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CMR42651.FE

Cameroon: President Biya's Youth (PRESBY), including its objectives and activities; whether its members participated in a youth congress allegedly held in November 2003 (1996-May 2004)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa

Sources mentioned [translation] "President Biya's Youth" (*Le Messenger* Jan. 2004; *ibid.* 24 Jan. 2003) and [translation] "President Paul Biya's Youth (PRESBY)" (*Cameroon Tribune* 29 Mar. 2004; Socpa 2001), which was founded in 1996 (*ibid.*; *Le Messenger* Apr. 2003; *ibid.* 24 Jan. 2003).

In describing the circumstances surrounding the creation of PRESBY, Antoine Socpa, Executive Secretary of the Pan African Anthropological Association (PAAA) (Ethno-Net Africa n.d.), wrote in a document entitled *Clientélisme et ethnicité dans le jeu politique : réflexions sur quelques mouvements thuriféraires au Cameroun* (Clientelism and Ethnicity in the Political Arena: Reflections on Some Thurifer Movements in Cameroon) that [translation] "the new association . . . had just registered as one of the individual and group movements of [President Biya's] personality cult" (Socpa 2001). The author explained that PRESBY members belonged to the majority Beti ethnic group and that 75 per cent of the organization's leaders (members of the board) were not only Betis, but also members of the [translation] "Bulu tribal subgroup, to which the president belongs" (*ibid.*). Antoine Socpa also explained that, at the socio-educational level, overall, PRESBY consisted of members from three subgroups: [translation] "students normally enrolled at a university or professional school, students without employment in the modern sector . . . [and] former students with or without degrees who . . . roam on and around campus" (*ibid.*). The latter subgroup is [translation] "a reservoir of ethno-political 'militias' that instil fear on university campuses throughout Cameroon" (*ibid.*).

In its 24 January 2003 issue, the Cameroonian weekly publication *Le Messenger* reported a power struggle within PRESBY, particularly between Philémon Ntyam Ntyam, National Graduate Student President, and Alexis Nkomoya, who was designated Ntyam's replacement at a meeting held in Yaoundé on 17 January 2003.

In its April 2003 issue, *Le Messenger* reported that some members of the organized groups formed since 1990 and known as [translation] "infrastructures of violence, . . . are now members of President Biya's Youth (PRESBY)." In addition, a press review published on the Website of the Embassy of France in Cameroon noted that observers identified the [translation] "President Biya's Youth (PRESBY) and Chantal Biya's Youth (JACHABY) [named after the

president's wife] associations" among those that had committed fraud during the legislative and municipal elections in June 2002 (12-18 May 2003). A memorandum signed by five political opposition parties, published on the Website of the Social Democratic Front (SDF) [one of the opposition parties], and addressed to French President Jacques Chirac at the Africa-France summit held in Yaoundé from 17 to 19 January 2001, stated that [translation] "the militias of the PRESBY, a fascistic organization connected to the RDPC [Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (Rassemblement démocratique du peuple camerounais)]," had participated in the repression of political opponents during a 13 January 2001 demonstration, in which they protested against the ONEL [National Elections Observatory (Observatoire national des élections)] and asked for the creation of the CENI [Independent National Electoral Commission (Commission électorale nationale indépendante)] (SDF 17 Jan. 2001).

No information on whether PRESBY members participated in a youth conference allegedly held in November 2003 could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

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 to refugee status or asylum. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

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Additional Sources Consulted

Publications: *Africa Confidential*, *Jeune Afrique/L'Intelligent*, Resource Centre country file, *West Africa*.

Internet sites, including: Africatime, AllAfrica, Amnesty International, Cameroun-info.net, Dialog, FIDH, HRW, MISNA, ReliefWeb.

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