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CONCERNING RUANDA-URUNDI

(Circulated in accordance with rule 85, paragraph 2 of the rules  
of procedure of the Trusteeship Council)

Leopoldville, 6 February 1961

To the Secretary-General of the United Nations,  
NEW YORK

Sir,

We have always adopted a conciliatory attitude towards the Administering Power. We have always turned a blind eye to its errors, considering them, in our naïveté, to be errors inherent in human nature. However, now that blood has been shed in Rwanda, - and there has already been much bloodshed - now that arbitrary rule and lawlessness have been introduced and are triumphing over justice, now that United Nations resolutions have been defied, the criminal designs of Belgium have been laid bare. At a time when colonialism is in its death throes, Belgium is persisting in its imperialist aims. It wishes to perpetuate its domination over Ruanda-Urundi and use it as a spring-board to reconquer its lost and much regretted territories. We wish to state our views on this Belgian neo-colonialist plan.

We cannot be parties to an unjust, despicable and blameworthy policy. We are not the first to denounce it. Many voices have already been raised, but in vain. We are still at the mercy of hard-pressed colonialism. We are still in the grip of an antiquated, tottering regime which wishes to drag us down with it in its fall.

We are more than ever opposed to the democracy of terror, racism and poverty established and maintained with the help of bayonets. You know the present atmosphere, which reigned during the communal elections: an atmosphere of arson and assassination, of agony and tears. Under these conditions, how can the Rwandi people express its views freely?

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This people has been unable to express its views. Its voice will continue to be stifled, unless the United Nations intervenes directly. What other power would take this welcome initiative? Certainly not Belgium. Its negative and hostile attitude towards common sense solutions has been revealed in the United Nations and has recently been confirmed in the Ostende Conference. It was during this conference, held behind closed doors, that the decision was taken to sabotage the resolutions of the United Nations.

The general amnesty, which is an essential prerequisite for national reconciliation, is regarded by Belgium as a matter to be consigned to silence and oblivion.

The Referendum, which is the only method by which the Rwandi people can express their real feelings, was described as a kill-joy in this oasis of peace. A curious oasis of peace ... the Rwandi people, Belgium proclaims, is very Republican. Can this be proved? Belgium refuses to do so. It is true that in Rwanda the colonialist is the incarnation of the popular will.

As regards the general elections, with the ill-concealed insincerity Belgium declared that it was prepared to postpone them. Meanwhile, behind the scenes, politics in our country had taken a new turn. In the space of a few hours, without consulting the people, a monarchy was overthrown and a republic set up.

There is no need to dwell on the illegal and anti-democratic nature of this new institution.

There is no need to show that Belgium, obsessed by a destructive urge, has just opened a fresh breach in the unity of the Rwandi nation and fomented a new crisis in the African continent.

There is no need, finally, to state that we shall never support a regime which has counted thousands of innocent victims. We refuse to be our brothers' executioners. We can never take part in the inhuman treatment inflicted on our compatriots.

These unhealthy camps where our families are crowded together after being deprived of their goods are a disgrace to the United Nations. These prisons where our brothers languish because they dared to say "NO" to the Belgian administration are a disgrace.

We would remind the United Nations of its responsibilities. We are relying on it to produce a true democracy, since the democracy of Belgium is nothing but a

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racist dictatorship. The situation is serious. Belgium has betrayed its trust, as it has betrayed the confidence of the United Nations. It has abused its power and plunged our country into hatred, destruction and anarchy. Through pride or stupidity, it clings to its errors: the wise resolutions of the Trusteeship Committee, approved by the fifteenth session of the General Assembly, are disregarded so as not to hinder the creation of institutions which seriously prejudice any chance of national reconciliation.

We consider that the Belgian's "sacred trust" of bringing us civilization must not be allowed to continue. We do not wish to go on being the victims of the incompetence or dishonesty of a Government whose errors and failures, both national and international, are unsurpassed.

We therefore urgently request:

the total and unconditional application of the resolutions approved by the fifteenth session of the General Assembly, in December 1960.

the cessation of Belgian trusteeship and the immediate and direct intervention of the United Nations.

We are convinced that only these steps will prevent the worst from happening. Today it is already late, tomorrow will be too late.

We have the honour to be, etc.

Rwandi students at Lovanium University

LEOPOLDVILLE

BAYINGANA Dismas

BISENGIMANA Barthélémy

GAKUBA Désiré

GAKWAYA Faustin

GASANA Augustin

HAEIRWA Aloys

KALISA Charles

KAMAZI Athénéodore

KATABARWA André

KAYIBANDA Victorien

MUFERUKA Michel

MUNANA Callixte

MUNYANGANZO Richard

MUNYARIGOGA Hormisdas

NGEZAHAYO Vincent

RUDASESWA Wenceslas

RUHILIMA Thomas

RUKERIBUGA Paul

RWIYEGURA Alexis

SANO Epimaque

TWAGIRAYEZU Jean-Gabriel

(all signatures illegible)

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