



LUKMEF-CAMEROON

Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Foundation
P.O. Box 1348, LIMBE, SWP, Cameroon

Promoting Peace, Non-Violence, Social Justice and
Sustainable Development in Cameroon since 1999

Tel/Fax (237) 233 33 23 04

Mobile (237) 677 94 74 49

Web: www.lukmefcameroon.org

E-mail: info@lukmefcameroon.org

STATEMENT FROM THE LUKMEF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

ON THE ONGOING CRISIS IN CAMEROON

Limbe, Cameroon 31/12/2016

The board of directors of LUKMEF wishes to express our concern regarding the escalating tensions in Cameroon that threaten wider divisions in the country and the possibility of overt violence by state and non-state actors.

We note with special concern calls for a national strike on January 2 that will apparently involve many parts of English speaking Cameroon as well as NGOs, legislators and others from the larger French speaking regions.

We recognize and respect the challenges that the government in Yaoundé now faces, from countering Boko Haram and other insurgencies to managing the heavy refugee load from the conflict in neighboring Central African Republic. These security challenges magnify existing struggles to guarantee food security, proper access to justice and medical care, and the full social and political participation by all citizens and in particular women and ethnic minorities.

As tensions persist, we urge recognition and restraint by all parties. The government surely recognizes its commitments to abide by international humanitarian and human rights law, including commitments related to any attempt by the Cameroon military to impose “security” at the expense of civil and political rights such as peaceful assembly, freedom of speech, fair application of the law, and freedom from any use of disproportionate force. We also strongly encourage the government to assess and address abuses by the Cameroon justice system, including denial of access to legal counsel, arbitrary arrest, Rape, torture or even sexual misconduct within incarceration facilities - all equally prohibited by binding regional and international agreements to which Cameroon is party.

LUKMEF has and will continue to do its part in conjunction with civil society and other partners to foster inclusive, frank and respectful dialogue that airs legitimate grievances and promotes fair and sustainable alternatives. We are concerned that, as existing formats for inclusive dialogue fail to produce tangible change, citizens will choose to ignore these opportunities altogether. This would, in our view, constitute a grave challenge to Cameroon’s future.

We are keenly aware of the impacts that unresolved political tensions would have on the pursuit of national development priorities consistent with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including equal access to health, education and employment opportunities. We are also aware that the decision in 1961 to form a

“Federal Republic of Cameroon” is one still deserving of broad support. The edges of this decision are currently fraying, to be sure, but there is still time to address legitimate concerns given sufficient political will and an absence of incitement - either through rhetorical or security provocations.

We will do our part to ensure a fair and equitable system of governance for all the people of Cameroon. We will explore options for change with our NGO partners across the country, including for a civil society early warning and monitoring mechanism to provide supplemental and rapid-response guidance regarding areas of Cameroon experiencing excessive frustration and/or unwelcome violence. We will also do our part to ensure that social and economic development in Cameroon, including development initiatives undertaken by LUKMEF, is rights-based in keeping with agreements made at the United Nations to which Cameroon is a state party.

On behalf of the board and staff of LUKMEF, you have our prayers but also our tangible support, both logistical and consultative. Cameroon has remained relatively stable and peaceful in a region that has already known too much turmoil. It is in the interests of all the people of Cameroon and the entire international community that pathways to continued stability and peace are well maintained and duly utilized.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrea Horner', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Andrea Cristiani Horner
President of the Board