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**Chairman: Mr. Frederick H. BOLAND (Ireland).**

**AGENDA ITEM 13**

**The future of the Trust Territories of the Cameroons under French administration and the Cameroons under United Kingdom administration: special report of the Trusteeship Council\* (A/4092, A/4093/Rev.1, A/4094, A/C.4/395, T/SR.953-963) (continued)**

**HEARING OF PETITIONERS (continued)**

At the invitation of the Chairman, the petitioners took places at the Committee table.

1. Mr. YANG (China) asked if Mr. Mbida could explain the apparent discrepancy between the statement he had made at the 855th meeting and the statements referring to Mr. Mbida's attitude to the Union des populations du Cameroun (UPC) in paragraphs 71, 72 and 73 of the report on the Cameroons under French administration (T/1427 and T/1434<sup>L</sup>) submitted by the United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in West Africa, 1958.

2. Mr. MBIDA (Parti des Démocrates camerounais) said that until January 1959 responsibility for maintaining law and order in the Cameroons under French administration had rested with France and not with the Cameroonian authorities, except in so far as the urban and rural administrative police were concerned. At the time of the events of May 1955, and during the subsequent repressions in Sanaga-Maritime, there had been no Cameroonian Government or Legislative Assembly. When the Cameroonian Government had been established in May 1957, France had nevertheless retained responsibility for the maintenance of law and order until January 1959.

3. When the question of an amnesty law had been discussed between the Cameroonian Government and the French Government, the Minister of Overseas France had stated that, as other French territories were involved, the proposed amnesty law could not be total and unconditional and thus apply to persons who had

committed actual crimes. France had also held that there would be an additional danger in granting an amnesty to all members of the UPC, since it was a Communist-dominated organization. As head of the Cameroonian Government, Mr. Mbida himself had intended to wait until there was some relaxation of tension in the Cameroons, and then approach the French Government again with a request for a total and unconditional amnesty law.

4. In the meantime a bill for a limited amnesty had been introduced. He had discussed it with his ministers, including Mr. Ahidjo, the present Prime Minister, then the Minister of the Interior, and also with Mr. Kemajou, the President of the Legislative Assembly. There had been general agreement that all those who had fled into the maquis, including those who had committed murders, could not be allowed to return to normal life, lest violence should break out in the event that France left the Cameroons. He had also discussed the situation with Mr. Um Nyobé, General Secretary of the UPC, who, far from showing any readiness to compromise, had said that if he did not obtain satisfaction with regard to the political programme he would order all his followers to leave the maquis. Mr. Um Nyobé had insisted that the Legislative Assembly should be dissolved and that new elections should be held. Mr. Mbida had been unable to consent to that proposal, since the Legislative Assembly had only just been elected. The majority of his ministers had shared his view that, since the responsibility for maintaining law and order lay with France, there was no action that the Cameroonian Government could take if France did not agree to a total and unconditional amnesty.

5. Mr. AHIDJO (France), Prime Minister of the Cameroons under French administration, said that Mr. Mbida had remained in office as the head of the Cameroonian Government for nine months—an action tantamount to accepting the decisions of the Administering Authority. If he had disagreed with those decisions, his duty had been to resign. In fact Mr. Mbida had referred to the UPC, in a telegram of 5 December 1957 to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, as a party responsible for violence, and stated that his Government was determined to ensure that it could do no further harm.

6. Mr. TOURE (Guinea) asked if Mr. Mbida could give any proof of his statement at the previous meeting that the UPC still existed as a political movement.

7. Mr. MBIDA (Parti des Démocrates camerounais) said that after the UPC had been dissolved France had continued to take repressive measures, and members of the UPC had fled to the maquis or escaped abroad. At that time it had appeared that the party would cease to exist in a matter of months. However, present information indicated that the UPC was still active in many places. Documents seized in the Sanaga-

\*In accordance with General Assembly resolution 1281 (XIII).

<sup>L</sup>/ Transmitted to Members of the General Assembly by a note of the Secretary-General (A/4092).

Maritime Region included lists of members and officials of the UPC, showing that there were UPC members everywhere, especially among young Cameroonians studying in France, and also among Government officials.

8. In January 1958 the number of UPC members in the maquis had been officially estimated at 300. However, the High Commissioner had stated that up to July 1958 some 1,300 persons had been killed or arrested, and approximately the same number were still in hiding. It could therefore be concluded that the UPC had gone underground since its dissolution, but that it still had a large following, which would manifest itself if there were no fear of repression.

9. Mr. MUFTI (United Arab Republic) referred to paragraph 68 of the Visiting Mission's report, and asked whether, in the light of articles 14, 40 and 41 of the Statute of the Cameroons established on 16 April 1957 (T/1314), the Cameroonian Government had been in a position to oppose the use of armed force by the Administering Authority.

10. Mr. MBIDA (Parti des Démocrates camerounais) referred to the reply he had given earlier to the Chinese representative. In 1957 additional French troops had been sent into Sanaga-Maritime. He himself had been visiting in France, and he had found then that an attempt was being made to create the impression that the new institutions of the Cameroons were not working satisfactorily, and that accordingly it would not be advisable to increase administrative autonomy there. The Cameroonian people had appealed to their Government when violence had broken out again, and had been told that the responsibility for maintaining law and order lay with the French Government. At that time former members of the UPC had been accusing the French authorities of fomenting discord between different groups of Cameroonians. He had asked the French Government for additional gendarmerie forces to protect the people, and had discovered that it was allowing the disorders to continue, and even provoking them, so that the people would ask France to take over the administration once again. Additional troops had been sent to Sanaga-Maritime, but not at his request. Mr. Ahidjo had said that he had been responsible for reducing the number of murders. In his campaign address he had said that if he became Prime Minister he would arrange for the troops then present to be replaced by fresh troops. He had claimed that as Minister of the Interior he had always co-operated with Mr. Mbida as Prime Minister, had supported his actions, and had asked the French Government why it had failed to protect the people in Sanaga-Maritime and Bamiléké. When Mr. Ahidjo had taken over the Government, the number of troops had been increased, and the High Commissioner had been gratified by Mr. Ahidjo's support for the repressive measures taken by the French authorities.

11. Mr. AHIDJO (France) said that when he had become Prime Minister, Mr. Mbida and his supporters had been uneasy lest the first step should be the withdrawal of troops from Sanaga-Maritime. Mr. Ahidjo had therefore given the assurance that if it was necessary to reinforce the troops in Sanaga-Maritime in order to protect the people, his Government would not hesitate to recommend such a step. Mr. Mbida had claimed that Mr. Ahidjo's Government had failed to restore calm, but the fact remained that the troops

had now been withdrawn from Sanaga-Maritime, at Mr. Ahidjo's request. Moreover, under his Government, most of those who had been in the maquis in Sanaga-Maritime had left it to support the legal authorities of the Cameroons. In 1957 Mr. Mbida had threatened to treat members of the UPC who did not surrender as rebels; now those same people were his friends.

12. Mr. MUFTI (United Arab Republic) asked if Mr. Mbida could give grounds for his assertions that the nine Conventions of 1 January 1959 annexed to the 1959 Statute (T/1427, annex II, and T/1434) had not been discussed at a plenary meeting of the Cameroonian Legislative Assembly.

13. Mr. MBIDA (Parti des Démocrates camerounais) replied that the Conventions had been studied by a committee, which had agreed that they would not be discussed at a plenary meeting.

14. Mr. MUFTI (United Arab Republic) said that, in view of the importance of the nine Conventions, he would like to hear the views of the representatives of the Cameroonian authorities on that question.

15. Mr. AHIDJO (France) stated that in accordance with normal democratic procedure the amendments proposed by Mr. Mbida and his supporters, who had been in the minority, had been rejected, while the amendments proposed by the majority party had been adopted. It had been agreed between the Cameroonian Government and the French Government that certain articles of the Statute needed to be supplemented by conventions relating to their application, and those had been accordingly annexed to the Statute. When the Conventions had been drafted, the Cameroonian Government had decided that although it was within its competence to approve the Conventions, they should be submitted to the relevant committee of the Legislative Assembly. That committee had studied the Conventions, and had decided that they should not be discussed at a plenary meeting. After the adoption of the Statute by the Legislative Assembly he had signed the Conventions for the Cameroonian Government.

16. Mr. TOURE (Guinea) asked Mr. Mbida for more information on the effect which the camps de regroupement established in some regions of the Territory had had on the population.

17. Mr. MBIDA (Parti des Démocrates camerounais) said that the regroupment operations had been decided upon and undertaken by the French authorities, in particular the military authorities, as a measure of protection for the population and without his knowledge. It was only several months later that he had been informed of them by the High Commissioner, who had told him at that time that part of the population affected welcomed the measure while others disliked it.

18. Mr. KOSCZIUSKO-MORIZET (France) asked Mr. Kingue-Jong what he thought of Mr. Mbida's present position.

19. Mr. KINGUE-JONG (Mouvement d'Action nationale du Cameroun) said he had been surprised by Mr. Mbida's defence of the UPC because that attitude was in flagrant contradiction with Mr. Mbida's position and policy during his term as Prime Minister. The Assembly should not allow itself to be deceived by Mr. Mbida's sudden reversal of position, which seemed to be prompted by a desire to find some means of retrieving his own political fortunes.

20. Mr. EILAN (Israel) said it was his understanding that Mr. Bindzi supported the present Cameroonian Government. He asked whether Mr. Bindzi had also supported the Mbida Government and what he had thought of the measures taken by that Government against the UPC.

21. Mr. BINDZI (Rassemblement du peuple camerounais) said that neither he nor his movement had ever supported the Mbida Government. As he had said in his statement to the Committee at the previous meeting, he had endeavoured to make Mr. Mbida understand that the course he was following was not in accordance with the wishes of the people of the Cameroons.

22. Mr. EILAN (Israel) asked whether, in view of the passage of the amnesty law and the statement by Mr. Ahidjo at the 849th meeting guaranteeing Mr. Moumié's personal safety if he returned to the Cameroons, Mr. Moumié now thought he could best serve the interests of his people by returning home. He would also like to know what steps Mr. Moumié intended to take to achieve his expressed desire for reconciliation and, more particularly, whether he and his movement would be prepared formally to renounce the use of violence.

23. Mr. MOUMIE (Union des populations du Cameroun) said that the question of his return to the Cameroons could not be regarded as a personal matter or settled on that basis. All the Cameroonians who had been exiled because of their refusal to betray their country must be allowed to return home in safety and to work for their ideals in freedom.

24. He could not propose any specific measures for reconciliation until his offer to confer with his political adversaries in order to negotiate a settlement had been answered. The violence of which his party had been accused had been the direct result of the violence directed against it and a legitimate exercise of the right of self-defence. If the Government was ready to abandon its use of violence against the UPC, his party would be prepared to renounce it.

25. Mr. EILAN (Israel) asked whether it was correct to conclude from Mr. Moumié's remarks that he was not at present prepared to return to the Cameroons, and whether he did not regard the assurances given by Mr. Ahidjo and his Government as constituting a renunciation of its violence against the UPC.

26. Mr. MOUMIE (Union des populations du Cameroun) said that the extent to which he and other exiles from the Cameroons would be open to prosecution if they returned remained unclear, even under the new amnesty law and after Mr. Ahidjo's statement. He would repeat, however, that the question was not personal but political; he and his colleagues had been outlawed for political activities and they, and all other political parties, must be guaranteed the right to pursue those activities freely.

27. Mr. AHIDJO (France) said that he agreed with Mr. Moumié that the problem was not the personal one of assuring Mr. Moumié's safety but the political one of achieving a general reconciliation. Such a reconciliation could only be reached in the Cameroons itself. The Cameroonian Government had not come to the United Nations to negotiate with anyone; the measures of reconciliation it had taken were already in effect and any persons who wished to take advantage

of them could do so. His Government was ready to welcome any Cameroonians living abroad who wished to return and to work with it for the construction of their country. It made no other conditions. On the other hand, it was useless for any of the exiles to expect an invitation from the Government to return home in triumph.

28. Mr. AKBAY (Turkey) noted that the statements made by Mr. Ahidjo, Mr. Kingue-Jong and Mr. Mbida concerning the latter's attitude towards the UPC were contradictory. He asked Mr. Moumié to give his views on that subject.

29. Mr. MOUMIE (Union des populations du Cameroun) said that his organization adhered to the principle that Governments, organizations and individuals should be judged not on the basis of ideology but on the basis of their position with regard to the Cameroonian problem. Whenever Mr. Mbida or Mr. Soppo Priso, the leader of the Mouvement d'Action nationale, had declared themselves in favour of a specific programme deemed by the UPC to be in the interest of the Cameroonian people, the UPC had supported them. The UPC had split with the Mouvement d'Action nationale when its representative had supported a Government which endorsed the *loi-cadre* of 23 June 1956. The UPC had been opposed not to Mr. Mbida personally but to his policy; as soon as Mr. Mbida had accepted the UPC's minimum programme in the interest of the Cameroonian people, he had won its support. At the present time, Mr. Mbida was striving to obtain acceptance of that minimum programme and therefore continued to enjoy UPC support. That did not mean that Mr. Mbida was a slave of the UPC or that the UPC was committed to support him at all times. If Mr. Ahidjo were prepared to endorse the same minimum programme, the UPC would back him.

30. Mr. DAVIN (New Zealand), observing that the representative of the UPC had referred to his deportation from the Trust Territory, asked whether he had in fact been deported or whether he had left of his own accord.

31. Mr. MOUMIE (Union des populations du Cameroun) stressed that no member of the UPC had ever asked to leave the Territory. He had been arrested on 3 June 1957 by the British authorities, held for one month in custody, then taken to Lagos and thence by plane to Khartoum.

32. Mr. MIRGHANI (Sudan) feared that Mr. Moumié's reply might create a wrong impression: the Sudan had admitted Mr. Moumié and his colleagues not because the British authorities had requested the Government to do so but at the request of Mr. Moumié himself. The representative of the UPC had sent a letter to the Sudanese Government, through a humanitarian intermediary, requesting admission as a political exile. In accordance with its policy of assisting all African national liberation movements, the Sudanese had granted Mr. Moumié and other UPC leaders now residing in the Sudan political asylum.

33. Mr. MOUMIE (Union des populations du Cameroun) corroborated the account of the Sudanese representative and thanked the Sudanese Government for having granted him political asylum.

34. Miss TENZER (Belgium) recalled that in his statement at the previous meeting Mr. Mbida had observed that he had been scandalized because the

French Communist Party had not been outlawed. She asked whether he felt that if there were a Communist Party in the Cameroons under French administration it should be outlawed.

35. Mr. MBIDA (Parti des Démocrates camerounais) replied that he had not understood the opposition in the French Parliament to the dissolution of the French Communist Party. He had thought that if that party were outlawed in France, Communists in the territories would abandon their activities. The decision to outlaw a party would, however, rest with the Parliament or the Government in a democracy. He personally felt that it was futile to take that step in any country because the Communists would continue to operate clandestinely.

36. Mr. VOUTOV (Bulgaria) contrasted the statement of the Visiting Mission that the situation in the Cameroons under French administration was relatively quiet and the UPC movement had virtually disappeared with Mr. Mbida's assertion that, although some 1,300 members and supporters of the UPC had been killed, thousands of others were still in existence. He asked Mr. Mbida whether he would characterize the present situation in the Territory as quiet, and, if not, where unrest was evident and what form it took.

37. Mr. MBIDA (Parti des Démocrates camerounais) said that the present situation in the Territory could not be said to be quiet. Members and supporters of the UPC were certainly in evidence, although many had gone underground for fear of reprisals and were living clandestinely in remote villages or in the bush, particularly since the death of Um Nyobé in September 1958. Their number could not be gauged with any accuracy, but from time to time there were incidents in some areas. Indeed, when the Visiting Mission had arrived in November 1958, there had been disorders in the area bordering the Cameroons under British administration. He had become persuaded of the need for a reconciliation with the UPC because he had realized that the movement still exerted considerable influence. He had endorsed a joint minimum programme with the UPC because he felt that its members wanted to return in peace.

38. Mr. YANG (China), referring to paragraphs 101 and 110 of the Visiting Mission's report, asked the representative of the UPC whether he had been in agreement with the policy of violence practised by Mr. Um Nyobé. As Mr. Moumié had chosen to flee his country while Mr. Um Nyobé had continued the struggle on the spot, Mr. Yang was under the impression that the petitioner must have had an aversion to Mr. Um Nyobé's policy of violence. He wanted to know whether or not his impression was correct.

39. He also asked Mr. Moumié what his party's programme was, now that under the Ahidjo Government the Cameroons under French administration was to become independent on 1 January 1960.

40. Mr. MOUMIE (Union des populations du Cameroun) said that the Visiting Mission had exceeded the powers conferred upon it by the General Assembly and the Trusteeship Council: it had not been asked to assess the support enjoyed by the various political parties in the Cameroons under French administration.

41. With regard to the reference in paragraph 101 of its report to Mr. Um Nyobé's policy of violence, he pointed out that the UPC was not a party of personalities, that it took collective decisions for which all members assumed responsibility and that those decisions were designed to promote the national interest. He challenged the implication that the UPC was popular in Sanaga-Maritime owing to the ethnic origin of Mr. Um Nyobé: while the personal influence of Mr. Um Nyobé had certainly been great and he regretted that he was not present to see his cause begin to bear fruit, the UPC, contrary to other parties of ethnic origin, had never been a tribal organization; it was a national movement. Its influence was not confined to Sanaga-Maritime; it was strong wherever there was repression in the Territory. Indeed, the French newspaper *Le Monde* had recognized in December 1958 that one-third of the Territory's population supported it, while the London *Economist* had said that it represented the most popular force in the Cameroons.

42. The UPC was not opposed to the Ahidjo Government any more than it was opposed to any given Government in principle: its sole concern was the execution of the minimum programme which it regarded as essential to the national interest. One of the objectives of that programme would be attained on 1 January 1960. The UPC had now established as its immediate objective the improvement of the standard of living of the Cameroonian people. Its position towards the Ahidjo Government would depend on that Government's attitude towards the interests of the Cameroonian people.

43. Mr. GERIG (United States of America), former Chairman of the Visiting Mission, wished to correct Mr. Moumié's statement that the Visiting Mission had exceeded the terms of reference it had received from the General Assembly. The Assembly had not dispatched the Mission or defined its terms of reference; the Trusteeship Council had appointed it and given it its mandate in resolutions 1907 (XXII) and 1924 (S-IX). The report of the Visiting Mission had been fully endorsed by the Council, which had at no point suggested that the Mission had exceeded its terms of reference. The Mission did not expect all those present in the Fourth Committee to agree with its conclusions; it had endeavoured to present the situation as it had seen it.

The meeting rose at 11.15 p.m.