

Statement on the Death of the Wayeyi chief: Shikati Calvin Kamanakao 1
March 1, 1961 to May 6, 2003

The Wayeyi people, one of the marginalized groups of Botswana moan the sudden death of their Chief Shikati Calvin Kamanakao. He was installed as chief on April 24th, 1999, a day the Wayeyi have celebrated annually since then. On the basis of tribally discriminating laws, government refused to recognise him. He took the matter to court and the Chieftainship Act was annulled but the government has refused to implement the court order. Sections 77 to 79, which admit members of the Tswana chiefs only to the House of Chiefs, at the exclusion of chief of other tribes such as Wayeyi was found discriminatory. However, the court could not order its amendment as the discrimination was protected in sections 3 and 15 of the same Constitution. Kamanakao and other organisations took the matter to the UN Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination recommended the amendment of the Chieftainship Act, the Tribal Territories Act, Sections 77 to 79 of the Constitution and the elimination of the derogations contained in sections 3 and 15 of the Botswana Constitution permitting discrimination along tribal lines. To date the government has not acknowledged the existence of the court order or the CERD report. To the contrary, the status quo has been enforced with better discriminatory strategies on the ground as in the following examples.

1. Some Wayeyi headmen have been removed from government payroll, as they spoke against the Government White Paper during the Presidential tour on the amendment of sections 77 to 79. This paper was rejected by the Coalition of marginalized tribes. Currently, the Wayeyi have developed strategies to peacefully protest against the imposition of the Batawana Chief over them and the non-recognition of their chief.
2. On May 6, 2003 the Wayeyi chief mysteriously died. He was brought to the hospital unconscious, half dressed and with watermelon spills on his shirt, a vest and a different substance on the collar of his shirt. Twenty-two (22) days later, the Police described their investigations as still at an embryonic stage and they have no suspect. They are not interested in investigating his clothes or the car he was driven in.
3. On May 14th, 2003 his ex-wife, who is a member of the eight Tswana speaking tribes sponsored a few relatives to oppose the burial of the chief at the tribes capital village of Gumare. She wanted him buried at Motopi just like an ordinary person. The matter went to court and the ruling allowed Wayeyi to bury the Chief at Gumare.
4. On the eve of his burial, the Government, through the Land Board obtained a court order to bar Wayeyi from burying their Chief in the Cultural Centre for which they have a 50-year land lease. They were instructed to bury him at the commoners cemetery. They defied the court order and buried him at the Cultural centre. The matter is still in court, scheduled for Friday June 13th.
5. In February 2003, The Batswapong, one of the marginalized tribes were denied the right to install their chief, by the Minister of Local Government who referred

them to get permission from the Tswana speaking Bangwato tribe. The Bangwato used bitter words and bittled Batswapong as landless servants.

6. The Basarwa continue to be forced out of the Central Kalahari Game Reserve.

Tribal discrimination has taken deep roots in Botswana. The Parliament is believed to be divided with the President's camp fighting for reform. On the other hand, another faction led by the Minister of Presidential Affairs is fighting for the status quo. This situation is not only volatile but un-conducive to address the issue objectively by government. Further, continued discrimination and intimidations by government forces on the oppressed people is most likely to cause conflict despite the patience exercised since independence. Peace therefore is being challenged in Botswana, which has a record of stability and an example of democracy. To the contrary, peace in Botswana has been defined as the absence of war and the silence of the majority of the oppressed citizens. Globalisation must provide a forum for the international community to take interest in the affairs of Botswana now than later. Peace in Botswana is peace elsewhere. Botswana is largely dependent on other countries, hence should not be immune to a friendly advice to prevent a major challenge to peace. The new architecture of peace should take root through collaborative research on the cultural issues in Botswana and educate the international community on the realities that are threatening peace.

We are calling on the international Community to study the death of those who fight for the linguistic and cultural rights of their people. To date Mr. Hardbattle of the Basarwa died immediately upon his arrival from the United Nations where he had raised the issue of the discrimination of the Basarwa in or around 1996. Mr. Mokgalagadi of the Bakwena, though he belonged to the Tswana speaking groups, he was a supporter of the liberation of the non-Tswana speaking tribes and belonged to the opposition party. When he contested his chieftainship he died in a car accident. Shikati Calvin Kamanakao died after the Wayeyi held a successful cultural festival in Maun at the same time the Tswana speaking Batawana Chief had a wedding, which was characterized by low attendance of the local people and the lack of labour. These and others need to be investigated but we have no funds to do that. There is also need to investigate the use of diamond funds to fan tribalism by government, engineer ethnic conflict through bribery and divide and rule and discriminate along tribal lines. Should current acts continue, Botswana is likely to experience the worst ethnic conflict in Africa. But is preventable through intervention by the global village.

As in the words of the liberation fighter Nicolae Titulescu '*Those who give up their life for an idea are heroes whose last will and statement is written in two vocables: go on!*' Indeed the struggle must go on even more intensively to the better end. We shall continue to reject the imposition of chiefs from other tribes. We shall also continue to reject and defy the implementation of tribalism enshrined in the laws. We shall continue to disengage and isolate government puppets that attempt to derail the struggle and divide us. We shall reject cosmetic bills brought to Parliament for ratification. We shall always be ready to face challenges no

matter how difficult. Shikati has his mission accomplished. Through his work the nation and the international community has a better understanding of the internal dynamics of Botswana's cultural complexion. It is clear that the country's laws discriminate over 65% of the population. It is up to the leadership to work towards true peace and unity and not the simplistic absence of war. Through his vision, Shiyeyi is now one of the written languages with reading materials. While in Harare on a Human Rights course, Shikati negotiated with the Canadian High Commission for funding to develop five of Botswana's unwritten languages. His main vision was a society that cherishes equality for all before the law. He valued a simple state recognition of our cultural diversity as a rich resource to harness sustainable unity. He hated oppression, deplored institutionalised tribalism and rejected to be discriminated against. He cherished human dignity, respect and love for all. The Wayeyi and his supporters World-wide will remember him for generations to come.

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