



# Appalling Irresponsibility in Cameroon's Leadership Spheres

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## ABSTRACT

This work is an attempt to show that there are appalling cases of irresponsibility in the leadership of a good number of domains or fields in Cameroon. They have enormously contributed to failure in these domains in particular and life in Cameroon in general. There is need for the leaders of the said domains to sit up.

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## Background

In Cameroon, there is an atmosphere of irresponsibility in the leadership circles of almost all domains of life.<sup>1</sup> In other words, the leaders or heads of these domains do not efficiently play their respective roles in society. A good number of them are found in families, neighbourhoods, peer groups, schools, trade unions, churches, business milieux, security forces, religious circles, public service structures, judicial units, communication offices, transport milieux, political structures, traditional units, sports milieux, financial institutions, migration structures, women's circles, youth groups, etc.

**Many family heads in Cameroon** (especially fathers) are increasingly irresponsible in their management of family affairs. These fathers do not unfortunately perceive fatherhood in the light of Ngam Valery Etane's definition of genuine fatherhood.<sup>2</sup> In this connection, some of them do not pay enough attention to the moral and spiritual upbringing of those who are under their authority in their respective families (children, relatives, etc). They do not seriously fight against the immoral dressing habits, utterances, ways of dancing, etc of these children, relatives, etc. They do not bother to advise them against watching pornographic films.

**Many heads of associations in the domains of sports, health, community development, youth affairs, women empowerment, etc in some Cameroonian neighbourhoods** work in an

irresponsible manner. They take decisions in a dictatorial way. They have a dubious approach to the management of financial resources. They hardly assume responsibility in case of problems concerning their authority in their respective associations. Their sense of unity or solidarity is very unreliable.

**Many peer group leaders in Cameroon** are not responsible heads or guides in terms of the manner in which they manage or handle the activities or affairs of their respective groups. They do not carry out their duties judiciously. It is in this light that they hardly counsel their group members when they are wrong. In some cases, they impose their ideas, perceptions, decisions, etc on these members. They behave irrationally, an irrational behaviour which is similar to that of political leaders in Cameroon.

**Heads of many educational institutions in Cameroon** indulge in many unorthodox or corrupt practices. The case of some heads of government or public nursery, primary, secondary and high schools is quite illustrative as concerns these practices.<sup>3</sup> They collect bribes from some parents before their children are admitted to their schools. Furthermore, some of them are unable to responsibly handle cases of indiscipline (poor dressing, drug consumption, lack of respect for teachers, etc) in their respective schools.

**Trade union leaders in many sectors of activities in Cameroon** display a lot of irresponsibility in their handling of trade union issues. In some cases, they work

<sup>1</sup> Vocabulary.com, "Irresponsibility"

Available at: [www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/irresponsibility](http://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/irresponsibility)

Consulted on: 23/10/24

This bibliographical reference presents the definition of the term *irresponsibility* as perceived in this article. It states as follows:

*Irresponsibility is the quality of not being trustworthy or dependable (Example: Forgetting to pick your little brother up after school would be evidence of your irresponsibility as a baby-sitter.*

<sup>2</sup> Ngam Valery Etane, "Fathers in Today's Changing World", *St. Francis Xavier Voice (Information Bulletin of the St Francis Xavier University Parish/University of Yaounde 1)*, Yaounde, 3 February 2019, p.4

Ngam Valery Etane provides an apt definition of genuine fatherhood in the following words:

*An authentic father should provide for the spiritual needs of the family. He should be a man of prayer and not be afraid to manifest it publicly. He should pray with his family.*

<sup>3</sup> Bernadette Franka Nambu, "Back-to-school: Bribery, Corruption on the Rise in Public Schools"

Available at: [cameroonnewsagency.com/back-to-school-bribery-corruption-on-the-rise-in-public-schools/](http://cameroonnewsagency.com/back-to-school-bribery-corruption-on-the-rise-in-public-schools/)

Consulted on: 11/3/25

In this article, a Cameroonian parent gives an idea of corrupt practices in which heads or principals of Cameroon's government or public schools are involved. The said parent does so in the following words:

*I am forced to send my child to a private school, which is very expensive. When I went to one of the public schools around my area here, I was told there was no space for my child. Most of my friends say I was supposed to go with some money to give the school for them to reserve a space for my child which, to me, is not normal.*

It should be noted that the principal of the school concerned obviously indulges in the mentioned corrupt practice since he is in charge of student admission.

against the interests of their members by yielding to government pressure or accepting bribes from the government. This situation is usually observable in the domains of education, transport, health, research, etc. Furthermore, the degree of irresponsibility of the said leaders has prompted many members of the trade unions managed by them to leave these unions.

**A great number of officials who are called upon to manage affairs in Cameroon's public service institutions** (ministries, embassies, State corporations, training centres, etc) are not serious or responsible leaders. They display a good number of managerial vices (laxity, autocracy, nonchalance, nepotism, tribalism, favouritism, belief in bribery, lack of a sense of proper coordination, etc). They do not professionally and psychologically motivate the workers who are under their authority.

**Many opinion leaders in Cameroon** sometimes carry out their activities irresponsibly. To this end, many opinion leaders in the political field sometimes use hate speech to express themselves in radio stations, television houses, social media fora, etc. They cause a lot of antagonism and hatred in Cameroon's current political dispensation. They have intentionally and unconsciously contributed to rendering this dispensation very volatile or explosive within the build-up to the 2025 Presidential Elections.

**A significant number of Cameroon's religious leaders** (catechists, pastors, priests, bishops, archbishops, imams, etc) exhibit a lot of responsibility shortcomings. They are not up to expectations since they lack many fundamental moral and spiritual virtues (simplicity or humility, love, self-sacrifice, etc). In this vein, most of them do not bother to empathize with their followers in particular and Cameroonians in general as concerns the current miseries being experienced in Cameroon. Furthermore, others do not bother to stop or combat the growing religious intolerance in and out of their worship houses.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> International Crisis Group, "Cameroon: The Threat of Religious Radicalism"

Available at: [www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/cameroon-threat-religious-radicalism](http://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/cameroon-threat-religious-radicalism)

Consulted on: 11/4/24

In this article, it is mentioned that religious intolerance is a growing but seriously underestimated risk in Cameroon both between and inside the major religious groups.

<sup>5</sup> Lewis Mudge (Human Rights Watch), "Decree in Cameroon Unjustifiably Censors Free Speech"

Available at: [www.hrw.org/news/2024/07/23/decrees-cameroon-unjustifiably-censors-free-speech](http://www.hrw.org/news/2024/07/23/decrees-cameroon-unjustifiably-censors-free-speech)

Consulted on: 25/10/24

Lewis Mudge provides, in the following words, an idea of the violation of freedom of speech in Cameroon by political officials:

**Many business leaders in Cameroon** (company managers, industrialists, owners of supermarkets, proprietors of financial institutions, etc) are irresponsible. In this connection, some of these persons sell expired products. They do not care about the disastrous or harmful consequences of these products on the health of their consumers, the state of the environment, etc. They are interested only in the benefits they obtain from the sale of these dangerous products.

**A great number of heads and proprietors of health institutions in Cameroon** (medical doctors, administrators, etc) do not work in a reliable or dependable manner. Some of them pay more attention to their personal interests (for instance, money-making interests). They do not comply with objective recruitment requirements when recruiting staff members for their respective health structures. They treat their workers poorly (for example, they do not listen to, or take into account, their complaints such as those concerning their salaries).

**Most political leaders in Cameroon's ruling party** (the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement) do not believe in responsible politics. They still believe that politics is a game meant for dishonest persons, a game in which the strong crush the weak, a game in which the respect for human rights (such as the right to freedom of speech) is out of the question.<sup>5</sup> Worse still, they cannot conceive or understand the normal, democratic and noble fact that life could be acceptable out of power circles.

**A good number of the heads of various units or structures of Cameroon's security forces** (army, gendarmerie, police, etc) act irresponsibly in the exercise of their duties. They indulge in corrupt practices such as collecting huge bribes from innocent citizens, misappropriating funds meant for security services under their authority, intimidating innocent citizens who strive to uphold their rights, etc. Just like many heads of State

*It is becoming increasingly difficult to speak freely in Cameroon. In an order issued on 16 July 2024, Emmanuel Mariel Djikdent (head of Mfoundi Division where the capital of Cameroon is found) stated that anyone who dangerously insults State institutions or the person who represents them could be banned from staying in the said division.*

*Two days later, Rene Emmanuel Sadi (the Communication Minister) issued a press release stating that it was unacceptable for some Cameroonians to show disrespect to President Paul Biya since he was freely and overwhelmingly elected.*

institutions in Cameroon, they think that they are above the law.

**A significant number of heads of judicial units or structures in Cameroon** (heads of courts of first instance, high courts, appeal courts, administrative courts, etc) are not trustworthy or dependable in their work. They are out to please the current political dispensation at the expense of the administration of justice since this political dispensation controls Cameroon's judiciary.<sup>6</sup> An illustration of this situation is the unwillingness of this judiciary to authorize the publication of the national voters' list since this publication would not please the ruling party.

**A great number of leaders in Cameroon's sports milieu** (stars in football, handball, volleyball, basketball, boxing, karate, judo, athletics, etc) usually display irresponsibility in their words and actions. The manner in which some of these leaders spend their income is quite illustrative of this situation. Just like other irresponsible Cameroonians, they waste a lot of money in drinking spots, etc. Other sports leaders buy very expensive items for their girlfriends, relatives, etc, items which are not supposed to be bought by these leaders.

**Many rich Cameroonians** who are considered as leaders in the domain of riches behave irresponsibly in their families, communities, offices, churches, companies, etc. They do not have any sense of humility, honesty, generosity, love, self-sacrifice, etc. They believe that their riches have placed them above the world and that there is no need for them to listen to the worries or demands of the poor. They are not out for the welfare of the majority of Cameroonians (poor Cameroonians).

**Some Cameroonians who head legal and illegal structures or institutions dealing with migration** are dishonest. They deceive many Cameroonians who intend to travel abroad by presenting fake travel

<sup>6</sup> Laura-Stella Eposi Enonchong (African Journal of Legal Studies), "Judicial Independence and Accountability in Cameroon: Balancing a Tenuous Relationship"

Available at: [brill.com/view/journals/ajls/5/3/article-p313\\_5.xml](http://brill.com/view/journals/ajls/5/3/article-p313_5.xml)

Consulted on: 21/10/24

In this article, Laura-Stella Eposi Enonchong mentions the control of Cameroon's judiciary by the executive body of government in Cameroon.

<sup>7</sup> Ayah Paul Abine, "South-West (Elite) Forum: A High-sounding Nothing", The Voice, Yaounde, 4 September 2018, p.8

Ayah Paul Abine gives us an idea of genuine leadership in the following words:

*Leadership is when the people freely raise you to a position of total dependence on them in the conduct of public business;*

schemes, dubious job offers, etc to them in various forms. Some of them collect huge sums of money from some of these Cameroonians and vanish into thin air. This disheartening situation has dashed the hopes of many Cameroonians (students, job seekers, workers, etc) who intended to travel abroad.

**Many persons in Cameroon become traditional rulers** in an irresponsible or unorthodox manner. The process in traditional councils and other bodies which enable them to become traditional rulers does not take into consideration democratic principles, principles that confer legitimacy on these traditional rulers, principles which take into account genuine leadership.<sup>7</sup> This situation has unfortunately prompted the said rulers to be very irresponsible in their handling of affairs in their respective villages since they do owe their ascension to power to fraud and not their people.

**A good number of leaders in Cameroon's musical realm** (music stars in various types of music) are irresponsible as far as their thoughts, words and actions are concerned. One of the glaring or conspicuous illustrations of this point is the immoral dressing habits and lyrics of these stars.<sup>8</sup> They do not bother about the negative moral impact of these habits and lyrics on youths in particular and the society in general. Their yearning for money prompts them to value these habits and lyrics.

**Many leaders of Cameroon's women's groups** have failed in a good number of their responsibilities. In this connection, some of them are unable to display a good spirit of responsibility in the management of female groups; they are unable to convincingly handle issues dealing with gossips, hatred, development, embezzlement of funds, etc. Moreover, female political leaders have not monitored responsibly the implementation of the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women such as those of this convention's preamble.<sup>9</sup>

*clothing you with a representative capacity that permits you to conduct public business in their name and benefit. On account of the foregoing statement, if you occupy any position without the mandate of the people, you lack legitimacy and genuine representative capacity.*

<sup>8</sup> Inhouse Team, "Le Sexe dans la Musique Camerounaise"

Available at: [www.musicinafrica.net/fr/magazine/le-sexe-dans-la-musique-camerounaise](http://www.musicinafrica.net/fr/magazine/le-sexe-dans-la-musique-camerounaise)

Consulted on: 31/3/25

In this article, it is clearly mentioned that in Cameroon, jazz, blues, bikutsi and hip hop talk about sex in an immoral manner. A good number of music stars in Cameroon are involved in this mess.

<sup>9</sup> In its preamble, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (2003) relies on

**A significant number of leaders of some youth groups in Cameroon** are not carrying out their duties in a responsible manner. They pay more attention to their personal interests and relegate to the background those of their group members. Furthermore, leaders of the main youth group in Cameroon (the Cameroon National Youth Council) are not up to expectations in the exercise of their duties since they are usually subservient to State authorities in charge of youth affairs and not serious about the handling of youth issues in Cameroon.

**Some leaders of Cameroon's transport associations, trade unions, etc** are irresponsible. Just like the heads of a good number of associations, trade unions, etc in Cameroon, they do not take the demands of their members seriously. They prefer to yield to government pressure during negotiations dealing with strikes, etc. Some of them are bribed or intimidated by the government to abandon some crucial or decisive demands of their members. This situation is rampant in the case of associations and trade unions pertaining to cabs.

The discussed cases of irresponsibility, though not exhaustive as concerns the irresponsibility of leaders in Cameroon, have contributed enormously to failure in the areas in which they are noticed. They have, inter alia, not enabled these areas to substantially contribute to Cameroon's development. There is need for the leaders of the said areas to sit up since, just like Wally Amos states, irresponsibility ineluctably leads to failure. They should be assisted in this redressing exercise by the rest of the society.<sup>10</sup>

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some salient issues (issues reaffirmed by the Charter of the United Nations) worth upholding by Cameroon's female leaders in the exercise of their leadership duties such as faith in fundamental or basic human rights, the worth of human beings and equality between the rights of men and women.

<sup>10</sup> Quote Master, "Quotes about Irresponsibility"

Available at: [www.quotemaster.org/Irresponsibility](http://www.quotemaster.org/Irresponsibility)

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Wally Amos contends as follows:

*There are two reasons for people's failure. One is irresponsibility. The second is fear.*