



INSIGHT: How rumours and allegations on social media affect aid agencies operating environment.

International humanitarian organisations in the Northwest and Southwest regions of Cameroon are increasingly affected by the ongoing conflict between Ambazonian separatists and the Cameroonian military. Local health workers and teachers have been victims of separatist conflict related violence in these areas for some time. Government measures and operations by state forces from the Army and Gendarmerie have also **affected aid operations**. The **kidnapping and killing of an MSF** employed community liaison officer by separatist forces on 7 July is concerning because it was justified based on the conclusion that the aid worker was spying on behalf of the government. Social media can influence to what extent aid agencies are perceived as impartial, neutral and independent.

ANALYST COMMENT

Insecurity Insight's social media monitoring suggests that international aid programmes in the conflict areas are subject to misinformation by people with links to the separatist movement. As a result, the presence of aid agencies is becoming increasingly political in the perception of many local people.

Separatists perceive and accuse international aid organisations as either “conniving” with the central government, or, if not deliberately working for the Government, then at least serving its purposes by inadvertently thwarting Ambazonian's objective of achieving independence from Yaoundé.

Concerned about social media, the health response or aid operations? Get in touch and send us your questions
- info@insecurityinsight.org

EXAMPLES:



Following the murder of the MSF aid worker, a highly active, pro-independence page issued a tract arguing that attacks on aid workers are justified, accusing international aid organisations including UNHCR, **UNDP**, and “NGOs” of **using humanitarianism as a cover to “penetrate communities” and spy for “the (Cameroonian) government and France”**.



In another social media post, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Cameroon was accused of **collaborating with “Biya’s regime” to bribe local religious leaders** to support efforts to reconstruct the local economy devastated by the ongoing conflict. The reconstruction effort is viewed with suspicion by separatists as a tool by the central government and supportive actors to decrease local support for independence.

The presence of the UNDP has resulted in the separatists viewing the UN as “conniving” with the central government: according to a post, “Anglophones will not accept any form of reconstruction put forward by UNDP to rescue France and Biya from humiliating war”. An active Twitter user claimed: **“France and UNDP are conniving with Cameroon and killing our people...”**.



Humanitarian efforts to combat COVID-19 may also become politicised. A social media post accused the central Cameroonian government of **bribing doctors into killing Anglophones who visit hospitals by “framing it” on COVID-19**.

Attacks on aid workers is justify because most of the aid workers are undercover agents of France who are not here for humanitarian purpose but what they are actually doing is spying, measuring the land and reconnaissance for the government and France but using UNHCR, UNDP and NGOs to penetrate communities



Government order doctors to kill anglophone clergymen and political opponents who visit the hospital with any illness and frame it on COVID-19 for a cash reward of 6 million frs each after the person has been killed just as Ahijo did to former UPC militants in 1960

