

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN
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MINISTERE DES RELATIONS EXTERIEURES



REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON
Peace – Work – Fatherland

MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL RELATIONS

**GOVERNMENT STATEMENT ON THE
SOCIO-POLITICAL SITUATION PREVAILING IN
CAMEROON**

TO THE ATTENTION OF

**HEADS OF DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS AND
CONSULAR POSTS AS WELL AS REPRESENTATIVES
OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS ACCREDITED
TO YAOUNDE**

YAOUNDE, 28 MAY 2019

**The Minister of Communication;
Fellow Members of Government;
Esteemed Heads of Diplomatic Missions and Consular Posts;
Distinguished Representatives of International Organisations;
All protocol duly respected;**

Kindly allow me to welcome and thank you for having honoured my invitation.

For some time now, Cameroon has been facing myriad challenges, especially the situation prevailing in the North West and South West Regions, the relentless fight against the Boko Haram terrorist sect, managing the influx of refugees and internally displaced persons, dealing with the post-election protests orchestrated by a certain political party and the smear campaign propagated in certain circles, mainly via social media.

First and foremost, may I be allowed to recall that Cameroon, my country, is positioned strategically within the Gulf of Guinea, as for the fight against terrorism, the management of refugees, maritime transport and economic stability. On this count Cameroon has never spared any effort geared towards peace and stability within this region, which is so vital for the geostrategic equilibrium of the African Continent.

In its consistent effort to keep public opinion informed, the Government, once more, through my voice, would like to shed light on these happenings, which are at polls apart with the actual situation on the ground nationwide.

With regard to the situation in the North West and South West Regions, which is drawing the greatest attention, the Government wishes to recall that in this part of its territory, Cameroon continues to be confronted with criminal and destabilisation acts perpetrated by secessionist groups using terrorist methods, which have already claimed many lives, swelled the ranks of refugees and internally displaced persons and caused substantial material damage as well as destroyed the economic fabric of these Regions.

Based on recent developments on the field, it could be clearly observed that secessionist claims have already given way to banditry and criminal activities, compounded by hostage-takings and demands for ransom.

Still on this issue, some people are claiming that the Government of Cameroon has opted for a military solution to this problem. This is far from the truth. As a matter of fact, as from the genesis of this crisis, the Government has been engaged in dialogue with all the stakeholders. It was within this framework that the Prime minister, Head of Government went down to the field in the Regions for discussions with all the Parties involved. Government missions were equally undertaken abroad in order to meet with the Diaspora.

Following these consultations, which some members of the Diaspora wanted to deter, the HEAD OF STATE, while considering the legitimate claims, then took the economic and

social measures that you all know so well. He particularly instructed the Government to speed up the decentralisation process which, according to a majority of the people of these Regions, is the solution to the problem

Furthermore, the Government set a structure in charge of managing the humanitarian situation and another one for promoting demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration. All these measures have already started bearing fruits.

On another note, the Cameroonian Army is on the ground to protect the people and their property against secessionist terrorists and carry out its republican mission of safeguarding the territorial integrity of our country.

Your Excellencies, Esteemed Heads of Diplomatic Missions and Consular Posts,

Esteemed Representatives of International Organisations,

As part of their assigned mission of restoring order, preserving our territorial integrity as well as protecting the people and property, Cameroon **Defence and Security Forces** were mobilised and deployed on the field. They are carrying out their duties in strict compliance with International Law.

In carrying out their mission of securing the Regions rocked by the crises, members of defence and security forces have always demonstrated a sense of professionalism in spite of acts of aggression and provocation of the separatist armed groups.

Furthermore, where there were proven cases of human rights violations, appropriate sanctions were taken against defaulters.

Therefore, the Forces cannot be accused of destroying public buildings, kidnapping or killing peaceful citizens. These atrocities are attributable to terrorist groups who, under the canopy of social demands, rather sought to implement a pernicious project aimed at undermining the territorial integrity of Cameroon and overthrowing republican institutions.

The Government would like to express its astonishment about alleged denunciations of instances of **Human Rights violations** attributable to Defence and Security Forces as far as the crisis is concerned.

I would be remiss not to remind you that Cameroon, in keeping with its commitments, signed and/or ratified 12 of the 13 major instruments (Conventions and Optional Protocols) governing Human Rights.

Cameroon tabled and defended its National Report as part of the Third Cycle of the Universal Periodic Review on 3 May 2018, as well as its Fourth National Report before the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, from 20-22 February 2019.

Elected into the Human Rights Council for a 3-year term starting on 1 January 2019, Cameroon made the official commitment to cooperate fully with members of the Human Rights Council,

Member States, Entities of the United Nations System and other bilateral partners.

In this connection and on the invitation of **H.E. PAUL BIYA**, President of the Republic of Cameroon, **Madam Michelle BACHELET**, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, paid a very fruitful and highly welcome visit to Cameroon, from 1-5 May 2019.

With respect to the **situation** depicted by some NGOs as a “**major humanitarian crisis**”, purportedly stating that there are currently over Four Million Three Hundred Thousand Internally Displaced Persons in both Regions, I would like to make it crystal clear that these figures are far-fetched and do not in any way reflect the actual situation on the ground.

As a matter of fact, official statistics from the Central Bureau of Census and Population Studies (BUCREP) based on 2015 projections show that the total number of inhabitants in the North West and South West Regions stands at three million five hundred thousand.

The Government developed and carried out an Emergency Humanitarian Assistance Plan, alongside a Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Centre in the Regions. A platform for coordinating humanitarian action with the UN System was equally set up. It is therefore not logical to claim that the Government of Cameroon is not facilitating access for humanitarian purposes by the competent agencies.

As a matter of fact, the various teams set up to this effect, under the coordination of the Minister of Territorial Administration, have already made several field trips, after which 150,000 families of displaced persons were duly identified and more than 75,000 of them have already received assistance in the form of basic commodities, agricultural equipment, building materials and school needs.

As for Dialogue, it should be recalled, as earlier stated that this has always been the privileged option for Government, who believes that dialogue is process and not an end in itself. The Government is pursuing its efforts geared towards restoring lasting peace in both Regions. Dialogue has always prevailed between the Government and the vital forces of both Regions. Moreover, the Prime Minister, Head of Government, during his recent tour in these localities, met with the vital forces of the North West and South West Regions. The positive outcome of this policy of proximity with the people and the enthusiasm expressed during such encounters are an eloquent testimony to the utmost desire of the people in these Regions for a return to normalcy, peace and serenity.

Whatever be the case, the situation prevailing in the North West and South West Regions, no matter how worrisome internally, does not in any way represent a threat to international peace and security. The Government is relentlessly striving to seeking an endogenous Cameroonian solution to the crisis, but still needs

the assistance of its partners that you are to support the country in this effort towards appeasement, preservation of its unity and territorial integrity, especially by cutting off funding and taking legal action against activists established in your respective territories and promoting violence and terrorist activities back home.

Your Excellencies, Esteemed Heads of Diplomatic Missions and Consular Posts,

Esteemed Representatives of International Organisations,

The Government wishes to recall that the Presidential election of 7 October 2018 went on without any major hitches, as acknowledged by international observers. The election results reflect the freely expressed desire of the Cameroonian People, who in their diversity and vast majority, once more, and in total sovereignty, threw their weight behind **H.E. PAUL BIYA**, who got 71.28% of the total votes cast. ***The debate on this issue is over and closed.***

Any action intended to cast doubts on the Constitutional Council ruling by any citizen whosoever is a violation of the republican order, punishable by the rules and regulations in force.

Your Excellencies, Esteemed Heads of Diplomatic Missions and Consular Posts,

Esteemed Representatives of International Organisations,

You are thus privileged ocular witnesses of the political and diplomatic situation prevailing in Cameroon. In total honesty, it certainly did not escape your attention that Cameroon, irrespective of the smear aimed at tarnishing its brand image, is still enjoying its characteristic stability; its economy is being built, in view of its emergence by 2035. The Government is at work and striving in this regard under the Very Esteemed stewardship of the HEAD OF STATE. The President of the Republic is still in charge as he has always been. Cameroon is well governed. Peace is the order of the day. Each and everyone is actually going about freely. Associations are going on with their activities and enjoying freedom of expression. Media organs are free, some may say too free for that matter. Diplomatic Missions and Consular Posts as well as International Organisations that you represent are carrying out their activities normally, unperturbed. In short, Cameroon is up and kicking, and is fully complying with its commitments and its responsibilities vis-à-vis its people and the International Community. By the way, the victory of the INDOMITABLE LIONS during the last Africa Cup of Nations, and more recently, that of the U-17 Squad, are glaring evidences of the vibrancy of our country.

In a nutshell, this prevailing pessimism, or worse still, doomsaying in which some want to cloak Cameroon is highly uncalled for, and betrays a pernicious hidden agenda.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen;

I would like to reiterate the determination of the HEAD OF STATE to seek a lasting solution to the crisis in the North West And South West Regions. Let us help him in carrying out this delicate and daunting mission, while shunning from statements and actions likely to exacerbate the situation. Cameroon highly welcomes the contribution of all its Partners who, day in day out, are helping the country to achieve its development objectives and ensuring the takeoff of this country which is endowed with enormous potentials and human resources.

I can trust that each and every one of you here present, will continue to provide their valuable assistance in this regard so that Cameroon, just like in the past, continues to stand tall.

Thank you.