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LETTER DATED 1 AUGUST 1960 FROM THE PERMANENT  
REPRESENTATIVE OF GHANA TO THE UNITED NATIONS,  
ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

New York, 1 August 1960

I have the honour, on the instructions of my Government, to request that the attached note on the situation of the Congo may be circulated to the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Alex Quaison-Sackey  
Ambassador,  
Permanent Representative of  
Ghana to the United Nations

NOTE FROM THE GHANA MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO THE  
PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

The Minister of Foreign Affairs has the honour to refer to events in the Republic of the Congo with particular relation to the recent actions of the Government of Belgium.

The Government of Ghana attempted prior to the independence of the Congo to lend its good offices to the Government of Belgium and to the various political groupings and parties in the Congo so as to assist them in a harmonious and effective transfer of power. The Government of Ghana in the period immediately preceding the independence of the Republic of the Congo was in close touch both with the Congolese Leaders and with the Government of Belgium, and the Government of Ghana is certain that in no way prior to independence of the Congo or immediately following its independence did the Government of Ghana do anything which could be construed as in any way hostile to the Government of Belgium.

It is in the light of this consideration that the Government of Ghana feels compelled to address all members of the Security Council in relation to the conduct of the Belgian Government in the Congo.

The Government of Ghana believes that the present conduct of the Belgian Government constitutes a grave threat to peace and, if continued, would justify the United Nations holding that Belgium was committing aggression against the Congo and should be dealt with as an aggressor.

The reason why the Government of Ghana takes this most serious view of the conduct of the Government of Belgium may be summarized as follows:

Despite the resolution of the Security Council that Belgian troops should be withdrawn from the Congo, the Belgian Government continued for a period after they had accepted the resolution to reinforce their troops in the Republic.

This action was taken on the grounds that the Belgian Government considered that the intervention of Belgian troops was necessary in order to preserve the safety and lives of Belgian nationals. The conduct, however, of the Belgian authorities has been in no way consistent with this use of their forces.

The threat to the lives and safety of Belgian nationals arose exclusively through the mutiny of the Force Publique. It was a marked feature of events in the Republic that the population in general did not attack Belgian nationals.

In these circumstances, it would have been supposed that the action of the Belgian Government would have been directed to assisting in restoring discipline in the Force Publique. On the contrary, Belgian soldiers arrested and kept under imprisonment for one week the newly appointed Commander of this force who was engaged in the mission of attempting to restore discipline among the force. It is hard to imagine any action which was more likely to encourage indiscipline and to produce the particular conditions which the Belgian Government said justified their intervention.

Secondly, the Belgian Government have, if press reports are correct, made a number of unprovoked attacks upon Congolese civilians. The only object of these attacks can have been to create a situation which would justify Belgian intervention. As an example, the Government of Ghana would refer to a report contained in a United Kingdom newspaper the Daily Telegraph of 21 July 1960. The correspondent of this newspaper, reporting from Matadi, thus described one so-called "Reprisal Raid" by the Belgian forces:

"..... The reprisal raid of the Belgians, which lingers in the minds of the Congolese with horror, happened this way:

"On Saturday, 9 July - the day after the Force Publique mutiny - the Belgian Consul ordered all the Belgians here to evacuate the town. The Belgian wives and children the same day boarded a Belgian vessel in the docks. All was quiet in the town next day when the Belgian men left and boarded the same ship.

"Before the men left town the Chief of State, Mr. Joseph Kasavubu, and the Prime Minister, Mr. Lumumba, visited the town and addressed them. Mr. Kasavubu said he was sorry to see them go because the Congolese had wanted them to stay.

"The ship sailed out of Matadi that night. Next day, 11 July, at about 9.30, the Belgian forces launched their attack.

"The Congolese and the Portuguese in Noqui, in neighbouring Angola, which I visited today checking with neutrals on the facts of the raid, can see no other purpose for it other than a reprisal because all the Belgians had left when it happened.

"The Portuguese saw the planes machine-gunning above Matadi - Noqui is about three miles away - and the four Belgian ships firing on the town. And one Portuguese I tracked down was actually in Natadi when the Belgian troops arrived that day.

"During that raid on the docks four policemen hid in a small room in the Police Station. They were all shot dead by the Belgians when they burst in.

"Today I saw bullet holes in the walls of some of the cars on the dockside. There was dried blood and human skin outside one office at the docks with the bullet-torn jacket of a policeman who was killed nearby.

"The Belgian planes on the first wave of the attack did a sneak run on Matadi, flying in low over Angola territory. But the Portuguese warned the Belgians that if another plane flew over the territory it would be fired on by their vessel in the river.

"It was after this reprisal raid that the mutinous Force Publique men from Matadi and Thysville turned themselves into armed bandits and went roaming around the countryside looking for Belgians ...."

The correspondent said that the number killed in this attack was nineteen and those wounded thirty-two. This incident was also reported in similar terms by the correspondent of the United Kingdom Daily Mail. From independent inquiries made by the Government of Ghana, the Government believes that the account of this event as given by these correspondents is accurate.

The number of deaths in this incident should be compared with the estimate given by Reuters News Agency of the total number of Belgian nationals killed throughout the Republic. The Reuters figure of total Belgians killed was twenty.

