

United Nations
**GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

FIFTEENTH SESSION

Official Records

**FOURTH COMMITTEE, 1089th
MEETING**

Thursday, 15 December 1960,
at 3.25 p.m.



NEW YORK

CONTENTS

	Page
<i>Agenda item 45:</i>	
<i>Question of the future of Ruanda-Urundi (con-</i>	
<i>tinued)</i>	
<i>General debate (continued)</i>	533

Chairman: Mr. Adnan M. PACHACHI (Iraq).

AGENDA ITEM 45

Question of the future of Ruanda-Urundi (A/4404, part I, chap. VI, sect. G and part II, chap. II; A/C.4/455, 456, 457 and Add.1; A/C.4/L.664 and Corr.1 and Add.1) (con-
tinued)

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mrs. SKOTTSBERG-AHMAN (Sweden) regretted the feeling of satisfaction with which the Committee normally discussed measures designed to guide a Trust Territory to independence was, in the case of Ruanda-Urundi, strongly tempered by anxiety over the difficulties of the situation. As that situation was fraught with danger, it should be handled with prudence. The role of the United Nations had taken on special importance because the people of the Territory were torn and divided at a crucial moment of their existence. The report of the United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in East Africa, 1960 (T/1538) had given a realistic appraisal of the problem, making its gravity and urgency apparent, but it also contained constructive recommendations which deserved the Committee's attention.

2. The representatives of the various political parties in Ruanda-Urundi had laid before the Committee their views, their fears and their aspirations. The very fact that they had revealed their inevitable differences was perhaps a sign that they relied on the United Nations to settle them. It was therefore important to take into account the points on which there seemed to be general agreement. The first was the common aspiration of the people to attain independence in the shortest possible time. As the Administering Authority had decided to grant that desire, there seemed to be nothing to prevent the date of independence from being fixed for the first half of 1962. The second point of agreement was that general elections should be held as soon as possible but not later than the middle of 1961. The third point was that all parties recognized the importance of national reconciliation, which they were prepared to strive for at a round-table conference to be held before the elections, and the need for the proclamation of amnesty measures beforehand.

3. If, as she thought, the differences dividing the parties, and relating mainly to the timing of the elections and to the question of amnesty, were differences of

degree rather than of kind, they should not prove insoluble. As far as the timing of the elections was concerned, the Hutu parties were eager to have them without delay in order that stable democratic institutions might be set up as soon as possible. The Union nationale ruandaise (UNAR) and the Rassemblement démocratique ruandais (RADER), on the other hand, had asked for a postponement of the elections in the hope of achieving, in the meantime, a national reconciliation and a normalization of the political situation. On the question of the amnesty, UNAR and RADER were asking for an immediate, general and unconditional amnesty, while the Hutu parties, fearing further disorders, thought that amnesty measures should be the result of negotiations between the different parties and not imposed from outside. As had been stressed by the Haitian representative, however, the essential thing was not so much the date of the elections as the creation of an atmosphere of calm beforehand, and there was a risk that an amnesty which was too early and too sweeping might entail some danger. On the other hand, the success of the elections might be jeopardized if they were too long delayed.

4. The role of the United Nations was not to take sides or to try to impose a solution, but rather to extend its good offices as a mediator. For the moment, she would make only some general observations on the draft resolution before the Committee (A/C.4/L.664 and Corr.1 and Add.1). Although that draft resolution, as was evident from the final preambular paragraph, was based in part on the statements of the petitioners, one could not help noting, in particular from operative paragraphs 2 and 7, that, on the two most controversial points, namely, the nature of the amnesty and the date of the elections, it completely endorsed the views of one side in the conflict and totally disregarded the wishes and fears of the other. Such partiality was contrary to United Nations practice, which was to offer mediation and not to impose a solution. In her delegation's opinion, it was essential to achieve a national reconciliation before the elections, which should therefore be somewhat delayed, even if only to allow the United Nations sufficient time to prepare for its task of supervision. It might be asked whether it was advisable for the United Nations to state categorically that the amnesty had to be general and unconditional and that elections had to be postponed until May or June; whether conciliation would be advanced by accepting the suggestions of only one party; and whether it was possible to judge at the present moment how long it would take to bring about a relaxation of tension.

5. In reality, the political parties themselves bore the main responsibility for solving their differences and showing a spirit of moderation and conciliation for the good of the Territory; they should not be merely passive objects of United Nations decisions. Consequently, it would be better for them to reach agreement on the controversial questions at the conference preceding the elections. As the United Nations would be represented

at that conference, it would be able to act as mediator. It was possible that a solution would then be found to the problem of the amnesty, so that the elections would not have to be postponed for as long as was contemplated in the draft resolution.

6. With regard to the commission whose establishment and powers were proposed in operative paragraphs 8 and 9, she thought, after having heard the Haitian representative's observations at the 1086th meeting, that it might be better for the commission as a whole to take part in the conference but for the chairman alone to serve as United Nations election commissioner. In addition, she feared that if, as was proposed in operative paragraph 9 (c), the commission was asked to "lend its advice", a sort of advisory council would be set up similar to that which had functioned in Somaliland under Italian administration. It might perhaps be enough in the present case to request the commission to keep in contact with the Administering Authority and the local elected bodies for the purpose of following the progress of events in the Territory and of reporting to the Trusteeship Council or the General Assembly as and when appropriate.

7. In conclusion, she wished to make two appeals. First, she urged the representatives of the political parties of Ruanda-Urundi to overcome their mutual distrust and to work with the United Nations for a real and lasting reconciliation that would be for the greater good of their country; and, secondly, she urged the Administering Authority to listen to and follow the advice of the United Nations before the situation got out of hand. Her delegation would do all in its power to find a solution which would be acceptable to both sides in the dispute.

8. Mr. Krishna MENON (India) felt that the question of the future of Ruanda-Urundi was more complicated than was usually the case in conducting elections in a Trust Territory, because it could not be considered apart from past experiences in other Trust Territories or from present conditions in all of Africa. In actuality, the question of Ruanda-Urundi was one of the most perilous problems before the fifteenth session of the General Assembly, since it might easily cause a worsening of the situation not only in Ruanda-Urundi itself, but also in the neighbouring Congo. The fact that in the Congo the departure of the administering Power had been able to bring about anarchy and even lead to the return of the imperialist Powers had been such a profound humiliation for the United Nations that it should seek to prevent a repetition of that situation in Ruanda-Urundi. It had to be even more vigilant because the Territory had been subjected to all the characteristic phases of imperialist rule. First, the Germans had established themselves there, and then the imperialist Powers which had carved up Africa had turned it into a Mandated Territory. At present, as a result of an Agreement concluded between Belgium and the United Nations, it was a Trust Territory.

9. The Territory covered approximately 54,000 square kilometres. It had had, in 1958, a population of 4,635,000 inhabitants, of whom only about 7,000 were Europeans and about 2,000 Asians. It was made up of two parts or provinces, both of which were kingdoms. The Administering Authority had been careful to maintain the two kingdoms, in accordance with the well-known principle of indirect rule. That strategy enabled it to encourage the division of the Territory, which occupied a strategic position, being bounded by Tan-

ganyika and Uganda, both of which had many problems of their own, and by the Congo. Ruanda-Urundi had already been subjected to what amounted to dissection, and some of its areas and peoples formed part of other States or Territories, thanks to the carving-up of the territory by the Europeans. Any attempt to divide that country still further would have tragic consequences. Yet, according to the available information, that was what Belgium was seeking to do, even though the Trusteeship Agreement expressly covered Ruanda and Urundi as a whole. The United Nations should put a stop to such attempts.

10. Under General Assembly resolutions 1413 (XIV) and 1419 (XIV), the Committee was called upon to consider the plans of political reforms envisaged for the Territory by Belgium. It was also called upon to consider the causes of the outbreak of violence which had occurred in the Territory in November 1959 and which indicated, as was usually the case in colonial countries, that the people were oppressed by the authorities in power and that national aspirations were opposed.

11. The plans of political reforms, as appeared both from the statement made by the representative of Belgium at the 947th meeting of the Fourth Committee (fourteenth session) and from the manner in which they were being applied under the government Decree of 28 January 1960, revealed the Belgian determination to maintain two separate States. Thus, the Belgian representative had said that it was at the level of the two States that more democratic institutions were being clamoured for. In addition, on 10 November 1959 the Belgian Government had made a policy statement (T/1502) dealing with those reforms in which it had also forecast the organization of "two States", which would enjoy a progressively increasing amount of autonomy and which had been invited to establish a community through appropriate consultations. It had also been suggested that either State, independently of the other, might establish direct links with Belgium.

12. The reforms themselves were open to criticism. For instance, as was clear from the Belgian representative's statement at the 947th meeting, the Administering Authority used the pretext of lack of time in which to prepare for elections in order to restrict the suffrage to male voters only. Also, the reforms covered as little ground as possible, since they were effected almost solely on the municipal level; they dealt only with the sub-chiefdoms and chiefdoms and did not constitute any real preparation for the popular consultations contemplated by the Trusteeship Agreement. At the national level, the Administering Authority had envisaged virtually nothing more than the establishment of a mere advisory council, and that too had been left by the wayside.

13. Belgium's true intentions were revealed even more clearly in its assertion at the 947th meeting that in view of the fact that the educated "élite" were still relatively few in number, it was important to provide, at least temporarily, for the possibility of the High Council being assisted by certain persons whose cooperation might be useful. Since the "élite" were still non-existent after seventy years of "civilizing" colonization, it could be assumed that such persons would come from outside, an arrangement that would facilitate the continuance of imperialist domination of the Territory. Such conditions were similar to those which had given rise to the present situation in the Congo.

14. The Belgian representative, in the same statement, had described the Mwami as a constitutional sovereign, despite the fact that the Territory did not have a constitution.

15. The Decree promulgated by the Belgian Government on 25 December 1959 had continued along the lines of the Government's statement of plans on 10 November and the statement made by the Belgian representative at the Committee's 947th meeting, according to which Belgium looked forward to leading "the two States" along the road to self-government, then to self-determination, and ultimately to a type of association that would not exclude any links which either of the countries might wish to forge with Belgium. That proved that the Administering Authority had no intention of complying with the basic principle of the Trusteeship System that the Administering Authority should renounce all control over the Territory after the attainment of independence.

16. In 1956, at its seventeenth session, the Trusteeship Council, recalling that it had previously expressed itself in favour of the development of the closest possible relationship between the two States in the interest of the future of the Trust Territory as a whole, had recognized the influence exerted in that direction through the unity of the administration itself and through the application of identical legislation and the creation of common institutions. As it had also been conscious that the ultimate development of their relationship must rest largely with the peoples themselves, the Council had expressed confidence that the Administering Authority would encourage them at every opportunity, by such means as joint discussion of common problems, to explore the advantages of closer contacts and the possibilities of developing their common interests. There had been no reason, in 1956, to believe that that would not be done. Yet, at the present session the Belgian representative had said that during 1960 the relations between the two countries had not developed either in the direction of succession or in that of union, but that a number of organs or political parties of one State or the other had said that it would be useful to have administrative, economic and customs unions, or even to have a confederation or a federation—and that not only between the two States but also with the Republic of the Congo or with the East African countries. It might be asked whether that did not amount to saying that unity was necessary while at the same time trying to hinder unity by recommending unions which would bind the Territory before its independence. The fact was that the plan of reforms, although a step forward, had come too late and had not been put into practical operation. The present situation was therefore particularly alarming, especially in view of what had taken place in the neighbouring territory of the Congo. As the Trusteeship Council had stated on page 68 of its report (A/4404), in view of the essential community of interests and the facts of history and geography the best future for Ruanda-Urundi lay in the evolution of a single, united and composite State.

17. It was hard not to be sceptical of the real intentions of the Administering Authority, knowing that in 1954 the Governor-General had considered that while, because of the unity of the traditional structure, the indigenous inhabitants were more susceptible of progress towards self-government than those of the Belgian Congo, it was very difficult to set any time-limit for obtaining self-government or independence; he had

thought that "in three or four generations", providing they had the possibility of associating with other societies which could guide them, the inhabitants of the Territory could take over the major task of governing the country (T/1141, paras. 121-122). In other words, the Governor-General had felt in 1954 that the population would be incapable of governing itself for another century. Events had belied that assumption.

18. Ruanda-Urundi had not been able to remain aloof from a process that was taking place in the rest of the African continent, especially as the independence attained by the Belgian Congo in the wake of a number of other Territories had had considerable repercussions there. After eighty years of imperialist rule, various political parties had emerged, and it was, in fact, surprising that that belated emergence had not proved even more disruptive. According to the 1960 Visiting Mission's report (T/1538), the four main political parties in Ruanda had a great hold on the people. The nationalist party, UNAR, demanded immediate independence for the Territory, a demand which the Indian delegation could only support since all peoples were fit for independence. The other, more conservative parties, accused UNAR of being undemocratic, an argument which seemed to be unfounded as all nationalist movements were of necessity based on popular support. There was no contradiction between democracy and independence. As Mr. Sears, the Chairman of the Visiting Mission, had pointed out in a statement to the Trusteeship Council on 17 June 1960 (T/PV.1116), "...you cannot have independence without democratic institutions, nor can you have democratic institutions without, resultingly, having independence. So, with the central point of the Mission being one of reconciliation, it considered that the big dispute... was a fictitious issue which could be resolved immediately if some force could be brought into the situation which could bring about... national reconciliation."

19. The Visiting Mission's report brought out a number of salient facts. In the first place, the Administration had done little to bring about a gradual revolution by democratic means in order to obviate a precipitous revolt—mainly because it had never recognized the need for rapid independence. Secondly, the Administering Authority had allowed the racial division between the Hutu, who constituted the vast majority of the population, and the Tutsi, who held all the positions of power, to deepen over the years; the Administering Authority had, in fact, adopted the classical method of divide and rule. Thirdly, since the Administration had contrary to the Trusteeship Agreement, too long suppressed the formation of political parties in the Territory, parties had suddenly sprung up in an atmosphere of racial animosity and rebellion against the feudal authorities and the Belgian Administration. Fourthly, the two main groups of parties had taken different stands, the UNAR calling for independence by 1962 and the Hutu parties asking for the European Administration to be strengthened and retained over a long period so as to advance the education of the Hutu and their access to public office. The religious missions had sided with the Hutu, alleging that UNAR was under Communist and Islamic influence. Fifthly, the Administering Authority had not intervened during the first phase of the disturbances when the Hutu had attacked the Tutsi and burnt down thousands of their dwellings. In the second phase, when the Tutsi had taken counter-measures to stop the revolt of the Hutu,

the Administering Authority had directed its action more or less exclusively against the Tutsi. As a result, thousands of Tutsi dwellings had been burnt and some 60,000 Tutsi had been left homeless. Numerous Tutsi chiefs had fled the Territory, and the Administering Authority had replaced them by preference with Hutu. A number of leaders of UNAR, which included many Hutu in its ranks, were in exile. Although, during that period of crisis, the Administering Authority should not have taken sides in the internal conflict, according to the Visiting Mission, officials in the Belgian Administration with whom the Mission had spoken had not hidden their sympathy with the opinions expressed by the Hutu parties (T/1538, para. 279). The Mission had also said: "Many Europeans support one or other of the parties and do not conceal the fact.

Members of various religious missions are also regarded as having marked preferences. While all this raises difficulties which hinder successful discussion, mediation or compromise, it is clearly necessary to take steps towards general reconciliation" (T/1538, para. 441).

20. The CHAIRMAN said that while he was sorry to interrupt the representative of India, the General Assembly was about to take up the discussion of the two Fourth Committee reports in plenary meeting.

21. Mr. Krishna MENON (India) said that he was willing to interrupt his statement and continue with it the next day.

The meeting rose at 4.35 p.m.