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LETTER DATED 5 JUNE 1961 FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES OF THE
PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (LEOPOLDVILLE)
TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

The Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Congo (Léopoldville) presents his compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to enclose herewith the statement by the Government of the Republic of the Congo on Angola, dated 3 June 1961.

The Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Congo would be grateful if the Secretary-General would have the above-mentioned text circulated as a Security Council document, and he has the honour to be, etc.

(Signed) GERVAIS BAHIZI
Chargé d'Affaires

STATEMENT BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO ON ANGOLA

For more than four months, grave and distressing events have been taking place in the territory of Angola. The Angolan people are living under a reign of terror characterized by the arrival of military reinforcements, the distribution of arms to the Portuguese settlers, arrests, torture, deportations and suppression of all nationalist groups likely to jeopardize colonial rule. The concentration camps set up by the Lisbon Government are now filled by thousands of Angolans. Whole villages, accused of rebellion and terrorism, are being massacred. The bloody repression of nationalist movements is proceeding unabated, and the situation is bound to deteriorate in consequence of decisions recently taken at Lisbon.

Portugal is pursuing a policy that is socially and economically unjust to the Angolans. The indigenous population is systematically kept in ignorance. The number of pupils attending the few scattered schools does not exceed the absurd figure of a few thousand. The huge rural population, among which there are few owners of land, are decimated by forced labour of an inhuman type surpassing anything known in Africa. In the political sphere, the indigenous inhabitants are deprived of the most basic liberties and of their political rights.

The Congo and Angola have shared a long history. Together they have suffered deportation, slavery and economic exploitation. The history of Angola is not different from the history of the rest of Africa, but the peoples of Africa, who were almost all reduced to slavery not more than a century ago, have become free and independent States and members of the community of nations. The others are claiming their right to self-determination, and the disease of African nationalism has spread throughout the continent, including Angola. Nothing can stop the normal course of history, as nothing will stop the determination of the Angolans to decide their own future. There have been many experiences of this type in Africa.

Our brothers have accordingly decided to conquer their right to be free and independent in their native land - a decision which is apparently firm and irrevocable, as events are proving.

Blood is being shed in Angola, but all this could have been avoided if Portugal had not insisted on its so-called right to what it describes as its "provinces". That right is not eternal. A tradition that is becoming obsolete and being clearly overtaken by events and changes in outlook cannot go on for ever. An accommodation must now be made between that right and the death struggle of colonialism. For us and for all men, Africa belongs to the Africans, as Europe belongs to the inhabitants of that continent. Angola, therefore, is and always will be an African country.

Portugal cannot stop the forward march of history which has already liquidated colonialism.

The Congo is admittedly very much absorbed in its own difficulties, and its help can be but little compared with what it might have been in other circumstances. Nevertheless, the situation on our frontiers created by Portuguese colonialism is of very grave concern to the Government. There is reason to wonder whether this fellow-country may not suffer a fate similar to or even worse than our own.

The Congolese Government can no longer tolerate the extermination of the people of Angola. It notes that Portugal continues cunningly to take advantage of the Congolese crisis to crush the nationalist movements without interference. Had it not been for its domestic problems, the Congolese Government would have given much more effective moral support and direct help to all those fighting on the other side of the frontier for peace and for their freedom. It has done already its utmost by granting asylum to a number of Angolan nationalist movements and to their leaders, by extending a warm welcome to thousands of refugees who have entered its territory after being driven from their own country and by organizing assistance for them as urgently as possible.

The Congolese Government declares that it will continue to assist the refugees from Angola. It offers them its further hospitality. It appeals to the patriotism of all Angolans to work together, free of any such baneful foreign political and ideological influences as afflict the Congo itself at this moment, and to concentrate and direct all their efforts towards the single objective of the liberation of Angola. It asks all Angolan political refugees never to abuse its hospitality and never to engage in, or to support, subversive activities against the Congolese authorities.

The right of the people of Angola to self-determination should be proclaimed without delay.

The process of accession to independence should begin forthwith in Angola, because Angola will soon become independent, with or without Portugal.

It is the desire of the Congolese Government that the people of Angola - who, like other peoples, will inevitably win their independence - should be given full preparation and training to fit them for self-government in the near future. It believes that if independence is not granted to Angola, it will be seized by force. There are States outside Africa which would welcome the opportunity to send arms in order to satisfy their lust for subversion. This continent is already coveted by foreign Powers which seek to impose their ideologies and their economic and social systems. Portuguese policy opens the door to Communism in Africa and increases the danger of a break-down of relations between free Europe and Africa.

The Congolese Government is therefore determined to support all African countries that are willing to assist in the struggle for the peace and liberation of Africa.

It denounces all treaties concluded on its behalf by Belgium which infringe the interests of the people of Angola or the sovereignty of the Congo or which jeopardize the ties of brotherhood and solidarity that link the Congolese people with all the other peoples of Africa, and in particular, the following treaties:

1. Secret agreement between Belgium and Portugal for the defence of the mouth and the lower reaches of the Congo, signed at Brussels on 21 December 1951;
2. Secret Belgian-Portuguese technical agreement concerning the joint defence of the mouth and the lower reaches of the Congo, signed at Brussels on 21 December 1951;
3. Agreement between Belgium and Portugal concerning the simplification of entry formalities for military units in time of peace in respect of the waters and ports of Angola and the Belgian Congo, concluded by an exchange of letters at Lisbon on 15 June 1955.

The Congolese Government appeals to all friendly States and to world opinion to exert such influence and pressure on Portugal that it may end the war of extermination in Angola and recognize the right of the people of Angola to self-determination.

Léopoldville, 3 June 1961

