

VI. In view of the present disturbed situation and the Italian Government's attempts to secure the alleviation or even the abolition of the inadequate sanctions already in operation, the Ethiopian Government desires to make to the League of Nations certain formal declarations, the object of which is to defeat any manoeuvre that might disturb public opinion.

1. It is not true that direct negotiations have been opened or are about to be opened between the Ethiopian Government and the Italian Government for a settlement of the conflict. The Ethiopian Government will always refuse to enter into any direct negotiation; it will only agree to negotiate within the framework of the League and through the agency of the League.

2. It is not true that in the course of recent fighting the Italian forces have broken the Ethiopian resistance. If all that was needed for victory were to draw up war communiqués, the Italian Government would undoubtedly have won the war long ago. The Ethiopian Government would point out that, on the eve of each meeting of any League body, triumphant communiqués are issued with the idea of convincing world opinion that any assistance to Ethiopia is henceforth useless and cannot prevent the accomplished fact. The Ethiopian Government scorns to deny every one of these exaggerated communiqués; but its silence is not to be taken as an implicit recognition of their truth. At the outbreak of the conflict, the Ethiopian Government announced that it would resist the aggressor to the death and would not yield to force, however much hostilities might be protracted and however cruel might be the sufferings inflicted by a pitiless enemy. After six months of war waged against the rules of international law, of massacres of defenceless citizens, and of systematic bombardments of hospitals, the Italian Government has not succeeded in cowing the Ethiopian people. The Ethiopian Government proclaims, with a force enhanced by indignation at these barbarous acts of violence, that its resolve is unchanged and unshakable.

3. It is not true that the Ethiopian people are divided in their attitude towards the aggressor. It is not true that portions of the Ethiopian population have lent their assistance to the Italian troops and betrayed their country. It is the unanimous resolve of the people, as of the Government of Ethiopia, to-day as yesterday, that there can be no peace with Italy until Ethiopian territory has been delivered from the invader. No sacrifice will be too heavy for the Ethiopian people if it prevents the triumph of the aggressor.

VII. Having devoted all its energy, all its strength, all its resources to the defence of its territorial integrity and political independence, the Ethiopian Government considers itself justified in appealing to the League for the assistance promised by Article 16 of the Covenant to be given to it without delay and in the most effective possible form. As the representative of Belgium said in the Council on March 14th, 1936 "Respect for international justice is essential to the continued existence of small countries ... The value of a signature does not depend on the strength of the one to whom that signature is given".

W.L.M. King Papers, Memoranda and Notes, 1933-1939
(M.G. 26, 4, volume 165, pages C117603-C118550)

PUBLIC ARCHIVES
ARCHIVES PUBLIQUES
CANADA