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PETITION FROM MR. FRANCOIS MANYENGUE CONCERNING THE  
CAMEROONS UNDER FRENCH ADMINISTRATION

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Maryengué François, former retail trader at Song-Mrangué-Ngambé  
Fahimbi, Eastern Kamerun

to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, New York.

Subject: Appeal

Sir,

As a Kamerunian citizen worthy of the name, fighting for the life and application of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted and proclaimed by your Organization on 10 December 1948, I take the liberty of submitting the following to your high authority, in the hope that it will be considered carefully and honestly, so that Justice may be done:

Many before me, in Kamerun and elsewhere, have described to you the various brutal and barbarous acts committed on the basis of might being right by the imperialists and colonialists in weak and especially in dependent countries.

And yet nothing has been done to stop these calamities, which are developing with the speed of a chain reaction; hence the present situation in Kamerun. As I write - and I do not know how to write this, for I can hardly put down all that I know - I observe with great sorrow that this country has been deprived of all the sons on which it based its hope of advancing to freedom. There is carnage and there is exile, and between the two there is a heavy sentence to a slow death. And where does the fault lie? With the right of peoples to self-determination, with world peace and security and with the United Nations, which claims to ensure the application and maintenance of all this, but has failed in its task. Poor world!

My sufferings and losses: In spite of all this and while waiting for the bullets of the French colonialists in turn to pierce my skin and thus put an end to my natural rights and free life, as they have done to some of my compatriots, I hereby submit to you a survey of the sufferings, imprisonment and losses to which I have been subjected because I committed the crime of wishing for the sovereignty and the Immediate Independence and Unification of my Country, Kamerun.

On 8 January 1957, twenty-seven of us at Song Mbengue-Eabinbi were taken manu militari to Mr. Bassama Jacques, an informer in the service of French colonialism, before whom we were forced, surrounded as we were by a clique of malefactors in the pay of the French Government, to adjure our UPC views, and hence our views on the Independence of Kamerun, and to give them 15,000 francs (local value), five goats, three demijohns of red wine and one case of beer. On that day, we were forced to sign typewritten papers, prepared in advance, without knowing the contents, for blows from clubs were raining down on us. We therefore declare those signatures to be null and void, since they were obtained under duress.

On 11 January 1957, Mr. Mananga, a policeman of the Song-Mbengué gendarmerie, threatened me personally, accusing me of having "tried to set fire to the gendarmerie lodgings and to the Sanaga ferry", and said that my wife and I would be killed if we did not deny the charge and give him 5,000 francs. Since many people had been killed in this way, I was afraid and gave that sum to Mr. Mananga, so that my wife and I should have more than another hour to live. Mr. Mananga was accompanied by Mr. Nsoga Joël, another lackey.

On 18 January 1957, I was forced by these same informers, led by Mr. Bome Daniel, another low criminal, to give them 5,000 francs and one case of beer, because I did not want to be one of those false witnesses who testified that our compatriot Bega Tanje had taken all his companions' voting cards. He was alleged to have done this because he was a "notorious member of the UPC" and wished to prevent the "loi-cadre", so dear to the administering country, from being adopted.

On 26 January 1957, my wife, with her ten-month old daughter and five other companions, was arrested for "re-establishment of dissolved organizations" and,

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after six months' close arrest, was sentenced to imprisonment for one year with stay of execution, as were two of the other women. The remaining three were each sentenced to another year's imprisonment. On the day of their arrest, the gendarmerie at Song Mbengué took from them 11,000 francs and one cock before they were allowed to obtain food from their families and even then only irregularly.

During this sentence with stay of execution, while I was in irons and my shop had been robbed, Mr. Vergoz, the Chief Subdivisional Officer, Babimbi, forced my wife to pay for a licence costing 5,800 francs - which was not even issued to her - although there were no goods to sell and she was obliged to borrow the sum from one of my compatriots. She is compelled to pay for the licence every year in this way, although she has nothing to sell.

On 20 April 1957, I was arrested, without any warrant, at my shop by Mr. Vergoz, the Chief Subdivisional Officer, and two police superintendents, all of them Europeans, with an African military escort. The value of the goods in the shop was over 350,000 francs (still local value). My house was illegally searched. The three Europeans, some soldiers and their collaborators, including Mr. M'Bome Daniel, Mr. Nyemb Etienne (a municipal councillor), Mr. Koppa Njempoth and Mr. Yéngué Yéngué (Registrar), were personally identified when carrying out the search. Everything in my house, including over 100,000 francs in cash, was seized. The school equipment of my daughter Ngo Manyengué Pauline, who is in her first year of secondary school, was taken by Mr. Yéngué; it made me cry there and then when I saw my daughter weeping and appealing in vain to that Yéngué Yéngué, who had even been her teacher, saying: "Papa Yéngué, my teacher! I beg you, Papa, I beg you, my teacher, give me back my school things!"

I was sentenced to imprisonment for one year and was supposed to be discharged on 3 April 1958. Although I am the father of five children, I was forced to remain in my dungeon, never seeing my wife and children, as a new plot was hatched against me, and my name was put at the head of the black list. It is from the depths of this dungeon that I am trying to submit this to you, Mr. Secretary-General, for I cannot approach the United Nations Visiting Mission, which is in the habit of telling nothing of the truth, even when the French Government kills, tortures and imprisons us in its very presence. I am referring to Mr. Dorsinville's Mission in 1955.

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Accordingly, Mr. Secretary-General, I am asking you to intervene, in order that peace may return to our Country. And this can happen only after the Immediate Independence and Unification of Kamerun have been recognized, with the following preliminary conditions:

1. Complete and unconditional amnesty for all political acts since 1955;
2. Repeal of the Decree of 13 July 1955 on the dissolution of the Kamerunian

National Liberation movements:

{ the Union des Populations du Cameroun (UPC)  
{ the Jeunesse Démocratique du Cameroun (JDC) and  
{ the Union Démocratique des Femmes Camerounaises (UDEFEC)

and the re-establishment of these movements "under French law";

3. Unconditional and absolute discharge of all political prisoners, and return of all political leaders and exiles to Kamerun;
4. Withdrawal of French oppression troops from Kamerun in general and from the Bamiléké country and the Sanaga Maritime region in particular;
5. Dissolution of the Legislative Assembly (Alcam) and its Government, which owe their existence to the loi-cadre rejected and opposed by the Kamerunian people;
6. Free and general elections under the control of the United Nations, for the establishment of a Kamerunian constituent assembly; we ask the United Nations to terminate the trusteeship which we shall replace by the participation of the Kamerunian nation as a Member of that International Organization.

Such, Mr. Secretary-General of the United Nations, are the unanimous and paramount aspirations of the Kamerunian people, as briefly summarized in this appeal.

(Signed) Manyengué François  
Song Mbengué, 5 November 1958

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