



VOTING FOR PAUL BIYA IN 2025 IS VOTING FOR THE FAILURE OF PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS

**ANALYSIS OF PAUL BIYA'S SPEECH OF DECEMBER 31, 2024: 42
YEARS OF PROMISES, 42 YEARS OF COUNTERTRUTHS, 42 YEARS
OF FAILURES... FROM PHANTOM EMERGENCE TO NATIONAL
DECEPTION**

ABSTRACT

Paul Biya's December 31st, 2024, speech, which is the most recent in terms of general policy, masks an alarming reality: Cameroon is facing a profound sociopolitical, economic, and security crisis. Despite promises of progress, inequality, persistent unemployment, and corrupt governance are hampering development. A change of leadership is urgent for the country's future.

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FROM PHANTOM EMERGENCE TO NATIONAL DECEPTION

**AN ACADEMIC ANALYSIS BY PROFESSOR JIMMY YAB,
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Voting for Paul Biya in 2025 means voting for the failure of present and future generations Pr. Jimmy Yab, MLDC National President

This document constitutes a major political and intellectual alert, particularly addressed to Cameroonian youth. It is intended as a well-argued warning: after 42 years in power, the continuation of Paul Biya as head of state is not a guarantee of stability, but the assurance of continuity in failure, institutionalized lies and national regression.

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Why was this document produced?

It follows Paul Biya's speech of December 31st, 2024, a speech deemed misleading, disconnected from reality and revealing a regime at the end of its rope. The objective is clear: to prevent the presidential election of October 2025 from being an opportunity to re-elect a man whose record is one of immobility, poverty and democratic contempt.

Executive summary of the six-point finding:

1. Misleading growth figures

The 3.8% growth rate announced for 2024 masks an economy undermined by poverty, massive unemployment (more than 30% among young people), social inequality and dependence on unprocessed raw materials. Inclusive development is absent.

2. Phantom industrialization

The industrial flagships of the 1980s have disappeared. The economic zones (Kribi, Ouassa-Babouté) remain incomplete. Industrial policy is nothing but a mirage, maintained to mask massive deindustrialization.

3. Endemic and unpunished corruption

According to Transparency International, Cameroon is ranked 142nd out of 180 in terms of corruption. The reports of the Court of Auditors reveal massive embezzlement (Covid Gate affair, CAN stadium scandal), without any serious sanction.

4. A security disaster

The Anglophone crisis continues to cause deaths and displaced people.

Boko Haram is still rampant in the Far North.

Urban crime is exploding.

DDR (disarmament, demobilization and reintegration) programmes are ineffective.

The so-called peace is a lie of the state.

5. A collapsed social infrastructure

Education: dilapidated schools, underpaid teachers.

Health: hospitals in ruins, inaccessible care.

Water and electricity: chronic shortage.

Housing: explosion of shanty towns. The daily life of Cameroonians is marked by indignity and survival.

6. False popularity built on fear

Calls for Biya's candidacy are staged by clientelist elites. Any dissenting voice is repressed. The real silent majority is demanding alternation, democracy and a new generation of leadership.

The challenge of 2025



At 92 years old, Paul Biya is faced with a historic choice:

To leave through the front door, by renouncing to stand again, and to allow a peaceful democratic transition, respected by history and welcomed by the people.

Or cling to power, at the risk of a national collapse and a humiliating exit through the back door, like other leaders who have refused to read the signs of the times.

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Overall conclusion

Cameroon is rich in its youth, its resources and its potential. But it is blocked by 42 years of personal rule, broken promises and predatory governance.

This document calls on every citizen — and especially every young person — to stop saying "I didn't know." It is a summary of 42 years of lies at the highest level of the state. To vote for Paul Biya is to vote against yourself. It is voting against your children. It is voting against Cameroon.

Professor Jimmy Yab National President of the MLDC — Movement for the Liberation and Development of Cameroon For the construction of a Community Developmentalist State (CDS)

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INTRODUCTION: A DECEPTIVE SPEECH TO MASK TOTAL FAILURE

On December 31st, 2024, Paul Biya, faithful to a decades-old tradition, addressed Cameroonians with a speech full of promises, flattering figures, and a resolutely optimistic tone. Yet, behind this well-honed rhetoric lies an undeniable reality: that of a country in the grip of a multifaceted crisis and constant socio-economic decline. Since coming to power in 1982, Paul Biya has delivered numerous speeches extolling imaginary progress, while the situation on the ground is inexorably deteriorating. Problems related to security, the economy, social infrastructure, and industrialization are all evidence of a total failure that this speech attempts to conceal.

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This discourse is part of a recurring strategy of the regime: to project an image of progress and stability to legitimize a declining power, while evading the true causes of Cameroon's ills. The vaunted growth rates, announced infrastructure projects, and supposedly successful security efforts do not stand up to an objective analysis of the facts. Behind the official figures lie darker realities: endemic unemployment, increased economic dependence, rampant deindustrialization, and persistent insecurity in several regions of the country.

The contrast between discourse and reality is striking, particularly on crucial aspects such as:

- The economy, where purely quantitative growth masks widespread poverty and a lack of real structural transformation.
- Security, where conflicts in the English-speaking regions and attacks by Boko Haram continue to sow terror, despite declarations of a return to peace.
- Social infrastructure, where the majority of Cameroonians struggle to access quality basic services, despite decades of government promises.
- Industry, where Cameroon, once the industrial leader in Central Africa, saw most of its industrial flagships disappear under the reign of Paul Biya, leaving an economy largely dependent on imports.

This introduction highlights the enormous gap between official statements and the reality experienced by Cameroonians. While Paul Biya's regime strives to disguise reality with carefully crafted rhetoric, the facts show that Cameroon is facing poor resource management, governance plagued by corruption, and a severe lack of strategic vision to lift the country out of stagnation.

This analysis will deconstruct the 2024 end-of-year speech by highlighting its contradictions, flaws, and deliberate omissions. Through a critical study of the main themes addressed—economy, security, social infrastructure, and industrialization—we will demonstrate that this speech, far from reflecting a tangible reality, is merely a communications ploy designed to maintain an aging power and mask the real failures of a regime at the end of its tether. Cameroon, after 42 years of unfulfilled promises, deserves a new form of governance focused on inclusive development and social justice.

I. MISLEADING ECONOMIC GROWTH FIGURES: THE TRUE FACE OF THE CAMEROONIAN ECONOMY

In his 2024 end-of-year speech, Paul Biya boasted of economic growth of 3.8% in 2024 and announced a projection of 4.1% for 2025. This figure, while attractive on paper, is far from reflecting the economic reality experienced by the majority of Cameroonians. Indeed, this growth, which is essentially quantitative, masks deep inequalities, persistent poverty, and a lack of genuine structural transformation of the economy.

1. GROWTH WITHOUT IMPACT ON THE DAILY LIVES OF CAMEROONIANS

Although Cameroon regularly displays positive growth rates, this growth does not translate into a significant improvement in the living conditions of the population:



- **High poverty rate:** According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), more than 37% of the Cameroonian population lives below the poverty line, despite the growth reported. This poverty is particularly pronounced in rural areas, where access to basic services (education, health, drinking water) remains limited.

- **Increased social inequality:** Cameroon has a Gini index (a measure of inequality) of over 0.43, indicating a high concentration of wealth in the hands of a minority. This inequality is evident in the contrast between the affluent neighborhoods of Douala and Yaoundé and the rapidly expanding slums.

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Concrete example: In Douala, the Bonanjo district is home to the headquarters of large companies and luxury residences, while nearby neighborhoods such as New Bell and Makepe are characterized by extreme poverty, without regular access to drinking water or electricity.

2. AN ECONOMY DEPENDENT ON RAW MATERIALS

Cameroon remains heavily dependent on the export of raw materials, without any real local processing:

- **Oil sector:** Although oil contributes more than 40% of export revenues, it has not diversified the economy or created significant jobs. The fall in oil prices on the international market between 2015 and 2018 revealed the fragility of this dependence.

- **Gross export of agricultural products:** Cameroon mainly exports cocoa, coffee and rubber in raw form, without significant local processing. In 2024, the country exported more than 300,000 tonnes of cocoa, but only a tiny fraction was processed locally, thus depriving the national economy of added value and jobs.

Concrete example: The cocoa-coffee sector, which employs more than 600,000 producers, suffers from a lack of local processing industries. The majority of producers sell their crops at low prices to foreign multinationals, which handle processing and marketing on international markets.

3. AN EMBRYONIC INDUSTRIAL SECTOR

Despite announcements on industrialization, the Cameroonian industrial sector remains underdeveloped:

- **Low contribution to GDP:** The secondary sector, including manufacturing, represents only 14% of GDP, a low figure for a country aspiring to emergence.

- **Unfinished industrial projects:** Many economic zones, such as Kribi, which are supposed to attract industrial investors, are struggling to get off the ground due to bureaucracy, the lack of quality infrastructure and an unattractive business climate.

Concrete example: The Kribi industrial zone project, launched with great fanfare in 2017, was to house wood, cocoa, and oil processing plants. To date, very few factories have been built, and the area remains largely underutilized.

4. MASSIVE UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDEREMPLOYMENT

Unemployment and underemployment constitute one of Cameroon's greatest economic challenges:

- **Youth unemployment:** According to the National Institute of Statistics (INS), the unemployment rate among young people aged 15 to 35 exceeds 30%, a situation aggravated by the absence of effective public policies for job creation.

- **Underemployment:** The majority of working Cameroonians work in the informal sector, often in precarious conditions, without social security or job security. In 2024, the informal sector accounted for approximately 90% of total employment.



Concrete example: In Yaoundé and Douala, young graduates struggle to find jobs that match their qualifications and often find themselves forced to work as motorcycle taxi drivers or small traders in the informal sector.

5. Inflation and loss of purchasing power

Despite the president's claims of controlling inflation, the reality is that the prices of basic necessities continue to rise:

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- **Persistent inflation:** Inflation, although reduced to 5% in 2024, remains high for an economy where wages are low and stagnant.

- **Rising food prices:** The price of bread, rice, oil and other basic products has risen sharply in recent years, undermining household purchasing power.

Concrete example: Between 2021 and 2024, the price of a liter of palm oil rose from 600 FCFA to 1,200 FCFA, and that of a bag of rice from 12,000 FCFA to 18,000 FCFA, leading to a drop in the standard of living of the poorest families.

Artificial and unbalanced growth

The official narrative on economic growth does not reflect the daily reality of Cameroonians. Behind the flattering figures lies a fragile economy marked by an excessive dependence on raw materials, a lack of genuine industrialization, and growing inequality. This situation illustrates the failure of the economic policies implemented under the Paul Biya regime, which were incapable of translating growth into inclusive development.

II. A FICTITIOUS INDUSTRIAL POLICY: WHERE ARE THE REAL FACTORIES?

In his speeches, Paul Biya regularly boasts of the "industrial progress" made under his regime, citing a few one-off projects such as the creation of new cement and tile factories. However, this rhetoric masks a much darker reality: massive deindustrialization since he came to power in 1982. Cameroon, once home to a vibrant industrial base, has seen the closure of many major factories over the past four decades, giving way to an increased reliance on imports.

1. AN INDUSTRIAL FABRIC IN DECLINE SINCE THE 1980S

Before Paul Biya came to power, Cameroon had a promising industrial sector, supported by an interventionist state that invested in strategic industries. Some of the most emblematic factories of this era were:

- **CELLUCAM** (Cellulose du Cameroun): This factory, located in Edea, specialized in transforming wood into paper pulp. It played a key role in exploiting the country's vast forest resources. Its closure in the 1990s, due to mismanagement and a lack of investment, not only led to the loss of thousands of jobs, but also forced Cameroon to import paper.

- **CICAM** (Industrial Cotton Mill of Cameroon): A major player in the textile industry, CICAM produced fabrics for local consumption and export. Under Paul Biya, the factory gradually declined due to competition from imported products, particularly from Asia, and the lack of protection for local industry. Today, CICAM is barely functioning, with production well below its initial capacity.

- **CAMSUCO** (Cameroon Sugar Company): This sugar company, located in the Central region, contributed to local sugar production. Its poorly managed privatization in the 1990s led to its collapse. Cameroon has since become dependent on imports to meet its sugar consumption.

A striking example: In 1980, Cameroon exported part of its textile and paper production. Today, it imports the majority of these products, worsening its trade deficit.



2. DISASTROUS PRIVATIZATIONS UNDER STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT PROGRAMS

In the 1990s, Cameroon, under pressure from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, launched a series of privatizations as part of structural adjustment programs. These privatizations, poorly prepared and often marred by corruption, led to the closure of numerous factories:

- **Privatization of SONEL** (Société Nationale d'Électricité): This company, formerly public, was privatized in 2001. The private management that followed did not improve access to electricity, and power cuts remain frequent, hampering industrial development.

- **Liquidation of REGIFERCAM (Cameroon Railway Company):** The disappearance of this public company had dramatic consequences on the transport of goods and the supply of raw materials to factories.

Consequence: The privatization and closure of these companies led to a disorganization of the national economy and an increase in production costs for the few remaining industries.

3. RECENT INDUSTRIAL PROJECTS THAT HAVE NOT BEEN COMPLETED

Since the 2010s, the government has made numerous announcements of ambitious industrial projects, but few of them have actually seen the light of day:

- **Kribi Industrial Zone:** This area, which was supposed to house wood and raw materials processing plants, remains largely under-exploited. In 2024, only a few companies will operate there, and the promised infrastructure has still not been finalized.

- **Ouassa-Babouté agro-industrial technology park:** This project, announced to relaunch the processing of local agricultural products (cereals, tubers, milk), has still not started, several years after its official launch.

Concrete example: Cocoa processing, a strategic sector for Cameroon, is a blatant failure. Although the country is one of the world's leading cocoa producers, more than 85% of its production is exported in its raw form. The few processing plants are operating below capacity due to a lack of investment and a favorable environment.

4. AN EMBRYONIC MANUFACTURING SECTOR

The manufacturing sector, key to economic development, remains marginal in Cameroon:

- **Low contribution to GDP:** The manufacturing sector represents barely 14% of GDP, compared to more than 30% in countries like Ethiopia or Morocco, which have managed to diversify their economies.

- **Lack of a local value chain:** Most products consumed in Cameroon are imported, even those made from locally available raw materials. For example, the country imports furniture even though it has vast forest resources.

Concrete example: In the cement sector, although new factories have been established (such as Dangote Cement), the cost of cement remains high, and the industry is unable to meet local demand due to energy supply and transportation problems.

5. CONSEQUENCES OF DEINDUSTRIALIZATION

Massive deindustrialization under the Paul Biya regime had profound consequences on the Cameroonian economy:

- **Loss of economic sovereignty:** Cameroon has become dependent on imports for many consumer goods, worsening its trade deficit.



- **Unemployment and job insecurity:** The closure of large factories has led to a massive loss of formal jobs. The majority of Cameroonians now work in the informal sector, without social security or job security.

- **Low competitiveness:** The absence of a strong industry prevents Cameroon from integrating into regional and global value chains, thus limiting its growth potential.

An industrial illusion maintained by the regime

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Contrary to official discourse, the industrial reality in Cameroon has been one of constant decline since the 1980s. The few recently inaugurated factories are not enough to mask the disappearance of true industrial flagships, nor to compensate for the jobs lost.

III. GOVERNANCE AND CORRUPTION: A GAPING WOUND THAT HAS NEVER HEALED

Paul Biya has once again promised to strengthen the fight against corruption. However, according to Transparency International's 2024 ranking, Cameroon is among the 25 most corrupt countries in the world, ranking 142nd out of 180.

Some recent examples illustrate the extent of this endemic corruption:

The Court of Auditors' reports: A damning mirror of poor governance in Cameroon

The annual reports of Cameroon's Court of Auditors are a key source for understanding the structural dysfunctions that characterize public management under the Paul Biya regime. These documents, prepared by an independent institution supposed to monitor the use of public funds, reveal massive irregularities, embezzlement, and mismanagement of public resources each year. However, despite the seriousness of the reports' findings, corrective action is slow to be taken, and those identified are rarely subject to exemplary sanctions.

1. LARGE-SCALE EMBEZZLEMENT

The Court of Auditors' reports regularly highlight cases of massive misappropriation of public funds in several key sectors:

- **CovidGate Affair:** In a report published in 2022, the Court of Auditors denounced the opaque management and embezzlement of several billion CFA francs intended for the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic. This scandal implicated strategic ministries, but to date, few concrete sanctions have been taken.

- **Road infrastructure projects:** The Court of Auditors has highlighted unjustified cost overruns in several road projects, such as the Yaoundé-Douala highway, the first phase of which, which began in 2014, has still not been completed. Overbilling and payments made for work not completed are among the irregularities noted.

2. MISMANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC ENTERPRISES

Another point regularly highlighted by the Court of Auditors concerns the inefficient management of state-owned enterprises. Many state-owned companies, despite receiving massive subsidies, continue to accumulate losses without contributing to economic development:

- **CAMTEL** (telecommunications company) and **SONARA** (national refinery) are among the companies whose management has been described as catastrophic by successive Court reports.

- **Economic zones**, such as the Kribi industrial zone, which are supposed to boost industrialization, are struggling to produce concrete results due to inadequate management and a lack of strategic vision.



3. INEFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE AND LACK OF ACCOUNTABILITY

The reports also highlight a chronic governance problem, including:

- **Lack of follow-up on recommendations:** Although the Court of Auditors makes recommendations each year to improve public management, these are rarely followed up. This demonstrates a lack of political will to implement reforms.
- **Involvement of untouchable senior officials:** Many of the embezzlements and irregularities concern figures close to power, who benefit from total impunity.

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4. A SIGNAL IGNORED BY PAUL BIYA

The Court of Auditors' reports could have been a powerful tool for reforming and cleaning up public management. However, under Paul Biya's regime, they remain largely ignored, reducing this institution to a mere observer with no real power to enforce it. This situation perfectly illustrates the regime's inability to establish governance based on transparency and accountability.

The Court of Auditors' reports provide irrefutable proof of the regime's failure in public management. They show that, despite official rhetoric about fighting corruption and improving governance, Cameroon remains mired in predatory practices that are holding back its development. If Paul Biya decides to run in the 2025 presidential election, he will have to answer for this damning legacy. Unless he chooses to exit through the front door, facilitating a political change and enabling a new, more efficient and transparent form of governance.

CAMEROON'S FOOTBALL STADIUM SCANDAL: A SHOWCASE OF BAD GOVERNANCE

The scandal surrounding the construction and rehabilitation of football stadiums in Cameroon is a glaring example of the mismanagement of infrastructure projects under the Paul Biya regime. This scandal escalated during the organization of the 2021 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON), initially scheduled for 2019 but postponed due to delays in infrastructure delivery. The dysfunctions observed reveal not only disastrous management of public funds, but also a deeply corrupt system.

1. Exorbitant and unjustified costs

The total cost of sports infrastructure related to the CAN has far exceeded initial forecasts. The emblematic case is that of the Olembe stadium, whose initial cost was estimated at 163 billion FCFA, but which ultimately exceeded 330 billion FCFA. This explosion in costs is explained by:

- **Poor planning:** Repeated changes to plans and missed deadlines led to artificial inflation of costs.
- **Overbilling and embezzlement:** According to reports from the Court of Auditors and certain journalistic investigations, a significant portion of the allocated funds was embezzled or misused.

Olembe stadium, which was supposed to be an architectural jewel and a source of national pride, was only partially completed on the eve of the competition, after several warnings from the Confederation of African Football (CAF).

2. Unfinished or underutilized infrastructure

Despite the enormous sums invested, several stadiums remain partially completed or underused:

- The **Olembe stadium**, despite its rushed inauguration for the CAN, still has unfinished work. The sports complex planned around the stadium, including hotels and shops, was never built.



- The **Japoma stadium**, built in Douala at an equally high cost, suffers from insufficient maintenance, and its use is limited due to a lack of appropriate management.

3. A scandal without real punishment

Despite the extent of the dysfunctions and embezzlement observed, no significant sanctions have been taken against those responsible for this fiasco. Calls from civil society and some parliamentarians to open an independent investigation have gone unanswered. This silence can be explained by the proximity of the main beneficiaries of these embezzlements to the circle of power:

- **Political responsibility:** Several ministers and senior officials who oversaw these projects have never been questioned.
- **Systemic impunity:** The Biya regime has repeatedly demonstrated its inability, or lack of will, to punish cases of corruption involving those close to power.

IV. A DISASTROUS SECURITY RECORD: THE MYTH OF RESTORED PEACE

In his 2024 end-of-year speech, Paul Biya asserted that peace and security are now consolidated in Cameroon, despite a few "cowardly attacks" by terrorist groups and "atrocities committed by armed gangs." This assertion, far from reflecting the reality on the ground, is part of a long tradition of discourse minimizing the severity of the security crises facing the country. In truth, the Biya regime's security record is disastrous, marked by ineffective conflict management and a steady deterioration of the situation in several regions.

1. THE PERSISTENCE OF THE ANGLOPHONE CRISIS: AN UNDECLARED WAR

Since 2016, Cameroon has been mired in a serious crisis in its Northwest and Southwest regions, where English-speaking separatist groups are clashing with government forces. Despite repeated government declarations of a gradual return to peace, the reality is quite different:

- **A deadly conflict:** According to estimates by the International Crisis Group, the conflict has left more than 6,000 dead and forced nearly a million people to flee their homes. Civilians, caught between security forces and separatist groups, are paying the highest price.
- **Abuses by both sides:** Reports by Human Rights Watch and other human rights organizations document abuses by both sides. Security forces are accused of extrajudicial executions, rape, and the destruction of villages, while separatist groups have increased kidnappings, attacks on schools, and the killing of civilians suspected of collaborating with the government.
- **A stalled peace process:** The Grand National Dialogue organized in 2019, which was supposed to resolve the crisis, has produced no concrete results. The main demands of the Anglophones, such as federalization or increased autonomy, have been ignored, which has led to a hardening of the positions of the separatist groups.

A striking example: In November 2024, an attack on a village in the Northwest region killed 27 civilians, including women and children, illustrating the ongoing violence in the area. Despite the presence of security forces, residents continue to live in daily fear.

2. THE PERSISTENT THREAT OF BOKO HARAM IN THE FAR NORTH

Cameroon's Far North region has been facing the threat of Boko Haram, a terrorist group originating in Nigeria, since 2014. Although Paul Biya welcomes "significant progress" in the fight against this group, the facts show that the threat persists:



- **Regular attacks:** In 2024, several dozen attacks were recorded in the region, causing the deaths of civilians and soldiers. These attacks mainly target isolated villages and security posts.

- **Population displacement:** According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), more than 340,000 people remain displaced in the Far North due to Boko Haram violence, living in precarious conditions.

- **Forced recruitment:** The terrorist group continues to forcibly recruit young people in remote villages, taking advantage of poverty and lack of economic opportunities.

A striking example: In July 2024, a Boko Haram attack in the town of Mozogo left 15 people dead, mostly civilians, and displaced hundreds of families. This event demonstrates that, despite military operations, the terrorist threat remains acute.

3. URBAN CRIME AND INSECURITY IN LARGE CITIES

In addition to major crises in the English-speaking regions and the Far North, Cameroon is facing a rise in crime in urban centers:

- **Banditry and armed robbery:** In Douala and Yaoundé, cases of armed robbery, assaults, and burglaries have increased in recent years. Despite the announcement of measures to strengthen security, people continue to live in insecurity.

- **Development of gangs:** Organized gangs, often made up of unemployed youth, are proliferating in several deprived neighborhoods, taking advantage of the absence of effective social reintegration policies.

A striking example: In October 2024, a series of spectacular burglaries in residential neighborhoods of Yaoundé caused great concern among residents, forcing the authorities to launch a security operation. However, this type of one-off action has had no lasting effect on crime.

4. THE FAILURE OF DISARMAMENT, DEMOBILIZATION AND REINTEGRATION (DDR) PROGRAMS

In an attempt to resolve armed conflicts, the Cameroonian government has implemented disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) programs for separatist fighters and former Boko Haram members. However, these programs have struggled to achieve their objectives:

- **Low adherence:** Very few separatist fighters have joined DDR centers, fearing reprisals or disbelieving the sincerity of the government's offer.

- **Precarious living conditions in the centers:** Several reports indicate poor living conditions in DDR centers, where ex-combatants struggle to receive vocational training or adequate support.

- **Relapse into violence:** Due to a lack of follow-up and economic opportunities, some ex-combatants return to hiding and take up arms again.

A speech disconnected from reality

Paul Biya's security record is far from that of a country on the path to peace. In reality, Cameroon remains confronted with multiple hotbeds of tension that continue to destabilize several regions and affect the daily lives of its populations. The regime's rhetoric, which presents an image of a country at peace, is more propaganda than reality.



V. INSUFFICIENT SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE: A DIFFICULT DAILY LIFE FOR CAMEROONIANS

Despite Paul Biya's optimistic rhetoric about improving Cameroonians' living conditions, social infrastructure remains seriously inadequate. Key sectors such as education, health, drinking water, and electricity suffer from chronic underinvestment and ineffective management. These shortcomings have direct consequences on the daily lives of the population, particularly the most vulnerable.

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1. EDUCATION: UNDER-EQUIPPED SCHOOLS AND POORLY PAID TEACHERS

The Cameroonian education system faces many challenges:

- **Lack of school infrastructure:** In many areas, schools are insufficient in number and poorly equipped. It is not uncommon to see children attending classes in makeshift shelters or under trees due to a lack of suitable classrooms.
- **Overcrowded classes:** In urban areas, public schools often have more than 100 students per class, which affects the quality of education.
- **Low teacher motivation:** Teachers, poorly paid and facing precarious working conditions, are increasingly striking to demand better conditions. In 2022, the teachers' movement called "We've put up with too much" paralyzed the sector for several weeks.

These problems contribute to a high school dropout rate, particularly in rural areas and English-speaking regions affected by the crisis.

2. HEALTH: AN UNDER-EQUIPPED AND INACCESSIBLE SYSTEM

Despite repeated announcements about strengthening the health system, the reality remains worrying:

- **Inadequate health infrastructure:** Many communities, particularly in rural areas, do not have functioning hospitals or health centers. Where they exist, they often lack qualified personnel, medicines and essential equipment.
- **Hospitals in crisis:** Large public hospitals in cities like Yaoundé and Douala are overcrowded and underequipped. There is a recurring shortage of beds, medical equipment, and medications. In 2023, a survey revealed that more than 60% of hospitalized patients in large cities had to buy their own medications from pharmacies.
- **High health costs:** The lack of an effective universal health coverage system makes health care inaccessible to a large part of the population. Many families must choose between receiving treatment and meeting their basic needs.

A striking example: the Yaoundé University Hospital (CHUY), which, despite its status as a reference hospital, suffers from a chronic lack of funding and equipment, leading to a constant deterioration in the quality of care.

3. DRINKING WATER: A DAILY CHALLENGE FOR MILLIONS OF CAMEROONIANS

Access to drinking water remains a major challenge in many regions:

- **Water shortages in major cities:** In Yaoundé and Douala, water cuts are frequent, forcing residents to obtain water from informal vendors at high prices. In 2024, several neighborhoods in Yaoundé experienced periods of prolonged shortages, sparking public anger.



- **Limited access in rural areas:** In rural areas, less than 40% of people have access to a safe drinking water source. The majority of people still get their water from unprotected rivers and wells, exposing families to waterborne diseases such as cholera.

Although water supply projects have been launched, such as the project to supply water to the city of Yaoundé from the Sanaga River, their impact remains limited due to delays and management problems.

4. ELECTRICITY: IRREGULAR AND INSUFFICIENT ACCESS

Despite promises to improve access to electricity, Cameroon continues to face frequent power outages:

- **Chronic power outages:** Power outages are commonplace, even in major cities. This disrupts not only household life but also economic activities, especially small businesses.

- **Inequality in access:** According to a World Bank report, approximately 30% of the rural population still lacks access to electricity. In some areas, residents must travel long distances to recharge their electrical appliances at private generators.

A striking example: the Lom Pangar dam, announced as a lasting solution to the energy problem, was completed several years late and did not resolve the persistent power cuts.

5. HOUSING AND URBANIZATION: ANARCHIC MANAGEMENT

The rapid urbanization of large cities such as Douala and Yaoundé has led to a housing crisis:

- **Growing slums:** A large part of the urban population lives in precarious neighborhoods, without access to basic services (water, electricity, sanitation). According to a UN-Habitat study, more than 60% of Douala's inhabitants live in slums.

- **Uncompleted social housing projects:** Several social housing programs announced by the government, such as Logpom in Douala and Mbanga-Bakoko in Yaoundé, have not been finalized or remain inaccessible due to high costs.

The difficult daily lives of Cameroonians, marked by inadequate social infrastructure, contrast sharply with official discourse, which celebrates non-existent progress. The deterioration of basic services reflects the failure of a government unable to meet the essential needs of its population.

VI. PAUL BIYA AND THE 2025 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION: THE PEOPLE'S FALSE APPEAL AND THE CHOICE OF HIS EXIT

In his 2024 end-of-year speech, Paul Biya cleverly hinted that he might run again in the presidential election scheduled for 2025. Although he did not openly declare his intentions, the implications were clear: he spoke of his "unwavering determination" and the supposed support of a grateful people, while insisting on the need to continue the path begun under his leadership. This staging prepares the ground for a candidacy that his supporters will present as a "demand from the people." But beyond appearances, this "call" from the people is nothing more than a charade orchestrated by a political and administrative elite anxious to preserve its privileges under a worn-out regime.

1. THE ILLUSION OF POPULAR APPEAL: A WELL-PRACTICED POLITICAL MANEUVER

For several decades, each presidential election in Cameroon has been preceded by a series of "motions of support" addressed to President Paul Biya by groups of local elites, traditional chiefs, and members of the ruling CPDM party. These motions, often relayed by state media, always feature the same rhetoric: they implore the president



to "respond favorably to the people's urgent call" and to seek a new term "to ensure stability and continued development."

However, it is important to remember that these calls are neither spontaneous nor representative of the real popular will. Indeed:

- **Artificial mobilization:** The motions of support are the result of pressure exerted on local elites, who fear losing their privileges or their positions if they do not actively participate in this staging.

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- **Repression of dissenting voices:** Any voice opposing this narrative is systematically stifled. With democratic space being extremely restricted in Cameroon, the majority of citizens have neither the means nor the freedom to truly express themselves.

The real popular sentiment is quite different: a large majority of Cameroonians yearn for a change of leadership, a democratic alternation and a new political dynamic after 42 years of inaction.

2. A CANDIDACY THAT WOULD PROLONG THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CRISIS

If Paul Biya decides to run again in 2025, this would mean the continuation of a regime marked by:

- **A stagnant economy:** Despite optimistic speeches, Cameroon is struggling to diversify its economy and remains dependent on raw materials, while the unemployment rate remains high, particularly among young people.

- **Weak governance:** Endemic corruption, mismanagement of public resources and the absence of structural reforms continue to hamper development.

- **Persistent security instability:** The Anglophone crisis, poorly managed since its outbreak, risks becoming even more entrenched if the current regime, perceived as illegitimate by a section of the population, remains in place.

By choosing to remain in power, Paul Biya would only delay an inevitable transition, at the risk of plunging the country into an even deeper political and social crisis.

3. PAUL BIYA'S HISTORIC CHOICE: THE BIG DOOR OR THE SMALL DOOR

At 92 years old and after more than four decades at the helm of Cameroon, Paul Biya faces a crucial choice that will determine his historical legacy:

- **Exit through the front door: The gesture of a statesman**

Paul Biya still has the opportunity to make a positive mark on history by renouncing his bid for re-election and organizing a transparent democratic transition. This gesture would be that of a responsible statesman, concerned with preserving his country's stability and ensuring a peaceful transition. He could become an example for other African leaders often accused of clinging to power. This grand exit would allow him to retire with honor, respected not only by Cameroonians but also by the international community.

- **Exit through the back door: The epilogue of a contested reign**

Conversely, if he chooses to run again, Paul Biya risks being swept away by growing popular protests. A new candidacy would only reinforce the feelings of frustration and exasperation among a large part of the population, paving the way for major political unrest. History is full of leaders who, refusing to read the signs of the times, ended up being driven from power in humiliation and violence.

Wisdom would dictate that Paul Biya take stock of the situation and understand that it is time to make way for a new generation of leaders capable of meeting the challenges of the day. This decision is his alone: it will be that



of a man who chooses to remain in history as a builder of peace or to be dismissed as a leader who refused to step down at the right time.

4. AN OPPORTUNITY FOR A NEW DEMOCRATIC BEGINNING

Paul Biya's non-candidacy could open a new era in Cameroon:

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- **A peaceful and credible transition:** By withdrawing, he would allow Cameroon to organize credible, transparent and inclusive elections, which would offer the country a chance to reinvent itself.
- **A sincere national dialogue:** His withdrawal would open the way to a genuine dialogue with all the nation's vital forces, including the opposition and civil society, to define a new national project.
- **National reconciliation:** Political change would promote reconciliation in English-speaking regions and the strengthening of national unity.

GENERAL CONCLUSION: THE TIME FOR CHOICE HAS COME

Paul Biya is at a decisive moment in his reign. His choice to remain in power or step down will determine not only his personal legacy, but also the future of Cameroon. This country, rich in potential and youth, deserves better than the current stagnation. It deserves new leadership, a new vision, and a new lease of life.

Only Paul Biya can still decide to leave through the front door, as a statesman aware of his historical responsibility. If he doesn't, history and the Cameroonian people will sooner or later force him to leave through the back door, with the bitter memory of a reign that lasted too long, marked by broken promises and a failed transition.

Cameroon needs change, and that change must start now.



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