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LETTER DATED 28 FEBRUARY 1969 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF SPAIN ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

On 27 February you kindly received me, at my request, at which time I had the opportunity to communicate to you the information then available on the events which had taken place in Equatorial Guinea, specifically in Río Muni.

I have now received additional information and can inform you that the governmental authorities of Equatorial Guinea recently asked the Spanish Consul at Bata to remove from the Chancellery of the Consulate the Spanish flag, which in accordance with international practice was flying on the building. The Spanish Consul in that town told the Guinean authorities that their request should be submitted through the normal diplomatic channel and asked them to address their request to the Spanish Government.

On 23 February, a group of soldiers of the Territorial Guard entered the Chancellery of the Consulate and violently tore down the flag. The Spanish Ambassador submitted an appropriate protest. When the Spanish flag was hoisted again on 25 February, the Consul took the necessary steps to avoid any further violations.

When the President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea was informed of these facts, he sent a cable to the Chief of the Spanish State, in which he reiterated the invitation which had been extended to the Spanish Consul in Bata concerning the Spanish flag and made certain charges regarding the attitude adopted by the Spanish Consul, distorting the facts concerning the protective measures adopted by the Consul in order to ensure that the Spanish flag was properly guarded and Spanish nationals properly protected.

To present the adoption of these protective measures as a general mobilization of the small force, consisting of three companies with a total of 450 men, which is now stationed in the country at the request of the Government of Guinea, in accordance with the Transitory Agreement, is completely contrary to the facts.

The Chief of the Spanish State, in his reply to that message, reiterated to the President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea his profound hope that the atmosphere of goodwill between Spain and Equatorial Guinea, which had intensified since the date of independence, would in no way be altered. In his reply the Chief of the Spanish State also stated that the co-operation initiated under the most favourable auspices should be continued and that there was no reason to alter the course that had been followed thus far. He further reaffirmed his highest respect for the independence and sovereignty of Equatorial Guinea and for its constitutionally-elected President.

In addition, the Chief of the Spanish State said that the Spanish forces of public order which are still stationed in Equatorial Guinea, as mentioned above, in no way intend to impair the independence or intervene in the domestic affairs of this sovereign and friendly country.

At present, the three mobile companies are confined to barracks, and the Guinean Territorial Guard is maintaining public order in the towns and villages. However, according to information provided by the Jover, S.A. timber company, which had employed the victim for the past few weeks, the Territorial Guard was unable to prevent the murder in Río Benito of a Spanish national, Mr. Juan José Bima, aged twenty-five, who was married only five months ago. In view of the seriousness of the situation, the Government of Guinea itself has informed the Spanish Government, through its Minister of the Interior, that it is unable to guarantee the safety of Spaniards residing in that country.

In view of this lack of personal safety, the Spaniards who were scattered throughout the interior of the country are gathering together at the port of Bata in order to obtain the protection of our consular representatives. The Spanish Government is ready to send a ship to this port in case it should be necessary to provide accommodation for these Spaniards and evacuate all those who request it.

I believe you will be especially interested to learn that the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Equatorial Guinea has gone to Madrid and is in contact with the Spanish authorities. He will return tomorrow (1 March) to Equatorial Guinea in order to examine the whole situation at a meeting of the Council of Ministers.

Any report which tends to present the facts in any other way is absolutely unfounded and I wish to assure you that my Government's only concern at this time is to guarantee the safety of the Spaniards residing in Guinea, since the Government of Guinea has notified the Spanish Government that it is unable to do so. Once the lives and safety of these Spaniards have been guaranteed, my Government is ready to seek any formula that will satisfy the Government of Guinea.

I should be grateful if you would circulate this communication in the same way as the communications addressed to you by the President of the Republic of Guinea or any other communication you may receive on this subject.

Accept, Sir, etc.

(Signed) Jaime de PINIÉS
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Spain
to the United Nations
