



Interview with Chief Mamogale More

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Tshepo Moloji [TM]: I will start with today is the 23rd of September 2013. I am Tshepo Moloji and I am sitting with *Ntathe More*, here in Mogopa. We will be talking about the history of Mogopa and this is for a project being done by SAHA Land Act of 2013. We want to see how it came about to them [government] moving you. I will start with thanking you and also thank *Ntathe Rampo* for bringing me here to meet you today. I thank you for the information that you are going to give me today. I don't know if you can tell me what your full names?

Chief Mamogale More [CMM]: I am Chief Mamogale More, those are my full names. The older people do not call me Chief, they call me Mamogale but the younger ones just call me Chief and they do not understand what that means.

TM: (Laughing), where were you born?

CMM: I was born here

TM: Do you remember when it was that you were born?

CMM: I think it was in 1930

TM: Okay, in 1930?

CMM: Yes

TM: When you say you were born here, do you mean here in Mogopa?

CMM: Yes, here in Mogopa

TM: Where are your parents from?

CMM: My parents?

TM: Yes

CMM: My parents: for them to come here as BaKwena [Clan name, they were chased away by the white people from places like the Free State. The white people chased them away and they paid people less and took their cows and the people grouped themselves and they were a clan and they wanted land. The black people at that time were not meant to have cows. They wanted land and it was hard to get land as a black person - the Chief needed to be there to negotiate the process of getting land.

TM: Yes

CMM: The head must do this process for you. At the time *Kgosi* was also *Mamogale* as well. She spoke to the Ba Koena's and he said he would negotiate for them as they also sold cows. He found them a place where we are at the moment.

[TIMECODE: 03m:18s]

TM: They then moved and came this side?

CMM: Yes, that is correct. That is why they came here

TM: Now, when you were growing up, how were things here, what did you feel about the place while growing up?

CMM: It was number one

TM: What do you mean?

CMM: We never went hungry, we lived well. A lot of people today, we are killed because we are poor today and the white people take our cattle and chickens. However [then] they used their force and guns and they wanted us to go to where they wanted us to go to.

TM: Let us look at home, to show that people - men and older men sell cows. They then asked Kgosi Morena and Mamogale to buy them this land. Here at home, how were your parents? Were they also selling cows as well?

CMM: They also did farm in cattle, there was no hunger at all.

TM: I mean here at home what did your parents farm in?

CMM: They did farming in the following vegetables mabele, beans, and mielies as well.

TM: When they were farming was this for selling or to eat at home?

CMM: Do you mean to sell?

TM: Yes

CMM: They would sell to people that are selling.

TM: Okay, how many were you at home?

CMM: There were nine of us at home

TM: As you were growing up, were there schools when you were going to school?

CMM: There were schools during that time.

TM: Was it here in Mogopa?

CMM: Yes

TM: Where did you start attending school in that case?

CMM: I started here

TM: What was it called?

CMM: It was called Mogopa Primary School.

TM: You attended school there and where did you end off though?

CMM: I got to Standard six [Grade 8]

TM: Where did you go to thereafter?

[TIMECODE: 06m:16s]

CMM: I then went to town for my high school.

TM: Where did you attend school thereafter?

CMM: It was Madibane High School

TM: Okay, that was in Soweto?

CMM: Yes

TM: Where did you live?

CMM: Right here in Moletsane

TM: Okay, did you have any family?

CMM: Yes we did. Our father worked there and when he worked there, he would hire a place there so that we could have a place to stay.

TM: Okay, where did you father work?

CMM: I do not remember anymore where he worked

TM: That is okay. Here at home, was it just your mother that stayed behind here in Mogopa?

CMM: You mean here?

TM: Yes

CMM: It was herself and the other children

TM: Who was farming?

CMM: First it was my uncle before I went to school

TM: When you went to school, who was farming at that time?

CMM: Farming?

TM: Yes

CMM: It was the younger children who were farming, when I was gone to school.

TM: Okay, what standard did you end off at Madibane?

CMM: I ended off at Form 3 [Grade 10]

TM: Thereafter, what did you do?

CMM: I then went and looked for a job

TM: Where did you work?

CMM: I worked at Plascon that is what it is called today

TM: They work with paints

CMM: Yes, I am trying to recall what it was called then? I don't remember but it is Plascon today.

[TIMECODE: 08m:13s]

TM: When you worked, were you working in Gauteng?

CMM: Yes

TM: Where did you stay?

CMM: I put up a shack in Sophiatown

TM: Okay, you stayed in Sophiatown. Were you still visiting home in Mogopa?

CMM: Yes

TM: When you visited home were the people still okay?

CMM: Yes

TM: They were still farming?

CMM: Yes

TM: They were still okay at home?

CMM: Yes

TM: Now the details of the forced removals, when did you hear about it?

CMM: It was a while but in 1984 that is when they attacked us. When they attacked they told people that they are moving them to a better place to stay. When they looked at it, they said this is not where we can stay, as this is a forced removal, we can rather go to Mamogale to stop it. He also told them to stop them so that you do not lose your land. However do not fight but there is your land there. It is not only for Mamogale but it is also for More as well.

TM: Were they telling the community this?

CMM: Yes they were telling the community that was that side. They were running after us to make a plan so that we stay there by Brown and Aninka.

TM: When they started the forced removals of 1984, were you that side already or where were you?

CMM: I was that side with my father.

TM: So you heard this and you were there still?

CMM: Yes

TM: When you heard this news that they were being removed, what did you do?

CMM: It was difficult but we fought it from that side while we were working in Gauteng. We could not sleep.

TM: How did you fight it though?

CMM: We want to come back and we want our land and we do not want someone else's land. The white person will challenge us and then they will come and say that this is my land and you need to leave and we did not want that. So we wanted our own land. There is no other land that is better than this one. The white people did cause us problems at that time.

[TIMECODE: 12m:07s]

Other: I would like you to explain something as you were in Gauteng, I would like you to explain if it was the community committee that was working and how they worked?

TM: As you say you were in Gauteng, you hear that the white people have arrived and *Ntathe Rampo* says that you were on the Reef Committee: how did you start this Committee?

CMM: We started this because the white people wanted to take the land, so we wanted to fight to get our land back.

TM: Who was in the Reef Committee, do you remember anyone?

CMM: There were a lot of us, some of which have now passed away. I worked with Paul Thladinyane, Henry that is my child; Poee, Bietjie, Membe and others as well there were a lot of us really.

TM: So you combine and you call it the Reef Committee?

CMM: Yes

TM: So what do you do now to fight the forced removals?

CMM: We went to places and told our story and whoever who would listen and help us with our situation. We met with people like TRAC and they would help us to fight this situation to be able to go back to our land.

TM: So you were able to meet TRAC while you were in Gauteng?

CMM: Yes, they helped us and if it was not for them, because others would be living there, and we would be living and they helped us with this situation.

TM: When you met with TRAC what did you say to them for them to assist you?

CMM: To TRAC?

TM: Yes

CMM: We asked for assistance to be able to go back home and what they can do for us.

TM: When you came back, you say that the police came and they wanted to remove you forcefully and here you say your grandfather was here. Did you find them here or were they still here?

CMM: They had been moved and they were there but there were still a few people. They did not like it and my father was taken first and they would load them and take them to the new place, as this was the forced removal.

TM: When you got there to where they had been moved to, how did you find it?

CMM: I never got there

TM: You had never been there?

CMM: When I left Gauteng, I came here to Mogopa to look at how things at home are

TM: When you came here to check how things are, what did you find?

CMM: The white people had taken over and they had their things here and they were happy here in our place

TM: Did they take the people's cows?

[TIMECODE: 16m:25s]

CMM: They ate all our goats, cows. The white people ate our things. When we need our land back today, they are now talking about compensation but when they took the land from us they did not talk about compensation however when they need to give it back they talk about compensation.

TM: So you found that there were cows, which belonged to them now?

CMM: Yes

TM: What happened to the houses?

CMM: They had crushed them with bulldozers and there was nothing. That is what they wanted - that we had nothing.

TM: When you remember when you were still growing up, how was your house?

CMM: The house?

TM: Where you lived?

CMM: They had built it with sand, you know how the old people were. It was those houses that were built with sand.

TM: You say that there were nine children of you at home at that time?

CMM: Yes

TM: Were you able to all fit in the house?

CMM: Yes

TM: How many rooms was the house?

CMM: It had five rooms

TM: Okay, so you lived with your parents?

CMM: Yes

TM: So they took your parents and forced them out of their house?

CMM: Yes

TM: So when you went back, were you still meeting with the Reef Committee?

CMM: We met all the time, we did not sleep and we would run up and down to sort this problem out

TM: Where did you meet, do you still remember?

CMM: We used to meet at my place?

TM: In Sophiatown, but they had removed Sophiatown at that time?

CMM: Yes

Other: He is asking if you met at your place and where was this as this was not in Sophiatown anymore?

CMM: I was staying in Moletsane

[TIMECODE: 19m:16s]

Other: Oh, okay at Moletsane?

CMM: Yes

TM: When you met, what did you speak? Do you still remember what you spoke about?

CMM: We wanted to go back home and remove the white people, as we know it is them that moved us forcefully.

TM: When you say you did not sleep, what did you do at night?

CMM: We were fighting this thing that we can live where we want to live

TM: The people that moved to the other place, were you able to meet with them to talk and see how you would fight this situation?

CMM: We could not meet with those people. The people that we met with were the Reef Committee really as the others were too far, so we could only meet with those that were working this side.

TM: The Reef Committee, who did they work with?

CMM: The people we met with that we saw, these are the people that told us to go and stop those people

TM: Where did you meet with them?

CMM: We used to meet - it is a place by Pretoria,

Other: Brits

TM: So that was Brits then?

CMM: Yes, Oukasie. That is where we used to meet

TM: Okay, you would meet and have your meetings there?

CMM: Yes we would meet so that we can discuss the things we needed to as we did not want them to know where we met and we could not meet at places like Bethanie. [Note: Oukasie was in SA at this time, whereas Bethanie was in Bophuthatswana. After the forced removal to Pachsdraai, the tribe moved to Bethanie to live with their paramount chief, while they tried to get back to Mogopa].

TM: These meetings what do you get there and discuss, with TRAC and Black Sash as the Reef Committee?

CMM: We would discuss the way forward: we need to discuss what we need and ideas to get back to where we are from, as this place is not our land.

TM: So what was the way forward?

CMM: We had to work hard to get back to where we were from and fight this situation that we had.

TM: The time that your parents had been removed; were you able to see your family when they were moved to the other land?

CMM: Yes, you could meet with them

TM: Oh okay they were in Bethanie and you could meet them

CMM: We did meet them but there were others that were bought: and they were sell outs and they messed up things for us, as they were promised houses just to keep us quiet.

[TIMECODE: 22m:33s]

TM: So in Bethanie, where did they stay, when you got there?

CMM: They stayed in Bethanie; there were a lot of houses there really

TM: I mean the house: how was it that they stayed in there?

CMM: It was just a small shack really

TM: It was a shack. What was your father saying about this situation really?

CMM: He was saying that he wanted to go back to the land that he knew. He wanted us to come together as people and fight this situation, so that we can go back to where we are from

TM: You fought this situation?

CMM: Yes we fought

TM: It eventually got fixed in the end

CMM: Yes it did get fixed in the end

TM: How did you feel in the end, when you moved back?

CMM: It was nice when you go back home, it was very nice. It felt like chocolate, if a person does not like his home then they don't know what they want. It was a very nice feeling.

TM: (Laughing), do you remember when you went back, how it was?

CMM: We found another man I don't remember his name Mabotheo

Other: Peter Moetshe

CMM: I think that could be him, he is one of those. He was the guys from school at the back, they used to call them Mabotheo and he showed us the people of the company of those that were taking people

Other: Oh, you are talking about the hearse?

CMM: Yes, that is it. The long cars and the trucks and they laughed at us saying that Chief Mokoena- that you are fighting the white people.

TM: They were laughing at you?

CMM: Yes

TM: What did they say?

CMM: They saying that we are fighting the white people to come back to Mogopa. So on my side I said something that belongs to someone is not taken forcefully. The strength will come though to take it.

TM: So the hearse came?

CMM: Yes, they did come

TM: What happened then?

CMM: They came and they would have people to help load people and there were a lot of these cars that would load the people and their luggage and they brought us home.

[TIMECODE: 26m:09s]

TM: Okay, was your father still alive?

CMM: Yes

TM: And your mom was she alive?

CMM: No she had passed away in 1988, but she is this side now

TM: Okay

CMM: Even the white people, we told them

Other: Piet Marie

CMM: Schalkwyk, we cannot just leave or bury our deceased anywhere; we need to take it back home to where it is from really. That is Mogopa and we bury them. It was hard, we told them that our cemeteries need to be cleaned and they allowed us to clean our cemeteries and we had to travel up and down and we told them if they can carry the costs then it is fine. Where we are from, we need to be there by 7am. They think that we will work and finish fast however this is not the case. We came with a plan and put up some small shacks and they said that we will make you some shacks close to the cemeteries and we told them that in our culture that is not done, we do not stay close to the cemeteries, we do not sleep where the departed are resting. We were a problem for the white people. They then moved us and then said that we need to move when we come to Mogopa, we told them that you sold us. We will fight this and we must not walk around here.

TM: Who was this?

CMM: If you want us to buy this land again, we will buy it but we want our land back. That is all. The white people did not want us really. They used to swear at us and say "F#@K die Kaffir". They were the owners of the land, (laughing).

TM: They were small bosses really, (laughing)?

CMM: Yes

TM: When they moved the people here, when they broke the houses, what did they do with the land, did they sell it?

CMM: They say the Government took it but it was the white people that took it. They told themselves that the people from Mogopa are laid back.

TM: So they still allowed you to come and bury your deceased here?

CMM: Yes, we told them like Schalkwyk that we couldn't just go and bury the deceased anywhere really; we need to bury them here in Mogopa. I remember one time there was a corner there in the cemetery and the water used to get in and mess up the cemetery and they said they will fix it and we said no we will fix it, it is our land really. You cannot fix our ancestors homes, we will fix them.

TM: Who was meeting with Schalkwyk, in the Committee, to tell them these details?

CMM: It was the Reef Committee that met with them

TM: So they agreed that you could bring people to come and clean the graves here?

CMM: Yes they allowed us and they did not realize that we were going to come for them, (laughing), we put up the shacks and they said we must put it there close to the cemetery and we said no that is not how it is done.

[TIMECODE: 32m:17s]

TM: So the people came and they were coming back?

CMM: Yes, they were coming back with the hearse. Most of them came with hearse and there was nothing that could be done and the police could not stop them as well.

Other: Can you explain how Fink Haysom, the lawyers that you used, that the Reef Committee that you had?

CMM: Yes it was our lawyers

Other: Just explain it for them

CMM: It was Fink... Who was the other one?

Other: Tell him about your lawyers, how you worked as a nation. *Mam Lydia* is the one that gave you their details.

CMM: They helped us and when you talk about lawyers it was Aninka and they helped us to get these things that we have today.

TM: So when you met with Aninka and Fink, how did you go to them, who told you about them?

CMM: I had a sister those days and she was in parliament and she took us to TRAC, which was also called Black Sash, and they helped us with this.

TM: Yes, what was her name?

CMM: Rita Tsanga

TM: So this was your sister?

CMM: She comes behind me

TM: Rita Tsanga is she not the one that lived...

CMM: She is from Senoane

TM: Her husband was killed by the police?

CMM: Yes, that is the one

TM: Oh

CMM: Yes that is right.

TM: We read about these people, she is the one that told you guys about TRAC?

CMM: She took us to Fink and TRAC

Other: Haysom

CMM: No Fink is the same thing as Haysom, there was another lawyer as well, can't remember the name.

TM: Geoff. When you met at Oukasie, did these lawyers come with you there?

CMM: Yes, they did come and meet us there

[TIMECODE: 35m:20s]

TM: Now were you not scared that the white people had removed you and now you were meeting with the white people as your lawyers to get your land back. Were you not afraid that they would turn their backs on you?

CMM: When you want your thing, you fight for it. You fight the white people in Soweto and you march, so why not fight for it here as well. There you died for something. You did not know what you were fighting. The nation knew that we had a chance and we had rights. Before there was no such thing. Now we were willing to fight for it. They had thrown us there but we knew we could win the land.

TM: You were still explaining

CMM: (Coughs)

TM: When you came back, when you won the land back, were you there on that day?

CMM: When they returning back home?

TM: Yes

CMM: Yes I was coming all the time to see what was happening

TM: So when you came back and saw that people had come back home, how did you feel?

CMM: You mean the nice feeling of chocolate?

TM: Yes

CMM: It was a nice feeling as long as I did not have anything. I did not mind, but I knew I was back home

TM: When you came back, you had said there were no houses here, what did you do?

CMM: We built shacks so that we could have a place to stay. We started from the bottom really.

TM: Where did you build, did you build where you used to stay or did you just build anywhere really?

CMM: You can build where you used to if you had a house if not you could make yourself another house. I had not built a house, so I built my own house as that was home before so I had to make my own home now.

TM: So you built the shack and you lived there and your father also had a home?

CMM: Yes

TM: What about farming, what happened with that?

CMM: Everything was gone; we could not farm as the white people had taken everything. The plants and everything was gone, you could not go and get your goats and your cattle they had taken everything and they had guns as well.

TM: What were people living on then during this time?

CMM: It was just difficult really. I do not know anything really as people grew up in troubles and when they came back into the trouble again and did not know anything, so because we were in the Reef Committee from Gauteng, it was just hard though.

[TIMECODE: 39m:17s]

TM: Are there still some others that were in the Reef Committee that are still alive today?

CMM: Most of them have passed away now but I can think of Boy, the other one is Samerikane, and I don't remember anyone else.

Other: Those are the only ones who are still alive today

CMM: Yes, the other people that had built their house in Gauteng, but they could now go back home now as they had their land back.

TM: In the Reef Committee, were there any woman that formed part of it?

CMM: No it was only men that formed part of the Reef Committee

TM: It was just men. Who was the person running it as the Chairperson?

CMM: It was myself and the other person was Kgatitso here

TM: Okay, are you the people that came up with the ideas to go to Black Sash and the lawyers as well?

CMM: As I mentioned before, that we were told by my sister who was in Parliament to go to the lawyers and also Black Sash as well.

TM: Why is it that when you grew up they were farming and things were nice and you got your land back and they are not farming anymore?

CMM: How will they farm now, they did not have anything anymore as the white people had taken most of their things. We used to farm with the cows.

TM: Was the land there though still?

CMM: There was a vast amount of land that was available. When you look at things there is land but it is heavy with my two hands.

TM: But with strength it was possible?

CMM: Yes, but there were the white cows. Maybe I could do something

TM: Now, the people here in Mogopa, are they still under the leadership of the *Kgosi* [Chief] as you said? That big *Kgosi* was *Mamogale*. Are they still under the leadership of a *Kgosi*?

CMM: Yes that is correct, but it is not the same, I am not sure anymore. I don't know what is happening.

TM: The new Government that we have voted for, is there anything different that they have brought here for you in Mogopa?

CMM: Let us say about the Government but not about Mogopa, they did work up to now as today. Before we did not know that there was a pensioner and things cannot be done overnight so the Government has worked. The Government has worked and has given people jobs and people say that the Government is spending the people's money and they have worked really and it is better than apartheid.

TM: When you say if you had something that you would like to see happening to develop the community, what would that be?

CMM: What?

[TIMECODE: 44m:10s]

TM: If the community can be developed, what would that be that you would like to happen?

CMM: I had asked for, when we came back and I asked the Government to help us come together and we also asked for tractors so that we can farm. We cannot go hungry here even if you have children or don't have children or you are an old woman, so that we do not go hungry. I do not know what is happening as they have not come but I do not think that they will still come.

TM: When did you move from Gauteng back this side to permanently stay here in Mogopa?

CMM: I came back here in 1994, it was a long time, but when Mandela came out of jail. It was around that time but I did not come immediately but by 2002 I had come back here.

TM: You had returned home by this time

CMM: Yes

TM: I heard you say that this land belongs to the *BaKwena* [Clan name – Crocodile], what did you mean by that?

CMM: The people that are here are from the BaKwena clan from Mogopa. We are under the BaKwena

TM: Oh, I see so Mamogale is a BaKwena?

CMM: Yes that is correct

TM: The name of Mogopa, where does this name come from?

CMM: I cannot say where it comes from

TM: Okay, we will ask someone else might now

CMM: I just grew up knowing it as Mogopa

TM: Okay, I do not know when you were the Reef Committee: did you take notes or minutes or was there nothing that you wrote for recording your meetings?

CMM: There was Vice Chairman and it was a meeting, and they would record things.

TM: Where are those things, do you know where they stayed, that you wrote in the meetings?

CMM: It was the secretary, it was Kgatitso and he is in Moletsane and he is still alive and he would have them

TM: What is his name?

CMM: It is Membe

TM: Okay, so it is Membe Kgatitso? He was the Secretary?

CMM: Yes, he was the Secretary of the Reef Committee

TM: Do you still have his numbers by any chance?

CMM: No I do not have them anymore

Other: We can get them from that boy where we got in here

[TIMECODE: 48m:07s]

TM: Oh, maybe he may have something?

Other: Yes he is my uncle

TM: Okay, did you have any photos of the place?

CMM: No I do not. We did not really care about anything else as we wanted our land back and that is all we cared about. You cannot say that tomorrow the white person is telling you what to do with your land. So we wanted what was ours.

TM: Thank you for your time today, you have given us all the details we needed. However what was your father's name?

CMM: It was Isaac More

TM: It was Isaac

CMM: Yes that is correct

TM: In Free State where were they from?

CMM: They were from Kornbrook as they met as people and he went other people and they were afraid of the white people and when they found their own place here

TM: They then bought their own land

CMM: Yes they did buy their own land

TM: Thank you very much for your time and it will help us to write this book and share the story of how the people suffered from Mogopa

CMM: Okay

TM: I will try to get Kgatitso and find out what he has to say

CMM: I am not sure if he has burnt the books but he is someone else that can help you

TM: I will definitely try to get in touch with him.

[TIMECODE: 50m:20s]

[END]