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Content analysis of Donga Mantung community radio's coverage of the Anglophone crisis: 1 July 2020 to 31 December 2020

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Abstract

What is today termed the "Anglophone Crisis" in the Northwest and Southwest regions of Cameroon is a nuanced problem dating back to the 1960s. It involves an on-going civil war between separatists and the government of Cameroon.

Simmering tensions between the warring parties i.e. government soldiers and separatists, boiled over in 2017 when separatists declared the independence of "Ambazonia" – their preferred name for the region (International Crisis Group, 2017). What followed was a brutal crackdown on both separatist fighters and civilians deemed by government forces to be in support of secession. The media have also been targeted and journalists have been jailed and others killed in relation to their reporting on the conflict (CPJ, 2017).

This study seeks to understand how Donga Mantung Community Radio (DMCR) in the Northwest of Cameroon has reported on the on the conflict, through a content analysis of forty news bulletins aired between 1 July 2020 to 31 December 2020. The bulletins were analyzed to understand how the news stories are framed, including the use of language to describe the different actors in the conflict and the dominant themes reported on in the conflict. It found that the station took an overwhelmingly pro-government position in the conflict. It also found that although it appears to take a position supportive of the well-being of community of listeners, the lack of a clear, independent editorial agenda results in reporting that does not always favour the safety and economic well-being of its listeners. Overall, it does not help to de-escalate the conflict by promoting a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

Keywords: Ambazonia, Cameroon, Community Radio, Military, Separatists, Southern Cameroons
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