

**Refugee Review Tribunal
AUSTRALIA**

RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE

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Question

1. Please provide information about the Manyika, and whether there is any evidence of discrimination against them.

RESPONSE

1. Please provide information about the Manyika, and whether there is any evidence of discrimination against them.

According to statistics provided by government, the indigenous population of Zimbabwe represents about 98% of the total. The balance comprises less than 1% white and the remainder Asian and coloured. The Shona ethnic group comprises 82%, the Ndebele 14% and in addition to the non-African minorities, there are a few other smaller ethnic groups including the Tonga, Sena, Hlengwe, Venda and Sotho. The official languages are English, Shona (Chishona) and Ndebele (Siondebele) (US Department of State 2009, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2008 – Zimbabwe*, 25 February, Section 5 – Attachment 1; *Africa South of the Sahara* 2003, Taylor & Francis, London, p. 1222 – Attachment 2).

No information has been found that indicates significant conflict along tribal lines exists in Zimbabwe, although this observation is subject to some qualification as noted below.

Minority Rights Group provides a general summary:

The Shona-speaking people, who today form about 77 per cent of the population, did not originally see themselves as a 'tribe'. Shona-speakers were spread over great distances and lacked consciousness of a common cultural or political identity. 'Shona-ness' is thus a creation of the past hundred years. Colonial missionaries and administrators set about

categorizing Shona into clusters or sub-tribes on the basis of largely spurious inferences. These artificial constructs took on lives of their own, and sub-groupings and hierarchies emerged: Zezeru (central), Karanga (south-central) and Manyika (east) are the three largest blocs.

With about 14 per cent of the population (16 per cent if the affiliated Kalanga are included), Ndebele are Zimbabwe's largest minority and their traditional lands (Matabeleland) are in the south-west of the country, around Bulawayo.

At the political and geographical margins outside the Shona–Ndebele polarity are three peoples together making up about 2 per cent of Zimbabwe's population. Shangaan and Venda people live mainly in the far south of Zimbabwe, and Tonga were forced to abandon their ancestral homes on the shores of the Zambesi River in the north of the country in 1957–8 after construction of the hydro-electric dam at Kariba (Minority Rights Group International 2008, *World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples – Zimbabwe: Overview*, June, <http://www.minorityrights.org/4504/zimbabwe/zimbabwe-overview.html> - Accessed 18 February 2009 – Attachment 3).

Historian David Beach has also written:

Zimbabwe is unusual among African states of its size in having only two large ethnic groups, Shona (79 per cent) and Ndebele (16 per cent), with the Shona being commonly subdivided into groups based on modern adaptations of old names rather than historical reality. However, historians have a long way to go before they can catch up with and correct the popular myth...Some of the differences between the Shona groups have some reality: the Kalanga dialect is so different from the rest of Shona that other Shona-speakers doubt that the Kalanga are Shona at all, tending to link them with the Ndebele. The Ndau also have a distinct accent, and remoteness from the rest of the country, the memory of the Gaza state and close labour and mission links with the Mocambican relatives have combined to give them a strong sense of identity and their own party. Elsewhere, the groupings called Zezeru, Korekore, Manyika and Karanga are linguistically very similar, and the historical basis for the original term has been greatly expanded and given an artificial rigidity in this century. Indeed, one old west-central Shona grouping called Roro vanished entirely, being sub-divided between Zezeru and Korekore (Beach, David 1994, *The Shona and their Neighbours*, Blackwell, Oxford, p. 185 – Attachment 4).

Deriving analysis in part from an earlier 1980 study published by Beach, as well as others, Terence Ranger also contends that, at least at the time he was writing in 1989, while there may have been identifiable Manyikan interests, 'the ethnic component nationalist disputes' had been greatly exaggerated;

...[E]ntities as the 'Manyika', the 'Zezeru' and the rest...certainly do not represent pre-colonial 'historical fact', not can they in the present be properly described as 'tribes' or 'clans', no matter that both African and European commentators employ these terms.

When the Portuguese came into contact with the Shona-speaking peoples in the sixteenth century, they recorded that the chiefly lineages which ruled over the commoners were known as 'Karanga'. They also reported the existence of a chiefly territory which was called 'Manyika'. European usage came to transform the significance of these terms. ...Most of the people of the [Manyika-associated Manicaland] did not think of themselves as related in any way to the Manyika chieftancy. As for the term 'karanga', it suffered a shift both of location and of meaning. The Portuguese had used it to refer to the ruling lineages of the northern and eastern Shona-speakers. The incoming British at the end of the nineteenth century picked up

this 'historic' term to describe the first Shona-speakers they encountered, naming the total populations of the southwest area 'Kalanga' and those of the southern plateau 'Karanga'.

...

The administrative units created by the colonial government were territorially defined districts which bore no intended nor actual relationship to 'tribal' or 'ethnic' identities. Later, when the Rhodesian government began to take the idea of 'tribal politics' more seriously, it demarcated and recognized literally hundreds of 'tribes', each under its own chief. Thus, there was no incentive for Africans to invent regional ethnicities in the hope of tapping the flow of administrative patronage.

Some interpreters in the 1970s attempted to attribute differences and divisions along tribal lines such that the idea of a monolithic Manyika identity became enlarged and a somewhat distorted lens through which some political conflicts (including for example power struggles within ZANU), were viewed. Ranger suggests that such an identity "never existed as a bloc, entirely at the disposal of any leader or party" (Ranger, Terence 1989, "Missionaries, Migrants and the Manyika: The Invention of Ethnicity in Zimbabwe" in V. Leroy (ed.), *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa*, James Currey, London, pp. 145, 120-121 – Attachment 5).

Similarly, the editor of *Zimbabwe Guardian* also argues

Although the struggle for power in Zimbabwe has been littered with tribalism, it has never been confined only to Shona-Ndebele form of tribalism. Pre-1987 Zanu and Zapu parties drew significant membership from both the Shona and the Ndebele – and so does the MDC party today. War stories from Zimbabwe record significant Manyika/Karanga fighting within Zanu/Zanla (military) in Zambia in the early 1970's. Zanu Chairman in exile, Herbert Chitepo, a Manyika was allegedly murdered by his Karanga rivals.

It cannot be dismissed though that tribalism has informed some political choices and affected Zimbabwean politics, but it has never been solely responsible for explaining the ascendancy of certain individuals or the breakup of parties – even the original Zapu.

...

The word "tribalism" never became an entirely important emic term in Zimbabwean politics and the a-priori assumption that somehow Zimbabwean politics, especially its contemporary form, is organized around tribe is misplaced.

Tribe has only been invoked at a time of crisis by those who seek meaning and explanation, for instance the latest desire to resuscitate PF-Zapu or calls by extreme groups for the creation of a Matabele state.

I do not think that tribalism persists as an active contemporary phenomenon that can be used to provide a sound narrative of mainstream and contemporary Zimbabwean politics (Garande, Itai 2008, "Ndebele President: Minorities should not cease to dream" *New Zimbabwe*, 12 February, <http://www.newzimbabwe.com/pages/opinion351.19061.html> - Accessed 18 February 2009 – Attachment 6).

This view is also consistent with Beach who has observed that

At a rural level [tribe] has been almost completely absent, either because many groups do not border on each other or because, when they do, they have close links by marriage. There was some Hlengwe resentment against

Shona and Ndebele settlers in the 1970s...Another form of rivalry has existed in the workplace. Much of the force behind inter-Shona rivalry has come from the fact that 'Shona' is too new and too huge and diverse an identity for comfort and that migrants to the towns have sought 'homeboy' links with others from the same region. Foremen, personnel officers, civil servants and politicians have all been suspected of favouritism at one time or another, on this basis. Much of the allegations of tribalism at cabinet level arise from the fact that ministers are expected to pass benefits to their home regions, though these rivalries can also be explained and modified by the fact that politicians above a certain age went to the same very few schools. Rivalries at the top have sometimes spread into ethnic rivalries at a military level (Beach, David 1994, *The Shona and their Neighbours*, Blackwell, Oxford, p. 186 – Attachment 4).

The Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board was unable to find any reports on the treatment of Manyika in 2000, noting that the Manyika language is 'partially intelligible to the Shona' (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2000, ZWE33768.E – *Zimbabwe: Members of the Manyika (Shona) tribe and their current treatment by the government*, 15 February – Attachment 7).

The US Department of State includes in its 2008 and most recent country information report the statement that "There was some tension between the white minority and other groups, between the Shona majority and the Ndebele minority, and among the various Shona subgroups" (US Department of State 2009, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2008 – Zimbabwe*, February, Section 5 – Attachment 1).

The Minority Rights Group report referred to above discusses some tensions between the Ndebele and Shona however no reference to the Manyika or other Shona groups is made (Minority Rights Group International 2008, *World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples – Zimbabwe: Overview*, June, <http://www.minorityrights.org/4504/zimbabwe/zimbabwe-overview.html> - Accessed 18 February 2009 – Attachment 3).

In what appears to be a draft contribution to the Africa Citizenship and Discrimination Audit (Open Society Justice Initiative http://www.justiceinitiative.org/activities/ec/ec_africacitizenship) Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights also points to the overlap between the location of groups within borders of a particular state as strongly determinant of ethnicity;

An analysis of the languages spoken also points to the fact that many groups in Africa that are defined as ethnic groups are in fact not ethnic groups as the definition states. They are 'sub-ethnic-groups' within a larger ethnic group. For example, the shona ethnic group in Zimbabwe has within it many sub-ethnic-groups, the Zezuru, the Manyika, the Maugwe, etc. These sub-ethnic-groups all speak the shona language but different dialects of it. The differences in dialect are so minor that it is mostly one's tone and the manner of pronouncing words that immediately points to that person's sub-ethnic-group. These sub-ethnic-groups also have almost similar cultural practices. The only differences in cultural practices are in their contemporary manner of practise not in their origin (Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (undated), "Africa Citizenship and Discrimination Audit. First Draft" published on University of Minnesota Human Rights Library website, <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/research/ZLHR-citizenship.html> - Accessed 27 February 2009 – Attachment 8)

List of Sources Consulted

Internet Sources:

Government Information and Reports

Immigration & Refugee Board of Canada <http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/>

UK Home Office <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/>

US Department of State <http://www.state.gov/>

International News & Politics

BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk>

The Times <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/global/>

The Economist <http://www.economist.co.uk>

Non-Government Organisations

European Country of Origin Information Network <http://www.ecoi.net/>

Freedom House <http://www.freedomhouse.org/>

Human Rights Watch <http://www.hrw.org/>

Minority Rights Group International <http://www.minorityrights.org/>

Region Specific Links

All Africa.com <http://allafrica.com>

Africa Confidential <http://www.africa-confidential.com/home>

Kubatana.net website <http://www.kubatana.net/index.htm>

Africa Research Bulletin <http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/journal.asp?ref=0001-9844>

Zimbabwe Situation website <http://www.zimbabwesiuation.com/>

Search Engines

Google <http://www.google.com>

Webcrawler <http://www.webcrawler.com>

Google Scholar <http://www.google.com>

Clusty <http://www.clusty.com>

Databases:

FACTIVA (news database)

BACIS (DIAC Country Information database)

REFINFO (IRBDC (Canada) Country Information database)

ISYS (RRT Research & Information database, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, US Department of State Reports)

MRT-RRT Library Catalogue

University of Melbourne Library Catalogue

List of Attachments

1. US Department of State 2009, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2008 – Zimbabwe*, 25 February, Section 5.
2. *Africa South of the Sahara* 2003, Taylor & Francis, London. (MRT-RRT Library)
3. Minority Rights Group International 2008, *World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples – Zimbabwe: Overview*, June, <http://www.minorityrights.org/4504/zimbabwe/zimbabwe-overview.html> - Accessed 18 February 2009.

4. Beach, David 1994, *The Shona and their Neighbours*, Blackwell, Oxford.
5. Ranger, Terence 1989, "Missionaries, Migrants and the Manyika: The Invention of Ethnicity in Zimbabwe" in V. Leroy (ed.), *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa*, James Currey, London, 1989.
6. Garande, Itai 2008, "Ndebele President: Minorities should not cease to dream" *New Zimbabwe*, 12 February,
<http://www.newzimbabwe.com/pages/opinion351.19061.html> - Accessed 18 February 2009.
7. Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2000, ZWE33768.E – *Zimbabwe: Members of the Manyika (Shona) tribe and their current treatment by the government*, 15 February. (REFWORLD)
8. Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (undated), "Africa Citizenship and Discrimination Audit. First Draft" published on University of Minnesota Human Rights Library website, <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/research/ZLHR-citizenship.html> - Accessed 27 February 2009.