

United Nations GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SIXTEENTH SESSION

Official Records



FOURTH COMMITTEE, 1307th
MEETING

Monday, 11 June 1962,
at 3.15 p.m.

NEW YORK

CONTENTS

	Page
<i>Agenda item 49:</i>	
<i>Question of the future of Ruanda-Urundi: report of the United Nations Commission for Ruanda Urundi (continued).</i>	<i>909</i>

Chairman: Miss Angie BROOKS (Liberia).

AGENDA ITEM 49

Question of the future of Ruanda-Urundi: report of the United Nations Commission for Ruanda-Urundi (A/5126 and Add.1; A/C.4/516 and Add.1-4) (continued)

1. The CHAIRMAN informed the Committee that certain representatives wished to ask questions, which would then all be answered by the members of the United Nations Commission for Ruanda-Urundi.

2. Mr. MUFTI (Syria) said that his delegation attached primary importance to the rapid withdrawal of the Belgian troops stationed in the Territory and thought that Belgium's responsibility for the maintenance of order in the Territory would cease as soon as the Trusteeship Agreement was terminated and independence was proclaimed. On the basis of those considerations, he would first put several questions of a military nature to the representative of the Administering Authority.

3. He would like to know whether Belgium was prepared to place any Belgian military officer personnel who might be retained in the Territory as an interim measure after independence under the direct authority of the Governments of the two countries and whether Belgium would also be prepared to accept the other conditions set forth in paragraph 220 of the report of the United Nations Commission (A/5126 and Add.1).

4. He would also like to know whether Belgium would be prepared to submit to the General Assembly, during the current session, a time-table for the progressive withdrawal of any Belgian military officer personnel who might remain in the Territory as an interim measure after independence.

5. He asked the representatives of the two local Governments whether their Governments would be prepared to place the operation of the withdrawal of the Belgian troops under the strict supervision of an important and responsible organ of the United Nations, for example the Security Council, which would if necessary be empowered to take all the necessary steps to bring about the withdrawal without delay. He would like to know whether, in the event of the Administering Authority's proposing a time-table for the withdrawal of its troops which was adopted by the General Assembly at the present session, the two Governments concerned would agree, up to the time of inde-

pendence, to the time-table being faithfully and completely followed, even if after independence either of the Governments tried to conclude agreements with the Administering Authority authorizing the retention of the officer personnel after the established date. Would the two Governments be prepared, in that case, to give priority, as it were, to the implementation of a General Assembly resolution, even if that meant bringing the military personnel who had already been evacuated back to the country later?

6. He wished to ask the Administering Authority another question concerning military matters: whether Belgium intended to establish a military base of any kind in the Territory, once it had become independent.

7. Turning to other problems, he asked whether Belgium would be prepared to give technical assistance to Rwanda and Burundi without making it dependent on any conditions that might infringe the sovereignty and independence of the two Governments. For example, he wondered whether Belgium would insist on the retention of some military personnel in the Territory, on the pretext that their presence would be essential to ensure the safety of the Belgian technicians and experts.

8. He also asked whether Belgium was preparing to co-operate with the two local Governments, before independence, in the implementation of the Agreement on Economic Union signed at Addis Ababa on 19 April 1962 (A/5126/Add.1, annex XVI) and whether it intended to take the necessary steps to that end. He would like to be assured that the fact that the two Governments of the Territory had concluded the Agreement without the participation of Belgium did not affect the position of the Belgian Government in that matter.

9. He would also like to know when the Administering Authority intended to effect the transfer of control over non-decentralized joint services. Finally, he asked the representative of the Administering Authority what had become of the bill on the reorganization of the judicial administration and whether the Administering Authority had taken any other steps in other fields.

10. He asked the representatives of Rwanda how many refugees had returned to Rwanda, since the report of the United Nations Commission gave no information on that subject.

11. He requested the United Nations Commission to enlarge upon paragraph 315 of its report (A/5126) and to explain how the foreign policy of the two countries would differ.

12. Referring to paragraphs 16 and 19 of annex XVI of the report of the United Nations Commission (A/5126/Add.1), he asked what stage had been reached in the matters mentioned there.

13. Mr. RAHNEMA (Iran), Rapporteur, United Nations Commission for Ruanda-Urundi, pointed out that the words "The Commission" in the second sentence of paragraph 315 of the Commission's report (A/5126) should read "Both delegations". The report contained several other substantive errors, which would be corrected very shortly.

14. Mr. O'SULLIVAN (Ireland) said that the report of the United Nations Commission (A/5126) evoked a number of questions. He would put those he thought to be most important to the Chairman of the United Nations Commission, regardless of the order in which those points appeared in the report.

15. The Irish delegation had stated earlier that its chief concern was the question of the security of the Territory after independence and the possibility of disturbances and violence breaking out if there was no adequate security system. He was therefore disturbed to note that the United Nations Commission itself, in its report, and several other members of the Commission, unofficially or officially, actually expressed the opinion that there was indeed a very grave danger of disturbances. According to paragraphs 146 and 161 of the report of the United Nations Commission, it appeared that over 1,000 people had been killed in the Biumba incident alone. He would be glad if the Chairman of the United Nations Commission, the representative of the Administering Authority or any other member of the Committee could give him more precise information on the incident, for if what was stated were true it augured ill for the future of a Territory for which the United Nations was still responsible under the Charter.

16. Concerning the question of Mwami Kigeli V, which was to a certain extent related to the question of the security of the Territory, he asked what exactly was to be understood by the statement in paragraph 135 of the report that "if the people at least felt that the die was irrevocably cast, it would be possible to establish a serious basis for a real solution".

17. Turning to the question of the training of indigenous forces, he asked whether the United Nations Commission was really of the opinion, as it appeared from paragraphs 188 and 194 of its report, that the Africanization of the national army of the territory could not be completed before 1965.

18. In connexion with the question of external security, he found the suggestion, in paragraph 367 of the report, that the national frontiers of the two countries should be guaranteed by the States bordering on them most interesting. As he was not familiar with the geography of the area, he would like to know whether the Commission had gone into the question and whether the frontiers could be effectively protected. He would also like to know what, in the opinion of the United Nations Commission, the General Assembly could do in order to lend its assistance in the matter.

19. Lastly, in connexion with another point concerning the security of the Territory, he noted that, according to paragraph 152 of the report of the Commission, opposition had "ceased to exist" in Burundi, although in the past it had been so active, according to the reports received, as to threaten the security of the Government in power. According to paragraph 153, the opposition had in fact been "crushed". Since the problem was of vital importance for the future of Burundi, he thought it would be useful to have more detailed information on the matter.

20. Mr. SOUMAH (Guinea) said that he had one question to ask, which was addressed both to the Commission and to the representative of the Administering Authority.

21. At the 1296th meeting, the Belgian Minister for Foreign Affairs had sought to allay the concern of the African-Asian group on the subject of one of the most complex problems that arose in connexion with the Territory, namely the withdrawal of the Belgian troops and the retention of Belgian technicians in the Territory. Although he had stated that there was no correlation between the two questions, the Belgian representative had shown that nevertheless they were still closely connected. It appeared that if the Belgian troops had to leave the Territory, the Belgian technicians would follow them immediately. He would therefore like to know whether, if security and order were guaranteed by the presence of other troops placed under the control of the United Nations, Belgium would agree to leave its technicians in the Territory.

22. Mr. EL-SHAFEI (United Arab Republic), referring to paragraph 285 (iii) of the report (A/5126), asked what the United Nations Commission considered should be the amount of the proposed special fund for assistance to Rwanda and Burundi.

23. With regard to the litigation mentioned in paragraph 58, and taking into account the obligations devolving upon Belgium under paragraph 6 of the Protocol relating to existing joint services in Ruanda-Urundi (A/C.4/517 and Corr.1), the delegation of the United Arab Republic would like to know how the matter now stood.

24. Turning to the problem of the Rwandese refugees, who according to paragraph 114 of the report numbered some 135,000, he drew attention to the pessimistic conclusion in paragraph 118. Furthermore, according to paragraph 135, the Commission seemed to consider that a real solution would be possible if the present debate "were to stabilize the situation", with regard to the Mwami, "one way or the other". Yet in another part of its report the Commission seemed to suggest that the different positions were unshakable in the present circumstances. His delegation would like to have some enlightenment on that point and to know what could be done to facilitate the return and resettlement of the refugees.

25. Lastly, his delegation noted that the Government of Burundi had sent the Commission a document dated 27 April 1962 (A/5126/Add.1, annex XXXVI) in which it had stated that it would no longer agree to the presence of foreign troops on its soil after the attainment of independence—an attitude which was in any case in conformity with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 1743 (XVI). However, the Commission was of the opinion that the Territory must accede to independence on 1 July 1962; his delegation would therefore like to know how the presence of Belgian troops after the proclamation of independence could be justified.

26. Mr. IBE (Nigeria) said that he too would like to know the amount envisaged for the proposed special fund for assistance to Rwanda and Burundi and the fields in which the fund would be used. Would it be used for balancing the Territory's budget, which was in deficit to the extent of 50 per cent according to paragraph 261 of the report (A/5126), or would it be used to finance the industrialization of the Territory or for technical assistance?

27. With regard to the question of the Mwami, and taking into account the formation of a Government of national unity and the conclusions contained in paragraph 132 of the report, the Nigerian delegation wished to know whether the Commission considered that the immediate return and resettlement of the refugees before the attainment of independence was essential for the maintenance of peace and stability in the Territory.

28. Lastly, in respect to the Belgian forces, the Governments of Rwanda and Burundi had categorically stated that they would not agree to the presence of Belgian troops on their soil after the attainment of independence. The Commission, for its part, had considered that the maintenance of order should be considered from a political, not a technical, point of view. Did the Commission consider that in such conditions the maintenance of foreign forces in the Territory would be anomalous and out of place?

29. Mr. QUAISON-SACKY (Ghana) noted that the Administering Authority seemed to think that to maintain order adequately in the Territory and to avoid any disastrous effects it would have to maintain at least 450 men in Rwanda and the same number in Burundi. He thought it would be better for the Administering Authority to consult the Government concerned instead of taking a unilateral decision.

30. With regard to the situation in Rwanda, paragraphs 359 and 360 of the report seemed to contain contradictory statements. The delegation of Ghana would like some clarification on that point.

31. With regard to the suggestion in paragraph 367 of the report concerning the guaranteeing of the national frontiers of Rwanda and Burundi by the neighbouring countries, he wondered what role the Commission considered that the United Nations and the States concerned should play in the matter.

32. The CHAIRMAN, speaking as Chairman of the Commission for Ruanda-Urundi, said that paragraphs 359 and 360 were not contradictory: one represented the views of the various factions in the Territory, the other the views of the Commission for Ruanda-Urundi.

33. Mr. SPAAK (Belgium) said he felt that it would be better to reply to some of the points raised immediately, rather than in the statement which he would be making at a later meeting. In that way his explanations would stand out more clearly.

34. Replying to the representative of Syria, he stated categorically that Belgium would agree to place the officers remaining in Rwanda and Burundi under the direct authority of the Governments of those two countries. That, in fact, was already the case, although Belgium was still exercising its trusteeship over the Territory; the Belgian commissioned and non-commissioned officers were under the direct authority of the Governments of the two countries under the terms of the Brussels Protocols (A/C.4/517 and Corr.1). They would continue to be so if it was decided to retain them in the Territory. They would then be given formal instructions to refrain from interfering in any way in the internal policies of the two countries and there would be no question of exceeding the strength decided upon in agreement with the Governments concerned and with the approval of the United Nations. When the time came the Belgian officers would leave Rwanda and Burundi peacefully. If such an arrangement were decided upon, Belgium would be ready to bear the cost.

35. With regard to certain allegations that had been made, he would add that Belgium would never conclude any bilateral agreement with Rwanda or Burundi for the maintenance of troops in those two countries without first requesting and obtaining the agreement of the United Nations.

36. With regard to the question of military bases, he gave a categorical assurance to the representative of Syria that Belgium had no intention of establishing such bases in either Rwanda or Burundi.

37. The representative of Syria had also asked if Belgium would give economic assistance to Rwanda and Burundi without imposing conditions that were incompatible with their status as sovereign nations. He could give a categorical assurance on that point. Belgium would, in fact, continue to provide the two countries with the technical assistance which it was already giving them.

38. With regard to the Addis Ababa Agreement, Belgium explicitly undertook to implement it. It was already taking steps to give effect to the economic provisions of that Agreement.

39. Turning to the question raised by the representative of Syria regarding the transfer of powers to the Governments of Rwanda and Burundi in accordance with the Brussels and Addis Ababa Agreements, he said that no final solution had yet been found but that important proposals for the speedy and full implementation of those Agreements had been submitted to the two Governments.

40. With regard to the question of justice, he had already said, at the 1274th meeting, that there was a disagreement with the Government of Burundi; no progress had yet been made in the matter.

41. He hoped that the representative of Syria would find his replies sufficiently clear and categorical.

42. Replying to the representative of Guinea, he said that in his next statement he would try to explain the manifold efforts which the Belgian Government had made to avoid linking the question of the withdrawal of the Belgian troops with the question of technical assistance and to show that there was absolutely no connexion between those two points. The more carefully order was maintained, of course, the easier it was to provide technical assistance. Belgium would agree to provide really substantial technical assistance to Rwanda and to Burundi if it could have some kind of assurance that order would be maintained there.

43. Lastly, he regretted that he had not made himself properly understood to the representative of Ghana. He had never said that the situation in the Territory would be disastrous unless a minimum strength of 900 men was maintained there. If economic development was to be ensured, order had to be maintained in one way or another, but Belgium had no intention of doing anything without the agreement of the Governments of the two countries concerned and of the United Nations. The era of bilateral relations with Rwanda and Burundi was over; anything done in any field would be done with the assistance and co-operation of the United Nations.

44. Mr. MUFTI (Syria) thanked the Belgian representative for his replies; he reserved the right to comment on them, if necessary, at a later stage of the debate.

45. He noted that Mr. Spaak had not stated whether the Administering Authority was prepared to submit to the General Assembly a time-table for the withdrawal of the Belgian military staff in the event of the General Assembly agreeing that such Belgian personnel should remain in Rwanda and Burundi after the accession of those two countries to independence.

46. Mr. SPAAK (Belgium) said that he thought he had answered that question indirectly by saying that nothing would be done without the approval of the United Nations. If it were decided, in agreement with the Governments concerned and the United Nations, to retain Belgian commissioned and non-commissioned officers as an interim measure to direct the national troops of Rwanda and Burundi, Belgium would, of course, be prepared to submit a plan for the withdrawal of such personnel.

47. Mr. QUAISON-SACKEY (Ghana) took note of the Belgian representative's statement that Belgium would conclude no bilateral agreements with Rwanda and Burundi. That was a praiseworthy anti-colonialist attitude and the delegation of Ghana hoped that Belgium would do its utmost to help guarantee the inde-

pendence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the two countries.

48. Mr. NABAVI (Iran) proposed that the representatives of Rwanda and Burundi should be invited to take part in the debates officially, in order to speed up the discussions.

49. After an exchange of views in which Sir Hugh FOOT (United Kingdom), Mr. NABAVI (Iran), Mr. MUFTI (Syria), Mr. BINDZI (Cameroun), Mr. COOPER (Liberia) and Mr. HOOD (Australia) took part, the CHAIRMAN decided that in order to speed up the work of the Committee the representatives of the Governments of Rwanda and Burundi would be invited to speak before the Committee, if they so wished, and to reply to any questions put to them.

50. Mr. BINDZI (Cameroun) pointed out that at the present stage of the debate the representatives of the Governments of Rwanda and Burundi had not asked to be heard. That was why he expressed doubts regarding the invitation to be addressed to them.

The meeting rose at 4.55 p.m.