

UNITED NATIONS TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL



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COMMUNICATION FROM MR. BATIND MAKON PAULIN CONCERNING CAMEROONS UNDER FRENCH ADMINISTRATION

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BATIND MAKON PAULIN, PEASANT AT MESSONDO C.F.C.
ESEKA, CAMEROONS under French Administration

MESSONDO, 28 October 1954

The Chairman of the Fourth Committee
of the United Nations, New York.
Sir,

Having read the observations made by the Administering Authority during the discussion of my petition concerning the landing field at Messondo (see document T/C.2/L.88/Add.1 and T/PET.5/161), I feel that I should draw your attention to the following. I am officially authorized by the LOG BISSAKA family to settle any dispute and enclose the power of attorney given me by the said family to deal with the matter of the landing field in view of the fact that I am directly responsible for this land which was part of the estate of my deceased father, MAKON/NOUMA. My position is therefore clear and unequivocal. It is regrettable that Mr. PIGNON said that the landing field was built in 1940. I should like to point out in this connexion that the landing field was built under the supervision of Mr. ROUAM-SIM, the Colonial Administrator at Eséka and MBEA BOTOK, the then Paramount Chief. It should also be noted that in 1937-38, one year after the construction of the landing field, the NDOG-BESSOL Canton was divided and placed under four Cantonal Chiefs by the same Administrator.

This means that the land was converted into a landing field in 1936 and not in 1940, as Mr. PIGNON falsely stated. In speaking of the sale of the land in 1947, Mr. PIGNON does not indicate from whom the Government purchased

the land before re-selling it. Mr. PIGNON should therefore state from whom the Government bought the land and name the date on which the palaver took place. To my knowledge no notice was given and no palaver took place. On the contrary, Mr. ROUAN-SIM, the Colonial Administrator arrived with a regiment and forcibly evicted all the people living on the land; work was started immediately, because then, as at present, our land was considered to be "vacant and ownerless". In reply to the statements of some representatives who pointed out that no objection was made at the time, I would like to emphasize that a mere objection would have been of no avail for the people living on the land were evicted by armed force. I therefore protest vigorously against the statements of the French representative who is only concerned with safeguarding the interests of the colonials and the French Government in the Cameroons regardless of the provisions of the Trusteeship Agreements and particularly of those concerning respect for the interests of the indigenous inhabitants. Such action is incompatible with France's undertaking to guide the Cameroons towards self-government. It should also be noted that Mr. PIGNON, the owner and vendor of the land, does not know its area and that proves that it does not belong to the Government. I should like to point out that the area of this land is twenty-eight hectares. After it was sold to Mr. Erschoff, the latter saw fit to take possession of the whole area right up to the spot where my hut is situated; that led me to claim the title to the plot which I occupy. Thanks to the support of the people, my claim was granted but the twenty-eight hectares are still being illegally withheld by the Government. I request the United Nations to draw the Administering Authority's attention to the incorrect information on the status of the land and particularly on the complaints of petitioners which that Authority submits to it. By relying on the false statements made by the French representative in reply to petitioners, the United Nations is running the risk of losing the confidence of petitioners. In closing, I request you to make representations to the Administering Authority with a view to the restoration of my land to me.

I have the honour to be, etc.

(Signed): BATIND MAKON Paulin

COPY

MESSONDO, 15 July 1954

THE LOG-BISSAKA FAMILY, MESSONDO

To: Messrs. MINKA Celestin,
NDJAB Jean, PASSOCOG Paul and
NJENG Paul, Cantonal Chiefs of
NDOG-BESSOL

Gentlemen:

We have the honour respectfully to submit the following case to you:

According to Bassa custom, every parcel of land belongs to an owner or to a family and if the owner dies, the parcel reverts to the family of the deceased and it is this family which has the right to turn it over to an heir.

However, in the present case, the landing field at Messondo belonging to MAKON MANOUMA has been occupied as a landing field since 1936, and we have been trying to find out whether the land has been sold ever since its owner died. Up to the present time, we have no written or oral evidence to convince us that the land has been sold. That is why we request you to inform us of the status of this land and notify us whether it has been sold or simply taken by the Government

(signed): BATIND MAKON Paulin, Representative,
of the Log-Bissaka
At Messondo, C.F.C. Cameroons
