

Press Conference of President Maurice KAMTO: CRM declaration on the legislative and municipal elections of february 9th, 2020

Less than a year after its creation in August 2012, the CRM took part in the twin legislative and municipal elections held on September 30th, 2013. These elections were marked by savage and barbaric frauds orchestrated by the CPDM, the party in power, in coaction with the electoral body, ELECAM, the Territorial Administration and the various State services. In practice, it proved that the Electoral Code of December 2012 is tailor-made to allow the current regime to rig the elections and cling to power.

At the end of these twin elections, the CRM, learning from the serious dysfunctional problems that skewed the results to its detriment, tabled a bill proposing the revision of the Electoral Code at the National Assembly in November 2014.

The Standing Orders of the National Assembly stipulates in its Section 39 (5) that, ***“Should a Private Member’s bill not be considered after the two ordinary sessions, such bill shall be automatically considered as of right at the subsequent ordinary session.”*** Unfortunately, until the convening of the electorate on July 9th, 2018 for the presidential election of October 7th, 2018, the CRM’s bill to reform the Electoral Code was not even included in the agenda of the National Assembly, notwithstanding the popular campaigns conducted towards MPs and the national opinion by our party to warn about the risk of a post-election crisis due to the wrong Electoral Code. (I note that it still has not been considered to date).

In this context, the CRM had objective reasons not to present a candidate for the October 2018 presidential election. But our party had, on the one hand, bet on the mobilisation of Cameroonians for a massive vote in favour of change and the barring by the populations of massive fraud; on the other hand, it felt that the Constitutional Council, which had finally been set up after 22 years of patience, should be put to the test in the hope that this body would live up to the legitimate expectations that we are entitled to have from an impartial judge. Moreover, the CRM was driven by the desire not to let Cameroon sink into a political crisis, even as the two English-speaking regions and the Far North Region were plunged into disastrous armed conflicts both

for the populations and for the country. ***Our party took part in this election with the main objectives, in case of victory, to reform the institutions of the country, and in this context the Electoral System; to put an end to the fratricidal war in the North-West and South-West by a political solution based on an inclusive dialogue; and work to put an end to the terrible humanitarian tragedy that has been going on in the Far North since 2014.***

During the presidential campaign, the institutions of the Republic were misled and put at the service of fierce and hateful propaganda against a backdrop of crude tribalism and unprecedented administrative ostracism against the CRM candidate, Maurice KAMTO. ***Despite this, he won the election in the ballot box with a score of 39.74% against 38.47% for Mr Paul BIYA, in spite of the countless extremely serious frauds, irregularities of various kinds, pressure and corruption of voters, pressure and violence on the representatives of the CRM candidate and his coalition members at the polling stations, etc.***

However, following a broadcast post-election dispute led by a Constitutional Council whose members were all at the behest of the regime, Paul BIYA was officially declared the winner. He was declared the winner despite, in particular, the following facts:

- disqualification of several members of the Council for their CPDM membership and/or their violation of the provisions of the law on incompatibilities;
- production by the CRM candidate and his lawyers of 32 false divisional election minutes not signed and covering about 1,800,000 votes counted in favour of the CPDM candidate;
- production of false election minutes, in the course of the hearing, by a prominent member of the Constitutional Council;
- evidence of fraud and other irregularities alleged by the CRM candidate and his coalition;
- demonstration that there was no election in the NOSO Regions.

Faced with this election hold-up assumed by the CPDM regime and the persistence of the war in the NOSO, the CRM and its Allies launched a National Resistance Programme (NRP) at the end of October 2018, with the following major demands:

- the recount of the votes, polling station by polling station, cross-checking minutes with electoral registers;
- the end of the civil war in the North-West and South-West;
- the consensual reform of the electoral system.

It is within the framework of this NRP that on January 26th, on June 1st and June 8th, 2019, the President-Elect, Mr Maurice KAMTO, allied leaders and hundreds of CRM militants and supporters were illegally arrested, while they were demonstrating peacefully, many of whom were brought before the Yaoundé Military Court for crimes, some of which are punishable by death. The objective of the illegal and illegitimate regime was, and undoubtedly remains, to behead the CRM, to eliminate it from the political field and to terrorise the populations.

Although many CRM militants and supporters have been released, including following the communiqué of October 4th, 2019, ***the 1st Vice-President of our party, Mamadou YAKOUBA MOTA and fourteen other militants, including MUTAGAH Sylvanus, are still imprisoned for their unfair conviction as a result of unfair trials following the mutiny at Kondengui Central Prison in Yaoundé on July 22nd, 2019.***

The participation of the CRM in the presidential election of October 7th, 2018 and the broadcast on television of the post-election dispute before the Constitutional Council allowed the Cameroonian people and the international community to see the high level of fraud the current regime has been using to cling to power for almost forty years. ***It is for having realised the decisive role of fraud in the exceptional longevity of this regime, notwithstanding its poor economic, social and security performance, and despite the deep desire of the Cameroonian people for change, that the international community has recommended, as requested by the CRM and many other political parties and civil society organisations in Cameroon, the consensual reform of the electoral system before the organisation of any new elections in Cameroon.***

Long before this unambiguous position of the international community, after the election of October 7th, 2018, in its report entitled “General Report on the Conduct of the 7 October 2018 Presidential Election Revised and Corrected” (Conf. <http://www.elecam.cm/sites/default/files/ELECAM%20REPORT%20ON%2018%20PRESIDENTIAL%20ELECTION%20ANGL%20Revised%20and%20Correct>

[ed%20Web.pdf](#)), even the electoral body, ELECAM, which had nevertheless played a decisive role in the hijacking of Maurice KAMTO's victory, had itself recommended to the Government the reform of the electoral system.

During the famous Major National Dialogue, despite the unthinkable willingness to stifle the participants who were, however, previously selected by the power, ***the Sultan of the Bamoun, Ibrahim MBOMBO NJOYA, CPDM dignitary, courageously and publicly recommended, among others, the revision of the Electoral Code, in order to create conditions for political appeasement and to give content to Cameroonian democracy, even though the regime was locked in the denial of the post-election crisis.***

The CRM believed, until the end, that the regime would pull itself together and remember that the NOSO is part of Cameroon and that the democratic game requires that its rules be agreed by consensual actors. In this sense, we have indicated that although the current electoral context was favourable to our party, we were prepared to support postponement of the election date to resolve the NOSO crisis and reform the electoral system.

On Sunday, November 10th, 2019, deaf to all these calls, Mr Paul BIYA convened the electorate on February 9th, 2020, without having ended the civil war he started three years ago and has been forcefully conducting it for three years in the North-West and South-West, which has already claimed the lives of more than 3,000 Cameroonians, is responsible for over one million internally displaced persons, nearly 40,000 refugees in Nigeria, and immeasurable economic damage. Nor has he reformed the electoral system, even in a symbolic way, stuck in his certainty and the guarantee of impunity with the help of some of his foreign support. Nor did he consider that the resolution of the humanitarian drama triggered by the war against Boko Haram, which curiously leaves indifferent the occupied northern political elites to defend their small positions and privileges, was as important as the holding of the upcoming elections.

By this irresponsible attitude, he gives, once again, the proof that the future of Cameroon, this bruised country which has given him everything, is no more interesting than his stay in power. ***We are entitled to ask ourselves the question, what is the level of destruction of the country that can bring him to pull himself together? Even our 9 months in prison and the sacrifice of many heroic comrades savagely tortured and who will spend the rest of their lives with sequelae will not bring the regime to regain a semblance of lucidity. We cannot leave***

Cameroon in the hands of individuals unable to bring together Cameroonians, eager for power and ready to plunge the country into chaos to keep it.

At a time when national political life is entering a new period of electoral excitement, two major facts are worth highlighting:

– First, all the objective indicators show today that the Cameroonian people are eagerly awaiting the CRM in the twin elections of February 9th, 2020 to do justice after the electoral hold-up of the October 7th, 2018 presidential election of which its candidate was victim by the current regime;

– Second, the CRM is fully aware that, in case of its absence in the upcoming elections, it will not be able, under the conditions of the current Electoral Code, to nominate a candidate for an upcoming presidential election, the electoral law requiring that every candidate for such an election is either presented by a political party with at least one elected official, or, failing that, it gathers at least 300 signatures of personalities, who are known to be largely subservient to the regime. Similarly, the CRM is aware that, in the absence of City Councillors, it will not be able to run for any senatorial and regional elections under the current conditions.

Yet, despite these crucial observations, the CRM HAS DECIDED NOT TO TAKE PART IN THE LEGISLATIVE AND MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS OF FEBRUARY 9TH, 2020.

By taking this serious political decision, the CRM remains faithful to itself in light of current events and the general situation of the country:

– First of all, faithful to the idea that organising elections in Cameroon today, which are more specifically local elections, without restoring peace in the NOSO regions and creating the conditions for the effective participation of the populations of the two regions in the free choice of their representatives in the National Assembly and in the municipal councils, is to give the message that these populations are not Cameroonians and, in doing so, to acknowledge the *de facto* partition of the country.

– Then, faithful to our constant demand of a consensual reform of the electoral system before all new elections in Cameroon, after our bitter experience of the twin elections of September 2013 and the presidential election of October 2018, because with the current electoral system the same causes will inevitably produce the same effects, namely massive fraud, theft of results and a new post-election crisis.

Certainly, the decision to boycott the municipal and legislative elections of February 9th may be misunderstood by a certain opinion. However, everyone must realise that it is dictated by the best interests of the Nation. The CRM's political commitment is not intended to secure a few positions for its members or to give itself some seats in an undemocratic, liberticidal system that is leading the country towards security chaos and economic and social disaster. The CRM was formed to build a new society, a fraternal Republic, a modern State structured on the basis of a transfer of most of the power of the State to the organised entities that compose it and based on the foundation of the Rule of law, effective democracy, respect for fundamental rights and freedoms, inclusive development resulting in shared progress. With this aim in mind, the CRM sees itself as a humble servant of our people and our Nation, over which no individual or partisan interest can prevail.

The CRM is consistent in the assertion that secession cannot not be an option for our compatriots in the North-West and South-West, despite the serious political and institutional injustices they have suffered since 1961. Therefore, it cannot be associated with the de facto or de jure partition of our dear and beautiful country, whether this partition is orchestrated by Mr BIYA through the organisation of a new parody of elections which excludes our compatriots from the NOSO, or sought by secessionists.

As a result of all the above, the CRM is calling on Cameroonians not to vote and to stay at home on February 9th, 2020, so as not to endorse elections that will not bring peace back to the country, nor will they lead to Free and transparent choice by Cameroonians of their representatives in the National Assembly and in municipal councils.

Certainly, the CRM asked its militants and supporters to prepare themselves to take part in the upcoming elections. It was convinced that in a patriotic surge, the current regime would consider the legitimate demands of Cameroonians, even at the last minute. Unfortunately, the regime has locked itself in its usual contempt. The illegitimate power does not even intend to respect a minimum of rules, whether they are those of the electoral code yet already very unsatisfactory or those governing the operation of the Public Administration. The current electoral system is nothing but a political mousetrap.

People carrying a dark project for our people are at work at the highest levels of the State. They are ready to do anything to stay in power. From February 9th, Cameroonians must expect everything.

There is credible information about a plan to physically eliminate the President-Elect, Prof Maurice KAMTO, two allied leaders, Christian PENDA EKOKA and Albert DZONGANG, and some CRM officials. The CRM, while calling on national and international public opinion to act as witnesses of these threats, wishes to tell the regime's extremists, who are both politicians and members of the security system, that these threats have no impact on its determination to offer a political alternative to Cameroonians.

Let's stay mobilised and vigilant! Let's resist!

The international community must be aware that it is the fate of the Cameroonian people that is at play behind this umpteenth provocation of the current regime. It must therefore give itself the means to be alongside the Cameroonian people and not the dictatorship that has been crushing them for almost forty years now.

The CRM wishes to draw the attention of certain world powers, important members of this international community, which, in defiance of democratic values and fundamental human rights, have been oiling the wheels of the BIYA's regime, on the fact that they are conducting a short-sighted policy. These powers act against the interests of the Cameroonian people who, like any other people, aspire to development and well-being. The CRM reminds these powers, prisoners of their immediate interests, that, like any mature people, the Cameroonian people have memories.

The CRM invites opposition political parties, some of which distinguish themselves by opposing the CRM rather than the current nefarious power, not to put themselves on the wrong side of our country's history by endorsing, as in the past, this last election travesty of the BIYA's regime which, considering the political, security, economic and social national context, runs the risk of destroying the last hopes of rebuilding peace in our country.

The CRM invites these political parties, the whole of civil society, organisations and other religious forces to join this party in boycotting the twin election of February 9th, 2020 and resist permanent travesty.

God bless Cameroon!

Yaoundé, the 25th November 2019

The National President

MAURICE KAMTO