

UNITED NATIONS
TRUSTEESHIP
COUNCIL



Distr.
LIMITED

T/PET.3/L.149
5 February 1962
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

PETITION FROM MR. MUHIRWA, PRIME MINISTER OF BURUNDI
CONCERNING RUANDA-URUNDI

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of procedure of the Trusteeship Council)

KINGDOM OF BURUNDI
OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

Usumbura, 31 January 1962
No. / Min.1

SUBJECT: Memorandum from the Government of Burundi
to the United Nations General Assembly

To the President of the sixteenth session of the
United Nations General Assembly
New York

Sir,

I have the honour to transmit herewith the protests lodged by the Government of Burundi against recent reports issued by the Press agency DIA and against the proposals of some petitioners in the United Nations Trusteeship Committee concerning the political union of Rwanda and Burundi.^{1/}

I have the honour to be, etc.

(Signed) André MUHIRWA
Prime Minister

cc for information to:

Mr. P.H. Spaak, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium and Ruanda-Urundi,
c/o United Nations, New York

Mr. Ngendandumwe, Deputy Prime Minister of Burundi,
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111 East 48th Street, Room 1432,
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Mr. Siryuyumusi Thaddée, President of the Legislative Assembly of Burundi
Hotel Barclay,
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Chief Representative of Belgium in Burundi, Usumbura

^{1/} See also T/PET.3/L.148.

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MEMORANDUM FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF BURUNDI TO THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Government of Burundi has learned from the international Press and radio about certain opinions expressed concerning Burundi and Rwanda-Burundi.

In connexion with incidents and clashes which took place in Usumbura, it was reported that "four Burundi have been murdered by youths members of the UPRONA Youth Party in power in Burundi". Some said that they were "political party members killed by members of the UPRONA Youth, a party opposed to the Christian trade unions". The report was issued by the DIA agency.

As it stands, the dispatch is tendentious and slanderous and directly incriminates the Government of Burundi.

A proper judicial inquiry into the aforementioned incidents is in progress and pending its outcome, it is presumptuous and improper to decide in advance who the guilty parties are.

Furthermore, the Government is not afraid of the responsibility of asserting that the UPRONA party does not oppose Christian or any other trade unions, so long as trade union leaders concern themselves with trade union activities.

Tendentious, inaccurate and obviously inspired reports such as that objected to above can only have the effect of provoking incidents similar to those which some people pretend to regret.

The Government of Burundi has also learnt with interest and surprise about the General Assembly debate, the ulterior motive of which appears to be to bring about a political union between Rwanda and Burundi at all costs. This opinion seems to be so strong as to make it appear that a political union would be a sine qua non for the granting of independence.

In that connexion, the Government wishes to present the following thoughts for consideration by the General Assembly in its wisdom.

The political and economic unity of Rwanda and Burundi may appear logical and necessary to anyone who merely glances at a map or thumbs through a file.

It emerges from a thorough and objective study, however, that although an economic union is undoubtedly useful and may be feasible, political union is neither useful nor feasible.

From time immemorial, as the attached historical survey shows, Rwanda and Burundi have been separate political entities under their respective Bami. The Akanyaru was always a political frontier and it was shifted to the advantage of one country or the other as the political tide changed, but the very fact that those historical conflicts persisted proves that each country had its own political development.

The first Europeans to occupy the territory at the end of the 19th century, the Germans, recognized that state of affairs and respected it by giving separate recognition to the Bami of Rwanda and Burundi.

In 1920, when the League of Nations took stock of the German colonies in order to convert them into mandated territories, the very fact that Ruanda-Urundi was spoken of once again confirmed that, politically, there were two countries, placed in the care of a single trustee. The unfortunate hyphen between the two names is undoubtedly the main reason for the present misunderstanding.

Belgium also accepted the obvious, recognized the two Bami and administered the two countries on their behalf using officials of the two separate nationalities. It was very careful to distribute public and revenue investments equally between them under the jealous - albeit initially timid - scrutiny of the two countries.

When it introduced political reforms of a democratic nature, such as the chieftdom councils and the Councils of State, it did so through separate elections and quite separate political bodies and authorities.

Rwandese petitioners who are now advocating political union between the two countries were for a long time members of Rwandese institutions which jealously safeguarded the separate political personality of Rwanda.

Belgium was in turn and for a long time the advocate of political integration of the two countries and went so far as to create the joint political organs which for many years was the General Council.

In 1958, when the first political parties emerged, not one, either in Rwanda or Burundi, and regardless of their differences in other respects, propounded for a single moment the political union of the two countries. Belgium was simply compelled to recognize that its efforts at unification had failed.

Today, the two countries have chosen different political forms based on opposite political ideologies.

Some have suggested the idea of holding a plebiscite in Rwanda and in Burundi in order to ascertain the will of the people as regards a possible union. The Government of Burundi finds that idea exceedingly strange.

Legislative elections have just been held in Burundi under the very strict supervision of Belgium and the United Nations. Nobody is contesting the results of those elections.

The result was that the nationalist party, which based its campaign on political independence, won 90 per cent of the votes and of the seats in Parliament. The present Government was unanimously invested by that Parliament. In the circumstances, it would be difficult to contest that Government's right to speak on behalf of all Burundi.

And that Government categorically rejects any political union whatsoever with Rwanda.

There appears to be absolutely no justification for imposing a referendum on Burundi on any question whatsoever. And to seek to impose it in respect of a question which was obviously settled at the polls, as it was a distinct part of the political platform of the winning party, verges on the absurd.

Consequently, the Government of Burundi requests the General Assembly to stop discussing the matter.

The Government hopes that the United Nations - champion of freedom for all nations - will not consider resorting to force in order to impose a political solution which could only create serious dissension in the future. And the Government of Burundi confirms the position taken by its official delegation in all respects.

Moreover, the Government reaffirms its earnest intention to explore the possibilities of close economic co-operation with its neighbours after independence.

(Signed) André MUHIRWA
Prime Minister of the Government of Burundi

(Signed) Jean NTIRUHWAMA
Minister of the Interior

(Signed) Albin NYAMOYA
Minister of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry

(Signed) Claver NUWINKWARE
Minister of Justice

(Signed) André BAREDETSE
Minister of Health

(Signed) Ignace NDIANYA
Minister of Public Works

(Signed) Gaspard NKESHIMANA
Minister of Social Affairs

FUANDA-URUNDI IS A PRODUCT OF THE COLONIZATION OF RWANDA AND BURUNDI

The newspaper reports of certain statements made by members of the Trusteeship Assembly have been a matter of constant amazement to us. Some members, in comparing our situation with that of Katanga, reveal their ignorance of Rwanda and Burundi. And their zeal dismays us when we remember a remark made by Mr. Pierre RYKLIANS concerning the policy to be pursued in these regions - a zeal which is ignorant and naturally destructive, since it does not see what it destroys. "He thinks he is simply clearing the ground for the grandiose monument of his dreams."

The situation of the States prior to their contact with the West and the relations between Rwanda and Burundi and Germany and Belgium justify the claim and show how illogical it would be to grant independence to Rwanda-Urundi and to deny it to Rwanda and Burundi.

1. As far back as we can reasonably go into the history of these States, we find two independent Kingdoms which are similar but not identical. The first assumption would take us back 200 years. The dynasty of the States is the method of calculating the age of our institutions. According to this assumption, then, Burundi had eight Kings or two series of four Kings, which would take us to about the eighteenth century. This assumption is now abandoned. The political organization would seem to have required more time in which to gain this stability. With the tombs of the Bami we go beyond the eight Kings of the first assumption. Near Kibira alone we find nearly eight, for it has seven, and we see tombs of Kings in Butandari. Mibambwe I, the fourth King of Rwanda, waged war on Mashira, with whom the future first King of Burundi, Ntare Rushatsi Cambrant resided. That would be about 1500. The history of Burundi also tells of a certain Ntare who attacked a State of Rwanda, the Bugesera, under the seventh King of Rwanda, Ruganza Ndeli, in the sixteenth century. Mutara the first Semugeshi, the eighth King of Rwanda defended Bwanamukari against a King of Burundi, Mutaga, and signed a peace treaty with him at Bufundu Malangara about the seventeenth century. Colonization found Rwanda and Burundi each sovereign in itself. Thus sovereignty is not a gift to be bestowed upon Rwanda-Urundi, but a restitution to be made to Rwanda and to Burundi, which were deprived thereof.

2. Germany was the first country to colonize Rwanda and Burundi. Europe was not unaware of the importance of Zanzibar in the Great Lakes, especially

during the last century. There is an Arab proverb which says: "When one plays at Zanzibar all Africa of the Great Lakes starts to dance". It was through there that the first Germans penetrated.

Rwanda and Burundi were later occupied militarily. They were part of German East Africa, which was divided into "Bezirke" (districts). Burundi was part of the Tanganyika Kivu Bezirk of which Bujiji was the capital. Rwanda and Burundi were then made into a separate Bezirke. As they became more familiar with them, the German authorities were compelled to recognize their originality and their independence of each other, and in 1908 they were made separate entities. Burundi had Gitega as its seat, and Rwanda had Kigali. Thus, even in the times of the German colonization, we see in what direction the decision regarding the independence of these States would be taken.

3. Germany lost its colonies during the First World War. By Ordinance of 3 April 1917, Belgium administered Rwanda and Burundi. The Congress of Versailles assigned the German colonies to the major Powers. Belgium was dissatisfied at being neglected. England had taken almost all of German East Africa and did not think of the country that had fought at its side. On 31 August, the League of Nations gave Belgium the Mandate over Rwanda and Burundi. The latter lost, as Mgr. Gerju writes, a very small State, a triangle of 150 square kilometres. Its position is like the muzzle of a dog, at the junction of the Ruvubu, the true source of the Nile and the Kagera; 25,000 to 30,000 inhabitants, Burundi by race and speaking Bugufi - "a mere trifle" is this parcel of land which the trickery of post-war policy took from Burundi and gave to others speaking other languages in Tanganyika Territory. The origin and independence of Rwanda and Burundi were both noted even in the first Belgian report (Urundi forms a small indigenous State, similar to Rwanda but not identical with it. It is situated roughly between longitude $29^{\circ}15'$ and $30^{\circ}45'$ E and latitude $2^{\circ}45'$ and $4^{\circ}14'$ S. It is bordered on the north by Rwanda, on the east by Ussuwi, on the south by the Territory of Ijiji and on the west by Kivu. It is bounded by natural frontiers formed by the rivers Rusizi, Akanyara, Nyabarongo and Maragarazi, and by Lake Tanganyika.

The origin and independence of these States with relation to each other never fail to impress writers, in particular Mr. Pierre RYCKMANS, who had an intimate personal knowledge of the life of these States. On returning from the Campaign of the Cameroons, he became administrator of Gitaga in 1917. Two years later, in 1919, he became Resident of Burundi. After an interval, from 1928 to 1933, he became Governor-General of the Belgian Congo and of Ruanda-Urundi until after the Second World War. In 1946, he was appointed representative of Belgium on the Trusteeship Council. He wrote in his book "Dominer pour servir" that in both Urundi and Rwanda the density of the population favoured the emergence of - and allows one to speak of - two genuine nationalities. "Another passage, despite the changes which have since taken place in certain regards, retains its validity so far as the originality and independence of the States are concerned. "The Belgian Administration found itself confronted in the Mandated Territory with two peoples and not only with several million Negroes without ties of relationship. Two peoples having their own origin, aware of their national unity and very clearly distinguishable from neighbouring groups. "Banyarwanda" and "Barundi" are the common names for individuals of very different races - the Batutsi and the Bahutu, who co-exist on good terms in each of the two kingdoms. "The change of régime in Rwanda strengthens even more the origin of the two States. One understands the logic and realism of Belgium on the eve of the independence of Rwanda and Burundi. The gesture which Belgium makes is a revelation to the world of the underlying reality of Ruanda-Urundi. A Representative of Belgium is appointed to Burundi, and another to Rwanda, to replace the Resident-General, who, straddling Rwanda and Burundi, made them Ruanda-Urundi for administrative purposes only to disclose something that really existed: Rwanda and Burundi. It is thus clear whether international sovereignty should be given to Rwanda-Urundi or to Rwanda and to Burundi.

4. The alarm of one of the members of the Assembly may be dispelled. Since Rwanda and Burundi have been independent of each other for as long as we know them, there will be no renewal of the difficulties of Katanga in the event of sovereignty for these States. Katanga is part of the Republic of the

Congo (Leopoldville), but Rwanda is not part of Burundi, nor is Burundi part of Rwanda. If Belgium has been criticized for having desired a single State instead of taking into account the reality, the diversity and the origin of the provinces, what would be said of the United Nations where we are concerned? The difficulties will not arise because of the recognition of Rwanda and Burundi as independent but because of the political union of States which have been rivals for centuries, which do not want to live together politically and which demand that their independence be recognized. The United Nations wants to decolonize all countries. The Fiction of Rwanda-Urundi, a creation of colonization, must not therefore survive decolonization. Decolonization must mean the death of Rwanda-Urundi and the resurrection of Rwanda and Burundi, which must regain their sovereignty, their personality and their letters. It is hard to believe that the United Nations by virtue of their sovereignty should wish to do for Rwanda and Burundi less than the colonizers and the trusteeship administrators who always bore their origin in mind and left them with the hope that one day they would regain their independence. Those who have known these States at first hand know what sacrifices colonization and trusteeship have meant for them. "The duty to make reparation", writes the same RYCKMANS, "involves the assurance that the indigenous people will have adequate compensation for the loss of their sovereignty. Is there any way of adequately compensating an individual for the loss of his freedom? For a State, sovereignty is its freedom. If in the trusteeship era there was no adequate compensation for the temporary loss of sovereignty, what compensation will be made to Rwanda and Burundi for the total loss of their sovereignty? It would certainly not be the bestowal of sovereignty upon Ruanda-Urundi that would be psychologically enviable. It would be a display of real ignorance of the Banyarwanda and the Barundi to create for them a Rwanda-Urundi by depriving them of their Rwanda and their Burundi. Such action would be inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations: to develop friendly relations among nations based on the principle of the equal rights and self-determination of peoples. The Principle of the equal rights of peoples will have been ignored for Rwanda and Burundi, to the advantage of a Rwanda-Urundi which in fact does not exist. Rwanda and Burundi would then be an exception to the right of

peoples to self-determination. They will have been made wards in order to be converted into perpetual slaves, since they would be deprived for ever of their freedom and sovereignty.

Trusteeship will have been nothing more than a snare for them. Our peoples would find that the purpose which the International Trusteeship System intended also for them remained unfulfilled, namely, "to develop self-government, to take due account of the political aspirations of the peoples, and to assist them in the development of their political institutions." No, Trusteeship cannot help us to develop self-government, or assist us in the development of our political institutions so that they play an active role in free legislative elections, if no account is taken of the political aspirations of Rwanda and Burundi and if the recovery by each of its sovereignty is refused. This would be incomprehensible. Again, the reality in Rwanda-Urundi is Rwanda and Burundi. And if independence is to be granted to our States, sovereignty must not be given to Rwanda-Urundi but must be restored to Rwanda and to Burundi.
