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THE KUMBA MASSACRE, 24 OCTOBER 2020 REACTION OF THE WPPJ

On 24 October 2020, masked armed men stormed into the Mother Francisca International Bilingual Academy compound in Kumba and killed at least 8 students and wounded twelve. The horror of the event drew condemnation and outrage from the parents, Kumba population, the Southern Cameroons and the international community as a whole.

It would be recalled that this is not the first of such gruesome massacres. We remember Ngarbur on February 14, Menka-pinyin on 25 March 2018, Mutengene and Munyenge on 10 September 2019 and many others. The outcry, condemnation and calls for investigations did not stop the Kumba massacre from happening.

There has been an outpouring of news stories immediately following the massacres, but WPPJ wants to remind the world that SYMPATHY and INACTION do not address the root cause of this crisis. Be vigilant and do not let organizations in power pat themselves on the back for a job well done for “sending thoughts and prayers”.

While some genuinely cry and weep, the politicians would be busy calculating what gain they can make out of the massacres. Some have already called for the population to arm themselves against certain groups; others will call for marches against certain positions. Newspapers too would be trying to make a scoop out of the story! Sadly, they will not address the main cause of the massacre which is the **persistence of the unjust and purposeless war declared on a peaceful population.**

The Women for Permanent Peace and Justice (WPPJ) feel the pains of the parents right down to the core. While we mourn our children, we must look for a permanent solution to these repeated massacres. WPPJ calls for an end to this purposeless war. War must never be declared and sustained. These massacres and other uncounted atrocities are the products of war and more will happen unless the war is stopped. We never saw these atrocities until this insane war was declared.

We all know who has the power to stop the war; we know who declared the war; we know who is refusing to call for a ceasefire; we know who is refusing internationally mediated talks and dialogue; we know who is refusing to sit down on the negotiating table to address the root causes. This same party which propagates this war will shed the most crocodile tears! We call on our parents not to be fooled: the culprit in these massacres is only one: the party refusing to sit down for talks to end the war! There is no other culprit!

This conflict requires the firm commitment of the international community if it is to end sooner rather than later. The African Union, the United Nations and all other international organizations which should be more actively engaged in resolving it have all decided to let the killings go on. For how long?

The WPPJ renews its appeal to these organizations not to standby waiting to condemn atrocities, but to use their leverage to bring the party refusing to sit on the negotiation table to do so. Other



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Movements such as Black Lives Matter and every organization of good faith is called upon to throw its weight to end this unjust and purposeless war.

The default template statement released by the UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, falls short of necessary actions: **swift and independent outside investigation, robust and swift justice for those responsible, robust pressure on parties to engage in substantive dialogue on the root cause of this crisis, and a demilitarization of the area, a pre-requisite for effective education.**

As they say, it is not the bad people who spoil the world, but the good people who decide to do nothing in the face of evil.