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African Union (AU)

Topic: Addressing the role that indigenous tribes have in modern-day Southern African societies.

I. Committee Background

The African Union (AU) was established in 2002 by order of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which, since 1999, had recognized the need for an intergovernmental body that would help bring about continent-wide cooperation and solidarity. In the 2002 Durban Summit, after a series of previous conferences which had established the design and structure of the organization, the African Union held its first Assembly of the Heads of State of the African Union. Since its genesis, the African Union's primary purpose has been to foster a sense of continental cooperation and development. The organization focuses on protecting African nations' rights to sovereignty, promoting peace, democracy, and human rights throughout the continent, and accelerating the political and socio-economic development of the continent as a whole.

The organization comprises 54 African states and consists of various organs, including the Assembly, the Executive Council, and the Peace and Security Council. The Assembly of Heads of State and Government is the organization's major organ; all 54 states are represented equally by their heads of state or appropriate representatives. The Executive Council, responsible to the Assembly, is comprised of ministers appointed by their heads of state. The Executive Council is responsible for creating the Assembly's agenda and determining which issues need priority. The Peace and Security Council has 15 member states and is responsible for making quick, executive decisions regarding violence-related threats and addressing possible conflicts through diplomacy. Other vital organs include the Parliamentary Parliament, the Economic, Social, and Cultural Council, and the African Commission on Human and People's Rights.

II. Introduction

Description and Definition of the Topic

Indigenous populations have existed in Africa and worldwide for centuries, developing "their own distinct cultures, languages, and social systems" (Britannica, 2021). They are regarded as the country's first settlers and have a strong bond with their traditional lands and way of life. Despite their longstanding existence and culture, the activities of colonists and governments have frequently resulted in the marginalization and disadvantage of these groups.

The topic of indigenous people in Southern African societies refers to the marginalization and discrimination of various indigenous groups, including the two largest groups: the San and Khoekhoe people, in countries such as Angola, Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Currently, there are nearly 90,000 San living in Southern Africa and 100,000

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Khoekhoe— but these are just two of hundreds upon hundreds of indigenous communities (Southern Africa, n.d). However, these two groups have been marginalized economically with scarce access to education. In Angola, for example, the San people suffer from food insecurity and no official recognition of their language (Southern Africa, n.d). On the other hand, "Botswana has a structural and constitutional bias against recognizing indigenous peoples" as outlined in the Chieftainship Act of 1966, which excludes indigenous and minority ethnic groups from having a say in the government (Southern Africa, n.d). In Namibia, the San communities are some of the poorest in the country and have little access to state services and resources (Southern Africa, n.d).

The Problem

Indigenous people in Southern Africa are commonly thought to represent “a form of primitivity that must be overcome to give way to development,” thus why the expansion of settlements and farming has led to a displacement and extermination of these groups (Hitchcock and Vinding, 2004). During colonial rule, the new economic and political structures reinforced the authority agricultural people had on gatherers and hunters (Mutume, 2007) European settlers who took on the role of agricultural people would have more access to healthcare and education, as opposed to gatherers and hunters who were denied of it (Mutume, 2007). This system remains today, with many communities being “vulnerable to labor and sexual exploitation” (Mutume, 2007). Currently, no country in Southern Africa aside from the Democratic Republic of Congo has specific legislation that provides for the protection of the human rights of indigenous groups (African Development Bank Group’s Development and Indigenous Peoples in Africa). This lack of recognition leads to failure to protect the groups’ land and limits their access to necessities, and a disregard for their cultures and practices. Because these groups heavily rely on nature for their livelihood, they are found in forests and parks “which usually puts them in direct conflict with national bodies in charge of conservation” (African Development Bank Group’s Development and Indigenous Peoples in Africa). This is because their lands were occupied during colonial rule for farming and industrialization.

Today, this continues to happen, a case in point is the ruling by the African Commission on Human and People’s Rights following the eviction of the Endorois people in Kenya from their land for tourism purposes (African Development Bank Group’s Development and Indigenous Peoples in Africa). Staggering percentages that compare the amount reserved for African populations, as opposed to the amount of African population there is in each country, exemplify how this commercialization of land resulted in a dramatic increase in landlessness for indigenous peoples (Hitchcock and Vinding, 2004). For example, while 80% of the population in South Africa is of African descent, only 12% of the land is reserved for them (Hitchcock and Vinding, 2004).

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III. History of the Topic

Chronological History of the Topic

Despite the widespread belief in western culture that Africa is just one homogenous mass of land, as the birthplace of humanity, Africa is undoubtedly full of many rich and unique cultures that have developed throughout several millennia. With over 1.2 billion people living on the continent, those usually designated as ‘Africans’ could very well be part of any of the “over 3000 African tribes” that can be found in the region (Middleton & Clarke, 2021).

However, even this great cultural heritage saw itself heavily impacting European interest in the continent’s natural resources, ability to provide checkpoints in trade routes, and, sadly, slave labor (Gates & Appiah, 2010). Because of this widespread ‘demand’ for Africa’s resources, starting in 1884 and ending in 1885, 14 countries opted to gather in Berlin to discuss the division of land in Africa to prevent any violent dispute amongst themselves (Jameson, 2017). During this time, the European powers divided up Africa among themselves, with “little regard for the continent’s existing cultural and political boundaries,” causing various tribal nations, who might have had a history of conflict, to be forced into one country governed by a foreign power (Jameson, 2017). Furthermore, towards the end of the 20th century, these newly created colonies were subject to the imposition of these western countries’ cultures, religions, and political systems— which often sought to suppress and damage many aspects of tribal cultures.

According to Dr. Jason Clay, a leader in the investigation of human rights and sustainable living, this “almost authoritarian approach” sought the suppression of ethnic identities and the formation of a single national identity that often disregards cultural diversity, “further amplifying pre-existing conflicts amongst neighboring tribes” (Clay, 2022). One such example would be that of the Ashanti and Fante tribes in what is now Ghana. Historically, the Ashanti and Fante were two separate ethnic groups in the region, with the Ashanti being “one of the most influential and dominant ethnic groups in the region and the Fante being coastal traders” (Ghana High Commission, 2017). These two tribes already had a history of conflict spanning several decades since British colonizers arrived. However, when they did, they utilized this long-standing conflict to assert control and take advantage of the region as much as possible (Ghana High Commission). In a way, it was much easier for colonial Britain to take control of these ethnic groups if they were “pinned against each other,” as that allowed little to no opportunity for an uprising that would threaten their authority in the region (Papaioannou & Michalopoulos, 2010).

Such was the case for the majority of the African continent until the first and second World Wars. In an attempt to enlarge their military force, many Africans were recruited to fight in Europe under their colonial powers, with some estimates being “well over a million” soldiers (Cascais, 2020). As a result, African soldiers and laborers came into contact with people from other colonies and exposed them to new ideas and political ideologies. This contact helped to break down the ethnic, linguistic, and cultural barriers their colonizers had only exacerbated and gave these African soldiers hailing from the same region a sense of “common identity and

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purpose” (Myrice, 2015). This, coupled with the fact that “shortages of goods and food widespread hardship” in African colonies, resulted in many of these once isolated colonies seeking out independence and self-governance following the World Wars— as they no longer saw other ethnic and tribal groups as enemies, but instead equals in their same situation (Myrice, 2015). This led to a wave of independence movements across Africa, and many countries gained their independence in the decades following the war and the belief that the unification of African tribes and groups was the only way to advance society.

Nonetheless, there are still struggles regarding conflicts between tribal groups. Some of them, for example, took the opportunity after these independence movements to set up their communities that enforced their ancestral traditions and laws, separate from those of the country they reside in (Goitom, 2014). Many activists argue that this behavior is commendable, as these tribal systems often reflect the community’s customs, traditions, and values and go against the beliefs the colonist regime imposed on them of one unified nation. However, because many regard these beliefs as “backwards and detrimental to societal development,” which has resulted in several decades of tension between tribal groups and centralized governments— often escalating into violence (Goitom, 2014)

Historical Case Studies

The Khoisan during Apartheid

In 1948, South Africa implemented Apartheid, a policy that promoted racial segregation and classified its citizens as Bantu (Black), colored (mixed race), or white (*Apartheid*, 2023). Apartheid established Land Acts, which had different areas for each race and helped ensure a majority of South African land for its white minority. Apartheid also led to the 1953 Bantu Education Act, which enforced the creation of state-run schools for non-white children. They were required to attend and were trained to do “manual labor and menial jobs that the government deemed suitable for those of their race,” and they enforced the use of Afrikaans (*Apartheid*, 2023). South Africa’s indigenous population was among the most affected during this time, especially the Khoisan, the “first and oldest nation in South Africa,” which consists of several indigenous communities like the Cape Khoi, Nama, Koranna, Griqua, and San (Parkinson, 2016). During Apartheid, these indigenous populations were deprived of their land and oppressed. They were classified as colored and required to assimilate and speak Afrikaans, leading to their indigenous languages and traditions being lost.

Apartheid officially ended in 1994, but its socioeconomic consequences are still prevalent, especially for the Khoisan, who continue to feel unrepresented and discriminated against. Although the African National Congress (ANC) party has redistributed land, it has excluded the Khoisan and has failed to “acknowledge them as the country’s first peoples” (Secorun, 2018). In addition, it has focused on returning land to black South Africans while disregarding the Khoisan, who were labeled as colored during Apartheid and had significant

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portions of their land taken away before the implementation of this policy in 1948. Peterson, the president of the Khoisan Revolution party, asserts that there is “no recognition or acknowledgment for [the Khoisan]” and that they aim to “claim back [their] land and govern [themselves]” (Parkinson, 2016). Regardless, the ANC insists it has aided the Khoisan through the National Khoi & San Council established by President Mandela in 1999; despite this, the body has no legislative power, making many reject its authority. The United Nations has sided with the Khoisan, stating that “the most pressing concern of all the Khoi-San communities is securing their land base,” in addition to criticizing the government’s slow progress (Parkinson, 2016). Despite this, the South African government has done little to recognize the Khoisan and their land rights, leading to increasing protests.

Expulsion of the Endorois People for Tourism Development

The Endorois are a minority indigenous community in Kenya that resides in the Lake Bogoria area and are heavily linked to the land through cultural and religious practices. The “lake was the center of their religion and culture,” and the Endorois heavily relied on its fertile land to sustain their population (Human Rights Watch, 2010). In addition, they had inhabited their land for over 300 years, and neighboring tribes accepted them as the land’s rightful owners (Claridge, 2010). However, between 1974 and 1979, the Kenyan government evicted the Endorois from their homes to make way for tourism development (Kipkazi, n.d.). By expelling the community, the government aimed to forcefully take land with “great tourism potential” to create the Lake Bogoria Game Reserve and establish tourist facilities (Human Rights Watch, 2010). According to the Minority Rights Group, when the Endorois challenged their eviction, the community was promised that 400 families would be given plots of fertile land along with 25% of the tourist revenue and 85% of the employment (2010). However, these promises never came to fruition, and few families were given a portion of the money. Instead, the Endorois were forced to move to arid land, which decimated their cattle populations.

In 2000, the Endorois went to the Kenyan High Court to contest their case, and in 2002, it ruled that their “customary claim to the land had been extinguished,” and they were “precluded from laying claim to revenue from [a national resource]” (Claridge, 2010). The Endorois then took their case to the African Commission. In 2010, it ruled that the expulsion of the Endorois from their traditional land violated their human rights “to property, health, culture, religion, and natural resources” (Human Rights Watch, 2010). As such, it ruled that the Kenyan government must compensate the Endorois and return their land. However, over a decade since the African Commission’s ruling, the Kenyan government has been slow to implement the court’s recommendations and has carried out only a few of these (Rwothungeyo, 2022). Nevertheless, the case has significant implications for ensuring the rights of indigenous people over their ancestral lands. The Commission’s ruling had a significant impact because it certified that indigenous have the right to their ancestral land and its development, creating an important precedent for other countries to follow. Clive Baldwin, a senior advisor at Human

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Rights Watch, described the ruling as “the first of its kind” and expressed that it can help many others across Africa who have been forced to escape from homes (Baldwin, 2010).

The San and the Central Kalahari Game Reserve

The San were traditionally hunter-gatherers with a population previously in the millions; however, their population dwindled substantially as they faced Bantu and white invaders over the last centuries. Currently, Botswana has the largest population of San in Southern Africa, with over 63,500 San that make up 2.8% of its population (Hitchcock & Sapignoli, 2018). Botswana was previously controlled by the British, who created the Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR) before the country’s independence to preserve wildlife and the culture of the San (Thompson, 2004). At the CKGR, the San were able to maintain their hunter-gatherer lifestyle. However, after diamonds were found in the CKGR, the government forcefully relocated the San living there starting from 1997 up until 2002, cutting off their water supply and other services to evict them (Thompson, 2004). The Botswana government claimed that their relocation was motivated by conservation efforts, but in 2014, a diamond mine worth billions opened in the CKGR. Since then, government officials have “admitted that the Bushmen do not hunt with guns and there is no evidence that their hunting is unsustainable” (Survival International, n.d.). However, in 2014, President Khama imposed a nationwide hunting ban, excluding private game ranches. Since the implementation of this ban, the San have been imprisoned for poaching and have faced police brutality. While the San are being “starved off their land with no way to feed themselves,” Khama has been praised by several conservation groups for his efforts (Survival International, n.d.). Currently, the San are among “the most underprivileged people in Botswana,” with little access to food, water, healthcare, education, and job opportunities (Survival International, n.d.).

The Himba and the Hydroelectric Dam

Many indigenous groups, such as the Ottawa, San, Nama, and Himba, reside in Namibia and constitute 8% of its population (Indigenous Africa, 2020). However, the Namibian government has continuously ignored its need to further the country’s economic development. Around 25,000 Himba live in Kunene, where they practice nomadic herding (Indigenous Africa, 2020). In the late 2000s, the Himba resisted the construction of a hydroelectric dam on the Kunene River, which would flood their lands and resources, destroying their trees and gravesites. However, the Namibian government insisted on building the dam and planned to construct it at a different spot in the river after learning that it would destroy Epupa Falls, a popular tourist site. In 2008, the government designated Baynes Mountain as a less destructive site for the dam; however, it would still disturb indigenous graves and traditions. Muniombara, a member of the Himba, stated that they “survive from the Baynes mountains,” adding that “if they build the dam, they’ll kill us” (Lesieur, 2010). Several presidents have agreed with the dam’s construction, spurring protests from the Himba. Despite this, many Namibians agree with

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the dam's construction, citing how it would reduce Namibia's energy dependency on South Africa, bring water to villages, and create job opportunities. John Mutorwa, Namibia's Minister of Agriculture, stated that "these dams were necessary for maintaining reliable power outlets in the country" (Lesieur, 2010). Although the project was put on hold in 2015 after facing criticism, the Namibian government is still considering the construction of a dam in the Kunene River (Mota, 2020). Thus, it is necessary to consider how the country's economic development will affect, exclude, and possibly harm the Himba and other indigenous populations.

ReconAfrica

Reconnaissance Energy Africa, more frequently referred to as ReconAfrica, is a Canadian oil company working to establish drill sites in Northeastern Namibia and Northwestern Botswana (ReconAfrica, n.d.). Their area of exploration, the Kavango Basin, is inhabited by the San community. The company also holds exploration permits for a 13,200-square-mile region, including the Okavango Delta's critical watershed, where over a million people live, including the San (Kweli, 2021). Jan Arkert, a South African engineering geologist, asserts that "digging boreholes for oil exploration may endanger the local ecology by causing oil spills, noise pollution, air pollution, and water contamination," endangering the San and a diverse variety of local wildlife (Kweli, 2021). Although Botswana and Namibia's pro-business governments have signed the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), neither recognize the San as an indigenous population, despite being considered the countries' original occupants by many. Regardless, critics of the oil project have maintained that the exploration "violates San rights under the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples" (Richardson, 2021).

When the Tsodilo Hills, a UNESCO Heritage Site because of its cultural value for the San, was listed as ReconAfrica leased area for drilling, it was returned to the Botswana government after UNESCO intervention. The company claimed that "the original inclusion of the Tsodilo Hills in the leased area was erroneous" (Kweli, 2021). Nevertheless, as ReconAfrica works on their leased area, their drilling and fracking could harm water sources that Indigenous people rely on and pose a threat to the Okavango Delta, another UNESCO Heritage site. ReconAfrica has maintained that they "seek to minimize environmental impacts" and view the San communities as "critically important stakeholders" in their operations (n.d.). However, an investigation carried out by Saving the Okavango's Unique Life (SOUL) has determined that water may have already been contaminated due to a lack of well-liners. Despite ReconAfrica's promises, worries about the company's impact on the environment and the San community have been prevalent, and several protests have been held against oil drilling in the region.

Past Actions

Since the early days of the African Union, the rights and quality of life of indigenous

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Individuals have always been a topic of discussion within the intercontinental union. Specifically, the African Commission on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR), an established autonomous treaty body of the AU, has been working with indigenous populations in Africa. According to their official web page the ACHPR "may create subsidiary mechanisms such as special rapporteurs, committees, and working groups" one of them being the "Working Group on Indigenous Populations/Communities and Minorities in Africa" (WGIP) established in the year 2000 (ACHPR, n.d). This working group was meant to exclusively examine and study the livelihood of indigenous communities or populations with the responsibility to report back to the commission in sessions. Shortly after its establishment, the working group presented the "Report of the African Commission's Working Group on Indigenous Populations / Communities" in 2003, which according to the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA, n.d) "continues to be the major framework for the [ACHPR] on the issue of indigenous people's rights in Africa" (African Commission on... n.d).

According to the African Commission on Human and People's Rights, the WGIP has various responsibilities and jurisdictions, notably undertaking country visits, working on publications and research, organizing seminars and workshops, addressing urgent appeals, and participating with international mechanisms focus on the rights of indigenous peoples, such as United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. From its establishment to the current day, it has been reported that the WGIP has visited 13 different countries, working on reports which in turn highlight "the socio-economic, environmental and land related challenges indigenous people are facing" (IWGIA, n.d).

In the past, this working group has been crucial when discussing the rights of indigenous people in Africa because, with their research, the ACHPR and AU may advise individual governments on policy making and legislation regarding the indigenous. In their 2015 publication "Extractive Industries, Land Rights and Indigenous Populations'/Communities' Rights" in collaboration with the IWGIA, the authors provided ethical and conscious recommendations not only to African states but also to business enterprises, international financial institutions, civil society organizations, national human rights institutions, the ACHPR, and even to Indigenous populations and communities (Extractive Industries... 2015).

Though the WGIP is a key instrument in assessing and more importantly advocating for the rights of indigenous people, it has limitations and thus cannot enforce any of the said recommendations.

IV. Key Players and Points of View

Cameroon

The Pygmies, an African indigenous group, forms about 0.4% of Cameroon's 20 million inhabitants. These can be further divided into three groups, Bakola, Baka, and Bedzang.

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Moreover, the “Mbororo people living in Cameroon are estimated to number over one million and they make up approx. 12% of the population” (IWGIA, 2022). Although they form a significant part of the country, Cameroon has a history of violating human rights of indigenous individuals. Just in 2021, there were a series of these illegal discrimination tactics. For instance, “The Bantu village has established an illegal control point at which every person from the Baka villages or even visitors are stopped, identified and searched by the chief of the Bantu village and his notables”; these illicit checkpoints have disproportionately affected indigenous citizens. Other human right violations have been more severe, such as the unjust murder of Cameroonian indigenous citizens (IWGIA, 2022). One man, for instance, was “allegedly beaten to death because he refused to help carry the goods of his murderer” (IWGIA, 2022). Although there are witnesses and evidence, police forces refuse to carry out an investigation or arrest the man allegedly responsible. Similar cases have become the norm for Cameroon; this community is denied justice simply because of the prejudice against them in the country.

Nevertheless, Cameroon has seen the first step of progress in recent years. For example, the Livestock Development Project (PRODEL), has included the Baka people and allowed them to breed small animals. In reality, this is just a minimal part of the action that needs to be done in Cameroon. Indigenous people are mostly farm workers in the country, and they have been denied the right to use or sell their livestock or crops up until three years ago. PRODEL is a step forward, but there is still a lot of work to be done if Cameroon wants to provide equal opportunities for all of its citizens. Moreover, the 9th session of the Inter-ministerial Committee on Oversight of Indigenous People’s Projects (CISPAV) was held on August 3rd, 2021. This session’s main themes included the “order to streamline all actions/programmes/projects involving Indigenous Peoples at the national level”, with some actions “implemented in 2021 [focusing] on agriculture, animal rearing, education, income-generating activities, health care services, COVID-19 awareness raising, potable water and obtaining civil registry documents such as birth certificates” (IWGIA, 2022). Cameroon, although silent for many years on the issue, has only recently started to implement actions that will shift the experience of indigenous communities in the country, and again, this is only the first step to securing these rights throughout the whole country. The AU can only hope that Cameroon continues on this road to equality between ethnicities.

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

Although the exact number of indigenous people in DRC is unknown, they have one of the most conflicting legislative norms regarding protecting indigenous people. In some instances, the DRC has been oppressive towards these tribes. For instance, although the Pygmy people are “accepted and approved by the government and civil society organizations (CSOs),” which many countries lack, they are still blatantly ignored in their contributions to the country (IWGIA, 2022). Many underestimate that the Pygmy’s traditional knowledge has “significantly contributed to preserving the Congolese forests,” even evicting these citizens from their homes

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without compensation or consent. However, in 2020, the DRC exposed the world to the upcoming actions they plan to take to secure the rights of indigenous people in their country. For instance, they provided secure access to education, but “[the education programs] [do] not correspond to the Indigenous Pygmy people’s culture, nor to the socioeconomic realities of their lifestyle, accounting for [a] high rate of illiteracy” (IWGIA, 2022). Opportunities have been opened, but there is a lack of communication between indigenous individuals and the government to provide all accommodations necessary for education to be accessible. Another example of this lack of development in programs that are supposed to aid indigenous communities includes the “ nationwide land tenure program,” implemented in January 2022 (IWGIA, 2022). Although this program is ideally to help indigenous individuals own more of their land, it has backfired, with tribes being victims of the unjust stealing of land. This conflict “mostly stems from an absence of measures to guarantee their land and environmental rights and accommodate their lifestyle” (IWGIA, 2022). As one can see, the DRC has tried to implement programs to aid all communities, but the lack of accommodations has made these programs ultimately ineffective.

Angola

Angola has a history of being in favor of indigenous rights, such as voting in favor of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples on 13 September 2007 and ratifying the Indigenous and Tribal Populations Convention of 1957. Although these actions seemed to lead in a positive direction, Angola halted reports from indigenous-related issues near 2010. Currently, the Angolan government does not recognize the concept of indigenous people in their laws. Angola houses around 25,000 indigenous citizens, and yet there is little to no action being taken in regards to their human rights (IWGIA, n.d.). Some of the main issues from the tribes residing in the country, including “the San and the Himba and potentially other Khoe-san descendent groups, such as the Kwisi, the Kwepe, and those with similarities to the Himba, such as the Kuvale and the Zemba”, include the following (IWGIA, n.d.). In 2016, there was a shortage in economic resources in regards to NGOs that aided indigenous people in Angola, with some of them closing completely. That same year, “several land expropriations for tourism development, commercial logging, and national projects affected Indigenous Peoples’ settlements”, and because of the lack of backing from NGOs, many citizens suffered financial losses, some becoming homeless (IWGIA, n.d.). Another challenge in these tribes was the drought of 2016, which severely affected the livelihood of many indigenous citizens, given that many worked in the farming and livestock industry. The only sort of recognition indigenous people in Angola have obtained was this same year of 2016, with “the national broadcaster TPA [showing] at least 13 short news segments related to government projects with San communities” (IWGIA, n.d.). Indigenous tribes are one of, if not the most, neglected communities in Angola, and the AU must have to properly address the effects that the lack of resources and recognition are having on such communities.

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Botswana

Botswana has one of the highest percentages of indigenous people in their country, with 3.2% of their population belonging to some indigenous tribe. Their jobs typically consist of small-scale farming and cattle post-workers, some of them also being hunter-gatherers. Because of such jobs and the state of Botswana's income on those industries, the "San, Balala and Nama are among the most underprivileged people in Botswana, with a high percentage living below the poverty line" (IWGIA, 2022). Despite these unfortunate statistics, Botswana as a government has signed and agreed many conventions aiding indigenous individuals, such as the "Conventions on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD)"; they also voted in favor of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) (IWGIA, 2022). Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic severely impacted not only the tribes, but the country itself. With a 80% decline in tourism, low vaccination rates to the less-fortunate, and lockdown restrictions, many indigenous citizens found themselves ill or without a job. Botswana is actively working towards bettering its economy and getting citizens back to their standard of living before the pandemic, such as removing all lockdown restrictions and financing their tourism sector. Nevertheless, it goes without saying that the livelihoods of thousands of citizens have been irreparably affected.

Moving on, Botswana has recently announced that "mother-tongue San languages would be taught in Botswana schools beginning in February 2022", with other native languages planning to be added in the future (IWGIA, 2022). Seeing as the previous languages were limited to English and Setswana, this is a great opportunity to join communities together. Botswana still has a lot of issues involving the accommodation and equality of indigenous people, but in comparison to other African countries, they have progressively improved their programs and stances on the issue.

V. Possible Solutions

Because of the multifaceted nature of this topic, many different solutions could be used in order to tackle the issue. In addition to the already existing legislations or conventions, member states of the African Union could implement frameworks to safeguard indigenous individuals' rights. As stated in the 2015 publication "Extractive Industries, Land Rights and Indigenous Populations'/Communities' Rights," these could vary from safeguarding the right to customary ownership of land, access to natural resources, or developing economic alternatives from extractive industries.

On that note, another possible solution would be to support, at an international level, the development of economic alternatives for indigenous people. Instead of forcing integration into the modern-day economic workforce, governments should focus on organically integrating these

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individuals and populations. By working on making them economically independent, governments have the opportunity to strengthen the presence of indigenous individuals in modern-day society. Additionally, supporting that development also ensures access to information directly affecting them. As stated in the aforementioned report, this could “ensure [that] they are able to participate effectively in the key decisions that affect them” (IGWEA, 2015).

Furthermore, another possible solution could be to work with business enterprises and financial institutions to develop or strengthen existing policies on indigenous rights. It is crucial that if this solution was to be implemented, it includes both businesses and financial institutions to respect the rights of indigenous people and prevent further enablement of human and indigenous rights violations.

Lastly, in addition to all previously mentioned, states could establish clear and effective grievance mechanisms in case the rights of indigenous communities are violated. According to the Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations, this refers to a “complaint process that can be used by individuals, workers, communities and/or civil society organizations that are being negatively affected by certain business activities and operations” (“What are Grievance Mechanisms?”, n.d).

Though these solutions are feasible and able to be established, at least to some extent, some argue that even with their implementation, solving the issue is a lost cause. Again, because of the multifaceted nature of the issue, there are countless aspects to consider when resolving it, and thus, more than one solution is needed. Moreover, it is essential to consider that each member state of the African Union also deals with other internal problems. Expecting the prioritization of one issue above all others is unrealistic, and without dealing with the issue on all fronts, hoping to resolve it is arguably futile. Ultimately, it all depends on how these possible solutions are implemented in each state, recognizing their areas of opportunity, limitations, and potential.

VI. Current Status

Currently, Africa houses over 3,000 tribes with varying ideologies, traditions, and religious beliefs (Moussa, 2020). Consequently, this ethnic diversity and the repercussions of tribalism have generated socio-economic injustices, inequality, and discrimination from within and beyond indigenous populations. Consequently, this issue has greatly hindered the ability of African countries to integrate their respective tribes under one national identity fully. This is because these groups will favor their collective over others. Thus, tribalism has “led to a decline in the progress of African nation-building” in all aspects (Okogu, 2016). Nevertheless, there have been attempts to rectify this dilemma. Nevertheless, the majority of attempts have been mainly unsuccessful.

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A recent example of a country's government trying to unite its tribal societies is that of the former president of Guinea, Alpha Condé. He “vowed in 2010 to unite all Guineans, regardless of tribe, after winning the presidential election” (Najimdeen, 2022). However, during his presidency, his strategies and politics would reflect the opposite of what was initially promised. Because Condé is an ethnic Mainline, it was decided to oppress his tribe's “rival,” the Fula. Guinea during his presidential period saw oppression, discrimination, and inequality; nonetheless, due to the September 3rd, 2021 coup in the country— in which Condé was deposed— the future of Guinea continues to be uncertain with this issue.

Moreover, there have also been recent events relating to tribalism that has resulted in the loss of human life. The incident occurred in Sudan due to a land dispute between Arab and African tribes in Kolbus. The aftermath left “a total of 126 people killed, including 101 from the Gimir tribe and 25 from the Arab Rizeigat tribe” (Magdy, 2022). Similarly, in South Kofordan, at least 19 people had perished, and 54 others had been harmed because of the altercations between tribes.

So far, attempts to solve the problem have failed. Tribalism is a subject that has long affected local African affairs. The repercussions of this incorporation by ethnic groups have caused there to be many obstacles in the development of African nation-building. However, even more gravely, its effects have produced multiple humanitarian crises that have affected hundreds of thousands of African ethnic groups. Racism, oppression, inequality, and ethnic violence have long plagued African political and economic dynamics. It is the responsibility of this committee to propose viable solutions for this dilemma that, if not tackled, will continue to have a profound impact on the entire continent of Africa.

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