

United Nations
GENERAL
ASSEMBLY

THIRTY-SECOND SESSION

Official Records *



COLLECTION

FOURTH COMMITTEE
29th meeting
held on
Thursday, 1 December 1977
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 29th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. AL-SAID (Oman)

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Hearing of petitioners

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Distr. GENERAL
A/C.4/32/SR.29
6 December 1977
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

The meeting was called to order at 3.35 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 92: QUESTION OF SOUTHERN RHODESIA: REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES (continued) (A/32/23/Add.1, A/32/57, A/32/61, A/32/63, A/32/92, A/32/98, A/32/109/Rev.1, A/32/115, A/32/235, A/32/259, A/32/266)

1. Mr. DOLJINTSEREN (Mongolia) said that the racist policies of the Salisbury and Pretoria régimes and their refusal to satisfy the legitimate demands of the population had created a situation which jeopardized international peace and security.
2. Disregarding world public opinion and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, the Smith régime perpetrated acts of repression and violence against the people of Zimbabwe; according to the report of the Special Committee (A/32/23/Add.1), about 200,000 Africans were forced to live in so-called protected villages, in conditions similar to those in concentration camps.
3. The aggressiveness of the Smith régime was also reflected in attacks against neighbouring sovereign States, which had suffered enormous material damage. Between March 1976 and March 1977 alone, 143 attacks by Southern Rhodesia against Mozambique had been recorded. That aggression was part of the imperialist conspiracy designed to weaken the liberation movement and the struggle of the peoples of Zimbabwe and Namibia.
4. His delegation strongly condemned the Smith régime and the military assistance which it received from South Africa and certain Western Powers, and believed that one of the main tasks of the United Nations must be to put an end to the violation of sanctions and to take all possible measures in accordance with Article 41 of the Charter.
5. In the face of the failure of attempts to reach a settlement in Southern Rhodesia as a result of the assistance which certain Powers gave directly or indirectly to the racist régimes, his delegation reaffirmed its support for the patriotic forces and emphasized that the oppressed peoples had the right to obtain freedom, even by means of armed struggle. The unity of the liberation movements and the support of progressive countries throughout the world, including the socialist countries, would ensure the triumph of their just cause.
6. His delegation supported the decisions adopted at the Maputo Conference, as well as the Declaration and the Programme of Action for the Liberation of Zimbabwe and Namibia, and reiterated its solidarity with the people of Zimbabwe and its support for any measure which could help them to attain freedom and self-determination.
7. Mr. FARAJ (United Arab Emirates) reviewed the work of the Special Committee with regard to Southern Rhodesia.

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(Mr. Faraj, United Arab Emirates)

8. The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom, Dr. David Owen, in his statement to the General Assembly during the current session, had said, referring to southern Africa, that it was becoming increasingly clear that only negotiated settlements which were internationally acceptable and which had the full support of the United Nations would end the violence and achieve stable majority rule government, and that the United Kingdom Government had faced up to the fact that, alone, it could not ensure a peaceful transfer of power.

9. Since 1965, the date of the unilateral declaration of independence, many negotiations had taken place with the rebel régime, but no negotiated settlement had yet been reached. After describing the countless efforts made in that direction, he pointed out that at the Geneva Conference the illegal régime had rejected the British proposals and had declared that it would seek an internal settlement with the Africans within the Territory. While the Anglo-American efforts to reach a negotiated settlement in Southern Rhodesia were continuing, Ian Smith had recently announced "adult suffrage", which seemed at first sight to be a step forward.

10. During the general debate at the current session of the General Assembly, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates, Mr. Al-Suweidi, had said that his country had followed with deep concern the developments in South Africa, Southern Rhodesia and Namibia, because it was fully aware of the dangers inherent in the perpetuation of white minority rule in those African territories. The United Arab Emirates knew that in recent months intensified efforts had been made to achieve a peaceful solution to the problem based on recognition of the right of the black majority to administer their own country. Although it supported those efforts, his delegation felt that it was necessary to adopt further practical and effective measures to ensure the compliance of the régime in Southern Rhodesia with the wishes of the international community. It believed, moreover, that more assistance should be made available to the African liberation movements so that they could meet the challenge of the Smith régime and its supporters in Pretoria.

11. Mr. KAMATH (India) said that in the annals of modern history there was no more outrageous case of international terrorism than that perpetrated by the Ian Smith group in 1965, when it had usurped the power of the British colonial authorities and taken over the colony of Southern Rhodesia. Conscious of the fact that the United Kingdom, as the administering Power and in keeping with the spirit of the times, would grant independence to Southern Rhodesia on the basis of majority rule, the white minority had usurped power in order to perpetuate a life style based on privilege and domination by the whites over the vast African majority.

12. The life of ease enjoyed by the white minority in Southern Rhodesia, which owned the mining, manufacturing, commercial and all other significant economic sectors, was based on the ruthless exploitation of the African majority. That inequality was sustained by the most cruel system of racial discrimination and oppression which was characterized by the complete denial of the fundamental human rights of the African majority.

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(Mr. Kamath, India)

13. The United Kingdom was still legally responsible, as administering Power, for correcting the historical deviation of Southern Rhodesia from the normal process of decolonization. It had, moreover, an obligation to promote the cause of international peace and security, which were jeopardized by the aggressive and irresponsible actions of the Ian Smith régime. The United Nations, for its part, must encourage and assist the administering Power in the difficult task of discharging its legal responsibility.

14. The statements made by the representatives of the liberation movement of Zimbabwe and the relevant sections of the report of the Special Committee of 24 had given details of the tyranny unleashed on the African majority: the murder of men, women and children, the destruction of villages, the establishment of so-called "protected villages" in which hundreds of thousands of Africans were confined in conditions which were no better than those in concentration camps.

15. The Smith régime propagated the fallacy that the blacks were intimidated by a few Marxists and that they wished to be protected from them by the security forces. Whatever the régime might say, however, its actions showed that it recognized that the people fully supported the guerrillas and that its policy was one of terror against the civilian population.

16. The growth of the national liberation movement of Zimbabwe could be seen from the 300 per cent increase in the defence budget of the illegal Smith régime between 1972 and 1976, and particularly during the current year. The collapse of the Portuguese colonial empire and the support which the front-line States gave to the struggle for the liberation of Zimbabwe had also been of immense significance. In its desperation, the illegal Smith régime had not only intensified repression within Zimbabwe, but had resorted to acts of aggression against Mozambique, Zambia and Botswana, against the innocent civilian population and refugee camps. The international community had an obligation to condemn those acts of aggression, to help the countries concerned to defend themselves, and to compensate them for the economic losses they incurred in defending their principles.

17. So far the reaction of the international community to the usurpation of power by the Ian Smith group had been ineffective and hesitant. The sanctions imposed by the Security Council had so far not produced the desired results. The reports of the Committee on sanctions indicated that there was widespread evasion of the sanctions and that they had been rendered ineffective by the support provided to the Smith régime by South Africa. Unless South Africa was forced to comply with the wishes of the international community, the objectives of the sanctions could not be achieved.

18. It was now time for the United Nations and the Security Council to tighten and expand sanctions under Article 41 of the Charter. In his delegation's view, the highest priority should be given to the question of the supply of petroleum and petroleum products to Southern Rhodesia, since it was a crucial factor for the survival of the illegal régime. In that connexion, India had submitted a draft resolution to the Security Council which was contained in document S/12450. His delegation was aware of certain specious legal arguments against the so-called extraterritorial jurisdiction of national sanctions legislation. It believed, however, that in the case of the illegal Smith régime those obstacles could and should be overcome.

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(Mr. Kamath, India)

19. His delegation had also given favourable attention to a proposal contained in the report of the Commonwealth Committee on Southern Rhodesia of 19 October 1977, under which the international community could demand guarantees from the South African Government that petroleum products imported into South Africa or manufactured there would in no circumstances be exported to Southern Rhodesia. Failure to provide such guarantees would lead to a mandatory embargo against South Africa itself.

20. His delegation was aware of the negotiations undertaken by the United Kingdom, with the backing of the United States, with a view to bringing about a peaceful solution to the problem. It was also aware that, pursuant to Security Council resolution 415 (1977), a special representative of the Secretary-General had held talks with all interested parties on the arrangements necessary for the transition to majority rule. The tightening of sanctions, far from jeopardizing the negotiations under way, would bring extra pressure to bear on the illegal régime and thus expedite the transition to majority rule and genuine independence.

21. His delegation viewed with great caution, if not scepticism, Ian Smith's offer of majority rule on the basis of one man, one vote. Elections held under the auspices of the Smith régime would not be fair, free, or acceptable to the United Nations, given Smith's dismal record of prevarication and duplicity.

22. Apart from sanctions, the best means of displacing the illegal Smith régime and achieving majority rule and genuine independence would be the establishment of unity among the various patriotic forces. He appealed once again to all the nationalist forces to sink their differences and unite in the common struggle to put an end to the illegal régime and usher in an era of freedom, human dignity and progress in Zimbabwe.

23. Mr. COUSTE (France) stated that the Rhodesian question had been aggravated by the operations which the illegal régime's forces had carried out in the territory of a neighbouring State. France condemned such acts, which not only caused suffering and death, but also heightened the indignation and anger of the world community. Such violent and desperate acts demonstrated the dangerous unease of those who believed that they could prevail by the use of violence. For 10 years, Southern Rhodesia had been suffering under the sanctions imposed by the Security Council, which France applied strictly; although the system had short-comings, Southern Rhodesia was cut off from major world trade avenues and the major sources of investment, and its economy was getting progressively weaker. Furthermore, the United Kingdom Government, with the backing of the United States Government, had begun diplomatic action to help to bring about a peaceful settlement of the problem. France subscribed to the principles motivating the authors of that plan, and hoped that the temporary setbacks they had recently suffered would not prevent their proposals from serving as a basis for negotiations. The plan had already clearly had some effects, since Mr. Smith had recognized that privileged voting was not the only way to ensure the survival of the white community, and had given grounds for believing that he subscribed to the principle that all men and women had the right to vote.

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(Mr. Couste, France)

24. At the present stage, his delegation believed that it was important not to take hasty decisions which could endanger the chances of success of the United Kingdom initiative and felt that carefully considered measures taken by the international community were the best way to correct the errors of a small group of people.

Hearing of petitioners

25. The CHAIRMAN said that the Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole of the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), whose request for a hearing had been approved at the 28th meeting of the Committee, had asked to make an additional statement. If he heard no objections, he would take it that the Committee agreed to that request.

26. It was so decided.

27. At the invitation of the Chairman, the Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole took a place at the petitioners' table.

28. The Reverend Ndabaningi SITHOLE (Zimbabwe African National Union), referring to the statement made by his compatriot, Mr. Kangai, said that he was the founder of ZANU, that he had been elected President by the Congress of ZANU in 1964, and that since then no other Congress had been held. The Reverend Robert Mbugabe had been elected Secretary-General of ZANU at the same Congress. The present claim that Mbugabe had been elected President of ZANU was incorrect. Although some ZANU dissidents outside the country had tried to elect him, it should be noted that the presidency of ZANU was conferred by its members living in the country, and not by dissidents living outside it. He repeated that he lived in Southern Rhodesia and was the President of ZANU.

29. The statement made by the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the effect that he was recruiting candidates for Mr. Smith's army, was also incorrect. The Committee should note that it was he himself who had stated in 1964 that if Zimbabwe wished to gain its freedom it had to be prepared to fight, and had proposed the adoption of a policy of direct confrontation which had given rise to the current armed struggle and had generated the spirit of resistance which was still alive. Those in the front line of the struggle understood his position and respected it fully. Mr. Kangai, on the other hand, had been out of the country since 1965, living in the United States, far from events in Zimbabwe.

30. It had also been said that those who supported him within the country were members of the Patriotic Front, which was also totally untrue and illogical. He was working for the good of his people, for whom he had suffered 10 years of humiliation, and he stood to gain nothing personally from the current struggle except the independence of the people of Zimbabwe. It should be made clear that the Patriotic Front lacked military leadership and a political committee. Both ZANU and ZAPU, on the other hand, had a military staff and a central political committee.

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(The Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole, ZANU)

31. ZANU firmly believed that elections had to be held before independence could be achieved. That had been the case in Kenya, Zambia and all the other former British colonies; the same precedent should apply to Zimbabwe. What was important was the final result, in other words, the transfer of political power to the black majority, not the details. Now that Smith had said that he accepted the principle of one man, one vote, he had to be made to put his words into practice, so that power would be in the hands of the black majority.

32. He then read out a statement which he had issued on 25 November 1977 concerning the recognition of the principle of one man, one vote, in which he had stated that the Smith régime's public acceptance of that principle was a great step forward in the long struggle to find a solution to the problem of Zimbabwe. ZANU had always maintained that the aim of the war in Zimbabwe was to gain the right to vote; the acceptance by the régime of the principle of one man, one vote thus paved the way for the end of the war and the establishment of majority rule.

33. If the Rhodesian Government was sincere, then the situation had changed radically, since it was the rejection of the principle of one man, one vote which had driven the people to armed struggle. It was to be hoped that the Rhodesian Government would now normalize the political climate by lifting the ban on certain political parties and certain literary works, releasing political detainees, granting amnesties to exiles, and giving immediate attention to the so-called "protected" villages, which had caused untold hardships for many thousands of the rural African population.

34. The problem of transferring power to the African majority could be resolved through the application of the principle of one man, one vote, for which so many Africans had suffered and died. In the past, ZANU had insisted that power should not be given to a particular party or leader but to the people of Zimbabwe who, in turn, would delegate it to the leaders of their own choice. The principle of one man, one vote gave political power to the people as a whole and that was what truly democratic people desired and demanded.

35. The acceptance of that principle meant that the problem of Zimbabwe could only be resolved by the people of that country and could not be imposed from outside. It clearly recognized the sovereignty of the people of Zimbabwe in their determined search for self-determination and constitutional government and in their ceaseless endeavour to become and remain masters of their own destiny.

36. The Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole withdrew.

37. Mr. NDLOVU (Observer for the Patriotic Front, Zimbabwe) said he wished to clarify some of the issues which had been raised since another representative of the Patriotic Front, Mr. Kangai, had addressed the Committee at its 27th meeting, so that the Committee would not have a distorted picture of the situation in Zimbabwe.

38. The Committee had heard the United Kingdom report on Western efforts to find a negotiated settlement of the Zimbabwe problem. The United Kingdom proposals had

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(Mr. Ndlovu, Observer, Patriotic Front, Zimbabwe)

been discussed in detail by the Patriotic Front in a document distributed as an official Security Council document and it was therefore unnecessary to repeat that analysis. In short, it was the position of the Patriotic Front that no negotiated settlement of the Southern Rhodesian problem was possible unless there was recognition that the struggle of the people of Zimbabwe was not over the franchise but over self-determination. The difference between the Patriotic Front and the groups that Smith had chosen to negotiate with was that, while the Patriotic Front saw negotiations as representing a movement to transfer power from minority settlers to the people of Zimbabwe, the other groups saw them as representing an arrangement to enable Africans to participate in Southern Rhodesian institutions. The talks that Smith would be holding with Bishop Muzorewa, the Reverend Ndzabaningi Sithole and Chief Chirau would not achieve anything, because he would be discussing not a transfer of power, but the participation of those groups in his Government.

39. Certain representatives believed that Mr. Smith's latest moves constituted a significant change in his attitude to the whole problem. The representative of Belgium had said that those moves constituted a new element which must be exploited. It should be remembered that in 1976 Mr. Smith had announced that he had accepted the principle of majority rule in Zimbabwe in two years. However, when the Geneva Conference had been convened, it had been discovered that Mr. Smith and his régime were negotiating on the principle, not on majority rule itself. Mr. Smith had now said that he accepted the principle of one man, one vote, but those who had chosen to negotiate with him would find that he was negotiating on the principle, not on one man one vote. No one who had followed Smith's politics of negotiation could believe that he was honest, and those who were ready to negotiate with him would be deceived.

40. It was remarkable that two of the groups that had agreed to negotiate with the Smith régime claimed to be liberation movements, yet they were willing to take part in negotiations alongside the so-called traditional chiefs who were the creatures of Southern Rhodesian colonialism.

41. Everyone knew that the Smith régime was living on borrowed time and those who agreed to negotiate with it would be standing in the way of the revolution. Those who believed that the mere accession to power of a black leadership would stop the war were deluding themselves, because the struggle in Zimbabwe was not against the white people but against a system of racism and exploitation.

42. Reference had been made in the debate to one organization which was holding its forces back in order to use them against other groups when Zimbabwe became free. That absurdity had been invented by imperialist propaganda with the objective of forcing the Patriotic Front to expose its fighting forces to destruction before they were sufficiently trained for the task of freeing Zimbabwe.

43. Recently, the Western news media had been ventilating the non-issue of whether there should be provisions for elections in any negotiated settlement. First, no armed struggle in history had been followed by a transfer of power through elections.

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(Mr. Ndlovu, Observer, Patriotic
Front, Zimbabwe)

Every revolution had to create counter-institutions to replace those of the old régime. The Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole had compared the situation in Zimbabwe with that in Kenya, but the two situations were in fact very different, since Kenya had not found itself in circumstances of all-out war. The problem of Zimbabwe had passed the stage of civil debate and could no longer be seen in terms of what the Belgian representative had called Western norms of democracy. First, the end of the war had to be negotiated and an interim government must then be set up with those fighting for change controlling the strategic institutions of power. Elections would take place only when those fighting for change were sure that all the vestiges of the enemy's power had been liquidated.

44. The Patriotic Front wanted to make it clear that it would not allow the future of Zimbabwe to be mortgaged to the quest of the Zimbabwe petty bourgeoisie for meaningless power. Those who were singing the song of imperialism were not Zimbabwean patriots but neo-feudal patriarchs.

45. The young men who had chosen the difficult life of fighting Smith in the jungles of Zimbabwe were not fighting for a black majority government but for a majority government of all the people of Zimbabwe, irrespective of race, colour or creed. Those young men knew that they were supported by all the progressive forces of the world. Those who had the insolence to attack the people who supported the revolution could not expect the freedom fighters to take them seriously.

46. It had been said that some of the countries supporting Zimbabwe were guided by self-interest. The Patriotic Front was well acquainted with the countries that were supporting it and was not prepared to discuss statements that had nothing to do with the issue and overlook the main objective of bringing down the racist régime. The Patriotic Front continued to believe what the Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole himself had once said, namely that there could be no solution to the problem of Zimbabwe unless Ian Smith was excluded. It was surprising that certain people currently believed that a solution could be achieved with Smith's participation. The problem would never be settled unless people recognized who it was that was really fighting for a solution.

47. Mr. LIBOUREL (France), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that at the 27th meeting a petitioner had accused a French company of involvement in a conspiracy to supply petroleum products to Southern Rhodesia. He pointed out that South Africa had the capacity to refine 21 million barrels of oil, while Southern Rhodesia's estimated consumption was 600,000 barrels. It was therefore obvious that South Africa could supply that small percentage of its production to Southern Rhodesia without any need for a conspiracy.

48. With regard to the Total oil company, it had a 30 per cent shareholding in the Sasolburg refinery which provided it with 1 million barrels of petroleum for distribution to its network of petrol stations throughout South Africa.

49. He therefore reiterated that his Government was scrupulously complying with Security Council resolutions on that subject.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.