perceived involvement in the SCNC or the SCYL would in itself lead to persecution and a grant of asylum in such cases is therefore not likely to be appropriate. Applicants who have been involved in illegal or criminal activities on behalf of the SCNC or the SCYL are likely to fear prosecution by the authorities rather than persecution. The grant of asylum in such cases is therefore also not likely to be appropriate. As stated in FK, however, some prominent and active opponents of the Government may, depending on their particular profile and circumstances continue to be at risk. Therefore, the nature of the political activity and level of involvement with any political group, including the SCNC and the SCYL should be thoroughly investigated as the grant of asylum may be appropriate in some cases (UK Home Office 2009, *Operational Guidance Note – Cameroon*, 1 June, Section 3.7 http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/policyandlaw/countryspecificasylumpolicyogns/cameroon.pdf?view=Binary – Accessed 14 September 2009 – Attachment 18).

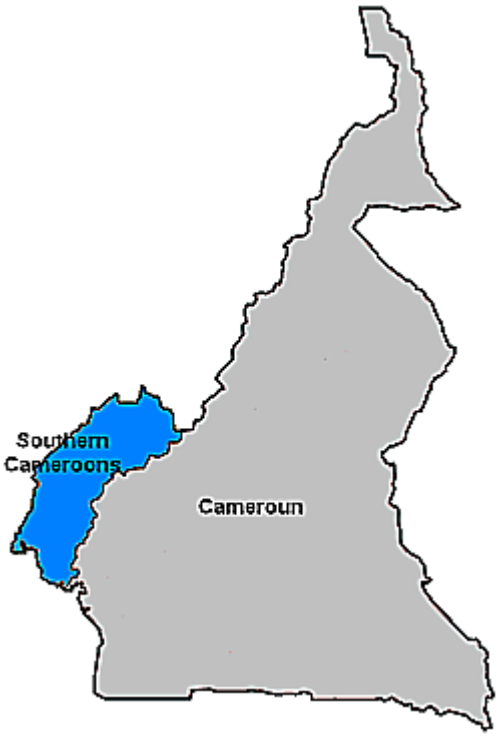
Research Response CMR32200, dated 17 September 2007 provides further information on the SCNC. Question two of the response provides an overview of the SCNC. Question five provides information on the targeting of the family members of SCNC members and Question 18 provides information on the treatment of failed asylum seekers, including SCNC members upon return to Cameroon (RRT Research & Information 2007, *Research Response CMR32200*, 17 September – Attachment 25).

5. Is there any relevant information about Kumba, in particular whether this is an SCNC area or particularly targeted by the authorities.

The following map from Wikipedia highlights the location of Kumba within the South West of Cameroon:

('Kumba: Location in Cameroon' (undated) Wikipedia website http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kumba – Accessed 16 September 2009 – Attachment 26; [**Note:** Wikipedia is a Web-based free-content encyclopaedia which is written collaboratively by volunteers. We recommend that users of Wikipedia familiarise themselves with the regulatory practices which Wikipedia employs as a preventative measure against vandalism, bias and inaccuracy (for more information, see the recommended background reading available in the 'Wikipedia Topical Information Package').]

The following map from the SCNC website shows the territory of "Southern Cameroons". "Southern Cameroons" refers to the territory which the SCNC believe should succeed from Cameroon and become an independent and sovereign state. It would appear from a comparison with the above Wikipedia map that Kumba lies within "Southern Cameroons":



(‘South Cameroons’ 2007, Southern Cameroon National Council website http://www.scncforsoutherncameroons.net/thescnc.html – Accessed 16 September 2009 – Attachment 27).

The USDOS *Reports on Human Rights Practices 2008 – Cameroon* reports that “natives of the North West and South West regions tended to support the opposition party SDF and consequently suffered disproportionately from human rights abuses committed by the government and its security forces (US Department of State 2009, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2008 – Cameroon*, 25 February, Section 3 – Attachment 16).

Amnesty International’s report *Cameroon: Impunity Underpins Persistent Abuse* published in January 2009, reports on the arbitrary arrest and detention of SCNC members in Kumba in September 2004. The report also provides other more recent examples of police violations in Kumba:

> The Cameroonian authorities have arbitrarily arrested and unlawfully detained members of the SCNC in violation of their right to peaceful assembly and association. On 21 and 22 September 2004, around 20 members of the SCNC were reportedly arrested and briefly detained in the towns of Mutengene, Tiko and Kumba in western Cameroon. Their reported arrests occurred as they met to prepare a celebration of the anniversary of southern Cameroon’s independence from Britain on 1 October 1961 (p.6)
>
> …Journalist and human rights defender Philip Njaru said he was detained for several hours in January 2007 by the police in Kumba. Before his release, the police told him that they had arrested him for publishing articles accusing the police of extortion and making arbitrary arrests. In March 2007, the UN Human Rights Committee established that the Cameroonian government had, in previous years, failed to protect Philip Njaru from ill-treatment and intimidation by the security forces because of his human rights activities. In its sessional report, the Committee urged the government to take action against the perpetrators and grant him effective reparation, but no such action had been taken by the end of 2008(p.21).
>
> According to a Cameroonian human rights organization, Bernard Afuh Weriwo died from severe burns inflicted on him by a senior police officer on 10 July 2004. The police officer was reportedly using fire to force him to confess to having stolen a bicycle. According to information received by Amnesty International, Weriwo lived near a combined gendarmerie and police checkpoint at Ikiliwindi, along the Kumba to Mamfe road in South-West Province. After midnight on 12 May 2004, he was woken up by a man who claimed that Weriwo had stolen his bicycle. Weriwo denied knowledge or possession of the bicycle. He was forcibly taken to the checkpoint where he was handcuffed and beaten by the police.
>
> When Weriwo failed to make a confession in the course of being beaten, a police inspector reportedly placed burning wood on his body. The officer reportedly forced him to drink kerosene, which the officer also sprayed on his body, and set it alight. Weriwo’s body burned while his hands were handcuffed. As he cried and begged the officers to extinguish the fire, three members of a family living nearby intervened and poured water on Weriwo and extinguished the fire. According to local sources, the family took him to Kumba Hospital, where he was diagnosed as having sustained third degree burns. The family used their own money to pay for preliminary treatment for Weriwo before he was transferred to a specialized burns unit in Douala. Weriwo died from his injuries two months later.
>
> For several months no action was taken against the police officer and his colleagues who failed to intervene to prevent the torture or to help the victim obtain emergency medical care. In March 2005 the procuracy in Buéa reportedly instituted preliminary investigations against the inspector of police accused of burning and causing the death of Bernard Afuh Weriwo.

> During interrogation, the police officer reportedly admitted to pouring what he claimed were small quantities of kerosene on Weriwo and threatening to set him on fire with burning wood, but denied actually setting him alight. In October 2005, the police officer was found guilty of causing Bernard Afuh Weriwo's death and was sentenced to five years' imprisonment (p.32)
>
> …A students' organization informed Amnesty International that on 9 November 2007, Ngome Nkwele Herbert was killed during a demonstration against the detention of his colleagues by the Kumba police on 7 November at an earlier demonstration over lack of electric power at their school in Kumba (p.35) (Amnesty International 2009, *Cameroon: Impunity Underpins Persistent Abuse*, January, pp. 6, 21, 32 & 35 http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/AFR17/001/2009/en/126d20cd-de59-11dd-b660-fb1f16ee4622/afr170012009en.pdf – Accessed 15 September 2009 – Attachment 17).

No other reports were found in the sources consulted regarding the targeting of SCNC members in Kumba by authorities.

6. Is there any information on whether activists subject to warrants could leave the country without being questioned by authorities?

No recent information was found in the sources consulted as to whether a person in Cameroon subject to a warrant would be able to leave the country without being questioned by authorities. A 2001 report by the Danish Immigration Service provided information from a "western diplomatic source" who described the lack of security checks at Douala airport for departing passengers. The source is cited as saying that even a "wanted criminal", including those involved in the political opposition, would be able to depart Cameroon through the airport. The source is also cited as stating that wanted criminals may be able to use bribery in order to depart Cameroon. More recent reports found in the sources consulted indicate that there are "various checkpoints" at Nsimalen airport which detect visa fraud and that computer systems have been introduced at Yaounde-Nsimalen International Airport. However, these reports do not indicate whether security checks are being conducted into an individual's criminal record upon departing Cameroon. In May 2007 DFAT provided advice that SCNC members have been attending international conferences outside of Cameroon (Danish Immigration Service (undated), *Fact-finding mission to Cameroon 23/1-3/2 2001, Section 8.1.1* http://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/rdonlyres/194F77BF-84FB-4CC4-A6AA-E053D9765F17/0/FactfindingmissiontoCameroon2001.pdf – Accessed 14 June 2002 – Attachment 9; 'Nsimalen Airport: Business Beehive' 2005, *Cameroon Tribune*, 4 July, All Africa website http://allafrica.com/ – Accessed 5 September 2007 – Attachment 28; Tataw, Emmanuel 2004, 'Airport Security: Yaounde-Nsimalen Takes Lead', *All Africa*, source: *Cameroon Tribune*, 27 February – Attachment 29; DIAC Country Information Service 2007, *Country Information Report No. 07/42 – Cameroon: Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC)*, (sourced from DFAT advice of 11 May 2007), 11 May, para. R.1 B – Attachment 10).

For a more detailed examination of the above reports and sources please see the following information.

A 2001 report by the Danish Immigration Service report titled *Fact-finding mission to Cameroon 23/1-3/2 2001* contains information on the lack of restrictions in departing Cameroon. The report contains the following information:

> There are no legal restrictions on the freedom of movement in Cameroon, and there are no restrictions on leaving the country. A western diplomatic source reported that passport issue

was hardly ever a problem in connection with departure from Cameroon, but that visas were more problematic. A person who wanted to leave had to be able to prove that he had funds to do so and could maintain himself during his stay abroad.

…A western diplomatic source said that there were no difficulties in leaving Cameroon. No thorough checks were made on departure from Douala airport.

The police did not possess an electronic database on wanted people. There was possibly a manual register of those connected with large-scale economic crimes. Individual police might also known the names of wanted individuals. However, even a wanted criminal would be able to leave via the airport. This also applied to those who were active in the political opposition. The source knew of no cases of political activists being detained when trying to depart. There was no central electronic database of Cameroonian citizens.

Hilaire Kamga reported that the secret police (DGRE) had an electronic database of all the persons they wanted. However, in the airports there was only a manual register. He believed that if someone was wanted by the DGRE the airport police would be informed accordingly.

As an illustration of the weak airport controls, the diplomatic source above described an occasion where someone claiming to be a Cameroonian citizen had passed through passport control and through police and customs checks at the airport although he could not speak French, the main language of Cameroon. He also knew of cases where departing Cameroonians had been able to pass through several controls at the airport with false visas.

The same source said that generally it was very easy to bribe the police, e.g. at the airport, and wanted Cameroonians or those without valid visas would probably be able to bribe their way out.

It would not be possible for an agent to accompany someone leaving via the airport all the way through the controls to the plane itself. This applied to departures with Swiss Air, Air France and Sabena. An agent might be able to accompany the departing person onto the plane itself, in the case of departure with Cameroon Airlines. However, Cameroon Airlines' procedures had been tightened up since June 2000 when a new director of the company had been appointed. Nevertheless, it might still be possible to do it, since "everything is possible in Cameroon".

Foreign (European) airlines had tightened pre-departure controls. Although 80% of all travellers could slip through the airport controls with a false passport and/or visa by use of bribery, effectively no-one would get through the final control by foreign police in the boarding lounge.

Over the last two years there had been a great increase in the number of Cameroonians leaving for Europe. Demand for visas to European countries had become significantly greater. The reason for this was that many Cameroonians wanted to improve their economic situation by living abroad. Young Cameroonians who wanted to leave to try to improve their economic situation were readily understood at all levels of Cameroonian society. This applied to their families, village, the police and the authorities in general.

Even wanted persons would be able to leave via the airport in Douala; it would also be possible to leave illegally via the land border with Nigeria. Border controls were not thorough, and even local people did not always know where the border ran. Illegal departure via the port in Douala would also be possible. The source had not experienced Cameroonians leaving for political reasons. This also applied to the large numbers of young Cameroonians who were constantly leaving.

> Genevieve Faure produced a report drawn up by the British immigration attaché in Lagos, Nigeria during a working visit to Cameroon in May 2000. After inspecting departure procedures at Douala airport the attaché concluded that document checks in the airport were particularly inadequate and that if false passports or visas were identified this was more by luck than professional skill. The report also stated that it was easy for non-passengers to accompany passengers right to the gate for departures with Cameroon airlines. The report concluded that "security is not a strong point at Douala airport and airside access can be achieved fairly easily".
>
> Anastasie Ongmboune, airport police officer, Douala, said that a significant number of Cameroonian citizens left the country for Europe and the USA. A Cameroonian citizen could not leave without a visa for the country he wished to go to.
>
> Airport controls had recently been improved as a result of an increase in the number of Cameroonians leaving on false documents.
>
> The authorities were currently working on setting up an electronic database at the airport. The system was not yet operational as large-scale staff training was required. The aim was that the police at check points in the airport should have access to electronic databases of wanted people.
>
> T. Asonganyi believed that the authorities at the airports had lists of wanted persons. He could not dismiss the possibility that people might be on such lists on political grounds. The editor of the Messenger also believed the police had list of wanted persons or of what he described as dangerous element (Danish Immigration Service (undated), *Fact-finding mission to Cameroon 23/1-3/2 2001, Section 8.1.1* http://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/rdonlyres/194F77BF-84FB-4CC4-A6AA-E053D9765F17/0/FactfindingmissiontoCameroon2001.pdf – Accessed 14 June 2002 – Attachment 9).

A report dated 4 July 2005 by the *Cameroon Tribune* describes various operations at Nsimalen Airport. The report states that travelers go through "various checkpoints" and that people found to be traveling on forged visas are arrested by airport security and "handed over to competent judicial authorities"('Nsimalen Airport: Business Beehive' 2005, *Cameroon Tribune*, 4 July, All Africa website http://allafrica.com/ – Accessed 5 September 2007 – Attachment 28).

On 27 February 2004, *The Cameroon Tribune* reported on the introduction of a computer system for "Emi-immigration" formalities at Yaounde-Nsimalen International Airport. The report states that this "pilot project" was expected to extend to Douala and Garoua airports. The report does not say whether the airport computer systems contain criminal information on passengers such as arrest warrants. The report provides the following information:

> The Yaounde-Nsimalen International Airport, yesterday formally entered the annals of the computer age. Pierre Minlo Medjo, Delegate General For National Security inaugurated the computer system for formalities of Emi-immigration at the airport of the Capital City.
>
> Welcoming the august guest at the ceremony, Didier Ngah, head of the security outfit at the Yaounde-Nsimalen airport expressed gratefulness for the choice of the airport for the pilot project that is expected to stretch to Douala and Garoua. He pledged to make good use of the computers in combating international crime.
>
> In his keynote address, the Delegate General For National Security, Pierre Minlo Medjo said the project was a link in a chain of modernizing equipments in the police department in general and those of airports in particular. He added that it was a practical expression of the

> "Prise-Police" acronym for a project to computerize all data of interest to the police department. The Police boss expressed government's appreciation of the efforts of friendly countries in re-enforcing security measures in airports in Cameroon. He recommended efficient and rigorous management of the material to meet its objectives of combating terrorism and international crime. Garoua and Douala international airports, he said, will soon benefit from the same treatment accorded the Yaounde-Nsimalen Airport.
>
> Pierre Minlo Medjo and his entourage were taken round the newly installed computers and given first hand treatment on how data is stored and retrieved. Emmanuel Maled, sub-director for computer management at DGSN explained in detail the process of assembling and managing information concerning all who take flights from or arrive through the Yaounde-Nsimalen Airport. The storage of all personal data of passengers and the ability to pass over necessary information to all international partners like "interpol" was explained. Although the computerization of the Yaounde-Nsimalen Airport is part of an ongoing project that concerns the entire General Delegation For National Security (DGSN), it benefited from the support of foreign partners like Spain (Tataw, E. 2004, 'Airport Security: Yaounde-Nsimalen Takes Lead', *All Africa*, source: *Cameroon Tribune*, 27 February – Attachment 29).

In May 2007 DFAT provided the following advice on SCNC members traveling overseas:

> Would citizens who had been identified as SCNC members have difficulty in obtaining a Cameroon passport?
>
> Confirmation that citizens who had been identified as SCNC members have difficulty obtaining a Cameroon passport has not been possible. Some members, however, are attending international conferences outside of Cameroon. It is an indication, which tends to demonstrate that they are entitled to obtain a Cameroon passport (DIAC Country Information Service 2007, *Country Information Report No. 07/42 – Cameroon: Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC)*, (sourced from DFAT advice of 11 May 2007), 11 May – Attachment 10).

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United Nations (UN)

UNHCR http://www.unhchr.ch/

Non-Government Organisations

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Freedom House http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=1
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