



UNITED NATIONS
TRUSTEESHIP
COUNCIL



Distr.
GENERAL

T/PET.10/106
8 February 1977

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

PETITION FROM MR. SUSUMU AIZAWA, CHAIRMAN OF THE MAGISTRATES' CONFERENCE
TRUK DISTRICT, EASTERN CAROLINE ISLANDS, CONCERNING THE TRUST TERRITORY
OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

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TRUK DISTRICT, EASTERN CAROLINE ISLANDS
96942
TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

1 March 1976 1/

Honourable members of the United Nations
Security Council
United Nations
New York, New York

Honourable members of the United States
Senate
Washington, D.C.

Honourable members of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

President Gerald Ford
White House, Washington, D.C.

Prime Minister Takeo Miki
Tokyo, Japan

Dear Sirs,

We, the petitioners, 2/ are citizens of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. We are residents of Truk District, Eastern Caroline Islands. We strongly feel that our past sufferings during the duration of the Second World War were not adequately compensated for by the \$US 10 million ex gratia payment

1/ This communication was received by the Secretariat on 24 August 1976.

2/ An enclosure, containing a list of 2,071 signatures, has been placed in the files of the Secretariat and is available to members of the Council for consultation.

put up by the Governments of the United States of America and Japan. We further object to the manner in which the Micronesian Claims Commission adjudicated our claims without due regard to the Micronesian culture and laws of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. Of utmost concern is the 16 per cent payment on an adjudicated claim, and we are required to sign releases, releasing the Governments of Japan and the United States from any further liability to the claimant, his successors, assignees and any member of his clan or lineage who has or may have a claim through the claimant or claimants, before payment of the 16 per cent can be made. We further petitioned the Micronesian Claims Commission, which does not compensate individuals for their constant fear, their famine and their displacement and for the unpardonable abuses and the many indignities visited upon us, especially by the Japanese soldiers. Japan should compensate for all these sufferings. Although Truk was not the site of a major battle, the Trukese people were subjected to bombardment by United States war planes, which killed hundreds of Trukese and Micronesians.

It is extremely painful for us to repeat the agonies of war we were exposed to from the hostilities of the two Governments, that of the United States and Japan, but we, the petitioners, feel that it is important to inform you and have them recorded in your journals. The Trukese people were slaves of the occupying Japanese forces. The Japanese armies forcibly evicted the Trukese men from their homes and then occupied them, used them and then destroyed them. When the Japanese soldiers moved out of the homes, they either destroyed or moved the houses to some other places. The husbands were beaten and chased away from their wives so that the Japanese soldiers could appropriate the wives. Our lands were taken from us by force, without our consent and without compensation. We were prohibited from harvesting our trees because the trees had become the property of the Japanese forces. There were many of us who were beaten and tortured to death by the Japanese armies, because we did not give up our crops for the use of the Japanese forces. Hard, forced labour was common. For example, we were assigned to move earth in large two-man wheelbarrows called taros. Each two-man team was assigned the same number of loads, regardless of individual strengths and weaknesses. If the assigned quotas were not completed during the working day, we were required to work on into the night to finish. If one of us collapsed and could not finish, he was beaten and put on display in front of the others. He was punished by squatting on his knees and had his two arms held up high with two large stones in his hands. If he dropped the stones or he put down his arms, he was beaten with hard sticks by the Japanese foreman. Many weak persons, who could not keep up, died from those punishments and beatings.

Many of us remember our attempts to escape the horrible treatment by running away. We swam, sometimes clinging to a piece of wood, the many miles to our home islands. Some of us were caught by the Japanese armies and the last information we heard about them was that they were beaten to death by their captors. Many of us are survivors of the incidents described above. We witnessed some of those beatings. Another punishment was that of being suspended from trees by ropes attached behind our backs to our wrists and ankles. Our Japanese foreman and soldiers would beat us in that hanging position. Hot water was also poured into our ears and nostrils by the Japanese soldiers. After the beatings, we were left hanging and the Japanese soldiers would go out to the Trukese communities

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and gather up a crowd and direct it to the scene of the beatings and hangings. A Japanese soldier would inform the crowd that if any other Trukese ran away, he would receive the same punishment. Many of those who received hard and heavy beatings suffered bone fractures and eventually died. There were cases of persons who died while they were suspended from the trees with ropes.

The incidents described above were examples of the suffering, atrocities and indignities inflicted upon us, Micronesians, as we were caught between the two warring nations.

We as a group, are, an innocent third party. We should be 100 per cent compensated for our deaths and injuries. Our property losses, individual constant fears and famine, should not be neglected.

We, as a small nation, look upon the United Nations and the United Nations is the hope of small nations such as Micronesia.

We, as a weak and poor nation, look toward the United States and the United States is the hope of the oppressed, the weak and the poor people all over the world.

Respectfully,

(Signed) Susumu AIZAWA
Chairman, Magistrates'
Conference, Truk District
