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QUESTION OF SOUTHERN RHODESIA

SECURITY COUNCIL
Thirty-third year

Letter dated 6 October 1978 from the Permanent Representative of
Burundi to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour, on behalf of the African Group of States at the United Nations, to request you to circulate as document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 93, and of the Security Council, the attached statement made by the African Group regarding the visit of the leader of the illegal racist régime in Southern Rhodesia, Ian Smith, to the United States of America.

(Signed) Artémon SIMBANANIYE
Permanent Representative of Burundi
Chairman of the African Group
for the month of October 1978

ANNEX

Statement of the African Group regarding the visit of the
leader of the illegal racist régime in Southern Rhodesia
to the United States of America

1. The African Group at the United Nations has learnt with dismay and is profoundly concerned at the decision of the Government of the United States to allow entry to the head of the illegal racist régime in Southern Rhodesia, Ian Smith. The Group is constrained to remind the administration of the United States that its decision is contrary to the Charter of the United Nations and is in direct violation of the letter and spirit of Security Council resolutions 253 (1968) and 423 (1978). In the view of the African Group, this development casts serious doubts on the administration's much-vaunted "new policies" towards our continent. It would also appear intended to give credibility to Smith's claim to have evolved an internal settlement, a claim which has not only been rejected but also condemned as a colossal fraud by the Security Council in paragraph 2 of resolution 423 (1978) which "Declares as illegal and unacceptable any internal settlement under the auspices of the illegal régime and calls upon all States not to accord any recognition to such settlement".

2. Article 2, paragraph 5, of the Charter of the United Nations states: "All Members shall give the United Nations every assistance in any action it takes in accordance with the present Charter, and shall refrain from giving assistance to any state against which the United Nations is taking preventive or enforcement action." While the African Group recognizes the principle of sovereignty of state, it however wishes to remind the administration of the United States that "this principle shall not prejudice the application of enforcement measures under Chapter VII," as stated in Article 2, paragraph 7, of the Charter. The Group also recalls especially operative paragraph 5 (b) of Security Council resolution 253 (1968) which calls on all States to "Take all possible measures to prevent the entry into their territories of persons whom they have reason to believe to be ordinarily resident in Southern Rhodesia and whom they have reason to believe to have furthered or encouraged, or to be likely to further or encourage, the unlawful actions of the illegal régime in Southern Rhodesia or any activities which are calculated to evade any measure decided upon in this resolution or resolution 232 (1966) of 16 December 1966". Ian Smith is the personification of the illegality in Southern Rhodesia.

3. The Government of the United States voted positively for this resolution and is therefore bound by its terms, in accordance with the provisions in Article 25 of the Charter which states: "The Members of the United Nations agree to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council in accordance with the present Charter."

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4. The decision of the administration of the United States, if implemented, would merely serve to provide solace to the Smith régime and certainly undermine further the efforts of the international community to isolate that illegal régime. The basic factor of seizure of power by Smith and a handful of white supporters from the British crown to pre-empt independence and self-determination for the six million Africans continues to be the problem. This no nation should circumvent by any manoeuvre.

5. It is evident that the rebel leader would, naturally, interpret the gesture as proof of acceptability of his illegal régime and a weakening of the international community's commitment against it. Furthermore, the gesture will also serve to encourage the rebel leader to intensify his persistent acts of aggression against the independent African States of Mozambique, Zambia and Botswana. Such a gesture to the rebel leader can only serve to embolden the illegal régime in its recalcitrance and continued defiance of the will of the international community, enable the rebel leader to persist in his treasonable acts against the administering Power and further encourage him in his policies of repression and callous brutality against the people of Zimbabwe.

6. In spite of this retrogressive step, the African Group would like to believe that the administration of the United States is still interested in exploring the possibility of a negotiated solution to the Zimbabwe question. The African Group recalls also that the administration of the United States is one of the co-authors of the Anglo-American proposals for settlement of the problem of Zimbabwe. It is logical to expect that the administration of the United States would scrupulously avoid any act which would further aggravate an already depressing situation or place its own settlement proposals in jeopardy.

7. Africa expects the administration of the United States, which has made pronouncements to the effect that the respect for human rights constitutes one of the corner-stones of its foreign policy, to rescind its decision bearing in mind the morality inherent in the burning issues facing mankind today in southern Africa, as well as the legal and binding obligation it has to discharge under the Charter as a permanent member of the Security Council.

8. The African Group also appeals to all States to deny transit facilities to the rebel Ian Smith and his collaborators.

9. The African Group draws the attention of the Security Council and the General Assembly to this act which violates relevant United Nations resolutions and urges these bodies to take urgent and appropriate action. For its part the African Group expresses its total and unflinching support for the Patriotic Front.
