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PETITION FROM THE PEOPLE OF SUMBE CONCERNING
THE CAMEROONS UNDER BRITISH ADMINISTRATION

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Note by the Secretariat: This communication was transmitted
to the Secretary-General by the United Nations Visiting
Mission to Trust Territories in West Africa.

The UNO Mission
Through the D.O. Mamfe

Sumbe, Mamfe
9th October 1958

Dear Sir,

We the people of Sumbe, beg to state that when the German Government ruled out that we should live in villages, some of us were under the village head of Defang and some were under the village head of Ntenembang. In 1914 we could not tolerate remaining in this way. We appealed to the then Government and we were set free. We became a recognised village with our own village head.

We then removed from our present site to a land between Nguti and Etinkem. In 1925 we noticed we were far from our family (Mbang) and that we had to walk over 30 miles to visit people of our family in other villages of Mbang Fotabe, Akririba, Defang and Ntenembang. Girls from these villages refused to marry us because we lived far from our original home. We were in Obang land, where our customs and language changed. We were then indirectly forced to return to our present but original land as free citizens of the family. In 1925 we returned here but willingly remained under Chief Eyang Defang. We decided to become a separate village after his death in 1946. The D.O. has no objection and often referred us to the N.A. The Chairman of the N.A. is the village head of Fotabe, but he would not give us the recognition because he fears the people of Akririba who are under him may rise one day to ask for recognition too.

We 90 taxpayers, 175 women and 500 children beg to ask to be recognised as a separate village. With our own tax collector. We do not see any reason why we are forced to be governed by the village of Defang. Is it not true that we are free to choose our own government? Is it not true that we are free and not to be oppressed?

We are 3 miles apart and today live in a land where our forefathers live before the advent of white man. There are smaller villages in Mamfe with only 10 taxpayers (e.g. Mbio) yet they have their own village head. Tali has just been made into Tali I and Tali II. The said N.A. has refused to appoint us a tax collector. Whereas the village head of Defang does not know the taxable males in Sumbe. Five quarter heads in Sumbe were heavily fined in the Magistrates court for collecting tax in Sumbe. As a result of this oppression most men are leaving Sumbe to Kumba and Victoria.

We therefore beg you to consider us as a separate village. At present we run a school of our own and have a church of our own.

We could be happy if we are allowed to elect our own village head. We are very capable of governing ourselves. While under V.H. Defang we are unable to aspire. The days of oppression are over.

We are, dear Sirs,
Your humble petitioners

Free writer (Signed) Andrew Mbu
Sumbe, Mamfe.

M.M. Asanu (thumb print)

Mbong Mchang "

Sam Akam "

Andrew A. Mbu "

Bakia Akong "
