

INSTITUTION OVER IDENTITY

A Foundational Doctrine for Stability, Unity, and Nation Building in Southern Cameroons

1. Purpose

This doctrine establishes a simple principle:

A stable and prosperous society is built on strong institutions, not competing identities.

Where institutions are weak or absent, identity becomes the default organizing force. This leads to division, suspicion, and long-term instability.

2. The Current Challenge

For decades, our people have operated without a clearly defined and widely accepted political and legal structure. In that vacuum:

- groups compete for recognition
- historical grievances are constantly revisited
- symbolic actions are over-interpreted

As a result, even neutral events are often seen through the lens of exclusion or dominance.

3. Historical Clarity

Our original administrative foundation was not based on the present North West versus South West framing. We had:

- Victoria Division
- Bamenda Division
- Kumba Division

The current regional narrative is a later development that has often functioned as a tool for division rather than a framework for unity. A serious society must return to structural thinking, not inherited divisions.

4. Why Division Persists

Division continues because the system lacks:

- clearly defined representation
- agreed rules of engagement
- institutional guarantees of fairness

In such an environment:

- perception replaces clarity
- emotion replaces structure
- identity replaces governance

This is not a failure of individuals. It is a failure of system design.

5. Core Principles

Principle 1: Structure Before Sentiment

Decisions must be guided by clear frameworks, not emotional reactions. Without structure, every action becomes open to conflicting interpretation.

Principle 2: Representation Must Be Designed

Fairness does not emerge naturally. It must be intentionally built into the system. Every group must know how it is represented, where it participates, and what its role is.

Principle 3: No Group Should Fear Domination

A functioning system removes fear through design. No region or community should depend on goodwill to be treated fairly. The system itself must guarantee balance.

Principle 4: Identity Must Not Replace Governance

Identity is part of culture and history. It must not become the basis of political organization or decision-making. When identity becomes the operating system, conflict becomes permanent.

Principle 5: Institutions Create Trust

Trust is built when rules are clear, systems are predictable, and outcomes are consistent. Trust does not come from statements. It comes from structure.

6. Strategic Direction

To move forward, the focus must shift from:

- reaction to structure
- narratives to frameworks
- symbolic debates to institutional design

Priority areas include:

- legal clarity of status
- structured representation
- transparent systems of accountability

7. Practical Implications

Going forward:

- reactions to perceived imbalance must give way to structured thinking
- regional suspicion must be replaced with defined representation
- narratives of division must give way to institutional guarantees

Effort should be directed toward building systems that:

- protect all groups equally
- prevent concentration of power
- ensure long-term stability

8. Conclusion

- Identity without structure leads to division.
- Structure creates order, predictability, and trust.
- If strong institutions are built, unity will follow naturally.
- If they are not built, division will persist regardless of intentions.

The future of Southern Cameroons will not be determined by who is mentioned, who is excluded, or who is recognized in any moment.

It will be determined by whether a system is built that guarantees fairness, representation, and stability for all.

That is the work ahead.

*We pray like everything depends on God.
But we work like everything depends on us.*

*God bless you.
And God bless Southern Cameroons.*

Developed within the Southern Cameroons Legal Clarity Framework
For civic education and institutional development