

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

May 2, 2025

His Excellency Lejeune Mbella Mbella
Minister
Ministry of External Relations of Cameroon
c/o Embassy of Cameroon
2349 Massachusetts Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20008

Dear Your Excellency:

I am deeply concerned about the case of two United States citizens in Cameroon: Dr. Amber Murrey-Ndewa, a Fulbright scholar, and her husband, Mr. Derogy Ndewa. I have been closely monitoring their situation and am alarmed by credible reports indicating that politically motivated legal actions have been taken against them concerning a housing dispute involving Ambassador André Magnus Ekoumou and his spouse, Claire Ekoumou.

I am particularly concerned about Mr. Ndewa's continued pre-trial detention since March 12, 2025, despite initial investigative findings showing no basis for the cyberdefamation charges filed against him or his wife. His detention appears unlawful, and Dr. Murrey also faces the risk of arrest. The circumstances suggest serious Cameroonian law violations and diplomatic influence abuse by a top Cameroonian official.

Dr. Murrey, who has strong family ties to Idaho, and Mr. Ndewa are raising three young children with them in Cameroon. This American family's safety and well-being are paramount to the United States.

Accordingly, I respectfully urge the Government of Cameroon to:

- Grant immediate consular access to Mr. Ndewa by the U.S. Embassy;
- Ensure both Dr. Murrey and Mr. Ndewa receive fair legal treatment under Cameroonian law; and
- Allow the family to depart safely, unimpeded, and immediately from Cameroon once this matter is resolved.

While I understand that legal and civil disputes occur, the handling of this case raises serious concerns about due process and judicial impartiality. I urge the Government of Cameroon to address these concerns swiftly and thoroughly. I am also aware that Ambassador Ekoumou has allegedly sent multiple emissaries to Dr. Murrey and Mr. Ndewa encouraging some public statements. Still, their legal team has never received an offer and would need to go through the normal legal channels in Cameroonian law. At this point, the couple has no assurance that any

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action would result in Mr. Ndewa's release, a resolution to the legal case, or their safe departure from Cameroon. Dr. Murrey and Mr. Ndewa are very motivated to resolve this issue, but it must include firm guarantees of no further prosecution and would need to be negotiated formally by each party's legal team.

The United States values its longstanding relationship with Cameroon; however, Mr. Ndewa's continued detention and the threat of further action against Dr. Murrey risk straining that relationship. I hope for a prompt resolution that reaffirms our mutual respect for the rule of law and diplomatic cooperation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jim E. Risch", with a large, stylized initial "J" and "R".

JAMES E. RISCH
Chairman
Senate Foreign Relations Committee