

WARNING TO NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL OPINION ON THE WORRYING SITUATION OF CAMEROON

At a time when the entire world is urging Cameroonian leadership to have an inclusive dialogue without preconditions, in order to give peace and national reconciliation a chance in our country, facing civil war and serious threats of implosion, the regime of BIYA is still obstinate with its approach of monopolizing the political field with totalitarian aims, giving a deaf ear to the plural expression of the different sociodemographic sensitivities of the country. The only effect to this approach will be the exacerbation of socio-political tensions and radicalizing the positions at the antipodes of the appeasement being sought. This approach was recently illustrated by our arbitrary arrest and detention, together with our supporters, on January 28, 2019, at the end of the peaceful marches organized by the Cameroon Renaissance Movement (CRM) on 26 January 2019 in some cities of Cameroon, and we were accused on false grounds including insurrection, rebellion, hostility to the homeland, the destruction of public property at the national level and in some Cameroonian embassies abroad, among others, for which authorities are unable to provide any evidence so far.

In reality, these abuses are part of a plan to make us scapegoats for the failure of Mr. BIYA's regime. He must take full responsibility for this failure and the chaos in which Cameroon is currently plunged.

In this regard, it must be emphasized that throughout his reign as head of state, Mr. BIYA's strategy has been to hide from the world the repulsive face of his tyrannical regime, presenting Cameroon as a haven of peace and stability. For the purpose of whitewashing the true reality of Cameroon, he recruited the services of lobbying firms and international media that he generously paid with our meagre budget resources, to the detriment of the construction of economic and social infrastructure.

Given the geostrategic position of Cameroon, in the heart of the Gulf of Guinea, at the junction of Central Africa and West Africa, the destabilization of this country will have myriad negative repercussions in the two subregions, and even beyond. It will affect local and international economic interests.

For this reason, by summarizing the real situation of Cameroon through various indicators analysed below, this message should serve as a warning to raise awareness of the magnitude and imminence of the danger and especially of the urgency of preventing it.

I. The Critical State of Cameroon

Cameroon today has a population of approximately 30 million inhabitants over an area surface of 475,000 km². This population is equally distributed between urban/peri-urban and rural areas.

Since the advent of the present regime, 37 years ago, Cameroon has experienced a noticeable decline in all sectors. In this way and in a consistent manner, in all international rankings relating to the performance of countries in different sectors - for example: **Doing Business** for the ease of business, **Business Monitor International (BMI)** for the investment climate, the **Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG)** for the capacity of governance to provide solutions to the problems of the populations, **Shanghai** for the quality of higher education, etc. Cameroon is surprisingly at the tail end in Africa, unlike corruption rankings where it shines at the top. In this respect, for example, in the last Shanghai ranking, the Cameroonian University ranks last in Africa. For more than two decades indeed, Cameroon is bogged down in the lower middle-income countries according to the World Bank ranking, with a GDP per capita of about 1300 US dollars, lower than that of Côte d'Ivoire, whereas our country has not experienced war. According to the opinion of all shrewd observers, Cameroon could easily triple or quadruple its GDP per capita in terms of its natural and human potential through an appropriate leadership. Cameroon would then be classified in the category of countries such as Malaysia for example. On the other hand, achieving such a performance would require an annual growth rate of 8 to 10% over the long term. However, Cameroon is struggling today to achieve a growth rate of 4 to 5% per year. Under these conditions, our country will not be able to reach the emergence status by 2035 as vociferously proclaimed by Mr. BIYA Paul. Obviously, this goal has become out of reach of the present regime and is moving further away day by day from the hope of the Cameroonian populations.

Overall, the stagnation of per capita income reported above is a major indicator of our country's difficulties. It is explained by a production structure of goods and services (GDP) characterized for decades by activities of very low productivity as well as products or services with low added value. Therefore, Cameroon has not undergone a major structural transformation for three decades.

As illustration:

- 1) The **primary sector** (about 22% of GDP) contains, in addition to the capital-intensive logging that is generally invested by foreign companies, the agricultural, pastoral and fisheries production activities occupy the rural populations who use the artisanal

methods; hence the deterioration in per capita primary production observed over the years in the face of a growing population (cattle, poultry, fishing, etc.); Cameroon's annual cocoa production has stagnated at about 200,000 tons since 1981 per year compared to that of Côte d'Ivoire, which has grown over the same period from 600,000 to 1,800,000 tons. In general, the primary sector has not benefited from public policy reforms, particularly in terms of agrarian reforms and infrastructures for access to production sources or targeted support - land, financial or training - likely to encourage the investment of entrepreneurial youth or massive foreign investments, capable of modernizing it and allowing the return of value chains, bringing with it technical and managerial innovations, both in the production and the processing as in the disposal of products within local, regional or global markets.

2) **The secondary sector (21% of GDP)** is weakly densified and not integrated upstream; it is also characterized by weak interindustry linkages, the import of virtually all industrial inputs, equipment, and machine tools; a decline in manufacturing value added per capita resulting from the closure or collapse of manufacturing firms in different branches of industry (eg the manufacturing of iron, concrete and shoes, the assembling of motorcycles and electronic equipment, the industrial, the aluminium smelter, the shipyard and industrial, the manufacturing of furniture and pieces of furniture, etc.).

3) **The tertiary sector (57% of GDP)** is mainly characterized by wholesale or retail activities, hotels, catering and transport of low value-added, following the disappearance of transport-related activities and to maritime logistics (notably Cameroon Shipping Lines, Camtainer, as well as stevedoring and transit companies), and the collapse of those relating to air transport (like Cameroon Airlines and Air AffairesAfrique), low value-added ICT services (telephony especially mobile), whose embryonic nature is to be noted, as the country has not yet taken advantage of the powerful leverage of the digital economy to boost growth and increase business and value-added job creation opportunities, especially in services, due to lack of vision and political commitment at the highest level. This is clearly evidenced by the underdevelopment of the digitization of activities in different sectors such as administration, education, health, security, transport, customs, trade, banking, judicial administration, agriculture, industry, etc.; the description of the growth reserves of this sector cannot be completed without mentioning the ruin of the tourism industry, which was once an important part of the northern economy, as well as the under-exploitation of the potential of transportation opportunities, waterways, because of the diversity of our rivers;

This sluggishness in economic activity is also sustained by an unattractive investment climate, reflected for example in Cameroon's poor ranking in the Doing Business reports.

In 2018, Cameroon is ranked 166th out of 193 countries, a decline of three ranks compared to the previous year. Reading the following indicators, the reader will better understand the seriousness of the continuous deterioration of the living conditions of the Cameroonian population for nearly forty years.

II. Sluggish indicators

At the economic and financial level (2018), we observe persistent fiscal deficits (3 to 4% of GDP), the trade balance (over 1,200 billion FCFA) and the current balance of payments; the resurgence of food imports, for example the import in 2017 of more than CFAF 600 billion of staple foods mainly for five (05) products - rice, fish, flour, oil and sugar, despite the immense agricultural, fishery and pastoral potential of the country; an acceleration of its external debt (38% of GDP, or about 7800 billion FCFA), which worries all wise observers, while Cameroon had benefited in 2006 from the cancellation of almost all of its external debt in the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC) framework; the Standard and Poor's country risk rating agency has just downgraded Cameroon's rating from stable to negative, due to the prospects for a rise in this debt, particularly in relation to the completion of the infrastructure of the African Nations' Cup to be held in Cameroon in 2021, but also the worsening security risks related to the crises in the North West and South West regions, as well as the threats of the Islamist sect Boko Haram in the northern regions; inefficient budget management characterized by large unproductive expenditures (missions, representation) that represent more than 30% of the budget; an exorbitant rise in the cost of infrastructure (World Bank report on budget spending in Cameroon, 2018); subsidies of public enterprises which are close to 5% of the GDP and the service of their unpaid debts, estimated at several hundreds of billions FCFA, which drains the budget of the State, like the CAMTEL, the Shipyard and industrial of the Cameroon (CNIC), SONARA, CAMAIR-Co, a banking rate below 15%, reflecting the fact that less than 15% of the population has access to banking services, which considerably reduces the impact of any monetary or credit policy on the revival of the economy; loans to the economy and the money supply, which account for about 18% and 20% of GDP respectively, reflecting weak policies to support the financing of the economy.

In general, the significant increase in the weight of informal activities (90% of GDP) in the economic and social sectors testifies to the absence of proactive public policies aimed at integrating these activities into the formal economy through appropriate measures. This abandonment by the state of important parts of the production of goods and services encourages hazardous behaviours of resourcefulness, out of all control and all norms. It promotes the precariousness of the business environment. One of the

consequences of this phenomenon is the reduction of tax revenues. It is also a risk-aggravating parameter in sensitive informal activities such as the provision of health care. This continued migration of economic activities to the informal sector is a major indicator of the government's loss of control of the socio-economic environment, resulting in the continued loss of factor productivity and the continuing impoverishment of the country.

For example, tax revenues represent about 17% of GDP. This is a relatively low rate compared to modern economies. It actually reflects the preponderance of the informal sector in economic activity, to the point where only a small segment of the productive economy contributes to the country's tax revenues. Hence this impression of fiscal overpressure felt by companies in this segment. The precariousness of the general environment, and particularly that of the business environment, has encouraged the migration of many enterprises, particularly SMEs and very small businesses, to the informal sector. This phenomenon is the result of the decay of the state over time, due to careless leadership and governance of public affairs.

At the social level: according to various studies on household expenditure and poverty, there is an increase in the number of poor people in Cameroon, with a very strong impact in the northern regions and in rural areas; a phenomenon favoured by a marginal reduction in the poverty rate (38%) and population growth; prominence of the difference of the living conditions between the main cities and the secondary cities which favours the siphoning of the populations of one to the other; worsening of inequalities and injustices that result in strengthening social divide (Gini coefficient); deterioration in public health indicators (infant and maternal mortality rate, number of general practitioners or specialists per capita, life expectancy (55 years), etc.); a deterioration in access to basic infrastructure services (transport, energy, drinking water, sanitation); for example, the duration of road transport between Yaoundé and the main cities (Douala, Bafoussam, Buea) doubled, or 5 hours to cover the 250km between Yaoundé and Douala, 6 hours between Yaoundé and Bafoussam; this duration has more than doubled between Yaoundé and Bamenda (between 8 and 10h). To reach the capitals of the northern regions coming from Yaoundé, we put 10 hours for NGaoundéré, 18 hours for Garoua, 24 hours for Maroua instead of 8h, 10h, 15h respectively there are forty years, combining road and rail transport; the railway network has not undergone any extension under the current regime, on the contrary, it has shrunk; the frequency and duration of power outages have increased, reflecting the aging of the transmission system, which has a loss rate of around 35%, which is excessive by industry standards (5 to 10%); whole districts of the main cities (Douala and Yaoundé) remain without electricity for

several days while this period rises to several weeks in the secondary cities, with a clear impact on the productivity of the economy and the functioning of the social sectors (schools, hospitals, etc.); the number of classrooms in primary and secondary schools is typically around 100 in urban and peri-urban areas; people travel an average of 5 km to reach a drinking water point (fountain or well); 30% of the Cameroonian population continue to suffer from waterborne diseases, with negative consequences for literacy and productivity; sanitation networks (drainage of wastewater, latrines, etc.) are failing in the cities, and completely non-existent in certain urban districts, in rural and peri-urban areas; in these conditions, cities and countryside are becoming unsanitary and dangerous environments for health (breeding grounds for the proliferation of mosquitoes and other vectors of disease transmission), hence the high rate of morbidity and the short life expectancy; a glaring absence of housing needs estimated at about two million; a process of de-urbanization characterized by the transformation of several cities into slums and urban ghettos; a school system, especially at the upper level, which is a machine for making the unemployed, because of its inadequacy to professional requirements, or even life itself.

At the political and security level: there is a weakening of national unity, a collapse of social cohesion, a weakening of the sense of belonging to a community with a common destiny; a loss of public trust in the state and its leaders, increased mistrust between the populations of the English-speaking and French-speaking regions; a feeling of helplessness and despair in youth; an increase, not to say an encouragement, of inter-ethnic hate speech, with the result that the ethnic retreat is rising, the repression of political liberties has increased, a drift towards totalitarianism, with the effect, among other things, of the disappearance of the state of law ; a worsening of insecurity that results in increased crime. In short, the state of Cameroon and the Cameroonian nation are in danger.

III. Neither democracy nor prosperity

In 1990, 29 years ago, answering the question of the French journalist Yves MOUROUSI on the heritage he would like to leave to his country, BIYA Paul responds was "*I would like to be remembered as the president who brought democracy and prosperity to his people.*" On reading the situation of Cameroon described above, it is easy for the reader to see that we are far from the mark. These words, like so many others uttered by BIYA during his long reign, appear today as they are: incantations. Unfortunately, manna will not fall from the sky.

But things were not meant to be this way: leadership is the cause and everything else is only the effect. Different research has clearly shown the strong correlation between the nature of political institutions and the dynamics of prosperity (or poverty) in a country. The results of these studies make it possible to establish that the mediocre performances of Cameroon presented above are not the result of a fatality.

This research shows that monolithic, so-called extractive political institutions encourage the election of incompetent and illegitimate political leaders, whose performances are not periodically subject to the sanction of voters, because of rigged electoral systems, which are neither transparent nor credible. The extractive nature of such political institutions favours the promotion of predators and prebenders in the main machinery of the countries concerned. They produce incentives for nepotism, corruption, and impunity in the political sphere and particularly in the executive, legislative and judicial sectors. The most pernicious is that these ills, born in the political sphere, contaminate all other spheres of activity including economy, education, health, etc., which in turn weaken, sclerosed and collapse.

Cameroon is a perfect illustration. As soon as he came to power, the plan of BIYA Paul was clearly to establish an absolutist political regime. This trait of his personality is indicated very early, in the mid-80s, in a response remained famous to a journalist to whom he wants to indicate the extent of his power: *"If I nod my head, you won't exist anymore"*.

This ambition of absolute power will lead over time to the takeover by the President of the Republic of all the republican political institutions - parliamentary and judicial in particular - that could serve as checks and balances. The result will be a personalization and a personification of power, in the form of a despot, with the cohort of related abuses: nepotism, courting, worship of the personality that borders on deification, corruption, impunity, etc.

Police and security management is another missing feature of Mr. BIYA's regime. While the classic police missions in a democracy aim to maintain public order and reassure citizens, under Mr. BIYA's regime, its essential mission is to maintain the political status quo, i.e. say the state of lawlessness, terror and the repression of basic human rights. To this end, the whole spectrum of means of repression and torture are mobilized: human, material, organizational, etc. resources.

The appointment of Mr. MBARGA NGUELE, 88, as head of the General Delegation for National Security (DGSN), is a perfect example. He has been a police officer since 1951 and is particularly noted for obsolete colonial repressive practices, methods diametrically

opposed to modern intelligence systems, characterized by anticipation and pro-activity, anxious to collect information to better understand the expectations of populations, including in cases of turbulence, in order to provide appropriate responses.

The same goes for the army and the gendarmerie, whose traditional role of protecting the integrity of the territory and the civilian population is misguided against them.

In the same vein, Mr. BIYA Paul has been using for 35 years a private Israeli company, transformed into a kind of private militia with the misleading name of Presidential Guard (GP) dedicated to his personal protection and that of his family; tens of billions of FCFA, products of the sentence and the work of the Cameroonians, have thus been paid to this militia since its creation; it is also the same Israeli mercenaries who supervise the famous Rapid Intervention Battalion (BIR). It is at this price that Mr. BIYA Paul is kept in power against all odds, and especially against the will of his compatriots.

The destruction of the independence of the media, notably by: the multiplication of titles and press groups created by members of the government and personalities of the regime, and which are illustrated as pledged media, not hesitating to propagate hatred and division; the power control of most newspapers through multiple pressures and corruption; maintaining the legal precariousness of the audiovisual media through the issuance of provisional approvals giving rise to a regime known as "administrative tolerance" which hangs like a sword of Damocles threats of closure on media companies that do not align on the position of the diet. In this context, media professionals who work professionally show heroism.

Last but not least, ethnic mobilization is a major marker of BIYA governance. The exacerbation of this parameter in all government acts has contributed to strengthening ethnic divisions and demolishing all attempts to build national unity. The leadership of BIYA will constantly use it in a logic of conservation of power, faithful to the old principle of "divide and rule". It is not surprising that his "long reign" is marked by an unprecedented intensification of interethnic feelings or attitudes of division, to the detriment of the ideal of republican fraternity. Proponents of hate speeches have gone unpunished when they were missed to be celebrated. Therefore, we are surprised by the recent "tweets" of Mr. BIYA calling for national unity and the defense of the homeland, after sowing the seeds of discord throughout his reign.

As predicted by lessons from research, the drifts born of the political sphere has infected all the other corps of the society: army, denominational and business circles, trade unions, educational institutions, etc.

Such a mode of exercising power is not driven by developmental performance goals, but rather by the goal of conservation of power. It is this characteristic that explains the lack of vision, prescription of objectives, the anticipation of the evaluation system and performance control in BIYA governance throughout his helm at the state. It explains, in particular, the deterioration of all the indicators presented above until the current decrepitude of Cameroon. In summary, a passive and lazy leadership that continues to endure events instead of anticipating them to influence their course.

IV. Some highlights of BIYA governance

Some facts presented above illustrate this governance devoid of planning, anticipation; foresight, and visibility, where we constantly endure the course of things.

- The sporadic holding of the councils of ministers which does not set objectives, nor a regular and diligent follow-up of the affairs of the country;
- A negligent control of the management of public or para-public companies, characterized by a lack of performance targets or roadmaps assigned to their leaders, it is not surprising that the leaders of these structures spend 15, 20 or even 25 years without monitoring and evaluation of performances and that they are discharged as they were appointed that is to say without them knowing why; in these circumstances, it is not surprising that the performance of all public or para-public companies leave much to be desired, that they have become a financial pitfall through chronic subsidies more than a source of enrichment for the country;
- The wasteful management of major infrastructural projects, characterized by higher costs and long extension of deadlines, without comparison with countries with a similar economic structure in Cameroon;
- The fiasco of the preparation of projects related to the organization of the AFCON 2019;
- The incapacity the inability to resolve the crisis that has been going on for three years in the North West and South West regions;
- The concessions of the public service infrastructure companies (electricity, water, rail) whose results are well below the announced objectives or the expectations of the populations;
- The Cameroon Business Forum (CBF), a platform for public-private dialogue, launched ten years ago to improve the business environment, and whose performance speaks for itself: the investment and business climate has

deteriorated as this is confirmed by Cameroon's ranking in the Doing Business 2018;

- the realization of projects without prior studies of opportunities in viability, which become white elephants whose funding of equity and debt service associated with the budget of the State, all resources likely to finance economic and social infrastructure sorely missing; projects such as "ebolowa tractors", the cassmelima cassava plant (without cassava), the Bafang slaughterhouse (no poultry), the Mekin dam of 10 MW, under construction for 8 years and whose cost is now around 100 billion CFA francs (about 200 million US dollars), or 20 million US dollars per MW, 7 to 10 cents the cost of MW according to industry standards, the Memvele dam whose construction ends at the same time as one realizes that the line of energy evacuation had been forgotten.

V. For a real dynamic of democracy and prosperity

This is the chaotic state of health in which Cameroon is today. A country committed for forty years in a process of continuous degradation under the wheel of a lazy and anarchic leadership, which endures the course of history without any desire to change it, as if it were ordered in advance and therefore immutable. Alas, the order of things is neither written in advance nor falling from the sky. If nothing changes in our country in the light of the above developments, the outcome of this story is known: accelerated pauperization and precariousness, increased insecurity, destabilization of the region; a disengaged youth who becomes fertile ground for the mirages of terrorism and emigration overseas, with the cohort of associated ravages.

We do not accept this fatalistic scenario. We can and we must conjure him. Hence the urgency and the imperative of the change of leadership, of a new and credible dynamic of democracy and prosperity. This is based on a series of fundamental reforms contained in our campaign program for the presidential election of October 7, 2018 (see website: www.mrcparty.org) that we will engage as soon as we are able to govern.

In conclusion, it emerges from the above developments that the failure of Mr BIYA's leadership, which led to the chaotic situation of the country, lies in the establishment of a political system focused on eliminating rule of law, hypercentralization, personalization and personification of power. For us, this is not an issue of an individual. To this end, any attempt at recovery in Cameroon must focus on the complete reform of the State, through the establishment of open, democratic and inclusive political institutions. Any political initiative to address the current challenges facing our country, in particular,

inclusive dialogue, will need to incorporate the issue of the form of the state. This is the bedrock of our recommendations for reforms which are the bases of our adherence to the recent proposals of the various international institutions and friendly countries, including the African Union, the European Union, the Commonwealth, the USA, France, Canada, Germany, the United Kingdom, Italy, Holland, Belgium, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International.

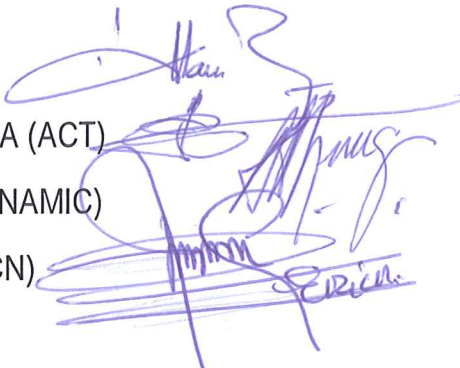
THE COALITION OF KODENGUI FOR THE IMMEDIATE CHANGE OF LEADERSHIP
IN CAMEROON.

Maurice KAMTO (CRM)

Christian PENDA EKOKA (ACT)

Albert DZONGANG (DYNAMIC)

Paul Éric KINCUE (MPCN)



PRINCIPAL PRISON OF KODENGUI (YAOUNDE)

MAY 10, 2019.