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COMMUNICATION FROM CHIEF AMADOU ALI, CHIEF OF THE ZONGO OF BAFILO
CONCERNING TOGOLAND UNDER FRENCH ADMINISTRATION

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Lomé, 5 September 1957

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Amadou ALI, Chief of the Zongo
of Bafilo
c/o Jules Moustapha,
27, rue des Haoussas,
Lomé

To: The Procureur of the Republic of Togoland, Lomé.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit to you an appeal against the verbal decision to expel me from Bafilo, of which I was informed by Mr. Puchiavy, the Chief of the Sokidé Sub-division, who insisted that the sentence should be carried out at once on pain of police escort.

Here are the facts:

On 17 June last we were assembled in the village square at Bafilo for the visit of the United Nations Commission on Togoland. Ayéva Issifou, the Paramount Chief, who came with the Mission, noticed that the Chef de quartier and I were standing with the nationalists and immediately announced publicly that he would see us after the members of the United Nations Commission had left. That same day, at about 5.30 p.m., a European gendarme came from Sokodé, where Ayéva Issifou, the Chief, had gone with the Commandant de cercle and his assistant that afternoon after the departure of the Mission for Lama-Kara. This gendarme, accompanied by an African auxiliary, went to the house of Amidou,

Chief of the Agoudadé quarter. I was taken there by a local policeman (garde-cercle) who was sent to fetch me. My friends Akélé Idrissou and Gibril Mola were already there, in handcuffs. We were made to get into a lorry which took all three of us to the police station at Sokodé after the particulars of our descriptions had been taken down. The European gendarme who took down the information gave me to understand that I was to be expelled upon release from prison.

The next day, Friday 18 June, we were brought before the Magistrate in his office. He was the first to acquaint us with the charges against us which were that we had struck Ayéva Issifou, the Paramount Chief. We denied this and pointed out to the Magistrate that it was curious that we should have struck the Chief in the presence of the Commandant de cercle, the Chief Subdivisional Officer, the Chief of the gendarmerie and several local policemen and auxiliary gendarmes and that none of them had done anything. Furthermore, I showed the Magistrate my disabled arm and leg to prove to him that the whole thing was a put-up job. We were returned to prison. About two weeks after our imprisonment we were given permission to get in touch with Mr. Amorin, our lawyer, who came from Sokodé. We returned to prison after the interview.

On Friday 30 August the European gendarme came for Gibril Mola and me, leaving our third member, Akélé Idrissou, alone in the prison. We were placed in the custody of an African auxiliary who took us to Ayéva Issifou, the Paramount Chief. Caizié, the African assistant to the Commandant de cercle, arrived at the Chief's house in a light lorry. They made us get in. The lorry called for Dermann Ayéva, then for Safiou at the U.A.C. and then took the road to Bafilo. We reached Bafilo at noon. The crowd was assembled in the camping-ground. Mr. Paillère, the Commandant de cercle, Mr. Puchiavy, the Chief Subdivisional Officer, and the European gendarme were already there. We got down from the lorries. The crowd surrounded us. The Commandant and his men met in a hut with the chiefs and some of the village notables. Shortly afterwards the Commandant began to call us in one after another. When my turn came Mr. Puchiavy, the Chief Sub-divisional Officer, looking at a paper in front of him, informed me that the chiefs no longer wanted me in the village and that I must immediately pack my bags and leave the village.

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They were, he said, releasing me out of pity after the three months of imprisonment, but my expulsion from the village, which the chiefs were demanding, must take place immediately. I asked for at least three days to settle my affairs. Mr. Puchiavy met my request with a categorical refusal. I then returned home. I had just had time to dress, when a policeman came to the house with orders for me to be on my way. I therefore had to go at once to avoid worse consequences, leaving behind my three children and three wives, all of the same village, and all my property, houses, fields and livestock.

Sir, I have lived at Bafilo for nearly forty years and it can hardly be said today that my interests are not bound up with those of the inhabitants of the place. I am chief of the Zongo, where even some people from the village live, and I collect taxes. What am I really accused of? I do not know. The mere fact that I was seen in a group of nationalists, who belong to the country like the others, has brought down on me all these misfortunes, going as far as my expulsion. I have come to Lomé, Sir, to implore the protection of justice and your intervention so that I may return to Bafilo to my family and my property.

I have the honour to be, etc.

(fingerprint)

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Amadou Ali

Copy to the Secretary-General as a petition, for information and for all useful purposes.

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