

Survival



We are the global movement for tribal peoples' rights. We help them defend their lives, protect their lands and determine their own futures.

Government lies: “There is no mining in the Central Kalahari Game Reserve.”

Timeline

Early 1980s

A diamond deposit is discovered in the Central Kalahari Game Reserve within the territory of the Bushman community of Gope.

12 October 1986

Botswana's Minister of Commerce and Industry, Mr Moutlakgola Nwako, announces the government's decision to relocate the Bushmen.

1996

A formal evaluation of the mine is completed.

May 1997

First evictions of Bushmen from the Central Kalahari Game Reserve take place.

1997

Anglo American drills two exploratory holes in the reserve.

31 August 1997

Anglo American (the majority shareholder in diamond company De Beers) “denied any knowledge of its activities within the reserve” to South African paper ‘Sunday Independent’.

1999

Mineral exploration camps are set up a few miles from the Bushman community of Molapo.

July 2000

Botswana's ‘Midweek Sun’ reports that Botswana's Minister of Minerals, Energy & Water Affairs, Boometswe Mokgothu, told Ghanzi District Council that “the relocation of Basarwa (Bushman) communities from the Central Kalahari Game Reserve is to pave way for a proposed Gope Diamond Mine.”

2001

In its draft management plan for the Central Kalahari Game Reserve, Botswana's Government Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP) writes, "DWNP should continue to point out that mining is incompatible with the Game Reserve's objectives."

2002

Bushmen tell Survival, "Foreign Minister General Merafhe went to the reserve and told us we had to be moved because of diamonds."

2002

A second wave of Bushman evictions from the reserve. The Bushmen's water borehole is destroyed.

7 November 2002

President Festus Mogae claims, "the program of assisted relocation of Basarwa (Bushmen) from areas of the Central Kalahari Game Reserve... was in no way related to any plan, real or fictitious, to commence diamond mining in the reserve."

2004

The Botswana government releases a statement which claims: "There is no mining nor any plans for future mining anywhere inside the CKGR as the only known mineral discovery in the CKGR, the Gope deposit, has proven not commercially viable to develop the mine."

2005

Third wave of Bushman evictions from the Central Kalahari Game Reserve.

2006

The Bushmen win their historic case against the government. High Court Judge Justice Dow states "(the Bushmen were evicted) forcibly, unlawfully and without their consent."

May 2007

De Beers sells its deposit at Gope to Gem Diamonds, for \$34 million. Gem Diamonds' chief executive calls the Gope deposit "a problematic asset for De Beers," because of the Bushman campaign.

5 September 2014

Gem Diamonds' official opening of the Ghaghoo (formerly Gope) mine worth an estimated \$4.9 billion. The mine lies within the territory of the Gope Bushmen and just 3.2 kilometers from their community in the Central Kalahari Game Reserve.