

UNITED NATIONS
TRUSTEESHIP
COUNCIL



Distr.
GENERAL

T/PET.7/518
9 February 1956
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

PETITION FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE OF JUVENTO
CONCERNING TOGOLAND UNDER FRENCH ADMINISTRATION

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procedure for the Trusteeship Council)

Mouvement de la Jeunesse Togolaise "JUVENTO"
National Committee
Post Office Box No. 205
Lomé, Togoland
No. 38-CN/CE/56

Lomé, 18 January 1956

Subject: Petition

From the Chairman of the National Committee
To The Secretary-General of the United Nations
New York

Sir,

We have the honour to submit this petition to you and we are convinced in advance that when you put this matter before the honourable Members of the United Nations they will be good enough to intervene with the French Government in order that the constant difficulties created by the responsible authorities in the Cameroons under French administration may be brought to an end.

We enclose a copy of our letter of 13 January 1956 to the Administrator-Mayor of the town of Lomé, which will give you an accurate idea of the purpose of our appeal to the United Nations. The sketch that is also attached to this petition is designed to give you a clear idea of the places and the crowds shown in the photographs.^{1/}

^{1/} Note by the Secretariat: The photographs and the sketch referred to as annexes have been placed in the Secretariat files and are available to members of the Trusteeship Council on request.

Part 1 of the sketch shows a part of the APALOO concession where crowds of men and women went to hear Mr. SANTOS, the spokesman for our Movement at the United Nations tenth session; this part 1 corresponds to the two photographs numbered 1 and 1 (bis) in the collection.

Photograph No. 2 shows Mr. SANTOS, (see arrow No. 1), standing in the middle of the crowd on its way to the meeting, asking Police Inspector Sognigbé (see arrow No. 2) whether the lawfully organized public meeting had been prohibited at the last minute. This photograph shows a scene which occurred near the police barrier at the north-west of the APALOO concession (see dotted line No. 2 of the sketch).

Photograph No. 2 (bis) shows the police dispersing the crowd in rue Thiers, just after Mr. SANTOS had passed. The scattered crowd withdrew to an enclosed area in the north-west part of the APALOO concession, in order to avoid the usual accusation of demonstrating on the public highway (No. 4 of the sketch - crowd in the background of photograph No. 4).

Photograph No. 3 shows the police forming a barrier across rue Thiers to the South of the entrance to the APALOO concession (No. 3 of the explanatory sketch).

We consider it unnecessary to stress the fact that any resistance to the orders of a policeman is likely to provoke incidents and lead to serious complications, for it is the Administering Authority's intention to subject the nationalists to constant provocation, with a view to suspending or impeding their political activities.

Thanking you in advance for your intervention on our behalf,

We have the honour to be etc.

(Signed) Ben APALOO

7 enclosures

13 JANUARY 1956

1/CN/CI

From the Chairman of the National Committee
To the ADMINISTRATOR FOR OVERSEAS FRANCE
Administrator-Mayor of the town of LOME

Sir,

Further to the interview which you were good enough to grant to a delegation from our movement on the afternoon of Monday, 9 January 1956,

We have the honour to inform you of our Committee's comments on the arguments you put forward, in reply to the complaints made by our delegation, to justify the truly regrettable intervention by the police on Tuesday, 3 January 1956.

Ever since the creation of our local political group, which is striving to obtain political liberties, the Police of the Territory, whose role should be to forestall and to prevent any infringement of the fundamental rights to which we are entitled under the Constitution of the Fourth Republic, the United Nations Charter and the Trusteeship Agreement, have been doing their utmost to disturb or prevent the public meetings lawfully organized by our Movement.

The files of the Administering Authority and of the United Nations are overflowing with telegrams, petitions and various motions which bear out this statement.

The purpose of the public meeting on 3 January 1956 was to hear Mr. Anani Ignacio SANTOS, the spokesman of our Movement before the United Nations, inside the APALOO concession.

At approximately 5 p.m. police barriers were drawn up in the roads in order to stop the very dense crowds streaming toward the meeting place from entering the concession. It was only by way of an exception that the speaker himself, an eye witness of the annoying incident, was allowed to cross one of the police barriers. At Lomé, the intellectual capital of the Territory, the municipal police turned back the people, regardless of age, sex or social status, who were going to hear Mr. SANTOS.

As the police were merely agents carrying out the orders of SOGNIGBE, the officer in command of the squad, a delegation of our Committee went to the Town Hall in order to report what was going on. As the Mayor was absent, the

delegation went to find Mr. PAUC, the Police Superintendent. The latter simply showed our delegation to the door, saying that he had "other fish to fry".

Our public meeting of 3 January 1956 would have been a resounding success had it not been for the deplorable intervention of the Lomé municipal police.

From the interview which our delegation had with you, it is clear that the business of the police who were rushed to the spot was to:

- (a) verify the identity of every person attending the meeting;
- (b) search people with a view to seizing any weapons they might be carrying;
- (c) establish your compliance with the threatening letters that obliged you to take action to safeguard public security.

Far from under-estimating the importance of the role that the police are called upon to play in any well-organized society, we regret to have to assure you that today, as in the past, it is rather a question of using the Police for the purpose of paralysing, at all costs, the nationalist activities in the country. For is it not paradoxical that:

- 1. the police have never done anything at Lomé or elsewhere to prevent or sabotage public meetings organized by the Parti Togolais du Progrès;
- 2. the people attending public meetings of the P.T.P. have never been turned back or searched - for example, the public meeting held by that Party at Tonyeviadjì on Thursday, 5 January 1956;
- 3. thousands of inhabitants of Lomé had to go home disappointed, and the police found no one carrying arms or without a proper identity card.

As the public meeting to which this letter relates took place in an atmosphere of calm and good order, we venture to think that you will not allow yourself to be influenced by these professional writers of threatening letters, whose actions show that the real instigators of disorder are not in our ranks.

In any case, we should be very grateful if you could arrange for us to receive copies of the threatening letters in question, so that we may take the necessary steps.

We have the honour to be etc..

(Signed) Ben APALOO
