

STATEMENT OF THE CAMEROON RENAISSANCE MOVEMENT ON THE SERIOUS THREATS TO RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS IN CAMEROON

The Cameroon Renaissance Movement was informed of the two letters from the Minister of territorial administration, dated 11 November 2022 and addressed to the Governor of the Littoral Region.

One letter concerns abusive language and defamation against the Head of State and institutions of the Republic; and the other relates to the handling of communications bodies and media professionals ".

In the first letter, a complaint is made against a CRM official, in this case Mr. Engelbert Lebon DATCHOUA, for having held insulting or even defamatory remarks against the Head of State and institutions of the Republic, stating that:

“Mr. BIYA is one of the bad luck that Cameroon has known” during a programme on the Equinox Television on Thursday 3rd November 2022 dwelling on the 40 years of the New Deal. Mr. DATCHOUA declared twice, with appropriate gestures, in the concerned section of the programme, as everyone can see from the circulating video, that the words in question were not his and that he put them in quotation marks.

Despite these customary precautions in the written or audiovisual communication when you don't want to bear responsibility in relation to the quoted remarks, the MINAT estimated that this is serious facts, and which are moreover likely to constitute violations of criminal law; and then instructed the Governor:

1. To report to the National Council of the Communication, for usual investigations, and take, where applicable, the appropriate sanctions against the media professionals concerned;
2. To proceed with the hearing of Mr. Engelbert Lebon DATCHOUA and Mr. Serge Alain OTTOU as part of an administrative investigation at the behest of the SDO of Wouri;
3. To invite the promoter of the concerned audiovisual media to suspend Mr. Engelbert Lebon DATCHOUA from participating in their programme while

investigations are carried out under his supervision

4. To invite the said promoter to a better supervision of its panelists, in order to avoid such excesses intolerable for him.

In the second letter, the MINAT prescribes the Governor to henceforth take his responsibilities in order to enforce the ethical rules inherent in the exercise of the profession of journalism by media bodies and professionals, carrying out where required, appropriate procedures by reporting to the National Communication Council and conducting administrative inquiries with systematic transmission of legal proceedings relating thereto to the competent judicial authorities.

The analysis of these two letters leads us to at least two observations:

Foremost, by namely mentioning an official of the Cameroon Renaissance Movement, the Minister of territorial administration is actually targeting the party that the government is trying to all its strength, to make it appear as a party acting against the law and inciting popular revolt, according to his own words.

Indeed, the comments made by Mr. Engelbert Lebon DATCHOUA, that he took care to put between quotation marks, were held in recently several times both in the written and audiovisual media, without ever leading to any recrimination from the government. This double standard sufficiently proves that it is not a concern to protect the President of the Republic that arouses the ire of the Minister in question but his deep hatred of the CRM and the freedom of thought and opinion, and perhaps also the desire to remind the prince about happy times, after a brief period of break.

Second, the power in place brings the country back to the darkest hours in its history, taking responsibility for the denial of rights and freedoms individual as well as collective, civil and political, including freedom of the press, freedom of expression and opinion, and even freedom of thinking.

We are witnessing a return to the era of laws on subversion and on press censorship.

Faced with this serious danger to which the country is now confronted, the Cameroon renaissance Movement would like to:

- denounce in the strongest possible terms the authoritarian deviation and the Cameroon government's ignorance of rights and freedoms contained both in national legislation and in international legal instruments duly ratified by our country;
- Ask the government to strictly protect the civil and political rights of all Cameroonians, this being not a favour, but requirement of compliance by a State with its commitments and the dignity of its citizens ;
- Request to stop the prescribed investigations by the Minister of territorial administration that

nothing justifies, unless it is the beginning of a purge that will not stop soon, so many are his comments which, assessed by the same yardstick, are more excessive than those made by Mr. DATCHOUA during his intervention on Equinoxe TV.

- Reaffirm the CRM's choice of a change in peace and through the ballot box;
- Express its full support to the Equinoxe executive concerned.

Yaoundé, 17 November 2022.

Maurice KAMTO

National President