



UNITED NATIONS
TRUSTEESHIP
COUNCIL



Distr.
GENERAL

T/C.2/SR.469
17 July 1958

ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE FOUR HUNDRED AND SIXTY-NINTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 11 February 1958, at 10.30 a.m.

CONTENTS:

Examination of petitions concerning the Cameroons under French
administration (T/C.2/L.321 and 322) (continued)

PRESENT:

Chairman:

Mr. JAIPAL India

Members:

Mr. YANG China

Mr. de CAMARET France

Mr. ZADOTTI Italy

Mr. BENDRYSHEV Union of Soviet Socialist
Republics

Mr. SMALLMAN United Kingdom of Great
Britain and Northern Ireland

Also present:

Mr. DENIAU Special Representative
of the Administering Authority
for the Trust Territory of
the Cameroons under
administration

Secretariat:

Mr. COTTRELL Secretary of the Comm.

EXAMINATION OF PETITIONS CONCERNING THE CAMEROONS UNDER FRENCH ADMINISTRATION
(T/C.2/L.321 and 322) (continued)

Document T/C.2/L.321 (continued)

IV. Petition from Mrs. Memeou Libiene (T/PET.5/888, section 26)

Mr. BENDRYSHEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) inquired whether there was any organization in the Territory to which a person could apply for assistance in finding the members of his or her family who had disappeared.

Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) regretted that he could not go against the Administering Authority's decision that it was unable to consider that petition which had been submitted by a person claiming to belong to an organization that was prohibited by law.

The CHAIRMAN said that the Secretariat would prepare conclusions to the effect that, in view of the Administering Authority's decision, the Committee had been unable to examine the petition and was confining itself to drawing the attention of the Trusteeship Council to it.

In reply to a question from Mr. BENDRYSHEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), he pointed out that under rule 90, paragraph 4, of the rules of procedure of the Trusteeship Council, the Committee's terms of reference were simply to conduct, in consultation with the representative of the Administering Authority concerned, a preliminary examination of petitions. The Special Representative not being in a position to give any details, the Committee could only transmit the petition to the Trusteeship Council without making any recommendation.

V. Petition from Mrs. Talom Ndeffo Fidèle (T/PET.5/888, section 28)

The CHAIRMAN, observing that the same objections applied to that petition as to the previous one, suggested that the same procedure should be followed.

Mr. BENDRYSHEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) pointed out that the Committee should not in principle allow the Administering Authority to settle the question of whether or not the United Nations should examine a given petition.

The CHAIRMAN also regretted the situation, but said that the Committee was bound by the rules of procedure. He pointed out that the proposal which he had made would not prejudice the decision which the Trusteeship Council might take.

The Secretariat would accordingly draft conclusions according to the suggestion he had made for petitions of that type.

VI. Petition from Mrs. Monique Tchouandem (T/PET.5/888, section 30)

The CHAIRMAN wanted to know exactly what offence the petitioner's husband had committed and why more than a year had elapsed between his arrest and the pronouncing of sentence.

Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) explained that on 26 May 1955, in the market at Yaoundé, the person concerned had actively participated in an attack committed by certain shopkeepers on the representative of a trade union and the police officials who had come to the latter's assistance. The gravity of the offence rendered him liable to a fairly long term of imprisonment, which explained the delay before sentence had been pronounced. Suspension of sentence had been granted because the prisoner had no previous convictions.

Mr. YANG (China) thought that the position was quite simple. Since the petition had been transmitted on 2 November 1955, the petitioner had learned that her husband had not disappeared. He would accordingly propose that the Committee should confine itself to taking note of the Administering Authority's observations.

In reply to a question from the CHAIRMAN, Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) said that he thought the person concerned must now have returned to his home, but could give no details in that connexion. Replying to a question from the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, he explained that the person concerned had been visited in prison by the members of his family, but he did not know whether he had been represented by counsel.

The petition was one of a large number which, on the word being passed by a political party, had been transmitted to the Visiting Mission during its stay in the Territory. He pointed out that only a few lines were devoted to the disappearance of the petitioner's husband, while almost the entire petition referred to political questions.

The CHAIRMAN said that the Secretariat would draft a resolution drawing the petitioner's attention to the observations of the Administering Authority and the statement of the special representative.

VII. Petition from Mrs. Marthe Mengue (T/PET.5/888, section 37)

In reply to a question from Mr. BENDRYSHEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) said that so far as he knew the petitioner was now living with her husband, who had been acquitted, and that they lived on the produce of their plantation. He did not know why she had fled from her home and denied that she had been driven from it.

The CHAIRMAN said that the Secretariat would draft a resolution drawing the petitioner's attention to the observations of the Administering Authority and the statement of the Special Representative.

VIII. Petition from Mrs. Cecile Bup (T/PET.5/888, section 41)

Mr. BENDRYSHEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) asked whether the Committee had examined the petition contained in document T/PET.5/732, which was mentioned in section 8 of document T/C.2/L.321. He also wanted some details of the offence of which the petitioner's husband was guilty.

Mr. COTTRELL (Secretary of the Committee) said that there was a mistake in document T/C.2/L.321 and that the correct symbol of the petition should have been T/PET.5/733. The petition had been reclassified in application of rule 85, paragraph 2, of the rules of procedure.

Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) explained that the petitioner's husband had been arrested for re-establishing an association that had been dissolved, to be precise, at a time when he had been typing the circulars and pamphlets of the UPC.

The CHAIRMAN asked how it happened that the person concerned had been kept in custody for six months when he had been sentenced to only four months' imprisonment.

Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) explained that the person concerned was liable to two years' imprisonment, but had benefited by extenuating circumstances. The delay in pronouncing sentence had been due to the fact that the court at Douala had been overloaded with cases as a result of the incidents of May 1955.

The CHAIRMAN said that the Secretariat would draft a resolution drawing the petitioner's attention to the observations of the Administering Authority.

IX. Petition from Mrs. Jeannette Tagny (T/PET.5/888, section 45)

In reply to a question from Mr. ZADOTTI (Italy), Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) explained that two different measures had been taken with respect to Dr. Tagny; first, he had been released temporarily by the Procureur général and subsequently the correctional court of Douala had made an order of discharge.

The CHAIRMAN said that the Secretariat would prepare a draft resolution drawing the petitioner's attention to the statement of the Special Representative.

X. Petition from Mr. Obama Severin Emmanuel (T/PET.5/888, section 48)

In reply to a question from Mr. SMALLMAN (United Kingdom), Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) said that he did not know what had become of Mr. Obama after his release. With regard to his sentence of four months' imprisonment for "usurpation of public functions", he explained that Mr. Obama, who was a former policeman dismissed for serious misconduct, had attempted to exploit his position as a policeman, which he no longer held, in order to secure certain advantages.

Mr. SMALLMAN (United Kingdom) thought that, in view of what the Special Representative had said and since the other allegations of the petitioner were by no means clear, it would be sufficient for the Committee to take note of the observations of the Administering Authority and of the statement of the Special Representative and draw them to the attention of the petitioner.

Replying to questions from Mr. BENDRYSHEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) said he had no knowledge of the fact that the petitioner's eldest daughter had died for lack of care. Mr. Obama had written the petition while he was in prison and expressed the most explicit reservations regarding the facts he had stated.

/...

(Mr. Deniau, Special Representative)

There was a contradiction between the assertions of the petitioner and the Special Representative's information regarding the dates of the petitioner's imprisonment and release. The petitioner had probably been imprisoned at a later date than that mentioned by the Administering Authority.

In reply to a question from the CHAIRMAN, Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) said that the complaint concerning the petitioner's elder sister was entirely without foundation. She had made no complaint to the judicial and administrative authorities. Moreover, it was not likely that a chief could have had her imprisoned for personal reasons at Ngonlemekong, a town in the vicinity of Yaoundé.

The CHAIRMAN said that the Secretariat would prepare a draft resolution in accordance with the proposal of the United Kingdom representative.

XI. Petition from Mr. Philippe Ngassa (T/PET.5/888, section 51) and

XII. Petition from Mrs. Sara M'Poupe (T/PET.5/888, section 54)

The CHAIRMAN, noting that the Administering Authority had decided not to consider those two petitions, said that the Committee would follow the procedure adopted for petitions in that category.

XIII. Petition from Mr. Celestin Komguem (T/PET.5/888, section 55)

Replying to a question from the CHAIRMAN, Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) said that about ten stalls had been burned in the fire which broke out in Mbalmayo market-place. It was absurd to assert that the Administering Authority had had any responsibility whatsoever for the fire. The inquiry had concluded that it had simply been the result of an accident.

Mr. YANG (China) said that, if that was the case, the petitioner's attention should be drawn to the observations of the Administering Authority.

The CHAIRMAN said that the Secretariat would take account of the Chinese representative's suggestion in preparing the relevant draft resolution.

/...

XIV. Petition from Mr. Alphonse Baty (T/PET.5/888, section 57)

Replying to a question from Mr. YANG (China), Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) said that when the inquiry was made, in August 1956, the petitioner had not taken his case to the Labour Inspectorate. The Special Representative had no idea whether the allegation that the petitioner was a member of the UPC was true, since the inquiry had dealt only with his dismissal, which had been effected in a perfectly normal way.

Mr. YANG (China) suggested that the observations of the Administering Authority should be drawn to the attention of the petitioner.

The CHAIRMAN said that the Secretariat would prepare a draft resolution in the usual terms.

XV. Petition from the Yaoundé branch of the Syndicat des petits commerçants détaillants, artisans et transporteurs autochtones du Cameroun (T/PET.5/888, section 59)

In reply to questions from Mr. ZADOTTI (Italy), Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) said that dues of stall-holders in the Yaoundé market were established by the Cameroonian municipal authorities. He did not believe that they had been increased, although he could not make a positive statement. On the other hand, he believed that there had been an increase in licence fees, which were determined by the Cameroonian Legislative Assembly.

Mr. SMALLMAN (United Kingdom) requested further information on the wide disparity in the figures given by the petitioners.

Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) replied that in 1952, a trader paid 100 francs in stall dues, that is, for the right to occupy a stall. In the meantime, the market had been reorganized, permanent shops had been built and the stall dues had risen to 250 francs. Licence fees were divided into several categories depending on the trader's business turnover.

Mr. SMALLMAN (United Kingdom) thought that, since the market installations had been improved, it was normal to increase the dues. He suggested that, in the draft resolution to be prepared by the Secretariat, the petitioner's attention should be drawn to the observations of the Administering Authority and the comments of the Special Representative.

/...

Mr. BENDRYSHEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) noted the statement by the Administering Authority that the petition was from a trade union which had never been legally recognized and inquired whether legal recognition was necessary for every trade union and, if so, what was the procedure followed.

Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) said that in order to become legal an association, trade union or other similar body had to make a declaration with the Ministry of the Interior. The declaration conferred certain rights on the association, as, for example, the right to establish property and to defend itself in the courts as a legal entity. The trade union in question had no legal existence because it had not made a declaration; declarations of associations were practically never refused.

The CHAIRMAN said that the Secretariat would prepare a draft resolution based on the observations of the United Kingdom representative.

Document T/C.2/L.322

I. Petition from Mr. Vincent Bela (T/PET.5/889, section 5)

The CHAIRMAN said that the petitioner's attention would be drawn to the observations of the Administering Authority.

II. Petition from Mr. Robert Afiana (T/PET.5/889, section 6)

The CHAIRMAN, speaking as the representative of India, asked whether the Administering Authority had recently investigated the petitioner's situation and inquired if he could be helped and if so to what extent.

Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) said he had little additional information about the petitioner. The disease he had contracted had not permanently affected his sight. The Special Representative did not know in what occupation he was employed.

The CHAIRMAN said that the Secretariat would prepare a draft resolution requesting the Administering Authority to inquire further into the matter.

III. Petition from Mr. Venant Ekenguele (T/PET.5/894, section 2)

Mr. BENDRYSHEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) drew attention to the observations of the Administering Authority that the petitioner's income was sufficient to maintain his dependants and wished to know what that income was.

Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) said that six years ago, the petitioner had given up a paid job with the Catholic Mission in order to devote himself to the growing of food crops. It was difficult to determine his income with any accuracy since the market prices of food crops fluctuated a great deal. It was a fact that the petitioner had supported his family for the past six years.

Mr. BENDRYSHEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) expressed his regrets that no figures were available. He further asked for comments on the petitioner's request that he be granted a reduction in taxes or a family allowance, as he was the father of a large family.

Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) replied that the question of tax reductions in favour of large families had been raised in the Legislative Assembly of the Cameroons by the deputy representing the petitioner's circonscription. A family allowance scheme for wage-earners was in force in the Territory and was described in the annual report of the Administering Authority. For the inhabitants of rural areas, children represented a source of income by working on the family farm. In addition, parents received a bride-price when their daughters married.

Mr. BENDRYSHEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) was surprised by the Special Representative's remark that children represented a source of income, since children could not work when they were very young, and the employment of minors was regulated by international conventions. Furthermore, the system of the bride-price paid to parents placed women in a position of inferiority in relation to men.

Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) said that he had merely described a situation without expressing an opinion. The Council had on a number of occasions been informed on the Administering Authority's efforts to put an end to the bride-price tradition. In the opinion of the Cameroonians, a large family was a source of wealth.

In reply to questions from Mr. YANG (China), Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) said that the petitioner was liable to the tax on persons who derived their income from agriculture. That tax amounted to 1,445 francs a year...

(Mr. Deniau, Special Representative)

in the petitioner's circonscription. In addition, the petitioner paid an annual tax of 200 francs that was in the nature of a social security contribution.

The chiefs were elected by the heads of households under the customary suffrage system and in accordance with procedures peculiar to each region. The Administration merely took note of the persons elected in accordance with the customary rules.

Mr. YANG (China) suggested that in the draft resolution to be prepared by the Secretariat the petitioner's attention should be drawn to the observations of the Administering Authority and the Special Representative.

IV. Petition from Mrs. Suzanna Mbetumou (T/PET.5/894, section 3)

In reply to questions from the CHAIRMAN, speaking as representative of India, Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) said that the population of Mefomo village was 160. Pre-natal and maternal and child welfare consultations were given every fortnight under the direction of a female nurse holding the French State certificate, who was assisted by several male nurses. Courses in domestic science were given by a social worker who visited the group of villages to which that village belonged.

The CHAIRMAN said that the Secretariat would draft a resolution drawing the petitioner's attention to the observations of the Administering Authority and the Special Representative.

V. Petition from the "Société des femmes Bomp" (T/PET.5/894, section 11)

The CHAIRMAN said that, in the absence of observations from the Administering Authority, the petition could not be examined by the Committee and would therefore be transmitted to the Trusteeship Council.

VI. Petition from Mr. Otolo Clément and Mr. Tanga Ndjana (T/PET.5/894, section 12)

In reply to questions from Mr. ZADOTTI (Italy), Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) said that the statements made by the petitioner were absolutely fantastic. Their cocoa production should normally be much larger in view of the size of their plantations, provided that these were properly maintained. The village was situated three kilometres from the hospital and school. /...

Mr. YANG (China) observed that the petitioners and the Administering Authority had not agreed on the number of Mr. Tanga's wives. He asked for an explanation of the discrepancy.

Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) said that Mr. Tanga now had eight dependants - three wives, three widows and two children. A number of widows of the petitioner's father and elder brother lived with him. It was hard to tell whether or not they had become his wives. They contributed to the family's working strength.

Mr. YANG (China) asked whether 800 cocoa trees could produce only two bags of cocoa. He also wished to know whether advisory services had been established in the Territory for the purpose of advising planters how to increase their production.

Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) said that production could not normally be that low. However, a plantation of 10,000 cocoa trees might produce nothing at all if it was not kept in good condition.

The area in which the petitioners lived was one of those which had benefited most from the various services that the Administration had made available to cocoa planters. A spectacular increase in production, amounting in some cases to 600 per cent, had been recorded in the past year. Paysannat units had been established at close intervals. Advisory services and the equipment to combat plant diseases were furnished to planters through those units. A pilot plantation where planters were taught how to increase their production had been set up in each village. Mutual credit associations had also been established. An increase in cocoa production was one of the Cameroonian Government's main concerns.

Mr. YANG (China) suggested that the petitioners' attention should be drawn to the observations of the Administering Authority and, more particularly, to the statement just made by the Special Representative.

In reply to questions from Mr. BENDRYSHEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) said that he did not know how many children there were in the village of Loua II. The population of the village numbered between eighty and 100. One thousand children attended the Catholic school at EfoK. It was difficult to say what specific areas were served by the

/...

(Mr. Deniau, Special Representative)

school since some of the children came from more distant cantons. He believed that the nearest public school was about ten kilometres away. In establishing public schools, priority was given to areas which did not have a private school. Where parents did not wish to send their children to Catholic schools, the children were admitted to State schools as boarders. The hospital at EfoK was among the best organized and largest in the Territory. As in all Catholic institutions, patients with sufficient income were required to pay and the poor were treated free of charge.

The CHAIRMAN said that the Secretariat would draft a resolution in which the Chinese representative's suggestions would be taken into account.

VII. Petition from Mr. Mvondo Martin (T/PET.5/894, section 15)

The CHAIRMAN wished to know the petitioner's present status.

Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) said that he did not have any information in that regard. The petitioner had exhausted the ordinary channels and, as a result, could only apply to employment offices or welfare institutions.

The CHAIRMAN said that, in the draft resolution, the petitioner should be advised to apply to the employment office.

In reply to questions from Mr. BENDRYSHEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) said that Mr. Aujoulat was the deputy from the Cameroons who had been defeated in the 1956 elections by Mr. Mbida, the present Prime Minister. Mr. Aujoulat was also the senior physician at the EfoK hospital. Mr. Deniau unfortunately did not have any information on the Tanguy Company at Loum-Paris. He pointed out that the incident had taken place in 1936.

Mr. BENDRYSHEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) stressed the seriousness of the petitioner's complaint, the sum received as compensation for the accident suffered by the petitioner having been quite small. He wished to know what measures were taken by the Administering Authority to protect the rights of workers in such cases.

/...

Mr. DENIAU (Special Representative) said that the petitioner had received compensation in accordance with the labour laws which had been in ~~force~~ force in 1936. The Administering Authority had enacted a broad labour code for the Territory. Under the 1952 Labour Code, victims of accidents had their hospital expenses paid and received compensation, the amount of which could be paid in annual instalments subject to the approval of the labour administration. A revision of existing regulations governing work accidents was currently under consideration by the Cameroonian Government. The petitioner was at present a labourer at Nachtigall, as he himself had pointed out at the beginning of his petition.

Mr. BENDRYSHEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) felt that the Administering Authority might look into the petitioner's present situation and help him to find work or to learn another trade.

The CHAIRMAN said that the Secretariat, in preparing a draft resolution, would take account of the suggestions that had been made.

VIII. Petition from Mr. Mintoumé Enock Benjamin (T/PET.5/894, section 18)

The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee would follow the procedure that had been adopted for petitions in that category.

Mr. de CAMARET (France) reserved his delegation's right to comment on petitions of that kind if other delegations did so.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.