

Cameroon

British Cameroon and French Cameroon

Africa

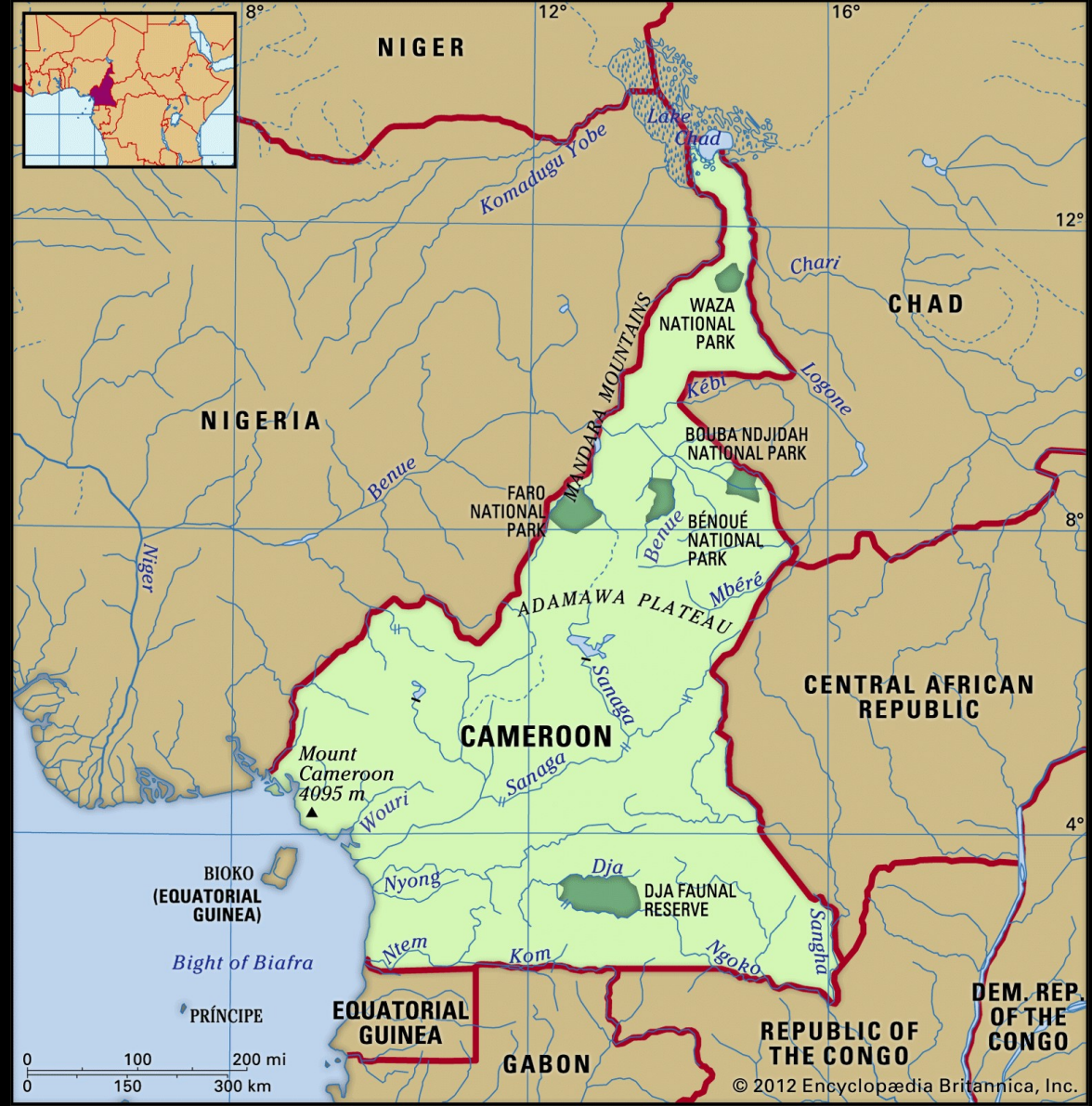
Teaching the Bahá'í Faith

Bahá'í Geography - Cameroon

Cameroon

The Republic of Cameroon is in west-central Africa on the Gulf of Guinea, with Nigeria to the west and north, Chad to the northeast, Central African Republic to the east, and Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and the Republic of the Congo to the south. Its population today is 27 million with a diversity of languages. Its capital is Yaoundé, and economic capital and main seaport Douala, both with almost 2 million inhabitants.

Cameroon



Cameroon



Cameroon

It became a German colony in 1884 using forced labour, and was divided between France and the United Kingdom as League of Nations mandates after World War I, and UN Trusteeships in 1946, giving it French and English as official languages. French and British Cameroons joined in independence in 1961.

Cameroon

Cameroon, with an area of 475,000 km², is known for its geological and cultural diversity, with beaches and a humid coastal plain, a plateau with equatorial rainforest, and northern lowland savannah and desert. Volcanic Mount Cameroon reaches almost 4,100 metres.

Mount Cameroon





Mount Cameroon

Cameroon



Cameroon





Cameroon



Cameroon

Cameroon
rain forest



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Cameroon

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Cameroon



Cameroon

northern
grasslands
and desert



Cameroon

coastal
beaches



Cameroon

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Cameroon



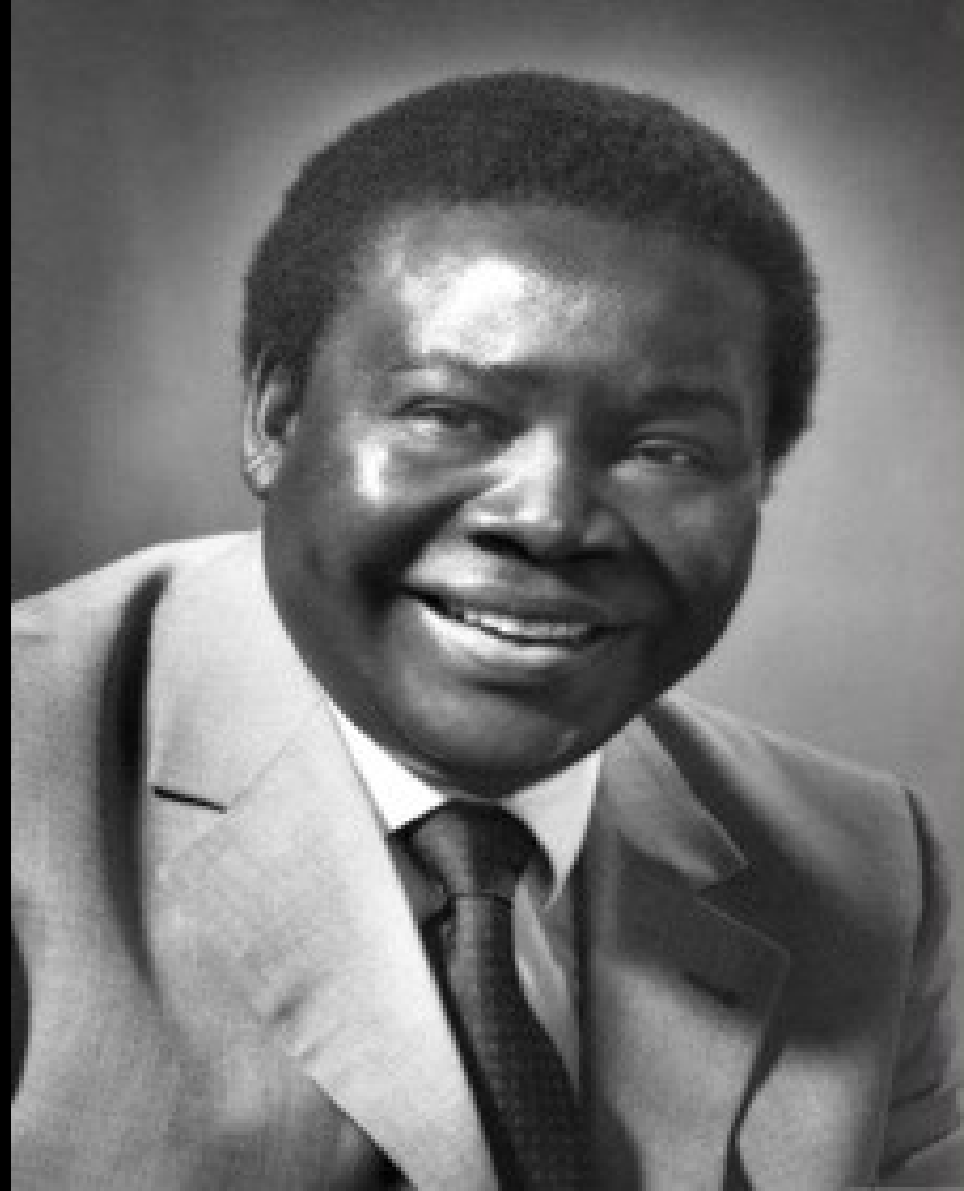
Enoch Olinga

Enoch Olinga (1926-1979) encountered the Baha'i Faith in Kampala, Uganda, in 1951, when Ali Nakhjavani picked him up as he was walking down the street, and he came to their house to study the Bahá'í writings with the first local Bahá'ís. He returned regularly and helped to translate prayers into a local language even before becoming a Bahá'í.

Enoch Olinga

Knight of Bahá'u'lláh

Hand of the Cause of God



Enoch Olinga

When Mr. and Mrs. Banani went on pilgrimage, they carried a letter from the local believers asking the Guardian to pray for a planned public meeting. While many people came, nothing happened. But Enoch came in the evening to ask questions about Bible prophecies. Then, much to their joy, he said "How does one become a Bahá'í? Since it was a British protectorate, he had to write to the British National Spiritual Assembly, which he did early the next morning, and was accepted.

Enoch Olinga

Enoch changed immediately, stopped drinking alcohol, took the Faith to his Teso tribesmen, and within two months had formed the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Kampala. Then he went to his home village and enrolled 17 Bahá'ís there. When he brought to his village Ali Nakhjavani, the white man who had converted him, 90 more villagers became Bahá'ís.

Shoghi Effendi

Shoghi Effendi wrote to the Bahá'í world:

“Rejoice to share... thrilling reports of feats achieved by the heroic band of Bahá'í pioneers... particularly in Uganda, in the heart of the continent.... The number of Africans converted in the course of the last fifteen months, residing in Kampala and outlying districts, with Protestant, Catholic and pagan backgrounds, lettered and unlettered, of both sexes, representative of no less than sixteen tribes, has passed the two hundred mark.”

Enoch Olinga

When Enoch heard of the Guardian's Ten Year Crusade, eighteen months after becoming a Bahá'í, he choose to open British Cameroon, the farthest country from Uganda. The Nakhjavanis drove him there 3,000 kilometres. When the car broke down, he walked 56 kilometres looking for help, covered with mud, crying out "Why am I here?" He fell asleep from exhaustion and dreamed that Shoghi Effendi held his hands, pulled him out of the mud and said "I am so pleased with you." On 15 October 1953, they reached British Cameroon.

(Quoted in Earl Redman, *The Knights of Bahá'u'lláh*, p.66-67)

Shoghi Effendi

By April 1954, there were a number of new Bahá'ís in British Cameroon, and a message from Shoghi Effendi called on African Bahá'ís to arise and fill the goals of the Ten Year Crusade.

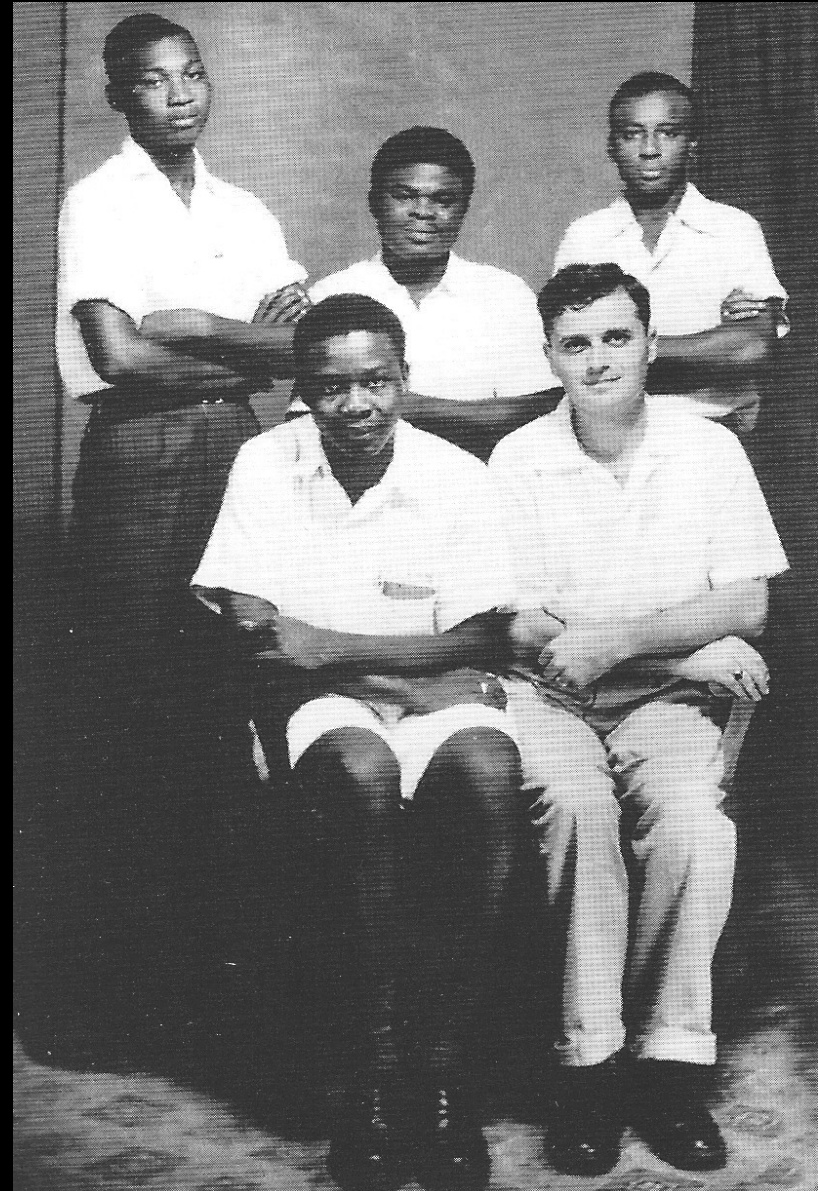
"Urgent entry African believer virgin territories British French Togolands Ashanti Protectorate Northern Territories Protectorate before Ridvan will assure victory. Shoghi."

Five more Knights of Bahá'u'lláh

The group elected five to go to these territories and become Knights of Bahá'u'lláh: Samuel Njiki to French Cameroon, David Nanyi to French Togoland, Edward Tabe to British Togoland, Benedict Eballa to Ashanti Protectorate and Martin Manga to Northern Territories Protectorate. One Knight of Bahá'u'lláh raised up five more Knights of Bahá'u'lláh. Enoch Olinga formed the first Local Spiritual Assembly and opened 12 other areas by Ridvan 1954.

Knights of Bahá'u'lláh
Benedict Eballa (Ashanti Protectorate)
David Tanyi (French Togoland)
Samuel Njiki Njenji (French Cameroon)

Enoch Olinga (British Cameroon)
Ali Nakhjavani



Shoghi Effendi

Shoghi Effendi was:

"Deeply moved by... the manner in which the friends received his call to pioneer in the virgin areas. He feels that people who have been Bahá'ís for only a short period, have arisen to carry the Glad Tidings to people of new lands. The manner in which the Faith has spread in Africa is truly remarkable, and overshadows the manner it has spread in other parts of the world. It indicates how glorious will be the future of the Faith in that great continent."

(Quoted in Earl Redman, *The Knights of Bahá'u'lláh*, p.71)

French Cameroon

Samuel Njiki Njenji (1935-1983), a typist, was one of those taught by Enoch Olinga in early 1954 at age 19, and had only been a Bahá'í for a few weeks when he offered to go to Douala in French Cameroon, arriving on 9 April 1954 to become a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh. Samuel later said "he and the other believers were convinced of the true implications and deep significance of the Guardian's call."

Knight of Bahá'u'lláh

Meherangiz Munsiff (1923-1999), born in India, received her name, meaning Giver of Love, from Bahiyiyih Khanum, the Greatest Holy Leaf (sister of 'Abdu'l-Bahá). She only had two years of formal schooling. She became a Bahá'í very young, against her father's wishes, and began teaching about Bahá'u'lláh at age 14 after meeting Martha Root. She met 16 year old Eruch Munsiff, and they married 5 years later.

Knight of Bahá'u'lláh
Meherangiz Munsiff



Meherangiz Munsiff

They went on pilgrimage in 1952, and in 1953, when only one of them could go pioneering, Meherangiz went first to Madagascar, leaving her husband and small daughter in London, and arriving on 21 April 1953. By the end of the year, 4 French people had become Bahá'í, and finally she taught the first Malagasy Bahá'í. She fell ill and left Madagascar on 20 January 1954.

French Cameroon

Despite her ill health, Meherangiz Munsiff then went to French Cameroon, arriving in Douala on 16 April 1954, with assurance from the Guardian of His prayers, and became a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh. Since Samuel and Meherangiz did not know each other, they arranged to meet at the post office in Yaoundé, with Samuel holding his Bahá'í prayer book. Samuel fell ill, but recovered.

Knight of Bahá'u'lláh
for French Cameroon

Meherangiz Munsiff



French Cameroon

For Meherangiz, it was a hell hole, extremely expensive, and the authorities suspected her of being a spy or a prostitute. She found a hut full of snakes and black widows, and lived on bread and bananas. She prayed for assistance, and a drunk Englishman came to her door, and was the first to declare. Then seekers started to appear. Her health was broken from her poor diet and she had to return after a year to London where she spent 3 months in hospital.

French Cameroon

Since Samuel did not speak French, it was almost impossible to find a job, but he continued teaching, and a Local Spiritual Assembly was formed in Douala in April 1955. Samuel stayed until 1960, when he returned to Limbé, Cameroon, where he served on the Local Spiritual Assembly until his passing in 1983.

Meherangiz Munsiff

Meherangiz followed her husband, who had a diplomatic posting at the Indian Embassy in Washington, D.C. Thus began a lifetime of service, travel-teaching all over Europe, to Africa, Asia, North and South America, Japan, Australasia and the Pacific Islands, visiting 147 countries in all. She had programmes on the BBC radio and on television, including the first mention of the Bahá'í Faith on TV in England in 1959. She passed away in June 1999 and is buried near to Shoghi Effendi's grave in London.

Knight of Bahá'u'lláh
Meherangiz Munsiff



Enoch Olinga

Enoch was accused of political intrigue and subject to a police investigation, but was exonerated and the investigating detective became a Bahá'í. When the first Regional Assembly of North-West Africa was formed in 1956, Enoch was elected a member.

Enoch Olinga, Hand of the Cause

In October 1957, Enoch Olinga, age 31, was appointed a Hand of the Cause of God by Shoghi Effendi. For the next 22 years, he traveled Africa and the world serving the Bahá'í Faith. He was the opening speaker at the Bahá'í World Congress in London in 1963.

Hands of the Cause
Enoch Olinga
Paul Haney

Knights of Bahá'u'lláh
Mihdi Samandari
Suhayl Samandari
(Italian Somaliland)

1968



Elizabeth Olinga
Enoch Olinga

1968



Mihdi Samandari
Suhayl Samandari
Paul Haney
Elizabeth Olinga
Enoch Olinga

1968



Enoch Olinga

When the Bahá'í Faith was banned in Uganda in 1977, Enoch obeyed and closed up the national office. He was placed on a list for elimination, but refused to leave, saying "What do I have to fear? Did the Báb run away? Did Bahá'u'lláh run away? Did 'Abdu'l-Bahá run away? Although the two year ban on the Bahá'í Faith ended, on 16 September 1979, five unknown armed men entered his home and murdered him, his wife and three children.

(Quoted in Earl Redman, *The Knights of Bahá'u'lláh*, p.68)