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PETITION FROM THE CHIEFS OF BELET UEN 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 18 February 1952 from the Chiefs of Belet Uen 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.

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T/PET.11/265

Translated from Italian

Belet Uen, 18 February 1952

To the Advisory Council for Somaliland under
Italian Trusteeship Administration,
Mogadiscio.

We, the undersigned Chiefs of Belet Uen district think it is our duty to bring to your knowledge what happened and still happens in this District owing to misrule and persecution by Italian administrative officials, who, although they call themselves democrats, remain what they used to be, namely, colonial Fascist officials, accustomed to considering Somalis as beings without feeling under their dictatorial rule.

First of all we wish to state that we decided to send this report only after having awaited justice in vain, and having repeatedly appealed to H.E. Fornari, who did not even deign to let us know that he had read our statements.

For the sole reason that we have been members of the "District Council" in Belet Uen, under the British Administration of Somaliland, and that we did not adhere to the so-called "pro-Italy" parties, though we do not belong either to the opposition, known as S.Y.L., we are continually prevented from carrying out our functions as Chiefs representing the people, and the local Authority, headed by the Resident Noce, keeps a sharp look-out on us, and seeks an excuse, any excuse, to institute proceedings against us, the result of which would be a prison sentence.

Among the many, we cite the following instances of misrule and open persecution against persons who do not turn spies in favour of the said officials, or else do not pretend to have no eyes to see and no intellect to understand.

1. In Belet Uen, the democratic institutions that the Administration boasted that it had set up in Somaliland - such as the Residency Council and the Municipal Council - do not exist in practice; the latter has not yet been set up and the former has been prevented from having a concrete existence owing to the improper choice of Councillors made by the Resident who took as a basis not so much intellectual capability,

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degree of education and capability of representing the various elements, as would have been fair, but rather the supposed political ideas of each of them; out of 15 Notables admitted as members, who, according to instructions received by A.F.I.S., should have been selected from among the real and most capable Notables of Belet Uen, no less than 11 are illiterate and 4 belong to ethnical groups of other districts, and of these, only one resides permanently in Belet Uen, although he is not well thought of by the group he is representing; one of these, indeed, is a paid chief of the El Bur Residency (Sheck Mohamed Ali "Hidik - Aberghidir Air"); he was sent to Belet Uen to strengthen the position of the "Africans", who are rather weak here. Of the 7 remaining ones, four are Giagele and three Makanne; there are no Awadle, Galgial, Shekal, Dir, Udegen and many other communities thriving in Belet Uen. The eleven above-mentioned Councillors belong to the "African" section of Belet Uen, and therefore, on account of the evident disproportion among ethnical groups, and among political formations (out of 33 Councillors, 17 are Africans, 12 independent and 4 S.Y.L. and ethnically, 6 are Giagele, 5 Makanne, 4 Galgial, 3 Awadle, etc.) the sound portion of the Councillors, who saw themselves placed in the minority, refused to enter as members of the Council. Subsequently, endeavours to balance the Assembly by adding other independent or S.Y.L. elements were brought to naught by the Resident, who did not accept the list submitted, and refused to admit persons carrying out an activity on their own (merchants, etc.); this shows that A.F.I.S. officials - at least those whom we saw here - prefer to have as Councillors persons who are compelled to depend, economically, on them (candidates to the office of paid Notables), thus encouraging parasites on the country's budget.

2. Public order is not properly safeguarded and when disorders occur, due to lack of protection, then the rage is turned against the people in order to collect fines. At the beginning of this year, on the occasion of Administrator Fornari's visit to Belet Uen, the tribe Makanne, which, as was well known, was at the time and still is in discord

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- over the choice of a Ugas, was permitted to make a demonstration with spears, swords, daggers and clubs. The Police warned the Resident of the danger of permitting a demonstration with weapons, but the Resident instructed that they be allowed to do it. The parties scuffled with one another, and there was a large number of wounded persons. About seven people were detained in prison over a month and then fined 100 So. each, in addition to a month's imprisonment, as a result of the incident, charged with illegally carrying arms. Why were they not prevented from entering the village with such arms, instead of taking pleasure in persecuting them afterwards? The answer should be given by the Administration.
3. The population is not free here to choose its own representatives. There is a question extant between the Chief Sandol Gure - Awadle Agon - and his people, who, since they no longer had confidence in him, asked the Authority for permission to convene a "Scir" through which to prove to the Authority that the population do not want that Chief any longer. The application was signed by 45 persons from among the most representative of the tribe. The Resident at first refused to receive them, alleging as a pretext that they were not allowed to call at the office without their Chiefs, against whom they were petitioning, being present. Subsequently he threatened to persecute them, because, so he said, they had been influenced by other persons and were not reasoning with their own mind, and refused to permit the "Scir", demanding that they should produce the signatures of all Agon people. All that because the Chief Sandol belongs to the African Party, and it is feared that the choice may fall on a "not sound" element, according to those officials' conception. At present it appears that the petition has been passed over to the Police, obviously to frighten the signatories, who had been expressly delegated by the population, and to make him recede from their purpose.
4. Chief Nur Siad - Awadle - Chief of the urban centre of Belet Uen, serves disinterestedly all those who come to him for medical care in which he has much expense. For more than thirty years he has been

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helping all in this manner without ever asking for anything and he is known in all Somaliland as a good surgeon even though not in the sense conceived by more advanced people. Now he is on trial because he is participating in our group of independent persons only for having seen superficially a year ago a woman who had been wounded on the head by her husband and who then died as a consequence of a confinement.

5. The Chief Ibrahim Abdo - Giagele - who is not well thought by the Administration because he stubbornly refuses to join the U.A.S. (African Union of Somaliland) thus asserting his independence, was recently summoned to the Police Station, charged, according to what he was told, with having borne false witness in favour of a fellow who is alleged to have unduly collected arrears of salary as ex-serviceman. The Chief gave no evidence, in favour or against anybody, and does not even know the person in question, but in the meantime, even though he is not convicted ... he was shown that he is persecuted. So all others too, who show independence, whether or not they belong to the S.Y.L., are carefully watched to be annihilated.

We request your intervention, so that this state of things be put to an end, and A.F.I.S. officials carry out their duties, without harassing the population.

We attach hereto copies of two statements^{1/} previously sent to H.E. the Administrator who did not deign to let us have a word of acknowledgement, and without the state of things having improved in the least.

We beg to remain,

Your obedient servants,

(signed)

1. Chief Mahallim Hussen Barre - Scekal
2. Chief Osman Abdulla - Udegen
3. Chief Nur Siad - Awadle
4. Chief Ibrahim Abdo - Giagele
5. Notable Ali Ido Maganei - Galgial
6. Notable Hagi Nur Ali - Galgial

Received by the United Nations Advisory Council in Mogadiscio on 3 March 1952.

^{1/} Note by the Secretariat: The documents referred to have been placed in the files of the Secretariat and are available to the members of the Trusteeship Council upon request.