

The Bakwena ba Mogopa: Victims of a forced removal, 1982-1984

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1. Introduction

The forced removal of especially large numbers of black people from traditional white rural areas to be separately located in residential areas, constituted a major aspect of the South African Government's policy of separate development. Forced removal can be defined as a process of control, division and segregation of people. It is achieved by forcing people to move from one place of residence to another without their opinion and/or approval.¹ In South Africa, forced removals were carried out to implement the apartheid policy which was aimed at segregated development in separated geographical, political and economic terms.²

The Bakwena assumedly crossed the Botletli (Zambezi) River from central Africa. This was before the eleventh century when the Bakwena was still part of the larger single Sotho group.³ Later the Sotho group subdivided into a number of groups, namely the Bahurutshe, the Bakwena, the Bakgatla, Bakgalagadi, Bafokeng and the Barolong.⁴

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1. E. UNTERHALTER, *Forced removal: The division, segregation and control of people of South Africa* (IDAF, London, 1987), p. 1.
 2. L. PLATZKY and C. WALKER (Eds.), *The surplus people: Forced removals in South Africa* (Raven Press, Johannesburg, 1985), p. 291.
 3. NATIONAL ARCHIVES DEPOSITORY (NAD), Pretoria, N.J. van Warmelo Collection, K32/25, S.385: G.P.Sepeng, History of the Bakwena ba Mogopa and the Baphalane, 20 September 1939, p. 1; P.L. BREUTZ, The tribes of Rustenburg and Pilansberg districts (Department of Native Affairs, Ethnological Series, no. 28, Government Printers, Pretoria, 1953), p. 84.
 4. H.J. VAN ASWEGEN, *History of South Africa to 1854* (Academica, Pretoria, 1990), p. 60. *Historia*, 45(1), May 2000 pp. 71-87.

In 1911, under the leadership of kgosi Motsile II and Kgosana Thomas More, the Bakwena ba Mogopa bought the farm Swartkop no. 605 IP in the Ventersdorp district from the Berlin Missionary Society. This was agreed at a tribal meeting on 3 March 1911 at Heuningvlak in the Heilbron district.⁵ The tribe only occupied the farm in 1913 after it had been registered as their property. This coincided with the passing of the Native Land Act of 1913, which ironically later served as the basis for removing the tribe from the very same area. Their settlement became known as Mogopa.⁶

By 1931, the tribe had increased and there was need for more land. The community raised more money from the farming enterprises on Swartkop and bought a second farm, Hartebeeslaagte no. 82IP, from the Lydenburg Gold Field Co. (Ltd). It was a fertile farm, good for both grazing and crop farming and adjacent to the first farm, Swartkop. The buying of Hartebeeslaagte orchestrated self-sufficiency and the building of a modest village.⁷ These two farms did not appear in the list of scheduled areas under the Native Land Act of 1913.⁸ This meant that they were outside areas reserved for black occupation and due for a forced removal.

The economic stability among the Bakwena ba Mogopa of Ventersdorp was due to the diversified and mixed economic system. This system ensured survival by combining migrant wages with subsistence crops. Additional income was also derived from leasing some unused land to other people for business purposes.⁹

2. Some reasons for the forced removals

2.1 Clearance of “black spots”

When the 1913 Native Land Act divided South Africa into separate areas for black and white occupation, Mogopa was not included in the schedule areas for black occupation. As it was outside the areas designated for black occupation, it

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5. NAD, Pretoria, N.J. van Warmelo Collection, K32/23, S.78: T.S. More, Additions to history of Bakwena ba Mogopa of Ventersdorp, 27 September 1938, pp. 3-4; Interview, B.K.M. Molokoe/A Boikanyo, 3 April 1996; Interview, B.K.M. Molokoe/D. Molefe, 3 April 1996; NAD, Pretoria, N.J. van Warmelo Collection, K32/23, S.78: T.S. More, Additions to history of Bakwena ba Mogopa of Ventersdorp, 27 September 1938, p. 3.
 6. Interview, B.K.M. Molokoe/M. Kgatitsoe, 25 September 1995; The Sunday Press, 4 December 1983; The Black Sash, “Mogopa rebuilds the story of resistance”, *Sash*, 26(4), February 1984, p. 2; NAD, Pretoria, N.J. van Warmelo Collection, K32/23, S.78: T.S. More, Additions to history of Bakwena ba Mogopa of Ventersdorp, 27 September 1938, pp. 3-4.
 7. C.L. PEART, “Forced removals: One community’s experience”, *Arena*, 1994, pp. 21-22.
 8. UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA, Statutes of the Union of South Africa, 1913 (Government Printers, Cape Town, 1913), pp. 460-474.
 9. B.K.M. MOLOKOE, A historical study of the Bakwena ba Mogopa as victims of forced removals, 1983-1984 (MA, PUCHE, 1998), p. 28.

was eventually classified as a “badly situated” area (“black spot”) in a “white” rural farming district.¹⁰

Mogopa remained a “black spot” in “white” South Africa. The introduction of the clearance of “black spots” through the Native Resettlement Act, no. 19 of 1954, signalled problems for its residents. As the occupants of a “black spot”, they were liable for removal from a “white” area. It was for this reason that Mogopa people were removed to Pachsdraai in the interests of grand apartheid.¹¹

2.2 Homeland consolidation

The Bakwena ba Mogopa were moved to Pachsdraai among others due to the homeland consolidation policy. Bophuthatswana was highly instrumental in the forced removal of the Bakwena ba Mogopa to Pachsdraai. Both the South African and Bophuthatswana governments wanted the consolidation of Bophuthatswana completed.¹² The 1975 consolidation schedule estimated land to be released to Bophuthatswana at 250 000 hectares and people to be moved from the deproclaimed areas were estimated at between 100 000 and 120 000. The areas from which people were to be removed as indicated in the approved consolidation proposals included Mogopa in the Ventersdorp district.¹³

With the envisaged resettlement of the Bakwena ba Mogopa, the president of Bophuthatswana, Chief Lucas Mangope, put more pressure on the South African Government to speed up the consolidation programme. He demanded

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10. Interview, B.K.M. Molokoe/M. Kgatitsoe, 14 March 1995; UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA, *The Statutes of the Union of South Africa, 1913* (Cape Town, Government Printers 1913), p. 100; C. ALBERTYN, “Forced removals and the Law: The Mogopa case, *More v Minister of Co-operation and Development 1986(1) SA 102(A)*, *The South African Journal on Human Rights*, vol. 2, part 1, March 1986, p. 93.
 11. C. ALBERTYN, “Forced removals and the Law: The Mogopa case, *More v Minister of Co-operation and Development 1986(1) SA 102(A)*, *The South African Journal on Human Rights*, vol.2, Part 1, March 1986, p. 93; *New Nation*, 7 March 1991; Land Affairs Department (LAD), Pretoria, *Konsolidasie van Bantoetuislande, UB 188/1716/7: Opruiming van swartkollie: Distrikte van Ventersdorp en Koster*, 14 Februarie 1967.
 12. Interview, B.K.M. Molokoe/P.G. Koornhof, 11 July 1996.
 13. Mogopa Tribal Office (MTO), Pachsdraai, Tribal correspondence: Consolidation: Bophuthatswana, 1975.

the expansion of the Bophuthatswana border to include some farms in the Marico strip, including Pachsdraai. From his independence speech during the night of 5 December 1977, it became clear that the consolidation of Bophuthatswana would be seriously pursued. He stressed that independence and consolidation were two sides of the same coin. Without the consolidation of Bophuthatswana, the coin would lack integrity and credibility, and would therefore be regarded as a fake. Independence would mean very little without

consolidation. This put more pressure on the South African Government to speed up the consolidation process.¹⁴

The Bakwena ba Mogopa were removed from their ancestral land to Pachsdraai in pursuit of the consolidation of Bophuthatswana as a homogeneous ethnic group. This was in accordance of the Government's apartheid policy. They were moved to the "national state" which they failed to recognise.¹⁵

2.3 Economic reasons

Mogopa was part of the Maize Triangle. It was a fertile and well-watered land, very good for the cultivation of maize. It became the focus of attraction to the white farmers. They therefore influenced the policy for the removal of the Bakwena ba Mogopa. As white electorates, they managed to pressurize the government in their own way.¹⁶

The land was also rich in diamonds, metals and other minerals.¹⁷ According to Mrs. Hellen Suzman, the Progressive Party member of Parliament for Houghton, the diamond rights were held by the tribe and the Government moved the tribe from their area to deny them the right to utilise the benefit of its diamonds. They were moved to the area where such rights were not available.¹⁸ The removal was also a continuation of a process of dispossession of land and denial of access to land by black people.¹⁹

2.4 Removals due to the Group Areas Act

Andrew Pooe, a member of the Mogopa Development Forum, stated in an interview with Lillian Sebolao of Seipone that the Bakwena ba Mogopa were forcibly removed from Mogopa in terms of the Group Areas Act. The act was intended to rearrange the black areas on ethnic lines. The Bakwena ba Mogopa were therefore relocated to Pachsdraai. This was done to ensure that the

14. L.M. MANGOPE, *A place for all* (Via Africa, Goodwood, 1978), pp. 38-39.

15. *Pretoria News*, 29 November 1983; Interview, B.K.M. Molokoe/P.G. Koornhof, 11 July 1996; REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA, Debates of the House of Assembly: Fourth Session, Seventh Parliament, no. 114, 16 February 1984 (Government Printers, Cape Town, 1985), col. 1204.

16. Cheadle Thompson and Haysom Attorneys (CTH), Johannesburg, Mogopa removal papers: H. Winkler, Land proposal for Mogopa, Annexure 2, July 1990, p. 11; *The Sowetan*, 24 September 1985.

17. *The Sowetan*, 24 September 1985.

18. REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA, Debates of the House of Assembly: Fourth Session, Seventh Parliament, vol. 114, 16 February 1984 (Government Printers, Cape Town, 1985), col. 1200.

19. C.L. PEART, "Forced removals: One community's experience" in *Arena*, 1994, p. 22.

apartheid policy of dividing “black” South Africa into ethnic homelands was achieved and that Bophuthatswana became a homogeneous Tswana homeland.²⁰

3. Execution of the removal process and resistance attempts by the Bakwena Ba Mogopa

3.1 Background

Rumours that Mogopa village was under threat of removal, were heard in the 1960's. In 1964, during the rule of kgosana Noah More, the Bakwena ba Mogopa realised that the rumours about their removal might become a reality. During that period, some black tribes, mostly Batswana in the Western Transvaal, faced forced removals. Their areas were classified as “badly situated” areas (“black spots”) because they were outside areas designated for black occupation. These tribes were to be removed to clear the white areas of the “black spots”.²¹

The circular released by the Department of Bantu Administration on 14 April 1965 made people whose areas were classified as “black spots” aware that they would be removed. It was stated in the circular that all freehold rights of the black tribes within white areas would be cancelled and such tribes would be moved to areas classified as released areas. These released areas were in the reserves or in areas which were about to be incorporated into the homelands (reserves).²²

The forced removal of Batswana tribes from the Western Transvaal districts of Rustenburg, Ventersdorp and Lichtenburg strengthened the possibility of the forced removal of the Bakwena ba Mogopa. Some of the Batswana tribes removed were:

- a) The Bakubung of Ratheo from Molotestad (Boons) to Ledig near Saulspoort in the Pilanesberg district in 1966;
- b) the Baphiring of kgosi A.S. Mabalane were removed from their area Mabaalstad, also known as Rietfontein, and were settled at Lemoenplaas, 30 kilometres north of Swartruggens in the Madikwe district in 1971; and

20. Seipone, 13 Phatwe 1991.

21. *The Sunday Times*, 4 December 1983; UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA, *The Statutes of the Union of South Africa, 1936* (Cape Town, Government Printers, 1936), p. 100; Interview, B.K.M. Molokoe/J.R. More, 20 June 1994.

22. G. MORE, *African people relocation in South Africa* (SAIRR, Johannesburg, 1980), p. 48.

- c) the Batlounge tribe was also removed from their area, Botshabelo (Putfontein), in 1977 to Ramatlabama near the Botswana border west of Mmabatho.²³

Due to these removals around them, the Bakwena ba Mogopa became uneasy and suspiciously waited for their turn to be removed.

The Bakwena ba Mogopa were informed about their removal on 21 February 1979. The officials of the Department of Co-operation and Development informed them that they would be removed after the 1980 harvests. This was to give them time to prepare themselves.²⁴ The removal did not take place at that time because the tribe did not accept the proposed compensatory land, Vlakfontein, in the Pilanesberg district. They claimed that it was smaller than Mogopa and its agricultural value was doubted.²⁵ In an interview, Shadrack More, the leader of the resisting group, denied the statement that the tribe had been informed about their removal. He claimed that the tribe only heard about their removal when they demanded the deposition of kgosana Jacob More in 1981.²⁶ His claim revealed that he was not well-informed about the events and developments on the issue of the removal. The memorandum of the Department of Bantu Administration dated 9 October 1967 indicated that the removal of Mogopa had been part of the general discussion on the removal of black tribes from “black spots” since 1964.²⁷

3.2. Methods used to execute the removal

The Government used different methods to remove people. Some of these methods included persuasion, a method/policy of divide and rule, cutting off of services and the use of brute force. These ensured that removals were executed.

3.2.1 Divide and rule

The Government relied on the co-operation of the dikgosi and dikgosana to move their tribes. It was a common practice by the Government to appoint or accept a co-operative person as a chief (kgosi), regardless of opposition from the tribe or clan. This happened at Molote when the regent, Tshose

23. L. PLATZKY and C. WALKER (Eds.), *The surplus people: Forced removals in South Africa* (IDAF, London, 1987), pp. 204-219.

24. *The Sunday Press*, 14 December 1983.

25. Interview, B.K.M. Molokoe/J.R. More, 10 January 1994.

26. Interview, B.K.M. Molokoe/S. More, 24 September 1994.

27. LAD, Pretoria, Mogopa case correspondence, UB188/1716/7: Opruiming van Swartkol Hartebeeslaagte en Swartkop, Ventersdorp, 9 Oktober 1967.

Monnakgotla, resisted the forced removal of the Bakubung of Ledig.²⁸ He was arrested and demoted and the Government installed Catherien Monnakgotla as chieftain because she was not opposed to the removal. In the case of Mogopa, the tribe tried to depose kgosana Jacob More for alleged corruption and misappropriation of tribal funds and to replace him with Shadrack More. The Government did not accept the decision because kgosana Jacob More had agreed to move.²⁹

The process of dividing communities by setting up and bribing leaders was generally effective. The leaders were given all facilities to allocate to the community members. They took the best facilities and accommodation such as the white farmhouses for themselves. Some families were split up as family members differed on whether to resist or collaborate with the Government. Once someone had agreed to move, the removal was carried out and the resisters were left utterly insecure and vulnerable.³⁰

The officials of the Department of Co-operation and Development, realising that the issue of removal was not welcomed by the majority of the Bakwena ba Mogopa, decided to negotiate the issue with kgosana Jacob More. In October 1981 the officials of the Department of Co-operation and Development, Louis Pretorius, (assistant director for rural settlement), Louis Nel (Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Information), L.A. Pretorius, J.A. de Villiers (Ventersdorp commissioner), S.C. Vermaak and S.J.M. Swanepoel, conducted a meeting in which a planning committee of fourteen members was elected to negotiate the removal with the Department of Co-operation and Development. The committee consisted of S.L.L. Rathebe (chairman), T.S. More (vice-chairman), B.M. Rampou (secretary), J. Rampa, A. Pooe, D. Kgatitsoe, M.C. Mooki, A. Rasweswe, D. More, J. Pooe, J. Mpse, N. More and E. Kau. Kgosana Jacob More rose to his position as the tribal leader (kgosana).³¹ This came as a shock to the majority of the people, as they had thought the meeting was convened to allow kgosana Jacob More to account for alleged misappropriation of tribal funds. Those who opposed the removal perceived the planning committee as a rubber

28. J.S. MOTLHAMME, *Forced removals in the people's Memory: The Bakubung of Ledig* (Skotaville Publishers, Braamfontein, 1989), p. 15.

29. TRANSVAAL RURAL ACTION COMMITTEE (TRAC), "Mogopa: And now we have no land: an update of the struggle of the Mogopa people", *Newsletter*, 3, August 1987, p. 2.

30. TRAC, "Mogopa: And now we have no land: an update of the struggle of the Mogopa people", *Newsletter*, 3, August 1987, p. 2.

31. Interview, B.K.M. Molokoe/B.M. Rampou, 24 May 1995; MTO, Pachsdraai, Tribal correspondence: Minutes of a meeting, 17 January 1983; C.L. Peart, "Forced removals: One community's experience", *Arena*, 1994, p. 2.

stamp of the Department of Co-operation and Development. They believed the committee did not have any say on whether the tribe had to be removed or not.³²

The resisters called upon Shadrack More from Johannesburg to lead them. They claimed that they recognised him as their legitimate kgosana. Tension started between the followers of kgosana Jacob More and Shadrack More. Despite this problem, the department continued to negotiate the removal with kgosana Jacob More and the planning committee.³³

Several meetings regarding negotiations on the removal were held between the department and the planning committee. At one of the meetings, held on 17 January 1983 at Mogopa, it was finally agreed that Pachsdraai had to be well-prepared before the tribe was to be moved in June 1983. Schools were to be built, and cattle were to be sold as it would be difficult to transport them to Pachsdraai. Those negotiations resulted in the agreement that the tribe should move. Kgosana Jacob More moved in mid-June 1983 with two hundred families to Pachsdraai. This paved the way for the intimidation of the resisting group. Eventually State bulldozers destroyed the community's schools, churches and houses of the families who had left Pachsdraai.³⁴

The Government also exploited the position of the tenants and women. "Black spots" were densely populated because it provided a haven for people evicted from white towns and farms. Some of these people had lived as farming tenants. The Government enticed them to move by offering them access to land in new areas such as Pachsdraai. In cases such as Matjakaneng, tenants were moved before the original occupants (landlords), thus left the landlords more vulnerable. The same applied to women. Officials visited the threatened areas during the week knowing that the men were away at work. They rejected the requests of women to come over the weekends. The officials intimidated the helpless women whose husbands were not there and the very old and very young children (whose parents were not there) to have their houses marked. On the doors of their houses numbers were painted and this was used as an indication that they had agreed to move. That is why in the case of Mogopa, the

32. TRAC, "Mogopa: And now we have no land: an update of the struggle of the Mogopa people", *Newsletter*, 3, August 1987, p. 2; Interview, B.K.M. Molokoe/S. More, 24 September 1994.

33. TRAC, "Mogopa: And now we have no land: an update of the struggle of the Mogopa people", *Newsletter*, 3, August 1987, p. 2; Interview, B.K.M. Molokoe/S. More, 24 September 1994.

34. E. UNTERHALTER, *Forced removal: The division, segregation and control of the people of South Africa*, p. 116; MTO, Pachsdraai, Tribal correspondence: Minutes of a meeting, 5 December 1983.

majority of the people who went to Pachsdraai were women. All this was done with the approval and help of the planning committee.³⁵

3.2.2 Cutting off of services

If other methods failed to make people to move “voluntarily”, new harsher methods were implemented. One of these methods was the cutting off of essential services. In the case of Mogopa, old age and disability pensions were not paid, the annual labour contracts were not stamped and the shop-owners’ licences were not renewed. To make people suffer in order to force them to move (in what Dr. P.G. Koornhof called a “voluntary move”),³⁶ the bus service to Ventersdorp was terminated. In January 1984, the leaders of the resistant group confronted the Ventersdorp Commissioner, demanding the payment of pensions owed and the stamping of the workers passes which had been refused. He conceded in order to lull them into a false sense of security so that no one would expect the pre-dawn police blitz and forced removal of 14 January 1984.³⁷ The forced removal was never put off, despite all the attempts by the resisting group and false concessions made by the Ventersdorp Commissioner.

After the Government lorries, known as GG lorries, had fetched the people who had agreed to move to Pachsdraai, the State bulldozers went on to demolish their numbered houses, all the schools and churches. Government officials removed the engines and water pumps. The resisting people also claimed that diesel was thrown in the remaining water in the reservoir. This claim was dismissed by kgosana Jacob More and there is no other evidence to support the claim. This did not break the resistance, as the resisting group installed new pumps.³⁸

3.2.3 Use of intimidation and the legal process

One of the coercive methods to persuade people to move was intimidation. People were threatened that if they did not move voluntarily, the Government would remove them by force. In that case, they would lose all compensation due to them. Livestock would be impounded and they had to pay R2,90 per head to

35. TRAC, “Mogopa: And now we have no land: an update of the struggle of the Mogopa people”, *Newsletter*, 3, August 1987, p. 3; Interview, B.K.M. Molokoe/S. More, 4 September 1994.

36. *Sunday Express*, 29 April 1984; Interview, B.K.M. Moloke/P.G. Koornhof, 11 July 1996.

37. TRAC, “Mogopa: And now we have no land: an update of the struggle of the Mogopa people”, *Newsletter*, 3, August 1987, p. 4; E. UNTERHALTER, *Forced removal: The division, segregation and control of the people of South Africa*, p. 116.

38. TRAC, “Mogopa: And now we have no land: an update of the struggle of the Mogopa people”, *Newsletter*, 3, August 1987, p. 4; C. COOPER et al., *A survey of race relations, 1984* (SAIRR, Johannesburg, 1983), p. 462.

get them back. Mogopa leaders such as M. Kgatitsoe, S. More and I. More were detained in terms of the state presidential order of 10 November 1983. They were kept in the police van as it drove around to instill fear among their followers. This did not reduce resistance to the forced removal of the Bakwena ba Mogopa, as had been the case in the forced removal of the Bakubung of Ledig.³⁹

The Government resorted to instructions in the form of court orders and State President's orders. On 19 November 1983, the Bakwena ba Mogopa were served with the State President's order signed by both the State President and the Minister of the Department of Co-operation and Development, dr. P.G. Koornhof. It gave the Bakwena ba Mogopa ten days, that is until 29 November 1983, to leave Mogopa. In his reading of the order, the Ventersdorp Commissioner, J.A. de Villiers, stated that if they have not moved by that day, they would be loaded up and moved by force.⁴⁰

The tribe tried to use the legal process to stop the forced removal. They tried to challenge the validity of the State President's order which did not meet the requirements of the Bantu Administration Act, no 38 of 1927, section 5(1)(b). They based their argument on the fact that no parliamentary resolution had been taken specifically for their removal. The Pretoria Supreme Court ruled that the removal was legal. Justice A.P. van Dyk stated that the State President's order for the Mogopa residents to vacate Mogopa by 29 November had been approved "in anticipation" by Parliament in 1975.⁴¹ Their attempts to use the legal process to stop the removal were in vain, but the community's lawyers, Cheadle Thompson and Hayson Attorneys, then petitioned Chief Justice C.J. Rabie for leave to appeal. They won the appeal in 1985, a year after their forced removal had been executed.⁴²

The State President's order issued on 19 November 1983 instructing the Mogopa people to move to Pachsdraai within ten days, was not executed on the said date, although a Supreme Court application to have the removal stayed, was

39. Interview, B.K.M. Molokoe/D. Molefe, 10 August 1997; J.S. Motlhamme, *Forced removal in the people's memory: The Bakubung of Ledig*, p. 15; MTO, Pachsdraai, Tribal correspondence: Lasbrief aan alle offisiere en lede van die Suid-Afrikaanse Polisie, 10 November 1983.

40. TRAC, "Mogopa: And now we have no land: an update of the struggle of the Mogopa people", Newsletter, no 3, August 1987, p. 5; MTO, Pachsdraai, Tribal correspondence: Lasbrief aan alle offisiere en lede van die Suid-Afrikaanse Polisie, 10 November 1983.

41. *The Sowetan*, 14 December 1983.

42. C. MURRAY and C. O'REGAN (Eds.), *No place to rest: Forced removal and the law in South Africa* (Oxford University Press, Cape Town, 1990), p. 21; C. ALBERTYN, "Forced removals and the Law: The Mogopa Case: More v Minister of Co-operation and Development 1986(1) SA 102(A)", *South African journal for Human Rights*, 2(1), March 1986, pp. 91-97; C. COOPER et al., *A survey of race relations, 1984*, p. 462.

turned down on 25 November 1983. Immense publicity, locally and abroad, and concerted church opposition appeared to have delayed the execution of the order. Mrs. Hellen Suzman had telephoned Dr. Chester Crocker, United States assistant secretary of State for Africa to assist in halting the removal. Nothing happened on that day, and the officials of the Department of Co-operation and Development did not turn up as was expected.⁴³

Many of the tribe refused to give up and in early December 1983 they organised themselves under the leadership of Isaac More who acted on behalf of Shadrack More who was based in Johannesburg to repair and rebuild the destroyed facilities at Mogopa. They installed a new pump and collected money to build a new school. On 9 January 1984 they started to rebuild the school and to improve roads. Men and women left their jobs to work full-time in the reconstruction of Mogopa. They were convinced that the Government would relent and leave them in peace. Unfortunately the Government's last strategy was the most cruel one, brute force.⁴⁴

3.2.4 Use of brute force

After all the strategies to include people to move had failed, the Government resorted to the use of brute force as the final strategy to ensure that the Bakwena ba Mogopa moved. This was done in accordance with the State President's order issued on 10 November 1983 to the South African Police. The order stated that if the people of Mogopa refused to leave Mogopa, force had to be used and their leaders arrested. In the early hours of 14 February 1984, Mogopa was surrounded by an armed police force of ninety policemen with policedogs at their disposal.⁴⁵ At 04:00 the people were told through megaphones to load their possessions onto the Government trucks and to go to Pachsdraai. Nobody was allowed to leave his house. Leaders who resisted the removal, such as Mathews Kgatitsoe, Shadrack More, Isaac More and Daniel Molefe, were arrested and locked up in the police vans.⁴⁶ The Government labourers packed and loaded the possessions onto lorries and buses. People tried to run away, but their children and furniture were loaded and dispatched to Pachsdraai. Parents became

43. *Sunday Express*, 4 December 1983; *Pretoria News*, 9 February 1984; *The Star*, 9 February 1984.

44. TRAC, "Mogopa: And now we have no land: an update of the struggle of the Mogopa people", *Newsletter*, 3, August 1987, p. 5; C. Cooper et al., *A survey of race relations, 1984*, p. 462; Interview, B.K.M. Molokoe/M. Kgatitsoe, 3 April 1996.

45. Interview, B.K.M. Molokoe/D. Molefe, 3 April 1996; MTO, Pachsdraai, Tribal correspondence: Lasbrief aan alle offisiere en lede van die Suid-Afrikaanse Polisie, 10 November 1983; C. Murray and C. OREGAN (Eds.), *No place to rest: Forced removals and the law in South Africa*, p. 22.

46. Interview, B.K.M. Molokoe/S. More, 24 September 1994; C. COOPER et al., *A survey of race relations 1984* (Johannesburg, SAIRR, 1984), p. 462.

desperate to find their children and got into the buses to Pachsdraai to go and look for their children.⁴⁷

Without any discussion, the houses were broken down by Government labourers and bulldozers. People found standing together outside their houses were beaten up by the police using batons. Those who wanted to go to Bethanie rather than Pachsdraai, were told to organise their own transport and that they would lose compensation for their property.⁴⁸

All the events of 14 February 1984 took place under strict police control. No outsiders (except the police, white farmers and black journalists), were allowed in the area. Journalists, diplomats, priests, lawyers and members of the Black Sash were turned back at the entrance of Mogopa. Those who managed to sneak in through backways were caught and charged with trespassing. The police initially said Mogopa was an “operational area”, but later corrected this and said since it was a black area, no whites were allowed to enter the area.⁴⁹ That was surprising, because black priests were also prevented to enter the area. Only the police and the white farmers who had free access in and out to buy livestock were allowed in the area.⁵⁰ Black journalists were allowed access only under police escort, which effectively restricted them from speaking freely to the people.⁵¹

Major A. Scheepers denied any victimisation of people by the police. He claimed that the ninety policemen armed with dogs were at Mogopa to protect the officials of the Department of Co-operation and Development and to maintain law and order. This claim was confirmed by Inspector K. Kole of the Ventersdorp police station. Major Scheepers further reported that on the first day (14 February 1984), twenty-seven families were moved and on 16 February 1984, 162 families had been taken to Pachsdraai. An unknown number had left with their own transport, but not for Pachsdraai.⁵² Most of these people went to Bethanie, the land of kgosi Mmamogale who was accepted by all the Bakwena ba Mogopa as their kgosi. An agreement was reached between him and Isaac

47. TRAC, “Mogopa: And now we have no land: an update of the struggle of the Mogopa people”, *Newsletter*, no 3, August 1987, pp. 5-7; C. COOPER et al., *A survey of race relations, 1984*, pp. 462-463.

48. E. UNTERHALTER, *Forced removal: The division, segregation and control of the people of South Africa*, p. 116; Interview, B.K.M. Molokoe/G. Rampou, 11 September 1996.

49. *Rand Daily Mail*, 24 February 1984; TRAC, “Mogopa: And now we have no land: an update of the struggle of the Mogopa people”, *Newsletter*, 3, August 1987, p. 7.

50. TRAC, “Mogopa: And now we have no land: an update of the struggle of the Mogopa people”, *Newsletter*, 3, August 1987, p. 7; *Rand Daily Mail*, 24 February 1984; C. COOPER et al., *A survey of race relations 1984*, p. 463.

51. *Rand Daily Mail*, 24 February 1984.

52. C. COOPER et al., *A survey of race relations, 1984*, p. 463; Interview, B.K.M. Molokoe/K. Kole, 26 November 1996.

More on 29 November 1983 to accommodate the resisting group if the Government should remove them.⁵³ By February 1984 all the families had been moved.⁵⁴

The events of 14 February 1984 and the following days crowned all the previous strategies, as they exposed the brute force used to remove the Bakwena ba Mogopa from their ancestral land, Mogopa, to the unknown land, Pachsdraai. The Government had ultimately managed to move the Bakwena ba Mogopa.

4. Consequences⁵⁵

The forced removal had all but destroyed the Bakwena ba Mogopa tribe. They were removed from the place of their ancestors and left insecure and traumatised. The Government failed and/or refused to understand the culture of continuity of generations. For the whole period in which the tribe wandered from one place to the other as a form of resistance to the forced removal, education suffered. Education is dependent on normal stable community life and for the Bakwena ba Mogopa, there was no normal community life since their forced removal. Education was constantly made the main target of the resisting and disillusioned groups. The parents who resisted the forced removal incited pupils to disregard the school authorities. The use of the liberation struggle slogan of “liberation first and education later”, had a negative impact on the school system.⁵⁶

The members of the Bakwena ba Mogopa tribe were reduced to the status of refugees at Bethanie. They were forced to remain destitute under appalling conditions without basic services. There was no clean water and access to health services. Those who returned to Mogopa in 1991, found themselves in the same situation.

Both the social and religious life of the Bakwena ba Mogopa were disrupted. Some families were permanently divided as their members took different directions during and after the removal. Members of churches also became scattered because religion as a unifying factor was ignored during the forced removal. The disintegration of various congregations and the fact that they were forcibly removed even though they had spent the whole night praying to God to save them from the removal, had shaken their faith.

The forced removal had a negative impact on the economic conditions and development of the Bakwena ba Mogopa. They were taken to an area very

53. Interview, B.K.M. Molokoe/S. More, 24 September 1994; *The Citizen*, 30 November 1983.

54. C. COOPER et al., *A survey of race relations, 1984*, p. 463.

55. For a detailed discussion on the consequences see B.K.M. MOLOKOE, A historical study of the Bakwena ba Mogopa as victims of forced removals, 1983-1984, Chapter 5 (pp. 58-80).

56. *Ibid.*, p. 78.

different from that to which they were accustomed. Pachsdraai was very different from Mogopa. Having moved from a well-watered agricultural zone in the Maize Triangle to a dry bushveld agricultural zone, it was difficult and unreasonable to expect the community to farm the area. The area required capital intensive equipments such as irrigation schemes for production. The tribe had to move from subsistence farming to commercial farming due to the nature of crops suited to that area. This impoverished the community further. The community lost almost everything in the forced removal. The meagre compensation or lack thereof given for the lost livestock and property destroyed them both economically and morally.

As far as land is concerned, the Bakwena ba Mogopa in the long run gained more land than they had had before the removal. Their farms Swartrand and Hartebeeslaagte were restored to them. In addition they have property rights at Pachsdraai and the Onderstepoort group has the permission to stay at Onderstepoort. In this regard the forced removal was to their advantage.⁵⁷

Politically, the forced removal undermined and in some instances destroyed the tribal authority. The Bakwena ba Mogopa resident at Mogopa are without traditional forms of governance. Attempts to transform traditional authority into the new policy of participatory democracy, proved to be a disaster. There is constant tension between the elected representatives and traditional tribal elders. This problem seems to be of a permanent nature.

The forced removal delayed development at Mogopa. On their return, the Bakwena ba Mogopa found themselves far behind the other tribes. There is no electricity, water supply and other services at Mogopa. They are trying to rebuild what was destroyed by the Government during the removal, but it will take time to develop their village to their expected standards.⁵⁸

5. Conclusion

An impression was created by the Government that the Bakwena ba Mogopa moved voluntarily. This article has, however, by and large, revealed the opposite. It is clear that cruel methods were used to forcibly remove the majority of the Bakwena ba Mogopa from Mogopa to Pachsdraai. The Bakwena ba Mogopa tried to resist and stop their removal from Mogopa to Pachsdraai. They rebuilt the demolished school, installed a new pump, and confronted the Ventersdorp magistrate to reinstate services that were terminated such as the payment of old age pensions, the stamping and removal of work permits and

57. *Ibid.*, p. 79.

58. *Ibid.*, p. 80.

business licences. They even used the legal process to challenge the validity of State President's order but all efforts were in vain. The methods used help to refute the myth of voluntary removal. The Bakwena ba Mogopa did not have an option to stay, and were forcibly removed from their ancestral land, Mogopa. The fact that one group voluntarily moved in June 1983 before the use of brute force, cannot be used to support the myth of voluntary removal. The cutting off of essential services such as water, the bus service to Ventersdorp, the payment of old age pensions, the demolition of schools and the use of brute force, show that there had been no option to stay.

Opsomming

Die Bakwena ba Mogopa: Slagoffers van 'n gedwonge verskuiving, 1982-1984

Een van die belangrike onderdele van die regering se beleid van afsonderlike ontwikkeling het op die gedwonge verskuiwings van swartmense betrekking gehad. 'n Gemeenskap wat deur hierdie maatreël geraak is, was die Bakwena ba Mogopa wat in 1983-4 na Pachsdraai moes verhuis. Die hoofdoelwit van die artikel is om meer lig te werp op die gedwonge verskuiwing van die groep en om die hipotese te bevestig, naamlik dat die verhuising nie vrywilliglik was nie. Die artikel handel oor die ontstaan en vestigingspatrone van die Bakwena ba Mogopa, die redes vir die gedwonge verskuiwing, die uitvoering van die verskuiwingsproses en pogings wat die Bakwena in werking gestel het om hulle daarteen te verset. Daar is ook 'n bespreking van die gevolge daarvan.