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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON TERRITORIES UNDER PORTUGUESE ADMINISTRATION  
ESTABLISHED UNDER GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 1699 (XVI)

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE FORTIETH MEETING

Held at Arden Hall, Accra,  
on Friday, 1 June 1962

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(UDENAMO)

Note: In accordance with the decision taken at the 67th meeting, this summary  
record is based on notes prepared by the Committee secretariat.

PRESENT:

Chairman:

Mr. ACEKAR (Guinea)

Members:

Mr. GRINBERG Bulgaria

Mr. WIJEGONAWARDENA Ceylon

Mr. VENEGAS Colombia

Mr. MOUSHOUTAS Cyprus

Mr. GONZALEZ-CALVO Guatemala

Mr. OLISEMEKA Nigeria

Secretariat:

Mr. KUNST Secretary of the Committee

HEARING OF A PETITIONER FROM THE MOUVEMENT DE LIBERATION DE LA GUINEE DITE PORTUGAISE (MLGP)

At the invitation of the Chairman, Miss Ernestina da Silva (MLGP) took a Place at the Committee table.

Miss da SILVA said that Portuguese Guinea was administered and exploited by the colonialists. Forced labour was rampant. Workers, including women and children, were recruited by force and often so badly treated that they died. For example, Administrator Carlos da Costa had tortured Africans and had caused the death of one man who had been buried at night at Tcheke. Chief Joa Augusto da Silva, who had led a peaceful demonstration in Abijam in 1930 had been tortured by the authorities, left unconscious and later beheaded.

During 500 years of colonial rule in Portuguese Guinea not a single African had been able to secure a responsible post. Africans could not obtain a proper education. In 1937, Governor Sarmento Rodrigues had opened a secondary school in Portuguese Guinea but Africans could not afford the fees. In August 1959, workers in a firm called Casa Gouveia had asked for better wages and as a result many of them had been killed by Portuguese troops. She quoted other instances of the torture and murder of nationalists by the secret police. She was confident that the Special Committee would do everything in its power to see that the exploitation of Portuguese Guinea was stopped. Its peoples were determined to liberate their country from the shackles of Portuguese colonialism.

Miss da Silva (MLGP) withdrew.

HEARING OF A PETITIONER FROM THE UNIAO DAS MULHERES DE ANGOLA (UMA)

At the invitation of the Chairman, Miss Serafina de Assis took a place at the Committee table.

Miss de ASSIS said that the Territories under Portuguese administration had borne the yoke of colonialism for five centuries. In Angola, educational opportunities for the Africans were strictly limited. A confidential circular issued in March 1958 by the Directorate of Administrative Services at Luanda showed clearly that the purpose of the education provided by the Portuguese authorities was to destroy all traces of African culture and to inculcate the alien way of life of the Portuguese.

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The system of forced labour imposed by the Portuguese on the Angolans was worse than slavery. Whereas voluntary workers were badly treated and had little freedom, forced workers lived in a state worse than misery. Many of them were moved to other African countries with the result that between 1918 and 1958 the population of Angola had fallen from 10 million to just over 4 million. Clearly, the real aim of Portuguese policy was the extermination of the Angolan race.

The indigenous inhabitants had no political rights and no one to defend their interests. The administration of justice was quite arbitrary and the courts had little contact with the indigenous inhabitants. Often, the chief of a region was neither loved nor respected by his subjects. Chiefs were bribed to provide forced workers and sometimes, if they did not provide them, they were punished themselves. Forced labour contracts were illegally extended, inadequate wages were paid, pregnant women were often compelled to work and corporal punishment was regularly inflicted. Many foreign companies in Angola benefited from forced labour.

Miss de Assis (UMA) withdrew.

HEARING OF A PETITIONER FROM THE UNIAO DEMOCRATICA NACIONAL DE MOÇAMBIQUE (UDENAMO)

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Mabunda, representative of UDENAMO at Accra, took a place at the Committee table.

Mr. MABUNDA said that the Portuguese had held on to Mozambique for more than four centuries. They ruled it by terror and oppression. They had not only exploited the Mozambicans but had also tried to destroy their culture. Africans received hardly any education and were subject to forced labour. They were often tortured, ill-treated and killed. Their lives were completely controlled by the Portuguese and they were nothing but slaves in their own country. Land was taken from them and given to white settlers. They were forced to contribute to the Portuguese economy on terms disadvantageous to themselves and beneficial to the whites.

Dr. Salazar had recently concluded a pact with South Africa and the Central African Federation for the purpose of crushing liberation movements throughout Africa. Forty thousand troops had recently been sent to Mozambique and five big military bases were being constructed in the country. Those military preparations, which were being financed by NATO members and other imperialists, were a clear indication that Salazar was about to wage a genocidal war against Mozambique.

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Portugal's contention that the territories under its administration were really Portuguese provinces, as well as its claim to be fulfilling a civilizing mission there, were equally farcical. In Mozambique there was no university and hardly any professional classes. The Africans had no political rights. The political and legal systems, as well as the division of Africans into assimilados and indigenas, were designed to maintain the Africans in a state of exploitation and servitude.

In the matter of labour, the notorious pass-book system of Mozambique bore a striking resemblance to that of South Africa. Workers who were unable to prove they were gainfully employed were taken for forced labour on farms and in public works. In 1955, one chief in Northern Mozambique had been publicly shot for refusing to supply the requisite number of forced workers. The shooting and torture of forced labourers were frequent. By agreement with the Governments of those countries, Mozambicans were sent abroad to work in the mines of South Africa and Nyasaland. Since 1902 no less than 80,000 Mozambicans had been killed in mine disasters.

The Mozambicans were also discriminated against in education. Ninety-eight per cent of them were illiterate. The only schools available for Africans were the rudimentary schools of the Catholic missions where they rarely advanced beyond the third grade. Many of the school children were taken for forced labour. No African languages were taught in the rudimentary schools and no instruction in elementary hygiene was given. The level of teaching was poor. The syllabus was designed to inculcate Portuguese ideas and eliminate African beliefs. No African had any chance of a secondary education unless he became an assimilado. Even the assimilados could not afford the fees charged by the secondary schools.

The secret police organization known as PIDE was engaged in kidnapping and killing all Africans considered dangerous to the State. In addition, the poll tax had been increased and new settlers were arriving in increasing numbers. Salazar seemed to be living in a bygone age; he ignored the wind of change blowing through Africa. The Mozambicans wanted to live as a free people in their own country. UDENAMO supported their demand for independence, condemned the colonial record of Portugal and hoped that the Special Committee would make recommendations to the General Assembly which would be speedily implemented.

In reply to a question from Mr. GRINBERG (Bulgaria), Mr. KASSINDA said that the situation of the workers in Angola was critical. Forced labour still existed. There was some form of voluntary work but the remuneration was not enough to make a living. The Portuguese claimed that the situation had improved but that was not true. He had received information from refugees who had left the country very recently.

In reply to a question from Mr. GONZALEZ-CALVO (Guatemala), Mr. KASSINDA said that the allegation that Angolan nationalists forced the local population to join their forces was untrue. So far as he knew, the Angolan people were all in favour of the liberation of their country. He did not know of any Angolan who would not wish to participate in the fight for independence.

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