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PETITION FROM J.B. KIGELI NDAHINDURWA, MWAMI OF RUANDA,
 CONCERNING RUANDA-RUANDI

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J.B. KIGELI NDAHINDURWA,
 Mwami of Ruanda

Usumbura,
 Nyanza, 16 June 1960

Copies for information to:

The Resident-General of Ruanda-Urundi, Usumbura
 The Special Resident of Ruanda, Kigali
 His Majesty, the King of the Belgians, Laeken Palace, Brussels
 The Secretary-General of the United Nations, New York
 The President of the Belgian Senate, Brussels
 The President of the Chamber of Representatives, Brussels

Your Majesty,
 Sirs,

Faced with the confused situation in which my country finds itself, and having regard to the very great responsibility weighing on me, particularly in these difficult moments on the eve of the communal and legislative elections, I find myself obliged to make a last appeal to your sense of the duties imposed upon you by your trusteeship over Ruanda-Urundi.

I would like in particular to draw your benevolent attention to the improper preparation of these elections, and to the anxiety felt by the great majority of the population in the face of the strong likelihood that these elections will not be held in complete freedom, although the Belgian Government promised at the conclusion of the recent conversations in Brussels that it would guarantee that freedom.

Considering that, according to the Communique published by the United Nations Visiting Mission before its departure from Ruanda-Urundi in March 1960, the elections previously scheduled for this month should be held directly after the general consultation of Ruanda-Urundi in the presence of United Nations observers,

Conscious of the enthusiasm with which the entire population supported the decisions contained in that Communique, and on the basis of which it proposes certain measures to restore peace, calm and national unity,

Referring, moreover, to the joint decision of the Resident-General of Ruanda-Urundi and the Special Resident of Ruanda to maintain the date of these elections at the end of June, despite the recommendation of the above-mentioned United Nations Mission,

Lastly, noting that in the conclusions of the recent Brussels conversations, the representatives of some of the political parties of Ruanda dared to support the maintenance of the Administration's time-table for the elections, and this in deliberate disregard of the ineluctable and unfortunate implications of the still unsatisfactory political and moral atmosphere in Ruanda on the results of these precipitate and ill-prepared elections (at least with regard to the degree of understanding and the still only relative freedom of the mass of the population),

I cannot but confirm to you that a real confusion, a certain desperation and a deep lack of confidence in the faithful and conscientious accomplishment of your mission is gaining ground in people's minds.

This is all the more disturbing because to the tension created by the murders, arson, pillaging and acts of intimidation which are still being perpetrated on a large scale in several Territories have been added a terror and panic exacerbated by the raids, (accompanied by innumerable rapes, kidnappings, acts of violence and arbitrary mass arrests, etc.) carried out by the Force Publique, the Administration's agents and the metropolitan forces, whose number is continually being increased.

Moreover, the presence of the latter is only increasingly disillusioning most people with regard to the hope of a possible cooling of passions and general calm, since all this massive military occupation has never in any locality

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created an immediate improvement in the situation, which, on the contrary, only grows worse at their approach and as the days pass.

What can be said of these elections, which will take place under a regime in which individual freedom and the most elementary human rights are trampled upon?

As a result of the acts of arson and the other terrorist and intimidatory activities which are still taking place in different parts of the Territory, untold numbers of people are wandering homelessly and without fixed political or administrative ties.

Not only do the legislative provisions recently put into effect grant only theoretical recognition to the right of this significant category of people to vote but there is a very large number of Ruandese who, as a result of systematically planned displacements (mass imprisonment without justification, assignment to residence under surveillance, forced concentration of victims and persons forced to leave their homes, flights motivated chiefly by the terror and unjustified torture practiced by the soldiers, etc.), and in particular a majority of the progressive elite who will be unable to take part in the election either as voters or, more important, as candidates.

Another factor which it is equally important to recall is the fact that it has been impossible to maintain the proper freedom of electoral propaganda since the Administration, through most of its officials, has on many occasions and by different means (public meetings, publicity, published statements and communiques of various kinds) continued to intervene intensively in order to make electoral propaganda in favour of certain individuals or political parties, while publicly seeking to discredit others.

In this connexion I cannot pass over in silence the fact that since November 1959 the Military Resident has untiringly engaged in the massive and unjustified deposition and recall (without compensation or appointment to other posts) of regularly appointed and worthy indigenous authorities who are highly esteemed by the people they administer and the Trusteeship Authority itself (all these measures render them ineligible) and their replacement by authorities chosen casually (already more than 250 have been appointed in this way) who are often incompetent or inexperienced.

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Most well-intentioned persons have been able to discern in this procedure a disguised means of enabling the persons thus appointed to make electoral propaganda either for themselves or for the only two parties (PARMEHUTU and RADER, and, to a somewhat lesser extent, APROSOMA) which are tools of the Administration (material advantages offered or promised to the members of these parties, compulsory possession, administratively supervised, of a membership card in PARMEHUTU especially, on pain of severe punishment, etc.), and which are nothing more than instruments of the present policy which is inexorably pushing the country towards ineluctable anarchy and into innumerable acts of public barbarism, because since November 1959 most violations have remained often unilaterally unpunished.

In the face of this situation, which calls for the co-operation of all the responsible authorities of my country, and of which I personally deplore the gravity, I cannot, in my capacity as Mwami, remain unconcerned, in spite of the lack of response to my many letters to Your Majesty and to you other gentlemen concerning the particularly dangerous turning Ruanda has taken since last November, the time at which, as if by coincidence, recognition of my right to take any initiative was withdrawn.

Accordingly, I wish to emphasize here once again the share of responsibility borne by Your Majesty and by each of you gentlemen in the results of the elections, which, as this brief summary bears witness, will take place in disquieting conditions and circumstances.

Thanking you in advance for your intervention, on which I rely both for the rapid rectification of this situation, which renders these elections fraudulent and, on the whole, undemocratic, in advance, and assuring you once again of my sincere co-operation, I have the honour to be, etc.

(Signed) Kigeli
