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Bureau of Conflict and
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Exploring Support for Religiously Based Violence: Survey Evidence from Nigeria and Cameroon

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The Advanced Conflict Analytics Team applied statistical regression analysis to survey data from both Nigeria and Cameroon to identify factors that correlate with support for religiously based violence. The data was derived from two separate in depth public opinion surveys commissioned by Special Operations Command Africa.

Primary Nigeria Results: Statistical analyses conducted on a nationally representative sample of Nigerians indicates that the population segment most likely to support religiously based violence are Muslims who are less religiously devout, less educated, and have considerable media consumption. On the other hand, Nigerian Muslims who are *more* religiously devout, older, and more educated, report generally less support for religiously based violence. Income had no impact on Muslim support for religiously based violence; however, increased income was correlated with reduced support for religiously based violence for non-Muslims. The education related finding in this report is corroborated by a previous assessment that used Nigerian government reported education statistics and verified incidents of violence. This assessment showed that net primary school education enrollment was associated with reduced likelihood of violence in Nigeria at the state level.[1] Additional research should attempt to unpack the nature of the relationship between education and violence in Nigeria, as other empirical research focused on a global sample size did not find a significant correlation.

Primary Cameroon Results: Statistical analyses conducted on the Northern Region of Cameroon indicate that across the religious spectrum, the most significant indicator of support for religiously based violence is media consumption. Overall, the population segment in North Cameroon most likely to support religiously motivated violence is Muslims who are less religiously devout but have a strong sense of religious supremacy. Unlike Nigeria, income was associated with reduced support for religious violence while education was not.

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[1] Subnational Regression Analysis of Socioeconomic Indicators in Nigeria, CSO Advanced Analytics, June 2014.

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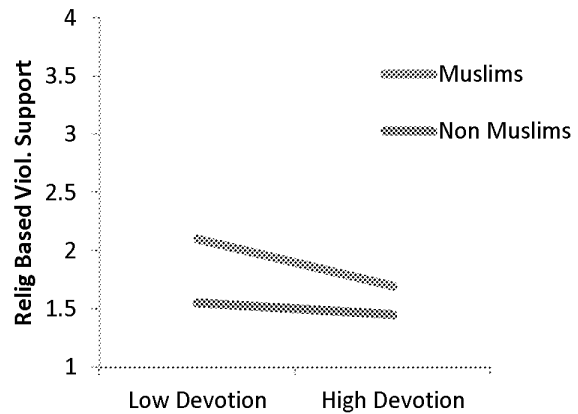
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Comprehensive Findings

Nigeria Analysis

Religion by Religious Devotion Interaction

Overall, survey respondents who self-identified as Muslim were more likely to report supporting religiously based violence than were non-Muslims. However, this relationship was qualified by religious devotion (measured by items such as "how often does religion govern your daily activities"). For Muslims, increased devotion correlated with decreased levels of support for the use of religiously based violence. This relationship was similar, but not as pronounced, for non-Muslims.
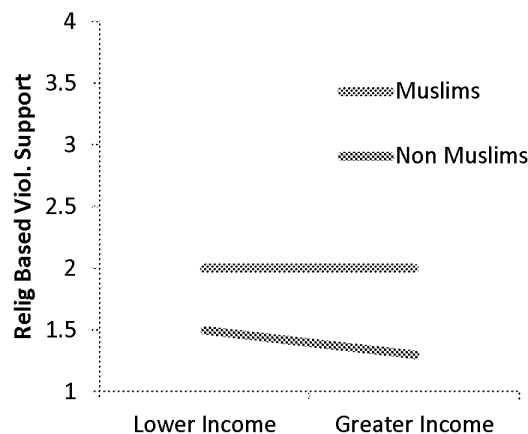
Religion-Devotion

Religion by Income Interaction

Our analysis also drew out an important finding on the relationship between religion and level of income as they related to religiously motivated violence. As shown in the Income-Religion figure, income had no impact on overall support for religiously based violence for Muslims; however, for non-Muslims increased wealth is correlated with less overall support for religiously based violence. This overall trend is consistent with prior CSO research on drivers of support for religiously based violence in Yemen. However, prior outside research has not found a consistent relationship between income levels and support for violence. This statistical relationship will require additional analysis.

Religion-Income

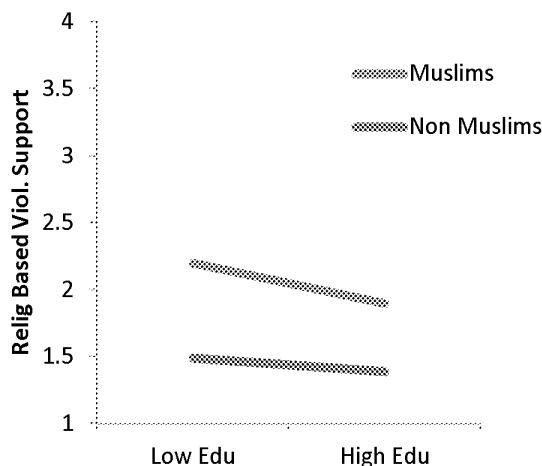SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

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Religion by Education Interaction

Another finding is a statistical interaction between religious affiliation and level of education on overall support for religiously based violence. Enhanced education is correlated with reduced support for religiously based violence among both Muslims and non-Muslims, though more pronounced for Muslims. Prior outside research has not found a consistent relationship between education levels and support for violence. Some findings even suggest that enhanced education is, in some cases, associated with increased support for religiously motivated violence. This statistical relationship will require additional analysis.
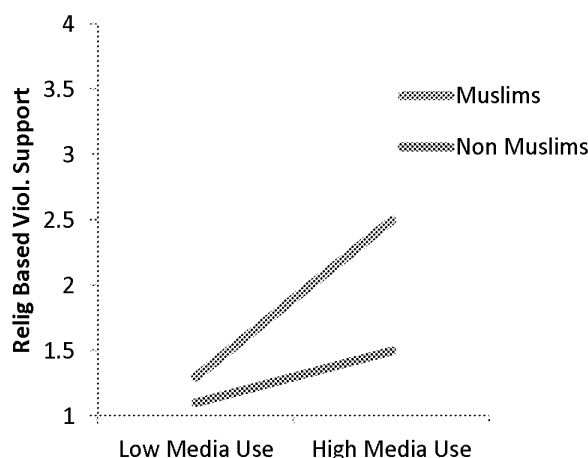
Religion-Education

Religion by Media Usage Interaction

Media Consumption in Nigeria is associated with increased support for religiously based violence regardless of whether one is Muslim or non-Muslim, though again, more pronounced for Muslims.

Further research is needed to better understand the exact nature of this relationship. It might be that media consumption in Nigeria drives the population to support religiously based violence . On the other hand, it might be that people who support religiously based violence seek out more media consumption. Regardless, this relationship is critical in Nigeria and must be further explored.

Media Use-Religion

Additional Nigeria Findings

There were several additional findings from the Nigeria analysis worth discussing. Beliefs about religious supremacy (as measured by survey items such as "the President of Nigeria should be required to follow

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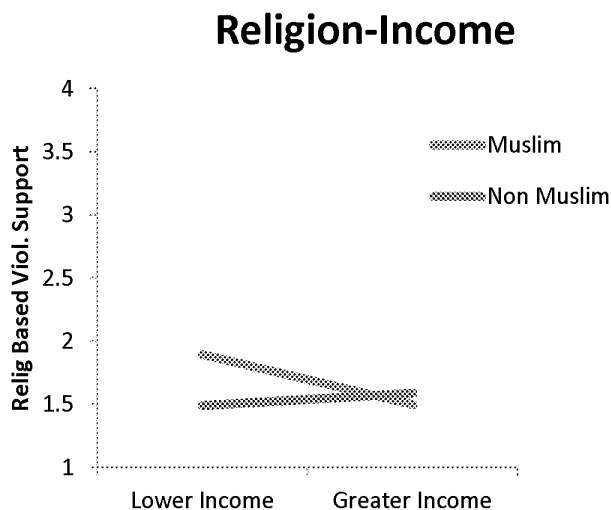Stabilization Operations

my religion"), regardless of religion, were associated with increased support for religiously based violence. On the other hand, older age was generally associated with reductions in support for religiously based violence, but this effect was especially pronounced for Muslims. Essentially, older Muslims are less likely to support religiously based violence than are non-Muslims.

For both Muslims and non-Muslims, more positive perceptions of government effectiveness are associated with *increased* support for religiously based violence. This result, though perhaps surprising, is consistent with prior research from both CSO and Mercy Corps. This finding will need additional research to unpack. Finally, overall, females were less likely to report supporting religiously based violence than were males.

Cameroon Analysis

The same statistical approach used for Nigeria was applied to neighboring Cameroon. In many ways, the Cameroon analysis is more straightforward because there were fewer differences between religious belief systems. However, two significant distinctions between religions did emerge.

First, the impact of income on support for religiously based violence was different for Muslims and non-Muslims. Specifically, non-Muslims were less likely than Muslims to support religiously based violence overall. However, as depicted in the Income-Religion figure, poor Muslims were more likely to support religiously based violence than were wealthier Muslims. This effect was not as pronounces for non-Muslims and even trended in the opposite direction such that Non-Muslims with greater income were slightly more likely to support religiously based violence.

Religion-Income

Relig Based Viol. Support (y-axis: 1, 1.5, 2, 2.5, 3, 3.5, 4)

Lower Income   Greater Income

······Muslim

······Non Muslim

As in Nigeria, increased media consumption was associated with increased support for religiously based violence for *both* Muslims and Non-Muslims. However, like Nigeria, this effect was more pronounced for Muslims than for Non-Muslims. Several additional variables were related to overall support for religiously based violence. Both older age and a belief that Cameroonian society has many problems were both associated with less support for violence. As in Nigeria, a sense of religious supremacy (regardless of religion) was associated with increased support for religiously based violence. Also like Nigeria, overall religious devotion (regardless of religious affiliation) was associated with decreased support for religiously based violence.

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Appendix A: Statistics and Methodology

Regression Results for Support for Religiously Motivated Violence:

Predictor Variable	Nigeria R2 = .26, p < .001			Cameroon R2 = .22, p < .001		
	B	**Sig**	**Var**	**B**	**Sig**	**Var**
Constant	1.942	0.000	*	1.733		*
Age	-0.005	0.000	0.003	-0.007	.050	.001
Education	-0.064	0.000	0.010	.000	.999	.000
Income	0.002	0.846	0.000	-.090	.050	.001
Gender	-0.070	0.000	0.000	.087	.223	.000
Religious Identification	-0.466	0.000	0.037	-.218	.001	.002
Media Consumption	0.186	0.000	0.035	.089	.001	.002
National Problems	-0.208	0.000	0.007	-.133	.050	.001
Government Confidence	0.190	0.000	0.009	-.042	.288	.000
Religious Devotion	0.171	0.000	0.006	-.256	.001	.006
Religious Supremacy	0.085	0.000	0.002	.276	.001	.009
Government Effectiveness	0.253	0.000	0.020	-.022	.616	.000
Religion-Supremacy Interaction	-0.026	0.153	0.000	-.033	.497	.000
Religion-Devotion Interaction	0.081	0.000	0.001	.069	.18	.000
Religion-Age Interaction	0.003	0.006	0.000	.004	.296	.000
Religion-Income Interaction	-0.072	0.000	0.002	.109	.050	.001
Religion Gov. Effective Inter	-0.109	0.000	0.001	-.003	.955	.000
Religion Gov. Confidence	-0.134	0.000	0.002	.054	.281	.000
Religion-Media Interaction	-0.055	0.000	0.001	-.065	.060	.001
Religion-Education Interaction	0.025	0.001	0.000	-.009	.758	.000
Religion-Gender	-0.017	0.500	0.000	-.008	.925	.000
Religion – Natl Problems Inter	-0.037	0.223	0.001	.106	.181	.000
Devotion-Supremacy Interaction	-0.054	0.001	0.002	-.127	.001	.004

*Yellow indicates significant at the p < .05 level.

The analysis specifically examined the impact of religious beliefs, as well as additional factors of interest, on support for religiously motivated violence. The table above provides detailed statistics for both the Nigeria and Cameroon analyses. The regression model accounted for a significant amount of variance for both nations (Nigeria $R^2 = .26$ $p < .001$; Cameroon $R^2 = .22$ $p < .001$) regarding support for religiously motivated violence. This essentially means that the regression models account for 26% and 22% of the explanation for support for religiously based violence respectively—both reasonable amounts given the complicated nature of the phenomena under study. The "Var" column in the table shows the importance of individual variables. Larger numbers indicate greater importance of an individual variable for understanding support for religiously based violence. For Nigeria, the most important individual variables were religion and media consumption (though, as noted earlier, these relationships were qualified by interactions). These variable the most important in Cameroon as well.

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Nigeria METHODOLOGY:

The Nigeria survey included 10,484 survey respondents aged 16 – 65. There were 5,973 self-identified Muslims (broadly defined and including Sunni, Shia, and non-denominational) and 4,509 self-identified non-Muslims (also broadly defined to include any non-Muslim religion including Christian, Hindu, etc.). There were 5,074 males in the survey and 4506 females.

Measures
The survey contained a number of measures designed to examine ideological perspectives, support for religiously-motivated violence, and other factors thought to be important to these topics. The table below 1 provides a brief summary of the variables included in this study (the survey measures are the same used for Cameroon).

List of Overall Independent and Dependent Variables Included in Model

Age	The age of the respondent
Education	Self-reported educational attainment
Income	The self reported income of respondents
Gender	Gender of respondent
Religion	Self-reported religious affiliation
Media Consumption	Self-reported media consumption including TV, Radio, Internet, Newspaper, Mobile Phone.
National Problems	Multiple variables regarding perceptions of national problems such as corruption, unemployment, declining moral values, crime, etc.
Government Confidence	Multiple variables regarding confidence in national government, local government, the military, police, Nigerian courts, etc.
Religious Devotion	Degree to which respondents indicate that religion guides daily life
Religious Supremacy	Multiple variables such as "all nations should follow my religion, the President of Nigeria should be required to follow my religion" etc.
Government Effectiveness	Multiple variables regarding government effectiveness on providing services, reducing poverty, combating Boko Haram etc.
(DV) Support for Religious Violence	Series of questions designed to examine support for religious based violence such as "I would support a family member who decided to join a group that uses violence to defend my religion"

Survey Items Used for Analyses
The table below is a list of all survey items from the overall survey which were used in the analyses. Items were statistically combined to create composite variables where appropriate. The appropriateness of combining items into a composite is based on Cronbach's Alpha scores, a common measure of inter-item reliability in the social sciences (Cronbach's α scores are noted in the tables). Typically, Cronbach's scores above .70 are considered suitable for composite items and are said to be measuring the same construct. Because this study was exploratory, we combined items into indices if they were above or generally near scores of .70.

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Nigeria Survey Items

Individual Demographic Variables	Question	Scale
Age	The age of the respondent	Numerical age
Education	Self-reported educational attainment	1 (No Formal Edu) – 9 (Graduate Degree)
Gender	Gender of respondent	Male = 0, Female = 1
Religion	What is your religion	Muslim = 0, Non-Muslim = 1
Income	Which of the following statements best describes your household income	1 (we do not have enough money for basic needs) – 5 (We can afford almost anything we want)
Media Consumption (α = .62)		
Radio Consumption	How often do you listen to the Radio	1 (Do Not Use) – (6 Daily)
TV Consumption	How often do you watch TV	1 (Do Not Use) – (6 Daily)
Internet Use	How often do you use the Internet	1 (Do Not Use) – (6 Daily)
Use Mobile Phone	How often do you use a mobile phone	1 (Do Not Use) – (6 Daily)
Read Newspaper	How often do you read the newspaper	1 (Do Not Use) – (6 Daily)
Religious Supremacy (α = .71)	**Question**	**Scale**
Nations Follow my Religion	In the future, all nations should follow my religion	1 (Strongly Disagree) – 4 (Strongly Agree)
Presidential Religion	The President of Nigeria should be required to follow my religion	1 (Strongly Disagree) – 4 (Strongly Agree)
Strict Religious Law	All countries should be governed by strict religious law	1 (Strongly Disagree) – 4 (Strongly Agree)
National Problems and Religion	The answer to all of our country's problems can be found in my religion	1 (Strongly Disagree) – 4 (Strongly Agree)
Importance of Religion (r = .51)*	**Question**	**Scale**
Daily Religion	How often does religion govern your daily actions	1 (Never) – 4 (Always)
Decisions and Religion	When you have to make an important decision, how often do you consider your religion first	1 (Never) – 4 (Always)
National Problems (α = .86)	**Question**	**Scale**
Corruption	Please tell me whether you think X is a problem	1 (Very Serious Problem) – 4 (Not a Problem)
Unemployment	Please tell me whether you think X is a problem	1 (Very Serious Problem) – 4 (Not a Problem)
Rising Prices	Please tell me whether you think X is a problem	1 (Very Serious Problem) – 4 (Not a Problem)
Terrorism	Please tell me whether you think X is a problem	1 (Very Serious Problem) – 4 (Not a Problem)
Declining Moral Values	Please tell me whether you think X is a problem	1 (Very Serious Problem) – 4 (Not a Problem)
Religious Extremism	Please tell me whether you think X is a problem	1 (Very Serious Problem) – 4 (Not a Problem)
Crime	Please tell me whether you think X is a problem	1 (Very Serious Problem) – 4 (Not a Problem)
Climate Change	Please tell me whether you think X is a problem	1 (Very Serious Problem) – 4 (Not a Problem)
Lack of electricity	Please tell me whether you think X is a problem	1 (Very Serious Problem) – 4 (Not a Problem)
Drug Smuggling	Please tell me whether you think X is a problem	1 (Very Serious Problem) – 4 (Not a Problem)
Weapons Smuggling	Please tell me whether you think X is a problem	1 (Very Serious Problem) – 4 (Not a Problem)

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Government Confidence (α = .90)	Question	Scale
National Government	How much confidence do you have in:	1 (No conf. at all) – 4 (Great deal of conf.)
National Assembly	How much confidence do you have in:	1 (No conf. at all) – 4 (Great deal of conf.)
Senate	How much confidence do you have in:	1 (No conf. at all) – 4 (Great deal of conf.)
Military	How much confidence do you have in:	1 (No conf. at all) – 4 (Great deal of conf.)
Police	How much confidence do you have in:	1 (No conf. at all) – 4 (Great deal of conf.)
Banks	How much confidence do you have in:	1 (No conf. at all) – 4 (Great deal of conf.)
Courts	How much confidence do you have in:	1 (No conf. at all) – 4 (Great deal of conf.)
The Shariat Law System	How much confidence do you have in:	1 (No conf. at all) – 4 (Great deal of conf.)
Electoral System	How much confidence do you have in:	1 (No conf. at all) – 4 (Great deal of conf.)
Nigerian Customs Service	How much confidence do you have in:	1 (No conf. at all) – 4 (Great deal of conf.)
Nigerian Drug/Law Enforcement Agency	How much confidence do you have in:	1 (No conf. at all) – 4 (Great deal of conf.)
Govt. Effectiveness (α = .90)	**Question**	**Scale**
Reducing poverty	How effective is Nigerian govt at:	1 (Very Ineffective) – 4 (very Effective)
Increasing employment	How effective is Nigerian govt at:	1 (Very Ineffective) – 4 (very Effective)
Enhancing education	How effective is Nigerian govt at:	1 (Very Ineffective) – 4 (very Effective)
Freedom of expression	How effective is Nigerian govt at:	1 (Very Ineffective) – 4 (very Effective)
Gathering space for youth	How effective is Nigerian govt at:	1 (Very Ineffective) – 4 (very Effective)
Responding to disasters	How effective is Nigerian govt at:	1 (Very Ineffective) – 4 (very Effective)
Reducing Boko Haram	How effective is Nigerian govt at:	1 (Very Ineffective) – 4 (very Effective)
Counter Drugs	How effective is Nigerian govt at:	1 (Very Ineffective) – 4 (very Effective)
Counter Weapons	How effective is Nigerian govt at:	1 (Very Ineffective) – 4 (very Effective)
Support for Religious Violence (α = .78)	**Question**	**Scale**
Friend Violence	I would support a close friend's decision to join a group that uses violence to defend my religion	1 (Strongly Disagree) – 4 (Strongly Agree)
Family Violence	I would support a family member's decision to join a group that uses violence to defend my religion	1 (Strongly Disagree) – 4 (Strongly Agree)
Violence and Salvation	Those who use violence in the name of religion, if killed, are guaranteed salvation	1 (Strongly Disagree) – 4 (Strongly Agree)
Violence Justified	Is it justified to use violence to defend one's religion	1 (Strongly Disagree) – 4 (Strongly Agree)
Further Justification	Do you think violence in the name of religion is justified	1 (Strongly Disagree) – 4 (Strongly Agree)

*When two variables form an index, Pearson's "r" correlation is the standard measure of reliability, rather than Cronbach's alpha.

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Cameroon METHODOLOGY:

The Cameroon survey included 1,488 survey respondents aged 16 – 65. There were 677 self-identified Muslims (broadly defined and including Sunni, Shia, and non-denominational) and 811 self-identified non-Muslims (also broadly defined to include any non-Muslim religion including Christian, Hindu, etc.). There were 744 males in the survey and 744 females. The survey itself was not designed to be representative of Cameroon nationally. Rather, it was designed to survey Cameroonian citizens from three regions: North, Far North, and West.

Measures

The survey contained, essentially, the same overall measures as described above to examine ideological perspectives, support for religiously-motivated violence, and other factors thought to be important to these topics. The table below provides a comprehensive list of the specific survey items used in Cameroon. The same Cronbach's alpha approach described above criteria was used to guide creation of composite measures.

	Question	Scale
Individual Demographic Variables		
Age	The age of the respondent	Numerical age
Education	Self-reported educational attainment	1 (No Formal Edu) – 9 (Graduate Degree)
Gender	Gender of respondent	Male = 0, Female = 1
Religion	What is your religion	Muslim = 0, Non-Muslim = 1
Income	Which of the following statements best describes your household income	1 (we do not have enough money for basic needs) – 5 (We can afford almost anything we want)
Media Consumption (α = .79)		
Radio Consumption	How often do you listen to the Radio	1 (Do Not Use) – (6 Daily)
TV Consumption	How often do you watch TV	1 (Do Not Use) – (6 Daily)
Internet Use	How often do you use the Internet	1 (Do Not Use) – (6 Daily)
Use Mobile Phone	How often do you use a mobile phone	1 (Do Not Use) – (6 Daily)
Read Newspaper	How often do you read the newspaper	1 (Do Not Use) – (6 Daily)
Religious Supremacy (α = .90)	**Question**	**Scale**
Nations Follow my Religion	In the future, all nations should follow my religion	1 (Strongly Disagree) – 4 (Strongly Agree)
Presidential Religion	The President of Cameroon should be required to follow my religion	1 (Strongly Disagree) – 4 (Strongly Agree)
Strict Religious Law	All countries should be governed by strict religious law	1 (Strongly Disagree) – 4 (Strongly Agree)
National Problems and Religion	The answer to all of our country's problems can be found in my religion	1 (Strongly Disagree) – 4 (Strongly Agree)
Importance of Religion (r = .51)*	**Question**	**Scale**
Daily Religion	How often does religion govern your daily actions	1 (Never) – 4 (Always)
Decisions and Religion	When you have to make an important decision, how often do you consider your religion first	1 (Never) – 4 (Always)
National Problems (α = .89)	**Question**	**Scale**
Corruption	Please tell me whether you think X is a problem	1 (Very Serious Problem) – 4 (Not a Problem)
Unemployment	Please tell me whether you think X is a problem	1 (Very Serious Problem) – 4 (Not a Problem)
Rising Prices	Please tell me whether you think X is a	1 (Very Serious Problem) – 4 (Not a Problem)

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	problem	
Terrorism	Please tell me whether you think X is a problem	1 (Very Serious Problem) – 4 (Not a Problem)
Declining Moral Values	Please tell me whether you think X is a problem	1 (Very Serious Problem) – 4 (Not a Problem)
Religious Extremism	Please tell me whether you think X is a problem	1 (Very Serious Problem) – 4 (Not a Problem)
Crime	Please tell me whether you think X is a problem	1 (Very Serious Problem) – 4 (Not a Problem)
Climate Change	Please tell me whether you think X is a problem	1 (Very Serious Problem) – 4 (Not a Problem)
Lack of electricity	Please tell me whether you think X is a problem	1 (Very Serious Problem) – 4 (Not a Problem)
Drug Smuggling	Please tell me whether you think X is a problem	1 (Very Serious Problem) – 4 (Not a Problem)
Weapons Smuggling	Please tell me whether you think X is a problem	1 (Very Serious Problem) – 4 (Not a Problem)
Government Confidence (α = .97)	**Question**	**Scale**
National Government	How much confidence do you have in:	1 (No conf. at all) – 4 (Great deal of conf.)
National Assembly	How much confidence do you have in:	1 (No conf. at all) – 4 (Great deal of conf.)
Senate	How much confidence do you have in:	1 (No conf. at all) – 4 (Great deal of conf.)
Military	How much confidence do you have in:	1 (No conf. at all) – 4 (Great deal of conf.)
Police	How much confidence do you have in:	1 (No conf. at all) – 4 (Great deal of conf.)
Courts	How much confidence do you have in:	1 (No conf. at all) – 4 (Great deal of conf.)
Govt. Effectiveness (α = .95)	**Question**	**Scale**
Reducing poverty	How effective is Cameroonian govt at:	1 (Very Ineffective) – 4 (very Effective)
Increasing employment	How effective is Cameroonian govt at:	1 (Very Ineffective) – 4 (very Effective)
Enhancing education	How effective is Cameroonian govt at:	1 (Very Ineffective) – 4 (very Effective)
Freedom of expression	How effective is Cameroonian govt at:	1 (Very Ineffective) – 4 (very Effective)
Gathering space for you	How effective is Cameroonian govt at:	1 (Very Ineffective) – 4 (very Effective)
Responding to disasters	How effective is Cameroonian govt at:	1 (Very Ineffective) – 4 (very Effective)
Reducing Boko Haram	How effective is Cameroonian govt at:	1 (Very Ineffective) – 4 (very Effective)
Counter Drugs	How effective is Cameroonian govt at:	1 (Very Ineffective) – 4 (very Effective)
Counter Weapons	How effective is Cameroonian govt at:	1 (Very Ineffective) – 4 (very Effective)
Support for Religious Violence (α = .89)	**Question**	**Scale**
Violence Justified	Is it justified to use violence to defend one's religion	1 (Strongly Disagree) – 4 (Strongly Agree)
Further Justification	Do you think violence in the name of religion is justified	1 (Strongly Disagree) – 4 (Strongly Agree)
Friend Violence	I would support a close friend's decision to join a group that uses violence to defend my religion	1 (Strongly Disagree) – 4 (Strongly Agree)
Family Violence	I would support a family member's decision to join a group that uses violence to defend my religion	1 (Strongly Disagree) – 4 (Strongly Agree)
Violence and Salvation	Those who use violence in the name of religion, if killed, are guaranteed salvation	1 (Strongly Disagree) – 4 (Strongly Agree)

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