

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 28, 2022

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

RECEIVED
By ESEC at 11:39 am, Mar 21, 2022

Dear President Biden:

As Members of the New Jersey Congressional Delegation, we write to respectfully request an immediate designation of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) or Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) be issued for Cameroon. Our own Cameroonian American population in New Jersey has a compelling interest in this crisis, and we are voicing the urgent need for action on their behalf. Currently, there is a crisis on the ground in Cameroon, filled with massive internal displacement, civil unrest, war crimes, and shortages of essentials like water, food, and healthcare. Deporting Cameroonian nationals is just not a viable, conscious, or moral option at this time, and we should immediately extend protections against such a policy.

The United Nations has estimated that more than 4.4 million people in Cameroon need assistance, with over 1.5 million people being internally displaced and another 67,000 Cameroonian refugees displaced in Nigeria. The U.S. Department of State has moved to issue “Do Not Travel” warnings to six regions: parts of Adamawa, Far North, North-West, North, South-West, and East, based on the high risk of kidnapping and armed conflict. In a recent human rights report released by the State Department on Cameroon, there was an unsettling number of human rights abuses, including extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detention, violence against women and children, and torture.

Cameroon is dealing with various humanitarian crises taking place across the nation. There is consistent and ongoing conflict with the armed Islamist group Boko Haram in the Far North region; a political and humanitarian crisis in the Anglophone North-West and South-West regions; and a refugee crisis in the East, near the border with the Central African Republic. Cameroon’s government has continued to come down against any peaceful political opposition and there has been documented use of security forces’ utilizing torture and detention to intimidate and punish many who have returned due to deportation from the United States.

Currently there are five armed conflicts on the ground in Cameroon and these conflicts have overtaken eight of the 10 regions. Civilians are facing:

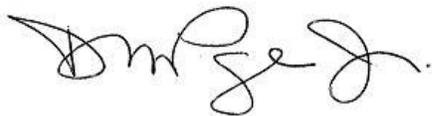
1. A humanitarian crisis due to political turmoil following the 2018 presidential election and 2020 local elections, as well as government repression of political opposition and gender and sexual minorities.
2. Ongoing violence stemming from the 2016 Anglophone Crisis.
3. The invasion of Boko Haram in the North of Cameroon.
4. Seleka and Anti-Balaka militias in the East of Cameroon.
5. An exacerbation of longstanding tensions between farmers and nomadic herders over natural resources, resulting in violence and increased civilian casualties in the Northwest and Northern regions of Cameroon.

The COVID-19 pandemic has only ravaged and intensified the problems on the ground in Cameroon, where aside from violence and social unrest, the increase in rainwater amounts have negatively impacted infrastructure essential to the delivery of humanitarian aid and pandemic relief. Citing limited medical resources and a high risk of contracting the virus, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has warned against all but essential travel to Cameroon.

An estimated 40,000 Cameroonians currently living in the United States would benefit from a TPS designation for Cameroon. An announcement on a designation for Cameroon would showcase the U.S. government's commitment to support international stability and humanitarian efforts across the world, by ensuring the safeguarding of Cameroonians in the U.S. from an immoral forced return to such unfortunate and menacing conditions. According to the Cameroon American Council, in New Jersey and across the United States, immigration relief for Cameroonians is a consensus builder for the diverse Cameroonian diaspora.

We respectfully ask that your administration do everything in its ability to assist these Cameroonian nationals remain stateside.

Sincerely,



Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress



Christopher H. Smith
Member of Congress



Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



Tom Malinowski
Member of Congress



Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress



Albio Sires
Member of Congress



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

April 28, 2022

The Honorable Donald M. Payne Jr.
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Payne:

Thank you for your January 28, 2022 letter regarding a request to designate Cameroon for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and to protect thousands of Cameroonians from returning to ongoing armed conflict.

On Friday, April 15, 2022, the Department of Homeland Security announced the designation of Cameroon for TPS for 18 months. The United States recognizes the ongoing armed conflict in Cameroon, and we will provide temporary protection to those in need. Cameroonian nationals currently residing in the United States who cannot safely return will be able to remain and work in the United States until conditions in their home country improve.

Individuals eligible for TPS under this designation must have continuously resided in the United States since April 14, 2022. Individuals who attempt to travel to the United States after April 14, 2022, will not be eligible for TPS. Cameroon's 18-month designation will go into effect on the publication date of the forthcoming Federal Register notice. The Federal Register notice will provide instructions for applying for TPS and an Employment Authorization Document. TPS applicants must meet all eligibility requirements and undergo security and background checks.

Thank you again for your letter and interest in this important issue. The cosigners of your letter will receive a separate, identical response. Should you require any additional assistance, please have your staff contact the U. S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Office of Legislative Affairs at (240) 721-3801.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ur M. Jaddou" followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Ur M. Jaddou
Director