

05/09/2024

PRAP's Position on School Resumption, Education and Call for 'Protest Action.

The People's Rights Advocacy Platform (PRAP), taking cognisance of the following:

- i. That certain members of our community have resolved to gamble with the future of our children by making sport of calling for unnecessary and pointless lockdowns every time our children need to go back to school, in spite of the fact that the right of children to education even in situations of armed conflicts is protected by international laws like the International Humanitarian Law (IHL) which is based on the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention.
- ii. Acknowledging that the relationship between education, security, and stability is bidirectional. In times of war, access to quality education becomes compromised, and conversely, the absence of proper education constrains individuals to a life under constant threat, disrupting education provision.
- iii. Noting that UNICEF (2024) declares that attacks on schools, students and educators eliminate children's right to education – and on their futures. And noting that without education, children under war and situations of conflict will lose the knowledge and skills they need to build their nations.

Here by condemns and distances itself from the actions of extremely radical and uniquely unreasonable Ambazonians (*distinct from moderate and reasonable Southern Cameroonian Groups involved in a legitimate cause to improve the lives of the average citizen and protective of their right to education*) groups that have now made it a habit/sports to use the education of our children as their preferred tool to gamble for legitimacy.

PRAP accepts that the UN General Assembly in 1948, outlined fundamental human rights to be universally protected. That There are 30 articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights-UDHR: with article 26 dedicated to education. That Education is a fundamental human right, enshrined in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Consequently:

- i. PRAP acknowledges that the systematic destruction of schools, the closure of educational institutions, and the targeted killings of students and teachers are stark violations of the right to education.
- ii. PRAP holds that these acts are not only an attack on individuals but also on the fabric of society and a compromise on the glorious future of the Southern Cameroons, as education is the bedrock of development and stability.
- iii. PRAP stands by the view that this deliberate targeting of students, teachers, and educational institutions is an affront to human dignity and must be unequivocally condemned and the perpetrators isolated and prepared to face justice.
- iv. PRAP reiterates that the disruption of education such as was in Bougainville for a decade and the ongoing violence in Anglophone Cameroon deprive entire generations.

Furthermore, the denial of education exacerbates inequality, among those who are already marginalized and vulnerable, making it a strategy that is counterproductive. Consequently,

Legal and Moral Accountability.

- v. PRAP maintains the view that the actions of those who destroy schools, kill educators, and terrorize students constitute serious human rights violations. PRAP affirms that Under international law, including the Geneva Conventions and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), such acts can and should be prosecuted as war crimes or crimes against humanity.
- vi. PRAP also affirms that the intentional targeting of civilians, including children and educators, violates the principles of distinction and proportionality in armed conflict, and those responsible must be held accountable.

Interim Solutions to Support Education while the Crisis Persists.

- vii. PRAP proposes the adoption of innovative interim solutions that have been used in order areas of conflict like -RADIO-ENABLED LEARNING, ONLINE LEARNING & LOW-BANDWIDTH LEARNING. Radio is considered a cheap, but effective technology that could be used to reach out to everyone at their home, where they are isolated from war. In South Sudan, where armed conflicts have disrupted the education system, UNICEF implemented radio-based education programs. For instance, an education program Speak-Up, aimed at increasing learning for those who dropped out of school, often due to the conflict. Speak-Up was a 6-month course with bi-weekly lessons provided via two mediums: (1) Local radio stations are provided with lessons to be broadcasted for 6 months, hence ensuring a large reachability of the students; and (2) registered classes, where teachers lead participants through the lessons using MP3 recordings. This solution could be most effective for segments of our territory that are inland and suffer from low/absent internet connectivity and coupled with Learning with low bandwidth which has emerged as a critical approach for areas with limited internet connectivity, ensuring education reaches even the most remote and underserved communities. Through offline learning solutions, such as offline educational apps and preloaded digital content.

On the future of Southern Cameroon's Education.

- viii. PRAP proposes the convening of a **Summit on Education** for the region of the Former British Southern Cameroons. This summit should bring together all actors and stakeholder of the educational sector to identify and propose solutions to the disruptions in education caused by the ongoing conflict as well as outline a concrete vision for the future of Southern Cameroons education. A diagnostic report of the status of our educational system should be the first output, followed by consultation that leads to the development of a **White Paper on Southern Cameroons education** to be implemented by the devolved government of the Southern Cameroons under the authority of an elected Prime Minister as proposed in our Peace Plan Paper. More details on the education summit to be convened in hybrid mode

(physically & Online) shall be communicated through the release of a concept note & call for contributions in the days ahead.

A Call to Protest Action: “Offer A Pen Campaign.”

Nelson Mandela at the dawn of the Post-Apartheid South African Democracy and addressing his organisation the ANC and fellow comrades with whom he had been in the armed struggle, had this to say

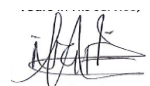
“If the ANC does to you what the Apartheid government did to you, then you must do to the ANC what you did to the Apartheid government.” – Nelson Mandela, Cosatu Conference, 1993

The actions of the Dogs of War and entrepreneurs of the ‘war economy’ through their repeated call for lockdowns to disrupt school resumption have now made one thing clear. They have drawn the line in the sand to make a distinction between themselves (radical extremists) and the rest of the moderate activists who mean well for our people. Inspired by the word of Nelson Mandela, it is time for us to all rise in solidarity and subscribe to the old adage that says the Pen is stronger than the Sword/Gun.

We therefore call upon all stakeholders of the Southern Cameroons family to demonstrate their support for education and opposition to these disruptions by offering every student in their circle and community a pen- as part of an **“Offer A Pen Campaign Protest Movement”**. **PRAP will be leading this protest by organising extensive mobilisation efforts to secure stationery and didactic materials for our children especially IDPs and Refugees to make sure that they are adequately equipped for the new academic year.**

There is no substitute for education to secure the future that we aspire and are fighting for and there is no justification for the actions of those who have chosen to gamble our children’s future on the altar of political expediency. Their actions should be condemned with the contempt that is deserved.

Comradely Yours



Prof G.Nubong
Vice-Chair PRAP.