CAMEROON ANGLOPHONE CRISIS PEACE POLICY PAPER

PATHWAYS TO A PEACE PROCESS

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This Resource Paper, on Pathways to Peace in the crisis affecting Cameroon's North-West and South-West Regions for the past five (5) years, is the culminating point of the five (5) products in our Peace Policy Paper series. In the other four papers, we have discussed what we appraise to be some of the most contentious, centrifugal, and conflict-prone sectors, that tend to inch Cameroon towards conflict along the fault-lines of its French and English heritages. In doing so, those papers enrich the landscape for an informed discussion of "**what**" is making Cameroonians disagree along the lines of these two heritages. When Cameroonians would congregate to discuss and determine what further measures are possible to abate the crisis, it is probable that they will need to discuss *the substance* of what tends to produce disagreements along the French/English markers.

This Paper builds on the four other papers by addressing the question of the "**how**" to create peace. In some respects, the first four Papers of the series are <u>diagnostics</u> – important and indeed essential pre-requisites to any *treatment plan*. The current paper takes the treatment plan forward, by sketching some *critical pathways* through which it may be possible to exit from conflict towards coexistence, while informing on the dynamics of peace processes, notably to resolve conflicts over regional autonomy, identity, and separatism. The present Paper is not prescriptive: it does not provide a magical formula for achieving peace in the two Regions. However, it draws on comparative best practices to show what factors enhance or impede the resolution of similar conflicts, identifies some key concepts Cameroon's peacemakers should be aware of, and makes recommendations specific to Cameroon's context.

This Resource Paper *quotes extensively* from important materials available on peace-making in intra-State conflicts, how separatist conflicts tend to end, when mediated and negotiated settlement of armed conflicts is most likely to occur, and how regional autonomy or self-government arrangements are crafted as midway point solutions in conflicts between centripetal unitarism, and ultra-centrifugal separatism. In giving voice to highly published experts on the resolution of such conflicts, as well as past mediators and negotiators (on behalf of parties) to such conflicts, we hope to improve the Cameroonian toolkit on the mechanics of ushering peace.

SECTION I: DEFINING A NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR PEACE IN THE NW & SW REGIONS

I.1 The Government of Cameroon needs a convergent NWSW Comprehensive Peace Strategy

Cameroon's *National Development Strategy 2020 – 2030* contains as one of its four (4) pillars: *Governance, Decentralisation and Strategic Management of the State*, within which the issue of the country's dual official languages and heritages is addressed (promotion of bilingualism and multiculturalism, and development of a synthetic cultural identity, Chapters 6.6.1 and 6.6.2). The Strategy notes that "insufficient ownership of bilingualism within the society is likely to undermine the country's unity and sense of national

belonging" (6.6.1). Among the risks to attainment of the Vision Scenario (Emerging Country status in 2035), the crisis in the NW-SW regions is listed: the NDS 2020-2030 expressly states that one of its "key assumption is the gradual return of peace in these Regions [and the Far North] by 2023", failing which there will be consequences for economic development, public finances, and social amenities provision (7.3.1). The NDS 2020 – 2030 therefore essentially *invites* or calls for a sub-strategy to achieve the said peace, notably in the NW & SW regions.

Within the centrifugal and conflict-prone sectors (identified across the other 4 Policy Papers in this series) the Government of Cameroon has adopted several *legislative, executive, regulatory, and administrative* decisions to state its stance on management of the official languages, the dual legal traditions, and the two educational sub-systems. These measures started in 2016/2017 right from the onset of the crisis (re-deployment of Teachers/Magistrates, creation of legal training and judicial bodies for the Anglo-Saxon legal tradition) and have continued incrementally. On a practical level, a DDR structure was established, and a reconstruction (or early conflict recovery) program initiated.

The National Dialogue in September-October 2019 enumerated *recommendations* for these conflict-prone sectors and was followed by the adoption of the *concept of asymmetrical devolution* (formal legislative recognition of specificities in the NW-SW regions due to their English systems heritage) and an Official Languages law. The National Dialogue's recommendations constitute a cross-cutting set of prescriptions (education, justice, official languages, devolution, reducing armed group adherence) to address the crisis. However, their character and purport remain "recommendations" and *not a national pact or compact* - the Executive having emphasized its margin of appreciation to assess their relevance or pertinence prior to implementation.

While all the above point to the level of Government activity in addressing the drivers of the crisis and mitigating its effects, they do not amount to a *one-stop, single-source, convergent and coherent strategy* for peace in the two regions. Through putting in place such a convergent Peace Strategy, the whole will become greater than the sum of its disparate parts. The importance of such a strategy lies in *visibility, coherence, whole-of-Government effectiveness, and leveraging viable partnerships*, to deliver the said Strategy.

Visibility connotes the ability to locate in a single, high-level Government commitment, what constitutes essentially its **Peace Offer** for the 2 regions – a considered, 360 degrees assessment of what it is willing, and committed to undertake across all conflict-prone sectors, to redress grievances that underlie the crisis. *Coherence* refers to the inter-linked logic between the respective policy thrusts, measures, and directions pursued by the Government (and stakeholders) to resolve the crisis. *Whole-of-Government effectiveness* connotes the importance of adherence by all sectors and portfolios in Government to a *converging* Strategy's thrust; and a good strategy will necessarily invite *partnerships,* through friends of Cameroon willing to support the country manage, mitigate, and eventually resolve a crisis it faces.

Achieving sustainable Peace in the NW-SW regions will entail more than a cessation of armed confrontations and armed activities. While that is a *critical, essential outcome* of a peace process, it is a result to be attained through the pursuit of a coherent set of peace-inducing policies. Ideally, a Comprehensive Peace Strategy for the NW-SW regions would include among its core components:

(i)   policy to defuse conflicts and enhance cohesion on official languages,

(ii)   policy direction on coexistence of education sub-systems,

(iii)   precepts and policies on coexistence of legal traditions,

(iv)   policy thrust on asymmetrical devolution, notably the meaning, reach, and progressive full extent of regional autonomy measures (Special Status),

(v)   an approach to Peace Mediation (it should be noted that it was an express recommendation of the National Dialogue to "create a team responsible for mediation with radicalised members of our Diaspora" – page 19, National Dialogue Report),

(vi)   diplomacy notably with key neighbouring regional States, diaspora-hosting, and friendly States, (with deference to principles of diplomatic reserve)

(vii)   Security, defence, law and order in the 2 Regions (with deference to the principles of defence secrecy and confidentiality),

(viii) Humanitarian access and space

(ix)   DDR, Community Violence Reduction, and reducing adherence to armed activities,

(x)   reducing arms trafficking, and proliferation of arms, light and sophisticated weapons,

(xi)   peace-accompanying measures (amnesty, national reconciliation, redress for human rights violations, response to sexual violence in conflict, a National Peace Fund to support initiatives that reconcile Cameroonians along the official language markers),

(xii)   early conflict recovery where possible, safety nets for and support to conflict displaced, returnees, and host communities, reconstruction, and development,

(xiii) policies for inter-community cohesion, multiculturalism, tolerance, bridge-building, and to combat prejudice, bias, and discrimination

(xiv)   re-building local capacities for peace, notably conflict mitigation measures for communities with underlying conflict fissures, such as settler/indigene, pastoral/farming, land/village border, chieftaincy disputes, and repairing the role of traditional institutions, authority, and symbols and vestiges attacked in conflict.

On the one hand, there is a wide convergence of positions to the effect that the "solution" to the crisis is not a military one – and the range of legislative, executive, policy, and

administrative measures undertaken to respond to it, attests to the inter-disciplinary, multi-sector, and whole-of-Government mobilization imperative that is needed to address it. On the other hand, there is no denying that the two years since the Dialogue (2020, 2021) have seen an unprecedented escalation of armed activities. The military and pro-separation fighters engaged in intense fighting across many parts of the NW region, with the pro-separation fighters showing use of more sophisticated weaponry and techniques (IEDs, anti-tank rockets) and forging alliances with non-national armed groups.

What obtains (and which a National Peace Strategy will counteract) is a *crisis of visibility and communication*: the never-ending cycle of military operations against self-reproducing bands of Non-State Armed Groups dominates the media environment and envelopes the national psyche, to the point that the *military strategy* becomes the dominant paradigm, and the lens through which the crisis is read (as improving or worsening or swaying in favour of one party or another). If, however, the country is to move on a path towards peace, it will need to become less inured to the never-ending stream of violent incidents. And to shift the conflict thermometer from a mere assessment of who has inflicted more violence on the other, who has displayed what strength on the battlefield, or when this actor or another will be taken out in battle. Rather, it is progress on a multidimensional *Peace Strategy* (policy reforms, mediation/non-violent resolution prospects, enabling context and environment propitious towards peace) that needs to become the yardstick – and it needs to be effectively communicated.

Formal communication on the crisis has tended to hover between *communication of minimization* (suggesting the situation is not so bad after all, that normalcy appears to be returning to the two regions) and *communication of militarization* (reporting on military operational achievements). However, both (and the former in particular) are undercut by the resurgence of new fronts, new weaponry, and new dynamics among the armed groups – with each new incident being a reminder that the crisis persists. Real-time communication on social media (mostly by armed actors themselves) and sordid accounts of victimization (such as doubly inflicted sexual violence meted by the respective belligerents on girls and young women exposed to survival sex, documented in the NW Region in 2021) mean the crisis is on smartphone, PC, and TV screens around the world. If neither a communications narrative of *minimization* nor *militarization* can hold sway, a transition is therefore required to a stronger communications narrative of *resolution*.

A comprehensive *Peace Strategy* is the cornerstone, and source of a narrative built around *resolution of the crisis*. That is a narrative which Government and other stakeholders can actually "control" better and is certainly a narrative which will attract much popular support nationally, and sympathetic international attention. As the often-cited concept of "winning the peace" (as distinct from winning the war) denotes, it does not suffice to establish whether the battlefield military dynamics have resulted in an end to fighting. It is critically important to determine whether the conditions that brought us to the brink, to the precipice are being substantially resolved, to prevent their recurrence.

I.2 A Presidentially impelled whole-of-Government Mechanism would be optimal to implement the convergent Peace Strategy

At present, the principal mechanism through which measures to return to peace in the NW and SW regions are assessed, is the *Committee to Follow up the Implementation of the Recommendations of the Major National Dialogue* (created by Presidential Decree No. 2020/136 of 23 March 2020). Its functions include to : follow up the implementation of the recommendations of the Major National Dialogue, as approved by the President of the Republic; issue strategic guidelines for the implementation of the recommendations of the Major National Dialogue; order, as and when necessary, the conduct of activities that could contribute to the effective implementation of the recommendations of the Major National Dialogue; prescribe any measure aimed at mobilizing Cameroonians at home and abroad to take part in peace building and in the pursuit of the country's development; record opinions and suggestions likely to facilitate the implementation of the recommendations of the Major National Dialogue (Section 2).

The Committee (which has so far met on an annual basis) is an extra-Cabinet structure (Sector Ministries only serve in its Technical Unit), as it is essentially composed of representatives from religious faiths, youth, women's associations, the diaspora, and civil society. This composition flows from the National Dialogue's composition which drew significantly from independent personalities, political parties, religious bodies, civil society, and some segments of the diaspora. It certainly serves as a useful venue for cross-stakeholder status-checking on the crisis.

For a Government-adopted comprehensive and convergent *Peace Strategy* which should constitute the connecting thread and organizing thrust of its policy directions towards peace (across all Sectors) it is **critical that the Implementation Mechanism reside in Cabinet and its Ministries and mandated entities** – working necessarily with external stakeholders that are critical in their respective Sectors. A Peace Strategy should necessarily have an *Annexed Implementation Matrix*, which delineates the specific actions that critical, conflict-prone Sector institutions will undertake, over specific timeframes, to address conflict triggers in their respective domains.

The Justice Sector for instance, would articulate how it intends to implement for the principle of *Bi-Juralism* which has been retained from the highest Executive decisions (such as the Presidential Decisions announced on 31 March 2017 on the Anglo-Saxon legal tradition) as well as in legislation (consideration of specificities of the Anglo-Saxon legal system, as integral to Special Status). The Education Sector would articulate its framework of actions for *specificity preservation* in the 2 education sub-systems, also a legally mandated and clearly elected choice towards pacifying that sector. A Peace Strategy also signals where the State's priorities lie. It enhances the importance and prioritisation of activities within its Implementation Matrix: they constitute important steppingstones towards peace.

A convergent Peace Strategy will not countenance divergent interpretations or actions on what Government's commitment is, to address the crisis. This constitutes an important measure to ensure that Government's commitment to its resolution and its Peace Offer (documented in the Strategy) is protected and not exposed to attack, even from within – and that the State's governing establishment speaks on the same tune, regarding the peace offer. Prior to the convening of the National Dialogue in 2019 and while the foundation for its convening was being laid, parts of Government downplayed eventual dialogue on the crisis as impertinent and inapposite. While pre-Peace Mediation (early scoping work of contact with some armed groups) was countenanced by high authorities, others would degrade the process as irrelevant. While frank debate and exchange of strongly held positions within Government is a norm, the obligations of loyalty and solidarity should impose on all corners and recesses of public power, adherence to a defined policy line of conduct. It is therefore critical given the modalities for organizing the work of Government, that a Peace Strategy should have Presidential unction. (See *Presidential General Instruction No. 002 of 1ˢᵗ October 2002, on the Organization of Government Business*).

I.3   Implementation of the Peace Strategy should be reflected in Government's Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks, annual program budget objectives, and development cooperation partnerships

The costs of war are undeniable. Government's 10-year National Development Strategy (2020-2030) already identifies the socio-economic downsides if the crisis is not resolved by 2023. The World Bank, in its socio-economic impact assessment of the crisis already provides important modelling on the GDP consequences for Cameroon if the crisis is not resolved by 2022/2023; [i] furthermore, the costs for reconstruction of the two regions from war damage also need to be factored in. Therefore, in essence peace has no price. The Government of Cameroon (and partners) *resources therefore will need to be aligned, strategically and consistently to back up the Implementation Matrix* of the NW & SW Peace Strategy. In this regard, it will be very important to pay attention to and fund the *Sectoral Implementation Matrices* that should form part of the Peace Strategy – those critical actions that institutions in charge of the conflict-prone, centrifugal Sectors need to undertake, to address the crisis drivers.

If the Ministry of Basic Education needs new resources to broaden the double-diet [English and French] mode of nursery and primary education which is so popular among private schools for middle-class Cameroonians, this innovation needs to be costed and progressively resourced. If the Ministry of Justice requires an entire service (within its Legislation Directorate) dedicated to Bi-Juralism, to develop a new unit for Co-Drafting of structural texts of Law (with joint Romano-Germanic and Anglo-Saxon legal drafters), or to institute a specialized graduate program on Legal Translation, it should be costed and resourced. If public-interfacing security and law and order agencies' (Police and Gendarmerie) bilingualism needs to be strengthened, the State Secretariat in charge of the Gendarmerie, and the General Delegation for National Security's respective training academies will need resources for same.

The most effective means of ensuring this alignment of resources, is to place and cost these peace-inducing priority measures within the Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks (MTEFs) of all the critical Sectors and Agencies whose contributions will work to deliver the Peace Strategy. From the MTEFs, Annual Program Budget objectives need to be deduced specifically committing the said Sector Ministries and Agencies to annual deliverables and operational expenditure in the direction of the policy thrust defined in the Peace Strategy. This should be further delineated in specific Sector commitments and activities, to be monitored and evaluated as part of the process of executing State programs and budget execution review.

This approach which entails a *Peace Strategy – Sector/Institutional Implementation Matrix – Medium Term Expenditure Framework – Annual Program Budget* also provides a reliable anchor, on which Cameroon's development partners can align their resource support to the country to help resolve the crisis and mitigate its causes over the long term. Presently, Cameroon's development partners engage several of these Sectors (such as Education, Justice, or Decentralisation and Local Government) without a clear Government policy blueprint on its management of the two heritages or institutional traditions therein. These constitute eminently bankable activities which hold the potential of reversing the conflict tide and avoiding the socio-economic performance slippage which the best analysis and modelling available is showing as looming in the horizon.

In this regard, future support to Cameroon on conflict prevention and resilience on this crisis would find in the said Strategy, a viable national framework as pertains to the NW & SW crisis. A similar framework already exists in the Recovery and Peace Consolidation Strategy (RPCS) for the three Northern Regions and the East region (2018-2022). A similar strategic, multi-sectoral outlook document is needed on the crisis affecting the NW-SW regions, which should cover not only the *in-region* dynamics, but also at national public policy level (such as policies on coexistence of the two education systems or the co-drafting of laws with consideration of Romano-Germanic/Anglo-Saxon/Cameroonian legal cannons).

It will be necessary for Cameroon's Government, civic forces, concerned Sector stakeholders, and development partners **to engage in meaningful, substantive, sectoral policy dialogue** on each of the conflict-prone areas highlighted in this Peace Policy Paper series, as critical to resolution of the conflict. These are: (i) legal system bi-juralism, (ii) coexistence of two educational approaches and sub-systems, (iii) managing the two official languages and bilingualism, and (iv) the mode of devolution and governance of subnational units with specific attention to the asymmetries (zones of autonomy) envisaged for the two crisis-affected regions.

Through this dialogue, these constituencies need to raise the bar for Cameroon's authorities to craft the optimal public policy positions that will enable implementation of sector-specific technical recommendations (such as those made across all our Policy Papers). Given that it is Government's own policies that need to evolve and improve, it will

not suffice for concerned stakeholders to assert that Government's position is not favourable to reform. The challenge is to **create a wider public policy debate** (in which Government is a key but not sole actor); an environment in which articulation and exchanges on public policy happen, and one conducive to unlocking policy evolutions.

This wider public policy debate needs to rely on all actors (academia and researchers, professional bodies, concerned Sector stakeholders, influence groups, media) who are *demand side influences on the policy production process*. They can help move along national opinion and positions towards reformed, improved policies in these domains. These influences should interact with *policymakers* (legislators, technocrats, Cabinet sector leadership) to enrich creation and formulation of policies. It should be borne in mind there has been institutional continuity since the crisis began. Most of the institutions whose policies likely contributed to the tensions that escalated into the crisis remain in place: it therefore requires not just policy reforms but sometimes policy turnarounds and reversals, which are even more challenging to attain.

SECTION II: COMPARATIVE EXPERIENCES ON RESOLVING INTRA-STATE, TERRITORIAL AUTONOMY, SEPARATIST CONFLICTS

In this Section of the Paper, we look at comparative experience with the actual mechanics of creating Peace amidst armed conflict. We do this by attempting to answer several critical questions: how are intra-State armed conflicts most likely to end? Why are internal or separatist armed conflicts particularly difficult to resolve peacefully? What makes parties to an armed conflict accept to pursue a mediated solution? How does the structure of armed groups impact upon attainment of their outcomes in a conflict, and upon their ability to enter peace talks and negotiations? To answer these questions most effectively, we *draw directly from renowned researchers and specialists on separatist conflicts, and on peace processes and negotiations* – and provide extensive excerpts of the answers they have provided to these questions.

II.1 **What is the most likely prognosis for how intra-State armed conflicts, including separatist conflicts, come to an end: victory by one party, capitulation by the other, or peace agreements? Two views from highly published researcher on separatist conflicts, Alexis Heraclides:**

This article argues that – contrary to *civil wars* as a whole, where military victory predominantly ends war – negotiated settlements and compromises are more practicable in ending *separatist wars*. In order to illustrate this argument, I will analyse endings and other outcomes of separatist wars and try to answer why some wars end with stable peace while others face problems of resurgence of violence and separatism. Finally, I will also offer an explanation of the reasons behind continued fighting and the hindering of peaceful resolution.

[In a study of the endings and outcomes from] 70 separatist armed conflicts [worldwide] identified for the period 1945 to 1996 : outright military victory by the State occurs in *21 per cent* of the total of outcomes; military victory by the separatist movement in *10 per cent* of the total number of

outcomes, of which all but one case led to independent statehood; and accommodation through some form of autonomous rule occurs in *22 cases and outcomes* (i.e., in 29 per cent of the outcomes), of which all but two (the conflicts in Kosovo and Southern Sudan) have lasted until today. As noted above, *civil wars in general* more often end with military victory by one side than with a negotiated settlement. However, the total number of military victories *in separatist wars* (31 per cent of the total outcomes) is not markedly more than the total number of peace accords (which accounts for 26 per cent).

Only in 11 out of the 70 cases of [separatist conflict in] the last half century has a successful military conquest led to the settlement of the conflict, with most of these taking place in the first four post-World War II decades. In other seemingly successful suppressions, the conflict has been far from resolved, even where the power asymmetry has been striking. As time goes by, the military option is more likely to fuel the conflict rather than to end separatist wars. Peaceful accommodation is certainly more commendable on grounds of ethical and normative principles. It may also be more practicable, as our findings seem to indicate, particularly as we have entered a new era of greater self-awareness among minority groups. This era calls for more imaginative solutions to cultural pluralism based on a recognition of legitimate grievances, mutual respect, and peaceful outcomes. [ii]

States that cling to a military rather than a political solution are more likely not to resolve the separatist conflict in question but rather to contribute to its indefinite continuation or resurgence with all the appalling cost and suffering that this implies. Often military victories are short-lived. The separatists disappear to fight another day and reappear in the future, as with the Kurds of Iraq following their devastating 1975 defeat. [...] In the second half of the 20th century we have witnessed at least seventy cases of armed separatism. During this period, it is clear that there is a steady decline in the effectiveness of military solutions by the State from more than 56% in the 1940s, to 2.5% by the 1980s and 6% by the 1990s. The slight rise in incumbent victories in the 1990s is counterpoised by a State's worst nightmare, to suffer defeat at the hands of the 'rebels' in 8% of the cases. Furthermore, there is a modest but steady rise in accommodations and peace accords from nil in the first 15 post-war years, to 15% in the 1970s, only 8% in the 1980s, but 24% in the 1990s, that is more than half of the peace accords reached since 1945. [iii]

II.2 Why do separatist conflicts appear so intractable, or elusive of peaceful resolution? Why do the parties appear so diametrically opposed, and distrustful of each other? Alexis Heraclides again, provides some clues:

Separatist mobilisation springs from a sense of distinct collective identity (though not necessarily *ethnic identity*) coupled with grievance founded either on stark discrimination and inequality or on a perceived comparative disadvantage within the existing State. It may also be a reaction against incorporation into another State or against the creation of a new State. A common fallacy of most of the literature on separatist and ethnic conflict is to take for granted that all separatist conflicts are ethnonationalist in character. In fact, several armed separatist conflicts are based on a very attenuated sense of communal identity and inchoate cultural markers (as in the case of Southern Sudan, the Moros of the Philippines, or the Western Papuans), or merely on a territorial-societal

distinctiveness often resulting from a history of separate existence as distinct entities, as in the case of Eritrea, Katanga (Shaba), or northern Somalia (Somaliland). [...]

Clearly devolution [to the regions facing separatism] can work even following a devastating separatist war. However, it is no easy matter. Separatist wars and, more generally, communal conflicts are often protracted and seemingly endless, frustrating the most sensible and promising attempts at peaceful resolution [...] In separatist wars, the conflict is more often than not regarded by the warring sides in terms which an analyst would define as an extreme 'zero-sum' or 'win-lose' situation. Almost without exception, separatist wars are characteristic cases of 'issue rigidity', perceived scarcity, and non-divisibility of values. The parties freeze themselves into their respective incompatible positions, convinced that there is no conceivable workable alternative.

As in all conflicts, and more so in violent confrontations, there is intense mutual suspicion, fear, acute ethnocentrism, bipolar stereotyping, and selective and distorted perceptions, which seriously hamper judgement. Armed violence, killings, and suffering evoke deep emotions and hate-filled rage. The enemy is the demon, the worst, most vicious and cunning enemy ever experienced. [...] In such a situation, known in theories of cognitive balance as 'entrapment', the adversaries cannot quit, since too much has been invested in the armed struggle and it is unbearable to imply that perhaps all was in vain or a mistaken decision. [...]

Irrespective of clear cultural differences, separatist clashes more often than not evolve into 'identity conflicts'. The ethnicity or national identity of one party clashes with that of the adversary. The existence of the other side as the 'enemy' is vital for the preservation of the ingroup-outgroup (self-other) boundary. Thus, not surprisingly, separatist and ethnonational clashes are portrayed by the opponents as no less than primeval struggles between 'right and wrong' and as 'moral crusades', as Christopher R. Mitchell points out. A humane, cultured and civilised 'other', worthy of respect, with whom one can live in peace, is inconceivable, for it undermines one's own cherished positive group distinctiveness and self-esteem. [iv]

II.3 **How does the structure of armed insurgent groups, notably whether they have a centralized leadership, or are instead a clustering of fragmented smaller entities, affect the said group's ability to enter into peace negotiations, and to abide by their commitments under a peace process? Does a certain structure make an armed group more amenable to accommodation (seeking peace) than to confrontation (a logic of pursuing war at all costs)? Abdulkader Sinno, a researcher on the organisational dynamics of armed groups, writes:**

[Armed groups can be grouped into] six basic organizational structures (ways that power can be distributed within and among organizations): <u>centralized, decentralized, networked, patron–client, multiple, and fragmented</u>. Centralization is the measure of distribution of power over decision-making among the top-tier leadership and second-level or subsequent cadres within the organization. Decision-making deals with formulation of strategy, making appointments, distribution of resources, control of communication, and enforcing discipline. [...] The more control that second level or subsequent cadres wield over the formulation of local strategy and other decisions, the more decentralized the organization. [...] Some conflicts feature <u>one independent challenger</u>, some <u>multiple independent challengers</u> (two to four organizations), and others a

<u>fragmented opposition</u> (five or more organizations). I decided on the cut-off between *multiplicity* and *fragmentation* after noticing a different dynamic in qualitative case studies once the number of organizations exceeds four – this is the empirical point of transition from competition with specific rivals to positioning the organization within a nearly atomized movement.

Strategies of <u>confrontation</u> and <u>accommodation</u> are available for both incumbents (the regime) and their challengers. The organizational structures of the parties in conflict can both encourage them to adopt an <u>accommodationist</u> (attempting to reach a settlement) or a <u>conflictual</u> strategy (through attrition or a direct attack to dismantle rival organizations) and also lock them into those tactics. [...] The ability of a *centralized organization* to adopt an accommodation strategy toward the incumbent (the regime or occupying power) can, however, be impaired by the existence of rival organizations. A *multiplicity of organizations* encourages the consistent adoption of a confrontational strategy by the challengers because a dissatisfied population is likely to shift its support to the organization that shuns the conciliatory route. [...] Decentralization of armed groups puts more decision-making power in the hands of second-tier cadres, making them more flexible on the local level, unlike their peers in centralized organizations. This local flexibility – the ability to switch strategies – comes at the expense of overall organizational flexibility.

Durable compromise settlements are rare. In a statistical study [conducted] of the forty-one conflicts that took place between 1945 and 2001, and that lasted longer than three years, in the Americas, the Middle East, and North Africa, only two experienced a durable settlement (longer than ten years). *Perhaps one reason is that durable settlements can only be achieved between (not among) centralized organizational rivals that strongly control their members* and are capable of pre-empting the rise of alternative organizations to represent the interests of those who do not favour an agreement. [...]

Centralization, and the ability that it generally confers to control the rank and file, is an important prerequisite for effective negotiation because of the frequent need to rein in *spoilers* (to use Stephen Stedman's terminology) who disagree with the leadership's conciliatory goals. Spoilers can sabotage negotiations by committing confrontational acts that undermine the perceived sincerity of organizational leaders, who will be blamed for them. Centralization also helps in effectively pre-empting the emergence of new rival organizations that are likely to adopt, as their strategy for rapid growth at the expense of the conciliatory organization, an uncompromising line that appeals to those conditioned during years of conflict to believe that negotiation is tantamount to betrayal. [v]

II.4   At what point do the belligerent parties in an armed conflict generally tend to decide that it is worthwhile to engage in peace negotiations, to seek a solution to the conflict other than through military means? Is there a specific time, or point during a conflict's course at which the parties are most likely to accept a mediated, negotiated solution? What is that point, and what can peace-supporting and external actors do to seize that moment? Eminent Professor on peace and conflict resolution, William Zartman, writes:

While most studies on peaceful settlement of disputes see the substance of the proposals for a solution as the key to a successful resolution of conflict, a growing focus of attention shows that a second and equally necessary key lies in *the timing of efforts for resolution*. Parties resolve their conflict only when they are ready to do so—when alternative, usually unilateral means of achieving

a satisfactory result are blocked and the parties feel that they are in an uncomfortable and costly predicament. At that ripe moment, they grab on to [peace] proposals that usually have been in the air for a long time and that only now appear attractive. [...]

The concept of a ripe moment centres on the parties' perception of a **Mutually Hurting Stalemate (MHS),** optimally associated with an impending, past or recently avoided Catastrophe. The concept is based on the notion that when the parties find themselves locked in a conflict from which they cannot escalate to victory and this deadlock is painful to both of them (although not necessarily in equal degree or for the same reasons), they seek an alternative policy or Way Out. [...] Using different images, the stalemate has been termed the Plateau, a flat and unending terrain without relief, and the catastrophe the Precipice, the point where things suddenly and predictably get worse. [...] The mutually hurting stalemate is grounded in cost-benefit analysis, fully consistent with public choice notions of rationality [...]

It is the [subjective] perception of the objective condition [*facts or events which constitute the stalemate*], not the condition itself, that makes for a MHS. If the parties do not recognize 'clear evidence' (in someone else's view) that they are in an impasse, a Mutually Hurting Stalemate has not (yet) occurred, and if they do perceive themselves to be in such a situation, no matter how flimsy the 'evidence', the MHS is present. [...] The other element necessary for a ripe moment is less complex and also perceptional: a Way Out. Parties do not have to be able to identify a specific solution, only a sense that a negotiated solution is possible for the searching and that the other party shares that sense and the willingness to search too. Without a sense of a Way Out, the push associated with the MHS would leave the parties with nowhere to go. [...]

Finding a ripe moment [for peace negotiations] requires research and intelligence studies to identify the objective and subjective elements. Subjective expressions of pain, impasse, and **inability to bear the cost of further escalation**, related to objective evidence of stalemate, data on numbers and nature of casualties and material costs, and/or other such indicators of MHS, along with expressions of a sense of a Way Out, can be researched on a regular basis in a conflict to establish whether ripeness exists. [...] The most important refinements carry the theory onto a second level of questions about the effects of each side's pluralized politics on both the perceptions and uses of ripeness. What kinds of internal political conditions are helpful both for perceiving ripeness and for turning that perception into the initiation of promising negotiations? [...] the military element in each party is the crucial element in perceiving the stalemate, and that the way out is as important an ingredient as the stalemate in that all parties may well see victory in the alternative outcome prepared by negotiation. [...]

[N]othing in the definition of the MHS requires it to take place at the height of the conflict or at a high level of violence. [...] Given the infinite number of potential conflicts which have not reached 'the heights', evidence would suggest that perception of an MHS occurs either (and optimally) at a *low level of conflict*, where it is relatively easy to begin problem-solving in most cases, or, in salient cases, at rather *high levels of conflict*. Thus, conflicts not treated 'early' appear to require a high level of intensity for a MHS perception to kick in and negotiations toward a solution to begin [...]

Mutually Enticing Opportunity [MEO] is important in the broader negotiation process and has its place in extending ripeness theory [...] Negotiations completed under the shadow—or the push—of a MHS alone are likely to be unstable and unlikely to lead to a more enduring settlement. [...] The negotiators must provide or be provided prospects for a more attractive future to pull them out

of their conflict, *once a MHS has pushed them into negotiations*. The seeds of the pull factor begin with the Way Out that the parties vaguely perceive as part of the initial ripeness, but that general sense of possibility needs to be developed and fleshed out into the vehicle for an agreement, a formula for settlement and a prospect of reconciliation that the negotiating parties design during negotiations. [...]

Unripeness should not constitute an excuse for second or third parties' inaction, even if one or both of the conflicting parties are mired in their hopes of escalation and victory [...] [*It is important for external, potential mediating actors to be*] present and available to the contestants while waiting for the moment to ripen, so as to be able to seize it when it occurs. [Some strategies for achieving this include] preliminary explorations of items identified with pre-negotiations, [such as to] Identify the parties necessary to a settlement, Identify the issues to be resolved, and separate out issues not resolvable in the conflict; Air alternatives to the current conflict course; Establish contacts and bridges between the parties; Clarify costs and risks involved in seeking settlement; [and] assure support for a settlement policy within each party's domestic constituency. [vi]

II.5 How does the organisational structure of Non-State Armed Groups (centralized, decentralized, multiple sub-groups, or fragmented) impact upon their actual conflict outcomes? Notably how do different armed group organisational structure types perform in the presence or absence of safe havens (territory in which they can train, plan, equip without substantial intrusion)? Abdulkader Sinno writes again:

[Armed groups can be grouped into] six basic organizational structures (ways that power can be distributed within and among organizations): <u>centralized, decentralized</u>, networked, patron–client, <u>multiple, and fragmented</u>. Centralization is the measure of distribution of power over decision-making among the top-tier leadership and second-level or subsequent cadres within the organization. Decision-making deals with formulation of strategy, making appointments, distribution of resources, control of communication, and enforcing discipline. [...] The more control that second level or subsequent cadres wield over the formulation of local strategy and other decisions, the more decentralized the organization. [...] Some conflicts feature <u>one independent challenger</u>, some <u>multiple independent challengers</u> (two to four organizations), and others a <u>fragmented opposition</u> (five or more organizations). I decided on the cut-off between multiplicity and fragmentation after noticing a different dynamic in qualitative case studies once the number of organizations exceeds four – this is the empirical point of transition from competition with specific rivals to positioning the organization within a nearly atomized movement. [...]

The contingency that decisively influences how structure affects performance is the organization's control of a <u>territorial safe haven</u> – a portion of the contested territory where an organization's rivals cannot intervene with enough force to disturb its operations. Non-centralized (decentralized, networked, patronage, multiple sub-group) organizations are more resilient than centralized ones in hostile environments [*where they do not have a safe haven*] because their different components are more autonomous and less dependent on co-ordination. *They are not as vulnerable as centralized organizations are to short-cuts such as decapitation or sophisticated strategies that aim to isolate the organization, because the rank and file are both fairly independent and well ensconced within the social structure*. [...] Some decentralized organizational set-ups (multiple patronage-based organizations) can even result in a strategic lock-up when the insurgent organizational

leaders cannot compromise with the powers that be regardless of their desire to do so or pressure from sponsors, because they would lose their rank and file. […]

Noncentralized organizations are also advantaged in mobilizing support in a hostile environment because their more autonomous cadres are more responsive to local needs and are better able to mete out positive and negative sanctions than the officers of centralized ones. Control and discipline are easier to maintain within smaller and autonomous groups in hostile environments, which gives an advantage to non-centralized organizations enmeshed in intricate social structures. Lastly, information does not need to move far in non-centralized organizations: it is mostly produced and used locally, with little input from the leadership and with little probability of interception by rivals. *Sophisticated incumbents can, however, easily defeat a fragmented insurgent landscape* because its different components are the equivalent of tiny vulnerable independent centralized organizations.[vii]

II.6 **Turning to separatist conflicts specifically, what does the evidence tend to show about when such conflicts are most likely to come to an end,** *other than through military victory of one party over the other***? Foremost researcher, Alexis Heraclides, who studied separatist conflicts during the 50 years between 1946 and 1996, writes:**

The most widely held view regarding wars that do not end **[a]** by way of military victory is that they cease **[b]** as a result of a military stalemate, **[c]** rational choice by the parties involved, or **[d]** exhaustion. Taking our cues from the burgeoning literature on conflict resolution, we have tentatively come up with 12 reasons outlining when and why separatist wars have actually come to a halt, temporarily or indefinitely, in the period 1946 to 1996. Apparently, separatist wars end:

1) When both parties reach the conclusion that there are no prospects of further gains in the battleground […]. In other words, it is militarily a 'no-win' for both adversaries. At the same time, the battleground situation serves as a basis for negotiations.

2) When, for both sides, the costs of ongoing war (economic costs, destruction, human losses, threats to legitimacy, etc.) far exceed the potential as well as the symbolic benefits from continued fighting. […] A propitious situation is one of a military 'hurting stalemate', where there is a 'cost symmetry', that is, when both sides are being drained and there is a bloody standoff.

3) When - as another example of decisions based on cost benefit analyses by the belligerents - it appears to both parties that they have more to gain and less to lose by a peace accord than by continuing fighting. […] A State may at some point become genuinely interested in affording maximum autonomous rule to the separatist group, short of independence, and the separatists, for their part, may be prepared to scale down from the goal of independent statehood. This is more likely to come about as a result of a change of perception beginning within one of the sides, preferably the more powerful one, which then takes the initiative for peace […]

4) When the warring sides are economically, militarily and morally exhausted.

5) When there is some form of 'conflict transformation', such as a leadership change, a transformation of regime or political system, a new ideology, a shift in international orientation and alignments, a distinct change in the regional or international system.

6) When the stronger party (normally the incumbent) is prepared for talks and accommodation and is in an advantageous military position with sound ingroup legitimacy while, at the same time, the intransigent party is on the verge of defeat with ebbing legitimacy. [...] *[Reasons for willingness to negotiate despite a military position of strength include]*: **(a)** due to radical change in the State in question [...] peaceful accommodation rather than 'smite and unite' becomes the preferred strategy, provided that the secessionist movement scales down its claim to independence; **(b)** the belief of the incumbent that military defeat, however realisable, is unlikely to be effective in the long run and that, at the very least, insurgent activity even at low ebb would be costly and unbearable, **(c)** a sudden realisation that, after all, the separatists have a good case and that they should be placated, or **(d)** negotiating from a position of strength is ideal since it allows the stronger party (most often the State) to 'give in' less to the other side.

7) When one side loses crucial foreign military support or realises that it is on the verge of being left out in the cold by its supporters.

8) [*In separatist conflicts with interference by a neighbouring State*] when the weaker party is actively supported by a powerful State (usually a 'big neighbour'), which is not keen to incorporate the separatist entity, but instead pushes for a mediated settlement.

9) If some form of mediation (official or unofficial by a non-state actor) marks a breakthrough.

10) By way of some form of 'coercive mediation'. War can end if one or more third parties (Inter Governmental Organisations or States) push strongly for a mediated settlement. In order to be more viable, it needs to coincide with some of the other factors *(*e.g., exhaustion, or a no-win situation).

11) If there is a cease-fire, the warring groups are physically separated, and their mutual security dilemmas (their vital physical and cultural safety and survival) are alleviated by third parties (peacekeepers).

12) When a settlement addresses the fears of the separatist leadership and a prestigious and meaningful role is in the offing in the prospective peace settlement, such as heading the regional government. [viii]

SECTION III: **AUTONOMY ARRANGEMENTS AND THEIR PROSPECTS AS MECHANISMS FOR RESOLVING TERRITORIAL MINORITY CONFLICTS**

In this section of the Policy Paper, we continue exploring the mechanics of peace-making, notably in intra-State, separation conflicts. Specifically, we examine the use of autonomy arrangements as a means to diffuse or respond to centrifugal pressures in conflicts involving territorially concentrated minorities within a State.

III.1 **Is there a demographic threshold (for a minority or territorially concentrated group) at which it is important to consider affording substantial autonomy to the said group for self-management of some of its affairs, if it becomes restive and parts thereof engage in armed conflict with the mother State? Professor Alexis Heraclides writes:**

Autonomy *lato sensu* (or devolution) includes all kinds of arrangements aimed at granting a group which differs from the rest of the population in a State, a *special status* whereby it is in the position of expressing itself and its identity as a group in a particular region. Territorial autonomy (or autonomy *stricto sensu*) is "an institutional arrangement that delimits a regionally-based, self-administering entity or entities within a State as having explicit policymaking responsibilities in one or more political, economic or cultural spheres". *Autonomy: Addressing the State Dilemma:* Despite the experience of so many forms of devolution, many States are reluctant to entertain forms of internal self-rule but prefer to stick to a very centralised model of governance. Not surprisingly this applies, in particular, to States facing armed separatist movements.

Under these circumstances Governments are loath to reach a political settlement with the 'insurgents' leading to devolution. State prestige apart, governments or dominant groups are convinced that any 'give' on this vital question would be suicidal for it would make unilateral separation more realisable. It would prompt the separatists to abuse the devolution reached. Well established examples of this frame of mind among State authorities threatened by secession, are the Kurdish challenge in Turkey, India with regard to Kashmir and the Punjabi Sikhs, Pakistan towards the Bengalis of former East Pakistan (1971), Sri Lanka and the Tamils, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Kosovo, or the Republic of Macedonia and its Albanians.

The most that these States could entertain is non-discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, minority rights or, in exceptional circumstances, personal non-territorial autonomy. However, such prospects are often non-starters, particularly if they concern sizeable politicised regional groups (from 10 to 15% of the national population upwards). If a group nears the 20% threshold of the national population and is predominant in a distinct region it rarely settles with less than meaningful autonomous rule coupled with at least proportional representation in the central political apparatus of the State. [ix] [Note 26: If one looks at the post-1945 separatist movements, the majority are from 15% upwards of the national population. The main exceptions are separatist movements in huge States, i.e., India or China, where of course they are far less than 15-20%]. [x]

III.2 **Is it possible in Unitary States with attachment to unitarism, without a nationwide federal structure for all its sub-national units, to carve out specially administered Regions with substantial forms of autonomy, managed asymmetrically from the country's other sub-national units (Regions)? How do such *region-specific* autonomy arrangements differ from a *nationwide* Federal model where all parts of the country (federated States) are placed into a federal relationship with the centre (Federal government)? Comparative political scientist and expert in constitutional systems, Professor Alfred Stepan writes:**

We want to raise here a hard problem [...] Can a unitary polity respond effectively to the nationalism of a territorially concentrated cultural minority within the State with its own "politically robust multinational leaders" while nonetheless remaining a unitary and democratic State? [...] Let us briefly hypothesize the character of the political problem of territorially concentrated minorities in the unitary State. Let us imagine an existing small or medium-sized independent State with a unitary Constitution, a relatively culturally homogenous population, and a proud nation-state sense of identity. Let us further assume that this otherwise well-functioning unitary State has a territorially concentrated population that does not identify with the history and culture of the unitary State. Its different identity will most likely stem from one or more of the following six factors:

1. Physical separation of great distance from the unitary State.
2. Linguistic or religious difference.
3. A previous, self-governing tradition it wants to restore or expand.
4. A geopolitical or cultural sense that it was, and should be, part of a neighbouring State with which it identifies.
5. A radically different economy that the population believes needs special laws to help preserve its own livelihood and way of life.
6. A history of warfare with, or coercive repression by, the unitary State within which it is located.

Let us make a further, not unreasonable assumption that this territorially concentrated minority population is unhappy with the status quo. At the very least, they want more autonomy and self-governing arrangements that recognize their culture and facilitate its development; some of the populations may identify with leaders and organizations who demand independence or secession. This combination of factors gives a *multi*national dimension to the unitary State.

Let us make some further assumptions about two possible solutions to this political problem: *federalism* or *independence*. Concerning federalism, if the population and dominant political actors of the unitary State agree to become an asymmetrical federal system, many of the problems of the territorially concentrated minority population, short of independence, could be addressed reasonably well. However, if we assume that the vast majority of the State's population and its major political actors do *not* want to depart from what they perceive as a well-functioning unitary State, we should assume that a federal State, much less an option for an asymmetrical federal State, is highly unlikely.

Let us also assume that a full exit from the unitary State of the territorially concentrated minority, either by independence or joining an irredentist neighbour, is extremely unlikely in the foreseeable future due to [among other factors] strong sentiments in the unitary State opposing such an exit and the military capacity to back up such policy preferences. [...] If we rule out federalism and complete exit, are there other political arrangements that could possibly increase the "voice" and "loyalty" of the territorially concentrated minority community or nation? Can their desires for greatly enhanced autonomy and self-government be addressed from *within* the unitary State? [...] We believe there is.

A federacy [*special autonomous or self-governing region*] is a political-administrative unit in an independent unitary State with exclusive power in certain areas, including some legislative power, constitutionally or quasi-constitutionally embedded, that cannot be changed unilaterally, and whose inhabitants have full citizenship rights in the otherwise unitary State. [...]

As an ideal type, a polity that contains a federacy [special autonomous, self-governing region] is also analytically quite different from a federal polity, even in an asymmetrical federal system. True, the unit we call a federacy ... has a federal [like] quality in its relations to the mother State. However, in the ideal type of federalism, the *entire polity* (country) is federal. Some readers might think that the powers of what we call a federacy are close to the autonomy and special prerogatives that are found in what we have called asymmetrical federalism. This is true but some differences are nonetheless fundamental. In asymmetrical federalism, *every* unit in the polity is part of a federation, and no part of the polity is part of a unitary State. [xi] [...]

III.3 Has this approach of affording special *regional self-government or autonomy*, as distinct from *classical Unitarism* (and decentralisation within it) and *classical Federalism*, been attempted in any peace processes? Was it able to assuage or pacify the demands of restive regions, and bring peace to end conflicts? Alfred Stepan writes further :

Did the idea of Federacy [*special autonomous or self-governing region*] contribute to peace in Aceh [Indonesia]? We believe we can make a strong case that it did. One of the major reasons why the [previous] cessation of hostilities [agreement on this conflict] broke down in 2003 was the continuing clash of fundamental goals. The central Government and the Military were worried about the territorial fragmentation of Indonesia and were deeply suspicious of any formula other than a unitary State. GAM [Gerakan Aceh Merdeka, or *Free Aceh Movement*], for their part, could not see how they could advance their social and developmental goals outside of independence. [...]

Soon after the second round [of negotiations] began, a spokesperson of GAM announced at a press conference on February 23, 2005: "The demand for Independence is no longer on the table. They are demanding self-government now and the Indonesians [government representatives] understand this very clearly". As [an author] put it: "This was a shift of historic proportions. It was the first time that GAM had ever indicated that it was prepared to accept anything *less than independence or a referendum [on independence]*. As such, it was widely viewed as a major breakthrough, and it made all subsequent progress in the talks possible."

What contributed to this major compromise on the part of the GAM? It would seem that the *idea* of federacy-type arrangements broke the bargaining deadlock. [...] On the eve of the second round

[of negotiations], the head of the Helsinki [Peace Process] mediation team, the former President of Finland, Marrti Ahtisaari in a television address […] alluded to "self-government" for Aceh as a possible goal of the negotiations. […] It may be that Ahtisaari's informal conversations with GAM were even more important. One of the GAM negotiators in Helsinki, Nur Djuli, told [this author] why he personally came to believe that a [federacy, such as the Aland Islands in Finland] type of arrangement could lead to self-government.

One evening he and some other GAM negotiators were sitting with Ahtisaari looking out at the sea. They respected Ahtisaari, who among many other accomplishments had been nominated for a Nobel Price for Peace for his peace-keeping achievements in the Balkans as a high official of the United Nations. Ahtisaari noticed a ship going by and asked Nur Djuli if he recognized the flag the ship was flying. Djuli said he did not. Ahtisaari said the flag was that of the Åland Islands. Ahtisaari went on to say that the Åland Islands were part of the unitary State of Finland with special self-governing arrangements. He said that he [while President of Finland] could not send a Finnish ship to the Åland Islands without the permission of the legislature of the Åland Islands. He said further that no major domestic law or treaty affecting the Åland Islands could go into effect without the consultation and consent of the government and legislature of the Åland Islands. Djuli later insisted that he and some of the other GAM negotiators virtually did not sleep that night. They spent the night looking up the Åland Islands, and then Greenland, on the Internet. They may or may not have heard of the word *federacy,* but they began to feel that [the type of federacy arrangement they had seen] might produce a serious form of "self-government" for Aceh.[xii]

On Autonomy or federal arrangements as a mechanism to resolve separatist conflicts, Alexis Heraclides writes:

Taking on board minority protection and self-rule [entails] rendering the protection of culturally (or regionally) distinct groups more comprehensive and providing for self-rule under certain circumstances. [This involves] respect for culturally (or regionally) distinct groups with a strong regional base and, more generally, tolerance and indeed respect for cultural diversity. The key here is for a State to perceive cultural ascriptive-diversity as actually enriching society, not as a necessarily evil to be dealt with as best one can. The other side of the coin is that the various distinct regionally-based groups would for their part, not question – let alone threaten – the territorial integrity of the State concerned. They will remain loyal to the State that has come to terms with them by respecting them and by striving for an ongoing dialogue with the group in question in order to meet its concerns and provide for its needs. This reciprocal solution of mutual respect and mutual 'acceptance' could be seen in terms of a legitimized reciprocal relationship, a kind of 'ethno-social contract'. Within such a framework, 'non-secessionist self-determination', could be envisaged – self-rule ranging from autonomy to a federation on communal lines.[xiii]

For territorial autonomy or a federated status to be established and to be able to function smoothly, precise criteria are worth establishing. Let us point to some of them. For one devolution should preferably be the outcome of dialogue with the regional group concerned; it should find strong support in that group as well as in the majority community. Other criteria worth including are the following: little likelihood for ensuing hazards to other distinct groups or to members of the majority residing in the region in question (the well-known problem of 'minority within a minority' or 'trapped minority'); the inclusion of adequate guarantees for cultural pluralism in the regional entity; no ensuing threat to the territorial integrity of the State concerned, that is, put differently, a firm undertaking not to seek secession after having obtained internal self-rule; and little

likelihood for inter-State friction as a result of the devolution achieved, say by a neighbouring stating fomenting separatism in the region in order to annex the territory.[xiv]

III.4   What is the fate of pro-separation politico-military groups after a successful peace process? How are their agendas *transformed* to enable their participation in national political life after conflict? Is there a prospect for them to transform into political entities? In its decision on a case pertaining specifically to Cameroon, the African Commission on Human & Peoples' Rights offered the pathway:

The [African] Commission states that secession is not the sole avenue open to Southern Cameroonians to exercise the right to self-determination. The African Charter cannot be invoked by a complainant to threaten the sovereignty and territorial integrity of a State party. The Commission has however accepted that autonomy within a sovereign state, in the context of self-government, confederacy, or federation, while preserving territorial integrity of a State party can be exercised under the Charter [...] The Commission states that the various forms of governance or self-determination such as federalism, local government, unitarism, confederacy, and self-government can be exercised only subject to conformity with State sovereignty and territorial integrity of a State party. [...] The African Commission [...] recommends that the State enters into constructive dialogue with the Complainants [...] to resolve the constitutional issues, as well as grievances which could threaten national unity [and] recommends to the complainants (i) to transform into political parties, (ii) to abandon secessionism and engage in constructive dialogue with the Respondent State on the Constitutional issues and grievances.[xv]

III.5   When faced with a centrifugal or pro-separation conflict, does the granting of autonomy concessions to assuage or contain the conflict, create a contagion effect? Namely that other regions or sub-national units within the State start to agitate for similar territorial concessions, eventually leading to dismemberment of the State. Does the "domino theory" hold in that concessions made to one group inevitably lead to others demanding same, placing unacceptable pressure on the State's unity? Based on several data-sets, researcher Erika Forsberg offers some answers:

There is a widespread and largely undisputed concern that granting autonomy or separate statehood to ethnic groups may set in motion a "domino effect." The claim is that the success of one separatist movement may in turn trigger other ethnic groups to also promote separate statehood violently, threatening to disintegrate the whole country and spread across borders. [...] A contagion effect is the process whereby an event in one location increases the probability of a similar event taking place in a nearby location at a later point in time. The idea has been applied to several political phenomena, including democratization, interstate war, and intrastate war. [...]

The present study utilizes these data to examine the potential for domino effects by examining whether ethnic groups are more inclined to violently pursue separatist goals if other ethnic groups nearby successfully gain territorial concessions. [...]

The empirical analysis of this study does not find any evidence in support of a domino effect of granting territorial concessions. Contrary to the common expectation, ethnic groups do not appear to be more inclined to initiate conflict when nearby ethnic groups have been successful in their struggles for greater territorial self-determination. Several alternative tests yield the same result, including when the relevant domain is restricted to the domestic arena. Instead, the empirical analysis consistently finds that ethnic groups are significantly more likely to end up in conflict if other ethnic groups fight in the same country or if kin members are involved in ethnic conflict in a neighboring country. [...]

The domino effects examined in this study are specified to the process whereby the granting of territorial concessions to one ethnic group may encourage other ethnic groups into violently pursuing similar aspirations. This specification of domino effects excludes the related process of concessions leading to more extreme demands *by the same group*. [...] In a comparative study, Saideman (1998) examines the breakup of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia, asking whether the disintegration of these countries was the consequence of a domino effect. The results of his study suggest that one successful secession generated conditions that favored more secessions. [...]

If a regime gives in to one group's *[separatist] demands*, this is highly relevant information for other ethnic groups in the country and may increase the perception that territorial concessions are attainable. By acquiescing to demands made by one ethnic group, the Government signals to other groups in the same country that it may be worthwhile to raise similar demands. [...] In research on the role of territory in ethnic conflict Toft (2002/2003, 2003) suggests that while ethnic groups view territory as indivisible when it has a homeland attachment to it, States view territory as indivisible when there is a risk of precedent-setting. Such effects operate when a State faces several ethnic groups that have the capacity and willingness to potentially opt for a secessionist strategy. If the State accommodates the demands of one secessionist group, it signals that such demands are legitimate and serves as an example to other groups. [...]

[On the other hand] the signing of a deal, which grants an ethnically mobilized opposition group *greater territorial control*, does not make other ethnic groups in the same country more inclined to initiate violent conflict, neither over territory nor over government control. Also, the implementation of such territorial deals has no significant effect. [...] In sum, the results of this study indicate that the granting of territorial concessions to one separatist group has no effects on the inclination of other ethnic groups within and across borders to pursue separatism. This result diverts both from the view held by many policymakers and, partly, also from previous research. [...]

With comprehensive time-series data on ethnic groups and territorial concessions incorporated in peace deals, allowing for the most systematic assessment of ethnic dominoes so far, this study finds no evidence suggesting that domino effects are operating. This finding is considered solid and robust to a series of alternative tests. Ethnic groups do not appear to be inspired to use violence when concessions are granted to nearby separatist groups. Neither do I find any patterns [in this direction] at the global level. [...] Walter ... finds that territorial conflicts *are the most intractable and the least likely to be successful on the part of the [non-State, insurgent] challenger* (Walter 2003). Thus, even if the Government has acquiesced to the demands of one separatist group, other groups may primarily perceive the great risks, and potential costs, involved in launching their own territorial challenge. This would make domino effects less likely. [xvi]

III.6 On a related question, namely the slippery slope from autonomy to separatism, is there research evidence that the grant of territorial autonomy concessions to resolve a conflict only postpones the demands for separatism? And that the group or region afforded autonomy will eventually and inevitably progress to demanding full separation from the mother State? Professor Alexis Heraclides writes:

The "slippery slope" effect, the well-known nightmare of States, though real is far from pervasive and [...] the main responsibility for its occurrence lays in fact more in the behaviour of reluctant central authorities and less on recalcitrant separatists. [...] Let us see what leading authorities on ethnic conflict have to say. Donald L. Horowitz, hardly an idealist on the question of ethnic conflict (for instance he argues for conflict *management* as the realistic solution in ethnic clashes rather than conflict *resolution*) maintains that there is a good deal of evidence that devolution will not pave the way for independence but rather that it will prevent it.

William Zartman, a well-known realist on international affairs and internal wars goes even further, claiming that history shows the reverse, that with home rule people become preoccupied with their own issues and that responsibility tempers demands, for, he argues, ethnic rebellions arise secondarily because a people 'want to be left alone and primarily because they are not afforded a fair share'. And Ted Robert Gurr's conclusion based on his extensive 'Minorities at Risk' project, is that '[n]either in theory nor in practice is there anything inherent in autonomy agreements that leads to future civil war or disintegration of the State'. These views are corroborated by other authors, be they optimists, such as Arend Lijphart or more pessimistic about the prospects of ethnic conflict resolution.

In separatist settings broken peace agreements tend to fall into four variants: (a) cases of peace accords that have worked for a discernible time-span only to be abrogated, unilaterally, by the State in question, which then leads to renewal of armed violence; (b) the immediate watering-down of agreements reached by the central Government or the apparent unwillingness to implement them in letter and spirit; (c) successful separatist 'spoiling' and 'outflanking' in spite of the governmental moderation and good intentions; and (d) the blame on both sides as it is often impossible to assign blame to either side as the sole instigator.

Our initial research into [peace] agreements following an ethnic or separatist conflict seem to confirm Gurr's empirical finding. Notwithstanding the dangers of [conciliatory armed groups signatory to peace agreements] being outflanked by recalcitrant separatist factions, renewed violence is more often than not, the State's doing, because of the defections of the central Government from the agreements. In this regard the Southern Sudanese are a case in point. When extended and meaningful autonomy was arbitrarily scrapped in 1983 by the central Government, internal war broke out and has continued since. Similarly, in the case of Kosovo, when the extended autonomous status was scuttled by Serbia's Milosevic in 1989, the Kosovar Albanians opted for a non-violent Ghandian-type struggle for independence which lasted for almost a decade, until the UCK took over in the late 1990s. [xvii]

SECTION IV: **ADDRESSING THE MECHANICS FOR PEACE ON CAMEROON'S NW & SW REGIONS' CRISIS**

In this Section of the Paper, we move from the comparative lessons to draw from Peace processes, to examine some specific facets of the mechanics of delivering peace on Cameroon's NW&SW regions crisis. Specifically, we examine the strategy for reducing the allure of armed careers and recruitment by armed groups; the use of economic incentives for peace; and peace enforcement measures. We also make specific recommendations to open up the national civic space for peace advocacy, for multilateralism and development partner coordination to support an eventual peace process, and for systematic funding of initiatives that increase the demand and supply of peace-inducing policies and peace outcomes.

IV.1 **What is the *optimal timing* for DDR processes in an armed conflict? Are there some *pre-conditions* for DDR programs to succeed? Are there *alternative approaches* that can be used to reduce the allure of armed groups, even prior to DDR's feasibility?**

To reduce adherence of persons to armed groups, the approach undertaken so far has been to set up national (and regional) structures for Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR). Armed group fighters are asked to leave their groups and join these centres, in exchange for which they shall not be prosecuted for insurrection but afforded socio-economic training to enable them transition to productive life. The above is framed without specific agreements with armed groups. Based on global practice, what is the *optimal timing* of DDR processes in an armed conflict? Are there some *pre-conditions* for DDR programs to succeed? Are there *alternative approaches* that can be used to reduce the allure of armed groups, even prior to DDR's feasibility? **The United Nations' Integrated DDR Standards** and related publications, provide guidance:

Defining [Traditional] Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration

Disarmament is the collection, documentation, control and disposal of small arms, ammunition, explosives and light and heavy weapons of combatants and often also of the civilian population. Disarmament also includes the development of responsible arms management programmes.

Demobilization is the formal and controlled discharge of active combatants from armed forces or other armed groups. The first stage of demobilization may extend from the processing of individual combatants in temporary centres to the massing of troops in camps designated for this purpose (cantonment sites, encampments, assembly areas or barracks). The second stage of demobilization encompasses the support package provided to the demobilized, which is called reinsertion.

Reintegration is the process by which ex-combatants acquire civilian status and gain sustainable employment and income. Reintegration is essentially a social and economic process with an open time frame, primarily taking place in communities at the local level. It is part of the general development of a country and a national responsibility and often necessitates long-term external assistance. […]

Lessons and experiences have shown that **the following preconditions are required for the implementation of a viable DDR programme**: [1] the signing of a negotiated ceasefire and/or peace agreement that provides the framework for DDR; [2] trust in the peace process; [3] willingness of the parties to the armed conflict to engage in DDR; and [4] a minimum guarantee of security. [xviii]

Distinguishing "Traditional" from "New Generation" DDR: used when pre-conditions for full DDR are not met

To facilitate better understanding of the Second-Generation [DDR] concept, [it should be contrasted with "traditional DDR", which [which it] shares the same strategic aims: to support the peace process, create political space and contribute to a secure environment. Whereas traditional DDR *focuses mainly on combatants that are present within military structures*, the focus of Second-Generation programmes shifts away from military structures towards the larger communities that are affected by armed violence.

Traditional DDR involves a range of activities falling under the operational categories of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. Second Generation programmes, on the other hand, include a number of different types of activities that **can be implemented when the preconditions for traditional DDR are not in place** in order to support the peace process, build trust, contribute to a secure environment and help build the foundation for longer term peacebuilding. [...] The following brief description of the **preconditions for DDR** highlights the complexity of the settings in which DDR is currently being conducted.

1. The signing of a negotiated peace agreement that provides a legal framework for DDR: [...] This precondition, which recommends that a negotiated peace agreement be signed, assumes that all warring parties are signatories to that peace agreement. However, in a majority of the cases examined in this study, *all* warring parties are not included in the peace process. Moreover, the manipulation of [armed] gangs by political elites and the proliferation of various types of militias and armed groups may complicate even the *identification* of all parties to the conflict.

2. Trust in the peace process*:* While trust of the parties to the conflict in the overall peace process is extremely difficult to evaluate, it is a key prerequisite for successful traditional DDR. [...] As DDR is often one of the first provisions of a peace agreement to be implemented, it may start at a time when the parties are still unsure of the process. They may wish to hold on to the military means that brought them to the negotiating table, thus delaying the start of DDR. At the same time, DDR practitioners have understood that progress in DDR can serve to foster trust between the parties. This can therefore lead to a vicious cycle where lack of [mutual] trust [between the parties] delays DDR and the lack of DDR only increases the parties' mistrust in the peace process.

3. Willingness of the parties to the conflict to engage in DDR**:** Political will of the warring parties to engage in DDR is crucial to a successful process. Nonetheless, in many cases, political will has been lacking. In the countries studied, political elites have been involved in the creation and support of militias or gangs. Accordingly, manipulation of gangs by elite members of society complicates the definition of "parties" to the conflict— a key aspect of developing a successful DDR programme.

4. <u>A minimum guarantee of security</u>**:** Without a minimum guarantee of security, armed groups and individuals are unlikely to disarm. [...] Even where peacekeeping operations are deployed, as in Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and Haiti, DDR processes have, at times, been hampered by insecurity. [...] Many combatants will therefore be reluctant to relinquish a weapon which they perceive to be their guarantee of security. [xix]

Examples of second-generation DDR: Community Violence Reduction programs

Community Violence Reduction (CVR) refers to programmes [...] aiming at preventing and reducing violence at the community level in ongoing armed conflict or in post-conflict environments. CVR differs from DDR in that it works directly with target communities to find solutions to causes of armed violence from within, and explicitly *targets youth at risk of recruitment by armed groups* in addition to ex-combatants. [...] CVR has gained traction in recent years as DDR operations have increasingly been mandated in contexts where the preconditions for DDR – including political will among the parties and the adherence to a comprehensive peace agreement – have not been met. [...]

THE CVR THEORY OF CHANGE: CVR is often implemented when the security, economic or political climates do not allow for effective intervention through DDR programmes. CVR serves as a short-term stabilization measure, designed to create "breathing space" for other rule of law, governance and livelihood programmes. It engages with communities and former members of armed groups. CVR projects are transitional measures aimed at linking its beneficiaries primarily to other DDR processes but also to broader peacebuilding strategies, while long-term programming, such as *reintegration*, is [being] put in place.[xx]

[*Project Note*: It should be noted that the Report of the Major National Dialogue in 2019 called for the inclusion of a *Community Violence Reduction* component into the DDR Program – at Page 16. Attention should also be given to the nature of the armed groups in the NW&SW crisis, which for the most part, based on preliminary observation, are dispersed into many fragmented, localized armed groups. Although some groups are adopting increasingly military-like organisational formations, command structures, and more sophisticated weaponry, fragmentation in the armed group constellation will complicate *identifying* armed parties and *securing consolidated adherence/engagement* for traditional group-wide DDR. The presence of *"non-classical" fighting groups* (not aligned with the structure of a modern army or armed group) also suggests the usefulness of complementary second-generation DDR which looks beyond an exclusive focus on actors within military-formed structures.]

IV.2   Leveraging Economic Support as a peace incentive, and the economic dividends of peace

It has been documented by a number of sources, including this Project[xxi] and the World Bank, [xxii] that one must be measured in asserting that a key driver of the crisis in the NW-SW regions was the lack of *socio-economic investment and infrastructural development* in those regions. Rather, what the evidence shows is a quite contrasted situation between the two regions before the advent of the crisis. On indicators such as reduction of poverty (low household poverty levels), National Household Surveys conducted periodically

countrywide for the 15 years prior to the crisis (2001, 2007, 2014 show the South-West region as consistently Cameroon's best performing region.

The North-West region by contrast, during the same period tended to cluster among the worst performing regions. Socio-economic deprivation *qua* regions, is not a trait that the NW and SW regions shared before the advent of the crisis. (This is not to say that the cumulative effects of policies or a status quo that reinforced the position of French vis-à-vis English would not have had some adverse impacts on the predominantly Anglophone population of the two regions especially non-bilinguals, notably in terms of their integration into professional or economic life. At least more adverse than their monolingual Francophone counterparts would have faced).

Incidence of Poverty in Cameroon (2001 - 2007 - 2014):
Percentage of population living below the national poverty line
Regions are ranked 1st to 10th: 1st = *lowest* poverty incidence, 10th = *highest* poverty incidence

Locality / Region	2001	Rank	2007	Rank	2014	Rank
Douala	10.9	-	5.5	-	4.2	-
Yaoundé	13.3	-	5.9	-	5.4	-
Adamawa	48.4	7th	53.0	8th	47.1	7th
Centre (excluding Yaoundé)	48.2	6th	41.2	5th	30.3	5th
East	44.0	5th	50.4	6th	30.0	4th
Far North	56.3	10th	65.9	10th	74.3	10th
Littoral (excluding Douala)	35.5	3rd	30.8	4th	19.5	2nd
North	50.1	8th	63.7	9th	67.9	9th
North-West	**52.5**	**9th**	**51.0**	**7th**	**55.3**	**8th**
West	40.3	4th	28.9	2nd	21.7	3rd
South	31.5	1st	29.3	3rd	34.1	6th
South-West	**33.8**	**2nd**	**27.5**	**1st**	**18.2**	**1st**

Sources: *2nd National Household Survey, 2001 (Main Report, pp. 34), 3rd National Household Survey, 2007 (Main Report, pp. 18), 4th National Household Survey, 2014 (Evolution of Principal Indicators, pp. 2)*

The above notwithstanding and despite significant recent investments in the road network in the two regions (notably the Kumba – Mamfe – Ekok, and Bamenda – Batibo – Widikum – Mamfe – Ekok roads), it is true that infrastructural gaps persist notably in the NW region (the access to Bamenda from the West region, the 300 plus kilometre Ring-Road that connects 5 of the Regions' 7 administrative divisions) and parts of the SW (Ndian and Manyu divisions notably). In this regard, infrastructural development, or the committing of funds to achieve high-value and historically highly sought-after projects, such as the North-West Ring Road, has emerged on the agenda. Government has prioritized the said infrastructure, reached out to and secured Development Partner funding for same (notably AFDB funding for the Ring Road) and launched tender processes. However, it cannot be

overlooked that the two (2) regions are particularly inhospitable terrain presently for large-scale infrastructure projects – which require the mobilization of often national and international personnel, costly equipment and machinery, and sensitive dual-use inputs (such as dynamite, which can serve armed groups).

A Tunisian worker for construction company SOROUBAT working on the Kumba – Ekondo Titi – Isangele – Akwa road project (SW region) was killed in March 2018, while construction company SOGEA-SATOM had its equipment vandalized by armed groups on the Bamenda – Babadjou road stretch. SATOM ultimately pulled out of the project which is now being re-contracted to local companies using local labour (hoped to be less vulnerable to sabotage and vandalism), subject to the development of a security plan for the project. The tender process for the Ring Road was also inconclusive, with only one company bidding for the project, at an exorbitant rate to adjust for the security risk and associated costs.

Undoubtedly and over time, national and development partner funds targeted towards improving the supply of infrastructure and closing deficits in the NW-SW regions will be important contributors and an essential component of a *future reconstruction and development program* for the 2 Regions (as with other conflict-affected Regions of Cameroon). The said Projects should therefore be "leveraged" with all stakeholders in the crisis (notably Government, belligerent groups, civic, community, and civil society groups). They should constitute a "dividend of peace" in the two regions, and an important leitmotif for the Cameroonian actors to get together and resolve the crisis, to move on to this stage of economic reconstruction and development. Timing these infrastructure projects in the NW and SW "inside" the unabated crisis is at best complicated. Situating them closer to the finishing line of a peace process provides an important incentive, notably for the *population to exert pressure on the political actors* on both sides, to moderate their positions, and engage in a process of negotiated solutions for peace.

A particularly important economic asset for the NW and SW regions, which has historical roots and relevance in both regions, and is woven into its economic fabric of savings and credit for agriculture and entrepreneurship, *is its Credit Union movement*, which is now part of Cameroon's wider micro-finance movement. It has been established that historically *the first microfinance institution in Cameroon was established in the North-West Region in 1963* (by missionary priests in Njinikom, Boyo Division, NW region).[xxiii] This subsequently led to the founding in the late 1960s of credit union leagues (which federate and provide management services to often hundreds of MFIs), such as the Cameroon Credit Union League (CAMCULL), which presently has one of the largest networks in the country of affiliated MFIs. Prior to the onset of the crisis, the dense network of credit unions ensured access to financial services, loans, and credit – provided by institutions with historical roots in both regions. The economic effects of the crisis place specific strain on these institutions, and it would be worthwhile envisaging measures to boost these institutions, to enable them to survive and outlive the crisis.

Lastly, on the economic dimensions of the crisis, it should be borne in mind that the crisis touches an economically sensitive geographic zone for Cameroon, and where geo-strategically it should not harbour conflict over a prolonged period or face risks to vital national assets. The South-West region harbours a significant portion of Cameroon's maritime coastline on the Atlantic Ocean, stretching from the Bakassi peninsula on its western border with Nigeria, to Tiko in the plains stretching to Douala. In addition to strategic assets such as the country's lone petroleum refinery (in Limbe, SW region), the SW region borders one of Cameroon's most promising oil and gas (hydrocarbons) formations in the Rio del Rey Basin off Bakassi (the heavily disputed territory which Cameroon formally won in a contest with Nigeria at the International Court of Justice), and active oil and gas permits in the area between the Douala and Rio del Rey hydrocarbon basins. The NW & SW regions also border Nigeria, a strategic neighbour and potential large export market, trade partner, and goods supplier – with cross border road infrastructure already developed for this strategic road border that links ECOWAS to CEMAC as part of the West-East Trans African Highway.

The crisis also comes close to the broad Gulf of Guinea area, where maritime piracy is a pressing and constant concern, with incidents of kidnapping of ships and shipping crews on the rise. This has necessitated major powers' maritime training exercises with the Naval forces of Gulf of Guinea States (Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Congo) to enhance readiness, as well as direct interventions by foreign navies to intercept rogue vessels in the seas. The residue of practices such as oil bunkering, kidnapping for ransom, trafficking in goods and weapons, and armed militancy from the adjoining Niger Delta (in Southeast Nigeria) also constitutes a risk factor, in terms of sourcing of expertise and weapons to conduct armed activities. The above factors mean that the crisis is occurring not far from highly sensitive economic production assets, and stemming its conflagration is important for the national economy. As such, *a return to an optimistic trajectory of stable economic development* (which the country harboured between debt relief in 2006 and 2014/2016 when the Boko Haram and NW-SW crises combined to darken the outlook) *is a critical dividend of peace.*

IV.3   Enforcement measures to align the actors towards peace

Cameroon's partners have taken some measures to urge the parties in conflict towards peaceful resolution of the crisis. Nowhere has there been more unison than that the solution to the crisis is not a military one. France has expressed the view that a peace agreement of some sort, is required for the 2 Regions. Concerted multilateral attention to the crisis has been complicated by divergent positions among the UN Security Council's Permanent Members, with the US and UK drawing international attention to the crisis and calling for dialogue between belligerents for its resolution, and Russia and China cautioning against international interventionism, and to allow Cameroon to resolve its internal matters.

Some bilateral, or single-country measures have been taken to urge/drive home the importance of resolving the conflict and ending the attendant human rights violations and abuses that come with it. These include: prosecutions of persons (of Cameroonian origin) for violating United States Defence export regulations, through smuggling weapons and ammunition in maritime vessel containers destined for Nigeria, and onward movement into the NWSW; reduction in US military assistance to Cameroon; exclusion from the US Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) tariff-free export privileges to the US; and the announcement of visa restrictions for persons opposing peaceful resolution of the crisis. Two additional measures will be cross-country and cross-institutional collaboration on peace enforcement measures; and regional border security cooperation, notably with States in West Africa, to stem the tide of trafficking and smuggling in goods, weapons, and ammunition – which is sustaining the crisis.

IV.4 Birthing the Peace: opening national civic space for peace advocacy and ideas, allowing Cameroon's social fabric to generate momentum, and pressure for Peace

To birth the peace, it is important to create an enabling national environment for peace to occur. While the tensions associated with armed conflict are alive, it may be difficult to envision promoting a culture of peace. In fact, some may conflate peace advocacy, the art of seeking solutions to conflict "outside" of the battleground as an expression of lack of faith in military prowess. Or worse still, as a discouragement of military efforts and sacrifices. It is also unhelpful that some actors, probably intending to call for peaceful resolution of the crisis, cross the lines of legitimate anti-war and pro-peace picketing, and target calls to disobedience to soldiers; oblivious that the soldier does not appreciate the *jus ad bello* or politico-moral justness of the assignment entrusted to him. The governance system is designed for *political institutions* to make those decisions, and it is to them, that pressure should be directed.

Yet, peace advocacy fully has its place if the country is going to birth a peace. *It is not denigrating of the national defence and security forces to suggest that a peaceful or negotiated resolution of the crisis is a less costly alternative to the armed conflict.* Government itself, while deploying defence and security forces to contain the conflagration has pursued various alternative measures to pacify the situation. It is not a criminal offence to call for an end to armed conflict, and for all parties to show moderation and end the crisis: that does not constitute a demoralization of the security forces engaged in the two regions. This is the *vital civic space* that needs to be opened.

Especially faced with a not-easily dismissed separatist conflagration, it can be tempting to "seal off" the space of discussion, in which there is deliberation about *why* the crisis occurred in the first place, and what structural reforms to pursue to prevent its recurrence. There is a particularly insidious temptation to conflate **(i)** an explanation of the root causes of linguistico-cultural tensions with centrifugal effects (the areas of policy management

which breed the most tensions along the English/French marker), with **(ii)** providing justification for the declaration of, pursuit of, and fighting for separatism or secession.

In this line of reasoning, any argumentation that demonstrates how one language system may have been side-lined (with a view to implementing corrective measures, and thus a diagnosis with remedial intensions) is instead considered a justification for the resort to separatism or secession. Separatism/secession is a criminal offence (Section 111, Penal Code) and justification of separatism/secession, like of any other offence against State security, is also a criminal offence (Section 267). It therefore totally freezes peace-inducing debate if persons analysing the causes of language systems' centrifugal and conflict-prone nature are labelled as apologists for secession.

It is already palpable how substantial constituencies within Cameroon, notably the *women's movement*, with marches and Silencing the Guns activities within the two regions, as well as peace mobilization activities nationally, have been able to mobilize attention towards peaceful resolution of the crisis. *Religious and faith-based* organisations have also done same, speaking relentlessly to political actors on all sides to consider non-military solutions and engage in frank dialogue for peace. There are yet other segments of Cameroonian society – such as its academics, performing artists, professional orders, trades unions, and the private sector – who could do even more, on the imperatives for peaceful resolution. It is therefore critical that national civic space be kept open, so that all ideas for and momentum towards peace can be generated. Homegrown solutions are critical, and in this regard, the experience of **Insider Mediators** (people who are within the fabric of the country affected by conflict, and who use their influence and legitimacy to change its course), is instructive, as documented by the *United Nations Development Program*:

Insider Mediators (IMs) are [defined] as "an individual or group of individuals who derive their legitimacy, credibility and influence from a socio-cultural and/or religious – and, indeed, personal - closeness to the parties of the conflict, endowing them with strong bonds of trust that help foster the necessary attitudinal changes amongst key protagonists which, over time, prevent conflict and contribute to sustaining peace. IMs are driven by personal conviction and dedication to the cause and have a vested interest in the outcome." [...]

Whereas in 1950 an average of eight armed groups were engaged in a civil war, by 2010 that average had surged to 14. In 2014, more than 1,000 active armed groups were estimated to be active in Syria alone. [...] In this *complex and highly dynamic conflict landscape* criminal and ideological interests overlap and armed groups fragment and splinter, compounding the challenges associated with fostering processes that may lead to a formal peace agreement. [...]

These trends **challenge the efficacy of the tools that the international community uses to address conflict** at a time when the political space for mediation is increasingly limited. The **broader processes of societal change required for lasting peace cannot hope to be captured within the confines of a formal peace process** that is negotiated by a limited number of predominantly male, often armed, elites at the national level. The high failure rate of peace agreements - 40 percent collapse in the first two years and 60 percent in the first five years post-

agreement – speaks to the limits of such an approach when it is not accompanied by efforts at different societal levels. Real transformation occurs as part of a society-wide, sustained and inclusive effort to promote tolerance, diversity, understanding and cooperation. [...]

As mediators from or closely affiliated with the context where actors are or could be in conflict, IMs are well positioned to perform the socio-political work required to **foster attitudinal changes over the long-term and at an early stage**, often before tensions have given rise to violence and long after a peace agreement is signed. After all, IMs are able to deal with the extended processes associated with managing the "nested and shifting forms of conflict that emerge during periods of transition and in countries that have been affected by violence. [...] Given the closeness of their relationships, IMs are likely to be able to identify entry points into even the most complex conflict contexts, including in increasingly complex identity conflicts, where actors' aims and goals may appear intransigent or even unnegotiable. [...] Indeed, in *any area or sector where power is contested, resources distributed, relationships fraught and narrative divisive*, IMs are able to carry out their instrumental work of mediating between divergent interests and positions, both horizontally amongst different societal groups and vertically across community, state and regional levels.

An appreciation of IMs, therefore, begins with the premise that all countries – whether stable or experiencing conflict – have inbuilt capacities for peace. This observation aligns with what has been referred to as a "'local/insider turn' in the fields of peacebuilding and development cooperation", which acknowledges the role played by local, indigenous methods of conflict prevention and resolution "that are owned and driven by actors 'intrinsic' to the conflict system'. Recent research in this field has sought to quantify that effect, at least in the domain of peace processes. Research on mediation in unarmed insurrections from 1970-2006 finds that IMs significantly increase the likelihood of a negotiated agreement: **when an IM is present, the probability of a negotiated agreement increases from 5 percent to 19 percent.** As several case studies in this GN will make clear, IMs also play an important role in linking processes at different levels, thereby increasing buy-in for a particular process. [xxiv]

IV.5 Accompanying the Peace: multilateralism and coordination – towards contact group diplomacy on the crisis.

Cameroon actively pursues a diversified diplomatic agenda in the domains of political, economic and trade relations, and military cooperation. For instance, within the past decade it has undertaken military cooperation programs, defence acquisitions, or defence maintenance contracts with entities from each of the five (5) UN Security Council permanent members. (US: troop deployments and cooperation against Boko Haram, UK: private defence aviation maintenance contracts, France: defence equipment acquisitions, Russia: military equipment acquisition; China: military equipment acquisition). Cameroon also has quite diversified trade partnerships (imports and exports) with States in Africa, Asia, and Europe. Its sovereign loan portfolio, presently at 10,300 billion XAF (18. 1 billion USD) is also significantly diversified between multilateral development banks and institutions (WB, IMF, AFDB, IDB), bilateral export credit agencies and banks, Middle East sovereign lenders, regional and international commercial banks, and issuances on regional and global bond markets.

Although in the 15 years since debt relief in 2006 Cameroon has been economically out-classed by its regional peers which were at an equal stage of development in 2006 (namely Kenya, Cote d'Ivoire, and Ghana) which presently significantly surpass Cameroon in GDP performance, the country continues to have several elements which can lead to its future development: a relatively educated population, fertile agricultural soils, substantial coastline, hydrocarbons formations offshore and onshore, and a largely unexploited solid minerals capacity. This means Cameroon will remain of interest to some investors, and importantly, that it's Government has the capacity to wean off lone-ranger diplomatic initiatives if it does not fully accord with their purport, and approach. Across the wide spectrum of economic and defence interests, in an increasingly polarised world with dwindling consensus (post-Brexit, Russian diplomacy on Africa, Ukraine crisis), it will be difficult for any single State to carry out an initiative on the crisis, without at least cooperation, or non-obstruction, by others.

This suggests that multilateralism is the critical direction that diplomatic initiatives on the crisis need to take. This includes in the domain of Peace Mediation, where (irrespective of the *specialized conflict-mediation institution* that undertakes the actual preparatory or mediation work), or the profile/personality of a Chief Mediator, it is important that the *mandate, or reference group* that is consulted on the mediation process be multilateral and include key States with geo-strategic relations with Cameroon. In this regard, the practice of informal "contact group" diplomacy may be very important and has proven useful in other settings to fine-tune policies between multiple entities and States (UN, EU, AU, US and other concerned countries) to respond to complex crises. While keeping the structure smaller to reflect the comparative magnitude of the NW-SW crisis, such approaches portend positive outcomes on being able effectively to influence the actors in the crisis towards peace outcomes – which is hard to achieve bilaterally.

An additional, critical requirement for Cameroon's bilateral and multilateral development partners as they seek to support the country to *prevent, mitigate, and build resilience to conflict,* **is the need for an enhanced political and policy mandate, space, and mechanisms to engage with the Government and other critical stakeholders**. For countries like Cameroon which face actual or potential conflicts, and which need efforts to prevent, mitigate, and show resilience to conflict (these are countries eligible for Prevention and Resilience Allocations under the World Bank's 2020 – 2025 Fragility, Conflict, and Violence mechanism), there may not exist a clear regional or global political mandate (High Level Envoy, Special Political Mission, Peace Operation, not even a Contact Group) to engage the said country. The current peace architecture generally creates these mandates only *after* conflict has boiled over, threatening regional peace and security – not at the prevention stage.

Yet the causes of conflict, and the mechanisms to prevent and mitigate them, often border on the political. The World Bank's 2021 Economic and Social Impact Assessment of the Anglophone crisis stated: "*Initial findings suggest that the NWSW crisis is foremost a political crisis*—the most recent articulation of long-standing grievances over language,

identity, and local autonomy, triggered here by early escalation in the government's response" (at pp 14). If a conflict's causes are explicitly identified as political, and if a range of *public policy reforms and improvements need to occur* to begin to reverse the postures that generated conflict (for instance in the conflict-prone Sectors of managing official languages, dual education sub-systems, and dual legal traditions), it means that these conflict prevention initiatives *need to be targeting the policy-formulation process* as well.

Without an explicit political or public policy process mandate, development partners can feel constrained, as having *no basis to be prescriptive or normative on national public policies* or may consider that it goes beyond their remit. Yet it must be remembered that it is Government's own policies in these areas that have not produced optimal results to date. There should be no hesitation – within a constructive policy dialogue – to urge reforms in these Sectors that help to make them less conflictual.

Two critical tools are available in this regard. First, is *policy dialogue*, the structured process, especially in key conflict-prone sectors, of a regular, informed exchange with Government and stakeholders on the content and pace of reforms. The second is to encourage in the national policy formulation process, *both the "supply"* (Government's articulation and implementation of optimal policies in these conflict-prone domains) *and "demand" sides* (participation of specialist, technical, civic entities, and other pro-reform constituencies) to improve the pace and quality of reforms.

IV.6   Funding the Peace: improving the resource environment for entities and initiatives that increase the *demand* and *supply* of peace-inducing policies, and peace outcomes

We have identified in the preceding sub-sections the potential that remains for Cameroonian stakeholders and societal initiatives to seize the imperatives of peace and make it a national priority – thereby urging belligerent actors to sue for a peaceful resolution of the crisis. In the multi-dimensional definition we have provided for peace in this Paper, the critical "demand-side" contributions to peace are all *initiatives which increase incentives for Government and policy makers to deliver the right mix of policies on those contentious, centrifugal policy areas on the English - French fault-line* (official languages, education, justice, and other Anglo-Saxon institutional traditions). This is because, as we have demonstrated throughout this Peace Policy Paper series, it is in the management of those conflict-prone sectors that the seeds of conflict lie or are sown.

In the first Section of this Paper, we made the case for Government to adopt a Peace Strategy, with an Accompanying Implementation Matrix, and for its activities to be prioritized in the Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks and reflected in the State's annual Program Budgets. That constitutes the *"supply-side"* of public policies in managing Cameroon's diversity along these lines, which is a strategic State objective. A properly functioning public policy formulation process requires a *supply side* (adoption of the right legislation, policies, decisions) and a *demand side* (deliberative and proposition capacity of

a diverse range of concerned stakeholders, to shape and influence the national policy process).

Notably in a complex area like French-English heritages management, some of these specialised stakeholders, often with immense expertise on these issues, need to be brought into the country's policy process, at centre-stage. Some of these **specialized demand-side stakeholders** include Cameroon's (i) excellent crop of linguists and specialists in language policy and planning; (ii) its equally impressive corps of professional translators and interpreters; (iii) its specialists on language-in-education and comparative education systems, and comparative pedagogy; (iv) educator/teacher/lecturer trade unions from both sub-systems and at all educational tiers; (v) the Legal Professions, Bar Association, and legal academics on bi-juralism; and (vi) the associations of devolved entities (CVUC-the national association of Municipal Councils; and eventually a similar structure for the Regional layer of sub-national institutions), as to the devolution/ asymmetrical devolution process.

These all *constitute legitimate, recognized professional bodies or orders – and thus informed components of society* with a germane interest and clear track record of involvement in managing these two linguistico-cultural systems. It is through *good and responsive interaction between these stakeholders and relevant Sector Ministries and Agencies that the optimal remedy of adapted policies, legislation, and regulations will emerge* – to manage this diversity. In addition to demand-side production of policy and legislation solutions to manage the core conflict-prone or contentious sectors, it is clear as well that there is a need to fund the various segments of society (women, religious, the media, youth, and other influencers) who constitute the bloc of *peace advocates* – to amplify their voices.

To operationalize this commitment to supporting demand-side initiatives, strong consideration should be given to creating a **National Peace Fund**, a sub-basket of which will go towards demand-side initiatives and activities driven towards securing peaceful resolution of the broader Anglophone crisis and its effects primarily on the NW and SW regions. Public revenues from the State budget can be used to start off such a Fund, which would however be managed by an autonomous entity, with State representation on its governing Board, along with representatives from development cooperation partners, and established segments of Cameroonian civic society. Development cooperation partners would also be encouraged to either place resources directly "into" the Peace Fund (if compatible with their respective national financial guidelines and if the Fund's operation meets their expectations) or earmark resources to meet the same objectives, while running the programs outside the Fund.

Among potential ideas to consider for Funding would be the establishment of a **Centre for the Study of Diversity Management**, a public-private think-tank and resource entity, specialized in the domain of scoping, research, policy ideation and production in the domain of diversity management across the English/ French markers (initially) and progressively expandable to other diversity domains. It is true that the National Commission for the Promotion of Bilingualism and Multiculturalism within its domains of

competence (bilingualism in *official languages'* use, and multiculturalism) has got a mandate to conduct studies and surveys, and to propose policies in those areas. However, as Cameroon's own instruments show (such as Section 3 of the General Code on Regions & Local Authorities which defines the remit of Anglo-Saxon particularities encompassed and protected under Special Status), *English-system peculiarities go beyond the language itself.* As such, Cameroon's legislator speaks of "linguistic specificity", "historical heritage", as well as Anglo-Saxon education, and legal system specificities (which are covered in two other Papers in this series). Hence the value of a specialized entity that is constantly keeping Cameroon on the edge in producing policies conducive to optimal management of its dual French/English heritage.

Another important input would be to support **significant University academic research investment**, through Cameroon's public and private Universities, for work in policy areas on managing the English/French heritages. This could include advanced graduate/Doctoral research fellowships, post-doctoral work, academic and scholarly journal creation, and publication, directed towards research on critical components of the national diversity agenda and English/French systems accommodation. University Departments in charge of Pedagogy and Comparative Pedagogy; Languages and Linguistics; Translation and Interpretation; Law and notably Comparative Law; Political Science including Devolution and Local Government, as well as Peace Studies, Conflict Management, Human Rights and Minority Rights, would constitute excellent candidate schools/Faculties for hosting such advanced research programs. Their products (research works and graduates) would constitute important sources respectively for the *practical ideas* and *workforce* required to transition Cameroon to a higher order of protecting and managing its heritage specificities.

END-NOTES

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