

Cameroon: UN envoy encourages authorities to restore the Internet in country's English-speaking regions

13 April 2017 – The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa, François Louncény Fall, urged today Cameroonian authorities to examine with diligence the difficulties of the populations and entrepreneurs of the English-speaking regions of the north-west and south-west, which have been deprived of Internet since mid-January 2017.

“This is a deplorable situation. But I am convinced that this important tool for development, communication and collective development will be gradually re-established throughout Cameroon,” he said before leaving Cameroon on 13 April after a visit four-day official visit.

During the visit, Mr. Fall, who also heads the UN Regional Office for Central Africa ([UNOCA](#)), reviewed the state of affairs and assessed the impact of recent measures taken by the Government to address the concerns of English-speaking lawyers and teachers, UNOCA said in a press release.

“I had fruitful and hopeful exchanges with all the stakeholders,” the Special Representative said at a press conference in Yaoundé on 12 April. He met with Government officials, members of civil society, opposition leaders, members of the diplomatic corps and the UN system.

He also met with people arrested and detained in connection with the situation in the north-west and south-west, including Felix Nkongho Agbor Balla and radio broadcaster Mancho Bibixy.

“I encourage the Cameroonian Government to take all the measures it deems appropriate, as soon as possible and within the framework of the law, in order to create conditions conducive to building the confidence needed to end the crisis,” noted Mr. Fall.

With this in mind, he stressed that “the pursuit of a sincere and constructive dialogue taking into account the achievements is paramount.” He added that, where appropriate, the UN remains ready to continue “to accompany this dynamic in order to contribute to the efforts of the authorities and their partners in the search for consensual and lasting solutions to this situation.”

Mr. Fall reiterated the UN's call to all parties to address the current situation through peaceful and legal means. He welcomed the Government's announced intention to restore Internet services in Bamenda for hospitals, universities and banks, as part of a package of measures announced on 30 March by the Minister of Justice.

He encouraged the Government to consider additional confidence-building

measures to appease tensions, including the release of the Anglophone leaders, and the full restoration of internet services in the two regions.

Mr. Fall also called on the leaders of the Anglophone movement to engage with the Government in a constructive manner to find a consensual and lasting solution to the situation in the south-west and north-west regions. He reaffirmed the willingness of the UN to continue to accompany the two parties in their dialogue efforts.

Mr. Fall will return to Cameroon on the occasion of the 44th ministerial meeting of the UN Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa and that's at the end of May, beginning of June of this year.