SELINUS UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCES AND LITERATURE

Assessing the Impact of improved local governance of security on protection of civilians in situations of internal armed conflict: The Case of Bangem sub-Division (Kupe/Mwanengouba Division of the Southwest Region of Cameroon) in the context of the 'Ambazonia War'.

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A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Department of
Peace Studies
program at Selinus University

Faculty of Arts & Humanities
in fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in Peace Studies

2021

DEDICATION

With love to all persons (girls, boys, women and men) affected by the Ambazonia War.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ABSTRACT

This research set out to examine the impact of local security governance on protection of civilians in Bangem sub-Division within the context of the 'Ambazonia War". Using a qualitative research design, the study pitches on a duality of purpose including utilitarianism as propounded by Jeremy Bentham and John S. Mill; as well as social constructivism propounded by L.S. Vygotsky. It derived from the direct observation that government security agencies who are the duty bearers for delivery of security and protection to persons and property in Bangem Sub Division may not have the capacity to do so.

Consultations with more than 100 stakeholders on security in Bangem Sub-division through interviews and focus group discussions revealed that national security agencies effectively cover less than 20% of the entire sub-division because of insufficient capacity. Delivery of security in the rest of the area under consideration is ensured by locally-led frameworks including local vigilante associations.

 The study also revealed operational gaps including the lack of training and operational capacity for all actors involved; arbitrariness in modes of operation, as well as total lack of coordination between informal and formal frameworks. Hence the need to advocate for capacity enhancement at the local level, as well as streamlined coordination between sub divisional security authorities, and the local actors in the leeward parts of the sub-division. Areas for future research include the role of local civil society in enhancement of accountability on security and protection-related matters in Kupe Mwanengouba Division.

CHAPTER ONE

1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The preamble of the Charter of the United Nations delineates security as one of the four pillars and hallmarks of its creation and existence**.** It reaffirms the central role of security in human life, including in ensuring peace and cohesion of communities. Security has a direct correlation with protection of civilians and property particularly in conflict situations which generally redefines the order of life. In the face of the breakdown of law and order and the ensuing anarchy that controls the conduct of livelihoods, social activities and other behavior, security governance becomes a critical tool for mitigation of conflict and its impacts on civilians.

Through effective governance of local security structures, protection-of-civilians-related threats and incidents could be mitigated and or even prevented through vibrant early warning responses. This however requires an effective synergy between local security governance structures and frameworks and the actual security needs of the local civilian populations on the ground.

This study examines the role of local security governance in the protection of civilian populations in Bangem Sub-Division, Kupe/Mwanengouba Division of the South West Region of Cameroon, in the context of the ongoing war of independence (hereinafter, Ambazonia War) from the Republic of Cameroon of the former Southern Cameroons territory. [1]

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[1] An armed conflict broke out in 2016 following several years of an uneasy relationship between the government of the Republic of Cameroon and the former Southern Cameroon

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

The Republic of Cameroon has ten Regions[2]. Of the ten, there are two English-speaking (the Northwest and South West Regions) also fondly referred to as Anglophone Cameroon; These two Regions affected by the Ambazonia War cover a surface area of 16.364 KM2 of the country's 475,442 KM2. The population of the two regions at approximately five Million inhabitants represents 20 % of the total population of the country which following the World Population Review[3] stands at approximately 27 Million inhabitants. The basis of the security crisis under consideration here is the question of marginalization of anglophone Cameroonians, which causes frustrations within various rungs of the anglophone community in Cameroon. It is important to mention that Anglophone Cameroon is dotted with marked economic potentials including suitable agricultural soils, a dynamic labor force which is practically motivating the current existence of the Cameroon Development Cooperation in this part of the country[4].. The International Crisis Group[5] most of the Country's oil which accounts for 1/12th of Cameroon's GDP is located Off the coast of the Anglophone Regions of Cameroon.

The International Crisis Group[6] locates the problem as far back as the independence of the Cameroon in 1961 when a poorly conducted reunification based on centralization and

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[2] South West, North West, Centre, Littoral, Western, Eastern, South, Adamawa, North and Far North

[3] World Population Review: *https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/cameroon-population* **consulted on 02/11/20**

[4] The Cameroon Development Cooperation was created in 1947 and stands as the second highest employer after the Cameroon government

[5] International Crisis Group: http://www.Crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/cameroon/250-cameroons-anglo

[6] International Crisis Group " The Ambazonia War" http://www.Crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/cameroon/250-cameroons-anglo

assimilation caused the anglophone minority to feel politically and economically disenfranchised. This explains why the International Crisis Group (Op. Cit) claims that the Cameroon Anglophone Crisis is in part, a classic problem of a minority which has swung between a desire for integration by some anglophone Cameroonians, and a deep yearning for autonomy by others generally referred to as separatists. International Crisis Group further maintains that the fault lines emerged as demonstrations turned into riots accompanied by brutal repression from national forces.

In September 2017, separatists in the Northwest and Southwest Regions declared the independence of Ambazonia and waged full-scale war against the Government of Cameroon. The war which started as a low-scale insurgency in the Regional Capitals of the two Anglophone regions quickly spread to most parts of Anglophone Cameroon.

By August 2019, the government controlled the major cities and some parts of the country-side while the separatists held the bulk of the country-side with regular-sporadic appearances in the urban areas. Clearly defined frontlines had emerged, with the separatists fully controlling certain areas of the country without confrontation from national defense and security forces. According to Crisis Group (ibid) the Ambazonia War has claimed well over 3000 lives and forced more than a million anglophone Cameroonians to flee their homes to other parts of Cameroon or across the territorial boundaries of Cameroon in to Nigeria and other neighboring countries.

Since 2017, the area under study has been one of the main hotspots of Ambazonia War resulting in the killing and injury of civilians, and displacement of populations internally to neighboring French-speaking regions and externally to neighboring countries, including Nigeria as refugees.

It has also caused damage to infrastructure and disrupted economic and social activities with schools remaining closed up to the time of this study

The Ambazonia War has led to the birth and growth of alternative forms of security for persons and property at the local level, particularly in highly enclaved villages and clans. In areas where Ambazonia fighters have laid down arms, they have metamorphosed into local security taskforce of sorts, integrating local vigilante groups and associations. Some Villages have developed local security committees and clan protection councils aimed at assessing security and POC-related threats and taking necessary preventive action. Some communities have set up local vigilante groups which carry out nocturnal patrols within the locality.

1.2. GENERAL OBJECTIVE

At the time of this study, the Ambazonia War has cast a shadow of fear and apprehension in the minds of residents and visitors alike. The researcher witnessed violence and hostilities, first-hand, during trips to Bangem town between 2017 and 2018. While the violence is reported ongoing in certain parts of the 'zone' usually referred to as hotspots particularly in the more enclaved parts of Mbuogmut Clan, protection-of-civilians-related concerns have significantly reduced. That gives an opportunity to ponder over the real or perceived root causes of hostilities, as well as how the local security apparatus and disposition aided or abated the consequences.

 The objective of this study is to assess local security governance frameworks in Bangem Sub Division within the context of the Ambazonia war and how they may be enhanced for the effective protection of civilians in the division.

1.3. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The study seeks specifically to:

- ✓ Identify the various local security actors in Bangem sub division;

- ✓ Analyze the existing security frameworks/structures;

- ✓ Analyze the protection of civilians' architecture;

- ✓ Streamline coordination mechanisms between formal and informal frameworks to enhance early warning system;

- ✓ Contribute input for establishment of a data base of best practices on governance of local security in Bangem Sub Division;

- ✓ Assess the effectiveness of hybrid systems of local security governance including vigilante associations

Three main assumptions have been formulated to guide the study.

1.4. HYPOTHESES

After a careful baseline assessment of the context of Bangem Sub Division in the wake of the Ambazonia War, the study is set to revolve on three major assumptions:

1. An established synergy of local governance of security including formal and informal mechanisms would enhance security of persons and property, as well as prevent PoC-related threats and incidents in Bangem Sub Division

2. The absence of effective formal security mechanisms in leeward parts of Bangem Sub Division has invigorated locally-led security mechanisms and the implantation of non-state actors.

3. The Ambazonia War has exposed the limited authority of national defense and security frameworks in enclaved communities within Bangem Sub Division

One central question and three follow-up questions are aligned to the hypothesis.

1.5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How has the national government demonstrated its position on security and protection of civilian population in Bangem as a national priority?

2. What security mechanisms exist and function in Bangem Sub Division?

3. How do national policies, principles and practices encourage the resort to alternative security arrangements at the local level in Bangem Sub Division?

These questions inspire a review of existing literature on concepts and notions related to the research, including the governance of security, local security context and protection of civilians.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND TERMINOLOGICAL

CONSIDERATION

The value of a research work is strongly determined by the clarity of related concepts since without a common understanding of relevant concepts, the real value of the research may be lost to misunderstandings and conceptual anarchy. A considerable amount of work has been written on local security governance and protection of civilians. This chapter examines some relevant literature related to local security governance as a tool for the protection of civilians in Bangem Sub-Division within the context of the Ambazonia War.

2.1. SECURITY GOVERNANCE

The concept of security governance may not be fully grasped without understanding the constitutive concepts of security and governance. The Oxford Learner's Dictionary[7] defines security as all activities involved in protecting a country, building or person against attack, danger etc. Loosely put, the noun security denotes safeguarding or shielding something/someone from external encroachment or destruction. Similarly, the *Merriam Webster Dictionary* 2015[8] defines governance as the act of governing or overseeing the control and direction of something (such

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[7] Definition of Security by Oxford Learners Dictionary:
https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/security?q=Security

[8] Definition of governance by Merriam Webster: https://www.merriam-webster.com/

as a country or an organization). Loosely put, this refers to aligning matter to maximize results. The World Bank[9] defines governance as the way power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources.

According to Danzi (2011: 9) the definition by the World Bank derives from the institution's concern for the sustainability of programmes it helps to fund all around the world. Krahman, quoted in Danzi [10]2011 defines governance as the structures and processes which enable a set of public and private actors to coordinate their interdependent needs and interests through the making and implementation of policy decisions in the absence of a central political authority. According to Krahman (Op. Cit) the governance paradigm features "new government" and the "changing locus of public authority which involves three elements: (i) an expanding role for non-governmental actors (civil society) in public management; ii) greater reliance on deliberative, as opposed to representative forms of democratic participation and iii) the relationship and boundary of binaries including: public/private; formal/informal; fiat/consensus as well as authoritative/unauthoritative.

Krahman (ibid) further concludes that governance is more than a term, or a notion. The study claims that governance is a new governing structure that is processed by inter sectoral ways where the condition of ordered rule is executed by fiat and consultancy and where society is not controlled but governed in its own way. Danzi (2011:3) asserts that governance is neither to deny

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[9] Information culled from: info.worldbank.org accessed on 16/01/2021
[10] Danzi Liao 2011. « Security Governance: An Alternative Paradigm?"
https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/131b/3c9fcdbf65aa6a28e2cee9c97adfefd2d338.pdf?_ga=2.40167329.20265618 16.1605945044-94347220.160594504; consulted on 21 November 2020.

the central role of state in public administration or national security, nor to abandon the formal institutions and rules necessary for the establishment of order.

Considering these terminological analyses, security governance may literally be described as the alignment of security outputs to attain maximum outcomes in a predictable, measurable and sustainable manner.

The term 'security governance' was first propounded by Krahman[11] as he examined the shifts of security policy in Europe and North America. Quoting Mark Weber et al (2004: 4)[12],Danzi (Op Cit) states that 'Security Governance' has five constitutive elements which are presented below:

> (i) Unclear hierarchical structure; (ii) the interaction of many actors- both public and private; (iii) both formal and informal institutionalization of relations between actors that are ideational in character; (iv) structured by norms and understandings as much as by formal regulation; (v) moved by a collective purpose.

From the Weberian purview expressed by Danzi (ibid) security governance involves the coordinated management and regulation of issues by multiple and separate authorities. Danzi (ibid)takes the narrative further by intimating that by the logic expressed in Webber et al (Op. Cit), security governance increasingly encompasses multi-dimensional, indirect relationships with plural and dispersed societal entities. A view which according to Danzi (Op. Cit) is different from the traditional view of security government as encompassing the supervision by central authority; and which is built upon hierarchical positions and regulated principles.

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[11] E. Krahman, 'Conceptualizing Security Governance' Cooperation and Conflict and conflict, Vol.38, No.1, pp.5-26,2003.
[12] M.Webber et al." The Governance of European Security, Review of International Studies 30. pp 3-26,2004.

In the light of Webber et al (Op. Cit), Danzi (Op. Cit) identified six dimensions of security governance which we shall present below:

- The first dimension of security governance identified by Danzi (Op. Cit) is **Actors** which include public and private; government organizations and non-governmental organizations. Danzi observes that all these in various ways participate in public management processes and assume responsibilities

- The second dimension is '***Direction'*** which includes orders of authority and control distributed through top-down, bottom-up and horizontal manner. The Bottom-up processes however received the highest priority which Danzi (Op.cit) claims to be *expedient as a source of information feedback and horizontal interaction is integral to interorganizational communication.* Danzi (Op. Cit) stresses that the bottom-up and horizontal dimensions require a term of art which seems more fitting than the more bureaucratic and categorical government.

- The third dimension is **Channel** and Danzi (Op. Cit) claims obedience by authority and hierarchical power is now surpassed by mutual trust, joint vision and negotiation. Panzi (Op. Cit) re-echoes Webber et al (2004:3) that more efficient security management is realized through a well agreed goal which is absolutely required in an information age[13] and that those who have easier access to information would find the proper channel to share and disperse it. Danzi (Op. Cit) sums up the relevance of channel as a dimension of

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[13] Danzi quoting from Webber et al 2004 insinuates that in an information age, information and knowledge come from multiple directions and the mode of information transfer is becoming more diversified

security governance with the assertion that only under the condition of mutual trust and joint vision can the utility of information be maximized.

- The fourth dimension of security governance as proposed by Danzi (Op. Cit) is **Form.** By form, the author refers to *flexible and soft elements* which constitute part of the governance style. This, Danzi describes as:

   "the traditional strict and formal orders are replaced by interpersonal negotiation and discussion. The established convention that it is the top head's responsibility to make decisions of every kind is replaced by multilateral discussions".

This view is sustained by Webber et al (2004:4) as they state that governance relies more on cultural identity and mental disposition and that self-motivation and organizational learning exert a more influential role in enhancing performance.

- The Fifth dimension is the **Model;** and Danzi (Op. Cit) indicates that security governance: (i) has more than one model; (ii) it is context-specific;(iii) the extent to which security governance is applied largely depends on the features of the context, including human resources, legal environment and the strength of civil society.

- The sixth and final dimension is **Scope** and Danzi (Op. Cit) claims that security governance can simultaneously find its empirical cases in local, national, regional and global ranges. As a concluding remark to the analytical perspective on dimensions of security governance, Danzi (Op. Cit) states:

   What needs to be stressed is that each dimension might take a variety of forms and attain a different scope along a range of this theoretically- constructed framework. The framework of security governance is being widely applied in different fields and analytical levels and is adopted as a helpful means of examining the interactions between a diverse number of actors.

In a related study, Bryden and Chappiu (2015:1) state that an effective and accountable security sector is an integral part of a functioning democracy, where democracy is understood as a government of the people, for the people and by the people. They claim that promoting democratic security governance is increasingly recognized as a key enabler for wider agendas to promote peace, development and the protection of human rights. Bryden and Chappiu (Op. Cit) also refer to the four (4) Ps that summarize the world of 'governance' as follows: (i) People; (ii) purpose; (iii) process; and (iv) performance.

According to Bryden and Chappuis (op. cit) effective security governance challenges the dynamics of power relations as it aims to introduce greater accountability, transparency, and related values such as inclusion and equality. The views expressed in Bryden and Chappuis 2016 above underscore the complexity in discussing security governance in a conflict or post-conflict context where challenges such as (i) the reluctance of major stakeholders to embrace new ways of doing things (ii) the absence of technical, material and logistical resources to support transformational change; and (iii) political and administrative bottle-necks.

The same study highlights more intangible obstacles such as a shared vision of what security governance should be in a free and fair society and upholds the fact that security remains a taboo topic in most parts of the African continent. Decision-making is a key aspect of governance. Bryden and Chappuis (2015:3) indicates that decision-making on security governance in Africa is restricted to a narrow cadre of political and security elites who are driven by their interests, aspirations and priorities. They claim that in most of Africa, public discussions hinging on security are often suppressed by restrictions on freedom of information and media coverage, or through

fear. They attribute these gaps to self-censorship, social legacies of autocratic governance and absent or weak civil society capacity on security issues.

The study highlights that as consequences of above gaps, formal security forces fail to see themselves as dedicated to meeting the safety and security needs of the population they are meant to serve.

Citing outdated legal frameworks, under capacitated parliaments, as well as submissive and subdued judicial authorities, they claim the notions of oversight, transparency and accountability that should sustain the protection of human rights and uphold the rule of law are for the most part, lacking. Bryden and Chappuis (2016:2) do not only hammer the gaps in security governance in the African context but also state that the most visible signs of positive change in security governance dynamics is a process of permanent and inclusive dialogue on security matters between government security forces, civil society actors and the public. They highlight that participative national dialogue processes create important dynamics for change, reducing uncertainty, building confidence and easing the way for compromise solutions. It follows from the foregoing views that consultative processes are essential to engage reform-minded elements on security governance.

In a related light, Block (2009:1) claims that dialogue and connectedness make strong and secure communities as they assert:

The essential challenge is to transform the isolation and self-interest within our communities into connectedness and care for the whole. The key is to identify how that transformation occurs and we begin by shifting our attention from problems of the community to possibilities of the communities. We also need to acknowledge that our wisdom about individual transformation is not enough when it comes to community transformation

Block (op. Cit) highlights the nature of collective transformation including in matters of security and individual protection which underscores another key aspect on the life and security of every community- social capital.

This highlights a shifting premise in security governance which puts the community at the center of strategies and successes, embedded on the notions of connected and mutual care, which are essential tenets of community governance when viewed from the constructive premise of identities. Through the lenses of Block (Op. Cit) we see that the need of belonging grows out of the isolated nature of human lives, institutions and communities

2.2. THE DEMAND FOR SECURITY GOVERNANCE IN LOCAL CONTEXTS

Bayley and Shearing (1996,2001) quoted in Dupont, Grabosky and Shearing (2003:332)[14] have noted that even in states that are by most standards, flourishing, the demand for public security often exceeds the capacity of the state to provide. According to these authors, it is for that reason that throughout the world, the state no longer has a monopoly on security, and especially on policing. Bayley and Shearing (Op. Cit) argue that the multilateralization of security implies that security takes a variety of institutional forms, including public-private, non-profit and hybrid. Depending on the contexts.

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[14] Benoit Dupont, Peter Grabosky and Clifford Shearing. 2003.'The Governance of Security in Weak and Failing States', In Criminal Justice. London: Sage Publications. Vol 3(4) 331-349. Accessed on 09/01/2021 at: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Benoit_Dupont/publication/251758848_The_Governance_of_Security_in_Weak_and_Failing_State/links/545139560cf24884d886fc89/The-Governance-of-Security-in-Weak-and-Failing-State.pdf

Dupont, Grabosky and Shearing (Op. Cit) uphold the view that some of the institutional forms by which security is provided in various contexts may be through explicit instruments of policy implementation, while others may operate spontaneously, driven by local demand and market forces. Hence, Dupont et al (Op. Cit) present the 'governance of security' as a constellation of institutions, whether formal or informal, government or private, commercial or voluntary that provide for social control, conflict prevention and resolution, as well as the attempts to promote peace in the face of threats (real or anticipated) arising from collective life and consolidated efforts.

Dupont et al (ibid) have also observed that in the developed world, new styles of governance, including policy formulation and implementation, previously delivered only by the state, have been characterized by a diffusion of responsibilities. They argue that in industrialized contexts, the two aspects of policy (stated above) are being progressively disconnected and distributed among networks of public, private and hybrid institutions. They further explain that under the governance conceptual framework, any combination is conceivable and amenable to trial and experimentation in response to specific needs. As illustration to the foregoing, Dupont et al (ibid) state that while identification of needs and formulation of policies in developed contexts may be done under a range of auspices[15]; in dysfunctional and weak states, a variety of non-governmental organizations may exist whose resources and capacities may be harnessed in

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[15] including government agencies, civil society and other interest groups including social, economic and cultural interests.

furtherance of public security. The above literature on security governance leads us to the review how governance is measured in real terms.

2.3.   MEASURING GOVERNANCE

One way of measuring governance is through the World Bank Group's World-Wide Governance Indicators (WGI)[16] which reports on six dimensions of governance, including: (i) Voice and accountability;(ii) political stability and absence of violence;(iii) Government effectiveness; (iv) regulatory quality;(v) rule of law; and (iv) control of corruption. According to the World Bank Group, the aggregate indicators in(i-iv) above combine the views of many enterprises, citizens and expert survey respondents in both industrialized and less industrialized countries around the world.

 The same Report states that for governance to be termed as 'good governance' it must demonstrate eight major principles and characteristics including: participatory, consensus oriented accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive, and, follows the rule of law.

2.4.   INADEQUATE GOVERNANCE OF SECURITY

The term inadequate security mostly finds expression in contexts akin to weak and failing states. According to Dupont, Grabosky and Shearing (2003:331), in weak states the state is barely capable of providing the needs of its citizens. Health, education, national defense, public welfare and public security are not adequately catered for. Instances of

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[16] World Bank Governance Indicators culled from: documents.worldbank.org.

weak states cited by the trio include Pau-Pau New Guinea and Zimbabwe. Regarding failing states, Dupont et al (Op cit) state that failing states would display indicators of inadequate security governance. They assert that in situations of failing state, the capability of the state to perform its essential functions has largely disappeared, and that basic state institutions, if they still exist, are largely dysfunctional such as in Somalia, and parts of Sierra Leone.

Still in line with governance of local security, Dupont, Grabosky and Shearing (2003:333) observe that just as community policing seeks to bring state institutions closer to civil society by way of consultative processes to co-produce security, local knowledge can be harnessed in weak states, to create and invent alternative mechanisms capable of complementing state provision. Dupont et al (Op. Cit) hold that such diversity should be encouraged, or at least be tolerated by governmental actors provided it does not undermine basic justice and accountability principles.

2.5.   ALTERNATIVE GOVERNANCE OF SECURITY

It is important to mention that there is a form of governance of security in every context. Under what we term as Alternative governance of security, some relevant governance tools will be examined, including local vigilante groups and local armed militias. According to Johnston and Shearing (2003:6) the absence or inefficiency of state security providers can lead to the institutionalization of self-help groups operating under voluntary vigilante associations.

Johnston and Shearing (Op. Cit) further illustrate that cattle rustling may not be considered a high priority security issue in a disintegrated society, while in local/rural communities the effects might be disastrous enough to compromise the future and welfare of the entire community.

They justify the creation of local vigilante groups and associations as response to such practices. Johnston and Shearing(Ibid) identified arbitrariness as one of the flip sides of such forms of security arrangements. They claim that procedural fairness is generally undermined in meting out justice on the spot, following an informal and usually contradictory discussion between the suspect, the victim and the local vigilante. The literature on alternative governance of security leads the study into another essential component in 2.6. the conceptual view of civilians

2.6.   CIVILIANS

According to The Oxford Learner's Dictionary[17], the term 'civilian' refers to a person who is not a member of the armed forces or the police. However, in International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and the context of armed conflicts, the semantic area of 'civilian' stretches a little further.[18] If the term is used within the Protection of Civilian (POC) Mandate in Peacekeeping, a civilian refers to anyone except people who fall in any of the following categories:

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[17] Consulted here: https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/civilian_1?q=civilian, on 17 November 2020;

[18] The meaning of civilian within IHL should be provided in a footnote. While you have explicitly explained its meaning in peacekeeping, you left out IHL. Civilian in IHL and peacekeeping don't mean the same thing.

- One who is a member of armed forces

- A member of an organized armed group who is still participating directly or in support of combat;

- Civilians directly participating in hostilities are not considered civilians if they are still doing so.

The DPKO/DFS Policy on POC however states that every civilian must be preventively and proactively protected by a peacekeeping operation from threats of physical violence. The Policy maintains that, where a peacekeeping mission is deployed in a non-armed conflict situation, everyone except members of armed forces are civilians within the scope of the POC mandate. The policy further provides the following caveats in determining whether someone is a civilian or not:

- In cases of doubt whether a person is a civilian, the person shall be considered a civilian.

- In some situations, such as community-based violence or criminal gang activity, the perpetrators or potential perpetrators of violence against civilians are usually other civilians. Where that is the case, the mission must make an operational decision on how to apply the POC Mandate.

2.7.   PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS IN SITUATIONS OF ARMED CONFLICT (POC)

The protection of civilians in armed conflict is a global concept that had been variedly discussed and given assiduous but sometimes not holistic definition. According to a UK Policy Paper

published in August 2020[19],the concept of protection of civilians in armed conflict (POC) encompasses all activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights[20] of the individual in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the relevant bodies of law. Going by the point of view, of the UK Policy Paper on POC (op cit), the goal of protection is to improve the safety of civilians by limiting their exposure to violence, abuse, coercion, exploitation, deprivation and the threats thereof.

According to the same UK Policy on POC, primary responsibility for the protection and assistance of civilians in situations of armed conflict lies with the state, which is obliged to protect, respect and fulfill the human rights of all persons within their jurisdiction, in accordance with the standards of national and international law.

According to the UK POC Policy (ibid) violence is the obvious thing in situations of armed conflicts where International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law are flouted, causing civilians to face a multitude of direct and indirect threats to their lives, safety and well-being.

Direct consequences of violation of such standards on civilians delineated by the Policy include death, injuries, sexual and gender-based violence, violence against children, forced internal displacement, torture, unlawful detention, family separation, loss of livelihoods, interrupted access to basic services and psychological harm.

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[19] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-paper-on-the-approach-to-protection-of-civilians-in-armed-conflict/uk-approach-to-protection-of-civilians-in-armed-conflict; checked on 09/11/2020

[20] Rights Based approach to POC

Further, the policy paper holds that the disregard for international law and humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, independence and neutrality exacerbates conflict and undermines global stability. It highlights the role of political engagement[21] in the prevention of POC threats and incidents. The UK POC strategy paper also outlines working bilaterally and multi-laterally on: (i) conflict resolution and (ii) ensuring that the parties involved in the conflict respect obligations under international law and to condemn violation of those obligations.

The Paper highlights the need for advocacy on arms control, and protection of civilians from banned weapons. There has been an important focus on accountability mechanisms including effective and independent monitoring and reporting of compliance with International Humanitarian Law as well as International Human Rights Law in situations of armed conflict.

Another concept that has been elaborated in the UK strategy 2015 (Op. cit) is that of Responsibility to Protect (R2P). The concept, as specified in the paper, refers to a global political concept that all UN members endorsed at the 2005 World Summit in New York. according to the World Summit Outcome Document 2005[22] states are primarily responsible for protecting their populations from: (i) genocide; (ii)war crimes; (iii)crimes against humanity; and (iv) ethnic cleansing. The World Outcome Document (2005: 2)[23] states:

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[21] Working bilaterally and multi-laterally not just on resolving conflicts but also ensuring that the parties involved respect their obligations under international Law.
[22] Resolution Adopted by the General Assembly on 16 September 2005. Culled from www.un.org. on 20/02/2021

[23]Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 16th September 2005
https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_RES_60_1.pdf webpage consulted on 14 November 2020.

We acknowledge that good governance and the rule of law at the national and international levels are essential for sustained economic growth, sustainable development and the eradication of poverty and hunger.

The concept of Protection of Civilians in situations of armed conflict (POC) became a cornerstone in United Nations Peacekeeping operations since the experiences in Rwanda and Srebrenica in the early 1990s. A revised POC Policy of November (2019: 3)[24] states as follows:

In 1999, the UN Security Council passed the first Resolution on the Protection of Civilians (S/RES/1265.1999) and, for the first time, gave a peacekeeping Operation the Mandate to take necessary action to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence (S/RES/1270.1999 on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone UNAMSIL.

This led to the development of the operational concept on the protection of civilians in United Nations peacekeeping operations in 2010 and to the first DPKO/DFS Policy on POC in UN Peacekeeping Operations in 2015. These documents drew on operational experience and have formed the core doctrine and guidance on the protection of Civilians in UN Peacekeeping.

These measures were preceded by other initiatives intended to streamline UN effectiveness on Protection of civilians in situations of armed conflict, including a High-Level Panel[25] headed by Lakhdar Brahimi. The Panel was set up to carry out a thorough assessment of United Nations

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[24] Policy on the Protection of Civilians in United Nations Peacekeeping. November 2019. https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/poc_policy_2019_.pdf. Consulted on 14 November 2020

[25] Brahimi Report March 2000. Consulted on 14 November 2020: https://www.un.org/ruleoflaw/files/brahimi%20report%20peacekeeping.pdf

activities relating to peace and security around the world. The identical Letters[26] addressed to the President of the UN General Assembly by the UN Secretary General states that the goal of the Panel consisted in presenting a clear set of specific, concrete and practical recommendations to assist the UN in carrying out peace and security-related activities forthwith.

Some experts have argued that the failure of the United Nations to take decisive action in the cases of Rwanda and Srebrenica resulted in huge massacre of vulnerable civilians. The Brahimi Report (Ibid) upholds that the backlash from Rwanda and Srebrenica caused the UN Security Council to recognize the need to progressively consider POC as a serious thematic concern[27]

Le Roy and Malcorra, (2009: I)[28] make the following interesting remark:

Since 1948, UN peacekeeping has contributed to preventing and managing violent conflict between and within Sates and supporting national actors in protecting and building peace after conflict. The landmark Brahimi report of 2000 charted a renewed vision for UN peacekeeping that helped make peacekeeping stronger, more effective and comparatively cost-efficient. These reforms enabled a five-fold growth in operations over the past decade. But United Nations peacekeeping is now at a crossroads. The scale and complexity of peacekeeping today are straining its personnel, administrative and support machinery. New political, military and financial challenges threaten to erode the unity of vision and purpose of the global peacekeeping partnership. A renewed partnership and a shared agenda are essential to ensuring that UN peacekeeping can meet the challenges of today and tomorrow.

According to (UN 2015a:2) the Protection of civilians has for many years been primarily understood as an entirely military endeavor, and the test confronting peace operations has been

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[26] I identical Letters from the Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (Brahimi Report (A/55/305). http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view-doc.asp

[28] Le Roy and Malcorra 2009," A New Partnership Agenda: Charting a New Horizon for UN Peacekeeping" read from https://www.globalpolicy.org/images/pdfs/Security_Council/full_report.pdf , consulted on 14 November 2020.

to which extent they were able to physically protect civilians under imminent threats. The UN System-wide Strategy for POC as detailed in the POC Strategy 2015 outlines four major components including (i) approaches to POC; and (ii) Phases of POC.

The Protection of Civilians in situations of armed conflict has been presented in various ways. However, the definition of that concept given in the UN Policy on POC UN2015(a)[29] Paragraphs 12-13 is as follows:

All necessary means up to and including the use of deadly force, aimed at preventing or responding to threats of physical violence against civilians, within capabilities and areas of operation and without prejudice to the responsibility of the host government.

A Revised UN Policy on POC 2019 has expanded the purview of Protection of civilians' mandate in peacekeeping settings as it states:

The POC mandate in UN Peacekeeping is defined as- without prejudice to the primary responsibility of the host state, integrated and coordinated activities by all civilian and uniformed mission components to prevent, deter or respond to the threat of violence against civilians, within the mission's capabilities and areas of deployment, using all necessary means up to and including deadly force.

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[29] UN.2015 a. Protection of Civilians in United Nations Peacekeeping. New York: DPKO and DFS Policy

A more recent tool-the POC Handbook 2020[30] builds on the POC policy (Op. Cit) and brings together the best practices of POC in UN Peacekeeping. According to Analytical Perspectives on POC 2020 (Op. Cit):

It captures the lessons from a wide-range of experience and provides all mission components with tools. It sheds light on the set of principles that guide the POC mandate in peacekeeping including:

POC is the primary responsibility of governments; peacekeepers with a mandate to protect civilians have the authority and responsibility to provide protection within their capabilities and areas of deployment where the government is unable or unwilling to protect; the POC mandate is a whole-of-mission activity not only a military task, which embodies an active duty to protect; protecting civilians is done in cooperation with humanitarian actors and with respect for humanitarian principles; the POC mandate is consonant with the principles of peacekeeping including the consent of the host state; impartiality in implementation of mandate, and the use of force only in self-defense or as authorized by the Security Council; the POC mandate is a priority mandate pursuant to a Security Council Resolution;

UN2015 (Op. Cit) also provides guidance on several aspects of POC. It includes a comprehensive approach which considers and addresses the range of factors influencing and underpinning threats to civilians in both the short and long terms. The policy also highlights the role of political and economic factors; it indicates that a comprehensive approach requires the combined efforts of all mission components including civilian, police, military and where relevant appropriate local and international stakeholders. It underscores the criticality of integrated analysis and planning as gage that the mission can implement its POC mandate in an effective manner. human rights-based approach to POC; a Governance approach to POC as well as a more all-encompassing approach.

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[30]*The Protection of Civilians in United Nations Peacekeeping Handbook 2020* consulted at
https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/dpo_poc_handbook_final_as_printed.pdf on 14 November 2020

The position of the Global Protection Cluster (GBP) [31]on Protection of Civilians is simply stated as follows:

the *protection of civilian population in times of conflict is based on an essential principle of humanitarian law that civilians who are not participating in hostilities must on no account be the object of attack and must be spared and protected. Providing humanitarian access; delivering protection specifically to those who are most vulnerable such as women and children are the essential elements of protection of civilians.*

Simply put, International Humanitarian Law stipulates that civilian populations caught amid armed hostilities must be given due consideration by warring parties and accorded humane treatment under all circumstances. The Article 49 of the 1st Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions[32] states:

Civilians under the power of the enemy forces must be treated humanely in all circumstances without any adverse distinction. They must be protected against all forms of violence and degrading treatment, including murder and torture. The same extends to all those trying to help them including medical units and humanitarian or relief bodies providing essentials such as food and nonfood items such as clothing and medical supplies.

Perhaps, the multidimensional character of PoC can better be understood when analyzed from a perspective of its operational stages.

2.7.1. Operational Stages of Protection of Civilians in situations of Armed Conflict

Following the UN Policy on POC as explained in the POC Handbook 2020, the first step in a comprehensive approach to POC includes prevention through political action. This phase includes

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[31] The Global Protection Cluster enshrines its protection of Civilians work in provisions of the International Humanitarian Law culled from www.globalprotectioncluster.org on 04/02/2021

[32] Geneva Convention(iv) Relative to the Protection of Civilian persons in times of war, Geneva 12 August 1949 read on www.un.org>atrocity-crimes. Pdf

engagement with stakeholders at various level, mediation, as well as monitoring and reporting of human rights violations. The Policy sums up this approach into three-tiers described below.

2.7.1.1 TIER I of PoC

Tier I relates to all aspects linked to protection through dialogue and engagement with actors at national and local levels. This is the phase of meaningful engagement and dialogue with all parties, perpetrators and potential perpetrators. It also encompasses activities aimed at conflict resolution, and mediation between parties to the conflict, persuading government and other relevant actors to intervene[33]

All mission components engage in dialogue and political advocacy, such as support for reconciliation, peace agreements or mediation, liaison with the government, or the resolution of local conflicts. Even if these efforts are not always very visible, the importance of this work, aiming to support the host government in its responsibilities.

2.7.1.2. TIER II of PoC

Tier II outlines measures pertaining to protection from physical violence. Activities cited for this tier level revolve on the show of physical force by police and military in a bid to prevent, deter, pre-empt and respond to situations in which civilians are under the threat of physical violence. Analytical perspectives of UN Peacekeeping (Op. Cit) sums this up as follows:

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[33] Analytical perspectives on POC culled from: https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/protection-of-civilians-mandate
Read on 14 November 2020

Peacekeepers also act to provide physical protection, usually by deterring attacks on civilians through active patrolling but using force if necessary.

2.7.1.3 TIER III of PoC

Tier III relates to the establishment of protective environment. The policy places under this tier activities to help create a protective environment for civilians including through the rule of law, human rights, and protection cluster activities as well as Security Sector Reforms (SSR) and Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR). Based on the Policy, many activities falling under this third tier are undertaken alongside or in coordination with programmes by members of the UN Country Team or other humanitarian actors on the ground. The analytical perspective sited above asserts as follows:

peacekeeping missions conduct activities which support the establishment of a protective environment that increases security and protects civilians from violence. Most of these activities consist of strengthening the host government's capacities to protect, including through the rule of law and security sector reform. Mission personnel are also engaged in building the capacity of national authorities to promote and respect human rights, prevent and respond to violence against children and sexual and gender-based violence.

2.7.2. POC Operational Phases

The POC policy 2020 highlights that POC should be carried out along four operational phases. These are briefly stated below for ease of reference:

1. **A preventive phase**: This refers to the longer-term phase where no clear threats to civilians have been identified.

2. **A Pre-emptive phase**: Shorter-term phase where threats are likely and violence and attacks against civilians are anticipated

3. **Response phase**: At this phase, attacks against civilians are imminent or even already occurring. Activities and tasks are in the short-term.

4. **Consolidation phase**. Here, the violence and attacks against civilians are already subsiding, and so the phase also calls for longer-term interventions.

UN (2020: 7)[34] states that like the tiers, the phases of POC are not mutually exclusive and can overlap:

 UN 2020: (Op. Cit) observes that there can be phases to individual threats in specific places and at a given time and there can be phases to entire conflicts. The same action by a peacekeeping mission can potentially address various phases simultaneously.

2.8.   PEACEMAKING

The Oxford Learners Dictionary[35] defines Peacemaking as the process of bringing about peace, especially by reconciling adversaries. Peacemaking as a concept is regularly used in relation to

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[34] The Protection of Civilians in United Nations Peacekeeping HANDBOOK 2020
[35] Definition of peacemaking Accessed online on 09/01/2021 at: www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com.

governance of security. Delahanty (2000:15) states that peacemaking focusses on disputes, particularly concerned with every day disputes that if left unresolved could escalate into serious problems in due course. He further explains that to facilitate peacemaking, a person or a group of persons within a local collectivity may establish a peace committee and put in place a set of tested steps and good practices as norms. This may bring local community members-particularly those having differences-to follow.

Peacemaking is far from being a process of passive acceptance of mistreatment, injustice and abuse. For Douglas Noll[36], it is rather a vibrant and powerful concept which creates relational and structural justice that allows for social and personal wellbeing. This process further inspires the use of cooperative, constructive and inclusive process to resolve human conflicts which situating adversary processes into a broader banded process.

2.9. PEACEBUILDING

Brown, Mclean and McMillan (2018)[37] define 'peacebuilding' as an activity which aims to resolve injustice in non-violent ways; and seeks to transform the cultural and structural conditions that generate deadly or destructive conflicts. According to Delahanty (Op. Cit), while seeking to contribute towards the resolution of interpersonal disputes (cf Peacemaking in 2.6.) pundits may also seek to resolve more generic problems that are often thought of as community development

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[36] See Douglass Nolls Article on Peacemaking: www.mediate.com/articles/noll4.cfm ; last visited on 7th March 2021

[37] Garret, W. Brown, Ian, McLean, and Alistair McMillan. (2018) **Concise Oxford Dictionary of Politics and International Relations**. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Accessed on 09/01/2021 on: www.oxfordreference.com.

issues. Delahanty (ibid) claims that the facilitation process for Peacebuilding is like that of peacemaking in that it entails a person or group of persons set out to seek forward looking solutions to existing problems. He however highlights the following steps that are specific to peacebuilding: (i) needs-gatherings are held to identify generic problems; (ii) solutions gatherings are facilitated to explore how to respond to the problems through the mobilization of local capacity and knowledge; (iii)plans of action are developed and implemented to create sustainable solutions.

Delahanty's purview of peacebuilding above, brings the concept closer to that of local governance of security as elucidated in 2.4 above.

Delahanty states that at the heart of the local governance model is the premise that good governance requires the mobilization of local knowledge and capacity and its integration with professional knowledge and capacity. Using the nautical metaphor that "both steering and rowing take place at the micro-level", he underscores the view that involving local populations directly in peacebuilding as well as in their own governance, enhances self-direction as well as the quality of services provided. Delahanty (ibid) highlights the view of Dupont, Grabosky and Shearing (Op. Cit) when he states:

Mobilizing local knowledge and capacity requires sustainable institutional arrangements that will ensure state agencies do not dominate in issues of peacebuilding. Where sustaining micro-governance requires new ways of channeling tax-derived resources to local communities and ensuring support from international bodies.

Concluding their take on local security governance, Grabosky et al (Op. Cit) posit that reconfiguring the governance of security at local levels particularly in weak and failing states, requires a dose of institutional creativity and courage. They claim that traditional models of

governance which are undergoing considerable transformations in stronger state contexts and whose transplant has often been instrumental in the disintegration of fledging states, should no longer remain the only available option for the provision of security. They reiterate that models that rely on local knowledge and the mobilization of a broad range of resources have the potential to facilitate de-escalation of violence and disorder, while at the same time allowing communities to stabilize and recover some of their lost strength.

According to Grabosky et al (ibid) the state, which is very often as much part of the problem and of the solution, cannot remain the sole conduit by which security is authorized and provided to vulnerable communities. They highlight the fact that increased involvement of non-state actors in the provision of security at local levels need not eclipse state agencies, but rather should buy time and relieve pressure in a manner that can allow legitimate state institutions to emerge or regenerate. Still according to Grabosky (Ibid), non-state actors at local level can help to make valuable contribution by arresting the deteriorating quality of life at grassroots level.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0. DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This Chapter examines the methodological framework on which the studies is based. It describes aspects relating to: (i) the research design;(ii) techniques for data collection; (iii) techniques for data analysis; (iv) research scope and delimitation approaches; as well as other aspects of the research.

3.1. THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Orodho (2003) in Ndue (2014:86) posits that the research design is the overall strategy that a researcher chose to integrate the different components of his study in a coherent and logical way, thereby ensuring the study effectively addresses the research problem. According Orodho (ibid) the design constitutes the blueprint for collection, measurement and analysis of data. To Ndue (2014: 87) a research design is a scheme, an outline or a plan that is used to generate answers to research problems; it is the glue that holds all the elements in a research project together.

This is a qualitative research which follows a pattern described by Ndue (2014:12) *as:*

a formal and systematic process for obtaining information about the world. The method is used to describe, test relationships and examine cause and effect relationships; to gain insight, explore the depth, richness, and complexity inherent in a phenomenon.

The approach is based on a descriptive survey. Its normative framework that has a dual theoretical alignment: (i) to the utilitarian[38] school of thought as propounded by Geremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill; and (ii) the social constructivist school of thought of L.S. Vygotsky. The Utilitarian philosophy states that the best action is the one that maximizes utility.

Burns and Hart[39] presenting the utilitarian framework state that the right thing to do in any situation, is whatever would produce the best overall outcome for all those involved, or who would be affected by the action. The link between this study and the utilitarian school of thought lies in the expectation that a clearly streamlined local security environment would produce significant dividends for the safety and protection of all the local population of Bangem Sub Division and their assets.

On the social constructivist theory, Vygotsky in Cole et al (1978:8-9) claims that in the tradition of Marx and Engels, the mechanism of individual developmental change is rooted in society and culture. He upholds the view that social constructivism is a theory of knowledge according to which, human development is socially situated, and knowledge is constructed through interaction with others, their culture and society at large. The social constructivism school of thought links the local security and protection outcomes in the area under consideration to the constellation and interaction of various actors.

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[38] The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy presents the utilitarian school of thought in normative ethics as a tradition stemming from the late 18th and 19th Century English Philosophers and economist Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill; according to which an action (or type of action) is right if it tends to promote happiness/pleasure and wrong, if it tends to produce unhappiness or pain.

[39] J.H. Burns and H.L.A. Hart. Eds. (1983) The Collected Works of Jeremy Bentham" An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

The dual theoretical alignment of this study is best described by the desire to usher in a meaningful positive change in the security of persons and their property, as well as in inclusion of various stakeholders in the construction of a more secure and protective environment.

The study's design features a descriptive survey that enables collection of data through interviews, focus group discussions and questionnaires. It also features a data validation workshop in Bangem that will enable   triangulation and confirmation of the validity of the information. The research design as described above will enable us to "gain insight, explore the depth, richness and complexity inherent in the case"[40].

3.1.1. Techniques for Data Collection

The study uses a three-pronged approach to collection of data. This includes in-person interviews with critical local security actors in Bangem; focus group discussions motor-bike riders; civil society representatives, and youth representatives. It also featured the administration of 100 questionnaires to three categories of local actors including: (i) local customary chiefs; (ii) members of village/Clan Councils; and (iii) members of local vigilante associations/groups in Bangem Sub-division.

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[40] Description of research design culled from: www.unmsl.edu>qualdsgn.

3.1.2. Technique for Triangulation and validation of Data

A data-validation workshop is envisaged in Bangem by March 2021. The workshop will provide the opportunity to cross-check data collected through various tools, described in3.1.1 above (i) representatives of government security agencies (the Public Security, the National Gendarmerie; and the Special Branch (ii) representatives of administration and judiciary including the Divisional Officer; the State Department and the Mayor of the Bangem Rural Council); (ii) local actors including customary Chiefs; representatives of village/clan councils as well as representatives of vigilante groups and associations.

3.2.   APPROACH TO DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected using the three-pronged approach described in 3.1.1 and validated by local actors through the workshop designed for that purpose, will be matched with theoretical considerations during the analytical phase. These concerns include the literature on local governance of security; the World Bank Governance Indicators; protection of civilians in situations of armed conflicts, as well as other expert views and underpinnings. The local security and protection of civilian context shall then be evaluated with a SWOT analysis the (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats)

The data analysis will set the stage for further discussion of findings and formulation of recommendations as the study progresses.

3.3.   DELIMITATION AND SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH

The study will adopt a classic three-fold delimitation comprising of the material delimitation, the space and time delimitations respectively. With regards to the *ratione materiea,* the study focuses on assessing the impact of local security governance on protection of civilians, drawing research elements from qualitative data which will inspire analysis of existing practice. It further mobilizes careful selection of existing literature on local security governance to properly understand the dynamics. For the space delimitation, the study focus on the case of Bangem sub-division in the south west region of Cameroon though selected cases and practices can be drawn from other areas for purposes of analysis. It provides a general purview of the concept of governance of local security in conflict and post-conflict settings but operates an in-depth analysis of the context of Bangem sub-Division covering all local administrative units (eight Clans and sixty-six villages), as well as all technical agencies with security and protection of civilian responsibilities.

For the time delimitation, the study seeks to assess the local security governance within the context of the Ambazonia war of independence from 2017 till present.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0   DESCRIPTION OF THE CASE STUDY (BANGEM SUB-DIVISION)

This chapter presents the case study, in (i) its geographical location; (ii) it's constituent administrative units; (iii) the existing administrative and security frameworks within the area under study.

4.1.   GEOGRAPHICAL LOCALIZATION OF BANGEM SUB-DIVISION

Bangem Sub-Division is one of the three sub-Divisions in Kupe/Mwanengouba Division in the South West Region of the Republic of Cameroon. Its location at the intersection between two diametrical opposed regions in terms of linguistic and geopolitical paradigms renders it vulnerable to security threats, such as the ones lived through in the context of Ambazonia War. Hence, the need for a community approach. The two other Sub-Divisions are Tombel and Nguti Sub-Divisions. Bangem Sub-Division is sandwiched between four administrative units including two Sub-Divisions in the Mungo Division (Melong and Manjo) as well as Tombel and Nguti. Following the Communal Development Plan[41] for Bangem, the Sub-Division has a population of over Twenty Thousand inhabitants with over sixty percent of this youths between the ages of 22 and 48 years old[42].

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[41] Communal Development Plan 2011 found in archives of the Divisional Office Bangem on 10/12/2020
[42] Information culled from the Divisional Office archives on 10/12/2020

The sub-Division has a temperate Climate with longer rainy seasons (April-October) and relatively shorter dry seasons (November to March)[43]

4.1.1. Administrative Delimitation of Bangem Sub-Division

The northern-most point of the Sub-Division is called Mwanengouba[44], including the Twin lakes and the Plains. It is limited here by the Pastoral Zone in the Mungo Division of the Littoral Region of Cameroon. The furthest point of Bangem Sub-Division to the South West is called Ekanjoh-Bajoh[45] village, and it is limited towards this end by Epen and Babubok villages in Nguti Sub-Division.

The furthest points of Bangem Sub-Division to the North-East include Banbengung[46] Village in Muambong Clan, which shares boundaries with Ngombo-Ku, the first village in Tombel Sub-Division; Ebonemin[47] village in Nninong Clan, which shares boundaries with Muandong-the first village in Muamenam, Manjo Sub-Division in the Mungo Division of the Littoral Province. The administrative composition of Bangem Sub-Division is shown in 4.1.2. below.

4.1.2. Administrative Composition of Bangem Sub-Division

According to Ekane (2007:20), Bangem Sub-Division is made up of eight Clans and sixty-six villages both categories of unequal sizes in terms of physical plant and population. The Sub-Division is mostly rural, inhabited by the Bakossi tribe with almost all inhabitants having the same ancestral origins from Ngoe, the founder of the tribe and his wife **Sumediang**. However, some main cities

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[43] Information culled from Archives of the Divisional Office in Bangem Town on 10/12/2020
[44] Approximately 12Km from Bangem Centre
[45] Approximately 15 KM from Bangem Centre
[46] Approximately 18 Km from Bangem Centre
[47] Approximately 11 Km from Bangem Centre

and larger agglomerations are becoming highly cosmopolitan with other tribes' people from neighboring Regions coming in for agricultural and commercial purposes.

The Communal Development Plan (ibid) states that over 75% of the population of Bangem Sub-Division lives in semi-rural areas with reduced accessibility due to poor roads. There are hardly any multi-media facilities in Bangem Sub-Division. communication is a serious challenge. The post-Office plays an important role in sending and receiving mail; but there is also limited access to signals of mobile telephone systems provided by the Orange and MTN networks.

The area known today as Bangem Sub-Division was, initially administered as part of the Kumba Eastern Area Federation (Kumba North)[48]. It was raised to a Sub-Division in 1963 incorporating the entire area occupied by the Bakossi to the west of Mwanengouba Mountains. Thirty years later in 1993, Bangem was raised to a Divisional headquarters after the creation of Kupe/Mwanengouba Division.

Table 1 below shows the eight clans that constitute the sub-division, their headquarters and the approximate distance from Bangem Centre.

No	CLAN	Headquarters	Est. Dist. From Centre	Category of Chiefdom
01	Nninong	Muebah-Nninong	07.5 KM	2nd Class
02	Bangem	Bangem-Centre	0Km	2nd Class
03	Mbuogmut	Ekanjoh-Bajoh	18 Km	3rd Class
04	Nhia	Muabi	10 Km	3rd Class

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[48] Information culled from archives of Divisional Office Bangem on 10/12/2020

05	Elung	Nkikoh	08 Km	3rd Class
06	Ebamut	Ebamut	09 Km	3 Class
07	Muambong	Banbengung	12 Km	3rd Class
08	Muetan	Muetan-Aku	10.5 Km	3rd Class

As mentioned in 4.1 above, the eight clans listed above are respectively unequal in size and in population.

According to the Communal Development Plan 2011 (Op. Cit) Bangem sub-Division constitutes over 25% of the total population of Kupe/Mwanengouba, and Mbuogmut Clan with it 12 villages is the largest and most thickly populated. The document also shows that it is followed in terms of size and numbers by Nninong, Muambong and Nhia Clans.

No	Nninong	Bangem	Mbuogmut	Nhia	Elung	Muambong	Ebamut	Muetan
01	Muebah	Muangwelo	Ebamut	Muabi	Nkiko	Banbengung	Ebamut	Enyandong
02	Nkack	Mbuh	Mwedimel	Mbat	Ekangte	Mwedib	Nkonteh	Muetan-Aku
03	Ebonemin	Ekaku	Mekume	Ekambeng	Nyan	Mwesok	Ndibse-Aku	Nzi-Mbeng
04	Muekan	New-Bell	Mbang	Mwelong	Mwanyet	Nkang	Ndun	Muetuk
05	Muanjeken	Mbuku	Elah	Muasum	Mwangwekan	Akid	Mwandelengoe	Ngomin
06	Epenibel		Ebase		Mwanjikom	Mwedib	Mwaloh	Nteho II
07	Muaku		Mombo		Ekanjoh-Elung	Mueken	Ndiamin	

08	Elum I		Epen			Mwantah		
	Ekambode		Njandu					
	Njom		Elambeng					
			Mbat-Bajoh					
			Ekona-Bajoh					

Table 2 below shows the various villages arranged according to relevant clans. MWANENGOUBA settlement has been left out of this classification for clarifications from Administrative authorities.

4.2. AN APPRAISAL OF SECURITY FRAMEWORKS AT THE LEVEL OF BANGEM SUB-DIVISION

The geographical localization of Bangem Sub-Division between the south West and Littoral Regions of Cameroon (sandwiched between Loum, Manjo, Melong, Nguti and Tombel Sub Divisions) accounts for its uniqueness in terms of accountability to administrative, security and socio-cultural dimensions. The Bangem sub-Division is presented as a melting pot of English, French and typically Cameroonian values, and that has a serious implication for the daily lives of the local population.

This section examines the formal and informal frameworks of security governance in Bangem and lays the groundwork for interpretation of data in the next Chapter. 4.2.1.

4.2.1. Formal frameworks

These include: (i) administrative apparatus (ii) government security agencies; and (iii) the judiciary.

4.2.1.1.   The administrative apparatus

Two structures will be considered in this categorization (i) the Sub-Divisional Office for Bangem and (ii) the Bangem Municipal Council.

4.2.1.1.1.   The Sub-Divisional Office for Bangem

This is the highest institution at the level of the Sub-Division. The administrative apparatus is structured in a way that enables it to play its role of representing all government ministries within the sub-division, and by so doing oversee and supervise the work of all government agencies. It is headed by a Sub-Divisional Officer (DO) who represents the President of the Republic in Bangem Sub Division; guarantees the smooth functioning of auxiliary arms of government including traditional authorities (the two second Class and Sixty-Four Third Class Chiefs). The DO is assisted in his work by an Assistant DO, a Secretariat and three Bureau Chiefs (Chefs de Bureaux) including Bureau Chiefs for General Affairs, Economic Affairs, and Socio-Cultural Affairs respectively. Perhaps the most important attribute of the administrative apparatus in relation to the present study, is its role as chair and convener of the Bangem Sub-Divisional Security Meeting which reviews the security situation of the sub-Division. It holds once a week in ordinary sessions. Ad hoc sessions are called as need arises.

4.2.1.1.1.2.   The Bangem Municipal Council (the Council)

This is a decentralized entity at the level of the Bangem municipality. The Council plays a central role in facilitating local governance, ranging from coordination of local commercial activities, socio-cultural life, hygiene and sanitation, to municipal policing. The Council is made up of 25 Municipal Councilors representing the eight clans that make up Bangem Sub-Division. According to the Lord Mayor[49] of the Council, every clan sends in 03 Councilors while Bangem is represented by 04 Councilors by dint of its central location. The Municipal Council is headed by a Municipal Administrator (Lord Mayor) assisted by two deputy Mayors. The Council is comprised of three main structures (i) the Executive including the Lord Mayor and his two deputies; (ii) the General Secretariat that comprises all technical services including finance and municipal policing; and Four subject-matter Committees made up of Municipal Councilors.

4.2.1.2. Government Security Agencies present in Bangem Sub-Division

There are three main government security agencies in Bangem Sub-Division including (i) the Public Security (national Police Force); (ii) the Brigade National Gendarmerie; and (ii) Police Special Branch.

4.2.1.2.1. The Public Security

The Public Security Department has been present in Bangem Sub-Division since the creation of the administrative unit in 1963. Its primary role is to maintain law and order all over the sub-division. However, due to the violence related to Ambazonia War since 2017, the role of the Public Security is constrained to the main urban and semi-urban centers. It also plays an important role in facilitating the management of community-based threats and incidents judicial

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[49] Lord Mayor Ekungwe Christopher was interviewed on 13th January 2021

proceedings, and in sensitizing the population on basic administrative rules and regulations. The Commissariat for Public Security is in Bangem town and from there, keeps an eye on developments in all the corners of the administrative unit. It is expected among others, to carry out patrols and related interventions in all eight clans and 66 villages of the Sub-division.

The Commissariat for public Security for Bangem is headed by a Senior Superintendent of Police, who is assisted by two deputies. The agency facilitates sub-divisional security meetings and reports to the Sub-Divisional Officer, and in some cases, the State Prosecutor.

4.2.1.2.2. The Police Special Branch

This is mostly an accountability agency whose main role is to investigate, monitor and report on lapses in performance for all state agents and other related structures. It plays mostly a covert political reporting role in public life, but a more centralized one in facilitating the Sub-Divisional weekly security meetings. It is headed by a Commissioner for Special Branch.

4.2.1.2.3. The National Gendarmerie

The National Gendarmerie Brigade was created in Bangem in 1977[50] . Its role is to support law enforcement and ensure the territorial integrity of the country at the sub-divisional level. Unlike Public Security that covers only semi-urban areas, the Gendarmerie cover leeward areas of the sub-division

The Gendarmerie Brigade carries out regular day and night patrols to sensitive spots, including parts of Nninong, Nhia, Ebamut and Mbuogmut Clans respectively, to pre-empt violent behavior

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[50] The Brigade Commander interviewed on 10/12/2020 in Bangem town

and re-assure the civilian populations of their security. The Gendarmerie Brigade in Bangem is headed by a Senior Warrant Officer of the Gendarmerie who reports to the Company Commander for Kupe Mwanengouba and the Divisional Officer for Bangem.

The difference between the National gendarmerie and the other government security agencies in the sub-division, to the exception of the detachment of the military that is stationed in Bangem since the onset of the Ambazonia war in 2017, is its dual role in law enforcement and the more offensive role of defending the territorial integrity of the country at sub-divisional level.

4.2.1.2.4. The Military Detachment

Bangem Sub-Division did not have a military presence till 2017 when the Ambazonia War started in the Sub-Division**.** Testimonies gathered from focus groups in Bangem town on 10 December 2020 revealed that full scale war started in Bangem in February 2017[51]. According to the participants at the Focus Group discussion, some administrative officials including the Senior Divisional Officer for Kupe/Mwanengouba and some Police Officers, were cornered at the GBHS Bangem, brought down to the city centre where they were publicly molested and humiliated by Ambazonia fighters, who according to the participants at the Focus Group, had set up headquarters in Mbuogmut Clan, particularly in a place called Babubok, with operational bases in Nkack Nninong and other areas**.** This incident prompted the government to immediately deploy a detachment of elements of the Cameroon Armed Forces.

The Focus Group informed that the initial deployment of the armed forces engaged the local population in peaceful discussions. That approach, the Group reiterated, was aimed at facilitating

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[51] February 6th, 2017 when the Ambazonia Warriors (Amba-Boys) stormed Bangem Central town for the first time)

a peaceful and sustainable solution to the issues that pit the Ambazonia Forces against administrative and security authorities. As violence spread into various parts of the sub-Division, the military detachment went into a full combat mode that left the sub-Division as a full operational zone. The military detachment has remained in Bangem with three main roles: (i) carrying out armed escorts for government authorities and visitors to Bangem; (ii) securing main administrative buildings including the Divisional Office; (iii) patrolling the hot spots in Bangem Sub-division by day and by night.

4.2.1.3. The judiciary

The judiciary power generally has as major role, the prevention and resolution of conflicts/differences (civil or criminal) between parties within its area of jurisdiction. In Bangem Sub-Division, this power is divided between (i) the Legal Department and (ii) the Courts. The Court of First Instance has jurisdiction over Bangem and Nguti Sub Divisions respectively. The High Court of Kupe/Mwanengouba[52] also located in Bangem[53] entertains felonies and probate matters.

The Courts in Bangem are managed by a chief magistrate who is also the administrative head. The Chief magistrate is assisted by two (2) magistrates, who generally preside over court sessions. The judges act cumulatively as examining magistrates[54]. The interview with Justice Etame (ibid) informs that courts receive complaints from parties in Bangem and adjudicate on them usually

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[52] The High Court of Kupe/Mwanengouba has jurisdiction over Bangem, Tombel and Nguti
[53] Prior to the Ambazonia Conflict that broke out in the Division around 2017, hearings were sometimes held in Nguti. Ever since, all hearings are held in Bangem town
[54] That means they can entertain and hear some sensitive matters in their chambers, make a ruling and then resend to Legal Department

leaning on facilitation by the Judicial Police Officers ('Officiers de Police Judiciaires' who are specially trained Gendarmerie or Police Officers. Justice Etame (ibid) explained that the courts sometimes give opportunity for alternative means of reaching settlement of issues through conciliation as stipulated by the law[55].

The other structure of the judiciary in Bangem is the Legal Department. According Justice Etame (ibid) that department is headed by a State Counsel, who is assisted by four deputies charged with prosecution. The judicial Police is under the authority and direction of the Legal Department. The judiciary in Bangem Sub-Division also plays an oversight role on the administration of justice by government security agencies including the judicial police officers. In compliance with the principle of separation of powers as enshrined in the law, the judiciary in Bangem is supposed to be an independent entity which nevertheless collaborates with other structures that fall under the other independent branches particularly the administration which falls under the executive.

Officials of the court claim that the Ambazonia war has presented real challenges to the administration of justice within the Sub-Division. These challenges range from impossibility for process-servers (Bailiffs) to reach litigants due to insecurity; to huddles in administration of summonses, warrants and other judicial processes by the judicial police officers.

4.2.3. Informal frameworks of security in Bangem Sub Division

These are non-governmental structures set up at local levels by Clans people and villagers to facilitate various aspects of community life within the sub-Division and the municipality. They

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[55] Reference at Section 62 of the Cameroon Criminal Procedure Code of 2005

include: (i) Village/clan councils; (ii) village vigilante associations; and (iii) internal and external elite; and (iv) local civil society organizations.

4.2.3.1. Village and Clan Councils

These are structures set up by local village chiefs at clan and or village levels in Bangem Sub-Division. They are generally made up of notables selected from various quarters or families that constitute the village or clan. The role of village/clan councils vary from place to place but they generally deliberate on security and socio-cultural issues facing the community. If they generally lack resources to push their agenda on security and how to keep their fellow residents safe and protected, they play an important role of liaising with government security agencies at the level of Bangem and advocating for action.

Most Clan/village Councils in Bangem also play an important role in conflict prevention, management and resolution. They have the mandate conferred on them by the chiefs to consider issues at individual, family and even village levels. Most land-related disputes are being managed at the level of Clan Councils and in most cases, their verdicts are morally and culturally binding.

The structure for Clan/Village Councils are quasi simple and almost the same across the sub-Division.

A chairperson in most cases appointed by the clan/village chief from one of the largest families in the case of the village; and village in the case of clans.

4.2.3.2. Vigilante Associations and Groups

The concept of vigilante groups and associations[56] gained steam[57] in Bangem Sub-Division during the Ambazonia war which engulfed the entity in early 2017. Youths in some villages and clans who were not/no longer part of the armed movement constituted themselves into village self-defense groups. Vigilante members impose curfews and monitor their strict respect by everyone in the community. In some villages, vigilante groups work in collaboration with government security agencies (elements of gendarmerie Brigade, Public Security and the military) by providing early warning and facilitating timely response action. Most of them are supported with basic security materials such as torch lights, boots and jackets by some elites and village development associations[58].

4.2.3.3. Bangem Sub-Divisional Elites (internal and external)

The Merriam Webster Dictionary (Op. Cit) defines the term 'elite' as the socially superior part of society. The second part of the definition fits better into the context of this study "a group of persons who by position or education exercise much power or influence in society. 'Internal elite' of Bangem-sub-Division may be understood as that category of persons who hail from different villages and clans but who live within the sub-division. While 'external elite' refers to those of them who live outside the sub-division.

The elite are known to play a central role in the running of affairs of their various villages, clans as well as the entire sub-Division. They organize themselves into (i) village development

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[56] Information gathered through a focus group discussion with some former Ambazonia fighters in Bangem town on 09/12/2020

[57] Forms of vigilante existed before 2017, as part of community-based security strengthening mechanisms to prevent and/or fight against armed banditry and low scaled criminality.

[58] Culled from interviews with some members of vigilante groups in Bangem carried out on 10/12/2020

associations, such as the Muebah Cultural and Development Association (MUECUDA) or Nkack Cultural and Development Meeting (NKACUDEM); (ii) clan unions and development associations such as Nninong Cultural and Development Association NICDA; or Muambong Development Association (MUADAC); (iii) Sub-Divisional development frameworks such as Bangem Cultural and Development Association (BACDA).

 Prior to the Ambazonia War, these frameworks' principal role was to create and follow up on local development initiatives including electrification, potable water supply and other local self-reliant projects. After February 2017, the Bangem sub Divisional elite took centre stage in managing security-related matters in their various contexts. Some of them were involved in a shuttle diplomacy of sorts between the youths who had in large numbers joined the Ambazonia warriors in fighting against the state security forces. In some other villages and clans, the elite would help set up local vigilante associations as self-defense groups to give the local population the much-needed sense of security in the face of rising insecurity. Hence, the elite currently play a central role in the governance of local security in Bangem Sub-Division.

4.2.3.4. Local Civil Society associations and organizations in Bangem Sub-Division

A focus Group discussion with some local stakeholders in Bangem town on 10 December 2020 [59] revealed that Civil Society has been a major presence in Bangem Sub-Division with roles ranging from supporting communities in agriculture, animal husbandry and most significantly in promoting Christianity. The Focus Group also revealed that some Christian organizations particularly the church, have been present in Bangem prior to the creation of the Sub-Division in 1963.

A follow up interview with authorities of the Catholic Mission in Bangem Town, revealed that the church was established in Bangem as early as the 23rd of February 1922. A similar interview with local authorities of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon revealed that the Presbyterian Church first came to Bangem Sub Division in 1926, when they established a church and a primary School in Muebah-Nninong and Nkikoh-Elung respectively.

Interviews with authorities of both churches informed that since then, both Christian churches have played a front-line role in health and education within the Sub-Division. More development-oriented structures were established in the early-to-late 2000 when the Centre for Rural Transformation (CERUT) was created to support local farming population with techniques and resources to enhance farming. It is not clear from the interviews if these organizations played any role in security and or the protection of civilians from physical violence or harm. However, the Presbyterian Church through the Presbyterian Secretary for Bakossi North, has been involved

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[59] A focus Group discussion to examine the role of local Civil Society organizations in ensuring security and protection of civilian population was held at GRA in Bangem on 10/12/2020. The focus group included five youths (two girls) arbitrarily drawn from Mbuogmut, Nninong and Nhia Clans.

in brokering peace between the Ambazonia forces alleged to be operating from their bases in

Mbuogmut clan.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0. DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

This chapter, presents the data collected through the descriptive survey design shown in Chapter 2. It provides a baseline interpretation of the data to lay the groundwork for analysis as well as discussion of the study. The data collected through three main techniques shall be presented and described in the following order: (i) data from questionnaires; (ii) data from interviews; and (iii) data from focus group discussions.

5.1. DESCRIPTION OF QUESTIONNAIRE DATA

A questionnaire containing eight targeted questions were administered to three categories of stakeholders in Bangem Sub-division from 29 November to 29 December 2020[60] :(i) 66 village Chiefs); (ii) Eight Clan Chiefs; and (iii) 25 municipal councilors.

The questionnaires are appropriately structured to elicit information in four specific domains-all directly linked to local governance of security and/or the protection of civilians in Bangem Sub-division. The questionnaire seeks responses on (i) respondent identification; (ii) leadership of local security and POC in respective localities; (iii) stakeholder interaction and local coordination;(iv) other forms of security and protection practiced in the Sub-division.

5.1.1. below present the responses of the leaders of the 66 villages of Bangem Sub-division.

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[60] That period was selected because it is the heart of the rather short dry season in Bangem, so our volunteers can find their way to the remote locations on motor-bikes

5.1.1. Responses by village chiefs or their regents[61].

Part one of the questionnaire reads Identification of Respondent. It was labelled 'optional' as a way to protect the identity of our respondents, given the precarious socio-political and security situation that prevails in Bangem and all the South West and North West Regions of Cameroon. However, 49 respondents in this category freely agreed to fully identify themselves. They assured our volunteers that their responses depict the realities in the Sub-Division, and do not violate any laws or regulations.

Part two is based on leadership of security and protection at the local level. Respondents were expected to tick from a set of actors ranging from (a) The D.O(b) the police (c) the mayor of the city Council (d) the local chiefs; to (e) None of the above.

An overwhelming majority of 53 on 66 ticked "d" showing that the local chiefs take leadership on security and protection-related issues in Bangem Sub-Division. The other thirteen 13 claims that the Mayor of the Municipal Council takes leadership on security and protection-related issues in their local context.

The second question was on the regularity of contacts between the leader and the local population. Here, 24 of 66 respondents showed they often met the leadership. Thirteen respondents claim they met with leadership very often. 07 of them showed they hardly ever met the leadership; while 05 respondents claimed they had never ever met their leadership. On this question, the respondents are almost evenly spread between 'often' and 'very often'. That shows

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[61] The term 'regent' is commonly used in Bangem Sub--Division to refer to a person officially authorized by a chief to serve as interim. They are usually introduced to the village and to other authorities including at Sub-Divisional levels and assigned specific tasks from time to time.

that there are regular contacts between the local chiefs and the population in their Area of Responsibility (AoR).

Question 03 in part 02 was to measure the level of contact between the local chiefs and the administrative and security authorities at the sub-divisional level in Bangem, notably through administrative tours and patrolling of villages by forces of law and order. A clear majority of respondents -48 of 60 ticked the letter "d" which stands for "a long time ago". Eight of them ticked the letter (e) which stands for "I cannot remember when". The responses here raise some concerns and seem to suggest that while the administration and forces of law and order are located not more than an average distance of 30 kilometers from the furthest village of the administrative entity, their physical presence is circumscribed to Bangem- the administrative headquarters of the sub-Division. This also implies that the impact of the government security agencies is almost absent in leeward parts of the sub division,

The fourth question requires respondents to indicate whether there is need for more frequent visit and patrols of administrative authorities and police to their localities. The respondents are almost evenly spread on 'strongly agree' (30) and "agree" (25). 05 respondents indicated that they 'disagree', while 06 "neither agree nor disagree". These responses portray the perception among local population that they could be more secure if the forces were regular in their villages.

In part 03 of the questionnaire respondents were required to provide more information on the interaction with various strands of own village population, and of neighboring villages. The first question in part three required respondents to state how often they met with population of own village on security and protection-related matters. On that question the respondents were

almost evenly spread between 'b' once a month (21 respondents); and 'c' 'once a week' (19 respondents).

13 respondents indicated that they hardly ever met with the population of their own villages on security and Protection-related matters. 13 others preferred to leave the question unanswered. Some of the responses to the previous question sharply contrast with responses to the next question (question 02 of part 03) which requires respondents to indicate whether their entities have village Councils or not.

 A staggering majority ticked letter 'a' which stands for 'Yes. Only 02 left the question unanswered. Village Councils provide the forum for discussing a variety of issues relating to the life of the community including security and protection. It is unclear how 13 respondents who indicated they hardly ever met with their village population to discuss security and protection indicate in question 02 that their villages have village Councils. This clearly highlights the arbitrariness associated with the functioning and local appropriation of security structures at the village/clan level. It also casts significant doubt on accountability measures.

Question 03 of part 03 examines the presence and role of civil society organizations in the villages. It required respondents to state if apart from churches there are other civil-society organizations in their villages. A clear majority of the respondents (40) ticked letter 'b' which states 'No'; while only half that number (15) indicated 'yes.

' The relative absence of human-rights based civil society organizations in most parts of Bangem Sub-Division (as illustrated by the respondents in this question) represents an important missing link on citizens oversight/accountability, coordination, advocacy and educational aspects of local

security governance in the specific circumstances of the Ambazonia war. However, respondents who indicated that there were other civil society organizations in their respective villages failed to state the name of the organizations as required in question 04 of the same section which required respondents to name the other civil society organizations that exist in their localities.

Part 04 of the Questionnaire is crafted to elicit information relating to the existence or not, of other forms of security or protection arrangements in the villages. 42 of 66 respondents indicated that other forms of security/protection related arrangements existed in their villages. 08 respondents indicated that there are no other security/protection-related arrangements; while 08 chose to abstain by ticking 'neither yes nor no'.

Question 02 of section 04 required respondents who answered 'yes' to question 01 of the same section, to name the said security or protection of civilians-related arrangements. An overwhelming majority of the respondents (44) indicated 'local vigilante associations' and other variants of the same including "trained group of youths to serve as village security" and youth self-defense groups'. 06 respondents mentioned village traditional shrines; while 04 respondents specifically stated "Muankum[62]" as a form of security and protection of civilians' arrangement in their villages.

The responses provided in question four of the questionnaire by village chiefs, are clear indications that vigilante associations and villages auto defense groups play a major role in security and protection of civilians-related matters within Bangem Sub-Division. 5.1.2. below

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[62] A dreadful traditional deity commonly revered by the Bakossi, to which most male natives of Bangem Sub-Division are initiated as a form of adulthood ritual

present the responses provided for the same set of questions by another category of local actors in the domain of local security governance in Bangem Sub-Division-the Clan Chiefs.

5.1.2. Responses of clan chiefs[63] .

On section 01 of the questionnaire for this category of local actors, 05 of 08 had no issues with stating their identity. Those who opted to identify themselves claimed they have nothing to hide in relation to security and protection of fellow clans' people and/or other inhabitants of their areas of responsibility.

In question 01 of section 02, 06 of 08 respondents ticked letter 'd' indicating that the local chief is responsible for the security and protection of populations living in their (AOR); one of eight respondents claimed it is the 'Police'; and the other mentioned the 'D.O'. This responses by clan chiefs corroborates the position of village chiefs, that security and protection of local population in most parts of Bangem Sub-Division are the responsibility of local chiefs.

Responses to question 02 of section 02, shows a closer relationship between the clan chiefs and their respective local population. 06 of 08 clan chiefs ticked the letter (a) which implies that they met with the local population in their AoR very often; while only 01 of the respondents ticked letter 'c' indicating that he met with his local population only occasionally. It also shows a close structural relationship between the clan chiefs and the village-level collaborators, who in most cases depend on the latter for much of administrative support and direction.

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[63] The Sub-Divisional Divisional Officer for Bangem informed that two of the eight Clan Heads in Bangem Sub-Division hold Second Class Chiefdoms, notably Nninong and Bangem. The rest hold Third Class Chiefdoms. The former being a of higher category than the latter following administrative classification of Chiefdoms.

Question 03 in section 02 elicited a near even distribution of responses from the clan chiefs in relation to the last time an administrative or security authority from Bangem visited their AoR. 03 of the 08 respondents ticked the letter 'c' indicating 'last month'; 03 of them ticked the letter 'd' which indicates 'a long time ago'; and 02 of them ticked the letter 'e' indicating 'I cannot remember'.

This category of respondents (Clan chiefs) showed a more formalized stance in section 03 which displays the interaction with their local population and other neighboring entities on security and protection of civilians-related concerns.

Question 01 here required the respondents to indicate how often they met and exchanged with the local population and/or neighboring clans in their AoR, on security and protection-related concerns. 04 of the 08 respondents ticked the letter 'b' indicating 'once a month' while four others ticked letter 'd' which indicates 'quarterly'.

On question 02, all the 08 respondents ticked the letter 'a' indicating that their respective clans have a Clan Council. Question 03 was on the existence or not of other civil society organizations besides churches in their AoR; 06 of the 08 respondents answered in the affirmative. However only 02 of them listed one organization (Chede) in part 02 of the same question. Question 04 on the regularity of contacts with such organizations in their AoR, seven respondents ticked the letter 'b' which stands for 'often'.

In section 04, this category of respondents showed a greater closeness to the village chiefs in terms of the similarity of their responses. In question one of section four where respondents were required to indicate whether there are any other forms of security or protection

arrangements in their AoR, five of eight respondents ticked the letter 'a' indicating 'yes'; two of them ticked the letter 'b' indicating 'no'; while one respondent ticked letter 'c' which stands for 'neither yes nor no'.

Question 02 of section 04 required respondents who indicated existence of other forms of security in their AoR in question 01, to name such other forms of security and protection arrangements.

05 of the 08 respondents named 'local vigilante groups and associations'; one respondent named 'traditional shrines'; while 02 were silent on the question. Responses by this category of actors also underscore the role of local vigilante groups and associations in the provision of local security and protection in Bangem Sub-Division. They also reiterate the need to establish stronger lines of collaboration between these and more formal administrative and security agencies found at the sub-Divisional headquarters in Bangem town.

5.1.3. An appraisal of responses by the 25 municipal councilors.

In question 01, 15 of the 25 respondents in this category indicated that the responsibility for local security and protection is borne by local chiefs. 07 of them claim that local vigilante groups and associations are in charge in most parts of Bangem sub-Division. Only 03 respondents indicated that the police are in charge. These responses conform with the pattern seen with the first 02 categories of local actors and respondents. Responses to question 02 indicate that municipal councilors are in regular contact with the local leadership. 05 of them indicated that they are 'very often' in touch with the local leadership; 06 of them indicated that they are 'often' in touch,

while 10 of the respondents indicated that they are occasionally in touch with two of them indicated they are hardly ever in touch with the local leadership.

For 07 of the respondents, the last time they were in touch with local leadership was 'last month'. 07 others were last in touch 'last week'; 05 of them were last in touch 'a long time ago', while 03 of them do not remember when they were last in touch with the traditional leadership.

The variance in the responses above raises concerns of whether there were (in Bangem Sub-Division) any coordination mechanisms on security and protection of civilians (formal or informal) that bring together various stakeholders for exchanges and/or context analysis. Question 04 required respondents to indicate whether administrative visits and police patrolling should be more frequent in villages in Bangem Sub-Division. 11 of 25 respondents 'strongly agree' to the option of more frequent visits and police patrolling.

On the same question, 08 respondents agree to more regular visits and patrols in villages. However, 03 respondents strongly disagree while two respondents disagree.

Section 03 provides the opportunity for municipal councilors to indicate the level of interaction between themselves and the local population in their AoR and/or neighboring clans. 09 of the 25 respondents indicated that they met with their local and neighboring populations 'once a week'. 07 of them, indicated that they met with their local populations on a 'quarterly' basis; 06 of the respondents in this category indicated that they met with their local populations once a month; while only 02 respondents indicated that they 'hardly ever' met their local population on security and protection-related concerns.

The overwhelming majority (22 of 25) of respondents in this category indicated that there exists a security committee in the municipality. 03 respondents answered 'no'. Many of the municipal councilors have asserted that there is a local security committee in Bangem town. That implies that there is a level of coordination in the sub divisional headquarters with incidence on the local security and the protection of civilians.

This study also examines data obtained through questionnaires as discussed in 5.1. as well as input from other sources, including   focus groups[64] (FG), presented in 5.2 below.

5.2. INPUT FROM FOCUS GROUPS

03 focus groups from diverse backgrounds were convened to provide their perceptions on the prevailing security and POC situations in Bangem Sub-division as well as the role of various stakeholders -(i) Focus Group with 06 randomly selected youths in Bangem town (ii) one with randomly selected motor-bike riders; and (iii) 05 former Ambazonia fighters, now turned members of local vigilante in own villages. Data culled from the focus Group are presented in 5.2 below:

5.2.1. Focus group of selected youths in Bangem town.

06 youths aged 18 to 30 (02 females) were invited for a discussion of the prevailing security situation in the Sub Division. They are all known for their active participation in social and cultural events in the city centre and beyond. As a result, they are in the position to provide informed

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[64] Focus Group in the context of this research means -small groups of three-six persons brought around a discussion table to exchange views on a subject matter. Three such groups were set up for this study

opinions/views on the socio-cultural life of the community, and a reliable assessment of the security landscape.

The objectives of the research were explained, and participants allowed to share their views on how the security situation in Bangem Sub-Division has impacted their social life first, as individuals, then as members of their community.

As they spoke in turns, 07 recurring security-related aspects spanning the period of the Ambazonia war became evident:: (i) 2017 to 2020 presented the worst security challenges in the history of the sub-division as people kept fleeing their homes in Bangem for safety in the bushes; (ii) people's businesses and farms took a serious down turn, affecting livelihoods (iii) 2017 and 2018 was the most dreadful as corpses could be seen abandoned in parts of the city; (iv) forces of law and order were friendly but could not be everywhere; (v) most villages further away from Bangem Centre having youth vigilante groups were flooded with internally displaced persons seeking protection; (vi) the security situation has significantly improved but everyone is still cautious; (vii)most villages still depend on vigilante groups and other self-defense arrangements for security and protection of their population from harm

Focus group participants were asked to suggest how to reassure the local population of their security and protection. The following points came up, expressed in various forms: (i) joint sensitization events in villages by the forces of law and order and local vigilante groups to show community of purpose and assure the villages that there would be no more security-related surprises; (ii) creation of more command posts in distant clans with high rates of criminal activity; (iii) regular information sharing meetings between sub-divisional security authorities and local

actors in villages; (iv) local vigilante groups and associations to be trained and equipped by the state to improve their performance as local security actors.

5.2.2. Focus Group with selected 'Okada riders'[65]

A resource person (identity withheld) was requested to link the research team up with any 04 commercial riders[66] of Okada who have lived and worked in Bangem for a continuous period of 03 years[67], for exchanges with them on the prevailing social, cultural and security-related circumstances of the sub-Division.

On 14/12/2020, a focus Group discussion was held at Government Residential Area (GRA) Bangem Centre with four adult male 'Okada riders' who insisted on being anonymous. After explaining the rationale of the meeting and assuring them that it was purely for research purposes, they were asked to give their perception of life in Bangem between 2016 and 2017; 2017 and 2019; and 2019 till date. These periods represent pre-war, during the war; and the easing of tensions.

All the 04 participants claim that prior to 2017, life in Bangem was very comfortable, business flourishing and even Okada riders could dream of big personal projects such as buying land and building themselves a house.

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[65] These are motor-bike riders. Bikes constitute the principal means of travel in the Sub-Division. Most adult males own and ride motor-bikes. The association of motor-bike riders is a very strong and consequential group of persons including in security and protection-related matters
[66] By random selection
[67] That period spans through the pre-Ambazonia War, during the war and when the fighters started laying down arms for a return to peace.

Participants agreed that the era just before the war started in February 2017, was the most economically viable era the Sub-Division has ever known. They informed that as Okada Riders, they are in the best position to testify, because their business was good. They would make good money transporting goods and diverse farm produce for local traders and farmers (respectively) to all local markets in the Sub-Division, without nursing security-related concerns.

They all spoke nostalgically of how visiting elites, and/or tourists to the Mwanengouba lakes would take them on hire for hours and even days. One of them intimated that on 04 occasions, he made a lot of money exceeding fifty thousand francs CFA[68] (respectively) riding administrative authorities to distant villages to sort out land-related disputes between.

The participants however noted that all the buoyant social context changed abruptly after January 2017, when even the main city (Bangem Central town) became too dangerous for bikes to circulate. They all agreed that between early 2017 and early 2018, it was hard to tell who of Ambazonia fighters or the national forces of defense and security was in control of Bangem Sub-Division.

All of them stated that that period will go down in history as the most devastating era in the history of Bangem sub Division.

According to that FG participant 01 or 02 of the several corpses they saw were dressed in military fatigues, but not certain if they were slain soldiers or Ambazonia fighters. They however ended

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[68] Approximately 100 USD which stands above the national minimum wage which stands at 35000cfa

the discourse on a positive note, that the same military persons who had earlier molested them and dragged them to their camp, apologized and drove them back to Mbuku village after three long hours of interrogation.

Participants at this focus group informed that mid 2018 was the turning point when tensions started easing up in most parts of Bangem Sub-Division.

Participants attributed the *détente* to a couple of factors, including (i) sensitization of local population and Ambazonia fighters by internal and external elite which changed the attitude of most towards the war; (ii) that the internal displacement of local civilian populations by the war had taken a heavy toll on most people who turned on Ambazonia fighters within their communities pushing them to lay down arms; (iii) the increased military offensive especially in high intensity zones of Mbuogmut, Muambong and Nninong helped to fish out most hardliners-killing some and pushing others to lay down their arms.

Participants of this FG explained that even in areas where Ambazonia fighters voluntarily laid down their arms within Bangem Sub Division, there are concerns that their mates from other areas where the fighting is still very active, could storm their communities and cause irreparable harm to civilians.

To this group, the growth of vigilante movements in almost all villages within the Sub-Division was emboldened by security concerns. They advised that government security agents at the Bangem level should engage the local vigilante movements more frequently, and if possible provide basic security training and logistical support.

5.2.3. Focus Group with 04 members of local vigilante movement

This group presented two pre-conditions for any discussions with them: (i) they must remain anonymous; (ii) they are not to address any questions relating to the war or activities of the Ambazonia fighters.

They were assured that the exercise is only driven by two aspects (i) the desire to improve governance of local security in Bangem sub-Division; and (ii) to ensure protection of civilian population during armed conflicts and other security emergencies. They were asked to talk about the objective of their vigilante movement, and how (if at all) they related with local administrative and security authorities in their villages, clans and Sub-Division.

The group highlighted the fact that government security agencies, the administration are in Bangem town as well as their action in villages beyond two kilometers is limited by extremely poor road conditions and lack of the means of transport. According to participants in this focus group, villagers in distant clans are mostly left on their own to prevent and/or respond to security and protection related threats and incidents.

They explained that their vigilante movement fills in the security gap created by the quasi absence of government security forces in their villages. Asked if there is anything they would expect government to do to make them more effective in providing security and protection to persons and their property, they called for logistical support. They listed provision of tools such as rain-coats, flash-lights for use at night, and regular supply of batteries, and basic trainings or coaching on basic security techniques.

The participants said they would like government to do one of two things for their communities (i) either create more public security out posts in villages located beyond ten kilometers from Bangem; or (ii) recognize vigilante movements like theirs and engage with them on a regular basis for coordination on the security and protection of their villages.

They claim that their role as a local security movement is to support the government in keeping local villagers safe from incursion by negative elements from within or outside their communities.

However, they all decried the fact that some government agencies in Bangem town fail to capitalize the actual value of vigilante movements which they wrongly consider as extensions or simply transformations of Ambazonia fighters.

They claim that working together on local security must start with the change of such erroneous mind-set. One of them explained that some members of the local vigilante have been Ambazonia fighters, who as from early 2018 had decided to instead work to secure and protect their communities from invaders.

All participants at this FG expressed satisfaction that life is progressively returning to normal in most parts of Bangem Sub-Division. They all expressed joy in the fact that their children have gone back to school. They all said their villages and clan chiefs play a central role in keeping the communities strong and united and hence require more support and respect from administrative and security authorities in Bangem.

5.3. DATA COLLECTED THROUGH INTERVIEWS WITH SOME ADMINISTRATIVE AND SECURITY AUTHORITIES IN BANGEM

The research design provided for data collection through interviews with representatives of the formal frameworks of security in Bangem. These include: (i) the Sub Divisional Office in Bangem; (ii) the Municipal Council (iii) the judiciary; and (iv) the Gendarmerie Brigade;

5.3.1. information obtained through Interview with the Divisional Officer[69] (DO) for Bangem

The DO was kind enough to grant two interviews during the research. The first was an in-person interview on 11/12/2020 in Bangem addressing the administrative organization of his AoR including the relationship with various formal security agencies and frameworks. He named the Public Security, the National Gendarmerie, the Special Branch, as well as the Special detachment of the military in the context of the NoSo[70] crisis. He was requested to talk about his role vis a vis the security of persons and property within his AoR and how he has fared in that light since 2017.

He explained that as the DO for Bangem Sub-Division, he is the embodiment of the government of Cameroon at the sub-Divisional level; and in that capacity bears the responsibility to guarantee the safety and security of all persons and their property. He however intimated that playing that role in the context of hostilities as it was the case since 2017 is very challenging.

He confirmed that the DO was the supervisory authority over all government ministries, as well as security agencies in his AoR and chairs all weekly and ad-hoc security meetings. The second

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[69] Félix Kanga, Senior Civil Administrator
[70] In the early 2017, government authorities generally referred to the war in the Anglophone Regions as 'NoSo Crisis'

interview was carried out on 10/01/2021 by phone, and it was intended to follow up on the relationship between the DO and other informal frameworks of local security within his AoR. He confirmed that Bangem Sub-Division has Sixty-four (64) third Class Chiefs and two (2) Second Class Chiefs who serve as auxiliaries of administration.

According to him, all security arrangements falling under the purview of local chiefs are assimilated to formal frameworks since they collaborate with his office and the government security agencies in Bangem through their village and clan chiefs. He highlighted the important role that chiefs play in organizing socio-cultural and economic life in their respective villages and clans. He would like to see stronger engagement by his office with local communities to ward-off security and protection-related threats and incidents but decried persistent logistical gaps, especially the absence of means of transportation for his office.

Asked to talk about vigilante groups that have sprouted up in most villages since 2017 when the fighting peaked, he explained that such movements may also have been in existence in some parts of the sub-division before 2017, but simply gained traction in the context of the fighting as villages yearned for permanent presence of a security provider. The DO explained that the state takes the security and protection of its population seriously and normally locates security forces as close to the population as possible.

He however highlighted logistical constraints that limit translation of that desire into concrete action citing the inadequate numbers of gendarmerie and public security elements posted in Bangem Sub-Division.

He continued that in the light of such operational limitations, the role of local security and protection arrangements such as vigilante groups (if well-coordinated through chiefs) cannot be overemphasized. The DO was also asked how frequently he communicates with local security stakeholders such chiefs, vigilante groups. He simply responded that he does communicate with a good number of chiefs quite regularly, but his visits are not as regular as he would love to, due to the same reasons stated above.

Asked if he has considered setting up local security committees at clan levels to streamline coordination with government security agencies in Bangem, the DO responded that both his office and the government security agencies in Bangem are in close collaboration with presidents of respective vigilante movements and associations at the level of villages in Bangem-Sub Division.

5.3.2. Input culled from interview with the Gendarmerie Brigade Commander[71] (CB) for Bangem

This interview was carried out on 14/12/2020 in the office of the Brigade Commander in Bangem town. Asked to talk about the role of the Gendarmerie Brigade in Bangem, the CB noted that the core role is to ensure the security and safety of persons and property within the Sub Division. A task he continued is larger than his team in its current configuration can perform.

He decried the limited number of elements, as well as logistical constraints such as lack of vehicle for mobility. He intimated that the Brigade is unable to carry out patrols beyond two kilometers

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[71] CB Bangem Senior Warrant Officer Toumba Haman

of Bangem Centre; and called on researchers to support with advocacy efforts for his hierarchy to provide the required means for effective work to be done by his team.

5.3.3. Interview with Municipal Administrator (Lord Mayor) Bangem

The Lord Mayor was interviewed at his residence (GRA) in Bangem town. Community organizing, and municipal policing are core aspects of local security governance. They are also among the main attributes of the Bangem Municipal Council. The mayor was asked to shed light on how his structure manages to respond to these two, and to describe the attendant challenges.

He explained that the twenty-five councilors (cf 4.2) in the Bangem municipality constitute five sub-committees that deliberate on substantive issues including (i) security related matters;(ii) economic issues; (iii) socio-cultural matters; (iv) finance; and (v) cooperation. That the five committees serve as compass and provide oversight to the technical services that are involved in the day-to-day running of the municipality.

Another important aspect the Mayor raised in connection with the question above, is the role of the municipal council in providing basic services including hygiene and sanitation to the population living in Bangem town. He highlighted the technical support the Council provides to some distant villages and clans on the same basic services, within available means. The Lord Mayor underscored municipal policing as a core responsibility of the Council, especially in the prevailing circumstances of armed violence and the COVID-19 Pandemic. He however, regretted that the function has been delayed this far, due to the lack of funding. Asked if the matter has been raised with hierarchy as a major priority for the municipality, the Mayor claimed that

administrations before him have raised the issue and promised to continue the search for possibilities through advocacy and other available means to mobilize funding.

Another aspect raised in the interview with the Mayor which has strong relation with local security governance is street lighting. He informed that street lights (solar panels) have been installed in major round-about and street corners of Bangem town. An initiative he said, was meant to be extended throughout the city and other villages and clans within the municipality as resources become available.

The mayor was also asked to talk about the impact of his structure on the security of villages and clans outside the immediate vicinity of Bangem town. He responded that the opinion of all the 66 villages and eight clans is sought and considered every time the municipal Council makes policy decisions. The mayor intimated that such consultation is made possible by the representativeness of the municipal Council, where every clan is represented by three Councilors as described in 4.2. above.

Asked whether the municipal Council participates in security-related coordination meetings organized on a weekly basis by Bangem Sub divisional authorities, the Mayor responded that the Council is not a statutory member of the weekly security coordination meeting. He however clarified that they are always available whenever the views of the municipal council are sought on a security-related matter.

He commended local actors such as village and clan chiefs for the important early warning they do in collaboration with sub divisional authorities to prevent atrocities, and to keep persons and their property secured and protected especially in the less accessible parts of the municipality.

His recommendation is to strengthen collaboration between all security actors living in Bangem town, and local stakeholders in villages outside Bangem. He called for all stakeholders to join the municipal council in working to keep residents of Bangem Municipality secure and safe, particularly in the context and in aftermaths of the Ambazonia War. The interview with the Lord Mayor of Bangem Municipal Council leads us to another critical part of this study, the analytical perspectives on the data, displayed in Chapter Six below.

5.3.4. Analytical perspectives on the local security governance in Bangem Sub division.

This section of the study intends to shed more light on the local governance of security in the area under consideration. Hence, the section provides analytical perspectives on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats displayed in the governance of local security in Bangem Sub division.

The characteristics highlighted here are identified through personal observation, as well as through the interviews, questionnaires and focus group discussions held in Chapter Five.

5.3.4.1. Strengths of the governance of local security in Bangem Sub division

During direct interactions with stakeholders in the context of this study, they were asked to highlight what they considered as the single capacity that makes Bangem sub division able to withstand security and protection-related stakes and adversities. Almost all the stakeholders mentioned strong and functional local arrangements/institutions at the village and clan levels. They considered these as a dependable source of strength for the security of their localities and the protection of civilians against security threats and incidents.

Participants in all the focus group discussions were unanimous on the fact that village chiefs (legitimate or de-facto) play a major stabilizing role in their respective entities and are the reason why most villages stay intact and secured even through the turbulent circumstances related to Ambazonia War.

This information was quite intriguing given that some villages and even clans within the sub division are known to have chieftaincy crisis[72]. The stakeholders however explained that even in situations of chieftaincy crisis, there is usually a defacto leader (crowned chief or not) whom everyone in the community looks up to as chief and turns to for help in times of security-related need.

They intimate that the action of government security forces is limited to less than two kilometers outside Bangem town, and easy travel for them is not guaranteed due to the poor road conditions, but mostly because they do not have the required means of mobility. They all referred to the existence of local vigilante groups and associations in every village as an additional strength factor. Interlocutors claim that the vigilante groups and associations play a critical role in preventing security-related threats within their localities, but also intervene in response to incidents including in neighboring villages.

Hence, the vigilantes constitute dependable force in times of need for the local population who construe this as the only source of security. Another development that boosts local security

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[72] Information provided by D.O. during the second interview show that more than five villages are known to have chieftaincy and succession-related issues which keeps them in a constant state of regency.

governance is the acceptance of local vigilante groups and associations by national security agents at the level of Bangem town.

5.3.4.2. Weaknesses

An analysis of the effectiveness of these community defense structures which is drawn from documentary evidence during the survey and discussions with their members points out to a certain number of issues which tends to compromise their full propensity in supporting the local security governance architecture.   A few factors were raised including poorly resourced[73] and government security agencies which are contrived to limit their operations within five kilometers from Bangem town. This limits the extent of control which the government can exercise over the operations of these groups especially those operating far beyond the city center. In addition, there is no proper coordination between formal agencies in Bangem, and the informal actors who hold the security forte in all villages and clans. Gaps in coordination exacerbate the concerns that some of the local vigilante groups may themselves constitute security concerns.

The study found no indications that anyone of the local security structures keeps a record of their activities. Neither was there a clear delineation of the process and/or criteria of recruitment and admission into vigilante groups. The study increasing odds that members of the local security structures may have expectations of reaping financial and other personal benefits from their services in the organization. Yet, that there are no risk mitigating protocols put in place to ensure

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[73] Referring to the limited number of policemen and gendarmerie officers; as well as the acute lack of logistical support in terms of vehicles and other operational needs

that the members will not turn into negative elements should such expectations on joining the group fail to be met.

Also, worth mentioning, is the poor road network between Bangem town and the rest of the sub division. This presents a serious obstacle to security and protection-related interventions. The near absence of civil society organizations such as those involved in protection of human rights and collection of early warning mechanism constitutes a weakness to the governance of local security in this context. The role of oversight and citizenship control in the domain of peace and security is clearly absent in Bangem Sub division.

5.3.4.3 Opportunities for enhancement of governance of local security in Bangem sub division

As mentioned in 3.0 above, elites (internal and external) play a critical role in the development and security of their respective villages and clans. This critical role came to the fore in Bangem Sub-Division during the Ambazonia War in 2017, when some elites braved the security challenges and travelled back to their villages to directly engage with local stakeholders (mostly youths). This is considered an opportunity because prior to 2017, the duty of providing security in villages and clans was never one that was associated with this category of persons. They however constitute a very significant potential to lead peace and security-related initiatives, if well harnessed.

Bangem Sub division is highly inclined to Christianity and the churches play a very important role in sensitizing the population on the need to give peace a chance. Ekane 2002: 10 states that there

is a catholic and/or a Presbyterian church in every village of Bangem Sub Division and that Sundays are days of worship.

The church therefore plays a strong stabilizing role in Bangem Sub division and so provides the opportunity for security and protection of civilians.

5.3.4.4. Threats to the governance of local security in Bangem Sub division

Interlocutors were asked to talk about any factors that could take advantage of the weaknesses described in 4.3.4.3. above and harm local population in Bangem sub division. Many of them cited the high unemployment rate among the youths which leaves a good number of youths idle and at the mercy of negative forces.

They also stated that the security status quo in Bangem sub division prior to 2017, was altered by a political wind-fall resulting from genuine claims for better opportunities in education, health and other basic rights. Hence, delays in carrying out the required reforms could threaten the peace and tranquility that the population of Bangem Sub division aspire to. Some of these factors will be further discussed in the next sections of the study.

CHAPTER SIX

6.0.   DISCUSSIONS, SUGGESTED REMEDIAL ACTION AND CONCLUSION

At the preliminary phase of this study, local stakeholders within Bangem Sub-division and outside were contacted to brainstorming and collect background information on aspects of security and protection of civilians. 100 persons who were deemed to have some knowledge of the functioning of security agencies, were asked to comment on how ordinary civilian population manage to stay safe and secure through the hostile atmosphere linked to Ambazonia War. The main objective of that phase was to enlist the perceptions of inhabitants of Bangem Sub-division and through that make a case for the present study in relation to: (i) its relevance and (ii) its feasibility under prevailing circumstances relating to security.

For most of the early interlocutors, particularly those living in Bangem sub-division, it was new for a research to link security in the purely rural context of Bangem with a big term such as 'governance'. Some people questioned why it was not simply taken as the 'management of local security in Bangem sub-division? In which case, the study would simply provide an evaluation of the formal security agencies present and operating in Bangem sub-division.

Still in the initial stage of the research, the idea of carrying out findings on governance of local security in Bangem was flagged in a local WhatsApp Forum to elicit views of members who are considered as educated natives of the area under consideration. One of the members, visibly trapped in the heavy toll the Ambazonia War has had on the population, called the idea 'intelligence gathering".

However, after several months of interaction with inhabitants of Bangem Sub Division across the board, it was obvious that assessing the governance of local security in Bangem during the very challenging period of Ambazonia War has been relevant and has brought more clarity on some specific aspects of security in the context under consideration.

While the enforcement or practice of security and protection of civilians are both supposed to be top priority of the government of the Republic of Cameroon. It is evident from the study that nothing much is being done by the government to deliver on effectively on that sovereign responsibility.

However, the study shows how these essential functions manage to happen in an area such as Bangem with very few and ill-equipped government forces of law and order. It also highlights the necessity for the roll out of a wide civil-military coordination in within the context of Bangem sub division, which builds on available local resources and the government security agencies to create an end-state security strategy that works for everyone in the target area.

The various interviews and focus group discussions carried out during the study showed how a variety of actors in Bangem Sub Division step in to fill the security void created by the limited capacity of state security forces. The involvement of multiple stakeholders in the provision of security at the local level is better captured and elaborated in the 'governance of local security'.

The leading role of informal frameworks and private actors such as local vigilante associations as well as village/clan Councils may not have been fully captured, had the study been skewed towards the narrower perspective suggested in the theme 'management of local security'.

Focus group participants highlighted the leading role of some clans/village elite associations in advancing development initiatives that positively impact delivery of security in the area under consideration. A case in point that was cited by several participants is the Nninong Development Association (NICDA) that partnered with the Delegation of Public Works and SOWEDA[74] to rehabilitate public and feeder roads in the Nninong Clan. That initiative should make it easier for government administrative and security officials to visit the clan and strengthen collaboration between them and local security structures.

The discussion of the context of Bangem Sub-Division here, is based on Krahman (2003: 15) as he highlights five constitutive elements of security governance (cf 2.1.) including variety of actors in local settings; and hierarchical controls in more formal settings. These will be further discussed in 6.1. below.

6.1. DISCUSSING ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISMS IN LOCAL SECURITY GOVERNANCE, AS OPPOSED TO HIERARCHICAL CONTROLS IN FORMAL SECURITY AGENCIES.

This section discusses two main aspects of security governance at the level of Bangem Sub division. These include hierarchical controls in formal mechanisms and arbitrariness of informal mechanisms

6.1.1. Hierarchical controls in formal security mechanisms in Bangem Sub Division

The study observed that although the area of coverage by government security agencies is highly restricted by inaccessibility and poor telephone connectivity, there exist clear lines of

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[74] SOWEDA is the South West Development Authority

coordination within the formal security mechanisms located at the sub divisional headquarters in Bangem town. Interactions with respective security agencies revealed two types of command and controls were noticed within the formal security mechanism and each plays a specific role. These include (i) Vertical controls; and (ii) horizontal controls.

6.1.1.1. Assessing the relevance of vertical controls over state security agencies in the sub-division

This manner of hierarchical control of security actors by their principals is very observable in Bangem Sub Division and corroborates Fukuyama (2013:3) when he posits that such governance pattern affirms the government's ability to make and enforce rules, and to deliver services. The Commissioner for Public Security is subject to command and control of the Regional Delegate for Public Security and technically reports to him. The same applies to the Gendarmerie Brigade Commander who is subject to the Company Commander for Kupe/Mwanengouba.

The concern emerging from this manner of coordination/command and control of the delivery of security and protection in Bangem Sub Division is like what obtains all over the country. The government security agents are more interested in performing the bidding of their commanders and hierarchical rungs than in living up to the expectations of providing security to the local population[75]. State security forces, who may not have a clear picture of the security situation in the most leeward parts of the sub division due to the lack of accessibility by road and/or

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[75] Also highlighted in Fukuyama. 2013. 'What is Governance' with the Centre for Global Development. Consulted at www.cgdev.org on 20/02/2021

telephone network, still manage to submit regular reports to their hierarchy and wait for the end of the month for salaries and increments.

The emphasis is therefore not so much the outcomes of their work[76], but on the performance of a certain set of actions construed as fundamental to the health of their relationship with hierarchy.

6.1.1.2. Discussing the impact of horizontal controls over state security mechanisms in the sub division

The study observed that state security agencies in Bangem Sub Division are also subject to horizontal controls at the sub divisional level.

The Sub Divisional Officer for Bangem who is under the command and control of the Senior Divisional Officer for Kupe Mwanengouba Division, chairs the Security Coordination Mechanism (Weekly Security Meeting) in Bangem. Hence, he exercises some level of supervision over all other security-related structures in the sub division, including the Commissioner for Public security, the Commissioner for Special Branch and the Gendarmerie Brigade Commander.

Nevertheless, that command responsibility by the D.O. over state security agencies in Bangem was observed to be more of a coordination role. That is because the D.O. normally does not have the expertise necessary to supervise the more technical aspects of enforcing law and order. Hence, technical controls are divulged to the same vertical chain of command described in 6.1.1.1. above.

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[76] Less concern on delivering on the duty of care on security of persons and property that the state owes to the civilian population within its territorial boundaries

Fukuyama (2013:5) observes that in the conceptualization of performance as described in vertical and horizontal controls, the quality of governance is different from the ends that governance is meant to fulfill. He relays the argument in 6.1.1.2 above, and upholds the assertion that considered in that purview, governance would be about the performance of agents in carrying out the wishes of their principals, and not about the goals set for attainment by the same principals.

Bo Rothstein quoted in Fukuyama (2013:7) provides a more conclusive summary to the argument on hierarchical controls as gauge of performance. He states that outputs like security are not simply the result of public action, and that the public sector must interact with the environment around it and the society it is dealing with, to produce sustainable results.

6.1.2. Discussing the performance gap deriving from unclear coordination and oversight of local security structures in Bangem sub-division

The basis for discussing the coordination mechanisms as an aspect of local security governance in Bangem sub-division is the overwhelming assertion[77] that security is almost entirely ensured by local stakeholders in most parts of the Sub Division.

 Direct observation corroborates information culled from interviews and focus group exchanges that all local security frameworks discussed in this study have some form of coordination. The vigilante associations are seen to operate under the auspices of the respective village chiefs and coordinated by a president who is chosen by members of the respective vigilante associations.

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[77] Interviews with security stakeholders in Bangem Sub Division, as well as focus group discussions with local inhabitants representatives of some influential groups

The same applies to the village and clan Councils that have been mentioned by the various stakeholders.

Although the management structures of local security platforms in Bangem Sub Division seem basic in character[78] and ordinary in terms of operational capacity[79], the village/Clan Councils in Bangem Sub Division are seen to play a very vital role in holding the communities together. They are less concerned about procedures and more focalized on the outcomes of their operations which include keeping the civilian population and their property safe from negative incursions.

6.1.3. Perspectives on the accountability challenge with respect to local security frameworks

While local security structures are seen to fill the security void in areas that are literally inaccessible to government security agencies, the study showed a huge accountability challenge in the modus-operandi of local security mechanisms in Bangem Sub Division. Participants in the focus group were unanimous that respect for the rule of law has been relegated to the back-burner and arbitrariness is the order of day.

It is unclear how vigilante groups and associations in the villages and Clans visited, determine what represents positive/right behavior to be encouraged; and negative/wrong/criminal behavior to be punished.

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[78] Almost all of them have just a president and Minutes Secretary. Ordinary meetings are held once a week, but the chief can convene ad hoc meetings as needs arise
[79] Members do not carry arms. They split up in smaller groups to patrol all the quarters of the village after nightfall

Even more unclear is the way they determine what punishment to mete out for every crime and how to measure compliance. It was observed that in some villages[80], mob action takes centre stage as punishment for wrong behavior. People are known to have been lynched, banished or severely beaten for mere allegations of offences that have remained unproven. Exchanges with various stakeholders during the study suggest that proper coordination between the local security structures and the more formal government security agencies in Bangem Centre would streamline the modus-operadi of local structures; rid them of arbitrariness and establish a significant degree of oversight in their operations.

Section 6.2. below provide suggestions for remedial actions to further enhance the local security governance in Bangem Sub Division. The recommendations in 6.2. are based on observations and input from various informed sources on the security situation in Bangem, also discussed in the study.

6.2. SUGGESTED REMEDIAL MEASURES

This study formulates four sets of remedial measures (see 2.1-2.4 below) to enhance the local security governance in Bangem sub-division; and to keep the local population safe and protected in moments of peace, but particularly in times of uncertainty as it is the case in the context of Ambazonia War.

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[80] Some villages were mentioned in Nninong Clan and Mbuogmut Clans respectively

6.2.1. Capacity enhancement for government security agencies in Bangem Centre by the government of Cameroon

The study highlights the critical role of government security agencies in ensuring security of persons and property in Bangem Sub division. It predicates this on their monopoly of the use of force in maintaining peace and security all over the country. Hence, it calls on the Delegate General for Public security at national level (DGSN[81]) to increase the numerical strength of the police Station in Bangem town. This should be done by (i) deploying more well-trained policemen to the sub-division; (ii) creating sub-public security out-posts in typical red-zones[82]; and (iii) providing adequate logistical means, especially all-terrain vehicles.

A similar call was made to the national Ministry of Defense through the Secretariat of State for the Gendarmerie (SED)[83] in relation to reinforcing the Gendarmerie Brigade in Bangem Sub division.

The study shows that the Brigade in its present configuration, is acutely understaffed and logistically ill-prepared to carry out any operations outside Bangem town. The Special Branch and the Special military deployment, facing the same capacity gaps require bold support action from their respective hierarchy.

6.2.2. Streamline coordination between government security agencies and local security providers in the leeward parts of the sub-division

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[81] Délégation Générale à la Saurité Nationale
[82] Interlocutors named Babubok, Enyandong and Ndibse 1 and 2; as well as Ebonemin and Nkack in Nninong
[83] Secrétariat d'état Chargé de la Gendarmerie Nationale

It is noteworthy, the study established that more than eighty percent of the sub-division is not effectively covered by government security agencies. It also observed that the gap created by that status-quo is being filled local structures with arbitrary modes of delivery. Hence, the DO for Bangem sub division is called upon to establish local security committees to serve as inter-stakeholder coordination platforms on security at the level of respective clan headquarters. These coordination platforms would streamline early warning through information-sharing. It would also shed clarity to the modes of operation of locally-led security structures.

6.2.3. Capacity enhancement for technical Committees et communal level and operationalization of municipal police in Bangem by the Lord Mayor

The study noted the central role of Bangem municipal Council in local governance, including strengthening security governance within its area of responsibility. It also registered concerns that all 25 Councilors operating in the five technical Committees are not adequately skilled to deliver effectively on local governance.

Hence, the Lord Mayor is exhorted to advocate for short and cost-effective capacity enhancement trainings in the interest of Councilors, from national and international partners including the National Support Fund for Municipal Councils (FEICOM); and the newly created National Advanced School of Local Administration (NASLA).

In the same vein and given the huge security challenges faced by the municipality, the Lord Mayor and the Municipal Council are called upon to reprioritize Municipal policing as a core responsibility of the Council in its area of responsibility and operationalize as a short-to-medium term imperative.

6.2.4. Enhance capacity for local security structures as a matter of priority

The study observed that most clan and village chiefs have never received any formal capacity enhancement but continue serve as de-facto local security mechanism within their respective areas of responsibility. The same applies to members of local vigilante associations. The stipends that are paid out to village and clan chiefs is deemed insignificant for auxiliaries of administration and hardly covers the cost of movement within the entity.

Hence, the Sub-divisional officer is called upon to advocate for improvement of the financial situation of the clan and village chiefs.

The local chiefs are also exhorted to take immediate measures to formalize all local security frameworks within their areas of responsibility. This should be done through registration at the Divisional Office in Bangem. It should be noted that Legal personality presents several advantages to local structures such as vigilante associations and village Committees.

The legal personality would: (i) bestow the local structure with the status of a moral person, with the right to establish links/relationships with other national and international partners, as such it: (ii) create accessibility for local structures to funding sources; and (iii) ensures clarity and traceability in the modes of operation of the local structures and renders them more accountable and trustworthy. The set of recommendations paves the way for the concluding phase of the study.

CONCLUSION

This study delves into the otherwise virgin grounds[84] of security governance in Bangem Sub-division, a location considered as hot spot in the context of Ambazonia War.

Through direct observation and by using various techniques of qualitative data collection and analysis, it shed some light on attendant issues to security and protection of civilians by establishing the various formal and informal security structures in vogue in the area under consideration.

It offers insights into the gaps, and singles out logistical constraints for government agencies, arbitrariness of local structures, and the quasi absence of coordination mechanisms as the three most fundamental concerns.

It would be preposterous to claim that the study has covered every aspect of local governance of security in Bangem sub-division and the municipality. It however, charts the foundational course on which future research in the domain of security governance, community organizing, and stakeholder engagement could build.

Similarly, the study raises pertinent concerns relating to the limited coverage of the sub-division by government security agencies and highlights the impact of that with respect to security of persons and property in the area under consideration.

 The methodology and research design adopted for the study adequately addresses the research questions and leads to the unravelling of the initial assumptions. By so doing, the research offers

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[84] Virgin grounds because no evidence was found that similar studies had been carried out in the context of Bangem sub division

original and cutting-edge exchanges between various stakeholders (from the most enclaved, to the most accessible parts of the sub division).

The study proposes a set of actionable suggestions, which range from capacity enhancement for local security frameworks, to re-posturing of government security agencies deployed to the sub division.

It makes a very strong case for the enhancement of multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms in the sub-division, as a first step to closing the wide and increasing gap between the duty bearers[85] of security, the de-facto security providers[86], and the population living in Bangem sub-division.

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[85] The government holds primary responsibility for the security of persons and property within its territorial limits
[86] The research showed that government security agencies cover less than 20% of Bangem sub division; and that most of the security of persons and their property is delivered by local vigilante associations and village security committees

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