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Eleventh session
FOURTH COMMITTEE

REQUEST FOR A HEARING

Note by the Secretary-General: In accordance with the decision taken by the Fourth Committee at its 615th meeting, the following letter is circulated to members of the Committee for their information. It follows the request for a hearing submitted by the Association Bamiléké (A/C.4/330/Add.1, 8, 13, 16 and 19) and granted by the Fourth Committee at its 552nd meeting.

Letter dated 18 January 1957 from Mr. Tchoumba Ngouankeu Isaac to the President of the General Assembly

Kumba, 18 January 1957

I have the honour to confirm the contents of the letters I have sent you since 17 December 1956 relating to the insurmountable obstacles which the French Administration continues to raise in connexion with the issue of passports to my delegation, although application was made for them as early as 22 May 1956. Since the hearing granted by the General Assembly to my Association constitutes a right, I protest in the strongest terms against this manoeuvre, the object of which is to prevent us from stating our case.

This Association numbers 600,000 people in the Bamiléké Region, 80 per cent of the population of Moungo and 35 per cent of the population of Douala, not to mention the various groups scattered across the Territory and the 400,000 inhabitants of the so-called British zone, i.e. an estimated total of more than one million. Hence it is certainly not to be disregarded in the Kamerunian problem and it is on behalf of all those people that my delegation should be allowed to state its case during the present session. Inasmuch as the United Nations Charter recognizes the right of people in Trust Territories to petition both orally and in writing, it is just and reasonable that my Association should be heard, for more than one reason: the hearing has been granted, the number of persons who have authorized us to speak for

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them is considerable, we live in a Trust Territory, etc. You are not unaware of the baneful attitude of the colonialists in our country. They are firmly resolved that their crimes shall not be denounced and that they shall not be charged with the barbarous and savage acts they have been committing daily, particularly during the last few years. You will thus understand that passports will never be issued to us, even after a thousand letters addressed by you to the French or British authorities. Since 8 January I have been in the British zone trying to obtain a passport, but I meet with the same difficulties everywhere. Are we wrong in placing our trust in the United Nations, whose wards we are? Are the Administering Authorities entitled to prevent us from saying what we think about our country? What do they fear? Do they already know what we are going to say before this high international authority? These are the questions every honest person must ask in connexion with all these manoeuvres. Yet I know one thing: the last word belongs to the United Nations, which is directly responsible for us.

At one of the meetings of the United Nations General Assembly in 1955 it was decided that travel documents might be issued to the inhabitants of Trust Territories who encountered difficulties in travelling to New York at the Assembly's invitation, as is the case with us. I should be very glad if such documents could be issued to us for this session, for as the people have asked that your present session should not rise until it has finally settled the Kamerunian problem, considering that France is still sheeding blood in our country, it would be paradoxical for us to be absent; for the large body of people whom we represent - we form at least a quarter of the total Kamerunian population - this would be a violation of our international rights.

You will, however, demonstrate that we are right in placing our trust in the United Nations if you make it possible for us to come to the United Nations in the interests of peace and justice, which should prevail over every other consideration.

The petitioners are the following: TCHOUMBA NGOUANKEU Isaac, now a refugee at Kumba, c/o James WANDJI Three Corner, NEYIM Pierre, traditional chief detained in Yaoundé prison and Doctor TAGNY Mathieu, at present fugitive from the French police.

(Signed) TCHOUMBA NGOUANKEU Isaac
Chairman of the Association Bamiléké
