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COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SOKODE BRANCH OF
THE "COMITE DE L'UNITE TOGOLAISE" CONCERNING TOGOLAND
UNDER FRENCH ADMINISTRATION

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of the rules of procedure for the Trusteeship Council)

The Chairman of the SOKODE
Branch of the C.U.T.

SOKODE, 9 November 1954

To the Secretary-General of the
United Nations, New York.

Sir:

I have the honour to send you a copy of a memorandum which I handed on behalf of my branch to the French Minister for Overseas France, who was in Togoland under French Administration on a visit of investigation. I am taking the liberty of sending you this document with the idea that the French Government might be led to make use of its Minister's visit to Togoland as justification for a position which might perhaps fail to reflect all the opinions and trends which were displayed during his visit.

I therefore request you to be kind enough to distribute this document to the Members of the General Assembly now in session.

I have the honour to be...etc.

(signature illegible)

Sokodé Branch of the
Comité de l'Unité togolaise
de Sokodé

Sokodé, 29 October 1954

To the Minister for Overseas
France visiting Togoland

Sir,

Following the conversation which your presence among us enabled us to have with the highest representative of the Overseas Territories, we have thought it useful to send you in writing a summary of our interview.

Since the Comité de l'Unité togolaise was established to enable Southern and Northern Togoland to fraternize and to deal together with their common problems, all of us in Northern Togoland welcomed that movement. As soon as the question of the reunification of the two zones of Togoland was contemplated, the Administration became a sworn enemy of the C.U.T.

It asked us to resign from the Movement. When it did not achieve that object, it set up the Union des Chefs du Nord, counting on these Chiefs to put pressure on their subjects. The Chiefs did not succeed. It was then that the Chiefs and the Administration turned to persecution. The Chiefs can beat us, abolish individual freedom and engage in manhunts without the slightest reproof from the Administration. There is no more freedom of speech. All meetings are prohibited by force, even private meetings within families. The Commandant himself, on the sole basis of an unverified denunciation, sends you an official summons to ask you for an explanation about a meeting which you have never even contemplated. And when the case is brought against you, a pretext is always found to beat you or to haul you before the court and sentence you for intimidation and discouraging others.

Thus, DO REGO ALLASSANI, a member of the C.U.T. and the Chairman of the Juvento, was awakened at his house at Cambolé, his native village, which he was visiting in order to attend a family funeral, and was dragged before the court on a charge of striking a policeman.

At Bafilo, a hamlet 50 kilometres from Sokodé, the Chief of the largest village was dismissed without reason given because he is a member of our Movement and obstinately refused to resign. His subjects decided to obey

no one but him in order to show their loyalty to him. Accordingly, one Friday, our day of prayers, the Administration sent gendarmes and gardes-cercle who broke into the place of prayer, beat people and bludgeoned Chief Alfa YAVA and Malam Issa, who were falsely accused of obstructing the public way and were sentenced to imprisonment, despite the defence of their lawyer, through whom they appealed. Hardly had these two men returned home when they were set on again by gendarmes and gardes-cercle. They had to take flight and their houses were sacked by these agents of the authorities. These men and their families are today out of the country. We can cite several similar cases.

We believe that the purpose of your visit is to obtain information about the political situation in the Territory in order to seek means of restoring peace in our country.

I declare on behalf of the group of the population represented by my party in the Sokodé cercle that we are not anti-French. We want regrouping and emancipation, such as occurs in other countries around us. Instead of studying with us the means of giving us satisfaction, your representatives here are displaying hostility towards us and maltreating us. We believe that it is they who are making us hate the French Administration.

We therefore place all our trust in you, in your present visit of investigation, in the hope that freedom of speech and of assembly will be restored among us and that the final solution will be found of the political problem which is at the bottom of all these injustices which we are suffering, to the greater renown of France and of the Mendès-France Movement with a view to sincere friendship between France and Togoland.

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Chairman
