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**ORGANISATION DE L'UNITE  
AFRICAINNE**

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CM/974(XXXIII)

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE QUESTION  
OF THE COMORIAN ISLAND OF MAYOTTE



CM 0974  
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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE QUESTION  
OF THE COMORIAN ISLAND OF MAYOTTE

At its Thirty-Second Ordinary Session held in Khartoum, Democratic Republic of the Sudan from 7 to 18 July 1978, the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity adopted Resolution CM/Res.678(XXXI) on the Comorian Island of Mayotte. After taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on the above issue the Council;

- i. Condemned the so-called referendums staged in Mayotte on 8 June 1976 and 11 April 1976 which it considered null and void and rejected at the outset all forms of referendum or consultations which might subsequently be organized or any other French initiative aiming at giving a legitimate character to French colonial presence in Mayotte in any form, whether direct or indirect, or in any other part of the Republic of the Comoros;
- ii. Strongly condemned the illegal French occupation of the Comorian Island of Mayotte which constituted an aggression aiming at undermining the national unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Republic of the Comoros, as well as the independence and sovereignty of the whole of Africa;
- iii. Condemned the criminal aggression perpetrated by mercenaries against the Republic of the Comoros and denounced any country in collusion with that aggression;
- iv. Requested the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of France from the Comorian Island of Mayotte, which is an integral part of the Republic of the Comoros;

- v. Reaffirmed its full solidarity with the people of the Comoros, in their legitimate struggle for the real and total liberation of their national territory;
- vi. Called upon the Administrative Secretary-General and the African group at the United Nations to see to it that, pending the evacuation of that territory by France, the question of the Comorian Island of Mayotte is included as a permanent item in the agenda of the United Nations, the OAU, the non-Aligned, the League of Arab States and in that of any other International Conference in which African States will participate.

2. By adopting such a resolution, the Organization of African Unity wanted to remind the international community that all the peoples of the Republic of the Comoros expressed by an overwhelming majority through the referendum of 21 December 1974, their will and determination to achieve independence in unity and territorial integrity and in no case should this independence be the object of bargaining with any one, not even with the former colonial power, that is with France.

a) What are the facts?

3. To understand better question of the Comorian Island of Mayotte, it is important to consider it from the historical point of view, that is, from the point of view of the archipelago as a whole.

4. The Archipelago of the Comoros which is composed of four Islands (la grande Comoro, Anjouan, Mohéli and Mayotte) occupies a strategic position in the Indian Ocean, between Africa and Madagascar.

5. It was in 1841 that the French flag was hoisted for the first time in the history of the four islands on the islet of Dzunudzi east of the Comorian Island of Mayotte. In 1972, the other Islands of the Archipelago, namely: La grande Comore, Anjouam and Mohéli became real French colonies, thus forming the entity of the Comoros. This situation did not change until the Archipelago became an oversea territory on 11 December 1958. The authorities in the Comoros were then given all the powers to form their government and elect their assembly within the limits set. On 19 December 1972, the chamber of deputies of the Comoros adopted (34 out of 39 members) a resolution authorizing the local government, associated with Parliamentarians and a special delegation of the Chamber of Deputies, to study and negotiate with the French government the accession of the Comoros to independence in co-operation and friendship with France. Unfortunately these negotiations were not as easy as they were thought and as a result the people of the Comoros began the struggle for their liberation.

6. On 22 December 1974, after a referendum organized by the administering power, 95 per cent of the people of the Comoros voted in favour of independence. This independence was recognized by the Organization of African Unity through its resolution CM/Res.453(XXVI), by the Conference of the non-Aligned countries and by the General Assembly of the United Nations in conformity with resolution 3161 (XXVIII) 1973 and 3291(XXIX) 1974.

7. It should be mentioned here that the tergiversations of France were due to the fear of losing its strategic position in the Indian Ocean.

b) Problem of the Comorian Island of Mayotte

8. The question of the Comorian Island of Mayotte dates from the morrow of Comoros' accession to international sovereignty when the government of France, the former colonizer of the Archipelago declared on 29 October 1975, that is, four months

after Comoros's admission to the comity of free nations, that it only recognized the independence of three out of the four islands constituting the Comoros. France recognized therefore the grande Comore, Anjouan and Mohéli.

9. According to France the people of the Island of Mayotte, an Island which until there was an integrant part of the Comoros, were to decide through a referendum whether they want their Island to be part of the new state or not. In case the people of Mayotte refused to be part of the state of the Comoros, they would decide through a second referendum the status they would like to be given within the French Republic.

10. This unilateral decision taken by France to recognize the independence of the three Islands in an independent date composed of four Islands led to a general outcry in the National Executive Council of the State of the Comoros. It was, infact, an interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign state.

11. Considering the gravity of this unilateral decision, a decision which impaired the unity, territorial integrity and intangibility of the frontiers of the Comoros, the government of the Young Republic declared the two referendums organized by France on 8 February and 11 April 1976 illegal, submitted the case to the Organization of African Unity urging the latter to take the necessary measures leading to the respect and applications of the principles enshrined in the Charters of the Organization of African Unity and of the United Nations.

12. At the twenty-Seventh Ordinary Session of the OAU Council of Ministers held in Port-Louis, Mauritius from 24 June to 3 July 1976, the Council adopted Resolution CM/Res.496(XXVII) by which it strongly condemned:

- i. the so-called referendums
- ii. the presence of France in the Island of Mayotte.

13. The Council at the same time, asked for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of France from the Comorian Island of Mayotte and requested the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, the general secretariat of the OAU and the African group at the United Nations to see to it that the question of the Island of Mayotte is included in the agenda of the next session of the United Nations General Assembly and in that of the Conference of Non-Aligned countries in Colombo.

14. At the end of the Twenty-Seventh Ordinary Session of the OAU Council of Ministers, an ad hoc Committee of seven members composed of Algeria, Cameroon, Comoros, Gabon, Madagascar, Mozambique and Senegal was established and entrusted with the study and formulation, under the auspices of the OAU general secretariat, of all strategies and measures likely to promote a rapid solution to the problem of the Comorian Island of Mayotte. On the basis of Resolution CM/Res.555(XZIX) adopted at the Twenty-Ninth Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers of the OAU held in Libreville, from 23 June to 3 July 1977, the Committee of Seven, attended the general secretariat, met in Moroni from 5 to 6 September 1977 and adopted a programme of action presented to the African group at the United Nations so that appropriate measures might be taken at the Thirty-Second Ordinary Session of the General Assembly as regards the Comorian Island of Mayotte.

15. At this Thirty-Second Ordinary Session, the General Assembly of the United Nations in fact, adopted on 1 November 1977, Resolution 32/7 on the question of the Comorian Island of Mayotte.

- i. Called upon the government of the Comoros and upon the French government to find a fair and equitable solution to the problem of the Comorian Island of Mayotte by respecting the political unity and territorial integrity of the Comoros, in conformity with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly in this matter;

- ii. Authorized the Secretary-General of the UNO to take, in close collaboration with the government of the Comoros and the Government of France, every initiative in favour of negotiations between the two governments;
- iii. Further called upon the Secretary-General of the United Nations Organization to get into touch with the Secretary-General of the OAU with a view to obtaining all necessary help in the fulfilment of his mission.

16. In the spirit of the resolutions of the Organization of African Unity and of the United Nations Organization mentioned above, the then current chairman of the OAU, His Excellency El Hadj Omar Bongo, President of the Gabonese Republic discussed with the French President the question of the Comorian Island of Mayotte. The latter took note of the determination of the OAU to see Mayotte reintegrated in the Comoros and said that France was prepared to reconsider the situation of the Island.

17. The OAU was represented by the Assistant Secretary-General in Charge of Political Affairs at the meeting the UN Secretary General had, on 3 November 1977, with the delegation of the Comoros headed by the Comorian Minister for Foreign Affairs. During discussions, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Comoros reiterated the stand taken by his delegation at the Thirty-Second Ordinary Session of the United Nations General Assembly and stressed the willingness of his government to open a dialogue with France so as to settle the question of Mayotte and normalize relations between the two countries. In this same connection, he stated that the Government of the Comoros was prepared to receive a representative of the United Nations Secretary-General, if necessary to us, to begin negotiations with France. The French army, at that time, continued to increase its

military activities on the Island of Mayotte. The Comorian Government once again appealed to the International Community so that the latter might condemn these activities.

18. A moment later, the Government of Comoros under the presidency of Mr. Ali Soilih was overthrown on 13 May 1978 by a coup which led to power co-presidents Messrs Ahmed Abdallah and Mohamed Ahmed.

19. The Committee of Seven then interrupted its mission on the Comorian Island of Mayotte.

20. The Authorities of the new regime, referring to Resolution 32/7 of the United Nations and to the programme of the OAU Committee of Seven on the Comorian Island of Mayotte took preliminary contacts in middle June 1978 with the French Authorities with a view to creating an atmosphere conducive to the normalization of relations between France and the Comoros.

21. At the Fifteenth Assembly of Heads of State and Government held in Khartoum in July 1978, the OAU adopted once again Resolution CM/Res.678(XXXI) condemning the so-called referendums staged in Mayotte and rejected at the outset all other forms of referendum or consultation which might subsequently be organized, or any other French initiative aiming at giving a legitimate character to French colonial presence in Mayotte or in any other part of the Republic of the Comoros.

22. At the Conference of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of non-Aligned Countries held in Belgrade in July 1978, the representative of the OAU presented to Conference, among other resolutions, Resolution CM/Res.678(XXXI) as a working document, in conformity with the wishes expressed by the Fifteenth Assembly of Heads of State and Government on the question of the Comorian Island of Mayotte.



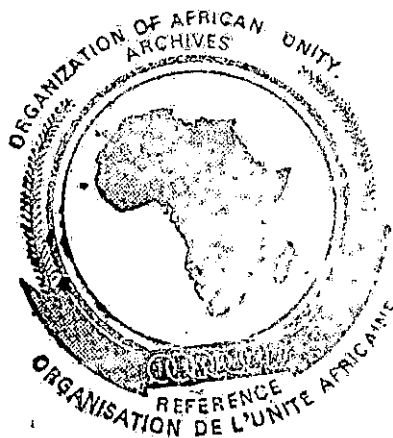
23. Meanwhile, there are signs in favour of the settlement of the problem of the Comorian Island of Mayotte and the Comorian Government prefer to continue negotiations with France so as to settle this question by mutual agreement.

24. These negotiations led since November 1978 to the re-establishment of diplomatic relations at ambassadorial level between the two countries.

25. It must be noted that the President of the Republic of Comoro, H.E. Ahmed Aballah went to France from 21 January to 9 February 1979. During his stay there, he exchanged views with President Valery Giscard d'Estaing on the situation in the Island of Mayotte.

In the course of their discussions, both Heads of State accepted to comply with the UN and OAU recommendations requesting them to discuss this issue and find a solution to it.

Pursuant to the decisions previously adopted by the Council of Ministers, the OAU General Secretariat follows the development of the situation in Comoro's Island of Mayotte and will consequently submit a report thereon to the Council of Ministers.



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