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LETTER DATED 12 JANUARY 1977 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF  
BOTSWANA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE  
SECURITY COUNCIL

Pursuant to my letter of 22 December 1976 (S/12262) to the President of the Security Council for the month of December 1976, in which I requested an urgent meeting of the Security Council to consider the serious situation arising from the hostile acts of aggression against Botswana by the illegal minority régime in the British colony of Southern Rhodesia, I have the honour to convey to the members of the Security Council through you the following information relating to the forthcoming Security Council meeting.

This information is forwarded to supplement or complement the information which members might have gathered as a result of their own research.

I. The illegal régime's claims and intentions

As the liberation war in Zimbabwe intensifies, the Ian Smith régime is going to become more and more desperate, and in that desperation it is going to cast about for scapegoats. This explains its threats against Zambia, its attacks against Mozambique and now also against Botswana.

1. The régime claims that freedom-fighter bases exist in Botswana and so incursions must be made to destroy them.

2. To this end not only do regular members of the Rhodesian forces make frequent incursions into Botswana, but now, even more threateningly, a special commando force, the so-called Selous Scouts, is actually being trained to carry out missions of sabotage, abduction, attacks etc. in Botswana.

3. The régime has now declared the whole 400-mile border between Rhodesia and Botswana a war zone, or operational area, as they like to call it. So a state of war virtually exists.

II. Incidents

Violations of Botswana's territorial integrity and sovereignty have occurred since our independence in 1966, and they have increased as the armed struggle in Zimbabwe escalates. They are aimed at both the Zimbabweans seeking asylum in Botswana and at the Botswana. Only a few more recent ones are outlined below:

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1. Kidnapping of Mr. Ethan Dube, a member of Nkomo's group, and other Rhodesian refugees on 13 October 1974.

2. 11 October 1975. Rhodesian forces attacked a camp of the Botswana Police Mobile Unit (PMU) at Kazungula on the Botswana/Rhodesian border.

3. 19 October. A 15- to 20-man-strong Rhodesian patrol fired shots at Matsiloje Village in Botswana, hitting a dairy and a clinic.

4. 15 July 1976. Five Rhodesian army helicopters flew low in formation over Nxai Pan in north-west Botswana on three occasions. Later, Smith's spokesman telephoned a government official in Botswana boasting that the helicopters were pursuing freedom fighters.

5. Hardly a month later, an army helicopter carrying 8 Rhodesian soldiers landed 80 km inside Botswana, harrassed and interrogated villagers about the whereabouts of freedom fighters and movements of the PMU.

6. 11 November 1976. A patrol entered Botswana and fired at a man, who escaped to tell the story later.

7. 19 November 1976. Joshua Nkomo's ANC offices were blown up by two bombs which also destroyed two vehicles and damaged neighbouring houses. The agents escaped into Rhodesia in two vehicles.

8. 25 November 1976. Rhodesian agents abducted a 16-year-old boy from a Botswana village. Later, three others were abducted, and all have never been seen since.

9. 17 December 1976. Rhodesian soldiers attacked a PMU camp near a refugee camp inside Botswana. The invaders were repulsed by the PMU.

10. 20 December 1976. At 9 p.m. Rhodesian forces attacked a Botswana village, and, again, the PMU repulsed them, but they succeeded in destroying a house with hand grenades.

### III. Botswana's position

1. Botswana unequivocally stands by its decision to give political asylum to those who flee from oppression in the minority-ruled States of southern Africa.

2. No amount of harrassment will force Botswana to abandon this stand.

3. Botswana sees this crisis in the larger context of a minority régime refusing to yield to majority rule. Only majority rule can restore peace and stability in the area.

4. As to charges of freedom fighters operating from Botswana, Botswana has stated unequivocally time and again that there are neither any bases in, nor any operations from, Botswana.

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IV. Botswana's response

1. Condemnation of aggression.
2. Call for cessation of these acts.
3. Strengthening of its security forces for defence against aggression.

4. As defence expenditure was not planned and is thrust upon Botswana by this aggression, funds for regular, planned development projects have had to be diverted as a matter of urgency for defence purposes. Without international assistance normal development will be drastically curtailed or, in certain cases, come to a standstill.

5. The following security measures are being taken immediately:

- (a) Increase substantially size of the PMU.
- (b) Erection of new PMU bases at strategic points.
- (c) More arms and other defence equipment.
- (d) Security fence along part of the 400-mile border.
- (e) Watering points for cattle and people who normally drew water from the several rivers forming the border between Rhodesia and Botswana.

V. Type of assistance needed

Preliminary studies indicate that the implementation of the security measures outlined under IV.5 will cost approximately 25 million pula or \$US 29 million. These funds, as stated under IV.4 will have to be diverted from planned development projects, such as roads, schools, clinics etc. Botswana seeks assistance from the United Nations and the international community in general to ensure that its development programme is not disrupted by this diversion of funds.

I would be most grateful if Your Excellency could circulate this communication as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) T. D. MOGAMI  
Permanent Representative of Botswana to the  
United Nations

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