

**United Nations: Commission on Human Rights
Working Group on Indigenous Populations
Seventeenth Session, 26-30 July 1999, Geneva**

**THE HADZABE OF TANZANIA:
THE LAND SITUATION IN JULY 1999**

By Simon Charles and Julius Madulu

Since the Conference on Indigenous Peoples from Eastern, Central and Southern Africa held at Arusha, Tanzania in January 1999, the situation of the Hadzabe has continued to become worse. Every day and in all areas more of our land is taken.

At the village of Mongo wa Mono, people of other groups are continuing to move onto our land without our permission. But we are taking a census of the names of all those who have occupied land in Mongo wa Mono village area without our permission and are seeking the help of local government to persuade them to return to their own village areas.

This year at Mangola in Karatu District farmers have taken over land on which we were living and we have had to move to join other Hadzabe inside the Ngorongoro Conservation Area where farmers cannot enter. We are traditional owners of part of the Conservation Area but we are concerned that our ownership rights are not at present recognized. We are living within the Conservation Area but we fear for our future there. We want to continue to keep our land outside the Conservation Area and within the Conservation Area and we want this land to be properly registered as our property. It has been our property since the beginning. We also want the support of local and central government and of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations of the United Nations so that we can keep our land.

For us it is essential that every Hadzabe community has its own land in its own area. We will not agree to any proposal to move us away from our own lands. We fear that many of our communities will soon be landless and we will not accept this. We must have our land.

We have always been concerned about conservation and if our land is returned to us we will make sure that the land is protected – that the trees, the other vegetation, the water sources, the animals and the birds, bees and other insects are looked after so that our children and our children's children can enjoy them just as we and our parents and grandparents have enjoyed them.

We ask for the active help and support of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations of the United Nations in our efforts to retain our land rights. The problem is very urgent. We must not be left without any land.

WGIP 29/EAT.T2A/3

Conference on Indigenous Peoples from Eastern, Central and Southern Africa.
Arusha, Tanzania. 17th - 23rd January 1999.

THE HADZABE OF TANZANIA.

By Gudo Mahiya, Gonga Petro and Simon Charles.

We Hadzabe are hunter-gatherers living in four districts in Tanzania: Mbulu and Karatu Districts in Arusha Region, Iramba District in Singida Region and Meatu District in Shinyanga Region. Our total population is about one thousand people. We speak a click language which is unlike any other language in Tanzania. Everybody recognizes that we are the original inhabitants, the first people to live here. Everyone else came later.

Until recently we lived entirely by hunting and gathering:

- by hunting eland, buffalo, zebra, wildebeeste, hartebeeste, impala and other animals with bows and poisoned arrows.
- by gathering baobab fruit, undushibi berries, //ekwa roots, the honey of wild bees and many other bush foods. We did not cultivate and we had no cattle, sheep or goats. Now our life is much more difficult. Most of our land has been taken by other people. Few game animals remain and even our undushibi trees are being cut down by other people to clear land for farming or to make into charcoal. Land clearance is reducing the plants and trees on which the bees depend for nectar and the amount of honey we obtain is much reduced.

For many years the Government has tried to change us into farmers. We were taught to cultivate at Yaeda Chini, Munguli, Endamaghan and Iramba Ndogo. But we prefer our own food and the hunting and gathering way of life and only a few of us are living by farming. Most of the best farming land has anyway been taken from us by strangers. At Munguli we were given a school and a dispensary but both of these together with our houses and all of the farming land there have been taken by strangers.

Other Tanzanians often think of our land as unused and empty. But it is not empty. Every part of it is owned and used by us. We have looked after it well. Until so much of our land was taken, the animals, the bees and the plants all multiplied well. We were never hungry. All our neighbours suffered from famines. In the history of the Hadzabe there has never been a famine. No Hadzabe ever died of hunger when we had our land. But now that so much of our land has been taken and is still being taken, many Hadzabe are hungry.

For our future and for the future of our children, we must have our land. Without land, we will have nothing. We are citizens of Tanzania and our land rights need to be protected like those of other citizens of Tanzania. Why are our fellow Tanzanians taking our land without our permission? We are all Tanzanians.

We Hadzabe want development. We want to develop trade in bush products - in honey, in baobab fruits, in local medicines and in grass mats. We want to control the tourists who come to Hadzabe country and to make contracts with them. We want as free citizens of Tanzania to choose our own development on our own land without being told what we have to do.

Translation from Swahili original.

A LETTER WRITTEN BY THE HADZABE OF MONGO WA MONO VILLAGE TO THE DISTRICT COMMISSIONER OF MBULU DISTRICT TANZANIA ON 23rd NOVEMBER 1997. A FEW DAYS LATER THE DISTRICT COMMISSIONER HAD A MEETING WITH THE HADZA WHO HAD WRITTEN THE LETTER.

Village of Mongo wa Mono,
P.O. Box, 116,
Mbulu.
23/11/1997.

The District Commissioner,
P.O. Box 1,
Mbulu.

RE: The Land of the Village of Mongo wa Mono.

Concerning the above matter, we the people of the village of Mongo wa Mono would like to write a letter to you about some serious difficulties in our village. We truly believe that our present difficulties are greater than past ones. Our land has been taken by strangers from different places. We believe that without land there can be no development, so we ask the Government to take steps so that our land is not lost.

Our village consists of one hundred Hadzabe households and only four or five Tatoga households. The village of Mongo wa Mono has been given a title deed for its land which has been registered by the Government.

Our difficulty is that the land of our village has been invaded. Strangers are coming in and taking village land without the permission of our village authorities. We have held several meetings to advise these strangers to leave but they are keeping hold of our land and they are threatening to kill us. District Commissioner, we ask the Government to help us to return these people to their own villages.

District Commissioner, there is [also the issue of] destruction of our water sources and our environment. Twenty one water sources have been destroyed so the game animals have no water and other game animals have fallen into the wells [of the incoming pastoralists] and have lost their lives. Many other game animals have moved away from our land and have gone to other places. Thousands of trees have been cut down causing aridity and many other trees on which we depend for food have been destroyed. Bees are being deprived of flowers (their food source). So in future there is a threat that our country will be deprived of water, game animals and trees.

District commissioner, with this letter we request you to remove the strangers who have invaded our village. We ask that they be removed immediately or, if not, that they pay damages for the destruction that they have caused in our village. Because the Government has demarcated the

boundaries and installed beacons, for future years we would not want any person to enter without the authority of our village General Assembly.

This land is our land from the beginning. Through all the years we have lived here. We have buried our ancestors right here.

- The Iraqw have their land
- The Chagga too have their land
- The Sukuma too have their land

So, are we to be without land? Why does the Government agree to the taking away of our land? The land that remains for the Hadzabe is only the land of the village of Mongo wa Mono. In Mbulu District in the Sipunga area, the land has been taken. In Karatu District, in the area of Mang'ola and Endamaghan the land has been taken. In Iramba District, Hadzabe land has been taken. In Meatu District all the Hadzabe land has been taken.

In the world of today a Government should not be ready to agree that any people should be deprived of their rights to their land. This issue is not only a matter for here, it is not only a matter for Tanzania but is a matter for the whole world. The land of our village must be protected and our brothers and other relatives in Sipunga, Mang'ola, Endamaghan, Iramba and Meatu must be given their land which must be registered and safeguarded.

District Commissioner, we hope efforts will be made by you as soon as possible to remove the strangers who are on our land and also to ensure that this invasion does not happen again. We the people of the village of Mongo wa Mono also ask that all Hadzabe be given their land.

Without land there is no development even for the coming generations. We Hadzabe cannot accept that other Tanzanians have land, but we have no land.

Yours,

Members of the Village of Mongo wa Mono.

1. Gongu Petro - Chairman
2. Naftali Z. Kitandu - Representative.
3. Yesaya Meza - “
4. Mahiya Matulu - “
5. Kampala Kizali - “
6. Esraeli Kwangu - “
7. Mosses Sigirigi - Secretary
8. Mrs Mahiya - Representative.
9. Mrs Yesaya - “
10. Miss Agnes Mussa - “
11. Richard Baalow - “
12. Sagwi Philipo - “