

A JOINT COMMUNIQUE FROM THE MODERATOR OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CAMEROON, THE EXECUTIVE PRESIDENT OF THE CAMEROON BAPTIST CONVENTION AND THE BISHOPS OF THE BAMENDA PROVINCIAL EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE (BAPEC)

By Divine Providence, the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon and the Executive President of the Cameroon Baptist Convention visited the Archbishop of Bamenda when the Bamenda Provincial Episcopal Conference was in session. They took advantage of the presence of the Bishops to discuss the current socio-political crises that have paralysed the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon since November 2016. Without any intention of establishing a permanent structure or association, they came up with the following statement:

Some authorities and people have branded Church Leaders in this part of the country as protagonists and promoters of the strike action that has crippled the schools and several areas of business and life in the North West and South West Regions. It is due to such accusations that Church Leaders have been receiving anonymous and threatening messages both from those who want the stalemate to persist and from those who would want an immediate return to the *status quo*.

Mindful of the fact that all the Churches run schools, thus rendering a great service to the State and to the parents, whose children they educate and evangelise, the Church Leaders would want to state unequivocally that they were neither consulted nor did they give any express consent for the initiation of the strike action or for its suspension.

The Teachers' Trade Unions, who initiated the sit-down strike of the teachers, have officially suspended the strike, but the schools have not resumed. For some people, the schools have not resumed, because the Church Leaders have not asked members of their respective Churches to send their children back to school. It is important to note that even Government schools, over which the Church Leaders have no authority, have not effectively resumed in this part of the country.

As far as confessional schools are concerned, it is our divine mission to teach and the right of the children to be educated. Therefore, we state that we did not at any point in time ask our respective schools to close and that the doors of our schools remain wide open to welcome pupils and students, when the parents bring their children.

We think that the non-resumption of schools in the North West and South West Regions is a pointer to more profound socio-political issues that need to be identified and addressed sooner than later. It is important to note that the oppressive, intimidating and unbearable attitude of some members of civil administration, such as the attitude of the Governor of the South West Region, has further hardened the hearts

of the common people. Furthermore, the inhuman treatment, torture, rampant arrests and the complete shutdown of the internet and consequently of businesses and services that depend on an internet connection for a smooth functioning have aggravated the situation.

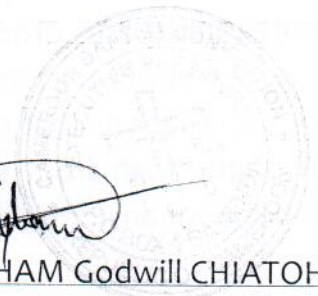

As pastors, preachers of the Good News and mediators of social justice and peace, we earnestly appeal to the Government and the people of Cameroon for a change of heart and to engage in a meaningful and constructive dialogue. We further call on our Christians and people of good will to pray fervently for wisdom and understanding to seek true and lasting solutions that will guarantee justice and peace. We pray that all Cameroonians may experience the presence of the Risen Lord, the Prince of Peace, for, "in his days, justice shall flourish and peace till the moon fails" (Ps. 71/72:7).

Given in Bamenda, this Thursday, the 9th of February 2017.

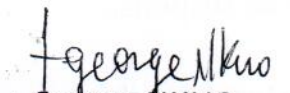


MODERATOR


Rt. Rev. FONKI Samuel FORBA
Moderator,
Presbyterian Church in Cameroon



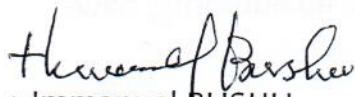
Rev. NCHAM Godwill CHIATOH
Executive President,
Cameroon Baptist Convention



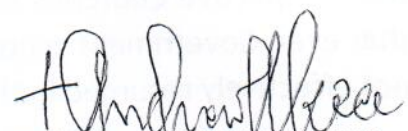
+ George NKUO
Bishop of Kumbo,
President of BAPEC




+ Cornelius FONTEM ESUA
Archbishop of Bamenda



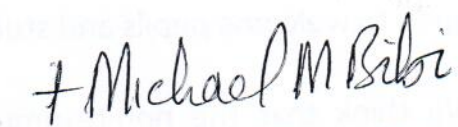
+ Immanuel BUSHU
Bishop of Buea



+ Andrew FUANYA NKEA
Bishop of Mamfe,
Vice-President of BAPEC



+ Agapitus NFON
Bishop of Kumba



+ Michael BIBI
Auxiliary Bishop of Bamenda