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PAPERS

RELATING TO THE

SLAVE TRADE IN BENGAZI.

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*Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.  
September 1893.*

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## Papers relating to the Slave Trade in Bengazi.

### No. 1.

*Consul-General Drummond Hay to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received April 15.)*

(Extract.)

*Tripoli, April 3, 1890.*

IT is to be feared that so long as domestic slavery continues to be a lawful institution in Turkey attempts to supply the demand for fresh slaves will continue to be made.

All slaves applying to the Local Government directly or through the medium of a foreign Consulate for their freedom are immediately emancipated. They now generally apply directly to the local authorities.

### No. 2.

*Consul Alvarez to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received January 27.)*

My Lord,

*Bengazi, January 9, 1891.*

I HAVE the honour to inclose herewith copy of a despatch addressed to his Excellency Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople, reporting the action of the Governor of Bengazi, Hajy Reschid Pasha, with regard to a caravan of 1,400 or 1,500 slaves said to have arrived at Ojela Jalo, and with regard to a case of slave-dealing in Bengazi, in which I supplied him with information.

I have, &c.

(Signed) JUSTIN ALVAREZ.

### Inclosure in No. 2.

*Consul Alvarez to Sir W. White.*

Sir,

*Bengazi, December 30, 1890.*

I HAVE the honour to report that, on the 18th instant, I received reliable information that a large caravan of slaves had arrived at Ojela Jalo, under the command of a Scheykh, who had 200 slaves and 500 camels, while the remainder, some 1,200 or 1,300 slaves, were in the same district in the hands of various members of the Mejabra tribe. I was also informed that a native of Bengazi had arrived here on the 16th instant with seventeen or eighteen camels and about twenty slaves. I at once wrote a note to the Pasha informing him of these facts, and stating that I was sure he would have a thorough inquiry made, and would enforce the Law for the suppression of the Slave Trade promulgated on the 16th December, 1889. The same evening word was brought me that Hajy Reschid Pasha had sent my note to the offices of the Secretary to Government and of the police to be copied and acted upon, with general instructions to exercise vigilance in looking after slave-dealers. This seemed satisfactory, and the next day being Friday, when no business is transacted at the Castle, I took no further action. On the Saturday, however, I sent to inquire what were the results of the arrest, which I supposed had taken place, on this charge of slave-dealing, and was astonished to learn that nothing had been done. The Pasha had left the Castle, and I could not see him. I therefore called upon him on Sunday morning, and while acknowledging the promptness with which he had acted, as mentioned above, I complained that as yet the police had not arrested the man, or made any search for him and his slaves, and asked his Excellency to give orders

for that purpose. He said he would do so, but although I waited for some time, no such orders were given. I then again pointed out to him the necessity of no time being lost, as in all probability the culprit would manage to hear of what was in store for him, and either decamp, sell his slaves in a hurry for what they would fetch, or carefully secrete them. The Pasha, who professed to doubt the existence of the accused man, about whom he consulted the President of the Municipality, nodded assent to my reiterated request, but said nothing, and as no orders were given in my presence, and I could obtain nothing further from the Pasha on this point beyond general declarations of his desire to put down the Slave Trade, I came away. I greatly fear that nothing will be done, if, indeed, the police do not put the slave-dealer on his guard by timely warning of their arrival, in which case of course no slaves will be found.

I have to-day received a reply from the Governor to my note of the 18th instant, and to another written on the 22nd, calling his attention to the fact that the police had allowed six days to elapse without arresting any one or making any search, repeating what I had told him the previous day, viz., that if time were lost the slaves would be sold or hidden, or the offender would manage to get out of the clutches of the law, and demanding that he should give the necessary orders. From this reply it appears that the man's house, and those of his connections, were searched (but, as I learn from private information, not till Sunday, the 28th instant, eight or nine days later than they should have been), with the result that there was no trace of the slaves to be found; and that former orders with reference to the repression of the Slave Trade have been repeated to the Kaïmakam of Ojela and Jalo, the officer commanding the Imperial troops, and other officials, in consequence of the information supplied by me. Of course, with regard to this case, only such a result was, under the circumstances, to be expected.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) JUSTIN ALVAREZ.

No. 3.

*Consul Alvarez to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received February 17.)*

My Lord,

*Bengazi, February 6, 1891.*

I HAVE the honour to inclose herewith extract of a despatch addressed to his Excellency Her Majesty's Ambassador reporting the employment of negroes in the military band, &c.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) JUSTIN ALVAREZ.

Inclosure in No. 3.

*Consul Alvarez to Sir W. White.*

(Extract.)

*Bengazi, January 28, 1891.*

IN the course of last year I suggested to Hajy Reschid Pasha, who has musical tastes, the utility of his incorporating in the military band some of the emancipated Blacks who idle about the streets of Bengazi in a very miserable condition, as many of them have a good ear for music, and are also physically capable of being enrolled in other branches of the Ottoman army. Nothing came of my suggestion till the commencement of this month, when one morning I saw a number of Blacks in military uniform being drilled, and apparently well clothed. On inquiry I found that the Pasha had filled up several vacancies in the band with Blacks, and had drafted the taller and stronger men into a battalion of the regular troops.

No. 4.

*Consul Alvarez to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received June 2.)*

My Lord,

*Bengazi, May 19, 1891.*

I HAVE the honour to inclose herewith extract of a despatch addressed to Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople, reporting the absence of slave-caravans

## 3

usually arriving here from Waday in the winter, and the probable diversion of this traffic to Derna.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) JUSTIN ALVAREZ.

Inclosure in No. 4.

*Consul Alvarez to Sir W. White.*

(Extract.)

*Bengazi, May 18, 1891.*

SINCE the beginning of the present year I have noticed the absence of slave-caravans which used formerly to arrive at Bengazi during the winter and spring from Waday, and, while unable to report any serious diminution of the Slave Traffic between this province and the interior of Africa, am led to believe that it is carried on by no means as openly as before, and that in process of time this Traffic will in all probability be diverted to another port, Mesurata, or more likely Derna.

Although in the beginning of the year I obtained from Hajy Reschid Pasha a repetition of strict orders previously given to the Kaïmakams of Derna and Jalo for the repression of the Slave Trade in their respective districts, coupled in the case of the former with an injunction to arrest two slave-dealers, whose names were given, and emancipate about forty-five slaves said to be with them, and although the then Kaïmakam (Edhem Effendi) of Ojela and Jalo was transferred to Merj, and the Kaïmakam of Merj (Husny Bey), represented to me by the Pasha as more energetic in character, was named in his place shortly afterwards, yet such is the apathy of the authorities in the interior and at Derna that I do not expect the improvement will be other than temporary.

No. 5.

*Acting Consul de Fremeaux to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received October 31.)*

My Lord,

*Bengazi, October 16, 1891.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith extract of my last Report to his Excellency the Ambassador of Her Majesty at Constantinople on the present state of slavery and Slave Trade in this province.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) G. DE FREMEAUX.

Inclosure in No. 5.

*Acting Consul de Fremeaux to Sir W. White.*

(Extract.)

*Bengazi, October 2, 1891.*

I HAVE the honour to report to your Excellency that, during the quarter ended the 30th September ultimo, on behalf of this Consulate, and by much trouble of my side, and very difficulties of these authorities, have been emancipated 33 slaves (20 men and 13 women).

The caravans arrived here in this period from Wadia, through Kufra and Jalu-Angela, brought with them separately about 500 slaves (300 men and 200 women). Most of them are natives of Darfour, Baghirmi, and Bahar Sélémet.

It is calculated that in this province, from the plains of Syrtis Major to the Egyptian confines, there are over 6,000 slaves, and the only city of Bengazi contains more than 3,000.

*Consul Alvarez to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received February 11.)*

My Lord,

*Bengazi, January 18, 1892.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit, herewith inclosed, extract of a despatch of the 4th instant, addressed to Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople, reporting the arrival of two caravans of slaves, and the apathy of the local authorities in repressing the Slave Trade.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) JUSTIN ALVAREZ.

Inclosure in No. 6.

*Consul Alvarez to Sir W. White.*

(Extract.)

*Bengazi, January 4, 1892.*

I HAVE the honour to report that the recent list of the slaves who have taken refuge at Her Majesty's Consulate during the last quarter shows a comparative diminution in their number (eleven males, sixteen females). This diminution is due to a variety of causes, among the first of which I have no hesitation in placing the enrolment in the Ottoman army of over 200 Blacks. This measure, besides providing for the subsistence of those who were in the direst straits of poverty, bordering on starvation, has greatly reduced the number of those whose services might be utilized with the sanction of the law by the Arabs of the place, who perhaps have treated their slaves better than usual, aware of the impossibility of replacing their labour except by the purchase of new slaves.

I regret to say that, in addition to the caravans of slaves reported on by Mr. de Fremeaux, two others have arrived, one of them before my return to my post, and another from Waday, with 220 slaves, on the 4th November. Notwithstanding that I lost no time in denouncing the second caravan to the authorities, to whom I communicated the names of four slave-dealers who held 100 out of the 220 slaves, ten days after I had put him in possession of the facts the Governor replied that the result of the inquiry made by the police was that no slaves had been brought by the four persons mentioned by me, whereas the exact contrary was matter of public notoriety. The Pasha further invited me to say who my informants were, in order that they might be confronted with the accused.

With this demand I could not comply, and nothing further has been done in the matter. The fact is, slave-dealing is considered by the Mussulman population a perfectly legitimate trade, and should any person be imprisoned on account of accusations of being concerned in it brought against him, he would be looked on as a martyr.

No. 7.

*Consul Alvarez to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received May 9.)*

(Extract.)

*Bengazi, April 30, 1892.*

I HAVE the honour to report to your Lordship that, during the quarter which terminated on the 31st ultimo, 33 slave were maintained at the expense of Her Majesty's Government, 19 of whom were males, and 14 females. The following is their distribution according to country or place of birth:—

Males, 19.			Females, 14.			Remarks.
Baghirmy	..	1	Bahr Selamet	..	3	No opposition was made by the authorities to their emancipation, but in several instances there was great delay in the fulfilment of the necessary formalities.
Budris	} Both in Barca	2	Baghirmy	..	2	
Hasr Tawyl			Buktaifa	} Barca	..	
Darfour	..	5	Hia		..	
Jebel Gera	..	2	Darfour	..	1	
Mahamyd	..	2	Kano	..	1	
Muby	..	1	Waday	..	1	
Rungha	..	1				
Waday..	..	5				

With regard to the repression of the Slave Trade, I regret to have to report that the apathy of the local authorities in enforcing the law still continues.

On reference to the Slave Register kept at this Consulate, and containing, among other details, statements of the time during which the slave has been in bondage, I find that from the 1st January, 1891, up to this day, out of a total of 183 slaves who have taken refuge at this Consulate, no fewer than 29 have been in slavery for periods not exceeding two years. Of these, 15 are males and 14 females. The last Law sanctioned by Imperial Iradé for the prohibition of the Traffic in Black Slaves was promulgated on the 4th (16th) December (1305), 1889.

Allowing three months for the delay which may have elapsed before its publication in Bengazi, and I think it will be admitted that this allowance is ample, on and after the 16th March, 1890, any purchase of slaves or slave-dealing would render the offenders liable to punishment under Article 5 of the above Law. I intend to call the attention of the local authorities to this fact with the view of causing legal proceedings to be instituted against the slave-owners who have rendered themselves liable to the penalties of the Law, and whose former slaves are resident in Bengazi.

No. 8.

*Consul Alvarez to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received May 17.)*

My Lord,

*Bengazi, May 9, 1892.*

I HAVE the honour to report the following occurrence in further illustration of the lukewarm attitude taken up by the local police as regards the Slave Trade, and the perfunctory manner in which they attempt its repression.

Three days ago, during the night of the 6th May, I received intelligence that slaves were to be found in the houses of two slave-dealers. With the object of preventing any collusion between them and the police, the result of which collusion would have been that no slaves would have been discovered, in the note which I addressed to the Governor, asking for the assistance of the police to enable my cavass to release certain slaves about to be sold, and to arrest the slave-dealers, I did not specify the names of the slave-dealers, or the position of their houses. By the Pasha's orders, one policeman and four zaptiehs were sent, and the search began. In the first house searched three female slaves were found, who were taken to the Castle.

On proceeding to the second house, that of a well-known slave-dealer, who has previously been denounced by me to the authorities, the police and my cavass found that the owner had come out of his house and locked the door. He refused to open it unless he was told the name of his denouncer, &c. The police, instead of proceeding to break into the house and make a search as they were called upon to do, parleyed and discussed for about two hours. Finally, the man was marched off in custody to the Castle. The Pasha, on hearing that the house had not been searched, sent the police back again, but of course the two female slaves, who would probably have been found if the search had been carried out without loss of time, had disappeared. The loss of time probably also accounted for the failure to find any slaves (there were supposed to be three) at the third house. On the report made to me by my cavass, I wrote to the Governor asking that legal proceedings should be taken against the owner of the second house for resisting the police in the execution of their duty. Of course the owner of the first house will be prosecuted, and the slaves having been found in his house, his conviction ought to be a foregone conclusion.

I have also expressed my regret to the Pasha at the failure of the police to make a thorough search in the second house in the first instance, in spite of the owner's opposition, but have not as yet received any explanation. The neglect in this case is palpable, and from it your Lordship may judge of the manner in which the benevolent intentions of His Imperial Majesty the Sultan, as expressed in the Law of the 16th December, 1889, forbidding the Traffic in Black Slaves, would be carried out if the local police were left to themselves.

I have, &c.

(Signed) JUSTIN ALVAREZ.



*Consul Alvarez to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received August 29.)*

My Lord,

*Bengazi, August 11, 1892.*

ON the 30th April of this year I had the honour to transmit to your Lordship my despatch at the end of which I referred to the fact that, from the 1st January, 1891, to that date, the Slave Register kept at this Consulate showed that, out of a total of 183 slaves who had taken refuge here, no fewer than 29 had been in slavery for periods not exceeding two years. The date of the promulgation of the Imperial Iradé for the prohibition of the Traffic in Black Slaves being the 4th (16th) December (1305) 1889, it is evident that any purchase of slaves after that date would be slave-dealing, and would render the offenders liable to punishment under Article 5 of the above Law. I then expressed my intention of calling the attention of the local authorities to this fact, with the view of causing legal proceedings to be instituted against those slave-owners who had broken the law. I now have to report to your Lordship that on the 8th instant I received from the Governor a note dated the 4th, translation of which is herewith inclosed.

Your Lordship will perceive how entirely the Provincial Administrative Council begs the question. Article 2 was certainly never intended to cover any description of owners other than passengers by sea or land, or captains or proprietors of vessels. None of the thirty slaves referred to in my note to the Government was employed as one of the crew of any vessel, or accompanied his or her master or mistress from any port of this province. By no reasonable interpretation, therefore, can they or their owners be brought under this clause, as the primary conditions for such an argument are wanting. Article 5, on the other hand, is perfectly clear, and admits of no prevarication.

In the opinion of the Administrative Council a person who buys a slave after the date of the promulgation of the Law for the prohibition of the Black Slave Trade is evidently not a slave-dealer, especially if he be "well known or respectable, or be of a class which requires servants." The Council clearly think that such an action would be no blot on his respectability.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) JUSTIN ALVAREZ.

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Inclosure in No. 9.

*Reschid Pasha to Consul Alvarez.*

(Translation.)

Sir,

11 Moharrem, 1310 (July 23 (August 4), 1892).

ON receipt of your "tacrir" of the 17th (29th) May (1308) 1892, requesting that the owners of thirty black slaves who at different dates had been sent by your Consulate to the Local Government, which gave them letters of emancipation, should, in conformity with the tenour of the Imperial Law of the 22nd Reby-ul-Akker, 1307, sanctioned by the Iradé of His Imperial Majesty the Sultan, be considered as slave-dealers, and legal proceedings be taken against them, I referred the matter to the Administrative Council of the province. In the first clause of Article 2 of that Law black slaves accompanying their masters or mistresses abroad as domestic servants, or found on board merchant-vessels as part of the crew, are excepted from prohibition, and in the 3rd Article black slaves whose owners have no certificate, such as is described in the 2nd Article, shall be considered free, and shall receive letters of emancipation, while their owners shall be looked upon as slave-dealers. But if these latter prove that they are not slave-dealers they shall be exempt from the penalty provided by law. Consequently, taking into consideration the fact that the male and female Blacks whose names are given in your note are of the class employed in domestic service, and that their employers have been found on inquiry not to be slave-dealers, but well-known and respectable persons of a class which requires servants, it was decided to inform you that the law did not allow of any action being taken against these persons, or anybody else accused in the past, or who shall be in the future.

I have, &c.

(Seal.) (Signed) MAHOMET RESCHID (son of Ibrahim),  
*Mutessarif of Bengazi, and Feryk.*

## No. 10.

*Consul Alvarez to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received August 29.)*

(Extract.)

*Bengazi, August 15, 1892.*

I HAVE the honour to report that on the 8th August, towards evening, Khadija, aged 22, a negress born in Rungha, took refuge in this Consulate, and informed me that her master, a native of Bengazi, had intended to sell her, as well as Mereisila, a native of Baghirmy, whom he had caught in the act of running away to this Consulate, and had bound and shut up in his house preparatory to selling her. After making a note of her statement, I applied to the Governor in the usual way for Khadija's manumission next day, and in a separate note referred to the case of Mereisila, asking for her liberation and emancipation, an inquiry into the affair, and the prevention of the sale, or, if it had taken place, the punishment of the guilty parties.

On the 11th instant Hajy Reschid Pasha, Governor of Bengazi, left for Derna, after having referred the matter, as I was told, to the Public Prosecutor.

On the 13th Mereisila informed the Consulate that she was still imprisoned. I at once sent to the Cadi, Khalil Fehmy Effendi, the Acting Governor, to inquire what had been done. The Acting Governor had no cognizance of the affair, and on further inquiries being made it turned out that neither the Public Prosecutor, nor the Judge of Instruction, nor the police had done anything.

I again sent to the Acting Governor a message asking that immediate action should be taken, and the next day saw the Governor's Dragoman, and impressed upon him the importance of the case being attended to without loss of time. Finally, as it was evident that nothing would be done, and that an attempt was being made to gain time in order that the girl might be sold, I informed the Acting Governor that I should hold the local authorities responsible for Mereisila's remaining in slavery and for the non-execution of the law. Thereupon the police sent to ask that Khadija might point out the place where Mereisila was confined. While I was confident that no negress would now be found, yet, that the authorities might not complain of want of assistance on my part, I sent the girl with my cavass. She went straight to the place where Mereisila had been shut up, but, of course, no one was found.

## No. 11.

*Consul Alvarez to the Earl of Rosebery.—(Received October 10.)*

My Lord,

*Bengazi, September 26, 1892.*

I HAVE the honour to report that a few days ago I received a communication from the Acting Governor stating that in consequence of the failure to discover the slave-girl Mereisila, who was shut up and afterwards sold, the only evidence against her captor was the girl Khadija's deposition, and therefore an "Ordonnance de non-lieu" had been pronounced in his favour.

I have forwarded to the Acting Governor a slave-girl, by name Saida, of Darfour, who three days previously had taken refuge in this Consulate, and declared that on the day of the search by the police in her master's house his brother-in-law warned him of the approach of the police, whereupon she and Mereisila were hurriedly hidden in the Marabut\* Sid Mumen and brought back two hours and a-half afterwards, when the police had left the house. Four days later Mereisila was sold to a well-known slave-dealer. Two other slave-girls, Zeytuné, of Baghirmy, and Ayescha, were placed in the kitchen and successfully passed off as domestic slaves. The next day Zeytuné took refuge at the Consulate, and when sending her to the Castle for emancipation I requested the annulment of the "Ordonnance de non-lieu" issued in the master's favour, as the evidence of these two girls, in addition to that of Khadija, furnished conclusive proofs of his guilt. Finally, Mereisila, the girl who was sold, was discovered yesterday and brought to the Consulate.

All the persons implicated in the affair are now under arrest, the case is now being re-examined, and I anticipate that if it be properly conducted there can be no doubt as to the result.

I have, &c.

(Signed)

JUSTIN ALVAREZ.

\* "Marabut" (bell tomb).

PAPERS relating to the Slave Trade in Bengazi.

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*Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Com-  
mand of Her Majesty. September 1893.*

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