



BRIEF BACKGROUND TO THE CAMPBELL CASE IN THE SADC TRIBUNAL REGIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE



The SADC Tribunal regional court of justice in Windhoek, Namibia

Mike Campbell, who built up the Mount Carmel farming enterprise in the Chegutu district of Zimbabwe's Mashonaland West province and developed a highly successful mango export operation, took President Mugabe to court at the Southern African Development Community (SADC)'s regional court of justice, the SADC Tribunal, in 2007 following the violent expropriation of his farm. The case was joined by 77 other farmers and farming organisations.

On 28 November 2008, the Tribunal held that the Zimbabwean government had violated the organisation's treaty by denying access to the courts and engaging in racial discrimination against white farmers whose lands had been confiscated under the land confiscation programme. The judges also held that fair compensation should be paid to the farmers by the government. In response, under pressure from President Mugabe, the SADC Heads of State disbanded the Tribunal in 2012.

Ben Freeth, Mike Campbell's son-in-law, who assisted Mike with the legal initiatives, embarked on a "Long Ride for Justice" across western Zimbabwe from Mount Carmel farm on 28 November 2023, the fifteenth anniversary of the SADC Tribunal court case judgment.

The second leg of his journey, which began on 2 February 2024, is taking him across Namibia's Caprivi Strip and then south to Windhoek, the capital of Namibia, where the SADC Tribunal was located.

Ben's objective is to raise the profile of the need to reopen the SADC Tribunal so that the 389 million SADC citizens can have access to justice when the justice systems fail them in their own countries.

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