



UNITED NATIONS
TRUSTEESHIP
COUNCIL



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GENERAL

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25 March 1953

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

PETITION FROM MR. ROY DEGOROBORE, ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE OF NAURU

Note by the Secretary-General: In accordance with rule 85 and supplementary rule F of the rules of procedure for the Trusteeship Council the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the Trusteeship Council and to the Government of Italy as the Administering Authority of the Trust Territory of Somaliland, a communication dated 11 March 1953 from Mr. Roy Degorobore, on behalf of the people of Nauru concerning the Trust Territory of Nauru. This communication was transmitted to the Secretary-General by the United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in the Pacific.

COPY

Domaneab,
11th March, 1953.

The Chairman,
The Visiting Mission,
NAURU.

Sir,

Herewith the copy of a Petition from the people of Nauru.

You will find it contains fairly all the facts that we wish to put forth
for your consideration.

Very respectfully submitted,
(Signed) (Illegible)

(Roy Degorogore)
COUNCILLOR OF EWA AND ANETAN

Received through the United Nations Visiting Mission to the Pacific Islands, 1953,
at United Nations Headquarters: 17 March 1953

Nauru,
Central Pacific.

10th November 1951.

The Right Honourable,
The Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia,
Prime Minister's Department,
CANBERRA, A.C.T.

Subject:- WAR DAMAGE COMPENSATION FOR NAURUANS

Rt. Honourable Sir,

We whose signatures appear hereafter, beg leave to appeal to receive compensation for the material losses we suffered during the last war of 1939-45.

We have, more than once, submitted claims for same to the local Administration, but after receiving for a long time only various forms of verbal acknowledgement, we were, not so very long ago, told with finality by the present Administration, that we have no legal rights to claim for war damage and no compensation will be paid to us. Then after this, we were told that the Australian Government had granted a specific sum of money towards compensation for War Damage but that the Department of External Territories had proposed to pay the sum into a fund for purchase of furniture, for any Nauruan who has a house under the existing Nauruan Housing Scheme.

A majority of the people concerned including some Chiefs were strongly opposed to the proposal, but because the Majority of Chiefs who flagrantly disregarded the desire of the people they represent, favoured it, the proposal is being enforced.

After protesting to the Council of chiefs against the enforcement of this proposal and having been ignored all the time, we have now decided to petition your high office for -

(1) an injunction against the enforcement of the proposal;

(2) a reconsideration of the whole question of War Damage compensation for

Nauruans, with the view if feasible, to compensate each individual with an amount which would enable him or her to use the amount for the replacement of what he or she actually lost during the War.

Although a former Administrator reasoned that we could make no claim on Australia for war damage, as it was not she but Japan who destroyed our homes and properties, we think she owes a strong moral obligation to use, and at least could represent our claims to Japan, the wrong-doer.

Here are the anomalies that would be involved if the plan of indiscriminate settlement of War Damage claims as explained heretofore, is enforced.

1. The majority of new house-owners do not want to use the money for purchase of furniture but would rather it be paid to those who lost heavily during the War.

2. There are people who own houses under the present Housing Scheme, but who have no claims for war damage compensation. Is it right for them to use war damage compensation to buy furniture?

On the other hand there are people who have claims for War Damage compensation, but who have no houses under the existing Housing scheme.

3. Of this people who own Housing Scheme houses at present, there are naturalised Nauruans, who were classified as Other Other Pacific Islanders before the last war and owned then no houses on this Island. Should they use money that rightly should compensate those who suffered material losses during the War, to purchase furniture?

4. All Europeans here, employees of both the Administration and the British Phosphate Commission, have been compensated for what they lost on this island during the War. We believe each claimant, with the exception of perhaps one or two, received as compensation a sum not less than three figures in Australian pounds (£).

It is quite clear however that since these Europeans do not own houses or real estate here, their losses cannot be greater than ours.

5. The Australian Government compensated to the extent of millions of pounds to the Papua and New Guinea Natives for their material losses during the war even to the extent of compensation for bushknives and blankets they lost.

They are natives of a territory administered by Australia, who suffered heavily on account of the war with Japan, and definitely deserved the compensation they received from Australia. Are we not exactly like them, despite the difference in the nature of the materials we lost?

We are being forced to accept what we do not want and consider that such is not right. We say the arrangement for settlement of war damage, as it is, is not acceptable, and are therefore compelled to seek your just arbitration on the matter.

Trusting our petition will receive your sympathetic and fair consideration, we are, Right Honourable Sir, thanking you in advance.

Very respectfully submitted,
From the District of Aiwo - Nauru.

(Signed) THOMA Q.
(Thoma Q.)
Chief of Aiwo.

33 signatures followed

From the District of Boe - Nauru.

(Signed) JOHN HARRIS
(John Harris)
Chief of Boe.

44 signatures followed

From the District of Yarren-- Nauru.

28 signatures followed

From the District of Buada - Nauru.

16 signatures followed

From the District of Meneng - Nauru

27 signatures followed

From the people of Anibare.

(Signed) ADEANY DEIRERAGEA
