

## Islamic Associations and the Social Development of the Muslim Community in Anglophone Cameroon - A Historical Analysis

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**Abstract:** Islamic civic associations have been in the vanguard for the reclamation and reassertion of Muslims in Anglophone Cameroon. The changing roles of Muslim Associations in the dynamics of public relation in Anglophone Cameroon can be appraised in the light of the recognition of the growing importance of religious associations across Cameroon and within the framework of discourse on society, religion and development. Islamic associations engage in advocacy work to promote legitimate interest of Islam in Anglophone Cameroon. The range of activities spreads from promoting good governance, building of Islamic infrastructures, girl children education and the preaching and spread of Islam.

The first Islamic Associations in Anglophone Cameroon were created in the late 1980s. With the liberty laws of the 1990s, other Islamic Associations were created in Anglophone Cameroon. Almost all of those association had similar goals or objectives being to promote the socio-religious and economic development of Islam and the Muslim community. This study therefore investigates the role played by Islamic Association in the spread, growth and development of Islam in Anglophone Cameroon. Drawing empirical evidence from the activities of Islamic Associations in Cameroon, through a qualitative and quantitative approach, the findings revealed how Islamic Associations greatly contribute in the socio-religious development of Islam and the Muslim Community in Anglophone Cameroon.

**Keywords:** Islamic Civic Associations, Anglophone Cameroon, Muslim Associations, Muslim Community, socio-religious and economic development.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The Cameroon is both a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society, with Islam and Christianity being the dominant religious. One of the ways used by the Muslim community in Anglophone Cameroon to help spread and develop their religion was through the creation and activities of Islamic Associations beginning from the late 1980s and early 1990s. Islamic Associations played a very important role in the growth and development of the Islamic religion and its infrastructures in Anglophone Cameroon. Examining the contributions of Islamic Associations in socio-religious development specifically in religions, health, education, economy and youth development is a way of showing connections between the economy, religion and social responsibility activities of these Islamic religious associations (A.Kurshid, 1977: pp. 2-57).

It had been observed that even through the majority of Muslim Associations were founded mainly to fulfill the parallel socio-economic activities. In addition, many Muslim Associations considered welfare programs an important part of their religious strategy. Hence, earlier and in recent decades, these associations have made attempts to increase in strength and have transformed their objectives through welfare services. This was and is still the case of Islamic Associations in Anglophone Cameroon (Interview with Alhaji Swaibou Baba Mallam, 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2003).

Significant contributions of Islamic Associations in Anglophone Cameroon such as intellectuals and economic empowerment, rehabilitation of children and orphans, renovating and construction of Islamic sites and schools, the encouragement of young girls to embrace education and proper and adequate health care were remarkable in the development of the region (A.B. Lemu and F. Heeren, 1978: pp. 2-37).

This paper therefore examines the role of Islamic Religious Associations in enhancing the spread, growth and development of Islam, as well as the socio-religious and economic improvement of the Muslim community in Anglophone Cameroon. Two of the most prominent Islamic or Muslim

Associations are treated as case study. These are Jurist of Islam (JIC) and the Cameroon Muslim student Union (CAMSU) (Interview with Mallam Musa, 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2002). The article end by looking at some of the challenges faced by those Islamic Associations in carrying out their activities

## **2. ISLAMIC ASSOCIATIONS IN THE NORTH WEST REGION OF ANGLOPHONE CAMEROON**

Islam in Anglophone Cameroon in general and the North West Region in particular was also spread and propagated through Islamic Associations. Most of those associations were created by Muslim Clerics with the major aim or objective being to help spread Islam all over the region. The entire Muslim community in the North West Region with their traditional and spiritual leaders also helped a great deal in bringing the faithful together, collecting money or raising funds, and building infrastructures for those associations. Muslim elites heading those initiatives or associations deposited demands or application in competence administrative offices for those associations to be legalized. Some of those associations were the Muslim Student of Bamenda (MUSAB), ZUMUNTA, AL-SHIFA, all in Bamenda Central, Jurist of Islam (J.I.B.), Islamic Welfare Association (I.W.A.), Bui Muslim Youth Association (Bumuyas), Salama Association, Jamhiya Association, all in Bui Division of the North West Region of Cameroon. We also had the Mbororo Cultural Development Association (MBOSCUA) and SODELCO of the Mbororos and the Cameroon Hausa Cultural Development Association (CHCDA) (Interview with Alhaji Swaibou Baba Mallam, 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2003). There was also the Bamenda Islamic Youth Association, the Bui Islamic Youth Association and the Bangolan Islamic Youth Forum (Interview with Alhaji Swaibou Baba Mallam, 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2003).

Apart from the above, we also had national and internationally base Islamic Associations that were also represented in the North West Region of Cameroon. Among which were the Cameroon Muslim Student Union (CAMSU), World Assembly of Muslim Youths (WAMY), *Association Culturelle Islamique du Cameroun* (ACIC), created in 1963 and officialize in 1967, *Jeunesse Islamique du Cameroun* (JIC), created in 1985, *Conseil Supérieur Islamique du Cameroun* (CSIC) created in 1994 and officialize in 1996. It was finally recognized in 2006 by the administration (Interview with Mallam Musa, 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2002).

Worth noting is the fact that most of those Islamic Associations in the North West Region of Cameroon benefitted from the largesse of the Cameroon Government, and most especially thanks to the liberty laws of the 1990s that called on liberalization, freedom of speech and associations. Almost all of those Islamic Associations had as prime objective the spread, promotion, propagation, practice and teaching of Islam. Some of those Islamic Associations were headed and coordinated by Muslim men while others were headed and manage by Muslim women. Almost all of the Divisions and sometimes Sub-Divisions of the North West Region had an Islamic Association. Some of them were registered under common initiative groups or Non-Governmental Organizations (Interview with Mallam Ibrahim, 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2002).

Other objectives of the different Islamic Associations in the North West Region were to raise funds for the construction of Mosques, Quranic, elementary and complementary schools. The need for solidarity among Muslim brothers and sisters. They also clamoured for a peaceful co-existence and living together. Come to the rescue of other members in times of need or difficulties. Help the needy, the poor, widows, the sick and orphans. Participate and help members in Islamic celebrations and ceremonies (A. Rahman and I. Doi, 1972: pp. 3-47). They also wanted to creat a forum where by Muslim men and women could come together and discuss their common problems. Preach against drugs abuse, stealing and alcohol consumption among Muslim youths. The education of the Muslim girl child, the Islamic education, ethics and teaching the norms of marriages and how to become a good house wife was also of priority. Participate in the graduation of Muslim young scholars upon their completion of the Quran. Visit the sick in hospitals and detention centers. The importance of sending their children to Quranic Schools (A.B. Lemu and F. Heeren, 1978: pp. 2-37).

We are presently going to take the case study of an Islamic Association in the North West Region of Cameroon. We will examine it origin, objective of it creation, its administrative set-up, organization, it actions, activities, realizations or achievements, it challenges and vision for the future. The association in question is Jurist of Islam (JIB), base in Kumbo, Bui Division of the North West Region of Cameroon.

## **3. CASE STUDY OF JURIST OF ISLAM (JIB) IN BUI DIVISION, NORTH WEST REGION**

### **3.1. Nature of JIB**

Jurist of Islam abbreviated JIB base in Bui Division, according to Mallam Ibrahim, was and is still an apolitical, non-profit and non-governmental association. It was created in 1990. The main objective of

this association was to promote, propagate and help in the development of Islam (Interview with Mallam Ibrahim, 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2002).

### 3.2. Legal Status of JIB

Jurist of Islam in Bui Division operates in conformity with law n°90/053 of 1912/1990 relating to the freedom of association. Jurist of Islam in Bui was authorized to operate by the Senior Divisional Officer for Bui Division through order n°E26/PS/118/146 of 25/10/2007.

### 3.3. Headquarters of JIB

The head office of JIB is in Kumbo, Bui Division, Northwest Region, of the Republic of Cameroon. Apart from the main headquarters base in Bui Division, JIB also have representation all over Anglophone Cameroon and beyond (Interview with Mallam Ibrahim, 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2002).

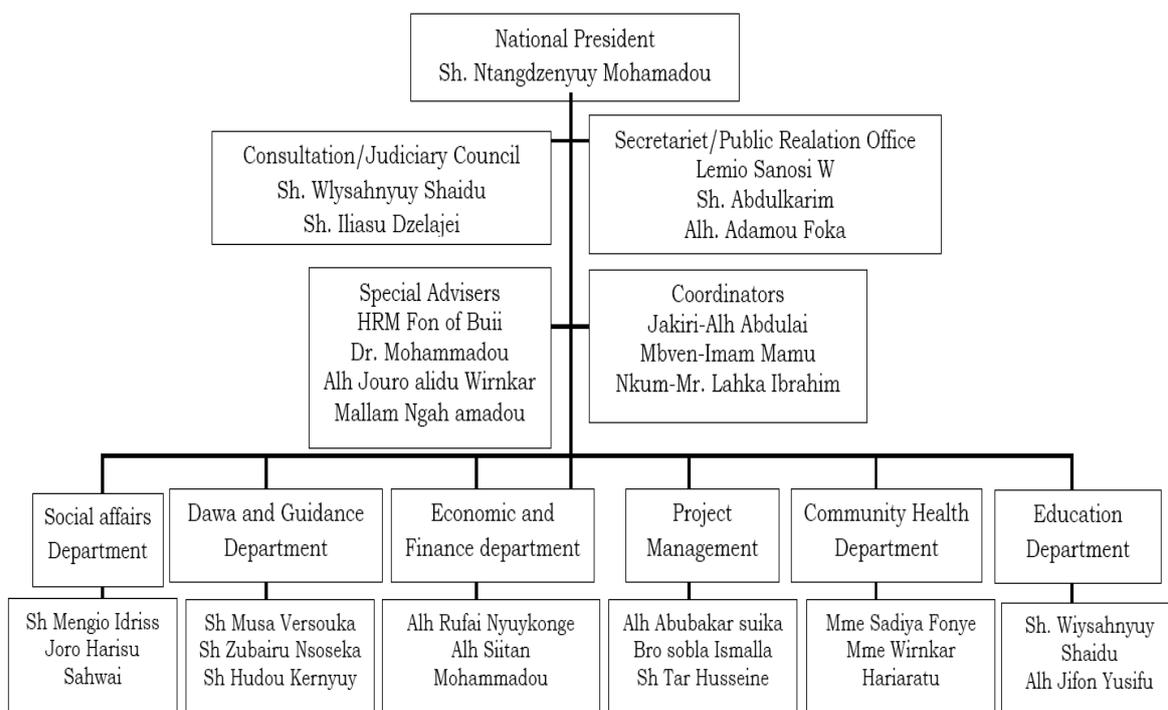
### 3.4. Objectives of JIB

The main objectives of the organization are:

- Enhancement of Islamic knowledge and values,
- To ensure unity within the Muslim community and other communities and to work in close collaboration with government organisations and other groups engaged in areas of interest to the association.
- To ensure a disease-free society by sensitizing the community on preventive methods against certain illnesses.
- To receive and distribute prescribed *Zakkat* or Alms giving.
- To seek funding for Islamic projects (Interview with Mallam Moustapha, 10<sup>th</sup> December 2000).

### 3.5. Administrative Set-up

In an effort to make JIB meet the aspirations of its ever growing members and also improve on the efficiency of the administrative machinery, the organization chart was approved by the General Assembly that held on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> march 2016 (Interview with Mallam Ibrahim, 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2002). Below can be seen the organizational chart of (JIB)



**Figure 1.** Organisation Chart of Jurist of Islam in Bui

Source: Authors Collection; the Islamic Education Secretary, North West Region

**Table 1.** Action by JIB Executive on Behalf of the Muslim Community of Bui Division

MONTH	VENUE	ACTIONS
February	Municipal stadium	Represented the Muslim community during the celebration of the National Youth Day
February	Takum K4	Inauguration of Jummuah in Takum Kikaikelaki and installation of 5 appointed imams of the Mosque
March	Bui Grand Mosque Ntoh Nso	Organized the installation of the CIDIMUC President of Bui Division ; Sheikh Ntangdzenyuy Mohamadou and Exco members by the S.D.O for Bui Division in the presence of the National President of CIDIMUC; Dr. Moussa Oumarou.
April	Mbve	Took part in the Kibunfon (Visit to pledge allegiance to HRH the Paramoun Fon of Nso) and in the installation of Fon Gasah (Sarki Hawsa) of Mbve (Haousa Chief)
April	Mensai	Roofing of the Mensai mosque worth over 700,000frs
May	Nsesnin-Nseh	Organized the inauguration of the Nseh Central Mosque by the SOD.O and all his close collaborators
May	Municipal stadium	Represented the Muslim community during the celebration of the National Day of Cameroon
May	Nkar Palace	Paid courtesy visit to the Fon of Nkar. Donated 2 bundles of zinc to help to with on-going construction work in the palace of the Fon of Nkar.
June	I H S Kumbo	Baid farewell to the American peaces corps Mme Alison Ruth who worked in Islamic Hiigh School Kumbo for 4 years.
June	Ber	JIB laid the foundation stone to mark the start of construction works of the Ber Mosque in Jakiri sub-Division
June	Bui Grand Mosque Ntoh Nso	Received some soldiers at the Bui Grand Mosque who came to learn more about the activities going on in the month of Ramadan 1437
September	Ndzen Njii	S.D.O. and all his close collaborators paid an official visit to the president of JIB to condole with him after the death of his mother
October	Tobin	JIB visited the S.D.O for Bui and his close collaborators to appreciate them for their constant support
October	JIB Office Kumbo	JIB received the NICDA Delegation from Yaounde that came to invite the JIB family to their fundraising that held 10 <sup>th</sup> December 2016. Paid courtesy visit to HRH the Fon of Nso
October	Buh	Took active part in the decking of the Buh Mosque under construction
October	Takum, Njombo, Nyaro	Visited some mosques in Kumbo central that are under construction in the company of the NICDA Delagation from Yaounde
November	Nseh, Kikoo, Takijah, Riba, Kingomen, Ber	In the company of Sh. Shathry of Saudi Arabia; JIB visited projects realized in partnership with WAMY in 7 Muslim communities of Bui
November	Kumbo Council Hall	Represented the Muslim community during the installation of 11 newly appointed divisional Delegated in Bui Division presided at by the S.D.O for Bui division
November	Tobin Municipal stadium	Took part in ceremony to dedicate the Lamnso dictionary (Nwah Nsav) and the Lamnso Bible
December	JIB Office Kumbo	JIB received the Nourudeen Delegation from Doula that came to invite the JIB family to their fundraising scheduled to hold on 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2017. Paid courtesy visit to HRH the Fon of Nso

**Source:** Authors Collection; the Islamic Education Secretary, North West Region

#### 4. DA'WAH ACTIVITIES

To bring the message of Islam to the entire population of Bui Division in a proper way, JIB adopted a number of strategies. Some of these included the following:

- Successfully organized the *Eid-ul Fitr* Feast with a prayer session conducted by Sheikh Ntangdzenyuy Mohamadou; followed by a cocktail party to honour her guest, the S.D.O for Bui Division, all his collaborators, HRH Fon of Nso, Senator, Member of Parliament, Mayor Kumbo Council, Sarki (Hausa Chief), and other important personalities of the division (Interview with Mallam Umaru, 10<sup>th</sup> March 2000).
- Successfully organized the *Eid-ul Adha* Feast (Feast of Sacrifice) with a prayer session conducted by Sheikh Wiysahnyuy Shaidu in the presence of the S.D.O for Bui Division, all his collaborators,

HRH Fon of Nso, Senator, Member of Parliament, Mayor Kumbo Council, Sarki (Hausa Chief), and other important personalities of the division (Interview with Mallam Ibrahim, 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2002).

- Organized reception of the Pilgrims from Bui Division who perform the pilgrimage to Mecca in 2016 in the presence of the First Assistant S.D.O for Bui; Dr. Mohammadou and HRH Fon of Nso. The reception witnessed a massive turn out of the population.
- Officiated at *Nikahs* (Muslim marriage ceremonies), *Akeekahs* (naming ceremony of new born babies) and funeral services across the Division.
- Delivered over 100 Friday sermons at the Bui Grand Mosque Kumbo and other Mosque Kumbo, Mbveh, Takum, Rifem, Jakiri, Nden-Njie, Kitiwum, Tadu, and Romajaiy during Ramadan 1437 (June-July 2016) (Interview with Mallam Ibrahim, 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2002).
- Teaches Islam to three (3) women groups, that is, CAMSU Women, Salama Women groups of Njombo and Jakiri.
- Reverts to Islam are taken care of by being taught proper Islamic Knowledge every Sunday in the JIB head office Kumbo. These lessons unfortunately abruptly ended after Ramadan 1347 (July 2017).
- Carried out preaching over Bui community Radio every Friday in the morning and in the afternoon (Interview with Mallam Moustapha, 10<sup>th</sup> December 2000).

### **5. JUMMAAH OR FRIDAY MOSQUES IN BUI DIVISION**

By December 2016, thirty-eight (38) mosques witnessed the solemn proclamation of the Friday sermon during the establishment of the Friday congregation prayer. Worth noting is the fact that JIB contributed in the building, designation, and proclamation of those Mosques as Friday Congregation prayers Mosques (Interview with Mallam Abo, 20<sup>th</sup> August 2003) and (Inua Wirba, 20<sup>th</sup> November 1998).

**Table 2.** *Friday Mosques in Bui Division*

	<b>KUMBO CENTRAL SUBDIVISION</b>
1	Bui Grand Mosque Kumbo Ntoh Nso
2	Mbve Central Mosque
3	Kingomen
4	Bamdzen
5	Takum Kikaiikelaki
6	Sabongari Roh
7	Jerfon Meluf
8	Tadu
	<b>NKUM SUBDIVISION</b>
9	Dzeng
10	Yangkitari
11	Wailai
12	Ngehdzen
13	Nseh
14	Waikov
15	Tatum
16	Takijah
17	Kiem
18	Takov
19	Kuvlu
20	Banten
21	Bamtov
22	Buh
	<b>JAKIRI SUBDIVISION</b>
23	Faakui
24	Vekovi
25	Limbo
26	Jakiri
27	Wainamah
28	Noi
29	Wasi

MBVEN SUBDIVISION	
30	Rifem
31	Njanawa
32	Mbonhnsso
33	Lip
34	Mbohkov
OKU SUBDIVISION	
36	Elak
37	SimonKov
NONI SUBDIVISION	
37	Lassin
38	Ngarba

Source: Authors Collection, the Islamic Education Secretary, North West Region

Table 3. Fund Raising for the Construction of Mosques in Bui Division

Fundraising Donations Organized in BUI Division in 2016					
	Date	Venue	Purpose	Cash Donation by JIB	Total Funds Raised
1	01/01/2006	Njanawa	Mosque	1,842,900	4,845,500
2	02/01/2016	Njombo	Mosque	3,011,000	11,587,275
3	06/02/2016	Bafoussam	Multi Purpose complex Bafoussam	3,166,900	3,166,900
4	27/02/2016	Kitiwum	Mosque	3,316,575	6,075,000
5	27/02/2016	Kikoo	Mosque		861,000
6	27/02/2016	Bamntov	Mosque		1,700,000
7	27/02/2016	Nyaro	Mosque	2,010,000	6,358,900
8	27/02/2016	HIS Kumbo	HIS K'bo Dormitory	2,748,750	3,308,875
9	27/02/2016	Faakui	Mosque	2,157,50	6,440,000
10	30/04/2016	Jakiri	Mosque	1,626,200	9,364,000
11	01/05/2016	Tsenla K4	Mosque		470,000
12	07/05/2016	Ngaan	School	546,600	2,400,100
13	21/05/2016	Bui Grand mosque	Mosque	22,348,450	22,348,100
14	30/07/2016	Tadu	Mosque	1,228,100	8,638,150
15	18/09/2016	Takum	Mosque	1,343,550	13,845,650
16	15/10/2016	Faakui	School	317,500	1,675,250
17	05/11/2016	Romajaiy	Mosque	2,399,500	9,587,300
18	13/11/2016	Dzeng	Mosque	1,977,250	4,823,100
19	22/11/2016	Mbve	School		321,000
20	26/11/2016	Sabongari Roh	Mosque	1,439,025	8,571,500
21	03/12/2016	Rifem	Mosque	1,838,250	8,477,800
22	03/12/2016	Kiyan	Mosque		623,000
23	10/12/2016	Yasounde	NICDA Complex	6,867,150	6,867,150
24	15/12/2016	Jerfon Meluf	School	363,300	1,500,150
25	25/12/2016	Yangkitari	Mosque	1,487,500	2,722,275
26	31/12/2016	Njombo	Mosque	3,420,000	16,243,700
<b>Total Cash Donations in 2016</b>				<b>65,455,550</b>	<b>162,831,025</b>

Source: Authors Collection; the Islamic Education Secretary, North West Region

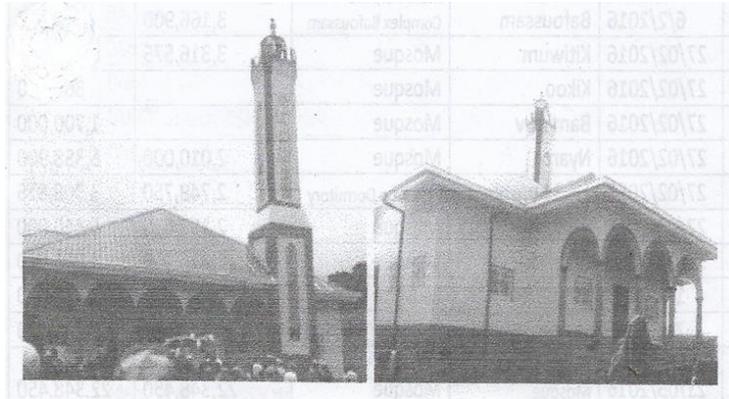
Total donations in kind in 2016	
403 bags of cement	
23 cows	
10Goats	
1 comuter	
2spades	
21 bages of corn	

Source: Authors Collection; the Islamic Education Secretary, North West Region

## 6. PROJECTS REALISED

### 6.1. Projects Realized Through Partnership

The projects below were realized through the collaboration of the beneficiary communities with JIB and her strategic partners.



**Picture 1.** *Construction of the Nseh Central Mosque*

**Source:** *Authors Collection*



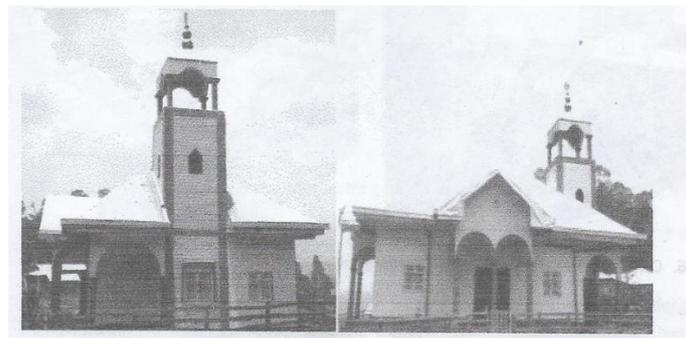
**Picture 2.** *Construction of the Ber Mosque*

**Source:** *Authors Collection*



**Picture 3.** *Construction of the Kikoo Mosque*

**Source:** *Authors Collection*

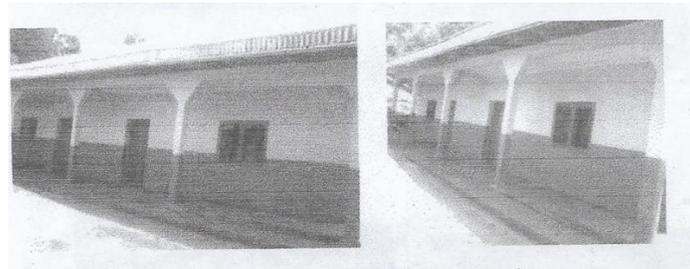


**Picture 4.** *Construction of the Riba Mosque*

**Source:** *Authors Collection*



**Picture 5:** *Construction of Six Classrooms and an Office in Islamic Primary School Kingomen*  
**Source:** *Authors Collection*



**Picture 6.** *Construction of Two Classrooms in Islamic Nursery School Kingomen*  
**Source:** *Authors Collection*



**Picture 7.** *Construction of Four Classrooms and an Office in Islamic Primary School Takijah*  
**Source:** *Authors Collection*

## **7. MOSQUES CURRENTLY UNDER CONSTRUCTION IN BUI DIVISION**

By 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2016, twenty five (25) mosques in Bui Division were undergoing construction works. The financial burden to bring to maturity these mosques is entirely the responsibility of the communities and JIB. This shows how active JIB was as far as the development and construction of Islamic infrastructures in Bui Division was concerned (Interview with Mallam Ibrahim, 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2002). Below can be seen the different Mosques under construction initiated by JIB and their close partners.

1. Kumbo central sub division
  - 1.1. Bui Grand Mosque Kumbo Ntoh Nso
  - 1.2. Yerima Mosque Mbve
  - 1.3. Kitiwum Mosque
  - 1.4. Sabongari Roh Mosque
  - 1.5. Njombo Mosque
  - 1.6. Dankiwuh Mosque
  - 1.7. Nyaro Mosque
  - 1.8. Upper Ndzen Njii Mosque
  - 1.9. Kih-Melim Mosque
  - 1.10. Mbah Mosque

2. NKUM SUB DIVISION

2.1. Takijah Mosque

2.2. Dzung Mosque

2.3. Banten Mosque

2.4. Kuvlu Mosque

2.5. Mbonhsha Mosque

3. MBVEN SUB DIVISION

3.1. Rifem Mosque

3.2. Njanawa Mosque

4. JAKIRI SUB DIVISION

4.1. Wasi Mosque

4.2. Limbo Mosque

4.3. Ntur Mosque

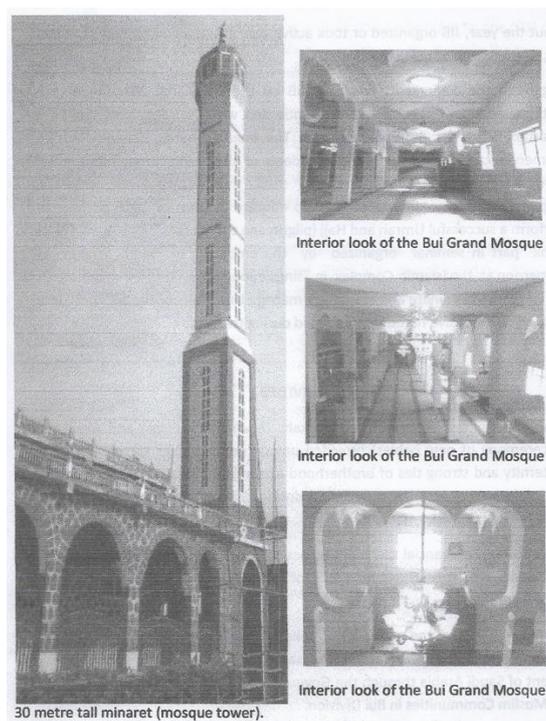
4.4. Mensai Mosque

4.5. Jakiri Mosque (Interview with Mallam Ibrahim and Mallam Umaru).

**8. RENOVATION WORKS ON THE BUI GRAND MOSQUE KUMBO, NTOH, NSO**

In the course of 2016, the following major renovation works that have transformed the outlook of the mosque just as its interior comfort and beauty were undertaken:

- Completion of the 30 metre tall *Minaret* (Mosque Tower) on the extreme right of the mosque. Construction of this *Minaret* (mosque tower) started in 2015 (Interview with Mallam Musa and Mallam Moustapha).
- Removal of the Lambri ceiling and replacing it with decorative white staff covering on ceiling.
- Installation of beautifying lamps as well as laying completely fresh electrical circuits for lighting, fans and sound system (Interview with Mallam Ibrahim and Mallam Umaru).



**Picture 8.** *The Bui Grand Mosque Kumbo, Ntoh, Nso, undergoing Renovation*

**Source:** *Authors Collection*

## 9. SEMINARS AND MEETINGS

Throughout the year, JIB organized or took active part in the following seminars and meetings:

- Organized the General Assembly of JIB on the 6th March 2016 under the distinguish patronage of DO of Kumbo and with Dr. Mohammadou, First Assistant SDO For Bui in attendance. The Imams, Juros, Salama (Muslim women groups) Presidents, Youth Presidents of all Muslim communities in Bui Division were present.
- Organized a seminar in August 2016 to educate Pilgrims of 2016 on how to perform a successful Umrah and Hajj (Pilgrimage to Mecca).
- Took part in seminar organized by the embassy of Saudi Arabia in Cameroon at the Islamic complex in Tsinga, Yaounde.
- To properly coordinate and effectively manage the affairs of the JIB for 2016, a total of 16 executive meetings were held during the year (Interview with Mallam Ibrahim and Mallam Umaru).

## 10. SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

The social gatherings of Muslims during *Nikahs* (Muslim weddings) and *Akeekahs* (naming ceremony of new babies) provided unique opportunities to celebrate the unity, fraternity and strong ties of brotherhood existing amongst the Muslims of the division. Solidarity was strongly manifested during difficult moments like funerals, burials and helping the sick and needy (M. Lapidus, 1988: pp. 2-49) and (T. Tajoche, 2008: pp. 7-78).

In June 2016, JIB gave financial and material assistance to 30 widows drawn from all the Sub-Divisions of Bui. The minor kids of these widows received school fee scholarship from JIB. During Ramadan 1437 (June-July 2016), collective fast breaking was organized in several mosques in Kumbo Central. In the same month, date palms donated by Government of Saudi Arabia through the government of Cameroon were distributed to all the Muslim Communities in Bui Division (Interview with Mallam Ibrahim and Mallam Umaru).

## 11. CONFLICTS AMICABLY RESOLVED

The Judiciary Council of JIB helped to bring an amicable settlement to one (01) of two (02) disputes that were reported to her learned scholars. One is still in the process of being resolved. These disputes involved inheritance rights of heirs. Most of these conflicts occur within the Muslim Communities of Kumbo and beyond (Interview with Mallam Ibrahim and Mallam Musa).

## 12. CHALLENGES

- Da'wah activities are still sporadic, with no comprehensive long term program. There is an urgent need to formulate and implement a result oriented *Da'wah* plan.
- The commitment of some members in some key aspects to the life of the association leaves much to be desired. There is an urgent need for members to improve on their commitments to their financial obligations and to carry out assigned tasks.
- Lack of innovation or creativity on the part of some HODS or simply outright neglect
- Non-respect of deadlines for submission of reports (Interview with Inua Wirba, 20<sup>th</sup> November 1998).
- Lateness to meeting and other organized programs ( time management by members needs to be reviewed)
- Absence of a well-designed program to take care of reverts (Interview with Mallam Ibrahim and Mallam Umaru).

## 13. SOURCES OF FINANCE

The funds are collected from members through the following three ways:

1. Registrations and yearly contributions by members,
2. Public fund raisings,
3. Payment of *Zakat* (compulsory charity paid by every Muslim who has a minimum yearly earnings of more than 200 000frs) (Interview with Mallam Ibrahim and Mallam Umaru).

#### **14. VISION**

In perspective, JIB has plans to embark on the following projects with the help of Allah and the support of her many members; IN SHAA ALLAH!

- Construction of a second *Minaret* on Bui Grand Mosque, Kanti lever, renovation of the offices of the mosque
- Organized capacity building seminars for leaders of Muslim communities in Bui Division
- Re-opening of the website
- Starting a Radio station
- Creating a Demographic data base of all the Muslim Quarters in Bui Division
- Construction of a JIB Complex in collaboration with Islamic Private Education Secretariat NWR which will have offices for each department of JIB, a conference hall, libraries, guest rooms, etc...
- Harmonization of Friday sermons for all Friday congregation mosques in Bui Division as well as translation of such into English, French and the local dialects.
- Construction of a health centre (Interview with Alhaji Amadou Wirba, November 1998).
- Organization of medical caravans
- Operate an institute for the training of Imams and preachers (Interview with Mallam Ibrahim and Mallam Umaru).

#### **15. ISLAMIC ASSOCIATIONS IN THE SOUTH WEST REGION OF ANGLOPHONE CAMEROON**

Islamic Association also played a very important role in the spread, practise, propagation and evolution of Islam in the South West Regions of Anglophone Cameroon. Most of those Islamic Associations saw the light of day in the early 1990s with the Liberty laws that were promulgated by the government (V.J. Ngoh, 1996: pp.3-70). Majority of those Islamic Associations in the South West Region were created by Muslim Clerics or Scholars, with the support of the entire Muslim Community in the region. Major objectives of those Islamic Associations were to spread, promote, preach and propagate as well as teach Islam to the community (T. Tajoche, 2008: pp. 7-78).

Islamic Associations in the South West Region were forums during which Muslim Clerics or Scholars, elites, leaders and youths of both sexes came together and discuss the major problems plaguing or hindering the community and religion to develop. Conferences and seminars were also held by those Islamic Associations to brain storm on the teaching, practise and worship of Islam. Emphasis were also laid on the importance of education in Islam, peaceful co-existence, mutual sharing, promoting of peace, education of the boy and girl child against some vices, knowing the Five Pillars of Islam, Islamic jurisprudence, *Tawhid* and *Figh* in Islam, religious tolerance and inter-religious dialogue. Worth noting is the fact that some of those Islamic Associations in the South West Region were Male dominated while others were led by women. Nonetheless, all of them had one prime objective, the promotion and spread of the Islamic religion in that region (Interview with Mallam Ibrahim and Mallam Umaru).

Some of the Islamic Associations in the South West Region were regionally or nationally base while others were internationally base. Examples of some of those regionally and nationally based Islamic Associations in the South West Region were the South West Muslim Community (SOWEMUC) and the Buea Muslim Community (BMC), with well organized structures. All of the two major associations were founded by the Principal or Central Imam of Buea, Imam Mohamed Abubakar. Through these associations, the Muslim Community in Buea promoted the faith, education as well as the health conditions of the Muslim Community (Interview with Mallam Ibrahim and Mallam Isa).

Each Division and Sub-Division in the South West Region where there was a concentration of the Muslim population had a Muslim Association. As such, Muslim Associations were found in Buea, Kumba, Limbe, Mamfe, Tiko, Muyuka and Muea. Some of those associations were registered independently while others were registered under common initiative groups or NGOS. Major objectives of those Muslim associations were the spread, teaching, propagating, promotion, learning, worship and development of Islam (Interview with Mallam Ibrahim and Mallam Isa).

The Nationally or internationally base Islamic associations operating with representatives and centers in the South West Region were the Cameroon Muslim Student Union (CAMSU), with an estimated members of 53 Muslims, mostly students, the World Assembly of Muslim Youths (WAMY), *Association culturelle Islamique du Cameroun* (ACIC), created in 1963 and officialize in 1967, *Jeunesse Islamique du Cameroun* (JIC), created in 1985, *Conseil Supérieur Islamique du Cameroun* (C.S.I.C), created in 1994 and recognized in 2006 (Interview with Mallam Ibrahim and Mallam Musa). It should be noted that all of these Muslim Associations in Anglophone Cameroon in general and the South West Region in particular were apolitical.

## **16. CASE STUDY OF AN ISLAMIC ASSOCIATION THAT COVERS THE WHOLE OF ANGLOPHONE CAMEROON: THE CAMEROON MUSLIM STUDENT UNION (CAMSU)**

Cameroon Muslim student Union (CAMSU) was created in 1998, in Ngaoundere, Cameroon. This was an initiative of Cameroon students, most especially University Students who wanted a forum within which they could meet and discuss problems affecting Cameroonian Muslim students. From the on-set, the idea of creating CAMSU started among Muslim Students of the University of Yaounde 1. It then gradually spread to other State Universities of Cameroon like the University of Douala, Ngaoundere, Yaounde II, and Buea. By early 1998, CAMSU saw the light of day. Its main center is base in the University of Yaounde 1 (Interview with Mallam Musa and Mallam Moustapha).

### **16.1. Objective of CAMSU**

CAMSU was a Cameroonian Muslim Student Association that was apolitical. Its main objective was the promotion of the practise, teaching, learning and propagation of Islam in all of the Cameroonian State Universities both public and private. Other objectives of CAMSU were:

- The spread and development of Islam, holding of Islamic conferences in all the eight States Universities,
- Bringing of Muslim youths together and sensitizing them on the Islamic faith, promoting the faith, development of Islamic values in all the Cameroonian states University, peaceful coexistence and how the religion is effectively practise,
- Fund raising to help in building some Muslim infrastructures like the building of Mosques, Islamic Schools, Islamic libraries, helping the needy, promotion of togetherness and living together among Muslim youths, worship and breaking the Fast, *Sawn*, together during the Month of Ramadan, sensitising Muslim youths to refrain from deviant behaviours or committing criminal acts (Interview with Mallam Musa and Mallam Moustapha).

### **16.2. Administrative set-up of CAMSU**

CAMSU just like any other association had its board of administrators or leaders to lead the association. There was a President, a secretary general, a treasurer, technical advisers, regional representatives in all the eight State Universities. One of the very first Presidents of CAMSU was Mohamadou Saoudite. He was assisted by his secretary, Abdoukarim Kanfon. One other President of CAMSU who played a very important role in boosting that association was President Boyomo. The present president of CAMSU is Sanda Umaru. In terms of budget to run the association, they solely depended on the contributions of the members of the association, contribution of well-wishers, NGOs and foreign donors. At times, contributions came from parents of some of the members of the association, Muslim elites, top ranking Muslim administrators, civil servants and ex-members already working. For example, financial aids usually come at times from other cultural associations like YUMSCA and ASEMUC. Foreign aids usually come from foreign donors such as the World Assembly of Muslim Youth, abbreviated as WAMY headed in Cameroon by Cheikh Abdoukarim Abbo, and the African Development Foundation, abbreviated as ADF headed in Cameroon by Cheikh Ali (Interview with Mallam Musa and Mallam Moustapha).

### **16.3. Achievements of CAMSU**

CAMSU has considerably helped in the promotion and spread of Islam in all of the State Universities of Cameroon. As a matter of fact, CAMSU has representatives and centers in all of the State Universities as well as all of the ten Regions of Cameroon. CAMSU has also helped in the building of mosques in almost all the Universities of Cameroon, beginning with that of the University of Yaounde 1, with the

Mosque at Bonamoussadi, student residential area. Almost all of those mosques served as Quranic Schools where Muslim students meet and learned the Quran and the Hadith (Interview with Mallam Musa and Mallam Ibrahim).

CAMSU had also raise funds to help the needy, Muslim students during Ramadan especially with collective breaking of fasting, organized workshops and conferences for the teaching, learning and practise of Islam, trained some Muslim students on the mastery of the computer, participated on some radio and T.V. programs to promote Islam like *Connaissance du Islam*, Monday Show and Hello Cameroon in the CRTV; Islam and the Society and *Vitrine de l'Islam* at Canal 2 International. Conferences had also been held in almost all the eight State Universities with topics on Islam. In Ngaoundere, it was in 1998, in Dschang it was in 2000, and in Douala it was in 2002. CAMSU is also working hand in hand with some Muslim International Organization, for the promotion of Islam. The case of WAMY is a clear example (Interview with Mallam Musa and Mallam Ibrahim).

## **17. GREAT FIGURES OF ISLAM IN ANGLOPHONE CAMEROON**

Great figures of Islam in Anglophone Cameroon are those Muslim Clerics from the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon who in one way or another help in the spread, promotion, propagation, teaching and development of Islam. They also help a great deal in the development, implantation and practise of Islam in Anglophone Cameroon. Most of those Islamic great figures mastered very well the Quran and the Hadith. They were spreaded all over the Division and Sub-divisions of Anglophone Cameroon. They were also the brains behind the founding and creation of Islamic Schools, Quranic Schools and Associations in Anglophone Cameroon (Interview with Mallam Musa and Mallam Ibrahim).

In the North West Region, we had Islamic Great Figures like Imam Haruna Garba, Mallam Umaru *Angwan Kwari*, Mallam Hamisu *Sabon Gari*, Bamenda Town, Mallam Musa Sokoto *Sabon Gari*, Bamenda Town, Imam Swaibu Baba Mallam *Angwan Sama*, Mallam Maman Dan Pulo Nkambe, Alhaji Bako Dan Pulo, Mallam Missa, Mallam Yaya, Mallam Amadou, Mallam Gwani, Mallam Sambo, Mallam Bako Galadima, Imam Umaru Wum, Mallam Adamu Bamiyi, Alhaji Adamu Faka, Cheikh Ntangdenyuy, Cheikh Wiysahnyuy Shaidu and Cheikh Mohamed. While in the South West Region, we had Mallam Awudu, Mallam Said, Ngoundal Daouda, Mallam Souley, Mallam Babale Bako, Sarki Mbua Souley and Imam Aboubakar Mohamed (Interview with Mallam Musa and Mallam Moustapha).

## **18. CONCLUSION**

Islamic Association played a very important role in spreading the Islamic religion in Anglophone Cameroon. The very first Islamic Associations in Anglophone Cameroon; that is the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon were created in the late 1980s. Apart from helping to spread Islam, the associations also help in the promotion of some social, economic and religious activities of the Muslim community. Beginning from the early 1990s with the advents of the liberty laws, other Islamic Associations were created in Anglophone Cameroon. Those new Islamic Associations broadened their objectives to include the improvement and construction of Islamic sites, health Centres, schools, health campaigns, helping the vulnerable, resolution of conflict among Muslims and promoting other Islamic activities.

Thanks to the advent and activities of Islamic Associations in Anglophone Cameroon, the Islamic religion is experiencing some growth and advancement. Through those associations, Islamic primary and secondary schools are created and well equipped, Islam and Arabic Language are taught in those schools, Muslim youths who are part of those associations master the religion better, Islamic sites are renovated and improved.

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