

# THE WITNESSES for the Bushmen



## 1. George Silberbauer

**WAS** the District Commissioner of Ghanzi District, Bechuanaland, from 1954-1967.

Silberbauer spent a number of years living with the G/wi Bushmen in the central Kalahari, and his reports to the British government about the threats to their land led to the creation of the Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR) in 1961.

**TESTIFIED** that the principal motive of establishing the CKGR was to provide a haven for hunters and gatherers and the animals they depended on into the indefinite future.

### QUOTE:

- 'The prime objective [in creating the reserve] was the welfare of the people, and the good condition of the wildlife was a necessary condition for that welfare.'



## 2. Amogelang Segootsane

**IS** a Bakalakgadi Bushman from Gugamma in the CKGR.

**TESTIFIED** that in 2002, the Botswana government threw away the water reserves in his village, dismantled his huts without his permission and took his wife away by force to Kaudwane resettlement camp. He had no choice but to follow her there.

### QUOTES:

- 'It is clear that these people [from the government] came to announce a decision, not to consult'.
- 'We know how to utilise wildlife and we know how to conserve'.
- 'When I said I am not relocating they went straight to my house and started dismantling it'.



### 3. Tshokodiso Boishelwane

IS a Gana Bushman from Metsiamanong.

**TESTIFIED** that the Government had been visiting his settlement for 15 years trying to persuade the people to relocate. Because no one agreed to relocate they were given six months' warning before services – including provision of drinking water, health facilities, food rations and pensions - would be cut off. In February 2002 a team of people arrived with many trucks and took his wife by force. He asked them to stop but the District Commissioner told him that because he had not given her a wedding ring, she was not his legal wife.

#### QUOTES:

- 'They poured away our water and took the tank away'.
- 'I told them to stop dismantling my house but they refused and said that this decision was made by the District Commissioner therefore they would continue implementing it'.
- 'It [the CKGR] is the place where God created me. It is a place God has given me and I have been surviving in that area for so long and I like it and for me it is a good place to live in'.

### 4. Motsoko Ra mahoko

IS a Tsila Bushman from Gope (the area over which De Beers holds a retention licence).

**TESTIFIED** that services were cut off and his wife was taken. He went to find his wife in Kaudwane resettlement camp, a four day walk from Gope. He and his wife then managed to return to Gope on foot, but found donkeys and goats had been let into their fields and had destroyed their crops. They were then taken back to Kaudwane.

#### QUOTES:

- 'This was not a polite negotiation. They were fighting me'.
- '[Kaudwane has] lots of shebeens [illegal drinking dens] and bars selling beer and drunk people and

they play loud music and it is too noisy for me. I did not like that place.’

- ‘There is nothing to hunt there...there is nothing to gather in Kaudwane. We just stay in the village. I just live there. There is nothing I can do except go to fetch some water’.



## 5. Mongwegi Thobogelo

**IS** a 47-year-old Gana woman from Molapo who was evicted in 2002 but then later managed to return home. She was evicted again in 2005 (during the court case) and now lives in New Xade. Molapo is now completely empty, although her and other peoples’ huts and belongings still remain there.

**TESTIFIED** that her ancestors’ graves are all in or near to Molapo. She visited the graves often and used the soil for medication. She was never asked whether she was willing to leave Molapo and was not given any information about New Xade, the resettlement camp to which she was taken against her will.

### **QUOTES:**

- ‘In my life I have never experienced a situation whereby people move away from their ancestors or their ancestors graves’.
- “They came in trucks in large numbers into Molapo....I have never seen such a number of vehicles in Molapo...I was frightened and feared for my life, thinking are we going to live or survive if people come in such numbers’.
- ‘I asked those who were dismantling my huts as to where there were taking my huts and the things I used...They told me ‘keep quiet – you are wasting our time’.



## 6. Xanne Gaothlobogwe

**IS** a Gana Bushman from Molapo. He has been living in New Xade resettlement camp since 2002.

**TESTIFIED** that before the evictions, people from the Department of Wildlife had been discussing with the residents of Molapo a way of zoning the game reserve so that people could continue living there in harmony with wildlife. Those discussions suddenly stopped. They were told they would be relocated and they should prepare their belongings. He went to Metsiamanong to see what was happening there and when he returned to Molapo his huts had been dismantled.

### **QUOTES:**

- ‘She [Assistant Minister Kokorwe] told us that Government does not want us to continue living in that area because Government has got some activities which need to be carried out in that area’.
- ‘We told them we were not moving and they then went ahead to dismantle people’s huts’.
- ‘At New Xade I am just idling, unlike in Molapo where I used to go to my fields to plough or round up my livestock’.



## 7. Loslobe Mooketsi

**IS** a thirty-nine year-old Bakalalgadi Bushman from Kikau.

**TESTIFIED** that when they came to tell them to relocate, his father, the headman of Kikau, was sick in hospital. The official, Norman Kelebemang (one of the government witnesses), said they could not see their father in hospital unless they agreed to relocate. Finally, they ‘gave up’ and relocated. He believed he would be able to return to Kikau even if he relocated to New Xade.

### **QUOTES:**

- ‘My property was assessed without my agreement but nonetheless the assessment was carried out and the property was carried away’.

- 'My father's ailment was used as a bait because I could not get transport to go and check on my father'.
- 'They told me an untruth about my father. They said my father said I should relocate....When on arrival [at the hospital] I went to him and asked him about this relocation he told me that he did not say what I was told'.



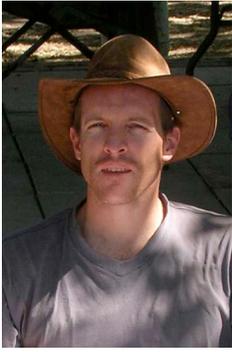
## 8. Matsipane Mosetlhanyane

**IS** a Bakalakgadi Bushman from Gugamma.

**TESTIFIED** that there were a number of meetings held before the evictions, including one with Assistant Minister Kokorwe, who told the people at the settlement that the government would stop their rations, services, water provision and issue of hunting licences within six months. Before the evictions they had had meetings with government officials who had made them think the game reserve would be re-organised so that they could keep stock there.

### **QUOTES:**

- 'She [Assistant Minister Kokorwe] said those who agreed to move should raise their hands but none raised their hands to agree to relocate.'
- 'The water in the reservoir was opened so that the water would spill away'.
- 'They [the relocation officials] spoke to me raising their voices and I also feared for myself and I could see that they may manhandle me, and my wife told me to stop talking to them'.



## 9. Arthur Albertson

**IS** a South African ecologist who worked as a consultant for the Bushmen, helping them to map out their traditional territories.

**TESTIFIED** that the Bushmen have little impact on wildlife levels in the Kalahari, and that wildlife in the area was increasing before the evictions in 2002. Also testified that in consultation with him and others, the Botswana's Department of Wildlife had drafted a comprehensive management plan for the reserve. This plan allowed the Bushmen to remain in the reserve and to continue to hunt and gather there. The plan was suddenly withdrawn when the relocations were announced and replaced with a new one that removed all references to Bushmen living inside the reserve.