

UNITED NATIONS

TRUSTEESHIP
COUNCIL



GENERAL

T/PET.3/44/Add.1
25 September 1951

ORIGINAL: FRENCH

PETITION FROM MR. NZAMWITA GASTON JOVITE
CONCERNING RUANDA-URUNDI

Note by the Secretary-General: In accordance with rule 84 and supplementary rule F of the rules of procedure for the Trusteeship Council, the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the Trusteeship Council and to the Government of Italy as the Administering Authority of the Trust Territory of Somaliland, an undated communication from Mr. Nzamwita Gaston Jovite concerning the Trust Territory of Ruanda-Urundi. This communication forms a supplement to the petition set forth in document T/PET.3/44.

This communication was transmitted to the Secretary-General by the United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in East Africa.

COPY

Members of the Visiting Mission!

Sirs,

Following my interview of 28 July 1951, I take the liberty of informing you that, as I predicted to you, I am now being persecuted by my superiors. Barely four days after your departure to the North, on Friday, 3 August, my immediate chief started this persecution.

At exactly 2 p.m., as I arrived at the post, Deputy Administrator Chotteau addressed me in the presence of witnesses in very insulting terms, saying that it was after two o'clock and I had no right to be outside my office. I answered that I had arrived at two o'clock sharp and that, like everyone else, I had taken three minutes to call at the post office for my mail. He bitterly upbraided me for frequently arriving late for work. I excused myself on that count, pointing out to him the grave difficulties that I had always had to arrive on time, as a result of not having any means of transport [he was unable to appreciate that, as I live at a distance of 1 km. 800 m. from the office, the exigencies of the service always required me to cover that distance six times a day, making 10 km. 800 m. in all. Indeed, instead of going home to breakfast at eight o'clock, I have been forced to give up the meal, because half an hour was barely long enough for me to get home on foot. Though I had a bicycle, I could not qualify for the bicycle allowance under S.T.A. regulations as the minimum distance laid down is 2½ km. I had to sell it as I was unable, in the absence of any allowance, to bear the incidental expenditure -- hence, the very bad reports regarding regularity].

A few minutes later, I told him that, although I wished to remain in Government service, if he was thoroughly dissatisfied with my work, he could have me dismissed instead of continuing to call me, as he had always been wont to do, a swine and a lazy good-for-nothing. The only reply I received was an order to submit my resignation! [I did not want to do so, thinking it very unwise to change my post at his behest. Was I to do that just because he was abusing me?]

Since I did not carry out his order, he brought me before the Administrator of the Territory, when the following conversation took place:

/(3 August 1951

(3 August 1951 at 2.15 p.m.)

D.A.T. to A. of T.: "Just imagine, he says that I am insulting him?"

"Yes, you are insulting me without reason."

"What have I said to you by way of insult?"

"You have several times told me that I am up to tricks, that I am a slacker and a good-for-nothing. Isn't that so?"

"And you regard that as an insult?"

"What do you mean?"

"In those circumstances, write out your resignation here and now!"

"Must I resign because I am complaining of your abuse?"

"You are a slacker; you have never given satisfaction; you are always late and you complain because I comment on it? Instead of going on making these useless complaints, draw up your resignation as soon as you can! Are you ignoring the fact, Jovite, that I have always helped you?"

"How have you helped me, sir?"

"Are you forgetting that I lent you 2,000 francs to help your poor father?"

"You should also point out that I paid you back that money a long time ago. What a fine gesture on your part to blame me for a service you did me -- which moreover has been reciprocated -- and I am humbly grateful for your taunts on the poverty of my family. If I had had the means, wouldn't I have been able to do the same thing in your place? Does that give you the right to call me a swine, a good-for-nothing and a slacker?"

A. of T.: "Write out that resignation!"

"It seems to me that instead of insulting me, if he had helped me as he says, he might have supervised me like a father, speaking politely and without abusing me. The least he should do, if there was any justice concerning the ratio of work to salary, would be to pay me at the rate of a quarter of his salary!!!"

D.A.T.: "Go on and write!"

A. of T.: "Put all that in writing. Let me tell you that you care for nothing, that you have never followed the instructions I've given you, and that you use the large size instead of the small stamped paper, as I have repeatedly told you!"

// Instead of

[Instead of heeding my grievances as a judge, he acted at one and the same time as accuser and prosecutor! Justice indeed!]

A. of T.: "Just recently, you arrived at 8.55 a.m. instead of 8.30 a.m."

4 August 1951

The following morning, I received a request for an explanation, which is attached hereto together with the reply (No. 2043/Pers.Aux.).

At 11.40 a.m., together with this request for an explanation, some mail to be typed was given to me with the following instructions: "This mail is urgent, get it done immediately." According to him, I had to enter the letters in the index, type them and give them back to him within the 20 minutes that remained... The work of indexing I passed on to my colleague, and began my reply to the request for an explanation (since it was a matter connected with work, was I not entitled to reply to it during working hours?).

I reckoned that the work he gave me would have required one hour at least. As my colleague indexed the letters, one by one, I typed them, and so, up to noon, I had typed four letters. I was absolutely worn out by hunger and fatigue. I had hardly eaten since the night before and required a much needed break of at least 20 minutes. Scarcely had I taken a couple of steps on my way to eat when I heard the Administrator call me. I turned back to find the A. of T., who shouted at me in a thundering voice:

"What the hell do you think you're doing?"

"I've done as much of the work you gave me as I could. I'm worn out and I'm very hungry. I would like to go and have a bite now and return shortly to finish the remainder of the work.

"No! Set to and finish the work at once! I'm hungry too!"

"But, Sir, I am physically incapable of going on. In 20 minutes I can return to work. (I was entitled to the afternoon off on Saturdays, but was willing to return in the interests of the service).

"Won't you show a little sympathy?"

"No! It is an order that all the work given you be finished at once!"

"Sir, allow me to make my excuses for not being able to satisfy you. I didn't come here with a halter around my neck to serve you! I came of my own free will and I am asking you to be good enough to look upon me as a man and not as a slave?"

(I bowed and left discreetly).

A minute later, I wished to come back to work, but the offices were closed.

/6 August

6 August 1951

On Monday, 6 August 1951, I received a second request for an explanation, No. 2057/Pers.Aux., which I attach hereto, together with my reply.

Since the reports on me given by the D.A.T. indicated that he regarded me as a very good influence and worker, undoubtedly the abuse that I have brought to your notice was not based on my behaviour at work, but upon some other motive that could not be made known to me; I could certainly not be at the same time a slacker, a good-for-nothing and a swine! Either he lied or such abuse was caused by something else! The A. of T., in his letter No. 2043, orders me to give an account of all the insults addressed to me so far. Am I not the sole injured party? Why should I have to lay my complaint before him? Can't I complain when and where I want to? Could he not have sacrificed his interests in favour of justice during our interview of the third? Should he not have refrained from complaining about me when, considering him as the judge, I was reporting my complaint on the orders of the D.A.T.?

He has ordered me to submit my resignation? Was that the sentence I deserved? Must the penalty for complaining be resignation?

In his letter No. 2043/P.A., he stated that "for the past three weeks your attitude and work leave much to be desired and have completely changed". It is scarcely three weeks since he came here, so how did he notice this change?

You will see from letter No. 2057, attached hereto, that the A. of T. had obviously had to trump up charges against me. He had written 11.40 a.m. and then wrote over it to make it 10.40 a.m. At any cost he had to find me at fault! What I cannot see is why he has gone so far as to slander me in order to punish me. (He tells me that this letter is the beginning of disciplinary action.) By so doing, he is providing evidence of his own injustice: he is at one and the same time plaintiff, judge and hangman.

My object in writing you this is to convince you of the injustice that has now been done to me. I am being hounded without rhyme or reason, constant watch is kept for the slightest shortcoming, so as to provide legal justification! Never before during my period of Government service have I received a request for an explanation, my personal file has not been marred by any penalty, and now, hardly four days after your departure, I am victimized by having two requests for an explanation on grounds whose seriousness you alone will be able to judge.

/My conclusion

My conclusion is that you would need to take away with you anyone who believes himself entitled to speak to you!!

I am subjected to such annoyances while you are still here. What will happen to me when you have gone? From 4.30 to 6 p.m. on Monday, I was interrogated by Mr. P. Leroy, Legal Counsellor, who wanted me to retract my statements because, according to him, I had lied!

May I ask you to study or take cognizance of the result of my request for transfer? I have been awaiting action for one month and... I am not hopeful that the outcome will be very favourable ... !

I also take the liberty of saying that we should in no way be victimized because of statements freely made upon request!

I have the honour to be, etc.

Gaston Jovite NZAMWITA

(signed) illegible

COPY

RESIDENCE OF THE URUNDI
KITEGA TERRITORY

Kitega, 4 August 1951

No. 2043/Pers.Aux.

Subject:

File: Nzamwita, Gaston Jovite
Assistant Clerk, 3rd Class

Sir,

Following our interview yesterday, Friday 3 August, would you be good enough, as I requested, to let me have your complaint against Mr. Chotteau, Deputy Administrator, in writing, stating fully the insults addressed by him to you in connexion with your work.

I wish to point out to you that, for about three weeks past, your work and attitude leave much to be desired. I trust that this intimation will suffice to bring about the needed improvement.

(signed) Lapierre de C.

LAPIERRE DE COUSSEMAKER

Administrator of the Territory

Mr. G. J. Nzamwita,
Assistant Clerk, 3rd Class,
KITEGA.

/COPY

COPY

Gaston Jovite NZAMWITA

KITEGA

Kitega, 4 August 1951.

Sir,

In reply to your letter of this morning and following our interview of yesterday, I have the honour to inform you that I shall complain when and where I wish, as I alone am the injured party in this matter and it was at the order of the person concerned that I saw you yesterday to state my grievances.

As to the second subject mentioned in your letter, I am strongly perturbed by what you say, and I promise that I shall try to make steady progress. As no man is perfect, I cannot reach the stage of perfection you want in one step. In order to do so, I shall use every means to give you satisfaction, although they may not all be suitable for the purpose. I am nevertheless surprised at the remark that my conduct and attitude have changed in the last three weeks, when you have hardly been here for that space of time.

I have the honour to be, Sir, etc.

(signed) Gaston Jovite NZAMWITA

To the Administrator of the Territory,
KITEGA

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COPY

RESIDENCE OF THE URUNDI
KITEGA TERRITORY

Kitega, 6 August 1951

No. 2057/Pers. Aux.

Subject:

File: NZAMWITA G. Jovite
Assistant Clerk, 3rd Class

PERSONAL

Sir,

At 10.40 a.m. on Saturday last, 4 August, I personally transmitted to you mail to be typed, together with my personal letter to you No. 2043/Pers. Aux. At the same time, I indicated to you that the letter for Mr. Douillon was urgent.

At noon, for your work, you brought me four monthly returns, three of which were not done, although you could quite easily have finished all the work by that time. When I requested you to go and finish it, you replied that you could not, because you were hungry.

In view of your unco-operative attitude, I ordered you to finish the work before you went home. You returned to your office and a few minutes later left the Territorial offices.

Kindly furnish me with reasons for your conduct, the reply to be in quadruplicate, as this letter represents the start of disciplinary action.

(signed) Lapierre de C.

LAPIERRE DE COUSSEMAKER,
Administrator of the Territory

Mr. G. J. NZAMWITA,
Assistant Clerk, 3rd Class,
KITEGA

/COPY

COPY

Gaston Jovite NZAMWITA
KITEGA

Kitega, 6 August 1951

Sir,

In reply to your letter of this morning, No. 2057/Pers. Aux., I have the honour to inform you that I see no point in submitting to you reasons for my conduct, since I cannot recognize as correct that the person accusing me should also act as judge and carry out the sentence.

I have the honour to be, Sir, etc.

(signed) Gaston Jovite NZAMWITA

The Administrator of the Territory,
KITEGA

18/10 p.m.