



UNITED NATIONS  
TRUSTEESHIP  
COUNCIL



Distr.  
LIMITED

T/COM.3/L.14  
26 April 1954  
ENGLISH  
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

COMMUNICATION FROM MR. BARNABE NTUNGUKA  
CONCERNING RUANDA-URUNDI

(Circulated in accordance with rule 24 and supplementary rule F of  
the rules of procedure for the Trusteeship Council)

Usumbura, 12 April 1954

From:  
NTUNGUKA, Barnabé  
GAUSHI Chiefdom  
BULINGA  
USUMBURA (Ruanda-Urundi)

To: Mr. Victor HOO  
Assistant Secretary-General  
United Nations  
New York

Sir,

As I have no way of writing to our King, I am sending him a letter through  
you, together with a copy for the Trusteeship Council at New York.

I have the honour to be etc.

(Signed) B. Ntunguka

Usumbura, 12 April 1954

To: His Majesty King Baudoin  
of and at  
Brussels (Belgium)

Sire,

I, the undersigned, NTUNGUKA Barnabé, ex-chief at Buringa, have the honour to inform you that I am suffering greatly in the Territory of Ruanda-Urundi.

The officials assigned to the Territory are taking away all my property. My duties as chief ended in 1940, not at my own wish, after I had served for 30 years.

During those 30 years, I had no regular salary. On account of that, I had to give up (resign) for no failing on my part or for any serious reason. I remained the owner of my property.

I had many head of cattle and 80 men to look after them, a eucalyptus plantation, a fine house, a rifle, a banana plantation, etc.

When I gave up my office in 1940, an inventory of my property was made by Mr. J. FREZIN, the Territorial Administrator at Bubanza, who is still in the Territory.

I was not given a copy of that inventory in spite of my requests. That was how they took away my property. Whenever I ask for a copy, he reads me chapter and verse, gives me a pat on the back but refuses to give me one.

I saw at once that I needed the help of the Resident at Urundi, but when I turned to him, he too refused to do anything.

I wrote to Mr. JUGNERS, ex-Governor-General, to ask his help; nothing was done. The same happened in the case of Mr. SEIGN, ex-Governor of Ruanda-Urundi.

Then they started to take away my property despite all my tears. When Mr. L. PETILLON was appointed Governor-General of Ruanda-Urundi, I explained everything again, but nothing came of it.

The only result was that they put me in prison. The sole reward for 30 years' service is prison. I have no other recourse, so here I am, bringing my complaint before the United Nations and informing it of the facts of the case.

I have taken to the bush where my cattle cannot damage other people's fields.

The officials are still after me and are taking a part of the land for an agricultural settlement (paysannat); I was not consulted about it.

Now I have no cattle or plantations left, because they needed land.

In the United Nations Council at New York Messrs. RYCKMANS and SCHEYVEN agreed that I would be compensated for all my property by the Urundi court.

This year I raised the question again; the answer was "You're a friend of the UN; keep asking the UN". They ended by threatening to have me transported (as a political prisoner).

I therefore ask Your Majesty to look into this case and say whether a man's goods may really be seized for no sufficient cause.

Before taking your decision, I ask you first to obtain the original of my letter listing all my property. This letter is in the possession of the Territorial Administrator at Bubanza (Usumbura).

If you hear of anything at variance with my story, I will reaffirm it just the same; and not only I, there are many other indigenous inhabitants that will do so. I am the only one that is hounded so much, because I claim my rights; what I want mainly is to be left in peace.

It has been proposed to use the piece of land I hold for the Anti-Erosion Mission. I beg you, Sire, to take the necessary steps on behalf of your humble servant, with his 23 children.

I am sending you this letter through the United Nations, since I have no authority to write to you.

We are Watutsi from RUHAHE part of our hill was taken over for an agricultural settlement (paysannat). Although we strongly urged that the land should be left us for our cattle, which in our country constitute our wealth, we were told: the land has been assigned for an agricultural settlement and your cattle will have to be turned loose.

We obey all the government regulations and a man has a right to keep his property in Africa just as he has in Europe. We do not farm the land in question; it is only for our cattle.

We are being maliciously pursued within our land so that our cattle are starving and we are becoming poverty-stricken.

They have plenty of room to do anything they wish but they hound us just the same.

Of the 13 Watutsi petitioners, I give you the names of four, who could act as witnesses:

1. KAGIMBI
2. RUSHARABIKA
3. SEGASHAHO
4. MAVUNGO.

All of them come from the same chiefdom.

All we ask for is peace, and that cattle from another chiefdom should not come into ours.

In the hope of a favourable reply, I have the honour to be, Sire, etc.

(Signed) B. Ntunguka

NTUNGUKA Barnabé  
Chiefdom: GAUSHI  
Territory: BUBANZA  
Usumbura (Ruanda-Urundi)

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