

**GRADUATION CEREMONY OF THE “LIEUTENANT YOUSOUF MAHAMAT BAHAR”  
AND “FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF REUNIFICATION” BATCHES OF THE COMBINED  
SERVICES ACADEMY**

**SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY MR PAUL BIYA  
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES**

*Yaounde, 24 April 2015*

The President of the Senate,  
The Prime Minister, Head of Government,  
The President of the Economic and Social Council,  
The First President and Procureur General of the Supreme Court,  
Ministers,  
Members of the Diplomatic Corps,  
Generals,  
Officers, Petty Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers and Soldiers,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

This ceremony is taking place at a special moment in Cameroon’s history. Our country is waging a merciless war against an enemy that is posing a threat to our territorial integrity, our lifestyle and our people.

Before I continue, please rise and let us observe a minute of silence in memory of our brave soldiers who fell defending our Fatherland, and in memory of our compatriots who were victims of atrocities perpetrated by the Boko Haram sect.

(... Thank you)

Young Officers of the “Lieutenant YOUSOUF MAHAMAT BAHAR” and “Fiftieth Anniversary of Reunification” Batches,

I am very pleased today to preside over your graduation ceremony as is customary.

You have opted to pursue one of the best professions, the military profession, which affords you the opportunity to serve the Fatherland in a spirit of selflessness and sacrifice.

The names you have chosen to christen your batches following your training at the Combined Services Academy are particularly evocative.

Lieutenant YOUSSEUF MAHAMAT BAHAR bequeaths to posterity the indelible memory of a young officer who lost his life after neutralizing the entire group of attackers in the course of a dangerous operation he led at sea against a gang of pirates.

The Fiftieth Anniversary of Reunification, which was celebrated with pomp and solemnity on 20 February 2014 in Buea, will go down in history as the commemoration of the fierce determination of the Cameroonian people to regain its unity.

In your career as officers, the names of your two batches should constantly serve as references in the discharge of your duties. Lieutenant YOUSSEUF MAHAMAT BAHAR's example will serve as a challenge and a permanent call to attain the highest level of patriotism and sense of sacrifice, while the Fiftieth Anniversary of Reunification will remind you of the absolute imperative to defend our national unity and territorial integrity.

Young Officers of the "Lieutenant YOUSSEUF MAHAMAT BAHAR" and "Fiftieth Anniversary of Reunification" Batches,

This graduation ceremony is undoubtedly a milestone in your lives. It confirms your accession to the military career, one that is definitely demanding, but no less exciting.

This graduation also crowns three years of efforts made by each and every one of you at the Combined Services Academy.

On behalf of the entire Nation, I am pleased to warmly congratulate you, before the military hierarchy and your respective families.

I equally hail the success of your comrades from Gabon, the Central African Republic, Mali, Niger, Benin and Senegal. Their presence in your midst is testimony to their countries' confidence in the quality of your school's label and, obviously, the excellent ties binding us.

I also wish to extend my profound gratitude to your academy's Training Command as well as all the civil and military instructors that accompanied you with competence and devotion throughout your training.

Lastly, I regretfully salute the memory of one of your comrades, Lieutenant DONKENG Joseph Kevin, who died alongside other soldiers during an attack by the Boko Haram terrorist group on 25 July 2014 at Bargaram in the Far-North Region.

Young Officers of the "Lieutenant YOUSSEUF MAHAMAT BAHAR" and "Fiftieth Anniversary of Reunification" Batches,

As I said, this ceremony is taking place under special circumstances. It is usually an occasion for the graduands, their families and loved ones to express legitimate pride and joy. This year, it is naturally tinged with a feeling of gravity at the thought of those killed in action or wounded in battle.

We must constantly bear in mind that our brave soldiers are engaged in a real war imposed on us by a merciless enemy who defies the laws of humanity.

We therefore had to defend ourselves against aggression of all types. Such is the primary mission of our armed forces: to defend the Nation. It should be underscored that our soldiers have done better than defending themselves and defending us.

They have inflicted huge losses on the enemy and compelled him to leave our territory. I pay tribute to their courage and spirit of sacrifice. They have won our esteem..., they have won our admiration.

Only a "republican" army whose action is rooted in the fundamental values freely chosen by the people can perform such feats. Such is the case of our defence forces which are an emanation of our people and, like all of us, hold dear our conception of a society of freedom, social justice and tolerance.

For their part, the Cameroonian people in their great wisdom clearly understood that it was their very existence as a people that was under threat. And obviously, they could not accept that.

From North to South and from East to West, Cameroonians have mobilized massively, and are still mobilizing enthusiastically and spontaneously, to make their generous contribution to the war effort in a remarkable show of solidarity.

I wish, here and now, to pay our people a glowing tribute for this undivided support to our defence forces. As Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, I congratulate them on this impressive show of patriotism. I encourage our people to keep up this noble spirit.

We also commend the unreserved support received from the international community. It has understood that what is really at stake in our struggle is human dignity. It has also understood that a single State cannot overcome the security challenges of today's world, namely terrorism, piracy, arms proliferation and drug trafficking. These threats transcend State boundaries. They require from our countries a concerted operational response within the framework of a subregional, regional and even international coalition.

I take this opportunity to note and commend the historic decision of my brother and friend His Excellency Idriss DEBY ITNO, President of the Republic of Chad, who, as you are aware, engaged a large Chadian military contingent to fight against Boko Haram alongside Cameroon. We will always remember that.

I will conclude by inviting you, once again, to spare a compassionate thought for our soldiers killed in action and for their families. The Nation will forever be grateful to them.

Young officers of the "Lieutenant YOUSSEUF MAHAMAT BAHAR" and "Fiftieth Anniversary of Reunification" Batches,

Your mission is crystal clear.

I am convinced that you will accomplish it with the full strength of your patriotic commitment, with Honour and Loyalty.

You can count on my constant solicitude and total support from the Cameroonian people.

Long live Cameroon's Defence Forces!

Long live Cameroon!