

Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission

In 2002 the UN established the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission (CNMC) at the request of the governments of Cameroon and Nigeria to assist in the implementation of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruling on the boundary dispute between the two nations.

The CNMC's mandate covers technical issues around border demarcation and delineation, but the commission also conducts monitoring and early warning to uphold the rights of those living in the area. The commission also supports confidence-building measures between the two countries, including joint economic ventures and cross-border cooperation. The CNMC is co-located with the UN Office for West Africa (UNOWA) and shares the latter's Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG), Said Djinnit, who is also the chairman of the Follow-up Committee for the Greentree Agreement,¹ in place until 2013.

Border demarcation is the major remaining technical aspect of the CNMC's mandate. As of November 2012, over 1,825 kilometers of the estimated 2,000-kilometer land boundary had been demarcated between the two countries. It is expected that the assessment of the remaining boundary can be completed by the end of 2013 and that the outstanding areas of disagreement be settled by the end of 2014, allowing for final maps and agreement by 2015.

Though significant progress has been made with the support of the CNMC, it has been hampered by technical and

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- Authorization Date 17 March 2004 (SG Letter S/2004/298)
- Chairman Said Djinnit (Algeria)
- Budget \$8.9 million (1 January 2012–31 December 2012)
- Strength as of 31 October 2012 International Civilian Staff: 9
National Civilian Staff: 2

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political challenges, including lack of adequate funding, faulty estimations of timelines, and omissions of important details in the ICJ ruling that pertain to the exact location of villages and roads along the delineated border. Political stalemates have centered on access to resources, particularly in the Bakassi peninsula, which has rich offshore oil deposits and plentiful fish stocks, but also include issues of nationality of the affected population.

In June 2012 the Nigerian House of Representatives passed a resolution demanding a review of the ICJ judgment ahead of the ten-year expiration of the period of revision of the ICJ's ruling on 9 October,² and called for a UN supervised plebiscite in which the people of Bakassi would exercise their right of self-determination. This was echoed by the Nigerian Senate in September. However, following intense consultation with legal experts, the government of Nigeria decided not to pursue the revision of the judgment.

Despite these risks, the commitment of the parties involved remains steadfast. The two countries signed a bilateral security pact in February to establish a transborder security committee to address additional insecurity challenges. The two countries have also agreed to joint oil exploration in the Bakassi peninsula. Further, new confidence-building measures directly aimed at supporting the affected border communities have been enacted by the government of Cameroon, and similar commitments to assess possible measures have been scheduled by Nigeria.

To facilitate the exit of the CNMC, its activities will be transferred to a bilateral commission and to other subregional structures. However, this will only be possible once the remaining outstanding issues have been addressed, such as placement of the final boundary pillars, the formal adoption of legally agreed maps, and the expiration of the Follow-up Committee of the Greentree Agreement in 2013.

Notes: 1. In 2006 the two parties agreed to the transfer of authority from Nigeria to Cameroon in the Bakassi peninsula under the Greentree Agreement. The process was successfully concluded in August 2008.

2. Although the judgment is final and not subject to appeal, the statute provides for circumstances under which a revision can be considered within a ten-year period from the ruling.