

Urgent Alert and Advocacy for Free, Credible and Peaceful Elections in Cameroon

Pre-Electoral Context in Cameroon: and Severe Security Tensions: A Worrisome Turning Point in the 2025 Electoral Process

As Cameroon approaches the presidential election scheduled for October 12, 2025, the country finds itself at a critical juncture once again. Cameroon is experiencing a severe security and political crisis. The unfair electoral environment seriously undermines the credibility of the democratic process and the right of every citizen to vote freely. The experience of the 2018 post-electoral crisis has left deep scars, both individually and collectively, affecting the social fabric, trust in institutions, and national cohesion.

Hate Speech and Communal Tensions: A Warning for National Cohesion

In several regions, insecurity and political violence are reducing citizen participation, particularly among women and youth, who are already marginalized in decision-making bodies. Concerning signs are emerging again. For example, there is a very worrying increase in hate speech, both in traditional media and on social media, accompanied by acts of stigmatization, tribalism, public calls for the extermination of certain communities, gender-based violence, and persistent human rights violations. In February, for example, a TikTok user publicly called for the genocide of the Bamileke people, while in Meyo-Centre, two machete murders triggered xenophobic violence. These are just a few examples among many others.

Recurring calls for the elimination of certain tribes are multiplying, raising fears of a risk of genocide. While the National Communication Council and public authorities have condemned these speeches through sanctions and warnings, in a sporadic manner and without real deterrent impact, religious leaders, media, civil society, women's organisations and other actors have also multiplied calls for calm to preserve national cohesion.

An unfair electoral environment contrary to Cameroon's commitments

The inequity of the electoral environment, illustrated by biased political, legal, security, and media conditions, undermines the process long before election day and prevents the holding of a free, transparent, credible and peaceful vote. Despite the incessant calls from actors of all stripes, the situation remains unchanged and worrisome, in contradiction with Cameroon's international commitments, particularly the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance, as well as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The government's control over institutions and the lack of independence of the electoral body severely undermine democracy and erode citizens' trust in the impartiality of the electoral process. It is urgent that the international community acts to guarantee a fair, transparent, inclusive, and peaceful electoral environment.

Specific Impact on Women and Vulnerable Communities

In this toxic democratic and security environment, Cameroonian women face double exclusion: on the one hand, structural inequalities limit their access to resources and political visibility; on the other hand, security tensions and gender-based political violence hinder their freedom of expression and civic participation. These obstacles not only deprive women of their fundamental rights but also weaken the representativeness and legitimacy of the democratic process.

Multiple legal and institutional barriers stand in the way of women and all citizens. The consequences on democracy are the underrepresentation of women, with the loss of citizen voices, which leads to the absence of a feminine perspective in public policies and the undermining of the rule of law, paving the way for growing instability and a very deep social divide.

Exclusion of Professor Maurice Kamto: A Key Factor Exacerbating Tensions

The rejection of Maurice Kamto's candidacy, a prominent political figure and perceived by many as one of the main contenders and favorites in the October 12, 2025 presidential election, for reasons widely contested by many stakeholders, constitutes a significant conflict-generating element. This situation is accentuating tensions and likely to further destabilize the political and social climate in Cameroon.

This event is part of a context marked by notable precedents. In 2018, following allegations of electoral fraud made by the opposition, Professor Maurice Kamto and several members of the Cameroon Renaissance Movement (CRM) party were arrested and placed in detention. Some of these political actors, tried by military courts and sentenced to heavy penalties, remain in detention. The combination of these factors contributes to weakening the political climate and increasing the risk of tensions or incidents in certain areas of the country, particularly in a sensitive electoral context.

Call to International Organizations

We call on international organizations and women's networks to **ACT NOW** for:

- Strong commitment to electoral justice and peace in Cameroon.
- Increased pressure on international and regional bodies to create an inclusive electoral environment.
- Amplifying the visibility of the Cameroonian situation in international media and platforms.
- Implementation of preventive diplomacy actions in Cameroon.

- Adoption of binding measures against actors responsible for human rights violations and obstacles to a free and fair electoral process. These measures should aim to protect vulnerable populations, particularly women, and preserve regional stability.

Advocacy related to the role of women articulated within the framework of UN Security Council Resolution 1325

As women committed to promoting peace and democracy, our role is clearly recognized and reinforced by UN Security Council Resolution 1325. This Resolution highlights the crucial importance of the full and equal participation of women in conflict prevention, crisis management, and building sustainable peace. We have an obligation to ensure that the electoral process is inclusive, free from violence, and fully respects the rights of all citizens. Within this framework, we request the active support of the international community to guarantee a fair and safe electoral environment in Cameroon.

Reference to International Norms and Commitments

Our call is in line with Cameroon's international commitments, notably:

- The African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance (ACDEG), which commits states to organizing free, fair, and transparent elections.
- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which obliges the state to guarantee the full and equal participation of women in political and public life.
- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which enshrines the right of every citizen to participate in public affairs without discrimination.

Call for collective action: A Message of Urgency and Solidarity

We firmly believe that coordinated international engagement can help **defuse current tensions, protect women, and preserve democratic gains**. Your experience and solidarity are essential to strengthen our collective resilience and promote a peaceful and inclusive electoral period.

This advocacy is supported by a collective of Cameroonian civil society organizations and international partners working for democracy, human rights, and lasting peace. The full list of signatories is kept securely and can be communicated to the competent authorities upon request.