

UNITED NATIONS  
TRUSTEESHIP  
COUNCIL



Distr.  
LIMITED

T/PET.4/L.161  
25 April 1961  
ENGLISH  
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

PETITION FROM WOMEN'S ASSOCIATIONS OF THE CAMEROUN CONCERNING  
CAMEROONS UNDER UNITED KINGDOM ADMINISTRATION

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of procedure of the Trusteeship Council)

The Women's Associations of the  
Cameroun  
Yaoundé

To the President of the United Nations General Assembly,  
Manhattan,  
New York

Sir,

We have the honour to submit this our humble petition to the United Nations  
General Assembly.

After the First World War our country was arbitrarily divided into two; one  
part was entrusted to the care of France, the other part to that of Great Britain.  
The duty of these two Administering Authorities was to help the respective  
populations of this Territory thus split up to develop politically, economically  
and socially and to lead them, in due course, to independence in accordance with  
the United Nations Charter. It would have been logical, once the Camerounians  
were able to rule themselves, for the United Nations to proclaim the  
reunification of the country, just as previously, without consulting the peoples  
concerned, it proclaimed the division of their national territory. However, what  
has occurred has been something diametrically opposite, especially in the matter  
of the Northern Cameroons.

A plebiscite has been held twice in the space of fifteen months in that part  
of the Territory. In November 1959 the people of Northern Cameroons voted as one  
man for secession from Nigeria. This result ought to have made it clear to the  
United Nations that the manifest desire of these peoples was to unite together

again after their unity had been disrupted by the wars waged between foreign countries. Notwithstanding, a second plebiscite was held fifteen months after the first, of whose results you are aware. We wish to express to you the indignation we feel at the results of this plebiscite in Northern Cameroun, for we are disgusted by the methods which the representatives of the United Kingdom authorities have resorted to in the Territory and which have led to this result contrary to the desires of the Camerounian people. The United Kingdom representatives have trampled on the United Nations Charter, which upholds the right of peoples to decide freely what is to be their destiny.

It is utterly incomprehensible that the people of this part of our national Territory should have changed their minds about the same matter within the space of less than fifteen months; for after having voted against integration, they could not possibly want to vote for it fifteen months later when nothing had arisen in the meantime to cause them to change their opinion. This clearly indicates that it was the means employed in the elections which varied according to the desired result decided upon beforehand by the representatives of the Administering Authority. These included: repression, wholesale participation in the voting by Nigerians previously brought into the country to increase the number of "integrationists"; refusal on the part of Nigerian officials in the country to place the "unificationists" on the electoral roll; repression and intimidation of the population and especially of the women, who were made to vote separately from the men, although it was the first time they had gone to the polls; repression exercised against the representatives of the Republic of Cameroun at the polling-stations by Nigerian police, over 700 of whom had been brought into the Territory from Nigeria three days before the elections; refusal to allow those representatives to take part in counting the votes, which was done by the wives of British officials.

We, as spokesmen for the Government and People of Cameroun, wish to protest vehemently and indignantly against these measures and to contest the result of this plebiscite, which has been vitiated by duly attested irregularities. We therefore request that it be immediately annulled. Our organizations taken together include over 500,000 women who are now profoundly disturbed to see their children, sisters and brothers placed under Nigerian sovereignty by illegal means.

We ask the General Assembly to study this crucial problem impartially and to organize in all fairness the holding of fresh elections in Northern Cameroun, in conditions which guarantee the legality of the ballot and complete freedom of expression for the people concerned.

Confident, as we are, in the impartial role played by the United Nations in the world,

We have the honour to remain, Sir, for and on behalf of the Women's Associations of Cameroun,

(Signed)

Mouvement "Femmes Camerounaises": illegible

Mouvement Union Démocratique des Femmes Camerounaises: illegible

Union des femmes camerounaises: Emma Mbem

Association des femmes camerounaises: illegible

Union Nationale des mères camerounaises: Cécile Mbok

Evolution des fermes camerounaises: Amackongo

Fédération des femmes travailleuses et paysannes: illegible

Association "Bia Bia", for the Chairman of the Administrative Committee: illegible

Yaoundé, 19 March 1961

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