



CALL OF 1ST MARCH 2021

**FOR THE MEETING OF
POLITICAL PARTIES, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS, INCLUDING TRADE
UNIONS, RELIGIOUS ORGANISATIONS,
PROFESSIONAL BODIES, IN PARTICULAR THE BAR ASSOCIATION,
INTELLIGENTSIA, DIASPORA, CITIZENS
FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO
A CONSENSUAL MODIFICATION OF THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM**

In the wake of its participation in the twin legislative and municipal elections of 30 September 2013, organised only a few months after its creation in August 2012, the Cameroon Renaissance Movement (CRM) produced a comprehensive report on the necessary reforms of the Electoral Code, in light of the serious shortcomings revealed by its implementation on the occasion of the said elections. It addressed this report to the Presidency of the Republic, the Government, ELECAM as well as various other national and international institutions by traceable means.

Through its MP in the National Assembly, the CRM subsequently submitted, in November 2014, a bill to the National Assembly to reform the Electoral Code. This bill has never been submitted to the Bureau of the National Assembly, in violation of the Standing Orders of the National Assembly.

After the disastrous presidential election of October 2018, which displayed the full extent of the flaws of the current ELECTORAL SYSTEM, the CRM launched on 26 January 2019 a vast peaceful campaign to demand, among other things, a consensual reform of the said SYSTEM. This campaign, which took the form of peaceful marches, prompted a barbaric repression, leading to the arbitrary arrest and illegal detention of the CRM President, leaders of allied parties and organisations, as well as hundreds and supporters across the country, who have been subjected to torture and inhuman and degrading treatment.

The regime having turned a deaf ear to all calls of reform by a large number of Cameroonian political actors, by ELECAM itself, as well as by various international bodies, the CRM and a coalition of political parties and civil society organisations launched a call for new peaceful marches on 22 September 2020 demanding the end of the war in the English-speaking regions of the North-West and South-West and a consensual reform of the electoral system.

An unbridled repression once again fell on peaceful demonstrators: as on 26 January, 1 and 8 June 2019, hundreds of CRM militants and sympathisers were arbitrarily arrested, tortured by elements of the security forces and thrown into prison where they face, as in 2019, the Military Courts.

It is in this context that the CRM learnt through the media that ELECAM would be working on amending the Electoral Code. Is it up to ELECAM to initiate a reform of the Electoral Code? Under the law, its mission, it should be recalled, is to organise and manage the electoral process in Cameroon. If need be, it is sufficient for ELECAM to point out, as it did after the 2018 presidential election, the need to revise the electoral legislation, which this body is responsible for implementing. Or to give a technical opinion if it is required by the participants in the political reform process. Otherwise, it would lose its nature and role as a technical body in electoral matters, and would be, so to speak, judge and party.

With regard to the consensual reform of the electoral legislation, it is important to stress that it must go beyond the Electoral Code itself, and cover all legislation applicable to elections in our country, be it the Constitution or texts relating to the Constitutional Council, the census and the distribution of seats of MPs in proportion to population, etc. In all countries of real democracy, the electoral law is a consensual endeavour, insofar as it sets the rules of the democratic game and requires the consensus of the players in the game; anything else being the text on the division of electoral constituencies for which the government of the day retains its room for manoeuvre.

Is it necessary to recall that there is a link between institutional reforms, in this case the consensual reform of the electoral system, and the return to lasting peace in the English-speaking regions at war? Indeed, respect for the democratic choice by the populations of the regions in question - as in the rest of Cameroon - of their representatives in institutions at all levels, through a free and transparent electoral system will be a guarantee of credibility and an important factor in the return of political confidence between the populations and the central government.

In order to obtain from the regime in power the political openness that is indispensable to prevent our country from repeated post-electoral crises and unrest, the CRM remains convinced that a gathering of all the recipients of this call around this issue of general national interest is necessary. It is nothing less than to provide our country with a transparent and credible electoral system, which will enable our people to freely give themselves legitimate leaders, and our country to resolutely devote itself to the necessary efforts to modernise itself, solve the problem of endemic youth unemployment, raise the standard of living of Cameroonians and position itself as one of the locomotives of our continent.

As early as 2015, through individual correspondence, I contacted all the opposition political parties so that we could work together to draw up a common draft for the revision of the Electoral Code. Without any follow-up. In August 2020, I contacted the leaders of various opposition political parties and civil society organisations by the same means, with a view to pooling forces in order to obtain concrete actions to resolve the armed conflict that is ravaging

the NOSO and to consensually reform our electoral system. The approach, although it elicited encouraging reactions, did not lead to the expected result.

Once again, I extend my hand to all the recipients of this Call, so that together we can prepare this reform. **I propose the organisation of a Conference for the preparation of a JOINT DRAFT REFORM OF THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM**, in a venue that we can agree upon together. I am already informing you of the availability of the CRM national headquarters, located behind *Dispensaire d'Odza* in Yaoundé. The CRM remains open to any other venue for the meeting. The Conference in question could set up a JOINT TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT to prepare the COMMON DRAFT.

It is highly desirable that the First Session of the Conference be held without delay to launch the process.

For follow-up to this Call, please contact the secretariat of the CRM: Tel (WhatsApp): 677 50 00 77.

Yaoundé, 1st March 2021

The National President



Maurice Kamto