

**NIGERIA-CAMEROON RELATIONS:
A HISTORICAL APPRAISAL**

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RESEARCH OVERVIEW:

Complete Project: 70 Pages

Research Method: Historical Research

References: MLA

RESEARCH PROPOSAL

Chapter One: Introduction

Nigeria-Cameroon is historically seen within the purview of border dispute over Bakassi Peninsula. The Peninsula has been a bone of contention between the two countries dating back to colonial period. On August 6th 1861, an agreement was concluded between King Dosumu and the British Crown in which the latter agreed to cede Lagos to the British Crown and by 1862, Lagos was proclaimed a colony. In the same vein, on September 10, 1884, similar agreement was signed between the kings and chiefs of old Calabar and the British government. In this agreement, the British government agreed to protect all the territories controlled by the Obong of Calabar, and true enough, Bakassi was one of these territories. The Bakassi was under the jurisdiction of the Efik Kingdom as at the time the September 10, 1884 agreement was signed.

However, the political and commercial hegemony enjoyed by Britain in the West African Coast was challenged by the Germans on July 14th, 1884 under the German Consul General, Dr. Nachtigal who entered into treaty agreement with two Douala chiefs. This was followed by hoisting of German flags in Douala and Bimba which belonged to Cameroon. Although Germany by 1880 has had contacts with the Cameroonian people, one could say that Cameroon as a political entity came into existence by virtue of the treaty mentioned above. Thus, the identification of Cameroon as a political unit in this area brought to the fore the question of demarcation of spheres of influence between Britain and Germany, thus leading to the establishment of boundaries. Thus, this development marked the beginning of rivalry and conflict between Britain and Germany over their colonial possessions and which was eventually inherited by the two West African Countries even after independence.

Hostilities and military confrontations broke out in the early 1990s between Cameroon and Nigeria. In 1994, Cameroon asked the International Court of Justice (ICJ), also known as the World Court, to settle a dispute over its boundary with Nigeria, especially the question of

sovereignty over the Bakassi peninsula, and over islands in Lake Chad, and to specify the course of the land and maritime boundary between the two countries.

After eight years of adjudication, the Court delivered its judgment on the merits of the case on 10th October 2002, deciding, in part, that sovereignty over the Bakassi peninsula and in the disputed area in the Lake Chad region lies with Cameroon. To help implement this decision in a peaceful manner, President Paul Biya of Cameroon and President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria asked the Secretary-General to set up a Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission chaired by the Secretary-General's Special Representative for West Africa, Mr. Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah, to consider ways of following up on the ICJ ruling and moving the process forward.¹

Today, Bakassi peninsula is governed by Cameroon, following the transfer of sovereignty from neighbouring Nigeria as a result of a judgment by the International Court of Justice. On 22 November 2007, the Nigerian Senate rejected the transfer, since the Green Tree Agreement ceding the area to Cameroon was contrary to Section 12(1) of the 1999 Constitution. Regardless, the territory was transferred to Cameroon on 14 August 2008.

Chapter Two: Historical Overview of Bakassi Peninsula

The controversy over Bakassi was who owns the Bakassi – Nigeria or Cameroon? It is this debate that has generated a lot of problem. This chapter historicizes where Bakassi was actually located at the period of partition by in the 19th century

Chapter Three: Nigeria-Cameroon Relations Over Bakassi Since Independence

This chapter examines Nigeria-Cameroon relations in post-independence era. The major causes of conflict will be examined while efforts will be made to discuss how the dispute over Bakassi made their relations to be sore in the 20th century.

¹ Olusegun Obasanjo. "Why we ceded Bakassi" *The Comet* June 15, 2005.

Chapter Four: The ICJ Judgment: Implication And Assessment

In this chapter, the researcher analyses how the crisis generated by the political disagreement and military confrontation between Nigeria and Cameroon over the Bakassi peninsula led Cameroon on March 29, 1999 and on June 6, 1999 to file an application instituting proceedings against Nigeria at the ICJ which related to the question of sovereignty over the Bakassi peninsula and over a part of the territory of Cameroon in the area of Lake Chad. These suits in addition to a counter memorial filed by Nigeria between June and October 1998, set the tone for the various legal proceedings by both Nigeria and Cameroon in the International Court of Justice (ICJ), but which eventually culminated in the final ICJ decision on October 10, 2002 in favour of Cameroon. This chapter assesses the implication of the ICJ judgment on Nigeria-Cameroon relations.

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