

UNITED NATIONS

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GENERAL

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2 April 1952

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LETTER DATED 2 APRIL 1952 FROM THE LIAISON OFFICER OF BURMA TO THE
PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL CONCERNING TUNISIA

2 April 1952

Sir,

I have the honour, under the instructions of my Government to bring urgently to the attention of the Security Council under Article 35 paragraph 1 of the United Nations Charter, the present grave situation in Tunisia. It will be recalled that the President of the Council of Ministers of Tunisia addressed a letter regarding the matter to the President of the Security Council on 12th January 1952. Since then, the Prime Minister and other Ministers of the Tunisian Government have been arrested and the situation continues to deteriorate.

In the opinion of my Government this situation seriously endangers the maintenance of international peace and security and thereby falls within the scope of Article 34 of the Charter.

In view of the urgent circumstances, I would request the Council to call an immediate meeting to consider the matter, with a view to taking the necessary measures provided by the Charter to put an end to the present situation.

An explanatory note on this item is annexed.

Assuring Your Excellency of my highest consideration.

/s/ (Ba Maung)

Liaison Officer of Burma
to the United Nations

Enc. Annex

His Excellency
Professor Ahmed S. Bokhari
President of the Security Council
United Nations
New York 17, N.Y.

52-4187

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EXPLANATORY NOTE

The military occupation of Tunisia by the Government of France which took place in the last century, expressly as a temporary measure, persists to this day. During this period, the French Government have, unilaterally and in flagrant violation of their solemn treaty obligations, deprived the government of H.H. the Bey of Tunisia of the latter's legitimate sovereign rights and powers, and have prevented the people of Tunisia from exercising their democratic right of self-government and self-determination. The Government and the people of Tunisia have, on many occasions, emphatically protested against this state of affairs, and a national liberation movement has been steadily growing in that country in spite of repressive measures by the French authorities. Negotiations between the French Government and the representatives of the Tunisian people have failed to resolve this tension in a peaceful manner. Since the beginning of this year the unrest in Tunisia has grown in an unprecedented manner. There have been numerous demonstrations in towns and villages which led to clashes between French troops and the Tunisian population, resulting in many deaths, thousands of arrests, atrocities against old men, women and children and widespread destruction of property. As long as the popular will is suppressed in this manner, there is little prospect of a peaceful settlement between the people of Tunisia and the French authorities.

Feelings in Asian and African countries run high. It is keenly felt that the domination of weak nations and peoples by colonial powers has no moral justification and is against the spirit of the times. Unless steps are taken towards ameliorating the tense situation now prevailing in Tunisia, its repercussions among all the people who believe in the principles of liberty and democracy - and especially among Asian and African peoples who look towards those principles as their ultimate salvation - will be very serious and are bound to shake their faith in the aims of the United Nations as outlined in paragraph 2 of Article 1 of the Charter.

The recent developments in Tunisia have increased the gravity of the situation. Neither the people of Tunisia themselves, nor world opinion can regard the forcible deposition of the popular Tunisian Government and the pressure exerted on H.H. the Bey of Tunisia as steps towards a solution of the Tunisian

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question. For it is painfully obvious that the arrests of Tunisian Ministers, preceded as they were by the arrest of all the prominent Tunisian leaders, and the flouting of national sentiment of the Tunisians cannot create an atmosphere in which any lasting solution of the Tunisian problem can be arrived at. To expect a satisfaction of Tunisia's legitimate national aspirations from this naked show of force would be to indulge in an optimism for which there is no warrant.

The great tension and instability that exists in Tunisia has exercised the minds of the Government and the people of my country considerably. Since they are apprehensive of the unfortunate consequences that might arise if the matter is not fully and thoroughly discussed in the Security Council, my Government attaches the greatest importance to the request contained in the letter to the President of the Security Council, to which this note is annexed. They are convinced that an urgent discussion of the Tunisian situation and suitable action by the Security Council will help considerably to open the way to better understanding between the Tunisian and French peoples, and the fulfilment of Tunisian national aspirations, and thus strengthen the very foundations on which the United Nations has been built.

