

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 19, 2017

The Honorable Rex W. Tillerson
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Secretary Tillerson,

As Members of Congress from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, we write to express our deep concern regarding the violent crackdown by the Government of Cameroon on the country's English-speaking minority. This crackdown has included the detention of at least one U.S. citizen and one U.S. resident who were visiting Cameroon. We urge you to call upon the Government of Cameroon to abide by its commitments to respect the rights of its citizens and to either appropriately charge or release imprisoned U.S. citizens and residents.

This letter follows similar correspondence sent to you on June 26th of this year by Maryland Congressmen Anthony Brown and Jamie Raskin that underscored the increasing unrest in Cameroon since November 2016 when the country's Anglophone population began demonstrating against policy changes that have marginalized that community. The *Washington Post* reported that in response to those protests more than 100 people were "violently arrested" during one demonstration and four individuals were shot dead by authorities during another rally. *Newsweek* reported additional deaths following subsequent demonstrations.

During the course of the demonstrations, the government cut off internet access to the Anglophone regions of Cameroon to prevent the circulation of information and videos of the security forces' actions. The United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression, Mr. David Kaye of the United States, subsequently called upon the government to restore internet services and characterized their cut-off as "an appalling violation of the right to freedom of expression." Recently, members of the security forces detained Mr. Fabian Fomuki, a U.S. citizen from Massachusetts, and Mr. Patrick Ndongo, a long-term U.S. resident from Maryland, without charging either man with violating the law.

On August 2, the International Crisis Group released a report highlighting this government repression and calling for the release of leaders of the Anglophone community and for sanctioning of security forces who committed abuses. Additional demonstrations are anticipated when the schools and courts reopen next month because the government is banning use of the English language in both institutions. We urge you to continue to do everything in your power to ensure the well-being of these citizens.

We believe that it is in our nation's interest to promote a de-escalation of the conflict between the Government of Cameroon and the Anglophone community, and a peaceful settlement of differences. To that end, we hope that the State Department will encourage the Government of Cameroon to comply with its obligations under international law with respect to the treatment of civilians and engage the leaders of the Anglophone community in a constructive dialogue to ease tensions and rebuild trust based on the rule of law, equality, and respect for human rights.

We also ask that the U.S. Embassy in Yaoundé continue to closely monitor the cases of Mr. Fomuki and Mr. Ndong. We request that these individuals receive independent medical evaluations and either be released from custody or formally charged and provided with access to a fair and speedy hearing. It has recently come to our attention that U.S. Embassy staff in Yaoundé has been denied access to Mr. Fomuki since August and that the *Charge d'Affaires* has since delivered a formal protest about this development. We appreciate all ongoing efforts to ensure that U.S. Embassy staff have access to Mr. Fomuki and to every U.S. citizen and resident that the Government of Cameroon may be detaining.

Thank you for your consideration of these concerns. We look forward to your response.

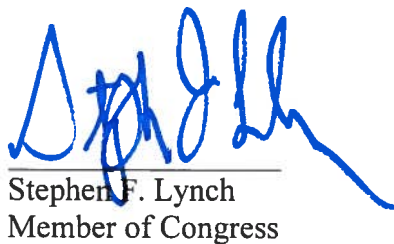
Sincerely,



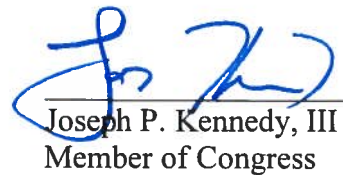
Niki Tsongas
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress



Joseph P. Kennedy, III
Member of Congress