

CAMEROONIAN PEOPLE’S CALL ON GOVERNMENT TO STOP HOLDING ELECTIONS PRIOR TO THE END OF THE CIVIL WAR IN THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING REGIONS AND THE EFFECTIVE REFORM OF THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM

After several decades of disputed elections and dialogue of the deaf between the Government on one side, the opposition and civil society on the other, an Electoral Code was adopted in 2012. But, instead of establishing serenity and confidence in the electoral process, this Code has, on the contrary, reinforced mistrust of national electoral system within the political class and the public opinion, because of the lack of consensus in its preparation and vote.

Admittedly, the current Electoral Code entails some improvements in comparison with previous texts, but it must be acknowledged that from its first test on the occasion of the senatorial elections and the 2013 twin legislative and council elections, it revealed numerous gaps and shortcomings as well as some inconsistencies and dysfunctions in its provisions which favoured irregularities along the entire electoral process. The 2018 presidential election held on 7 October 2018 dramatically revealed these multiple shortcomings of the electoral system to the Cameroonians and the world. The municipal and legislative twin elections of 9 February 2020, marked by a historic abstention rate, convinced even the most sceptical of the urgent need to reform the entire electoral system.

In the light of this situation, numerous friendly countries of Cameroon and international organisations as the African Union (AU) and the European Union (EU), including all domestic observers, have recommended the reform of the electoral system to avoid upheavals caused by the protests to election results affecting by critical irregularities.

In that respect, the AU Election Observation Mission, which engaged in the presidential election of 7 October 2018 as observers, recommended that ***“all political and electoral actors to initiate an inclusive political dialogue for promoting political, legal and electoral reforms to consolidate democracy, governance, peace and stability.”***¹

Following the municipal and legislative twin elections of 9 February 2020, which the CRM had called for a boycott due to the civil war in English-speaking regions and the poor electoral system, the AU, once again recommended amending the law governing the electoral process. Indeed, the AU calls on the Cameroonian authorities to ***“review the texts governing the elections to clarify the provisions subject to diverging interpretations and to apply the required implementing instruments.”*** The pan-African organisation also calls on the Cameroonian authorities to “strengthen the Electoral Management Body (ELECAM) independence” to bring it “into conformity with the provisions of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance” and to review “the method of appointment of its members.”

The European Parliament Resolution of 2019/2691(RSP) on Cameroon (Session No. 9), adopted on 18 April 2019, ***“urges the Cameroonian regime to build a genuine representative and living democracy; and to this end, calls on it to convene all political actors to carry out a consensual review of the electoral system to make it a free, transparent and credible process; and also calls for this review to be carried out before any new elections, in order to***

¹ https://au.int/sites/default/files/pressreleases/35142-pr-final_preliminary_statement_cameroon_french.pdf, checked on 19/07/2020.

promote peace and avoid post-electoral crises; invite the European Union to step up its technical assistance to Cameroon in support of its efforts to strengthen electoral procedures in the interests of democracy.²

Even the electoral body, ELECAM, in its general report on the conduct of the presidential election of 7 October 2018, also recommended a reform of our electoral system³.

It is on the basis of its practical electoral experience since 2013 and these various recommendations advocated both at national and international arena, that the CRM published in March 2020 its updated draft law amending certain provisions of the Electoral Code concerning the law on the Constitutional Council and the Constitution. This enriched bill followed the previous bill tabled in the National Assembly in February 2014, which Assembly has never examined it to date, even at the level of its Bureau, in violation of its Rules of Procedure which provide that, after two sessions, the bill is automatically submitted to the Bureau for examination.

In the light of the foregoing, and pursuant to the National Resistance Plan (NRP), which calls, inter alia, for:

- the end of the civil war in the North-West and South-West;
- the consensual reform of the Electoral System before any new election;

the CRM calls on its militants and supporters, the People of the Renaissance and Cameroonians who cherish democracy and peace, in Cameroon and abroad, TO MOVE TO EMPEDE BY ALL PACIFIC WAYS, THE HOLDING OF ANY NEW ELECTIONS, STARTING WITH THE REGIONAL ELECTIONS IN PREPARATION, PRIOR TO THE END OF THE CIVIL WAR IN NOSO AND THE CONSENSUAL REFORM OF THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM.

The CRM formerly holds Mr Paul BIYA, the *de facto* President of the Republic, following the electoral hold-up of 2018, his regime and his militia, which sadly distinguished themselves during the savage repressions of 26 January 2019 and 1 and 8 June 2019, responsible for all the incidents and violence that may occur if, despite this warning, the regime forces to hold any election without meeting the two requirements recalled above. Everyone can acknowledge that these requirements of common sense and good faith are necessary for peace and stability, indispensable for the growth of our country.

The CRM appeals to the individual republican responsibility of the elements of the security and defence forces as well as the magistrates, most of whom have, until now, given the impression that they are protecting the power of Mr Paul BIYA against the people.

The Cameroonian people want to get out of the rhythm of political and electoral violence over an electoral system that guarantees a transparent, fair and sincere vote. They can no longer tolerate that Cameroonians kill other Cameroonians because of the political incompetence of the government.

In the decisive political struggle for the nation that is looming on the horizon, these elements of the security and defence forces, these magistrates and even officials of the Territorial

² https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2019-04-18_FR.html, checked on 19/07/2020.

³ <https://www.elecaml.cm/?q=fr/content/rapport-g%C3%A9n%C3%A9ral-sur-le-d%C3%A9roulement-de-%C3%A9lection-pr%C3%A9sidentielle-du-07-octobre-2018>, checked on 19/07/2020.

Administration will have to choose between ensuring the defence of the rule of law and democracy, fundamental human rights and public freedoms provided for by law, or being instruments of the dictatorship that is crushing our people.

I want to make it perfectly clear that the CRM is not calling for a coup d'état or an armed insurrection, because it is not asking people to give it power. But rather for the conscious political struggle of Cameroonians to free our people. Our call for peace, dialogue and the search for compromise was in vain. This political struggle, which has been postponed until now, must therefore take place if the regime forces to do so. What is the point of allowing the masquerade of elections with known results, which amuse no one, and which we know very well will not resolve any of the multifaceted crises that are hitting our country so hard, to continue?

The CRM takes the people of Cameroon and the international community to witness all its efforts for the democratic devolution of power and the return of peace to our country.

The CRM knows the arrogance and cynicism of Mr BIYA and his regime.

But enough is enough! If, as usual, this regime chooses confrontation and convenes the electorate, even for regional elections, without first having created the conditions for a return to peace in the NOSO and carried out a consensual reform of the electoral system, it will have the people's response.

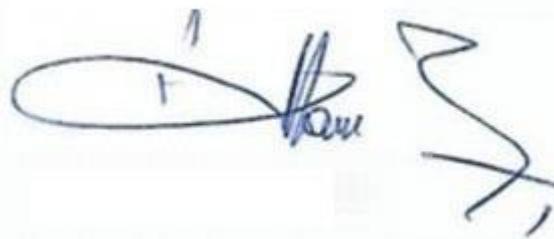
I call on the Cameroonian people to remain mobilised, vigilant, and above all to be ready. I invite them to have in mind in a republican manner but with an unprecedented determination the following slogan: ***“Zero elections without the end of the civil war in the NOSO and the consensual reform of the electoral system!”***

As I told you, I will never betray you!

Long live Cameroon!

Yaoundé, 19 July 2020

The National President



Maurice KAMTO

With copies to:

A/

- United Nations Security Council;
- UN Secretary General;
- Chairperson of the African Union;

- Chairperson of the AU Commission;
- President European Parliament;
- President of the EU Commission;

B/

- Francophonie;
- Commonwealth.

C/

- United States;
- France; -
- Great Britain;
- China;
- Russia;
- Germany;
- Switzerland;
- Israel;
- Canada;
- Nigeria;
- South Africa.