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Sexual and Gender-based Violence against Women and Girls during the Armed Conflict in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon

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I dedicate my work to my Father Paul Ngangue who passed away and to all women victims of violence in the world and in particular to those who struggle every day to regain their dignity

Abstract

Sexual and Gender based Violence continue to be an issue of global concern to international human right bodies as well as reformed governments globally, especially during armed conflicts. Recently statistics have shown that women and girls are the most affected during a period of political instability such as wars and armed conflicts. Whereas evidence on the causes and aftermath differs from country to country. Violence on women and girls is noticed more in countries where there is huge violation of human right. Women from African countries such as Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, Niger and Cameroon are the most affected during armed conflicts. The effects on Women and girls during and after armed conflicts have led to severe damage on women such as women being mentally and physically derange and women considered as second-class citizens in the society. Violence On women and girls can be considerable reduced in Anglophone region of Cameroon of the state as an actor and the non-state actor (separatist) by means of protecting women and children and by obeying United Nation human right law and mechanisms.

Reduction of Violence on women and young girls in the Anglophone region of Cameroon can be achieved through good implementation of human right mechanisms by the state and non-state actors. Medical care and attention should be given to wounded women and pregnant women but in the case of the conflict in the Anglophone region of Cameroon is not since the hospitals are being target and burnt down. Churches and other closest hiding place for women and children are being targeted and are no more hiding place for women and children since entire villages are being burnt down by the state. Women cannot run and hide in the bushes since the bushes are the hiding place for the separatist fighters. The state and non-state actors should give access to emergency medical care and food. Access must also be given to media organs so that they can report what is really going on. International Organisations, Africa Union, the united Nation and other NGOs must show concern not neglecting armed conflicts such as that in the Anglophone region in Cameroon.

A cross sectional survey design and mixed methodology was used to comprising of both qualitative and quantitative methods. The study was limited to the Anglophone regions of Cameroon with a sample size of 20 respondents drawn from all the regions of South West and North West of Cameroon through snowball sample selection method. WHO data collection instruments were used

to analyse the health impacts of the effects of SGBV. A questionnaire schedule was also administered to victims of SGBV.

The study established that the state was the worst violator of SGBV through several of its agencies such as the army, the police and the investigating bodies. The study established that the various state agencies miscarried justice through conflict of interest in courts which denies justice to the victims of SGBV. It was noticed that, during armed conflict majority of women who experienced SGBV were of tender ages with majority having been raped, sexually assaulted, mutilated on the genitals and in other cases killed or used as military sex objectives. The study further established that the civil society pointed fingers on the state through its agencies for ratifying international human rights conventions and treaties without implementing them. The study recommends the repeal of various policy acts as well as military acts to enable these state agencies remain accountable during emergencies like armed conflict.

Key Words: Sexual and Gender based Violence, Armed conflict, Anglophone.

Zusammenfassung

Sexuelle und geschlechtsspezifische Gewalt ist nach wie vor ein Thema von globaler Bedeutung für internationale Menschenrechtsorgane wie auch für reformierte Regierungen weltweit, insbesondere während bewaffneter Konflikte. Kürzlich haben Statistiken gezeigt, dass Frauen und Mädchen in einer Zeit politischer Instabilität wie Kriegen und bewaffneten Konflikten am stärksten betroffen sind. Während die Erkenntnisse über die Ursachen und die Nachwirkungen von Land zu Land unterschiedlich sind, wird Gewalt gegen Frauen und Mädchen eher in Ländern wahrgenommen, in denen es zu massiven Menschenrechtsverletzungen kommt. Frauen aus afrikanischen Ländern wie Ruanda, der Demokratischen Republik Kongo, Mali, Niger und Kamerun sind bei bewaffneten Konflikten am stärksten betroffen. Die Auswirkungen auf Frauen und Mädchen während und nach bewaffneten Konflikten haben zu schweren Schäden für Frauen geführt, da sie geistig und körperlich verwirrt sind und in der Gesellschaft als Bürgerinnen zweiter Klasse gelten. Die Gewalt gegen Frauen und Mädchen kann in der anglophonen Region Kameruns durch den Schutz von Frauen und Kindern und durch die Einhaltung der Menschenrechtsgesetze und -mechanismen der Vereinten Nationen erheblich reduziert werden, sowohl als staatlicher Akteur, als auch als nichtstaatlicher Akteur (Separatist). Die Verringerung der Gewalt gegen Frauen und junge Mädchen in der anglophonen Region Kameruns kann durch eine gute Umsetzung der Menschenrechtsmechanismen durch staatliche und nichtstaatliche Akteure erreicht werden. Verwundete Frauen und schwangere Frauen sollten medizinisch versorgt und betreut werden, was im Falle des internen Konflikts in der anglophonen Region Kameruns nicht der Fall ist, da die Krankenhäuser attackiert und niedergebrannt werden. Kirchen und andere nächstgelegene Verstecke für Frauen und Kinder werden ins Visier genommen und sind kein Versteck mehr für Frauen und Kinder, da ganze Dörfer vom Staat niedergebrannt werden. Frauen können nicht fliehen und sich in den Büschen verstecken, da die Büsche das Versteck der Separatistenkämpfer sind. Der Zugang zu medizinischer Notfallversorgung und Nahrung sollte durch den Staat und nichtstaatliche Akteure gewährleistet werden. Auch den Medienorganen muss Zugang gewährt werden, damit sie darüber berichten können, was wirklich vor sich geht. Internationale Organisationen, die Afrikanische Union, die Vereinten Nationen und andere Nichtregierungsorganisationen müssen

sich darum bemühen, bewaffnete Konflikte wie den in der anglophonen Region in Kamerun nicht zu vernachlässigen. Auch den Medienorganen muss Zugang gewährt werden, damit sie darüber berichten können, was wirklich vor sich geht.

Es wurde ein Querschnittserhebungsdesign und eine gemischte Methodik verwendet, die sowohl qualitative als auch quantitative Methoden umfasst. Die Studie beschränkte sich auf die anglophonen Regionen Kameruns mit einer Stichprobengröße von 20 Befragten, die aus allen Regionen im Südwesten und Nordwesten Kameruns mittels Schneeballstichprobenauswahlverfahren gezogen wurden. Zur Analyse der gesundheitlichen Auswirkungen von SGBV wurden WHO-Datenerhebungsinstrumente eingesetzt. Darüber hinaus wurde den Opfern von SGBV ein Fragebogenplan ausgehändigt. Die Studie stellte fest, dass der Staat über mehrere seiner Behörden wie die Armee, die Politik und die Untersuchungsorgane der schlimmste Verursacher des SGBV war. Die Studie kam zu dem Ergebnis, dass die verschiedenen staatlichen Stellen einen Justizirrtum begingen, indem sie den Opfern des SGBV keine Gerechtigkeit verschafften. Es wurde festgestellt, dass während eines bewaffneten Konflikts die Mehrheit der Frauen, die SGBV erlebt haben, in einem jungen Alter waren, wobei die Mehrheit vergewaltigt, sexuell missbraucht, an den Genitalien verstümmelt und in anderen Fällen getötet oder als militärisches Sexualziel benutzt wurde. Die Studie stellte ferner fest, dass die Zivilgesellschaft über ihre Agenturen mit dem Finger auf den Staat zeigte, um internationale Menschenrechtskonventionen und -verträge zu ratifizieren, ohne sie umzusetzen. Die Studie empfiehlt die Aussetzung verschiedener politischer und militärischer Hilfen durch internationale Akteure und fordert die kamerunischen Behörden auf, dafür zu sorgen, dass die Gewalttäter während des Konflikts zur Rechenschaft gezogen werden.

Stichwörter: Sexuelle und geschlechtsspezifische Gewalt, bewaffneter Konflikt, Anglophon.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

Sexual and Gender based Violence continue to rise all over the world due to the continuous increased of armed conflicts globally. Armed conflicts have been the only mechanism used to find solution to most political problems in many nations today. It is a great concern to international human right bodies as well as reformed governments because women and young girls are the most affected during and after armed conflicts. Women trapped in conflicts areas especially in countries with bad governments, corrupt government and where human abuse is neglected are in great danger. The women and young girls living in the Anglophone region of Cameroon are in risk and danger because the state is committing more atrocities on women than the non-state actors. Moreover, the armed conflict in the Anglophone region of Cameroon is the most neglected armed conflict by the International communities. The armed conflict in the Anglophone region in Cameroon started in the September 2016 as peaceful demonstration and the government of Cameroon over reacted and asked the forces to use fire arms and live bullets on protesters. The conflict then escalated to a full-grown war as the years passes by. The state has been applying wrong mechanism to bring solution to this conflict. Access to emergency medical care and food is denied in some conflict areas in the Anglophone region of Cameroon. Pregnant women give birth to children in the bushes. Children are not allowed to go to school. The media is not allowed to go to some areas. Implementing human right laws and mechanism to the conflict area of the Anglophone region of Cameroon will save many women and young girls and if the government can look into the root cause of the problem, this might bring solution to the conflict.

1.2 Background to the Study

During armed conflict, sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV) against women and girls is one of the most significant abuses that women are facing in the world. SGBV knows no social, economic or national boundaries and as such, its prevalence has been reported from major parts of the world. Worldwide, it is estimated that, women had experienced physical and sexual abuses in their life¹. The term “sexual violence” includes sexual threat, assault, interference, exploitation,

¹UNFPA. Female genital mutilation: a joint WHO/UNICEF/UNFPA statement: World Health Organization; 2017.

humiliation, molestation, incest, involuntary prostitution, torture, breast ironing, insertion of objects into genital openings and attempted rape, including statutory rape, carried out against women and girls or men and boys². The United Nations Population Fund (UNPF) mandate is to promote gender equality, women empowerment and to address the physical and emotional consequences of gender-based violence against women and girls³. The United Nations Commission for Refugees (UNCHR) asserts that, SGBV against women and girls in whatever form is the worst form of Human rights violation⁴. Many research project reports such as the 2017 UNPF SGBV research shows that, sexual violence against women, girls and men is common throughout the world⁵.

Evidence on armed conflict from developing nations allude that in many situations of armed conflict, civilian conflict or even political violence, the biggest casualties are women, young girls and children.⁶ As armed conflicts have increasingly arisen in many parts of the world in recent times and SGBV has become an issue of concern. The unrest in Syria is an example of armed conflict that started from small protest (2011 Arab Spring protests) and grew out of discontent with

² WHO on its Chapter 6 defines “*Sexual violence is any sexual act or attempt to obtain a sexual act by violence or coercion, acts to traffic a person or acts directed against a person's sexuality, regardless of the relationship to the victim. It occurs in times of peace and armed conflict situations, is widespread and is considered to be one of the most traumatic, pervasive, and most common human rights violations*”. Available at:

https://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/global_campaign/en/chap6.pdf?ua=1. Accessed on the 29 May 2020

³ UNFP ,Gender based Violence, available at :
<https://www.unfpa.org/gender-based-violence>. Accessed 29March 2020

⁴ UNHCR, Sexual and Gender Based Violence ,available at :
<https://www.unhcr.org/sexual-and-gender-based-violence.html>. Accessed 28March 2020

⁵ Kelly, J., 2010. *Rape in war: Motives of militia in DRC*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace.
Parmar, P., Agrawal, P., Greenough, P.G., Goyal, R. and Kayden, S., 2012. Sexual violence among host and refugee population in Djohong District, Eastern Cameroon. *Global public health*, 7(9), pp.974-994.

⁶ Amnesty International ,the Casualties of war ,Women’s body ,Women’s life , available at :
<https://www.amnesty.ie/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/SVAW-Casualties-of-War-womens-bodies-womens-lives.pdf>. Accessed 29Mays 2020

the Syrian authority and escalated to an armed conflict after protesters calling for Assad's removal and they were violently suppressed. During this period of conflict, a number of SGBV were reported. The armed conflict in Nigeria, orchestrated by the Boko Haram insurgency, is one of recent examples that registered the worst form of SGBV against women and girls. A report estimated that 35% of women globally have been sexually, physically, and emotionally abused by a non-partner⁷. The WHO also reported violence against women and young girls in a news release on the 29 of November 2017⁸.

The gender-based violence is not a new phenomenon when it comes to Cameroon or West Africa at large. Within the Cameroonian culture, SGBV has always been abetted in Cameroonian cultures and traditions⁹. The community accords men higher social status than women. The community has soft stands towards men on cultures related to family, property and access to states institutions. For example the right to inheritance of property by women is frustrated by the cultural structures and prejudice of patriarchy principles in the community. Generally, women are considered as subjects, while men are perceived as properties. This vision of a woman already promotes the inequality between men and women and perpetuates violence against women. For example, in the Far North region of Cameroon, early forceful and violent marriage is perceived as normal custom on young girls¹⁰. Within the South-West mainly Banyangi culture, the female genital mutilation is considered as a means of bringing additional value to women virtue¹¹. The breasts of young girls are being

⁷ 826 allegations of conflict-related sexual violence were documented by the United Nations, including rape and forced marriage... Available at :<https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/countries/nigeria/>

⁸ World Health Organization: violence against women ,29November 2017,available at: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women>. Accessed 30 March 2020

⁹ Fonjong, L., Sama-Lang, I.F. and Fombe, L.F., 2012. Implications of customary practices on gender discrimination in land ownership in Cameroon. *Ethics and Social Welfare*, 6(3), pp.260-274.

¹⁰ Cislighi, B., Mackie, G., Nkwi, P. and Shakya, H., 2019. Social norms and child marriage in Cameroon: An application of the theory of normative spectrum. *Global public health*, 14(10), pp.1479-1494.

¹¹ Bayangi is a tribe from Manyu subdivision in South West Region of Cameroon

flattened with hot stones and bandaged by some mothers in the entire regions of Cameroon, so that, they will be less attractive to men¹². All these practices have been found as negatively impact on the psychological and physical development of young girls and women. UN Women estimates that 51% of women in Cameroon have been victims of domestic violence, partly contributed by the cultural setups in the community, 31% of young girls have been forced to early marriage and 1% of women have been exposed to Female Genital Mutilation¹³. Besides, security apparatus are being accused to be involved in GBV against women and girls. In early July 2018, two women and their kids were shot dead by Cameroonian soldiers in the Far North region of Cameroon. The soldiers suspected the women knew something about the Islamic terrorist group Boko Haram¹⁴.

Anglophone crisis is a conflict in the Southwest and Northwest Cameroon regions. Its genesis emanated because of perceived historical injustices meted on the Anglophone region by the previous colonial masters and propagated by previous ruling governments¹⁵. In September 2017 the armed conflict began, when the people of the Northwest and Southwest Region of Cameroon (collectively known as Southern Cameroons or the British West Cameroon) reacted to the use of arms by the Government of Cameroon on them and declared the independence of Ambazonia. What began as a low-scale insurgency, spread to almost all Anglophone regions of Cameroon and as a result of the insurgency, about 4000 people has been killed, about 450000 of civilians displaced, and millions worth of property destroyed¹⁶.

¹² QUARTZ AFRICA, Breast ironing is a harmful practice to young girls that isn't getting sufficient attention, available at : <https://qz.com/africa/1614334/breast-ironing-is-ignored-problem-in-cameroon-across-africa/>. Accessed 29May 2020

¹³ UN WOMEN Global Database on Violence against Women, available at: <https://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/en/countries/africa/cameroon>. Accessed 27March 2020

1 14 Amnesty News, Cameroon: Trial of soldiers for killing women and children must lead to justice for victims, available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2019/08/cameroon-trial-of-soldiers-for-killing-women-and-children/>. Accessed 29March 2020

¹⁵ Konings, P. and Nyamnjoh, F.B., 1997. The anglophone problem in Cameroon. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 35(2), pp.207-229.

¹⁶ Human Rights Watch ,Cameroon Events 2019 ,available at : <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2020/country-chapters/cameroon>. Accessed 30 March 2020

Many reports by United Nations Children Fund as well as reports from other United Nations agencies such as UNIFEM, Centre for Elimination of discrimination against Women (CEDAW), United Nations Commission for Human Rights (UNCHR) reported massive human rights violations against women, girls, and Children and appealed to the Cameroonian government and other international and regional development partners to look for solutions towards SGBV related to the armed conflict.

Despite such global efforts to mitigate SGBV during armed conflict, many civilians, innocent women and girls continues to experience SGBV in many Anglophone parts of Cameroon since the armed conflict continues to escalate from the countryside to the major cities which are currently controlled by government forces¹⁷. To compel the government into a negotiation table, the militia/insurgency is wreaking havoc on the masses in the controlled regions, killing, maiming, raping, and exercising all types of GBV against women and girls. However, the state is not keen in allowing any human right violation on women and girls by the militia to be reported by the media or even civil societies. The study carried out, and tried to establish the status and extent of GBV against women and girls in the wake of the armed conflict.

1.2.1 About Cameroon

Just like any other African country, Cameroon is a multicultural and multiethnic country. In Cameroon, 52% of the population represents women, and the remaining percentage is occupied by men¹⁸. Women are players and important actors in the growth and development of the country's GDP. Overall, women contribute about 75% towards agricultural work and they produce around 80% of the country's food security. The country is ranked position 151 in the World and 21 in Africa on the Human Development Index of the year 2020¹⁹. Very many ethnic groups, languages

¹⁷ Global Giving, Gender based violence in the Anglophone silent war, available at :

<https://www.globalgiving.org/projects/gender-based-violence-in-the-anglophone-silent-war/>. Accessed 30 May 2020

¹⁸ Fossungu, P.A.A., 2013. *Understanding Confusion in Africa: The Politics of Multiculturalism and Nation-building in Cameroon*. African Books Collective.

¹⁹ African Development Bank Group ,Cameroon Development Outlook ,available at: <https://www.afdb.org/en/countries-central-africa-cameroon/cameroon-economic-outlook>. Accessed 27April 2020

and most religions of the world characterize Cameroon²⁰. Posits that although a number of cultures are high in Cameroon, the importance given to the local traditions is quite evident²¹. These traditions however affect women largely since they do not give much protection to the modern equality laws as is expected. On one hand the Cameroonian constitution gives and highly regards the principle of equality to her citizens yet on the other hand many obstacles are faced with the implementation of this including legal, social, religious and cultural obstacles²².

The dual system of law, that is, French and English coupled with patriarch customary law makes it very difficult to attain gender equality in the society, hence negatively affecting women in this country. In fact, sustainable commitment is beset by political expediency and arbitrariness so characteristic of budding, unfair and non-functional democracies.

Violence and discrimination against women is very prevalent in Cameroon, with the current law failing to impose effective and punitive penalties against the perpetrators of GBV even at family level. Evidence from Cameroon indicates that, women continue to suffer from gross discrimination in accessing civil political and social economical rights²³. Some of the rights include, right to education, right to political participation, right to economical emancipation, right to inheritance of property, and even rights to participation in key decision making to the community and family level. The persistence of gender discriminatory provisions in several laws and the discriminatory customary laws, as well as the prejudices and stereotypical attitudes concerning the role of women and men in the family and society are open doors for continuous violence on women. This is based on the discriminatory notion of men superiority and women inferiority trajectories. In Cameroon,

²⁰ Johnson-Hanks, J., 2003. Education, ethnicity, and reproductive practice in Cameroon. *Population*, 58(2), pp.153-179.

²¹ Veuthey, S. and Gerber, J.F., 2010. Logging conflicts in Southern Cameroon: a feminist ecological economics perspective. *Ecological economics*, 70(2), pp.170-177.

²² Constitution of the Republic of Cameroon, Law No. 96-06 of 18 January 1996 to amend the Constitution of 2 June 1972, on the Preamble (1) all persons shall have equal rights and obligations. The State shall provide all its citizens with the conditions necessary for their development. Available at: https://www.cnpbm.cm/sites/default/files/article/files/cameroon_constitution.pdf. Accessed 29 July 2020

²³ Egbe Orock, R.T., 2007. Gender equality—whose agenda? Observations from Cameroon. *Development in Practice*, 17(1), pp.93-97.

girls face high illiteracy levels with about 70% of Cameroonian girls as illiterate²⁴. The limited representation of women in decision-making and very limited involvement in enterprise development makes them more vulnerable to public and private violence.

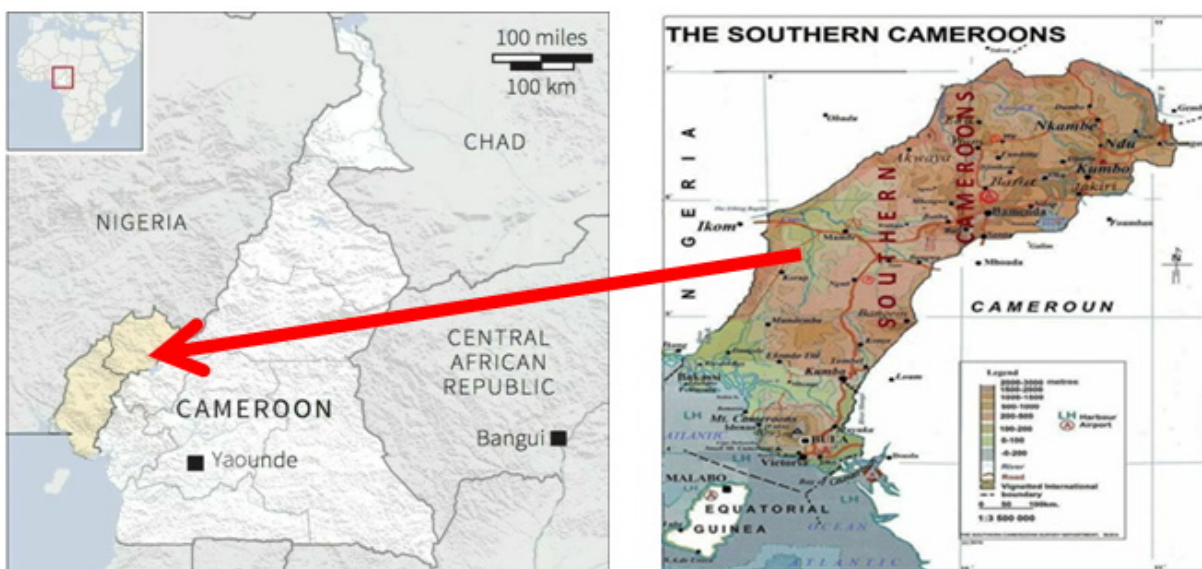


Figure 1: *The map of Cameroon*

1.2.2 The Development of Armed Conflict in Anglophone Cameroon

A peaceful demonstration that started in 2016 further escalated to a full-grown war in the Anglophone region of Cameroon. There have been also several attacks from the Islamic militant group-Boko Haram, in the Far North region of Cameroon, thus worsening humanitarian crisis in the country. In the Anglophone regions of Cameroon, government armed forces started it all by committing extrajudicial killings, carried out arbitrary arrests, tortured detainees including women and girls and burned property. Human Rights Watch report documented a range of abuses by both sides in the Anglophone regions, including arson attacks on homes and schools²⁵. According to

²⁴ Humanium, the under-education of girls in Cameroon, available at:

<https://www.humanium.org/en/the-under-education-of-girls-in-cameroon/>. Accessed 2 June 2020

²⁵ Amnesty International, Next Government must tackle human crises in violence hit-regions, available at :

<https://www.amnestyusa.org/press-releases/cameroon-next-government-must-tackle-human-rights-crises-in-violence-hit-regions/>. Accessed 1 June 2020

the UN report 2018 and the International Crisis Group, government forces and armed rebels killed over 400 civilians, a majority being women and girls in the regions since the crisis escalated.

According to a United Nation's report, an estimate of more than 250,000 civilians was displaced in the Far North and 440,000 in the Anglophone North West and South West regions²⁶. The report further highlighted that about 34,000 Cameroonians for which a vast majority being women and girls are refugees in Nigeria. The report further says, the Cameroon government denies tolerating serious crimes committed by security forces and failed to proof or make evident in investigating the atrocities caused by military forces. Another scenario is the validation of President Paul Biya's victory after the presidential election by Cameroon Constitutional Council. The decision of the council was contested immediately by one of Biya's rivals Maurice Kamto, who claimed the results was a fraud²⁷. In early November, several pro-Kamto protesters were arrested in Bafoussam, Douala and in various cities across the country²⁸.

Beside the pro-Kamto protesters, some Anglophone regions were angered by the re-election of president Biya and as such, they felt the lack of political ability to address the political injustices that has existing in the country which was caused by the same ruling president²⁹. They then considered themselves as minority and marginalized group. According to a scholar literature, it was due to this that region resorted to radicalization by the activists and the crisis has grown to a full-armed conflict. More rebels groups emerges and started attacking government institutions, threatened, abused women and girls and also killed civilians perceived to be on the side of the government. The action of the various Rebel groups was due to the use of excessive force by government security forces against peaceful demonstrators of the Anglophone minority who were

²⁶ Okereke, C.N.E., 2018. Analysing Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis. *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses*, 10(3), pp.8-12.

²⁷ CRTV, 2018 Presidential Election, the Results, available at: <http://www.crtv.cm/2018/10/2018-presidential-election-constitutional-council-proclaims-biya-paul-winner-with-71/>. Accessed 02 April 2020

²⁸ Human Rights Watch, Cameroon: Opposition Leaders Arrested ,available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/01/30/cameroon-opposition-leaders-arrested>. Accessed 12 April 2020

²⁹ It is important to note that Southern Cameroons became part of the Republic of Cameroon in 1961.

calling for increased autonomy for their region in October 2016³⁰. The government forces used live ammunition, including helicopters gunshot against bystanders and demonstrators killing a large number of people many of which were women and young girls during a demonstration in late 2017.

It was also reported that, the Cameroon government forces responded to the harsh separatist insurgency by carrying out abusive security operations against communities which include burning down of villages and hospitals due to the fact that, they suspected communities of being supporting secessionist groups. The study further revealed that, security forces committed extrajudicial executions, used excessive force against civilians, tortured and abused suspected women and inflicted gender based violence to several girls and women. Human Rights Watch documented that, security forces allegedly shot and killed over a dozen civilians during attacks, including people with psychosocial or physical disabilities who could not flee because they couldn't or refused to. The human rights activists further reported that, several older women died and some were burned alive, after security forces set their homes on fire. Several cases were further documented where security forces detained suspects for supporting the secessionist activities, and they were tortured and killed in detention. It was evident that armed conflict in Anglophone Cameroon was not close to ending as predicted by the government of the Republic of Cameroon.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

SGBV against women and girls continues to dominate studies on armed conflict in both developed and developing nations³¹. Despite unprecedented efforts by the United Nations agencies such as the International Court of Justice, based in the Hague, as well as other national civil and social legislation geared towards averting SGBV during armed conflicts, SGBV continues to be witnessed unabated in many developing nations. SGBV reports from developing nations report mixed findings on various issues concerning SGBV in various armed conflict zones. Little research has

³⁰ Amnesty International, Cameroon :Excessive force that led to deaths of protesters must be urgently investigated, available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2016/12/cameroon-excessive-force-that-led-to-deaths-of-protesters-must-be-urgently-investigated/>. Accessed 18May 2020

³¹SGBV protocols and Fact Sheets
United Nations Human rights Office of High Commissioner : Violence against Women ,available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Women/WRGS/Pages/VAW.aspx>. Accessed 30May 2020

been carried out in Cameroon concerning the various forms of SGBV meted on women and girls by the state forces and by the militia, as well as the various victim experiences and health aftermaths because of various forms of SGBV during the armed conflict. In September 2019, Ayafor Florence, prison warden at the Bamenda main prison, was found dead. According to the Cameroonian Journalist Mimi Mefo, Florence was the second female soldier, killed by the separatist gunmen since the crisis began³². According to UNICEF an estimated of about 1.3million people need aid in Anglophone Cameroon³³. The precarious standards of living made them easy target to be exploited and abuses. This study employed an integrated approach in carrying out an intensive study on the subject of SGBV on women and girls during armed conflict by focusing on the actors as well as victims of the violence.

1.4 Main Research Question

How armed conflict does exacerbate sexual and Gender-based violence against women and girls in the Anglophone areas in Cameroon?

1.5 Purpose and Main Objectives of the Study

The study is to investigate the status of the armed conflict in Cameroon and assess its impacts on SGBV on women and girls as well as explore options of its future mitigation.

1.5.1 Specific objectives

The objectives of this study are:

- To establish the different forms of SGBV inflicted on women and young girls in the context of the actual armed conflict in the English-speaking regions of Cameroon.

³² INFO MIMI MEFO

<https://mimimefoinfos.com/gruesome-killing-of-prison-administrator-gets-widespread-condemnation/>. Accessed 12 March 2020

3 ³³ Africa Times, UNICEF says 1.3 million need aid in Cameroon's Anglophone regions, available at:

<https://africatimes.com/2019/06/22/unicef-says-1-3-million-need-aid-in-camerouns-anglophone-regions/>. Accessed 15 April 2020

- To make inquiries of the role of the state as an actor in perpetuating or reducing various instances of SGBV against women and girls in the armed conflict in the Anglophone parts of Cameroon.
- To document the SGBV experiences on women and girls as well as their health consequences because of SGBV.
- To seek opinions from the SGBV victims concerning the effective strategies, which the government and humanitarian organisations can use to mitigate SGBV during, armed conflict.

1.6 Some Specific Research Questions.

- What are the various forms of SGBV meted on women and girls in the ongoing-armed conflict in the Anglophone parts of Cameroon?
- What is the role of the state as an actor in perpetuating or reducing various instances of SGBV against women and girls in the armed conflict in the Anglophone parts of Cameroon?
- What are some of the SGBV and health experiences of women and girls in the armed conflict of the Anglophone parts of Cameroon?
- What are the opinions of the SGBV victims concerning the affective strategies that can be applied by the state and humanitarian organisations in curbing SGBV against women and girls in the armed conflict in Anglophone Cameroon?

1.7 Significance of the Study

The findings from this study is significant to many parties in many ways. To the government of Cameroon, various humanitarian organisations and civil society, the findings from this study looked over on SGBV against women during armed conflict. The study offers victim views on the strategies of reducing SGBV. The study also applied the complex theoretical frameworks concerning the cause and rationale of SGBV as a weapon during the armed conflict in developing nations. Finally, the findings from the study added to the literature on the nature, extend of armed conflict in the developing Cameroon.

1.8 Scope of the Study

The study was carried out in six months focusing only on the SGBV against women and young girls within the Anglophone crisis Cameroon. The study focussed on Kumba epicentre of South West Cameroon, an area between Manfe and Moyoka, where the armed conflict reached its peak. Other parts affected by armed conflict include Bamenda town in the North West region, where the Anglophone crisis escalated and its impact have been serious on women and young girls especially in Ngarbuh³⁴. Ntumbo is another village in the northwest of Cameroon where women and young girls have really suffered the impact of the crises³⁵. The scope of the study was restricted to the current extent of SGBV against women and young girls as well the effectiveness of the initiatives utilised by the state and humanitarian organisations to mitigate the atrocities. The implication of the state as an actor and a perpetrator was also discussed as well as health consequences of the victims.

1.9 Workflow

The introduction chapter gives us the overview and objective of this work. Chapter 2 talks about the literature review. The next chapter which is chapter 3 gives an overview on the Africa and International instrument on the protection of women during armed conflicts. The methodology and general workflow is presented in chapter 4. Chapter 5 talks about findings on affected conflict areas. Discussion and conclusion are made in chapter 6. A reference from where the literatures are taken is added in chapter 7 and chapter 8 gives the full meaning of the abbreviations used in the text.

³⁴Cameroon army confirms death of woman, children in Ngarbuh, available at:
<https://www.journalducameroun.com/en/cameroon-army-confirms-death-of-woman-children-in-ngarbuh/>.
 Accessed 17 March 2020

³⁵14 children among dozens killed in Cameroon attack, UN says, available at:
<https://edition.cnn.com/2020/02/17/africa/cameroon-village-attack-intl/index.html> . Accessed 17 March 2020

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview

Several researches have been made concerning SGBV against women from different human right activists and International Organisations. National and International Organisations have also released reports and articles on SGBV against women. This section reviews research on Sexual and gender-based violence during armed conflicts.

2.2 Sexual and Gender-based Violence

SGBV has been defined differently based on the context and the subject matter. However the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, 1994 on its Article 1 defines the term “*Violence against Women means any act of gender based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life*”³⁶. It encompasses threats of violence and coercion refers to any form or treatment or act done against a person basing on gender and unequal power relationships. The various forms of violence ranges from assault, torture, abduction, rape, blackmail, FGM, and threats. The Rome Statute also recognized “crimes against women as crimes against humanity, war crimes, and in some instances, genocide³⁷”.

Several women human rights are violated by SGBV such as right to life, freedom from torture, right to equal treatment under the law, degrading and cruel treatment for women, and the right of education to mention a few. Rape was also classified as a serious form of SGBV after the Hague Convention IV³⁸. The best example of rape as Gender based violence was after the decision of the

³⁶ Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, available at : <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/violenceagainstwomen.aspx>. Accessed 11August 2020

³⁷ Gender and International Criminal Court , available at : <http://iccnow.org/?mod=gender>. Accessed 11August 2020

International Criminal Court of Rwanda .During the Rwanda Genocide, women body were used as army of war³⁹ .

The division between Hutus and Tutsi in Rwanda in 1994 created a bloody war. This war left almost 800,000 dead. During these 100 days of war, it was estimated that, around 250,000 to 500,000 young girls were raped and among these women that were raped, 67% of them were infected with HIV/AIDS. These statistics tell us that the women are real victims during the conflicts. Being physically weak, it is almost impossible for women to protect themselves from the male during conflicts period. It is also noted that, until date 73% of rape survivors remain traumatized. Violence and psychological wounds still affects women several years after the war. There is necessity for the government to prevent wars or else to protect women and children during the crisis because they are the most vulnerable⁴⁰.

Basic human rights are undermined by taking the advantage of a vulnerable group. There are various reasons why this defect continues to occur globally. Most commonly, the victims are not in a position to defend them or they need a favour done and so perpetrators take that advantage and violate them. In some work places, women are sexually assaulted before they can be upgrade or promoted. Forced early marriages are other forms of violations and this is common in societies where the rights of women are undermined. In addition, gender based violence can involve emotional and psychological torture, sexual harassment or access of resources.

2.3 Armed Conflict

Common Article 2 of the Geneva Convention stated that “*in addition to the provisions which shall be implemented in peacetime, the present*

Article 46 of the Hague Convention IV, October 1907, stated that “Family honour and rights, the lives of persons, and private property, as well as religious convictions and practice, must be respected. Private property cannot be confiscated“. Available at :

<https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/ihl/INTRO/195>. Accessed 2 August 2020

³⁹ Human Rights Watch , Sexual Violence during the Rwandan Genocide and its Aftermath, available :

<https://www.hrw.org/reports/1996/Rwanda.htm>. Accessed 28 June 2020

⁴⁰ SURF SURVIVORS FUND, statistics of the Genocide ,available at:
<https://survivors-fund.org.uk/learn/statistics/>. Accessed 29 May 2020

“Convention shall apply to all cases of declared war or of any other armed conflict which may arise between two or more of the High Contracting Parties, even if the state of war is not recognized by one of them. The Convention shall also apply to all cases of partial or total occupation of the territory of a. High Contracting Party, even if the said occupation meets with no armed resistance”⁴¹.

Armed conflict is any form of war that emerges between either two states or a state and an internally based group⁴². The outcome shows that there are two categories of armed conflict. Internal armed conflict occurs when the state is in war with a group for instance, a militia group within the country. Taking Nigeria as an example, there are constant fights between the army and Boko Haram. These two groups fight within the boundaries of Nigeria. Both are well equipped with weapons and the impact of their fight is felt across a vast area. Thus, such conflicts are termed as internal armed conflict⁴³.

Non-internal armed conflict occurs when there is a war between two states or a state with an outside group. States can fight over boundaries issues or diplomatic disagreements. Severe consequences are attached to either form of armed conflict. There are loss of property and life, displacement of people and poor economic growth in the area under conflict. Internal armed conflicts at times lead to closure of vital services. For the case of external non-internal conflicts, diplomatic relationships are undermined and may result into trade barriers and travelling restrictions.

2.3.1 Theoretical framework on armed conflict and gender Based violence

The following theories supported this study.

⁴¹ International Committee of the Red Cross, How the Term “Armed Conflict” is defined in international humanitarian law? available at : <https://www.icrc.org/en/doc/resources/documents/article/other/armed-conflict-article-170308.htm>. Accessed 11J August 2020

⁴² Types of Armed conflict, available at: <https://legalanswers.sl.nsw.gov.au/hot-topics-80-international-humanitarian-law/types-armed-conflict>. Accessed 28July 2020

⁴³ RULAC:Non-International Armed Conflicts in Nigeria, available at: <http://www.rulac.org/browse/conflicts/non-international-armed-conflict-in-nigeria>. Accessed 25 May 2020

2.3.1.1 Post-structural Feminist Theory

The feminist theory is based on many ideas that surround the wellbeing of women and girls. It was advanced because the societies tend to view women as a weak race of people. The theory is used to curb some of the beliefs that hide women from being free like their male counterparts. Most societies are patriarchal and thus favour men while ignoring women. Additionally, there are traditional forms of thinking that support the subordination of women. As a result, women have been subjects to men and consequently their rights violated. This theory offers a new dimension of thinking that places women at the same rank as men. Feminist theory finds application across all fields from medical, academic and social avenues amongst others⁴⁴. It is due to this factor that this study was based on this theory. In times of armed conflict, the most common form of women violation is rape. Rape is a typical manifestation of male patriarchal values (Feminist theory). This study established that, women and girls are violated by men since the society views women as weak species. Rape instils fear to victims and those yet to be affected. The study indicated the relevance of including the feminist theory as it addresses some of the violations cast to women and girls at times of war. The theory discusses discrimination and exclusion based on gender. Women and girls are normally discriminated especially in the allocation of relief.

From the traditional point of views, women are regarded as powerless before men. This notion makes men to oppress women and think it is normal. This study established that, women and girls are oppressed because they have no say when it comes to power. Therefore, the feminist theory was used to address some of the areas that need to be changed. The theory views both men and women as equals and advocates for equity. Thus, at times of armed conflict, they need to be subjected to the same treatment as men. In addition, the theory discusses objectification of women⁴⁵. From the study, women are seen to be used as items for bargaining. In other terms, they are viewed as objects of meeting men's demand. Reasons why they are most affected stem when

⁴⁴Kambarami, M., 2006. Femininity, sexuality and culture: Patriarchy and female subordination in Zimbabwe. *South Africa: ARSRC*.

⁴⁵Feminist Theory available at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/social-sciences/feminist-theory>

⁴⁶Feminist Theory In Sociology: Objectification available at :

<https://www.thoughtco.com/feminist-theory-3026624>. Accessed 23 June 2020

incidences of armed conflict occur. In summary, the feminist theory tries to explain the deficiencies of the society in regards to women's rights. It emphasizes on the importance of safeguarding the well-being of women and girls. Therefore, it is against stereotyping and defining gender roles on the ground of sex orientation. This study is centred towards discussing the effects of armed conflict to women and girls. As it is evident from the research, those violating women's right operate centrally to the feminist theory. Thus, the theory remains to be significant in this study as the two are almost intertwined.

2.3.1.2 The Queer Theory

Queer theory on gender discrimination aims at destabilizing institutions bent on hierarchies and oppression that tend to collaboratively marginalize women based on their gender. The theory recognizes that the issue of gender is fluid and hence the need for gender binary to be dismantled to separate power dynamics attached to it⁴⁶. The theory eludes that, masculinity results into domination while feminist results into subordination. According to this theory, hierarchy system relies on the concept of separation and the opposite depends on each other for existence thus exposing the oppression that is rooted in the structures of heteropatriarchy, white supremacy and capitalism.

The theory alludes that masculinity that structures the world leads to inequality and preys on unequal relations of power⁴⁷. Therefore, by deconstructing the current paradigm that systematically oppresses women through homogenous ideals is the way forward. The theory posits that gender relations can be steered in the transitional phase in order to promote gender equality in a non-binary way thus enhancing the respect of human rights for all individuals existing in armed conflict environments. Shepherd supported the queer theory and proponents that in order to transform structural gender inequality within the society and especially in the aftermath of an armed conflict,

⁴⁶Hemmings, C., 2012. Affective solidarity: Feminist reflexivity and political transformation. *Feminist Theory*, 13(2), pp.147-161.

⁴⁷ Smith, T. and Kimmel, M., 2005. The hidden discourse of masculinity in gender discrimination law. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 30(3), pp.1827-1849.

gender mainstreaming must go beyond quotas and ‘adding’ women⁴⁸. They further allude that it is not sufficient to change players in the game but it is necessary to change the rules of the game.

2.3.2 Global Perspective of Armed Conflict and Women Human Rights Violations.

There is a global increase of armed conflict where women, children, and girls suffer more the effects of war. Human rights are violated at times of war as there are few watchdogs who can manage to advocate for human rights at that time. The Armed Conflict Report in Syria shows that the state experienced a series of conflicts since 2011. More so, the US engaged in quarrels with Syria in a bid to counter terrorism attacks against Islamic state in the northern Syria⁴⁹. Since 2015, we have seen local partners retaking areas formerly held by the Islamic state in Syria due to the US operations in Syria. Mark and Brown report states that these moves were characterised with massive violation of human rights⁵⁰. Women and children were kidnapped by rebels and subjected to torture. There are several cases of rape and forced marriages in the rebel camps. Additionally, the two reports elaborate how girls and women are forced to serve as wives and provide cheap labour. A research done by Mark and Brown show that by 2020 half pre-displaced citizens of Syria were still refugees. The refugee camps are centers of human rights violation. In Africa, armed conflict countries such as Democratic republic of Congo, Nigeria and Cameroon resulted into violation of human rights. Upon displacement, refugees were denied right to access of education, basic human wants like food shelter and clothing. Militia groups in Africa were blamed for inflicting pain to women and girls during their operations. Other countries within Africa that experience armed conflict are Libya, Somalia and Sudan. Somalia is the worst hit as civilians are the targeted group by the Al Shabab group⁵¹. Military operations in Somalia saw violation of human rights even to the innocent civilians.

⁴⁸Shepherd, D. (2008). Post-apartheid trends in gender discrimination in South Africa: Analysis through decomposition techniques. *Stellenbosch, University of Stellenbosch*. Retrieved October, 5, 2011.

⁴⁹ Armed Conflict in Syria, available at :

<https://www.everycrsreport.com/reports/RL33487.html>. Accessed 22June 2020

⁵⁰ Armed conflict as determinant of children malnourishment available at :

<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-020-08665-x>. Accessed 23June 2020

⁵¹ Nature of Armed Conflict Rapidly Changing in Africa ,available at:

<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/africa/nature-of-armed-conflict-in-africa-is-rapidly-changing-1.2969940>. Accessed 28June 2020

Many studies have indicated that several human rights are violated at times of armed conflict. The most common in many scenarios is the right to life⁵². Wars are often accompanied by death of both the innocent and guilty. Women and girls are not left out as research shows that they are the most hit group. Additionally freedom of movement and association is foregone at times of crisis. The right to peaceful demonstration is provided for in most states⁵³. However, as evident in Cameroon, such practice can turn to be a death sentence as it happened in between 2016 and 2017. The military captured, and tortured demonstrators some of whom succumbed to death⁵⁴. Most studies also show that labor rights are undermined at times of crisis⁵⁵. The studies further states that armed conflict is associated with forced labor and inclusion of women and children in military operations.

2.3.3 Armed Conflict and SGBV against Women and Girls

Wars and conflicts accelerate SGBV against women and girls than peaceful times. The UN Report of 2014 documented that sexual violence is mainly used as a tactic at time of war⁵⁶. The reports further that, at times of conflict women become vulnerable and are easily targeted by both sides that are in war. Armed conflict results into massive displacement of people to new areas. As a result, there are emergences of refugee camps, which are the main centers of SGBV against women and girls. In these camps, the norms of the society tend to be overlooked, as the focus is survival⁵⁷. The report stated that women and girls are forced to comply with harsh treatment for fear of death

⁵² Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 10 December 1948 states that “Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.”

⁵³ Article 21 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 1966 states that “*The right of peaceful assembly shall be recognized. No restrictions may be placed of the exercise of this right other than those imposed in conformity with the law and which are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, public order (ordre public), the protection of public health or morals or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.*”

⁵⁴ Reuters: Cameroon army helicopters shot separatists protesters: Witnesses, available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-cameroon-protests/cameroon-army-helicopters-shot-separatist-protesters-witnesses-idUSKBN1CB2BP>. Accessed 12 June 2020

⁵⁵ Human Rights in Armed conflicts ,available at: <https://home.hiroshima-u.ac.jp/heiwa/Pub/E19/chap6.pdf>. Accessed 12 June 2020

⁵⁶ Women and Armed conflict, available at : <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/end-violence-against-women/2014/conflict> . Accessed 27 June 2020

⁵⁷ Binet, L., 2016. *Rwandan Refugee Camps in Zaire and Tanzania 1994-1995*. Médecins Sans Frontières.

or torture. Further, domestic violence, child marriage and human trafficking are accelerated at times of conflict. A research done by George and Weather spoon in 2020 mentioned that Boko Haram abducted and took young girls as captives in West Africa⁵⁸. They were used as form of cheap labor, especially as domestic workers. Schools were closed down and cases of early marriages rose to a significant level. The report also indicates that some girls became wives to the militia men who were ‘married’ to more than 15 women which go against their will. The UN report of 2020 indicated that women are used as suppliers of weapons and information. Further, the report mentions that failure to follow militia orders results to torture in form of beatings, rape or other forms of psychological torture⁵⁹.

Reuben and Britney’s research of 2014 indicated that the Human Rights watch groups are paralyzed at times of armed conflict. They further states that when the society is undergoing crisis, the normal enjoyment of human rights is postponed. At such times, women are violated as the perpetrators are somehow convinced that their actions will go unnoticed. Consequently, domestic violence and sexual harassment increases drastically. Many research records that health facilities at times of armed conflict receive an influx of patients who mostly are women⁶⁰. Cases of rape and beatings result into physical injuries and death at times. Additionally, the number cases of infections of sexually transmitted diseases are accelerated at times of armed conflict. Early pregnancies become a common thing as women are sexually violated. The enjoyment of basic human rights is postponed in the event of armed conflicts. In the event of armed conflict, researches show there is property destruction where victims are left homeless and some even get killed. The right to access to education becomes impossible as most educational institutions are burnt some being converted into refugee camps. Particularly, women and girls are harassed in such avenues for mostly they do not have the ability to fight back. In order to cover their needs at times of crisis, they are forced to give

⁵⁸ Evidence From Boko Haram, available at :

<https://doi.org/10.1093/ajae/aaz039> . Accessed 15 June 2020

⁵⁹ The neuropsychological consequences of Armed conflict and torture ,available at:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/29445906>. Accessed 20 June 2020

⁶⁰ Kota, The Anglophone Crisis in Cameroon: Challenges facing Women, children and Displaced Families ,available at:

<https://www.kota-alliance.org/blog/2018/11/12/the-anglophone-crisis-in-cameroon-challenges-facing-women-children-and-displaced-families> . Accessed 29 July 2020

in to sexual favors in return to access to food and other essential. The UN Report (2020) indicated that women and girls pay up for their survival by sexual favors. This is one form of violation of human right as is a form of gender based violence.

2.3.4 Different forms of Sexual and Gender Based Violence against women and Girls during Armed conflict

At times of crisis, it has been proved that women suffer more than their counterparts' males especially during armed conflict. A research done by Martinez in 2017 explained that women are weak to defend themselves at time of armed conflict as people are just concerned with restoration of peace⁶¹. Martinez further reports that displacements are common during armed conflict, and separate women from their families or source of defense. In 2018 the Human Rights Council found that girls and women were subjected to sexual violence for reasons such as extraction of information from them⁶². They were considered as a weak species at times of war and thus can be exploited at any time. Martinez also points out that gender based violence is rampant especially at times of wars as the human rights groups and movements are at that time suppressed. Harassments are common in almost all places experiencing political instability. There are many forms of sexual and gender based violence that occurs at such time as discussed as per the existing literatures.

During armed conflicts, cases of rape become common where women are raped by a variety type of people. Human Right Council report of 2017 showed that there are cases of soldiers raping women especially in camp sites or holding sites⁶³. This is a common scenario especially in Syria which affects many refugee women. At such places, women are taken from their tents and raped and nobody is there to intervene for them. The report indicated that women soldiers seem not to be concerned about such act of undermining their colleagues. Additionally, it was reported that militia groups also violate women at times of war. The Al Shabaab group, which is a common militia group around East Africa, reported of having many women being raped. There are cases of mass

⁶¹ Armed Conflict; Impact on Women, available at:
<https://doi.org/10.11144/Javeriana.upsy16-3.acpi> . Accessed 22July 2020

⁶² Sexual violence on women ,available at :
<https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1427>. Accessed 12June 2020

⁶³ I lost my dignity ,available at:
<https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/CoISyria/A-HRC-37-CRP-3.pdf> . Accessed 22June 20202

raping in some instances. The end results to such form of violence are increased number of unwanted pregnancies. Also, most researches show that women are infected with sexually transmitted infections such as HIV/AIDS, syphilis and others at times of armed conflict⁶⁴.

As a method of extracting information, Martinez reported that women were subjected to different forms of physical torture. In events of armed conflicts, women interact than men with the warring sides and so can gather information from both sides. As a result, when a group feels like they need information from them, they end up torturing women. Most of women who suffered such pain were reported to be spies or medical practitioners who happen to interact with the antagonistic groups. They were subjected to beatings, body piercing and any form of torture that would make them give secrets. At times of armed conflicts, there are emergences of torture units whose victims are women at times. Such scenarios are also common in Saudi Arabia and in some instances women end up dying⁶⁵.

There are shortages of labor during armed conflicts since they are characterized by massive displacement of people and properties. At such times, most activities come to a standstill as workers are displaced and other killed in the course of war. However, women fall victims of forced labor especially in militia camps. They are used to provide cheap or free labor since they cannot fight back as per the UN Report of 2020. As a result, some are taken to serve as domestic workers or work in the farms. Various studies indicated that that working conditions are poor in refugee camps and so women end up suffering like any other victims of war. Also, they are underfed and at times raped by their bosses as they are defenseless. Several women died while doing hard forced jobs while under the supervision of their oppressors as reported by the UN report of 2020.

Scenarios of forced marriages are rampant at times of armed conflict. Due to displacements, women find themselves under the custody of uncivilized personnel. They are given out to serve as wives to fighters and rulers especially for the militia groups. This form of violation is common in the Al

⁶⁴ Transmission and prevention of HIV and Sexually transmitted infections in war settings: implications for current and future armed conflicts, available at:

<https://www.unhcr.org/en-ie/4073cc494.pdf> Accessed 25 May 2020

⁶⁵ Condemned for being a victim ,available at:

<https://medium.com/@feliciathobeka/dar-al-reaya-female-torture-chambers-in-saudi-arabia-f78c16271859>.

Accessed 21 May 2020

Shabab group around East African regions. There are cases of school girls being abducted and sold out as wives to militia leaders. Women are used as rewards and motivation to fighters which is violence against them. Consequently, the number of girls attending school at times of armed conflict reduces as they fear for their lives. Therefore, their education is undermined and they end up dragging back academically. Women at times are used as weapons or means of bargaining as captured by many research. In the Boko Haram group in West Africa, women were captured and taken into slavery. The intention here was to make the community weak and meet the demands of the group. In this regard, women were used as a bargaining tool. However, in the course of being taken to exile, their rights are violated and are used as cheap source of labor. At times, they were used to transport weapons and supply the militia group with relevant commodities. Commonly, there is a low probability of women to be targeted by the army and so the militia groups use them as vessels of transport. They are forced to do such activities after being threatened or when their family members are at the mercies of their oppressors. Under extreme conditions, they are used as suicide bombers, which is violence against them.

In refugee camps, distribution of aids is characterized with sexual discriminations. Women and girls are at times forced to give in to sexual demands in order to secure relief food. Research shows that most of the women sexually harassed fall victims of those who are better off in refugee camps. Such individuals include camp managers and soldiers at times. Additionally, lack of ideal facilities in the camps exposes women and girls to dangers. Most refugee camps share latrine facilities which are usually few. At night, women find it difficult to access such facilities. There are many cases of rape and assault at night in refugee camps affecting women and girls⁶⁶. Some of the perpetrators are other refugees while others are visitor or security personnel.

Female genital mutilation is accelerated at times of conflict. Much focus is on how to restore peace in an area and so this creates a loop hole for FGM supporters⁶⁷. As a result, most cases of FGM are recorded when there are armed conflicts. Some women and girls try to flee away from such traps but forcefully captured and subjected to the torture. At times of war cases of early marriages

⁶⁶ Sexual Assault Against Refugees, available at:
http://www.stopvaw.org/sexual_assault_against_refugees . Accessed 18June 2020

⁶⁷ Family Based Violence at times of Armed Conflict ,available at:
<https://www.refworld.org/docid/5bc744d24.html>. Accessed 28 May 2020

increases drastically as most women and girls are displaced, and find themselves in new environment. They end up finding themselves in new cultures that torment them. Some militia men believe that a woman is only complete if she has undergone FGM. As a result, apart from being forced into marriage life, women are subjected to FGM to meet the demands of their 'husbands'.

2.3.5 Armed Conflict in Cameroon

Cameroon has a long history of stability and a state that upholds human rights. However, the year 2018 saw the nation undergoing violence and serious human abuses⁶⁸. The unrest was because of the Boko Haram invasion and operations in the country. This era was marked with abusive military operations, which extended from the militia group to the local citizens. The cause of these violations lay behind President Paul Biya's victory for a seven-year ruling term. Military actions in the South West and North West region became a complete violation of human rights. Properties were destroyed, extrajudicial executions staged and detainees were tortured. Several schools were attacked which saw death of over 420 civilians. Most of the victims were those opposed to the rule of the president.

Political instability in Cameroon made an estimate of 32,600 citizens to seek refuge in Nigeria. At the same time, the government of Cameroon was forcibly returning Nigerian Refugees who were escaping the wrath of Boko Haram in Northern Nigeria. During this time, the government ignored violations done by the military. Moreover, Biya was affirmed to be the president and this resulted into protests from Kamto protesters. As a result, the military tortured protesters in order to make them surrender to the rule of the elect president. The government used force against peaceful demonstrators killing dozens of them. Reports show that there was use of live ammunitions including from helicopters and military vehicles. The Anglophone crisis saw abuse of civilians from both the government and the opposition. Anglophone separatists attacked kidnapped and killed civilians who took sides with the government. Schools were burnt, trading centres closed and teachers were threatened with death if they continue running school activities. As a result, learning was paralyzed in most learning facilities. The government also sought civilians who sided with the Anglophone and subjected them to torture.

⁶⁸ Cameroon Events of 2018 ,available at:

<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/cameroon>. Accessed 29July 2020

Currently the country is unstable as cases of violence as a result of armed conflict dominate. In the 14th February this year, there were attacks on Ngarbuh village that left 23 citizens dead. The northwest region continues to experience cases of human rights violation⁶⁹. UN officials reported attacks on civilians, arbitrary arrests, abduction, extrajudicial killings, rape and other forms of sexual violence. The biggest casualties were children and women, out of the 23 death cases, 15 were children. Additionally, the Southwest regions of Cameroon are unstable and civilians are forced to relocate for fear of attacks. Many schools have closed down bringing education to a halt. Children have been abducted and taken into military camps by rebels who train them to become soldiers. The international community's calls the Cameroonian government to take up responsibility of providing security to its citizens to ensure things go back to normal. Human right watch groups all over the globe continue to advocate for restoration of peace to reduce the impact of armed conflict in Cameroon.

2.3.6 Actors during Armed Conflict in Cameroon

It is seen that different participants engaged in the armed conflict in Cameroon. The consequences are diverse and felt more by women and girls whereby the quarrelling sides subjected women and girls into torture and exploitation. The main actors are the government and the militia groups, and some natives who also engage in harassment of women and girls. In 2016 and 2017, the government security forces excessively used force to halt peaceful demonstrations launched by Anglophone minority. Additionally, some individuals were detained and subjected to torture as a means of subduing them. The process of identifying rebels was not fair as those captured included women and girls who were innocent. Several of them were killed and others left handicapped due to injuries and pain inflicted in them from torture.

In November 2017, President Biya announced that Cameroon was under attack from terrorists and vowed to eradicate the criminals⁷⁰. However, the measures that were deployed in identification of terrorist were biased as victims included innocent women and girls. Government forces responded

⁶⁹ Armed Conflict at Ngarbuh ,available at : <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/2020/02/un-officials-call-for-enhanced-protection-of-civilians-facing-escalating-violence-in-cameroon/>. Accessed 22Mai 2020

⁷⁰Biya's war declaration ,available at: <https://www.africanews.com/2017/12/04/cameroon-secessionists-vow-to-fight-despite-biya-s-war-declaration//>. Accessed 28Mai 2020

to the growing insurgencies by committing extrajudicial killings, torture and abuse of suspected separatists. Moreover, the forces burnt down homes and properties for the suspect leaving women and girls vulnerable to other forms of attack. It is documented that several women were shot dead and others burnt for failure to run away from their homesteads. To cover up for such acts, the government denied access to the Human Rights watch team for fear of exposure⁷¹. As a result, some of the government harmful acts were not captured and documented.

In return armed separatists launched series of attacks on students, teachers and schools. Dozens of schools were burnt⁷², issuance of threats to parents, teachers and students also dominate. Those who did not heed to these separatists requirement were kidnapped and killed. Father William Neba who was by then the principal of S. Bede's college was kidnapped and later released making the school's activities to be suspended. Gunmen also attacked a girls' school in Bafut in 2017 and kidnapped some students while the principal was left wounded. Pressure tactics prompted many schools to close in the 2016-2017 academic year. Even after the elapse of that period, a big number of children were not in a position to resume classes. The majority of them were displaced from their homes and very quickly the life become difficult.

Militia groups make use of SGBV as a weapon of bargaining or forcing the state to meet their demands. The militia groups seem to know that SGBV inflicts more pain than death and so they exploit this avenue. Women are subjected to forced labour, forced marriages and some taken in as wives. When having captured women under their custody, women and girls as captives, militia groups are somehow convinced that the government may decide to table talks with them to settle their grievances. This approach has been used in countries Cameroon and Nigeria. To make their impact felt, militia groups will torture⁷³ women and girls and expose their act to the public. This prompts requests from the public that government launch peaceful talks to save the women and girls in captive. In this case, militia groups use women and children as bargaining items.

⁷¹Human Rights Watch Denied Entry ,available at :

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/05/02/cameroon-human-rights-watch-denied-entry>. Accessed 29May 2020

⁷² Education under attack ,available at:

<https://www.refworld.org/docid/5be94314a.html>. Accessed 27June 2020

⁷³ SGBV as Weapon of War ,available at:

<https://www.warchild.org.uk/whats-happening/news/sexual-gender-based-violence-weapon-of-war> . 12 April 2020

In summary, both the state and militia groups are violators of women and girls at times of armed conflict. Measures taken by the government to defeat terrorists are not efficient and end up causing injury to women and girls. The militia groups on their hand take the advantage of causing harm to women and children. They understand that it is easy to launch attacks to women and girls as compared to men. At the end women and girls, become the main victims of armed conflict.

3 AFRICA AND INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENT ON THE PROTECTION OF WOMEN DURING ARMED CONFLICT

3.1 Overview

This chapter presents the international and regional instruments on protection of sexual and gender based violence against women and girls focusing on United Nations resolutions and instruments, the World Health Organizations tools, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the African instruments and the Cameroonian (Anglophone) legal instruments on sexual and gender based violence against women in armed conflict.

3.2 International Instruments on Protection of SGBV against Women and Girls in Armed Conflict.

3.2.1 United Nations Resolution 1325 on Women and Armed Conflict

Resolution 1325 was the first formal and legal document from the Security Council that required parties in a conflict to avoid abuses of women's rights during the war time and encourage the participation of women in the process of peace. It was also the first United Nations Security Council resolution to specifically mention the impact of conflict on women. The resolution has since become an organizing framework for the women, peace, and security agenda, which focuses on advancing the components of Resolution 1325.

Security Council resolution 1325 recognizes that guarantee the physical, moral and psychological integrity of the women is the excellent mean to reach at cease-fire and peace. In as much as these resolutions were delayed in the making, the hope for implementation was realized.

Literary commentators have noted that the adoption of Resolution 1325 by the Security Council has broken one of the biggest bats in history -- *the systematic, brutal and widespread practice of*

*violence against women and girls in armed conflict*⁷⁴. Prior to the adoption of Resolution 1235, States did not pay particular attention to violence against women during conflicts, as there were no adequate instruments to ensure the promotion and protection of women during war.

According to UN Women reports, during armed conflict in most of the affected countries, the bodies of women and girls become battlefields for army soldiers and militia⁷⁵. The study assumes that it is necessary that the State assign women with significant responsibilities with the aim to enable it to open up prospects for security, peace and construction during and after the war.

The significant realization of the Security Council was the adoption by many Member States of national action plans to implement the resolution⁷⁶. Despite previous achievements, women and girls are still victims of gender-based violence, especially sexual violence during armed conflict. The resolution describes other forms of gender-based violence, including rape, torture, abduction, humiliation and many others.

In a study by the Scholars, it was established that cessation of aggressions did not often guarantee an end to violence against women and girls as evidence from other studies showed⁷⁷.

Hence, we believe that it would be important for the Government to reaffirm its commitment by intensifying work on gender issues, holding perpetrators accountable and, finally, bringing together efforts to create a lasting peace.

According to resolution 1325, efforts must be put in place by all member states to ensure empowerment of women as peacemakers, peace builders and peacekeepers, envisaged by the resolution. Scholarly evidences show that bringing women to the peace table improves the quality and chances of implementing agreements as women participation was seen to enrich the process,

⁷⁴ Heise, L., Ellsberg, M. and Gottmoeller, M., 2002. A global overview of gender-based violence. *International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics*, 78, pp.S5-S14.

⁷⁵ UN WOMEN, The Beijing Platform for Action Turns 20 ,available at: <https://beijing20.unwomen.org/en/in-focus/armed-conflict>. Accessed 22 May 2020

⁷⁶ UNSCR 1325 AND NATIONAL ACTION PLANS (NAPS), available at: [https://www.securitywomen.org/united-nations/uns-cr-1325-and-national-action-plans-nap#:~:text=UNSCR%201325%20and%20National%20Action%20Plans%20\(NAPs\).and%20have%20access%20to%20justice](https://www.securitywomen.org/united-nations/uns-cr-1325-and-national-action-plans-nap#:~:text=UNSCR%201325%20and%20National%20Action%20Plans%20(NAPs).and%20have%20access%20to%20justice). Accessed 19 June 2020

⁷⁷ McFadden, M.H., 2005. Joyce Blackwell. No Peace without Freedom: Race and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, 1915–1975. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press. 2004. Pp. xix, 241. \$55.00.

set different priorities and possibly bridge the political divide more effectively. The resolution requires that women seize the opportunity to lead processes of reconciliation and peacekeeping.

3.2.2 World Health Organisation Guidelines on SGBV against in Armed Conflict

According to World Health Organization, gender based violence especially sexual violence affects women and children and it has been recorded as a serious life threatening issue. It has been documented that SGBV is widespread across the globe and even highly on the African continent⁷⁸. The studies further revealed that sexual gender based violence is a critical health issue in emergency and natural disaster issue where civilian women and girls are always targeted for abuse due to their vulnerability in terms of gender, age and status in the society. World Health Organization (WHO) defines GBV as a violation to the universal human rights including the right to freedom from torture and degrading treatment, right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health and the right to life. In its study, WHO recorded that during crisis of armed conflict in a given country, systems and institutions for physical and social protection are weakened and destroyed⁷⁹. Institutions like the police, education, health, legal and social service are greatly interrupted ([Hassan, Ventevogel, Jefee-Bahloul, Barkil-Oteo, & Kirmayer, 2016](#)).

To deal with issues of gender based violence affecting women and girls, WHO recommends that protection measures should be undertaken in a coordinated manner to prevent and respond to gender based violence. WHO reported that victims and survivors of SGBV require help in dealing with the harmful impacts through healthcare services, legal redress, psychosocial support, security and other social support services. It further recommends that every member states should put in place prevention measures to hedge against the impacts of SGBV against women and girls. The organization also provides guideline regarding the capacity of staff dealing with victims of gender based violence by stating that all providers of services to SGBV victims must be knowledgeable and compassionate for effectiveness.

⁷⁸ Warwick, B.T., 2016. Socio-Economic Rights during Economic Crises: A Changes Approach to Non-Retrogression. *Int'l & Comp. LQ*, 65, p.249.

⁷⁹Sexual and others forms of gender-based violence in crises, available at: <https://www.who.int/hac/techguidance/pht/SGBV/en/>. Accessed 12July 2020

According to several reports, to achieve effective prevention of impacts of sexual and gender based violence, a multi-sectoral approach is needed to coordinate matters including health services, legal services, human rights and social security⁸⁰. WHO recommends that coordination should involve strategic planning, data collection, resource sharing and provision of leadership among others. It further recommends that a GBV programming should be designed between a UN international and a local NGO, which should be established at the earliest stages of emergency or armed conflict. Evidences have shown that establishing a coordination mechanism for SGBV at the beginning of an armed conflict has helped ensure a more responsible and responsive action from the onset of the conflict to a more stable phase and beyond⁸¹. WHO recommends several guidelines in line with fundraising. These include participation in the UN consolidated appeal process (CAP) in SGBV, advocating for inclusion of sexual and gender based violence as a daily agenda for discussion in all sector meetings, identifying and clarifying the nature and extent of sexual violence and developing an advocacy action plan, which gives details of specific activities to be undertaken⁸².

According to WHO, a major challenge to addressing sexual violence is the absence of data on the extent and nature of sexual and gender based violence as a result of under reporting of GBV. In its guidelines, WHO reported that during armed conflict, the impact and scale of these cases including rape and human rights abuse are manipulated for political gains by various political parties. Therefore to guard against this backdrop, WHO guidelines provides that the SGBV working group should ensure that a situation analysis is done with regard to sexual and gender based violence to ensure; promotion of inclusivity of issues related to SGBV and will draw relevant and accurate information from the needs assessments already conducted. WHO also directs that, member states should utilize an already established and tested tool as a guide to collecting information related to the nature and extent of sexual and gender based violence, attitudes, policies and practices.

⁸⁰ International alert , The complexity of sexual and gender-based violence, available at: https://www.international-alert.org/fr/publications/complexity-sexual-and-gender-based-violence?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI_sjEuv-M6wIVDfIRCh3xXwjREAAYASAAEgK36fD_BwE. Accessed 29 May 2020

⁸¹ UNHCR, Sexual and Gender-based violence toolkit, available at : https://www.unhcr.org/sgbv-toolkit/_test/. Accessed 30 May 2020

⁸² Consolidated Appeals Process, available at: <https://www.who.int/hac/donorinfo/cap/about/en/>. Accessed 19 July 2020

3.2.3 United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and SGBV against Women.

The United Nations Development fund for women (UNIFEM) is an UN organ which provides globally finance and technical assistance to women in order to empower and promote women rights. It was established in the year 1976. Its role is to subsidize projects and organizations that contribute to the realization of women's rights⁸³. Since its inception, UNIFEM has supported women empowerment and gender equality through links women organizations across the globe. In the African countries like Sierra Leone, Uganda, Liberia and Cameroon, UNIFEM has helped women to cope with the post-armed conflict effects through implementation of several projects to support women and girls⁸⁴. Through its situation analysis, UNIFEM found out that extending the benefits of a project to the community and involving sexual and gender based violence victims in the planning and implementation increased the local support for the project hence its sustainability⁸⁵. Through such projects, member of a community were sensitized on gender equality and social responsibility. According to UNIFEM, communication and wide dissemination of information is among the most effective ways of enhancing equal accessibility to information. Through this, attitudes of a community are changed towards gender sensitive conflict resolution thus curbing all forms of sexual and gender based violence.

To assist women and girls affected by gender-based violence in armed conflict, according to UNIFEM, It is important to provide women with financial support to enable them to meet their needs and to protect them from abuse, as well as funding for human rights organizations to accompany women victims of abuse in the process of regaining their dignity.

During armed conflict, women and girls face immense obstacles in gathering and deliberating on their concerns regarding sexual abuse. According to the UNIFEM guideline, during the post

⁸³ Scott, J., Averbach, S., Modest, A.M., Hacker, M.R., Cornish, S., Spencer, D., Murphy, M. and Parmar, P., 2013. An assessment of gender inequitable norms and gender-based violence in South Sudan: a community-based participatory research approach. *Conflict and Health*, 7(1), p.4.

⁸⁴ Peace Women , UNIFEM AND URGENT ACTION FUND SUPPORT PEACE-BUILDING PROCESS IN SIERRA LEONE, available at : <https://www.peacewomen.org/node/90342> ,Accessed 28July 2020

⁸⁵ Clark, C., 2003. Gender-based violence research initiatives in refugee, internally displaced, and post-conflict settings: Lessons learned.

conflict period, women should be involved in rebuilding the society thus increasing the efforts of making them to be part of the decision making process.

3.2.4 The United Nations Convention against Torture (UNCAT)

The United Nations Convention against torture (UNCAT) is the most detailed treaty that deal with torture internationally.

Article 1 of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment defines the term Torture as

*“Any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third party. It could also be a confession, punishing a person for an act he or a third party has committed or is suspected of having committed, intimidating or coercing him. It does not include pain or suffering arising only inherent or incidental to lawful sanctions”*⁸⁶.

Torture has destroyed Women’ dignities as many of them were subjected to arbitrary detention, sexual exploitation, unlawful killing and forced labor⁸⁷.

Likewise, the international law, international customary law and the prohibition against torture are some legal instruments, which guarantee the impermissibility of the practice of torture. According to the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, Juan E. Méndez⁸⁸

“The prohibition against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment enjoys the enhanced status of a jus cogens⁸⁹ or peremptory norm of

⁸⁶ Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 39/46 of 10 December 1984

entry into force 26 June 1987, in accordance with article 27 (1)

⁸⁷UN General Assembly Resolution 3452 (XXX) of 9 December 1975, Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Being Subjected to Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment ,available at : <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/DeclarationTorture.aspx> . Accessed 26 July 2020

⁸⁸UNGA’ Special Rapporteur the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, Juan E. Méndez ,April 2014;A/HRC/25/60 ,

⁸⁹ Draft articles on Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrongful Acts, with commentaries, Commentary to Article 26, para 5, Adopted by International Law Commission, 2001, para. 5. See UNGA ‘Interim report of the Special

general international law and requires the States not merely to refrain from authorizing or conniving at torture or other ill-treatment but also to suppress, prevent and discourage such practices”.

In others words, in addition to the traditional States Obligations: Respect, Protect, and Fulfill, the States must “ensure respect” for the absolute prohibition against torture by taking positives actions to prevent any form of Torture or Ill-Treatment even during the trouble period.

The General Comments No.20 of the Prohibition of torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment of the article 7 (1992) ⁹⁰ notes that,

“It is not sufficient for the implementation of article 7 to prohibit such treatment or punishment, or to make it a crime, the States should inform the Committee of the measures they take to prevent and punish acts of torture or other ill-treatment in any territory under their jurisdiction”.

In another way States should take appropriates measures that will reinforce the prohibition of Torture through the legislative, administrative, judicial or other actions that must, in the end, be effective in preventing such treatment.

However, despite all those measures, the practice of torture is still effective in many countries in the world. Therefore, combating torture of women needs the participation of many actors in diverse sectors and effective implementation of various norms and standards to fight genuinely the plague.

3.2.5 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is a treaty that was internationally adopted in the year 1979 by the United Nations General Assembly. It is described as an international Bill of Rights for women and girls. This convention contains

Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment’ (2018) UN Doc A/73/207, para. 5.

⁹⁰ General Comment No. 20: Prohibition of torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (article 7) (1992) (Adopted by the Human Rights Committee at the Forty-fourth Session, A/44/40, 10 March 1992), available at [:https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Education/Training/Compilation/Pages/a\)GeneralCommentNo20Prohibitionoftortureorothercruelinhumanordegradingtreatmentorpunishment\(article7\)\(1992\).aspx](https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Education/Training/Compilation/Pages/a)GeneralCommentNo20Prohibitionoftortureorothercruelinhumanordegradingtreatmentorpunishment(article7)(1992).aspx). Accessed 26 July 2020

several articles dealing with different issues regarding discrimination against women and girls in the society. According to Article 1 of the convention,

*“discrimination against women shall mean any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field”*⁹¹.

The discrimination against women is recognized as Gender based violence in several legislative both in international and national. Article 1 and the General recommendation No.35 (2017) thereon, by CEDAW of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women at the international level update the general recommendation No.19⁹². According to the General recommendation, Discrimination against women deprives women to fully enjoy her fundamental rights like other human being. Gender-based violence is the physical representation of the discrimination that occurs in women within the society. Several States legislations, do not address gender-based violence against women. The Committee condemns the Gender based Violence in all forms and recommends the States parties of the Convention to implement mechanisms in order to effectively eradicate this phenomenon. The laws should be coercive and the perpetrators must be accountable.

3.2.6 The UN Special Procedure

UN Human Rights Council is the organ, which promotes and monitors human rights globally by putting in places special procedures. Special Rapporteur, Special representatives or working Groups to names those few are classified according to the Country mandate or thematic.

⁹¹ Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women New York, 18 December 1979, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CEDAW.aspx>. Accessed 28May 2020

⁹² UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, General recommendation No.35, Article 1: “discrimination against women”, 26 July 2017, CEDAW/C/GC/35, available at :https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fGC%2f35&Lang=en . Accessed 30July 202

The Special rapporteur on violence against women Dubravka stressed the causes and consequences of the apparition of the violence⁹³. She also raised awareness and provided recommendations for further reforms. It is important to mention that the causes of Sexual based violence against women can be related to numerous factors such as tradition, cultures, economic factors, political and social for a specific region in the world.

For the Dubravka the violation against women is considerate as a fundamental human rights violation. She criticizes all forms of violations on Women and she highlights the importance of the government to take its responsibilities regard on the protection of the women rights. She also emphasizes on the accountabilities of the perpetrators.

3.3 African Instruments on SGBV against Women in Armed Conflict

SGBV is the rising bane in the African region, so the AU is consecrating its efforts therein. Several regional instruments have been put in place in order to safeguard the human rights of women and children during peace time and during emergencies.

3.3.1 The protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's rights

The protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's rights on the rights of the women in Africa Knows as "Maputo Protocol" is the main regional legal tool concerning the protection of the Women. The Article 14 (a) (b) and (c) guarantees Women rights in the aspect of health, sexuality and reproductive health.

⁹³ The UN Human Rights Council designed Dubravka Šimonovic as Special Rapporteur on violence against women in June 2015. Available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/women/srwomen/pages/srwomenindex.aspx#:~:text=The%20United%20Nations%20Commission%20on,session%20in%20resolution%202003%2F45>. Accessed 29 July 2020

For the purpose to provide comprehensive knowledge on it, the Africa Commission, adopted the General Comments No.2, 2014 on the Article 14 of the protocol on to the African Charter on Human and People's rights⁹⁴.

The Commission stressed that prevalence of maternity mortality is very high in Africa, due to the unsafe abortions methods. In Cameroon for example because on Anglophone Conflict women were forced to give birth in the bush because the risk of getting kill by the soldiers or Militia were significant⁹⁵. Young raped girls were forced to carry a pregnancy that they did not wish. In most African cultures and traditions, children born of rape are rejected by the community. This stigma is a double victimization for the young mother and the child.

The commission recommended that States parties should take necessary measures the effective implementation if the right of non-discrimination. Likewise, the woman should have the possibility to choose the contraception method without reprisals from the family or any member from the community. Finally, the Commission encourage States to comply with the international standards of the WHO and domesticate the regional treaty.

3.3.2 The African Charter on the rights and welfare of the Child

The African Charter on the rights and welfare of the Child is the most detailed treaty in Africa that deals with the protection and promotion of the Child right. The Charter on its Article 16 requires that State should protect Children from all form of violence. Parents and legal guardian must ensure the respect and the dignity of the child.

The African Committee on the rights and welfare of the Child issued in 2011 a statement on Children violence⁹⁶. It recommends that states should remove from their constitutions any language

⁹⁴ General Comment No. 2 on Article 14.1 (a), (b), (c) and (f) and Article 14. 2 (a) and (c) of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, available at: <https://www.achpr.org/legalinstruments/detail?id=13> ,Accessed 28 June 2020

⁹⁵ RFI, Women bear the brunt of violence in Cameroon's Anglophone crisis , 3March 2020, available at : <https://www.rfi.fr/en/international/20200303-women-bearing-brunt-ongoing-violence-cameroon-s-anglophone-crisis> :Accessed 30 July2020

⁹⁶ African Committee on the rights and welfare of the Child ,2011,available at : <https://endcorporalpunishment.org/human-rights-law/regional-human-rights-instruments/acrwc/#:~:text=Relevant%20articles->

which encourages corporal punishment of the Child and which does not tie, since it does not obey the principles of the convention.

The Committee of experts in the process of monitoring the implementation of the Charter requested from the Africans States their commitment on the eradication of all forms of abuses against children. The Committee found that in many Countries corporal Punishment was accepted in their cultures and traditions, which make the implementation very difficult. However, the Committee stressed that the States should include the provisions into their domestic law. By doing that the perpetrators of violence will be held accountable by the law.

3.4 The Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa

Its mandate is to ensure that the member states are effectively implement the mechanisms of gender equality and reinforce their engagement to the international and regional women rights tools. The Solemn Declaration ensure also the full participation of the women in peace process as in the resolution 1235 of the United Nations. Solemn Declaration believe that the gender equality can be only be effective if the factors such as economic empowerment of women ,good governance and peace-security is respected by each member state.

The intersession report of the mechanism on the rights of women in Africa launched on the 9-22 October 2012 a working group with the special rapporteur on that issue⁹⁷. During this intersession, the special rapporteur Soyata Maiga presents the challenges that States are facing in the implementation of the Solemn Declaration but also the successful collaboration between the inter-governmental institutions for the promotion and protection of the rights of the women⁹⁸. GIMAC (Gender in my Agenda Campaign) is one of the main international NGO that collaborated with regional institution concerning this Issue⁹⁹. It has contributed to evaluate the implementation of the

[The%20African%20Charter%20on%20the%20Rights%20and%20Welfare%20of%20the,childrearing%20must%20ensure%20discipline%20is](#). Accessed 26 July 2020

⁹⁷ Africa Commission on Human and People Rights ,available at: <https://www.achpr.org/sessions/intersession?id=146>. Available , Accessed 29 July 2020

⁹⁸ Special Rapporteur on Rights of Women Soyata Maiga ,Commissioner Intersession reports ,available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/510a45322.html> Accessed 22 June 2020

⁹⁹ Gender in my Agenda Campaign ,available at:<http://www.genderismyagenda.com/campaign/mission.html> Accessed 29 July 2020

declaration as well as formulate recommendations to heads of the States. It also plays a significant role to monitor the policy of the Declaration.

3.5 Cameroon Legal Instruments and SGBV

Cameroon, like many African countries, has been under the yoke of colonisation, as a result has inherited of two distinct legal systems. The English system law “Common Law” and the French “Civil law“. Constitution, legislation, judicial precedent, customary law and law reporting are the mains sources of Cameroonian law¹⁰⁰. Cameroon has enacted several legal instruments in the fight against sexual and gender based violence against women and girls. It has also ratified several international instruments. The country acceded to the instrument of the convention against torture and other inhumane treatment on the 19 December 1986¹⁰¹. This made Cameroon legally obligated to adhere to the rules of this convention. Despite the ratification of the convention, Women in Cameroon are in powerless position and the risk of being torture is significant. However, some legal measures are allowed to enhance their conditions and fight torture in order to make them live in an environment free of torture and restore their honor and human dignity.

In the year 2000, the country further acceded to the International Covenant on civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)¹⁰². This convention deals with gender equality between men and women, this mandated the government to receive and act on the information received in its jurisdiction with regard to domestic and other forms violence against women including rape, measures to prevent abortion, safe access to abortion services for victims who become pregnant due to rape etc¹⁰³.

Cameroon furthermore acceded to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) in 1984 and further ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination¹⁰⁴. In the year 2012, Cameroon was advised by the International

¹⁰⁰ Hauser Global Law School Program, Researching Cameroonian Law ,available at: <https://www.nyulawglobal.org/globalex/Cameroon.html>. Accessed 29 June 2020

¹⁰¹ United Nations treaties collection , Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment New York, 10 December 1984,available at https://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=IND&mtdsg_no=IV-9&chapter=4&lang=en Accessed 19 May 2020

¹⁰² International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (adopted 16 December 1966, entered into force 23 March 1976), Article 26

¹⁰³ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (adopted 16 December 1966 ,entered into force 23 March 1976),Article 7

¹⁰⁴ UN Treaty Database ,available at:

bodies to amend the family code, labour code and the penal code as they had discriminatory elements against women and girls. It was further called upon to strengthen its legal framework to hedge against violence against women and girls.

The Constitution of the Republic of Cameroon on its Article 1(2) provides that “*it is the responsibility of the government to ensure the equality of all citizens before the law*”¹⁰⁵. A penal code was then established to deal with issues regarding rape, adultery and early marriages. Article 277 and 281 of the penal code dealt with domestic violence largely; however, a more specific law on combating violence against women is yet to be adopted. The Cameroon government has set up call centres for victims of sexual and gender based violence, however this has proven ineffective. Civil code launched by the government contained some elements discrimination against women hence its reform is being awaited. Nevertheless, the government of Cameroon has been blamed for taking long to implement several recommendations on combating SGBV against women. Such recommendations include criminalization of domestic violence and marital rape¹⁰⁶.

3.6 Application of Cameroon Legal Instruments on SGBV

In order to implement its international commitment, Cameroon has enshrined in its Constitution the protection of women rights and children in accordance with the preamble. This is done under article 45¹⁰⁷ of the constitution, which stipulates that the ratification of the international convention must be incorporated into national laws.

The Ministry of Women’s empowerment and the family is the main organ in charge to promote ensure and protect women. To respond to the CEDAW Committee recommendations¹⁰⁸, the

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=30&Lang=EN.

Accessed 29May 2020

¹⁰⁵ Constitution of the Republic of Cameroon (As in force from January 1996,including all amendments up to November2011) , Article 1(2) ,available at :

<https://www.cnpbm.cm/en/constitution-republic-cameroon> .Accessed. Accessed 22May 2020

¹⁰⁶ Warwick, B.T., 2016. Socio-Economic Rights during Economic Crises: A Changes Approach to Non-Retrogression. *Int'l & Comp. LQ*, 65, p.249.

¹⁰⁷ Constitution of the Republic of Cameroon, (as in force from 18 January1996 ,includes all amendments up to November 2011) ,available at :

<https://www.cnpbm.cm/en/constitution-republic-cameroon> Accessed 29July 2020

¹⁰⁸ Refwolrd, Committee on the Elimination Of Discrimination against Womnen,2November 2012,CEDAW/C/CMR/4-5,available at :

<https://www.refworld.org/publisher,CEDAW,COUNTRYREP,CMR,525be9256,0.html> .Accessed 22July 2020

Ministry of empowerment and the family organized an inter-ministerial working group to discuss about the issue related on women rights.

At the end of this meeting, several solutions have been settle .In 2009 the parliament set up a “Implementation of the parliamentarians” Network for gender. This network has to aim to raise awareness about women abuses and defend women rights in all forms. It has been co finance by the Cameroonian government and the UNIFEM.

Financial support has been also allocated to NGO such as “The Association to combat Violence against Women” and “Cameroonian Association of Women lawyers and Lawyers without borders” in June 2011. Likewise, several workshops and Seminars have been on topic Mainstreaming gender when adopting laws and the role of women in governance. The Ministry of education has introduced Human rights as subjects since 2010 in order to enhance the importance to respect the rights of women. At the Justice level judges, lawyers have been train in order to better understand the mechanism of CEDAW for a better implementation. It is important to note that many raped women did not report the case, due to the complexity of the procedures. This working meeting allow setting up an easy procedure both for the victims and the judicial organs.

The criminalization of the exploitation of female prostitution in the Article 294 of the penal Code has been enacted¹⁰⁹. Article 345 and article 343 of the Penal Code recommend a special protection of girls in danger in protection. The Anglophones crisis has demonstrated that many young girls have been enrol in prostitution either by their parents or by relatives. This law will permit to fight effectively the sex trafficking.

For combating precocities of young girls and women, the government has rehabilitated three public Counselling centres and increase Youth support Centres. The Social worker guides has been pushed in 2010, which will give a directive to civil servants to facilitate women and young girls reintegration .Likewise the creation of Ombudsperson for gender equality with the mandate to promote women rights in collaboration with the National Commissions on Human Rights and Freedoms.

¹⁰⁹ Book 1, the Penal Code , available at : <https://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/en/cm/cm014en.pdf> . Accessed 29June 2020

4 METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

This section addresses the methodology and the research design that was used throughout this study. A comprehensive data collection process, bearing in mind the ethical consideration of the respondents and including the victims. The necessary international protocols and guidelines were followed in designing the instruments, collecting data, and presenting the findings. Mixed methodology was used as it offers grounds to draw robust findings about the study.

4.1 Research Design

Cross sectional survey research design and mixed methodology had been suitable for this study. The choice of a mixed methodology comprising of both quantitative and qualitative methods. The mixed methods research consisted to collect and analyze data both quantitative and qualitative. Interviews and focus groups were generally the approach used in the qualitative method, while the study of information was the particularity of the quantitative method¹¹⁰.

4.1.1 Cross Sectional Survey Research Design

The particularity of Cross-sectional Survey was the method of observation. In this Cross Sectional study, the researcher evaluated simultaneously the findings and the vulnerability of the participants. Participants in a cross-sectional study were simply selected on the basis of the inclusion and exclusion criteria defined for the study. Cross sectional was most preferred in this study as it had enable women victims of GBV to be sampled and included in the study.

4.1.2 Triangulation

Triangulation involved the use of mixed methodology (quantitative and qualitative).

The results of a qualitative study, allowed the researcher to have an understanding of the social phenomena and to better appreciate the behavior of the participants.

¹¹⁰ Bryman, A., 2016. *Social research methods*. Oxford university press

Qualitative methods gather information that was presented primarily in text form through narratives, verbatim quotes, descriptions, lists, and case studies¹¹¹.

Quantitative research methods produced data that was showed and evaluated as percentage. Quantitative methods used in research a positivistic or post positivistic framework, whereas qualitative methods was more associated with the naturalistic or interpretive framework. They were particularly appropriated for measuring the frequency of a problem or condition and its distribution in a population (for example, how many women in a community had experienced violence and which age groups were most affected). Surveys were often used to obtain information about people's opinions and behavior, for example through Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices (KAP) surveys. Because the underlying goal contributed to social change, critical researchers tended to be more pragmatic in the use of methods

4.1.3 Cohort Study Design

Cohort research design was also used to some extend in the study. Cohort studies were a type of design preferably used in medical and sociological research used to investigate the causes of disease or certain social phenomena and to establish links between risk factors and health outcomes. In this study the design was used to establish the health effects of SGBV in armed conflict in Anglophone Cameroon. These effects had been discussed in a qualitative manner and not medical or epidemiological manner.

4.2 The scope of the Study and Sampling

The study was based on Anglophone parts of Cameroon. The Anglophone crisis had affected mostly the south West and North West region of Cameroon. The table below showed the statistics of sample collected for the two English speaking part of Cameroon.

¹¹¹ Bryman, A., 2015. Social research methods 5 th edn New York.

Region	Sample
Northwest	
Bamenda	2
Ntumbo	3
Ngarbuh	4
Mbengwi	2
Southwest	
Kumba	2
Mamfe	2
Buea	3
Limbe	2
Total Sample Size	20

Table 1: Samples collected from the two crises hided area in Cameroon

The sample size consisted of 20 respondents who were proportionately drawn from all the regions of South west and North West of Cameroon through snowball sampling.

4.2.1 Stratified purposeful sampling

Since the regions where the ongoing-armed conflict is large, many were distributed in the Northwest and South west, parts of the Anglophone regions, the study used proportionate stratified sampling so as to offer equal chances for every victim of SGBV to be included in the study.

4.2.2 Snowball or chain sampling

Since victims of SGBV were not normally disclosed in communities, snowball sampling through the help of community social workers and civil society representatives enables the respondents to be netted in the sample through snowball sampling.

4.3 Instrumentation and Data

Various instruments were used in the study. The instruments were used in line with international guidelines.

4.3.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data and it semi-structured.

4.3.1.1 Violence against Women Instrument

On the item seeking to establish various forms of SGBV meted on women, the study used violence against women studies scale.

4.3.1.2 World Health Organisation's instrument for the VAW

The WHO guideline had been followed when examining health impacts of the effects of SGBV in the armed. In line with the WHO guidelines of research on VAW, both men and women were included in the FGD to ensure gender equity. Focus group discussions (FGDs), in-depth interviews, and semi-structured interviews were conducted. 24 FGDs (18 with women and six with men) were conducted to better understand community perceptions of VAW¹¹². Six FGDs were conducted with women in each ecological zone (18total). Women and men had been stratified by age¹¹³

4.3.2 In-depth Qualitative Research

This involved in-depth interviews and focused on group discussions. In-depth interviews were normally carried out face to face so that a rapport can be created with respondents. The In-depth interviews allowed the researcher to express its empathy to the victims.

¹¹² The United Nations defines violence against women (VAW) as *"any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life."* (1)
<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women> (Accessed 26.05.2020)

¹¹³ UNFPA. (2017). *Female genital mutilation: a joint WHO/UNICEF/UNFPA statement*: World Health Organization.

4.3.3 Free Listing

Free listing was used to list the various forms of SGBV and the frequency in which it has occurred in the Anglophone area.

4.4 Ethical Considerations

This study considered all manner of ethical considerations in the process of data collection especially in carrying out interviews from victims of SGBV. Written permission was obtained from relevant statutory institutions and bodies before the victims were interviewed. An assurance was made to the victims that the information offered during armed conflict should only be used for the purposes of research and that it was treated with utmost confidentiality.

4.4.1 Informed Consideration for the Respondents

As part of ethical requirement, permission was sought from the victims of SGBV before engaging them in the study. Participants who did not want to continue the study drop without any form of coerced or manipulation.

4.4.2 Community Agreement

The leadership of the community was involved in the process of data collection and assurance given to them that, rights of the women and girls who were victims of SGBV were not violated.

4.4.3 Privacy and Confidentiality

The study ensured absolute confidentiality to information collected from the victims. Interviews were done through phone to ensure the rights of the victims of SGBV were respected.

4.4.4 Beneficence

Beneficence was an ethical consideration where by researcher did not take advantage of the situation to collect more information way and above what the objectives of the study desired.

4.5 Data Collection and Analysis

4.5.1 Instruments

The instruments for data analysis includes semi-structured questionnaires, interview schedules, private phone conversations, and focused group discussions. The questionnaires were subjected to

pilot studies to ascertain their reliability by use of Cronbach alpha coefficient. A value of above 0.75 was accepted and as such the questionnaire used to be reliable.

4.5.2 Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative data analysis was done using both descriptive and inferential statistics.

4.5.2.1 Qualitative data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis was analyzed thematically using excerpts consisting of statements collected through interviews or private phone interviews or focused group discussions.

5 FINDINGS ON AFFECTED CONFLICT AREA

This chapter presents findings and discussions of sexual and gender based violence in terms of the status of conflict in the Anglophone Cameroon. It states the role of the state as a protector and perpetrator of sexual and gender based violence in Anglophone Cameroon, the experiences by women and girls, as well as the health consequences of SGBV on them. Finally, the chapter unfolds the opinions from victims of SGBV and human rights organizations in Cameroon. This portion of the work begins by establishing the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

5.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

This section addresses the demographic characteristics of the respondents with regards to age, level of education and marital status.

5.1.1 Age of the respondents

This item establishes that 42% of the respondents were of the age 24 and below, 38% were of the age 25-35, and 20% were 20 years of age, as showed in the figure.

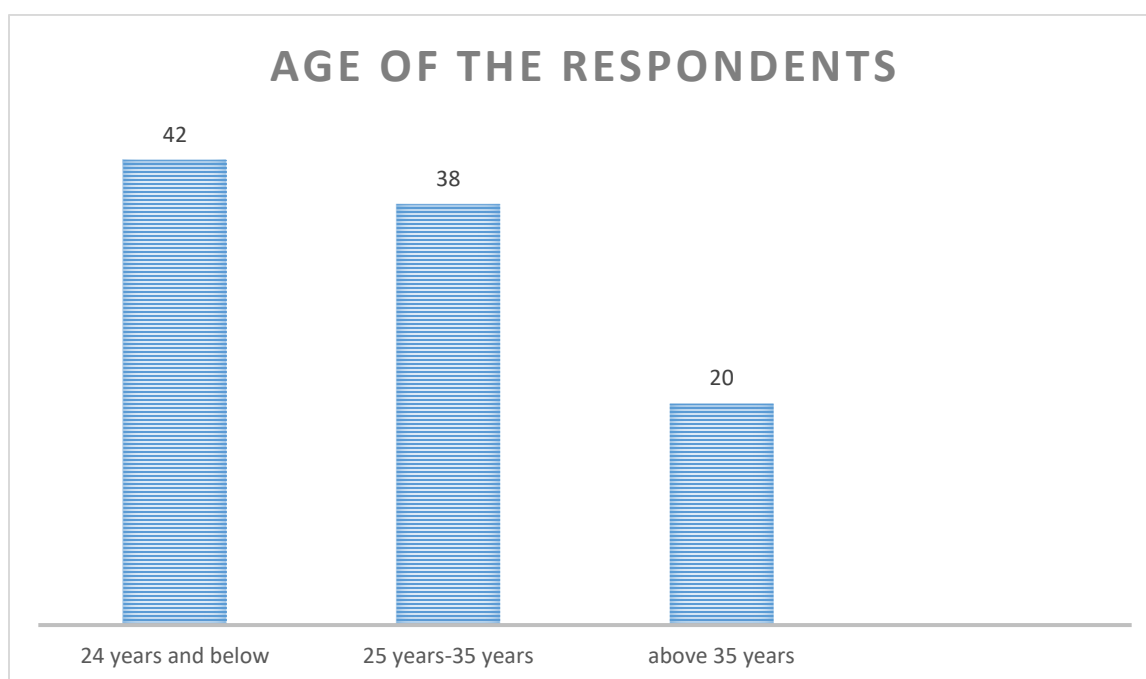


Figure 2: *Age of the Respondents*

The findings from figure 2 demonstrates that majority of victims of SGBV are women and girls below the age of 24¹¹⁴. This concurs with the Ugandan study by Undie (2016) who established that perpetrators of SGBV prefer young girls, since majority of the perpetrators used threats on young girls and women and that this cohort was found to rarely opt to report the incidents for fear of stigma from community. One of the key objectives of SGBV as perceived by actors of violence was attacking victims who created much impact in the society. Majority of women of this age are single and hence there is a possibility that they would not speak out about the violation unlike their married counterparts for fear of being shunned by men in future due to the rape experiences.

5.1.2 Educational level

This item sought to establish the educational level of the respondents to establish their level of preparedness in managing aspects of SGBV including their conducts with the perpetrators. The results of the respondents with different educational backgrounds are the Primary Schools, Secondary Ordinary Level, Secondary Advanced level and University as shown in figure 3.

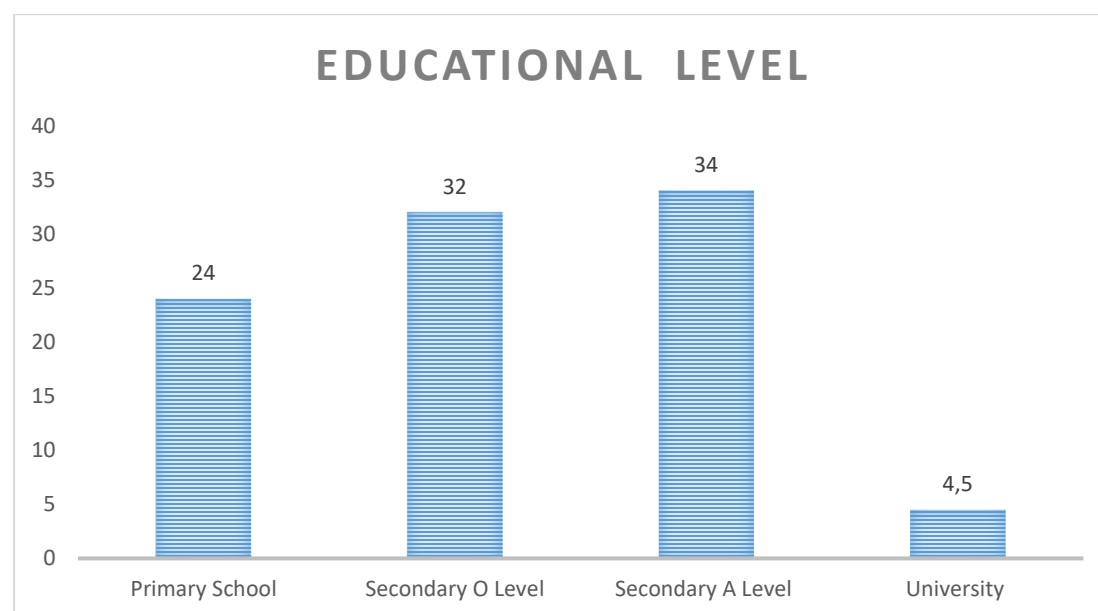


Figure 3: *Educational Level of the Respondents*

¹¹⁴ Undie, C.C., Birungi, H., Obare, F., Odwe, G., Namwebya, J.H., Orikushaba, P., Ayebale, P., Onen, W., Nicholson, F., Chisinga-Francis, R. and Netshabako, P., 2016. Effectiveness of a community-based SGBV prevention model in emergency settings in Uganda: Testing the 'Zero Tolerance Village Alliance' intervention.

From the findings in figure 3, it was evident that majority of the victims were of Advanced level meaning they had a reasonable level of education during the incidents¹¹⁵. Women empowerment requires that women have basic education to know how to engage the perpetrators during the violence in case the law enforcement agencies are not available during that period to protect the victim from the violence. These findings concur with those of Simister (2010)¹¹⁶ who established that education matters a lot during SGBV and women that are more educated will be in a better position to negotiate with the attackers during the incident, which may lead to less physical assault as compared to these girls, and women who are less educated. The principal of preservation of evidence during rape was well understood by educated girls and women unlike the illiterate girls and women, as such, the fight of SGBV during armed conflict can be won if the women and girl child was enlightened through advocacy.

5.1.3 Marital status

This item sought to establish the marital status of the victims of SGBV. Figure 4 shows the distribution based on marital status.

¹¹⁵ The education system in Cameroon has two sub-systems, the British and French sub-system, and the languages of instruction are accordingly English and French. Advanced Level refers to the students who graduate from secondary school and can continue studies at university.

¹¹⁶ Simister, J.G., 2010. Domestic violence and female genital mutilation in Kenya: effects of ethnicity and education. *Journal of Family Violence*, 25(3), pp.247-257.

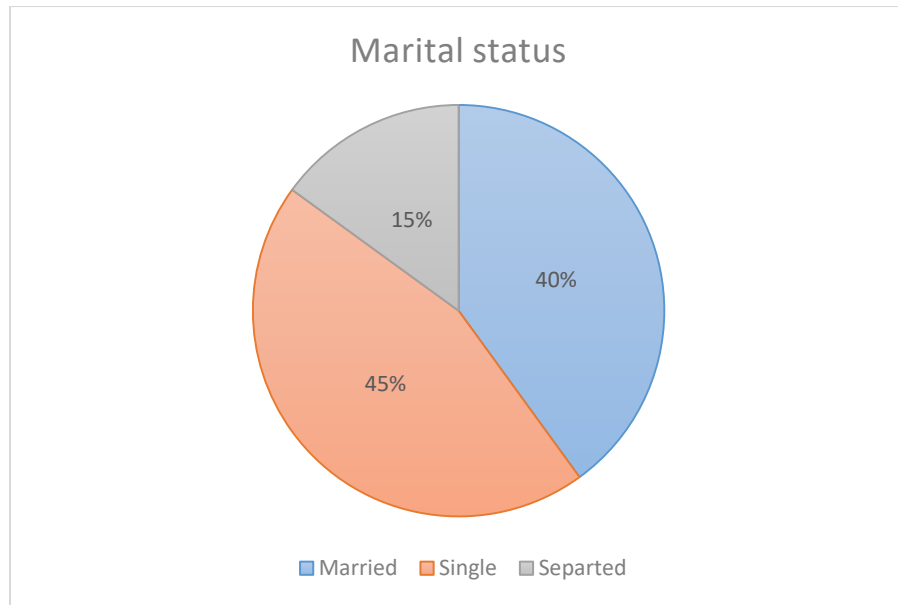


Figure 4: *Marital status of the respondents*

From the findings of figure 2 above, majority of the victims (45%) were single, 40% were married and 15% of the victims were separated or divorced. It was apparent that most of the victims of SGBV were unmarried women. This concurs with of the study of UNICEF who alluded that SGBV was more prevalent among single women and young girls unlike married women¹¹⁷. However, some researchers argued that the impact of SGBV on women and girls in relation to their marital status differs from one situation to the other and from one-armed conflict to the other¹¹⁸. These findings differ with those of UNICEF, who in her study established that during armed conflict, the perpetrators of SGBV pick victims who have experienced much impact of the violence, with some cases the violence meted on victims with no clear pattern or motive. We decided to seek views from scholars in the Institute of Gender and Development in the University of Cameroon as to why

¹¹⁷ UNICEF, "THE IMPACT OF CONFLICT ON WOMEN AND GIRLS IN WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA AND THE UNICEF RESPONSE", available at:

https://www.unicef.org/emergencies/files/Impact_conflict_women.pdf. Accessed 27 Juin 2020

¹¹⁸ Gleditsch, N.P. and Rudolfson, I., 2016. Are Muslim countries more prone to violence?. *Research & Politics*, 3(2), p.2053168016646392.

during armed conflict, girls and young women are the highest casualties. One of the scholars, a 42 years old Scholar at the Faculty of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Buea, conducted an interview on the 26th of May 2020, at Buea. During his interview said,

“The main foundation of SGBV is the inequality of power between two genders. Women likewise girls are discriminate in many Africans societies. This situation explains why many national and global organizations recommend Cameroon to immediately apply the ratified treaty on the Anglophones crisis to prevent more abuses on girls and women.”

The essence of establishing the marital distribution of victims of SGBV was to try to find out the level of rampage caused by armed conflict on family. This was because evidence from other armed conflict settings indicated that many families were ruined by SGBV during armed conflict as the victims were never accepted back to not only their nuclear or extended families but even to the villages or communities.

5.2 Status of Armed Conflict in Anglophone Cameroon

Available literatures indicated armed conflict in the Anglophone Cameroon has been a long-lasting issue since independence. The status of the armed conflict revolves round many scenarios. Some of the scenarios ranged from increased number of victims of rape, assault, displacement, forced marriages, and even death. This study established that during armed conflict, civilians were the highest casualties in all gender. The ICRC study further revealed disparities among girls, men and women, with a big proportion girls and women being the most negatively affected during the armed period¹¹⁹. Figure 5 shows the distribution of women, girls and men as victims of SGBV.

¹¹⁹ This is according to the information gathered from International Committee of the Red Cross during the Study of the women affected by the Armed Conflict of 15 June 2003, available at :

<https://www.icrc.org/en/doc/resources/documents/statement/5nkl7c.htm> .Accessed 29 July 2020

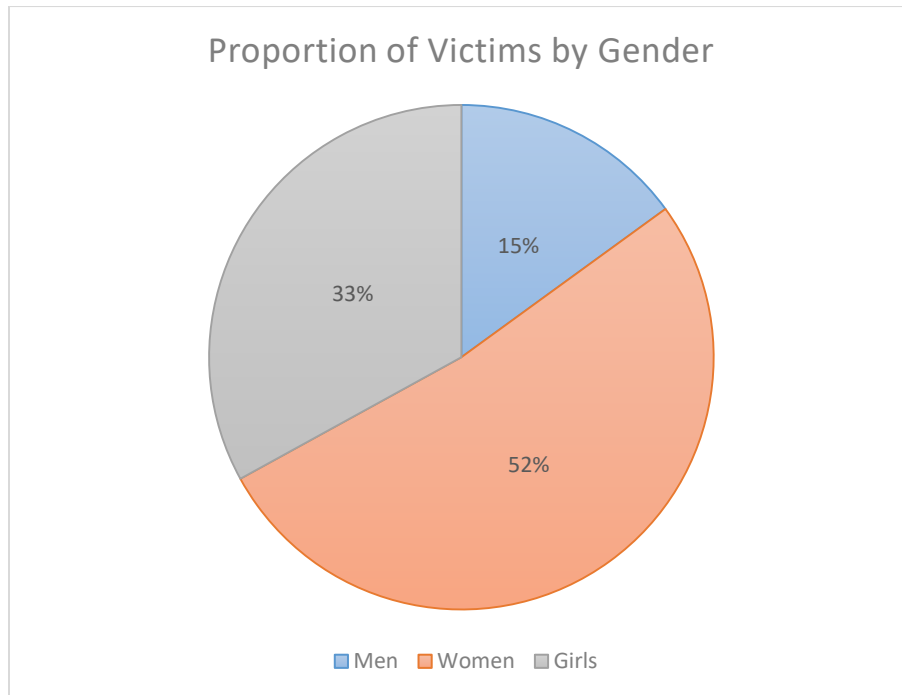


Figure 5: *Proportion of victims by Gender*

Statistics from the figure above show that a big proportion of girls and women (85%) were subjected to various forms of abuse. A study by Scholars recorded that armed conflicts in Cameroon on girls and women are basically tragic mainly due to violation of their physical integrity and the fact that they are incapacitated to contribute to the wellbeing of their families and communities¹²⁰. Both women and men are severely affected by effects of armed conflicts as the agricultural and economic activities are temporarily suspended. Survive in this context, was very difficult to live in decent conditions.¹²¹ However, it was evident from some responses from men who felt that their plight was not addressed as victims since much attention is paid to women and girls as compared to them. One of the male victims spoke out his mind saying;

¹²⁰ Ani, K.J., Kinge, G.T.W. and Ojakorotu, V., 2018. Political crisis, protests and implications on nation building in Cameroon. *African Renaissance*, 15(Special Issue 1), pp.123-141.

¹²¹ Perception Global Media, Cameroon : Social ,Economic Consequences of the “Anglophone Crisis” in the NW and SW regions ,6 May 2017,available at : <http://www.perceptionglobalmedia.com/cameroon-social-economic-consequences-of-the-anglophone-crisis-in-the-nw-and-sw-regions/>. Accessed 29 July2020

“Men just like women and girls were also victims of the tragedy. Whenever this armed militia broke into homes, the first person they hurt is the head of the house. They beat you until they ensure you are helpless before they choose what to do with your wife and children. However, much of the findings from commission of enquiry into the armed conflict seem to pay little emphasis to our status during armed conflict. We have never been interviewed nor even compensated for the pain we underwent”. He is the fifth victim and he is 30 years of age, respondent in a questionnaire on the 26 May 2020 at Limbe.

These findings found that during armed conflict, men and boys were particularly targeted through kidnappings, assassinations and forced labour while women and girls were subjected through rape, forced marriages, sexual slavery, sequestrations and mass kidnappings. This was done as a power strategy by the perpetrators to cause huge impact and have their agenda propagated. The second status was that armed conflict was the largest source of conflict in Anglophones after land disputes which has claimed countless lives and displaced thousands of civilians including women and children. The study established that 50% of civilians in the Anglophone region have never recover socially, emotionally and economically since armed conflicts with half of the percentage being women, girls and children¹²². A study by Mbongdulo-Wondieh (2016), noted that in the past 20 months in the Anglophone Cameroon, the armed militia has been responsible for reigning terror in the communities through various abductions, forced slavery and earlier marriages. The current study established that the government has stepped up efforts to curb this form of human right violations by negotiating with the militia by accepting not to pursue charges against those who surrender and quit their insurgency activities. As the numbers of girls were rescued in the process, as reported by the government agency, majority of the rescued girls and women were already pregnant. Civil servant at MBengwi Council responded in the questionnaire on 24 May, 2020 at Mbengwi that,

“this armed conflict has caused a lot of civilian distress. As a government worker, we don’t condone any firm of insurgency or armed conflict as our role is to protect all citizens and their property. The perpetrators use the same strategies of kidnapping citizens as Nigerians abuse

¹²² Mbongdulo-Wondieh, Z., 2020. Women and the Anglophone Struggle in Cameroon. In *Gender, Protests and Political Change in Africa* (pp. 131-147). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.

them sexually and physically so as their voices are heard. We normally try to respond to rescue them, but by the time we finish the operation, majority of the victims could have either lost lives, fallen pregnant or physically wounded. But the situation is in control now”.

The study further notes that the social economic rights of the community were grossly being violated as the community in the Northwest and southwest were slowly succumbing to the demands of the separatists’ militia¹²³. Areas bordering the forests which were traditionally fertile and suitable for agriculture have been deserted as civilians move closer to urban areas which are considered safer. Schools around these areas prone to armed conflict have been closed for fear of increased atrocities due to the aftermath of the armed conflict. About right to education, the statuses of education in the South-west and the Northwest parts of Cameroon do not longer exist. Similarly, right to quality of healthcare is an issue as most health facilities are dysfunctional as medical officers were displaced by the conflict. One of the victims of the armed violence reported that,

“The teacher at the University of Bamenda was shot dead in mid-May by separatists because he refused to stop teaching, in line with their demands to boycott education. When the family brought him at hospital, the hospital was almost empty .It was only one nurse presented who attended to him .But the man died because they were not medications.”(Victim 3, 31 years, responded in the questionnaire on 24 May 2020 at Bamenda).

The human rights watch reported that the government security forces committed extrajudicial executions¹²⁴. The military tortured, abused and burnt homes and other properties in several villages, rendering hundreds of residents homeless and vulnerable. It is documented in the human watch report that the government played a role in perpetuating armed conflict¹²⁵. 52% of the interviewed victims alleged that the government through its security used excess force by killing them. A 42 years old victim responded in the questionnaire on 25 July 2020 at Bafut.

¹²³ The Northwest and South West regions are well known for Agriculture with fertile lands which are some of the reasons why the armed militia is targeting to take control of the areas.

¹²⁴ Human rights Watch World Report 2020 “Cameroon Events 2019”: The Anglophone Crisis , 2019, available at: <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2020/country-chapters/cameroon>. Accessed 21 July 2020

¹²⁵ Human rights Watch News “A chance for Accountability in Cameroon”,25 June 2020,available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/06/25/chance-accountability-cameroon>. Accessed 21/07/2020

“The government security forces are not protecting us. Most of the soldiers who were sent for peace mission ended up to ruin the lives of those they were to protect. Since the beginning of the war, several people have lost their lives in the hands of the policy as a way of reinforcing curfew regulations. They burn down our houses with our families inside; they set fire to our fields. How can we survive in these conditions” (victim no 4).

DW news of 23December, 2019 revealed that the government of Cameroon was not timely in proactive response to the armed conflict but instead its response was reactive¹²⁶. This resulted to the displacement of approximately 680,000 Cameroonians to North West and South West inside the country and over 52,000 people to Nigeria¹²⁷.

Likewise, DW news further released those hostilities that existed between the government and the Anglophone separatists and has caused access to deteriorate in the North-West and South-West (NW and SW) regions due to high insecurity. Amnesty International Africa report argued that gross human rights violations against women, children and girls was due to the presence of the government armed forces and non-state armed forces¹²⁸. Besides, persistent violence from the militia, lockdowns and curfew from the State, and poor roads infrastructure inhibit the movement of the people in the Anglophone regions.

The findings of the study did not imply the government was doing nothing about the conflict. However, following failed attempts to address the demands of the Anglophone population through negotiation with the insurgency groups. For the President of Cameroon, H.E. Paul Biya, the recommendations of English-speaking Cameroonians are unfounded. This sad vision of the

¹²⁶ DW news, Cameroon: Anglophone’s Special Status-too little, too late? Available at: <https://www.dw.com/en/cameroon-anglophones-special-status-too-little-too-late/a-51747683>. Accessed 29July 2020

3.1 **127** reliefweb,Cameroon: North-West and South-West Regions IDPS and Returnees Factsheet, December 2019, available at : <https://reliefweb.int/report/cameroon/cameroon-north-west-and-south-west-regions-idps-and-returnees-factsheet-december>. Accessed 29July 2020

¹²⁸ Amnesty International Africa ,available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/africa/report-africa/>. Accessed 29July 2020

Anglophones situation by Biya created an uprising and radicalization of many youths. This tension period benefit from “Ambazonia armed men” because it allows them to recruit new members. The document analysis further revealed that on the 9th of January 2017, Agbor Balla declared Operation Ghost Town Resistance (OGTR), which it is a call of order from one of the chiefs of Southern Cameroon resistance, which consists of not going about any daily activity. During this day, everything is closed and anyone who does not respect this slogan is sanctioned. It is evident from a script that the government’s approach to the insurgency is reactive and not sustainable in bringing long lasting peace to the Anglophone regions. To support this sentiment, one of the NGO directors echoed our findings and reported that,

“Yes the government of Cameroon is doing everything possible to end the conflict, however the strategy of blending approaches between negotiation and military approach should be guided by a lot of wisdom since the militia do not trust in government commitment” (NGO Social Worker, respondent of the questionnaire 24 May, 2020 at Kumba).

The justification of the reactive approach by the government is portrayed excessive reaction of President Biya, which imprisoned Agbo Balla, and other members of its secessionist group.

This critical document analysis reveals that the Cameroonian government approach was yet to result to any meaningful solution to the crisis in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon because the insurgency is within the Cameroon Anglophone populace.

Having explored the status of the armed conflict with regards to its current state, parties involved, role of the state, the last part of this items established the status of SGBV in Anglophone Cameroon, respondents were asked to report if they had been afflicted with various aspects of SGBV and the results were as shown in table 2.

Form of SGBV	YES	NO
Attempted Rape	75	25
Rape	78	22
Sexual exploitation with money	82	18
Forced Earlier marriage	72	28
Female genital mutilation	65	35
Assault	68	32
Trafficking	57	43

Table 2: *Forms of Sexual and Gender Based Violence*

From the results in the table above, it is evident that 75% of the respondents that were sampled randomly from the Anglophone communities where SGBV was reported, accepted to have experienced attempted rape, 78% of them accepted to have been actually raped, while 65% of them reported that they were obliged to undergo female genital mutilation during captivity during armed conflict. This clearly justifies the horrible status of violence against women in the Anglophone in Cameroon. To collate this information, we decided to confirm the same from the various Sexual and Gender Recovery Centers (SGRC's) in the region and the head of social work from the SGRC in Bamenda Women Hospital reported,

“I can't give you the exact figures of all forms of SGBV we have received in this hospital because I am not authorized to reveal that, but what I can tell you is that a number of rape cases, FGM cases, defilement, and physical assault have been handled in this facility. Don't forget so many young girls and women lost their lives too as they were battling the effects of SGBV in this facility” (Bamenda SGRC social worker respondent of the questionnaire on 22 May 2020 at Bamenda).

These findings concurred with those that were done in Northern Nigeria, where many women and girls were reported to have experienced severe SGBV as a result of Boko Haram.

5.3 Role of State as an Actor in SGBV against Women and Girls

This section attempts to establish the role of the state of Cameroon as an actor and or as a perpetrator of SGBV during armed a conflict. Article 1 of the CEDAW is the main international Article dealing with the protection and promotion of women rights internationally¹²⁹. Likewise, the Article 18(3) of the African Charter on Human Rights and People's Rights knows as "Banjul Charter" recommends the domestication of the regional instrument as signatory member¹³⁰. It is the role of the state to set laws and use state machinery to protect civilians during armed conflict. To address this section well, respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire on items, which sought to establish the role of the state as a protector and as a perpetrator of SGBV. The state in this case refers to state agencies as well as constitutional bodies like courts (judiciary), police, which were the investigation agencies, and the army, which was in charge of protection of civilians during armed conflict or insurgency. The table below showed the results with proportion of the responses.

¹²⁹ Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women,1979 on its Articles 1 stated that "For the purposes of the present Convention, the term "discrimination against women" shall mean any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field."

¹³⁰ African Charter on Human and People's Rights ,1981,on its Article 18(3) stated that "The State shall ensure the elimination of every discrimination against women and also ensure the protection of the rights of women and the child as stipulated in international declarations and conventions."

Statement	SA	A	NANDA	DA	SDA
The government did not everything to protect us from SGBV during armed conflict	42	28	5	15	10
The government security apparatus were involved in the violation of our rights during armed conflict	46	34	6	14	10
The government did little to stop the armed conflict	53	34	2	5	5
Some of the government officials are behind the armed conflict being experienced	48	32	5	10	5
The judicial system in the country protects the militia more than it does to women	34	36	10	16	14
The national government representatives at community level are accomplices in the armed conflict	32	34	14	15	15
The government intelligence has failed to apprehend the culprits in the ongoing-armed conflict.	42	28	10	14	16

Table 3: The role of the State as the Actor in SGBV

The figures represented proportion of the responses in percentage.

From the results in the table above, 42% of the respondents were of the view that the state did not play its roles of protecting the rights of its citizens as we as property. Further, the findings indicate that the state was both a protector and perpetrator of SGBV with 48% of the respondents reporting that the security apparatus did not only protect buy also harm its citizens. 34% of respondents reported that there was many cases of SGBV that were reported against the army, the policy, and against the representatives of the national government at the community level who were instructed with the responsibility of protecting young girls and women during the armed conflict. The other thing that is evident from the findings above, is that a big proportion of mentioned that the

government intelligence system was aware that politicians were financing the militia, but since the politicians were on the government side, little was done by the state to apprehend the perpetrators and help save the victims. These findings concurred with findings from other parts of Africa, where the state has been accused of being a perpetrator and not defender of Human rights violation, during armed conflict. In this study, Elbert argues that African Nations do not apply sustainable strategies when dealing with armed conflict, since there are guidelines by the United Nations, which must be followed by countries to minimize atrocities during the management of armed conflict.

5.3.1 The Role of State as a Perpetuator of SGBV

Though many citizens expected the state to protect them during the Anglophone crisis, the study established that the reverse instead happened. The findings revealed that the government agencies as well as the separationist groups were abusing the citizens during the Anglophone crisis. The government agencies included the police who were reinforcing the curfew, the army that was flashing out the militia from the community, and other agencies like courts, which held the accused suspects before they were charged in court. Respondents during the study said that many women and girls had experienced physical during the Anglophone crisis. The role of the state was divided into the role of the police, the role of the army, the role of the judiciary.

5.3.1.1 The Role of the Police and the Army.

The Cameroonian Police Act stipulates the role of the police as to maintain law and order protect all human rights and property as well as discharge their service with utmost honesty and fairness. The respondents responded to the research items how the state through the policy contributed in the violation or the protection of human rights during the armed conflict and the responses were as shown below.

Statement	SA	A	NANDA	DA	SDA
The police always responded on time when we made distress calls to them	16	14	10	26	34
The police never asked for bribe to address complains of human rights violation by the militia in the community	15	10	12	25	38
The police never colluded with the militia to loot and steal property from the residents during armed conflict	16	11	10	15	48
The police colluded with the arrested insurgency group members to destroy evidence making their cases weak in courts	52	28	3	10	7
The police failed to carry out proper intelligence on the insurgency	47	23	5	15	10
The police only focused on the bribes during their line of duty	42	28	6	13	11

Table 4: *The Role of Police and Army*

From the findings in the table above, 34% of the respondents reported that the police never responded on time when distress calls were made to them during the armed conflict. These findings were in contravention of the United Nations guidelines on the conduct of the police during armed conflict such as United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, and those guidelines by the United Nations Department of Peace Operations (DPO) by the police or the Army¹³¹. The results from the table also indicate that 38% of the respondents reported that the police asked them for the bribe before offering assistance during the armed conflict. Some of the assistance offered by police in armed conflict includes arresting of the culprits of violence,

¹³¹ United NATIONS Peacekeeping ,available at:
<https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/departement-of-peace-operations>. Accessed 2 August 2020

responses to emergency calls during atrocities or destruction of property during emergency, investigations for various gross human rights violations etc.

The findings did not necessarily imply majority of the police officers were corrupt, but it implied that the responses were not in line with the guidelines of security apparatus during armed conflict.

During armed conflict where many victims complained negligence from the policy as they demanded for facilitation from victims to offer help during armed conflict. Other victims reported that some security and military forces mistreated female (internally displaced persons) IDPs and some even sexually exploited women refugees travelling with no national identity cards as an exchange in order to allow them pass through the security checkpoints. In the North West region, government was able to initiate curfew at 6pm, which affected females involved in the informal business¹³². This may have allowed Physical and sexual exploitation by the police in order to allow the women to break the curfew rules. A neighbor of Buea reported,

“At 6pm there were some customers who refused to leave, as soon as the police came, they asked me to close down. The police brutalize me and took all my daily takings. I'm a widow with four children, where will I get money to restart my business?” (Respondent of the questionnaire on 27 May 2020 at Buea).

According to research, security forces from government responded negatively to the peaceful demonstrations in larger cities like Bamenda, Kumba and Buea. An interview conducted with surviving victim on the 11 June, 2020 at Moyoka and he reported that,

“Following the arrest of the civilians the armed separatists mobilized more civilians to attack security forces or shoot at their stations. This led to government security forces carrying out abusive operations to children, women, girls and even men. These security forces attacked villages burning and destroying properties. They were able to kill many civilians while most women and girls were forced to undress and raped. Many women and girls were raped and killed by the security forces. The old people and those with disabilities who were unable to escape were also killed”.

¹³² Curfew is an order from government that specify the time in which certain regulations should apply.

The killing of men and young boys also left women and girls with no support or assistance in their activities like clearing of bushes to facilitate farming. In other cases, elderly women and physical disables peoples were unable to run away during government operation in Bole, Ntumbo were burnt alive in their homestead as per the witness from the respondents¹³³. These security forces from government also went ahead and shot many people dead in areas like Mutengene and Tiko. The victim reported,

“They came to my homestead that took me ten years to establish and burned everything. Now I live in total misery, lost, with no job, no house, no money, no food and no clothing. I used to be strong but I now feel defeated psychologically and do not know where to start”. (Respondent 3, on the 16 June 2020 at Ntumbo).

The office by United Nations for the Coordination of humanitarian affairs (OCHA)¹³⁴ also confirmed that the violence had led to internal displacement of over one hundred and sixty thousand people in the south-west and north- west regions with many of the victims hiding in forests for their safety. Through the documents analysis of the report done by the United Nation refugee’s agency the UNHCR on 26th September 2019, about 20,000 civilians fled the Anglophone regions across to River States and Nigeria’s Benue state¹³⁵. The reports by government however indicated that the number of civilians internally displaced in the two regions were 75, 000, with no explanations indicated on the plight of the remaining 50,000 IDPS’s.

5.3.2 The Role of State as a Protector of SGBV

The role of the state is to protect Human rights and property of the citizens during any emergency. This study established that in dealing with incidents of SGBV and protect the victims during the

¹³³ The Guardian , Cameroon's military accused of burning alive unarmed civilians, available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jul/20/cameroon-military-accused-of-burning-alive-unarmed-civilains-villages-english-speaking>. Accessed 2 August 2020

¹³⁴ OCHA Cameroon: Emergency Response Plan seeks US\$15M to reach 160,000 internally displaced people in the next three months, 29May 2018,available at: <https://www.unocha.org/story/cameroon-emergency-response-plan-seeks-us15m-reach-160000-internally-displaced-people-next>. Accessed 07 July 2020

¹³⁵ UNHCR News , “More Cameroonian refugees flee to Nigeria, bringing total arrivals close to 60,000 mark”, 13February 2020,available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2020/2/5e452d2b4/cameroon-refugees-flee-nigeria-bringing-total-arrivals-close-60000-mark.html>. Accessed 11June 2020

Anglophone crisis the government had to come up with more stringent measures to curb the spread of the radicalization by the militia. Despite declined trust and confidence by the public concerning the previous approaches the state had used in managing armed conflict when it was first reported,

“ the state was able to support the UN Women Cameroon Country Office (CO) which had been very active in humanitarian action around the areas affected by Anglophone crisis to initiate a one-year support project though financed by government of Italy. The project was focused in protecting women and girls who had been affected during the crisis by enhancing protection services and wider education meant program targeting members from north west and south west regions ”(Respondent of questionnaire 17th June 2020 in Limbe).

The government officials also informed the human rights watch that, investigations have been conducted but the results are kept enclosed not to allow the public to avoid undermining government troop's morale. According to the respondent the president being the commander of armed forces had to recognize the Anglophone crisis problem publicly and speak out to calm the tensions. Since most of the times it is the armed forces that were deployed to stop damage by the protesters he had to intervene to ensure these security forces did not harm the innocent women and girls anymore either by burning their houses, molesting, raping or killing. This was affected when the Cameroon government dismissed the video footage that was showing two children and two women being executed by armed soldiers¹³⁶.

Another evidence of gross human right violation by the state is indicated in the report by the Amnesty International had done investigations and found out that the various atrocities were reported in the Anglophone Cameroon, which prompted the state to arrest the suspected six soldiers executing the crime in the video. To bring peace and reduce protests, there were recommendations for the state to release the leaders of Anglophone movements. According to the respondents this would reduce the protests which in return would reduce cases of killing, molesting and raping of women. This was affected since the government at the end was able to grant access

¹³⁶ Amnesty International News Cameroon: “Trial of soldiers for killing women and children must lead to justice for victims”, 26 August 2019, available at : <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2019/08/cameroon-trial-of-soldiers-for-killing-women-and-children/>. Accessed 18 July 2020

to ten leaders of Anglophone who had been detained and deported to Cameroon from Nigeria. They were allowed to meet their lawyers after being held for over six months. The government seems to protect perpetrators of various atrocities of SGBV each time the atrocities are reported during armed conflict¹³⁷. The government though through pressure by the human right activists was able to sanction some members of security forces who had committed abuses like rape, molest and killing (Respondent 14 of the questionnaire 22 June, 2020 at Kumba).

There were suggestions and recommendations on re-organizing the government and senior administration which were to be affected. The re-organizing was aimed at reflecting the political, historical and demographic importance of the Anglophones and to include more legitimate and younger Anglophone community members. This was all meant to reduce the mistreatment of women and girls by the security forces and separatist groups. It was also agreed by the state officials that the state was to undertake reforms of the country constitution in order to solve deeper problems which caused Anglophone crisis.

5.4 Experience of Women and Girls and Health Consequences SGBV in Anglophone

It is the responsibility of the State to ensure that all provisions and measures are taken correctly to guarantee and protect the right to health of every individual. The Article 12 (1) (2) of CEDAW and Article 16 of the Banjul Charter emphasize to the obligation of the State to protect, respect and fulfil the right to health of women¹³⁸. Consequently, any action leading to the violation of women's right to health even in a state of war is the responsibility of the State. This item reports the experiences and health consequences of women during armed conflict. By experiences, the study

¹³⁷ Sanction is a threatened penalty for not obeying rule or law.

¹³⁸ CEDAW, Article 12 (1) (2) stated that “States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of health care in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, access to health care services, including those related to family planning. And “Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph 1 of this article, States Parties shall ensure to women appropriate services in connection with pregnancy, confinement and the post-natal period, granting free services where necessary, as well as adequate nutrition during pregnancy and lactation.”

Banjul Charter Article 16 (1) (2) stated “Every individual shall have the right to enjoy the best attainable state of physical and mental health.” And “State Parties to the present Charter shall take the necessary measures to protect the health of their people and to ensure that they receive medical attention when they are sick”

implies interactions with effects of armed conflict ranging from what the victims went through to what knowledge they have about the phenomena.

5.4.1 SGBV Experience Women and Girls on GBV IN Anglophone

This item sought to establish the experiences of women and girls on SGBV as well as the various health consequences that befell them because of SGBV during armed conflict. Some of the experiences that were traumatising were not recorded and hence not transcribed. The dire and horrible state of affairs because of SGBV has been documented through excerpts. The table below illustrates the responses to the questionnaire items concerning experiences and health consequences towards SGBV. The results are as shown in the table below.

Statement	SA	A	NANDA	DA	SDA
There are women I know who suffered partial disability as a result armed conflict in this area	36	34	5	10	5
There are women I know who were impregnated as a result of armed conflict	55	24	1	14	6
There are women I know who were infected with sexually transmitted diseases as a result of armed conflict	34	36	10	14	16
There are women I know who suffered a lot of mental stress and trauma as a result of armed conflict	43	22	10	15	15
There are women I know who were sexually assaulted during armed conflict	54	41	5	3	2
There are women I know who suffered damage to my genitals during the armed conflict	45	25	6	14	10

Table 5: *SGBV Experience by Women and Girls*

From the table above, 36 % of women agreed to the fact that they knew women who suffered disability because of armed conflict, while 55% of them agreed to the fact they knew women or girls who were impregnated during the armed conflict. 45% of the respondents reported that they knew, someone whose genitals were interfered with during the armed conflict. These findings are key in expounding the experiences and health consequences of women and girls during armed conflict. One of key observation that was made is that many respondents reported having witnessed some women and girls who were sexually assaulted and murdered. One of them said,

“what we have experienced in this place since the start of armed conflict is horrible. I know of some incident where three girls were abducted, raped and even murdered. Since then, the family of the victim has never received justice. In fact more cases of rape and assault are being reported every single day” (questionnaire on 22 May, 2020 at limbe).

The document analysis indicated that since inception of the armed conflict that started in the year 2016, women and girls in the Anglophone Areas of Cameroon have been subjected to harsh reality of armed conflict¹³⁹. Several deaths have been experience and many have lost parts of their bodies while others have been left with permanent scars either psychologically or emotionally. It was found that two women in every five women have had an experience with a sexual or a physical abuser while one woman in every three women have been raped or their children have been raped while they were watching.

The term 'sexual violence' includes sexual threat, assault, interference, exploitation, humiliation, molestation, incest, involuntary prostitution, torture, insertion of objects into genital openings and attempted rape, including statutory rape, carried out against women and girls. GBV experiences were noted to occur mostly from within intimate relationships, families and could also extend perpetration by others from beyond the households. In Anglophone Cameroon, women and girls faced women experienced sexual abuse from both sides of the armed conflict divide. Recently, statistics from Cameroon have shown that 35% of women have experienced some form of physical or sexual violence from either a member of the rebel forces or from the government forces. During the armed conflict, the threat of physical violence, kidnappings and rape were recounted by many

¹³⁹ Human rights Watch World Report 2020 “Cameroon Events 2019”: The Anglophone Crisis , 2019,available at : <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2020/country-chapters/cameroon>. Accessed 21 June 2020

women and girls. During the interview, one participant recounted her experience of gang rape by the rebel forces and forced abortion. She opens up that,

“My displacement happened months ago. I was seven months pregnant then. I lost the pregnancy through forced abortion. The military took me to a place where they had several women kidnapped and tied with ropes. They moved me aside in the middle of bushes and grass. One of them grabbed me and tied my foot and arms. Five men raped me in turns as the women rebels were watching after that I lost consciousness” (Survivor number 12, 22 years, respondent of the questionnaire on 26 June 2020 at Limbe).

According to a research that was done by, besides armed groups, intimate partners were found to inflict gender based violence on women when living in conflict areas. During this study, the scholar found that interfamilial violence were the leading experiences in a displaced setting which ranged from sexual violence, physical violence, violence as a result of weapons and infidelity

“My husband used to beat me. He pulled me by the hairs. At one time he shot me on my left leg. I still have the mark of his shooting. Many at times I used to run away from home with my children. One day I decided to run away into the camp with the rest of the IDP” said one of the participants. (Participant 16, respondent of the questionnaire on 15th June, 2020 at Kumba).

5.4.2 Health Consequences Women and Girls as a result GBV in Anglophone

Gender based violence in Anglophone has been a major scourge for women, girls and children. They are the most vulnerable and suffer the most during armed conflict. Women and girls have faced unimaginable adversity since the eruption of protests against marginalization in the year 2016. There are several health consequences that have been endured by women and girls ranging from physical, mental, psychological and emotional. According to our research, women are victims of many diseases such as cholera and malaria; many of them are not able to get menstrual hygiene products. While some have resorted to using age-old methods like plants, rags and locally-made pads, others rely on the few pads donated by aid organizations. This unhygienic lifestyle results in diseases such as Chlamydia. A female IDP in Douala area narrated on 12 June, 2020 at Douala that,

“During my long time in the forest I always used herbs for my menstruation. When I arrived in Douala, I had huge pains in my lower abdomen. I went to the hospital and the doctor told me that I was infected with a germ and that I had a good chance of not having any more children. This situation has upset me tremendously for a young girl like me. Which man can marry me if I am unable to be productive? so.... I am putting everything in God's hands only he can work the miracle in my life”.

Women and girls in Anglophone areas of Cameroon are also struggling to get access to medical assistance. As a result, some young women end up with chronic illnesses and unwanted pregnancies. A young woman who fled to Douala from Bamenda tells Equal Times that

“A social worker used to rape me all the time when I was living in Bamenda Camp. These repeated sodomies have destroyed my anus. As soon as I make a sudden movement, I feel extremes inside me. The doctor told me that a surgery could help me, but I don't have any money and the government doesn't take care of us right now I'm living with a doula lady who's done a lot for me already.”(She asked to remain anonymous).

Scholarly studies have presented evidences of the physical consequences of gender-based violence in women and girls during armed conflict. Some of the physical consequences include and not limited to gynecological problems, body pain, unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections and early pregnancies. Data on HIV –AIDS is not clearly available however, those who have been sexually assaulted often find themselves frequenting medical care. Long-term health consequences include permanent or partial disability, infertility, and reproductive health destruction because of forced genital mutilation. Other fatal consequences include suicide, homicide and death. During armed conflict girls and women undergo psychological issues such as feeling of low esteem, shame, fear of death, anxiety, depression, difficulty in remembering things and avoidance of emotions that trigger the memories of violation. Other studies have also highlighted some common impacts of SGBV such as women and girls developing a feeling of guilt, hypochondria, complete loss of sexual desire, apathy, frequent headaches, lack of confidence, vaginal discharges, pelvic pain, and infected among others.

These acts of violence have negative impacts on the social health of a community. Document analysis further revealed that on several occasions, many women whose human rights were violated in the armed conflict or were ostracized by family members since as after the abuse, social link failed and such women are generally isolated. Further, an interview schedule with the healthcare providers revealed that women who fall pregnant during armed conflict face stigma in the community. This is because children born of sexual violence are often abandoned by their mothers as well as stigmatized by the community. Unwanted pregnancy is one of the consequences of sexual violence. Many women did not have access to abortion services. However, many had difficulties in caring for these 'children of bad memories' and there were several reports of infanticide or abandonments. One of the medical social worker reported,

“Most women who experience rape or forced marriages during armed conflict opted to undergo procedural abortion since many of the children born out of SGBV are never accepted in the community with their parents facing a lot of discrimination. (Medical social worker, Respondent of the questionnaire on 26 May 2020, at Kumbo).

5.5 Opinions from the SGBV victims on how to mitigate SGBV during armed Conflict.

This item sought to establish the opinions of SGBV on how SGBV effects can be mitigated during armed conflict. To fully understand the means or ways that can be employed to mitigate SGBV during armed conflict we conducted an interview where different surviving victims of SGBV during the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon gave their opinions on means they believe if employed can help mitigate SGBV during armed conflict. These victims were able to give different opinions on system steps, prevention steps, response steps and emergency steps that can be employed to mitigate SGBV during armed conflict based on experience.

Due to this, we should always initiate SGBV response or prevention program from the start of emergency without considering whether any case is reported or not. We should also not forget to include boys and men whenever we work with communities on prevention of SGBV. It is also advisable that we always consider involving staff having variety of functions in prevention of SGBV. When mitigating SGBV during armed conflict like the Anglophone crisis we are always advised to put aside our culture orientation and other biases or assumptions with regard to SGBV.

It is also worth knowing that SGBV can be perpetrated by anyone including personnel from host communities, humanitarian actors, IDP or refugees' communities or people in authority like teachers, police, community leaders or even security officials during the armed conflict as a weapon of war.

The prevention steps given by the SGBV surviving victims of Anglophone crisis include: The first prevention step suggested was identifying and encouraging the formation of the community-based networks among individual of concern in areas vulnerable to armed conflict and help them in their information or preventive work against SGBV. The other suggested prevention step was on taking steps to create awareness among individual of concern on need to prevent SGBV and about the services available to SGBV survivors. This should include informing survivors can access justice via informal or formal justice mechanisms during the armed conflict,

“It will also be very necessary for the government to work with private organizations to come up with safe spaces for children and women in areas vulnerable to armed conflict. In occasions where the safe spaces already exist the state government should make the affected communities aware of them” (A surviving victims, respondent of the questionnaire on 22 May 2020 at Douala).

The other prevention step suggested was ensuring that the state provides training to the affected communities' law enforcers, judicial officers and local authorities to ensure that they recognize, protect and respect the SGBV survivors' rights during armed conflict. The training should emphasize on the principles of equality before courts, laws, tribunals, and non-discrimination. This will mainly help in preventing the security officers or armed forces do not execute SGBV as they did during the Anglophone crisis. The state government should also emphasize on the importance of taking the perpetrators of SGBV during armed conflict to justice and make laws concerning the same. Another victim suggested that it will be wise for the government to organize training to members of communities that are vulnerable to armed conflict about the risks, consequences of SGBV and the steps to take in case one become a victim or about to become a victim during the armed conflicts. The victim emphasized that if the victims who died because of the SGBV during the Anglophone crisis had this knowledge they would have survived by seeking the right approach.

The systems steps suggested by different SGBV victims include: One of the victims suggested that state should consider appointing even if it is one professional member to be responsible with the prevention or response to SGBV in the affected area under supervision of assistant or senior protection officer. Another victim suggested that it would be better if the state consider establishing a coordination mechanism like SGBV working group in areas affected by armed conflict. Other opinion was about identifying others actors working with SGBV response or prevention in government institutions, agencies by United Nation, international or local NGOs as well as providers of services in the fields of security, health, safety and legal assistance to be contacted in case of SGBV¹⁴⁰. Another victim suggested that state should collaborate with service providers to develop a clear reporting mechanism or referral means for the survivors or victims of SGBV during armed conflict and ensure they are in position to disclose SGBV in variety of contacts, point or centers and ensure they access appropriate services without discrimination. A victim of SGBV reported,

“taking the case of my daughter for instance, if she was able to get immediate help after she was raped during the Anglophone crisis she could have gotten help on how to avoid pregnancy that killed her later after she had a miscarriage bleeding to death” (The victim of SGBV, respondent of the questionnaire on 19 June 2020 at Kumba).

The other system step suggestion was on reviewing national policies and laws on SGBV protection, gender equality and survivors’ rights in order to ensure that they are in line with different international laws. The response steps suggested by the victims interviewed aimed at mitigating SGBV during armed conflicts include the first response step suggested by one of the surviving victims was engaging service providers in order to make sure that they provide services which were of high quality, appropriate and complied with the survivor care basic standards. A surviving victim said,

“whenever a victim of SGBV in case of armed conflict report the incident he or she should be informed of the available assistance including legal assistance, medical service, psychosocial

¹⁴⁰ NGOs refer to the Non-governmental organizations either owned privately or by a group of people as form of partnership.

support and legal assistance without discrimination” (One of the surviving victims , respondent of the questionnaire on 28June 2020 at Douala) .

The victim added that upon reporting the victim should be provided with free health assistance in case he or she has experienced mental or physical harm, access to post exposure prophylaxis against infection with HIV, prophylaxis for STDIs and emergency contraception for female survivors. The victim should also consider relocating to safer places free from armed conflicts or SGBV¹⁴¹. The other response step as per the interviewed victims is familiarizing the UNHCR staff with SPHERE standard in order to ensure that their response assistance or planning take the specific needs by men, girls, boys and women into consideration. This will ensure that the right approach to provision of care is taken during armed conflict. Most victims said that if all these services were made available and in time during the Anglophone crisis, many civilians would not have died. They also emphasized it would have helped reduce the cases of the SGBV victims.

5.6 Experiences and Opinions of Human Rights Organizations on SGBV in Anglophone Cameroon

This item sought to establish experiences of human rights organizations on the status and solutions to SGBV in the Anglophone Cameroon. Human rights organizations play a pivotal role in social advocacy and campaign against human rights violations. The findings from the study revealed that during the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon many cases of sexual and gender-based violence were witnessed and reported¹⁴². According to research many of the LGBTI rights organizations such as Alternatives Cameroon, Cameroonian Foundation for AIDS (CAMFAIDS), National Observatory of the Rights of LGBTI persons and Humanity First Cameroon reported many arrests of the LGBTI persons though they had reduced in the past year¹⁴³. The LGBTI persons however continued to receive threats from unknown people via email, text message and telephone but the authorities did not investigate these allegations. According to other civil society organizations, LGBTI members were also subjected to corrective rape what also targeted their families in some cases. The police

¹⁴¹ Prophylaxis is the treatment or any medical attention given to patient or victim of physical assault like rape in order to prevent infection.

¹⁴² Anglophone Cameroonians are people who live from Cameroon English-speaking regions the southwest and northwest regions. Anglophone crisis is a conflict in the region of Southern Cameroon in Cameroon.

¹⁴³ LGBTI stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex.

were also unresponsive in protecting the lawyers that protected LGBTI persons from external threat and asked them to bribe them so that they cannot report them.

LGBTI Lawyer Alice Nkom said,

“The constitution of Cameroon provides for equality for all. I do not understand why the government and some parts of the population marginalize gays. I will fight with all my strength so that this group can live with dignity in Cameroon even if I have to lose my life for this cause. I will do it. Many gays are threatened by the police if they are in possession of preservatives or lubricants. This is an absurdity.” (Respondents 3 from LGBTI Lawyer, respondent of the questionnaire on 30 June 2020 at Douala).

The findings further revealed that this scenario resulted into fear of exposure which in return affected the personal willingness to seek HIV/AIDS services and forced several HIV/AIDS gay men to have female partners to conceal their behaviors. Maximilienne Ngo Mbe, director of the NGO Network of Human Rights Defenders of Central Africa (REDHAC) reported that,

“During the armed conflict period, a lot of violence was witnessed among members of the community who had been identified as belonging to LGBTI. U see, in these country issues of LGBTI are not well embraced. This group of people suffered a great deal. I won’t wish the same to happen to anyone irrespective of his sexual orientation” (Director of NGO in Douala, respondent on the questionnaire on 30 June, 2020 at Douala).

According to reports from UN rapporteur in charge of West Africa and Great Lakes Peace, reports discrimination was experienced in places of employment based on sexual orientation¹⁴⁴. The members of Affirmative Action also reported that the transgender individual feared or avoided seeking employment from formal sectors due to discrimination. During the Anglophone crisis the CAMFAIDS was able to document cases of human rights abuses. These abuses were mostly psychological, physical, verbal, economical, religious and cultural in nature. The first instance according to CAMFAIDS was where the security officers arrested men in Bamenda and detained

¹⁴⁴ Human Rights Watch ,African Great Lakes Regions :Human Rights Concerns for the 61st Session of the U.N Commission on Human Rights ,10 March 2005, available at:

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2005/03/10/african-great-lakes-region-human-rights-concerns-61st-session-un-commission-human> . Accessed 28June 2020

them. Claims from human rights activists indicated the six people were detained after being charged with indecency and homosexuality¹⁴⁵. In other cases, the police posted a humiliating video online, where they asking questions about gay sexuality.

¹⁴⁵ Home Office , Country Policy and Information Cameroon :Sexual orientation and gender identity or expression ,available at:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/865882/Cameroon - SOGIE - CPIN - v1.0 Final Feb 20 Gov.uk.pdf. Accessed 2August 2020

6 CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

This chapter gives the conclusions of the study and offers suggestions to the stakeholders in SGBV during armed conflict in Cameroon. The conclusions are made based on the stated objectives.

6.1 Findings on SGBV against Women and Girls

The key findings on this theme is that a big proportion of women and girls were raped, physically assaulted, displaced, impregnated, devilled, and another proportion lost their lives. The study further established that women of tender ages faced more atrocities than elderly women. The study recommends the strengthening of Gender Violence act during emergencies to enable in the process of rehabilitation of women and girls through rescue centres or victim protection centres. The study finally reiterates its earlier suggestion of Government's commitment in its National Action Plan 2018-2020 on Resolution 1325, to take into account the role of women in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programs. Lastly, SGBV recovery centers should be established in each county to ensure immediate recovery and rehabilitation of women and girls during emergency to minimize atrocities.

6.1.1 Findings on Status of Armed Conflict in Anglophone Cameroon

The conclusion drawn is that the discontent between the English-speaking population and the Cameroonian army has led to an endless war. The Cameroonian army who thought they can eradicate the separatists in a very short period are now disappointed to be facing though time battling the armed separatists.

It was observe that, the States and the military were both main actors of women rights violations. Women and girls are at the centre of battle. In other words, the women and girls were is the real victims of this war. Despite the complaints of the latter, their voices were not heard. Women during the conflict suffered a lot because they are often reduced to silence. According to African tradition, it is the man who nourishes and protects the family, unfortunately in times of conflict men are the ideal targets for the military and for the separatists. Very uncomfortable position because they can no longer really fulfil their role of protector.

6.1.2 Role of State as an Actor in GBV against Women and Girls

With regard to the role of the state as a violator and the protector of women rights, the study established that in many instances, the state through its agencies violated women and girl child during armed conflict. The state through the defence forces failed to mitigate the crisis which led to panic of different groups, violence and excessive repression of Anglophone activists by security forces. The government approach in repulsing insurgency should be adjusted to focus more on more sustainable approaches including negotiation with the militants. The study recommends a more proactive role and not reactive role of state agencies like the police and the army in dealing with insurgency and militias without causing casualties to the public. In cases of abduction of women and girls the government should use diplomacy to rescue the victims.

6.1.2.1 SGBV Experiences of women and Girls

With regard to experiences of women and girls during armed conflict, this study established that a number of young girls were raped, impregnated, physically and emotionally abused and majority of married women and children displaced. The study established further that apart from the armed militia, Social worker, the policy and the defence forces were also perpetrators of SGBV. The study recommends that the state should not apply double standards in identifying the SGBV perpetrators within the defence forces to ensure that the defence forces discharge duties in line with international conventions and national laws.

6.1.2.2 Health consequences of women and Girls as a result of SGBV

This item sought to establish the health consequences of armed conflict on women and girl child in the Anglophone of Cameroon. The study established that women and girls experienced many health consequences as a result of armed conflict like forced rape, abortions, defilement, genital mutilation, infection of HIV/STDs, emotional and psychological trauma etc. The study recommends that the state becomes proactive in negotiation with the armed militia as well as setting of gender violence recovery centres to be able to offer emergency services on SGBV aftermaths. The study also recommends that psychological cells should be created to help women to reintegrate in their communities and also give a complete and free health care to the victims.

6.2 Opinions from the SGBV victims to mitigate SGBV during armed conflict

This item sought to seek views of victims concerning the measures that should be put in place by the government, civil society and international community to mitigate effects of SGBV on women and girls during armed conflicts. The key suggestions that were made by the victims is the enactment of laws which removes immunity of the presidency in being held both individually and collectively culpable as a violator of human rights violation through state agencies and an actor by failing to issue orders to the state agencies to mitigate the effects of SGBV during armed conflict. Secondly, the victims were of the opinion that the policy Act and the defence Act be repealed to enable the state prosecute any police or defence officer found guilty of SGBV during armed conflict. The evidence act should also be repelled to ensure prosecution of culprits who destroy evidence during rape cases and other sensitive SGBV cases to be prosecuted in court.

6.2.1 Experiences and Opinions of Human Rights organizations on SGBV in Anglophone Cameroon

Any armed conflict has interested parties who observe and report more but have little opportunity to take part in decision making to offer sustainable solution to the end of SGBV in armed conflict. This section sought to seek the views of the civil society, NGO sector, Cameroon National Human Rights Commission, the media, and international human rights agencies and organisations like Amnesty international to offer insights on sustainable solutions concerning SGBV during armed conflict. These agencies suggested that the government of Cameroon should implement various national and international human rights instruments it had ratified as a sign of commitment to the protection of women human rights.

The government of the Republic of Cameroon must create a commission to investigate on the abuses and make the perpetrators to be condemned. The International stakeholders should clearly stipulate that any further violence by Cameroon forces would lead to economic sanctions such as preventing the Cameroonian government to import or export certain goods and restrictions on financial and investment of the capital. The United Nations Security Council should suspend military cooperation with Cameroon, embargoes on arms and travel bans. The institutions of Bretton woods should sanctions Cameroon, by stopping financial or projects if crisis persists. The

United Nations Security Council should consider initiating setting up a base in Cameroon to protect and combat the rebels or armed groups if they violated the principles of International Humanitarian Law. The UN Security Council should undertake an investigation and initiate mediation between the protagonists in the northwestern and southwestern region¹⁴⁶. A ceasefire should be their priority, but in case they encounter resistance, the installation of a military base would be welcome.

6.2.2 Human Right perspective of Armed Conflict in Anglophone Cameroon.

From a human rights perspective, the following conclusions and suggestions can be made:

6.2.2.1 United Nations Resolution 1325 on Women in Armed Conflict

This study established that the UN Resolution 1325 on women in armed conflict is partially being implemented not only in Anglophone parts of Cameroon but also in others countries in Africa. The respect and the implementation Human rights mechanisms and standards in line with universal guidelines in conventions and declarations can only be successful through national legal framework, which provides mechanism to safeguard and protect only human rights but also rights of women and girl child during emergencies. To achieve this, this study suggests enactment of gender equality and violence Act to enable operationalisation of any civil legislation to protect the right of women. Another approach is to ensure the resolution is integrated in the military peace keeping act of Cameroon as well as the policy and essential Evidence Act used for prosecuting perpetrators of SGBV in Cameroon.

6.2.2.2 United Nations Convention against Torture

This study recommends that the government of Cameroon observe all the protocols for protection of women rights through an introduction of a legislative legal framework. The Cameroonian army must stop torturing prisoners and respect the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the treatment of prisoners (Nelson Mandela rules)¹⁴⁷. Cameroonian army must stop torturing women who they suspect to belong or collaborate with the Ambazonia boys. The Cameroonian

¹⁴⁶ United Nations Security Council, available at:

<https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/what-security-council>. Accessed 11 August 2020

¹⁴⁷ Penal Reform International , UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (Nelson Mandela Rules), available at:

<https://www.penalreform.org/resource/standard-minimum-rules-treatment-prisoners-smr/>. Accessed 2 August 2020

Government should also create a special commission to monitor the effective implementations of the treaties by visiting prisons and polices stations. Engage a proper collaboration with the national human rights institutions and the civil societies organizations. This collaboration will allow them to organize workshops and seminars with the stakeholders of the societies, where they will provide them more knowledge on the protection of the women during conflict.

6.2.2.3 Cameroonian Legal system and SGBV against women

The study established that the proliferation of weapons is one of the factors that increase insecurity and promote conflict in Cameroon. Law on the General Regime of Weapons and Ammunition in Cameroon is a step forward. However, it is important for Cameroonian government to cooperate with Nigeria. The signature of the decree on the “*non-proliferation*” of small arms lights weapons (SALW) with their neighbor Nigeria was not effective¹⁴⁸. Evidences from the Cameroonian government released that Nigeria is the main source of supply of arms for the separatists groups. It should be important for the Cameroonian government to strengthen controls on the borders between Nigeria .The study makes three recommendations: Establish without delay the National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons, ensure the effective implementation at national level of the Arms Trade Treaty and the Kinshasa Convention and lastly the government should Open an inclusive national dialogue with the various stakeholders in the English-speaking communities in order to reach a consensual solution that respects human rights and enables an effective process of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration that integrates a gender perspective.

6.3 Conclusions

After a critical assessment of the views of the victims and those of other parties involved in the study, the study makes the following conclusions:

- The Anglophone armed conflict will not end soon unless the state clears its stake in the conflict.

¹⁴⁸ Enable , Arms trafficking ,Cameroon and Nigeria renew cooperation to fight arms proliferation ,available <https://enactafrica.org/research/trend-reports/cameroon-and-nigeria-renew-cooperation-to-fight-arms-proliferation>. Accessed 2August 2020

- The government of Cameroon should be probed by independent international human rights bodies like Amnesty international on its role on the violation of women rights in the Anglophone parts of Cameroon
- The protection of rights of women, girls and children should supersede those of property during armed conflict hence the state must adhere to regulation of international human rights and conventions to be able to be protective in the prevention of SGBV during armed conflict.
- The government of Cameroon should enact various laws and approve pending legislation like the Gender Violence Act, the Gender Violence Evidence Act and the state agency amnesty Act so as to show its commitment in minimising the prevalence of the state as a violator of women rights during emergencies in the Anglophone Cameroon.

6.4 Limitations

This study encountered several imitations. First, the study was limited in scope because it only focused on the Anglophone part of Cameroon. Secondly, the study was limited in contextual scope because it focused on only on SGBV because of the recent armed conflict and not previous conflicts. The study was also limited in time since it was done in three months implying that other causes of SGBV may have been reported in the study.

6.5 Challenges

There were some challenges faced during the development of this thesis for which some of the challenges are stated below.

- As a French speaking Cameroonian, it was difficult to communicate with my English-speaking brothers and sisters, situation which frustrated me. At some point, I felt rejected. I understood that if the government do not respond appropriately to solve the problems, the rupture could be very soon effective.
- Communication with the victims was difficult due to technical problems: The telephone network was out of place and many of them did not have computers, printers and scanners.
- Harassment by some participants.

6.6 Suggestions and Further Work

The following suggestions were made during the finds on this work:

Since much evidence has indicated that women and girls are victims of SGBV during armed conflict, the Judiciary of Cameroon and parliament must enact laws, which govern the role of various state agencies involved in the protection of civil rights during armed conflict

- The United Nations General Assembly should suspend or expel Cameroon from Human Rights Council due to the gross human rights violations.
- African Union through its Peace Security Council must deploy a peace mission to Cameroon if the situation escalates.
- The Cameroonian government should open an investigation into its government to know the members who finance the rebel groups in order to condemn them.
- The Cameroon Judicial system and Parliament must enact the Gender Violence Act and expound it to include atrocities, which arise from state actors who are entrusted with protection of civilian rights to live, dignity, and Property.

The Cameroon government must relight its human rights laws and Acts to conform with international practices like CRC, various UN resolutions like resolution UN resolution 2445 of 2019, and 1949 Geneva Convention on the protection of civilians during armed conflict and the most recent convention on the protection of journalist during armed conflict.

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8 Abbreviation

ASF	<i>African Standby force</i>
AU PSO	<i>Africa Union Peace Support Operation</i>
AUCC	<i>African Union Code of Conduct</i>
CEDAW	<i>Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women</i>
CRC	<i>Convention of the Rights of the Child 1989</i>
FGDs	<i>Focus Group Discussions</i>
FGM	<i>Female Genital Mutilation</i>
GBV	<i>Gender Based Violence</i>
ICCPR	<i>International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 1966</i>
ICESCR	<i>International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1966</i>
ICRC	<i>International Committee of the Red Cross</i>
IDP	<i>Internally Displaced Person</i>
MDGs	<i>Millennium Development Goals</i>
PSC	<i>Peace Security Council</i>
SEA	<i>Sexual Exploitation and abuse</i>
SGBV	<i>Sexual Gender based Violence</i>
UN CAT	<i>United Nations Convention against Torture</i>
UN CAP	<i>United Nations Consolidated appeal Process</i>
UNCHR	<i>United Nations Commissions on Human Rights</i>
UNFPA	<i>United Nations Population Fund</i>
UNICEF	<i>United Nations International Children s Funds</i>
UNIFEM	<i>United Nations Development Fund for Women</i>
UN Report	<i>Report –United Nations Report</i>
UNSCR	<i>United Nations Security Council Resolution</i>
VAW	<i>Violence Against Women</i>
WHO	<i>World Health Organization</i>

<i>SDA</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
<i>DA</i>	<i>Disagree</i>
<i>A</i>	<i>Agree</i>
<i>SA</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>

9 APPENDICES

9.1 APPENDIX 1: Questionnaire Guideline

Programme: Vienna Master in Human Rights / University of Vienna

Topic: Sexual and Gender based Violence during the Armed Conflict in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon

Kindly respond to the following items in the questionnaire as honest as possible. Do NOT reveal your identity or that of any person while responding to this questionnaire. Please note that the information you present on this questionnaire shall be used only for purposes of research, and all confidential information you give shall remain as confidential as possible.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESPONDENTS

1. Which of the following best describes your age bracket?
(a). 18-30 (b). 31-40 (c). 41-50 (d). Above 50.
2. **What Is your gender?**
(a). Male (b) Female
3. **What is your level of Education?**
(a) Below secondary school (b) College/matriculation diploma (c). Degree and above
4. **Which city do you hail from.....**
5. **What is your current marital status?**
(a). Single (b). Married (c). Separated (d). Divorced.

SECTION B: Different Forms of SGBV Afflicted on women

Kindly state in affirmative whether the following actions have ever been afflicted on you. Tick where appropriate

Form of SGBV	YES	NO
Attempted Rape		
Rape		
Sexual exploitation with money		
Forced Earlier marriage		
Female genital mutilation		
Assault		
Trafficking		

Table 6: *Form Of SGBV Afflicted on women*

SECTION C: Role of the State as a player in Human Rights Violation.

Kindly respond 1, if you strongly disagree, 3 if you are not sure, and 5 if you strongly agree to the following questions regards the various forms of sexual and gender based violence you have experienced ever since the armed conflict begun. You may also select 3 if you somehow disagree or 4 if you somehow agree to the items listed below.

ROLE OF THE POLICE

Statement	SA	A	NANDA	DA	SDA
The police always responded on time when we made distress calls to them					
The police never asked for bribe to address complains of human rights violation by the militia in the community					
The police never colluded with the militia to loot and steal property from the residents during armed conflict					
The police failed to carry out proper intelligence on the insurgency					
The police only focused on the bribes during their line of duty					

Table 7: Role of the police

OTHER STATE AGENCIES

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
The government did everything to protect us from SGBV during armed conflict					
The government security apparatus were involved in the violation of our rights during armed conflict					
The government did little to stop the armed conflict					
Some of the government officials are behind the armed conflict being experienced					
The judicial system in the country protects the militia more than it does to women					
The national government representatives at community level are accomplices in the armed conflict					
The government intelligence has failed to apprehend the culprits in the ongoing armed conflict.					

Table 8: *Other state agency*

SECTION C: Experiences of women and Health Consequences

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
There are women I know who suffered partial disability as a result armed conflict in this area					
There are women I know who were impregnated as a result of armed conflict					
There are women I know who were infected with sexually transmitted diseases as a result of armed conflict					
There are women I know who suffered a lot of mental stress and trauma as a result of armed conflict					
There are women I know who were sexually assaulted during armed conflict					
There are women I know who suffered damage to my genitals during the armed conflict					
There are women I know who suffered reproductive health complications as a result of Armed conflict					
There are women I know who were handled indecently during armed conflict					

Table 9: *Experience and health consequence on women*

INTERVIEW SCHEDULES

This interview schedule shall be very brief and confidential. Kindly respond to the questions as honest as possible and please remember the information you give shall be treated with utmost confidentiality.

1. The armed conflict in Cameroon has lasted for a while now, how has the conflict affected you as a woman?
.....
.....
.....
.....
2. The armed conflict in this part of Cameroon has had great impacts on women and girl child. In your own view, kindly tell us what your experiences have been so far concerning armed conflict and women and girls?
.....
.....
.....
3. What health consequences have you suffered or any other woman has suffered ever since the conflict begun?
.....
.....
.....
.....
4. The conflict seems not to end, as woman what do you think the state shall do to ensure the various human rights violations being witnessed are abetted?
.....
.....
.....
.....
5. In your view does the constitution of this country, the judiciary or other relevant government authorities has done enough to curb the challenges women are facing ever since the start of the armed conflict?
.....

.....
.....
..

6. In your own view, what are some of the effective strategies, which the government and humanitarian organisations can use to mitigate SGBV during the current armed conflict?

.....
.....

9.2 Appendix 2



Figure 6: *Photo of Victims SGBV Survivors*

9.3 Appendix 3



Figure 7: *Photo of NGO*

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