



## **ALIVE OR DEATH, PRESIDENT PAUL BIYA PROMOTES THE INSTRUMENTATION OF IMPUNITY IN THE REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON**

**Advocacy Network for Justice and Peace (ANJP)** is concerned that the reaction to the international media reports of the alleged death of the 91-year-old President of the Republic of Cameroon, Paul Biya, has led to the intense instrumentation of impunity by masterminds of genocide, war crimes, and crimes against the people of Southern Cameroons, aka Ambazonia. The activation of the systemic operational structures of impunity and atrocity crimes which have shocked the conscience of humanity but elicited insufficient reaction from the international community is increasing the intensity of the bloodletting which is progressively transforming the Gulf of Guinea into an ocean of blood. Recall that Cameroon, under President Paul Biya, continues to operate under a [2014 anti-terrorism law, law No. 2014/028](#), criminalizing peaceful assembly and curtailing most freedoms even those espoused in its constitution. The Republic of Cameroon hangs on a precipice, and the supposed death of its leader is yet another reason to clam down on even more restrictions on freedoms.

Paul Biya, the President of the Republic of Cameroon and mastermind of the genocide and other atrocity crimes in the Southern Cameroons, was last seen in public, on September 4, 2024, during a visit to China to attend the Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), which exposed him as [infirm and barely able to walk unassisted](#). It was hard to ascertain in the circumstances whether his significantly diminished abilities and stature were weighed down by the curse of the blood of innocent Southern Cameroons victims killed in a senseless war of assimilation and annexation, cries from nearly 56% of the Republic of Cameroon youths whose futures have been mortgaged in decades-long failed economic policies, or by his advanced age and other natural factors.

The announcement of President Biya's alleged death by some [media outlets](#) caught the world's attention, triggering a flurry of official statements aimed at debunking television reports which were replicated in international press organs, could only elicit one of two possible realities:

*That Paul Biya is dead as announced or may be alive but seriously impaired and mentally and physically incapacitated to be capable of governing la Republique du Cameroun. (Italics added for emphasis)*



We note wryly, that while prolonged absences in Geneva, Switzerland ensconce at The Intercontinental Hotel or elsewhere have long been a pattern by the ailing longest-serving African head of state of the Republic of Cameroon, if he is alive, the vociferous denials and threats by his tribal cabal, power elite crime syndicate serve mainly to prosecute the [ongoing genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes in Southern Cameroons](#) on the watch of the international community, the ultimate result will be the extermination of the politically emasculated people of La Republique du Cameroun in the power struggle which will ensue.

The multiple official press statements issued on the matter denying the death of Paul Biya, and threats of severe punishment by all and sundry who debate the matter, unambiguously point to a government in disarray, with each Minister asserting an independent authority to act in a frantic bid to reassure the world of the good health of the 91-year old President who *took a brief private stay in Europe* ostensibly as reported, attentive to developments in his country, rather raised more questions than answers (See media correspondences and statements by Gregoire Owona, Assistant Secretary-General of the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM), Jacques Fame Ndong, communications secretary for the ruling party, CPDM and Minister of Higher Education, Atanga Nji, Minister of Territorial Administration, and Rene Sadi, Minister of Communications). Indeed, this is a government whose members work outside a coordinated constitutional structure.

Some years ago, likely due to poor health, [Paul Biya permanently delegated authority and his signature to his Secretary-General of the Presidency, Ferdinand Ngoh Ngoh](#), not to the Prime Minister, Head of Government, Director of Civil Cabinet, Minister of State of Higher Education and Communication Secretary of the CPDM, his Minister of Labour and Assistant Secretary-General of the CPDM, Minister of Territorial Administration, the later who have issued press statements, laden with threats against the media (see MIMAT statement dated October 9, 2024, titled "Very Urgent: Ban on certain debates in the media (translated)) for publishing the news about the alleged death of Paul Biya, his condition of health, his advanced age and infirmities, or his long unexplained absence from public view in Geneva, Switzerland.

The supposed official statements issued by the Minister of Territorial Administration, Paul Atanga Nji, require special attention. The October 9, 2024, statement referenced above, failed to cite the constitutional or legal basis of his actions. Mr. Paul Atanga Nji took upon himself an intergovernmental coordination role by issuing press statements smacking of anarchy,



lawlessness, and impunity, which were issued by other Ministers as a basis of his declaration that the media announcement of the death or poor health condition of a 91-year old President Paul Biya of the Republic of Cameroon amounted to a threat to national security and ordered an immediate ban of individual, public, press and social media discussions about it immediately. Recall [journalists have been murdered](#) for just doing their jobs. In the same statement, he activated the emergency powers of government-appointed Governors, Senior Divisional Officers (SDOs), and Divisional Officers (DOs), who constitute the civilian and military chain of command while also serving as the minister's permanent operational death squads and brigades to enforce his orders, many of which manifest in the war zone in Southern Cameroons.

Under the supervision of President Paul Biya and Mr. Paul Atanga Nji, these civil administrators are permanent battlefield operational civilian commanders who in coordination with the Military Commanders, state-sponsored militias, and state-sponsored terror and death squads have been prosecuting the genocide in the Southern Cameroons (see civilian, military, and government sponsored militia alleged involvement in the Ngarbuh massacres, 2020). These civil administrators are responsible for recruiting blacklegs, infiltrators and enablers who are known for grave crimes and for their participation with the military in raping Southern Cameroons women and girls, looting and torching hospitals, churches, schools, civilian subsistence economy, exterminating Southern Cameroons youth, ramson, abduction, humiliation and deportation or detention of Southern Cameroons civilian population, many without due process. In the [Ngarbuh massacres](#), on par with the [killings of civilians in Bucha, Ukraine](#), that drew swift condemnation and collective action including military aid to Ukraine, economic sanctions against Russia, and an International Criminal Court (ICC) referral by the West, the civilian and military commanders responsible were never held accountable.

Recently, in a video circulating on social media, Mr. Okalia Bilai, a Biya appointed Governor in the Southern Zone (Southwest region), summoned the civilian population in the Bakassi Peninsula and gave them a 72-hour deadline to return a Divisional Officer who was allegedly abducted by unknown gunmen. This systematic conditional threat against armless fishermen civilians in a war zone in Southern Cameroons is a crime against humanity for which the International Community must intervene and protect them from the pogrom that warmongers as Governor Okalia Bilai have promised to unleash on them and their ancestral home. In a



televised outing in 2017, Mr. Bilai referred to Southern Cameroonians as “*dogs*,” warning that anyone who dares to step out to protest will be shot and killed. The use of [derogatory terms and hate language when referring to Southern Cameroonians](#) has been widespread and signals their genocidal intent.

It should come as little surprise that the stampede by ministers in the Republic of Cameroon, which is in total anarchy, to issue threats against citizens, foreign nationals, communication networks, and social media outlets violates the Constitution of the Republic of Cameroon and its International treaty obligations.

For those who care to know, the [Constitution of the Republic of Cameroon](#) in section 8(1) confers the authority to make national security assessment which Mr. Atanga Nji purported to make and rely on to impose a national and international ban on free speech and communication. The Constitution in force states that if the President is temporarily unable to perform his functions or is unavailable, an eventuality which the flurry of press statements alleged, he shall according to section 10(3) *delegate the authority to the Prime Minister* or any other member of Government within the framework of an express delegation of some of his powers.

The relevant provisions of the said Constitution state: Section 8 (1) “The President of the Republic shall represent the State in all acts of public life, (2) He shall be Head of the Armed Forces, (3) He shall ensure the internal and external security of the Republic. Section 10(3): “Where the President of the Republic is temporarily unable to perform his duties, he shall **delegate the Prime Minister** and, should the latter also be unavailable, any other member of Government to discharge his duties within the framework of an express delegation of some of his powers.” The said Constitution in its preamble affirms the commitment of La Republique du Cameroun to “the fundamental freedoms enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Charter of the United Nations, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and all duly ratified International Conventions” and pledged to guarantee among other international human rights, “the freedom of communication, of expression, of the press, of assembly, of association...”

Civil liberties are severely curtailed in the Republic of Cameroon where the question of the health of its head of state is a matter of national security is a sound foundation for concern among all and sundry but to decree no media or debate on the matter is manifestly dictatorial



and concerning and retrograde. Within the context of a war in Southern Cameroons, the authorities of the Republic of Cameroon continue to curtail all civil liberties of its citizens and dare to extend the same to media organizations and persons outside its borders. The Republic of Cameroon lacks the legal frameworks to protect human rights even though such is enshrined in its constitution. The point was [raised by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Turk, during a visit to the Republic of Cameroon in August 2024](#) citing persistent impunity and grave human rights abuses and violations involving state security forces.

A minister in a country with a Prime Minister, Head of Government, presumably, the next in line to be delegated to discharge the duties of the President, relegates for himself the right to oppress the citizens.

The order by the Minister of Territorial Administration, laced with threats, violated both national and international instruments. Similar to a prior [action of summoning telephone operators, such as MTN and Orange Cameroun during which he ordered them to identify and register all clients](#), which they rightly should do, but to also turn over all client data to him or face dire consequences. To provide the Minister of Territorial Administration with customer telephone sim card information and access to registered communications in La Republique is manifestly illegal. By requesting the information, Mr. Atanga Nji and potentially the telephone operators, in the case they provided him with the information, are in violation not only of internationally protected human rights but are potentially a threat to international security and all protocols governing personal and organizationally protected information. The potential that personally identifiable information (PII), health records, diplomatic, organizational, privacy, and legally protected communications may find themselves in the hands of dangerous actors, and the sovereignty of nations and the sanctity and privacy of persons and organizations may be violated, in jeopardy or damaged. Neither Mr. Atanga Nji, President Paul Biya, the telephone operating companies, nor any security network, has the authority to access the information without legitimate reasons authorized by law and in compliance with the rule of law. The fact that he was able to request this information with no consequences and has again imposed a national and international ban on internationally and constitutionally protected freedom of speech, expression, and assembly with no consequences, is yet again evidence that La Republique du Cameroun operates under the thumbnail of rogue actors and is a haven for



international crimes, crime syndicates, and an ungovernable failed state out of step with a civilized rules-based international legal order.

The order by the Minister of Territorial Administration will aggravate the commission of atrocity crimes in the Southern Cameroons. It provides an additional tool for mass arrests and abduction, torture, and other inhumane and degrading treatment, extrajudicial executions, rapes, mass deportations, and summary execution of Southern Cameroons civilians, [crimes that have been widely reported](#), yet sadly taking place with no robust response under the watch of the international community. Recently, information circulated widely on social media of soldiers in the militarized civilian settlements and towns of the Southern Cameroons carried out mass violations including illegal searches and seizures, abductions, rape of multiple women and girls, ramson of civilians, and other atrocity crimes.

The announced death of Paul Biya, true or rumoured, has rattled the country's elite power syndicate. The panicky reactions, increased militarization of civilian settlements that has led to mass arrests and killings of innocent civilians, and the gaging of free speech are strong indicators of a regime hell-bent on maintaining the status quo; hanging on to power and pursuing the unchecked culture of atrocity crimes unfolding in what it calls its “NOSO” regions which have numbed the conscience of humanity without a robust international response to hold the Republic of Cameroon and other perpetrators accountable or for an internationally mandated mechanism to examine the root causes of conflict, bring an end to impunity, and justice to victims (see ANJP statement titled Human Rights Violations, Accountability, and the Threshold for International Investigative Mechanisms in the Conflict in Southern Cameroons presented at the Assembly of States Parties (ASP) [Side Event](#): Reckoning with Double Standards: The Future of the Rome Statutes, December 8, 2023, United Nations).

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