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REPORT ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTHERN KATANGA FROM THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

After the publication of document S/4691, the following message from Mr. Tshombé was received by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the Congo on 16 February 1961. It should be appended as Annex II to document S/4691.

ANNEX II

The President of the State of Katanga presents his compliments to the Representative of the United Nations at Elisabethville and has the honour to acknowledge receipt of the message from Mr. Dayal which was transmitted to him on 12 February 1961. He protests against the tendentious interpretations made both by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the Congo and by the information services of the United Nations. The sole purpose of the action taken was to clear the railway between Lubudi and Bukama. This line of communication, which is vital to Katanga, Kasai and other regions of the Congo, and which, under the agreement of 17 October 1960, was to be kept open and secure by the United Nations forces, was cut several times by bands of outlaws, while the passengers were held to ransom, molested and even killed, as occurred for example on 20 December 1960. In describing as an offensive military action a police action that was rendered unavoidable by passivity and dereliction of duty on the part of the United Nations forces in northern Katanga, the ONUC authorities are deliberately misrepresenting the facts. The responsible ONUC authorities know better than anyone that the Katanga Government is merely exercising its indefeasible right to maintain order and calm throughout the territory under its jurisdiction. In its sincere anxiety to help in calming the atmosphere in that part of Katanga, the Government had signified its agreement to the establishment of a neutral zone in northern Katanga. Whereas the regular security forces scrupulously complied with the terms of the agreement reached,

and refrained from any intervention in that zone, the United Nations forces showed themselves to be utterly incapable of fulfilling their obligations, especially those concerning the disarming of outlaw bands. The latter have been able, over the past months, to commit acts of terrorism and banditry with complete impunity, even mounting attacks on the forces of law and order stationed outside the so-called neutral zone. If the United Nations authorities are honest, they must recognize that the security forces have shown great patience in enduring the attacks launched from that zone, without ever exercising their lawful right of pursuit. When armed soldiers in the pay of the self-styled Central Government of Stanleyville invaded the so-called neutral zone with impunity, it became evident that the United Nations neither would nor could observe and enforce the terms of the agreement concluded with the Katanga Government.

No honest person will question the right of the Katanga Government to resume its freedom of action as soon as the United Nations showed itself so plainly incapable of discharging its obligations. It is consequently the duty of the Katanga authorities to take all necessary steps to preserve the sound areas of the country from the violence and ruin visited upon northern Katanga by irresponsible criminals in the course of a few months.

The President of the State of Katanga regrets that the concern expressed in the penultimate paragraph of the message from the Special Representative of the Secretary-General has not had more influence on the attitude of the United Nations forces in northern Katanga. These forces have so far shown themselves strangely indulgent towards the bands of assassins and looters who have jeopardized the economic and social advancement of those areas for many years to come.

The President of the State of Katanga would emphasize that, as impartial observers have testified, the police operations have been conducted with constant care to avoid bloodshed. Furthermore, harmless peoples who rejoice in the restoration of normal living conditions should not be confused with armed terrorists. The President of the State of Katanga deplores the tenor of the Special Representative's message, which indicates an erroneous interpretation of an action undertaken solely in order to restore order and peace in areas disturbed by certain irresponsible elements.

