



## *Office of International Justice and Peace*

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October 4, 2019

The Honorable Jim Risch  
Chairman  
Senate Foreign Relations Committee  
The United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Robert Menendez  
Ranking Member  
Senate Foreign Relations Committee  
The United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Risch and Ranking Member Menendez:

As Chairman of the Committee on International Justice and Peace of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), I write to express my general support for House Resolution 358 approved in July and Senate Resolution 292 under consideration. Both measures call on the Government of Cameroon and armed separatist groups to respect the human rights of all Cameroonian citizens, to end all violence and to pursue an inclusive dialogue to resolve the conflict in the Northwest and Southwest provinces.

Committee staff and I conducted a solidarity visit to the Catholic Church in Cameroon in August this year. We had an opportunity to engage Church leaders on the state of the conflict in the two provinces concerned and what the Church had done and intends to do to help stop the violence and end the conflict. We also solicited their input regarding the Congressional resolution on Cameroon, and it seems appropriate to offer our recommendations for your kind consideration.

Church leaders expressed support for the resolution. Their only suggestion was to limit the scope of the resolution to issues that pertain directly to the conflict. They believe that clauses that mention the past elections, the arrest of opposition leaders, the crack down on political expression and others will distract attention from the country's biggest threat, the conflict in Northwest and Southwest provinces. These other issues are valid concerns but represent second tier threats to the country.

As you are aware, the Government of Cameroon sponsored the National Dialogue process the week of September 30-October 4, 2019. I recommend that the Senate Resolution refer to this event, express its approval of the initiative, and urge the Government and Anglophone leaders to conduct an inclusive, transparent, and good faith effort to build confidence among the parties concerned, address legitimate grievances, and agree to peaceful solutions to the crisis. The resolution could recommend that the parties commit to a longer-term structure and process to continue dialogue and negotiations beyond the current process. This extended process could include outside facilitation and mediation groups acceptable to all parties to help them overcome their differences and develop the compromises needed for durable solutions.

As you finalize Senate Resolution 292 I wish to highlight certain clauses that it seems important to retain.

- Page two of S. Res. 292 refers to the Rapid Intervention Battalion (BIR). United States support to the BIR and its reported actions in the two Anglophone Provinces outside of the Boko Haram field of action make this reference very pertinent.
- Page three mentions the role that France has played in Cameroon. Church leaders consider France a key player in the conflict and hope it will contribute to a peaceful end to the conflict.
- Paragraphs three and six on page five raise important findings that enrich the resolution.

Too much bloodshed and suffering have already occurred in a violent conflict that started in 2016, but the roots of which go back decades. This is a conflict that could have been avoided years ago and can be resolved now if parties come to the negotiation table with good will and with the interests of the common good at heart.

The Committee on International Justice and Peace is committed to continue to work with you to pass this resolution and contribute to its fulfillment in the months to come.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Timothy P. Broglio". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. A small cross symbol is visible at the beginning of the signature.

(The Most Reverend) Timothy P. Broglio  
Archbishop for the Military Services, USA  
Chair, Committee on International Justice and Peace  
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops