



UNITED NATIONS
TRUSTEESHIP
COUNCIL



Distr.
LIMITED

T/COM.7/L.53
16 August 1957
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

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

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

Note by the Secretariat: This communication was transmitted
to the Secretary-General by the United Nations Commission on
Togoland under French Administration.

TELEGRAM

Place of origin: Bafilo

Number: 407

Lamakara, 17 June 1957

Help! Idrissou Akalé, Secretary of CUT, arrested after
your departure.

Jules Moustapha

LE COMITE DE L'UNITE TOGOLAISE

Bafilo Local Branch

Bafilo, 17 June 1957

To the Chairman of the United Nations Visiting Mission to Togoland

Sir,

We have the honour to bring to your attention the following facts in confirmation of our telegram sent this evening.

This morning, before the arrival of the Visiting Mission in our village, Mr. Issifou Ayeva, the Paramount Chief of SOKODE, appeared before the Nationalists in the square where we were awaiting your arrival.

After several provocative statements, to which we made no reply, he started slapping Mr. Djibril, one of our members, on the face for having shouted: ABLODE!

After you left this evening, Chief Ayeva telephoned to the gendarmerie at Sokodé. A European gendarme and two auxiliary policemen arrived and jumped on us, handcuffing the following: Mr. Idrissous Akelé, the Chief of Zongo, Mr. Djibrila, Mr. Kossi.

The prisoners are in Sokodé prison.

We also wish to inform you that the village is besieged by local policemen (Gardes Cercles) and that the Paramount Chief has forbidden the use of the word ABLODE (which means freedom) in the village under threat of imprisonment.

We therefore ask you, Sir, kindly to ask about these prisoners and to find out why they were arrested.

Hoping that you will succeed in setting our people free, we thank you in advance and have the honour to be, etc.

(Signed) Illegible
General Counsel

/...

Lomé, 25 June 1957

From Jules Mustapha, Counsellor for the Bafilo branch of the CUT
To the Chairman of the United Nations Visiting Mission at Lomé

Sir,

I suppose that you received at Iama-Kara the telegram which I sent to you from Bafilo on 17 June 1957, referring to the arrest of three members of the CUT of Bafilo by the local authorities.

In a letter dated 18 June 1957 I explained to you what had happened and the unavowed reasons behind the arrest of the three members of our Bafilo branch.

I enclose herewith a copy of a letter addressed to the Magistrate at Sokodé. I carefully explained the facts to the Magistrate. He gave me to understand that the Paramount Chief had given you and him another version.

As usual, the Paramount Chief invented reasons for imprisoning the three leaders of our branch. None of them had had a fight with the Paramount Chief. If they had really manhandled him, the police officials of the Cantonal Chief, the sergeant in charge of the village, Mr. KAO Kézié, Assistant to the Commandant de Cercle, and Chief Amadou, all members of the Union of Northern Chiefs who were behind the Chief at that time would have come to his assistance, and the festival which we had organized would have been broken up.

All those I have just mentioned could testify in favour of the three accused, if they were not afraid of reprisals. One thing is certain - the crowd could testify on our behalf.

What happened exactly? The members of the Union of Chiefs had grouped themselves on a hill, while the Nationalists had gathered at the foot of the hill between the old and the new market. The Paramount Chief, accompanied by his retinue, wished to disperse us, but we refused to move stating that our group was there in order that the Visiting Mission might understand that there were Nationalists also in the North.

A certain Amidou Possi, a friend of Gibril Mola, finding himself in a crowd of CUT members and seeing Gibril cried out "Greetings, Mola!". Gibril replied "Mola is here". The Paramount Chief who is also a Mola was behind, and thought that Gibril was making fun of him, Gibril and he both being descended from the

/...

Mola tribe and each of them having added the name of Mola to his own (Mole means Prince, and there are many in the Cotonou country).

The Chief walked towards me and told me to call Gibril. I obeyed. But when Gibril came the Chief slapped him on the face in front of me. Gibril did not return the blow. I told the Chief that his conduct was improper and unworthy of a Paramount Chief. Idrissou Akelé, our local secretary, added: "Paramount Chief, we do not want to quarrel with you". Chief Zongo said nothing at all.

The Paramount Chief and his suite rejoined their group on the hill. That occurred at about 9 a.m. If we had retaliated we should have given them a reason to send us away.

Towards 5 p.m., to our great astonishment, a European gendarme and an auxiliary came to Bafilo and handcuffed Akelé Isidore, Gibril Mola and Chief Zongo of Bafilo. What was held against them? We had no idea.

At Sokodé the Magistrate gave me to understand that they had fought with the Paramount Chief at Bafilo. That was untrue. The reasons put forward had been invented solely to punish our leaders and to spread fear among our members in the region.

Sir, it is not difficult to bring truth to light. Chief Issifou Ayeva has been to Mecca. He has the title of EL HADJ. Ask him before Moslems to swear on the Koran that the three accused men or even one of them fought with him.

He would never agree to do that. If you return to the North you will see that the Administering Authority and the autocratic Chiefs are already beginning to persecute the Nationalists who dared to speak to you. They are going to stir up incidents everywhere in order that it may be said that the United Nations Visiting Mission always causes trouble in Eastern Togoland. It is a put-up game between the Administering Authority and the indigenous Chiefs.

After you leave, schemes and intrigues will be set afoot in order to punish the Nationalists of the North, lies will be invented to justify the offensive and unjust acts of the Administering Authority. The latter will bear us a grudge, since it was anxious that you should never know that opposition existed also in the North. So we ask you, Mr. Chairman and representatives, to intervene on our behalf with the High Commissioner of the Republic and the Minister for Overseas France so that when you leave the indigenous chiefs and the local administration will not begin persecuting and crushing us with every kind of injustice.

We count on you and thank you in advance.

We have the honour to be, etc.