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SECURITY AND ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF CAMEROON –AMBAZONIAN CONFLICT ON THE PEOPLE OF CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Cross River is among the 36 states that makes up the Federal Republic of Nigeria. It was created on 27 May 1967 from the Eastern Region to become South-Eastern State and later in 1976, it was named "Cross River State" by the then military Head of State General Murtala Mohammed. The state is naturally contiguous with Republic of Cameroon by sea and by land. It has had an elongated boarder crisis with the republic until the oil rich Bakassi was ceded to the Cameroon after the International Court of Justice (ICJ) declared in it judgment of October 2002 that the country owned the disputed area. The Cameroun-Ambazonian conflict began on 11th October, 2016 in the town of Bemenda as a result of political and economic marginalization of Cameroon's Aglo-phone minority. Cameroon is made up of the Franco-phone Cameroon and the Anglo- phones. The Franco-phones are French speaking and majority while the Anglo-phone are English speaking minority. As the war escalated between the government forces and the Ambazonian rebels resulting to human displacement and migration to peaceful areas to save their lives, the following states in Nigeria bordering Cameroon; Cross River, Benue, Taraba and Adamawa States became their choicest destination. However bulk of the displaced persons and refugees are densely settled in various cities and towns in Cross River State. With the aid of corrupt immigration officers and Nigeria's free borders instead of camping in refugee camps they are allowed to access all parts of the state. Accordingly, there is hyper inflationary trend in towns and villages in Cross River State such as Accommodation for private houses and hotels, high cost of agro-products, transportation, feeding, pressure on social and infrastructural facilities as well as security threat. Economic Theory of conflict as well as frustration-Aggression theory were adopted by the writers of this paper to explain the reason behind Cameroon Ambazonian conflict. The following recommendation were made: Nigerian government should as a matter of urgency provide more refugee camps equipped with facilities to accommodate all the refugees, the government should beef-up border security to track down

all displaced persons and direct them to specific camps and also provide security to all refugee camps.

Keywords: Cameroon, Ambzonia, Nigeria, Cross River, Conflict, Human displacement, Refugee, Economic theory, frustration Aggression theory.

INTRODUCTION

Paul Biya of Cameroon was sworn into office as the second Head of State of the Republic on 6th November, 1982 following the resignation of former president Ahmadou Ahidjo. He has therefore, been president from the same year till date, implying that he has been president for 43 years. Before emerging as the president, he was the prime minister between 1975 and 1982. He is presently 92 years as he was born on 13 February 1933. Cameroon operated a one party system from 1970 to 1989 and changed under pressure to multi-party system in 1990 and Biya emerged victorious in the first multiparty elections in 1992, and repeated same in 1997, 2004, 2011 and of course 2018.

In 2023 corruption perceptions index, conducted by a non-governmental organization Transparency international ranked Cameroon 140 out of the 180 countries assessed, the country is of course made up of diverse civil society groups, but the activities of these groups are hampered by government repressions, through strict registration process and requirements, websites blockage, prohibition of rallies and media censorship. Although in the country's sustainable development vision 2025 adopted the goals of becoming an emerging economy by 2025 and in November 2021, the Paul biya's new national development strategy which goals is to industrializes the country by 2030 based or mainly on internal products and checking unemployment by creating many jobs. It is however observed that the government commitment to the goals of 2030 agenda and the African Unions Agenda is mostly in scripts and not in practice as sustainable development approaches are only being applied insignificantly. It was also discovered that the government have not lived up to the rubost and ambitions goals it adopted, as sustainable development report doesn't note any significant progress on sustainable development goals.

The United Nations reported that as a result of the conflict escalation, there are about 2.1 million displaced people in the Cameroon. It also reported that about 3.4 million of the country's approximately 28 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance. The Anglophone North-west and South-West separatist groups have been on arm struggle since 2016 seeking for greater say in the decision making of the country or clear independence of Ambazonian State. "Republic of Ambazonia" also referred to as Amba Land. The protracted conflict has claimed more than 6,000 lives according to reports (Moki 2016).

A major National dialogue was launched in 2019 by president Biya to try to de-escalate the conflict. After the conference, steps were initially taken to decentralized the country and efforts were also made to reconstruct infrastructures in the English speaking Cameroon. Paul Biya later rejected the idea of federalism as earlier agreed. Federalism would have increased participation in public decision making to accommodate all minorities mostly the Anglophone that have long been neglected and relegated to the background. Most of Cameroonian Anglophone were trained in Nigerian Universities between the early 1980s and 1990s. During this period the republic of Cameroon had just one central French speaking University located at Yaunde the country's capital. English speaking University was later established in Buea and Bamenda town in 1993. Many roads linking the Anglophones and Nigerian Borders were never constructed for fear of conspiracy as Anglophones were once British-Nigeria till they voted to opt out of Nigeria in 1963 plebiscite.

Clarification of concepts

- **Cameroon**: Cameroon is a central African country with a land area of approximately 475,442 square kilometers (183,569 square miles)with a population of 29.3 million people by 2025 (https://en.wiipedia.org). Its major cities are Yaounde (Political Capital), Douala (economic capital and major seaport), and Garoua. The official language of the country is French and English, and bounded to the West with Nigeria, to the North by Chad, to the East by Central African Republic, and to the South by Atlantic Ocean, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and the Republic of Congo. The country has over 200 different linguistic groups and the 53rd largest country in the world by land area. Its major exports include; crude oil, petroleum gas, cocoa beans, timber and gold. Other include: bananas, coffee, cotton and aluminum.
- **Ambazonia**: Ambazonia also known as Amba land is the proposed country of the Cameroonian separatists groups, predominantly English speaking Cameroon with a population of approximately 6 million people and a land size of 42,483km square (16,64sq miles). The proposed political Headquarters of the republic is Buea. The Cameroonian Aglophone's population represent 20% of the total population while the francophone represents 80% of the total republic of Cameroon population.
- **Cross River State:** Cross River State is among the 36 states of Federal Republic of Nigeria. As at 2022, its population was projected at 4,406,200 people. Located in the Niger Delta, Cross River occupies 20,156 square kilometers. The state produces a variety of food and cash crops which include; cocoa, palm oil, rice, yams, cocoyam, pineapple, bananas, plantain, pepper, okra, cassava, maize, melon and many others. It is bounded to the North by Abia State, Ebony and Benue State, to the West by Akwa Ibom State, to South by Atlantic Ocean and to the East by the Republic of Cameroon the location of Ambazonian separatist.
- **Conflict:** Conflict refers to any serious disagreement, and struggle between opposing forces resulting to armed struggle. It is also the disruption caused primarily by conflicting ideas, wants and thoughts that are either good or bad.

Theoretical direction:

The Frustration-aggression and the economic theories of conflict were adopted as the basis and point of departure of the Cameroon-Ambazonian escalated conflagrations. These theories tries to explain the source and reasons for the arm struggle by the Ambazonian separatist seeking for independence from the Cameroon Republic.

The theories are therefore explained and expatiated as follows:

- **Frustration-aggression theory:** This theory was developed in 1939 by John Dollard and his research associates and later in 1962, Leonard Berkowitz and Aubrey Yates, modified and expanded the theory. The theory explains that violent behaviours are exhibited when one is unable to fulfills his needs. Theorists who solely depends on this explanatory dynamics often rely and adopts the psychological theories of motivation and behaviour to explain aggression. Scholars have pointed out the differentiations in what people may actually want or deserve to what the get, and differences between "expected need satisfaction" and "actual need, satisfaction". (Shedrack Gaya Best, 2009). Based on the foregoing, whenever expectation failed to meet attainment, there is every tendency that the people will respond violently on the people responsible for their woes. Furthermore, frustration-Aggression theory emphasizes that people engages in violent act as a result of frustration of inability for the system to meet up their aspirational needs

and wants. Also when legitimate desires of an individual are directly or indirectly denied the person, there is every likelihood for such persons to embark on unlawful acts of violent that often times degenerate to sophisticated arm struggle that might leave many death and several properties destroyed.

- **Economic theories of conflict**: The economic theorizer's belief that conflicts are catapulted by material marginalization. The theorist are also with the belief that some key actors who trigger conflicts benefit from it while majority of the people suffers during conflict escalation. Collier (2003) referred to those who benefit from conflicts as conflict entrepreneurs. While Bredal and Malone (2000) noted that conflicts are embedded in economic disparities.
- **Political history of Cameroon**: As far back as the fifteenth century, the Portuguese engaged in trade with the people in the land now called Cameroon. The name Cameroon was the exonym the Portuguese gave to the Wouri River which they referred to as "Rio dos Camaroes", meaning "River of Shrimps", or Shrimp River, as the river had abundant Shrimp. Cameroon became a nexus for slave trade during the slave trade era. While the then Southern Cameroon was ruled by village kings, funs and chief the Northern Cameroon were integrated into the Islamic kingdom the Sahel and the Chad Basin. The first Archeological discovery in the present Cameroon in the high lands of Bamenda dates back 30, 000 years ago but human habitation has been there since the middle Paleolithic period of likely not later than 130, 000 years ago. Shum Laka, where the archeological remains was found is a significant archaeological rock that also serves as a shelter site is found in the grass fields region close to the town of Bamenda at an altitude of 1600 behind a waterfall, on the side of a volcano. (htts://en.wikipedia.org).

Cameroon was annexed and became a German protectorate in July 1884 and was named 'Kamerun' in the same year, German Gustav Nachtigal an explorer and former consul-general arrived a Cameroonian town called Duala and negotiated a treaty with the kings and rulers which transpired to the establishment and consolidation of the German protectorate . as a territory under German colonial rule Gustav Nachtigal hoisted a German flag indicating ownership and control. The flag was only brought down after 34years of German control of the territory, this incident occurred in 1918 at the end of the first World War (WWI). The country was thereafter divided into two mandate territories by the League of Nations and handed over to France and Britain for administration, and that was of course the beginning of Francophone and Anglophone Cameroon. In 1922, the League of Nations further confirmed the division of the colony between France and Britain. While the French were given 80% of the colony to administer, the British were to administer the smaller divide of 20% consisting the present day North and South-west Cameroon with Borders to the west with Nigeria British Colony during the period under analytical discussions.

The North and South Western was initially part of Nigeria but later became a UN Trusteeship Council. The British administered the territory through indirect rule where the local chiefs and kings where allowed to administer their custom and tradition and pay taxes to the British colonial administration. The main interest of the British then was trade and the exploitation of the territory's resources.

On 11 February, 1961 the United Nations conducted plebiscite for the people of Northern and Southern Cameroon to make a choice to either remain in Nigeria or join Cameroon and the South Cameroon voted overwhelmingly to return to the Cameroon and form a state with the French Cameroon while the North West Cameroon voted to be part of independent Nigeria 59.97% of Northern Cameroon voted to join Nigeria while 40.03% voted to return to Cameroon in South Western British Cameroon, 70.50% voted to join Cameroon and

2.50% voted to remain in Nigeria (source: en.m.wikipedia.org). The remark by the British colonial administrators was that Northern Cameroon voted to remain with their Northern Nigeria Moslem brothers while the Southern Cameroon voted to join their southern Cameroon Christians. That was an erroneous conclusion as the Northern plebiscite was perceived to have been manipulated by the British officials to increase both the landmass and the population of Northern Nigeria against the South. It was a drastic measure and strategy to Punish Southern Nigeria for early request for independence in 1956 by Sir Anthony Enahoro of Action Group party founded by Chief Obafemi Awolowo. The Northern Nigeria represented by Northern people congress rejected the motion of independence request, and when asked their preferred date and time for independence and their response was "as soon as practicable".

When the British colonial master arrived Northern Nigeria and met sound emirate administrative formation with a comprehensive tax regime, they immediately fell in love with the system and introduced indirect rule system of administration which allows the traditional rulers to administer local people and collect taxes for the colonial masters. The system of indirect rule was so successful in the North, that Lord Lugard was engulfed in the euphoria and decided as a matter of policy to extent it to the South-west, south-east and the Cameroon. While the Oba council of Western Nigeria was made up of council chiefs this made it difficult for the Oba to make unilateral decisions, in the east, the Ibos never had a central administration rather they operated egalitarian system of government, therefore the imposition of warrant chiefs and the arbitrary tax regime was strange to the people. The arbitrary taxations led to the Aba women riot of 1929. The riot started on 18 November 1929 and ended January1930 (https://en.wikipedia.org). The British Cameroon also grumbled for the excessive exploitations of resources and taxation by the British administrators using the local chiefs.

On the 1st January 1960 France granted independence to French Cameroon and on 3rd January, 1960 Ahmadou Ahidjo who was prime minister before independence emerged the first president to the central African country. After a successful plebiscite conducted on the 11th February 1961, the British Southern Cameroon by their votes, joined the French Cameroon to form the republic of Cameroon with two official language-French and English. From this particular moment a dichotomy between Francophone and Anglophone was politically created. However, to this day, there is a public holiday in Cameroon in remembrance of the plebiscite conducted in British Cameroon where the British Cameroonians voted massively to unite with the French Cameroon. The day is referred to as "unification day" in English and "Journee de I' unification" in French.

President Ahmadou Ahidjo was president of the country for 22 years, 1960 to 1982 where he resigned and handed over power to president Paul Biya who have remained in office for 43 years (1982 to 2025) and still, counting. The country is operating a unitary system of government which concentrates all government powers at the centre without diversification.

- **Political and economic marginalization of the Anglophone Cameroon in Francophone regime:** The Root of the problem. There had been wide spread complains, dissatisfaction and grumbling leading to frustration in the Anglophone axis of the Cameroon of gross marginalization and abandonment of the area interms of political, economic and infrastructural development of the region. Apart from not being able to produce president of the country since the decisive plebiscite in 1961, the system of government is Unitary in character thereby not allowing powers to be distributed to regional and sub-regional layers. Again change in administrative leadership at presidential level would have ushered in different developmental initiatives and strategies to spread development across all regions of the republic. A single president for

43 years could exhaust his development ideas in the first eight to ten years of his tenure of office, other, years spent in the office are filled with stereotypical ideas which stagnates growth and development. Mfum borders is the most popular border linking Eastern Nigeria with South-west Cameroon while the Nigerian government constructed the Ikom-Mfum border road in 1973 and also constructed a bridge across river Cross River that demarcates Nigeria and Cameroon for easy access for the two countries, Cameroonian government never link up access road from Bamenda to Ekok the border town with Nigeria. The Bamenda Ekok road was constructed for the first time in 2012 and completed in 2017 under the Green Tree Agreement which ceded Bakassi to Cameroon, and sponsored by African Development Bank, Nigerian Government, Cameroonian Government and the Japanese Government.

- **Anglophone Teachers Demonstration in 2016:** Borne out of frustration, in 2016 Anglophone Teachers matched out enmass to protest government policy that approves the posting of Francophone teachers to teach English in Anglophone schools. That the same policy was also initiated in francophone where Francophone teachers were employed to teach English language. The fear being that it is government deliberate policy to render Anglophone English teachers redundant and unemployed. It should be noted that public universities in the Cameroon are presently eleven in number but only two are located in the Anglophone region, therefore, it is unacceptable by the Anglophones to have Francophone dominate the few University in south western Cameroon.
- **2016 Lawyers protest**: In 2016 common law lawyers and practitioners in the two Anglophone Cameroon regions wrote a letter of appeal to the government of Cameroon. Over the use of French in courts and in schools in the Anglophone regions. In order to drive home their demands and to protect the English culture, the lawyers embarked on a sit down strike action in all the courtrooms in the two speaking English regions on October 6 2016. Al Jazeera's reporter stated that there are two curriculum in the English-speaking regions but the French have always dominated the six million English – speaking. The lawyers and Teachers primary reason of protest is that government should stop posting lawyers and teachers who only speak French and pidgin English to Anglophone schools. After a 72 hour meeting with the government officials on ways to call off the strike, the spokesperson for the strike lawyers Mr. Harmony Bogda addressed the press and informed them that the strike continues because from all indications the government wasn't ready to take their request and demands serious. Another lawyer Ben Muna of the Cameroon Bar council Association reported that his colleagues were harassed and beaten by government security operatives for embarking on a peaceful protest, an act he said will further escalate the conflict. He further emphasized that all lawyers and citizens are free at any moment to make demand whether political or economic without victimization and harassment (Moki Edwin Kindzek: VDA, 2016)
- **Human Rights Abuse by Cameroonian Security forces**: As mannerless and autocratic as some of the African leaders are, there were wide report of violation of human rights in the peaceful protest embarked by the English speaking Cameroon. The Cameroonian government decided to adopt forced measures instead peaceful approach in solving the problem. The Human rights defenders in Africa Headed by Hon. Commissioner Reine Mapini Gasou reported that human rights situations deteriorated during the peaceful protest resulting to the killing of armed less civilians. The Human rights commission condemned the deployment of armed military personnel's to the two regions during the protest. He also condemned the disproportionate and deathly use of force and outright violence to dispel unarmed peaceful protesters that include Teachers, students, lawyers

and civilians in the towns of Buea, Kumba and Bamenda. The security operatives also engaged themselves in absurd and illegal activities of raping of students in Buea and indiscriminate arbitrary arrest and detention of protesters by the police and gendarmerie military following the strike process. The security operatives according to reports killed a armedless civilians during the early stage of the protest in Kumba, Bamenda and Buea. There were also rumours of government plans to kidnap and kill the leaders of teachers' union, lawyers Association, civil society groups and Human Rights Defenders to thwart the Anglophone movement for justice. The Human Rights Commissioner urged the government to as a matter of justice and fair play to:

- Release all civilians unjustly arrested during the protest.
- To uphold fundamental Human rights as enshrine in the African charter that include; freedom of Assembly, expression and right to peaceful protest.
- To stop all forms of arrests and detention as they were all done arbitrary
- To investigate all forms of human rights violations that include rapes, killings, inhuman treatment of protesters by government security agents.
- To end all forms of violence against civilians.

Articles 6,7,9,10, 11 and 20 of the African charter made provisions for all African governments to guarantee fundamental rights that include freedom of assembly, association and of course expression as well as right to self-determination. The foregoing government action stimulated and escalated the violence that led to massive migration of Anglophone displaced persons to Cross River State of Nigeria because as a border state, it was their only save haven.

Infrastructural decay in the Anglophone regions also contributed to their frustration. Poor and diplorarable road quality, undependable power supply, poor and unreliable ICT sectors, poor sanitary conditions and inadequate water supply were all challenging factors. The inability to access healthcare services in the region as well poor funding of education in the area were also factors that prompted the violent struggle for justice.

Migration to Cross River State Nigeria and its security and Economic Consequences

The Ambazonian separatists had about 2000-4000 fighters as at 2019 to content with the Cameroonian military strength of 12,500 troops, and 9,000 militia. By June 2019, the Ambazonian fighters lost about 1,000 of its fighters while the Cameroonian military recorded a huge lost of between 800-1000 of its personnel in February 2020 and by January 2023 more than 6,000 civilians mostly from the Anglophone region have been killed. A repot further showed that within the same period 700,000 civilians were internally displaced in the same region and 63,800 refugees successfully landed Cross River State Nigeria (en.m.wikipedia.org). Roland Ayingang, a university Don in the Anglophone region reported that up till 2025 many Ambazonians could not access their ancestral homes to reunite with their Aged parents. The exact number of Anglophone, Cameroon in Cross River State is sometimes difficult to ascertain as many are settled in rural villages of the state bounded with Cameroon. The influx of the displaced Anglophone into the state resulted to unprecedented high cost of living and security challenges across the state.

A systematic listing and analysis of some of the challenges post by the refugees run thus:

i. **Increase in cost of residential accommodation**: I have not seen anywhere in the world where cost of residential accommodation is far higher than the gross income of citizens accept in Cross River State. The skyrocketed rentage has been a tradition before 2016 when the clash between the Cameroon authority and the Anglophone Cameroon began. It only got worst and unbearable when a huge number of displaced Anglophone arrived

Cross River State. The government of Cross River State has never in the past and present made any deliberate move to address the challenging and teething problem of high cost of rent in the state. The last housing Estate in the state was built by the administration of President Shehu Shagari between 1979 and 1983. Housing is fixed assert, since the government cannot longer build housing Estate in the state, let the government as a matter of policy regulate the rent across the state. some private Estate owners complain of cost of building materials using that as a reason for the escalated rent forgetting that a fixed assert is for life and it is not morally and economically upright to retrieve all that one spent in building a house in a single year. It is abnormal for landlords to charge N300,000 per annum for a self-contain and presently charged between N600,000, N700,000 to N800,000 per annum for a two bedroom flat.

The Cameroonians who are supposed to be settled in refugee camps are all over the place and can afford whatever rent demanded by greedy landlords and estate owner, the reason being that our naira is the poorest currency in the international market with very low value. The Cameroonian currency is higher in value than the Naira and once exchanged, they can buy so much in the Nigerian market and pay off much as well. Nigeria is among the countries in the world with low salary regime and per capita income. How can the people sustain their livelihood in situations like this?

ii. **High cost of Hotel accommodation**: As at 2024, the least cost of hotel Accommodation for 12 hours in Ikom and villages close to Cameroon was N9,000 the cost before the influx Cameroonians was between N3,000 to N5,000 depending on the standard of facilities in the hotel. Most Cameroonians who wonder freely in our cities and towns prefers, living in hotels as they can afford to pay up front of three to six months. This is mostly common in Ikom a Cross River town located about 15 kilometres from the Cameroonian borders. The displaced Cameroonians are so many in Ikom that the move freely as they desire and when apprehended by the Nigerian immigration officers settlement will be made and so they continue. Sometimes one is forced to wonder whether Nigeria is actually a state because modern states don't operate the same way we do. In the Republic of Cameroon citizens don't walk about without their National identity cards and at nights during their Makossa parties their security operatives are seen around in search of illegal immigrants and once caught they are thrown in their prisons to await repatriation. Nigeria plays the role of good neighborliness with her Francophone neigbouring. States, but none of the neighbor state has ever reciprocated Nigeria good gesture. Okoro (2002) reported that Nigeria through the University of Calabar has trained many medical doctors from Cameroon and has amicably settled many issues with the country that would have resulted to war.

iii. **Transportation Hike and inflation on food items:** The influx of displaced Anglophone in to Cross River State also triggered a phenomenal increase in prices of food items as well as hike in transportation. It may sometimes look as if the removal of oil subsidies by the present administration of President Tinubu is the major reason behind the astronomical hike in transportation. While the removal of subsidies is an indisputable factor, the influx of a huge population into the state contributed immensely to transport hike and inflation in prices of food items and agro products in the state. In Ikom for instance, a drop of less 300 miters is charged ₦500, food has become so costly in the town because the demand there is higher than the supply as a result of sudden increase in population. It could surprise you to note that apart from Calabar the state capital, Akpabuyo Local Government Area, Odukpani, Ikom Etung, Boki and Ogoja the prices

of food items is still moderate and affordable in other Local Government Areas. Inter Local Government Area shuttles cost of transportation is higher than interstate shuttles.

iv. **High cost of living:** Life in Cross River and the country at large is relatively difficult, primary and essential commodities in the market are no longer affordable as the price of these commodities has tremendously skyrocketed. Therefore, the common man can no longer afford food items like Rice, Garri, Yam, water yam, cocoyam, Beans, plantain, banana, maize and many other domestic fruits at ease as compared to the past. As stated elsewhere, Cross River case is peculiar as a result of the inability of Nigerian government to organized and control the influx of Anglophone Cameroon refugee in the state. It's worthwhile to comprehend that increased in population requires increase demand and increase demand that is not proportional with supply triggers inflation, this is just what is presently happening in Cross River States. Because of extensive greed, illiterate marketers increase prices of commodities as they prefer as they are not governed by law. The price of a cup of rice in a particular shop may not be the same elsewhere within the same market. If the common man finds it difficult to take three square meals a day, with high cost of transportation and accommodation then life become meaningless to the people. When this happened the people may determine to adopt other illegal measures to survive and this becomes security issue and threat.

v. **Increase crime rate:** Between January 1 and December 31 2003 Cross River State according Nigerian Tribune recorded a total of 521 incidents of various crimes. The Cross River State Police Commissioner who was granted interview by the Nigerian Tribune stated that the crime incident include; kidnapping, communal clashes, car theft, armed robbery, abduction, cult activities, child abuse, murder, child trafficking, sea robbery, arson, cattle rustling, defilement, stealing and burglary. That out of the number, the command charged 273 to court, while 41 cases were summarily prosecuted and 3 cases discharged for want of evidence.

He further stated that 36 cases have been convicted whereas 229 cases are still pending of 103 cases were transmitted to the Department of Public Prosecution (DPP). He finally noted that Cross River State accounted for 1.61% of the total reported criminal cases in Nigeria having 2,163 cases reported out a total of 134,663(https://nigeria.opendataforafrica.org)

One hasn't concluded that the Cameroonians are directly involved in crime across the state but their presence has triggered hardship through inflation and many Cross Riverian are driven into crime as a result of high cost of living. Between 2001and 2002 Cross River State only recorded 0.3% crime rate but went as high as 1.61% in 2023.

vi. **Border security threats:** The displaced people of Cameroon Anglophone has made it possible for cross border arms smuggling through major borders and bush tracks through thick forest, and also necessitated the infiltration of militants to Cross River State. This of course poses a significant security threat to the country at large. The government policy will now as a matter of urgency be diverted from critical development to security challenges. This implies increased budgetary allocation on security negating more, critical sector like education, science and technology, economic development and food security.

vii. **Pressure on the environment:** Cross River State has a vast tropical forest area covering 0.85 million hecters which is a home for biodiversity and carbon storage. It holds a greater share of the country's remaining tropical forest with maximum and enormous biodiversity resources. Cross River is a home of Nigeria's 50% forest with a significant number of species that are

endemic to the region and harboring a wide array of flora and fauna, endangered species of primates and gorillas are also found in the Cross River State rain forest (conservationsng.com) . At present because of the prevailing economic circumstance, the remaining Cross River vast rain forest is being encroached by wildlife poachers, and massive deforestation for both timber and fuel wood. While fuel wood replaces kerosene and cooking gas, timber is mainly for export to earned profit and maximize a living.

Again many Cross Riverians including civil/public servants have returned to farming for the cultivation variety of food crops to sustain a living. Since their salaries are no longer sustainable. Accordingly, vast hecters of Cross River natural forest is being deforested on daily basis and the government is not making any effort to resettle the great number of Caroonians in our towns and cities.

Concluding remarks

The Nigerian government, after decades of independence has not been able to strengthen its' border security. Foreigners moves in and out of our borders without passport and travelling permit. Why the country is facing critical security threat in the northeast of the country is as a result of the nature of our free borders modern states are not operated as chiefdoms and ancient African kingdoms, one doesn't understand whether this occurs as a result of government ineptitude or extreme liberalism and love for our African neighbours, but whatever may be the reasons, a modern state is supposed to be prepared and ready for all adverse circumstances that may befall their states, a country borders should be well secured to check criminals and religious extremist from infiltrating in order not to cause collateral damage to its people.

Recommendations and prognosis for Action:

The following recommendations and prognosis for action are stated as follows:

i. The government and the international Red Cross should provide more refugee camps equipped with facilities to accommodate all the refugees;

ii. The government should beef up borders security to track down all displaced persons of Anglophone and direct them to refugee camps;

iii. The Nigerian government should make sure that adequate security is provided at camps to ensure security of the refugees and also to avoid escape.

iv. Government should as a matter of economic policy improve the living condition of Nigerians, and improve salaries of its workers to avoid environmental depletion.

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