

This material is distributed by Moran Global Strategies on behalf of the Ambazonia Governing Council. Additional information is available at the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.

PROFILE OF DR. CHO LUCAS AYABA, PhD
Human Rights Advocate and Political Prisoner in Norway

[Detained by Norway for his exercise of freedom of speech on social media in calling for victims of Cameroon state violence to exercise their human right to self-defense against oppression, genocidal killings (more than 6,000 dead), and scorched earth by the Cameroun government in the erstwhile Southern Cameroons (Ambazonia), referred to by Cameroon as "Anglophone Regions" or "Northwest and Southwest Regions of Cameroon"]

SUMMARY

Date of Birth	August 11, 1972 (52 years)
Gender	Male
Religion	Christianity
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BSc. in Human Rights and Sociology, University of Roehampton, London, UK, 2007 • MSc. in International Relations, University of Life Sciences, As, Norway, 2012 • PhD in Law, University of Middlesex, London, UK, 2017
Expertise and Activism	Democratic values and Human and People's Rights in accordance with the International Bill of Human Rights and the UN Charter
Political Leadership	President of the Ambazonia Governing Council
Policy Positions Regarding Relationship Between Ambazonia and the USA	<p>Friend of the USA. <i>As political leader of the Ambazonia Independence Struggle, Dr. Ayaba strongly believes and advocates that:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambazonia, as a sovereign state, should be the closest ally of the USA in Sub-saharan Africa especially regarding economic, military and international security, and development infrastructure investment matters. • Ambazonia should enter into agreements with the USA that will secure the mutual interest of the people of the USA and the people of Ambazonia. • The Ambazonian political and economic systems should generally be mirrored on that of the USA to foster attainment of the mutual interest of both peoples.
Arrest and Detention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrested in his house by Norway's KRIPOS on September 24, 2024 • Accused of voicing the right of the people of Ambazonia to self-defense in the face of their violent torture and killings and the burning down of their towns and villages by the Cameroon government forces. KRIPOS has strangely framed this exercise of free speech as a "war crime." • Has been detained in Oslo Central Prison at Grønland in Oslo, Norway, for more than five months without indictment. • Detained with restrictions barring visits from the public, including friends, government officials, etc.

Human Rights Promotion

- Worked with Amnesty International from 1999 to 2003 to highlight the dehumanizing and torturous plight of Ambazonian political prisoners in Kondengui, Yaoundé and other locations.
- Developed with Amnesty International reports that caused the United Nations Human Rights Council to send Sir Nigel Rodney in 1999 to visit Cameroun and observe the situation of the detainees. His compelling report showed that Cameroun was practicing systematic torture and violence against the Ambazonian political detainees.
- Rapporteur at the German sponsored conference in Berlin to examine the situation of the Democratic Republic of Congo, 2006. The Commission was chaired by the then President of Burundi, Major Pierre Buyoya with the main speaker being Azarias Rubewa, DRC's third Vice president.
- Detested xenophobic attacks in South Africa and led marches in Europe against such racism in 2015 in view of promoting respect for the human rights of everyone.
- Champion of respect for human rights in the Ambazonia Independence Struggle.

Dissertations and Publications for Civil and Political Rights Protection

The foci of Dr. Ayaba's academic dissertations and publications reflect his advocacy for human rights, societal peace, and deep sense of compassion and protection of vulnerable populations from oppression and genocidal killings:

MSc. Dissertation: "A Sense of Shared Loss: Post Genocide Justice and Reconciliation in Rwanda."

PhD Dissertation: "Autocracies and the Implementation of Human Rights Treaties: The case of the Cameroun and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights."

Published Book: "Not Guilty: We versus Them, the Experience of an African Refugee," Publishamerica, In., 2006.

Advocacy for Education:

- ✓ 1994: Protested Cameroun government's exorbitant fees increase that would have made the University of Buea unaffordable to poor and underprivileged students.
- ✓ 2012: Led a campaign in Europe for scholarships for advocates of human and people's rights, endorsed by the Norwegian Foreign Minister and the Minister of Development.
- ✓ Pursued and instituted community schools to ensure children are not deprived of their education in armed conflict areas of the Ambazonia Independence struggle.

Advocacy for Democratic Governance Values

Political Party Leadership in the Social Democratic Front (SDF), the main opposition political party in Cameroon, which advocates for democratic values in governance

- ✚ 1993: Elected Press Secretary of the SDF Molyko Ward in Buea
- ✚ 1993: Elected Press Secretary of the Victoria Electoral District of the SDF
- ✚ 1996: SDF Polling Officer for the 1996 Municipal Elections
- ✚ Called for increased and institutionalized participation of youth in the SDF.

Advocacy for Civil and Political Rights of the People of the Erstwhile Southern Cameroons

- 1993: Participant in the All Anglophones Conference (AACI) in Buea, Cameroon. Advocated for constitutional protection of minority rights.
- 1994: Participant in the All Anglophones Conference (AACII) in Bamenda, Cameroon. Advocated for the political right of people to self-determination under international law, and called on the Cameroon government to peacefully address grievances put forth by the people of the erstwhile Southern Cameroons (Ambazonia)
- 1995 to Present:
 - ✓ Elected political President of the Ambazonia Governing Council in 2015, and reelected to the same office in 2017, 2021, and 2025.
 - ✓ Advocates for the right of the people of Ambazonia to self-determination in accordance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and as necessity to promote USA-Ambazonia mutual interests.
 - ✓ Held multiple diplomatic talks with foreign ambassadors such as those of the USA, Rwanda, Nigeria, UK, Germany, South Africa, etc, presenting the Ambazonia Independence Struggle as a matter of respect for human and people's rights.

Ideologies Regarding Defense of the Oppressed from Oppressive Regimes

- ✓ Promotes invocation of the United Nation's principle of the Responsibility to Protect to prevent wars, genocide, and other violent oppression of peoples.
- ✓ Recognizes the right to self-defense as a right implied in the fundamental human right to life, and in accordance with the U.S. Supreme Court Ruling in District of Columbia v. Heller and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
- ✓ Insists on a code of conduct based on the Geneva Convention that should regulate the activities of any self-defense group in an armed conflict.
- ✓ Subjected the Code of Conduct of the Ambazonia Defense Forces to review by the International Community of the Red Cross to promote respect for civilian rights and protections, etc. in the Ambazonia Independence Struggle.

Position on Ending the Cameroon-Ambazonia Liberation Armed Conflict

- ✓ 2023: Promoted Ambazonia's participation in the Canada led negotiation pre-talks intended to peacefully end the conflict. These talks were supported by the USA. The Cameroun government abandoned the negotiations.
- ✓ Advocates for an ultimate peaceful negotiated settlement that should guarantee regional/international peace and respect the rights of the people of Ambazonia to self-determination under international law and the UN Charter.



Op-Ed

Why Finland, Norway, and Sweden Shouldn't Top Freedom Rankings

By Michael Rubin

19fortyfive.com

March 12, 2025

Once again, Freedom House awarded Finland, Norway, and Sweden its top rankings in its annual Freedom in the World [dataset](#). Finland received a perfect score of 100, scoring 40 out of a possible 40 for political rights and the maximum 60 for civil liberties. Norway and Sweden each scored 99 total points, with Norway docked one point for political rights and Sweden losing one point for civil liberties. The United States, in contrast, scored just 84—on par with Mongolia and below Slovakia, Italy, and France.

The Scandinavian countries do not deserve such laurels, however. Over the past 18 months, each was put to the test and each failed, putting commercial and military interests above freedom and human rights.

Consider Finland: On November 29, 2024, following a referendum, Biafrans formally [declared](#) their independence during a convention in Finland. Occupying the Igbo-populated region of southeastern Nigeria, Biafra first sought independence in 1967. The Nigerian government responded with a deliberate campaign

of genocide that claimed more than two million lives. Many war criminals from that era subsequently rose to Nigeria's highest ranks including former President Muhammadu Buhari, whom Secretary of State Antony Blinken **feted** during his first trip to Nigeria. In recent years, the Nigerian government has resumed its assaults on the Christian Igbo. It buses in Fulani Islamist militiamen to slaughter Christians. While the Biden administration wrote that off as the result of climate change-induced migration, this was nonsense: global warming does not charter buses for gunmen; Nigerian government officials do.

It was against this backdrop that Simon Ekpa, a Biafran activist born in Nigeria who moved to Finland with his family in 2007, helped organize a referendum that culminated in the independence declaration. Certainly, Ekpa has his critics, both among the Biafran community and in Finland, but his activities violated no Finnish law. Quite the contrary, he was a productive member of Finnish society, serving as chairman of the main Igbo diaspora community in Finland as well as the local playground board. He served in the Finnish Army and ran for local office. Criticism is expected. The Indigenous People of Biafra is faction-ridden; there are jealousies and genuine philosophical differences. Nigeria pressures other Igbo leaders to condemn Ekpa and other Biafran activists, in much the same way that Turkey makes some Kurdish spokesmen offers they cannot refuse to condemn the Kurdish freedom movement.

In the run up to the Biafran convention, though, Nigerian leaders were scared. Nigeria is among the world's most **corrupt** countries. As its government hemorrhages legitimacy, Nigerian political and military leaders seek to distract the population with sectarian and ethnic incitement. The Nigerian leadership might argue Ekpa exaggerated the results of the Biafra plebiscite, but every Nigerian knows if they allowed a United Nations-monitored vote inside Biafra, the local population would vote for freedom. Nigeria took another route, however: It lobbied the Finnish government to arrest Ekpa, threatening to cancel **trade deals** unless Helsinki acted. Finnish President Alexander Stubb exposed Finland's

human rights commitment as cosmetic when his government then imprisoned Ekpa.

Something similar happened in Norway. There are few countries in Africa as brutal as Cameroon. Ruled by President Paul Biya for more than 40 years, it was a colonial construct based on fraud and deception. The British colonial territory of Southern Cameroons was a League of Nations Trust Territory that, upon the League of Nations' dissolution fell under the authority of the UN Trusteeship Council which in turn extended British control. A 1961 referendum offered residents a choice between joining the French portions of Cameroon and the new state of Nigeria; there was no option for their own independence. The people of Southern Cameroons chose Cameroon on the condition it be federal with both English and French as official languages. The French speaking Cameroonians treated English-speakers as second-class citizens and, in 1972, formally abolished federalism and all protections the Anglophones enjoyed. Cameroon is today as corrupt as Nigeria and among the least free countries in Africa.

The disenfranchised residents of former Southern Cameroons tried to work within the system but, after a violent crackdown on civil society protests in 2016, they now recognize they have no choice but to abrogate the failed Cameroon compact. Today, they seek their own nation—[Ambazonia](#)—whose exiled leader Lucas Ayaba Cho lives in Norway, having reportedly escaped an assassination attempt in Brussels. On September 24, 2024, Norwegian authorities [arrested](#) Cho at Biya's request. In effect, Norway conducted transnational repression on behalf of Africa's longest-serving dictator. Norway may be free and democratic, but its leaders condescend that white Norwegians deserve a higher standard of freedom and legal protection than African immigrants.

Sweden's betrayal of democracy and freedom was even more cynical. After the [Russian invasion of Ukraine](#), Sweden and Finland both sought to join [NATO](#). [Turkey](#) saw an opportunity to extort Sweden, and Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson readily obliged. Many Turkish and Kurdish dissidents had long ago fled Turkey for

Sweden believing they would be safe there from the long arm of Turkish repression. Not only to Kristersson crack down on dissidents, but he also **extradited** a Kurd wanted on spurious charges back to Turkey. That action had a chilling effect on Kurdish civil society in Sweden that has never fully recovered since Swedes accused Kurds of involvement in the 1986 assassination of Prime Minister Olaf Palme; only in 2020 did investigators conclude that one of their eye witnesses—an ethnic Swede who died in 2000—was the **likely assailant**.

Finland, Norway, and Sweden deserve high freedom rankings. They have admirable records that span decades. It is always a mistake, however, to calibrate policy to the way countries were in the past or remain blind to how they are changing. When immigrants and ethnic minorities receive fewer rights than other citizens, democracies are not perfect. Perhaps Freedom House elided over Scandinavia because greater problems loom elsewhere, but the best way to protect democracy is to call out its abuse. **Finland**, Norway, and Sweden's presence at the top of Freedom House rankings increasingly seems like an anachronism rather than a reflection of today's reality.



Michael Rubin 

Senior Fellow

Latest Work

April 23, 2025

Op-Ed

Will Qatar Add Bangladesh to its “String of Misbaha?”

April 23, 2025

Op-Ed

The State Department Needs Reform, but Killing its Africa Bureau Only Benefits China

April 22, 2025

Press

Discussing Turkey’s Anti-Israel Alliance: Rubin on Washington Watch with Tony Perkins

Tags:

Democracy | Scandinavia | West Africa

Related

Op-Ed



May 11, 2023
Washington Examiner
**Embracing False Dissidents
Devalues Real Ones**

By Michael Rubin

Op-Ed



September 09, 2024
Washington Examiner
**Give Vladimir Kara-Murza the
Nobel Peace Prize**

By Michael Rubin

Op-Ed



October 27, 2023

19fortyfive.com

**Liberia Pivots Toward
Dictatorship as the World
Looks Elsewhere**

By Michael Rubin



Donate

Subscribe

About

About AEI

Organization and Purpose

Leadership

Annual Report

AEI Archive

Contact

American Enterprise Institute

1789 Massachusetts Avenue,

NW Washington, DC 20036

Main telephone: 202.862.5800

Main fax: 202.862.7177

Policy Areas

- Economics
- Foreign and Defense Policy
- Health Care
- Education
- Politics and Public Opinion
- Opportunity & Social Mobility
- Society and Culture
- Technology and Innovation
- Legal and Constitutional Studies

Scholars

Find a scholar by policy area:

- Agricultural Policy Studies
- Center for Technology, Science, and Energy
- Economics
- Education
- Foreign and Defense Policy
- Health Care
- Housing
- Legal and Constitutional
- Opportunity and Social Mobility
- Politics and Public Opinion
- Society and Culture

© 2025 American Enterprise Institute | Privacy Policy



Op-Ed

The Next Rwanda? France's Role in Cameroon's Crisis

By Michael Rubin

19fortyfive.com

February 03, 2025

The [anti-Tutsi genocide](#) in Rwanda was not spontaneous. [French](#) archival documents demonstrate beyond doubt that the orgy of violence that killed up to 800,000 Tutsi and moderate Hutus. Hutu militants and génocidaires raped an addition quarter million Tutsi women.

In 2021, Robert Muse, a well-respected Washington lawyer, led a team to research documentary and diplomatic evidence from the time, much of which was stored at the Quay d'Orsay, the French Foreign Ministry. His subsequent [report](#) is damning. The French trained and encouraged some of the worst elements, knew in advance about plans for Hutus to slaughter Tutsis. Some French soldiers even manned checkpoints alongside the Interahamwe—then Hutu equivalent of Germany's SS—as the genocide unfolded. The French then spun a [cynical narrative](#) that the Tutsis had provoked the genocide. This is akin to arguing the Jews provoked the Holocaust. The génocidaires' supporters in the [Democratic Republic of Congo](#) and Belgium still promote the myths France [amplified](#). A month after Muse released his report, French

President Emmanuel Macron [visited Kigali](#) and [acknowledged](#) the French role.

The documentary evidence suggests that a prime motivator for then-French President François Mitterrand was antagonism to the Tutsi for seeking to go Anglophone. While first the [Germans](#) and then the Belgians—not France—were the colonial powers in Rwanda, Mitterrand and many in the French policymaking class sought to preserve Francophone regimes, even at the cost of genocide.

The Rwandans welcomes Macron's half-apology with grace. After all, Rwanda is a very different place today than it was three decades ago. President Paul Kagame has defeated dysfunctional corruption and he has sought to erase the Tutsi-Hutu distinction crafted by the Germans and the Belgians during the age of eugenics; he has also reintegrated and rehabilitated Rwandans who participated in the 1994 slaughter so long as they subjected themselves to a truth and reconciliation process.

Today, [Rwanda](#) is well on its way to becoming the [Singapore of Africa](#).

While Rwandans have learned lessons and moved on, have the French? Unfortunately, here, the answer appears to be non.

Like Rwanda, Germany initially [colonized](#) "Kamerun" though after [World War I](#), the [United Kingdom](#) and France assumed responsibility for different portions of the territory: The British administered Northern and Southern [Cameroons](#), a strip of land alongside Nigeria, while the French ran the rest of the territory. French Cameroun gained independence in 1960 as the Republic of Cameroun, but the British-run trusteeship adjacent to Nigeria resisted joining Cameroun, preferring to join Nigeria instead. Ultimately, a plebiscite led Muslim dominated northern sections to join Nigeria while Southern Cameroons joined Cameroun to create the Federal Republic of Cameroon; the plebiscite did not offer independence as an option for the two British-run Cameroons.

Cameroon failed as a state following the incorporation of southern British Cameroons into the new federal republic. The basis of the union was that both British Southern Cameroons, also called Ambazonia, and the former French territories would be equal.

Post-independence Cameroon has had only two leaders, both dictators. Ahmadou Ahidjo, ran Cameroon from independence and through the forced merger with British Southern Cameroons, Paul Biya became president in 1982 and has dominated the country for the past 43-years. Under Biya's rule, Cameroon has become an increasingly brutal dictatorship. Freedom House ranks its freedom as on par with Nicolás Maduro's Venezuela and Vladimir Putin's [Russia](#). Its civil liberties ranking falls below [China](#) and Cuba. Cameroonian Americans often describe the interrogations and often arbitrary imprisonment to which they are subject by Cameroonian security services should they visit home. Many now choose only to keep in touch with their families by Whatsapp, since the danger of being in Cameroon is too great, even for U.S. passport holders.

Ahidjo and Biya treated Ambazonia's English-speakers with disdain. In 1972, Ahidjo unilaterally and illegally abolished the federation. First Ahidjo and then Biya sought to systematically marginalize Ambazonia's English speakers in governance, education, and economic development. They imposed French as the official language in the English-speaking regions. Through it all, French leaders offered Cameroon's dictators their full support, while the United Kingdom largely turned its back on its former territory. Even as human rights violations skyrocketed, France has doubled down on bilateral military relations and sales. Paris also relies on Cameroon for much of its uranium needs.

There is only so much abuse the English-speakers could take. The International Court of Justice's finding against South Africa in its illegal annexation of Namibia suggests Ambazonia has international law on its side.

In 2016, protests [erupted](#) in Ambazonia as teachers, lawyers, and civil society activists took to the streets. Cameroon's military

cracked down violently; not only protestors but also the region's professionals are subject to arbitrary arrest, torture, and worse. The Cameroonian regime had **reportedly** killed thousands and **displaced** more than a million more. The violence is **ongoing**.

Rwanda and Cameroon are not the same, of course. There was not a separatist component to the Hutu repression of Tutsis; theirs was pure ethnic animosity compounded by the legacy of German and Belgian colonial policy and French cynicism and incitement. The Ambazonians want to right historic wrongs; in their case, they have more in common with the Isaaqs of Somaliland who seek recognition for the abrogation of a 1960 merger between British and Italian **Somaliland** that was never legally consummated and ended in genocide.

Still, the parallels between the Rwandan genocide and events ongoing in Ambazonia are growing. Again, **France** gives blind support for a racist Francophone regime simply because its victims prefer English. The Quai d'Orsay puts France's commercial interests and, in Cameroon's case **uranium**, above human rights.

Macron, President Bill Clinton, and UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan have each apologized for their country's or the UN's negligence in the run-up to the anti-Tutsi genocide in Rwanda and promised never again. While Norway **cites** the Rwanda's anti-Tutsi genocide to virtue signal about human rights, its **arrest** of Ambazonian leader Lucas Ayaba Cho shows that **Norway**, like France, today prioritizes cash above moral clarity. Today, Washington, Paris, Oslo and Turtle Bay repeat the same mistakes they did in Rwanda.

This is shameful and should not stand.



Michael Rubin 

Senior Fellow

Latest Work

[April 23, 2025](#)

Op-Ed

Will Qatar Add Bangladesh to its “String of Misbaha?”

[April 23, 2025](#)

Op-Ed

The State Department Needs Reform, but Killing its Africa Bureau Only Benefits China

[April 22, 2025](#)

Press

Discussing Turkey’s Anti-Israel Alliance: Rubin on Washington Watch with Tony Perkins

Tags:

Africa | France

Related

Op-Ed



February 03, 2025

19fortyfive.com

Donald Trump Needs to Go to Somaliland

By Michael Rubin

Op-Ed



February 03, 2025

Hellas Journal

Designate Turkey's Intelligence Service to Be a Terror Organization

By Michael Rubin

Op-Ed



February 03, 2025

Washington Examiner

Will France Snatch Defeat in Lebanon by Re-Empowering Hezbollah?

By Michael Rubin



Donate

Subscribe

About

- About AEI
- Organization and Purpose
- Leadership
- Annual Report
- AEI Archive

Contact

American Enterprise Institute
 1789 Massachusetts Avenue,
 NW Washington, DC 20036
 Main telephone: 202.862.5800
 Main fax: 202.862.7177

Policy Areas

- Economics
- Foreign and Defense Policy
- Health Care
- Education
- Politics and Public Opinion
- Opportunity & Social Mobility
- Society and Culture
- Technology and Innovation
- Legal and Constitutional Studies

Scholars

- Find a scholar by policy area:
- Agricultural Policy Studies
 - Center for Technology, Science, and Energy
 - Economics
 - Education
 - Foreign and Defense Policy
 - Health Care
 - Housing
 - Legal and Constitutional
 - Opportunity and Social Mobility

Politics and Public Opinion

Society and Culture

© 2025 American Enterprise Institute | Privacy Policy