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PETITION FROM MR. ANTONI BIGIRANEZA  
CONCERNING RUANDA URUNDI

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BIGIRANEZA ANTONI  
1.8th Avenue  
Buyenzi,  
Usumbura,  
Ruanda Urundi

Kihanga, 26 August 1958

To the United Nations  
Visiting Mission,  
New York

Sirs,

I much regret that I was unable to inform you immediately of the wrongs done by the Administrator of the Bubanza Territory, Mr. Debare, and Chief Nyarusagi Athanase.

I have the honour very respectfully to request you in your high and authoritative position kindly to take action in relation to the following incidents.

On 7 October 1957, the very day after your departure, one of my workers came from my house in the town of Usumbura to tell me that there was a band of armed men of the Wavira tribe at my house waiting to attack me, and that they had set upon all my family. My workers and the neighbours all came to the rescue, and with good luck they managed to capture the leader of the group with all his arms.

So then I went to look for the Police Superintendent T.R. of Usumbura to ask him for help, and he took me back to my place in his car together with

eight policeman. But on our arrival, as soon as the armed band saw the headlights of the car they all took flight. The Superintendent would have pursued them but he was advised not to do so because it was already ten o'clock at night. The Superintendent therefore authorized me to keep the man who had been seized with all his arms until the Monday morning, and told me to take him, then to the Administrator of Kilanga T.R., Bubanga, the next day being a Sunday. He gave me three policemen to protect me from the malefactors, telling them not to fight them when they came back but to hide and if possible to get word to him.

On the morning of Monday, 9 October 1957, in obedience to the instructions of the Superintendent, I took the man who was captured together with the people who had captured him to Kihanga, to the Administrator Mr. Debere. As soon as he saw us the latter at once began to cross-examine me: "Bigiraneza", he said, "why didn't you bring him on Sunday"? "Because the Superintendent told us not to," I replied, "isn't that true? And in any case no office is open on Sunday and what is more I was authorized by the Superintendent in the presence of eight policemen to bring him to-day". He then told me to be quiet and ordered us fifteen days imprisonment and a fine of 500 francs each and released the man in question.

I appealed for reconsideration of the sentence to the Parquet at Usumbura and there the matter rests at present, without any results. So all these proceedings are the work of the Government which did not want us to write and send a report to Mr. Deberg and to Chief Nyarusagi Athanase. As proof of what I say, they authorized a policeman and some others to come and settle on my hill that had been cleared of bush and they took a field from me as well as from seven other people and since then they have been in the habit of taking land belonging to the Bahutu and handing it over to the Batutsi. Does this mean that the Bahutu have no right to grow crops on their own land or to eat? How then can they live? As witness of the foregoing I cannot do better than refer to Mr. Leudovic and Mr. Pe of Urundi.

Another thing: it is very surprising that the Government should go about collecting taxes by armed force when in fact the Barundi have never refused to pay their taxes. Further, if we take our cases to the Resident or

to the Governor they never have the courtesy to listen to us. Truly, I should be very grateful if you would base your judgements on the United Nations Trusteeship Agreement especially article 8 on the subject of alienation of land, and article 17 of the Universal Declaration proclaimed by the United Nations in the year 1948. By the way, we have been sending you letters since the year 1957 and up to now we have received no reply, in particular to the letter which you subsequently transmitted to the United Nations.

I have the honour to be, etc.,

(Signed) Bigiraneza Antoni