

SUBMISSION TO THE LAND REFORM CONFERENCE FOR THE SANGWALI DISTRICT IN EASTERN CAPRIVI:

National Archives
of Namibia

LUPALA ISLAND: The Mayei were resettled from Lupala Island under the Odendaal plan in 1969 and were restricted to the area they live-in today. Before the implementation of this plan, these people used to migrate from the Island to the present areas, then referred too as the dry or forest area during times of heavy floods.

They would move back to the flat or wet areas during drought period, such as the one which hit the region for the past 10 years, culminating in the drying-up of rivers and rivulets as well as the Lake Lyambezi.

Although this area was declared a Nature conservation area by the former government, it is the people's wish that the state of affairs be reversed. In fact the agreement between the former government and the local headmen was that Nkasa Island be a game reserve area, but not Lupala which together with Nkasa had been declared Mamili Game reserve.

The Mayei feel that they have been robbed and have not benefitted from these claims, which were their places of rescue as I have explained in my first and second paragraph. It is even regretted that having relinquished Nkasa, Lupala followed without consent. You may disagree with me, but it is true that some of the full-time employed workers also possess farms. Such people have a privilege of gaining double income whereas these communal people have none.

The farmers can also hunt on these farms, whilst the Mayei and other communal dwellers could be catching fish as well as obtaining other food from areas such as in Lupala.

Lupala is needed for the commodities it offers to the Mayei. Special species of grass used for building houses and scortyards (lapa) such as reeds, palms and papyrus for mats to sit and sleep on can only be obtained on riverside. Palms only grow on the Island only.

Other essentials food like fish, waterlilies (Mashela), cat-tail grass to mention but a few are obtainable only on the Island. Here I am referring to people who are not economically self-sufficient, unable to buy meat or mealie-meal every day, people whose daily life depends on-nature. If there is no rain other means are devised for survival, i.e, the natural food mentioned above .

These people's cattle also depend on the Island for water.

How can people develop their culture or tradition if they are separated or restricted from their ancestral places. Here I would like to mention that it's traditional culture to go back to the graves and communicate with the ancestors in times of difficulties such as the droughts and other woes that befall people. Take away these places and you have destroyed the historical fire that encandles a nation, and a nation without a history is doomed to fail.

It is normal practices to revere these places, just like any other culture or people any where in Namibia, the most evidence being the Mandume and Kutako graves in Windhoek and Okahandja respectively.

It is disappointing that the people's government would discriminate against certain individual groups or persons by confirming claims disadvantaging others.

I believe people should come first than nature, even if the Mayei were given freedom of movement in Lupala, nature or game would still be protected, in fact poachers are outsiders.

In this way the government could teach responsibility among the masses. No one can shoot an animal without authorisation.

Let the government develop areas such as Lupala (Mamili game reserve) as presently they are game reserves in name only.

People should be conscientised to be aware of the importance of their environment. Committees such as the one established to combat the stealing of diamonds could be instituted in villages. Depriving people of their land increases unemployment and crimes.

This is my submission

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