

THE REAL INGWAVUMA STORY

SENSATIONAL headline stories in both the White and White-controlled Black Press have reported that Inkatha members are allegedly attacking hundreds of Swazi-speaking people in the northern KwaZulu area of Ingwavuma.

Refugees are said to be crossing the rugged Lebombo mountain range to get to Swaziland from Ingwavuma because they fear for their lives.

The papers quoted a senior Swaziland official, Mr A M Dlamini, who is secretary of the Swaziland Council as saying: "If you're not a member of Inkatha in Ingwavuma you cannot send your children to school; you cannot be attended to at hospital; you cannot be employed; you cannot start your own business..."

No mention has been made in the reports of the enmity Swaziland has towards KwaZulu, and therefore Inkatha, after Chief M G Buthelezi and his government successfully blocked a South African Government attempt to hand over the Ingwavuma area to Swaziland in a land deal which also included KaNgwane.

Scant or no mention was made of the decades-old tribal conflict which has been raging in the region.

The Sowetan Sunday Mirror did not print Chief Buthelezi's explanation of the conflict in the area until a week after its headline story — and even then an extremely condensed version.

The editor, moreover, did not even acknowledge an urgent invitation telephoned by Chief Buthelezi for him to send one or more of his reporters to the area immediately with a senior KwaZulu official who would investigate all the allegations in their presence.

This invitation was sent before the publication of the story and a week later, in a footnote to the Chief's reply, the paper mentioned the proposal but said it would be of "little use" as the claims were made by people already in exile in Swaziland.

"One-sided

Press reports

are

heightening

the conflict..."

Chief Buthelezi is still prepared for reporters from any SA newspapers to accompany top Government officials to any area they wish to nominate to substantiate the allegations against Inkatha — such as those printed above by Mr A M Dlamini.

Chief Buthelezi told the newspapers concerned that the executive of Inkatha would "not tolerate for one minute" the sort of behaviour alleged in the stories.

Some of the stories were "hysterical" and total anti-Inkatha propaganda.

He believed there was "absolutely no truth" in the allegations.

Indeed there were so-called Swazi speaking "refugees" from the Ingwavuma area now living in Swaziland but the reason for their emigration to the neighbouring country had nothing whatsoever to do with Inkatha.

The Chief gave Clarion Call the background to the ongoing conflict.

Thousand of pe



The landscape ... it forms part of the camp in south-

The story which appeared in The Star on Friday August 17.

MBABANE — Refugees who have crossed the rugged Lebombo mountain range to get to Swaziland from Ingwavuma told *The Star* this week that they had feared for their lives because hundreds of people had been attacked by Inkatha supporters in KwaZulu.

The Swazi-speaking refugees said they were being forced to renounce their Swazi traditions, abandon their mother tongues for Zulu, and shed their traditional garb.

The refugees also claimed that pensioners were being made to affiliate into the Zulu movement in order to receive their money.

The Inkatha leader, Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, dismissed the allegations as "absolute rubbish".

PROBLEMS

"These are old allegations which have been thrown at the KwaZulu Government and Inkatha for some time. There is absolutely no truth in them whatsoever."

"It is well known by those who have studied the history of the area that there are inter-tribal problems there. These are being blown up by those who are hostile to Inkatha. The people in Swaziland want

He said:

I am aware that attempts are being made to use the very unfortunate Mngomezulu conflict as a stick with which to beat Inkatha and KwaZulu.

Gross distortions from one-sided accounts will act to heighten the conflict in the community which dates back to 1965 when Chief Zombizwe died.

As is normally the case there were a number of descendents in the line of succession who could legitimately be appointed a Chief and, as is often the case, a number of parties were proposed and supported by groups of followers in their bid for the chieftainship.

One of these was ex-Chief Ntunjwa. Disputes which emerged delayed the appointment of

fled over rugged Lebombo mountains from Ingwavuma



The people... Mrs Ester Mngomezulu and husband, a shock when she went for her pension. Pictures by AH Kumalo.

Refugees claim they being attacked by Inkatha

mass exodus, pointing out that the department was concerned only with providing relief aid to the refugees.

Chief Ntunjwa Mngomezulu, who is the paternal head of the refugees, is also in Swaziland. He fled from Ingwavuma several years ago.

Swazi authorities estimate the number of refugees from Ingwavuma at between 4 000 and 7 000 — with more still arriving.

Mr R M Mabha, secretary of the Liqepo, said that as far as he knew, Inkatha supporters were bounding down Swazi-speaking residents in Ingwavuma and forcing them to renounce their nationality in favour of Zulu and join Inkatha and wear its uniform.

He said: "The Liqepo understands that people do not want to change their ethnicity. They are Swazi and are forced to

become Zulus. Rather than change, they prefer to flee the area. Our attitude is that South Africa would do its best by prevailing upon the KwaZulu Government to hold its horses in so far as Ingwavuma is concerned."

A senior Swaziland official, Mr A M Dlamini, who is secretary of the Swaziland Council, observed: "If you're not a member of Inkatha in Ingwavuma you cannot send your children to school; you cannot be attended to at hospital; you cannot be employed; and you cannot start your own business."

When *The Star* visited the Ndabavuse Resettlement Centre, runaways told tales of fear, and spoke about an empty future away from their birthland.

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees

(UNHCR), in conjunction with the Swaziland Government and the Lutheran World Federation, has started relief programmes aimed at alleviating the poverty and privation under which refugee families live.

Many people are still arriving. All that awaits them is a bleak and uncertain future. The new arrivals get tents from the UNHCR until they have adjusted and can fend for themselves.

"I fled Ingwavuma after a nasty experience one night at home," said Mr Ndabavuse Mkhomane, who arrived in the camp last October. "A group of men, saying they were policemen, came into my house carrying firearms. They wanted to take me away, but I refused. Then a tug-of-war for a firearm between one of the men

and me ensued. Fortunately I managed to grab the gun and they all fled."

He felt that remaining in the area would be unsafe and sped away to Swaziland. He said he surrendered the firearm to the Swazi Government. His family joined him later.

Mr H Mhambali (31) fled from Ingwavuma after shots were fired at him by men he claimed were Inkatha members.

"These men came into my home and said they were looking for me," he said. "My wife told them I was not in and they left. I suspected who they might be, so I decided to sleep in the bush that night in case they came back. But as I left, two men stopped me outside. They fired two shots, but missed. I raced away to the bush — where I remained for two weeks before finally deciding to come to Swaziland."

Mrs Ester Mngomezulu (66) said she was shocked when she went to collect her pension money at the end of July.

"When I arrived there a man told me I would not get my money because I refused to join Inkatha. But I hardly know what good Inkatha is to me. I will never join that body, which is for Zulu people."

A clinic and three primary schools have been started in the refugee centre. According to the principal secretary of the Swazi Ministry of Interior and Immigration, Mr Vusumuzi Mamba, there are big plans to offer more programmes to the people there.

"We are trying our best to alleviate problems of these people in the centre. We are not going to stop them as long as they do not come with violent intentions. This is a humble contribution on the part of the kingdom."

Mr G M Bembe, Assistant Secretary of the Department of Interior, said his government was appealing for funds from several international agencies to start more programmes for the refugees, such as irrigation and plantation schemes.

At the moment the refugees have nothing to do except tend their cotton fields in the camp.

I can attest to the fact that the violence in the Mngomezulu community must be laid at the door of the ex-Chief Ntunjwa.

When he was removed from his position, David Mngomezulu was appointed as acting Chief pending final choice of the Chief.

While acting as Chief, David Mngomezulu was brutally assaulted and will be a cripple for life.

Those who worked with him were assaulted and on many occasions their cattle were despicably maimed.

The late Chief Kethwayo was subsequently appointed. He and his Indunas were also harassed with violence.

Chief Johannes Mngomezulu, now Regent Chief pending the appointment of Chief Kethwayo's heir, faces the same violence.

Ex-Chief Ntunjwa knows nothing about democracy and his behaviour after his removal, as far as I am concerned, fully substantiates the fact that he was not fit to rule as Chief.

It is common knowledge that there is a warrant out for his arrest in South Africa.

What is not common knowledge is that ex-Chief Ntunjwa has been working assiduously to have the Ingwavuma district incorporated into Swaziland.

As far back as 1972 he was involved with the Late King Sobhuza II in attempts to denationalise the people of Ingwavuma and to make them Swazi citizens.

The impression some now want to give that the Mngomezulu problems can now be traced to Inkatha and the KwaZulu Government are mischievous in the extreme.

The Mngomezulu community has for decades been divided by the South African/Swaziland border and the Mngomezulu community in Swaziland undoubtedly seek to be party to the treachery of making the Ingwavuma district part of Swaziland.

It is natural therefore that the villification of myself and Inkatha will emanate from the Mngomezulus in Swaziland and some of their families and followers living in Ingwavuma.

the new chief and ex-Chief Ntunjwa was finally appointed in November 1970.

The origins and intensity of the present conflict must therefore be traced to a time when KwaZulu, as it is now constituted, did not even exist and to long before Inkatha was formed.

The affairs of rural communities at the time were directed from Pretoria through the Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner in Pietermaritzburg and the local Bantu Affairs Commissioner.

At the time when Chief Ntunjwa was finally removed in 1973, the Mngomezulu area was not under the jurisdiction of the Territorial Authority which Pretoria foisted on the Zulu nation.

It is simply a matter of history that Chief Ntunjwa abused the

privileges of his position.

He chose to locate himself primarily in Swaziland and has never satisfactorily answered questions relating to the misappropriation of tribal funds and property. Even to this day he refuses to return three vehicles which, it is alleged, were bought with tribal funds.

Chief Ntunjwa became unpopular because of his high-handed attitude and Pretoria was faced with demands for his removal.

An official enquiry was held and it was recommended to the State President that he be removed. I was not involved in this in any way.

But I am now involved in the very unfortunate aftermath of his removal from the position of Chief.