



UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL
ASSEMBLY



Distr.
GENERAL

A/AC.108/SR.29
21 August 1962

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON TERRITORIES UNDER PORTUGUESE ADMINISTRATION
ESTABLISHED UNDER GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 1699 (XVI)

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE TWENTY-NINTH MEETING

Held in the Parliament Building, Dar es Salaam,
on Thursday, 17 May 1962

CONTENTS

Hearing of petitioners from the African National Congress
(of South Africa) and from the South West Africa National Union

Note: In accordance with the decision taken at the 67th meeting, this summary record is based on notes prepared by the Committee secretariat.

PRESENT:

Chairman:

Mr. ACHKAR (Guinea)

Members:

Mr. GRINBERG Bulgaria

Mr. WIJEGONAWARDENA Ceylon

Mr. VENEGAS Colombia

Mr. MOUSHOUTAS Cyprus

Mr. GONZALEZ-CALVO Guatemala

Mr. OLISEMEKA Nigeria

Secretariat:

Mr. KUNST Secretary of the
Committee

HEARING OF PETITIONERS FROM THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS (OF SOUTH AFRICA) AND THE SOUTH WEST AFRICA UNION

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Makiwane (African National Congress) took a place at the Committee table.

Mr. MAKIWANE said that the export of forced labour by the Portuguese authorities in Angola and Mozambique to the South African gold mines had had a serious effect on African working conditions in those mines. There had also been growing evidence of political and military collaboration between the Governments of South Africa and Portugal (as well as of the Central African Federation). The aim of those Governments was to suppress liberation movements, perpetuate political suppression and continue the brutal economic exploitation of the indigenous inhabitants. For example, on 2 April 1962 Edward Ngubeni and Philip Sobral, Mozambicans by birth but residents of South Africa, had been illegally deported to the Mozambique border where they had been handed over to the Portuguese police and brutally assaulted.

Portugal and South Africa also collaborated in the matter of forced labour. Of the total labour force working in the South African mines, 58 per cent had come from territories over which the Republic of South Africa had no political control. The proportion of miners from Central Africa, including Angola, Northern Bechuanaland, Nyasaland and Tanganyika, had increased sharply each year. Recruiting agents had begun a furious drive to entice African recruits to the mines. Recruits who were taken in by deceptive propaganda found that when they started working in South Africa their only rewards were starvation wages and tuberculosis.

The earliest records of the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WNLA) showed that, in January 1903, 88.9 per cent of the African miners had come from Mozambique. From 1904 onwards the South African mines drew anything between 60,000 and 115,000 Africans from Mozambique annually, the peak having been reached in 1928-29. In 1928, the South African Government had signed the Mozambique Convention with Portugal thereby obtaining the sole right to recruit an annual contingent of contract workers from Mozambique. That Convention, which was nothing more than a sordid barter deal in human beings, had been revised and ratified in 1934, 1936, 1940 and 1952.

The policy underlying the export of forced workers played a major part in the strategy of the mining magnates. It depressed the wages of African miners, prevented trade union organization and kept down production costs. African workers were paid one-tenth of the wages paid to white workers. Strike action by African miners was savagely suppressed. If the Portuguese colonialists, who supplied the largest amount of forced labour in South Africa, were expelled and the people of Mozambique given their freedom, the deplorable trade in human beings would end. Already, free Tanganyika had refused to supply any more mining recruits, a decision which had shaken the mining concerns to the roots. Were a free democratic Government of Mozambique and Angola to take similar action, the whole structure of cheap African labour in the Transvaal mines would collapse. By speeding up the liberation of those Portuguese territories, the United Nations would also be easing the burden of African miners in South Africa.

There was also mounting evidence that Portugal and South Africa had entered into a secret military agreement to act jointly in suppressing African liberation movements by force of arms. Mr. Salazar had stressed the mutual interests of Portugal, the Central African Federation and South Africa. In 1961, Southern Rhodesian troops and RAF units had been training in South Africa. Military missions from South Africa and the Central African Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland had visited Lourenço Marques and had taken part in training exercises. According to the South African aviation magazine Wings, the Portuguese were building new jet-fighter aerodromes along or near the borders of Tanganyika and Nyasaland. Shortly after the Angola uprising, the South African Government had announced its intention of granting refuelling facilities in South West Africa to Portuguese aircraft engaged in strafing operations against the Angolan guerrillas.

In the event that South African troops went to the assistance of Portuguese troops suppressing the people of Mozambique, the Africans in South Africa would open up a second front of their own. Such a conflict would quickly spread to the whole continent and perhaps to the rest of the globe. If the United Nations were to take energetic measures to assist in the liberation of the Portuguese territories, it would greatly assist in stamping out the monstrous conspiracy hatched by South Africa, Portugal and the Central African Federation.

In reply to questions from Mr. GRINBERG (Bulgaria), Mr. GONZALEZ-CALVO (Guatemala), Mr. MOUSHOUTAS (Cyprus) and the CHAIRMAN, Mr. MAKIWANE said it was impossible to trust the assurances allegedly given by Portugal that any assistance it received from other countries would not be used for repression in the Portuguese territories. There was evidence that in Angola arms were being used which had been manufactured by Portugal's NATO partners. That had been confirmed by a correspondent from The Observer. United Kingdom shareholders had recently undertaken to manufacture arms in South Africa and those arms would find their way to Portugal. He had seen thousands of Mozambicans working in the South African mines at Johannesburg. They were living under very bad conditions. Workers sent to the big farms were also cruelly treated. Africans could not form trade unions and it was illegal to go on strike. The South African authorities could arrest workers at any time they wanted and deliver them to the Portuguese authorities across the border. .

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Mbaeva, representative of the South West Africa National Union, took a seat at the Committee table.

Mr. MBAEVA said that the artificial boundary between South West Africa and Angola had split the original inhabitants of Ovamboland into two groups which still had affinities with each other. Consequently, disturbances in Angola automatically affected inhabitants of South West Africa. Since the Angola uprising, South African troops had been stationed along the border for the sole purpose of preventing the trouble from spreading. In October 1961, two African politicians, Mr. Nikapulwa and Mr. Nangouja, had been taken from their homes in Ovamboland by the South African police and handed over to Portuguese soldiers at Oudjiva, the seat of the Chief District Commissioner for southern Angola. They had subsequently been shot by a Portuguese firing squad.

The situation in the Portuguese colonies could not be remedied by discussions but only by drastic measures. He therefore suggested that a United Nations police force should be sent to Angola and Mozambique to restore order. At the same time, a United Nations commission should be sent to the territories in order to ensure the evacuation of Portuguese troops and police, the holding of a constitutional convention under United Nations auspices, the release of all political prisoners, the preparation of general elections, the provision of assistance to the new government, and the improvement of the conditions in the territories.