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LETTER DATED 1 JUNE 1972 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
OF SENEGAL TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT  
OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to request you to bring to the attention of the members of the Security Council the serious incidents which have just occurred on the frontier between Senegal and Guinea (Bissau).

On Friday 26 May 1972 at 5 p.m., the village of SANTIABA-MANJAK in the OUSSOUYE Department came under attack by armed elements from Guinea (Bissau).

The incident occurred following a dispute over rice fields whose ownership is the source of frequent disagreements between two villages, one - SANTIABA-MANJAK in Senegal and the other CASSALOL - in Guinea (Bissau).

Towards mid-day, armed bands from the village of CASSALOL, led by auxiliaries of the regular forces of the Portuguese army, appeared and began to threaten Senegalese villagers, engaged in cultivating their fields, and fired shots to intimidate them.

However, these armed bands withdrew without causing damage, following the arrival of elements of the Senegalese Army, from the post at KANEME, who had been alerted.

The same day, at 5.45 p.m., a fresh attack on a larger scale was launched against the same village of SANTIABA-MANJAK by a force from Guinea (Bissau) estimated at some 200 men, armed with automatic weapons, grenade launchers and hand grenades. The defence unit of the National Senegalese Army based at Ziguinchor had nevertheless had time to move reinforcements to the area following the alert given late that same morning.

When the two armed contingents came into contact, a particularly dangerous situation arose. The attackers who, to judge from appearances, were under the influence of drugs, hurled themselves against the Senegalese National Army troops, shouting and opening heavy fire with all the weapons in their possession.

Our troops took immediate counter-action and, although confronted with an armed force superior in numbers and firepower, succeeded in checking the onslaught of the enemy and compelled them to withdraw shortly afterwards.

Unfortunately, this clash resulted on the Senegalese side in the loss of six soldiers killed and five others wounded. It was not possible to determine the number of dead and wounded casualties on the Guinea (Bissau) side because they were carried away by their comrades when they withdrew.

It should be noted that the six Senegalese soldiers who were killed were savagely mutilated by the attackers.

The Government of Senegal could not remain passive in the face of this unjustified provocation and therefore ordered a reprisal action, the final phase of which took place during the night of 30 to 31 May 1972.

The report received from the General Staff of the Senegalese Armed Forces gives grounds for hope that the Portuguese authorities responsible for the action against the peaceful village communities of our frontier areas will have learned a thorough lesson.

Obviously, we regard this incident as regrettable, to say the least, particularly as this is the first occasion on which a Senegalese soldier has crossed the frontier separating Senegal from Guinea (Bissau).

It was clear, however, that in view of the developments following the incidents on 26 May, the Senegalese Army could not remain idle and would consider itself duty-bound to avenge its comrades who had been savagely murdered.

Furthermore, I would draw attention to the fact that the Portuguese forces from Guinea (Bissau) committed these latest provocative acts at the very time when the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in his report in document S/10662, informed the Council that no communication had been received by the President of the Security Council or himself since the adoption of resolution No. 302 of 24 November 1971, which called upon the Government of Portugal to take immediate effective measures:

"(a) So that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Senegal should be fully respected;

(b) To prevent acts of violence and destruction against the territory and the people of Senegal in order to contribute to the safeguarding of peace and security in the region."

It would appear that the purpose of the Portuguese authorities was to reply suo modo to the concern expressed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

I should be grateful if you would bring all these facts to the attention of the members of the Security Council and would circulate this communication as a Council document.

(Signed) Médoune FALL  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative of Senegal  
to the United Nations