

Cameroon

Rice

The Federal Republic of Cameroon was formed in 1960 out of the former French colonial territory in Cameroon combined with one-third of the former British colonial holdings in Cameroon (the other two-thirds opted to join Nigeria). This Federation elected Ahmadou Ahidjo, initially a member of the Cameroon Union (UC) as President in 1961. By 1966, Ahidjo had outlawed all political parties but his own (which was now the Cameroon National Union, or UNC), and had consolidated his rule into a single-party/personalist government. The UC becomes a part of UNC (the country's only legal party 1966-1985) as a result of a transition to unitary government, which designed to meet the challenge posed by Cameroon's racial, tribal, religious and political diversity (Muller et. al., 2011: 222). Geddes codes Ahidjo's time in office as a single-party-personalist regime. Ahidjo remained in office until 1982, when he retired. He was succeeded by his Prime Minister, Paul Biya, also a member of the UNC. Geddes codes this as a change from a single-party/personalist regime to just a personalist one. Whether to code this as a SOLS change is tricky. On the one hand, Biya was part of Ahidjo's inner circle and his pre-designated successor and he had the same party affiliation and the same cabinet (Takougang 2004, 428). However, when Biya wanted to put forward a platform of change in 1983, this led to a break between him and Ahidjo and the UNC. The latter even plotted a coup against Biya in 1984. As a result, Biya established a regime much more independent of Ahidjo and the UNC. Biya built a support base from the military and his Beti clan (Takougang 2004 106, 108-9; Konings 1996, 251-252). He replaced important posts formerly occupied by members of the Gaous clan (Ahidjo's clan) with Beti people. This suggests that while initially Biya had the same SOLS as Ahidjo, over time Biya phased out the old regime (Takougang 2004, 106-107), and thus this is considered a SOLS change. In 1985, the UNC changed its name to the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (RDPC). Biya remains in power in the present day, having won single-candidate elections in 1984 and 1988, followed by flawed multiparty elections in 1992, 1997 and 2004.

Source

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