

# New political era predicted in Cameroon, despite President Biya's victory

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Although the president of Cameroon, Paul Biya, won his sixth term in a row in the October 9th presidential elections, analysts say his nearly 30-year rule is coming to an end. And just as the experience of the Arab Spring showed, the change will not come from the political arena, but from the diaspora and civil organisations.

Two weeks ago the Supreme Court of Cameroon announced that the incumbent, President Paul Biya, had won 77.98 per cent of the votes in a battle against 22 opponents. For the first time in this year's elections, the diaspora was also allowed to vote.

But while Biya's success may seem noteworthy, reality in the country reveals a different picture.

"People are not just dissatisfied with Biya's ruling; this is a low estimate. They are disgusted!" said Dibussi Tande, a Cameroonian blogger and writer living in Chicago. "They call him the 'do nothing' president, because he doesn't do anything for the country."

The opposition seems also unable to deliver, as it is weakened and divided.

"In any normal, democratic country, if you face an incumbent who has the state resources, the money, the state TV, the administration at national and local level, and then you have 22 candidates against this person, even if this person is unpopular, it is obvious he is going to win."

Julie Owono, a Cameroonian blogger and political commentator living in Paris, said there were mainly two reasons behind the massive political apathy in Cameroon: first, people had lost faith in the ability of the opposition to deliver, and second, after several violent episodes in Cameroon's recent history, people don't want instability, but peace. Thus, the elections resulted in a very low turnout.

"A lot of people didn't vote. It was a way for them to show that they don't trust the electoral system and don't want to participate in Paul Biya's victory," Owono said.

She said that even in Douala, one of the two main cities in Cameroon, many polling stations were empty, which was an incredible sight during Election Day. In her estimate, the people who came out to vote did so mainly in favour of the incumbent president. The same was in the diaspora, whose members were allowed to vote for the first time. But the abstention was huge even there.

"In France, where I live, there are 40,000 Cameroonians, of whom



A biker rides past street vendors under a huge poster of Cameroon's incumbent president and presidential candidate Paul Biya in a street of Yaounde on October 5th. Two weeks ago the Supreme Court announced that the incumbent President Paul Biya had won 77.98 per cent of the votes, in a battle against 22 opponents. For the first time, the diaspora was also allowed to vote

only 1,000 registered to vote. I think only 900 went to vote in the end," added Owono.

More than 4 million Cameroonians are estimated to live outside the country. Those eligible to vote were allowed to do so in 33 diplomatic and consular missions worldwide, according to the Cameroon Ministry of Foreign Relations. But it was still not easy.

## Election reality

Presidential elections in Cameroon were announced only six weeks prior to the election date, with parties having only two weeks to register: a time frame, which was virtually impossible for presidential candidates to prepare and wage political campaigns.

"Political parties with resources much less than those of the ruling party had to prepare within four weeks after registering: to build teams, to run a campaign, and to visit every one of the 10 regions of the country. This is impossible, even in the best of the situations," said Dibussi Tande.

The blogger explained that Cameroon has very bad communications infrastructure and the airlines fly to only three of the cities in the country. That is why the opposition leaders did not even go to some parts of Cameroon.

"One week before the elections, the president went to the northern part of the country to campaign. Then the next day, three opposition parties wanted to go there as well. But they could not do it, because the president had booked all the planes."

Usually it takes several hours to cross Cameroon by plane, and this is the usual way of transportation. By train it takes around 24 hours.

"So how are you expected to win, when you are not even allowed to go? That is why now it is impossible for any opposition parties to win any elections in Cameroon," concluded Tande.

On a positive note, an electoral commission, called ELECAM, was established in the capital Yaounde, tasked with overseeing the electoral process. But critics say that commission was basically made up of members of the ruling party and the government, with few civil society neutral observers. The resources were scarce and disorganisation was common.

On October 13th, 10 presidential candidates filed an appeal before the Supreme Court to nullify the elections owing to fraud and irregularities. The court rejected the claim, but Radio France

International (RFI) announced last Monday that France had decided to revise its original position that the elections were held under "acceptable terms". On October 22nd the spokesman of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bernard Valero said, "In the election were found many failures and irregularities."

## Turning point

Dibussi Tande is confident that Biya will not be there forever, and that the old system is slowly breaking down, with the diaspora and civil organisations triggering the change.

"Cameroonians have relied for too long on political parties. The solution will come from the civil society: if Cameroonians start focusing on building a civil society, that walks at the margins of the political party system, this will be able to mobilise not only Cameroonians in the country, but also those in the diaspora."

"I think this approach has a chance because that is exactly what happened in Tunisia and Egypt. It was not political parties that led the revolution. It was those people working in the diaspora and within Egypt who built online and offline connections. They used offline activ-

ism to mobilise people on the ground."

According to the blogger Julie Owono, although these elections might not produce an effect immediately visible, they are seen by Cameroonian people as a turning point from which Cameroon can build a better opposition for 2018, and where more people will engage and commit themselves to bringing an alternative to Biya's rule.

"It is a good thinking, because nobody wants chaos, war, and instability," said Owono.

Owono noted that social networks also entered the political game for the first time during the October 2011 elections. Even though the internet penetration rate in the country is estimated at a mere 5 per cent, Paul Biya and other presidential candidates opened a Facebook or Twitter page, and uploaded videos on YouTube, which was another way of interacting with broader audience and the entire population.

"This is a beginning of a process until 2018, when the political landscape will change in the country."

"Now social change is possible although it was not possible a few years ago. The game is very different now," concluded Owono.

## Intervention in Syria will trigger 'another Afghanistan'

STEPHEN JONES  
IN DUBAI

Syria's President Bashar al-Assad has warned that Western intervention in the country's unrest will cause an "earthquake" in the region.

In an interview with the *Sunday Telegraph*, al-Assad warned that foreign involvement risked creating "another Afghanistan".

The interview came just days after protesters took to the streets to demand a no-fly zone similar to the one NATO enforced in Libya.

However, al-Assad warned against any such move. "Syria is the hub now in this region," he told the *Sunday Telegraph*. "It is the fault line, and if you play with the ground you will cause an earthquake. ... Do you want to see another Afghanistan, or tens of Afghanistans?"

"Any problem in Syria will burn the whole region. If the plan is to divide Syria, that is to divide the whole region."

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon condemned the violence against civilians on Saturday, after more than 50 people were killed in the city of Homs and to the north in Idlib Province.

In a statement released through his office, he said, "The calls of the Syrian people for change must be answered with far-reaching reforms, not repression and violence."

As many as 3,000 people have been killed after protests calling for al-Assad's government to step down broke out in March.

Al-Assad admitted that "many mistakes" had been made, but stressed that only "terrorists" were now being targeted by the regime.

He said that his government had commenced reforms as early as six days after the protests began. "We didn't go down the road of stubborn government," he added.

Al-Assad described the country's unrest as a "struggle between Islamism and pan-Arabism".

"We've been fighting the Muslim brotherhood since the 1950s and we are still fighting with them," he said.

US State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland told reporters last week that foreign military intervention appeared not to be popular in Syria.

"The vast majority of the Syrian opposition continues to speak in favour of peaceful, nonviolent protest and against foreign intervention of any kind, and particularly foreign military intervention into the situation in Syria, and we respect that," she said.

## Nine Commentaries on the Communist Party



The 'Nine Commentaries' is the book that is disintegrating the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and changing China. This award-winning Epoch Times editorial series discloses the true history and nature of the CCP. Now it is serialised here.

### Commentary three (cont.) On the tyranny of the Chinese Communist Party

Many were admitted into the CCP for their "good behaviour" during similar slaughters. According to incomplete statistics for Guangxi Province, about 50,000 CCP members engaged in killing. Among these, more than 9,000 were admitted into the Party shortly after killing someone, more than 20,000 committed murder after being admitted into the Party, and more than 19,000 other Party members were involved in killing in one way or another.

During the Cultural Revolution, class theory would also be applied to beatings. The bad deserved it if they were beaten by the good. It was honourable for a bad per-

son to beat another bad person. It was a misunderstanding if a good person beat another good person. Such a theory invented by Mao was spread widely in the rebel movements. Violence and slaughter were widespread following the logic that the enemies of the class struggle deserved any violence against them.

From August 13 to October 7 of 1967, militiamen in Dao County of Hunan Province slaughtered members of the Xiangjiang Wind and Thunder organisation and those of the five black classes. The slaughter lasted 66 days; more than 4,519 people in 2,778 households were killed in 468 brigades (administrative villages) of 36 people's communes in ten districts. In the entire prefecture consisting of ten counties, a total of 9,093 people were killed, of which 38 per cent were of the five black classes and 44 per cent were their children. The oldest person killed was 78 years old, and the youngest was only ten days old.

This is only one case of violence in one small area during the Cul-

tural Revolution. In Inner Mongolia, after the establishment of the "revolutionary committee" in early 1968, the cleansing of class rank and purging of the fabricated Inner Mongolia People's Revolutionary Party resulted in the deaths of more than 350,000 people. In 1968, tens of thousands of people in Guangxi Province participated in the mass slaughter of a public faction known as "4.22" organisation, killing more than 110,000.

These cases point out that those major acts of violent killing during the Cultural Revolution were all under the direct instigation and instruction of CCP leaders who encouraged and utilised violence to persecute and kill citizens. Those killers directly involved in instructing and executing the killing were mostly from the military, police, armed militia, and key members of the Party and the Youth League.

If, during the Land Reform, the CCP used peasants to overthrow landlords to obtain land, during the Industrial and Commercial

Reform the CCP used the working class to overthrow capitalists to gain assets, and during the Anti-Rightist Movement the CCP eliminated all intellectuals who held opposing opinions, then what was the purpose of all the killing during the Cultural Revolution? The CCP used one group to kill another, and no one class was relied upon. Even if you were from the workers and peasants, two classes upon which the Party relied in the past, if your viewpoint differed from that of the Party, your life would be in danger. So in the end, what was it all for?

The purpose was to establish communism as the one and only religion dominating the entire country, controlling not just the state but every individual's mind.

The Cultural Revolution pushed the CCP and Mao Zedong's cult of personality to a climax. Mao's theory had to be used to dictate everything and one person's vision had to be embedded in tens of millions of people's minds.

The Cultural Revolution, in a way unprecedented and never again to be matched, intentionally did not specify what could not be done. Instead, the Party emphasised what can be done and how to do it. Anything outside this boundary could not be done or even considered.

During the Cultural Revolution, everyone in the country carried out a religious-like ritual: ask the Party for instructions in the morning and report to the Party in the evening, salute Chairman Mao several times a day, wishing him boundless longevity, and conduct morning and evening political prayers every day. Nearly every literate person had the experience of writing self-criticism and thought reports. Mao's quotations such as the following were frequently recited. "Fight ferociously against every passing thought of selfishness." "Execute the Party's command whether or not you understand it. Even if you do not understand, carry it out anyway and your understanding should deepen in the process of execution."

### QUITTING THE CCP



105,109,004 Quit  
as of 6:42 pm, 1/11/11

Chinese people have quit the Chinese Communist Party and its affiliate organisations on a special website established by The Epoch Times. Many others, unable to break through the Chinese Internet blockade, have posted their withdrawal statements on buildings in the street or written them on Chinese banknotes.

Read the statements of Chinese people who have recently quit the party and more at:

[www.NineCommentaries.com](http://www.NineCommentaries.com)