

RÉPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN

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MINISTÈRE DE LA COMMUNICATION

REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON

Peace- Work- Fatherland

MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATION

PRESS BRIEFING
ON THE FIGHT AGAINST BOKO HARAM

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT OF
H.E. ISSA TCHIROMA BAKARY
MINISTER OF COMMUNICATION

Yaoundé 05th September 2014

The Secretary General of the Ministry of Communication,

Distinguished Collaborators,

Distinguished Journalists,

Dear Invitees,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me, before entering into the core of the matter, to wish you a warm welcome in this conference hall of my Ministry, and to express to you my profound gratitude for responding so quickly to my invitation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The subject of this press conference is to take stock of the fight against Boko Haram and on the recent measures taken by the Head of State, to preserve the integrity of Cameroon in its northern part.

As we are all aware, Cameroon is faced with incursions from an armed group based in Nigeria, notably that of Boko Haram. This is a terrorist group, which under the cover of religion, has as main goal, to spread trauma, loot properties, destroy, and cause deaths.

Let it be crystal clear. Boko Haram is above all an external phenomenon to Cameroon. It is a foreign terrorist group, created in Nigeria and having its base in this neighboring country, where the list of its wanton atrocities is not ending. Unfortunately, the attacks of this nebula began to go beyond the borders of Nigeria. And Cameroon, like other neighbors of Nigeria are incurring collateral damages.

It is within this context that some localities of Cameroon sharing borders with Nigeria, at the level of the Far-north region, are faced for some months now, with repeated attacks from these criminals, with some resulting in the abduction of persons, lost in human lives and great material damage.

Still talking on the consequences of the reactions of these sect, Cameroon is recording the massive arrival of Nigeria citizens seeking refuge against terrorist attacks. If our country is welcoming these populations in anguish, within the strict respect of hospitality well-known to Cameroon, no one ignores that such an inflow of refugees is a heavy burden with regard to the pressure on the already limited resources of the hospitable communities.

Faced with the gravity of the threats, the **President of the Republic, His Excellency Paul BIYA**, took the following measures:

- Deployment of important military means in terms of human resources and equipment.
- The reorganization of the military machinery with the commissioning of new officials.

The first results of this action are already yielding fruits in the field. Our brave defense and security forces are inflicting heavy loss on the part of these foreign assailers, who are increasingly facing enormous difficulties to succeed with their attacks in our territory.

At the economic and social level, the **President of the Republic**, has equally instructed the Government to continue and intensify the programmes targeting the reduction of poverty and precariousness in the northern regions.

Allow me to acknowledge the support of the international community, and notably countries such as France, The

United States of America, Great Britain and Germany, brought to us in this fight. The regionalization, and even the internalization of the threat brought by this terrorist group, requires a more determined involvement of the international community in this fight, be it at military or humanitarian level.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the moment when the noose is tightening around the enemy, some voices inspired by ill-fated intentions, have chosen to make one believe that the attacks of Boko Haram against Cameroon are for real, the manifestation of an internal rebellion in our country.

I would like to strongly condemn such ungrounded and irresponsible allegations likely to cause trouble in weak minds.

This is an opportunity for the Government to call on the population to abstain from being distracted by these allegations relayed by some media, likely to jeopardize national harmony and unity.

These allegations, I say it loud and clear, are ungrounded. Let me then stress with vigor and conviction that:

- The entire Cameroonian Nation strongly condemns the terrorist attacks of BOKO HARAM and as one man, stands behind the HEAD OF STATE, CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES, to fight against the atrocities of this barbarous sect.
- There is no Cameroonian BOKO HARAM. The attacks against Cameroon are indeed perpetrated by assailers from abroad and who, after their crimes, immediately cross back to the other side of our borders.
- It is possible that the BOKO HARAM terrorist group could be enrolling some compatriots likely to be economically or socially vulnerable. Meanwhile, it is equally true that this phenomenon is not widespread in our country. As it appears, we witness in the most developed countries, the enrolment of isolated individuals, who succumb to propaganda of terrorist organizations, leaving their home country to join Jihadist movements. If throughout the

world these people are rallying Jihadist movements, should we therefore conclude that there are local versions of Jihadist groups in their countries of origin, or rather that there are internal rebellions being plotted against the governments of the said countries? Certainly No!

Fellow Journalists,

I would like to seize this occasion to clarify the situation of Mr HARISSOU, Notary Public, and Mr Abdoulaye SIDDIKI, which has recently been the talk of the day in the media. If we go by the information we currently have, there is no link between this case and the fight against BOKO HARAM. Mr Abdoulaye SIDDIKI and Mr HARISSOU were arrested by security forces as part of an ongoing investigation on attempts to State security. They are being heard for alleged activities and acquaintances with armed groups from the Central African Republic, some of which are accountable for the attacks against Cameroon. In accordance with the law, those concerned benefit from non-guilt assumption, and only the judge before whom they may appear at the end of

investigations, will rule on whether they are guilty or not. From the foregoing, neither their status, origin, political activities nor their acquaintances, real or alleged, can be incriminated here.

Fellow journalists,

As you can all bear witness, the allegations substantiating a rebellion in the Northern regions are mere maneuvers of division and distraction that can fool nobody.

With regard to these attempts to stigmatize a part of our population which seriously threaten the unity of our Nation, I hereby strongly warn the national media, especially those who have decided to follow this gruesome and perilous move, by reminding them of the obligations binding their republican responsibility, especially when the territorial integrity of our country is at stake and when our fundamental values are likely to be jeopardized.

Such wayward attitudes are intolerable and inadmissible in a Republic and in a Rule of Law.

Nevertheless, I am delighted to notice that a wide range of Cameroonian media organs are cognizant of the severity of

the armed conflict opposing our country to the BOKO HARAM terrorist group, and have to this effect accepted to support **the PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC, HEAD OF STATE, CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES**, as well as our defense and security forces, in the just cause undertaken to preserve our national integrity, the protection of persons and goods throughout the national territory.

I therefore call on them to continue in that way for the salvation of our beautiful Nation which belongs to us all.

On behalf of the PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC, HEAD OF STATE AND CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES, we pay homage to our defense and security forces for their heroism, and their high sense of honour. They have always lived up their motto of “Honour and Fidelity”.

The entire nation is thankful to them.

We equally salute all the sons and daughters of Cameroon from North to South and East to West, who come up in a patriotic move to preserve the peace and stability that our country cherishes the most, and who, in one way or the other,

have continued to support our defense and security forces in the rough fight against BOKO HARAM.

To the entire political class and the civil society of Cameroon, who are supporting the HEAD OF STATE and our defence and security forces, we acknowledge their high sense of civic values and citizenship.

To the people of the Far-North, victim of the atrocities of BOKO HARAM, we hereby express the compassion and support of the Nation.

Fellow Journalists,

As closing remarks, permit me to reassure the national public opinion that the Very High Instructions of the HEAD OF STATE concerning security building at our borders are efficiently implemented by our brave defence and security forces. The successes recently recorded with the dismantling of arm trafficking bands and the neutralization of attempts of armed groups to enter our territory, are a sufficient evidence of this fact.

It is therefore needless giving in to panic because the Government and the defence and security forces under the auspices of His EXCELLENCY PAUL BIYA, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC, are dealing with this issue.

In the eve of back to school, the Government has taken all necessary measures to ensure that all citizens pursue their usual activities in all tranquillity and serenity. The Cameroonian people can therefore rest fully assured, even if people should remain vigilant and mobilized.

Distinguished Journalists, this is the substance of the statement I had to deliver on the occasion of this press briefing to which I invited you.

Thank you for your kind attention.