

UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL
ASSEMBLY



Distr.
GENERAL

A/AC.109/SR.849

28 April 1972

ENGLISH

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH/FRENCH

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF
INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND
FORTY-NINTH MEETING

Held at Conakry, Republic of Guinea,
on Tuesday, 11 April 1972, at 10.15 a.m.

Chairman:

Mr. SALIM

United Republic of
Tanzania

Rapporteur:

Mr. ARYUBI

Afghanistan

CONTENTS

Expression of sympathy in connexion with the earthquake in Iran

Question of Territories under Portuguese administration

EXPRESSION OF SYMPATHY IN CONNEXION WITH THE EARTHQUAKE IN IRAN

The CHAIRMAN said he wished to express to the delegation of Iran on behalf of the Committee its profound sorrow and regret at the tragic natural disaster that had befallen Iran. An earthquake had caused great loss of life and destruction of property. He requested the representative of Iran to convey the Committee's profound distress to His Imperial Majesty the Shahinshah and to the Government and people of Iran.

Mr. SHEMIRANI (Iran) thanked the Chairman and members of the Committee. Their expressions of sympathy would be conveyed to the Government and people of Iran.

QUESTION OF TERRITORIES UNDER PORTUGUESE ADMINISTRATION

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Cabral, Secretary-General of Partido Africano da Independencia da Guiné e Cabo Verde (PAIGC), and his colleagues took places at the Committee table.

The CHAIRMAN invited Mr. Cabral to introduce his colleagues who wished to make statements.

Mr. CABRAL (Secretary-General of PAIGC), introducing Mr. Korca Djallo, said that when he had been a corporal in PIDE in Guinea (Bissau), Mr. Korca Djallo had been a clandestine member of PAIGC and for 30 years had served as liaison officer between the prisoners and Mr. Cabral. When he was captured, he suffered cruel tortures which caused him a serious psychological shock and weakened him to the point of putting his life in danger. When after six months he was released from prison, he was put under house arrest and, with the help of friends, managed to flee to Conakry where, thanks to medicine contained in a medical kit which had been donated by the Soviet Union, his health appreciably improved.

Mr. DJALLO (PAIGC) said he came from Farim, Guinea (Bissau), and that from 1957 to March 1962 he had served as chief of the security police in Guinea (Bissau) and then as assistant chief of that body in the town of Bolama, the former capital, and in the frontier post of Dungal. Without any formal accusation or trial, he had been detained and had spent five consecutive years as

/...

a prisoner of the Policia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado (PIDE) at Bissau, in the district of Mansoa, in the notorious concentration camp of Tarrafal on the island of Santiago, Cape Verde, then in the PIDE prison at Bissau and finally in the penal settlement on the island of Galinhas in Guinea. As a result of his experiences during that time, he felt obliged to shed some light on the methods used by the Portuguese colonialists in their repressive and unprincipled onslaught against the African population of Guinea (Bissau).

In March 1962, without any legal justification whatsoever, he had been arrested by Lieutenant Castro, his superior officer, and subjected to 14 hours' interrogation concerning his connexions with PAIGC. Having failed to achieve his objective, Lieutenant Castro - who in subsequent years was to become notorious for the crimes he committed against Africans in his attempts to extract confessions of crimes against the security of the State - had handed him over to PIDE. Together with 17 other patriots, he (Mr. Djallo) had been imprisoned in an underground cell, into which light entered only when food was brought or when PIDE guards came to take them for interrogation or to remove the bodies of persons who had succumbed to torture. The interrogation had consisted of two questions: "Where are the weapons?" and "Who else is connected with the Party?" The accusers had made no attempt to investigate the truth of their accusations; nor had they been interested in the statements or the living conditions of the prisoners. They had not even been interested in the very principles which the colonialists claimed to apply to uphold the dignity of the Africans.

During the interminable periods of interrogation, the prisoners had been compelled to kneel on broken glass, and had been beaten and kicked, even before they could reply. Prisoners who had fainted had been revived with water. When they could no longer speak they had been taken back to the cells and left, their wounds unattended. Many had died from the torture. Often on the verge of despair, they had begun to reel off names or invent stories of hidden arms on the island of Bissau. Those whose names had been mentioned in that way had been immediately arrested and tortured. The vast majority of them had had no previous contact with, or knowledge of, PAIGC, but had later come into contact with the Party during their detention.

The PIDE prison had soon become very overcrowded, despite the very high mortality rate. The decision had therefore been taken to send the detainees after interrogation to concentration camps. In August 1962, together with 14 others, he had been transferred to the prison of Mansoa, a village about 60 kilometres from Bissau. The colonialists had feared an imminent attack by PAIGC in commemoration of the third anniversary of the massacre of Pidjiguiti. They had hoped that the presence of the prisoners would dissuade PAIGC from attacking and, if they had attacked, it would have been a good opportunity to kill the prisoners and present them later as victims of PAIGC terrorism; but there had been no attack. Conditions in the prison had been indescribably filthy. The population of Mansoa had been terrified of the prison because of the torture inflicted by the soldiers, under a captain nicknamed "Speak the truth" - the words which he uttered most frequently. At the torture sessions, of which there had been two daily, the prisoners had been bound and beaten by soldiers wielding clubs. If the prisoners had persisted in protesting their innocence, the beating had been intensified. Half dead, they had then been taken back to the cells. At least one prisoner had died every day. The dead had been removed at 9 p.m. and left outside, as a warning to the population until they had been buried.

In September 1962, together with 13 other survivors of Mansoa, he had been transferred to the island of Galhinas, a penal settlement transformed into a concentration camp for some 300 PAIGC terrorists. Late at night, two prisoners had been made to run out and had heard machine-gun fire. The soldiers had then claimed that the two prisoners had attempted to escape.

In September 1962 he, together with about 100 others, many of whom had been in very poor physical condition, had been transferred by ship to the Tarrafal concentration camp on the island of Santiago. On the way, most of them had fainted from the heat. In the camp, which was notorious, the prisoners had been shut up under the constant watch of armed guards, and had been forbidden to talk or even laugh. Every 10 days they had been given a little water for washing. The climate was unbearably hot, and fever, diarrhoea and other diseases had been rampant. They had been denied medical assistance. For any breach of the camp rules, such as laughing, a prisoner would be confined to a small cell for a week on bread and water. As a result of the bad food, which had consisted of stale

/...

cabbage and mouldy rice, their bodies had swollen up. After the death of two prisoners in November 1962, a rebel movement had been started. At first the camp commandant had taken no notice of their demands for better conditions, but later a doctor had been sent and they had been given water twice a week, daily exercise and noticeably better food. When they had finally been permitted to speak, they had learnt of the measures taken by the colonialists in various parts of the country.

The colonialist military command for southern Guinea was stationed in the village of Tite, in the southern central part of Guinea (Bissau). There was also a concentration camp, in which Corporal Carreira Curto had later become notorious for his crimes. On arrival, prisoners had had their clothing slashed and their hands tied behind their backs with wire. They had been made to keep apart and had been forbidden to stand or kneel, on pain of being shot. The camp, surrounded by barbed wire, with a guard-house at the entrance, was open to rain, sun and mosquitoes. The food had consisted of the soldiers' leftovers - soup, potatoes, cod, bread, etc., mixed with cigarette butts. Each prisoner had the "right" to one glass of that mixture which, because his hands were tied, had been poured down his throat. They had been given one glass of water each per day.

Hundreds of prisoners had died or had been permanently incapacitated by torture and the miserable living conditions. The dead were not removed for many hours. Prisoners had been tortured by being made to stand up to their necks in a hole in the ground. Sometimes they had been beaten for hours by soldiers wielding sacks full of sand.

At the end of 1962, a prison had been constructed. Several survivors of the Tite camp had been transferred to the Galhinas concentration camp.

In the Bula region, the camp consisted of a cave some five metres deep. Conditions had been almost identical to those of Tite. Several prisoners there had been stabbed to death by the notorious Andrade.

In prison at Bissora, also in the Bula region, prisoners had had their fingernails pulled out. In the Santo Domingo prison, the prisoners had been whipped, often until they died.

In the region of Bafata, conditions had become overcrowded, since the number of prisoners had kept increasing. To solve the problem, groups of up to 20 prisoners had been given picks and shovels, taken close to the airport and forced to dig their own graves, after which they had been shot. In 1969, he had seen human bones, skeletons and skulls there.

In October 1965, together with four others, he had been transferred back to the PIDE prison at Bissau, although on that occasion he had travelled on board ship in a third-class cabin.

Repression had by then increased. The windows of the cells had been bricked up and light and air entered only through narrow cracks. The doors had been reinforced with steel. During October 1965 the prison had held some 700 to 800 political prisoners. Ten of the cells had housed women, some of them pregnant or with young children. All cells had been jammed. For example, in a cell constructed for one prisoner there had been 15; and in one meant for 12, there had been 84. Most prisoners had not had enough room to lie down. Even the toilets had been full of prisoners, who had been totally naked, since they could not bear to wear any clothing. Because of the terrible heat, most prisoners had developed a heat rash.

Food had been brought in buckets every two days. Prisoners furthest from the door had often been unable to obtain food, since they had been unable to reach it. Many had become emaciated, but had received no medical care. No day passed without prisoners dying, and their bodies had sometimes been left in the cells for over 24 hours. Some prisoners had succeeded in electrocuting themselves in order to end their misery.

In November 1965, they had been sent back to the Galhinas camp, as a result of the intervention of the Bissau public health officer following protests by the gravediggers in the Bissau cemetery. Others had been sent to São Nicolau camp in Angola, while yet others, such as Professor Vormao de Sousa, Duarte N'Bana, Victor Pinhel and many others, had simply been put to death in the PIDE camp at Bissau. In Galhinas, the 245 political prisoners had been subjected to forced labour, although many were sick. During the first few months, they had worked on extending the airfield for 10 hours a day in the heat of the sun. Their guards had been ready to shoot to kill on the slightest pretext. The prisoners

/...

had had to continue working even when the trees were being felled, otherwise the guards had shot them immediately, alleging that they had attempted to escape. In the space of several weeks, 15 political prisoners had been killed in that way, and many others seriously wounded. The political prisoners had been strictly segregated from the common criminals. One companion had been killed because he had stood up to stretch himself. Another, named Victor, had been tied to a tree, and the guards had used him as a target. After several hours, the blood had flowed profusely from the wounds of yet another victim of the "Christian civilization" of the Portuguese colonialists, and soon he had died from his wounds.

Because of those and other indescribable crimes, even the assistant chief of the security police in the concentration camp had quarrelled with the guards. Fortunately, he had won and the guards had been replaced by infantrymen. When the airport runway had been completed, they had been given other work, such as extracting coconut oil and growing rice. After the departure of the guards, two dangerous enemies had remained - police armed with whips and the poisonous cobras that infested the island. The prisoners had not been permitted to bury their dead; they had been told that even vultures had a right to eat.

Food had consisted of 60 grammes of rice per day mixed with stones.

As for medical care, the situation had been disastrous: a single nurse, without any auxiliaries, had been assigned for the whole population of the island, common criminals and political prisoners alike. The nurse had been given everything to do, including the work of a general practitioner and surgeon. Consequently, mortality had been very high: cases of malaria, scurvy, diarrhoea, snakebite etc. had been rife.

They had obtained further information from political prisoners sent to the island concerning other criminal acts committed by the Portuguese colonialists. In December 1965, for example, alleging that deaths had resulted from a fight with terrorists in the Biambi area, the colonialist forces had captured 10 Africans, two of whom - Mamadi Kali and Mamadu Cassama - had been detained with him in the camp of Tarrafal. They had been accused of terrorism and executed.

Also in November 1965, a grenade had been thrown during a dance at Morcunda in the district of Farim, north Guinea, causing a number of deaths and casualties. In committing that crime, the colonialists had been pursuing two objectives. Firstly, they had sought to discredit PAIGC among the population. A vast propaganda campaign had been launched by radio in which PAIGC had been accused of being responsible for the crime. Secondly, they had sought to eliminate Africans who refused to collaborate with them. In their view, the "criminal" must surely have had accomplices who had established a secret PAIGC network among the population in the region of Farim. The rest had been easy: a man named Julio had been accused of the crime, while 80 other Africans had been detained in Farim and Bigene. Julio and 15 others had been shot, and the remaining 65 had been imprisoned in the PIDE prison in Bissau.

In April 1967, he had been taken together with three companions to Bissau and released, the only comment made by the colonial administrator, Manuel da Trindade Guerra Ribeiro, had been that he should consider himself lucky to be alive after five years' imprisonment.

It had never been clear whether more crimes had been committed in the PIDE prison or by the administration of the Bissau council. He had remained for six months at Bissau, having to report to PIDE once a week.

In conclusion, he explained that he had omitted from his statement many other cases, occurring both in and out of prison, which he had witnessed or which had been related to him by other victims of repression. Many crimes would never be known, since the victims had succumbed to the torture and appalling living conditions of the concentration camps - abominable crimes that had been committed because the Portuguese colonialists had refused to accept the new realities so well expressed in General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV).

Mr. CABRAL (Secretary-General of PAIGC), introducing Mr. Sotero Fortes, said that the latter was an agricultural worker who had been engaged as a contratado at São Tomé. The system of contratados was a form of disguised slavery which allowed the Portuguese Government to recruit cheap labour in its colonial territories to replace the Portuguese workers who emigrated in large numbers, particularly to France. As a result of the ill-treatment which he had suffered, Mr. Fortes had become aware of the tragic condition of his people and had joined the freedom fighters.

Introducing another member of his group, Mr. Maleo Cabral, he said that the latter had been connected at an early age with PAIGC in Guinea (Bissau) and that, in 1971, when he was studying to become an agricultural engineer in Portugal, he had organized there the clandestine movement of students from Guinea (Bissa) and from Cape Verde. When he had finished his studies, he had managed to escape from Portugal and to make his way to France, where he had rejoined the Party.

He also introduced Mr. Inacio Semedo, another member of his group. Mr. Inacio Semedo had gone to Hungary at an early age and had obtained there a diploma in agricultural engineering and, two years later, a doctorate in agronomics. It could be seen that the freedom fighters were carrying on the struggle while at the same time building up cadres of specialists which their country would need in the future.

Mr. FORTES (PAIGC) said that the majority of the peasants were landless and had to go in daily search of work, eking out a miserable and precarious existence on wages that were not enough to appease the hunger of their families. In the rural areas the only employees were the officials of the Portuguese colonial administration. Job security and trade union organizations were non-existent. Medical care, although available in theory, was given only to the few who could afford it. Many resorted to traditional tribal medicine, and those who fell seriously ill frequently died from lack of assistance.

The overwhelming majority of the peasants and their children were unable to read or write. Many of the women were reduced to the level of labourers, carrying stones and farm produce.

The position was much worse in years of drought, which were frequent. The peasants became beggars and road workers. Only the big landowners, whose interests coincided with those of the colonialists and who normally lived by the sweat of the peasants' brow, were able to survive the crises. In such times they engaged in speculation by raising the prices of consumer goods, although they had made vast profits in the years of plenty. In the years of famine, the colonial administration promoted public works, consisting of road building and repairing, for which they paid miserably low wages. Many died from malnutrition or sickness and were buried in mass graves. Mothers who could not feed their babies the necessary milk even resorted to killing them.

/...

Centuries of such misery had passed without the Portuguese administration having made any attempt to improve the lot of the people of Cape Verde. On the contrary, it had taken advantage of the situation to assist the big landowners, such as the Banco Nacional Ultramarino and the Caixa Economica Portuguesa, and to rob the medium-sized and small landowners who, because of the crises, failed to pay their mortgages. At such times, the Government was also able to recruit slave labour for the farms of São Tomé and Angola, since peasants who had lost their lands and were unemployed had no option but to accept any contract that might ensure their survival. In 1957, although not a crisis year, he himself, as a landless peasant, had had to accept a contract of work in São Tomé. Promises of good working conditions, food, clothing, free medical care and the opportunity to save had never been fulfilled. For each labour contract, the agents received a commission of 100 escudos. In previous years, many had died from malnutrition and sickness during the 10-day voyage. On arrival on the island, all contract labourers were subjected, as in the days of slavery, to a physical examination. Husband, wife and children were often separated and each was taken to the place where his or her work would be most productive. For a 12-hour day - amounting to some 324 hours per month - men received a monthly wage of 110 and women 90 escudos. Half of the wage was withheld as compulsory savings. Children were also compelled to work and paid the equivalent of \$2 per month. Because of their exhausting work, the sun and rain, and insufficient food, which consisted merely of flour and dried fish, the peasants lived in a state of perpetual sickness; yet they were excused work only when at death's door. When in the hospital, they received no pay. The hospital expenses were deducted from their compulsory savings, as were any other extraordinary expenses. Such was the state of virtual slavery in which they lived. They were constantly urged to work even harder and insulted and, if they reacted, they were whipped.

With the support of the colonial administration of the island, the managers of the newly cleared lands administered arbitrary justice without let or hindrance. A few workers succeeded in escaping to neighbouring countries, such as Gabo or the Congo, or to Cape Verde. Under such conditions, hundreds of labourers from Cape Verde had perished in São Tomé or Angola, while those fortunate enough to survive until the end of their contract had returned sick,

prematurely aged and destitute to Cape Verde. The sole advantage they could draw from their experiences in São Tomé was their sharpened political awareness and feeling of rebellion, and the understanding that the peoples of Cape Verde, Guinea (Bissa), Angola, São Tomé and Mozambique were all equally victims of Portuguese colonialism. They knew they must fight a common foe, whose hoary stratagem of divide and rule deceived no one.

After the founding of PAIGC in 1956, and particularly after the start of the armed struggle in Guinea (Bissau) in 1963, the people of the country - imprisoned, tortured, oppressed and exploited - had been determined to fight within the ranks of the Party, whose objective was the complete independence of the Territory, with schools, hospitals, work, progress and justice for all.

Mr. CABRAL (Secretary-General of PAIGC) said that Mr. Carlos Reis had been, a few months earlier, a member of the Higher Council of the liberation struggle in one of the Cape Verde Islands. He had left the island to strengthen the liaison with the Party; he had then returned and had been arrested. When he had served his prison sentence, he had succeeded in leaving the country.

Mr. REIS (PAIGC) said that he was 26 years old, a native of São Vicente, Cape Verde, was married and had one daughter. The African population of the Cape Verde Islands, like the other African populations subjected to Portuguese colonialism, had always lived in the greatest poverty and ignorance. They had been extensively exploited for centuries and had been the victims of the slave trade. With the end of slavery in 1875, the "donatarios" system, instituted by the Portuguese Crown, had been replaced by the land tenure system which still prevailed in Cape Verde. During the centuries in which they had been in the archipelago the Portuguese colonialists had taken no significant steps to develop the islands economically or to relieve the hunger of the population. On the contrary, they had taken advantage of the hunger in order to strengthen their domination and to secure cheap, if not slave, labour to work the farms of the settlers in São Tomé and Angola, to which the people of Cape Verde were exported as contract labour. In the twentieth century alone, the population of Cape Verde had known 21 years of hunger and, in one of the great famines afflicting the islands, had been reduced by between 15 and 25 per cent. Every fourth year for the past two centuries, the Cape Verdians had had a full year of starvation. That was the most tragic aspect of what was known as the "civilizing and Christian mission" of Portugal in Africa.

/...

There had been many attempts at rebellion. However, the uprisings had been so cruelly repressed and the population had been so badly organized that it was only with the founding of PAIGC that the population had been able to assume responsibility for shaping their own destiny.

Describing the situation prevailing in Cape Verde, he said that, contrary to all principles of international law and in defiance of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), the Portuguese Government was, despite its deficit budget, making a desperate effort to increase its forces in Cape Verde. Indeed, one of the factors characterizing the political life of the archipelago in the last century had been the strengthening of the colonial presence. Portuguese military forces had been greatly increased. A new naval base had been established at Ribeira do Julia on São Vicente; the international airport on the island of Sal had been equipped by South Africa to accommodate all kinds of military planes, including supersonic aircraft, and the airport on the island of Boa Vista had also been equipped to receive all types of military aircraft. The waters of the Cape Verde islands were constantly patrolled by Portuguese warships, and warships of countries friendly to Portugal regularly plied at the archipelago. The Portuguese colonialists were resorting to all possible measures to involve the NATO Powers in their warlike plans and in developing the necessary infrastructure to transform the Cape Verde islands into a military base. They had persuaded their United States allies to construct a base for observing the eclipse of the sun on São Vicente. NASA technicians had already been sent to the island and it was expected that the project would be completed by June 1973. The sole purpose of the supposedly scientific project was to camouflage the first steps in the execution of a plan Portugal had devised many years ago. The immediate purpose of using Cape Verde's excellent strategic position for warlike ends was to curb the national liberation movement not only in Cape Verde but also in Guinea (Bissau), Angola and Mozambique.

The notorious political police force (PIDE) had been greatly reinforced in the islands. In 1971, 105 PIDE officials had been sent to Cape Verde and, taking advantage of the fact that the population was starving, had launched a vast propaganda campaign to recruit local information agents. Nevertheless, despite the famine prevailing in the islands, the Portuguese Government had been

/...

obliged to send to the islands Portuguese policemen specially trained to work in the colonies to reinforce the public security police which had traditionally consisted of Cape Verdians. In that way, the Portuguese Government had provided proof of its growing alarm in the face of the increasing political awareness of the local population.

At the same time as it encouraged Cape Verdians to emigrate on the pretext that the economy of the islands could support no more than two thirds of the population, the Portuguese Government was encouraging its settlers and army to go to the archipelago. It was clear, therefore, that its real aim was to put down the nationalist movement in the islands by removing all useful members of the population from the country. In the primary, secondary and technical schools, for instance, several teachers had been replaced by untrained Portuguese military personnel and their wives, and Cape Verdians between the ages of 20 and 25 had been sent to fight the colonialist wars in Guinea (Bissau), Angola and Mozambique. Whereas there might have been some justification for the occupation of the islands by foreign military personnel in the Second World War, such occupation surely could not be condoned at the present time. The facts he had mentioned served to illustrate the desperate effort being made by the Portuguese colonialists to strengthen their odious presence in the archipelago and prevent the populations from attaining independence.

The irreversible forward march of the national liberation movement had forced the Portuguese colonialists to try to introduce their so-called "Better Guinea" policy in Cape Verde. The principal purpose of the visit by Marcello Caetano, the Portuguese Prime Minister, to Cape Verde in February/March 1971 had been to calm the local population by promising them help in overcoming their famine. That had been the first time in five centuries that a Portuguese head of Government had felt obliged to visit Cape Verde and it was because of the famine prevailing in the islands. It had also been the first time that, impelled by the force of public opinion and the success of the national liberation movement, a Portuguese Government had pretended to be concerned about the starvation of the people in one of its colonies. Though it had long been known that ground water existed in Cape Verde, no attempt to exploit it had been made before the emergence of PALMGC.

/...

As part of its propaganda, the colonialist Government had always insisted that Cape Verde enjoyed a high level of literacy and that 90 per cent of its children attended school. In fact, no more than 25 to 30 per cent of the children were able to go to school. Moreover, as the population was so widely scattered over the island, the children often had to walk many miles to school. Furthermore, most of the children who began their primary schooling were prevented, for economic reasons, from completing it. Secondary schooling was available to less than 1 per cent of the population which, for the most part, was unable to afford the necessary books and materials. There was an agricultural and technical school at Santiago but the rural workers attending it had no land on which they could apply their knowledge. The local population had submitted requests to open private primary and secondary schools, which had usually been denied. There was no doubt, therefore, that the aim of the colonialist Government was to perpetrate the ignorance of Cape Verdians and thus maintain their domination over them.

So far as health was concerned, the success of the national liberation movement had caused the colonialist Government to make promises in the hope of deceiving the population. Thus, a few years previously, it had promised to build a new hospital on Sao Vicente and, on the pretext that it needed the land, had expropriated many peasants. Nevertheless, work on the construction of the hospital had not started. There were very few doctors and the only medicaments available were to be bought in private pharmacies and were beyond the means of most Cape Verdian families.

Turning to the situation of the working classes of Cape Verde, he said that in the past 50 years the total amount of exports had decreased by between one third and three quarters. Crops that had flourished previously had been abandoned in favour of crops which would not compete with those grown in Portugal. That had been one of the main reasons for the worsening of the situation of the working classes. The land tenure system was characterized by the existence of large ranches concentrated in the hands of a few landowners, including the Banco Nacional Ultramarino and the Caixa Economica Portuguesa. The majority of the peasants owned no land and were unable to enjoy the fruits of their labour. On the contrary, even in years when the harvest was good they led miserable lives, and in periods of drought they either had to accept State work, consisting of road-building or repair,

/...

or emigrate to ranches in Sao Tome or Angola, where the conditions for them were subhuman. Urban workers who lacked any form of trade union protection, were underemployed. The unemployment figure was very high in the good harvest years, but, in times of crisis, when rural workers flocked into the cities it reached astronomical proportions. In the past decade economic and social conditions had deteriorated in Cape Verde which had never been as poor as at present. The cost of living was constantly rising and almost the entire local production was consumed by the colonialists. Conditions were such that Cape Verdians had been obliged to emigrate although they yearned to build a life for themselves in the archipelago. Indeed, the number of Cape Verdians who had been forced to leave their country in the past 70 years was greater than the current population of the archipelago. In the 1960s there had been a wave of emigration to the Netherlands and France. The emigrants had encountered difficulties in obtaining the necessary documents and tickets and the contracts signed between the Portuguese, Netherlands and French Governments had created further difficulties for them. Portugal was interested in obtaining Cape Verdian workers to work on the ranches of Sao Tome or Angola and in the mines of Portugal. Fifteen thousand young Cape Verdians had been sent to work in Portugal, not in order to offer them a better life but to provide Portugal with the manpower it lacked as a result of the emigration of Portuguese workers to other European countries. The shameful economic and social conditions prevailing in the archipelago had led to almost constant rebellion. Any signs of rebellion were, of course, swiftly and cruelly repressed. Nevertheless, to judge by the number of persons joining it, PAIGC faithfully reflected the aspirations of the local population and, despite the fact that many young people had been arrested, the liberation movement continued to grow. The local population was convinced that, as a result of the efforts of PAIGC, they would be able to build a life of peace and progress and thus contribute to international peace and security.

The CHAIRMAN thanked the representatives of PAIGC for their statements.

Mr. CABRAL (Secretary-General of PAIGC), introducing

Mr. Tchierno Indjai, said that he was studying in a secondary school in Guinea (Bissau).

/...

Mr. INDJAI (PAIGC) said he was 17 years old, a native of Bolama, Guinea (Bissau), and had attended school in Bissau. In view of the increased pressure being exerted by the Portuguese colonialists, the PAIGC leaders had decided that he should leave Bissau and on 23 February 1972 he had sought refuge in the liberated areas of northern Guinea.

When barely eight years old he had witnessed the arrest of one of his uncles and only a few years later another of his uncles had been taken into custody. Though only a child, he had realized that life in the town was not normal and had gradually become aware of the fact that the number of Africans being arrested was increasing daily. The number of colonialist soldiers in the town was also increasing and, as there was no room to quarter them in the two barracks, several shops and the school canteen had been requisitioned for them. Jet planes had often flown over the town terrorizing the population. In 1964, General Schultz had taken over as commander-in-chief in Guinea. The situation in Bissau had then deteriorated and repressive acts had been committed against the local population. It was generally understood that the colonialists' actions were designed to prevent the local population from supporting PAIGC and the liberation movement. In 1966 the colonialist soldiers had made daily raids into the African districts and had filled the prisons with alleged PAIGC militants. His uncle had again been tortured and imprisoned by the political police (PIDE) together with two of his comrades. At the beginning of 1968 General Schultz had returned to Portugal and had been replaced by Brigadier Ribeiro de Spínola who had subsequently been promoted general. The colonialists had then unleashed a vast "Better Guinea" propaganda campaign and Spínola had promised economic and social improvements, saying that the colonialists wished to improve conditions by reason, not arms. That had been tantamount to a confession that Portugal had realized that its efforts to put down the national liberation movement had failed and was trying to persuade the local population to forget the barbarous crimes committed against them.

Having been a student at Bissau, he was in a position to describe the economic and social conditions of the area. There was only one secondary school in Guinea, and a vocational school - the Commercial and Industrial School - which provided courses for electricians, sawmill mechanics, etc. and also for women. Until 1961 when the "Indigenous Statute" had been repealed, Guineans had constituted only

/...

20 per cent of the total school enrolment. After that date, although the number of pupils attending school had greatly increased, the Portuguese still placed obstacles in the way of Guineans wishing to attend. The first obstacle was the dearth of teaching staff. There were only three full-time teachers, the remainder of the staff being wives of officers and sergeants in the Portuguese army. In many cases the teachers had to leave their teaching duties in order to serve in the Portuguese army and the students were then left to their own devices. Neither English nor French was taught in the schools. The second obstacle was the fact that textbooks had not been modernized. In addition, only students with money were able to purchase the textbooks they needed. The percentage of children attending school was very small and many were forced to leave before they had completed their education. The lack of equipment in the laboratories and the discriminatory treatment meted out to Africans were other obstacles to improved education for the local population. Very few Africans were awarded scholarships, which, for the most part went to the sons of settlers. Furthermore, those who did win scholarships had difficulty in keeping up in Portugal because the level of education in Bissau was so low. Very few Africans were exempted from military service and many of them, after completing three months' military training requested to be transferred to the colonialist army because they were unable to live at Bissau. Once in the colonialist army, they asked to be transferred to Angola or Mozambique where they hoped to find work. African students were fully aware of the situation, and hatred for the colonialists was becoming evident even in schools. Many students fled to the liberated areas in order to join PAIGC; in the first three months of 1972, 50 students had succeeded in fleeing to the liberated areas.

The CHAIRMAN thanked Mr. Indjai for the very valuable information he had given the Committee.

Mr. CABRAL (Secretary-General of PAIGC) pointed out that Mr. Teixeira Barros had left the country to escape Portuguese reprisals, because he was suspected of being responsible for a bomb explosion, which had seriously damaged a police station.

Mr. TEIXEIRA BARROS (PAIGC) said that he was 24 years old, a bachelor, and born in the town of Bissau. On the instructions of PAIGC, of which he had been

/...

a militant since 1963, he had left Bissau on 23 February 1972. At Bissau he had taken an electrician's course at the Industrial School, the only vocational school in Guinea (Bissau). He explained that what he was about to say was supplementary to the statement shortly to be made by his colleague Tchernó Indjai.

In exploiting Guinea (Bissau), the Portuguese colonialists had done nothing to develop, or to allow the Africans to develop, its resources in order to establish and build up a social and economic infrastructure. Before the struggle for national liberation had begun, under the leadership of PAIGC, Guinea (Bissau) had been nothing more than a supplier of raw materials, in particular, peanuts, coconuts, palm oil, honey, hides and timber, for the factories of the Companhia Uniao Fabril in Portugal. The colonialist policy consisted in forcing the population to produce those raw materials, so that the activities in which the Africans could engage were restricted to agriculture - using traditional techniques - slave labour in the sawmills and other inferior jobs such as loading and unloading on the docks, serving as "indigenous" policemen, i.e. agents of oppression, servants, petty officials in the colonial administration, shop assistants or small traders. They could also work as masons, mechanics, domestic servants or employees in bars and restaurants. In order to enslave the African labour force, the Portuguese had done nothing to develop production techniques; they had enforced their racist laws with the use of whips and erected a whole series of social, economic and cultural barriers between themselves and the Africans.

The armed struggle for national liberation led by PAIGC would change that situation forever in more than two thirds of the national territory in which, in spite of the bombing and attacks by the Portuguese colonialists, his people were creating a new life based on progress and justice. In the rest of the Territory, which was still under colonialist control, the Africans continued to be mercilessly exploited.

In the town of Bissau, where industry was virtually non-existent, under-employment was being gradually superseded by mass unemployment, partly because the colonial exploitation was being brought to a halt in most of the Territory and partly because of the progress of the armed struggle which prevented the Portuguese from intensifying their activities, both because they

/...

were afraid and because they lacked the necessary capital, as Portugal's investment was restricted to the military. Hence, employment opportunities for the Africans were decreasing. The rising unemployment in the town of Bissau was also the result of other factors, of which he would describe the most important.

First of all, there were the underhand tactics in which the colonialist Government was engaging. Faced with the critical situation he had outlined, the Portuguese Government was trying to recruit collaborators from among the African urban population. In order to find collaborators for their political police - the so-called Security Department - the colonialists were giving work only to African traitors or to Africans who enlisted in the "Liga des Guinéus", or so-called "Partido de uma Guiné Melhor", a pseudo-party formed by the colonialist military Governor and consisting of African turncoats and settlers. Its policy was "to build a better Guinea under the Portuguese flag". Africans who refused to acquiesce were either unable to find work or, if they already worked, were subjected to persecution.

In order to mobilize Africans for the colonialist war - a policy which was being pursued more and more persistently in recent times - the colonialists had introduced compulsory military service. Young men who completed their military service were forced to re-enlist because they were unable to find work however good their military records might have been. Theoretically, they did not lose their jobs, but in practice they seldom returned to them after their military service or after being wounded in battle.

Another aspect of the colonialist Government's underhand tactics was the facilities afforded to the Portuguese soldiers who had been sent to work in Bissau, facilities which were also provided for their wives. The purpose of that policy was to encourage the Portuguese soldiers to stay in Guinea (Bissau) on the completion of their military service, but almost none of them did so.

The second factor was the increase in population. From 1962 to 1967, in particular, the colonialists had transplanted to the town of Bissau a large number of the inhabitants who had been living in areas where the colonialist army had been no longer able to stem the PAIGC offensive, for example, Empada, Quinara and Chao dos Nalus. They had also transferred to Bissau the inhabitants whom

/...

they had captured in the liberated areas. The colonialists were building fortified villages in the areas they still occupied and were herding the captured inhabitants into them.

He then described the various types of employment available in Bissau.

Shop assistants. Formerly the shop assistants had been almost exclusively Africans, especially those of the Moslem faith, but they had been almost completely ousted by the wives of soldiers. Some of the former employees had been sent to work in warehouses or had lost their jobs.

Clerical work. At present almost all office work was reserved for the wives of Portuguese officers and non-commissioned officers.

Schools. Almost the entire teaching staff consisted of Portuguese soldiers and their wives.

Bissau Civilian Hospital. In order to employ the wives of some Portuguese soldiers and sailors, the colonialists had created the post of supervisor in the Bissau Hospital. African assistants with several years' seniority were not promoted.

Bars and hotels. The Portuguese soldiers stationed at Bissau worked in almost all the bars and hotels, in which their wages and fringe benefits were vastly superior to those of the African workers. An African cook earned a maximum of 1,750 escudos and had no fringe benefits, whereas an assistant cook who was a Portuguese soldier's wife earned 2,500 escudos per month.

Port of Bissau. There was a high percentage of unemployment in the Port of Bissau. When a Portuguese ship arrived at the main dock, a few hundred Africans were recruited as stevedores in two shifts, each working 10-12 hours per day for 20 escudos per shift. At Pidjiguiti dock, where military launches and small craft carrying food and raw materials for garrisons in the interior called, there were also some stevedoring jobs available for the unemployed and the shift system and wages were the same as at the main dock. However, as there was no work for the majority of the unemployed, crime and prostitution, in addition to other social problems, were increasing daily in the town of Bissau.

The housing crisis, already bad in Portugal, was much worse in Guinea (Bissau) because the rate of construction was decreasing year by year. Construction was restricted to the houses built by the Africans; the Portuguese proprietors had nothing to invest and, as a result, there was widespread speculation in rents.

/...

Few of the adobe houses in Bissau - the only ones the Africans could afford - and almost none in the outskirts of Bissau had piped-in water or electricity. Because of the high rents, virtually only the Portuguese could afford to live in stone houses and even they were occupied by two or three families. Obviously the health conditions were execrable.

The housing crisis had been further aggravated by the security measures adopted by the Portuguese colonialists. On the pretext of opening up new streets or realigning others, the Bissau Town Council had torn down a large number of adobe houses in the African districts. That had not been done in the interest of urban improvement but because the colonialists authorities wished to avoid concentrations of houses in order to facilitate their police and military surveillance and prevent people on their "wanted" list from escaping. Even when compensated, Africans wanting to build houses were seldom able to find any lots in the urban area.

Generally speaking, an African wishing to build a house had little money available for the purpose owing to the low wage level and high cost of living. For example, before starting to build, an African with 10,000 escudos - a large sum in Bissau - had to submit a blueprint to the Council and pay 4,000 escudos, quite apart from the price of the land. He thus had nothing left to pay for materials and labour. As a result they almost all preferred to build in secret; if they were discovered, either the construction was stopped or they were fined 300 escudos. A house builder thus lost all the money he had invested if he did not pay the fine or make the advance payment. Recently the Chairman of the Bissau Town Council had informed all the owners of adobe houses that they must comply with the law in respect of the land on which they lived and complete their construction on penalty of having their houses destroyed and replaced by stone structures.

For the entire population of the town and island of Bissau there was only one hospital with six doctors. In order to be examined, patients had to report to the consulting rooms before 5 a.m., unless they could afford private consultations. The doctors appeared after 11 a.m. but never spent more than one hour on consultations. At most they spoke to 15 patients and then left on the pretext of being very busy. Those who were not lucky enough to see the doctor, had to return at 5 a.m. the next morning. A patient could thus lose two weeks

/...

waiting for a doctor's consultation of less than five minutes. Even with a prescription in hand, a patient could not count on the hospital pharmacy because of the great shortage of medicaments and was therefore obliged to buy them in one of the exorbitantly expensive local pharmacies. Most African patients had therefore to resort to traditional medicine.

Africans needing hospital treatment had to wait for more than a month for a bed. In hospital those who could do so had their food brought to them from home because the hospital food was both unhygienic and of low nutritional value.

On 25 July 1971, General Antonio Spínola, the colonialist military Governor, had threatened the population of Bissau, vowing to punish them with the severity which an enemy deserved. The reason for that drastic measure was his realization that his deceitful and Machiavellian policy had been a complete failure and because the people of Bissau had been rallying in increasing numbers to PAIGC. He had passed from threats to action: in September 1971, the arbitrary arrest of Africans by the political police had been resumed and by February 1972, when he had been ordered by his Party to leave Bissau, dozens of young men - including soldiers in the colonial army, students, trainees and unemployed - had been arrested. They had included people such as Malam Darame who had been victims of the repression of 1962-1967, during which period they had been tortured and refused defence counsel. Once again the colonialists had tried to terrorize the African population of Bissau; once again they had sought to commit acts of genocide against the defenceless inhabitants. His people would not be daunted by that new wave of arrests, which reflected the despair in which the Portuguese colonialists had been plunged because of the rapid spread of the armed struggle for national liberation as from the first half of 1971. Some would certainly die, as they had in the past, but, however great the sacrifices, nothing would hold back the victorious advance of the people of Guinea and Cape Verde under the leadership of PAIGC. They would triumph, because they were fighting for a just cause, for legality and for peace and progress in accord with the United Nations Charter.

Mr. CABRAL (Secretary-General of PAIGC) said he was happy that the members of his group who had spoken during that session had been able to provide the Committee with useful information, which he had not possessed himself on various aspects of the life of the fighters in Cape Verde.

/...

The CHAIRMAN thanked the members of PAIGC for their interesting and informative statements. In particular, he thanked Mr. Cabral for his inspiring address, which would prove most useful to the Committee in its work. He invited the members of the Committee to put questions to the members of PAIGC.

Mr. NEKLESSA (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that his delegation had listened with great interest to the statements made by the spokesmen of the heroic peoples of Guinea (Bissau) and Cape Verde. Their statements testified to the unswerving determination of those peoples to drive the Portuguese colonialists from their countries for ever and to continue the fight for social progress. His delegation wished them every success in their endeavours. It was the duty of the Special Committee and of the United Nations to grant the people of Guinea (Bissau) and Cape Verde all possible assistance. His delegation had noted with satisfaction that in their statements the PAIGC spokesmen had referred to the support given by the Soviet Union to the peoples of Guinea (Bissau) and Cape Verde. The USSR had always assisted peoples fighting colonial régimes and would continue to do so.

At recent meetings the Committee had heard of the horrible crimes committed by Portuguese colonialists. It was essential that steps be taken to inform the whole world of what the Committee had learnt, for the assertion that Portuguese colonialist policy had been liberalized must be unmasked as pure myth. At the previous meeting the representative of India had proposed that the United Nations Office of Public Information (OPI) should give the widest possible circulation to the statements made by PAIGC. His delegation endorsed that suggestion and wished to suggest in addition that OPI should not limit itself to press releases but should produce a special pamphlet devoted to Guinea (Bissau) and Cape Verde reproducing the material submitted to the Committee which showed the Portuguese colonialists in their true colours. OPI should also include in it material obtained by the special mission which had recently visited Guinea (Bissau). His delegation wished to hold consultations on the subject with representatives of OPI. If a special decision by the Committee was required before his proposal could be implemented, perhaps the Committee could return to the matter at a later meeting.

/...

Mr. BARAKAT AHMAD (India) reminded the members that at the previous meeting he had suggested that OPI should give extensive coverage in its cables to the statements made by the spokesmen of PAIGC. He had since been informed that OPI had already exhausted the funds allocated to it for the Conakry part of the mission. In view of the special nature of the Committee's session, such an economy seemed out of place, so he suggested that the Committee should decide to increase the budget for cables at least in so far as PAIGC statements were concerned. In order to facilitate matters, his delegation was willing to forgo cable coverage of its own statements.

His delegation wished to put a question to the Secretary-General of PAIGC concerning a statement which had appeared in a confidential newsletter published in London. The 25 November 1971 issue of the newsletter contained the following statement: "On balance, confidence in Portugal's ability to hold Guinea seems quite justified. But PAIGC is well equipped with heavy equipment, a lot of which has been captured (taken intact and still greased). Perhaps a more fundamental factor is the failure of PAIGC to recruit widespread support in Guinea, plus the increasing movement of African populations to towns like Bissau, Bafata and Mansoa, and to areas near the Portuguese army bases." His delegation was convinced that the statement was false but would welcome the Secretary-General's comments on it.

The CHAIRMAN said that the suggestions of the representative of the USSR would be passed on to OPI at Headquarters, as a matter of priority, for appropriate action.

Referring to the comments made by the representative of India, he said that despite the financial implications a comprehensive report had been dispatched after the previous day's meetings. He believed that the Committee could take a flexible approach with regard to the prescribed length of cable coverage.

Mr. CABRAL (Secretary-General of PAIGC) replied that, although it was true that PAIGC had lost a considerable number of heavy weapons, it had captured in its turn a large number from the Portuguese. It now possessed automatic and semi-automatic weapons, to which it owed its recent success in safeguarding the United Nations group in the liberated areas.

The members of the Special Committee should not give credence to the propaganda issued by Portuguese agents throughout the world and at the United Nations. These agents lied and exaggerated, especially when they said that 20,000 members of PAIGC had been put out of action. That figure was unrealistic in view of the fact that the population from which PAIGC recruited its troops numbered less than 400,000 inhabitants. It emerged from secret reports received by the Portuguese Government from its own political agents and military commanders in Guinea (Bissau) and other territories under its domination that the Portuguese recognized their weakness and were becoming more and more aware that the liberation movements received growing support from the mass of the population. Moreover, the Portuguese Government had difficulty in recruiting officers, many of whom had deserted, especially to Sweden.

Mr. PSONCAK (Yugoslavia), thanking the members of PAIGC for their interesting statements, asked whether they would have any firm proposals to put forward with a view to making the links between their Party and the Special Committee more direct and regular and joint action more effective. He would also like to know by what means and on what basis, apart from United Nations resolutions, the Special Committee would be able to persuade other United Nations bodies to render their moral, material and political aid to liberation movements with greater flexibility. Did PAIGC intend to take steps towards being officially admitted to the United Nations?

Mr. CABRAL (Secretary-General of PAIGC) thought that the Special Committee itself was in a position to improve its relations with PAIGC on the basis of United Nations resolutions. If those resolutions were put fully into effect by the various United Nations bodies and especially by the specialized agencies, they could help to strengthen the co-operation between the United Nations and PAIGC and, in so doing, to make more effective the aid rendered by the international community to liberation movements.

It was true that for the United Nations, on the recommendation of OAU, PAIGC represented the people of Guinea (Bissau) and Cape Verde, but that was not enough: in the same way as OAU, the United Nations should give PAIGC its rightful place among United Nations bodies. He was aware that PAIGC had enemies as well

as friends in the international community, witness the fact that an African country had voted against it at a recent UNESCO meeting. But it was the duty of the Special Committee to denounce the opponents of liberation movements.

As to PAIGC, it had done and would do everything possible to encourage joint action: it had liberated and now controlled half the territory of Guinea (Bassau); it had created regional councils which would have far-reaching legal and political effects; and, as the Special Committee knew, it was most anxious to use all the means at its disposal (information bulletins, visits by its representatives to New York, etc.) to strengthen its relations with the United Nations.

Mr. GARVALOV (Bulgaria) said that the Secretary-General of PAIGC had given the Committee a comprehensive picture of the situation in Guinea (Bissau) and an analysis of the aims of PAIGC. His colleagues had also provided a moving and factual description of life in Guinea (Bissau) and Cape Verde. His delegation was grateful for the information it had received concerning the struggle being waged in Guinea (Bissau) for national independence. The statement by the Secretary-General contained much information which would be helpful to the Committee in preparing its recommendations to the General Assembly. He therefore endorsed the Soviet representative's proposal that the statements by the Secretary-General of PAIGC and his colleagues should be given the widest possible coverage in OPI publications, particularly Objective: Justice. His delegation was grateful to PAIGC for having enabled the Committee's special mission to visit Guinea (Bissau). As for the reference made by the Secretary-General to the aid received from Bulgaria, the Bulgarian people would continue to provide assistance until the people of Guinea (Bissau) had attained their independence and freedom.

The meeting rose at 2.20 p.m.