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SAD ANNIVERSARY.

Statement on the political and judicial hostage-taking of CRM militants and sympathisers following the Peaceful Marches of 22 September 2020

On 22 September 2020, the people of Cameroon took to the streets in massive numbers to express, through peaceful marches, their disapproval of the fratricidal war that is bleeding Cameroon in the North-West and South-West regions, as well as the maintenance of an iniquitous electoral system that makes democratic expression impossible, and to demand that light be shed on the corruption and blatant attacks on public wealth that have been amplified, particularly in the context of preparations for the 2019 African Cup of Nations.

In response to this peaceful expression of their constitutional right by their fellow citizens, Mr. BIYA and his regime reacted, as usual, with arrogance and unequalled violence revealing an assumed barbarity of the entire state apparatus. Thus, peaceful demonstrators were brutalised, tortured, mutilated and, for 556 of them, illegally and arbitrarily detained. On 22 September 2020, journalists were also victims of torture by the repressive forces deployed by the regime. One year later, 124 of these compatriots are still languishing in the regime's jails, of whom 116, all civilians, are appearing before military courts on charges that are as empty as they are ridiculous in some respects, such as: attempted revolution, rebellion, lack of a national identity card, aggravated assembly, attempted insurrection in coercion, conspiracy, contempt for the President of the Republic; etc.

Throughout this year of illegal torture and detention of these heroic compatriots who demonstrated peacefully to not only denounce the wrongs of the regime but also to propose solutions to the ills that are deconstructing the nation, the Cameroonian judiciary has unabashedly shown itself to be only one of the instruments of the regime's repressive apparatus. Thus, in addition to the institutionalised political repression against the Cameroon Renaissance Movement (CRM), which has been systematically applied since its creation, the regime is now assuming a shameless judicial repression in which all the fundamentals of the institution of justice in a democracy are blithely flouted.

Thus, at a turning point in the history of our country where the judicial institution was able to contribute to the strengthening of the rule of law and democracy in Cameroon by making the force of law prevail, a certain Cameroonian justice system has consciously taken up the cause of the law of force and injustice, by setting itself up as a pillar of dictatorship. History will remember this. History will also remember that it is with the complicity of a certain justice system that torture centres, worthy of the worst dictatorships, carry out their dirty work in the heart of the capital and our cities. It is therefore to the credit of the Sylvain SOUOP Lawyers' Collective, constituted to represent our compatriots who are political hostages of the regime, to have decided, on 9 September 2021, to denounce in a professional manner this dramatic situation by putting down their robes, thus refusing to become accomplice of the parody of justice in display in Cameroon.

1/2

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To all our compatriots, political hostages, and victims of the repressive apparatus of a declining dictatorship, to their families, I reiterate my total solidarity and encouragement in this new ordeal on the road to the liberation of our country. I once again demand the immediate and unconditional release of all those illegally arrested and detained before, during and after the peaceful marches of 22 September 2020. I reiterate the determination of the CRM to continue to accompany them, while awaiting their release which will inevitably come, just like the victory of our common struggle for the Renaissance of Cameroon.

22 September 2021

The National President

Maurice KAMTO