



Immigration and
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Commission de l'immigration
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Cameroon: Whether there was a rally by Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC) members to commemorate independence on 1 October 2004; whether the police made arrests and incarcerated individuals at Limbe police station and if so, the length of incarceration; whether there was a 1 October 2006 rally of SCNC and Southern Cameroons Youth League (SCYL) members in Limbe; whether members were incarcerated at Limbe police station and if so, the length of incarceration
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

In an article available in *The Post*, an English-language online newspaper published in Cameroon, 1 October is referred to as "the day Southern Cameroons theoretically gained [i]ndependence in 1961" (*The Post* Sept. 2007). The article indicates that independence has been commemorated on 1 October by Southern Cameroonians since 1993 (*ibid.*). *Quotidien Mutations*, a French-language Yaoundé-based daily newspaper (*Quotidien Mutations* n.d.), notes that demonstrations are held by the Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC) every year in Cameroon's two anglophone provinces on 1 October (*ibid.* 2 Oct. 2008). Freedom House adds that there are clashes between security forces and anglophone activists annually on 1 October (Freedom House 2008).

Specific information on rallies in Limbe [Southwest province] on 1 October 2004 or 1 October 2006 or on any related arrests or incarcerations of members of the SCNC or the Southern Cameroons Youth League (SCYL) could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate. However, information on rallies and arrests for which the city was not specified or that took place in other cities was found and is provided below.

1 October 2004

An article by Agence France-Presse (AFP) dated 30 September 2004 states that approximately twenty SCNC "activists" were arrested on 21 and 22 September 2004 while making preparations to commemorate Southern Cameroonian independence on 1 October and that they were detained at Mutengene, Tiko and Kumba [Southwest province]. A senior member of the SCNC is quoted in the article as saying that "practically every year" arrests are made and that those arrested are usually kept in detention until after 1 October (AFP 30 Sept. 2004).

Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2004 reports that four SCNC activists were arrested by police in Bamenda [Northwest province] a few days before 1 October 2004 (US 28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 2.b). The same source adds

that "there was no reliable estimate" of the number of political prisoners, including SCNC activists, being held in detention at the end of the year (ibid., Sec. 1.e), and notes that some SCNC activists and suspected supporters were reportedly held without charge (ibid., Sec. 5).

1 October 2006

In September 2006, the prefect of Mezam division, Northwest province banned all SCNC rallies and public meetings (*Quotidien Mutations* 2 Oct. 2006; US 6 Mar. 2007, Sec. 3). Measures taken by authorities included a ban on gatherings of more than four persons and the denial of electronic media access to SCNC officials and sympathizers (ibid.). Five "activists" were arrested in Bamenda [Mezam division] on 16 September at an SCNC office and briefly detained (ibid.).

According to *Quotidien Mutations*, gatherings of more than three people were forbidden to take place on 1 October in Bamenda (2 Oct. 2006). *Country Reports 2006* reports that authorities conducted surveillance operations and carried out searches of the private residences of SCNC leaders and activists there on that date (US 6 Mar. 2007, Sec. 3). *Quotidien Mutations* adds that television and radio transmissions related to SCNC activities were officially banned and that a journalist who took pictures of a SCNC flag was reportedly arrested and tortured (2 Oct. 2006).

Country Reports 2006 states that SCNC members were arrested on 1 October in both the Northwest and Southwest provinces for incidents such as raising an SCNC flag, but were released several days later (US 6 Mar. 2007, Sec. 3). The same source also notes that other SCNC activists remained in "temporary detention pending trials," but neither the date of arrest nor the nature of the offence was indicated (ibid.).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

Agence France-Presse (AFP). 30 September 2004. "Cameroon Police Arrest English-speaking Activists." (Factiva)

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The Post [Buea, Cameroon]. September 2007. Sam Nuvala Fonkem. "Snapshot: 1st October Frenzy." <<http://www.postnewsline.com/2007/09/snapshot1st-oct.html>> [Accessed 2 Dec. 2008]

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Additional Sources Consulted

Oral source: The Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC) did not respond within the time constraints of this Response.

Internet sources, including: AllAfrica.com, Amnesty International (AI), British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), European Country of Origin Information Network (ecoi.net), Human Rights Watch (HRW), *l'Observateur Paalga* [Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso], United Kingdom (UK) Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO).

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