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What Cameroonians need to know about the presidential elections of October 7, 2018 in Cameroon

Presidential Election Day in Cameroon was held on Sunday, October 7, 2018. Nine candidates ran including outgoing President Paul BIYA, 85 years old with 36 years at the helm of the state, without interruption, and Maurice KAMTO, former Minister Delegate of Justice, candidate of the Movement for the Renaissance in Cameroon (MRC) and of the Coalition of Forces for Change and the National Renaissance. After its creation in August 2012 and the holding of its first Convention on September 29, 2012, on September 30, 2013, the CRM took part in the twin legislative and municipal elections, held on September 30, 2013, by presenting lists in nearly twenty constituencies out of more than three hundred that count the country comprises. Despite the savage and barbaric frauds that twisted the outcome of this election, the CRM officially won one MP and 19 City Councillors. In terms of the votes validly cast, the CRM, the newly born on the political scene, ranked fourth out of a total of three hundred parties. At the time, the CRM had drawn up a general report on this twin elections, which was sent to the President of the Republic, to the Government, at various accredited diplomatic missions in Cameroon and to various international organizations. In essence, the report denounced the multiple and various frauds that tarnished the twin poll. It decried the coalition of Administration - Electoral Body (ELECAM) - CPDM (ruling party) in the organization of frauds and the protection of fraudsters for the benefit of Mr BIYA's party. Based on its analysis of the poll, the CRM concluded its general report with concrete proposals on the reform of the Electoral Code, the electoral body (ELECAM) which by its composition is a mere affiliate of the ruling party.

Respectful of the institutional game, the CRM, through his deputy to the National Assembly has tabled a bill to reform the Electoral Code in November 2014 which, in violation of the rules and regulations of the said assembly, was never even submitted to the bureau more than four years after, whereas it should have been so, after three sessions of Parliament.

From September 2013 to 2018, the CRM sensitized the national and international opinion on the imperative necessity of the consensual and genuine democratic reform of the Electoral Code and the electoral body, ELECAM, before the presidential elections of October 7, 2018. This long and difficult sensitization campaign during which many of its leaders and activists were often brutalized or even arrested by the police and law enforcement forces, was aimed at preventing post-electoral conflict in our country.

Unfortunately, all the measures undertaken peacefully and legally by the CRM to prevent a post-election conflict, as the result of fraud, the bad Electoral Code and the bias of ELECAM, were only met with contempt of the regime.

All these made the CRM to be torn between taking part in the presidential election on October 7 and not doing so because not only the Electoral Code and ELECAM had not been reformed, but two regions of the country, the North West and the South West are found in a civil war, while the Northern part of the country and especially the Far North Region are still under threat from the Boko Haram sect, despite the bravery of our army supported by courageous populations.

After reflection, and taking into account the risk that the country would face if the election was not organized, the MRC responsibly thought it wise that despite the wrong Electoral Code, the structure of the electoral body,

SIEGE / Headquarters : Près du Dispensaire d'Odza – Yaoundé - B.P. : 8704 Yaoundé/ Cameroun

Téléphone : (+237) 22.71.82.35 / 22.80.76.53 <http://www.mrc-party.org/> contact@mrc-party.org

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ELECAM, composed mainly of members of the ruling party and the security situation in the two English-speaking regions, we decided to take part in the presidential election of October 7, 2018.

* The presidential election of October 7, 2018

* Before the ballot

The Government had voted a budget of 50 billion CFA francs for the elections scheduled for 2018, namely the presidential and municipal and legislative elections. The municipal and legislative elections having been postponed, it was only the presidential election that was left. The deposit required from the candidate was 30,000,000 CFA francs. In spite of the high cost of the deposit given the purchasing power of Cameroonians and the large budget planned for the election this year, the Government allocated a modest sum of fifteen million (15,000,000) CFA francs representing the first instalment of the public funding allocated to of each candidate's campaign.

More seriously, while the candidate Paul BIYA used all the human, material and financial resources of the State for his campaign, the Government only issued its financial contribution of 15,000,000 CFA francs to the candidates three days before the opening of the campaign. The aim here was to go against the spirit of the law prescribing the payment of the financial contribution of the State to the candidates.

Candidate Paul BIYA flooded the country with his campaign posters in a flagrant violation of the provisions of article 91 of the Electoral Code (P. N ° 1). Despite the CRM's request to the electoral body ELECAM to ask the municipalities and the candidate Paul BIYA to respect the law, nothing was done.

Naively believing that the Government also had an interest in seeing a transparent election without fraud, the CRM, in accordance with the law, seized all courts of first instance in the country to obtain orders permitting them to mobilize bailiffs of justice to notify any fraud on the day of the vote. Indeed, on public holidays, bailiffs need an order from the president of the district court to make such acts deemed legal. All the 154 motions of the CRM were rejected for various fallacious reasons, but more on political grounds.

In violation of Article 97 of the Electoral Code that provides that "The list of polling stations shall be forwarded to Council Branches of Elections Cameroon for posting up at least 8 (eight) days before the day of election", the lists were only published on the very day of the polling, whereas the CRM resorted to a public protest in an attempt for the law to be enforced.

Candidate Maurice KAMTO was unable to campaign in the North West and South West regions because of insecurity. The power ensured the safety of supporters of Mr. BIYA in these two regions, but refused to grant security's means to candidate Maurice KAMTO, despite a written request addressed to him and to the electoral body, ELECAM.

The candidate Paul BIYA made a campaign of seven (07) minutes in all. It was in Maroua in the Far North.

The Government has refused to grant accreditation to many national and international organizations that can provide objective reports on the conduct of the polls.

The Minister of Territorial Administration, Paul ATANGA NJI, had one of his close friends, Marinus ATANGA NJI, head of Houston-based Innovative Solution Inc, a poll announcing a victory close to the official results finally announced by the Constitutional Council.

The Minister of Territorial Administration has, in violation of Article 87 which provides that "The election campaign shall open on the 15th (fifteenth) day preceding the election and close at midnight on the eve of the Election Day." took a decree prohibiting interurban traffic from Saturday, October 6, 2018 at 18 hours (No. 2).

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- Election day

While the CRM did everything to send the list of its representatives to ELECAM in all 25,000 offices, on the day of the vote, across the country, many representatives of the candidate Maurice KAMTO were expelled, and sometimes violently, from the polling stations as soon as they were opened.

Throughout the day of October 7, 2018, many representatives of the CRM were expelled from the polling stations generally with the assistance of the administration and mainly law enforcement agents, and with the collaboration of the electoral body ELECAM.

In many polling stations across the country, together with the electoral body ELECAM and the administration, the CPDM, the party of Mr. BIYA, imposed on the voters his ballot paper.

In NGALAN close to Ebolowa in the South Region, a representative of the candidate Maurice KAMTO, ASSIGUI Lin Mathieu, who dared to protest that the BIYA candidate's ballot was imposed on voters was expelled from the office and received all sorts of threats.

Two days after voting, by way of punishment, an armed commando burst into his home and matrimonial room around 1:30 am, and opened fire on him the representative. His wife and 13-month-old child was brutalized. With the tears of the wife, who had managed to escape with her baby, but also with the arrival of the alerted neighbours, this made the commando to panic and retreat, leaving behind two full loaders, a belt and the pocket of a gun. The next day, at around 4 pm, to the surprise of the victim, his wife and neighbours, the local brigade commander came to try to recover the items. From then on everything suggests that this commando was paid by the regime. The national gendarmerie was notified of this assassination attempt.

Mr Thierry OKALA EBODE, Deputy National Treasurer of the party, had the unpleasant surprise to notice that as he went to vote around 5:30 PM at the Yaounde based college Vogt polling station, the officials of the said polling station had already made someone vote on his behalf. But when he protested, he was brutalized by the police and taken to the judicial police where he spent eight days in the cell before being charged and released on bail.

In Makenene Bafia, Obala, Baham, Djeng, Kribi, Mbouda, Vellé, Sangmelima, Ebolowa etc ... the representatives were abused and chased away from the offices.

The reports of various organizations of civil society whose credibility is recognized both at the national level and by Cameroon's foreign partners such as REDAH, A Future World, the Episcopal Conference of the Catholic Church in Cameroon issued reports mentioning the massive frauds that took place on Election Day. Their reports were in complete contradiction to that foully prepared by the fake observers of Tranparency International recruited by the Government to give credibility to the presidential election of October 7.

*The constitutionnal Council

The candidate Maurice KAMTO claimed victory the day after the election of October 7 based on the feedback of the results from the polling stations gathered at the Headquarters and in accordance with Article 113 of the Electoral Code which states that, "Once counting is over, the results obtained in each polling station shall be proclaimed."

In order for his victory to be formalized and to increase his score, Maurice KAMTO appealed to the Constitutional Council for the recusal of five of its members out of eleven and to request the partial cancellation of the results in the South, East, North, Far North, Adamaoua, South West and North West Regions for contrived and systematic frauds.

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Concerning the recusal of certain members of the Constitutional Council, it is an established fact that:

- Mr. Clément ATANGANA, President of the Constitutional Council is married to CPDM parliamentarian, party of which the outgoing President of Republic was the candidate of the election of October 7, 2018. This entails legally a motive of legitimate suspicion coupled with a conflict of interest. Mr. ATANGANA combines his functions as President of the Constitutional Council with that of Practicing Lawyer enrolled at the Bar of Cameroon and continues to follow his cases before the courts of the country and particularly before the Special Criminal Tribunal (SCT). This is an incompatibility under the law that organizes the functioning of the Constitutional Council.

- Jean FOUMANE AKAM who has in a petition of the CPDM, ruling party, publicly called to support the candidacy of Mr. Paul BIYA for the poll of October 7, 2018 in violation of its status of member of the Constitutional Council. Still in violation of the law, on the incompatibilities this time, he is chairman of the Board of Directors of the University of Yaoundé I, the Permanent Secretary of the Superior Council of the Judiciary and President of the Tribunal de la Francophonie etc.

- Mr. Emmanuel BONDE is, in violation of the law, still member of the CPDM political bureau headed by the outgoing president Paul BIYA. After this was mentioned before the Constitutional Council and while we were still before the Elders, with the delicacy like a bull in a China shop, the CPDM removed his name on their website, but leaving some traces behind (PN °);

NOTE / The lawyers must complete by listing the other members and specifying the grievances.

On fraud, using rather curious arguments and publicly refusing to make use of Article 107 which gives authority of inquiry to the Constitutional Council in case of dispute to respond to the request of Maurice KAMTO on the following points:

- Confrontation of copies of 32 fake reports (procès-verbaux, PV) of the Divisional Supervisory Commission obtained legally from the National Commission for the Final Counting of Votes, covering almost two (2) million voters, with the "originals" held by the Constitutional Council;

- The confrontation of the PV of the polling stations with the electoral register which are documents annexed to the procès-verbal and legally attest the effectiveness of the vote by each voter in accordance with article 106 of the Electoral Code.

* On the expulsion of the representatives of Maurice KAMTO from the polling stations, unanimously, the members of the Constitutional Council affirmed that the request of the applicant cannot prosper because in the request do not appear PVs on which these representatives mentioned that they were expelled from the polling stations. As if in the case of an expulsion from a polling station one could ask his tormentors a little time to mention his misfortune on a PV.

In conclusion, the CPDM, the administration, the electoral body and the Constitutional Council have coalesced to steal the victory of Maurice KAMTO from October 1, 2018. Indeed, Cameroonians have expressed their choice for change after 36 years of the reign of President Paul BIYA now 85 years old.

All the peoples and countries friendly to the Cameroonian people must help defend their vote cast on October 7, 2018.

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