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COMMUNICATION FROM Dr. PEDRO OLYMPIO, CHAIRMAN
OF THE MOUVEMENT POPULAIRE TOGOLAIS CONCERNING
FRENCH TOGOLAND

(Circulated in accordance with rule 24 of the rules
of procedure of the Trusteeship Council)

24 April 1957

To the Minister for Overseas France
c/o The High Commissioner of the French Republic in Togoland

Subject: (a) Re-election of the Legislative Assembly
(b) Municipal elections

Sir,

In compliance with the provisions of the loi-cadre, the Territorial Assemblies elected by limited suffrage in the Cameroons and in all the Territories of French Equatorial Africa have been re-elected by universal suffrage.

Togoland is the sole exception. Its Assembly, which was elected by limited suffrage, has not been re-elected. It has been simply recalled and converted into a legislative assembly. Despite the example of the Territories cited above, and the recommendations of the United Nations that that Assembly should be re-elected by universal suffrage, the Togolese Government has so far done nothing to legalize the situation. We cannot understand the reason for this anomaly.

Moreover, the Act passed by the French Parliament relating to the creation of communes de plein exercice in certain Overseas Territories has been applied in French West Africa, French Equatorial Africa and the Cameroons.

Togoland is again the only exception. The elections prescribed by that Act have taken place in all the Territories. In Togoland they were postponed from 28 October 1956 to 28 March 1957. As that date approached they were again postponed sine die by the Togolese Government on the pretext that a bill on the elections was pending in Togoland. Can they enact better laws on municipal elections in Togoland than those in force in France and recently followed by the Overseas Territories?

Thus, we have the impression that the members of the Togolese Parliament, not having been elected by universal suffrage, fear that they will lose some personal advantages and resort to pretexts and dubious arguments to prolong that situation, which is not in the interests of the country or of France, but in their own.

We cannot hide the fact that such a situation borders on dictatorship and creates a certain uneasiness in this country which the Defferre Act has made the most autonomous in French Africa, but where, unfortunately, it is being applied in a far from democratic manner.

We must therefore deem it our urgent duty to request that, as has been done in the Cameroons and in all the Overseas Territories, municipal elections prescribed by law should take place as soon as possible and that the Togolese Legislative Assembly should be re-elected by universal suffrage.

We think, Sir, that a just and honest application of the provisions of the loi-cadre will bring peace to this country and give it confidence.

In the hope that our request will meet with your kind attention, we have the honour to be, etc.

For the Executive Committee

Dr. Pedro Olympio

Chairman
