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COMMUNICATION FROM THE "RASSEMBLEMENT POPULAIRE DES REFUGIES DU  
TOGO FRANCAIS" CONCERNING TOGOLAND UNDER BRITISH ADMINISTRATION  
AND TOGOLAND UNDER FRENCH ADMINISTRATION

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of procedure for the Trusteeship Council)

RASSEMBLEMENT POPULAIRE DES REFUGIES DU TOGO FRANCAIS  
(R.P.R.T.F.) P.O. BOX 143 - HOHOE - TOGOLAND UNDER  
BRITISH TRUSTEESHIP

Ref. No. 15/CE/ONU/55

Hohoe, 15 October 1955

SUBJECT: (Petition) Protest against the payment of taxes in French Togoland

TO: The Secretary-General of the United Nations

Sir,

On behalf of the R.P.R.T.F., I have the honour very respectfully to bring to your attention a protest dated 2 October 1955 from the R.P.R.T.F. branch in Wancheke village, Cherekpeni Canton, in the north of British Togoland. No sooner had the 1955 Visiting Mission departed than the French local administration in the person of Cantonal Chief, NAMBIEMA Tabi, Mango Subdivision, began to press relentlessly for the payment of poll taxes in respect of the refugees who had fled from the Canton despite the fact that they had been absent for two, three, four and even five years. For this reason, Mr. BOSSAFU of the Gokansou-Djabou District (Mango), the head of a family, whose members have nearly all taken refuge in the British Zone, now finds himself in the sorry plight of having to move heaven and earth to comply with this unjust demand, not only so that he can continue to live in Mango, where he personally prefers to remain, but also so that he can represent his district which the French administration is planning to abolish.

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I energetically refute the following statement made by the French Government:  
"With respect to the payment of poll tax, almost all those who have emigrated still pay their taxes in Togoland under French administration, but they do so entirely from choice..... Their idea in so doing is to show that they consider themselves temporary and not permanent emigrants and that they have not ceased to belong to their native communities, to which they always return after a certain period of absence."

I wish it to be clearly understood that this statement is quite inapplicable to the Togoland refugees, especially those from northern Togoland (Mango) who are compelled to live in utter wretchedness; to say that they pay such taxes entirely from choice to support a colonial Power whose domination they formally repudiate is an insult to the Togolandese living voluntarily in the British Zone. Can the French representative produce a list of the names of even temporary friends of France who are seasonal or temporary emigrants, which is counterbalanced by a similar reverse movement between these two territories?

What action does he propose to take in regard to the list of over two hundred names of applicants for exemption from poll taxes, sent to him in care of his Consul General at Accra? When he looks at some of the allegations made by the French representative and by the representatives of some other States in the Standing Committee on Petitions, the defenseless African, the unfortunate Togolander refugee, inevitably comes to believe the assertion made by French Administrators in Togoland that the United Nations is nothing more than a family council.

- (a) Consequently, I request your immediate intervention on behalf of the refugees in the North referred to above;
- (b) Information on the action the French Government proposes to take on our applications for exemption, which were sent to him in care of the French Consul General at Accra, who never acknowledges our communications even when sent by registered mail.

I have the honour to be, etc.

For the R.P.R.T.F.

For the Executive Council

(Signed) Paul Y. AGBETETE

General Secretary

RASSEMBLEMENT POPULAIRE DES REFUGIES DU TOGO FRANCAIS  
P.O. BOX 143  
Hohoe, Togoland under British Trusteeship - 18 October 1955

Ref. No. 16/CE/ONU/55

TO: The Secretary-General

Sir,

The R.P.R.T.F. wishes to thank the United Nations for the consideration which was kindly given to its petition T/PET.6 and 7/4 at the 270th and 279th meetings on 1 and 15 July 1955 and has instructed me to draw your attention to certain salient points in the observations made by the Administering Authority and also in the formal resolution with which our case was dismissed. I request your patient attention to what I have to say and your permission to present our humble opinion regarding the terms of the resolution adopted by the Trusteeship Council.

It is noted with regret that some representatives appear to have been influenced by the Administering Power. The following wording that it contrived to have adopted tends to bring discredit on the United Nations: Recognising that the movement of population involved in the present petition (generally) is seasonal or temporary immigration OF A PURELY ECONOMIC CHARACTER. One does not kick a man when he is down. Political parties from the Gold Coast and Togoland regularly send representatives on the costly annual voyage to New York to fight French colonialism which is doomed, but the Administering Authority manages to circumvent them with devilish cunning. The United Nations is influenced or misled by such deception, which accounts for the fact that it has always adopted extremely diplomatic resolutions. What fate is in store for the dead tree when the green tree bursts into flames? This is the unfortunate position of the defenceless R.P.R.T.F. We request our protecting Power to find us a place in which we can settle down permanently so that we may be saved both in body and mind, we who have fled from the miseries of the persecution to which we were subjected. And it is this exodus that is described as a seasonal or temporary immigration. If we lived in both parts of the country, would we be compelled to make such a forceful appeal to an organisation like the United Nations? We

call on the United Nations to help us settle peacefully in the British zone; it will then be clearly demonstrated whether we form part of a seasonal and temporary immigration of a purely economic character.

Sir, will your Standing Committee on Petitions again say that the R.P.R.T.F. involves a seasonal and temporary movement between the two territories? In travelling through one of these territories your Special Visiting Mission found peaceful conditions prevailing. In the other it met with an ill-treatment which places your honour at stake; when it left, one member had a wounded arm and another had his forehead bruised by a blow indirectly inflicted by a European colonial administrator. The honour of the United Nations is at stake. Down with racial discrimination!

I have the honour to be, etc.

For the R.P.R.T.F.

(Signed) Paul Y. AGBETETE

General Secretary

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