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PETITION FROM MR. ABDI RAZAK HAJI AHMED MOHAMUD CONCERNING
SOMALILAND UNDER ITALIAN ADMINISTRATION

(Circulated in accordance with rule 85 and supplementary rules F and L
of the rules of procedure for the Trusteeship Council)

Petition from the Trust
Territory of Somaliland under
Italian Administration

To His Excellency Mr. LUIGI EINAUDI,
President of the Italian Republic,
ROME.

Copy for information to:

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS,
NEW YORK.

We are poor, oppressed Somali workers of Chisimaio, employed by the "Luigi Gallotti" Stevedoring Company and by the Italian Romana Company's sawmill, numbering in all some 750 men and 50 women. On behalf of our fellow-workers we are sending this humble petition directly and personally to Your Excellency as the gracious supreme head of the Italian nation upon which in 1950 the United Nations conferred the trusteeship of our country until 1960. That year, we earnestly hope, will witness the joyful event of our attaining sovereignty and independence. In accordance with the Trusteeship Agreement, the Italian Government is represented in Somaliland by the Italian Administration for the Trust Territory of Somaliland, which has now been in full operation for several years without, unfortunately, the Territory or its people achieving the slightest progress in any department of life in the solution of the various problems which are the essential points of departure for the accomplishment of the important and noble task which Italy has set herself to perform for the benefit of the Somali people. Four years of administration have not succeeded in establishing an

amicable relationship of understanding and co-operation between the Somalis and the Administration on the one hand and between the former and the Italian residents on the other. No Somali today has the slightest intention of failing in his sacred duty to make his modest contribution, to the utmost of his endeavour, side by side with the Italian Authority, for the general good both of Italians and Somalis, and we are now convinced that the sole solution for the good of our country in the pursuit of its goal is that every Somali should work honestly and faithfully in co-operation with the Italian Administration. The latter, however, will not admit that aim and that desire. In order to hide nothing from you, we shall describe the origin of this unhappy state of things, so that the Department of Political and Civil Internal Affairs - which, in spite of all the restraints on the Administration, is in the hands of the old colonialist, Dr. Gualtiero Benardelli, who has been in our country ever since 1928 - may not forever put off the attainment of that goal which has been set before us, and which we are all awaiting: Italy, Somaliland and the United Nations. For that man, a fascist, a believer in colonialism and a hypocrite, with the co-operation of his colleagues, appointed at his behest, under whom the Somali will never enjoy his right to justice, freedom and progress, is leading our country inevitably and irrecoverably to the brink of the abyss, and we know full well that this fascist group of Administration officials and employees is stoutly supported and protected by another group working under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Department for Somaliland Affairs, and headed by that notorious colonialist, Dr. Franca. Has Italy through her Government newly assumed responsibility for us in order to protect and educate us and lead us along the path of progress of her age-old culture, or to destroy us utterly? Surely Italy, a great nation of 50 millions, cannot desire, for the mere six years remaining to her, to administer the Somalis, men instructed and educated in her great schools of justice, honour and democratic freedom, by subjecting them to oppression and tyranny beneath the yoke of this fascist and colonialist group of officials and employees? We know that with good will our desires can be met justly and opportunely.

The great Italian nation can lead Somaliland forward along the straight road of justice, culture, progress and democratic freedom and wipe out the memory of the grave errors committed and the brutal methods used by the colonial fascist government which ruled Somaliland between 1922 and 1941, to the detriment of the Somali people and their country as a whole.

Now in conclusion we should like to relate the injustices from which we workers and labourers of Chisimaio have been suffering for the past four years and about which our voice has been raised in a legitimate claim for justice, verbally and in writing, to everyone from the Resident of Chisimaio to the Regional Commissioner of the Lower Juba Region, and from the head of the Department for Internal Affairs to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and from the latter to the Administrator of Somaliland, without our obtaining justice or the satisfaction of even a negative reply, in reply to the complaints we have made at various times. We have also written to the United Nations Advisory Council in Somaliland and they at least replied clearly in writing and also by word of mouth that the Council had no power to intervene on our behalf with the Administration to obtain justice and the protection of our labour and our rights.

1. We have asked the Administration to protect labour by introducing provisions fixing wage-rates, for at present we receive the miserable sum of 3 somalos a day for a man and 2 somalos a day for a woman for a whole day's work, and those who work for the above-mentioned Gallotti Company even work at night and at sea, undergoing every peril.

2. We have also asked that the provisions should establish the right to compensation for accidents at work and for occupational illness, the right to hospital treatment, to holidays, to old-age and retirement pensions, and so on, none of which are at present recognized, for we are at the mercy of the Authority and have no hope of obtaining even the least of the rights set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

3. The exercise of our legitimate right to strike, protest and demonstrate is strictly prohibited by the Administration, although the previous Administration, i.e. the British Military Occupation, freely permitted it. Anyone who protests

is arrested and tortured by the police by order of the Resident or the Regional Commissioner. If he persists, he is condemned to a long period of imprisonment.

4. Towards both the indigenous population in general and towards us workers in particular the Administering Authority at Chisimaio adopts a policy of economic restriction of every kind. For instance, all last season's Gu and Der crop of maize, durra and sesame seeds from the whole territory of the Lower Juba, was acquired and stored by the Commissioner and the Resident of Chisimaio, at the nominal price of 25 somalos per quintal for durra and maize and 110 somalos per quintal for sesame seeds, which are the staple foodstuffs of the Somali worker. Almost as soon as they had bought these grains, they began speculating at our expense and the price jumped to 45 somalos per quintal for the first two kinds of grain and to 180 somalos for the other. At our absurd rate of pay of 3 somalos a day for men and 2 somalos a day for women, how can we possibly feed ourselves and our families even with superhuman efforts at economy?

The true situation, Sir, is as we have summarized it briefly above and we implore you to afford us every possible human assistance and protection for our rights and our labour, so that we may be treated like honest workers the world over.

We offer our apologies and beg you to accept our sincere and devoted homage and respect.

Chisimaio, 1 February 1954

Address for reply: Somali Abdi Razak Haji Ahmed Mohamud, Chisimaio.

Signed: 1. Hassan Mohamed Jusuf
2. Giama Mussa Samantar
3. Abdi Razak Ahmed Hagi
4. Mire Giama Midigh
5. Said Ali Mohamud
6. Giama Nur Fahie
7. Omar Mohamed Hassan
