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COMMUNICATION FROM MR. PAUL Y. AGBETETE CONCERNING  
TOGOLAND UNDER FRENCH ADMINISTRATION

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

Paul Y. Agbetete  
P.O. Box 86  
Gbi-Hohoe, 24 September 1953

TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS,

Sir,

I have the honour very respectfully to acknowledge receipt of the summary records of the discussions of my petitions, T/PET.7/316, T/PET.7/318 and T/PET.7/320 for which I thank you very much. Long live the United Nations, long live Togoland, long live Akposso.

I have now moved to Togoland under British Administration whence I can breathe the air of my native land of Akposso, which is forty-five kilometres away. I have read the summary records with earnest attention and have particularly taken note of the observations of the French Government. Their assertions are unfounded but prudence is the only remedy in view of the sovereignty of such an Administration.

It is maintained that I am not wanted on any grounds whatsoever, but French sovereignty is there well in evidence in view of the case of Chief Afola Gbadégbé, who is also mentioned as having moved to Togoland under British Administration in my petition (T/PET.7/318) because of arbitrary arrests following the visit of the United Nations Mission. This venerable old man, who has returned home after a stay of four months, was unable to avoid imprisonment at Atakpané, where he is now detained, for it is a well-known proverb that when you wish to drown your dog you accuse him of having rabies.

False accusations against us are always quickly found. Chief Gbadégbé will not be released from prison until next December. My group of exiles has now been increased by two persons; the old men Djangba and Agbé joined us in Togoland under British Administration on 13 July 1953 because of the incident of 10 July 1953.

With regard to the case of Théophile Mally the French Government speaks of the courts of the Territory (T/PET.7/320). What is this colonial court? What happened there in the case of Sam Klu, Dovi, Edhson Mensah etc.? What bitter persecutions are practised there? The Administration has laid its hands on everything. May I say once again that right is right and that justice exists only in name.

Théophile Mally, who it is claimed was released last month, has returned safely to his home at Akposso. The whole police force of the Cercle of the Aktakpamé Centre now spends most of its time patrolling outside his house in order to provoke the poor man, who would prefer to leave the Territory rather than be surrounded by gendarmes night and day in his own house. And the French representative speaks to us of returning to the country where these abuses occur.

With regard to documents T/PET.7/315 and 316, the Administering Authority alleges that Paul Agbetété, whose name appeared at the bottom of a telegram dispatched at Accra on 4 December 1952, was actually at Akposso at that date. In reply to that completely unfounded assertion I would say that only God is omnipresent; I myself, being human, do not possess that attribute.

The French representative alleges that we made the journey to the Gold Coast and to Togoland under British Administration of our own free will. Thank you very much. I wish to make it perfectly clear that two gendarmes and two Cercle guards had threatened me with arrest at Tomégbé on 24 August 1952 during the night. It was then that I escaped and fled under cover of darkness and with the assistance of a large crowd which showed considerable skill in rescuing me. This fact is completely incontestable. During the same night I went to Kadjebi in Togoland under British Administration wearing only a pair of khaki shorts. On 29 August 1953, while I was at Kadjebi in Togoland under British Administration, two gendarmes again came to look for me at the Adomiabra farm where they thought they would catch me, but they returned empty-handed. All those who have fled have met with similar difficulties.

Furthermore, what pleasure would the father of a family have in thus abruptly leaving his family at a time when all the fugitives were complaining of lack of clothes and it proved necessary to travel for the most part half-naked.

What pleasure could I have had in leaving my family in tears and making such a journey at night at the mercy of the elements? What advantage was there in seeking employment in Togoland under British Administration and in the Gold Coast when I do not know a single word of English and have my family to provide for? I sometimes wonder if Heaven allows such lies to be invented.

As for the "Conseil de Circonscription" I shall never consider it as other than a complete farce. It has merely discussed rates of taxation. I have never seen any work undertaken with the money voted, such as the construction of a school or a road. In fact the poor labourers have always been obliged to work without remuneration whereas there are sums voted which could be used to pay workmen or at least pay the poor labourers who have reluctantly abandoned their rice fields to do forced labour. Have the poor labourers of Litimé and of Akposso Logbe (South) and of the Palimé line ever ceased to demand their money for one or two months, work on a road which they had requested the conseil to construct?

I believe that my term of office is about to expire now that the Administration is seeking to make appointments not by election but by the arbitrary decision of the "Commandant du Cercle" at the end of this month. I shall be saying goodbye to a "Conseil" which is a mere puppet.

I hope that you will consider my point of view and have the honour to be, etc.

(signature illegible)

PAUL Y. AGBETEYE

The Secretary-General of the United Nations,  
New York