

**17TH UN WORKING GROUP FOR INDIGENOUS
POPULATIONS**

PRESENTATION BY MAMA RAMPADI

Kgaiso! Greetings from the First People of the Kalahari, in Botswana.

My name is Mama Rampadi, Bushman (also known as San) lady from Botswana. I am the coordinator of a Bushman organisation called "Kgeigani Kweni", the First People of the Kalahari.

Our main mission is to assist the Bushmen who have lived in the Central Kalahari Game Reserve for many centuries, to remain on their ancestral land.

The Botswana Government has made it clear that it wishes the Central Kalahari Game Reserve to be a place only for animals, and not for its people. It appears to us that our Government respects the rights of animals above those of the Bushmen. It also appears to us that our Government does not understand the rights of Indigenous Peoples, as are accepted in the world today.

The Botswana constitution states that every Motswana citizen has the right to live where he or she chooses. This does not apply to the Bushmen. Approximately 1500 residents of the CKGR have been moved off the land in the past five years, and less than 500 brave people remain. They are bribed to leave with promises of development, and good land, which promises are not met. Those that move end up on poor land, and their culture starts to disappear.

Our plea is for the Botswana Government to learn by what has been achieved in South Africa, and other enlightened countries. Our people have lived amongst the animals for centuries without destroying the wildlife. Indigenous peoples know how to coexist with conservation. The Government should work with us, not against us.

We appeal to this forum for support in our struggle for our people's land and dignity.

Thank you Madame Chairperson.

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