

UNITED NATIONS

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31 JUL 1959

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Dist.
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T/PET.11/L.60
27 July 1959
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: ITALIAN

PETITION FROM THE COMMITTEE FOR THE DEFENCE
OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF SOMALILAND CONCERNING
SOMALILAND UNDER ITALIAN ADMINISTRATION

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TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
UNITED NATIONS
NEW YORK

We have the honour to send you the present memorandum in order to draw the attention of all the States Members of the United Nations to the distressingly grave political activities of the Emperor of Ethiopia, Mr. Haile Selassie, which are designed to prevent Somaliland, which is at present administered by Italy as a United Nations Trust Territory, from achieving full independence, as scheduled, in 1960.

The Press and news agencies now confirm that Russia, in addition to providing a not inconsiderable amount of financial aid to Ethiopia, has made it clear, in the form of a speech by Prime Minister Khrushchev at a banquet in honour of Haile Selassie, that it will give all possible political support to prevent the establishment of a free, independent and democratic Somaliland.

In the circumstances, the activities of Ethiopia - which has obtained financial and political support from one of the great world powers - are of particular gravity and make it necessary to take immediate action, not only to guarantee for the emergent Somali nation the independence which it has been promised, but also to provide it with the necessary means to preserve its freedom in future among the free, democratic and peace-loving nations of the world.

We believe it unnecessary to recall that Ethiopia has long harboured expansionist aims with regard to Somali territory, and particularly with regard to

the present Italian Trust Territory of Somaliland whose access to the ocean it envies.

In diplomatic circles and in the world Press, Ethiopians have frequently asserted that it is necessary to absorb Somaliland, which is erroneously considered by the Abyssinians to be a part of their "motherland", a term cherished by colonialists of the worst category.

Apart from the fact that there is no historical, ethnic or religious affinity between the two peoples, we must express our grave concern at this threat to the future of Somaliland from an imperialistic neighbour nation which is seeking by every means to subject us to a rule that is not desired even by the other subject peoples of Ethiopia which form the well-known feudal mosaic of the Selassian Empire.

As our country is to obtain independence in 1960, we strongly urge the United Nations to clarify the long-standing question of the Somali frontier with Ethiopia, and, in view of the grave situation which is being created, we would appeal to all the Member States to give consideration to all the documents and material submitted by Italy and the Somali authorities in recent years and to bear in mind that Ethiopia is now arbitrarily occupying more than half a million square kilometres of Somali territory, i.e. the territories of Ogaden, Haud and the Reserve Area.

The deceitful manoeuvres of Ethiopia are in defiance of the decisions that have been adopted by the supreme international assembly of the United Nations and are based on the principles of the Charter and of the Declaration of Human Rights and on the right of peoples to self-determination.

The delay in settling the frontier question not only reduces Somaliland's ability to face any emergency which may arise but also endangers the peace of Africa as a whole. It also means that, just as in past centuries our forebears were able to hold their own against the Abyssinians, we shall not allow ourselves to be overcome and shall not yield an inch of our territory to complete the mosaic of a vassal Ethiopian Empire.

This statement must not be construed as a threat, but rather as a formal denunciation of a military threat from our neighbour Abyssinia, a member of the international community of nations.

/...

What has been said above clearly indicates the true national aspirations of the Somali people, which may be defined as a resolve jealously to preserve, maintain and safeguard our sovereignty and territorial integrity once we have achieved them.

In any event, the question of the future of Somaliland is of such importance that it can be settled only by a decision of the United Nations, which, in addition to guaranteeing the preserving peace in this part of the world, will give the Somali people the assurance that they will not be abandoned but will be able to live in peace with all peoples, and particularly with their neighbours. Such a decision will thus also enable us to establish good diplomatic, commercial and cultural relations with the nations of the world.

In order to achieve these high objectives, it is necessary and even essential that Somaliland be granted the following safeguards:

- (a) The necessary means to stop any military infiltration of the Somali border by Ethiopia;
- (b) A well-defined frontier with Ethiopia;
- (c) The reunification with Somaliland of the latter's lawful territories now under Ethiopian rule, i.e. Haud, the Reserve Area and Ogaden. In this connexion we would point out that it would be most useful and desirable for a plebiscite under United Nations auspices to be conducted in these areas so that the desires of our brothers who have been subjugated by Ethiopia might be made known.

We are convinced that the United Nations, guided by the noble principles of the Charter and of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, will not fail to give due consideration to the views expressed in this brief memorandum.

We would therefore be grateful if you would kindly circulate copies of this letter to the delegations of all the Member States.

COMMITTEE FOR THE DEFENCE OF THE INDEPENDENCE
OF SOMALILAND

Somali Students Organization

Via Baglivi 5, Rome

1. (Signed) Yusuf Herzi Ahmed Ali
2. (Signed) Ahmed Dahir Hassan
3. (Signed) Mohamed Farah Siad Nur

Rome, 16 July 1959
