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PETITION FROM MR. FAI NDZENDERF OF BANSO CONCERNING
THE CAMEROONS UNDER BRITISH ADMINISTRATION

(Circulated in accordance with rule 85 and supplementary rule F of the
rules of procedure for the Trusteeship Council)

N. B.

Copies of this petition have been sent to:

- (1) The Colonial Secretary, Downing Street, London.
- (2) The Governor-General, Lagos, Nigeria.
- (3) The Commissioner of the Cameroons, Buea, Cameroons.

(Signed) _____ (Illegible)

PP. Cameroons' Illiterates' Guardian.
Regd. in Nigeria No. 5490

From Fai Ndzenderf of Banso,
Now at Baba l. Ndop Area,
Bamenda District.
British Cameroons.
20th August 1955.

The Trusteeship Council
United Nations Organisation,
Lake Success, New York,
United States of America.

Through the Secretary-General,
United Nations Organisation,
Lake Success, New York, U.S.A.

Petition by Fai Ndzenderf of Banso, Bamenda Province
British Cameroons: against illegal exile

Sir,

The following is the humble petition from your humble petitioner Fai Ndzenderf
of Banso, Bamenda Province, British Cameroons, craving for your assistance and
address against the illegal exile imposed on him merely from a domestic dispute
without trial in any Court of law and reads as follows:

There are changes which I regard as bombs which are still in progress and can best be interpreted as bombs amongst the people of Bansa Town, a peace loving people who have enjoyed cordial relations and quiet atmosphere with their previous Chiefs and Councillors for many thousands of years immemorial.

It is widely accepted that changes must be made, constitutions have to be revised but changes and revisions of old things must be substituted by revised new methods unanimously agreed by the Community and not forceful changes likely to create riots of bloodshed accompanied with wild discriminations keeping the minds of the people very uneasy and suspicious with one another, destroying unity, love and sincere friendship planted in the people by tradition.

From time immemorial the Town of Bansa from where I have been removed has always been ruled by seven Councillors called and known by the people as "Kibais" who usually hold meetings on communal problems for the Chief's sanction and in other words this Council of seven has been the legislative and the advisory body for the Bansa Town, and Chiefs who have been coming up from time to time on the throne have met it in its existence as History will remain to tell generations.

When the late Chief of Bansa took up the throne in 1910 there was a great fight between the Chief's family and the family of my predecessor (Fai Ndzenderf) and the result of the fight was that houses were demolished many people wounded and the peace of the Town was terribly disturbed to a very great extent; and that very family dispute is just exactly what is taking place today as the present Chief on the throne is using all within his power to abolish my name and title of that very family, a position next to the Chief in rank and over three quarters of the population of this town even to death will never from him accept, except by arms or conquest where several lives will be lost.

I have been living in Bansa Town and according to our traditional ways of crowning the Chief I was the one who crowned him and I have no claim of Chieftaincy neither have I attempted to take his position as a Chief. I have been sincere with the part of the population which constitute about three quarters of the people of Bansa and up to this date they acclaim my methods of ruling them as being democratic and their loyalty towards me will remain and remains unshakable.

In my life time I have not offended the British Government in this part of the World and have not committed any crime against the public or against my people and therefore regard the present exile without an order from a Court of Justice as

being a great challenge to the British Administration in the British Cameroons, the exile being purely unreasonable, illegal, barbarous, inhuman, savage, brutal, for a Government which is regarded as civilised to banish a person unduly from his home town and against the wishes of the people merely to please a ruler who does not want co-operation with your humble petitioner.

Seeing that an innocent person of my type in my life time has been given this undemocratic treatment I have repeatedly appealed to the British Government for intervention against this illegal exile but from the 10th of December 1949 whether to promote the "Divide and rule policy" it appears to me that the British Administrators are interested in my illegal exile and are not prepared to intervene and are backing my opponent to keep me away from my home indefinitely at the vage desire of the Chief of Bansa with his supporters who side him both on wrongs and rights through the fear of their bonifide properties being seized or driven away like myself.

It is not argued in any Quarter that this Chief should not rule and we all have accepted him as our Chief but not that he should ascert undue influence to the extent of banishing a true citizen of my calibre from the Town merely on a domestic dispute and ill-treating my family members because they support my stand and will not divert from our traditional laws and customs. The Family is not prepared to abolish our ancient title and even the Chief himself is not prepared to abolish it but because of the disagreement between him and myself he has been seeking directly and indirectly the support of the Administration to hate me and banish me from my home Town. Since I cannot consent to be banished away there being no reason to back such an exile, and my people consisting of a greater part of the Town who wish to have me since no substitute can be made in my life time, this problem boils to be a dangerous issue hanging above the peace, justice fairplay and democracy in Bansa if I should stay away from home indefinitely.

HOW I WAS SENT OUT OF THE TOWN

On the 10th of December 1949, in the Bansa Council the District Officer present was attempting to find ways to settle our dispute on the native customs but no settlement was arrived at the issue. On about the hours of 3.30 p.m a group of Villagers of the Chief's families and followers gathered in a huge crowd were

singing war songs coming to the direction of my compound. Soon after the late Rev. Father Kennedy of the Roman Catholic Mission passed swiftly at top speed with his Car to the Rest House where the District Officer took his sleep. From our Compound we were able to see the advancing crowd coming to our direction and the District Officer stopping them from doing so.

After a short time a Policeman came saying that I should be taken to a place of safety because the number of Policemen available was too small to disperse the angry crowd which threatened my life and I agreed and was taken away to Baba Village by the Veterianry Officer a distance of twenty seven miles from my home Town.

While in Baba, I saw three lorries with more Policemen to Bansa that night from Bamenda but on their return no person was arrested and charged although the threats on my life was witnessed by the District Officer and the Veterianry Officer with Policemen who advised me to leave my palace to a place of safety. Here it looks quite clear that this incident might have been a planned affair by the Fon and the Administration to remove me from my home land under the disguise that my life was threatened by the aggressors as after several petitions sent to the Administration have fallen to blind and deaf ears and only flimsy excuses are being fermented day after day to keep me indefinitely into illegal exile without any allowance.

On the 16th of December 1949 the District Officer on his way to Bamenda from Bansa met me at Baba where I was kept and told me that the Resident, Bamenda, was going to Enugu to meet the Chief Commissioner about my dispute with the Fon and myself and continued to say that he advised me not to return to Bansa then because the Fon and his people were annoyed of the way and manner I entered Bansa on my return from Bamenda, that I arranged with my family to meet me at a Hill from the Town and my people went on naming the Fon which he said was against the native law and custom.

I asked the District Officer whether the Fon and his people were annoyed and wanted to kill me because they saw me rejoicing on my return from Bamenda with my people, and whether it was against law for any person to rejoice at his or her own will, and also whether that was all that annoyed the Fon and his people to raise arms against my life and the District Officer only replied that he

understood that I had written a petition to the Chief Commissioner as told him by some people and he had nothing more to say since the matter had gone to higher Authorities.

According to the District Officer's statement before me after this incident the 6th day after, it is definite that I was removed from Bansa Town because my people rejoiced with me on my return from Bamenda and because they allege that my people called the Fon by name. Now, as World state men responsible for the peace and justice of the whole World and the Trust Territory of the Cameroons your attention is hereby needed to sum up the above allegations and to say whether these are crimes which warrants a person to be removed from his home land in these days of improved administrations in world politics?

My predecessors have been acting in this capacity even before the advent of the German Administration in the Cameroons and the British Government met this type of things existing after their occupation of this territory after the Great War of 1914. Several intelligence Reports of the Administrative Officers will confirm this and what has lead the Officers of the Administration to upheld the vague and tyrannical policies of the present Fon of this Town is what is beating my imagination and misinterpreting British Rule before me and my people who believe that the aims of the Government is for justice and fairplay for all persons irrespective of creed, colour and race.

My potential reasons for believing that the Administration is backing the Chief against me and supporting the illegal exile, and paying no heed on bad treatment against my people.

(1) That on the 10th day of October 1954 my elder in the person of Peter Sangov was attached by the authority of this autocratic Chief and was kept in his palace for some days against his will, tortured and remained hungry within that period until when the situation was getting critical when he was released. A Report was made to the Nigeria Police and no action was taken against the Chief although such wicked actions are contravening the Criminal Code of the Federation of Nigeria which this Territory belongs.

(2) That three members of my family have been ordered to break down their buildings on a plot they have been living for the past 28 years without just cause simply because this Chief wants that all my people should be given unbearable troubles for supporting me and when the Supreme Court ordered that the said land

should be surveyed this autocratic Chief threatened to murder a Government Surveyor hired and sent on duty to survey the plot and told him if he did not leave the town that day he will be killed and he left without doing the work and reported to the District Officer who took no measures.

(3) On my being removed from my home Town the District Officer, the Veterinary Officer and Policemen told me that the Fon and his people wanted to kill me and raised a crowd of over four hundred men according to the District Officer's estimation and the same day by night three lorries filled with Police Constable were seen going to Bansa but no single arrest was made although this contravenes the Criminal Code of the Federation of Nigeria.

(4) That on the 16th of June 1955 the Fon as understood ordered his wives with some men to destroy coffee trees numbering 4,500 and a report was made to the Nigeria Police and the District Officer up till now although the destruction was inspected by the Assistant Superintendent of Police no action has been taken although this contravenes the Criminal Code of Nigeria and the victim is left to boil up in anger of suicide nature in vain to this date.

(5) A malicious case was brought against me by the Fon that I insulted him by saying that he is extorting money from the Bansa inhabitants and showed finger to him. The European Magistrate's decision declared that I was guilty to pay 500 gns compensation and 75 pounds costs. Not bothering about the decision which I believe will be set aside by the higher Court of Appeal if there is justice in the judicial set up in this Country; I asked for appeal in such a civil matter which is not criminal but was refused this legal avenue of redress open to all litigants until after some struggles in his chambers. A few days after this Chief followed the Magistrate as far as to Buem 261 miles when the Case was tried in Bamenda and the writ against me in the case was handed to him to enforce that judgment a procedure which is not usual even when I had been allowed appeal by the same Magistrate. On trial the Magistrate said that he believed the statements of the Chief because he is a big man and cannot tell lies. It can be seen that the only method of ascertaining the truth in my trials is the comparison of my opponents and myself, and since the Chief is a big man he cannot tell lies and since I am not up to his attainment of office my views should be ridiculed because I am a small man. This great wisdom in the judicial Department is a

continuation of the bad behaviours of the Administration against me and even before trial the witnesses of the Plaintiff had to be called up in chambers where (I believe they were lectured before the actual trial in the open Court.) The Magnitude of the compensation awarded the Plaintiff was one that created great sensation in the public. The open statement of the Magistrate that a big man cannot tell lies seems to tell the world that the law has eyes and the truth from parties in a Court of law under trial can be obtained by looking at the parties only and not by obtaining evidences from witnesses and cross-examination in the open courts. This new technic I think is marching a long aside with other world discoveries in modern science and will please those who oppose justice and fairplay to the small men around us.

(6) I was sued by this Chief on malicious grounds and he later came to the open Court and withdrew his action before the learned Judge and your humble petitioner was awarded cost up to the sum of one hundred and fifty pounds costs. For this amount to be paid by the Plaintiff the Resident of the Province came to the Court leaving his office of Administration when he was not connected with the Judicial Administration and told the Barrister that the amount so awarded should not be enforced otherwise there would be a fight between the Plaintiff (Chief of Bansa) and your humble petitioner's family. The Superintendent of Police also came for the same object and up to this date this amount has been held up indefinitely because they maintain the Chief who is the almighty above the Government will not favour to pay and it will disgrace him to pay costs ordered by a Court of law to be paid to the small man as I have been termed.

The Members of this great organisation (UNO) for peace and Justice will undoubtedly see that the law is even made the reverse on anything that has to be referred to your humble petitioner and that the only salvation to this great problem is to bring my cries before the Trusteeship Council for whatever action that may please your offices to place all men on earth to the balance of equality and sincerity and restore the lost hopes of being a protected person under the British Empire.

(7) That this chief has ordered other families in the Town we belong where we have been living in peace and good harmony with the entire population that we should not vote in elections, attend Local Council Meetings, associate with others and to

be declared a neutral set of people to have nothing to do with the local Administration of the place where we have taken an active part, I being the next person in Office with a population consisting about three quarters of the whole Town. My people are being sued under vague reasons and excuses to please him and their appeals and complaints to the Administrative Officers receive death ears and no heed.

REDRESS REQUESTED FROM UNITED NATIONS, TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL

(1) That since I have not committed any crimes against the British Government any my people during the Administration of the British Government in this Country in my life time and only taken away to my present place of abode temporary when a domestic dispute existed with this Chief I should be allowed to return to my home land in no distant date counting with the decision of the Trusteeship Council.

(2) That since I have no intention of being the Chief of the Town and having no intention to dethrone the Chief and have no case to answer to the British people their past mistakes in my struggles should be forgotten as all human being are liable to mistakes, and that they should hands off this domestic dispute which does not warrant a person to be removed from his homeland and break off their unworthy alliance with the Banso Chief because it stings and misinterprets Britain's heritage of human existence - her democratic ideals Freedom, Justice and peace handed down by their forefathers which I maintain cannot abundantly exist in the Banso Community without Administrative interference.

(3) That the Administrative Officers serving in the Federation this Chief belongs be very vigilant over the wicked policies, autocracy, tyranny, and oppressive acts of this Chief to save Democracy from being abused under this Government and to make the Citizens in this very Town feel free as British protected persons of the Commonwealth of Free Nations and not as slaves who have to be drilled anyhow with such brutal treatments as have been described in previous paragraphs in this petition.

(4) That the Administration to retain its good name in the Banso Town and elsewhere where this wicked acts may reach peoples' ears to allow the law to take cause even against this Chief when he contravenes as a saying says that the law is blind otherwise the long cherished hope that the British Government has moved upright in its Colonial Administration will be automatically chartered into pieces

in the mind of your humble petitioner and his family, who are the regular victims of this rare and unbelievable occurrences in the Empire.

With a change of heart and this wicked policies by the Chief the past will be forgotten and nothing less than the actual love, co-operation and peace will exist between him and your humble petitioner, and should this my humble petition be given consideration of this dangerous issue I shall be very grateful and I look forward on to your most valued redress at the earliest convenience.

I have the honour to be,

Sir, (thumb print)

Your most humble petitioner,

His thumb mark. Fai Ndzenderf of the Banso now at Baba Village Ndop Area, Bamenda Division, Cameroons.

This is to certify that the above and attached petition has been written at the request of the petitioner Fai Ndzenderf of Banso, Bamenda District of the British Cameroons, West Africa, and after it has been read over to him in English and expalined to him in vernacular, he confirms that this contains nothing more than his expressions and authority dictated to the Writer for the Trusteeship Council, United Nations Organisation, Lake Success, New York, United States of America, through the Secretary-General, UNO, New York, U.S.A.

Witnessed this 20th day of August 1955 by: (Signed) J.L. JOHNSEN

Witnessed this 20th day of August 1955 by: (Signed) R.S. SHANG

Written by H.J.S. Ngongi,
Cameroons' Illiterates' Guardian,
Abakpa-Bamenda, British Cameroons

(Signed)

H.J.S. NGONGI

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