

UNITED NATIONS  
TRUSTEESHIP  
COUNCIL



GENERAL

T/PET.2/139  
8 October 1951

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

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PETITION FROM THE SHARIFF IS-HAK ARAB COMMUNITY  
CONCERNING TANGANYIKA

Note by the Secretary-General: In accordance with rule 84 and supplementary rule F of the rules of procedure for the Trusteeship Council, the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the Trusteeship Council and to the Government of Italy as the Administering Authority of the Trust Territory of Somaliland, a communication dated 5 September 1951 from the Shariff IS-Hak Arab Community concerning the Trust Territory of Tanganyika.

This communication was transmitted to the Secretary-General by the United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in East Africa.

COPY

SHARIFF IS-HAK ARAB COMMUNITY,  
ARUSHA BRANCH,  
P.O. BOX 231.  
ARUSHA.

5th September, 1951.

The United Nations Organisation Mission,  
Arusha,  
thro' The District Commissioner,  
Arusha.

Sirs,

We have the honour to refer to D.Cs letter dated 28th August 1951 and to submit the following for your kind and sympathetic consideration please.

We, the members of the Shariff Isakia Community of the Tanganyika Territory beg to submit the following for your consideration.

In Tanganyika Territory there are three types of races, Europeans, Asians, and Natives (i.e. Africans). The three types of races have different legal as well as other incidents attaching to them. For instance in so far as the land law is concerned, Africans do not have the same freedom of dealing with lands as the Europeans or Asians. Or again, in certain liquor laws the same difference exist. Also with regard to Township and Municipal by-law and regulations, and similarly in many other branches of substantive law and in matters of legal procedure. We are not concerned with the reasons for these distinctions or, we only point out they exist. It is possible that, say, in reference to occupation of land for farming or residential purposes the emphasis henceforth may be towards more separatist tendencies. And the impact of say Kenya (where the divisions based on racial differences are more marked). On Tanganyika Territory cannot be ignored. In fact this impact can be palpably felt here more and more. That being the case, we naturally, to protect our own rights and interests, have to fight for the recognition by the Government of our racial status, as our legal rights flow from and are conditioned by such recognition by the Government that we are Asians. Where the Government classified us as Natives or Somalis in the Census Ordinance for the purpose of census that is the

/thin end

thin end of the wedge and if we did not take up the matter we might find out too late that the whole basis of our community has been changed to our great detriment.

Again, we claim we are of Arabic descent. There is reliable information which can be given and proved correct. It is not as a matter of a racial pride that we hold our racial origin dear; We cherish this racial origin as our community heritage. We owe it to our forefathers and to our posterity that we do not lose the bond which binds us and connects us with our race. This is not only a legal and racial issue. It is religious, cultural and anthropological issue as well.

You will agree with us when we say, it is our inalienable right to maintain our racial ancestry, in order that we may develop along the lines of our culture and civilisation. We have not the slightest objection to mingling with Africans. In fact we co-operate fully with Africans, the indigenous inhabitants of this land in every respect. But we are entitled. We respectfully submit, to retain our racial origin and to demand from Government such recognition. We submit the Tanganyika Territory Government should not by legislation classify us as this or that race. We only want to be classified the same race as we are sprung from. And this, we submit, is an elemental right; and we fail to see why the Tanganyika Territory Government refuses to grant our request. It is true a Government when committed to a line of action rarely changes its policy, but we submit in our instance. The Tanganyika Territory Government should allow our submission to prevail inasmuch as our representations are non-prejudicial to other but are vital importance to ourselves.

As we stated, we claimed to be Asians, and such we are not concerned with what the Tanganyika Territory Government intends to do with the Somalis, but we distinct from them. And the Tanganyika Territory Government should not classify us as Somalis or Natives or for the matter as Europeans, but should only classify us as Asians. Our actual RACE.

In our humble opinion therefore the contemplated or proposed changes in the status of Somalis in certain aspects are irrelevant to us, a part from the fact that such contemplated changes do not go far enough in any event.

/For reasons

For reasons aforementioned we once more humbly beg you to do justly by us and grant us our petition to be regarded and treated as ASIANS in its full implications.

We have the honour to be,  
Sirs,

Your obedient Servants,

(SGD) SHARIF EIMI.

(SGD) MOHAMED ALI, Elder.

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