

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 13, 2020

Tony H. Pham
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
1500 12th St., SW
Washington, D.C. 20536

Dear Mr. Pham:

We write to express grave concerns over the situation of Cameroonian migrants and asylum seekers in Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention. There have been several alarming high-profile incidents, including the death of a Cameroonian migrant in ICE detention last year¹ and a hunger strike held at Pine Prairie this past June.²

There are several overlapping crises in Cameroon, including grave human rights violations, the ongoing Anglophone crisis, and the emergence of Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa, that mean that for many Cameroonian asylum seekers, orders of removal may result in tragedy for Cameroonians.

The United States has been active in recognizing this danger. The most recent U.S. Department of State annual human rights report on Cameroon identifies patterns of extrajudicial killings, torture, and forced disappearance by the Cameroonian state as well as various non-state actors. The State Department took these allegations seriously enough that in February 2019, they restricted security aid to Cameroon in response to reported atrocities committed by Cameroonian security forces.³

Given the grave circumstances in Cameroon, it is a moral and legal imperative to ensure that Cameroonians are being given the utmost concern in their asylum applications.

To better understand the Department's treatment of Cameroonians, we request the following information no later than October 30, 2020.

- How many Cameroonians have been removed each year from FY10 through FY20?
- How many of these individuals were removed to Cameroon and how many to other countries? If not Cameroon, which third countries have accepted these Cameroonian nationals?

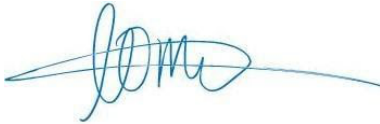
¹ <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2019-10-05/cameroon-death-ice-custody-black-immigrants-rights>

² <https://www.nybooks.com/daily/2020/09/08/the-hunger-strikers-of-pine-prairie-protesting-indefinite-detention-by-ice/>

³ <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/07/world/africa/cameroon-military-abuses-united-states-aid.html>

- How many Cameroonians have applied for asylum or other forms of relief and protection during this same time period?
 - What percentage of these applications have been denied, disaggregated by the form of relief?
 - What percentage of these applicants have had legal counsel?
- What is the rate of denied parole for Cameroonian asylum seekers, and how does it compare to the rates for other nationalities?
 - If there are large disparities, what accounts for these disparities?
- How many Cameroonians are currently in ICE custody, and where are they held? Please include a list of all detention facility names and locations.
 - How many have been approved for bond, but remain in ICE detention, for inability to pay or other reasons?

Sincerely,



Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress



Cedric L. Richmond
Member of Congress



Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress

cc: Joseph Edlow, Deputy Director for Policy, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services