

Zim farmer travels across Namibia for justice

Oh! SixSeven – central northern areas of Namibia

22 February 2024

"I am so grateful for the warmth and kindness of Namibians I have encountered so far - both in the communal and commercial areas. Thank you very much! My biggest need is to be able to give Stardust enough water." – Ben Freeth, Zimbabwean farmer whose farm Mt Carmel was expropriated.

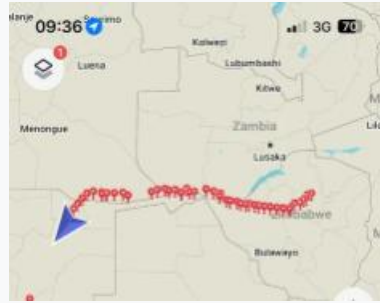


Ben Freeth, a Zimbabwean farmer who is currently traveling thousands of kilometres on horseback and on foot on his way to the SADC Tribunal in Windhoek after the Zimbabwean government confiscated the Campbell family farm, is currently moving through the O67 area. He was about 120 km to 100 km before Grootfontein at 12 o'clock on Thursday afternoon (22 February 2024).

A request is made to farmers along the road to help provide his horse with water and possibly some pasture every 15 km.



Route



Ben is originally from the farm Mt Carmel in Zimbabwe. He started his journey on the farm in Zimbabwe [Chegutu district] on horseback and on foot - for 800 km. On the Namibian side, he rode a mule and otherwise led it for about 400 km, with the assistance of Dr. Telané Greyling [a zoologist, rider, and expert on the Namib horses].

However, [Nikao] the mule had to go back to Windhoek because he does not like being alone on the road without another horse. Megan Wise, owner of Grootfontein's famous Chahanic Stud and Safaris, has meanwhile made one of her horses available for him to complete his route.

Ben is currently completing the rest of the journey by the side and on the back of Stardust from Chahanic Stud and Safaris.



"It was at the SADC Tribunal in Windhoek where a historic decision was made on 28 November 2008 that we may stay on the farm, Mt Carmel, in Zimbabwe. Unfortunately, the Zimbabwean government disregarded the decision. This formerly extremely productive farm is now a shambles - like so many other dispossessed farms in Zimbabwe," says Ben.

"Former president Robert Mugabe effectively 'dismantled' the SADC Tribunal. This long journey for justice is to bring awareness that the SADC Tribunal needs to appoint judges for it to work as it is supposed to.

"All the almost 400 million people in Southern Africa need individual property rights and justice. Where injustice reigns, destruction follows. All people need justice, we are all equal citizens, equal before the law - whether we are poor or rich, white or black and young or old," says Ben.

The reason

Mt Carmel was the largest mango producing farm in Zimbabwe, while it also produced several other crops and provided employment to over 500 Zimbabweans. However, their houses were burnt down - also those of the employees and they lost all their crops. At the same time, more than 500 animals were killed on the farm.

Ben and his wife, father-in-law and mother-in-law were kidnapped and assaulted. His father-in-law, Mike Campbell, died two years later as a result of the injuries he sustained. Ben set up a foundation called the Mike Campbell Foundation in memory of his father-in-law. The focus of the foundation is the restoration of justice, law and human rights in Zimbabwe.

He hopes that the long journey will help raise awareness of the need to reopen the SADC Tribunal in Zimbabwe and also that human rights must be respected.

Ben referred people to the film "Mugabe and the White African" on Amazon Prime to learn more about farmers' situation in this country.

Those interested can also visit his blog www.mikecampbellfoundation.com/blog or make donations at www.mikecampbellfoundation.com/benlongrideforjustice

For more information, contact Dr. Talane Greyling on 081 444.

<https://www.ohsixseven.com/post/zim-boer-reis-deur-namibi%C3%AB-vir-geregtigheid>

Oh!SixSeven: Taking the initiative

Oh!SixSeven was born in June 2022 as a initiative to promote and tell the stories of the #067valley. The idea is to get a platform for OUR businesses, OUR people and OUR news.

If we don't tell our stories, then who will? There is a gap within the coverage of prominent local media and newspapers, often forgetting that we - the rest of Namibia - are here too. We count too!

The 067-valley covers the areas of Otjiwarongo, Tsumeb, Otavi, Grootfontein, Outjo, the Etosha National Park, Waterberg Plateau Park, Epupa, Kamanjab, Khorixas and Kalkfeld. This area is estimated to have about 200 000 inhabitants and is often considered to be the heart of agricultural production - containing the maize triangle and being one of the main cattle producing areas. The 067-valley feeds Namibia - in a big way!