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Cameroon

Cameroon: The right to love and be loved

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Once again, the issue of decriminalizing homosexuality is being discussed in Cameroon with a position that is unexpected to say the least. On June 30, the young 26-year-old rapper King Nasty declared his love for Brazilian model Layyons Valença on the social network X (formerly Twitter) with a photo of the two lovers kissing passionately. This tweet has significant repercussions in Cameroon.

Homophobic politics

King Nasty is the stage name of Brenda Biya, who is none other than the daughter of Paul Biya, President of Cameroon, a country that is particularly repressive towards the LGBTQIA+ community.

Article 347-1 of the Cameroonian Penal Code provides for a prison sentence of up to five years, accompanied by a fine of 200,000 CFA francs. The presidential party, the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM), like most other parties, regularly conducts homophobic campaigns that most often result in acts of violence against people suspected of being homosexual. A very convenient diversion for the country's elites to make people forget their disastrous policies in terms of health, education and purchasing power.

It is also a way for these leaders to appear as defenders of the nation and the authenticity of African culture against a supposedly decadent West. They do not hesitate to use oft-repeated untruths in which Africa is the only continent without sexual diversity, despite numerous works by historians demonstrating the opposite.

In her recent interview with the newspaper *Le Parisien*, Brenda Biya mentioned the wrath of her brother, Franck Biya, who is preparing to succeed his father and the presidential couple's request to remove her post on X. She refused and is still waiting for a dialogue with her family. Some will point out that she is not risking much for her coming out, living in Switzerland, being the daughter of the president with a comfortable income. However, Brenda Biya assumes this announcement as an act of militancy against the criminalization of homosexuality: "This law existed before my father was in power. I find it unfair and I hope that my story will change it."

LGBTQIA+ rights defenders like lawyer Alice Nkom, who has defended people presented as homosexual for two decades, have not been mistaken: "I salute the courage of Brenda Biya, who assumes her fundamental right to love and be loved" The same goes for Shakiro, a transgender activist, who has been the victim of assault and imprisoned several times, forcing her to flee her country. As for Brenda Biya, she is calling for the release of the twenty or so detainees accused of homosexuality who are languishing in the government's jails.

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Translated by *International Viewpoint* from [l'Anticapitaliste](#).

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