



The background of the slide is a map of Cameroon. The northern part of the map is labeled 'NIGERIA' and the southern part is labeled 'CENTRAL AFRICA'. The map shows the coastline and major cities. The Anglophone crisis region is highlighted in a darker shade of gray. Cities marked in this region include Maroua, Kaélé, Guidar, Garoua, Poli, Tcholliré, Touboro, Ngaoundéré, Meiganga, Banyo, Tibati, Kumbo, and Garoua Boulai. The title 'CAMEROON' is in white and 'ANGLOPHONE CRISIS' is in red.

CAMEROON ANGLOPHONE CRISIS

CIVIL UNREST · AUGUST 2020

Cameroon Anglophone Crisis

Cameroon has been struggling with increasingly violent crisis between the country's two linguistic communities. Despite the current conflict only being active since 2016, the roots of the conflict go back to decisions made by the country's linguistic communities and the international community, both leading up to independence and immediately afterward. The aftermath of World War I resulted in Germany, Cameroon's original colonial ruler, losing its possession, and the League of Nations splitting the colony and giving mandates to both France and the United Kingdom. Each new ruler proceeded, during the mandate period, to pursue integrating their possession into their colonial holdings; thus, the legal and educational systems were separated and, most importantly, as a cultural signifier, Cameroon became split along linguistic lines

After independence, and a difficult reunification process – a significant number of Anglophones would have preferred independence – the subsequent Francophone dominated governments pursued policies of centralization many Anglophones developed grievances and felt marginalized by an increasingly unitary, Francophone dominated state. Most recently, these grievances came to the fore late in 2016 when teachers and lawyers joined together to protest for more representation for Anglophones. These protests eventually expanded throughout the Anglophone community and were met with repression by security forces. While a

minority to call for an independent state, usually under the name Ambazonia, most were calling for a return to federalism, which, according to the Anglophones, was part of the deal that unified the two former colonies.

Throughout the last two years, both sides escalated the conflict; allegations of brutality by the security forces are not unheard of, and armed separatist groups have taken advantage of the disorder to further their aims by violently confronting security forces. The population – which bore the brunt of the breakdown of law and order – has been caught in the middle of the conflict between Anglophone activists, the government, and armed groups; more than 700,000 have had to flee their homes. The United States State Department also called out the Cameroon government for excessive use of force, extrajudicial killings, and prolonged and unlawful detentions. The violence, however, has not been one-sided as separatists have also been responsible for murdering security force personnel as well as innocent villagers. Since 2017, the separatists have turned into kidnapping for ransom. While initially the militants used kidnapping to deliver an illusion of control over the two regions, the tactic soon changed into a tool to intimidate the local populace to comply and assist the militants and quickly progressed into a way to fund their activities. Hundreds of people, including students, clergy and politicians were kidnapped and released after ransom payments.

In December 2019, the separatists fired on a Cameroon Airlines passenger aircraft as it was approaching to land at Bamenda airport in the northwest of the country. The aircraft landed safely despite its

fuselage being hit by small arm fire.

To defuse the violence, in December 2019, the central government passed a law granting special status to the Anglophone regions. The new law provided the Anglophone regions with some control over their legal and educational systems; moreover, it also envisions assemblies of chiefs and elected assemblies for the Anglophone regions along with additional representation at the Federal level. Opposition lawmakers and Anglophone separatist groups, however,

have rejected the new law as wholly insufficient. While many separatists are seeking full independence, lawmakers and those seeking autonomy are demanding more involvement at the national level – including within the executive branch – and complete control of local educational and cultural policies for the Anglophone minority. It will take time to see if its passage and implementation has an impact on violence, and if the international community continues and expands its push for more autonomy for the Anglophone regions

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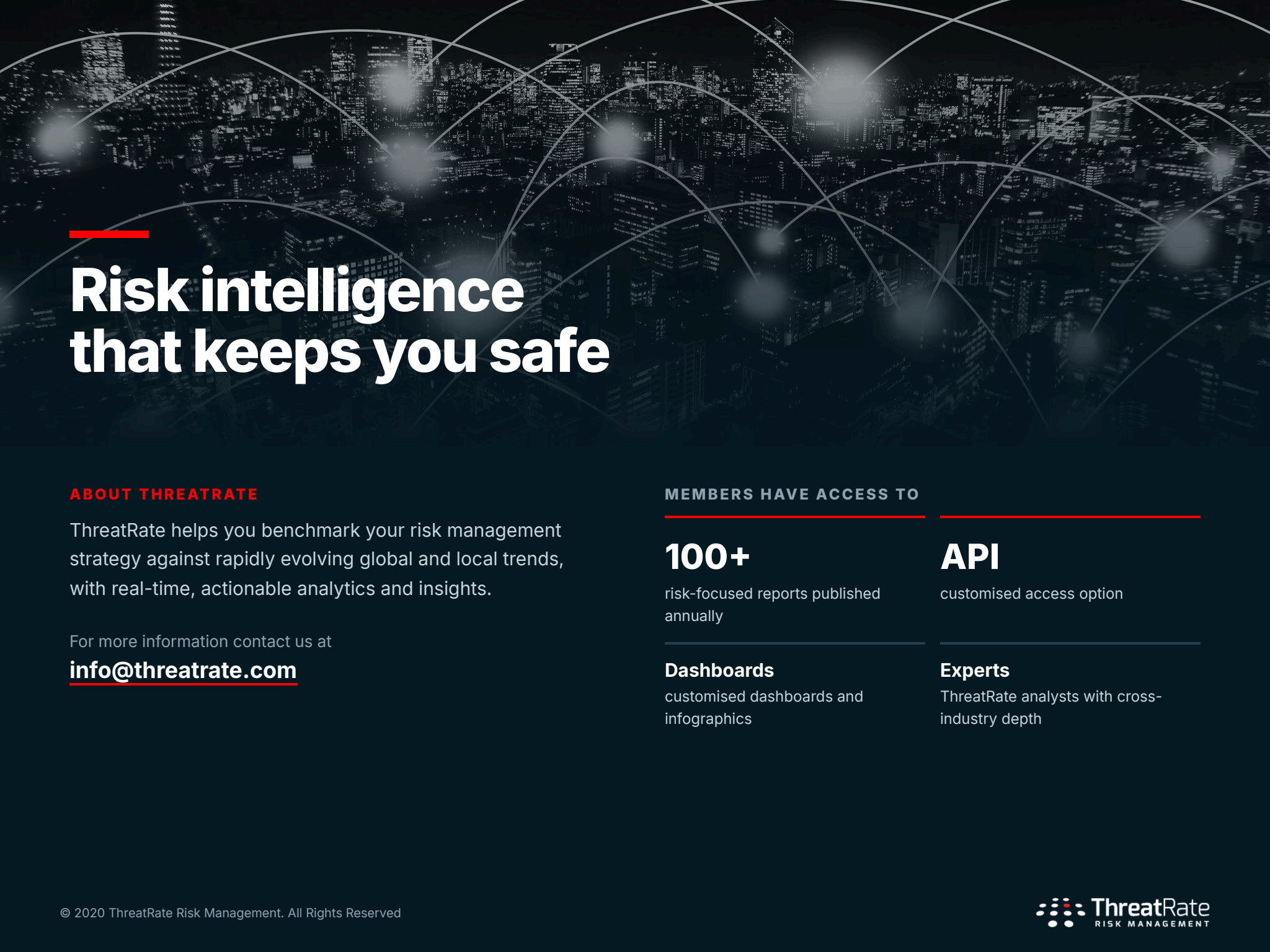
Soundbite analytics

- Five of Cameroon's twenty-four million people are Anglophones.
- More than 3000 people have died in the recent two-year conflict.

- More than 700,000 have had to flee their homes.
- In some surveys, more than 69% of Anglophones prefer secession.

SOURCES

- 1 <http://www.cameroonintelligence.com/cameroons-anglophone-crisis-at-the-crossroads/>
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- 3 <https://www.msn.com/en-xl/news/other/cameroons-anglophone-regions-granted-special-status/ar-BBY9dIZ>
- 4 <https://www.africanews.com/2018/04/22/cameroon-forces-in-gross-abuse-over-anglophone-boko-haram-crisis-us-report/>
- 5 <https://kapital929.fm/cameroon-airlines-flight-fired-on-by-separatist-rebels/>
- 6 <https://www.dw.com/en/cameroon-anglophones-special-status-too-little-too-late/a-51747683>



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