

118TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. RES. 1048

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the plight of Cameroonian immigrants and the continued turmoil and instability in the nation of Cameroon merits a designation of humanitarian parole and calling on the Department of Homeland Security to create a humanitarian parole program for Cameroonians fleeing this violence.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 1, 2024

Mr. ESPAILLAT (for himself, Mr. IVEY, Mr. TRONE, Mr. BOWMAN, Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, Mr. CLEAVER, and Mr. MCGOVERN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

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## RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the plight of Cameroonian immigrants and the continued turmoil and instability in the nation of Cameroon merits a designation of humanitarian parole and calling on the Department of Homeland Security to create a humanitarian parole program for Cameroonians fleeing this violence.

Whereas Cameroon is currently facing multiple ongoing armed conflicts including the Boko Haram terror crisis, the Seleka/Anti-Balaka rebel crisis, the Anglophone seces-

sionist crisis, and other ethno-religious clashes, in addition to widespread corruption and political instability;

Whereas Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa, which have been designated as foreign terrorist organizations by the United States Government since 2013 and 2018, respectively, have continued to launch deadly attacks on villages and civilians in Cameroon's northern region;

Whereas the civil war in the Central African Republic has also spilled over to Cameroon, with cross-border militias initiating conflicts in eastern Cameroon;

Whereas, from 2016 through November 2023, over 6,000 people were killed as a direct result of violence in northwest and southwest Cameroon, and according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 1,700,000 people in Cameroon are in need of humanitarian assistance, 638,421 people have been internally displaced, and more than 87,402 have fled to neighboring Nigeria;

Whereas the Cameroonian military faces credible accusations of arresting people it identifies as dissidents, burning down civilian homes, and killing citizens with impunity, further exacerbating the humanitarian crisis for Cameroonian civilians;

Whereas, due to ongoing armed conflict, continued human rights abuses, and other extraordinary and temporary conditions in Cameroon that prevent Cameroonian nationals from safely returning to their country, the Department of Homeland Security designated Cameroon for temporary protected status (TPS) in April 2022 and then redesignated and extended Cameroonian nationals for TPS in October 2023, providing short-term relief for

Cameroonian immigrants who have been continuously residing in the United States since October 5, 2023;

Whereas the aforementioned TPS designations do not apply to Cameroonians who arrived in the United States after October 5, 2023, presenting a pressing need for the United States to apply humanitarian protections for Cameroonians who continue to flee the ongoing armed conflicts in their country and who have continued to arrive in the United States since October 5, 2023;

Whereas, as of February 2024, multiple nations other than Cameroon have received concurrent TPS designations and humanitarian parole designations from the Department of Homeland Security as a means of providing comprehensive protection in the United States for deserving and embattled immigrant populations;

Whereas Cameroonian immigrants who have fled to Nigeria have previously faced extradition back to Cameroon where they risk an unfair trial before a military court and the possibility of torture;

Whereas the journey from Africa to seek refuge in the Western Hemisphere is particularly perilous and occasionally deadly for Cameroonian migrants, as demonstrated in March 2023 when a boat carrying nearly 3 dozen West African immigrants, a majority of whom were Cameroonian migrants en route to the United States Virgin Islands, capsized, killing 3 Cameroonians and leading to a search for 13 additional bodies that were never found;

Whereas, in December 2023, the European Union (EU) signed a pact to facilitate the deportation of asylum seekers and limit migration to the bloc, leaving Cameroonian

migrants fleeing violence or ethnoreligious persecution particularly at risk;

Whereas, amid stricter EU immigration policies, Cameroonian asylum seekers are increasingly seeking protection in Latin America and the United States, where they often face intense discrimination, detainment, poor conditions of confinement, and deportation;

Whereas, in the United States, despite only making up around 7 percent of the noncitizen population, Black immigrants represent over 20 percent of those in deportation proceedings on criminal grounds, constituting revealing evidence of the disparate treatment of Black immigrants;

Whereas, in August 2020, Cameroonian detainees at Louisiana's Pine Prairie Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention center launched their third hunger strike that year to bring attention to their experiences of racism, unwarranted threats, and excessive abuse by ICE officials;

Whereas, although only 6 percent of migrants detained by ICE are Black, 28 percent of abuse complaints over a recent 6-year period (2016–2021) were reported by Black detained persons, and nearly half of the calls (43 percent) by Black nonbinary-detained persons included reports of abuse;

Whereas immigrants from majority Black countries, such as Cameroon, that are in ICE detention facilities are sent to solitary confinement at a disproportionately high rate, pay higher bonds, and face more rejections for asylum than immigrants from nonmajority Black countries;

Whereas a recent report from Human Rights Watch reveals that Cameroonian authorities, including police, paramilitary officers (gendarmes), military personnel, and other Cameroonian state actors have subjected returned deportees, and family members of those deportees, to serious human rights violations to punish them for fleeing, including rape, torture, physical abuse, extortion, arbitrary arrest and detention, and inhuman and degrading treatment in detention;

Whereas this aforementioned report by Human Rights Watch further indicates that, upon the arrival of deported migrants back in Cameroon, Cameroonian authorities have confiscated the identity documents of these Cameroonian citizens in an attempt to contain, monitor, and possibly arrest these individuals at a later date on fabricated charges;

Whereas section 212(d)(5)(A) of the Immigration and Nationality Act grants the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security the authority to establish parole programs for urgent humanitarian reasons or significant public benefits (“Special Humanitarian Parole”); and

Whereas since the creation of the Humanitarian Parole process in the 1950’s, the United States Government has successfully established over 120 different programmatic or categorical parole programs to address the circumstances of deserving, at-risk immigrant populations from nations in Europe, Asia, and Central and South America, but has never created such a program for any of the fifty-four African nations in the program’s 70-year history, raising concerns of anti-Blackness and anti-Africanness in the United States historical immigration policy that deserve to be addressed and corrected: Now, therefore, be it

1       *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2               (1) recognizes the dire and ongoing humani-  
3       tarian crisis for Cameroonian migrants that are flee-  
4       ing violence and widespread human rights violations  
5       in their home nation, in addition to the discrimina-  
6       tory treatment often faced by Black and African im-  
7       migrants;

8               (2) calls on the Secretary of Homeland Security  
9       to use the authority under section 212(d)(5)(A) of  
10      the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C.  
11      1182(d)(5)(A)) to establish a special humanitarian  
12      parole program for Cameroonian nationals who are  
13      seeking refuge in the United States to grant these  
14      immigrants much-deserved humanitarian relief; and

15              (3) urges the United States Government to allo-  
16      cate appropriate resources to assist in the successful  
17      resettlement of Cameroonian immigrants, including  
18      comprehensive support for Cameroonians benefitting  
19      from Special Humanitarian Parole status.

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