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PETITION FROM THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE "UNION DES POPULATIONS DU CAMEROUN" CONCERNING THE CAMEROONS UNDER FRENCH ADMINISTRATION

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

U.P.C.

Cameroons Section of the Rassemblement Démocratique Africain

DOUALA

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

Sir,

Although some delay in despatching this petition has been caused by an oversight, the facts reported have lost almost nothing of their urgency.

We are therefore forwarding the petition to you for such action as may be appropriate.

We have the honour to be, etc.

For the Officers of the U.P.C.

(Signed) Ernest CUANDIE,  
Vice-President.

UNION DES POPULATIONS DU CAMEROUN

Cameroons Section of the Rassemblement Démocratique Africain

P.O. Box 435 - Douala

Douala, 16 June 1953

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

Subject: Fraudulent removal of persons resident in the  
Cameroons

Sir,

We have the honour to bring to your attention the text of a telegram, a copy of which is attached, sent by Mr. Ruben UM NYOBE, the Secretary-General of our organization, to the High Commissioner of the French Republic in the Cameroons on 12 June 1953 protesting against the fraudulent recruitment of Cameroonian workers by Spanish nationals from the neighbouring colonies.

What happens is that Spaniards or Spanish nationals come to the Cameroons and engage in activities which are - to say the least - extraordinary and the purpose of which is to secure large contingents of African workers through the intermediary of certain Africans who do not belong to the Territory. The new recruits are led to believe that they will obtain good jobs once they have arrived in Spanish territory.

The information in our possession, however, indicates that Africans so recruited, whatever their qualifications, are assigned to work in which they cannot engage in their trades or skilled occupations, or communicate with anyone outside the territory where they are working, much less with the people of their own territory. In particular, it has come to our knowledge that these Cameroonian recruits have been made to do forced labour under inhuman conditions in plantations belonging to Europeans either in Spain or in the Spanish colonies. The fraudulent methods of recruitment merely serve to confirm this information, which no one has yet been able to disprove.

This situation is fostered by the laxity of the French authorities in the Cameroons in applying the Labour Code promulgated on 15 December 1952. In order to take advantage of the well-known "law of supply and demand", the employers, the overwhelming majority of whom are European settlers, engage in large-scale dismissals of their employees. By creating unemployment, they hope not only to take this labour on again cheaply, but also to support the Spaniards in their present efforts to depopulate the country by draining off native workers so as to leave room for foreign immigrants who are of no help to the people of the Cameroons in their advance towards independence. We also enclose a cutting from a local newspaper, an organ of the French settlers in the Cameroons, containing an article in which a certain Louis Gence, the founder and president of an association called the Communautaire du peuplement français d'outre-mer, advocates the introduction into the Territory of French unemployed workers, for whom the superb plateau of Adamaoua would be reserved. Thus, while Cameroonian workers arbitrarily held to be "unemployed" are being removed to work as semi-slaves in a country whose Government does not recognize democratic freedom, French "unemployed" would come and occupy the finest plateau in our country, because the Cameroons is regarded as "an integral part of French territory", a contention which we challenge with all the energy we possess. Having regard to our right of participation in the management of our country's affairs, we consider that it would be more important for the French Government to establish an emigration and immigration commission the majority of whose members would be Africans appointed by the most representative political, social and cultural organizations.

In confirmation of what we say above, we would mention the complicity of the French authorities in the kind of slave trade at present being conducted by Spanish nationals. When questioned by a U.P.C. delegation on 12 June, one of the recruiting agents stated that he recruited only Nigerians or persons from the British colonies. This is further evidence of the fraudulent nature of the undertaking. A recruiting centre would hardly be established in a territory administered by France to engage only nationals of countries administered by Great Britain. Little effort was, however, needed to ascertain that the "recruitment" or rather traffic, is largely if not exclusively concerned with persons from the Cameroons under French administration.

Lastly, it should be pointed out that the men recruited obtain medical certificates at the Douala Institut d'Hygiène, an official service organized by the French Administration. They obtain exist visas from the general security service at Douala, the same service which raises all kinds of difficulties in the way of Cameroonian workers and democrats duly invited to attend French or international assemblies or congresses. We know that as a result of our intervention certain enquiries are now being made to determine those responsible for these practices. This last-minute display of interest by the Administration in such a serious matter is only further proof of its complicity.

The matter has raised strong feelings among Cameroonians of all classes. We attach as a third enclosure an issue of a local newspaper called Cameroun Espoir with a leading article of protest on the same subject.<sup>1/</sup> Cameroun Espoir is not the organ of our movement. This means that most sections of the Cameroonian people reprobate the odious deception practiced on Cameroonians by the use of a method peculiarly reminiscent of the traffic in Negroes.

We would therefore be grateful to you, Mr. Secretary-General, if you would transmit this letter to the competent organs of the United Nations with a view to the French Government's being called upon to take effective action to prevent the continuation of the practices which we formally condemn in this letter. We also request the United Nations to recommend the French Government to establish a joint emigration and immigration commission along the lines described above.

Thanking you in advance, we have the honour to be, etc.

For the Executive Committee of the UPC  
(Signed) Ernest CUANDIE,  
Vice-President.

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<sup>1/</sup> Note by the Secretariat: The newspaper mentioned above as an enclosure has been placed in the Secretariat files and is available to members of the Trusteeship Council on request.

## TELEGRAM

HAUSSAIRE, YACUNDÉ

HAVE HONOUR REPORT EUROPEAN ELEMENTS FROM NEIGHBOURING SPANISH COLONIES  
ENGAGING IN MASS RECRUITMENT CAMEROONIAN CITIZENS FOR UNKNOWN DESTINATION  
STOP WE PROTEST AGAINST THIS METHOD REMINISCENT OF TRAFFIC IN NEGROES AND  
URGENTLY REQUEST YOU PROHIBIT DEPARTURE FROM TERRITORY CONTINGENTS NOW  
LOCATED DOUALA AND TAKE URGENT ACTION FOR IMMEDIATE REPATRIATION OF  
CAMEROONIANS PREVIOUSLY REMOVED FROM TERRITORY IN THIS WAY STOP WE DEMAND  
PENALTIES AGAINST THOSE INVOLVED AS PRINCIPALS OR ACCOMPLICES IN USE OF  
METHODS OF FRAUDULENT DEPOPULATION OF CAMEROONS UNDER UNATIONS TRUSTEESHIP  
FOR BENEFIT OF FASCIST SPAIN STOP DEEP ESTEEM

UM NYOBE

Secretary-General of the UPC

Douala-New-Belle, 12 June 1953

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