

Keesing's Record of World Events (formerly Keesing's Contemporary Archives),
Volume 17, May, 1971 Zambia, Page 24570
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Dispute with Portugal. - Alleged Portuguese Blockade. - Presidential Action against Dissenters.

A dispute between the Governments of Portugal and Zambia arose during March 1971 over the fate of five Portuguese agricultural experts abducted in January by a guerrilla group calling itself the Mozambique Revolutionary Committee (*Coremo*) near the Cabora Bassa dam site [see 23904 A] and allegedly taken to Zambia.

According to a special correspondent of *The Guardian* in Beira, the five men (three Europeans and two of mixed race) were taken from an experimental station in the Tote district (Mozambique) and subsequently held at a guerrilla base in eastern Zambia until Feb. 6. A sixth man captured by the guerrillas was said to have been killed by them because a physical disability of his was delaying their march. After being taken to Lusaka, on instructions from the Zambian authorities, the five men were, according to this account, interviewed on Feb. 8 by Mr. Fitzpatrick Chuula, the Zambian Attorney General, who ordered them to be handed back to *Coremo*, at whose bees they were reported to have arrived on Feb. 9 and to have been executed soon afterwards.

It was also reported that the Zambian High Commissioner in Zomba (Malawi) had told Dr. Vasco Pereira, the Portuguese Ambassador to Malawi, that the Zambian authorities had returned the prisoners to the guerrillas for return to Mozambique "to avoid further embarrassment".

The Portuguese Government stated officially on March 3 that the captured men had been taken to Lusaka, where the authorities had handed them back to *Coremo*. Mr. Lewis Changufu, the Zambian Minister of Home Affairs, however, denied on March 5 that the five men had ever been taken to Zambia, an application by *Coremo* for permission to take them there having been turned down. *Coremo* officials in Lusaka claimed on the same day that the men had been released in Mozambique shortly after Feb. 15.

Mr. Changufu asserted on March 8 that in retaliation for Zambia's failure to produce the five kidnapped Portuguese, five Zambians had been forcibly taken across the Mozambique border as hostages by the Portuguese authorities.

The Zambian Government subsequently accused the Portuguese of having organized a blockade of Zambia by holding up goods destined for Zambia at the port of Beira, but this was categorically denied by the Portuguese Government.

Reiterating that Zambia could not be held responsible for the fate of the five men, the Zambian Foreign Ministry accused Portugal on March 16 of "trying to create a false image in the outside world by attributing her military setbacks in Mozambique and elsewhere to Zambia's alleged involvement and taking this as a pretext for wanton acts of blockade against Zambia" [Such action had been advocated in the newspaper *Noticias Betra*, stating that any full-scale retaliatory blockade would have a crippling effect on Zambia.]

President Kaunda declared before more than 30 foreign diplomats in Lusaka on March 22 that Zambian imports, including thousands of tons of maize (Zambia's staple food.), were being held up at three Portuguese ports—Beira and Nacala in Mozambique and Lobito in Angola. He denied any Zambian involvement in the case of the five abducted men and claimed that any Portuguese arrested in Zambia were safely looked after before being handed back to the Portuguese authorities; he produced two men who, he said, were Portuguese soldiers serving prison sentences for illegal entry and due to be returned to Portuguese territory at the end of

their term. He added that there had been “many acts of aggression” during alleged Portuguese border incursions since independence and that Zambia was “ready to hit back with all we have got” against any attacks, military or economic.

A spokesman for the Portuguese Foreign Ministry said on the same day: “There is no blockade of Zambian goods in Beira. Perhaps traffic congestion has caused delays but there is no blockade by Portugal. No measures have been taken.”

The Portuguese Government restated its case in a Note to the Zambian Government on March 25, describing President Kaunda's version of the kidnapping of the five men as “completely contrary to the reality” and asserting in particular that the men had been committed to the custody of *Coremo* by Mr. Chuula. The Note also disclosed that there had been repeated official contacts between the two Governments in 1968-69 and that Mr. Mark Chona (described as “personal counsellor” to President Kaunda) had just ended two days’ consultations in Lisbon. The Note dismissed the President's reference to a threat of Portuguese military or economic attack and stressed that Portuguese ports would remain open to Zambian cargo as long as Zambia did not antagonize Portugal directly, and that Zambia would always find in the Portuguese Government “a desire to establish peaceful relations and profitable collaboration” as long as the same spirit and attitude were forthcoming from Zambia.

The Lusaka newspaper *Times of Zambia* reported on April 13 that rail traffic between Beira and Zambia was “back to normal” as from April 12.

A number of border incidents had taken place in previous years, arising out of the activities of African nationalist guerrillas in both Angola and Mozambique and counter-action taken by Portuguese forces [see 23321 A], some members of which were arrested inside Zambia.

Mr. A. G. Zulu, then Zambian Minister of Home Affairs, confirmed on Sept. 21, 1969, that the two Portuguese soldiers who had been detained in Zambia and been at the centre of the Government's dispute with the judiciary in July 1969 [see 23533 A] had been exchanged on Sept. 20 against three Zambians held by the Portuguese authorities after straying into Mozambique.

Lieutenant Paul Kalolozhi, an African member of the Portuguese Army, was in December 1969 sentenced to five years’ imprisonment under the State security Act after he had admitted having been sent to Zambia from Angola on Nov. 11 in order to obtain information on Angolan nationalist guerrillas inside Zambia.

Meanwhile there had been public expression of dissension, largely based on tribal differences, both in the country's ruling United National Independence Party (UNIP) and in the Cabinet, from which two Ministers were dismissed.

Mr. Justin Chimba, the Minister of Trade and Industry, and it member of Zambia's largest tribe, the Bemba, on Jan. 25 accused the Government of persecuting Bembas, and other Bemba Ministers were reported to have objected to the reinstatement on Jan. 1 of three Ministers previously accused of having misappropriated funds [see 24401 A]. [Mr. Honey Shamabanse, the former Minsiter of the North-Western Province, was later, in March 1971, convicted of having obtained money under false pretences from a farming fund, and given a two-year suspended sentence and fined].

President Kaunda decided on the next day (Jan. 26) to set up a Commission of Inquiry into allegations of tribal bias and corrupt practices in the Government, and on Jan. 29 he suspended Mr. Chimba until the Commission had investigated his allegations,

Speaking to a meeting of 80 UNIP leaders at Kitwe on April 19, President Kaunda announced the permanent dismissal of Mr. Chimba and also that of Mr. Sylvester Chisembele, Minister for the Western Province, on the

ground of his having rejected collective responsibility in government. At the same time he outlawed two unofficial UNIP committees which he described as “dirty and cheap tribal mafias”, one being a committee of 24 formed by Bemba politicians and the other one of 14 formed by politicians of rival tribes.

President Kaunda made it clear on April 19 that there would be “no such thing as a tribal leader with a provincial political base” in his Government who would “claim to be the champion of his province or be its spokesman in the Cabinet or outside”.—(Times - Guardian - Daily Telegraph - Financial Times - Cape Times - Neue Zürcher Zeitung) (*Prev. rep. 24401A*)

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