

UNITED NATIONS

TRUSTEESHIP
COUNCIL



GENERAL

T/PET.11/156

5 November 1951

ENGLISH

ORIGINAL: ITALIAN

PETITION FROM MR. SCERIF AHMED ABDALLA

CONCERNING SOMALILAND UNDER ITALIAN ADMINISTRATION

Note by the Secretary-General: In accordance with rule 84 and supplementary rules F and L of the rules of procedure for the Trusteeship Council, the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the Trusteeship Council, to the Government of Italy as the Administering Authority of the Trust Territory of Somaliland, and to the Governments of Colombia, Egypt, and the Philippines as members of the Advisory Council for the Trust Territory of Somaliland, a communication dated 30 September 1951 from Mr. Scerif Ahmed Abdalla concerning the Trust Territory of Somaliland under Italian administration.

This communication was transmitted to the Secretary-General by the United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in East Africa.

51-56844

To His Excellency De Marchena Darique,
Chairman of the United Nations Visiting Mission. Mogadiscio
and for the information of the Chairman of the
United Nations Consultative Council, Mogadiscio

I the undersigned, Scerif Ahmed Abdalla, an Asceraf Notable, dwelling in Marca, beg to present the following facts for the careful and fair judgment of the United Nations Visiting Mission:

Your Excellency:

The injustice and cruelty of the AFIS Judiciary Authority -- injustice and cruelty already acknowledged by the United Nations Consultative Council -- compel me to invoke the supreme justice of the United Nations, to which people of all colours may look trustfully for justice and fair treatment.

As shown in the enclosed copy of the statement addressed to His Excellency, Ambassador Fornari, Administrator of Somaliland and for the information of the President of the Consultative Council -- both of whom did not take it upon themselves to answer one single word -- I have suffered the calamity of the slaughter of Scerif Mohamed Nur, a young relative of mine.

Mohamed Nur was killed in Merca in 1950, by Mr. Del Bufalo, holder of a land concession. The deed was committed brutally, without justification, but nevertheless the guilty party was under arrest by the Italian Police for less than one hour and was later acquitted by the AFIS judges.

Soon after this grave incident, my son, Scerif Abdurahman Scerif Ahmed, was beaten and kicked in the back by Mr. Bruno Pedraneschi, another holder of a land concession in Merca, who was wearing shoes at the time. Such an offence can be wiped out only by blood among us Moslems, yet this affair was treated by the Police and the Judiciary Authority in the same way as the act recorded above. The most astonishing thing is that no appeal is granted in the case of either verdict. Consequently any chance of obtaining justice is lost forever. Where is the solemn declaration of equality before the law? We heard and read the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, but we never saw the AFIS applying it to our people.

/Your Excellency:

Your Excellency:

The facts are briefly described in the enclosed statement. There is nothing I can do but solicit once again the judgment of the United Nations, since because of my protests against the two Italians I myself have suffered the insult of being deprived by the SACA of Genale, a company supported and protected by the AFIS of work for my two trucks.

Anxious for a favourable result I thank you deeply and send you my best wishes and greetings.

Scerif Ahmed Abdalla
Notable of Merca.

Mogadiscio,
30 September 1951

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To His Excellency the Ambassador Giovanni Formari
Administrator of Somaliland

and for the information of
the honourable Chairman of the United Nations Consultative Council - Mogadiscio

Your Excellency:

May the peace of God and His benediction be with you and may Almighty God assist you in your heavy task of making our people fully civilized and of leading them to economic and political independence in the very short term of ten years.

This humble writer is the Scerif Ahmed Scerif Abdalla Asciaraf, a Notable born and residing in Merca, who has always been friendly to Italy and to the Italians and who during the British rule not only strove for the return of Italy to Somaliland but in January 1948 called upon the United Nations representatives to beg them, in the name of my tribe, for Italy's return. I, more than anybody else in Merca, have suffered morally and materially for my loyal and sincere support of the cause of Italy in this country. Today the Italian Administration is here. We always had high hopes for its care of our people's rights and interests.

Unfortunately I feel obliged to tell you frankly that I have had to admit recently that I am disappointed and perplexed and that my faith in the AFIS is shaken. True, the AFIS has granted favours and gifts in order to win the Somali people's love, but justice is not administered to us with the clear fairness and the humanity we long for and which would win over our hearts. Our people are indeed primitive and therefore they instinctively acknowledge what is right, just as on different occasions their acute sensitiveness tells them that justice is not being done.

Sad times can be foreseen for all of us, Your Excellency, should our people lose their confidence in the justice of the AFIS. As Your Excellency will see, I am being frank. Perhaps I am taking too great a liberty, but I am persuaded to do so by the conviction that nothing should remain unknown to Your Excellency.

Two events occurred recently involving relatives of mine, shaking not only my family's confidence in the justice of the AFIS but also the confidence of the whole Somali society.

/Scerif Mohamed

Scerif Mohamed Scerif Nur, a young relative of mine, was killed by Mr. Del Bufalo, an Italian citizen, who ran over him in his car at the very garage where he was working in Merca. The case was tried last January in the Somali Law-Courts and, notwithstanding many proofs demonstrating the full responsibility of the defendant, it ended with the acquittal of Mr. Del Bufalo.

Our pain was even more acute when the young judge who had delivered the sentence told the relatives of the victim that Mr. Del Bufalo was ordered to pay only S/1,500 damages, while everybody knows that the amount of a "Diah" for manslaughter in Somaliland is much higher than that.

The second fact concerns my son, Scerif Abdurahman Scerif Ahmed, who has been grossly insulted by Mr. Bruno Pedraneschi -- an official of the Agricultural Union -- who seized him by the neck and after swinging him round and round kicked him in the back. Among Moslems, such an offence can be avenged only with blood. Upon my son's complaint to the Carabinieri in Merca, Mr. Pedraneschi was charged with assault and battery but at the hearing on 17 February the charge was modified to "abuse" and Mr. Pedraneschi was dismissed by the same court which had judged the case of Scerif Mohamed Scerif Nur's death.

It will be a long time before the wounds inflicted upon our honour by such a verdict will be forgotten; furthermore, we are told that there is no appeal in either case.

Your Excellency, as far back as 1 November 1950, I forwarded to Mr. Benardelli, head of the AFIS home Affairs Department, with a copy to the Command of the Carabinieri (Military Police), a report on the dismissal of my son by the SACA in Merca. The SACA refused to give him back his job, which had been suspended for some time while his truck underwent repairs. Only after the sympathetic intervention of the Authority in Mogadiscio did my complaint have any result.

The SACA, however, obviously in revenge for our complaint to the authorities, barred my second truck from its usual service, giving the work to Mr. Pedraneschi, whose character and behaviour towards the Somali people are notorious.

/I shall

I shall not give any more details about this incident, but I do remember that when His Excellency Brusasca spoke to the people of Merca he assured us that there would be bread and work for everybody. The behaviour of some officials, however, no matter how Italian they claim to be, is not designed to strengthen our love and loyalty for Italy.

Your Excellency's intervention in this affair is needed to confirm the supreme assumption that THE LAW IS THE SAME FOR EVERYBODY, even when Mr. Pedraneschi or the SACA are concerned, and to see that our trucks are allowed to work like other people's. The Italians must in future treat us with the deference and understanding we think we deserve.

If Your Excellency is willing to grant me an interview, my people and I will be deeply grateful.

Your humble servant

Scerif Ahmed Abdalla

Mogadiscio,
24 February 1951

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