

## Contributor Profile: Cameroon

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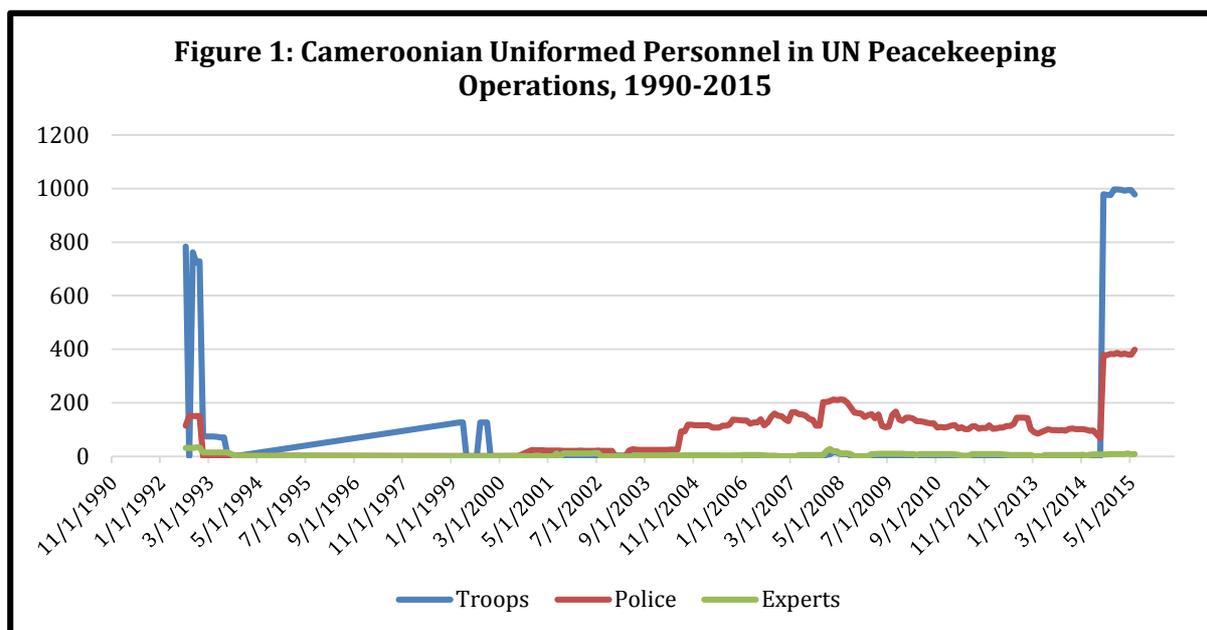
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Active Armed Forces <sup>1</sup>	Helicopters & fixed-wing transport	Defense Budget	UN Peacekeepers	UN Contribution Breakdown	Other Significant Deployments
+ 14,200 <sup>2</sup> World Ranking (size): 113 Army: 12,500 Navy 1,300 Air 300-400 +Paramilitary (gendarmerie): 9,000	Helicopters: 8 Multirole 7 Transport  Aircraft: 5 Attack 20 Transport	2014: <b>\$410m</b> (1.27% of GDP)  2013: <b>\$393m</b> (1.40% of GDP)  2012: <b>\$355m</b> (1.45% of GDP)  2011: <b>\$348m</b> (1.36% of GDP)	1,385 (72 women) 30 June 2015  Rank: 22 <sup>nd</sup> (14 <sup>th</sup> largest African contributor; 13 <sup>th</sup> largest African Union contributor)	MONUSCO 29 (24 police, 3 experts, 2 troops) MINUSCA 1,289 (311 police, 973 troops, 5 experts) MINUSMA 21 (18 police, 3 troops) MINUSTAH 13 police UNAMID 18 police UNOCI 15 (1 expert, 14 police)	MNJTF vs Boko Haram 950
Defense Spending / Troop: <sup>3</sup> Given the contested number of troops in the Cameroonian armed forces we have chosen not to speculate on the total defense spending per soldier.					

### Part 1: Recent Trends

Cameroon has a modest record of deploying peacekeepers in UN and African-led missions. In recent years, Cameroon's major deployments have focused on the Central African Republic (CAR), including one company (approximately 150 troops) to the MICOPAX mission led by the [Economic Community of Central African States](#) (ECCAS). MICOPAX was superseded by the *Mission Internationale de Soutien à la Centrafrique sous Conduite Africaine*/African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (MISCA) in 2013, and in September 2014, a Cameroonian major-general, Martin Chomu Tumentah, assumed the role of Force Commander. Also in September 2014 MISCA was transitioned into a UN peacekeeping operation, [MINUSCA](#). General Chomo remained the Force Commander and Cameroon maintained nearly 1,300 peacekeepers in the mission. In February 2015, President Biya announced a contribution of CFA30.5bn (c.US\$52.6m) to ongoing peace operations in CAR.<sup>4</sup>

According to [UN statistics](#), Cameroon increased its peacekeeping troops from 100 in 2013 to over 500 in 2014 to reach a total of 1,285 in 2015. Cameroon has also contributed troops to the Central African regional force (ECCAS Standby Force/FOMAC) since 2006, which has since been absorbed into the African Standby Force (ASF). Douala has served as the African Union's Continental Logistics Base [since 2011](#). In 2008, Cameroon created a training program, referred to as the International School for Security Forces (EIFORCES), for police and law enforcement contingents for peacekeeping missions. The school is modelled after the Bamako peacekeeping school in Mali and the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre in Accra, Ghana. In [April 2015](#), Police Commissioner Oyono (née Thom Cecile) became the new Deputy Director General of the training school, the first woman to hold the position.



## Part 2: Decision-Making Process

All decisions about peacekeeping or the deployment of military force are highly centralized under the Minister Delegate and the President, Paul Biya, who has ruled Cameroon since 1982. According to Article 8 of [Cameroon's constitution](#), the President of the Republic is the head of the armed forces, appoints all military posts, and is tasked with ensuring internal and external security. According to Article 9, the President has powers to declare an emergency, where he may take on any additional power, presumably including those that involve the military. The President relies on the Minister Delegate at the Presidency in charge of Defense to implement defense policy. The Secretary of State for Defense in charge of the Gendarmerie, Secretary of State for Defense for Veterans and War Victims, the chief of general staff, and other undersecretaries report to the Minister Delegate. The Chief of Staff has authority over the sub-chiefs of the army, navy, and air force. Cameroon's military command structure is divided in two; there is an operational command and an organic command. The latter is responsible for administrative management, training, and effectiveness of forces. Both African-led and other international peacekeeping operations fall under the control of the International Relations Directorate, [which was set up in 2001](#).

## Part 3: Rationales for Contributing

*Political Rationales:* Peacekeeping and multilateralism has been formally part of Cameroon's military strategy since 1979, [according to a report](#) detailing Cameroon's 1980 employment of forces doctrine, a confidential document. The author of the report notes that this document is out of date, and that a new draft document has been put forth that outlines key principles for the future of defence in Cameroon. The status of this draft is unclear, but fear of regional conflict and the need to provide support to international peace operations are two of five key elements, positioned equally among maintaining Cameroon's territorial integrity and preventing threats against public order. Specifically, Cameroon envisions contributing to multilateral efforts to enforce settlements between belligerent parties, such as after a ceasefire. Additionally, this doctrine notes the importance of having forces ready to be deployed for peacekeeping missions, but it is unclear if forces are kept ready for deployment to peacekeeping operations.

*Security Rationales:* Cameroon's north-western border is shared with Nigeria. As of early 2015, Boko Haram fighters controlled two Nigerian provinces, Adamawa and Borno, adjacent to Cameroon. Thus far, Cameroon has been effective at defending itself from the group, but attacks along the border [continue to increase](#). Early force deployments against Boko Haram in 2014 began with reconnaissance flights, but in 2015, the country actively engaged in ground offensives. Boko Haram is known to raid banks and take hostages when it advances through territory, posing a distinct threat to the security of Cameroon's people. Through April 2015, attacks within Cameroon from Boko Haram have increased, killing numerous individuals. Moreover, the state's relationship with the group may be more complicated than initially expected. Boko Haram, though condemned by the Cameroonian government, has [until recently](#) been able to thrive within the country, developing and launching attacks from local cells. On 3 February 2015, the United States Ambassador to Cameroon mentioned Washington was working on a "logistic pipeline of material" to enable the country to defend itself against Boko Haram. This comment came concurrent to an [increase in training efforts](#) that focus specifically on measures to combat the group. Broader national security concerns may be the driving force behind recent investment in the military, but when taken in conjunction with the trend of asymmetrical stateless warfare common in the region, Cameroon seems to believe instability is better addressed through multilateralism. For example, Colonel Joseph Nouma of Cameroon's Rapid Intervention Brigade (BIR), who is leading the effort to fight Boko Haram, [said](#) "We hope for change from the Nigerians [under new president Muhammadu Buhari, who was inaugurated at the end of May], and the best change would be to see co-operation with foreign troops."

*Economic Rationales:* Providing peacekeepers brings both direct and indirect economic benefits. Directly, Cameroon receives US\$1,028 per month per soldier serving as a UN peacekeeper, in addition to being reimbursed for equipment utilized for peacekeeping missions. Cameroon receives over US\$17 million annually in payments for troops alone. Tangentially, the country benefits from being a centre of stability in a conflict-prone region. Engaging in regional peacekeeping missions to assist unstable neighbouring countries prevents conflict spilling over into Cameroon, as is currently happening with Boko Haram in Nigeria. By building a peacekeeping apparatus, such as having the city of Douala act as the logistics base for AU-led missions across Africa, Cameroon positions itself as a sub-regional (and continent-wide) leader. Moreover, the security provided by being designated as a centre of operations translates into long-run economic benefits, such as decreased borrowing costs and greater private investments as contractors, manufacturers, and other entities establish business networks in the country.

*Institutional Rationales:* Apart from the presidential guard, Cameroon's military has a high degree of ethnic diversity, and is intentionally designed to be representative of the country's regions. As a result, the willingness to participate in peacekeeping operations is greater than it would be if the force were more homogenous.

*Normative Rationales:* Cameroon's government is not motivated by any particular normative rationale when it comes to the deployment of its peacekeepers.

#### **Part 4: Barriers to Contributing**

*Divergent Economic Interests:* Peacekeeping motivations may be hindered by a lack of funding for the military more broadly. Though Cameroon receives funding from the UN for peacekeeping, it is unclear whether the payments are substantial enough to encourage additional contributions. For example, Cameroon's BIR, which was created in 2001, is the

country's most effective security force, yet in 2008, two of the three battalions were not operational. Currently, the force is deployed to fight Boko Haram on the border with Nigeria. Approximately 60% of the BIR's funding comes from the state-owned Cameroonian Hydrocarbons Company, with the remainder coming from the Ministry of Defense. Unfortunately, this means that Cameroon's peacekeeping priorities come second after protecting vital state interests.

*Political Factors:* Cameroon maintained a non-interventionist foreign policy until the recent Boko Haram attacks. Cameroon did not wish to be at the forefront of the international political arena and hence it had [adopted a posture](#) of “reserve and temperateness,” due to President Biya's belief that meddling in the affairs of other countries produces instability. Nonetheless, with Boko Haram threats and rising security issues along the borders with Nigeria, Chad and Central African Republic, Cameroon has increasingly taken on a leadership role in peacekeeping, such as having top generals leading multinational operations or through Douala's designation as a logistics hub. Leadership in these endeavours is fairly new.

Cameroon's non-interventionist foreign policy explains the limited number of past regional peacekeeping agreements, one of which would have put together a multilateral fighting force to combat highway piracy in Chad, [but may have been politically divisive](#) among neighbouring states, who considered them to be rebel groups. With the fear that a joint fighting force could impact rebel movements in other countries, participation was seen as likely to threaten regional peace. As a result, some states in the region such as Chad or Central African Republic viewed Cameroon as responsible for blocking the formation of mutually beneficial peace agreements. However, Boko Haram attacks in Northern Cameroon [have forced](#) President Biya to put aside his “reserve and temperateness,” and instead vow “to fight against the terrorist group Boko Haram until it is totally eradicated.” As mentioned above, [Cameroon's military wanted](#) to launch peacekeeping operations to help repel Boko Haram in Nigeria months ago, but were only allowed to systematically cross border and fight when President Muhammadu Buhari was elected. It remains to be seen whether this authorisation will be sustainably maintained and implemented for months or years to come.

The politics of Cameroon's peacekeeping deployments are also influenced by internal divisions within the government. President Biya was born in 1933 and has ruled Cameroon since 1982. Given constitutional rules, the President of the Senate, Marcel Niat Njifenji, is expected to take power should Biya become incapacitated, until new elections are held. Given the potential for a power struggle, discontent and factionalism—illustrated by an overwhelming number of small political parties and divisions between the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement's (CPDM) hardliners and moderates—are likely to remain prominent, increasing uncertainty into the future. Given that the BIR would likely be deployed to bolster domestic security, [as occurred in 2008](#), there may be a reduction of support for peacekeeping operations.

*Lack of Experience:* The Cameroonian military has seldom fought against forces from other states. Thus, their strategic acumen and operational capacity to respond to evolving threats and conflicts may be limited. Experience is becoming less of an issue as better training programs are implemented, such as the EIFORCES School or through training partnerships with other countries, [such as China](#).

*Lack of equipment:* Cameroon's military equipment is limited. For example, the Air Force has few attack helicopters. This is insufficient for the scope and scale of the campaigns Cameroonian peacekeepers participate in. As of early 2015, the majority of Cameroon's

helicopters were deployed to fight Boko Haram in the north of the country. This leaves the rest of Cameroon in theory vulnerable to attack, and results in a low likelihood that Cameroon will engage in aerial peacekeeping efforts away from its borders. Moreover, Cameroon's military does not have adequate surveillance aircraft, preventing intelligence gathering, a crucial component of fighting insurgent groups. In 2008, [a report](#) indicated that instead of investing in new military hardware, the Minister Delegate of Defense plans to "militarize and armor" civilian vehicles such as Toyota Land Cruisers. The same report went on to comment that at the one operational naval base in Douala, even the ships ready to sail could not travel more than 15 meters from the dock.

### **Part 5: Current Challenges and Issues**

*Multiple Conflicts:* Cameroon faces conflict on multiple fronts. In the north, Boko Haram-controlled territory in Nigeria presents a constant stream of violent attacks on the border. In the east, internal strife in Central African Republic has resulted in the deployment of peacekeepers. Three distinct issues have emerged as a result. First, Cameroon's limited fighting forces are stretched thin. With an already limited number of troops able to be deployed for peacekeeping, multiple conflicts makes it more difficult to have an effective number of troops at each conflict front, much less engage in international peacekeeping operations. Second, the chaos of conflict in conjunction with Cameroon's desire to increase troop deployments may come at the expense of recruiting individuals motivated by pay, with little stake in maintaining peace or security. Local news outlets have already alleged that there are issues with the degree of commitment to human rights standards by certain members of the military (see the section on human rights abuses below). Third, should Cameroon's forces continue to effectively combat Boko Haram, it is likely the organization will take advantage of support from ISIL and AQIM (both of which are allied with Boko Haram; the latter having conducted operations in Nigeria), adding a new dimension to conflict.

*Refugee Influx:* Conflict in neighboring states has produced a deluge of refugees, which have to be housed, cared for, and secured by military personnel. As a result of Boko Haram's rising insurgency, tens of thousands of Cameroonians are internally displaced, and over 40,000 Nigerian civilians are seeking refuge in the country. In total, there are at least 96,000 displaced persons in northern Cameroon.<sup>5</sup> In the first weekend of March 2015 alone, 25,000 refugees crossed the border from Nigeria into Cameroon, resulting in a total of approximately 66,000 refugees from Nigeria alone. In the east, the conflict in Central African Republic has resulted in an influx of over 150,000 refugees. Insurgent groups such as Boko Haram may camouflage themselves as refugees, adding to the number of troops needed to maintain security. In the coming year, the Boko Haram threat is likely to increase. Thus, it is unrealistic to assume that Cameroon will be able to increase its peacekeeping deployments in the short run, when even now, President Biya is asking for considerable external assistance (military aid) to fight Boko Haram.

*Human Rights Abuses:* Peacekeeping forces are intended to maintain stability in times of conflict. Moreover, fighting terrorist groups is a complex endeavor for a country such as Cameroon that has been at peace for about half a century. In its attempts to increase efficiency in the fight against Boko Haram, some members of the Cameroon's security forces [were alleged to have been complicit](#) in, if not responsible for, abuses against the civilian population who were suspected of supporting Boko Haram. The military has declined to comment on the incident. As of early 2015, over 1,000 suspected fighters are being held at prisons in the north of the country.

## **Part 6: Key Peacekeeping Champions and Opponents**

France has historically supported Cameroon politically and militarily, but French pressure on the regime to adopt democratic reforms has sometimes strained relations. Cameroon has a decent relationship with other developed countries. Between February and March 2013, Cameroon participated in a joint air/med military exercise with the United States, observed by Burundi, Republic of Congo, DR Congo, and São Tomé and Príncipe.<sup>6</sup> Historically, China has had a close partnership with Cameroon. According to Wikileaks diplomatic cables, China provides training equipment and assistance to the Cameroonian military, though it is unclear to what extent Chinese assistance influences peacekeeping. In 2012, China pledged to help support the Cameroonian Navy. Cameroon's recent involvement with Boko Haram demonstrates a new level of international collaboration and planning for peace operations. For example, an international joint-multinational force meeting was held in Yaoundé in early February 2015, where a regional force of 8,700 soldiers was announced. Many Cameroonians have advocated for a greater peacekeeping role given the recent spillover of attacks into the country. For example, two marches were held in early February, which culminated in a third large march in Yaoundé on 28 February 2015. Cameroon's fight against Boko Haram has been aided by Russia, [which announced in January](#) that it would provide Cameroonian forces with heavy artillery, missiles, cannons, armoured vehicles, air defenses, and anti-aircraft systems by the end of 2015. In January 2015, Biya [publicly thanked](#) Germany, France, the United States, Britain, Russia, and China for their assistance fighting Boko Haram.

## **Part 7: Capabilities and Caveats**

Cameroon's increased experience with peace operations is evident, even in the few recent years it has fought Boko Haram. As early as 2009, ECCAS member states agreed to set up a logistics and supply warehouse in Douala to support peace operations requiring rapid deployment. The facility, located near the airport, is [intended to serve the entire continent](#). Moreover, Cameroon is strategically positioned to act as a staging point for peace operations in the region. Douala, a port and the largest city in Cameroon, acted as the main departure point for convoys resupplying peace operations elsewhere in the region, such as the MINURCAT mission in Chad/CAR that ended in 2010. This is indicative of the broader role Cameroon can play in supporting regional stability. Cameroon has also been able to expand the scope and scale of its peace operations with support from regional partners. However, despite the country's increased role in peacekeeping, its security forces require better training to avoid human rights abuses and enhance their credibility. Despite volunteer military service and an approximately equal balance of men and women in the armed forces, Cameroon's peacekeeping efforts could be far more inclusive of women. Currently, there are few women involved, mostly serving as police, representative of approximately 4% of the country's UN peacekeepers. Finally, Cameroon's aging military equipment is in need of greater investment going forward.

## **Part 8: Further Readings**

Niagale Bagayoko-Penone, [Cameroon's Security Apparatus: Actors and Structures](#) (GO/0717, 2008, African Security Network).

"Sub-Saharan Africa" in International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 2015* (Taylor & Francis, 2015): 435–36.

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### **Notes**

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise stated, data is drawn from IISS, *The Military Balance 2015* (London: IISS/ Taylor & Francis, 2015) and the [Providing for Peacekeeping database](#).

<sup>2</sup> A [report released by the French National Assembly](#) on 30 March 2011 estimated Cameroon's active armed forces to be 33,000 troops, including 17,000 for the army; 3,100 for the navy; 2,300 for air

forces; and 11,000 for paramilitary. [Additionally](#), in December 2013, the Cameroon Minister-Delegate at the Presidency for Defense announced the hiring of 4,850 new troops (2,750 for the armed forces, and 2,100 paramilitary) and in January 2014, 2,000 additional troops for the presidential guards and the rapid intervention battalions. This means that the official number of active armed forces in Cameroon is close to 40,000 troops, including 20,000 for the army. Unfortunately, government officials contacted by the authors did not provide additional data.

<sup>3</sup> Defense Spending/Troop is the total defense budget (in US\$) divided by the total number of active armed forces. Uses latest figures available from IISS, *The Military Balance 2015*.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.businessincameroon.com/pdf/BC25.pdf> (p.16) and <http://www.cameroononline.org/cameroon-bankrolls-cfa-30-5b-car-peacekeeping/>

<sup>5</sup> Lisa Schlein, "Northern Cameroon in Turmoil as Boko Haram Attacks Increase," *VOA*, January 30, 2015, <http://www.voanews.com/content/northern-cameroon-in-turmoil-as-boko-haram-attacks-increase/2620829.html>.

<sup>6</sup> International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 2014* (2014), p.475.