



**An Address to the People of the Former British Southern Cameroons
By Prof. Januarius Asongu, APJ Steering Committee Chair, December 3, 2024**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On Thursday, November 28, 2024, I had the awesome responsibility of speaking on behalf of the over eight million people of the Former British Southern Cameroons (Ambazonia) at the 17th Session of the United Nations Forum on Minority Issues in Geneva, Switzerland. My address focused on the need for peace and justice, specifically calling for a UN-mediated cessation of hostilities between the pro-independence Ambazonian fighters and the Cameroon armed forces. I also called for a referendum on the future of the Former British Southern Cameroons. This speech was heard by hundreds of diplomats from all over the globe as well as by over 500 organizations supporting various facets of minority rights. So far, the response of the international community has been positive.

Since this historic presentation, the first of its kind by any leader of the Former British Southern Cameroons, reactions from our communities have been mixed. There are those who hail it for the significant diplomatic breakthrough it achieved, and others who have seen it as a sell-out and even insinuated that I have been bought by the Cameroon government. Yet, there are others who simply want to know me and how I came about to unveil this peace plan, not just to the international community, but even more importantly to our people.

My credentials for leading this struggle at this critical moment are solid – I have studied this problem from an academic perspective and served as a frontline activist dating back to the 1980s. In 1993, I wrote and defended a dissertation at the Pontifical Urban University, Rome, on “The Problem of National Unity in Cameroon,” where I argued for our right to national self-determination. I grew through the ranks of the Cameroon Anglophone Movement (CAM), the Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC), the Ambazonia Liberation Movement (ALM), and now the Alliance for Peace & Justice (APJ) in the Former British Southern Cameroons. The history of Ambazonia cannot be complete without recognizing my significant contributions including the development of the Ambazonia flag, being a sponsor and plaintiff in the famous Banjul case against the Republic of Cameroon, registration of the SCNC in the United States, and currently leading another case in Banjul against the government of Cameroon... Professionally, apart from rising to an Associated Professor of Business, I have also been a consultant for various agencies within the US Federal Government, have held senior positions at global IT and Financial Services firms, and now serve as the president/CEO of the IT consulting firm – WeSecure.

In May 2021, I founded a group of “Concerned Ambazonians” with the hope of reconciling the factions, but this endeavor was futile. In 2024, I joined a group of nationalist organizations that was seeking a resolution to the conflict through dialogue with the Cameroon government. Participants included members of the Consultative Commission (CC). In September 2024, the Consultative Commission withdrew from the talks after failing to get money from the International Communities Organisation (ICO), the sponsoring organization, and because the ICO won’t let them take over control of the process. However, before leaving they had been participating in drafting the Peace Plan document, which they now criticize.



After the Consultative Commission left, the remaining parties reached out to other Ambazonian groups, large and small, inviting them to be part of this historic movement to end the war through a UN-mediated peace agreement that should include a referendum on our future. On November 17, 2024, the Alliance for Peace & Justice in the Former British Southern Cameroons, briefly referred to as the Alliance for Peace & Justice, or simply APJ, was born and I was elected the pioneer chair of its Steering Committee. APJ represents a collective of leaders from the Former British Southern Cameroons, united by a shared vision for peace, justice, and equitable governance. We understand the depth of suffering experienced by our communities, the injustices of marginalization, and the enduring aspirations for dignity, equality, and self-determination. We are working towards the cessation of hostilities, for autonomy now, and a referendum on the future of the Former British Southern Cameroons territory.

This is not a surrender, but an answer to the call for peace; with the understanding that there can be no true peace without justice; and in keeping with our erstwhile motto – “*The force of argument, and not the argument of force.*” Our war of independence is proof that we take our rights seriously, but the time has come for peace. For the first time, there are voices from both sides signaling for dialogue. We are cognizant of gestures from the government of Cameroon that have acknowledged our unique status. While such gestures have fallen short of the minimum expectations of our people, we call on the government of Cameroon to engage us in genuine dialogue and negotiations – not the status quo where the two sides are having parallel monologues, while the masses continue to suffer unnecessarily.

The consequences of the failure to dialogue have been dire. In the coming weeks and months, APJ plans to engage all stakeholders in the struggle to ensure that our position is truly a representation not just of your grievances, but more especially of your goals and aspirations. Ours will be a democratic process involving not just the Ambazonian diaspora community, but especially those in Ground Zero. We welcome all opinions, even those opposed to ours, as we strive to put an end to the current quagmire.

Fellow citizens: I ask for your confidence... As the man who helped develop the Ambazonia flag, I won't betray that very flag. As the man who helped bring legal victory from Banjul, you can count on my patriotism. As the man who created the first Southern Cameroons Missions in Washington, DC, and New York, you can count on my diplomatic skills. As the man who delivered the call for peace, justice and referendum at the United Nations, I am unflinching in my commitment to the Ambazonian cause. As a man who has been blessed with financial stability, I am not going to compromise for the sake of money. As a realist, I acknowledge that while most Ambazonians will want their own country, today our territory is still internationally identified as part of Cameroon. As a philosopher and academic, I know enough to state that our best path forward is through negotiation with the Cameroon government; negotiations supported by the international community. That is what APJ promises to deliver... For this I promise to do my best!

How many years must our people suffer, before we come to their rescue?

How many times must our blood be shed, before you know it's too much?

The answer, my friends, is needed by our people; the answer is living in all of us!

A luta continua, Vitoria e certa (The struggle continues, Victory is certain)! Thank you.