REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN

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ASSEMBLEE NATIONALE

10th LEGISLATURE



REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON

Peace - Work - Fatherland

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

10th LEGISLATURE

Yaoundé, 22nd February, 2021.

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS SIGNATORIES OF THE CORRESPONDENCE OF 17TH FEBRUARY 2020 TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES REQUESTING TPS AND DED FOR **CAMEROONIANS**

BY

THE MEMBERS OF THE CAMEROON HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

We the representatives of the Cameroonian people, Members of the National Assembly of Cameroon are appalled by the falsehood, distorted opinion, and the extremely negative characterization of our country reflected by the Members of the United States Congress, signatories of the correspondence of 17th February 2020? to the President of the United States of America in attempting to secure a Temporary Protected Status (TPS) or Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) to some Cameroonians scheduled for removal from the USA.

As legislators in Cameroon, we seek not to interfere in the decision making processes of the Immigration Enforcement System of the United States government in dealing with its challenges, but we reject the views perpetrated by these Congressmen on the prevailing situation in Cameroon. We consider these remarks on Cameroon as most unfriendly, derogatory and smacks of an attempt to tarnish our image, respectability in seeking to mislead public opinion, create confusion to justify the securing of TPS and DED status from some groups defending the rights of immigrants in the USA.

Immigration is a global phenomenon and no nation can or should stop its citizens from travelling to any part of the world. Cameroon readily issues travel documents and passports to its citizens to travel to anywhere in the world and considers the right to travel, to emigrate, a fundamental human right. In situations where Cameroonians have entered a foreign country illegally or overstayed their visa, we are bound by our international obligations to cooperate with foreign governments, to issue travel documents and accept the physical return of our citizens.

Our Government has a long standing cooperation with the State Department and other United States services including the DHS, ICE, the DOJ, in matters of removal of certain Cameroonians who may have entered the United States without inspection, overstayed their visas, criminally persecuted, or with fraudulent documents.

This cooperation between the Government of the United States and the Government of Cameroon has been maintained over the years in the spirit of international cooperation and mutual respect. Cameroon has recognized the nationality of the current list of persons for removal and issued the relevant travel documents to ensure collaboration and to reject the classification as a 'recalcitrant uncooperative country at risk of non-compliance (ARON)' by the DHS which has a potentially negative impact on the issuance of immigrant and non-immigrant visas as well as bilateral and other joint foreign policy interests in Central Africa.

We, the Cameroonian legislators are dismayed and regret that in an effort to take into consideration and to succumb to the pressure coming from their respective jurisdictions, American human rights organizations and other pressure groups, a few misguided Congressmen would describe Cameroon in the most horrible, unrealistic and untrue language just to obtain from the US executive branch a stay of execution of a DHS decision to remove certain Cameroonians from the USA, all these at the expense of our country. We cannot deny our citizens but if the objective is for their continued residence in the United States, by all means keep them there but not at the expense of the millions of peace loving Cameroonians who go about their business, striving for prosperity and economic development.

It is unfortunate that these Congressmen display such deep misunderstanding despite the views of the United States Embassy in Yaoundé and fail to recognize and acknowledge the significant strides made by Cameroon:

- to provide a safe haven to refugees and displaced persons from Northern Nigeria as a result of the fight against militant Islam and Boko Haram,
- to receive and accommodate thousands of people fleeing the conflict situation in the Central African Republic,
- in continuing its cooperation with many Nations including the United States to fight piracy in the gulf of Guinea,
- to provide an environment for the return to peace and security in the restive Northwest and Southwest Regions of Cameroon through multitude of government actions and programs which have wide international support and participation,
- to check the propagation of the COVID-19 virus and to successfully host an international soccer competition within the COVID-19 environment,
- to acknowledge the positive process of decentralization and devolution of powers from the Central Government to Regional Assemblies and the right of Cameroonians to participate in the decision making process in their areas of origin.

The Cameroon they describe and allude to in their correspondence does not exist and we believe it is a figment of the misinformed views of certain individuals who are determined to cause further destabilization in the whole Central African Region.

As legislators, we welcome genuine expression of concern and support for the well-being of the vast majority of Cameroonians. We urge the United States Congressmen to be more vigorously engaged in ensuring the respect of International Conventions against transnational crime and criminality to which the United Sates is signatory and to ensure that their country is not a refuge for criminal perpetrators and financiers of acts of extreme violence and terrorism on the people of Cameroon.

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