

## 2022 END OF YEAR MESSAGE FROM THE CRM NATIONAL PRESIDENT Mr MAURICE KAMTO

Cameroonians, my dear compatriots!

The year 2022 which is coming to an end has put our country to the test and announces an even more difficult year 2023. I shall not paint a detailed picture of the disastrous economic and social situation in which the regime in place is sinking our country, having drawn your attention to this situation in various communications during the year. Suffice it to recall that :

- for more than three years our country has again been placed under the financial supervision of the IMF, as during the dark twenty years of the structural adjustment plans;
  - the deficit of our trade balance has continued to widen, with a spectacular drop in the volume of certain export products such as bananas, and coffee, to stand at more than minus 1400 billion CFAF;
  - State debt continued to soar to reach almost 44% of Gross Domestic Product today;
  - the unprecedented increase in taxes and duties within the framework of a budget crisis which sacrifices the most vulnerable groups of the population ;
  - the cost of living has become unbearable for most of our compatriots, with a surge in inflation and the increase in the prices of all products, leading to a phenomenon of violently felt high cost of living, in a country where the minimum wage is less than 37,000 CFAF while it is between 60,000 and 75.000 CFAF. I would like to recall that there has been no general increase in wages for several decades in our Cameroon;
- No part of our economic, political, social and cultural life is doing well. You know it, because you feel it in your everyday life.

The year 2022 began with the scandalous criminal convictions before military courts of our comrades, members and sympathizers of the Cameroon Renaissance Movement (CRM), our party, in expeditious political trials at the end of December 2021. The only crime of these Cameroonian citizens, PEACEFUL MARCHERS, is to have dared, within the framework of public demonstrations duly declared and not prohibited by any competent authority, to peacefully express their political disagreements with the power in place. They had been arbitrarily arrested, tortured and illegally sentenced along with dozens of other members and sympathizers of our party. One of them, the young Rodrigue NDAGUEHO KOUFET lost his life in the prime of life, in New Bell prison in Douala, following culpable medical negligence and in inhuman conditions of detention. May his soul rests in peace. Let him know, from where he is, that we will never betray his fight for a free Cameroon where justice, human dignity and the fundamental rights of citizens are respected.

With the year 2022, the civil war that has been destroying lives, the economy, national cohesion in the English-speaking regions of the North-West and South-West since the end of 2017 has registered an additional year. Every year that goes by without this conflict being resolved is one year too long.

Too many of our compatriots, civilians and soldiers, died in this fratricidal conflict. It is high time that all efforts be combined at the national and international levels to bring about a definitive political solution. Our populations in the regions concerned aspire to peace and

tranquillity to run their lives, and our country to establish national cohesion and vigorously pursue its march towards global development and shared progress.

The year 2022 is also the year in which the phenomena of insecurity have worsened, linked in particular to the difficult cohabitation between certain communities in our country, to traffic, to the social excesses caused by the growing precariousness of the poorest strata of our population, particularly in urban areas, and the lack of an adequate response to the chronic problem of youth unemployment and the social exclusion it engenders. This is how we witnessed with sadness the deadly clashes, in particular between Arab Choa and Mousgoum in the Logone-et-Chari division, the multiplication of land and air traffic accidents, with the crash of a plane in Bibey in Upper Sanaga, food insecurity in particular in the Far North region, border incursions, the explosion of the so-called "Microbes" phenomenon which sows terror in cities, especially in Douala, the phenomenon of paedophilia which destroys our children, including in schools, rape, violence against women, and I am probably forgetting some. These multiple facets of insecurity have revealed the notorious incompetence of the Government to guarantee Cameroonians the tranquillity necessary for their development. To the families who have lost loved ones in this explosion of insecurity, I extend my sincere condolences. To the injured and various victims, I wish them a speedy recovery and a lot of courage.

The year 2022 is finally the year of the fortieth anniversary of the accession to power of the President of the Republic in office. We can take no pride in such a political reality in a republic that prides itself on being democratic. The fortieth anniversary of a man at the head of a State in which there are so many Well educated persons , where the dynamism of youth is envied, and where young people under 35 represent more than 60% of the population is in itself proof that Cameroon is a political anomaly. This longevity which is part of a logic of self-preservation of power, in the pride of proving – but to who? and why ? – that we are there because we “can” lead over the years to the ruin of the country.

Even among its most ardent defenders, we see today that such a monarchical confiscation of power has gradually installed our country in an undemocratic governance, resistant to free, transparent and credible elections; in the temptation to organize a dynastic succession through a transmission of power by mutual agreement ignoring the choice of the sovereign people, or even of the Constitution; a family, gregarious and opaque management of public affairs.

Together, let us solemnly warn all those here or elsewhere who would be tempted by such an adventure. Cameroonians, particularly the People of Change, will not accept that anyone transposes into their country irresponsible political experiences that are totally disrespectful of the dignity of peoples. Such experiments, which we would like to impose as an appropriate practice and to generalize in Central Africa, correspond neither to the sociological and political complexity of Cameroon, nor to our history, nor to the size of our population and current level of political culture of our people. The People of Change works for a peaceful and democratic change of power, through the ballot box, and in accordance with the Constitution in force in our country.

Is it necessary to repeat it ? It will be infinitely less costly, for countries that claim to be friends of Cameroon and for the international community, to act energetically to achieve a consensual

revision of the Electoral Code and the organisation of fair and transparent elections, than to manage a crisis linked to rigged elections, or to fund useless peacekeeping operations costing of billions of dollars, if by misfortune things went awry.

During the installation meeting of officials of our party in Littoral II in Nkongsamba, on 8 October 2022, I made public more explicitly the decision of the CRM Directorate that our party will take part in all future elections organised in our country. This decision is the result of careful political and tactical reflection. The enthusiastic reception reserved for this announcement by the militants and sympathisers of our party and beyond is proof of the symbiosis that exists between the CRM leadership and the wide range of Cameroonians who have for years followed the activities of our party on the national political scene. It is a source of satisfaction and encouragement. I can assure them that the CRM is working to live up to the expectations of Cameroonians on the occasion of the 2025 elections, or before.

In view of these upcoming elections, the CRM calls, as since its creation, all the forces of change, civil society, intellectuals, the diaspora to pool efforts to put an end, through the ballot box, to the CPDM regime which has plagued the country for decades. According to us, the minimum common programme on which we should urgently focus our efforts comprises three main points:

- firstly, consensual reform of the Electoral Code;
- secondly, the rejection, without the slightest ambiguity, of the succession by mutual agreement at the helm of the State, whether dynastic or otherwise;
- thirdly, a common call to the international community not to make in Cameroon the same mistakes with tragic consequences as in certain neighbouring countries while supporting our country in its process of change of power or democratic transition.

Cameroonians, my dear compatriots!

For ten years, ELECAM, which by its composition may be taken for a subsection of the ruling party, the CPDM, has been lying to Cameroonians. This institution created to guarantee the credibility of the elections in Cameroon multiplies its manoeuvres to distort the real figures of the number of voters in the country. It engages in electoral obstruction against new registrants deemed "suspicious" because they are unknown to the battalions by party-state officials. To demonstrate it, I will have to present the figures ; I therefore ask your full attention, because it might be a little bit forbidding.

In an interview given to the government newspaper, Cameroon Tribune, on 16 January 2013, by the very first Director-General of ELECAM, we learned that the number of Cameroonian voters consolidated in 2012 was 7,008,704; that on 12 January 2013, 2 811,921 new voters had just been registered; that on the basis of the colossal human, material and financial resources already available on that date, a projection of 350,000 registered voters per week was planned. Moreover, the Director-General of ELECAM announced that with 1,200 kits already acquired at the time, his administration had set itself the goal of registering 7 million new voters. As of 31 August 2017, to everyone's surprise, the same ELECAM revealed that Cameroon had only 6,500,000 registered voters. This new figure established a regression of 508,704 registered voters compared to the 7,008,704 voters deemed consolidated in 2012. During the presidential election of 7 October 2018, ELECAM officially declared 6,667,754

registered voters out of a population of nearly 25.5 million, according to World Bank data. Thus, between 2017 and 2018, the year of the presidential election of 7 October for which the political parties, in particular those of the opposition, had mobilised to massively register the populations on the electoral lists, ELECAM declared to have enrolled 167,754 new registered voters. On this basis, from January to August, i.e. for 8 months, there would have been an average of 20,969 registered voters per month, or 5,242 registered voters per week, and, considering six days of opening for public registration out of seven, only 873 registered voters per day nationwide; i.e. an average of 2.42 registrants per day, taking into account the 360 municipalities in the country. This average is simply ridiculous, inaccurate and unacceptable.

It is clear proof that ELECAM distorts the electoral game even before Election Day.

During the double legislative and municipal elections of 9 February 2020, 6,900, 928 voters were officially registered on the electoral lists. That is an increase of 233,174 new voters compared to the presidential election of 7 October 2018, and a daily average per council of approximately 3.37 registered voters between January and August 2019. At the end of the national campaign for registration on the electoral rolls of 2021, the current Director-General of ELECAM revealed during a press briefing on 1 September 2021, that 182,913 new voters had been registered (<https://www.crtv.cm/2021/09/elecaml-182-913-registered-on-the-electoral-file-in-2021/>). From these figures, we then arrived at a daily municipal ratio of 2.6 registered voters per day over 6 days, 5,716 registered voters per week throughout the country, and 22,864 monthly registered voters in all 360 subdivisions and all our embassies and consulates abroad.

On 2 September 2022, ELECAM announced that it had registered 338, 376 new voters; i.e. a ratio of 940 new voters on average in the country's 360 councils, and much less if we add the municipalities, consulates and embassies. A monthly ratio of 42,297 registered voters per month; 10,574 new voters per week and 1762 new voters per day, i.e. in the end less than 05 new voters per day and per council. If we include registrations made in consulates and embassies, we obtain a maximum of 03 registrations per day per municipality. These figures are far below the 350,000 weekly new voters planned and announced in 2013, despite the large annual budgets of ELECAM, which was FCFA 22 billion in 2011, 50 billion in 2017, just over 11 billion in 2021.

The first observation that emerges from the various figures of the number of registered voters from 2013 to September 2021 is that ELECAM is organising the stagnation of the number of officially registered voters in our country. I summarize: ELECAM announced that it had consolidated to 7,008,704 voters in 2012 a file from the ONEL, and committed to register 7 million new voters to bring the average total Cameroonian voters registered at 14 million from a projection of 350,000 registered per week. It is therefore surprising to note that on 1 September 2022, ELECAM had only 7,298,244 registered voters in total; that is a very small increase of 280,540 new voters in ten years! On the assumption of the registration of only 10 new voters per day in average, 6 days out of 7 in each of the 360 municipalities - excluding registrations made abroad in embassies -, and this from January to August, i.e. 8 months per year, there would be 3,600 new voters per day, 21,600 per week, 86,400 per month, and 691,200 new voters per year. On this very low scenario, in ten years, ELECAM would have taken on the challenge of 7 million new registered voters that it had set itself, without much

effort. Cameroon would then have around 14 million voters, which would be closer to reality taking into consideration its population, which is now around 30 million.

Even taking an average of five new registered voters per day in each of the 360 municipalities, we would arrive at 1,800 new registered voters per day nationally, 10,800 per week, 43,200 per month, 345,600 per year, that is a total of 3 456,000 new registered voters in 10 years, instead of the 280,540 that emerge from the ELECAM figures. So, even with this low assumption of only five new voters registered on average per day in each of the 360 municipalities, Cameroon's electorate should be 10,464,904 voters in 10 years, that is 7,008,904 voters as consolidated in 2012 plus the 3,456,000 new registrants from 2012 to 2022.

Faced with a 40 years dictatorship that wants to regenerate, we must show together, peacefully, our republican, patriotic and democratic determination, by being smart in the face of the dark forces that are at work within the regime to keep us captive.

In a similar way, we could act together on the following three major axes:

- bring the electoral body, ELECAM, to make public the true figures of voters registered on the electoral lists;
- denounce electoral fraud upstream, which consists of the refusal, by the national police, to issue national identity cards to many Cameroonians;
- demand a general demographic census before the 2025 elections and a consequent readjustment of electoral constituencies.

In this context, in order to put an end to the scandalous tampering with the number of registered voters by ELECAM, together invite Cameroonians from inside and the diaspora to massively support a citizen, cross-party operation, which we may call: "SAVE OUR RIGHT TO VOTE", with the instruction: "REGISTER, SEND US A COPY OF YOUR RECEIPT AND WE WILL GUARANTEE YOUR RIGHT TO VOTE WITH ELECAM". As soon as the campaign for registration on the electoral lists begins in January 2023, register in numbers. In strict compliance with confidentiality and personal data, monitoring teams would ensure your effective registration on the voters' lists. With the receipts collected and the follow-up work which would be operational from January 2023, we would now be able to put ELECAM before its responsibilities. Whatsapp numbers would be made available to you as part of this operation to monitor registrations on the electoral lists. The SECRETARIAT OF THE PLATFORM OF POLITICAL PARTIES AND CIVIL SOCIETY FOR THE CONSENSOUS AND PARTICIPATORY REFORM OF THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM, open to other political forces, could be the MONITORING BODY of the operation. It is the right of every Cameroonian to be a voter and no one has the right to deprive them of that right.

The last general census of the population in our country dates back to 2005, that is to say almost 20 years ago ! The results of this census were only made public in April 2010 ! However, in violation of the law which prescribes that the organisation of elections, in particular the number of members of parliament and municipal councillors, be determined on the basis of the result of the last population census, the presidential decree on the number of members of parliament per constituency, published on 3 July 2013, did not take into account the result of the said census. Similarly, the number of municipal councillors by subdivision is based on the results of the 1987 census. All of this is against the law.

A comparison of the results of the census published in April 2010 with the number of parliamentary seats allocated to each region shows in a choking way the electoral deception of the ruling party, the CPDM, as shown by the following figures:

<b>Region</b>	<b>Number of Members of Parliament (MP)</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Unequal distribution</b>
ADAMAWA	10	1,015, 622	1 MP for 101,562 inhabitants
CENTRE	28	3, 525, 664	1 MP for 129,488 inhabitants
EAST	11	801,968	1 MP for 72, 906 inhabitants
FAR-NORTH	29	3, 480,414	1 MP for 120, 014 inhabitants
LITTORAL	19	2, 865,795	1 MP for 150, 831 inhabitants
NORTH	12	2, 050, 229	1 MP for 170, 852 inhabitants
NORTH-WEST	20	1, 804, 695	1 MP for 90, 235 inhabitants
WEST	25	1,785, 285	1 MP for 71 ?411 inhabitants
SOUTH	11	634,655	1 MP for 57,695 inhabitants
SOUTH-WEST	15	1, 384,286	1 MP for 92,287 inhabitants

In addition to its impact on the legislative elections, the result of the census should have consequences on both municipal and senatorial elections. Also, I call on the Government to urgently take all the measures so that a demographic census is carried out in a professional manner by the middle of the year 2024. This work must and can be carried out within the next 18 months.

This is the place to issue a solemn warning to those who, frightened by the prospect of a credible democratic game, because it is reliable, are calling for a new extension of the term of office of Members of Parliament at the end of the current term closing in February 2025, after the 2019 extension during the last tenure.

Cameroonians, Cameroonians, my dear compatriots,

As this year 2022 is coming to its end, I cannot help but have a thought for our comrades who are still political hostages of the regime in the prisons of Yaoundé and Douala, victims of political hatred and judicial revenge. Last September, the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention of the United Nations, after contradictory exchanges with the Cameroonian

Government, definitively established that our comrades, political prisoners, are arbitrarily detained, and that as civilians they would never have had to be tried by military tribunals. This is a remarkable victory in the legal battle we have waged against the regime's violence, regardless of what fate the latter reserves for this Opinion.

I invite our Friends, political prisoners, to remain combative, and the People of Change to remain confident, because the dawn is approaching; it is in the limbo of the long night.

To all Cameroonians, inside the country and in the diaspora, I extend my best wishes, as well as those of the Cameroon Renaissance Movement for the year 2023, a crucial year in our common march towards the long-awaited peaceful political change of power.

No attack will shake us. No baseness will confuse us. No violence will derail us.

I have told you and I repeat it again : You can trust me, I will never betray you.

May God bless Cameroon!

Yaoundé, on the 31 December 2022

Maurice Kamto

National President of the MRC