

**RUNDU, KAVANGO: A CASE STUDY OF FORCED RELOCATIONS IN
NAMIBIA, 1954 TO 1972**

BY

KLETUS MUHENA LIKUWA



**A mini-thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Magister Atrium, in the faculty of Arts,
University of the Western Cape.**

Supervisor: Professor Uma Mesthrie

Submitted on 15 November 2005

DECLARATION

I declare that (*Rundu, Kavango, a case study of forced relocation in Namibia, 1954 to 1972*), is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete reference.

Full name.....Date.....

Signed.....



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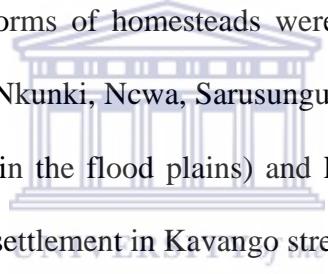
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INTRODUCTION

This is a study about forced relocations in Rundu, Kavango in northeast Namibia.¹ Between 1915 and 1990; Namibia was under South Africa rule. It is during the period of South African rule that the removals of Rundu occurred. In the context of Namibia's international boundaries, Kavango ends in the middle of the Kavango River.² Kavango is both the name of the region and a river situated in the northeast of Namibia. It means “small place” in Rumanyo languages (Namibian language). There were settlements along the Kavango River before the establishment of the Native Affairs Commissioner’s office at Runtu in 1936.³ By 1936, the following settlements in the forms of homesteads were lined up from west to east: Sauyemwa, Rundu, Nkunki, Ncwa, Sarusungu, Nkondo, (which was situated north of Sarusungu in the flood plains) and Rupouoro. Even by the 1960s most of the African settlement in Kavango stretched along the river.⁴



WESTERN CAPE

The cases of forced relocations which this study looks at are those that occurred during the South African period. South African rule is of significance since that country’s history was also marked by forced removals. It is also useful to help to put Rundu removals in the context of a regional framework. The histories of forced relocations in South Africa are

¹ See a Namibian map in appendix on page 120 taken from, Cliffe, L, et al, the transition to independence in Namibia, (U.S.A, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1994), x, which indicates the location of Rundu, Kavango in the North Eastern part of Namibia.

² See L.Hangula, The international boundaries of Namibia, (Windhoek, Gamsberg Macmillan, 1993), 19-20, 37, 42, 45.

³ Note that the Native Affairs Commissioner was also referred to as the Bantu or Black Affairs Commissioner.

⁴ R. First, South West Africa, (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, U.S.A., Penguin, 1963), 43.

well documented in various books.⁵ Forced removals in South Africa say much about the relationship between land, law and power. People were moved and stripped off their land ownership, all in accordance with established laws.⁶ Three and a half a million people in South Africa had been moved by the 1960s and left under appalling conditions,⁷ a figure regarded as incomplete as it did not, for example, include the bulk of people affected by influx control in the urban areas.⁸ The fundamental strategies behind these removals were to perpetuate control, both political and economical. Bantustan strategies were also used to apply indirect rule, politically and economically through the traditional leaders.⁹

Conditions of starvation and suffering were common in the resettlement camps in the 1960s to 1970s after which the state began to soften its methods of relocating black people.¹⁰ Resettlement areas for black people in Kwazulu Natal, for example, were scattered, neglected patches of land, overpopulated, eroded and impoverished with no significant industrial development.¹¹ Thousands of people were moved in Kwazulu Natal through

⁵See for example E. Unterhalter, Forced removals, the division, segregation and control of the people of South Africa, (London, IDAF Publication Ltd, 1987)

See also C. Desmond, The discarded people: an account of African resettlement in South Africa, (Penguin, Harmonds-worth, 1971), L. Platzky and C. Walker, The surplus people, Forced removals in South Africa (Johannesburg, 1985)

⁶See C. Murray and C. O'Regan, No Place to rest: Forced removals and the law in South Africa, (United Kingdom, Oxford University Press, 1990), 13-26.

⁷ Khayelitsha, New home, old story, (Surplus People's Project, Western Cape, 1984), 3.

⁸ See L. Platzky and C. Walker, The surplus people, Forced removals in South Africa, (Johannesburg, 1985), 9.

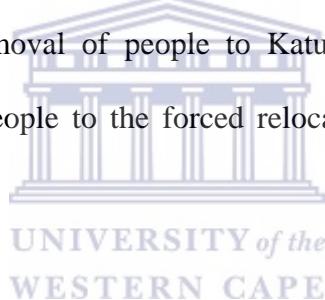
⁹See examples from B. Egero, "South Africa's Bantustans: From dumping ground to battlefronts," Discussion paper 4, (Uppsala, Nordiska Africa Institutet, 1991), 15.

¹⁰A. Claasen, Second Carnegie inquiry into poverty and development in Southern Africa: "The myth of voluntary removals," Carnegie conference paper, No: 74, Cape Town, 13-19 April 1984), 1-2.

¹¹ C. Walker, "A process of dispossession: an overview of relocation in Natal," (Associations for Rural Advancement Special Report No: 3, Pietermaritzburg, November 1982), 1.

the process of betterment schemes (these were projects set up for agricultural production in Bantustan/Homeland areas) and faced appalling conditions in the relocated areas. Africans were moved out of the white urban and rural areas into the homelands without any monetary compensation as an exchange for the land lost.¹²

While there is an extreme literature on forced removal in South Africa, in contrast, a history of forced removals during the South African rule in Namibia is rare. There exists one case study of forced relocation in Windhoek in 1959 in which Africans were forced to relocate to a new black township called Katutura.¹³ The study provides a history of the old location until the forced removal of people to Katutura in 1959. It explains the opposition of the people to the forced relocation from the old location to Katutura.



The sixteen paged field report titled Rundu removals of the 1960s is an extremely important source.¹⁴ The report findings are based on oral history and are important in the sense that it is meant to be a means of recovering lost histories. The report presents discussions on the meanings of the names that were given to the camps to which the black people were relocated. It establishes from the residents some of the reasons the state presented for

¹² N. Haysom and A. Armstrong, Second Carnegie inquiry into poverty and development in Southern Africa, “Population relocation and the law: Social engineering on a vast scale,” Carnegie Conference paper No: 86, (Cape Town, 13-19 April 1984), 5-6.

¹³ See W.C. Pendleton, Katutura, a place where we do not stay, (California, San Diego State University Press, 1974), 43. Also see R. First, South West Africa, (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, U.S.A: Penguin, 1963), 142, 270.

M. Jafta et al, Investigation of the shooting at the old location on 10 December 1959, (Windhoek, MSORP Publication, 1991).

¹⁴ K. Mandhavela, ‘Rundu removals of the 1960s’, (Unpublished report), (Windhoek, Namibia National Archive, 2003).

relocating them. The field report is however limited in the following respect. It creates an erroneous picture when it presents the relocations as relocations that occurred during the 1960s. This is a clear mis-representation of the story of removals since it conflates the different removals from the 1950s to the 1970s as one. This report also does not make use of archival materials and secondary literature to supplement or conceptualise its oral interviews. Mandhavela's report was just a preliminary report. He was not able to transcribe and translate the entire interviews and his report was written as an over-all impression. In this way some useful information on Rundu relocations have been left out.

This study therefore is a chronological representation of a case study of forced relocations in Rundu which aims to be a tool to both academics and ordinary people in the debates around colonial land dispossession and the question of land resettlement and rehabilitation as set out by the new democratic state.

This research deals with the following cases of relocations that occurred in Rundu, namely: Nkondo village in the 1950s, forced removal to Nkarapamwe Black Township in 1968, Nkarapamwe: new beginnings and new endings, and the relocation of Sarusungu and Mangarangandja in 1971 and 1972. The central over-arching research aim of this study is to explain why and how relocations occurred and their impact on the communities. The study aims to explain the motives of the authorities for the removals. It argues that the forced relocation of people in Rundu in the 1950s was out of

the benevolence of the Native Affairs Commissioner who was concerned about preventing future suffering to the people of Nkondo village after a flood devastated them in the 1950s. It argues, however, that the forced relocations in Rundu in the 1960s and early 1970s must be seen in the context of the frontier war activities of SWAPO (South West Africa People's Organisation) in the 1960s. The aim is also to present colonial relocation history to help to contribute to the current debates on the Namibian government's plans of land resettlement and rehabilitation.

This research studies each of these removals of Rundu as separate entities but nonetheless places them in a coherent chronological framework. It makes use of the archival materials, oral interviews, and secondary sources. In terms of the oral history methodology, interviews were carried out in Rundu, in the areas of Sauyemwa settlement, in Nkarapamwe Black Township, in Kehemu and Kaisosi resettlement camps because people who were removed are found in those areas. Fourteen people were interviewed. In one case, two people demanded that they would only agree to be interviewed together; they had a close family history and a bond of forced relocation as they lived in the same homestead when they were forced to move by the colonial administration. In another case, a potential interviewee refused an interview unless I first went to interview her older sister and because her older sister was not interviewed as she claimed to have no time; the younger sister could also not be interviewed.

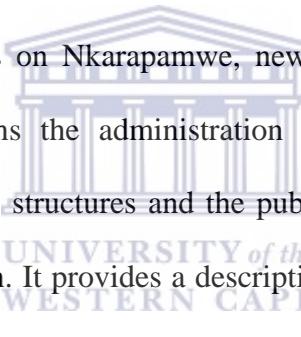
Archival documents and oral interviews are compared so as to provide an understanding that ultimately provides a more coherent history of removals of Rundu. In the National Archive of Namibia (hereafter NAN) one of the most important files was that of the Native Affairs Commissioner's report on Kavango.¹⁵ This file deals with the political unrest in Kavango from the 1960s to the 1970s. It also covers the correspondence of the Commissioner from the early 1960s to 1970s. The Namibian government's land policy document and many other sources on land reform in Namibia are also used in the discussion on the legacy of colonial removals in contemporary Namibia.¹⁶

The mini- thesis is divided into four chapters. The first chapter is Nkondo village, 1950s. This chapter begins by charting the history of origin of the settlement of Nkondo, the social structures within the community, and its spatial setting in relation to other surrounding communities of Rundu. It explains the lifestyles of the community that was mainly depended on the river, subsistence farming and hunting and this in turn provides a basis to analyze the effects that the relocation brought for the community of Nkondo. It also explains the effects of the relocation on the community of Nkondo in the new resettlement areas by answering the questions of how life changed and how the new spaces influenced identity, customs and other social practices.

¹⁵ See Namibia National Archive, Windhoek, Native Affairs Reports, (hereafter NAR) 1/1/55.

¹⁶ See National Land Policy, (Government of the Republic of Namibia, Ministry of Land, Resettlements and Rehabilitation, Windhoek, April 1998).

The second chapter is on forced removal to Nkarapamwe Black Township in 1968. This chapter aims to explain the origin of the construction of Nkarapamwe Black Township by considering the political situation in Namibia, with specific reference to Kavango at that time that led to the establishment of a Commission and, the recommendations it made for Kavango that led to construction of a township and the eventual removals discussed in this chapter. It analyses why people refused to move to the township and what strategies the colonial state used to force people to move to the township and what effects the removal had on the new residents of Nkarapamwe.



The third chapter is on Nkarapamwe, new beginnings and new endings. This chapter explains the administration of Nkarapamwe Township. It explains the physical structures and the public facilities of Nkarapamwe at the time of relocation. It provides a description of life in Nkarapamwe at its inception. The chapter also explains the eviction of Nkarapamwe residents by 1970, indicating how and why the evictions occurred. It explains the process of eviction by answering the questions of what steps was taken by the Commissioner to evict the residents and the reaction of the residents to the eviction and the effects of the eviction on the residents. The fourth chapter is about the removals of Sarusungu and Mangarangandja areas in 1971 and 1972. This chapter explains the origin, meaning and way of life in Sarusungu and Mangarangandja and the reasons for and the process of relocation in 1971 and 1972. It explains why the people had initially opposed relocation and the strategies that the colonial authorities used to

influence the people to move. It also explains the effects of the relocation and the new life in Kaisosi and Kehemu respectively.

A concluding chapter considers the legacies of colonial removals of Rundu. It also considers the question of loss of land ownership in Rundu and what redress exist for the people of Rundu in the context of the government's land reform program after 1990.



CHAPTER ONE

NKONDO VILLAGE, 1950s

Introduction

Chris De Wet has argued:

Resettlement creates a potentially paradoxical situation. On the one hand, it moves people together in the sense of bringing them together into larger and more concentrated settlements. On the other hand, in order to move people together in the first place, it has frequently had to move people apart in a physical sense, as members of pre-move settlements often find themselves scattered all over the new, larger settlements. But in so doing, resettlement also moves people apart in a more social sense, as old territorial and social patterns are broken up, changing and often disrupting the continuity and economic viability of people's lives and relationships. Often as not, relocates find themselves among strangers whose lives have likewise been disrupted.¹

This insight is of great relevance of the Nkondo community in Rundu in which the whole community was compelled in the 1950s to relocate from their flood plain areas and resettle among the nearby communities and in that process tear down their social bonds.

It is easy to declare the relocation of the community of Nkondo as falling under the category referred to as “villagisation” as it consists of many comparable features.

¹ C. De Wet, Moving together drifting apart: Betterment planning and villagisation in a South African homeland, (Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press, 1995), 210.

These similarities involves among others, the moving of whole scattered communities into concentrated larger village type residential settlements which are usually a few miles from their home areas and are also usually settled with people of their own culture and language enabling a higher degree of continuity in people's socio- spatial context.² The relocation of Nkondo however, differs in certain respects. In the South African case villagisation schemes emerged in the context of supposed betterment schemes that were more about political and social control but in the Nkondo case, the Commissioner purely based it on a benevolent concern about the effects of flooding.

This chapter begins by charting the history of the settlement of Nkondo, the social structures within the community, and its spatial setting in relation to other surrounding communities of Rundu. It explains the lifestyles of the community that was mainly depended on the river, subsistence farming and hunting and this in turn provides a basis to analyze the effects that the relocation brought for the community of Nkondo.

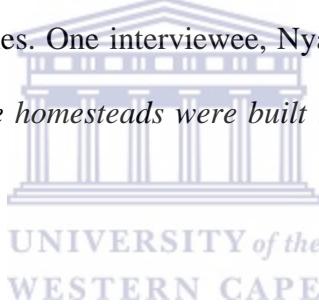
It explains why the relocation orders from the Commissioner could not make people to move without him welding a stick in his hand, threatening to beat and fine with a cow all those who refused the orders of relocation even when his action was based on his benevolent interest for the community. It also explains the effects of the relocation on the community of Nkondo in the new resettlement areas by answering the questions of how life changed and how the new spaces influenced

² For explanations on Villagisation see ibid. 210

identity, customs and other social practices. The chapter argues that a new category of forced removals is necessary to cater for forced removals through natural causes like floods, etc.³

Nkondo village, origin and meaning

Nkondo is the name of the village that existed near Rundu. There is no exact year of the beginning of its existence. It came to be occupied mainly by the *Nyemba*⁴ and by the other people who usually came as visitors to some relatives on the Namibian side of Kavango and the returning Angolan migrant laborers from the South African goldmines. One interviewee, Nyamonde Kanunga said “*The only Kavango people whose homesteads were built in Nkondo were that of Haimbili and that of Mukuve.*”⁵



The word Nkondo therefore is a Nyemba word that means “floodplains”. It was a village that was situated in between the Kavango River and the valley of Ncwa village. It was therefore a village of cool weather as it was situated more closely to the Kavango River than other surrounding villages. Nkondo was a small village that was in close walking proximity of the other nearby villages of Rundu as Shikerete Gosbert explained:

³ For an analysis and description of categories of forced removals see L. Platzky and C. Walker, The Surplus People: Forced Removals in South Africa, glossary, (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1985), ix.

⁴ Nyemba is the name used by Kavango ethnic groups to refer to the people who came from Angola to settle in Kavango before and after the Angolan war against the Portuguese.

⁵ Interview with Nyamonde, Kanunga, Rundu, Safari Location, 29 December 2004.

Yes, if you were coming from Rundu and faced to go eastward, there was one valley they use to call Savanyime, which was situated, at the northern side of the compound. As you moved on you would come to find Nkunki village, after that you would come to find the valley of Ncwa village and on the Southern side of Ncwa you would find the village they use to call Mangarangandja, From Mangarangandja you moved on and found the village which they use to call Sarusungu, after the village of Sarusungu, you then moved Northward down to go to Nkondo village which was situated at the riverside of Sarusungu village. At the eastern side of Nkondo village you moved to find Kanonga village from where you moved on to find Rupoworo after which you found Uvhungu-Vhungu as you continued to move eastward. Now, those villages were the ones I knew very-very well as I was growing up.⁶

{Ya nsene to tundilire ko Rundu oze upumezuva otunde kodoropa za Rundu kwakerekko ediva limwe ngavatumbura asi Savanyime lyakere komukuro gwa komboni. Notundapo toyagwana ozo Nkunki, notunda nye opo toyagwana ediva ngavatumbura asi Ncwa, ano kourundu wa ncwa tokagwana mukunda ngavatumbura asi Mangarangandja. Kutunda nye po Managarangandja tozi toyagwana mukunda ngavatumbura asi Sarusungu, kutunda nye momukunda gwa Sarusungu togurumuka tozi ko Nkondo ako komukuronye gwa Sarusungu. Ko Upumezuva wa Nkondo toka gwanakonye Kanonga, ntani noyazako ogwane Rupoworo. Kutunda Rupoworo tokagwananye Uvhungu-vhungu okazenye ko Upumezuva. Makuranye ponomukunda nye odo ame pokukura kwange yido nadivire nawa-nawa.}

Nkondo thus was not an isolated village; other nearby villages surrounded it. It was noted in a report on system of land tenure on the Kavango in 1929, which claimed to have been confirmed as correct by the local chief, that immigrants from other areas were encouraged by chiefs on the river and that immediately an immigrant was granted an allotment of land he automatically became naturalized.⁷

⁶Interview with Gosbert Lyambayi Shikerete, Rundu, Safari Location, 20 December 2004.

⁷Refer to NAN, Windhoek, NAR1/1/55, NAR4, File N1/12/1, "Ethnologies and Customs", a letter on the system of land tenure on the Kavango to the secretary of South West Africa, 8 December 1929.

The fact that the Angolans and other immigrants were allowed by Kavango chiefs to settle in Kavango along the lifeline river is an indication that chiefs in Kavango could accommodate members from other tribes in their communities as visitors and eventually naturalized to become members, save they did not cause turmoil.

Life in the village of Nkondo

The following discussion, which charts the life in Nkondo village, is drawn from the interviews with Nyamonde Kanunga, Laurentius Kamonga Hausiku and Gosbert Lyambayi Shikerete. They all indicated that Nkondo village had isolated homesteads just as was the case in other surrounding villages. The way of life of people was not very different from those of the surrounding villages. Children had various duties. The boys had the task of going for fishing to the river. Although there was a school at the Roman Catholic mission in Shambyu area, most parents preferred their boys to go and look after livestock than to send them to the mission school. They had to look after cattle and make sure that they did not lose any one of the livestock as Shikerete explained,

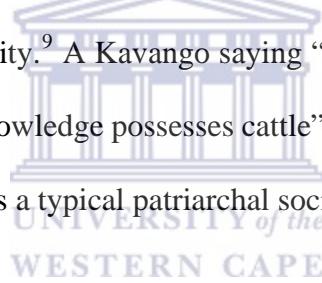
Going to school was something that our parents did not favour. Our parents did not want a child to go to school. If you were not looking after cattle you had to do a lot of tilling in the fields. It always happened that you had to look after those goats, cows and calves. If you lost a calf or a goat, you too, the child, would not sleep in the homestead. That was the disciplining measures that we received, you had to have a concern for wealth.⁸

{*Morwa vakurona vetu kuza kosikora nokuharasi ngano*

⁸Shikerete, 20 December, 2004.

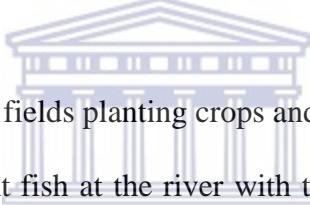
munona oze kosikora, nsene kapi ono kutakamesa no ngombe mwakona kulima umene-nene. Eyi ngayikara asi oyo yikombo, nongombe, nontana wakona kuditakamesa. Nsene ozumba ntana ndi sikombo ove munona nove kapi torara membo. Yilyo edeuro twagwene olyo, wakona kukara nosinka semona ntani.}

It is argued therefore that European or Western education had very little value and usefulness in the traditional economy of the Kavango people at that time. The acquisition of the highest community social status of Esimbi (A word which refers to a man of great knowledge and wisdom in the community) that most men in Kavango at that time aspired to acquire was measured in terms of the number of cattle one owned and not on the level of education one has obtained. On a contrary, it did not matter if a woman owned a million cattle; she could never become an Esimbi in her community.⁹ A Kavango saying “Esimbi nonoNgombe dalyo” (“A man of wisdom and knowledge possesses cattle”) best describes the ultimate male aspiration. Nkondo was a typical patriarchal society.



There was a clear sign of social control in the community between boys and girls, men and women. There was also a sexual division of labour that overlapped at times. The boys would go to the river to catch fish and cut reeds to come and make mats. They made bows and arrows and also helped the elders with iron smelting from which they produced knives, axes etc. They also helped elders to go and cut down trees in the forest for building the homesteads and kraals. It is evident that contract labour system also played a great role of generating additional income for many black communities of Rundu in Namibia as much as it did in South Africa.

In the rural area of Ciskei such as Chatha for example, families were heavily depended upon migrant remittances from members of their community who were temporarily working in South African cities as their inhabitants were far from being able to provide for their subsistence requirement from agricultural production.¹⁰ The same practice can be seen in the community of Nkondo in Rundu where the older boys were also expected by their parents to become contract labourers on farms and mines in the central and southern part of Namibia so that they would bring back financial income to be used in paying the “trust fund” tax which every male person in Kavango over the age of eighteen was compelled to pay by law, and also as an additional income to the household.¹¹



The girls worked in the fields planting crops and clearing out all the bushes in the fields. They also caught fish at the river with their fishing baskets. They had to cook at home, pound Mahangu (which is a local staple cereal) to be used for cooking porridge. They had to go and collect water from the river and also looked after small children whom they usually carried on their backs. They also, like boys, collected firewood. Although boys and girls at times played together in games like playing house, these were exceptional cases, in most cases boys and girls played separately. Girls had separate swimming places from the boys at the river. There was a clear sign of social control in the community in which certain

⁹ See the document titled “Universal Suffrage for Kavango”, NAR 1/1/55, NAR7 by Romanus Kampungu where he explained the concept “Esimbii”.

¹⁰ De Wet, Moving together Drifting apart, (1995), 103.

¹¹ See Kanunga, 29 December 2004. Also refer to The laws of South West Africa, Vol XVI, P, Okavango Native Territory, No32 of 1937),303-310, For an explanation on the trust fund tax which every working able Kavango men was required to pay.

social rules applied to children, especially with regard to alcohol consumption and the issues of marriage. Boys and girls would meet in the presence of their parents at the traditional dances that were usually organized on the weekend nights for the community of Nkondo. Children were not allowed to drink alcohol; this was strictly reserved for the elders. Children received traditional education at “Shinyanga” which was a place at the homestead section of the household head where children sat around fire at night to be told stories, riddles and the history of the families and tribe.

It was expected of the children to be married off by their parents and not to make decisions themselves. Children would inform their parents and the parents of the boy would go and offer a proposal to the parents of the girl. It was up to the parents of the girl to accept the proposal for marriage on behalf of their daughters or to refuse it. The elders of Nkondo village like those of surrounding villages worked in the fields. Very few men were employed at Rundu since jobs were scarce. Those few who did work walked to work in the mornings and returned in the evenings. Men managed homesteads to see to it that there was food for the families. They went hunting for animals up into the forest. They also smelted iron to make metal objects like knives and axes. They built the homesteads.

Women worked in the fields and did all domestic work. The women of Nkondo brewed a traditional wine known as “Kashipembe” which they sold for one cent a bottle to the returning migrant laborers from “*Dwjaini*”, (a word used amongst the

people of the Kavango to refer to the South African gold mines). The returning migrants were seen by the locals as “Magayisa”, meaning Tycoon.¹² It was not very profitable but at least earned some income for their homesteads. They would also catch fish and cook Mahangu porridge to sell to the Magayisa.

There existed good neighbourly relations among the people of Nkondo. People displayed concern and care for the properties of other people. Community members would pick up lost goods of others and search to return it to them rather than keeping it for themselves. Nyamonde for example explains:

Even when you walked and picked any thing in the path, whether it is a cup or a nickel, you would even ask as to who lost their goods.¹³

{Nampili sininke monzira, nkinda ndi siranda kuvhura tupu kupura asi yilye kazumbanesere sininke sendi}

This is also evident in the words of Hausiku who confirms the very good understanding and cooperation among the people of Nkondo whereby they would all take care of the cattle of each other.

We use to understand each other very, very, much. If the cattle of their fellows were found in the forest, you would bring it for them back to the kraal. You would bring it back for each other for free; you would never leave them behind. If you, the children, finds the cattle of other people and leave them behind and the elders hear about it, they would beat you and ask you why you left those cattle behind.¹⁴

¹² Kanunga, 29 December 2004. See also K.M.Likuwa ‘Djwaini, a coffin with your recruit number on: the experience of Kavango contract labourers to South African gold mines from 1942 to 1977’(Unpublished undergraduate research project, UNAM history department, Windhoek, 2001),10 which explains that Djwaini means ‘to sign up your life to any danger’

¹³Kanunga, 29 December 2004.

¹⁴Hausiku, Rundu, Safari, 30 December 2004.

{Kulizuva għunene-nene. No ngombe damukwawo nsene aka digwana, tadireta kohambo, takadimupitwira mawokowoko, nokudisigasi. Ndi one vanona tomukadigwana nongombe dogħo vantu mukadisige, vakondi vayamuzuve, kuyamutoona asi yinke mwakadisigira odo no ngombe.}

Such was the life of the people of Nkondo before their peaceful life came to be disrupted by natural disaster.

A flood and relocation

The community of Nkondo village was broken down in the 1950s. It has not been possible to establish the exact year for the collapse of this community. One interviewee, Kanunga indicated that the destruction of the village of Nkondo occurred in 1954 during the time of C. E. Kruger who was a Native Affairs Commissioner for Kavango from 1954 to 1958.¹⁵ Her date matches the start of the Commissioner's first year of service in Kavango. The other interviewee Hausiku, however, gives a possibility of 1958 or 1959.¹⁶ In the absence of official documentation and increase oral sources, it can be assumed that the collapse of the community of Nkondo occurred sometime between 1954 and 1959.

It is well established that it was flood that brought about the destruction of the once established village as was explained by Ginter Hairwa:

If people were forced to move, that was the flood that made them to move out. It was a great flood that occurred so that fishes would swim and enter into the huts. People moved out,

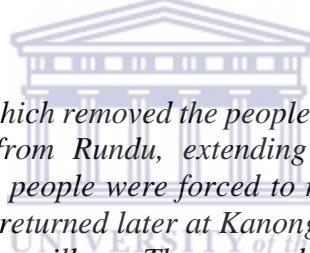
¹⁵ Kanunga, 29 December 2004.

¹⁶ Hausiku, 30 December 2004.

their huts were falling down, what did they do? They put their hands together and picked up the huts and placed them on the boats and paddled them away. Since then, we have not seen a flood again”¹⁷

{Nsene vadirkire vantu, orwina kwakere ruhanzo rwava dirukisireko vantu, ruhanzo rorunene rwakerepo rwawizire dogoro nomfi kuwiza diyahwilire mono nzugo. Vantu tavadiruka, nonzugo kunakugwa, ngapi vadirugene, kutura mawoko vagarambakane ngesi. Nonzugo kuditidamuna kutura po mawato vakaduge vakaze, kutunda opo kapi twamona hena ruhanzo.}

The flood, which destroyed the village of Nkondo, also swept all the other homesteads of the nearby villages that were situated alongside the river as was explained by Hausiku:



It was the flood which removed the people and chased them all out. Beginning from Rundu, extending up to the side of Kanonga village, people were forced to move. The people of Kanonga village returned later at Kanonga but we decided to just settle at Ncwa village. That was where our homesteads were lined up, starting from Shikerete’s homestead and also at Dominikus Ndango’s homestead you moved further until you found Paulus Munango ending at Sarusungu.¹⁸

{Ruhanzo yiro rwagusire nye vantu ruvatjidemo navenye. Kutamekera koku ko Rundu oku, dogoro rutware dogoro Kanonga navenye kwina kwavagusireko vantu. Nye vaKanonga vayatengwire vayaze hena kooko, vatengwire mwina mo Kanonga. Makura ose kapi twayatengwire, makura kwakere tupu ngororo. Tatutungu tupu koku ko Ncwa nye yiko galizarerenye mambo otundilirenje ko Shikerete, oku mwayatumbura asi ko Dominikus Ndango, dogoro tozi dogoro, dogoro okagwane nye Paulus Munango, akahulireko nye ko Sarusungu.}

¹⁷Ginter Hairwa, Kaisosi, 24 December 2004.

¹⁸Hausiku, 30 December, 2004.

While it is accepted that flood caused the people to move, some of the interviewees argued that most of them returned to Nkondo after the water had dried out but were forced to move out by the Commissioner who threatened to beat and punish them if they remained in the flood plain areas. Kanunga explained:

The flood of 1954 was a very great flood. Homesteads were subsiding. Commissioner Kruger then said that we should move out of Nkondo and that any one who would remain there would be penalized to pay a cow. But then, since the water has subsided, people did not want to move out again as they were used to living there. Kruger went in with his interpreters Paulus Munango and Makaranga and held meetings there. They said anyone who was going to remain there would pay a cow, but that before that they would be beaten with a beating stick and then made to pay a cow afterwards. People of the past feared the whites. When they heard of being beaten and forced to pay a cow that was when they moved out and came to settle at Ncwa village where the Ekongoro youth centre is now situated.¹⁹

{Ruhanzo mo 1954 kwakere ruhanzo rorunene-nene. Mambo kuna kudamadama. Komisara Krugere taninki asi tundenimo mo Nkondo, ogu nakaramo tafutu ngombe. Makura vantu mema gatundumo kapi tava hara mora yimo vayika, kapi tavahara kutundamo. Tazimo Krugere novatoroki vendi Paurusa Munango na Makaranga tavakaninkamo nye yigongi. Asi nkenye ogu nakaramo tafutu ngombe. Pomuhowo takaza konomurunga kumutoona, ntani kumufutisa ngombe. Makura vantu vakere nare woma noyirumbu. Kuzuva kumutoona nomurunga ntani kumufutisa ngombe yiponye vadirkiremo vawizenye ko Ncwa oku kwakara Ekongoro.}

Another interviewee supports the argument of being forced to move away from Nkondo village by the Commissioner after the flood subsided,

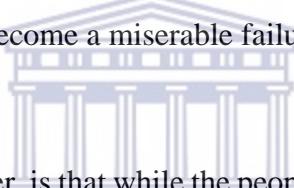
People were under water, Nkondo was filled up with water, full water! They moved out and went to Mangarangandja and named that place as Mangarangandja. Flood, the whites came

¹⁹ Kanunga, 29 December 2004.

*when the flood has gone away completely and the people were still there. The whites came and said, ‘you would suffer constantly this side, better you move away up to the highland.*²⁰

{*Vantu mo mema, mo Nkodo mwavhuka mema, mema to! tavadiruka vaze mo Mangarangandja vazigidepo asi po Mangarangandja. Ruhanzo, vanawiza vayirumbu, ruhanzo too rwapiti awo moomo, asi omu tomu hepa-hepa, dirukeni kumwe muwize oku kourundu*}

While interviews thus point clearly to a forced removal it can be argued that the Commissioner had a benevolent interest. His use of threats on the villagers can be understood as follows: it was the only way to make the Nkondo villagers who were more used to their village than any other place and were fearful that a new life somewhere else could become a miserable failure, to accept to move.



The main point, however, is that while the people of Kanonga village could return after the flood, those of Nkondo were not allowed. It is not clear why this was so.

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One fact, however, may have relevance. The majority of the community members of Nkondo were immigrants which was not the same in Kanonga village. It can be argued that while the people of Kanonga could return and resettle in their former areas on the basis that this was their land, those of Nkondo were in a vulnerable situation. They were mostly Angolan immigrants and if they refused to co-operate with the colonial authorities they could be handed back to the Portuguese whom many Angolan immigrants regarded to be cruel and wanted to avoid by all means. The words of interviewee Kahare suggests that an area called

²⁰ Singungu Kahare, Kaisosi, 24 December 2004.

Mangarangandja only came to be established by the people who moved from Nkondo because of the flood. This is however not correct because Mangarangandja existed even before the flood. The victims of flood only came to settle here because that is where their other fellow Angolans were situated but most of them also went to Sarusungu village which was by then a sparsely populated village. Those residents from Nkondo village who came to settle in the area of Mangarangandja did not acquire the membership of the community of Ncwa in which Mangarangandja was situated; but remained a part of the community of Mangarangandja.

In many forced relocation cases in general, spatial change is a problem faced by almost all the relocated people. De Wet argues:

In as much as resettlement involves the movement of people from one place to another, it brings about change in the spatial setting or context in which people find themselves, and to which they have to adapt. This change in spatial setting has both physical and socio-economic and political relationships.²¹

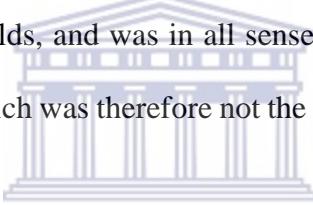
It is also in the above context that the relocation process and its effects on the community of Nkondo in Rundu are to be understood. It brought on problems associated with spatial change. Some people of Nkondo in the new areas experienced the problem of suitable space. To some of them, it was not an easy task to locate good enough space for a new settlement as the spaces were less and smaller than was the case in Nkondo area. As Hausiku explained:

²¹ De Wet, Moving together drifting apart, 10.

*We did not like to live closely with other people. When we came we found that people have already built all over, there was no space for us to settle again, it was therefore better that we had to go and look for our own space somewhere were we could live.*²²

{*Kapi twahere kutunga pepi novantu morwa opo twayavagwene awo vadikadikanye nare, nokusi natuvhura kutungira hena, hansa tupu tukapapare evega ly a nyaumwetu oku natuvhura kukakaranye}*}

In the new areas, living space became limited and smaller than in their previous areas because many people were already found in the resettlement areas and there was therefore competition for the acquisition of space. The forest land further south of the areas of Mangarangandja and Sarusungu formed part of their subsistence farming fields, and was in all sense far away from the river and still full of wild animals which was therefore not the favourable space for settlement at that time.



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In a comparable example to Nkondo, residents from Nyanga in the Eastern Cape in South Africa too could hardly find good space in their relocated areas as everybody wanted a good site that was as close as possible to wood and water, and many people therefore found the sites that they wanted already occupied.²³

It is true that the physical aspect of any move would largely circumscribe the degree to which people are able to preserve their old way of life. De Wet explains:

“Factors such as such as whether people are close enough to their old home areas to be able to keep up contacts, or whether

²² L.K. Hausiku, 30 December 2004.

²³De Wet, Moving together, drifting apart, 87.

the area has been transformed, whether they are in an area which is topographically, agriculturally and climatically similar or different and whether they would have to find new ways of making a livelihood, will influence the way in which people will seek to organize themselves in their new situation.”²⁴

There were social effects of relocation but these were not very serious. The people from Nkondo, for example, did not remain together but were scattered among the people of the communities of Mangarangandja and Sarusungu areas. It was, therefore, not possible to keep old bonds with former neighbours in the new areas as they all had to fit in an already occupied space. They were, however, able to maintain many of their traditional practices in the new areas. The people from Nkondo still continued to practice their tradition of cultural performances at nights in the new areas. There was still the practice of arranged marriage for their children. The children of opposite sex still had delegated domestic tasks or responsibilities. This was all so because, the people they found in the new areas were in most sense similar to them, culturally and linguistically, and it was not therefore very difficult for the people of Nkondo to fit into their new spatial setting.

According to De Wet “*The kind and degree of spatial change that people undergo seems to hold part of the key to a greater understanding of the stress they undergo in resettlement... the greater the physical and or social modification, the greater the stress.*”²⁵ We can only make an assumption here that because the relocation

²⁴ Ibid.10.

of Nkondo community was over a very short distance from their former areas, and was in all sense into the areas of their former neighbours; their social and psychological effects were minimal. This is, however, an assumption as it was not entirely possible in this research to determine the extent of psychological effects incurred by the people of Nkondo. Life in the new areas was only different for the former residents of Nkondo to some limited extent as Hausiku explained:

Our life was different, it differed actually in the sense that our fields became nearer and, at the new site it became nearer to go to town. When we came to grow up in the new area, it can be said that life was different because, we began to come and grow up with the whites. When we were in Nkondo as children we never lived with the whites.²⁶

{*Eparu lyetu lyalisigire. Mokulisiga mwenemwene lyayakere mapya ngwendi hambara pepi ntani,yaa, kuwiza hena kodoropa pepi. Apa twayakuru ose, eparu kutantasi ngwendi lyalisiginye morwa tatuyavarekenye kukura poyirumbu. Opena twakere mwina mo Nkondo ose vanona, ovena ngavaparuka kapisi għunene noyirumbu.*}

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The above quotation indicates an outcome of advantage for the community whereby they came to live in a much closer walking proximities to their fields and to the town of Rundu then they were before the relocation took place. It also indicates that the relocation brought the people of Nkondo to a life of social contacts with white people as many of them got employed as domestic workers and in this way, as De Wet would say of villagisations,

It opened out people's social universe, exposing them to people they had initially perceived as strangers and outsiders, leading to the establishment of new social relationships,

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Hausiku, 30 December 2004.

*cutting across kinship lines.*²⁷

Forced relocations thus had mixed consequences for the villagers of Nkondo.²⁸

Conclusions

This chapter has indicated that the destruction of the community of Nkondo was a result of flood that caused the whole village to subside under water and therefore gave the Commissioner a good reason to compel all the residents of Nkondo community to relocate to the new areas. It has also shown that it is possible for the forced relocation of communities to occur through a natural cause.

In the study by Platsky and Walker, natural causes do not form a part of the categories of factors that causes forced relocations of communities. They refer to farm evictions, black spots, Bantustan consolidation, group area relocations, Bantustan urban relocations, infrastructure, betterment and strategic removals as the main categories of removals.²⁹ Yet, a natural disasters removal category, which has so far been neglected in the South Africa literature on forced removals, is a very important category under which certain groups had been compelled to

²⁷ De Wet, Moving together drifting apart, 37.

²⁸ See also B. Freund, Insiders and outsiders: The Indian working class of Durban 1910-1990 (Pietermaritzburg, Portmouth and London, University of Natal Press, Heinemann and James Currey, 1995), 72-75, where he makes a similar point about Indian victims of group areas removals in Durban.

²⁹ Platzky and Walker, The surplus people, (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1985), 6-60. Also see C. Walker, A process of dispossession: an overview of relocation in Natal, (Association for Advancement, Special Report No.3, Pietermaritzburg, November, 1982), 10-16.

move. It is argued in this study that such a new category is necessary and should be considered to cater for such cases as those of the people of Nkondo community in Rundu and many others who find themselves in the same situation. The community of Nkondo did not re-establish itself but was dispersed among the people whom they found in the new areas. The study has, however, shown that people were able to fit in easily in their new environment and could still maintain most of their traditional practices and customs.

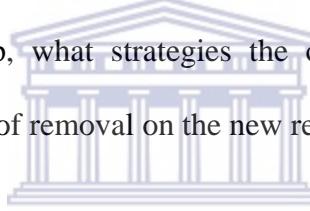
This was not to be the first and the last relocation for many of the people from Nkondo. Some of them, especially government employees, faced another forced relocation when the colonial authorities built a new township for blacks and forced the people near Rundu to move into the township, claiming that urban lifestyle was a vital process of preparing the Kavango and all ethnic groups of Namibia for Bantustan independence. It is to this that the study now turns: to explain the relocation of people to Nkarapamwe township in 1968.

CHAPTER 2

FORCED REMOVAL TO NKARAPAMWE TOWNSHIP IN 1968

Introduction

This chapter aims to explain the origin of the construction of Nkarapamwe Black Township. It considers the relevance of the political situation in Namibia, with specific reference to Kavango at that time and the establishment of the Odendaal Commission and its recommendations. Finally, it analyses why people refused to move to the township, what strategies the colonial state used to achieve its objectives and, effects of removal on the new residents of Nkarapamwe.



This chapter also presents two main testimonies that were given to the police in 1970 by people who were involved in the removal to Nkarapamwe Township in 1968. The main testimonies are by Paulus Munango and Jonas Hilemo respectively. While the testimonies seem to agree on various aspects of removal to the township in 1968, they contain some contrasting views. While most of their views are supported by the oral interviews carried out between 2004 and 2005 in Rundu, there are contestations as to whether the removal to Nkarapamwe was a “forced removal.” Using these diverse sources this chapter seeks to draw a conclusion as to whether the removal of black people to Nkarapamwe in 1968 was a forced or voluntary removal.

The construction of Nkarapamwe Black Township

The South African colonial authorities embarked upon the project of building a township for black people near Rundu, Kavango, in the 1960s and by 1968 people were moved here. The evolution behind the construction of this township must be understood in the following contexts. First, the tense political situation in Namibia in the 1960s led to greater international pressure on South Africa's colonial rule over Namibia. Liberia and Ethiopia were by then waiting for the ruling of the International Court of Justice (hereafter, ICJ) on a case where they argued that South Africa had failed to improve the economic, social, political and moral well being of the Namibians and should therefore cease its control over them.¹

On the other hand, People's Liberation Army of Namibia (hereafter P.L.A.N) of S.W.A.P.O began taking root as a military group with its bases in Zambia, Botswana and Tanzania, preparing to wage an armed struggle against the illegal occupation of South Africa over Namibia. The P.L.A.N fighters had been using the Kavango River as its early entry point into Namibia since 1966. South Africa was therefore left in a difficult position to prove that Liberia and Ethiopia's accusations at the International Court of Justice of neglecting the people of South West Africa/Namibia were not true. She also had to find her own way to provide self-determination to the Namibian people so as to create an impression among

¹ See J. Diescho, "The Odendaal Commission in respect of Kavango" (M.A thesis, Fort Hare, 1983), on the pending case for Namibia in the 1960s at ICJ.

ethnic groups in Namibia and the international community that the beginning of the military struggle by S.W.A.P.O in the 1960s was therefore unnecessary. The Odendaal Commission was therefore appointed in 1962 by South Africa, apparently, to investigate the economic, social, political and moral well being of Namibians and make recommendations for implementations.

The Odendaal Commission made recommendations for various ethnic groups of Namibia. In reference to Kavango, the Commission had the following recommendations.² It proposed a Legislative Council to be constituted by traditional chiefs and headmen and some elected members who would take over the functions that were vested in the Department of Bantu Administration of the government of South Africa. It also recommended an Executive Council, which was to consist of the chiefs in Kavango and members elected by the Legislative Council.

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It also recommended increase of educational facilities in the form of schools and improved health facilities for the communities. On agriculture, investigation into crops that could be grown economically was to be encouraged and that there should be irrigation schemes along the Kavango River. It also recommended that fifty hectares should enlarge the already existing irrigation scheme of Uvhungu-vhungu along the Kavango River. The recommendations were to have been implemented as soon as possible but by 1963, the Bantu Commissioner of Kavango admitted that little had been done so far to implement because of the lack of personnel with

² The recommendations are summarized from Diescho, “The Odendaal Commission in respect of Kavango”.

technical skills.³ A five-year development plan for Kavango for 1964 to 1969 was drawn up.⁴ This Plan had various facets. In relation to animal husbandry, an increased cattle population along the river and the need for the marketing of cattle were great concerns for the authorities. It was planned that cattle grazing be removed from the river as it resulted in infectious diseases of cattle, and that stock farming be encouraged inland, provided that boreholes were drilled in that waterless and sandy inland area.

It was clear to the colonial authorities when they planned to implement the Odendaal Commission's recommendations as early as 1964 that the people of Kavango would not accept such recommendations or changes so easily and would need to be approached with caution as the Commissioner Mare noted:

We would need to cautiously begin to put the recommendations of the Odendaal Commission to work and on these recommendation we stand in the same position as a man who takes a horse to the water to drink. The co-operation of the locals depends namely on their trust in the good intentions of the government. The most important recommendation of the Commission for it to be accepted by the blacks is the establishment of the Legislative Council and this recommendation can remove the suspicion that the government wants blacks, as they say it, “to be thrown away”, something of which the Kavango people are very much afraid.⁵

{Ons sal vermoedelik eersdag moet begin om die aanbevelings van die Odendaal kommisie in werking te stel en ten opsigte

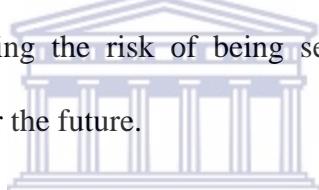
³ NAN, NAR 1/1/55, NAR10, file 13, a letter from the Commissioner titled “Sekere aangeleenthede betreffende die distrik Okavango wat aandag behoort te geniet”, 10 November 1963.

⁴ NAR 1/1/55, NAR10, file 13, Commissioner Report titled “Ontwikkeling van Kommissie aanbevelings, 1964-69”.

⁵ NAR 1/1/55, NAR9, Volume13, a letter by the Commissioner in Rundu to the Chief Commissioner in Windhoek titled “Veeartsenydienste: Distrik Okavango”, 31 March 1964.

van hier die aanbeveelings staan ons in die selfde posisie as die man wat die spreekwoordilike perd na die water neem om te suip. Die samewerking van die inwoner hang hoofsaklik af van hulle vertroue in die goeie bedoeling van die regering. Die belangrikste aanbeveling van die kommisie om deur Bantoe aanvaar te word, is myns insiens die stigting van 'n wetgewende raad en hierdie aanbeveling kan self die suspisie in dat die regering die Bantoe will, soos hulle dit noem, "weggooi", iets waarvoor die Okavangos baie bang is.)

The creation of the Legislative Council was therefore seen as a pertinent pretext through which to implement all the Odendaal Commission plans. This does not mean that they could not have implemented them without it; in fact the forced removal to Nkarapamwe Township in 1968 occurred before its establishment. This was however just a safer way for South Africa to carry out the implementation process without standing the risk of being seen by the Kavango people with suspicion and doubt for the future.

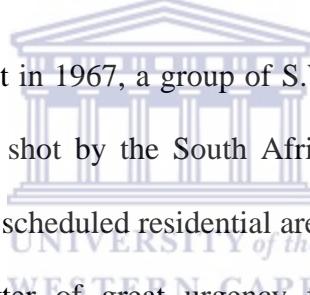


The pressure of S.W.A.P.O guerrilla warfare that was taking root along the Kavango River in the 1960s became a great concern for the colonial authorities. People along the riverside, near Rundu were, therefore, compelled to move away from their homesteads to the black township as soon as possible. This was necessary so as to provide security forces with a clear view near Rundu of potential infiltration of S.W.A.P.O fighters along the Kavango River. The infiltration of the guerilla fighters into the Kavango from as early as March 1966 coincided with the implementation process of the Odendaal plan in the Kavango area.

Helao Shityuwete, one of the first groups of S.W.A.P.O freedom fighters explains

how they penetrated Namibia across the Kavango River in March 1966 with the purpose to kill or to be killed by the enemy but were in the end ambushed and taken prisoners to Robben Island in Cape Town, South Africa.

It was 23 March 1966, a date I remember as the day when, as a returning guerrilla, I was prepared to play the game according to its rule of kill or get killed.... We arrived at Rundu at about 0200h and because we could not find our way through to town, we decided to rest and have a little snooze. We moved away at first light and located the house of our contact in Rundu. Rundu was teeming with security police. Uniformed police in four-wheel drive vans were patrolling everywhere in the dusty town. Police in civilian clothes and unmarked cars were in evidence everywhere. It was clear that they knew we were in the area, but did not know who we were or what we looked like....⁶



Diescho also wrote that in 1967, a group of S.W.A.P.O Cadres who came via the Caprivi Strip were all shot by the South African soldiers in Mbukushu area in Kavango⁷. The idea of scheduled residential areas from the riverside to a township was, therefore, a matter of great urgency for the authorities. Dr. Romanus Kampungu indicated this urgency of the colonial authorities in Kavango⁸. He explains how the Commissioner was confronted with frontier war by P.L.A.N fighters in the Kavango in 1967.⁹

The office of the Commissioner, the South African police and the army all worked

⁶ H. Shityuwete, Never follow the wolf: The autobiography of a Namibian freedom fighter, (London, KlipTown Books, 1990), 119-127.

⁷ J. Diescho, “The Odendaal Commission in respect of Kavango”, (1983), 48.

⁸ Dr. Romanus Kampungu was born in Kavango. He was a Roman Catholic priest until he had a child with Sister Theresia Katiku, a Roman Catholic sister, to whom he got married. Kampungu died in 1975.

together to the same purpose of making sure that S.W.A.P.O did not get any hold of Namibia. Co-operation between these branches was necessary as the Bantu Affairs Commissioner of Kavango in 1968 explained:

With the intensification of the political war, it shall sometimes be necessary to take calculated risks. The risk can however be reduced if the institution that runs the risk knows in advance what to expect so that the necessary preparations to reduce the possible disadvantages that may follow can be put up in time. Our department, the S.A police, and the army have each their specific branch but our work is pointed on the same purpose, we are dependent on each other and if each one walks their own way, we would run the deadly danger of undermining each other with the best of meanings.¹⁰

{By die bekamping van'n politieke oorlog sal dit vermoedelik soms nodig wees om berekende risikos te neem. Die risiko kan egter verminder word indien die instansie wat die risiko loop vooraf weet wat om te verwag so dat die nodige voorbereiding om die moontlike nadelige gevolge te verminder, betyds getref kan word. Ons department, die S.A polisie en die weermag het elkeen sy spesifieke taak maar ons werk is gemik op dieselfde doel, ons is die een van die ander afhanglik en as elkeen sy eie weg sou inslaan loop ons die dodelike gevvaar van mekaar te ondermy met die beste van bedoelings}

A township was constructed for black people at Rundu in the 1960s to become the seat of the Kavango homeland government in 1970. It was named Nkarapamwe by the residents which in the Kavango language means “Sitting together at one place.” The word Nkarapamwe is derived from a local proverb which says, “*In an act of sitting together at one place, one should not expose a view of the nakedness of another*” {*Nkarapamwe kapi ava zilimonene mpenywina*}. It implied that residents

⁹See NAR 1/1/55, NAR7, file (1), N13, 2, 7, 4, (90), A letter by Dr. Romanus Kampungu to the office of the Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Rundu, Kavango titled “RE: House No. (90) & Bantu Sisters (nuns) and Catholic Mission.” 12 August 1970.

should promote good neighborliness, support each other in times of problems or crisis and not to bring one another into trouble with the authorities. Construction of the township began in 1964. The work was done by a local group of builders under the supervision of the white supervisor whom the local people named “Kandoroha”, meaning “a small tin.” The plot on which the township was built was leased from the communal land of the vaShambyu tribal authority during the reign of Queen Maria Mwengere. The purpose of the construction of the township, as local people were informed by the colonial authorities, was so that the black people could settle peacefully together. As Paulus Munango explains: “*The previous Bantu Commissioner told us that the government was building a town for us where we may live together.*”¹¹ {Dievorige Bantoesakekommisaris het vir ons gese dat die regering vir ons 'n dorp bou waar ons bymekaar mag woon.



They were also told that it was constructed so as to house all the black government workers who resided in the nearby areas of Sarusungu in the east up to Sauyemwa settlement in the west so that they were nearer to their place of work at Rundu. The township was a centre for urban lifestyle among the local people, a centre for modernity and progress towards an improved social, economical and political independence which the colonial authority aspired for black Namibians in the 1970s.

The Bantu Commissioner Mare organized meetings in January 1967 to encourage

¹⁰ 1/1/55, NAR9, Volume 1, Letter by the Commissioner entitled “Veiligheid: Kavango: Inter-departemente skeakeling”, 16 July 1968.

people nearer to Rundu to vacate the riverside villages and the workers to move to the newly built township. The rest of the unemployed people were to move to the villages of Ncwa up to Sarusungu in the east in a bid to remove them from the banks of the river. This was met with opposition from the people.

Reactions of local people to live in the new black township

Some people were willing to move to the new black township without being forced. In the oral interviews carried out, Simon Kandere who also moved to the township in 1968 rejected the view that he or some other people were forced to move to the township.¹² He argues that they moved in at their own will because they were attracted to the “nice” houses. This view was also reiterated in an interview with Florian Shiyuka Lucian and his wife Namvhura Lucian.¹³ They said they moved into Nkarapamwe because it was near to their place of work at Rundu.

The Commissioner’s files, however, indicates that the question of new residential areas became a thorny issue for Mr. Mare in 1967 when he organized meetings to convince the Kavango people about the recommendations of the Odendaal Commission about a township because, as he put it, “*Blacks do not want to live in ‘towns.’ ”*¹⁴ {*Die Bantoes wil nie in “dorp” bly nie}.*

¹¹ 1/1/55, NAR9, Volume 13, police testimony by Paulus Munango, 18 July 1970.

¹² Interview with Simon Kandere, Rundu, Nkarapamwe, 20 December 2004

¹³ Interview with Berthold Shiyuka Lucian and Alphonsine Namvhura Lucian, Rundu, Safari location, 19 June 2005.

¹⁴ 1/1/55, NAR10, file13, a letter by the Commissioner in Rundu to the Chief Bantu Commissioner in Windhoek titled, “Beplande ontwikkiling: Okavango gebied”, 06 March 1967.

There were various reasons that the people gave at the community meetings held by the Commissioner in January 1967 why they were unwilling to move into the new black township. To start with, they were afraid that they would be compelled to pay for all developments in the town. They also feared that they would have to pay for the renting of the houses and would have no right of ownership as they did of their homesteads. In his letter to the Bantu Commissioner of Kavango in 1970, the Chief Bantu Commissioner in Windhoek also explained clearly why it should not be a good idea to allow residents of Nkarapamwe to be given private ownership to the plots and houses of Nkarapamwe and why they must therefore only rent it.

All the residents of Nkarapamwe have residential rights elsewhere in Kavango and they are only living in Nkarapamwe while they work at Rundu. To give them approval in any instance would be unnecessary work and would also be time wasting.¹⁵

{Al die inwoner van Nkarapamwe het nog elders in Kavango woonregte en hulle woon slegs in Nkarapamwe terwyl werkzaam te Rundu. Om in alle gevalle 'n goedkeuring te kry, sal onnodige werk en tydmors wees}

Blacks were not to be allowed ownership of houses or plots in Nkarapamwe and this was the same in Katutura, the Black Township in Windhoek. This was mainly an implementation in line with apartheid South African government policy, which stated that “*Africans are in urban areas such as Windhoek only to work. When Africans are no longer able to work because of health, old age or some reason, they may be asked or required to leave the urban area and return to their previous*

¹⁵ 1/1/55, NAR7, N13/1/2, letter from Chief Bantu Commissioner to the Kavango Commissioner titled, “Bantoenorp regulasies: Administrasie en bestuur van bantoenoppe: SuidWesAfrica”, February 1970.

home".¹⁶ Women were initially reluctant to move to Nkarapamwe because they were not used to township life like their men who had become used to it during their contract labour system periods in the central part of Namibia.¹⁷ This is an interesting observation of the position of women towards the removal. In many cases, women always have a second or subordinate role in many male dominated community histories. The reluctance of women to move to the black township in the 1960s is maybe a sign that women were opposed to the colonial act of forced removals in Rundu. The role of women in colonial resistance histories of Kavango calls for further research.

There is evidence that people felt that the houses in the townships were too small for their families because some had three wives.¹⁸ People argued that they had children of opposite sex and the houses of Nkarapamwe did not seem to meet that need of having different rooms for the boys and girls. The houses in Nkarapamwe lacked most of the characteristics of the homesteads at the riverside villages. They argued that the rooms were not enough for their large extended families and for keeping guests. They also feared that water in the township would be less than what was the case alongside the river. It is evident that while some people felt forced to come and live into the township in 1968 others came in at their own will and at the attraction of the "nice" houses. The removal to Nkarapamwe Black Township did not trigger any physical confrontation with the colonial authority. While there were people who

¹⁶Pendleton, Katutura, 43.

¹⁷ See 1/155, NAR9, Volume 13, a letter of complaint from Nkarapamwe Black Township to the Commissioner Van Niekerk, 17 June 1970.

did not like to move to the township, there were others who favoured it. It is argued, that there was no well organized and united community resistance. The following explanation by Aninka Claassen of why the fear to resist may have existed in the case of South African communities can also be argued as true for the community in Rundu: “*In many cases people are terrified of challenging the state precisely because they know that this will bring force into play.*”¹⁹

The Commissioner Mr. Mare initiated strategies to influence the people to move away from the riverside homesteads which surrounded Rundu to Nkarapamwe Township.

Strategies of forced relocation

The apartheid South African government that initiated various strategies to force black communities in South Africa to move applied some of the same strategies in the case of Rundu in Namibia in the 1960s to 1970s. In South Africa, the strategies of forced removals were applied in the context of set laws such as section five of the Black Administration Act²⁰ and many others. Since the 1950s, relocation within the Bantustans in South Africa occurred for the implementation of betterment planning where tribal areas has been divided into residential and agricultural land.²¹ Since

¹⁸See ibid.

¹⁹A.Claassen, Second Carnegie inquiry into poverty and development in Southern Africa, “The myth of ‘voluntary removals’ ”, (Carnegie conference paper no. 74, Cape Town. 13-14 April 1984),2.

²⁰ See for example C. Murray and C. O'Regan (Ed), No place to rest: forced removals and the law in South Africa, Section 5 of Black Administration Act: The case of the Bakwena ba Mogopa, (United Kingdom, Oxford University Press, 1990), 13-26.

²¹ L. Platzky and C. Walker, The Surplus People: Forced Removals in South Africa, (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1985), 9.

the 1950s, removals of black spots also occurred. In the 1960s, mass removals of Coloureds and Indians began as a result of the Group Area Act of 1950.²² The 1960s and 1970s were years of convulsive upheavals for hundreds of thousands of rural people who were forced to move to try and make nations out of reserves.²³

The state followed some patterns in dealing with communities under threat of removals that mostly resulted in an escalating use of force. The state in South Africa worked to divide the communities under threat of removals by creating leadership crisis in the communities, used threats of parked bulldozers, no pensions, no passes, smashed schools or cut off their water. If after all these attempts, the communities still refused to move, they were given due dates and told that on that day they will be moved.²⁴ In Rundu, Kavango, the South African government, as it had done in most parts of South Africa, organized community meetings to inform the communities about the fate of their removals. In the case of removals to Nkarapamwe township of Rundu the South African government worked to divide the people by choosing to make the traditional leaders to decide for the whole community rather than allowing a community public debate about the issue of relocation to scheduled residential areas. It chose the sole decision of the traditional leaders to represent the decision of the whole community even when the views of the traditional leaders were contrary to the views of the majority of the members of

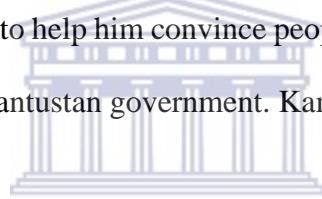
²²Ibid. 35.

²³Ibid. 115.

²⁴See A. Claassens, “The myth of ‘voluntary removals’, 2.

their communities.²⁵ One of the Commissioner's strategies to influence the people to go to the newly built township of Nkarapamwe was to use the service of influential people among the Kavango community to assist him. His most important tool was indeed the service of Dr. Romanus Kampungu.

The Rev. Dr. Kampungu was the most learned and the most respected individual in all walks of life in Kavango. He was respected and trusted among the Kavango people as the son of the soil who knew better about the outside world because of his high education.²⁶ In 1966, he was the first black Roman Catholic priest in Namibia to obtain a Doctor of philosophy.²⁷ Commissioner Mare requested his transfer from Windhoek to Kavango to help him convince people to accept the ideas of scheduled residential areas and Bantustan government. Kampungu himself explains:



During 1967, Mr. Mare was busy preparing the people of Kavango for various development levels according to the Odendaal Commission proposals (Bantustans), and was confronted with the then increasing danger of frontier terrorists and the fast spreading anti- South Africa attitude and pro-SWAPO ideas. He thought my presence in Kavango would be a help to the administration and church alike. Hence his desire that the Bishop sends me to Rundu for his immediate work of having the people accept the proposed self-rule offered by the government of the Republic of South Africa to various non-whites' ethnic groups, and the scheduled residential areas. He urgently requested the Bishop to send me immediately to assist him at various meetings held all over Kavango in January 1967.... Towards the end of 1967, the Bishop visited Kavango. When he returned to Windhoek, he told me that he would transfer me to Rundu because the

²⁵ See for example, NAN, Windhoek, 1/1/55, NAR10, file 13, letter from Commissioner, Rundu, Kavango to Windhoek titled "Beplande Ontwikkeling:Okavango", 2 February 1967.

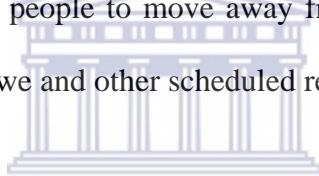
²⁶ Diescho," Odendaal report in respect of Kavango".

²⁷ See G. L. Buys and S.V. Nambala, History of the church in Namibia 1805-1905, (Windhoek, Gamsberg Macmillan,2003), Introduction.

Commissioner blamed him for retaining me in the police zone; where as my own country needed me urgently. The Commissioner had told him also that unless he sent me to Rundu, he would not give permission for the Catholic Church to come into Nkarapamwe.

So, at the beginning of March 1968, I was transferred from Windhoek district were I was teaching Latin, Religion, did pastoral work and directed the students of Dobra High school in various ways. I would still be at Dobra where I was very much needed also. It was in compliance with the insistent request of the Bantu Commissioner.²⁸

It is interesting to note that Dr. Kampungu arrived in Rundu, Nkarapamwe at the beginning of March 1968 and, by 31 March 1968, “*88 houses were occupied while only 3 houses remained open.*”²⁹ So, with the help of Kampungu, Mare was able to win the support of the people to move away from the riverside villages into the township of Nkarapamwe and other scheduled residential areas.



In January 1967 before his official transfer to Kavango by 1968, he travelled the whole Kavango with the Commissioner Mare to do some motivational work among the local people at the meetings and many people believed in Kampungu’s explanations. This was very clear at one such meeting when one of the locals stood up and said:

I am glad to see my friend Dr. Romanus here today and also the other visitors...I accept that the plans hold great advantages for us especially since I heard them explained by

²⁸1/1/55, NAR7, N13/2/7/4,(90), A letter by Dr. Romanus Kampungu to the office of the Bantu Affairs Commissioner,Rundu,Kavango titled “RE: House No. (90) & Bantu Sisters (nuns) and Catholic Mission.”, 12 August 1970.

²⁹1/1/55, NAR7, N13/2/20/2, a Commissioner’s letter titled “Bantoe dorp inkomste”, (U66 N13/20/2), 22 May 1968.

Dr. Romanus. As a son of the land he would not welcome the proposals if they were bad. What the Bantu Affairs Commissioner has promised, I see them fulfilled. I hear my friend's explanation and I do not doubt...³⁰

In the end people were influenced to accept the plans as Kampungu Romanus himself explains:

I used whatever influence I had to convince my fellow Kavangos about the proposal at different levels and influenced them to accept the offer from the Republic of South Africa. It was not an easy job. When we finished the meetings, Mr. Mare, overjoyed and pleased with the results declared by way of thanking me: "I do not think that without you we could have got the people to accept the proposals of residential areas and self rule."³¹

It is not altogether clear why Kampungu was a willing tool to the colonial authorities at that time. It may be to do with his character and beliefs. What can be learnt from his letter, however, is that he was ordered to help the Commissioner in Rundu by the bishop of the Catholic Church Mr. Koppman.

Despite the meetings that were held in 1967 by the Commissioner in the presence of Dr. Romanus Kampungu, some people initially refused to move as they feared that their large families will not fit in the four bedroom houses of Nkarapamwe. They informed the Commissioner Mare of this. He, therefore, worked to reduce people's fear by promising that those who had large families would be given two houses depending on the size of their families.³² Mare also tried other arguments to

³⁰1/1/55, NAR10, file 13, speech by foreman Haipanda Nekome at a meeting in January 1967.

³¹1/1/55. NAR7, file (1), N13/2/7/4, (90), A letter by Dr. Romanus Kampungu to the office of the Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Rundu, 12 August 1970.

³²1/1/55, NAR9, Volume 13, Paulus Munango.

encourage the move to the township as Paulus Munango, a resident of Nkarapamwe, explains:

Mister Mare also indicated to us that the water of the river is infected with various diseases and that we would receive clean water in the black township which is free from germs.³³

{Meneer Maree het ook vir ons uit gewys dat die water van die rivier besmet is met verskeie siektes en dat ons in die Bantoe dorp skoon water sou kry wat vry van kieme is}

Some government workers initially refused to move and remained in their homestead alongside the river. The Commissioner therefore used a more aggressive strategy. He sent a local government employee Jonas Hilemo to threaten the remaining people. Hilemo gives a fascinating account of his instruction and activities at the riverside villages:

Jonas Hilemo, Blackman, postal address, airport basis, Rundu, declares. ‘I am an adult Blackman and work as mentioned above. I live in the black township Nkarapamwe near Rundu. During the year 1968 I was working at the Department of Black Affairs. During 1968, people began to move to the new township Nkarapamwe. There were some of the people who refused to move. During the above mentioned year, I was told by the former Bantu Affairs Commissioner Mister Mare to tell the people who lived from the east to the west of Rundu, who had refused, to move. I had to go and tell them to move. In case they refused to move I had to burn down their homesteads.

The assistant Bantu Commissioner Mister Veldsman also said further that in case people still did not want to move I had to tell them that they would no longer find any jobs in Rundu and that those who were already in employment would lose their jobs. I also had to destroy all homesteads that had already been vacated but have not been destroyed by the previous

³³ Ibid.

occupants so that no other people would be able to live there again. I therefore went out to deliver the message of the Bantu Affairs and the assistant Bantu Affairs Commissioner. The people had no other choice if not to move. They left their homesteads and went to live in Nkarapamwe. Some of the people destroyed the homesteads themselves. I also destroyed homesteads that were not destroyed by their occupants. It was so lucky that I did not have any need to burn down the peoples' homesteads. After I told them that in case they refused to move, I would burn down their houses, they all moved.³⁴

{*Jonas Hilemo, Bantoe,P/a Lugmag basis, Rundu, verklaar. Ek is 'n volwasse Bantoe man en werk soos bo vermeld. Ek woon in die Bantoe dorp Nkarapamwe naby Rundu. Gedurende die jaar 1968 was ek werksaam by die department van Bantoesake. Gedurende 1968 het die mense na die nuwe dorp Nkarapamwe begin trek. Daar was sommige van die mense wat gewier het om te trek. Gedurende genoemde jaar is ek deur meneer Mare, die vorige Bantoesakkekommisaris aangese om na die mense wat ten ooste en weste van Rundu gewoon het en wat weier het om te trek, te gaan en hulle aan te se om te trek. Indien hulle weier om te trek moes ek hulle krale afbrand. Die assistant-Bantoesakkekommisarie meneer Veldsman het verder gese dat indien die mense nie nou trek nie ek aan hulle moes se dat hulle geen verdere werk in Rundu sou kry nie en die wat reeds in diens was sou uit hulle werk ontslaan word. Ek moes ook kralle wat reeds ontruim was vernietig deur die huise en omheinings aftebreek sodat ander nie weer daar kon gaan woon nie. Ek het toe uitgegaan en het aan die mense die boodskap van die Bantoesakkekommisaris en die assistant Bantoesakkekommisaris oorgedra. Die mense het geen ander keuse gehad as om te trek nie en hulle het hulle krale verlaat en het na Nkarapamwe gegaan en daar gaan woon. Party mense het self hulle krale afgebreek. Ek het ook van die krale afgebreek wat nie reeds deur die vorige bewoners afgebreek was nie. Gelukkig was dit so dat ek nie nodig gehad het om van die mense se krale af te brand nie. Na ek hulle gese het dat idien hulle nie trek nie ek hulle krale sal afbrand het hulle almal getrek.*}

Paulus Munango also argues that the strategy to burn down homesteads worked:

³⁴1/1/55, NAR9, Police declaration by Jonas Hilemo, 21 July 1970.

The people moved afterwards to the new Bantu township. The occupants also destroyed the other homesteads that were left behind so that no other persons could come and live there. The people whose homesteads were burned were unhappy but they reasoned that they were now getting good houses and that they would now live better than in their homesteads.³⁵

{Die mense het toe almal getrek na die nuwe Bantoe dorp. Die kral wat reeds agter gelaat was deur die bewoners ook vernietig so dat ander mense nie daar kon kom woon nie. Die mense wie se krale was gebrand was ontevreden maar hulle het gese dat hulle nou mooi huise kry en dat hulle beter sal woon as in hulle krale.}

The quotation is important for the following purpose: It helps to bring forth the question of evidence in the writing of history. Jonas Hilemo's statement, while agreeing to some extent with the testimony of Paulus Munango, contradicts it on an important point. While Paulus Munango claims that houses were burnt, the man who was supposedly charged with this task himself denies this. Hilemo suggests that he only destroyed homes after people left but he didn't have to actually burn homes to force them to leave.

The question therefore stands out; did Jonas Hilemo burn down the homesteads or not? Does it mean therefore that, the fact that their evidence contradicts each other, therefore one of them must have lied in front of the police just to get their point heard? This question indeed may not have a clear cut answer, but what is important for this research is that both sources agree that people had been forced to move against their will.

³⁵NAR 9, Volume 13, Paulus Munango.

The effects of forced relocations to Nkarapamwe Township

The relocation of people from the riverside villages to the Bantu township of Nkarapamwe in 1968 affected the people in various ways. Most of the information from this section was obtained from the interview with Shikerete.³⁶ The effects can be classified as social and economical. The relocations placed economic pressure on the people who had to find money to pay for the renting of the houses and water consumptions. The houses did not have ceilings and were not electrified. There was no sewerage system in place and the toilets were those pothole toilets where you did not need to flush.³⁷ People moved into the houses while the houses were not yet completed.



It is argued therefore that the apartheid colonial authorities did not complete the houses for black people in Nkarapamwe before their occupation because their main concern was to have some township structures, whether complete or incomplete, in place for black people as centers for their Bantustan governments as soon as possible so as to whisk off all international and SWAPO criticism which was rife in the 1960s and 1970s rather than to build proper houses for black people. The people had to always buy candles or lamps to use in their new houses as Nkarapamwe location had no lights, and this was too costly. Those who could afford it used paraffin stoves to cook; otherwise they all cooked on an open fire outside as they did

³⁶Shikerete, Rundu, 20 December 2004.

³⁷ Shikerete, 20 December 2004.

along the riverside villages. The rooms were too small to accommodate all members of the extended families, some family members had to find space in the nearby villages and this disrupted previous strong extended families that lived in one big traditional homestead at the riverside villages. As Shikerete explained:

Those houses again were only built consisting of two parts and I had my elder sister, there was nowhere to leave her since her husband had died, so there was nowhere to keep her. Even when my father uses to come and visit me, there was nowhere for him to sleep. When visitors came from Ukwangali area there was no place to keep them. There was nowhere to keep my in-laws, even when my own family came to visit; there was no way we could survive.

So then it was life, only life inside there which made me to say, this cannot be, better I go and settle myself that side so that when visitors comes I can settle them here to stay here while I myself must just stay there.³⁸

{Yinzugo hena yokudika asi tuzimo tuvali tupu. Ame nakere namukurwange gomukadi, nokusi nani musiga age mugara gwendi gadogoroka, makura nokusi nanimutura. Nye napasi ngava wiza otate nakumwesi navarara. Vagenda navawiza wokutunda ko Ukwangali nokusi nanivatura, womukwarero gwange vawiza, vekoro lyange vawiza nomusi natuparuka.

Makura eparu lyelike, yilyo lyelike lyaninkisirenge asi aye nokuvhurasi, hasa tupu nikature kwina, sene vawiza vagenda niyavature tupu oku awo vakareko, ame nyaumwange nikakare tupu nye kwina.}

It is clear from the quotation that there was no space for keeping visitors. Personal freedoms were reduced because people were not free to do every thing as a result of reduced space and township regulations. There were rules and certain required behavior from administration that township residence had to adhere too. Noise was

³⁸ Ibid.

not allowed in town, which meant there was to be no traditional dances where drums are usually beaten the whole night, as was a normal practice at the riverside villages. There were breakdowns of traditions, especially where children had to share the same toilet with their parents, sisters and brothers as Anna Lisa Mate za Ihemba explains, “*Some of the parents who were not used to it still use to leave the toilets rooms behind and run away into the nearby bushes.*”³⁹ {Vamwe vakurona ava vapilire kuyiyika ngava sigi simpe no toilet vakadukire moyihwa yopopepi}

The traditional activity of “Shinyanga” which was a gathering at night around the fire of the parents and their children for transmission of traditional education from parents to children disappeared from the township life as there was no time for it in town from both the children and parents. Traditional brewed beer was allowed in the township, provided it was not sold inside the house. People were allowed to buy the Portuguese beer, Cerveja, across the river at Calai Portuguese camp on the Angolan side of Kavango River, which they brought and drank in Nkarapamwe.

The environmental setting of Nkarapamwe Township did not allow the residents to bring along all their traditions and customs, which they followed at the riverside villages; there was simply no space for them. Instead the residents were forced by the environment to adapt to township life. They had to adapt to staying quietly indoors without disturbing their neighbors with noise. They were expected to be indoors in the evening at night until the next day for the administration’s security purposes of controlling intruders and terrorists who in this case included the

³⁹ Interview with Annalisa Mate Ihemba, Rundu, Sauyemwa location, 14 February 2005.

SWAPO freedom fighters. The children had to learn to love school and attend it every Monday to Friday and time for playing house was less; in fact, the space in Nkarapamwe was just too small to play such a game.

However, it was the identity of the people that was affected the most. To be a Kavango is to be a riverside people. Kavango is the name, which means “small place” which was given by the local people to the place in which the river was found and from which the river came to acquire its name. The people in turn came to identify themselves not with the land within which the river was found but with the river itself. They became known as vaKavango, meaning those who belong to Kavango, the river. It is that process of living along the riverside and identifying yourself with it by taking part in all river activities which identified you as a Kavango. The issue of identity also became a reason for some Kavango law makers of the 1970s to propose for the discontinuing of the planning of and the removals of people to new residential areas. Bonifacius Haushiku for example argued:⁴⁰

I have heard further that they are erecting a fence from east to west along side the river, which means that the people will now move inland and this river subsequently become a wilderness and people born inland will know nothing about the river and of hunting along the riverside. Hence when I sit on my easy chair I want to be able to see the Kavango flowing. I don't want them to take me to a wild environment because than they won't call me a muKavango anymore. I will be something else.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Bonifacius Haushiku was a black Roman Catholic priest born in Kavango. He was co opted in the Kavango Bantustan parliament in the 1970s. He became the first black arch Bishop of the Roman Catholic Church in Namibia, a position he held until his death.

Conclusion

This chapter indicated that Nkarapamwe Township was not only constructed to accommodate government workers but that a township was also necessary for Bantustan rule of Kavango to become the seat of the homeland government. The frontier war by the SWAPO fighters became a reason for the colonial authorities to force the black people near Rundu to vacate their homesteads and move to Nkarapamwe Township while the unemployed settled at Ncwa and Sarusungu villages. It is evident that while some people had moved voluntarily to Nkarapamwe Township in 1968 many others had initially refused but were eventually forced to move by the threat of having their homesteads burned and losing their jobs.



Barely two years after they had moved to the township residents of Nkarapamwe were presented with a new shocking announcement. The new Commissioner, Mr. Van Niekerk in 1970 requested all the residents of Nkarapamwe Township to fill in new applications for occupation of houses in Nkarapamwe. What happened afterwards was yet another forced removal- this time to evict some residents out of the houses.

⁴¹ NAN, F002-AP 7/3/1*1, 3, Kavango Legislative Council Proceedings of the third session, a statement by Reverent Bonifacius Haushiku, (February-March, 1972), 214-215.

CHAPTER 3

NKARAPAMWE: NEW BEGININGS AND NEW ENDINGS

Introduction

This chapter outlines the physical structures and public facilities available at Nkarapamwe Township, provides a description of life within the township and analyses the circumstances by which some residents were later evicted from here.

The physical structures, public facilities and administration of Nkarapamwe Township



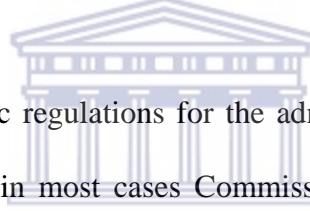
At the time of occupation in 1968, the houses in Nkarapamwe had no ceilings, no electricity and no sewerage system in place but yet were declared ready for occupation by the colonial authorities.¹ The Commissioner provided an outline of what was available in the township.² He explained that a piece of land approximately 875*700 meters were cut into forty-eight plots of one hectare each with streets. The following public buildings were also in place in Nkarapamwe Township before 1969: a community hall, ten lower primary classrooms, five higher primary classrooms, ten secondary class rooms, a general dealer shop, Café, Restaurant and one “Bantoe Bevolking van Kavango” (hereafter, B.B.K)

¹Shikerete, Rundu, 20 December 2004.

² 1/1/55, NAR10, Volume, 13, a letter by the Kavango Commissioner to the Chief Bantu Commissioner in Windhoek titled, “Beplande Ontwikkeling: Okavango gebied”, 6 March 1967.

butchery. In addition, water pumps were being placed at different plots to pump water from the river.³

By 1970 there were 1089 residents in Nkarapamwe Township, 676 males and 413 females.⁴ It can be deduced that approximately 1089 people or little less were forced to relocate to Nkarapamwe in 1968. The number excludes the remaining large numbers of the majority of unemployed people who were forced to move and settle in the near by areas of Mangarangandja and Sarusungu. Households in Nkarapamwe, one may estimate, could have had about twelve residents each though there could have been some variation.



There were no specific regulations for the administration of Bantu townships in South -West- Africa; in most cases Commissioners used the regulations of the administration of South African black townships or at times used their own discretion in administering the townships. The Black Affairs Commissioner of Kavango in 1970 who had administrative problems in Nkarapamwe wrote a letter of complaint to the secretary for Bantu Administration and Development and inquired on how best to administer a black township in South- West- Africa.⁵ It was explained to the Bantu Commissioner of Kavango in 1970 that some of the regulations of the black townships that were foreign to the Kavango people

³1/1/55, NAR7 (1) N13/2/20/2, a letter of the Commissioner, Rundu, Kavango, titled, “Bantoe dorp inkomste, U66 N13/20/2 van 22.5.1968,” 6 June 1968.

⁴Population census, South West Africa geographical distribution of the population (Report No, 02-05-26, 1970), 4.

⁵See, 1/1/55, NAR9, Volume, 13, a letter titled “Behuisig: Bantedorp Nkarapamwe: Kavangogebied”, 5 November 1970.

needed to be scrapped from the regulations applicable to the administration of a black township. The residents of Nkarapamwe were, for example, allowed to continue to move around with their knobkerries, axes, knives etc. despite it being against the law. It was felt that to restrict them on these issues would just cause unnecessary uprisings and antagonistic feelings.

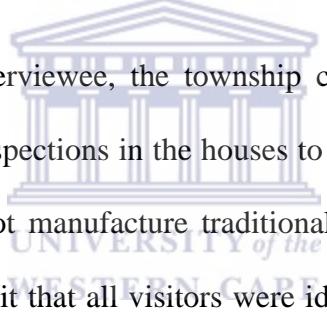
On the advice of the head office of the Bantu Commissioner in Windhoek, a suggestion was made that since Chapter 8 of the regulation for the administration and control of black townships of 1962 which dealt with the establishment of township committees was quite unfamiliar to the Kavango culture it should be omitted in its whole.⁶ This would have meant that blacks in Nkarapamwe had no local town representatives in place and the Commissioner would have been the sole administrator of Nkarapamwe Black Township. Despite such advice however, a township committee existed in Nkarapamwe that was composed of residents of Nkarapamwe of whom some were appointed by the vaShambyu traditional chief and the other ones by the Commissioner. The committee's functions were local administration of the black township. Its task, according to the Government Gazette No.293 of 1962, was supposed to be as follows:

To give orders and directions which did not need to be consistent with the regulations if it deemed it fit for the proper administration and control of the township. It could make by-laws for general observance in the township in regard to any or all matters and in addition to any other fees payable, levy a rate not exceeding one rand per annum on every grantee or holder in the township, for the benefit of the

⁶ See, 1/1/55, NAR7, N13/1/2, a letter titled “Bantedorperegulasies: Administrasie en bestuur van Bantudorp: Suid-Wes-Afrika”, February 1970.

*treasury of such council.*⁷

This may seem to be a lot of power to the Committee. In reality, the township committee did not have such vast powers. It had no independent powers from the Commissioner and was his tool in controlling the black township residents of Nkarapamwe for the sake of political security. This is not however to say that the committee was of no use to the residents of Nkarapamwe, indeed it was in the forefront of opposing the Bantu Commissioner's eviction of many residents of Nkarapamwe in 1970, but the committee could only give advice to the Bantu Commissioner and had no final powers to effect changes.



According to one interviewee, the township committee had other functions in town: it carried out inspections in the houses to see to it that residents maintained cleanliness and did not manufacture traditional home brewed beers inside their houses. It also saw to it that all visitors were identified and recorded for security reasons. Rebbekka Kambundu explains:

In the town, it was my late husband who was made a police man to inspect the houses and also to establish the number of visitors coming in, that was his job. He would leave the house seven o'clock, and would move in all the houses of Katutura until at the end then he would return, sometimes he would not come back to eat lunch.⁸

{Doropa meshu nakufa muswamane wande ndje vatuliremo mu uporosi wokukenga ndjuwo novagenda ava vanakuyomo

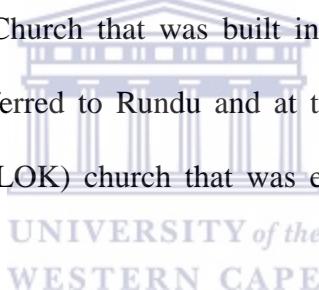
⁷1/1/55, NAR7, N13/1/2, Government Gazette, No R293, 1962, attached to a letter from the office of the Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner in Windhoek to Rundu, February 1970.

⁸ Interview with Rebbekka Kambundu at Rundu, Safari, 20 December 2004. Note that the word Katutura, that she uses means, we will not settle, it's the name of a black township in Windhoek used interchangeably to refer to Nkarapamwe Black Township in Rundu.

ashi vangapi. Mbyo viruwana vyendi. Kurupuka weno 7 o'clock mumundi, ndjuwo nadintje kudiyenda da Katutura dogoro kughuhura kukavyuka, metaha pamwe nakuya lya shi.}

Living in Nkarapamwe Township

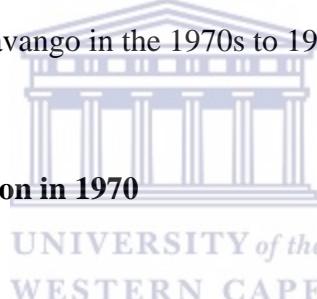
There were very few activities for the residents of Nkarapamwe to be involved in because there were not many public facilities built within the township. There was a community hall, which was also used as a sitting place for the Kavango Legislative Council from 1970 onwards where residents went to watch concerts that were usually arranged by schools. Residents attended the church service at the Roman Catholic Church that was built in the township after Dr. Romanus Kampungu was transferred to Rundu and at the Evangelical Lutheran Ovambo Kavango (hereafter ELOK) church that was established in Nkarapamwe in the 1970s.



The conditions under which the establishment of the Roman Catholic Church in Nkarapamwe occurred gives an indication of how far church men could go in supporting colonial authorities in their endeavours for the sake of winning colonial support in allowing them space to convert local people. This is not, however, to say that the Roman Catholic Church in Nkarapamwe has always been an instrument of colonial control over local people. It gave support to the black people in the liberation struggle in the 1980s period. Colonial authorities, however, allowed church men to establish a church in the black township of

Nkarapamwe because it helped to mould the behaviours of the local people so that they become obedient to an authority which was just what the colonial authorities wanted, to have political and economic control over black people. A primary and a secondary school existed in Nkarapamwe by 1968. Some residents owned gramophones, which they usually played at baptism feasts or when some people got married and neighbours came to join the celebration. A few residents owned small shops in the townships; among them was Markus Ihemba, who was an assistant to the white doctors at the Rundu state hospital in the 1970s. Residents went to buy goods like foodstuff and alcohol at his shop. The other local business people in Nkarapamwe were Rudolph Ngondo who became a prominent man in the local politics of Kavango in the 1970s to 1980s and Marcelius Kudumo.

The purpose of eviction in 1970



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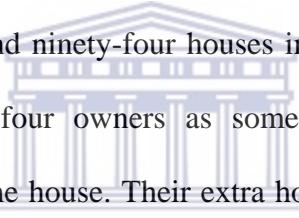
The eviction of Nkarapamwe residents in Rundu, Kavango, northeast Namibia in 1970 had its root source in the way houses were acquired in Nkarapamwe in 1968. Paulus Munango argues that large families has moved to Nkarapamwe in 1968 only after the Commissioner agreed to give them more then one house.⁹ Oral interviews, however, suggest that only those who had connections with Commissioner Mare got more then one house.¹⁰ Government employees who had great influence in community affairs and who played a crucial role to convince their fellow community members to vacate their homesteads near Rundu and to

⁹ Paulus Munango, NAR9, Volume 13, 18 July 1970.

¹⁰ Gorretti Nakadiru Kaundu, 2004.

move into the township in 1967 were granted two to three houses per person by the Commissioner Mare.¹¹

Paulus Munango who got more than one house in the township had by 1970 been in the civil service for more than thirty-nine years and was an old man facing retirement.¹² The other like Pineas Kandunda (also known as Shamamburo) was by then an old man who had worked as a tribal police and received more than one house too. These two men got more than one house because they were well connected to the former Commissioner Mr. Mare.

While there were around ninety-four houses in Nkarapamwe by 1970, there was thus less than ninety-four owners as some influential community members possessed more than one house. Their extra homes were occupied by dependants many of whom were unemployed. It was against this background that the new  Commissioner Van Niekerk evicted families out of the houses and argued that he did so to provide more accommodation for government workers who needed accommodation in the black township of Nkarapamwe.

In 1970, two years after they had come to settle into the township, people of Nkarapamwe began to refer to their township as Katutura, which is a borrowed Herero term for a black township in Windhoek to which blacks had been forced to go to in 1959. Katutura means “a place where we will not settle”. This name

¹¹ Paulus Munango, NAR9, Volume 13.

¹² Ibid.

began to be used for Nkarapamwe when many residents of Nkarapamwe faced eviction as a result of the orders from the new Bantu Affairs Commissioner Van Niekerk. The previous Commissioner Mare left behind problems to which the new Commissioner Van Niekerk had to find solutions. Among the problems was the lack of accommodation for many black workers in Rundu by 1970.

The new Commissioner explained that he had made an inspection of the files of the previous Commissioner and discovered that some of the residents who were given houses were discharged from their work a long time. They were now unemployed and still occupying houses. He decided to act on this problem after he established a long list of applicants needing accommodation. He explains:

During April 1970, I established that there was a waiting list of almost 100 applicants from the assistant inspector of Bantu education and Bantu information assistant. It was very clear to me that there was an accommodation need in Nkarapamwe that needed to be addressed. I therefore went through the Bantu files and established that some of the houses were assigned to the natives while they were for example working for the local hospital, the army, etc and that the above mentioned people have been discharged along time but still live unemployed in the houses.¹³

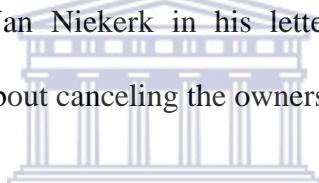
{Gedurende April 1970 het ek vas gestel dat daar a wag lys van byna 100 aansoekers was o.a. die assistant inspekteur van Bantoe-onderwys, 'n Bantoe inligtingsassistent. Dit was vir my duidelik dat daar 'n woningsnood in Nkarapamwe was, wat verlig moes word. Ek het toe die Bantoe leers deur gegaan en vas gestel dat sommige huise aan natuurlike toegeken is terwyl in diens van byvoorbeeld die plaaslike hospital, weermag, ens. En dat genoemde persone lankal daar ontslaan is en nog, verkloos, in die huise woon.}

¹³ See 1/1/55, NAR9, Vol: 13, letter titled, "Behuising: Bantoeendorp Nkarapamwe: Kavango gebied, U geheime aansbrief nr.T.60/2/1482/1 van 12de Oktober 1970," 5 November 1970.

He argued that some individuals had two to three houses and should therefore surrender these and retain one only.¹⁴ He began by requiring all residents to fill in new application forms for occupation. With this information, he then acted to cancel all the extra houses of individuals. This had direct consequences for the unemployed and for those government workers who had houses in the township but who also retained homesteads in the areas of Sarusungu in the east and Sauyemwa in the west of Rundu. A total of 300-400 people were affected.¹⁵

The response of Nkarapamwe residents to the eviction orders

The Commissioner Van Niekerk in his letter explains that he informed the township committee about canceling the ownership of houses of some residents of Nkarapamwe:



After the forms were completed, I called the town committee together and explained the problem to them. I indicated to them that I felt that those natives who still had their homesteads in Sauyemwa and Sarusungu needed to give up their houses since their homesteads were just in walking distance to the white township, Rundu, where their employment is situated. The township committee accepted these arrangements openly.¹⁶

{Nadat die vorms voltooi was het ek die dorp komiteee bynageroep en aan hulle die probleem verduidelik. Ek het dit aan hulle gestel dat ek voel dat naturelle wat nog krale het en wie se krale te Sauyemwa en Sarusungu is, hulle huise behoort preis te gee aan gesien hulle krale binne loopstand van die Blanke dorp, Rundu, waar hulle werk, gelee is. Die dorp komitee het hierdie reelings oenskynlik aanvaar.”}

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵ See NAR9, Volume: 13, letter by Dr. Romanus Kampungu to the Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Rundu, Kavango, to enquiry about the eviction issue, 29 June 1970.

¹⁶ NAR9, Vol: 13, Behuisung: Bantoedorf Nkarapamwe: Kavango gebied.

While the Commissioner suggests that the township committee agreed with his decision, this is not an accurate representation of the committee's position. Evidence indicates that the committee wrote a letter to him to oppose the eviction of residents from Nkarapamwe Township.¹⁷ Further, oral interviews carried out in 2004 and 2005 shed additional light on some of the Commissioner's motives. Interviewees strongly disagreed that they were evicted because they were unemployed or because they had homesteads in walking proximity to their place of work. They argued instead that some of the employed people who had no homesteads near Rundu were also evicted from the township mainly for political reasons. Shikerete explains:

*Van Niekerk came in, yes, when he arrived he came to begin with his own rules, he came to put in place his own rules but we were used to those of Mare. Mare could speak with people and would understand them and would also ask about all the problems that the people may have. Van Niekerk was not a type of a white person who could listen. At this time, I also went out of town to settle at Mupapama village where I had my other homestead. When I returned from there, I found that they have put a law in place. His whole intention was based on his suspicion of establishing as to who was working for the government and who was not working for the government that was his whole intention. That was when he started to make people fill in new forms to evict those who were not co-operating with him; I was also one of those people who were evicted from the house.*¹⁸

{Van Niekerk gawiziremo ya, apa gawiziremo tayatameke no mpango dendì, nage tayaturapo nompango dendì, mara twayikiresa nye da Mare. Mare goku uyunga novantu tazuvu, oku nage tapura nkenye maudigu govantu. Van Niekerk kapisi sirumbu gokupurakena. Ame ruvezé oro natundirepo mo doropa nikature ko Mupapama yiko nakatungire nzugo zange,

¹⁷ See NAR9, Vol: 13, a letter by Nkarapamwe committee to the Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Rundu, Kavango, titled "Die Bantoessakekommissaris. Geagte Heer," 17 June 1970.

¹⁸ Interview with Shikerete, 2004.

makura apa nakatunda oko niyagwane vaturapo veta zokuninka asi nkehe muntu, morwa kwaninkire sitambo setu, gayakere nositambo sokuninka asi kwaku saspekte asi wolye vakuruganena epangero, wolye vakupira kuruganena epangero, yiso sitambo sendi gakere naso. Yipo gatamekere kutanta asi a felese vantu vena vanakupira kulizuva nage avatjidemo, mara name muntu gumwe ogu vapwagesere.}

The evicted residents of Nkarapamwe were given one month to vacate the houses.

The eviction order brought discontent among the residents of Nkarapamwe who protested against such evictions as unfair. The residents of Nkarapamwe held a meeting under the leadership of their township committee and explained in writing to the Commissioner Van Niekerk why they were opposed to his eviction orders.¹⁹ In this letter, the residents of Nkarapamwe argued that they no longer had any other homesteads on the outskirts of the town of Rundu, therefore, to return there would mean they would have to re-erect new homesteads at their own cost and they did not think that this was fair because they were never paid for the destruction of their previous homesteads along the riverside when they were forced in 1968 to come and live in Nkarapamwe township.

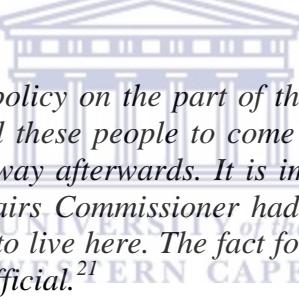
Residents argued that life was no longer going to be the same again at their previous settlements since they had lost touch. In addition, the Bantu Affairs Commissioner had indicated that, the people who were evicted would have to build their homesteads further away than their previous settlement. People who were surely still government workers would then have to walk very long distances to work and this was a big concern as Paulus Munango explains:

¹⁹ See, NAR9, Vol: 13, Die Bantoesakekommisaris, Rundu, Geagte Heer.

I am again already an old age man and do not see a chance to walk by foot every day. There is in each case no public transport in Kavango area and there is only one way and that is to go on foot to your work.²⁰

{Ek self is nog al 'n jaarde man en sien nie kans om elke dag die distansie te voet kan le nie. Hier is in elk geval geen openbare vervoer in Kavango gebied nie en daar is net een manier en dit is om te voet te wee na jou werk is.}

Residents were opposed to evictions because they said that it was the same government that forced them to leave their homesteads alongside the river and invited them to come and live in Nkarapamwe Township, why again should they be forced to move out? This argument was well summed up by Dr. Romanus Kampungu in his letter to the Commissioner Van Niekerk, in which he argued:


It would be bad policy on the part of the government to have called and invited these people to come and live here only to have them sent away afterwards. It is immaterial whether the former Bantu Affairs Commissioner had committed a blunder in allowing them to live here. The fact for the people is that he had acted as an official.²¹

Residents also felt that Van Niekerk's decision to evict people from Nkarapamwe Township did not hold value because he had not consulted with the Queen Maria Mwengere of the vaSambyu and Nepemba of vaMbunza tribes in whose land the township was situated. The township committee asked:

How did you come about to decide alone to chase people out of the Bantu township without coming into agreement with the chiefs? If we have to ask Pretoria that the new Commissioner who has been sent to us decides on his own with out unity with

²⁰ NAR9, Volume: 13, Paulus Munango.

²¹ NAR9, Vol: 13, a letter by Dr. Romanus Kampungu to the Bantu Affairs Commissioner, Rundu, Kavango, to enquiry about the eviction issue, 29 June 1970.

*the tribe shall it be good? Shall you find comfort in that? But we do not want to approach Pretoria in a case where you listen to us.*²²

{*Hoe het u alleen tot besluit gekom om die mense uit die Bantoe dorp te jag sonder dat u met Kaptein ooreen gekom het. As ons na Pretoria vra dat wat die nuwe kommisaris wat na ons gestuur is alleen iets besluit sonder die ooreenlegging met die volk sal dan goed wees? Sal u daarin behae vind? Maar ons wil nie Pretoria nader nie indien u na ons luister.*}

By referring to their chiefs and the threat to write directly to Pretoria, residents clearly hoped they could force the Commissioner to reconsider his decision. Residents who faced evictions in 1970 included those who had come as early as 1936 from Nkurenkuru settlement to Rundu. They felt that they also came from far and therefore if Nkarapamwe Township was meant for people who came from far as the Commissioner argued, then they were those people. People, however, also rejected the idea that the township was only built for people who came from far and not for those ones who lived nearby as the township committee further explained to the Commissioner Van Niekerk:

*What we know is that Oshakati is occupied by people who live nearby as well as those who live from far like any other towns in the world. Where do you find such an idea that a town must be occupied only by people who come from far? Is Windhoek, Johannesburg built only for people who come from far, must we than ask Pretoria?*²³

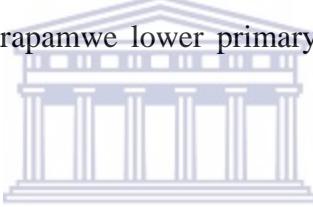
{*Wat ons weet is dat Oshakati deur mense bewoon is wat nabij woon sowel as die wat ver woon soos enige dorp op die wereld. Waar kry u daar die gedagte dat die dorp deur mense bewoon moet word wat van ver afkom? Is Windhoek, Johannesburg vir*

²² See NAR9, Vol: 13, a letter titled “Die Bantoesakekommisaris, Rundu, Geagte Heer,” 17 June 1970.

²³Ibid.

mense wat van ver woon alleen gebou, moet ons dan Pretoria vra?}

The residents argued that most of the children of the people who faced eviction were already progressing to higher grades at both primary and secondary level, and the eviction of their parents would also mean their children would be forced to stop schooling. Schooling was seen as an important part of the anticipated self-rule which was forthcoming and they argued that the areas of Sauyemwa and Sarusungu to which the evicted people were told to move had no classes going above standard three to four. They also argued that most of the teachers of lower primary school were originally from Sauyemwa and Sarusungu, and who then was going to teach in Nkarapamwe lower primary school if they were also evicted from the township?



The people also reasoned that they had already paid a lot of money as rent for all the two years that they had come to reside in the township and to move out now would be an act of having wasted their money on the houses. If one takes into consideration the regulations of black townships, which were also applicable to Nkarapamwe, residents were expected to pay rent of one rand per annum. This may sound very little rent today, but it was of some value at that time especially when you consider that you could buy a few blankets with one rand. It was argued that ownership of two to three houses should not be used as a basis to remove them out of the township. That matter was well understood and accepted by the former Commissioner as basis on which most Nkarapamwe household heads with

large families were only willing to move from the river side and come to live in the township by 1968. The township committee explained:

These houses of Nkarapamwe are suited for people who just got married, but not for people with big families. We know that the government have built such houses in South Africa and South-West-Africa but this does not mean that they have enough living space. What is understandable is that two houses in Nkarapamwe are not easily affordable but not to say that they are big enough. The previous Commissioner, mister Mare understood the case very well, which was why he provided people with big families two houses.²⁴

{Hier die huise van Nkarapamwe is blybaar vir die pas getroude bedoel maar nie vir mense met groot gesinne nie. Ons weet dat die regeering sulke huise in Suid-Afrika en Suid-wes laat bou het. Maar nie te se dat hulle genoeg ruimte inslaan nie. Wat verstaanbaar is dat twee huise in Nkarapamwe nie maklik bekostig kan word nie. Maar nie te se dat hulle groot genoeg is nie. Die gewese kommissaris, meneer Mare het hier die sak mooi verstaan, daarom het hy vir mense met groot gesinne twee huise beskikbaar gestel}

They also opposed the eviction because they were informed that the areas of  Sarusungu in the east and Sauyemwa in the west of Rundu to which the Commissioner insisted that they should go and live was under plan by the local administration for betterment schemes and that all people in those villages would soon have to be relocated to camps which had been cleared for them.²⁵ So, there was a clear fear to being evicted from the township and forced to relocate to the said areas, only to be forced to relocate again to new planned camps at the end of 1970 and beginning of 1971 in the name of betterment scheme projects.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵See NAR9, Vol: 13, “Behuising: Bantodorp Nkarapamwe: Kavango gebied,” 5 November 1970.

Dr. Romanus Kampungu once more took a position of leadership and came out to support the people.²⁶ He wrote a letter to Commissioner Van Niekerk hoping to convince him to reconsider his decision. He thought that these people having learned in the past two years how to live in the township would be a good example to the others gradually coming in. He also saw that such an expulsion was already creating and was going to continue to create a bad impression in the Kavango that the government deals unfairly with the people of Kavango and therefore fills them with doubts for the future and forthcoming self-rule.

He thought that to replace old inhabitants with new ones would mean starting over again to teach them how to behave in order to live peacefully in the township and this would be unnecessary time wasted to the Catholic Church that had already spent time framing and moulding the behaviour of these people in the township. Residents subsequently went to the police and gave testimonies about the evictions. The police first forwarded these testimonies to the head office of the Bantu Commissioner in Windhoek and then approached the commissioner in Rundu. All these angered Commissioner Van Niekerk who felt he should have been contacted first. The Commissioner, in a response letter to the head office painted a glowing view of the planning prospects for Rundu.²⁷ He indicated in his letter that all those residents whose ownership of houses in the township was cancelled would have to build their homesteads further away from Rundu and not in their former areas of Sarusungu and Sauyemwa as these two areas has been set

²⁶ See NAR9, Vol: 13, a letter by Dr. Romanus Kampungu, Rundu, Kavango, 29 June 1970.

²⁷ See NAR9, Vol: 13, “Behuisings: Bantoeidorp Nkarapamwe: Kavango gebied, 5 November 1970.

aside as agriculture areas. All the residents of these two areas were soon to shift to new resettlement camps of Kaisosi and Kansukwa respectively.

While residents did their best to ward off removals, evictions began. In July 1970 Pinias Kandunda, (also known as Shamamburo, meaning, the master of knobkerries) indicated to the police:

At this moment, I am aware of five families who have already moved out of the Bantu township. The people who have already moved out have erected temporary shelters for themselves where they now live. There are still other people who are planning to move out, but then, there are others who are refusing to move out.²⁸

{Op hierdie tydstip is ek bewus van vyf huis gesinne wat reeds uit die Bantoedorp uitgetrek het. Die mense wat reeds uitgetrek het, het vir hulle tydelikke wonings opgerig waarin hulle woon. Daar is nog ander mense wat beplan om te trek, dog dan is daar ander wat weier om te trek.}

Residents thus had to spend money erecting temporary shelters, a matter which caused grief. Those people who owned more than one house lost some and remained only with one. In some cases there was a relief. For example, where a father owned two houses, one of the houses was taken away and registered in the name of his working son. As the Commissioner explains, this was so in the case of Paulus Munango:

“Concerning Paulus, whose homestead is +2 miles East of Rundu, two houses were cancelled and one was later given in its whole to his son after an appeal through the committee.”²⁹

²⁸NAR9, a police testimony by Pinias Kandunda, 17 July 1970.

²⁹ NAR9, Vol: 13, Behuisung: Bantoedorp Nkarapamwe, Kavango gebied.

{Van Paulus wie, se kraal +2 myl oos van Rundu is, is twee huise in Nkarapamwe gekanselleer en een later, na vertoe deur die komitee as 'n geheel aan Paulus se seun in besonder hertoegeken was.}

The eviction of people from the township of Nkarapamwe surely filled the residents of Kavango with doubts for the future. The Queen, Maria Mwengere Mukosho, in whose land the town was situated, flatly refused to move to the new residential quarters of the tribal offices which were specially erected for her occupation in 1970 in fear that she too may eventually face eviction. Indeed no other Kavango chief moved to live in the tribal houses.

The people of Nkarapamwe began to doubt the policies of the Commissioner who had previously always told them that the authorities were there to protect them against enemies who were craving to take away their land and all that they owned. This doubt is expressed in the letter of the township committee of Nkarapamwe to the Commissioner in 1970:

N.B: In Windhoek, the blacks had to be forced to go and live in Katutura. It took years. In Nkarapamwe, the blacks have to be prevented from living in a black township .What will our enemies say?³⁰

{NB: In Windhoek moes die Bantoe gedwing word om in Katutura te gaan woon. Dit het jare geduur. In Nkarapamwe moes die Bantoe verhinder word om in 'n Bantoe dorp te woon. Wat sal ons vyande se?}

This indicates that the people were becoming doubtful of the future plans of the government and indeed of what their so-called enemies, as was told to them,

³⁰ See NAR9, Vol: 13, Die Bantoesakekommisaris, Rundu, Geagte Heer.

would say to such a move of eviction. They were beginning to doubt that the colonial authorities were their partners in opposing the communist enemies whom as the colonial authorities informed them, wanted nothing more than to take away their land and properties. It also indicates, however, that the people of Nkarapamwe Township were not living in isolation. They were aware of what went on in the whole country and beyond the border. Their resistance and other responses to the cases of forced removal from their areas to new ones by the South African colonial authorities were shaped by their understanding and knowledge from the experience of forced removals of other black people from as far as Windhoek.



When they moved to Nkarapamwe township, people experienced difficulties. The UNIVERSITY of the WESTERN CAPE township houses lacked electricity and residents who could not afford paraffin stoves had to cook on open fires as they had done at their former village. There was no sewerage system in place and this was a health hazard among residents, yet they settled here and began to make a life. Then there came the threat of another removal. The eviction in 1970 was based on both economic and political factors. It was economic in the following sense: the Commissioner Van Niekerk was concerned that Nkarapamwe should be occupied only by black people who contributed to the colonial economy by means of working for the authorities rather than living jobless in the town. It was a concern based on the fact that if

there was no accommodation in Nkarapamwe, many potential black workers from distance areas of Kavango would not come to work for the white people in Rundu as there would be no place to accommodate them.

The eviction was also political in the following sense: the Commissioner used this opportunity to evict some employed people from the township who were not listening to the colonial authority and were causing problems for him as he did in the case of Gosbert Lyambayi Shikerete.

The Commissioner's insistence that those people who were evicted from the township would have to build their homesteads further away than their previous settlement was a strategy to keep out the militant black people away from Rundu, the center of political activities. Despite strategies that included working through the township committee, threats to go to Pretoria to complain and the lodging of complaints at the police station, evictions occurred. The colonial authorities managed to have the unemployed evicted but it is not clear whether in doing so they actually solved the need for accommodation for workers in the township.

One interviewee, Simon Kandere argues that the Commissioner was made to feel ashamed of his wrong doings by the residents and abdicated his office.³¹ This perception derives from the fact that Van Niekerk was in office for barely a year and was replaced in 1970 by D.E Jacobus.³² This interpretation is important to

³¹ Interview with Kandere Simon, Rundu, Nkarapamwe location, 20 December 2004.

³² See Diescho, The Odendaal Commission in respect of Kavango, 48.

those who were victims of removals. Whether it was really the case is immaterial. It gives them, however, some satisfaction that their struggle had not been totally in vain. It conveys a tale of morality.

In 1970, the Kavango received a Legislative Council. Jacobus was not only the new Commissioner but Director General of the Kavango administration. Soon the black people of Sarusungu and Mangarangandja areas in the administrative areas of Rundu were uprooted from their areas along the Kavango River to the settlement camps of Kaisosi and Kehemu by the Kavango administration and the next chapter will explain these final colonial removals of black people in Rundu.



CHAPTER 4

SARUSUNGU AND MANGARANGANDJA, FINAL DSTRUCTION AND RELOCATION, 1971- 1972

Introduction

In 1971 and 1972, the people of Sarusungu and Mangarangandja were removed. This chapter analyses why and how the removals occurred and its significance for the people. It will deal with both Sarusungu and Mangarangandja because the relocation of Mangarangandja in 1972 was a continuation of the relocation started with Sarusungu in 1971. The other reason for this combination is because by 1970, the two areas contained some inextricable links. Both communities consisted of members of all the five tribes of Kavango and the Angolan group called vaNyemba and, therefore, had great similarities in customs and traditions.

The relocations of both areas occurred after the establishment of the Kavango Legislative Council in 1970 and were both based on similar intentions of political control by the apartheid colonial administration. The chapter provides an account of life in these rural villages and how these were disrupted. In some ways, this story provides links to the previous chapters on Nkondo village and Nkarapamwe Township.

Sarusungu area

Origin and way of life

Gorretti Nakadiru Kaundu explains that Sarusungu comes from the word “ruhungu” (or rushungu, in ruSambyu language) which was a type of poison made and thrown into the stream so that the next day they would find dead fish floating. The stream became known as “shidiva sharushungu” which means the stream of poison.¹ The stream, therefore, became known as Sarusungu, after the poison used by residents to catch fish, and the village in turn got its name from the stream. When the Black Affairs Commissioner Harold Eeds, known as “Nakare” by the local people moved from his previous settlement at Nkurenkuru in western Kavango to establish offices at Rundu in 1936, all his black policemen settled at Sarusungu village from which they would walk some kilometers to Rundu for work. Sarusungu, which was sparsely populated by 1936, consisted mainly of the homesteads of these policemen. It was only after 1954 that some of the victims of flood from the Nkondo area came in numbers to settle here.

The following information about life in Sarusungu is taken from an interview with Nyamonde Kanunga.² People of Sarusungu like those of Nkondo village made a living from the river. They were also a subsistence-farming community

¹Interview with Kaundu, G, N, Rundu, Kaisosi, 29 December 2004.

²Kanunga, N, 29 December 2004.

who owned mainly cattle. They also hunted animals in the forest. They had assigned duties for men, women and children. Traditional dances of shiwingi and shiperu were performed on weekends at night when everybody could attend, but at which only men were allowed by tradition to consume alcohol. Children would be the first to take the floor and when it was getting very late they would go back home and only elders would continue the dances.³

The system of “ndjambi” was practiced in the community. In this system one sought the assistance of other people at work and invited them afterwards to a drinking feast as a way to thank them for their services rendered.⁴ A Roman Catholic Church and school existed in Sarusungu village, which worked to educate children but at the same time Christianize the community.

Motives for removal from Sarusungu WESTERN CAPE

By 1971, people of Sarusungu were relocated to a new area that they named Kaisosi, a word in the Kavango languages that means, “Looking for a reason to start up a quarrel or fight”. The Commissioner Van Niekerk had stated in 1970 that the relocation of people from Sarusungu like that of Sauyemwa in the east of Rundu was long planned by the authority to make way for agriculture.⁵ He was referring to the meetings held all over Kavango in January 1967 by the then

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ NAR 1/1/55, NAR9, Vol: 13, letter titled, “Behuising: Bantodorp Nkarapamwe: Kavango gebied, U geheime aansbrief nr.T.60/2/1482/1 van 12de Oktober 1970,” 5 November 1970.

Commissioner Mare who promised the people that each tribal community in the planned relocation camps will be divided into scheduled residential and grazing areas where stock farming will be encouraged with free immunisation and provision of mineral licks for cattle etc.⁶ While this indicates a well intended motive, it is argued here that the real reason was the need to control the infiltration of S.W.A.P.O forces which threatened the relationship between the state and the people.⁷

The war by S.W.A.P.O freedom fighters was a big concern for the colonial authorities in Kavango.U.N.I.T.A, (Uniao Nacionalpela Indipendencia Total de Angola) a military movement of Angola, which was by then collaborating with S.W.A.P.O had by the early 1970s gained a millitary stronghold of southeast Angola, across the Kavango River, and they were putting up a fierce battle against the Portuguese and South African forces respectively. Since the late 1960s and early 1970s, the colonial authority in Kavango was worried that with the intensification of war in Angola, many blacks from Angola along the Kavango River would grab any opportunity to move across the other side of the river into Namibia.⁸ As a result of this escalating war indeed, many refugees from south east of Angola, who were in all sense families and relatives of the Kavango people of Namibia, began to cross the Kavango River to seek refuge.

⁶ See, NAR 1/1/55, NAR10, file 13, “Notule van stam vergaderings gehou in die distrik Okavango gedurende die tydperk 16-1-1967 tot 26-1-1967,” 02 February 1967, for explanation on the planning of agriculture and stock farming away from the river for black communities of Kavango.

⁷ See, NAR 1/1/55, NAR 9, a letter titled, “Kavango-Angola betrekkinge”, 29 September 1972.

⁸ See, NAR 1/1/55, NAR9, letter titled, “Vlugtelinge uit naburige State: U vertroulik 78 van 23 April 1969”, a letter by Commissioner Van Niekerk to the Chief Commissiner in Windhoek, 20 May 1969.

The colonial authority was worried that S.W.A.P.O and U.N.I.T.A may be the ones who were organizing these people to cross as refugees while in fact they were terrorists and, they reasoned as follows,

In case we receive any refugees, we would be going through the deadly danger of inviting opponents and terrorists and provide those elements of south east Angola with contacts and support.⁹

{*Indien ons vlugtelinge sou ontvang loop ons die daadwerklike gevaar om ondermyners en terroriste in te voer en kontakte en herberg vir sodanige elemente in suid oos Angola te skep.*}

The colonial authorities in Kavango were in a difficult situation namely that, if they sent back the refugees to Angola it would bring grievance among the locals because they are sending back their family members, as they claim, so that the Portuguese can kill them, a belief which the Commissioner said played very strongly on the feelings of the local people.¹⁰ The Commissioner also had no doubt that the communists were promoting this refugee movement so as to influence the people of Kavango against them.¹¹ On the other hand, it was also feared by the colonial authorities that their enemy, S.W.A.P.O, would use any opportunity to infiltrate among the refugees as Commissioner Mare explains:

In case we provide settlement to the refugees, it is definitely sure that opponents and terrorists would infiltrate among them and in doing so gain a standing ground in Kavango and, individual inhabitants of Kavango can, out of the sense of being their parents, children, brothers and sisters, hide

⁹ See, NAR9, “Vlugtelinge uit naburige State: U vertroulik 78 van 23 April 1969”, 20 May 1969.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid.

them in their homesteads just as it has already occurred in Gciriku and Mbukushu areas.¹²

{Indien ons herberg aan die vlugtellinge sou verleen is dit feitlik seker dat ondermyners en terroriste saam met hulle sal infiltrer en sodoende 'n staanplek in Kavango sal bekom; en individuele inwoners van Kavango kan naverwante (ouers, kinders, broers, susters, ens.) uit Angola by hulle krale versteek, soos ek vermoed wel reeds by Gciriku en Mbukushu gebeur.}

All the Black Affairs Commissioners for Kavango since the 1960s worked to prevent S.W.A.P.O infiltration into Kavango in any possible way and were worried about the presence of homesteads stretched out along the Kavango River. The final solution for the colonial authorities therefore was to remove all the homesteads of villages along the whole Kavango River, which included Sarusungu village in 1971, and they also set up a refugee camp for Angolan immigrants of war east of Rundu at which they were controlled.

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Strategies of colonial authorities for relocation

The colonial authorities embarked on the relocation of these two areas only after the Kavango Legislative Council was established on 21 October 1970. This created an impression that the removal was the work of the Kavango administration with the support of the Kavango Legislative Council rather than that of South Africa.

¹²Ibid.



Figure 1 Members of Kavango Legislative Councils (hereafter K.L.C) greeting visitors at 1970 celebrations of the establishment of Kavango Legislative Council. From left to right, Chief Linus Shashipapo (Chief Minister), Rev. Bonifacius Haushiku, (Vice chairperson of K.L.C) Rev. Dr. Romanus Kampungu (Chair person of K.L.C) , Paulus Munango, carrier of the K.L.C hood. (Picture received from Christiaan Marungu.)

There were, however, no political parties in Kavango that competed for places in the Legislative Council. Instead, it was composed of five Chiefs of the five tribes in Kavango, two members nominated by each of the five tribal authorities, and three members for each of the five electoral divisions who were elected by those members of Kavango who were entitled to vote.¹³ In total, therefore, the Legislative Council was composed of thirty members of which fifteen were nominated members and another fifteen were elected members among the five tribal communities. Some members of the Legislative Council also made up the Executive Council. Several administrative departments were set up, each with an Executive Councilor in charge.

¹³See, NAN, Windhoek, F002-AP 7/3/1*1, 3, Kavango Legislatives proceedings of the first session of the second Kavango Legislative Council of 31 October to 09 November 1973, “minute No.19: Opening address by the honourable primeminister, B.J. Vorster”, 35-43.

In May 1973 Kavango was declared a “self governing” area under the development of Self- Government for Native Nations in South West Africa Amendment Act No.20 of 1973.¹⁴ After 1973, the Bantustan government of Kavango consisted of three branches, namely: The Legislature, which in the case of Kavango was the Legislative Council which had a chairperson; The Executive Authority, which replaced the former Executive Council and was vested in the cabinet of ministers headed by a chief minister; and the Judicial Authority, which vested in inferior courts responsible for administration of justice.¹⁵

The Commissioner D.E. Jacobus came up with various tactics to remove the people of Sarusungu. In the meetings that he carried out, he told the people that the river water was infected with bacteria which cause diseases and all other sickness. The people were told that they must be relocated to the new area where they would be provided with clean water free from all germs from boreholes and pumps.¹⁶

The Commissioner also informed the people that the war was coming and that the SWAPO fighters were coming to kill them and take away all their land and properties and that, therefore, people should be resettled together in one area where it would be easy for the South African soldiers to protect them.¹⁷

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶ Interview with Singungu Kahare, 24 December, 2004.

¹⁷Ibid.

The people's response

People opposed the relocation to the new areas for various reasons. They argued that if the river water was indeed infected with bacteria that brought sickness, the government could still provide clean water to them while they remained in Sarusungu. Many people in fact did not believe that the river water made them sick. One interviewee, Kanunga Nyamonde argued that there were very few death cases in their community of Sarusungu. Their graveyard was empty compared to the high death rates per year that later became common in the relocation area of Kaisosi.¹⁸



The Nkarapamwe black township committee by 1970 felt the right to speak on behalf of all the people of Kavango about matters affecting them. As early as 1970, they supported the people of Sarusungu against the relocation to Kaisosi resettlement camp by reasoning that the new camps were simply too small and that people would go thirsty in the new areas just as the people of Nkarapamwe black township themselves were already experiencing thirst as was explained to the Commissioner in the following letter:

The area under planning is too small. We Kavangos do not like to live densely together. Why are the camps under planning so small while the whole Kavango is still big and the people are not so many? You are urgently requested to enlarge the planned camps. Further more, the people are caught up in the fear that they would go thirsty that side because, how often have the people indicated that the people responsible for the repair of the pumps neglect their duties

¹⁸Kanunga, 29 December 2004.

after it has been reported to them that one or the other pump is out of function?

According to the consultations, there should be pumps spread out at each water point but because this is not put to practice, there are worries that hundreds of people would only collect water at one water pump. That is why people are now no longer willing to move to the camps under planning. People should not be chased to move to the planned camps so long as the pumps are not yet brought about completely. There is also the fear of wild animals like lions, elephants, wolves etc which brings problems to livestocks etc.¹⁹

{*Wyke onder beplanning is te klein. Ons Kavango's hou nie daarvan om te dig bymekaar te woon nie. Hoekom is wyke onder beplanning so klein terwyl die hele Kavango nog te groot is en die mense ook nie te baie is nie? U word drigend versoek om die beplande wyke groter te maak. Verder is die mense vrees bevange dat hulle van dors sal omkom, want hoe dikwels het die mense opgemerk dat mense wat vir die reparasie van pompe verantwoordelik is hul plig verwuim wanneer daar geraporteer word dat die een of die ander pomp buite werking is?*

Volgens afspraak, beplanning moet daar 'n verspreide kraanskema wees by betrokke pomp, maar omdat dit nie prakties toegepas word nie is daar 'n vertraging dat honderde mense net by een kraan water sal skep. Daarom is mense nou nie meer gewillig om in die beplande Kampe te trek nie. So lank krane nog nie heeltemal aangebring is nie moet die mense nie aangejag word om na die beplande kampte te trek nie. Daar is ook die vrees vir wilde diere, soos leeuns, olifante, wolve ens wat skade aan velde, vee ens, doen}

People also did not believe that the Kavango administration's plan to bring development to them in the planned resettlement areas was really for free. It seemed to them that they would be required to pay for that development later, so

¹⁹ NAR 1/1/55, NAR9, Vol: 13, Geagte Heer, 17 July 1970.

they were not interested in relocating.²⁰ S.W.A.P.O supporters secretly campaigned against the relocation under the leadership of David (alias Davy Liasanga Lyangurungunda) Hausiku.²¹ In a secret anonymous S.W.A.P.O letter which was discovered by the police, S.W.A.P.O encouraged people to oppose the relocations away from the riverside villages, to continue to support the S.W.A.P.O guerilla fighters who were infiltrating into their areas, and finally to cross in large numbers into Angola and join the other Kavango people and other ethnic groups who were already in the liberation war. The letter urged:

*Do you want to live in the camps that the Boers are making for you? Do you want to lose your properties such as cattle? They are making camps for your cattle too. How do we call it when they put you in a place that you do not want and he who gives it to you is not his? If you look at the BANTUSTAN, what do you think? They are camps and this is slavery, brothers, men and women, come, the voice is calling you.*²²

{Will julle in kampte bly wat die Boere vir julle maak? Wil julle julle bessittings verloor soos julle beeste, hulle maak ook kampe vir julle beeste. Hoe noem ons dit as hulle jou in 'n plek sit waar jy nie wil he nie en hy wat dit vir jou gee is nie syne nie. As julle kyk na die BANTOESTAN wat dink julle? Dit is die kampe en dit is Ballingskap, broerders, mans en vrouens kom, die stem roep julle.}

²⁰ See NAR 1/1/55, NAR10, File: 13, "Notule van stam vergaderings gehou in die distrik Okavango gedurende die tydperk 16-1-1967 tot 26-1-1967, letter dated 2 February 1967.

²¹ He was an S.W.A.P.O activist and leader in Kavango who organized people against Bantustan rule. He went into exile to join S.W.A.P.O in Angola in the late 1970s where he continued to broadcast freedom messages through S.W.A.P.O radio to the Kavango people. In the 1980s, he feared that his life was in danger among his own S.W.A.P.O comrades and escaped into a second exile to Canada where he lives up to today. At the time of writing this thesis, I tried in vain to contact him through his children who all live in Namibia who told me that he is not interested in talking politics anymore as it has made him an exile from his own country.

²² See, NAR 1/1/55, NAR9, Vol: 13, a Swapo letter dated 1-1-1970.

The letter provides interesting observations. Its advice to the black people that they could lose their properties and cattle through resettlement camps casts back to the apartheid South African government an image of a robber, which it has always associated with S.W.A.P.O that S.W.A.P.O will take away people's land and properties. It also indicates that S.W.A.P.O was opposed to the Bantustans and, therefore, encouraged all the people to oppose it. Despite the opposition of S.W.A.P.O to the relocations, its message did not fully reach the masses under threat of removal in Sarusungu because S.W.A.P.O by then was operating secretly and people could lose their lives for being S.W.A.P.O supporters.

Commissioner Jacobus, now called Director General since the Legislative Council was conferred in Kavango, informed the Commisioner General in Windhoek that David (alias, Davy Liasanga Lyangurungunda) Hausiku was so far responsible for all the unrest against the whites, and that the Department of Safety and Security was busy investigating his case and that it seemed they were dealing here with a hardcore S.W.A.P.O leader. It also seemed to them that he was born in Angola since his father was still living there and that if this would be established, than they would hand him over to the Portuguese.²³

People became afraid, therefore, to take any lead against relocations because some people of Kavango had been born on the Angolan side of Kavango and they feared deportation. Dr. Romanus Kampungu has noted that from the standpoint of the Kavango people themselves, the Kavango River does not form

²³ NAR9, Vol: 13, a letter from the Chief Director D.E. Jacobus, 15 December 1971

any boundary.²⁴ People who reside along the riverside of Kavango on the Angolan side are also Kavango because they belong to the same tribes as the Kavangos found on the Namibian side. It was known that the Portuguese were crueler than the Boers and when you were handed over to them as a troublemaker or an S.W.A.P.O leader for that matter, the only fate that awaited you was probably death. It is in this sense that the official boundary had great meaning.

Despite all opposition, people were finally relocated from Sarusungu to Kaisosi. According to Gorretti Nakadiru Kaundu, the Department of Agriculture provided trucks that loaded the people of Sarusungu to their new areas and, during the relocation process, people lost their goods like cups, plates which dropped off along the way and some of which were forgotten behind.²⁵ The people's containers of beers spilled out to the ground, some people's huts got broken down during the transportation process and those who had built brick houses had to dismantle them.²⁶

People were never compensated for anything. In some cases, men were still at work as the relocation took place in the working hours and women had to carry out the whole responsibilities of packing goods. They could choose their own

²⁴Kampungu, R, "Concept and aims of Okavango Marriage: An investment in the light of ecclesiastical legislation,"Introduction, dissertation (Doctoral), (Rome, Pontifical University, 1966).

²⁵ Kaundu, Kaisosi, 29 December 2004. See also NAN, F002-Ap 7/3/1*1, 3, statement by Bonifacius Haushiku, Kavango Legislative Council proceedings of February to March 1972, 214-215 for evidence on the use of lorries by the Department of Agriculture for relocation of Sarusungu to Kaisosi.

²⁶Hausiku, 30 December 2004.

spots to be dropped off by the government trucks. If the people of Sarusungu did not want to relocate to the new site, why then did they allow themselves to be relocated? One interviewee responded to that question bluntly by saying that they had to do so for the following reason: “*To save lives! You could not to stand up together, whenever they spoke and asked people if you understood the orders, you responded with a yes and clapped your hands.*”²⁷ {*Kutjilisa monyo! Kapi tomusikama kumwe. Nsene va uyunga nokupura vantu asi mwayizuvu asi yi, tomusakerere.*}

This indicates that the people were terrified of the colonial authority and therefore accepted orders out of fear. The colonial authorities interpreted this as a sign of willingness and voluntary relocation of the local people. It can be argued, therefore, that people were easily removed because they were all fearful of the powers of the colonial authorities. The other reason for a non-lasting opposition was clearly the lack of community activists to organise people against relocations. It was clear, as could be seen in the case of the S.W.A.P.O ring leader in Kavango David (alias Davy Lyangurungunda) Hausiku that any one who took the public lead in opposing the colonial government could face the brute force of the colonial authority’s power.

The people also heard about the experience of the other black communities in Windhoek who were shot and killed by the white colonial authorities for refusing to move from their old location to the scheduled residential area of

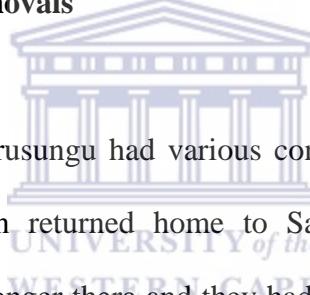
²⁷Kahare, S, 24 December 2004.

Katutura.²⁸ They therefore feared too that they would be shot and killed if they refused to move to the resettlement camps. This fear of death by the people of Sarusungu was clearly spelt out by the township committee of Nkarapamwe. In their letter of complaint to the Commissioner Van Niekerk in the middle of the year 1970 they said:

The people have great uneasiness that they would be shot if they will not be willing to move into the planned camps but to stay where they are.²⁹

{*Die mense het groot besorgdheid dat hulle geskied sal word indien hulle nie gewillig sal wees om in die beplande kampe te trek nie maar te laat bly waar hulle is}*}

The aftermath of removals



The relocations of Sarusungu had various consequences. When the secondary school hostel children returned home to Sarusungu, they found that their homesteads were no longer there and they had to search for their parents in the new relocated area of Kaisosi.³⁰ The forced relocation made local people question the value of the self government which was given to them by the South African government.

According to Kanunga Nyamonde, life in Kaisosi was not good compared to Sarusungu because they came to suffer water shortages. She said that many people in the relocated areas, mainly women, would line up for water behind the

²⁸ See, NAR9, Vol: 13, a letter by Nkarapamwe Black Township committee, 17 July 1970.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰ See, Kaundu, 29 December, 2004.

water point and soon began to argue with each other and would go as far as labelling each others as witches.³¹ This contributed to a breakdown of good neighbourliness and cooperation. People in Kaisosi could no longer bath with as much water as they did at the riverside villages because water became scarce and they soon started to pay for water as Ginter Hairwa explains,

*The result of the trouble of having come to settle here is that we have come to live in drought, we thought we were coming to drink water. Right now as we speak, we did not even wash ourselves, we did not bathe. But then, when we lived that side you would just go and swim. Is this the good life now? No, this is not good. It seems today that those people only encouraged us to come so that they would come and take away our money in a clever way that we had to buy water. We are currently buying it. Some of us do not work; we will not find money to buy water.*³²

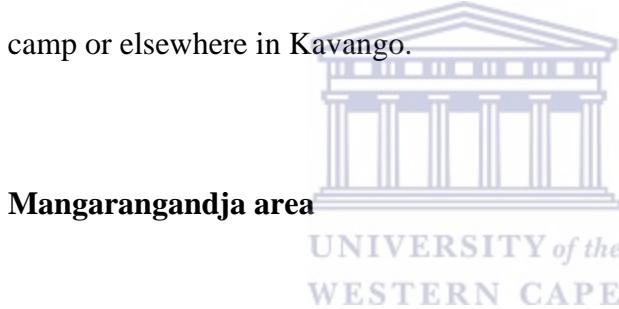
{*Morwa asi moudigu wokuyakara oku morukukutu kurutara. Ano kurumona asi tatukanwa mema. Ngesi kapi tunalikuhu, kapi tuna zogana. Ano apa twakere kuza tupu tozogana. Ngesi eparu lyewa nye eli? Hawe kapisi nawa. Nani vantu kwakondjere vaguse yimaliva mononduge asi turande mema, ngesi kuranda tunakuranda. Vamwe kapi aturugana kapi natugwana yimaliva turande mema}*}

People found that in the new sites they were living in crowded spaces and it was difficult to own anything compared to the riverside villages. The practice of “Shinyanga”, which was an evening gathering around the fire of families for traditional educational purposes, common in Sarusungu began to disappear because children in Kaisosi started moving around at night at shebeens that mushroomed. Later, as Nyamonde explains, “*When elders tried to admonish*

³¹ Kanunga, 29 December 2004.

³² Interview with Ginter Hairwa, Rundu, Kaisosi, 24 December 2004.

children, they became obstinate and would no longer listen”³³ {Monyima vakurona pokuhara kuvarongako, vanona mutwe nokuzuvhasi.} The old activities of night-time traditional dances with drum beatings were slowly but surely being replaced by the all night disco dances at shebeens in Kaisosi. People became mainly dependent on money than farming for survival because they settled in what were formerly their ploughing fields and therefore space for bigger fields became very limited. The Odendaal Comission’s proposal of encouraging livestock farming among the black people in the new relocation sites with the aim of finding an economic market for the Kavango subsistence farmer’s meat in the southern part of Namibia never materialized in Kaisosi camp or elsewhere in Kavango.

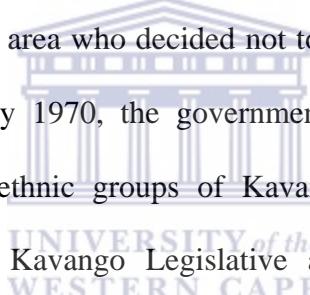


The origin and meaning of Mangarangandja

Mangarangandja was a name of a location that was situated in the area known as Ncwa village in Rundu, Kavango, northeast Namibia. There is some contestation as to how it derived its name. According to Kaundu, it means “people of senseless loud noise”, a reference to the fact that it was occupied by the Ngondjero people, who were different in language and customs from the rest

³³ Kanunga, 29 December 2004.

of the community of Ncwa who called them “Mangarangandja”.³⁴ On the contrary, another interviewee, Nyamonde Kanunga argued that the name Mangarangandja was derived from the small trees that grew in that area known among an Angolan Nyemba language as “Mungalangandja”.³⁵ Thus Mangarangandja means different things for different people. To the Kavango people, this was a derogatory word to refer to people who were different while to the Angolan immigrants themselves it signified “belonging to these small “Mungalangandja” trees.

In the 1950s, the homesteads of Mangarangandja expanded after some victims of flood from Nkondo area who decided not to go and settle in Sarusungu area came here instead. By 1970, the government also sent trucks that brought people from all the ethnic groups of Kavango to come and celebrate the establishment of the  Kavango Legislative and Executive Council for the Bantustan homelands. These people were settled in Mangarangandja area and never returned after the celebrations.

Mangarangandja was in walking proximity from the contract labour compound in Rundu and some returning contract labourers from South African gold mines who did not wish to return home to Ovambo land, Angola and other distant areas in Kavango got married and settled there. By the year 1972,

³⁴ Kaundu, 29 December 2004.

³⁵ Kanunga, 29 December 2004.

Mangarangandja was an overcrowded settlement in a close walking proximity of Nkarapamwe Black Township in Rundu.

Life in Mangarangandja area

Life in this area changed over time. In the early days when there were only few homesteads, people had enough space to settle and also ploughed some fields for subsistence farming. The women sold food at the road side to the returning contract labourers to supplement the money their men got from working as contract labourers. By the early 1970s, life in Mangarangandja changed drastically as an increase in population reduced the space for residential areas. It was no longer a favourite place to raise livestock or to be a subsistence farmer, and most people by then depended on the cash economy. The following description by Shikerete gives an overview of life in Mangarangandja over time.

Mangarangandja was the area in which our colleagues who came from across came to settle and gave it that name. And now, because of other people who use to come from that other side, Mangarangandja became a very “hard” village. Many young men who were found there were pilgrims. It came to happen that many cultures came to exist in it. There were cultures of Umbundu, Mbukushu, Kwangali and Gciriku. All the people came to meet there. If you came there, you would find the ‘I will give you one blow’ people, or you would also find the ‘I will kill you’ people.

It therefore came to happen that when young men clashed with each other in the afternoons, the coward ones would run away. Mangarangandja became Mangarangandja. People were rough. The boys who lived there no longer behaved well. By then, we were also grown-ups now and we would also go into Mangarangandja. Ah, no, because we were born

there and were known it was not a problem, we use to pass through, it was only for those who came from far and entered the area, yes.

In the beginning Mangarangandja was peaceful. There were only activities and peace. But where it ended, it was very rough because there were many people and single women. So, when Magayisa (returning contract labourers) returned from the mines and dropped off in the compound, they would go into Mangarangandja and enjoy themselves. Most of the boys there were unemployed but needed money; those who were employed needed women, well now, stealing activities started. Life became a life that you would no longer call as a good life because by than, everybody who had ‘a broken mind’ and was rude came to Mangarangandja.³⁶

{Mangarangandja mukunda gwakere vakwetetu ava vatundire mwina vawize, yiwo vayagurukire. Makura novantu vena ngavatundu kwina, makura mo Mangarangandja yiyo gwayakere nye asi mukunda gokuninka asi mukunda go “hard”. Vamati wovanzi vakeremo yiwo vagenda. Makura amo kwayakere nye asi nompo nonzi dayakeremo. Nompo do Umbundu, dosi Mbukuhu, dosi Kwangali, dosi Gciriku, navenye vantu yiyo vayaligwanekererere. Towizanye yo fotji tovagwana, ndi kutiha tovagwana, yiyo mwayerenyeye asi nsene vamati vagwanekere nye kositenguko hambara vamati wowoma hambara kutjwayukamo.

Mangarangandja kwayakerenyeye Mangarangandja. Vantu hambara “Roff”. Vamati vayakeremo kapi vakuvhulika. Nye ose nose twayakurunye, nose tatuzi mo Mangarangandja. Awe ose mora yipo vaturetera, apo hena vatudiva kapisi udigu unene, hawe ngatupitimo tupu. Gokuwizamo atunde nako peke, yaa.

Muhoverera Mangarangandja kwakere sompora. Maudano no mpora tupu, ano makura oku zayahulilire kwayakere “Roff”, morwa Magayisa nagatunda oko amo kwakeresanye vantu wovanzi nye, vakurukadi wovadike, Magayisa apa nagawiza mokomboni tagazi mo Mangarangandja yimo gakaliyisira omo. Vamati kapi avarugana twaharako yimaliva, ava wokurugana twaharako vakadi, awe makura no “stealing” tayitamekenye. Eparu lyakerepo kwakere eparu lyokuninka asi kapisi lyewa nawa-nawanye, morwa nkenye

³⁶ Shikerete, 20 December 2004.

*gumwe gakere nomutwe gokuteka go kana kuwiza mo
Mangarangandja.}*

From a small satisfied and peaceful community Mangarangandja had become a large, desperate and violent community with little opportunities of employment. The people sold what became known as “kaffir beer” at their homesteads for income generating purposes and women became objects of sexual molestations from white male soldiers who usually visited the drinking places. After one rape case by the white soldiers in their area, residents testified to Dr. Kampungu, who then wrote to Commissioner Mare as follows:

People at Mangarangandja (also elsewhere) say they receive very often visits from whites who molest them, particularly as regard to sexual matters (they begin by asking for beer as a pretext).³⁷

Dr. Kampungu further reports that one girl who was raped by two white soldiers said she had no choice of resisting the sexual molestation of the white soldiers, as she feared that she could be shot.³⁸ Dr. Kampungu urged the Commissioner of the seriousness of the matter:

*If the behaviour of some whites continues, Christianity will weaken considerably with the result that it would be very easy for our enemies to come in (especially the communist). People ask ‘if these whites have come to help us, why do they do these things? They discourage us in our quest for higher things.*³⁹

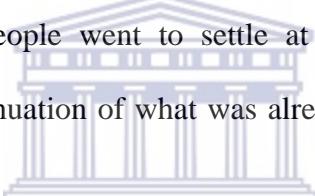
³⁷ NAR9. Vol: 1, a letter by Dr. Romanus Kampungu to the Commissioner Mare titled, “Re: Contravention of immorality act by whites (Probably members of the Military Group), Van R96951”, 18 February 1969.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

The purpose of relocation and the response of the people

By 1972, the settlement of Mangarangandja was dismantled by the colonial authorities through the Kavango administration and the residents were relocated further inland at Kehemu resettlement area. The relocation site was named Kehemu which is a Kavango word meaning “Whatever”. Mandhavela Khasera explains that the name was intended to show the regime that residents were tired and helpless, thus the regime could do whatever it felt like doing.⁴⁰ This resettlement area was situated south of Mangarangandja across the gravel road that stretched from Rundu to Mbukushu area in the east and to Ukwangali area in the west. Other people went to settle at Kaisosi relocation camp. This relocation was a continuation of what was already carried out on Sarusungu in 1971.



While the state alleged that removals were to ensure better conditions for people at Kehemu, for example, better water supplies,⁴¹ the key reason has to be the need to control the black people so as to prevent the penetration of S.W.A.P.O guerillas in Kavango. Victims make their own deductions too of why they were removed as Beatha Kambwali explains, “*So that the whites could construct their buildings there!*”⁴² {*Vatungesa no nzugo dawo vayirumbu!*}

⁴⁰ Mandhavela, K, 2003:4

⁴¹ See, for example, F002-AP 7/3/1*1, 3, Kavango Legislative Council proceedings of the third session, a statement by Reverent Bonifacious Haushiku, (February- March 1972), 214-215.

⁴² Interview with Beatha Kambwali, 24 December 2004.

This refers to a camp that was constructed on a part of Mangarangandja after the people were removed. This was a youth camp that became known as “Ekongoro” camp.⁴³ It was also known as Maria Mwengere youth camp after the name of the Chief of that time. This was a camp that was used by the South African regime to convene community leaders, teachers and learners from schools all over Kavango area for biblical teachings and anti- S.W.A.P.O propaganda in the 1970s and 1980s.

Members of the Kavango Legislative Council opposed the relocation of Mangarangandja in 1972 because it would destroy the identity of Kavango people as riverside people as Reverend Bonifacius Haushiku argued,

I have heard further that they are erecting a fence from east to west along side the river, which means that the people will now move inland and this river subsequently become a wilderness and people born inland will know nothing about the river and of hunting along the riverside.

Hence when I sit on my easy chair I want to be able to see the Kavango flowing. I don't want them to take me to a wild environment because then they won't call me a muKavango anymore. I will be something else.⁴⁴

The people opposed the relocation and argued that if the authorities thought that people need cleaner water rather than collecting it straight from the river, they

⁴³ Note that the word Ekongoro contains two meanings among the Kavango ethnic groups. The first one is rainbow. It is also a name for a large river snake believed among the Kavango people to be the strongest living creature in the Kavango River. It is believed that the youth camp was constructed near the riversite at which this snake resided and the camp was, therefore, named after it.

⁴⁴ NAN, F002-AP 7/3/1*1, 3, Reverent Bonifacius Haushiku.

could come and erect water pumps for fresh water right there in Mangarangandja as Reverend Haushiku further explained:

There is yet another reason they advance why people must move inland, namely that the river water they drink is unhealthy. It is infected with various diseases. If it is that the river is full of germs, which cause people disease, why do they arrange that we move? Why can't they give us fresh water alongside the river? They could devise means to enable people to get water easily from pumps. Rundu is about 3 miles from the river.

*Everybody knows fully well that Rundu lies alongside the river. The people know that the river water is unhealthy and therefore they left that water alone and sank boreholes and installed pumps while they remained settled alongside the river. If that is what was done in Rundu, why is it not done in other areas?*⁴⁵

One would rightly like to think that, as a law making body, the Kavango Legislative Council was the highest decision making body of the new Kavango homeland government that was formed in 1970. But then, the member's usage of the words such as "They arrange or they give us" and "we move" brings forth the serious question of who are the "we"? And who are the "they"? Surely in the words of this Kavango "law maker", their group seems to fall into the category of victims facing relocation and the "they" seems to refer to some other people or group rather than themselves as part of the Kavango administration. This is illustrative of the limited powers of the Kavango Legislative Council in governing the Kavango. Most powers still remained exclusively in the hands of the Chief Director and his various white secretaries of the various departments of the Kavango administration. The powers of the Kavango Legislative Council

⁴⁵Ibid.

were limited as is evident in the following complaint by a Kavango Legislative Council member,

At the beginning of this session they said that what happens in this house is of importance. If a motion or subject is discussed here, even if it is wrong, it cannot be changed before the next session. This matter was brought before to this gathering because difficulties rose after the last session. First the people heard that there are no more removals and later they saw it carried out. Therefore I say, what is decided here should have force. If it is of no force, the people will say to us that we are liars and when the world laughs at us, we shall have nothing to say in answer. Hence I second the words of Rev. Bonifacius that the people remain alongside the river.⁴⁶

It is argued that although the final clearance of the area of Mangarangandja and forced relocation to Kehemu resettlement area occurred after the Kavango people have received their Legislative Council, the relocations were not supported by the Kavango Legislative Council. Although the Kavango Legislative Council previously discussed and rejected the idea of removing the people alongside the river in the last parliamentary session, their decisions were ignored by the Kavango administration and the motion of discontinuation of the planning and removal of people was brought back to parliament debate for the second time. This questioned the power of the Legislative Assembly over the Kavango administration. To some people, this new threat of relocation of Mangarangandja was a betrayal of the idea of no more removals promised to the Kavango people in 1971 as Haushiku explains:

⁴⁶ NAN, F002-Ap.7/3/1*1,3, Speech by parliamentarian Voitto Lyevera, Kavango Legislative proceedings, (February to March 1972), 215.

Honourable chairman, this matter has truly been refused by the Legislative Council that it should not happen. With great confidence, people left the Legislative Council and went to tell their people thereof, that there were no more removals. The people were very pleased to hear that. In the course of the time they noticed fences being erected, after which people were compelled to move. The people were not willing but were compelled to move. The People were difficult and refused. They were than told that soldiers would be fetched to force them out. Hence this rumour went right through the Kavango and the people asked themselves whether they got self-government or have been hoaxed.⁴⁷

From Mangarangandja to Kehemu

The colonial authorities did not only want to relocate the people of Mangarangandja to Kehemu resettlement site but also went as far as loading many people in trucks to deport them out of Mangarangandja back to their respective tribal areas in Kavango so that only those who were born in Rundu and were subjects of Chief Maria Mwengere of the vaShambyu tribe settled in the new site of Kehemu. One interviewee, Rebbekka Kambundu,⁴⁸ said that the idea to endorse people out of town to their respective tribal area came from Chief Maria Mwengere, who felt that they were not her subjects as she explains,

My mother too, my late mother the Chief, insisted too that who ever came from Mbukushu, from Ukwangali, from Mbundja must return, yes, that was when she asked for the

⁴⁷ NAN, F002-Ap 7/3/1*1, 3, statement by Bonifacius Haushiku. Kavango Legislative Council proceedings, (February to March 1972), 214-215.

⁴⁸ Rebbekka Kambundu belongs to the vaShambyu royal family. In 1969 Chief Maria Mwengere appointed her as the chairperson of Nkarapamwe township committee. Since then, she also became known as the forewoman of Rundu town up until today. She is a niece of Chief Maria Mwengere whom she would usually call as her mother than as her aunty in line with Kavango tradition. This is so because she is born of Maria Mwengeres'sister called Mukwahepo. She would only have been Maria Mwengere's niece if she were a child of Maria Mwengere's brother.

lorries so that those people could be deported.⁴⁹ {Vanane navo, nakufa vanane hompa naye ghana para po, ogho atundo kuMbukushu, ogho atundo ku Ukwangali, ogho atundo ku Mbundja vyuka-vyukenu, nhi, ava rombo ngoli roli ndi vatute}

The interviewee suggests that the deportation out of town was a suggestion from the Queen rather than from the colonial authorities. Other interviewees could neither affirm nor reject the above view. Her suggestion, however, indicates that the Chief was afraid that she could lose firm control in her area if it was composed of people whom were not from her tribe. The Commissioner had powers to remove from power any Chief whether elected by the tribe or appointed by the Commissioner if they were no longer co-operative with the authorities. All the Chiefs in Kavango had by then been co-opted in the Bantustan government and were regarded as puppets of the colonial authorities by the local people. Lack of respect for the Chiefs in Kavango as a result of their co-operation with the colonial authorities existed among the local people. This is evident from the letter of Chief Maria Mwengere as early as 1969 when she complained to the Commissioner that her head men Shakandova Haingura was beaten by Markus Ihemba and his children at their shebeen on the ground that he was her foreman. He had been told:

Are you the the foreman of Mwengere? We are not amused by chieftaincy, chieftaincy is now about to finish out in this current world.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Interview with Kambundu, R, Rundu, Safari location, 29 December 2004.

⁵⁰ NAR7, N13/2/15/2, a letter by Chief Maria Mwengere to the Black Affairs Commissioner, 10 November 1969.

{Nani ve foromani ja Mwengere? Atue nokutetukashi uhompa. Uhompa kuna kushana kupua moudjuni uno uo ntaantani}

The deportation of residents from Mangarangandja to their respective tribal area never materialized because people were determined to stay in town and would return to town in the same lorries that deported them out of town. Kambundu further explains:

*Oh goodness! Some of them would come back with the same lorry that deported them. They were deported, some of them remained there up to today but others up to this moment are still here.*⁵¹

{Ani nane! Ghumwe ndjeyi nka yakuvatwara roli ndjo nka akaya nayo, vavatutire, vamwe ne vakakarerera noruno ruvede, vamwe ne hawe noru ruvede mpovali momu.}

The people did not want to return to the rural area any more because they had been absent from rural life for many years and had become used to a town life, dependent on the cash economy. They could no longer succeed an attempt for a rural subsistence farming life. When the idea of deporting people out of Rundu to their respective tribal areas failed, the Kavango administration embarked on forced relocation from the area of Mangarangandja to Kehemu resettlement area. Kaundu dramatically says: “*Mangarangandja was destroyed when the bulldozers had arrived*”⁵² *{Mangarangandja kwayazidirura ago mabure gawizamo.}* Homesteads were destroyed by force with bulldozers and people were loaded into trucks and transported to the new resettlement camp of Mangarangandja. Some of the people, however, moved to the new resettlement

⁵¹ Kambundu, 29 December 2004.

⁵² Kaundu, Kaisosi, 29 December 2004.

site earlier before the authorities could force them out. It was indicated by Oswalt Theart that after Mangarangandja area was forcefully dismantled, the principle of divide and rule was applied and all the Nyemba inhabitants were relocated in Kaisosi, while the Namibian Mbukushu people were settled in Kehemu closer to Rundu.⁵³

The apartheid idea of ethnic segregation was implemented. It can be argued, however, that despite this attempt to segregate Kavango groups from the Angolan Nyemba group, this did not materialize. There were no such steps to make such segregation a serious task, and eventually the Nyemba became mixed up among the Kavango in both Kehemu and Kaisosi relocation areas.



The interviewees said that the plots in the new camp were much smaller than in the former Mangarangandja. There were few public pumps in the new relocation sites and many people had to gather in large numbers at the water points arguing and fighting with each other for space, which caused divisions among the relocated community members. At first, the water provision was for free but few years later, homesteads were told to make monthly contributions for public water consumptions. Despite the protest, various homesteads started to make contributions.⁵⁴ People with no money, therefore, had to travel long distances to the Kavango River to collect water and lack of water became a problem for many people in Kehemu resettlement camp. There were, however,

⁵³ Oswald Theart, “The Nyemba: Namibia’s only unrecognised tribe”, (2001) <http://www.economist.com.na/2001/270701/story35.htm-13k->

⁵⁴ Refer to interview with Shikerete, 20 December 2004.

great similarities of the new relocation site to the previous one of Mangarangandja. People still lived closely as space was limited only in the demarcated area of the camp and people were not allowed to build outside the boundaries. The type of houses in Kehemu were similar to the former Mangarangandja, ranging from huts with thatched roofs on top with mud on the sides and those made of scrap materials such as tins, boxes, cardboards, etc. Kehemu was, as Mangarangandja was by 1970, a noisy place at night as people danced disco at night shebeens.

The authorities fenced up Kehemu camp and the army had night patrols on the outskirts of the surroundings of the camp. Kehemu became a place of fear for outsiders who saw it as a place of disorder marked by violence, rapes, robberies and death. The people of Kehemu also had to pass through an army checkpoint before they were allowed to visit the town of Rundu for their daily activities.⁵⁵

Conclusion

This chapter argues that the removals of Sarusungu and Mangarangandja in the early 1970s were based on the need for political control over black people rather than the need to clear space for the development of the riverbanks for mass agricultural production for Kavango. It showed that although the removals occurred after Kavango became a Bantustan area with the Legislative Council as the highest decision-making body, the Council's proposals against the

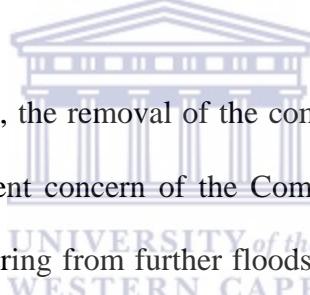
⁵⁵ See Kanunga, Rundu, 29 December 2004.

relocations of the two areas were ignored by the Kavango administration, and this questioned the power of the Council over the Kavango administration.

The chapter showed that the people of Sarusungu and later Mangarangandja initially refused to relocate but were compelled and loaded into trucks and were taken to the resettlement areas of Kaisosi and Kehemu respectively. The people lost properties but were not compensated for any loss or damages. People's lives were affected, as old social bonds were broken and altered. The relocation created a negative image about the system of self-government that was given to the Kavango people in 1970 when it was evident that despite the promise by the Kavango Legislative Council members in 1970 that there were no more removals, they saw them carried out. The people, therefore, began to ask themselves whether they really have self-government or have just been hoaxed. The major colonial removals in Rundu were over and victims have had to live with lifetime memories of removals and its legacies.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has dealt with at least four case studies of relocations in Rundu namely, Nkondo village in the 1950s, forced removal to Nkarapamwe Black Township in 1968, Nkarapamwe, new beginnings and new endings and forced relocations from Sarusungu and Mangarangandja in the 1970s. These relocations contain both similarities and differences. First, they all occurred during South Africa's colonial period and all of them, except for Nkondo village in the 1950s, were based on the colonial intention of economic and political control over the black people.



In the case of Nkondo, the removal of the community to the high grounds was based on the benevolent concern of the Commissioner Kruger to prevent the community from suffering from further floods. Even with a benevolent reason, however, the Commissioner could not make the people of Nkondo to move to the high ground without wielding a stick in his hand.

The forced removal of residents to Nkarapamwe Black Township in 1968 was based on the mounting political pressure and by SWAPO frontier war in the 1960s. The purpose of political security and control overrode the supposed colonial intention for agricultural planning and implementation alongside the Kavango River. The question of whether the relocation to Nkarapamwe Black Township was a forced removal or a voluntary removal remained a contentious

debate among the interviewees. Some interviewees argued that they were not forced to go into the township and that they moved in because it was nearer to their place of work and also because the new houses were attractive. The above view, however, is contrary to the argument of Shikerete in 2005, as well as the testimonies to the police of the 1970s that points to a forced removal. Both perspectives thus exist alongside each other and are contested. The eviction from the township in 1970 was a sign to residents that the colonial government dealt badly with the people of Kavango and, therefore, created feelings of doubts about the forthcoming self-rule of the 1970s.

The relocation of Sarusungu and Mangarangandja occurred despite the efforts by the Kavango Legislative Council to ward it off. The former areas of Sarusungu and Mangarangandja remain almost vacant except, as Khasera explain, for “*A Youth Camp, Zoo, eucalyptus trees and the Uvhungu-vhungu dairy project which were established in the areas of Ncwa and Sarusungu.*”¹



Figure 1 Former graveyard of the former Nkunki settlement families among the Planted eucalyptus trees behind the former Mangarangandja area, (Photo by Kletus Muhena Likuwa, 25 July 2005).

¹K. Mandhavela, “The Rundu removals of the 1960s field report,” (Unpublished report, Windhoek, NAN, 2003), 8.

There are also remains of a miniature golf course facility in the flood plain area of the former Sarusungu area that were built by the South African army but were abandoned later.



Figure 2 Remains of a miniature golf-course facility of the South African Army in the flood plains of the former Sarusungu community, (Photo by Kletus Muhena Likuwa, 25 July 2005).



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The remains of the buildings of a camp of a Portuguese trader who settled there after civil war erupted in Angola around 1975 are today also found in the area of the former community of Sarusungu.

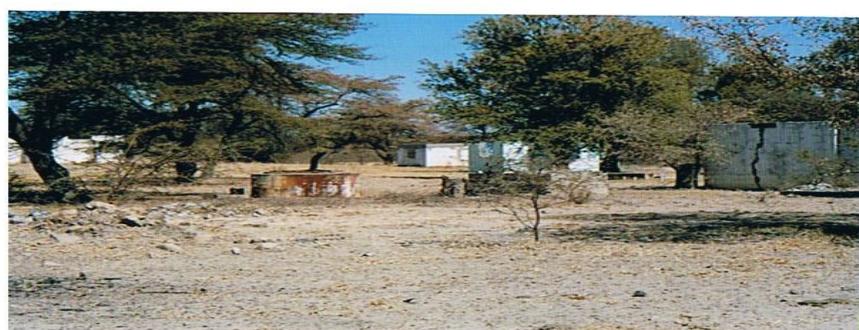


Figure 3 Remains of buildings of the former camp of a Portuguese trader in the area of the former community of Sarusungu, (Photo by Kletus Muhena Likuwa, 25 July 2005).

The people remained in the resettlement camps and never returned to their former areas even after Namibia became an independent country on 21 March 1990. The areas of the former Sarusungu and that of Mangarangandja in the former Ncwa area today falls under the town council of Rundu that claims control of all areas in ten kilometres reach from north, east, south and west of Rundu. This declaration of their area of jurisdiction is not however practical when going into the northern direction, for this would mean going across the other side of the Kavango River into Calai settlement which is certainly on the Angolan side. Mangarangandja lodge is today situated in the former Mangarangandja area and Sarusungu lodge in the former Sarusungu area.

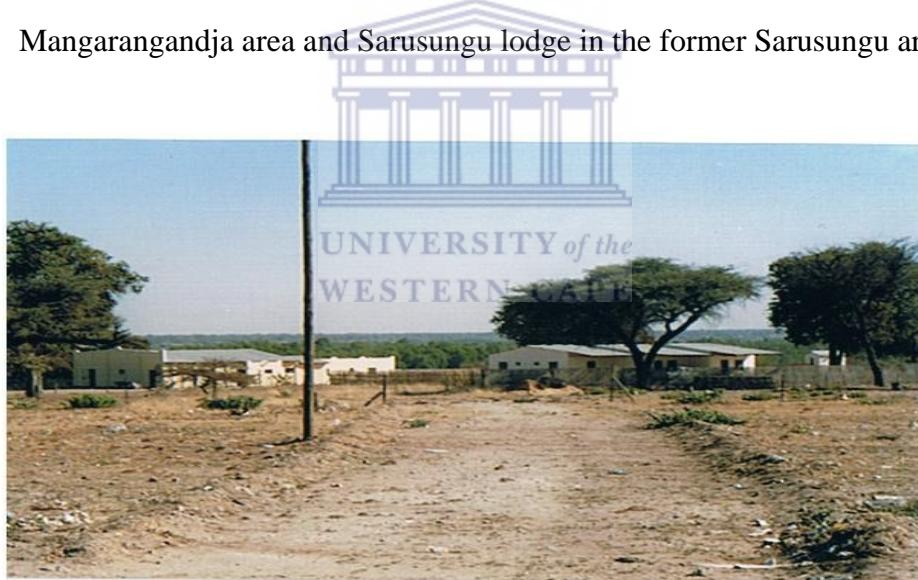
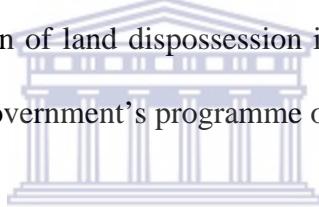


Figure 4 Mangarangandja lodge situated in the former Mangarangandja area, (Photo by Kletus Muhena Likuwa, 25 July 2005).

Apart from their names, however, nothing about them at present seems to recognize the history and heritage of the former Sarusungu and Mangarangandja communities in whose area they are situated. The colonial relocations of Rundu,

Kavango in northeast Namibia has its own legacies, and it emerged during the oral interviews of this research that many residents of Rundu still hold vivid memories of their past experience of forced removals and also of land lost. To many of them, this is not only ancestral land, but also the land that they themselves lived on before they were removed.

Namibia received independence on 21 March 1990. The new democratically elected government at a National Land Conference in 1991 decided not to tamper with land restitution for ancestral land in its land reform process as land ownership has changed hands² In the absence of a policy that allows land restitution, the question of land dispossession in Rundu, therefore, can only be dealt with under the government's programme of land distribution.



By 1998, a National Land Policy was in place whose philosophy aimed to redress, in the spirit of national reconciliation, constitutionality and nation building, the problem of dispossession, discrimination, and inequitable distribution of land that characterised the pre- independence era.³ When the question of land dispossession of pre- independence era is discussed in Namibia, however, it refers to the central and southern part of Namibia that was beyond the police zone. (Police zone is a veterinary border, also known as the red line, which separated northern Namibia from central and southern Namibia).

² See H. Melber, "Contested territory: Land in Southern Africa, the case of Namibia", (Namibia Scientific Society Journal, Windhoek, Volume: 50, 2002), 4-5.

³ See for example, Government of the Republic of Namibia, Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation, "National Land Policy", foreword, (Windhoek, April 1998), iii.

People accept that the question of land restitution is strictly speaking for the majority of the population a non-issue since the majority of the population who are settled north of the police zone were never moved from the land they occupied.⁴ The colonial authority owned all the communal land in Namibia. Chiefs in Kavango, therefore, have been dispossessed of land ownership. This is so because, before colonialism, the Chiefs in Kavango owned all the land, and all their subjects had the right of land occupation through the permission of Chiefs.⁵

After Kavango was declared a reserve area for the occupation of the black people, the land became a communal land in which the state took over ownership of all the land and, Chiefs became salaried officials of the colonial authorities for economic and political control of the local people. This change of ownership of land in Kavango from the Chiefs to the colonial government was a process of dispossession of land ownership of the traditional Chiefs. Chiefs in Kavango did not, however, realise that they have lost ownership of their land to the colonial government. This was because the process of dispossession of land ownership did not occur through wars with the colonial forces but through the colonial power's use of the pen to sign and declare the Kavango as a reserve or communal area which was more difficult to oppose than land dispossession through physical fighting. The dispossession was also not realised because colonialists in Kavango allowed Chiefs to continue to occupy the land and to

⁴ Melber , “Contested territory: Land in Southern Africa”, 4.

⁵ Shikerete, 20 December 2004.

administer it on behalf and benefit of the colonial government. Land dispossession in Rundu, therefore, occurred before the colonial removals discussed here and was strictly speaking a land dispossession for the traditional Chief rather than of individual community members. The removals, however, made black people in Rundu realise that their traditional Chief no longer had the right of land ownership and authority over Rundu and, therefore, they began to enquire when and why Nkarapamwe Black Township and Rundu were detached from vaSambyu tribal area.⁶

With independence, all the urban area lands situated within communal areas have been released by the state from communal land to the respective town councils or municipalities and, the town council provides freehold title, a permission to occupy (P.T.O) certificates or group tenure in these urban areas. All the urban area plot holders are also liable to taxation from the town councils or municipalities.

The people in Rundu, which includes those of Nkarapamwe and the resettlement areas of Kaisosi and Kehemu, therefore, live on the land that belongs to the town council of Rundu. The former resettlement camps of Kaisosi and Kehemu now form part of the informal settlements of Rundu and all residents are regarded as informal settlers. According to the definition in the new National Land Policy, an informal settler is a person occupying land in

⁶ NAR 1/1/55, NAR9, Volume: 13, Nkarapamwe township committee's letter to Commissioner Van Niekerk, 19 June 1970.

unplanned manner, with the owner's expressed or implied permission to be there.⁷ Anybody in Kehemu and Kaisosi, who has not entered in an agreement with the Rundu town council to occupy land in these areas, therefore, are regarded by the National Land Policy as squatters and remain so until they obtain permission to stay there or until they leave the area.⁸

The former residents of Sarusungu and Mangarangandja do not have the right to claim ownership of the land from which they were removed or the land in which they were resettled during the colonial removals because they were never owners of it before and it all belongs now to the town council of Rundu. Removals of people in Rundu continues after independence by the Rundu town council and, if the former residents of Nkondo, Sarusungu and Mangarangandja in Rundu will face any new threat to move out of town, they would only be free to acquire communal land in other parts of Kavango, away from Rundu where they were born and raised and were some of their parents and grand parents are buried.

As South Africa implements its own land reform and restitution policies, the legacy of apartheid rule in Namibia remains and there is little redress for the people as this study of Rundu reveals. People remain unhealed and have but their memories to live with.

⁷ See for example, Government of the Republic of Namibia, Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation, "National Land Policy", (Windhoek, April 1998), 9.

⁸ Ibid.

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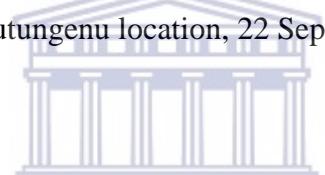
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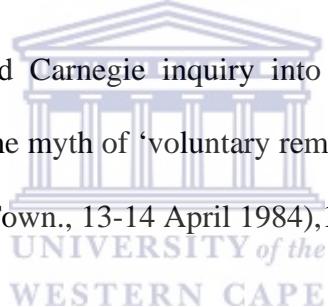
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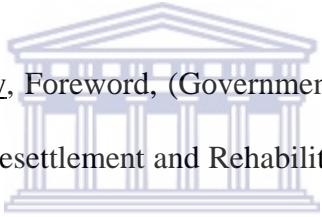
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Appendix

Namibian map showing various districts with their main towns during the South African colonial period.

