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LETTER DATED 17 OCTOBER 1966 FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES, A.I. OF PORTUGAL TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

In the course of the general debate in the plenary of the twenty-first session of the General Assembly, certain highly misleading and at times tendentious affirmations have been made in connexion with the policies of the Government of Portugal in its overseas provinces in Africa. The Portuguese delegation would like to reject and repudiate most formally these affirmations as devoid of truth, and to stress once again that they are either prompted by a stubborn reluctance to face the realities of life in these territories or are rendered necessary by the agitational approach that has qualified the discussion of international problems today.

In particular, the Portuguese delegation denies emphatically that there is any racial discrimination practised in any part of the Portuguese nation, including the overseas provinces of Angola, Mozambique and Portuguese Guinea, or that there is or has been any denial of human rights there. On the other hand, it should be stressed that these rights are better safeguarded for all individuals in the Portuguese nation than in many other regions of the world; our populations have been self-determined for many centuries past and have been sending their accredited representatives to the many legislative and administrative organs of government whether at the provincial or the national level. Any statement to the contrary is entirely incorrect. Likewise, it is slanderous to say that there is either exploitation or repression in the overseas provinces where there is only an increased endeavour towards all-round progress and socio-economic betterment, as eloquently witnessed by an increasing number of unbiased foreign visitors calling in those territories.

Lastly, once again, the Portuguese delegation is constrained to repudiate and deny the allegation that there is any such alliance, as described by a number of speakers during the general debate, in southern Africa between Portugal, South Africa and Rhodesia. Portugal has always adhered to the principle of fruitful co-operation with all contiguous countries in mutual interest, and such co-operation has been offered time and again by the Portuguese Government to all other African States. Regrettably these offers have in some cases been met by refusal, and those that thus refused the benefits that might have resulted to them from such collaboration cannot now justly turn around and complain that others have thought it wise and statesmanly to accept what they too could have accepted, with advantage.

I have the honour to request you, Sir, that this letter be circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(Signed) António PATRICIO
