



## **STATEMENT**

### **On the betrayal of the People by Cameroonian MPs complicit in the war in the North-West and South-West Regions**

On 17 February 2021, forty members of the US Congress wrote to the President of the United States of America and his Secretary of Homeland Security, requesting the implementation of measures to prevent the repatriation to Cameroon of some of our compatriots who are currently in an irregular situation on American soil. The measures requested from the U.S. administration would be activated under the *Temporary Protected Status* or the *Deferred Enforced Departure*, two instruments developed to ensure the protection of foreign nationals living in the United States "from civil, political and humanitarian crises in their home country that make it unsafe for them to return" or "if conditions in the[ir] country make return unsafe". In support of their initiative, the American parliamentarians illustrate the situation in Cameroon as follows: "[a] humanitarian crisis and civil war characterized by massive internal displacement, war crimes, and shortages of essentials like water, food, healthcare, and housing [...]"; civilians caught in the middle of multiple and complex armed conflicts between English-speaking separatists, the government and Boko Haram; "an extensive and troubling catalogue of human rights abuses against Cameroonian civilians, including extrajudicial killings, torture, arbitrary detention, and targeted violence against vulnerable populations such as children and members of the LGBTQ+ community."

In a correspondence dated 22 February 2021, some members of the National Assembly of Cameroon felt they had to speak out against the granting to our compatriots by the United States Government of the protection measures envisaged, on the grounds that the "extremely negative description of Cameroon" made by some "misguided" American parliamentarians could be false and distorted. In the opinion of the MPs in question, the Cameroon referred to by the members of the US Congress "does not exist ... [but] is a figment of the misinformed views of certain individuals who are determined to cause further destabilization in the whole Central African Region".

The Cameroon Renaissance Movement (CRM) finds regrettable and irresponsible the views expressed by the group of Cameroonian parliamentarians concerned whose approach gives the measure of the state of collapse of the foundation of values on which our young nation wanted to build itself. Indeed, what can we say about "representatives of the people" who, not satisfied with doing nothing to stop the continuous deterioration of the standard of living of the population and doing everything possible to kill all hope for the youth, notably by throwing the latter into exile, are pushing their cynicism to the limit by demanding the repatriation to Cameroon of some of our compatriots, and consequently that they be denied humanitarian protection.

The CRM notes that a concerted approach of this nature has never been initiated by the Cameroonian MPs in question, to demand a parliamentary debate on the fratricidal war that is destroying the North-West and South-West Regions and endangering the destiny of our country as a united Nation. We did not see such "solidarity" around their colleague, the Honourable Joseph Wirba, when he courageously spoke out on the Anglophone question at the tribune of the National Assembly a few years ago. For the Cameroonian parliamentarians concerned, the civil war in the North-West and South-West Regions does not exist, unless in the opinions of these MPs, these regions are no longer part of Cameroon. The hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons, victims of this fratricidal war would just be the imagination of distraught individuals. One can now understand why

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the issue of this absurd war in the North-West and South-West Regions has never been debated either in the National Assembly or in the Senate. The unbearable episodes of this dirty war, including Ngarbuh, Menka-Pinyin, Muyuka, Kumba, Mautu and others, do not seem to change the prevailing autism and blindness: even the "representatives of the People" do not see the People suffering.

We also better understand the complicit silence of parliamentarians of the CPDM regime and its allies in the face of arbitrary arrests and detentions, submission to acts of torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, to which CRM militants have been subjected for several years, for having demonstrated peacefully (on 26 January, 1 and 8 June 2019 and 22 September 2020) to demand an end to the war in the North-West and South-West Regions. In doing so, the group of concerned Cameroonian parliamentarians provides a further illustration of its indifference to the suffering of Cameroonians. In any case, it confirms their complicity in the serious violations of fundamental human rights and their support for acts of barbarism carried out by the state apparatus, all institutions combined, as reported in the first **CRM Report on Human Rights and Governance, which covers the year 2020**.

Our "People's Representatives" obviously live in another country, when they are bold enough to claim that "Cameroon readily issues travel documents and passports to its citizens."! Yes, when they are not deprived of passports, many of our compatriots, especially from the diaspora, for whom returning to Cameroon has become dangerous for many years, as they are on file by the Cameroonian authorities because of their political opinions, or their alleged political views.

The CRM's mission is to restore the rule of law and to ensure that Cameroon adopts and respects a true national charter of human rights and democracy. It promotes and defends the fundamental rights of all Cameroonians wherever they are. The CRM welcomes all initiatives that go in this direction, including from countries and institutions that take the measure of the suffering and distress of the Cameroonian people and come to their aid. Our people will know how to recognize their friends.

Yaoundé, 27 February 2021