

104<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
1<sup>ST</sup> SESSION

# H. CON. RES. 93

Concerning democracy and human rights situation in Cameroon.

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IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

AUGUST 4, 1995

Mr. ENGEL submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on International Relations

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## **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION**

Concerning democracy and human rights situation in Cameroon.

Whereas Cameroon held its first multiparty legislative election in March 1992 and its first multiparty presidential election in October 1992;

Whereas the legislative elections were conducted relatively well, the October 1992 election was described by a multinational observer mission as highly unfair and strongly biased in favor of the current President, Paul Biya;

Whereas the Department of State's Country Reports for 1992 and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs Report outlined numerous voting irregularities, including vote counting by authorities who had partisan leanings, underage and multiple voting, and electoral reports from "ghost precincts";

Whereas the United States suspended \$14,000,000 in aid to Cameroon in November 1992 due to problems arising from the presidential election and subsequent harassment by the government of the leading opposition party;

Whereas 34 Members of the House of Representatives wrote a letter to President Biya on March 25, 1993, expressing disappointment over the failed electoral process and concern about human rights violations in Cameroon;

Whereas immediately after assuming the presidency, President Biya promised constitutional reform and meaningful participation by opposition parties in the process;

Whereas a draft of a new constitution, initiated by a broadly representative committee, was taken over by the Government of Cameroon in 1993;

Whereas the Government of Cameroon has not committed itself to a national referendum on the constitution, instead suggesting endorsement of minor changes by the government-controlled national assembly;

Whereas President Biya hastily convened a Consultative Constitutional Review Committee (CCRC) on December 15, 1994, but hand selected its members, closed its deliberations to the public, and never announced whether or when its recommendations for a new constitution would be approved;

Whereas the Government of Cameroon has retained control of electronic media by refusing to grant licenses to private radio and television stations and has intensified political attacks against the independent press;

Whereas the Department of State's Country Reports on Cameroonian authorities "continued to commit serious

human rights abuses, including a number of extrajudicial killings”;

Whereas, in an almost unprecedented maneuver, on March 25, 1994, the Department of State blocked an Export-Import Bank loan of \$22,000,000 to the Government of Cameroon, invoking the rarely implemented Chafee Amendment to the Export-Import Bank Act of 1945, marking only the fifth time the Secretary of State invoked the amendment and the first time it was invoked in regard to human rights violations in a Sub-Saharan country;

Whereas the United States and other countries have suspended economic assistance to the Government of Cameroon since November 1992, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) suspended support payments in May 1994, due to the high level of fiscal fraud and continued deterioration of public services, such as education, health, and infrastructure;

Whereas the IMF is set to review a new standby arrangement for Cameroon for September 1995;

Whereas the United States has strongly supported the transition of Cameroon to a democratic society: Now, therefore, be it

1        *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*  
2 *concurring)*, That the Congress—

3            (1) urges prompt implementation by the Gov-  
4        ernment of Cameroon of long postponed steps to  
5        promote further democratization in Cameroon, in-  
6        cluding—

1 (A) separation of executive, legislative, and  
2 judicial powers, and decentralization of author-  
3 ity;

4 (B) full and open debate on the constitu-  
5 tion;

6 (C) ratification of a new constitution re-  
7 spectful and representative of the democratic  
8 aspirations of the multiethnic Cameroonian peo-  
9 ple;

10 (D) assuring a free and fair electoral proc-  
11 ess, including access by international election  
12 monitors;

13 (E) guaranteed equal access to the media  
14 and the political process by all political parties;  
15 and

16 (F) elimination of media censorship and is-  
17 suance of licenses to private radio and television  
18 stations;

19 (2) urges the Government of Cameroon to un-  
20 dertake measures to address human rights abuses,  
21 including—

22 (A) immediate release of persons detained  
23 solely for their political views;

24 (B) introduction of safeguards to protect  
25 all prisoners from torture and ill-treatment, and

1 institution of impartial investigations into alle-  
2 gations of such activities, including alleged  
3 extrajudicial executions by security forces;

4 (C) sustained human rights education pro-  
5 grams for the security forces of Cameroon; and

6 (D) prohibition on the intimidation, har-  
7 assment, and wiretapping of opposition leaders  
8 and political dissidents; and

9 (3) urges the Government of Cameroon and  
10 Cameroonian political parties to cease violence  
11 among ethnic groups and against foreign nationals.

12 (4) commends the Administration for steps  
13 taken in support of Democracy and human rights in  
14 Cameroon and urges the Administration to explore  
15 additional measures, both unilateral and in coordina-  
16 tion with other governments to promote improved  
17 human rights and restoration of full democratic rule.

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