

Good Evening All,

Great discussions. It is useful to have these kinds of discussions and debates. However, we must also not get to pedantic, otherwise we spend a lot of energy on futile ventures. I have been tempted to argue further, but think at this stage, we need to redirect in order to make progress given the little time we have left to get this campaign off the ground. Let me make the following points before I proceed to propose some direction for your consideration.

1. **Our goal here is to push the Biya Regime to Release Prisoners of Conscience:** The question we must ask ourselves is ***what we want to achieve and how can we achieve that.*** If we want broad-based support, then we will have to tone down ***militant rhetoric and attract larger crowds of neutral sympathisers.*** During the initial planning meeting, it was suggested that we focus exclusively on the human rights issues:
 - a. ***Arbitrary arrests of University Professors in order to attract academia and student's unions across the globe;***
 - b. ***Trade Unionists were also abducted, so we can attract unionists and syndicates;***
 - c. ***Journalists like Mancho Bibixy will attract the media...etc.***

Many of the above groups are not interested in our political issues and so will only get involved if they see the human rights issues. It is also for that reason that the team had argued that we choose the ***Patrick Ndongoh Bunker Video*** as the theme video of the campaign and avoid all political videos/rhetoric. We must all remember, our goal is to Pressure the Cameroun Government to ***Release prisoners and not to win political points.*** What is the use of winning political arguments and rather reinforce the argument of the regime that these people constitute a political danger and might destabilize the country?

So we will have to choose between ***BEING RIGHT OR BEING SUCCESSFUL.*** And remember, we do not wear the shoes of the prisoners who really want to be released. So before we argue very strongly that it doesn't matter, we must remember that many of them have agreed to take risks and be part of this campaign.

2. **We should learn from Previous Efforts - Why have previous efforts not yielded much fruits?** Firstly, they were too politically and militant. That meant that these campaigns were limited to our community and we just sang and spoke to ourselves. Secondly, the campaigns were not designed or built to last long. The regime understands today that we throw temporary tantrums and then go back to our beautiful beds and have a self-satisfied sleep. You would have noticed that we started off with freedom for Ambazonian POC, but later changed to POCs only. We want everyone to see human rights atrocities and not ambazonians. Our goal is clear; we use the greater argument to achieve our particular objective. But if remain in our particular objective, the greater population would shun our campaign and then its limited to a few ambazonians on social media for two weeks and then back to our cozy fireplaces in the January winter. ***Remember, our goal is to win this campaign, by any means necessary.*** In order to win, we must tire the regime by making it a sustained campaign. If it must be sustained, then we need broad international support including Francophones, who might join for their own reasons. My enemy's enemy is my friend. We must broaden our circle of friends and reduce our circle of enemies.

3. **Amnesty International Opinion is important but not vital to our campaign:** We can choose what we call our prisoners. Amnesty International will fall in line eventually. I know that Amecky is presently lobbying quietly behind the scenes with some of the Regional Directors of Amnesty International to reconsider our POCs. We have to do a lot of lobbying and behind the scenes work. Unfortunately, very little of this is being done. That will be the work of some of the Working Groups. Get people with strong NGO and advocacy backgrounds to soften the ground for us.
4. **Though human Rights Focus, its political undertones remain:** The big question has cropped up. *Why use CAMEROUN instead of CAMEROON?* Many international players including some of the NGOs we are trying to get on our side tend to stay politically correct. They prefer to use “Cameroon”, “North West and South West Regions”, “Anglophones”, etc. Our use of Ambazonia is like a vernacular to a language. It applies mostly to our community. It’s like the territory that was officially known as “South West Africa” until it got its independence and called itself “Namibia”. Of course in exile they already called themselves Namibia, but nobody else called them that. If we want our campaign to be international and attract neutral players, then we must be seen to be neutral and focused only on human rights. When we use CAMEROUN, we are implicitly *dissociating ourselves as Southern Cameroonians from that triangle*. It is a political statement without being overtly political. On the other hand, if we go with CAMEROON, we are accepting that we are part of the One-and-indivisible. If we use Southern Cameroons or Ambazonia, then it is considered too militant and might scare neutral sympathisers. Hence our use of the French spelling of Cameroun, even though our language of expression in the campaign is English. Anyone familiar with our context would be forced to stop and ask why. Those who do not know would just tag along, but it is an argument we could defend.
5. **It is not a temporary Campaign, it is meant to be long-term:** Like I mentioned, it is not a temporary campaign. It is meant to be long term. Some have argued that by trying to be neutral, it might dilute our particular demands. For instance, the regime could under pressure decide to release more francophones. But that is where in my opinion, *it falls in the trap which we set*. It gives us weapons to then push an overtly political campaign worldwide and justify the genocide that we have been claiming. So its all going to be a game of chess. *We either rush to win and get beaten, or we play the waiting game and see who blinks first.*
6. **Do We need to Join our Campaign to Others?** I would say NO! We have a game plan. Ultimately our various efforts will converge somewhere. But for now, we keep building. A lot of thought has gone into this campaign for it to be watered down by trying to accommodate other efforts. Each has their own objectives, even if they resemble. Should we criticize those who decided to be political? NO! Their goal might be to score political points. Do we criticize those who want to project a government? No! There is a market for that too. We must always remember that the only victory we would derive from this campaign would be **THE RELEASE OF OUR PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE**.
7. **What Should we Call the Campaign:** We have dabbled with various punchlines and I think that is good. I suggest we keep working on that until we find something that is suitable. I Working Group on Organising and Planning was supposed to make some time to work on the name of the campaign. I think Yaah Maggie suggested a punchline that I really liked, but someone could come up with a smarter idea. She suggested **RELEASE THEM**. That is in itself

provocative as a passerby would want to find out a bit more – **RELEASE WHO?** In the struggle to overthrow Milosevic in Yugoslavia, the youth coined a campaign called **HE IS FINISHED**. No one needed to tell you who HE is. Yet it was powerful. We need to be more creative than political, which is what we have done so far.

In conclusion, we must understand that even if we got some of the prisoners released. That too is a victory. When the apartheid regime released the prisoner, it started with some in 1985, then 1987, then 1990 and finally 1994. The most important thing is to continue chipping away the concrete until the edifice falls. And it takes time and effort. No quick fixes.

Everyone here is supposed to be part of a working group. I suggest we all ensure that we get our group meetings and really brainstorm. **Tomorrow we have a meeting at 20h00 amba time**. It would be a great disappointment if we arrive unprepared and with nothing to contribute. We must remember, each Working Group compliments the others. We would rather have 10 people working hard to make this a success, than have 30 people who stroll with their hands in their pockets.