

GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY

TWENTY-SEVENTH SESSION

Official Records

Thursday, 12 October 1972,  
at 4.35 p.m.

NEW YORK

Chairman: Mr. Zdeněk ČERNÍK  
(Czechoslovakia).

## AGENDA ITEM 65

## Question of Territories under Portuguese administration (continued) (A/8723/Add.3, A/8758, A/C.4/745)

## GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. GELBER (Canada) said that it was deplorable that since the twenty-sixth session of the General Assembly there had been no improvement in the situation of the Territories under Portuguese administration. Portugal persisted in pursuing a policy which could only be detrimental to its own interest in that part of the world. No delegation would deny that the people of those Territories had a right to determine their own future and that the United Nations should leave no stone unturned in its efforts to help them. The United Nations should not give up hope of finding a peaceful solution to the problem until all the means of persuasion available to it had been exhausted. To that end, the Committee should draw up a programme of action which could meet with the unanimous approval of the international community. It was in that spirit that the Canadian delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution on the question the previous year, although it had had serious reservations on certain provisions, and it hoped that the same objective would be pursued at the present session by all members of the Committee, especially those who would be responsible for drawing up the draft resolution on the subject.

2. In addition, his delegation welcomed the initiative taken recently by the United Nations to inform and alert public opinion with regard to the problems of decolonization and felt that it was important to discuss the question with the Portuguese authorities whenever circumstances permitted. That was what Canada was doing. Furthermore, assistance should be given to the refugees from Mozambique, Angola and Guinea (Bissau). Lastly, the United Nations Educational and Training Programme for Southern Africa, which in 1972 had enabled more than 250 refugees from the Portuguese Territories to continue their education on the African continent and elsewhere, should not be overlooked; it was to be hoped that the more than 100 States Members of the United Nations which were not yet giving the Programme financial support would do so before the end of the year. His delegation hoped that those specific measures, which could easily be put into effect and which might help to influence the attitude of the Portuguese authorities, would be

applied. His delegation, for its part, was ready to contribute to their achievement.

3. Mr. AL HADAD (Yemen) said that there was no need for him to outline the position of his country with respect to colonialism; its position stemmed from its commitment to the principles and purposes of the United Nations. It was common knowledge that Yemen had belonged to the non-aligned countries ever since the Bandung Conference and that it opposed all forms of foreign domination and intervention. More than 11 years had passed since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) which contained the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, but there had been no improvement in the colonial situation in Africa. Portugal continued to defy the United Nations and to subjugate the people of Angola, Mozambique and Guinea (Bissau), herding them into "strategic hamlets" and subjecting them to torture. Moreover, not content with pursuing, and even intensifying, its colonial war, the Portuguese Government had attacked neighbouring independent African States. That conduct led the delegation of Yemen to question the validity of Portugal's membership of the United Nations in the context of Article 6 of the Charter. There was no doubt that Portugal would continue to pursue that policy and to receive weapons and all sorts of war material from its military allies in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The United Nations should be guided by those facts in its efforts to find ways of putting an end to Portugal's colonial domination. Furthermore, his delegation reaffirmed its complete solidarity with the liberation movements in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea (Bissau) and urged that the freedom fighters should be given more assistance, as it had done at the Conference of Foreign Ministers of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Georgetown, Guyana from 8 to 11 August 1972. In particular, they should be provided with more weapons, for it was only through armed struggle that the people of the Portuguese Territories in Africa would achieve self-determination and independence, since Portugal showed no willingness to listen to the voice of reason and to respect the principles of the Charter.

4. Mr. ABUBAKAR (Philippines) said that the United Nations had been concerned with the question of the Non-Self-Governing Territories under Portuguese administration ever since Portugal's admission to the Organization 17 years earlier. Throughout that long period there had been no change in the situation: Portugal ignored all the United Nations resolutions, failed to carry out its obligations under Chapter XI of the Charter and denied its Territories—which it

found expedient to call "overseas provinces"—the right to self-determination and independence. Nevertheless, Portugal's intransigent colonial policy, which was carried out by force of arms, was being breached by the heroic struggle of the people of Angola, Mozambique, Guinea (Bissau) and Cape Verde, who had liberated extensive areas in their respective countries, especially in Guinea (Bissau). In April 1972 the United Nations had taken a step unprecedented in its history in sending a three-man Special Mission to that Territory to visit the liberated areas. The Mission had confirmed the existence of those areas, had established direct contact with the people and had obtained first-hand information on the economic, social and other conditions in the liberated areas; that information appeared in its report (see A/8723/Add.3, annex I) and would help the United Nations to decide how best it could help the people concerned. The members of the Mission were to be congratulated on having carried out their task so successfully in spite of the great personal risks involved.

5. His delegation had carefully studied the statement made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Portugal in the General Assembly on 2 October (2048th plenary meeting), in the hope of seeing in it some improvement in Portugal's colonial policy, but it had to admit that its hopes had been disappointed. It was clear from the statement that, while Portugal did not reject the principle of self-determination, it attached to that expression a totally different meaning from that given to it by the United Nations in general and in particular in the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. In the view of the Portuguese Government, self-determination merely meant the consent of the people to a certain structure and political organization, brought about by participation in administration and in public life; it was that definition of self-determination that it was still imposing on its African Territories. The Minister for Foreign Affairs had not hesitated to deny the existence of the liberated areas and had branded the Special Mission an "invisible mission". He had mentioned with satisfaction the revision of the Portuguese Constitution, which set forth the following principles: the existence of special statutes for the provinces as autonomous regions; their designation as "State" when the advancement of the social milieu and the complexity of administration justified it; and a political and administrative organization specific to each province, adapted to its geographical situation and its state of development. That revision of the Constitution, which must be regarded as negative, was designed merely to strengthen Portugal's domination of the Territories under its administration in Africa. Lastly, the Minister for Foreign Affairs had said that Portugal was proud of the creation of the great Brazilian nation; he had apparently failed to realize that Brazil had become a great nation because it had had the good fortune to proclaim itself independent of Lisbon 150 years earlier. If Portugal granted self-government and independence to the people of its African Territories, it could then be proud of the creation of new nations. His delegation continued to hope that Portugal would

reconsider its colonial policy and it appealed to Portugal to do so.

6. Mrs. ANDERSEN (Norway) noted that since the General Assembly had adopted the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples in 1960, a large number of former colonial territories had become fully-fledged members of the international community. Unfortunately the African Territories under Portuguese administration were a tragic exception. Her delegation felt that Portugal's colonial policies were contrary to the Charter, and an impediment to the promotion of world peace and co-operation and that they had retarded, at the cost of much suffering to all parties concerned, a fundamental historical development. The doctrine that those African Territories were overseas provinces of Portugal had been utterly rejected by the overwhelming majority of Members of the Organization.

7. Portugal's attitude increased the feeling of frustration and impatience on the part of the African peoples and made any peaceful transfer of power more difficult to achieve. Her delegation hoped that a peaceful solution was still attainable and was ready to co-operate in the pursuit of such a solution. However, faced with the inflexible attitude of the colonial authorities, it was understandable that the African peoples adopted more forceful means in their struggle for self-determination and independence. The Norwegian Government felt that it was the duty of Member States to respond to the call of the General Assembly for moral and material assistance to the struggling peoples in southern Africa. The previous year the Norwegian Minister for Foreign Affairs had announced in the General Assembly that the Norwegian Government was also ready to provide humanitarian and economic assistance to the peoples of southern Africa who were struggling for national liberation. In line with that decision it had contributed sizeable amounts to the Mozambique Institute of the Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO), to the Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde (PAIGC) and to the Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (MPLA). Moreover, Norway had for a number of years been one of the major contributors to the United Nations Trust Fund for South Africa and to the United Nations Educational and Training Programme for Southern Africa. Furthermore, her Government proposed to increase its humanitarian and economic assistance for 1973.

8. Her Government had greatly appreciated and benefited from the discussions it had had over the past year with representatives of the African liberation movements. It had thus received first-hand information about the activities of the movements and had had the opportunity to restate its attitude towards Portugal's colonial policies in Africa. All that had further strengthened the existing bonds of understanding and co-operation between Norway and the liberation movements. Her Government hoped that the forthcoming world conference of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) for the support of victims of racism and colonialism, which was to be held in Oslo the following spring would also contribute to that end. As a token

of the importance which it attached to the participation of representatives of the African liberation movements her Government had decided to grant \$US 31,500 to cover their travel expenses. Other Scandinavian countries had also agreed to make generous contributions.

9. Finally, she wished to express the hope that the draft resolutions which were to be introduced in the Committee after the conclusion of the general debate would receive the widest possible support. Her delegation was ready to co-operate in reaching that objective in the hope that greater moral and political pressure could thus be exerted on those who were still struggling against the trend of history.

10. Mr. MOLAPO (Lesotho) said that Portugal's preposterous claims that some parts of Africa constituted extensions of metropolitan Portugal deserved the strongest condemnation.

11. In a resolution adopted by the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (see A/8723/Add.3, para. 35) an appeal was made to NATO countries to refrain from actions that might be interpreted as a political and moral encouragement to Portugal to pursue its colonialist policies. His delegation drew the attention of NATO members to the fact that whereas it accepted NATO as a regional defence instrument, it condemned the acts committed by NATO which resulted in the atrocities currently being perpetrated by Portugal in Africa.

12. His delegation would welcome the adoption, following the debate, of a draft resolution which would leave Portugal's NATO allies no excuse for persisting in their negative votes and abstentions.

13. His Government unequivocally condemned the relentless wars that were being waged by Portugal, deplored the collaboration between Portugal, South Africa and the illegal régime in Salisbury which was designed to perpetuate colonialism in southern Africa. It upheld the principles of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), and affirmed the right of the peoples of the Territories under Portuguese administration to self-determination and independence, and the legitimacy of their struggle to achieve that right.

14. His Government expressed satisfaction that vast areas had been liberated from Portuguese domination and that rehabilitation programmes were being implemented with the assistance of the World Council of Churches and various Governments and institutions.

15. In accordance with the obligations stemming from the resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council, his delegation earnestly appealed to all agencies and Governments to increase their support to the victims of Portugal. Finally, it wished to express its satisfaction that an overwhelming majority of the members of the Committee had seen fit to grant observer status to the members of the liberation movements.

16. Mr. SHOUNA (Sudan) said he was convinced that the Portuguese colonies in Africa would not be freed by the discussions of the Fourth Committee but by the solidarity, determination and steadfastness that Africans themselves showed the world. It was that very determination which inspired the liberation movements and freedom fighters in those Territories and it was the duty of the world Organization to give them all the moral and material assistance they needed. The important decision to welcome the representatives of such movements as observers, taken a few days earlier by the Committee (1975th meeting), was a logical step in that direction. As usual, some members had tried to oppose the decision. He therefore wished to remind them that any further attempt to impose servitude on an African people would be vain. In that connexion the meeting of the Security Council in Africa and the Special Mission of the Special Committee to Guinea (Bissau) had been two steps of prime importance for they had enabled the United Nations to come close to the scene of the tragedy and to pay greater heed to the true voice of Africa. His delegation thanked the Special Committee for its indefatigable efforts and for the excellent work it had done. It also thanked the members of the Special Mission to Guinea (Bissau) for their sense of responsibility and their dedication and courage. The lesson to be drawn from those two initiatives was that the United Nations must have continued close contacts with Africa in order to follow closely what was happening there and to influence the course of events in the light of the Charter.

17. On the other hand, Portugal's allies continued to assist it overtly and covertly. As the leader of PAIGC, Mr. Amílcar Cabral, had pointed out before the Security Council at the meetings held at Addis Ababa,<sup>1</sup> without that aid and in particular without the assistance from the NATO countries which supplied Portugal with aircraft, helicopters and the most modern weapons, it would not be in a position to devote about 50 per cent of its annual budget to its lengthy colonial wars in Africa. During those meetings, the representative of the United States, Mr. Bush,<sup>2</sup> had made a passionate plea to Portugal to recognize that the force of history was on the side of social justice. Portugal however, which by its agreement with the United States on the military base in the Azores would receive some 500 million dollars (see A/8723/Add.3, Annex II, sect. A, paras. 123-127), continued to turn a deaf ear. The French representative, Mr. Kosciuszko-Morizet,<sup>3</sup> had stated that France was ready to co-operate in the implementation of concrete, practical and reasonable solutions which would give new momentum to and accelerate political and social progress in the Territories under Portuguese administration. Unfortunately all those efforts had been in vain. Yet all that the peoples of Angola, Mozambique, Guinea (Bissau) and Cape Verde were striving for was that Portugal should consider giving them back their freedom and independence and should be prepared, as

<sup>1</sup> See *Official Records of the Security Council, Twenty-seventh Year*, 1632nd meeting.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 1635th meeting.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

they were, to negotiate. The United Nations should therefore apply pressure on Portugal to give up its policy of armed repression and to deal as equals with the representatives of the peoples concerned. Meanwhile the international community should give the liberated areas of those Territories all possible material assistance. A programme of action should be set up as a matter of urgency and as a first priority, so that such assistance could reach them rapidly.

18. Mr. MÜLLER (Finland) said that it was extremely regrettable that, 12 years after the adoption of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, the Committee was still forced to focus its attention on the remnants of colonialism in southern Africa. The attitude of the minority régimes in power in Namibia, in Southern Rhodesia and in the Territories under Portuguese administration was an obstacle which unduly held up the march for progress and independence in southern Africa, at the cost of much suffering. He agreed with the Secretary-General's statement in the introduction to his report on the work of the Organization that the current impasse was due not only to the failure of Governments to implement General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, but also to the failure of the international community to make concerted efforts to mobilize effectively all the resources available to it (see A/8701/Add.1, sect. VII). Furthermore it cast a certain discredit on the Organization itself.

19. The situation in the African Territories under Portuguese administration was characterized by two major phenomena: on the one hand, the peoples of Angola, Mozambique and Guinea (Bissau) were continuing their struggle to rid themselves of the Portuguese colonial domination and to achieve the right to choose their own future and set out along the path of their African heritage; on the other hand, the conflict had spread beyond those territories and seriously affected the peace, security and well-being of neighbouring independent African countries. The violation of the territory of States such as Senegal and Zambia was most deplorable because it not only resulted in grave loss of human life and material damage but represented an even greater danger, that of an escalation of violence which might eventually involve the entire resources of several African countries. It was clear that the situation which prevailed inside the African Territories under Portuguese administration could not be viewed separately from what was occurring outside them. The Security Council and the General Assembly had repeatedly expressed serious concern over the situation, but in spite of repeated appeals Portugal had refused to act in accordance with the basic principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. There was no doubt in the mind of the Finnish Government that the Declaration was fully applicable to the African Territories under Portuguese administration, that the peoples of those Territories therefore had the right to self-determination and that the Portuguese Government alone was responsible for the continuous tension in the area and the deterioration of Portugal's relations with independent African States.

20. It would be tragic if by its refusal to take into account not only the pertinent resolutions of the Assembly and the Council but also the current realities in the African Territories, the Portuguese Government created a situation where a peaceful solution would be impossible.

21. He felt that it was of crucial importance to distinguish the reasons for the current state of affairs before seeking appropriate ways in which to solve the problems. The time had come to deal with the situation not by studying each problem—such as attacks and border incidents—as it arose, but as part of a unique colonial problem which, if allowed to continue, would have serious repercussions in the African continent and would seriously hurt common efforts to strengthen the Organization.

22. Finland remained fully committed to the United Nations efforts to realize, in conformity with the Charter, the inalienable rights of the peoples in those Territories. It was actively participating in applying increasing pressure on Portugal and it abided by the relevant decisions of the Security Council not to render any assistance which would enable Portugal to continue its colonial domination; each year it increased its humanitarian and educational assistance to the peoples in the area through the appropriate United Nations programmes, through other international organizations and through the OAU.

23. He agreed with the representative of Denmark (1979th meeting) that the United Nations, representing the views of the world community, should clearly state the obligations of Member States under the Charter through resolutions which should be carried by as large and as representative a majority as possible. In that way world opinion could influence the decisions of the Portuguese Government. Needless to say, his delegation remained ready to participate in any efforts of that kind undertaken in the Fourth Committee.

24. Mr. MULWA (Kenya) said he had no wish to repeat what other delegations had said regarding the criminal atrocities committed by the Portuguese colonial authorities in the Territories of Mozambique, Angola and Guinea (Bissau), which they obstinately asserted to be metropolitan provinces despite the fact that General Assembly resolution 2707 (XXV) had rejected that theory and reaffirmed the inalienable right of the African people in those Territories to self-determination and the legitimacy of their struggle for freedom. He would, however, examine the means of bringing those atrocities to a halt.

25. His delegation very much regretted that some big Western Powers, which had voted in favour of that resolution and other resolutions on the same question, continued to support Portugal in its repressive activities against the freedom fighters, maintained diplomatic relations with Lisbon and had even established consulates in the Portuguese colonies. That would seem to suggest that they considered those colonies to be part of Portugal. It was no secret that, were it not for the continued support afforded to Portugal, a poor

country, by some of those Western countries, which supplied it with all kinds of modern weapons, including napalm bombs, Portugal would be unable to continue its prolonged colonial wars overseas. During its twenty-sixth session, the General Assembly had, on 20 December 1971, adopted resolution 2873 (XXVI) in which it condemned the construction of the Cabora Bassa project in Mozambique and the Cunene River Basin project in Angola, which were obviously designed further to entrench colonialist and racist domination over the Territories of southern Africa, and requested all States to end the supply of funds and other forms of assistance, including military equipment, to those régimes which used such assistance to repress the national liberation movements. That resolution had, however, remained a dead letter for those States: they continued to provide military assistance to Portugal and to participate in the construction of the aforesaid projects.

26. Bearing that situation in mind, his delegation urgently proposed the following steps: (a) that all freedom-loving countries of the world should immediately sever diplomatic and consular relations with Portugal until it changed its inhuman policies by honouring its obligations under article 73 of the Charter of the United Nations to promote to the utmost the well-being of the inhabitants of its colonial Territories and to assist them in the progressive development of their free political institutions; (b) that the countries which continued to supply the Portuguese colonialists with military assistance, enabling them to suppress the national liberation movements in those Territories and to stifle the legitimate aspirations of their peoples for freedom, should be condemned in the strongest terms; (c) that a further appeal should be made to those countries that maintained trade relations with South Africa, Portugal and Southern Rhodesia to sever those relations and that, in the event of their refusal, economic sanctions should be imposed on them, including the refusal to grant landing and transit facilities to all aircraft belonging to or in the service of their Governments and to companies registered in those countries; (d) that a fresh appeal should be made to the members of NATO not to supply arms or military equipment to Portugal for use in the repression of African nationalists.

27. Portugal continued to enjoy substantial aid from South Africa and Southern Rhodesia in support of its colonial wars. The sanctions against Southern Rhodesia had failed because of their non-observance by countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, the Federal Republic of Germany, France and others which continued to violate Security Council resolutions 253 (1968), 277 (1970) and 288 (1970), and Article 25 of the Charter. With regard to South Africa, the United Kingdom and the United States, which had heavy investments there, argued that sanctions and boycotts were unnecessary in order to weaken white domination, because economic growth was eroding *apartheid* and because economics must win in its struggle against racism. They argued that the shortage of skilled labour in South Africa had begun to make

work opportunities available to the blacks. The greater the rate of investment in South Africa, the greater the rate of industrialization and the faster the cracks in *apartheid* would grow. The hypocrisy of that argument, popular in board-rooms and at shareholders' meetings, had been carried over into the debates of the United Nations. In his view, *apartheid* was essentially a control mechanism designed for the maintenance of cheap labour, and it was the duty of the freedom-loving countries to denounce those hypocritical tactics.

28. His delegation warmly welcomed the steps taken by the OAU at the Assembly of Heads of State and Government held at Rabat in June 1972 to aid the liberation movements in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea (Bissau). In addition to its contribution through the OAU, Kenya had provided some 40 persons from the Portuguese Territories with training facilities in its institutions. He hoped that all friendly countries within the world community would do the same. In fact, it was clear that resolutions which were never implemented and oral condemnation, however vehement it might be, were not enough. What his delegation expected from the twenty-seventh session of the General Assembly was action. As a starting point, he considered that the specialized agencies should step up their material assistance to the liberated areas of Angola, Mozambique and Guinea (Bissau) in respect of education, health and food supplies; and that, in view of the fact that OAU could supply only modest sums and in order to set an example, the countries of the third world must increase the fighting capacity of the liberation movements by giving them more aid, particularly in the form of military equipment.

29. In his statement in the 2048th plenary meeting of the General Assembly, the Portuguese Minister for Foreign Affairs, seeking to minimize the achievements of the liberation movements, had denied the existence of the liberated areas despite what had been witnessed in Guinea (Bissau) by the Special Mission established by the Special Committee. In that connexion, his delegation called upon all States and the specialized agencies to recognize the Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde (PAIGC) as the *de facto* and the sole and authentic representative of the aspirations of the people of Guinea (Bissau) and Cape Verde. He also welcomed the efforts of certain Nordic countries which, although members of NATO, generously supported the liberation of Africa from the yoke of Portuguese colonialism, and he hoped they would be able to help the other NATO members to see the writing on the wall in time.

30. Finally, emphasizing the importance of the Special Mission's visit to Guinea (Bissau), he noted in particular that the Mission had been able to witness for itself that Portugal, assisted by South Africa, had resorted to the use of biological weapons against the freedom fighters in its African Territories. That fact had, moreover, been confirmed by the *Sunday Times* of London, which had reported, among other things, that one of the chemicals used was Convolvotox, which was manufactured by a South African firm and which not only killed plants but also inhibited fertilization.

He took the view that the United Nations should assist the national liberation movements in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea (Bissau) in denouncing such Portuguese crimes. It was also important to put greater emphasis on the practical aid which United Nations bodies could supply in such forms as food, medicines

and educational equipment, and to publicize what was taking place in those Territories, in order to mobilize world opinion against Portugal.

*The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.*