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PETITION FROM MESSRS. YUSUF ALI BARA, AHMED HABIB AND OTHERS
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)

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

10 April 1955

To the Chairman of the United Nations Advisory Council, Mogadiscio,
Somaliland.

From Yusuf 'Ali Bara, Ahmed Habib and twenty others, Bender Cassim.

We send you this petition to speak for us and to express our complaint, which we consider of great importance: we are being persecuted by the Italian Trusteeship Administration in Bender Cassim. We, the undersigned, are young Somalis resident and domiciled in Bender Cassim and we charge the Commissioner and the Resident of this town and other officials in our district with pursuing a policy of fomenting dissension, prejudice and intransigence.

The Commissioner has summoned up to one thousand of his supporters to his villa and given them orders to sow dissension among us.* He has formed a company..... in the name of his Government and vested control of it in some of his prominent supporters, giving them wide authority: they have seized our products..... but the truth is that the directors of this company are leading members of the Trusteeship Administration.

The Commissioner and the Resident have declared that they will not agree to recognize any Somali youths except those..... because they know that we do

* Translator's note: The next two lines of the petition are illegible; elsewhere, dots indicate illegible words.

not accept the principles of their policy of enslavement. Accordingly they have decided:

- (1) to bar us from all posts of every kind;
- (2) to deny us access to them: whenever we wish to state our position to them they summon the soldiers;
- (3) to debar us from all rights as nationals, because we are young men and we belong to the Somali Youth League.

The Commissioner and the Resident have long been hoping for fundamental cleavages among us Somalis. The Commissioner has now appointed a blind man named Mohammed 'Ali Shemran, the head of the village of who has completed discretion, while the Government has chosen a certain Nur 'Othman, the leader of the Somali Democratic Party and one of its supporters, to be his secretary and to travel as his representative to Mogadiscio and elsewhere.

As you know, the Trusteeship Administration announced municipal elections last year throughout Somaliland and these were completed on 28 March 1954. In the municipality of Bender Cassim, eight of the thirteen municipal councillors belong to the Somali Youth League, but unfortunately the heads of the Trusteeship Administration in Bender Cassim did not recognize their existence and have not once called them, and despite their election the Administering Authority appointed that man and others.

2. The present Resident who is carrying out a Fascist policy has been in this town almost three years. He does as he likes with the local funds and we have conclusive evidence that he is seeking to take over the district, but we are powerless to do anything.

For three months this man has been working a large farm situated sixty kilometres from the town and up to the present time has spent an enormous sum on it. The estate he has requisitioned was not allotted to him by the local council or the town leaders or anyone else, but it is believed that he seized the village and its lands after he was appointed District Officer.

3. He has an interpreter who has been here three years; this man controls the Resident to such an extent that they have opened a large shop in partnership in Bender Cassim, imported a number of sewing machines and made a lot of money.

We will confine ourselves to these two matters and can prove all that we have said.

We see that some sections of the people are opposed to the Trusteeship Agreement but we are in the same state as when the country was occupied by the Italians in the old days. We therefore beg you to deal justly with us and to visit our district to observe all these activities.

We consider ourselves oppressed by the Administration leaders who have made large sums out of our best land, while we do not know where to find our daily food. These leaders decided last week to take five of their supporters, members of the Somali Democratic Party in five villages, to Mogadiscio by steamer, to sign documents we know nothing about. We do not know what the Italian Administration's purpose is in taking these men who have no proper authority and are not supported by the leaders of the people, but were chosen by the Italian Administration.

We accordingly testify and explain to you, as the Advisory Council, that you should know that we are not satisfied with these representatives whom we regard as traitors and that we do not consent to anything they are going to do. We call them traitors, who are going to sign and do whatever they are told to do by the Italian Administration.

For these reasons we report these activities by the Administration in Bender Cassim in violation of the Trusteeship Agreement. We ask you to examine this petition, which we address to you from the bottom of our hearts and in which we express our views and claim our rights which have gone astray. We respect the law and so beg you to concern yourselves with our evil lot, our rights and our complaints against the Commissioner and the Resident.

Hereafter we shall not accept any action the Italian Administration takes through its officials in Bender Cassim. We beg you to communicate directly with the Italian Administration Authorities, ordering them to remove the Commissioner and the Resident. We have complete confidence that you will give these matters your closest attention.

(Signed) Yusuf 'Ali Bara

Ahmed Habib

Nur Yusuf Farih

Musa 'Ali Yusi

Mohammed Nur 'Ali

and 17 other signatures.

10 April 1955
