

MOUVEMENT POUR
LA RENAISSANCE
DU CAMEROUN



CAMEROON
RENAISSANCE
MOVEMENT

AUTORISATION MINATD N°000221 DU 25 JUILLET 2008/ LETTRE MINATD N°0002249/LMINATD/DAP/SDE/STP DU 02 AOÛT 2012

PRESS CONFERENCE

STATEMENT ON ELECTIONS AND THE ELECTORAL CALENDAR

By Mr Maurice KAMTO, CRM National President

Ladies and gentlemen journalists,

First of all, I welcome you today, here, at the head office of the Cameroon Renaissance Movement. Your role in the dissemination of information, good information, and therefore in the civic education of Cameroonians is useful and important, especially when our country is going through delicate times like those we are currently experiencing and of which we do not know how they will evolve in times to come.

As our country inevitably moves towards crucial elections for its future, even its destiny, the Cameroon Renaissance Movement (CRM) uses this opportunity to remind the national and international opinion of its original and fundamental attachment to peaceful change and through the ballot box. The expression "Let's change the future in peace" has been our credo since the creation of the party in 2012. We chant it at all our meetings and public rallies. You will therefore understand that the elections are and remain to this day the intangible option of the CRM for a peaceful political change in our country.

Our attachment to alternation through elections obliges us to be attentive to the issue of compliance with the electoral calendar. Of course, in a country where the electoral calendar is known to all political actors, and where the organization of elections respects this calendar, the problem does not arise. On the other hand, in a country where the power in place has taken up the harmful habit of postponing elections and deliberately keeping the electoral calendar vague, this concern finds all its resonance and justification. If the question - in principle elementary in a democracy - of compliance with the electoral calendar still arises in Cameroon more than 40 years after the advent of the so-called New Deal regime, it is because the power in place for all these years has made the undemocratic and politically fraudulent choice to confiscate the

1

electoral calendar and postpone elections according to its own agenda, to the assumed contempt of all the other actors on the national political scene and the Cameroonian people as a whole, and, perhaps, with satisfaction of those who wish to continue to see Cameroon be run as a banana republic.

In this context of obscurantism and cowardice of the CPDM regime, where politics and in particular elections are carried out by ambush, the position of our party is clear and solemn: **THE CAMEROON RENAISSANCE MOVEMENT IS ASKING FOR THE RESPECT OF THE ELECTORAL CALENDAR FOR THE NEXT LEGISLATIVE AND MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS IN 2025.**

Nothing can justify the postponement of legislative and municipal elections. We are going to show it through 5 main arguments, which are not exhaustive, namely:

- Electoral days are fixed and known for 5 years
- There is sufficient time between the legislative and municipal elections on the one hand, and the presidential election on the other hand
- The postponement of the legislative and municipal elections would be a forfeiture
- The financial or budgetary argument is not relevant, because the postponement would cost the State more
- Is the CPDM, so-called "electoral machine", afraid of the elections?

2

1- Electoral days fixed and known for 5 years

The holding of these elections in early 2025 is no secret, since everyone knows that the last legislative and municipal elections were held on 9 February 2020. The public authorities in general, and the authorities competent in electoral matters in particular, have therefore known since 2020 at least that they have the obligation to take all the necessary measures for the effective holding of these elections within the time limits prescribed by law. No one will make the Cameroonian people believe or accept that after the February 2020 elections, the public authorities have all fallen into a long institutional sleep, in which they would still be as I speak, and will finally wake up only when the next elections approach to realize that they cannot organize the elections within the deadlines set by law.

2- Sufficient time between the legislative and municipal and presidential elections

If we can, even out of complacency, understand the postponement of the legislative and municipal elections of 2018, because of their chronological proximity to the presidential election of the same month and the same year, i.e. 7 October 2018 for the holding of the presidential election and 15 October 2018 for the end of the mandate of Members of Parliament and municipal councillors, nothing can justify the postponement of the upcoming legislative and municipal elections scheduled for February 2025 at the latest since they must be held eight (08)

long months before the October 2025 presidential election.

Moreover, this explanation for the postponement of the elections in 2018 was not and still is not valid justification, insofar as several African countries have organized several types of elections on the same day for decades. The most recent example is that of the neighbouring Nigeria, where the authorities organized on the same day, 25 February 2023, the presidential election, the election of senators and the election of Members of Parliament in a country with a population of more than 220,000,000 and which had more than 87 million people registered on the electoral lists at the time of the election. A few weeks later, on 11 March 2023, the same country organized the election of Governors, in strict compliance with the electoral calendar.

It is clear that in Cameroon, if the CPDM regime was not so attached to political fraud, to tampering with the law, and had not confiscated the electoral calendar for itself, the legislative and municipal elections and the presidential election of October 2018 could perfectly have been held on the same day, and Cameroon, a country of approximately 30 million inhabitants and less than 8 million voters, would not have done anything extraordinary compared to other countries in Africa. In any case, in view of all the above, the very long period between the months of February and October 2025 removes any acceptable justification for any idea of postponing the next legislative and municipal elections.

In their petty political calculations which have no concern for democracy, nor for the respect of the Institutions, nor for the will of the Cameroonian People, the power and the CPDM want each time that the presidential election takes place before the legislative and municipal elections, thus hoping to have the benefit of the dynamics of the presidential election that they have the mad hope of winning. But it is because they constantly juggle the electoral calendar, each time extending the mandate of Members of Parliament and municipal councillors, that they always arrive at a situation where the legislative and municipal elections fall before the presidential election. Because the presidential mandate being 7 years and that of Members of Parliament and municipal councillors 5 years, the same situation would happen again in 2032. We must therefore respect the electoral deadlines as they are imposed in the light of the last elections.

3- The postponement of the legislative and municipal elections would be a forfeiture

Section 15 (1) of the Constitution provides that the National Assembly is composed of 180 Members of Parliament “elected by direct and secret universal suffrage for a term of (5) five years”. Such was the rule set out in the 1996 Constitution, which moreover was not accompanied by any possibility of derogation, until the controversial constitutional revision of April 2008. This constitutional revision added a paragraph 4 to Section 15, which provides: “In the event of a serious crisis or when the circumstances so require, the President of the Republic may, after consulting the President of the Constitutional Council and the Executives of the National

Assembly and of the Senate, request the National Assembly to decide, by law, to extend or shorten his mandate.”. Section 15 (4) therefore provides for an exceptional derogatory measure applicable to cases of crisis or circumstance dictated by a situation which cannot be ordinary, that is to say fall within the ordinary or even routine management of the State. The same reasoning applies to municipal councillors. By adopting a practice of systematic extension of the mandate of Members of Parliament and municipal councillors, we would transform the exception into a rule and would therefore undermine the Constitution, that they claim to apply and of which one of the main duties of the President of the Republic is, under the provisions of section 5 (2), to ensure compliance.

Accordingly, even if the President of the Republic was under pressure by his CPDM comrades to once again extend the terms of Members of Parliament and municipal councillors, he should never ignore the fact that under the provisions of the Constitution, he is, before all other considerations, President of the Republic, Head of State, embodying national unity and guarantor of the compliance with the Constitution. He should therefore tell them that he cannot follow them in their mistakes without committing a forfeiture which would engage his responsibility, his and his alone, before the law and before History, because he would violate the oath he took when he was inaugurated in office.

4- The financial or budgetary argument is not relevant, because the postponement would cost the State more 4

Respecting the electoral calendar, contrary to what one might think and what the regime wants us to believe, allows the State to make budgetary savings. If we consider the last postponement of 18 months for the mandates of Members of Parliament and municipal councillors, the State had therefore had to bear during this period, the additional operating expenses of the National Assembly and the 180 Members of Parliament who sit there, as well as those of the 360 Councils in Cameroon. This makes nearly 35 billion for the National Assembly, about 25.2 billion for the City Councils and 2.08 billion for the District Councils, i.e. a total of more than 60 billion FCFA in operating expenses, amount very much higher than the budgetary resources necessary for the organization of legislative and municipal elections.

The argument of the budgetary constraint often put forward by some to support the postponement of the elections is therefore non-existent. It is even a lie. Let us say it more clearly: Cameroon has sufficient budgetary resources to organize, in 2025, the legislative and municipal elections in February and the presidential election in October. Any postponement will have the effect of increasing the budgetary costs of the State.

5- Is the CPDM, so-called "electoral machine", afraid of the elections?

By deciding that the mandate of Members of Parliament and municipal councillors is 5 years,

the Cameroonian constitutional legislator has determined a reasonable duration for the breathing of democracy, thus intending to attenuate the length of the presidential seven-year term by the legislative and municipal five-year terms. A systematic practice of extending the terms of Members of Parliament and municipal councillors would deprive Cameroonian citizens of their power to renew the choice of their local elected officials and their representatives in the National Assembly, and would deprive them of a democratic outlet for their frustrations, which we know to be numerous, thus exposing the country to the risk of anger being expressed outside of institutional channels.

But what is the CPDM regime afraid of?

Why would you want to postpone the upcoming legislative and municipal elections when the Cameroonian people are ready to express themselves sovereignly?

Why is the CPDM, which is falsely presented as an "electoral machine", so feverish and frightened as the legislative and municipal elections of 2025 are near?

Ladies and gentlemen journalists,

The CRM carries a great vision for the Cameroonian people, that of the National Renaissance. We are working on it day and night with commitment, patience and determination. We do this because we are deeply convinced that another Cameroon is possible. And the attacks of the regime in place, whether direct or disguised, reassure us that we are on the right track.

As I already said a few months ago, we will be in all the electoral battles to come. Our commitment to serve our people is irreducible. We will serve them very soon in the municipal councils, in the National Assembly and in the presidency of the Republic. Even if the presidential election were to be held this year, the CRM would be ready and would present to the Cameroonian people a candidate to restore their lost dignity and greatness.

The President of the Republic in office had, on 9 February 2020, personally criticized in front of the media the boycott launched by the CRM during these elections. Not only was this boycott massively followed by nearly 80% of registered voters, but we can now see, with hindsight, that the regime in place had made it an important moment to implement its strategy against the CRM. We therefore understand the regrets expressed by the President of the CPDM during this interview. He had also spoken of the CRM in terms of a "small political party". The CRM is therefore surprised that its regime is deploying so much energy and resources to try to weaken a political party which in its eyes does not represent much.

But rest assured: the CRM is master of its political strategy. It does not expect congratulations from the CPDM, which is his political adversary. The CRM the only one to decide on its actions as a political party. And now, it clearly repeats it to the public opinion: WE WILL TAKE PART

IN ALL FUTURE ELECTIONS, STARTING WITH LEGISLATIVE AND MUNICIPAL IN 2025.

The CRM draws the attention of the national and international opinion on the full and total responsibility of those who are active in the advent of political change in Cameroon outside the institutional framework as provided for by the Constitution. Everyone involved in this disastrous and dark plan, at whatever level, will take full responsibility for it. In any case, **THE PEOPLE OF CHANGE ARE ALREADY READY.**

Thank you.