

Tourism and the Gana and Gwi Bushmen
Survival International
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Boycott Botswana Tourism

- Survival International is calling for a boycott of tourism to Botswana. We are asking people not to choose Botswana as a holiday destination until the Gana and Gwi Bushmen and their neighbours the Bakgalagadi are allowed to return to their land in the Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR) and to hunt and gather freely.

The eviction of the Gana and Gwi

- Thousands of Gana and Gwi Bushmen, and Bakgalagadi, have been forcibly evicted from their ancestral lands in the CKGR in Botswana. This is a gross violation of their human rights and is against international law. Unless they get their lands back, these tribes are unlikely to survive as peoples.

Tourism in the Central Kalahari Game Reserve

- Under international law, tribal peoples have the right to decide the priorities for any 'development' on their land.¹
- The Bushmen have said tourism should not be developed in the CKGR until they are allowed to return, and that they must then be in control of it. Bushman Tobee Tcori says, 'There should be no tourism in that area before we go back.'
- The Botswana government is promoting the CKGR as a tourist destination.
- A government 'fact finding mission' into the CKGR in 1985 recommended tapping the tourism potential of the reserve.²
- The 'Draft Final Management Plan' for the CKGR, published several months after the 2002 evictions, makes clear the government's

¹ International Labour Organisation (ILO) Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (Convention 169), Article 7.

² Report of the Central Kgalagadi Game Reserve Fact Finding Mission, Nov 85, 'Summary of Recommendations'

- intention to develop tourism in the reserve.³ Plans for the opening of one tourist lodge inside the reserve are laid out, as is the possibility of developing a further two lodges at a later date.⁴
- The plan cites government policy, ‘to promote community participation in the management of Game Reserves,’ and states, ‘the tourism policy will be... designed to provide local communities with direct and indirect benefits from tourism activities.’⁵
 - However, it is clear that the government did not intend to honour this, as the plan also outlines what measures will be taken to prevent the Bushmen from returning to the CKGR.
 - Instead, the plan envisages the evicted Bushmen providing ‘cultural tourism’ to tourists on their way in and out of the CKGR: ‘Cultural tourism would add significantly to the reserves’ appeal by offering alternatives to ordinary game viewing. The communities in New Xade and Kaudwane [the government eviction sites] are well positioned along the tourists’ routes to provide cultural tourism.’⁶ Thus the government is denying the Bushmen the right to live on or even visit their ancestral land, yet wants them to be on hand to contribute to the reserve’s tourist potential by providing cultural shows. In reality the Bushmen’s culture is fast being destroyed in the eviction sites as they succumb to alcoholism, prostitution and HIV/AIDS.
 - In 1997, a report by Dr Samora Gaborone claimed that information on the government’s tourism policy had been held back from Bushmen living at Xade in the CKGR to trick them into moving out of the reserve.⁷
 - In August 2003, a company called Afritourism was reported to be setting up a lodge inside the CKGR.⁸
 - In October 2004, the Bushman organisation First People of the Kalahari reported safari companies taking tourists into the CKGR, and

³ Draft Final Management Plan: Central Kalahari Game Reserve and Khutse Game Reserve, July 2002 (5.1, 5.2)

⁴ Draft Final Management Plan: Central Kalahari Game Reserve and Khutse Game Reserve, July 2002 (6.5.1)

⁵ Draft Final Management Plan: Central Kalahari Game Reserve and Khutse Game Reserve, July 2002 (9.1)

⁶ Draft Final Management Plan: Central Kalahari Game Reserve and Khutse Game Reserve, July 2002 (9.5.5)

⁷ ‘Who gains or loses in a state-sponsored dispossession’, Dr Samora Gaborone, quoted in Botswana Gazette, 13 August 1997.

⁸ Mmegi Monitor, 25-31 August 2003.

persuading Bushmen who had returned to their communities in the reserve to dance and take them tracking animals. The Bushmen were paid in tobacco.⁹

Botswana's use of Bushmen to promote the country's tourism

- The Botswana government's literature promoting tourism repeatedly markets the Bushmen, their culture and their crafts as attractions.
- In its section on 'community-based tourism', the government's tourism website states that 'the Bushmen [sic] culture especially is attracting a growing number of international visitors.'¹⁰
- The website has a section on Bushman crafts available to tourists, including 'hunting sets'.¹¹
- There is a picture on the website of a Bushman with a bow and arrow, with the caption 'Bushman hunter'. The accompanying text refers to the Bushmen as 'the second largest group of indigenous hunter-gatherers in Africa.'¹² Yet in relation to the evictions, the government refuses to acknowledge the Bushmen's status as indigenous peoples, claiming that all Botswana's people are indigenous, and has banned all hunting and gathering in the reserve.
- In its section on the CKGR, the website states that Bushmen 'have been resident in and around the area for probably thousands of years' and now live in the southern part of the reserve.¹³ Yet the government has now evicted them from this land.
- The website also claims that the Bushmen 'have lived an almost unchanged lifestyle in the country since the Middle Stone Age'¹⁴ – an inaccurate and harmful stereotype.
- One government leaflet advertises a 'walk with a Bushman': 'their utter "one-ness" with the environment reminds us how out of touch we have become with our own.'¹⁵

⁹ Survival meeting with First People of the Kalahari workers, 5 October 2004

¹⁰ <http://www.botswana-tourism.gov.bw/tourism/community/community.html>, accessed 3 March 2005

¹¹ http://www.botswana-tourism.gov.bw/tourism/culture_and_his/arts.html, accessed 3 March 2005

¹² http://www.botswana-tourism.gov.bw/tourism/culture_and_his/people.html#basarwa, accessed 3 March 2005

¹³ <http://www.botswana-tourism.gov.bw/tourism/attractions/central.html>, accessed 3 March 2005

¹⁴ http://www.botswana-tourism.gov.bw/tourism/culture_and_his/culture_and_his.html, accessed 3 March 2005

¹⁵ Botswana Tourism UK's 'Activities' leaflet

- Much is made in this literature of the Bushmen's hunter-gather, semi-nomadic way of life. The 2004 tourism brochure states, 'Today, their present population has dwindled, but San some [sic] still live and follow their traditional life-style as hunter-gatherers in the Central Kalahari Game Reserve and other parts of the Kalahari.'¹⁶
- In fact, the government banned all hunting and gathering in the CKGR when it evicted the Bushmen in 2002, and Bushmen hunting to feed their families now face arrest and either imprisonment or heavy fines. Bushman hunters have also been tortured by officials.¹⁷ Whilst it seems happy to call the Bushmen 'traditional hunter-gatherers' to promote tourism, at the same time it repeatedly and falsely claims that the Gana and Gwi now use rifles to hunt – seemingly an attempt to justify its persecution of hunters.¹⁸

Tsodilo Hills

- The Tsodilo Hills, home of some of the finest examples of ancient Bushman rock paintings, are also heavily marketed in the Department of Tourism's promotional material, using present-day images of Bushmen.¹⁹ However, Ju'hoansi Bushmen living in the vicinity of the Tsodilo Hills were evicted from the area in 1994 by the government, and a museum was built for tourists in their place.²⁰
- The government's tourism website states, 'Tsodilo is a place of special significance to the San who have been living here for thousands of years.'²¹

The importance of tourism to Botswana's economy

¹⁶ Botswana Department of Tourism brochure, 2004, p44

¹⁷ 'When will all this moving stop? Report on a fact-finding mission of the CKGR', Ditshwanelo – the Botswana Centre for Human Rights, 1996

¹⁸ President Mogae, quoted in government's Daily News online, http://www.gov.bw/cgi-bin/news.cgi?d=20041104&i=British_MPs_impressed, 4 November 2004

¹⁹ Botswana Department of Tourism brochure, 2003, p23

²⁰ Survival interviews with Ju'hoansi Bushmen, 1999

²¹ <http://www.botswana-tourism.gov.bw/tourism/attractions/tsodilo.html>, accessed 3 March 2005

- Botswana's economy currently relies heavily on diamond mining. In 2001/2002, diamond mining contributed 35% of GDP directly, and much more indirectly. The government of Botswana recognises that the country's diamond reserves will eventually run out, and is trying to diversify the country's economy.²²
- The government identifies tourism as 'the area with the greatest future potential.'²³ In its 2004-2009 five-year national development plan, the government defines tourism 'as a major engine of continued economic growth with a development budget of P300m (US\$ 68,190,000).'²⁴
- It is estimated that tourism currently contributes 4.5% of the country's GDP. According to latest figures, it brings in annually foreign exchange worth P500m (US\$113,650,000), the tourists spend P1.1 billion (US\$ 227,300,000), and government receipts benefit by P320m (US\$ 72,736,000).²⁵
- Most tourists visiting Botswana come from South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia, the UK, Europe and the US.²⁶

Summary

- The Gana and Gwi Bushmen say tourism should not be developed in the CKGR until they are allowed to go home.
- The Botswana government, having evicted the Bushmen from their land, is promoting the CKGR as a tourist destination.
- The government uses the Bushmen to sell Botswana to tourists, celebrating their hunter-gatherer way of life. Yet it persecutes the Gana and Gwi for hunting and gathering.
- Ju'hoansi Bushmen were evicted from their land in the Tsodilo Hills to make way for tourists.
- The government regards tourism as key to the future of Botswana's economy.
- Survival is asking people 1) not to choose Botswana as a holiday destination until the Bushmen's rights to live on their land and to hunt

²² Botswana Department of Tourism brochure, 2004, p28

²³ Botswana Department of Tourism brochure, 2004, p28

²⁴ Botswana Department of Tourism brochure, 2004, p10

²⁵ Botswana Department of Tourism brochure, 2004, p10

²⁶ Botswana Department of Tourism brochure, 2004, p10

and gather are respected, and 2) to let the Botswana government know of your decision.