



THE QUESTION OF MOROCCO

Note by the President

The President of the General Assembly has the honour to transmit to the Members of the General Assembly a copy of a letter dated 16 March 1953, together with an accompanying memorandum, which he has received from the Delegations of Afghanistan, Burma, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Liberia, Pakistan, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Yemen. At the request of those Delegations, the letter and the accompanying memorandum have been referred by the President to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of France, for the consideration of his Government.

Letter dated 16 March 1953 from the Delegations of  
Afghanistan, Burma, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Liberia,  
Pakistan, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Yemen, addressed to the  
President of the General Assembly

New York, 16 March 1953

Our deep concern over the dangerous situation prevailing in Morocco had impelled us to bring this matter again before the General Assembly in the first part of its present session. The Assembly recognized the gravity of the situation by passing resolution 612 (VII), which appealed "to the parties to conduct their relations in an atmosphere of goodwill, mutual confidence and respect and to settle their disputes in accordance with the spirit of the Charter, thus refraining from any acts or measures likely to aggravate the present tension", and expressed the confidence that "the Government of France will endeavour to further the fundamental liberties of the people of Morocco, in conformity with the Purposes and Principles of the Charter", and hoped "the parties will continue negotiations on an urgent basis towards developing the free political institutions of the people of Morocco, with due regard to legitimate rights and interests under the established norms and practices of the law of nations".

We are now obliged to draw your attention to the repressive measures which we believe continue to be taken by the French authorities in an intensified manner against the spirit of the Charter and the above resolution.

By its refusal to resume genuine negotiations and its attempts to compel the Moroccans to accept inequitable proposals under duress, and by intensifying its repressive measures, the French Government is proceeding against the spirit of the Charter and thus inevitably aggravating the existing tension.

We therefore request you, Sir, to place the facts mentioned in the attached memorandum based on the best available information before the Government of France and urge it to take the prompt and liberal measures required by the situation existing in Morocco and the trust reposed in France by the General Assembly, and in particular to bring about the early restoration of civil liberties and the release of political prisoners.

It is to be hoped that speedy action to remedy the situation will be taken in view of the facts above mentioned, thereby relieving us of the necessity of referring the Moroccan question again to the appropriate body of the United Nations.

We shall be grateful if the text of this letter and the attached memorandum is circulated as a United Nations document.

(Signed)

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Chairman, Delegation of  
Afghanistan to the General Assembly

U. KYIN  
Chairman, Delegation of Burma  
to the General Assembly

Ahmed Galal Eldine ABDELRAZEK  
Chairman, Delegation of Egypt  
to the General Assembly

Vijaya Lakshmi PANDIT  
Chairman, Delegation of India  
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L. N. PALAR  
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Nazrollah ENTEZAM  
Chairman, Delegation of Iran  
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Abdullah BAKR  
Acting Chairman, Delegation of  
Iraq to the General Assembly

Karim AZKOUL  
Acting Chairman, Delegation of  
Lebanon, to the General Assembly

Henry F. COOPER  
Chairman, Delegation of Liberia  
to the General Assembly

Ahmed BOKHARI  
Chairman, Delegation of Pakistan  
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Carlos P. ROMULO  
Chairman, Delegation of the  
Philippines to the General  
Assembly

Faisal AL-SAUD  
Chairman, Delegation of Saudi  
Arabia to the General Assembly

Farid ZEINEDDINE  
Chairman, Delegation of Syria  
to the General Assembly

Saif Al Islam ABDULLAH  
Chairman, Delegation of Yemen  
to the General Assembly

Memorandum

The unchanged attitude of the French Government is evident from the statement made by the French Resident-General in Morocco, General Augustin Guillaume, on 7 February 1953, when he states "We recommend either the permanent use of force or renunciation of Morocco", and made it clear that he was determined to employ the first alternative. Consequently, armed repression by French forces continues unabated. In the massacre of Casablanca which took place in the middle of last December, it is estimated by a group of French Catholic intellectuals, Centre Catholique des Intellectuels Francais (CCIF), in their report which was prepared by their Secretary-General, M. Robert Barrat after thorough investigation, that the death toll was between one thousand and twelve hundred. The members of the CCIF agitated for a parliamentary commission of investigation, but General Guillaume threatened the government of M. René Mayer that he would resign if the government agreed to send such a commission. Hence, the repressive measures adopted by the French Government have been augmented during the last three months, that is, after the passing of the General Assembly resolution. The Temoignage Chrétien dated 30 January 1953 estimated that during this period between ten to fifteen thousand persons have been arrested in Morocco, and mass arrests continue to be made all over the country. Considering the city of Casablanca alone, the number of Moroccans arrested during the three months and subjected to summary justice in groups amounted to 1,043. Nine hundred and seventy Moroccans "including boys of ten and twelve years", have been sentenced to three to eighteen months imprisonment without being given the opportunity of defending themselves. The extent to which justice has deliberately been subverted is seen in the example, by no means unique, of seventy-three nationalists who have been taken into political custody charged with plotting against the security of the State, which carries major penalties, and will be presented to a special military court within a few days. These include members of the Executive Committee of the Istiqlal party, editors of all the Istiqlal newspapers, which have been completely suppressed since 8 December 1952 (when the Moroccan question was about to be discussed in

the United Nations) and members of trade unions. Among these are seven persons accused of killing a French citizen, M. Ribes. A French eyewitness, M. Guise was quoted by M. Robert Barrat as certifying that M. Ribes, who was a civilian whilst driving his car on the Mediouna Road, suddenly brandished a revolver and fired it into an unarmed Moroccan gathering and in the scuffle that followed received a lethal blow on his head.

All those arrested are subject to primitive and barbarous methods of torture, and a revealing case, which is typical, is mentioned in the January issue of La Quinzaine, a Catholic magazine published in Paris, which describes "the picture of Majhoub Ben Seddiq (the leader of Moroccan labour unions) when arrested, and his picture when he was transferred from police headquarters to prison, prove that he was savagely tortured. His face and hands were completely disfigured and it was difficult to establish any resemblance between the two pictures".

Prison conditions are sub-human in the jails, military and concentration camps, where political prisoners arraigned as criminals are confined.

We consider even more alarming the systematic undermining of the Sultan's prerogatives by the French authorities, with the intention of weakening the Moroccan Government, and the attempt to transfer authority held at present by the French Resident-General to the small minority of French colonists in order to clothe this authority with the semblance of justice and to divert criticism from the undemocratic principles on which the present political institutions, such as they are, are based. Towards this end, prominent personalities who are members of the Sultan's private council have been arrested. The French administration in Morocco is engineering disaffection against the Sultan in certain disloyal quarters in an effort to depose the Sultan and replace him with somebody less devoted to the cause of his people. It is significant that although the Moroccan nationalist parties were outlawed on 8 December, the French settlers, with their status of aliens in the country, are encouraged to maintain their own French political parties. A branch of the French Radical and Radical-Socialist party in Morocco held a meeting on 26 February and adopted a resolution recommending the following principles to the French Government: (1) that executive power be

vested entirely in the Resident-General; (2) the legislative power be vested in the local rural and urban councils composed equally of French colonists elected by universal suffrage, and of Moroccans elected in two stages, or preferably nominated by the Resident-General; (3) that a central government council be instituted with the same composition as the urban councils, with the right to deliberate on all questions except matters of security, military affairs and foreign relations, which would be left to the French Government; (4) the Moroccan judicial system should be abolished and its prerogatives transferred to the French courts.

On 2 February 1953, La Vigie Marocaine reported that M. René Mayer, Prime Minister of France, and Secretary-General of the Radical and Radical-Socialist party, gave his approval to the above resolution. Such a resolution if implemented, would in effect reduce Morocco from its present status to that of a colony. The situation has been aggravated by the decision of the Resident-General, General Guillaume, to force the programme outlined above on the Sultan regardless of consequences.

It might be mentioned that the passports of Moroccan nationalists who were present in New York during the deliberations of the General Assembly in December last were rescinded by the French Resident-General in Rabat, contrary to the Declaration of Human Rights.

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