



OPEN PETITION
06 April 2014

**GRANT CAPRIVIANS THEIR POLITICAL FREEDOM AND INDEPENDENCE
INSTEAD OF FORCED REPATRIATION**

Attention:

**UNHCR Botswana
UNHCR Namibia
Minister of Foreign Affairs, Botswana
Minister of Foreign Affairs, Namibia**

Caprivi Concerned Group (CCG) has learnt that Government of Namibia is tirelessly trying to entice the government of Botswana and the United Nations (UN) to forcefully repatriate Caprivians by all means possible.

We understand the hardship which Caprivi refugees have gone through since 1998 and we are aware that hundreds of them have passed on and buried in foreign lands. It is a fact that their hardships in Botswana are also experienced by other refugees and non-refugees in Caprivi and Namibia, for example. Not all their problems are natural or universal but some of them are administrative problems – which include unemployment, denied or delayed health care, poor sanitation and restrictions on freedom of movement and others.

We are also aware that some of these refugees have been repatriated from as early as 1999 due to personal or family problems back home but most of them have been subjected to torture, imprisonment and some were forced to testify against their own brothers in Caprivi high treason trial.

On our part, like other independent civil or rights organizations, we have been calling for a political solution to the Caprivi political dispute, a dispute in which Caprivians argue that Namibia is forcefully governing them. However, GRN have constantly rejected compromise solutions such as political dialogue and a referendum over this dispute.

Besides, there are a few facts amongst others, which Botswana, UNHCR and Namibia should have known better and therefore acknowledge as follows:

1. That Namibia is illegally governing Caprivi Strip and her people.
2. That all Caprivi refugees in Dukwi or elsewhere followed their political and traditional leaders as members of a political organization, the United Democratic Party (UDP) and the Mafwe tribe.
3. And that both this political party's leadership and its followers went into exile fearing political persecution and to seek peaceful means to liberate Caprivians from the Namibian brute and foreign government.
4. That in both cases above, it is ONLY the leadership of UDP which must be engaged directly by UN, Botswana or Namibia on any issue regarding its members or followers who are referred to as refugees.

5. That the family members and political cadres of these concerned Caprivian refugees in Botswana or elsewhere whom GRN wants to repatriate are in Namibian prisons for their political opinion while others are currently in mass graves.
6. And that this political party (the UDP) to which they (Caprivi refugees) all belong to was banned in Namibia by the same Namibian government in September 2006.
7. That the laws of Namibia were only extended by Act of Parliament (Act 10 of 1999) in Namibia to apply in Caprivi Strip in June 1999, a year after the Caprivi political leadership had already disputed the Namibian government over Caprivi and fled to exile.
8. That concerned Caprivi refugees and many Caprivians at home, even in the high treason trial have publicly dispute the authority of Namibia over them, refer to the 28 November 2011 submission by Caprivian community in Dukwi and recent court records from the main Caprivi treason trial.
9. That there is a mass grave of seven Caprivians in Katima Mulilo, who were executed by the same Namibian government in 1999, and that CCG has clues of where it is exactly found.
10. That there are more than twenty four (24) Caprivi political prisoners who died in Namibian prisons due to negligence, unhealthy environment and food, and poison by state agents.
11. That Caprivi Strip is the poorest territory administered by Namibia with high poverty, unemployment and HIV prevalence, the National Planning of Namibia can attest to this.

12. That Caprivians do not have the right to peacefully protest on issues regarding the Caprivi political detainees and dispute, reference to Caprivi Concerned Group which was totally denied to peacefully demonstrate calling for a political solution in 2012 and 2013.

Given this background, it is up to the government of Botswana and the UNHCR (acting on behalf of the United Nations) to collaborate with Namibia in its political war and international crimes against the Caprivian nation, where political intolerance, subjugation, war crimes, torture and political detentions are imminent.

We have known the good character of the Botswana government in political issues within Southern Africa and we haven't realized its bad character thus far. We live to see if Botswana will conform to Namibia's ill political character or not.

We suggest that Botswana, Namibia, and UNHCR or UN should uphold, protect and ensure the political rights of Caprivians, which is the right to self-determination, and therefore grant them the freedom and independence they desire and deserve.

Thank you.



Edwin M Samati
Secretary General
Caprivi Concerned Group

Date

Cc Namrights, Ditswanelo, UDP, Namibia Attorney General