

## PRESS RELEASE

### ON THE MALIAN SITUATION

On August 18th, 2020, international public opinion became aware of the occurrence in Mali of a putsch which led President **Ibrahim Boubakar Keita** to announce his resignation, the dissolution of the government as well as that of the National Assembly. This coup also led to the arrest by its perpetrators of the President and some of his relatives as well as senior officials of his regime, including his Prime Minister.

The coup follows a series of mass demonstrations that have taken the streets of Bamako and Mali. These demonstrations, organised under the leadership of the **M5** movement in particular, demanded, among other things, an end to corruption and electoral fraud, the reform of the Constitutional Council, the resignation of allegedly poorly elected Members of Parliament, of the Prime Minister and even that of President **Ibrahim Boubakar Keita**.

Since the occurrence of this power grab in BAMAKO, we have observed a wave of reactions at the international level, from both state actors and international organisations such as ECOWAS, the African Union, the United Nations, France, the United States, to condemn what has been called an "unconstitutional changeover of power" and demand a return to constitutional order.

The Cameroon Renaissance Movement (CRM) is not a political actor in the sister Republic of Mali. However, the events underway in this country and the reactions to them call out to other African countries, in that the causes of these events and the attitude of the international community are more or less reminiscent of the situation prevailing in other African countries, including Cameroon.

**The CRM reaffirms its constant and renewed attachment to the respect for democratic principles, in particular the requirement to use peaceful and electoral means to gain power.**

However, the CRM would like to draw the attention of the international community to the fact that the proscription of "unconstitutional changeover of power" was not designed against the peoples, the true holders of sovereignty. This principle was designed to protect democracy and not dictators who, as soon as they come to power, destroy the democratic mechanisms of access to power. It aims to prohibit the overthrow of a power that works democratically and meets the multifaceted aspirations of the people. Also, the international community cannot give the impression of protecting despotic, corrupt leaders, architects of bad governance that prevents the development of African countries. It must also hear the voice of the people on how they are governed.

It is clear that the peoples are often left to their fate by this international community when their own rulers become their tormentors. They are left to their own devices when they denounce, including through giant peaceful demonstrations, the constitutional manipulations by certain leaders to remain in power against the will of the majority of the population; the enactment of tailored electoral codes to perpetuate their regime through elections marred by massive fraud; the establishment of electoral bodies and constitutional courts all in the pay of the leaders and political parties in power. In this regard, some leaders do not hesitate to reject the decisions of competent courts such as the African

Court on Human and Peoples' Rights and the ECOWAS Court of Justice, without eliciting the slightest reaction, let alone sanctions by the African Union and the entire international community.

There is need to recall at this point that totalitarianism, the worst form of dictatorship, was implemented in Nazi Germany by a regime resulting from democratic elections! Likewise, the Apartheid regime proceeded from a democratically elected government and well represented the "constitutional order" of the day in South Africa. This was also the situation of the racist regime in Southern Rhodesia.

The basic question that arises is whether the international community can support an unjust and illegitimate constitutional order and condemn its overthrow without disregarding the fundamental rights of citizens and peoples. The right to resist oppression is recognised in international law and various peoples of Europe used it yesterday and are using it today, with the understanding and even the support of the international community.

If the seizure of power by force, as is currently the case in Mali, is inevitably and effectively an unconstitutional changeover of government, the foiling of the democratic changeover of power and the maintenance in power against the will of the sovereign people are no less logics of unconstitutional perpetuation of government which must be condemned and sanctioned with even more vigour by the international community.

Article 23 paragraph 4 of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG) clearly consecrates this position and therefore considers the **“electoral hold-ups”**, like that perpetrated in Cameroon following the October 2018 presidential election, as a real coup d'état, too. This is the position of African positive law today on the question of unconstitutional changeovers of power.

The international community, and especially the African Union, notably through its Peace and Security Council, in accordance with the provisions of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) and those of Article 25 of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG), is called upon for more consistency. They would gain credibility if they were genuinely involved in all types of "unconstitutional changeovers" of government and stood firmly with the people and citizens in the face of the violation by those in power of their fundamental rights and freedoms.

I must, in that respect, express my disappointment at the inaction of the international community in the face of the massacres perpetrated for almost four years in the context of the armed conflict in the English-speaking regions of the North-West and South-West of Cameroon as well as its lack of will to bring the current leadership to put an end to this absurd and disastrous civil war, notwithstanding the thousands of deaths and the continuing violations of international law it engenders.

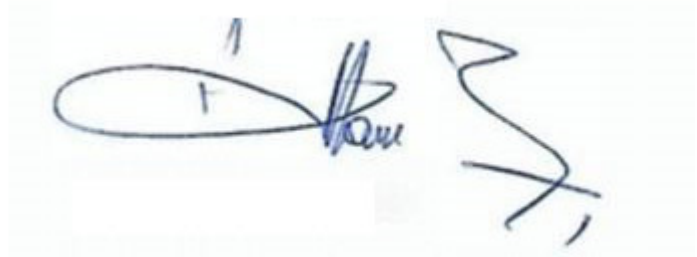
The condemnations of the international community seem to focus on the consequences and not on the causes of the "unconstitutional changeovers" of power, refusing to prescribe the consensual establishment of the rules of the democratic game in order to avoid recourse to such changeovers of power. It is high time to move beyond the mantra around certain concepts and help people tackle the root causes of the evils that plague our States.

It remains to be hoped that, following this coup, visibly supported by a large segment of the Malian population, the conditions for a real democratisation, protective of the rights and aspirations of the

Malian people are put in place, in order to guarantee the return to a normal situation where a civil power will be at the service of the people. The people of Mali need to be supported in this direction and not be stifled by reckless sanctions.

As far as they are concerned, the CRM and the National Resistance will always stand alongside the Cameroonian people in their struggle for their national liberation, shared progress and the construction of a State that is subject to the rule of law, a State that is modern, solid, democratic and radiant at the international level.

### **The National President**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized loop on the left and a more complex, angular structure on the right.

**Maurice KAMTO**

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