



NATIONAL ASSEMBLY CAUCUS

HONOURABLE KAZEONGERE TJEUNDO SPEECH ON THE PLIGHT OF THE PEOPLE OF KOMBAT

Honourable Speaker
Honourable Members,

The people of Kombat have been deserted by government. They have been the subject of grave humiliation, degradation and exploitation for almost 20 years now.

The rich and powerful, led by businessman Knowledge Katti and friends from multi-national mining firms are committing great injustices against the people of Kombat.

Through this all, government has turned a blind eye to the cries of the people of Kombat. What is happening in Kombat is unacceptable. It is exploitation of the highest form, and almost resembles the dark days of apartheid. What is going on in Kombat must not be allowed to take place in our modern-day democratic dispensation.

Honourable Members,

Perhaps it is imperative to provide a historical analysis of the town of Kombat first before I dive into the grievances of the people of Kombat. It is common cause that, around the year 1900, the Kombat mine

was opened to extract copper and other minerals after they were discovered at the town in the year 1850. The mine was opened and operated by the Otavi Minen – und Eisenbahn Gesellschaft, or better known as OMEG, a German-British consortium.

The mine was closed down between 1915-1946 because of the First World War and the Second World War which took place between that period. The mine was then reopened in 1947 when Tsumeb Corporation Limited (TCL), owned by Newmont Mining of the United States, acquired mining rights and started drilling at the town in 1953.

Tsumeb Corporation Limited was liquidated in 1998 after which Ongopolo Mining and Processing Limited acquired all TCL assets in 1999 and reopened the mines.

In the year 2006, the Government of the Republic of Namibia through Government Gazette number 3679, Notice number 119 published on 15 August 2006 declared Kombat a Township in terms of section 31(1) of the Regional Councils act, 1992 (Act No. 22 of 1992).

In that same year, a company by the name of Weatherly International plc acquired the Kombat mine from Ongopolo and subsequently operated the mine until January 2008 due to the flooding of the mine and the constant power outages due to the drop in copper prices.

In 2009, a South African company called Grove Mining bought Kombat mine from Weatherly International plc. In 2012, Grove mining was in the process of selling Kombat mine to Canadian owned Pan Terra Industries, a Namibian company African Renaissance Mining Company that was chaired by Mr. Mihe Gaomab (The First), who acted as Grove Mining's Agent.

This is when Mr. Knowledge Katti, the self-proclaimed owner of Kombat, was brought in as a middleman for Pan Perra Industries by Mr. Gaomab.

Mr. Katti claims that he bought the town of Kombat in 2015, and has since been collecting rent, electricity and other basic service payments. Mr. Katti even went on to threaten residents of the town

who could not pay rent with eviction in a meeting with the town's residents in June 2018.

Mr. Katti through his oppressive nature also evicted dozens of residents from their homes in Kombat to accommodate the Welwitchia University and campus and its students. Many houses and living rooms were converted into bedrooms in order to accommodate as many students as possible. This has created very unhygienic conditions as students are forced to cook in their bedrooms and twelve students have to share one toilet and one shower.

In October 2018, Mr. Katti attempted to force the residents of Kombat into signing new lease agreements, which included massive rent increased of +-200% through his company, Kombat Village Properties. The residents strongly refused this greedy rent increases and elected a committee to institute the fight against the oppression of Mr.Katti. The residents also decided to stop paying rent after it surfaced that the electricity payments they had been making to Mr. Katti were never paid over to Nampower.

Under the management of Tsumeb Cooperation Limited (TCL), residents did not pay for housing and water supply. Even when Ongopolo Mining and Processing took over, residents entered into various agreements for purchases of houses, and those who wanted to buy their houses signed deeds of sale and started paying them through pay slip deductions or cash at the mine offices. Some residents signed lease agreements and started to pay rent, but water supply remained free of charge.

Mr. Katti continues to harass the residents of Kombat with summons for eviction, and went as far as taking some residents to Otavi Magistrates Court where he obtained a summary judgement in November 2019.

Honourable Speaker
Honourable Members,

It is clear that the problems of the people of Kombat started when Mr. Knowledge Katti supposedly bought the town of Kombat in 2015. The residents of Kombat, led by the Kombat Community Committee, have been trying to get clarity for the past five years as to how exactly Mr. Katti managed to acquire ownership of the town.

Until this day, Mr. Katti has failed to provide any proof of how and when he acquired ownership of the town. There is no deed of sale, deed of transfer or even a title deed showing that Mr. Katti did indeed buy the town. Mr. Katti has also failed to provide proof as to ^{now} a government property duly proclaimed in 2006 has been alienated to become property of Grove Mining. The residents of Kombat are also demanding documentary proof of the claim that he made in his Notice of Motion to amend in the Otavi Magistrates Court in which he claimed that he previously traded as Grove Mining.

Honourable Speaker,

It is about time that the Minister of Urban and Rural Development comes out clear and clarifies the issue around the ownership of Kombat.

Why has Knowledge Katti not yet provided proof of ownership of Kombat despite the countless attempts and efforts by the residents of Kombat for him to do so?

How did Mr. Katti acquire ownership of Kombat while Government Gazette number 3679, Notice number 119 published on 15 August 2006 declared Kombat a Township in terms of section 31(1) of the Regional Councils act, 1992 (Act No. 22 of 1992)?

Why does the Namibian government allow powerful business people such as Knowledge Katti to continue exploiting the people of Kombat? Has Mr. Katti captured some politicians who ought to intervene in this crisis?

Honourable Minister, the people of Kombat are frustrated and angry, and they want answers and real action now.....**I THANK YOU.**