



STATEMENT ON

THE REGIONAL ELECTIONS OF 6 DECEMBER 2020*

The Cameroon Renaissance Movement (CRM), in due time, repeatedly informed national and international public opinion that it would not take part in the legislative and municipal elections this year, in the absence of a consensual reform of the electoral system and the political resolution of the Anglophone crisis, starting with the end of the fratricidal war which is ravaging the North-West and South-West regions of the country.

In line with its genetic disdain, the Yaoundé regime did not even consider it necessary to pay the slightest attention to these requirements of common sense and convened the electorate for 9 February 2020. Drawing the necessary consequences, the CRM launched a call for a boycott of the twin legislative and municipal elections of 9 February 2020, overwhelmingly supported by the Cameroonian people. The historically low and unprecedented participation rate made all these elections and therefore their results illegitimate. History will remember, in particular, that despite a disastrous and regrettable civil war from all points of view, resulting in, among other things, many deaths and massive displacement of populations outside the English-speaking North-West and South-West, the CPDM regime did not hesitate to fabricate elected officials and majorities there, on the blood of Cameroonians.

Far from learning the lessons of this disapproval, the regime organised, on 6 December, the so-called regional "elections". This other attempt to force it through, supposed to complete the decentralisation which, although enshrined in the Cameroon Constitution for 24 years, has never really started, further reveals the autocratic nature of the regime of Mr Biya while strengthening its monolithic character inherited from the one-party period.

The conduct of these regional "elections" has also shown that, despite its incantations, the regime remains incapable of, or little concerned with, ensuring the security of Cameroonian citizens. The 6th of December 2020 saw the murder of a municipal councillor in Widikum, just weeks after the killings at the Mother Francisca International Bilingual Academy school complex in Kumba and other abuses that followed.

As it stands, there is little to be expected from the regional councils resulting from the 6 December poll. First, in view of the upsurge in armed activities in the North-West and South-West regions since the famous Major National Dialogue which announced a special status for these two regions, everything suggests that these regional elections cannot and will not resolve the Anglophone crisis. Then, in addition to serving as a pseudo-democratic dress for the benefit of the few foreign friends of the current regime, the regional councils will remain subservient

* Redistributed for technical reasons

to the system that created them and unable to meet the expectations of the Cameroonian populations from whatever region they are supposed to represent and serve. In fact, the central government must agree, in practice, to transfer to the regions the resources necessary for carrying out their development programmes. Because in order to control the regions, the government will want to control the resources which, moreover, are becoming scarce and which central managers will not want to lose, as the experience of municipal decentralisation has shown.

In short, the 6 December 2020 farce will in no way change the daily life of the Cameroonian people, whose deep aspirations will clearly not be realised under the current dictatorial regime. The Cameroonian people aspire:

- to peace throughout the national territory, with as a priority the resolution of the Anglophone crisis, in particular by the immediate establishment of a ceasefire and the opening of a genuine inclusive national political dialogue;
- to acquire legitimate political leaders; this requires a consensual reform of the electoral system, which, as it stands, guarantees massive fraud and the perpetuation in power of illegitimate leaders, the main cause of post-election tensions and crises in our country.

Unfortunately, under Mr Biya, to demand that no more blood of Cameroonians in the North-West and South-West be shed and to peacefully demand that the fundamental rights of Cameroonians to equip themselves with legitimate political leaders be respected now constitute crimes among the most serious of our legal system, since such claims can lead to prosecutions exposing to death penalty before military courts.

Thus, despite the exemplary nature of the 22 September 2020 peaceful marches, the repressive forces of the autocratic regime in Yaoundé used force against the peaceful demonstrators, and have since carried out a political cleansing characterised by kidnappings, arbitrary detention and even the sentencing to prison terms of CRM officials and other militants, even of allied political parties and organisations. Were it not for the dramatic nature of things, one would have noted the irony of the fact that the "beggar of peace" coupled with "purveyor of democracy", brought Cameroon back to the darkest pages of political repression of the history of our country. The demonstration of the barbarism that surrounded these peaceful marches of 22 September, combined with the sequestration, with large reinforcements of heavily armed police and gendarmes, of the CRM leader and his household for nearly three months, therefore had the sole purpose of allowing to the regime to hold these sham elections and to declare victory over the so-called "insurrectionary" forces! Pitiful spectacle and poor satisfaction! Cameroon's image is smeared again.

Cameroonians must be aware that with state violence linked to the peaceful marches of 22 September, the dictatorial regime in Yaoundé has just moved to a new level which opens the way to totalitarianism: from now on, Cameroonians can be arbitrarily arrested, cruelly tortured, thrown in prison without hesitation, according to "the threat they represent for society", as revealed in the Government Communiqué dated 8 December. It's a shame!

Arbitrariness and illegality based on repressive forces blinded by hatred and subservient and wild justice will triumph for a while but will not be victorious.

We demand the immediate and unconditional release of

all political prisoners who are honest Cameroonian citizens arrested before, during and after the peaceful marches of 22 September 2020 and arbitrarily and illegally detained since then in various prisons and other unknown places of detention in the country; including Professor Alain FOGUE TEDOM, CRM National Treasurer, Mr Olivier BIBOU NISSACK, Advisor and spokesperson for the CRM National President, Mr Pascal ZAMBOUE, CRM Coordinator in charge of Development and Inspection.

The misery of Cameroonians in all regions, the non-satisfaction of their basic social needs of access to drinking water, electricity and basic health care, the economic decline of our country marked in particular by the unravelling of the industrial fabric allow no respite in our political struggle. Until we reach our destination, the National Resistance will continue and intensify; because nothing has ever stopped and will stop a people standing, marching for their liberation. The road may seem long; but victory is certain. We must remain mobilised more than ever.

Done at Yaoundé, 9 December 2020

The National President

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'M' followed by a series of loops and a final flourish.

Maurice Kamto