



**MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATION**  
**MINISTÈRE DE LA COMMUNICATION**

# **GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION**

## **CLARIFICATIONS FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF CAMEROON ON COMMUNICATION ACTIONS IN RELATION TO THE NGARBUH INCIDENT**

### **MINCOM PRESS BRIEFING**

### **STATEMENT**

**OF**

**H.E. RENE EMMANUEL SADI**  
***MINISTER OF COMMUNICATION***

**Yaoundé, 28 April 2020**

**Dear Journalists,**

**Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**Pursuant to the Instructions of the PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC, His Excellency Paul BIYA, the Minister of State, Secretary General of the Presidency of the Republic, through a press release dated 21 April 2020, published the Report of the Joint Inquiry Commission set up on 17 February 2020, by the Minister Delegate at the Presidency of the Republic in charge of Defence, ordered by the Head of State, Commander-In-Chief of the Armed Forces, with the mission to shed light on the tragic events that occurred in the locality of Ngarbuh, on the night of 13 to 14 February 2020, and to establish the responsibilities of the different actors.**

**Barely had the main findings of the Inquiry ordered by the PRESIDENT of the REPUBLIC following those unfortunate events been made public that voices were raised here and there, through the media and social networks, to denounce what they considered to be lies previously uttered by the Government in connection with those events.**

**For these slayers, who are of different leanings and who are always the same, the results of this investigation confuse the Government, in a kind of denial of the truth, with regard to the facts, as they occurred.**

**Faced with such an amalgam intended by those who believe they will benefit from it in any way, the**

**Government of the Republic intends to provide the following clarifications and explanations.**

**First, while we all agree that in all democracies, the duty to inform corresponds to the right of peoples to be informed, it should be stressed that whenever an event of national importance and scope occurs that catches the attention of all Cameroonians, it is the Government that has the primary responsibility, to address, as quickly as possible, national and international opinion to provide it with the essential information it is entitled to know.**

**In other words, it is a sovereign obligation that no Government can shirk without failing in its commitments to the sovereign people.**

**To this end, in Cameroon as elsewhere, the information is collected from sources that enjoy the best presumption of reliability, and is then cross-checked before being made public, in order to limit as much as possible the margins of error likely to alter it. This also explains why it may take some time between the occurrence of the event and the Government's reaction.**

**This was the case with the Ngarbuh events. The events, as you know, took place on the night of 13 to 14 February 2020. The Government's reaction came four days later, the time needed to conduct the investigations required by the seriousness of the events.**

**This means, distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, that when the Government speaks out on topical issues, it**

**always does so in good faith, never with the aim of misinforming or misrepresenting the facts, but, on the contrary, in order to provide the public with the right information in a transparent manner.**

**As to the substance of the matter in relation to the Ngarbuh incidents, the Government began by recalling the context in which the military operation was undertaken.**

**In this respect, moreover, as you will have noticed, the views of the Government and those of the Joint Commission of Inquiry converge, in that the village of Ngarbuh had become a landmark, a veritable logistical base for the supply of arms, ammunition and fuel to the secessionist armed bands.**

**Moreover, the investigation revealed that those terrorists had carried out numerous acts of violence against the civilian population, such as cattle rustling, rape and other assaults, what the Government had also said at the time.**

**Moreover, it should be recalled that it was in response to the appeal of the people of the locality of Ngarbuh, who were literally taken hostage by the armed gangs, that the Defence Forces undertook a mission on the ground, during which fighting took place and leading to the death of five secessionist terrorists.**

**Here again, the Joint Commission of Inquiry does not contradict what the Government stated on 18 February 2020, namely that (...) the armed gangs that were**

**wreaking havoc in this area, sowing terror and desolation among the population, had taken refuge in a peripheral hamlet called Ngarbuh, to set up their rear base and reorganize the racketeering of the people, while perpetrating unspeakable abuses on the road leading to Ntumbaw.**

**Similarly, and at no time did the Government conceal the fact that there have been civilian deaths. This is a serious, distressing and deplorable situation for which the Government, through my voice, has conveyed to the bereaved families the condolences of the PRESIDENT of the REPUBLIC, His Excellency Paul BIYA.**

**Only the exact number and the responsibility of the perpetrators of the human killings were deliberately concealed by the elements of our Defence and Security Forces involved in the operation in which they were taken by panic.**

**Another truth that has not been denied by the Joint Commission of Inquiry and that must be said is that the detachment of military and gendarmes dispatched to Ngarbuh was not intended to exterminate civilians or set houses on fire. In other words, it was not a combat operation, but a reconnaissance mission whose essence was unfortunately twisted.**

**All what I have just said is sufficient to indicate that it was never the intention of the Government to distort the facts and attests to its good faith: the Communiqué of the Minister of State, Secretary General of the**

**Presidency of the Republic is unequivocal on this subject, when it states that, *“Returning to Ntumbaw, Sergeant BABA GUIDA, who led the operation, sent to his hierarchy, a deliberately biased report. An account on which the Government initially based its Communication. »***

**The good faith of the Government, a Government which is and remains one and the same entity, is all the more indisputable since, notwithstanding the initial information made public on the Ngarbuh incident, the Head of State ordered a thorough investigation, the results of which were *a priori* likely to invalidate or confirm the facts in our possession.**

**Beyond any differences or convergences that may be revealed by the analysis of the various communications, what is probably important is that the findings of the Inquiry clearly establish the responsibility of certain elements of the army in the Ngarbuh incident and clarify the circumstances in which this incident occurred.**

**Furthermore, the most important thing is undoubtedly the decision of the President of the Republic to give credence to the findings of the independent Inquiry that he ordered, to take note of them and to draw all the necessary consequences.**

**We are therefore entitled to congratulate ourselves on the fact that the international and national community unanimously warmly welcomed this remarkable gesture which honours the **PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC,****

**ignoring the small, provocative, incongruous and inappropriate comments made by some of our fellow citizens who obviously have only a very limited knowledge of the functioning of our institutions and who, unscrupulously and without shame, triumph and jubilate to see that several officials are punished.**

**Yes, we are saying that the most important thing is to hail, exalt and magnify the act of the PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC, who is without doubt an example of political courage, that of a PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC, faithful to his principles and commitments, concerned to build and preserve the image of a strong, responsible and exemplary Cameroonian Army.**

**The Presidential act also proves once again that Cameroon is a Rule of Law where all citizens are equal before the law. In this regard, the persons concerned shall be brought to book.**

**Similarly, they benefit from the presumption of innocence, as is the case for any person subject to trial until proof of their respective guilt.**

**As for our Defence and Security Forces, they deserve the encouragement of the entire Nation in carrying out the mission of bringing things back to normalcy, in particularly difficult conditions, faced with terrorist and secessionist armed gangs in the North-West and South-West Regions.**

**The Cameroonian people must remain conscious of the sensitive nature of this mission, which is aimed at**

**preserving the territorial integrity of our country and enabling our people to live in all security, to go about their business with serenity and to fully enjoy their property.**

**It should also be reiterated that the Cameroonian Army is that of neither a Region, a tribe, nor a political party.**

**Its vocation is to ensure the defence of the entire nation and all Cameroonians who are respectful of institutions, without discrimination.**

**Also, the blunders that some elements of this Army may commit, at times and according to circumstances, cannot in any way tarnish the image of our Defence and Security Forces, which have distinguished themselves in Cameroon, Africa and the world, through their professionalism, discipline and constant attachment to republican values and institutions.**

**That is why the Government will not cease to denounce the relentlessness and stigmatization shown by some people, particularly NGOs, against the Cameroonian Armed Forces, whose quality, seriousness and the sense of honour are recognized and hailed in many theatres of operation throughout the world.**

**What is in fact difficult to understand and admit, is this selective condemnation of the exactions perpetrated in the various conflict zones, in that those attributed to the National Forces are dramatised and amplified, while those committed by armed terrorist and**



**secessionist gangs are minimised or even simply concealed, in an astonishing silence of the so-called human rights organisations.**

**Such an attitude is, to say the least, suspicious. In our point of view, NGOs can dream of being a moral force, but they are not called to add fuel to the fire.**

**The Government of Cameroon therefore urges bilateral and multilateral partners, and NGOs in particular, to beware of instrumentalization through the deceptive propaganda of the real promoters of violence in Cameroon, who, lurking abroad, are working perniciously and stubbornly to destabilize our country.**

**In any event, the Government will endeavour to continue to inform national and international opinion on major current events, with the same constancy and the same demand for rigour and transparency whenever necessary.**

**As for the situation in the North-West and South-West Regions, whose reconstruction programme the Head of State has just launched, the Government, through my voice, urges the people of these two Regions to continue to support the local authorities, as well as our Defence and Security Forces, in their struggle to restore peace in this part of our country.**

**Thank you for your kind attention.**

**The Minister of Communication,**