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# Abuses in Cameroon After US Deports Third-Country Nationals

## US and Cameroon Partner in Rights Violations; Cameroon Not Safe for Deportees



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In [January](#) and [February](#), under a secret agreement, the US government deported to Cameroon 17 men and women—including asylum seekers and a stateless person—from 9 African countries: Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Morocco, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Zimbabwe.

Cameroonian authorities immediately detained the deportees, despite having no [legal basis](#) for doing so. A lawyer assisting some of the deportees said representatives from United Nations agencies spoke to them about the possibility of seeking asylum in Cameroon. However, the deportees told the lawyer they felt pressured to return to their countries of origin.

Several deportees were ineligible for asylum in the US but had court-ordered protections against deportation to their countries of origin due to fears of persecution or torture. The Trump administration circumvented these protections by sending them to a third country – one that Human Rights Watch and others have consistently [said](#) is unsafe for deportations.

For years, parts of [Cameroon](#) have been wracked by violence and armed conflict, the government has [cracked down](#) on opposition and the media, and [armed groups](#) and government forces have committed widespread abuses, including [torture](#) in detention. In 2022, we [documented](#) how Cameroonian asylum seekers deported by the US experienced harms in Cameroon after their return.

Cameroon is party to the 1951 [Refugee](#) Convention and has national [refugee](#) legislation, yet two people the US sent to Cameroon have already returned to their country of origin. Fifteen remain in detention in the Cameroonian capital, Yaoundé. The forced or coerced return of anyone to a country where they face risks of persecution, torture, or other serious harm is refoulement, prohibited under international law.

The Cameroonian government should immediately release the remaining deportees, ensure protection

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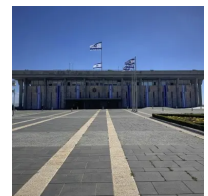
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