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Mr. J.A.C. Robertson, Director of Personnel.

25 June 1956.

Jean de la Roche, Principal Secretary,  
United Nations Advisory Council for  
Somaliland.



2685

Special report on Somaliland Mission staff members.

Following my report on Mr. Izzedine sent to you by memorandum dated 22 June 1956, I am sending you a report concerning:

Mr. C.K. Robinson  
Mr. H.T. Sie  
Mr. Al-Kattab.

I would like to suggest that those three reports be read together with the report on Mr. Izzedine; it is only when read together that they give a general idea about the situation which prevailed in Mogadiscio during the last twelve months.

I tried to avoid any mention of the members of the Advisory Council but, unfortunately, I found out that without mentioning at least one of them, the situation remains without any coherent explanation.

II. Mr. C.K. ROBINSON

Mr. Robinson had been in charge of social and educational affairs in the Secretariat of the United Nations Advisory Council for Somaliland, then, pending the assignment of an economist after the death of Miss E. Walton, he was in charge of economic affairs; he has on several occasions been officer-in-charge of the Mission during absences of the Principal Secretary.

In those different posts, he discharged his responsibilities with outstanding competence. In spite of the fact that his professional training is in the economic field, especially on agricultural problems, he acquainted himself very rapidly with social and educational affairs and was, on several occasions, consulted by officials of the local administration who highly valued his advice. On economic problems — including budgetary and financial questions — he proved to be highly competent. As officer in charge of the Mission, he showed all the tact, firmness and understanding required.

Mr. Robinson was on excellent terms with the members of the Advisory Council till the day he prepared a working paper on education in which he expressed the opinion that, according to a recommendation of the Trusteeship Council, the Somali people should have the means of improving the Somali language, which is not a written language but is spoken by the whole population. The Egyptian representative strongly objected to that opinion. I did my best to explain to the latter that there was nothing wrong in the expression of such an idea, but since that day the Egyptian representative's attitude towards Mr. Robinson has been very cool, to say the least.

The Egyptian representative has submitted an official complaint against Mr. Robinson mainly on the grounds that, as officer-in-charge, he issued invitations to a party offered on the occasion of the Moslem feast at the end of Ramadan; he considered that he should have issued those invitations in his capacity of Chairman of the Advisory Council, even though I had explained to him on several occasions that when only one member of the Advisory Council is present in the Territory, there cannot be any Chairman since there is no Council. The point, however, is that invitations of that kind have always been issued by the Secretariat and Mr. Robinson would have had no valid reason to change an established practice. In fact, I guess that the Egyptian representative seized what he thought was a good case, to lodge a complaint against Mr. Robinson, in order to prevent his return to Mogadiscio.

I deeply regret that unfounded antagonism on the part of the Egyptian representative against a staff member whom I consider as outstanding in his professional competence, his devotion to duty and to the ideals of the United Nations.

UNITED NATIONS ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR SOMALILAND: Report on staff member

III. Mr. H.T. SIE

Mr. Sie is the administrative and financial officer of the Somaliland Mission, which means that he has not only to care for the management of the official affairs of the Council's members, of the United Nations staff and of the Somali personnel (guards, drivers, maintenance employees), but also to help them in many of their personal needs and requirements. The most varied problems are left to his ingenuity and imagination to be solved, within the limits of local resources. When a tap is leaking somewhere, the electric current failing, food to be found for a party, money to be advanced, transportation to be arranged, medical care to be dispensed, amusement to be provided, Mr. Sie is called upon because everyone knows that his devotion and kindness are without limits.

I wish to state that I have always admired his patience and understanding on many occasions and also that I was glad to be able to avail myself of his advice on some delicate problems.

Material conditions in the offices and the living quarters of the United Nations compound have shown a considerable improvement since his appointment to the Mission. The Somali staff have greatly appreciated the human interest Mr. Sie has shown towards their many problems.

Under written instructions I gave him instructions approved by Headquarters, Mr. Sie had to limit the use of the UN cars by the representative of Egypt; the fleet of cars was used for the latter's transportation, also the transportation of his personal staff, of his family and of his friends, to such an extent that sarcastic comments were made in town and on some occasions the other representatives, and staff members were deprived of the use of these cars. The Egyptian representative resented those measures as a personal insult; I had explained to him that I considered it as my duty to take them, but he affected to believe that Mr. Sie was personally responsible for them, with the aim of persecuting him and denying him the unlimited use of the United Nations material facilities. I cannot enter into the details of the difficulties Mr. Sie encountered with the Egyptian representative not only in respect of the cars but also regarding the use by the latter of the facilities offered by the Secretariat volunteers services to which he considered himself also as having an unlimited right.

Having told the political parties that upon his request the <sup>P</sup>Principal Secretary, Mr. Robinson and Mr. Abdo -- a UN guard -- were removed by Headquarters because of their anti-Arabic attitude, the Egyptian representative seems now to have decided that Mr. Sie should also be recalled.

I consider Mr. Sie as an outstanding administrative officer, whose honesty, integrity and high sense of duty cannot be questioned. Under very provoking circumstances, he has shown an admirable patience and devotion to his duties as a United Nations staff member.

IV. Mr. AL-KATTAB

When he appointed that UN guard to the Mission, the Chief of Field Operations Service told me that he could not give the assurance that his services would be satisfactory and that if we found reason to complain, his services would be terminated.

The administrative officer and myself, on several occasions, warned Mr. Al-Kattab about the way he was discharging his duties; he would, for a period of time, give complete satisfaction and, then, become lax and definitively unreliable, refusing to work overtime, forgetting his duties and generally not to be counted upon. However, on the whole, the Mission would have made good use of the better aspects of his character and his geniality if, unfortunately for everyone concerned, Mr. Al-Kattab had not fallen under the influence of the political affairs officer, Mr. Izzedine and of the Egyptian representative.

The latter, for motives which have no place here, was determined to control the activities of the Secretariat of the Advisory Council; he claimed publicly that the United Nations officers who did not, or would not submit to his authority, would be recalled by Headquarters, since his authority could not be challenged in Somaliland. He predicted that the Principal Secretary, then Mr. Robinson, then Mr. Abdo, then Mr. Sie, would leave Mogadiscio and that should be a warning to everyone. Since that prediction came true, as far as three out of four members were concerned, it is no wonder that Mr. Al-Kattab threw in his ~~lot~~ with the Egyptian side.

I find some difficulty in blaming him: being an Arab and a Moslem, an uncommon amount of character would have been required of him to enable him to resist.

However, I believe that the sooner he is recalled or transferred, the better for him and the Mission.

Mr. J.A.C. Robertson, Director of Personnel.

22 June 1956.

Jean de la Roche, Principal Secretary,  
United Nations Advisory Council for  
Somaliland.

2685

Report on staff member N. Izzedine.

Please find herewith a special report on Mr. N. Izzedine, at present officer in charge of political affairs on the United Nations Advisory Council's Secretariat. This is the first of the reports I will submit very shortly on international staff members of the Advisory Council.

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UNITED NATIONS ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR SOMALILAND: Report on staff members

I. Mr. N. IZZEDINE

This staff member came to Mogadiscio under unfortunate circumstances; it will be recalled that, owing to some misunderstanding, some sort of promise was made to him that he would be assistant Principal Secretary and, eventually, acting Principal Secretary of the Mission, while, in fact, there was already an officer who was his senior and, later on another officer also his senior was to be appointed. From what I have been able to see and judge, Mr. Izzedine never has overcome the deep disappointment he experienced when his hopes did not materialize, although he had been informed of the situation before his departure from New York. After his arrival in Somaliland, he was still expecting that in some way, he would see fulfilled the promise which he believed had been made to him. Whether Mr. Izzedine was right to consider that he had been deprived of something due to him, I do not know. I only know that Mr. Izzedine was already quite tense and not kindly disposed towards his supervisors when he arrived in Somaliland. His attitude was not hostile but, to say the least, aloof. He was not particularly co-operative with the other members of the staff, except a few he selected to talk to.

Mr. Izzedine was to be responsible for political affairs, appointed to that post by Headquarters. In practice, most of the questions of a political nature have to be handled by the Principal Secretary; members of the Advisory Council and high officials of the local administration refuse generally to deal with anyone else. Mr. Izzedine was therefore primary responsible for the handling of petitions; he does not appear to have been much interested in the work which was of secondary interest to the members of the Advisory Council.

Mr. Izzedine's health did not seem to help in accepting de facto conditions. He has always given me the impression that he considered himself deeply discriminated against and that he was not happy to be with us in Mogadiscio. Considering the circumstances of his coming to Somaliland, I have been more patient with Mr. Izzedine than I would have been towards other staff members not labouring under such an obvious psychological condition.

I can only summarize my report on this staff member by stating that the circumstances surrounding his appointment to the Mission precluded his full usefulness and his full co-operation with others which is essential in such a small body as the United Nations Advisory Council's secretariat.

In spite of the unhappy experience which I have had with Mr. Izzedine, I think that this staff member could do most useful work at Headquarters.