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COMMUNICATION FROM THE VILLAGE CHIEF, THE NOTABLES AND THE CHAIRMAN  
OF THE SUB-BRANCH No. 1 OF AKPOSSO OF THE "UNITE TOGOLAISE"  
CONCERNING TOGOLAND UNDER FRENCH ADMINISTRATION

(Circulated in accordance with rule 24 of the rules  
of procedure of the Trusteeship Council)

The Village Chief  
The Notables  
The Chairman of the Sub-branch No. 1 of  
Akposso (Logbo) of the "Unité Togolaise"

Evou-Apégamé, 8 June 1957

To the Chairman of the United Nations Visiting Mission to Togoland.

Sir,

Nothing gives us greater pleasure than to see a United Nations Visiting Mission to Togoland once again seeking information regarding the real desires of the Togolandese.

We should like first of all to take this opportunity of extending a sincere welcome to you in Togoland.

We wish to draw your attention to the cruel practices employed by the French Government in dealing with the people of Togoland. For some time past this country has been going through troubles to which there would seem to be no solution.

Because we are members of the CUT, we are deprived of freedom and human rights. Our requests to the Administration regarding our needs are never met. Our applications for permission to cut down the oil palms which are encumbering our coffee and cocoa plantations, and to cut down timber for housebuilding, and our requests for permits to purchase modern weapons are refused. Legal proceedings in civil and correctional courts turn against us. This method of dealing with the nationalists is becoming a habit in Togoland. We are very unhappy. This situation must change.

France has shown itself in its true colours in Togoland. It has failed to recognize the right to hold public meetings although these are authorized under the Act of 30 June 1881 the provisions of which were made applicable to Togoland by the decree of 11 April 1946. Furthermore the French authorities have until now prevented any meetings of the CUT. We should like to give you a few details concerning the attitude adopted by the Administration regarding a CUT meeting organized on 31 March last at Atakpamé. Some inhabitants of Atakpamé and a number of Hausas who were members of the PTP stirred up fights during the meeting and claimed that the provisions of the administrative measures authorized them to do this. Squads of gendarmes who had been brought from Koutonuo and Lomé ostensibly to observe the CUT meeting, in fact prevented nationalists from attending it. As a result, it proved impossible to hold the meeting. However, no legal action is ever taken against the instigators of these fights even when the authorities know who they are.

In addition the right to free universal suffrage in Trust Territories as approved by the Trusteeship Council is not ensured in Togoland. We regret to say that the base voting practices employed by the authorities in the election of representatives will be the ruin of our Territory. The CUT takes no part in any ballots at the present time as official voting procedure is gerrymandered.

In our village there are 133 qualified voters, but from among these only thirteen who are members of the PTP have been placed on the electoral rolls. The others were rejected because they were nationalists. We would ask you to carry out a thorough investigation into these practices. You will find attached a copy of the list of rejected electors.<sup>1/</sup>

France also has the effrontery to ignore article 7 of the order of 2 December 1949 which authorizes a population to elect its Village Chief. The French administrators in Togoland ensure that certain Village Chiefs are elected against the will of the population while others are removed because they are nationalists.

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1/ Note by the Secretariat: The enclosure referred to has not been received by the Secretariat.

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We, the members of the Customary Council, and the population appointed Prince Joseph Melafon II as Village Chief on 6 March 1955 to replace his father Boadié Melafon I, who had died. We sent a letter to the Commandant de Cercle informing him of the election of our new chief and requesting his recognition.

However, as the authorities did not wish to recognize our Chief, they appointed contrary to our wishes the Regent, who is a member of the PTP, as Village Chief although he is not qualified to occupy this post. The chief for whom the population had voted claimed that the post was his by right and as a result the authorities escorted him to the cercle where he was detained in prison for three days without preliminary questioning and was subjected to maltreatment.

You will find attached a copy of the summons which led to his arrest.<sup>1/</sup>  
This summons came from the Chief Subdivisional Officer of Akposso-Plateau who was acting upon orders from the Commandant de Cercle.

I shall be obliged if you will take particular note of the following points:

1. We expect no satisfaction from the Statute granted by France giving Togoland internal autonomy within the French Union;
2. We request that the Statute giving Togoland internal autonomy be rescinded as it bears no relationship to the desires of the Togolandese;
3. We seek the abolition of the Legislative Assembly as only one political party is represented on it and its members are all French citizens;
4. We ask that our name be placed officially on the electoral rolls so that we can have a direct voice in questions of general interest to this country;
5. We request that freedom of speech and meeting be guaranteed throughout the Territory;
6. We request that any further elections for a reformed Legislative Assembly be placed under proper United Nations supervision.

According to our calculations, Togoland has been sending telegrams, registered letters and personal communications to the United Nations for the last ten years concerning matters of general interest to this country; for all this, the situation has remained unchanged. The United Nations is sufficiently influential to put an

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end to the present state of affairs in Togoland. A country of almost a million inhabitants is struggling to improve its general position. The people seek independence and unification of the two parts of Togoland in the face of opposition by an Administering Authority that does nothing for their people. The people of Togoland address this appeal to the United Nations and ask for complete independence.

We have a right to ask why the United Nations allows France to increase its colonial power and jeopardize our future for its own benefit.

We follow the work of the United Nations and without wishing to exhaust the patience of that Organization we would ask you to transmit to the General Assembly a special report giving the true facts about the conduct and the results of the new elections for the reform of the Legislative Assembly.

We have the honour to be etc.

INDEPENDENCE! UNIFICATION! ABLODE!

Signatories:

1. Joseph Melafon II, Village Chief (fingerprint)
2. Outcha Adim, Notable "
3. Alphonse Senipa, Counsellor "
4. Christophe Ameoha, Secretary "
5. Louis K. Segoh, Chairman of the  
Sub-Branch No. 1 of Akposso (Logbo)  
of the Unité Togolaise

(Seal)

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