



Sixteenth session

QUESTION OF THE FUTURE OF RUANDA-URUNDI

Letter dated 9 September 1961 from the Permanent Representative
of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the United Nations
addressed to the President of the General Assembly

On 21 April 1961 the General Assembly adopted resolution 1605 (XV) on the question of the future of the Trust Territory of Ruanda-Urundi. This resolution provided, inter alia, that "the legislative elections in Ruanda-Urundi should be held in the month of August 1961 ... under the supervision of the United Nations ..." and declared that "it is clearly the obligation and the responsibility of the Administering Authority to create the necessary conditions and atmosphere for the proper conduct of the national elections ..."

To that end, the General Assembly recommended to the Administering Authority that a full and unconditional amnesty should be granted, that the Legislative Order of 25 October 1960 should be rescinded, etc.

The actual situation in the Trust Territory shows that the Government of Belgium is failing to carry out the decisions taken by the General Assembly at its fifteenth session concerning a full and unconditional amnesty. The recently issued report of the Special Commission for Ruanda-Urundi (A/4856) points out that the Administering Authority Ordinance providing for a so-called amnesty "runs counter to the spirit and the letter of the General Assembly resolutions", and that "the amnesty measures envisaged by the Administering Authority would leave an inordinate number of people unable to have the benefit of amnesty".

Moreover, the Administering Authority has taken no steps to create normal conditions for the free activity of all political parties in Ruanda-Urundi. Most of the leaders of the patriotic parties of the Trust Territory are still in exile. The Administering Authority is resorting to all sorts of tricks in order to restrict the activities of the patriotic parties to the greatest possible extent. For example, it keeps the leaders of these parties under arrest during the day and frees them for the night, and so forth. There are still about 50,000 refugees in the Congo and in Uganda. Thousands of refugees more have had to leave their homes and seek refuge in schools and churches.

The developments of the last few weeks and days in Ruanda-Urundi show that the Belgian colonialists are working against time to prevent a free expression of the will of the population of the Trust Territory at the forthcoming elections. As a result, a highly tense situation has been created in Ruanda-Urundi.

The Belgian colonial authorities are continuing their policy of setting one tribe against another, and are seeking to kindle the flames of inter-tribal war in the Trust Territory. In the last two months, according to Press reports, about 300 people have been killed in the Trust Territory; and in Ruanda alone more than 100 people have recently been killed and about 500 wounded.

The Administering Authority, while maintaining that it is not opposed to the holding of elections and to "co-operation" with the United Nations Special Commission for Ruanda-Urundi, in fact wants the elections to be held in its own way: in the colonial manner, in conditions of military emergency and under the completely arbitrary control of the Belgian occupation troops and authorities. It is well known that the Belgian forces in Ruanda-Urundi have recently been reinforced with new units, transported to the Trust Territory by air from Belgium. Further reinforcements are anticipated. The Belgian paratroopers are equipped with helicopters and transport aircraft, maintain constant control over the Mwogo River valley, where unrest is rife, and open fire on Africans without the slightest warning.

All these facts must inevitably cause all anti-colonial forces to feel concern for the fate of the population of Ruanda-Urundi and the cause of peace on the much-tried African continent.

Accordingly, the Soviet delegation considers it essential that all States Members of the General Assembly should be furnished at the earliest possible date with preliminary information on the situation in the Trust Territory and the measures which the United Nations ~~Special~~ Commission for Ruanda-Urundi has taken or intends to take in order to ensure the proper implementation of the relevant General Assembly decisions, including those providing for the democratic conduct of the national elections.

I hope, Mr. President, that you will take the necessary prompt steps to obtain such information and to circulate it to all States Members of the United Nations.

I would appreciate the publication of this letter as an official document of the General Assembly.

(Signed) V. ZORIN
Permanent Representative of the USSR
to the United Nations
