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PETITION FROM MR. FEBENOU BONIFACE CONCERNING
THE CAMEROONS UNDER FRENCH ADMINISTRATION

(Circulated in accordance with rule 85, paragraph 2 of
the rules of procedure for the Trusteeship Council)

FEBENOU Boniface,
Head of a family at Batinche,
c/o P.O Box No. 80 Douala,
Cameroons

Batinche, 23 August 1956

To the Secretary-General and Members of the United Nations

Sirs,

Considering the atmosphere at present existing in the Cameroons under French administration,

I have the honour to address to your honourable Organization the present motion, first of all on behalf of myself and of the family of which I am the head and secondly on behalf of my Cameroonian fellow-citizens. Likewise I would ask you to be good enough to pass this motion on to the Trusteeship Council, which we desire should be fully aware of the present situation in the Cameroons before it agrees to any plan proposed by the French Government.

Nevertheless, the Cameroonian people have often protested, and they will continue to protest even if the Trusteeship Council feels, like the French Government, that the Cameroons, a country under United Nations trusteeship, should be administered as if it were part and parcel of the French Colonies. We warn you that today the Cameroonian peoples do not entertain that idea. We have confidence in the United Nations, regarding Article 76 of its Charter, and in the Trusteeship Agreements.

We call upon the French Government to respect international law and to recognize the sovereignty of the Cameroonian people.

On 8 July 1956 the Cameroonian people demonstrated against any elections under French auspices without United Nations participation. Considering that, in spite of our widespread protests, the French Government is trying to force upon us a belated reform measure in the shape of its General Law. This reform does not satisfy any existing aspirations in the Cameroons.

Considering the trickery often practised by the French Government in elections in the Cameroons. Considering that no candidate from the people has ever been considered by the French Government unless such a candidate was unconditionally in favour of France. There was a cruel case in point during the election on 2 January 1956 where the candidates were Tchoumba Isaac, whose platform was unification and independence of the Cameroons, and Douala-Manga-Bell, with a platform of integration with the French Union. Observing the faking of the results by the French Government in its own favour, the Cameroonian people and parliamentary representatives such as Mr. Alcandre, himself a Frenchman and a candidate in this election, protested to the French National Assembly against this injustice and submitted requests for invalidations. These requests were justified and were supported by certain fair-minded Frenchman, but were finally unjustly rejected on the principle that might is right. To this must be added the decree of 13 July 1955, based on an Act of 10 January 1936, which dissolved the Union des Populations du Cameroun although article 4 of the Act in question states that it is to be applicable only to Algeria and the Colonies. We are surprised to see that the Councillors of State have considered this law valid and applicable in the Cameroons.

Fully conscious of the issues involved, the Cameroonian people protests vehemently against the holding of any election under French auspices alone. Any change in the status of the Cameroons should lead only to Unification and Independence. We ask that the Government should cease to persecute the national movements and should negotiate with their leaders, the only authorized representatives of the Cameroonian people.

France is swindling us by dealing with our territory through the parliamentary representatives in the French Assembly and even with the members of the Territorial Assembly. For no parliamentary representative, nor any councillor, is authorized to voice the political aspirations of the Cameroonian people. It is a big swindle that the Government should consider these people as legitimate representatives, the truth being that in the Cameroons nobody was elected on the basis of a party programme or even on a general political programme.

Today we are calling for the Unification and Independence of our country. That is the sole aim we are at present pursuing in the Cameroons, and because of it the Cameroonian people have been undergoing torture since 1954 and were massacred in May 1955. Because of it, repression is becoming daily more severe in the Cameroons, and attempts are being made to divide the people in the North from those in the South. I honestly think that the United Nations would serve the cause of peace by recognizing the rightful aspirations of the Cameroonian peoples and helping them out of their present difficulties.

Hoping that you will take this petition into consideration, I have the honour to be, etc.

(Signed) F. FEBENOU
