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# **MEDIA ATTACKS AGAINST CAMEROON**

## **PRESS BRIEFING**

**INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT OF HIS EXCELLENCY**

**ISSA TCHIROMA BAKARY**

**MINISTER OF COMMUNICATION**

**Yaoundé, October 10, 2014**

**The Secretary General of the Ministry of Communication,**

**The Inspector General,**

**Technical Advisers,**

**Inspectors,**

**The Head of Divisions,**

**Distinguished Collaborators,**

**Distinguished Journalists,**

**Distinguished guests,**

You must have noticed that, for some time now, foreign media have repeatedly chosen to direct unjustified attacks against the institutions of our country in general and **the Head of State His Excellency Paul BIYA** in particular, through a wide range of their local representatives and some organizations of the civil society.

I would like us to honestly, sincerely and frankly exchange on this issue, which affects the strategic interests of Cameroon, and to, in all likelihood, discredit our nation before the whole world and pave the way for the destabilization of our fundamental balances through misinformation and manipulation used as arm weapons by our destroyers.

Meanwhile, allow me first of all, before getting into the core of the matter, to wish you a warm welcome in this conference hall of my ministry, and to express to you all my gratitude, for accepting my invitation to take part in this press briefing.

**Distinguished Journalists,**

**Distinguished guests,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It has been observed that in the past few weeks, a wide range of foreign media and other international civil society organizations have expressed great interest on Cameroon from different angles, but always in the sense of criticizing, degrading and slandering our country, Cameroon.

Illustratively, I would like to mention the news article of Mrs. Fanny PIGEAUD published some weeks ago in the French information website "*Médiapart*", in which, the author went on to indicate that an armed rebellion is being constituted in the northern regions of Cameroon, under the cover of attacks perpetrated by the "BOKO HARAM" terrorist organization.

Allow me to further cite the last report of the N.G.O *International Crisis Group* on our country entitled “Cameroon: Prevention is Better than Cure”, followed by the recent rumour instilled by a news article published in the *Jeune Afrique* magazine stating the abduction and assassination of Mister GUERANDI MBARA by Cameroonian Special Services.

Once again, and only after few editions, the same information magazine went further to publish an interview of a former top state official who is today at war with the law.

More recently, local media, from an allegation published by another local website, have chosen to insert in their respective headlines, and in their editions of the same day, that the **Head of State** would be the fifth most richest African Head of States, backing their alleged ranking from the international magazines *Forbes*.

To this, we should add the constant unbalanced treatment of information on Cameroon by some leading international media such as *Radio France Internationale* or even *France 24*, for the audiovisual sector, also, by daily newspapers, whose professionalism seems to be evident, such as, *Le Monde* or *Libération*, and just to name a few.

I would not cite all the destroyers committed in this permanent adversity into which Cameroon is systematically criticized by the same « Lords of Virtue » for facts whose truthfulness are not always verified and thoroughly examined.

In any case, be it the ungrounded allegations of “*Médiapart*” on the thesis of a conspiracy organized by top rank officials and other top leaders from the northern regions of the country, or be it of an armed rebellion under the cover of « BOKO HARAM » to destabilize these regions, or better still, of the apocalyptic curses and gruesome fantasies served by the International Crisis Group, following their last report, the facts, after detailed analysis remain indisputable: **this is a bunch of ungrounded and flagrant allegations.**

Regarding the ill-fated interest manifested by certain international wide audience media against Cameroon, it is not only the frequency of their editorial occurrences on matters of our country that matters, but also serious professional misconduct practices in the treatment of these issues, rendering their proceedings very suspicious vis-à-vis our nation.

Meanwhile, we cannot think for a moment, that Cameroon has become so important to be the target of the editorial choices of these huge media organs, I am talking of Cameroon, to the extent of obsessing a large proportion of such news makers.

Similarly, no one can imagine for a moment that the ungrounded information uttered openly by these actors of a proven dimension, would fall short of professional practice or even ignore the issues to be handled.

This can only be considered as a wilful attempt to distort the truth, to exploit and poison public opinion, with the ultimate goal of systematically casting opprobrium on the **President of the Republic**, with the intention to gradually prepare the opinion to a certain socio-political crisis, and in the long run, destabilize and set the institutions of our country on fire.

But, let us be very careful, Cameroonians are not naïve, duped or less again ungrateful.

This is not the first attempt to destabilize Cameroon, to destroy its granite bedrock and to undermine its core values of national peace, unity and solidarity.

In any case, these attempts, in which our destroyers, full with sepulchral imagination, and to which we begin to be accustomed with, are for the rest doomed to failure, and shall not prosper owing to their screaming emptiness and apparent inconsistency of facts.

Moreover, Cameroonians are the first to take stock of the situation as they are everyday living a different reality contrary to the fallacies relayed by these doomsayers.

Allusion is being made of a conspiracy and of an armed rebellion under the cover of "Boko Haram" in Cameroon.

But everyone knows who Boko Haram is and what their motivations from their base in Nigeria are.

It is also known by everyone that it is in their quest for a support base to conduct its fight within Nigeria that this criminal organization is attacking part of our country.

There is therefore no rebellion or any plot against anyone in Cameroon.

The International Crisis Group also predicted hell to us by 2018, with the only solution being that **President Paul BIYA** would step down from power by 2018.

The ingredients of this cast are all found for this N.G.O: widespread economic stagnation, change in political leadership with a rigged electoral system, lack of resources and poor state of the opposition and civil society, all chronically dependent on the regime in place, security system plagued by internal divisions and unable to cope with day-to-day challenges, etc.

But there again, no one in our country would want to be distracted by such amenities which have nothing to do with the situation actually lived in Cameroon.

Economically, all indicators are henceforth to the green in our country, with a positive growth rate and continuous improvement. The Major Accomplishments Policy moving full steam ahead by the **Head of State**,

has now reached its cruising speed and Cameroon is progressively moving forward toward its goal of becoming emergent by 2035.

With regard to the electoral system, the last consultations have demonstrated a qualitative progression of the electoral system put in place since the advent of Elections Cameroon (ELECAM), the review of the electoral roll, the introduction of biometrics, not to mention the significant rise of the participation rate. This qualitative leap in our electoral system and the transparency of the various elections has each time been lauded by the international community.

With regard to our security system, the results achieved by our defence and security forces in a regional environment marked by endless crises, is enough proof to showcase the perfection of their organization and the skills of their human resources.

With regard to the controversy over the assets owned by the **Head of State**, and which has each time become like a chorus, it should be buttressed that this controversy has never found any arguments, whether with regard to the repeated inventive launched by the Catholic Committee against Hunger and for Development, the famous CCFD, with the assistance of its local handymen, or better still, with the shameless attempt orchestrated by a small group of manipulators supported by some national media.

Yes, you now know of what I am talking about, notably on the alleged ranking of the assets of **African Heads of State**, first attributed to Forbes magazine, and now referred to a website hitherto unknown to all, following the emphatic denial made by the African Director of the famous American magazine on this crude attempt to usurp any credibility.

According to the so-called ranking, the **Head of State** of Cameroon is said to occupy the fifth position in the ranking of the richest **African Heads of State**.

In an exclusive interview with Cameroon Tribune of Friday October 10, 2014 the African Director of Forbes magazine describes in detail the methodology by which the rankings of fortunes are established at their level.

According to the African Director, the methodology from which Forbes magazine has built its reputation over the past years is based on several verifiable auditable data used to establish the value of the assets of the persons concerned.

This essentially concerns the assets held in companies (shares, stock options, dividends), the essential elements of their assets (real estate, gold stocks, yachts, private jets, etc.). The collection of this data is supplemented by investigations carried out by journalists of the magazine from financial experts.

Furthermore, cross-checks are being made by the same journalists, going to the extent of even investigating the persons concerned, to assert or refute the information at their disposal.

It is worth mentioning that the authors of the alleged ranking, which have been rapidly widespread by some national media, only have as methodology, a corporation of door-to-door selling, deriving from sources which are themselves already discredited, either by court after many court attempts, or by the ungrounded character of their statements over the amount of expenses incurred during the stay of the concerned person abroad.

This is the case with CCFD, over which the reference website of local amplifiers are backing their stance, for a court action in France against the Cameroonian **Head of State**, and which was simply stonewalled.

The same applied to the “Rue89” website which thought it wise to render public, without any evidence, the daily rent price of a villa rented for the stay of **the Head of State** in France.

These are the few evidences used by the authors of the alleged ranking, to indicate that the Cameroonian **Head of State** is the fifth richest **African Head of State**.

Looking carefully at these facts, one would then easily understand why, instead of citing their real sources in this website, which came out only four or five months ago, the national relays of this fiction, surreptitiously tried to attribute it to *Forbes magazine*, whose notoriety and credibility are, in any case, much more evident than the focused source of our today's destroyers.

To end up, it should be understood that Cameroon is going through persecution and a voluntary tarnishing of its image with the authors hiding their intentions.

I have previously mentioned that this strategy will never yield fruits in our country, where Cameroonians are strongly united behind their leader, **President Paul BIYA**.

Allow me to say to all those supporting this perfidious and pernicious game, be it from inside or from abroad, that they are driving straight away into their own doom.

Those among them who committed themselves to inform the public, I mean here the media, should be aware that by displaying such a flagrant deficit in deontology, they are jeopardizing their own credibility, and in the same time, endangering both their professional and entrepreneurship future, and will never carry the Cameroonian people along to sink together with them!

I therefore urge on all Cameroonian to remain vigilant, against these enemies of our Nation, who are more dangerous because they have many hidden accomplices among us, but let me assure you that their faces are beginning to be unmasked.

Let us remain strongly united and mobilized behind **the President of the Republic, His Excellency Paul BIYA**, for our fundamental values of national peace, unity and solidarity.

Thank you very much for your kind attention