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TRUSTEESHIP
COUNCIL



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PETITION FROM MR. SCERIF MOHAMUD ABDURAHMAN AND OTHERS
CONCERNING SOMALILAND UNDER ITALIAN ADMINISTRATION

(Circulated in accordance with rule 85, paragraph 2, and supplementary rule F of the rules of procedure for the Trusteeship Council)

Translated from Italian

Mogadiscio, 27 December 1953

To: the ADVISORY COUNCIL of the
UNITED NATIONS IN SOMALILAND
MOGADISCIO

We consider it our duty and of utmost necessity, in the general interest of this Territory, to report the following to the Advisory Council, asking it to do anything in its power with AFIS and with the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations to obtain that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights be recognized and observed by the Administering Authority, and at the same time to persuade the Italian Government, responsible for this Territory's administration, to promulgate, once and for all, a suitable and democratic law dealing with justice, the budget, etc.

The continual pleas of the Somali people regarding the urgent need for democratic laws, compatible with evolution and advancement of the Territory's inhabitants, are no doubt well known, but unfortunately the Italian Administering Authority will not listen to them.

The Judicial and Political-Administrative Authorities of AFIS, since the latter assumed power in Somaliland over four years ago, adopt measures, and legislation - in the judicial, fiscal, juridical, administrative and political fields - based on Royal Decrees and rules issued during the colonial era, and subsequently the fascist government. For example, Royal Decrees issued for Eritrea from the year 1885 onwards were extended to Somaliland and are still in force; there are still in

force decrees and ordinances issued by the various Governors who succeeded one another in Somaliland since the land was officially occupied from 1900 to the year 1951, when Somaliland was occupied by British troops, as well as Proclamations and Ordinances imposed and decreed by British Military Authorities of occupation for exigencies of war, in a state of emergency during the world war, and finally Decrees and rulings issued by the General Imperial Italian Government for East Africa, under which Somaliland had been passed after the occupation of Ethiopia.

Fines and penalties are still inflicted collectively or singly with no concern for justice and without a rudimentary court debate; income tax, taxes on rentals, purchases, sales, tax on business, tax on buildings, on huts, on wooden structures, on licences for trade and industry, on handicrafts, on circulation of motor vehicles, judicial fees, taxes on occupation of public ground, on "shambas", on agricultural production, etc. etc. are levied arbitrarily, and are not free from serious abuse, particularly by administrative and judicial officials up-country, in accordance with those old colonialist and fascist methods, and excessively so, to say nothing of custom and postal fees, which are altered and increased almost from month to month. We may state that to the existing taxes and dues - by now amounting to hundreds of items, many of which were unknown and did not exist during the British occupation - new and severe burdens have been imposed on the impoverished Somali population, who cannot stand it any longer, whose economic situation grows worse daily.

In short, there is definitely an economic cold war being conducted against Somalis to destroy them and make them disappear from this earth, for political reasons that we cannot discover and understand.

If we are not greatly mistaken, the Trusteeship Agreement provides that the Administering Authority is to elaborate and promulgate democratic laws and rules, compatible with the Country's requirements and its people's development and advancement, whereas we now find ourselves at the starting point of colonial era and of fascist rule; indeed, we may say that we are much worse off, because now Italians, partly perhaps out of revenge, partly because Somaliland is no longer a colony of theirs but a Territory under the protection and guardianship of the United Nations, awaiting its full sovereignty on a day not very far off, are unconcerned with the problems and sorrows of the Somali people; they endeavour only to reduce them to the most abject poverty and irresoluteness.

We believe that even the Trusteeship Council, in various meetings held, addressed to the Italian Government recommendations and suggestions to promulgate as soon as possible new democratic laws for the Territory, but the Administering Authority remains stiff and deaf to reality and good faith for the honest fulfilment of the task undertaken.

We ask only that AFIS, or better still, the responsible Italian Government, promulgate and establish laws for Somaliland covering all sectors of Somali life, and that its representatives in Somaliland be advised to abide by the Declaration of Human Rights. We ask for the salvation of what still remains of life and resources. We ask for justice and equitable administration under the guardianship of the United Nations before the Somali population perishes, through inhuman treatment, at the hands of the present Administration.

Yours faithfully

Please address reply to: Scerif Mohamud Abdurahman
P.O. Box 340

(Sgd)

Hassan Barre	Farah Mohamed
Dahir Sciacul	Hagi Wasai Erzi Nur
Iusuf Ali	Mohamed Osman
Elmi'Auale	Amin Hagi Abuti
Hagi Osman Abdi	Mohamed Sare
Scerif Ahmed Ibrahim	Abukar Mohamul
Osman Ali Hassan	Hagi Musa
Hagi Mohamud	Aden Hassan
Hussen Nur Mohamed	Mohamed Abdi
Ali Mahad	Ali Aden
Ahmed Sceek Ali	Mohamed Ossoble
Mohamed Hassan	Iusuf Hassan
Ghelle Uarsama	Ahmed Mohamed
Mohamed Ali	Mohamed Iusuf
Mohamed Dini	

and 65 other signatures

P. S. The attention of the Advisory Council is drawn to the grave fact, without exaggerating or going into the matter at length, that even decrees and ordinances signed by Administrators Fornari and Martino are devoid of virtue or justice, being only facsimili or worse of those issued by former Governors of the ex-Italian colony; Somalia. The only solution is a decision by the Italian government to promulgate just laws, which laws to be examined and approved by the United Nations.