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COMMUNICATION FROM MR. ETIENNE MBIDA CONCERNING
THE CAMEROONS UNDER FRENCH ADMINISTRATION

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

County of Banés
College of the Count
Mbida Etienne
Nseng-Nlong I
Mbalmayo

Nseng-Nlong I, 6 February 1957

Etienne Mbida, unofficial President of the Cameroonian Republic
Count of Banés, President of the R.M.C. - Superior of the
College of the Count

To the Secretary-General of the United Nations, c/o of the President of the
Trusteeship Council, c/o of the Ambassador of France to the United Nations

Sir,

As I have already informed you in a previous letter, events are moving fast.
There is now a question of applying (why talk of adopting a Constitution which has
already been rejected ? because it is not in keeping with our degree of
development) the Constitution which seems to confirm our status as a Trust
Territory, but places us in a precarious position, on account of the question
of co-sovereignty which leads to strained relations and threatens to perpetuate
a state of clandestine war between the two States.

I am forwarding a copy of the Constitution of the whole Cameroonian nation
(far be it from me to indulge in demagoguery or illusion). It is the only one
in keeping with the circumstances, the only one which supports and honours you,
both at home and abroad.

Allow me to reveal to you a reef on which we may be shipwrecked in the
United Nations and which deprives us of our best support: that is, the absence
of any organ dealing with self-governing territories. Would it not be possible

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to make a slight change in the structure of the Trusteeship Council and to set up a Self-Government Council for the Territories which have reached our stage of development?

I therefore ask you to ratify our Constitution and to see that it is adopted by the former administering Powers: France and the United Kingdom.

I have the honour to be, etc.

(Signed) Mbida
The President

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County of Banés
College of the Count Mbida Etienne
Nseng-Nleng I

Constitution of the Cameroons

- Article I. The Cameroons is a single and undivided Territory.
- Article II. No one may alienate any part of the national property.
- Article III. The Cameroons is a constitutional Republic. It is governed by a Head of State, President of the Republic, by a Council of Ministers, and by two Chambers, the Chamber of Senators and the Chamber of Deputies, constituting the National Assembly.
- The Head of State is elected by direct universal suffrage for a term of five years. He may be re-elected an infinite number of times. He must be chosen from among the members of the National Assembly.
- Article IV. The Executive Power of the Nation is vested in the President of the Republic. He is assisted by High Commissioners, who are the leading foreign experts of the Nation, and by the Council of Ministers.
- Article V. The President of the Republic is assisted also by two Vice-Presidents, one elected in each of the zones formerly under French and British influence, and by a Council of State of his own choosing.
- Article VI. The Council of State consists of a President of the Council, a Vice-President of the Council, a Secretary of State to the Presidency of the Council and a full corps of Ministers. Their number will depend on the Nation's needs.
- Article VII. The principal departments of government are as follows: the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, the Interior, National Defence, Finance, Public Health, Education, Justice, Information, Public Works, Industry, Commerce, Shipping, Aviation, Agriculture, Stock-raising, Sports.
- Article VIII. The members of the Government are elected from among the Deputies and the Senators. The Head of the Government is appointed by the Head of State. The choice is to be ratified by the National Assembly. He appoints his colleagues. The duration of his term

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of office is determined by the National Assembly at the time of appointment. He may re-organize his Cabinet when the need arises, subject to consultation with the National Assembly.

Article IX. The legislative power is vested in the National Assembly, which consists of two Chambers, the Chamber of Deputies (100) (150), and the Chamber of Senators (50). Deputies are elected by direct universal suffrage. Senators are drawn from the ranks of the Counts and the principal Marquises (paramount chiefs of the great tribes). The Deputies are elected for a term of five years.

Article X. Laws enacted by the National Assembly come into force thirty days after their publication in the official gazette of the Nation.

Article XI. The Provincial Councils: the National Territory is divided into six or eight provinces of varying size, their boundaries being determined by ethnic, linguistic and, above all, geographical considerations. They are called Departments and are under the direction of Heads of Departments or Prefects, assisted by provincial councils under the supervision of the Minister of the Interior.

Article XII. The Cameroonian State maintains close relationships with the former Administering Powers and with the United Nations. In addition to the assistance of the High Commissioners, the Head of State and each member of the Council of Ministers maintains close relationships with his counterpart in the Governments of the former Metropolitan countries. These relationships will take the form of frequent consultations.

Article XIII. The High Commissioners have the same functions as Ambassadors in the Cameroonian Republic. They therefore have the right to protect their compatriots and their interests, and to request the repeal of decrees prejudicial to the rights of their metropolitan countries. Such requests will be examined in the Council of Ministers under the Chairmanship of the Head of the State, after consultation with the National Assembly.

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- Article XIV. The High Commissioners arrange in the Nation for the recruitment of such labour as may still be necessary. In full agreement with the Head of the State and the Cameroonian Government, they appoint the senior officials in the higher grades of the civil service in the Territory. The salaries of all officials are paid by the Cameroons.
- Article XV. The appointment of senior African officials, and officials of all grades, will follow immediately upon that of the Ministers of State.
- Article XVI. The national emblem is the tricolour flag Red, White, Yellow.
- Article XVII. The State recognizes and supports all religions without discrimination. It guarantees to each religion freedom of worship and to every citizen freedom of conscience.
- Article XVIII. The Cameroonian Nation is sovereign; it exercises its sovereignty through universal suffrage, and demonstrates the unanimity of its wishes in plebiscites and referendums.
- Article XIX. The Constitution of the Cameroons shall enter into force officially upon ratification by the United Nations and by the Governments of the former administering Powers. In the event of refusal by one of those Governments, the decision of the United Nations will be final.
- Article XX. The application of the Constitution in the Territory brings the Trusteeship System to an end, and inaugurates the age of international self-government.

Done at Nseng-Nlong I Mbalmayo

6 February 1957

Signed: Mbida Etienne - unofficial President by acclamation of the Cameroonian Republic. Count of Banés, President of the Radicaux Modérés du Cameroun. - Superior of the College of the Count.

(Signed) Mbida
