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2406th MEETING

Held in New York on Tuesday, 14 December 1982, at 5.30 p.m.

President: Mr. Włodzimierz NATORF (Poland).

Present: The representatives of the following States: China, France, Guyana, Ireland, Japan, Jordan, Panama, Poland, Spain, Togo, Uganda, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Zaire.

Provisional agenda (S/Agenda/2406)

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. Complaint by Lesotho against South Africa:
Letter dated 9 December 1982 from the Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Lesotho to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/15515)

The meeting was called to order at 5.55 p.m.

Expression of welcome to the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Zaire.

1. The PRESIDENT: I should like to acknowledge the presence at the Council table of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Mr. Malcolm Rifkind, to whom, on behalf of the Council, I extend a warm welcome.

2. I should also like, on behalf of the Council, to extend a warm welcome to Mr. Kamanda wa Kamanda, former representative of Zaire to the United Nations, in his new capacity as Minister for Foreign Affairs of Zaire.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Complaint by Lesotho against South Africa:

Letter dated 9 December 1982 from the Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Lesotho to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/15515)

3. The PRESIDENT: I should like to inform members of the Council that I have received letters from

the representatives of Algeria, Angola, Botswana, India, Lesotho and Zimbabwe, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Thamae (Lesotho) took a place at the Council table; Mr. Sahnoun (Algeria), Mr. de Figueiredo (Angola), Mr. Legwaila (Botswana), Mr. Krishnan (India) and Mr. Mashingaidze (Zimbabwe) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council chamber.

4. The PRESIDENT: The Council is meeting today in response to the request contained in the letter dated 9 December 1982 from the Chargé d'Affaires *ad interim* of the Permanent Mission of Lesotho to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, which is contained in document S/15515.

5. The Secretary-General wishes to make a statement. I now call upon him.

6. The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I was deeply shocked to learn of the attack carried out by the South African Defence Force (SADF) against targets in Maseru, which was a grave violation of the Charter of the United Nations and the territorial integrity of a sovereign Member State. The attack has resulted in the tragic loss of innocent lives and much suffering.

7. I have been in close touch with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (HCR), since many of the victims were reported to be refugees. He has dispatched a special mission to Lesotho to consult with the Government on the situation, to ascertain the condition of survivors and to offer the families of those refugees who have been killed any additional help that might be necessary for their welfare.

8. The precise identification of the victims has been rendered difficult by the fact that many bodies are badly mutilated. However, of the 42 victims accounted for, it has been confirmed that 19 were registered refugees and four others were in the process of being registered. Investigations are continuing, and it should be possible to ascertain the exact number of refugees killed through identity cards which were

issued to them by the Kingdom of Lesotho in collaboration with the Office of HCR. There are some 11,500 refugees in Lesotho, of which about 1,000 are formally registered.

9. I should like to emphasize that the Government of Lesotho has consistently endeavoured to ensure that refugees under its care are treated in accordance with established international standards. Lesotho is a party to the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees of 1951¹ and the Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees of 1967,² as well as to the Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa of 1969, adopted under the aegis of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). Lesotho has followed the practice laid down in these instruments by granting asylum to refugees and by facilitating their integration within its society. This practice of integrating refugees speedily explains why the refugee population in Lesotho is scattered and not confined to camps or specific localities.

10. The international community has long recognized Lesotho's commitment to the cause of refugees. Through its support of programmes of HCR, it has provided Lesotho with financial and material assistance amounting to some \$3.3 million over the past two years. This programme has been directed towards the care and maintenance of refugees and to their local integration through employment, training and educational projects. Moreover, every attempt has been made to resettle elsewhere those refugees who, for security or personal reasons, did not wish to stay in Lesotho.

11. It is my hope that the international community will continue to provide generous assistance to Lesotho to strengthen the country's capacity to provide care and maintenance to all those who seek asylum within its borders.

12. The PRESIDENT: The Council will now hear a statement by His Majesty King Motlotlehi Moshoeshe II of Lesotho.

13. I have the honour to extend a warm welcome and express the highest esteem to His Majesty Motlotlehi Moshoeshe II of Lesotho. I invite him to address the Council.

14. King MOSHOESHOE: Mr. President, on behalf of the people and Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho we wish to thank you for your prompt reaction to our request to summon, as a matter of urgency, this meeting of the Council.

15. You have, Mr. President, distinguished yourself as an able diplomat and a worthy representative of your country, the fraternal People's Republic of Poland, at the United Nations. We are pleased, therefore, to appear before the Council under your presidency to plead the just cause of our people, who have

been immeasurably harmed in a most arrogant and inhuman manner by the *apartheid* régime of South Africa.

16. As members of the Council and the world community already know, in the early hours of 9 December 1982, at about 1 o'clock in the morning, units of SADF violated our borders, invaded Lesotho and caused heavy damage and loss of life in its capital city, Maseru. In that unprovoked and indefensible attack at least 42 people were killed, men, women and children. Houses were razed to the ground and other property was destroyed. No occasion in the recent history of our nation has shaken us as these events have.

17. This is not the first occasion on which the Council has been requested to consider an issue affecting Lesotho and its neighbour, the Republic of South Africa. This time the reason for our appearing before the Council is the naked act of aggression against Lesotho by South Africa, aggression which has been explained by the Commander of SADF, Constand Viljoen, as intended to pre-empt operations planned by refugees of the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC) resident in Lesotho against targets in South Africa during the coming festive season. At the same time, a suggestion has been made that this murderous attack was intended to avenge some acts of sabotage which took place in different parts of South Africa during the course of this year. Lesotho totally rejects this hollow explanation.

18. As anyone conversant with the activities of the Pretoria régime in the region will have suspected, none of these claims is supported by facts. We wish to place on record the following facts with regard to the identity of some of the persons murdered during this criminal adventure.

19. At a house belonging to one Lehlohonolo Moloi, eight youthful refugees on their way to the ANC school in Tanzania were killed, including two men who had arrived in Lesotho only in August 1982 as refugees from South Africa.

20. Mr. Zola Ngini was murdered in his house, together with his three visitors—a medical doctor and two others—who had just arrived from South Africa.

21. Mr. Phakamile Mphongoshe—also known as Mavimbela—was murdered, together with his wife, a male visitor and the latter's son and daughter. All were visitors from South Africa who had been in Lesotho for only four days.

22. At the house of Mr. Themba Mazibuko, two South African blacks who were regular visitors to Lesotho and a South African high-school student were killed.

23. Are these the type of people who could have been planning incursions into South Africa?

24. In addition to those citizens of South Africa, 12 Lesotho citizens, including women and children, were also murdered. It is inconceivable to imagine that these Lesotho citizens were plotting attacks against South Africa. At no stage did South Africa warn or advise Lesotho—as we would have expected between peace-loving neighbours—of the reasons advanced by the Commander of SADF.

25. Concerning the acts of sabotage allegedly committed in South Africa by refugees resident in Lesotho, two are said to have occurred in Cape Town—some 1,000 miles or so from Lesotho. Other acts are alleged to have taken place in Port Elizabeth and East London, towns also a long distance away from Lesotho on the south-eastern coast of South Africa. Not a single obvious across-the-border incident has been alleged, let alone proved, against us, in contrast with numerous occasions when mortars have been launched from South African territory into Lesotho.

26. In numerous political trials held in South Africa involving ANC freedom fighters, not once has it been alleged that any were based in or operated from Lesotho. In the course of all these trials, arms of all kinds have been exhibited. There has never been a single occasion when arms of Chinese origin were shown. It was therefore most surprising when the South Africans at a press conference suddenly exhibited weapons which they alleged were of Chinese origin and had been found in Lesotho. This was part of the campaign to prove that South Africa was faced with an onslaught by the communist/socialist world.

27. All manner of accusations have been hurled at us by the racist Pretoria régime in preparation for their aggression against Lesotho. A completely unacceptable demand is made of us to abandon our international obligation of giving asylum to political refugees from South Africa. When, with the assistance of HCR, we have facilitated the departure of these refugees from Lesotho, we have been accused of acting as a clearing-house for people on their way to military training in bases abroad.

28. The Basotho nation, unlike other nationalities in the region, won and maintained its independence, albeit on a greatly reduced portion of its original territory, by diplomacy, peaceful coexistence and good-neighbourliness, rather than by war. It emerged from a motley assemblage of national groups welded together by our wise founder and leader Moshoeshe I. In a word, it is essentially a nation of refugees. Against this background, we accept present-day refugees as a matter of course. As a nation whose very existence is founded upon diplomacy and peaceful co-operation and coexistence, we expect of our neighbours the kind of co-operation and partnership that would, in the first place, make them find it imperative to apprise us of situations which cause them concern, whereupon we would both seek common solutions. Lesotho has repeatedly called upon South Africa genuinely to commit itself to this policy.

29. At the risk of his image as an African patriot, our Prime Minister has conferred with the rulers of South Africa on bilateral and regional problems with a view to promoting peaceful coexistence. Why, then, in the face of this overwhelming evidence of Lesotho's policy of non-interference in South Africa's internal affairs, does South Africa attack us?

30. The reasons are well known to the members of the international community. In the first place, the Pretoria régime resents our oft-expressed abhorrence, in line with the whole of civilized mankind, of the obnoxious policy of *apartheid*. They hope to intimidate us into dissociating ourselves from the world-wide condemnation of the policy of *apartheid* and from offering moral support to the oppressed people of South Africa in their struggle for justice, freedom and equality. They resent our membership in the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference, whose main objective is to reduce our undue economic dependence on South Africa—an objective that would give us greater freedom of action. They are opposed to our membership in OAU and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. In short, South Africa is against the very existence of a sovereign and independent African State within its geographic boundaries which will not do its bidding.

31. It is a fact well known to the Pretoria régime that the few ANC freedom fighters who have occasionally retreated into Lesotho from South Africa have, when found to be in possession of weapons, always been promptly dealt with in accordance with our laws and international obligations. South Africa would wish us to hand over these people. Lesotho is not prepared to do this, and we appear here today to seek the unanimous support of the international community through the Council.

32. It is well known that South Africa does not want genuine peace and freedom in southern Africa. *Apartheid* affects not only black citizens of South Africa but also affects with equal force all black people, irrespective of their country of origin. It is for this reason that we maintain that South Africa has been fanning the flames of trouble in the region. South Africa's defiance of international opinion has heightened, and its zeal for incursions into neighbouring States has increased. Hence our contention that *apartheid* is a threat to international peace and security.

33. We plead that those members of the Council that have influence over the rulers in Pretoria be called upon to exert pressure on South Africa to desist from its present policies of wholesale destruction and terrorism. Some permanent members of the Council have traditional bonds of friendship with South Africa, a situation which should enable them to contribute to the maintenance of peace by curbing South Africa's adventurism. It is not enough to condemn South Africa in resolutions destined to gather dust in the

archives of the United Nations; there have been enough condemnations in numerous forums. It is positive action we are asking for from the Council.

34. In its attempts to stave off the inevitable conflict that is impending within its own borders, South Africa has decided to make itself the imperialist Power in the whole subregion. It is out to destabilize neighbouring African States as an initial step in an attempt to install its agents in their Governments and, failing that, to overrun and rule them as its colonies. This expansionist policy, which it has recently arrogantly equated with the Monroe Doctrine, seems, regrettably, to be encouraged by those of its powerful friends with vested economic interests in South Africa.

35. It has not escaped our attention that repeated threats by South Africa to invade its neighbours have met with no condemnation in certain quarters.

36. The question we ask is why, when its policy is so patently the gravest threat to international peace and security, it receives open support and encouragement from those countries which were themselves founded on the principles of freedom, liberty and equality and which claim to espouse a policy of détente and world peace. On behalf of our Government and people, we appeal to our friends, the peace-loving

Members of this Organization that is committed to the maintenance of world peace, to expose and condemn this covert support for South Africa's policy of expansionism.

37. We appeal to the Council, which has set itself the noble task of maintaining world peace, to restrain South Africa from flouting the Charter of the United Nations, from violating the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Member States of the Organization and from pursuing a strategy of naked terrorism against a whole subcontinent.

38. The PRESIDENT: I thank King Moshoeshoe for the important statement he has just made and for the kind words he addressed to me.

The meeting was suspended at 6.20 p.m.; it was resumed at 6.25 p.m. and immediately adjourned.

NOTES

¹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 189, No. 2545, p. 137.

² *Ibid.*, vol. 606, No. 8791, p. 267.

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