

UNITED NATIONS
TRUSTEESHIP
COUNCIL



Distr.
GENERAL

T/PET.1/14
13 May 1959

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

PETITION FROM THE CHIEFS AND ORATORS AND ALL THE PEOPLE OF THE VILLAGE
OF FAGALII CONCERNING WESTERN SAMOA

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of procedure of the Trusteeship Council)

Note by the Secretariat: This communication was transmitted to
the Secretary-General by the United Nations Visiting Mission to
Western Samoa, 1959.

Fagalii
VAIMAUGA EAST.

4th February, 1959.

Distinguished Members
of
The Visiting Mission
from
The United Nations.^{1/}

Sirs,

We hereby submit this letter with due respect before you. We thank God Almighty for His loving care that you have arrived safely as expected. May God keep you in good health so that you may perform your duties successfully.

Turning now to our Petition, we humbly submit the following appeal before you:

"We are people of a very distressed village from the past years till this day; a village with an increasing population living on a limited area of land. That is the object of our Petition. This Petition had often been submitted before the Government for consideration since the time the Germans were here till to-day. We also submitted the same Petition to the former New Zealand Governors of the Territory and the reply given us was that we would get what we asked for. Until now, however, we have not got what was long promised to us.

^{1/} United Nations Visiting Mission to Western Samoa, 1959.

This village has a very limited area of land; 45 acres was all the area given us to purchase, and that is all that we have. The present Minister for Lands of the Government of Western Samoa has had in his possession our Petition which he received four years ago but, unfortunately, we have not received a reply thereto. We, therefore, wish to place this same Petition before the Distinguished Members of the Mission from the United Nations so as to let you know the desperate position we, the indigenous people of the Territory, are in.

A brief statement as to the Reason of this Tribulation:

The year 1889 was the very year since these people began to suffer. During the days of fighting and unrest in Samoa, the people of this village were driven away from it. Immediately the German Regime grabbed all our lands, on the understanding that when peace was restored they would be returned to us. When the fighting days of the Territory were over, our parents returned to our lands and their properties but they were told off by the Europeans saying that they had already bought the lands all fenced with wires on which they had built their houses. One European filed a claim that he had already purchased his land with tobacco, matches and razor blades but this was objected to by some of the Fagalii people. This man was known as Stockfleth. Consequently, a case between him and the Fuamatu and the people of Fagalii was hold. The statement given by this gentleman was that this land is his real property which was already registered in Berlin by way of a treaty, but the statement of our parents was that they were our lands but were forcibly taken by the Germans. They tried to get the lands back but their efforts were in vain. Our parents then sought help through political channels which concerned lands and properties held by the Government during the time of unrest of which consideration could be given afterwards so that such properties held by the Government could be returned and restored to their rightful owners. If, however, the Government could not agree with its findings concerning such property, it would then hold on to it, until such time when it could deal with same more adequately.

The abovementioned case was held on April 11, 1895 in Apia. Since that time, the Government took firm possession of our properties until the present time. The Government, therefore, did not do justice to us in returning our lands and properties which it had forcibly taken under the harsh authority of the Germans at that time.

We are more or less forced to submit this Petition before the Distinguished Members of the Mission because of the difficulties we are constantly experiencing every day, thus:

1. The Total population of this village which is still increasing is about more than 600 but the limited area of land which we are living on is only 45 acres.

2. This village and its people have no source of income like other people all over Samoa who have plantations and lands of their own, and also other people who are permitted to have leases on Government lands, or the people who have purchased some of the Government lands, on reasonable and good conditions.

3. Poverty in this village is gradually increasing because we could not get any copra, no cocoa or coffee, no bananas or any other way from which the Government may earn its economy which depends on the produce of its soil. We are anxious to toil the soil but we have no lands to work on so that we can assist our country in its development.

4. There is a constant breach of the laws in this village by way of thieving, begging and lying because of the want for the properties of other people. They are also bound to become evil-minded and all other ways of breaking the law. The reason and cause of all these is the lack of lands.

5. It is a pity that most of the poor generations of this village are becoming under-educated. There is seldom a child who can remain in school until he has graduated. This is all because there is no money to pay for their school fees, except for the very few children, some whose relatives have jobs to do. The majority of the children in this village are not in school because there is not a Grade II School in our village now. We could not get any funds with which we could build a European School house according to the rules of the Education Department. The cause of all these is because of the lack of lands.

6. Most of the duties and the obligations of the matai(s) in this village are not heeded nor performed for fear and shame of no money. As a matter of fact the people of Samoa depend on their produce, but where could we get the produce while we have no lands?

7. Although we are known as indigenous people of Samoa and its Government, we hereby declare that we are not enjoying the position of a free people. We are still in a distressed position, a life of poverty, just because we have no land on which we can work.

The reason, therefore, of our constant petitioning is our humble desire to regain our properties. Kindly return to us the land which is right behind us, or even if it is to be sold to us outright or lease it to us, or in any other possible way by which we can get assistance to us the indigenous people of Samoa, who are in a state of poverty because of the lack of land.

That is our humble petition with the hope that it will receive favourable consideration by the Distinguished Members of the Mission from the United Nations.

May the blessings be upon you.

The Chiefs and Orators and all the People
of the village of Fagalii.
