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PETITION FROM MR. NOUDJRODOU GASTON CONCERNING  
TOGOLAND UNDER FRENCH ADMINISTRATION

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Noudjrodou Gaston,  
Railway Engine Stoker serving at Lomé

Lomé, 14 March 1957

To the Procureur de la République,  
Court of First Instance,  
LOME.

Sir,

I hereby wish to claim damages against three policemen who used violence against me at about eight o'clock this morning. The three policemen, of whom one, Sagbo Benjamin, is well known to me, were on duty at police post No. 1 at the eastern end of the Avenue des Alliés (Lomé).

The following are the facts of the case.

This morning, as usual, I was going home, (rue de Bé) after cleaning the engine that I stoke in the afternoon on the line from Lomé to Anécho. I was cycling along the Avenue des Alliés, going from the station towards the police post. At some metres from the post, I found myself hemmed in by three lorries, one travelling behind me and in the same direction as myself, and the other two in the opposite direction in the rue d'Amoutivé. In order not to be crushed, I got quickly off my bicycle at the police post.

The three vehicles had to stop. The lorry coming from the south went in front of the post and continued in the direction of the station. A cyclist coming from Amoutivé shouted "Ablodé" to greet his friend who was in the lorry also coming from Amoutivé. Just when I was preparing to go on my way again the policeman Sagbo Benjamin came out and asked me if it were I who had just shouted "Ablodé". I told him that it was not, adding that it was the cyclist who had just

passed. Sagbo Benjamin ordered me to go inside the police post, which I did. There, Sagbo and two of his comrades began to beat me. I was struck with clubs on the temple, on the cheeks, on the chest etc.

As I felt legitimately entitled to defend myself, I took my penknife out of my pocket, whereupon my three assailants rushed outside.

The three policemen decided to take me to their white chief, Mr. Pauc. One of them put me on his bicycle, while Sagbo brought my bicycle along.

On our arrival at the central police station, Mr. Pauc asked if I had in fact shouted "Ablodé". I replied that it was a cyclist, who was speaking to an individual in the lorry coming from Amoutivé, who had said it. The chief constable told the policemen that they ought to have let me go instead of bringing me to the central police station. I was then set free.

I ask that this case be tried because:

- (a) I did not use the word "Ablodé"
- (b) the word "Ablodé" is not an insult
- (c) the physical punishment which the policemen inflicted on me unjustly and atrociously prevented me from carrying out my duties as a railwayman
- (d) I think that by punishing assailants, independent French justice will give Togoland confidence in France.

Signature illegible

Noudjrodou Gaston

Certified copies:

- 1. to the Prime Minister
- the Chairman of P.T.P.
- the " of C.U.T.
- the " of M.P.T.
- the " of Juvento
- the Procureur Général, Cotonou.

Copy sent to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for information and use as required.

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