**Cameroon – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 4 March 2011**

**What information is there on police corruption, specifically politically motivated corruption, within Cameroon?**

The 2011 *Committee to Protect Journalists* annual report on Cameroon states:

> "Cameroon, which has Central Africa's largest economy, was among the 35 worst nations worldwide on Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perception Index, which ranks nations on government integrity." (Committee to Protect Journalists (15 February 2011) *Attacks on the Press 2010 – Cameroon*)

A country profile of Cameroon published on the *Business Anti-Corruption Portal* website, in a section titled "Political Climate", states:

> "Cameroon's President and leader of the ruling Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM), Paul Biya, has been in power since 1982, having been re-elected for a new seven-year term in 2004 with more than 70% of the vote. International observers note that the President's many years with a tight grip on power have facilitated high levels of corruption, nepotism and cronyism that have fuelled extensive patronage systems. The President's ethnic group, the Beti-Bulu, is overrepresented in the government, in the military, as civil servants and in the management of state-owned companies. This feeds a system of endemic graft and ethnic clientelism in an administration that includes more than 60 ministries. Ministerial posts are considered part of the patronage system rather than a rational legal system, and the embezzlement of public funds at high levels of the state hierarchy continues. Public aversion with corruption is growing and, according to Transparency International's Global Corruption Barometer 2009, corruption is perceived to be widespread within the judiciary, political parties, customs, the police, and among civil servants in general, with 55% of the citizens claiming to have paid a bribe in the 6 months prior to the study. Moreover, close to 70% of the respondents in the household survey acknowledge that both petty and grand corruption are 'very serious' problems for the country. Officials in both private and public administration frequently demand bribes, gifts or favours in return for rendering a service." (Business Anti-Corruption Portal (October 2010) *Cameroon Country Profile*)

A country report on Cameroon published by *Bertelsmann Stiftung*, in a section titled "Rule of Law", states:

> "Corruption is pervasive. Cameroon was twice designated the most corrupt country on earth in CPI findings published by Transparency International in 1998 and 1999. Corruption is still rampant at the political level. However, since 2005 a growing number of well-known representatives of the political elite have been arrested on charges of corruption, amongst them former ministers and acting members of

> parliament." (Bertelsmann Stiftung (2008) *Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI) 2008 – Cameroon Country Report*, p.8)

The 2010 *US Department of State* country report on Cameroon, in a section titled "Official Corruption and Government Transparency" (Section 4), states:

> "The law provides criminal penalties for official corruption; however, the government did not implement the law effectively, and officials frequently engaged in corrupt practices with impunity. The World Bank's worldwide indicators reflected that corruption was a severe problem. The public perception was that judicial and administrative officials were open to bribes in almost all situations. Corruption was pervasive at all levels of government. Judicial corruption was a problem. According to several press reports, judicial authorities accepted illegal payments from detainees' families in exchange for a reduction in sentence or the outright release of their relatives, including juveniles. Political bias by judges (often instructed by the government) frequently stopped trials or resulted in an extremely long process with extended court recesses. Many powerful political or business interests enjoyed virtual immunity from prosecution and some politically sensitive cases were settled through bribes. There were publicized prosecutions of government officials accused of corruption during the year. Governments officials accused of corruption were held in separate quarters and received special treatment. During the year the government sanctioned dozens of government employees for corruption and mismanagement." (US Department of State (11 March 2010) *2009 Human Rights Report: Cameroon*)

A *Voice of America News* report states:

> "The government of Cameroon has launched a new attack on corruption. It has arrested and jailed more than 100 former ministers, public administrators and state corporation managers -- charging them with embezzling public funds and plundering national resources. Experts say corruption is causing huge economic losses to the state. Tax revenues and foreign aid end up in private pockets. As a result, public investment budgets are dropping, the cost of living and doing business is rising and development has slowed. Economists say Cameroon is blessed with vast economic potential and with a variety of human and natural resources. It's one of the best-endowed primary economies for exporting commodities like bananas, timber, minerals and oil. But widespread malpractice has often named Cameroon as one of the world's most corrupt countries and is now severely curtailing investment and growth." (Voice of America News (10 November 2009) *Corruption in Cameroon Deters Investment, Slows Growth*)

An *International Crisis Group* report, in a section titled "Indiscipline And Crime", states:

> "The various branches of the security forces are affected by this criminalisation. An increasing number of officers have been suspended for corruption, trafficking, influence peddling and embezzlement, although seemingly to little effect. In May 2008, the head of the border police was dismissed for corruption in passport and visa delivery. In November 2008, two policemen were dismissed and charged with cooperating with a foreign intelligence service for accepting money to kidnap a refugee political opponent from Equatorial Guinea and deliver him to the country's embassy in Yaoundé. Even more serious is the fact that police officers are known to rent out their weapons at night to criminals or participate directly in robbery. In 2007 a police officer was suspended for armed assault. In late 2008, a country's forest reserves, some gendarmes rent their weapons to smugglers of protected species."

> (International Crisis Group (24 June 2010) *Cameroon: The Dangers of a Fracturing Regime*, p.10)

An *Amnesty International* report, in a section titled "Denial of journalists' right to freedom of expression", states:

> "The authorities have taken measures to silence journalists deemed to be too critical of government authorities. Many of the criticisms by journalists are based on alleged corruption by high level government and other public officials. Actions taken by the authorities have included closing down radio and television stations, and the arrest and imprisonment of journalists on what often appear to be politically motivated criminal defamation charges." (Amnesty International (29 January 2009) *Cameroon: Impunity underpins persistent abuse*)

The 2010 *Freedom House* report on press freedom in Cameroon states:

> "Journalists covering high-profile corruption cases were harassed with legal action and extralegal threats during the year. According to Journaliste en Danger (JED), in June 2009 a military tribunal in Yaounde sentenced Jacques Blaise Mvie and Charles Rene Nwe of the private weekly La Nouvelle to five years in prison and a fine of 500,000 CFA francs (US$1,000); the journalists were only informed of the closed-door hearing after the fact. Jean Bosco Talla, editor of the privately owned weekly Germinal, reported receiving anonymous threats after his paper republished a report by the Catholic Committee against Hunger and for Development that questioned the wealth of President Paul Biya. In December, Talla was sentenced to a suspended one-year prison term, as well as a fine of three million CFA francs (US$6,000), for allegedly libeling the president. In another case, Jules Koum Koum, editor of the weekly Le Jeune Observateur, was repeatedly threatened for his coverage of corruption; he faced several incidents involving armed intruders who removed work-related documents from his home, as well as the hacking of his e-mail accounts." (Freedom House (30 September 2010) *Freedom of the Press 2010 – Cameroon*)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre 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. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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