

UNITED NATIONS  
TRUSTEESHIP  
COUNCIL



GENERAL

T/PET.11/43

11 May 1951

ENGLISH

ORIGINAL: ARABIC

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PETITION FROM THE MOSLEM LEAGUE, MOGADISCIO  
CONCERNING SOMALILAND UNDER ITALIAN ADMINISTRATION.

Note by the Secretary-General: In accordance with rule 85 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 22 February 1951 from the Moslem League concerning the Trust Territory of Somaliland under Italian Administration.

This communication was transmitted to the Secretary-General by the United Nations Advisory Council for the Trust Territory of Somaliland under Italian Administration.

PETITION FROM THE MOSLEM LEAGUE, MOGADISCIO

Copy

28 February 1950, or 22 Jumada al Awwal, 1370

The President, Trusteeship Council, United Nations

Sir,

We beg to submit to you the following complaint.

The whole Somali people has repeatedly determined that the Arabic language shall be the official language of Somaliland, on account of its associations with the Islamic religion and its firm connexions with the social and cultural life of the country. We therefore protest most strongly and urge speedy satisfaction of the nation's desire, which is that all official communications and applications to the Government and to public departments such as the Post Office, banks, criminal courts, local authorities and the High Commissioner's office, and all addresses, shall be in the Arabic language; and that education shall be made general throughout Somaliland by the early provision of a sufficient number of qualified teachers for all the country's schools. We observe here a movement against the Arabic language and the Islamic religion, directed towards abolishing that noble language and the principles of Islam.

In face of this problem we are unable to sit with folded hands. The language with which we have lived for the past thirteen hundred and seventy years is the language which we learn and which we teach to our children, which we cherish and for which we give our lives.

We beg you to lay the matter before the Trusteeship Council for examination at the earliest possible moment. A year of the trusteeship period has passed, and yet we see no interest, nor any sign that interest is felt, in this language. The truth is that the Arabic language is neglected entirely, and there are in the whole of Somaliland no qualified teachers at all, nor any schools properly so called, but the name is used merely for wretched, starved village Koran schools, which do not merit the name of school. Thus we have no education in Arabic, but the Italians wish to wipe out the Arabic language and

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to replace it by Italian, and to merge the Somali people with the Italians and colonize the country themselves, doing away with Somali identity and tradition.

Article 4 of the Trusteeship Agreement for the Territory of Somaliland made between the United Nations and Italy provides that:

"The Administering Authority, recognizing the fact that education in its broadest sense is the only sure foundation on which any moral, social, political and economic advancement of the inhabitants of the Territory can be based, and believing that national independence with due respect for freedom and democracy can be established only on this basis, undertakes to establish a sound and effective system of education, with due regard for Islamic culture and religion.

"The Administering Authority therefore undertakes to promote the educational advancement of the inhabitants, and to this end undertakes to establish which shall include elementary, secondary, vocational (including institutions for the training of teachers) and technical schools, to provide free of charge at least elementary education, and to facilitate higher and professional education and cultural advancement in every possible way.

"In particular, the Administering Authority shall take all appropriate steps:

"(a) To provide that an adequate number of qualified students from among the indigenous population receive university or professional education outside the Territory, so as to ensure that sufficient qualified personnel will be available when the Territory becomes a sovereign independent State;

"(b) To combat illiteracy by all possible means;..."  
-- and to disseminate culture generally and in particular to foster interest in Islamic culture and Islamic law where circumstances so require.

(signed) Al Sharif Mahmud Abd al Rahman  
President, Moslem League

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