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STATEMENT ON UNOFFICIALISED CONTACTS BETWEEN SEPARATIST LEADERS IN PRISON AND THE GOVERNMENT

The general public learnt, through unofficial channels, that on 2nd July 2020, there was, reportedly, a contact between the Government and English-speaking separatist leaders currently incarcerated in the Main Prison of Yaoundé, led by Mr Sisiku AYUK TABE, in order to enable a ceasefire. This meeting would be the consequence of the call for a "world cease-fire" launched on 23rd March 2020 by the Secretary-General of the United Nations within the framework of the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to the separatist leaders and the government, the embassies of the United States, France and Germany reportedly took part in this meeting as facilitators, as well as a United Nations representative as principal negotiator.

Without prejudice, and beyond all considerations, the CRM is delighted with such an omen. It welcomes the conversion, albeit a very late one, of the Government to the idea that it is through a cease-fire, an inclusive and sincere dialogue, and direct negotiations with the separatist leaders that it is possible to bring about an end to the disastrous civil war it has unleashed, in a totally irresponsible way, for almost four years in the North-West and South-West regions of our country.

Such a contact, if it turned out to be the case, would consecrate the failure, as we predicted, of the famous Grand National Dialogue which, in reality, was a monologue between the CPDM, its allies and the administration.

When the official announcement of the holding of this Grand National Dialogue, from the Main Prison of Yaoundé, on 17th September 2019, I made it known that the CRM would not take part in this meeting, for two reasons: on the one hand, our party could not participate without our prior release, that of the allied leaders, myself and the hundreds of militants and sympathisers arbitrarily arrested and illegally detained for more than seven months for some, following the "Peaceful White March" of the 26th January, 1st and 8th June 2019; on the other hand, due to the organisational conditions of the said Dialogue. In this regard, I expressed strong reservations about the outcome of this political meeting, the discussions of which were deliberately skewed from the outset by the authorities. **One of the major arguments of my reservations was that the real secessionist leaders, both political and armed leaders, were not invited to the discussions and the important question of the form of the State was excluded from the proceedings.**

The official confirmation of this contact would also be proof that the crisis resolution methodology of the Government, whose inconsistencies betray the serious incompetence of those who put forth such methodology, has failed. Finally, it would mean the failure of the

evanescent initiative of Geneva and a host of other initiatives initiated by different competing clans of the regime.

The Anglophone question is a political reality that Cameroon must face, no matter how zealous defenders of the regime are. This Anglophone question is at the heart of the CRM concerns and of my action long before the political crisis and then the current civil war erupted.

The CRM has consistently argued that this issue must be discussed and resolved in a republican dialogue and has appealed to those in charge of the country's affairs today to establish a framework suitable for this dialogue. The CRM is undoubtedly the promoter of this idea of dialogue as the only appropriate approach to tackle this thorny question, as it proposed it in 2012, reiterated it during its meeting in Bamenda on 25th June 2016 and its meeting in Ngaoundéré on 10th December 2016. In the face of the silence of the world vis-à-vis the Cameroonian drama, on Monday, 3rd April 2017, I gave a press conference on the theme "THE ANGLOPHONE CRISIS AND THE CONCERNING WAIT-AND-SEE POLICY OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY". A few days later, on 12th April 2017, Ambassador François Louncény Fall, United Nations Secretary General Special Representative in Central Africa, finally made the trip to Yaoundé to discuss with President Paul BIYA the crisis in the English-speaking regions of the North-West and South-West of Cameroon.

During the October 2018 presidential campaign, in addition to institutional reform, the peaceful resolution of the Anglophone crisis was the second pillar of my political project.

After the presidential election, the results of which were stolen by the constitutional council for the benefit of Mr Paul BIYA, the National Resistance campaign launched by the CRM and its allies aimed, in addition to the NO to the electoral hold-up, the end of the war in the NOSO.

On 27th November 2019, when the Government and its zealous defenders were still imposing support for the war as the only proof of patriotism, I called for:

- an immediate cease-fire;
- the development of a disarmament process,
- the reintegration of insurgent combatants;
- a general amnesty for the benefit of all those involved in this conflict.

- On 17th May 2019, when I was arbitrarily detained with my allied leaders and hundreds of my militants, I released a series of proposals to end the war through political negotiation. These could inspire those involved in the alleged discussions between the Government and the separatist leaders.

They included:

- The immediate measures to restore confidence and peace;
- The immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners without exception, both those arrested in connection with the conflict in the North-West and South-West as well as those of the white marches organised by the CRM, the allied political parties and organisations on 26th January 2019, across Cameroon, as well as the State's dropping of charges against these people;
- The implementation of ways and means for the assessment and, if necessary, the restoration of the health of the prisoners thus released, the reconnection with their families, accompanied by appropriate compensation;
- The declaration of a cease-fire and the withdrawal of the armed forces, the return of the military to barracks (BIR, Armies); only the police and the gendarmerie must be responsible for peacekeeping;
- the cantonment of armed elements engaged against the defence forces;
- the total, immediate and unconditional amnesty of those convicted within the framework of the white marches of 26th January 2019, as well as the discontinuance of proceedings against those arrested in the context of the marches of 27th October 2018, in particular in Douala, whose proceedings had been suspended before being restarted;
- the lifting of any administrative ban on public meetings and demonstrations;
- the free exercise of fundamental rights and freedoms in accordance with the provisions of our Constitution and those of international conventions to which Cameroon is a party;
- Creation of a committee responsible for the Anglophone question, chaired by an English-speaking person with a French-speaking vice-president (personalities chosen after consultation with stakeholders). This commission would include around thirty members equally divided between Anglophones and Francophones, with international observers (UN, AU, EU, USA, France, United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, Canada, Netherlands);

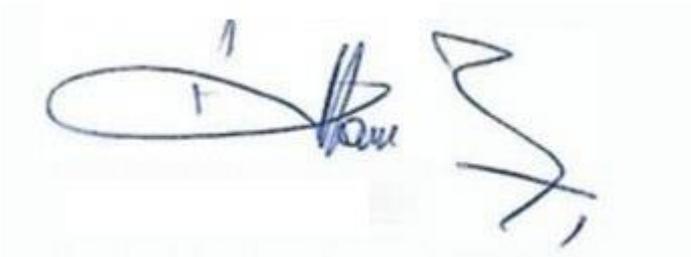
This committee would include the following sub-commissions:

- * Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Sub-Commission;
- * “Peace and Disarmament” Sub-Commission, responsible for creating conditions for the guarantee of peace and DDR (demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration);
- * Sub-Commission on Humanitarian Emergencies, Reconstruction, Repatriation of Refugees and Displaced Persons;
- * Sub-Commission for the preparation of the inclusive dialogue (this sub-commission would follow the organisation of the AII Anglophone Conference which was intended, among other things, to propose the points concerning the Anglophone question to be included in the agenda of the Inclusive National Dialogue, as well as participants representative of English-speaking regions, including those of the diaspora, under the auspices of a moral authority).

If the contacts announced between the English-speaking separatist leaders detained at the Main Prison of Yaoundé and the Cameroonian government were proven, we remain convinced that this plan would open serious prospects for a way out of the crisis and a lasting resolution of armed conflict in the North-West and South-West regions and multifaceted crises which undermine our country.

Yaoundé, 5th July 2020

The National President



Maurice KAMTO