

**Hunger strike declaration by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detainees from Cameroon detained at the Pine Prairie ICE Processing Center (PPIPC) based on gross human rights violations by ICE New Orleans Regional Field Office (NOLA ICE) and Judge Scott Laragy of Oakdale Immigration Court.**

We thank you for the privilege and opportunity to use your platform to denounce the unfair biased and illegal detentions by ICE and court judgements by Hon. Scott Laragy of Oakdale Immigration Court, all geared at forcefully deporting us back to Cameroon where we have suffered from persecution and severe torture by the Cameroon government forces as a result of the ongoing socio-political upheavals plaguing the minority English speakers regions of the Northwest and Southwest where we hail from.

We are beginning an indefinite hunger strike on 03/03/2020 to express our frustrations for our lives are in danger back home in Cameroon.

**A. Why we escaped from Cameroon and why we fear to return**

Over the last four years, Cameroon has been the focus of a nation sliding into a genocide in Africa from what started in late 2016 as legitimate grievances by the minority English speaking lawyers, teachers, students and civil society over the prolonged marginalization, discrimination, suppression and oppression by the French majority government under Pres. Paul Biya who has ruled the country for the last 38 years. Peaceful protests turned deadly when the government military resorted to violence, shooting at peaceful protesters, wounding, killing, arresting and detaining many. The situation has deteriorated and we were targeted by the Cameroon government and we fled the country to seek for protection in the United States. We fear returning to Cameroon because the government continues to kill, arrest, detain many, burn villages and destroy properties targeting the male youths and others. No meaningful solution is reached as the government remains very high handed ignoring the propositions of the international community.

**B. Biased and illegal efforts by the Department of Homeland Security (ICE) aimed at denying to parole and release us from detention and eventually deport us back to Cameroon where we flee prosecution.**

We are about 43 Cameroonians detained here at PPIPC out of which 41 are arriving aliens (inspected at a designated port of entries). All of us are determined to have a credible fear of persecution and torture by asylum officers. By implication 41 of us are eligible for bond, parole and release from ICE custody and 2 eligible for bond. Almost all of us have submitted parole documents to the ICE authority here at PPIPC who vehemently refused to issue any acknowledgement for receiving the document. Our periods of detention range from 6 months to 18 months. As we write to you, none of us has been paroled and released from ICE custody and we have not received any written nor verbal response from ICE related to the said documents for parole. It's appalling that none of us has ever met our respective deportation officers through out detention here at PPIPC. All our efforts to meet them through telephones have yielded no fruits. We are frustrated and downtrodden as we have no one to our rescue except you. In other detentions and states Cameroonians are being given parole and bond. We doubt if this state, Louisiana, is not in the United States or whether they don't have the same immigration laws like other states.

**C. Unfair, biased and illegal court judgements and efforts by immigration Judge Hon. Scott Laragy of Oakdale Immigration Court aimed at deporting us back to Cameroon where we flee persecution and fear death, torture and imprisonment by the Cameroon government and its forces.**

Out of 43 Cameroonians detained at PPIPC, about 28 have their cases filed with Judge Scott Laragy. He has already judged 16 of these cases denying any form of protection to 13 Cameroonians while results of 3 cases are still pending for about 3 weeks now since they were judged. On the contrary judge Hon. Nicholas Martz has judged 5

Cameroonians granting protection to 4. Hon. Scott Laragy generally predetermines our judgements before full hearing paying little attention to our testimonies and sidelining the evidences we present.

Furthermore, we also suffer the problem of intimidation from Judge Scott Laragy during full hearing. He uses unguarded languages off record asking applicants to shut up, warn applicants in court or forced you (us) to sign a voluntary deportation even without hearing your case. He does all these off record to cover up traces in case of any appeal.

Judge Scott Laragy often switch off audio records during hearings especially when he is going against the rule of law and when the applicants and their defense counsel brings up tangible evidence and reasonable points to defend their cases. He does all these to cover up any trace and make sure the applicant will not have any reason to win an appeal to the level of (BIA).

Judge Scott Laragy dismisses almost all the evidence presented by us before him to support our cases despite the country report of Cameroon. Forcefully asking arriving aliens to accept voluntary deportation even without hearing the applicants claim. He also insist to judge an applicant who is under deplorable health conditions just to make sure he frustrate you and send you back to your country to be killed.

As we speak, our country's condition Cameroon is getting worse every day and our lives are in danger because we are wanted. We hearby plead for your clemency and indulgence to see into our case. Since January 2020 the judge has proven beyond reasonable doubt to send us back without mindful of our proofs of past persecution, future persecution, torture, harm, death threats and testimonies from family members. The judge is bent in sending us all back to be killed by our government.

#### **D. No access to our personal deportation officers**

None of us has ever encountered his deportation officers either physically by mail or telephone or by any means. For that reason all parole documents are submitted to liaison officers here at PPIPC who vehemently refuse to issue acknowledgement receipts to us. We have never received any feedback as to the said parole documents submitted and we remain here in detention stranded and frustrated.

#### **E. Missing evidence from our files from Customs and Border Protection (CBP)**

Most of us are arriving aliens who were inspected at designated port of entries before admission into the USA after spending between 2 and 4 months at the port of entries (Mexico) as per the metering system. Copies and originals of these evidences including 20 days stay permits bearing our numbers and original identifications documents were handed to CBP and inserted in our files, but its rather unfortunate that we have never met our deportation officers to have access to these documents and court the government attorneys and the judges tell us these documents are not found in our files. By implication the purported miraculous disappearance of these documents limits our abilities to prove our eligibility to asylum and prove our personal identification and nationality.

This declaration is read, approved and signed by all the 43 Cameroonians detained at PPIPC LA this 1<sup>st</sup> of March, 2020.