

Religious Roundtable Meeting in Yaounde, Cameroon. 7-11 August, 2023.

Religious Leaders in Cameroon meet to discuss strategies for progress and peace in the country.

“The Level of Unity, Representation and Commitment that we have achieved here has never before been experienced in this way in Cameroon.” This wonderful statement from the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Yaounde in Cameroon truly summed up the ethos and outcome of a Roundtable of Christian and Muslim Religious Leaders that took place in Yaounde, Cameroon from 7-11 August 2023. In a meeting that brought together the most senior religious leaders of all the religious communities and denominations in the country, the results exceeded expectations.



Called by the Ecumenical Forum for Justice and Peace in Cameroon, the meeting was coordinated by the All Africa Council of Churches to strengthen collegiality between the religious leaders and agree a plan of action for a common commitment by the Religious Leaders to work together for justice and peace in Cameroon. International partners were present to encourage and support the gathering and to emphasise the significance of its purpose, not just for Cameroon, but for the cause of peace and justice in Africa and further afield. The Methodist Church in Britain contributed funding for the meeting to take place.

For 6 years, there has been a deepening and frequently violent conflict between the Anglophone north-west and south-west of Cameroon and the Francophone majority in the rest of the country. For years, the economic, political and social marginalization of the Anglophone region by the rest of the country has caused disenfranchisement and resentment. The violence that has spilled over from Nigeria and the Sahel region into the North and West of the country has also increased tensions.

Within this context, the role that religious leaders play – in a deeply religious country – in ensuring, sustaining and promoting national cohesion and stability cannot be overstated.

For two days, Christian and Muslim leaders engaged in a sincere and honest consideration of the challenges and possibilities of achieving progress in ensuring the peace and well-being of the nation. All present contributed to discussions. In one session, participants were invited to share two things that they would change if they could. What emerged was the profound commonality of concerns

and aspirations of all those present. This in turn enabled priorities for action to be easily identified and agreed. Through discussing the shared difficulties and aspirations of local dynamics, trust was built and ideas for constructive collaborative action were shared.

During the last session, three significant courses of action were agreed and a new Standing Committee, comprising 6 Christian and 5 Muslim senior leaders was chosen by those present. They will implement the decisions made and seek to enable the concerns of all groups within the country to be heard so that transformative resolutions could be sought and embraced.



The significance of this meeting for Cameroon cannot be overstated. Senior leaders of all the major Christian and Muslim denominations in Cameroon were present and supported the agreed outcomes. Moreover, in a meeting with the Cameroon Prime Minister, the Prime Minister expressed his support for the process, for the actions agreed, and for the efforts and importance of the mediating role that religious leaders play in ensuring stability and peace within the nation.



It is a blessing that the Methodist Church in Britain was invited to be a part of this process. It is an example of the on-going model of partnership and friendship that is possible with our partners. Such initiatives are one of the many ways in which we are able to share the gifts of solidarity, support and friendship with the global Christian community.

Dr. Andrew Ashdown
Partnership Coordinator for Africa.
Global Relationships Team.
Methodist Church in Britain.