

Survival



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

Key criticisms of the Botswana government's treatment of Central Kalahari Bushmen, 2005-2013

US State Department, 2013 Country Report on Human Rights Practices in Botswana, 2013

"[Bushmen are] marginalized economically and politically."

Michael Dingake, Veteran ANC activist and writer, Mmegi Newspaper, 2013

"The government feels bound by the legality of the [2006 court] ruling, but not the morality of the judgment. The government can't hide its callousness, nor its determination to win in the end!"

"The ban on hunting is also a form of pressure on Basarwa [Bushmen] to get out of the CKGR. Without hunting, Basarwa are literally being starved to surrender. Under the circumstances Basarwa will be driven to poaching and into the torturous hands of wildlife officers who delight in mistreating Basarwa."

Dama Mosweunyane, Sunday Standard, 2013

"It is important to note that atrocities that Basarwa [Bushmen] are subjected to by the government of Botswana, which continue unabated, warrant international attention. Most importantly, there is an urgent need for punishment of perpetrators of heinous crimes against them, which will ensure that Basarwa benefit from the international justice system."

"The apartheid oriented Botswana government continues to preside over discriminatory pieces of legislations, which deny the impoverished section of the population hunting of wild animals just because they do not have farms."

TravelPickr, Travel operator, 2013

"We have cancelled our pending [tour] requests for Botswana and informed the local tour operators about this boycott. We will suspend all tours and block tour requests to Botswana until the government in Botswana has improved the situation."

Universal Periodic Review of Botswana, United Nations Human Rights Council, 2013

“Recommendations regarding Botswana’s treatment of the Bushmen were made by Ireland, Norway, Spain, Mexico, Finland and Congo, such as ‘fully implementing the 2006 High Court ruling’ and to ‘guarantee the return of the San [Bushman] communities to the Kalahari reserve.”

Botswana High Court, 2011

“[The Bushman case is] a harrowing story of human suffering and despair.”

John Simpson, The Guardian, 2011

“There is something peculiarly repellent about blocking off the water supply in a desert. And when the president of the country called the Bushmen ‘primitive stone-age creatures’ who were to be swept into the dustbin of history, it seemed like an offence against our common humanity.”

“The camps set up for the Bushmen were disgusting places where rape, prostitution and drunkenness were rampant. I visited a camp called New Xade secretly with a film crew, who were visibly shocked by what we saw.”

Maude Barlow, former UN advisor on water, 2010

“The world (now) witnesses one of Africa’s most prosperous countries denying its first inhabitants the right to sink a well, while promoting mining and safari camps just a few miles away. It’s hard to imagine a more cruel and inhuman way to treat people. One can only conclude Botswana’s authorities view Bushmen as less important than wildlife. Many people around the world will be horrified at what they’re seeing.”

Barry Bearak, New York Times, 2010

“In the resettlement areas, the ‘unique culture’ of the Bushmen mingles with the familiar culture of the displaced. The destitute rarely hunt or gather, instead awaiting a monthly parcel of cornmeal, beans, sorghum, sugar, tea and cooking oil.”

James Anaya, UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2010

“Denial of services to those currently living in the [Central Kalahari Game] Reserve does not appear to be in keeping with the spirit and underlying logic of the (2006 High Court) decision, nor with the relevant international human rights standards.”

Pippa Small, Jeweller, 2010

“As jewellers we have for years made sure that we do not use blood diamonds. Now we also need to boycott Botswana diamonds until the Bushmen are allowed to live and hunt freely on their land.”

Mmegi editorial, 2009

“In the Basarwa [Bushman] case, our government has repeatedly flunked the democratic test.”

“This is homicide by another name and our government cannot be proud of the reckless and shameful conduct that seems to place no value in human life no matter how they are despised.”

The UN Human Rights Committee, 2008

“The committee expressed its ‘concern’ that the Bushmen’s ‘right to return [to their land] is conditional on providing identity documents prior to entering the CKGR, obtaining Special Game Licences to hunt and that the State party will not provide access to ground-water for such persons.’”

Alexander McCall Smith, author, 2008

“The issue of the San [Bushmen] people and their access to the Central Kalahari Reserve is a sad and distressing one, and the Botswana courts have ruled against their own government in this matter.”

“Everybody I know hopes that this blot on the country’s history will be resolved in a way which respects the rights and feelings of the San; I do hope the government of Botswana bears this in mind, and I am sure they will.”

Lucia Van Der Post, The Times, 2007

“Why when I arrive to see for myself the happy sight of Bushmen returning to their land, do I find so many of them still living in the hated, dusty settlements? Why are they being prosecuted for hunting when that is their time-honoured means of feeding themselves? Why is the Government refusing to reopen the boreholes, schools and hospitals that they forcibly closed?”

“We are unable to find any family in New Xade [resettlement camp] that has the means to return. Many of the young men have to appear in court in a few days’ time for hunting offences, and so cannot leave. Others have no cars, no petrol...”

Archbishop Desmond Tutu, 2006

“The San Bushmen represent a 100,000-year-old culture that we should consider one of the world’s treasures. And while progress is necessary, it cannot be that the only way to achieve progress is to remove the San from their ancestral lands and drive their traditions away ... I appeal to the Botswana Government, and the world, to find new ways to help solve these issues in a manner that respects the lovely, spiritual culture of the San bushmen.”

African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights, 2006

“Botswana has adopted a rather dangerous attitude towards the question of indigenous populations... [Bushmen] face discrimination through laws and government policies and such discrimination is manifested even by high ranking public officials.”

US Ambassador to Botswana, Joseph Huggins, 2005

“[The Bushmen have been] dumped in economically absolutely unviable situations without forethought, and without follow-up support. The lack of imagination displayed... is breathtaking.”