



UNITED NATIONS  
SECURITY  
COUNCIL



Distr.  
GENERAL

S/11992  
23 February 1976  
ENGLISH  
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

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LETTER DATED 23 FEBRUARY 1976 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CUBA  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

On instructions from the Revolutionary Government of Cuba, I refer to the communications which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the South African régime addressed to you on 22 January (S/11938), 6 February (S/11970) and 13 February 1976 (S/11980), in which it refers to the problems of the "refugees" and "displaced persons" in Angola and seeks, in an exercise of cynicism as clumsy as it is futile, to confuse public opinion and to conceal the aggressive and totally illegitimate actions which the racist authorities are taking against the peoples of Angola and Namibia, and to disguise them by invoking so-called "humanitarian" objectives.

The whole world - and particularly the African peoples - knows the true nature of the Pretoria régime and the brutality of its conduct towards the African populations, and therefore understands the value that can be attached to its clumsy claims. It is a secret to no one that that régime is founded upon the most merciless exploitation of the African masses inhabiting the territory of South Africa, who have been subjected to the infamy of apartheid. Motivated by the selfsame desire for exploitation, the South African authorities are illegally occupying the Territory of Namibia, in which it has also introduced its abominable racist practices. From the Territory of Namibia, seeking to extend their odious system of oppression, the South African authorities invaded the People's Republic of Angola and launched the most dastardly and criminal aggression against its heroic people.

What moral authority could a Government such as that of the South African racists have - condemned by the United Nations for its systematic violation of the most elementary rights of the peoples that it subjugates - to speak of "humanitarian" questions? Whom does that régime believe it can deceive with its hypocritical expressions of concern for the fate of the "refugees" or the "displaced persons"? Might such persons not be victims of a war unleashed by the same South African authorities? Is it not a fact that millions of Africans have been brutally dispossessed of their lands and transformed into refugees and displaced persons, discriminated against and hounded within their own country, in South Africa and Namibia, as a result of the ignominious practice of apartheid?

In its letter dated 22 January (S/11938), the South African Ministry of Foreign Affairs mentions the existence of 2,800 refugees at three locations "near the Angola-South West Africa border" and of some 2,200 in "the South African port of Walvis Bay". In his communication dated 6 February (S/11970), Mr. Muller was more precise and explained that the "refugee camps" set up by the South African authorities are situated inside the territory of Angola at Calai, Chitado, Cuangar and Pereira de Eça. It is therefore obvious that such installations are violating the territorial integrity and the sovereignty of the People's Republic of Angola, which is an independent and sovereign State and a member of the Organization of African Unity, and is recognized by a constantly growing number of countries throughout the world. The first question that Mr. Muller should therefore answer is: by what right are South African troops operating in that area of southern Angola, and who requested their presence in those places?

Furthermore, it is not clear as to the actual status of the persons referred to in the letters from the South African Minister of Foreign Affairs. It may be recalled that, at the end of last year and the beginning of the current year, which is the period to which those communications refer, the invading South African troops occupied and exercised control over a part of the territory of Angola extending well beyond the area in which the so-called "refugee camps" are situated. Yet according to the same South African communications, there were at that time some 12,000 "displaced persons" in that area. If that was the case, if it was a question of settlers from the territory of southern Angola, hitherto occupied by the South Africans, who "displaced them"? Who caused and was responsible for such a displacement of the population?

In the light of the familiar background of practices of the racists of South Africa and Namibia and of the selfsame methods used by the former Portuguese colonizers in that area of Angola - when, in a vain attempt to reduce the support lent by its inhabitants to the revolutionary forces of MPLA, they dispossessed them of their lands and confined them to concentration camps and "strategic villages" along the lines of those which the United States imperialists made notorious in Viet-Nam - it is worth inquiring whether the refugees and displaced persons mentioned by Mr. Muller are not also victims of that criminal form of waging war so familiar to the racists of Pretoria.

If, on the other hand, the persons in question are not native of Angola and, given the plentiful and proven information on the deployment of foreign mercenaries who, together with the South African troops and under their direction, fought the Angolan patriots, in the very area to which Mr. Muller refers, the question should be raised as to whether the "displacement" of persons and the setting up of "refugee camps" might not be linked with the mobilization of international murderers, in the pay of imperialism, aimed at imposing racist and colonialist slavery on the people of Angola.

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I should also like to point out that the South African authorities themselves, on more than one occasion, have recognized the presence of their armed forces in the south of Angola and have declared their intention of occupying it and of converting it into a fortified zone controlled by its troops along the frontier with Namibia. It may be assumed that, in the context of those warlike and utterly illegal plans, the South Africans conceived such "camps" in order to confine the civilian population whom they themselves "displaced".

Given such a background and in view of the copious documentation on relations between the United Nations and the South African régime and its utter scorn for each and every one of the principles and purposes of the Charter, which justified the most firm and repeated condemnation on the part of the Organization, it is an act of incredible shamelessness that the Pretoria authorities should seek to present themselves as carrying out a "humanitarian" task in Angola and Namibia and to that end request United Nations assistance.

If Mr. Muller had any "concern" for the welfare of the Angolan people, he need only recommend to his Government that it should bring to an end, immediately and without conditions, its criminal aggression and should withdraw forthwith all its troops and South African personnel, as well as the mercenaries in its service, from all the corners of the Angolan territory that they are still occupying. If his "concern" were also to extend further south, he might also suggest to his Government that it should respect the decisions of the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council and of the International Court of Justice and should abandon, without further delay, the entire Territory of Namibia which it is occupying illegally, including the area of Walvis Bay, an inseparable part of Namibia.

The South African ruling circles and the imperialists who support and encourage them can no longer deceive anyone. Their countless crimes against the African masses demand the adoption of effective steps to put an end to their excesses and to speed up the hour of total liberation of the millions of men and women who are prisoners of their ignoble régime of exploitation and discrimination.

The glorious victories of the People's Republic of Angola, resulting from the selfless struggle of its heroic fighters under the direction of MPLA and from the unshakable solidarity of the community of socialists and revolutionaries throughout the world, have made it clear that the days of colonialist and racist slavery are numbered.

In order to bring about full African emancipation and to shorten the sufferings of those who are still victims of oppression, the fullest and most effective international action is needed, in which the United Nations, now as in the past, has an important role to play in order to overthrow and eliminate colonialism and racism in southern Africa.

I should be grateful if you could arrange for this letter to be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Ricardo ALARCON  
Ambassador

Permanent Representative of  
Cuba to the United Nations

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