

Presidential Succession and Academic Freedom: Botswana Deports Leading Political Scientist Kenneth Good

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Botswana is frequently depicted as a major success story on a continent where political and economic success stories are unfortunately few and far between (Acemoglu, Johnson, and Robinson 2001; Leith 2005; Samatar 1999; Sarraf and Jiwaji 2002). In many ways, it is. In contrast to many resource-dependent countries, Botswana has avoided civil war, held regular elections, and produced some of the fastest sustained economic growth in the world. Yet, on February 18, 2005, President Festus Mogae declared the country's most famous political scientist, Kenneth Good, a Prohibited Immigrant and gave him 48 hours to leave the country. On May 31, 2005, after losing a legal appeal against this order, Good was held in a police cell for two hours, given 30 minutes to pack, and put on a flight to Johannesburg, South Africa (see timeline below). This article explores the background to Good's deportation and addresses some of the fundamental questions it raises about academic freedom.

An Australian native, Ken Good joined the department of political and administrative studies at the University of Botswana (UB) in 1990. He was principally known as a persistent critic of the Botswana government. While Botswana's economic growth and per capita GDP are impressive, Good highlighted the structural nature of inequality in the country (Good 1992, 90; 1999, 199). He frequently advocated on behalf of Botswana's indigenous San or Basarwa community and consistently condemned the government's discriminatory treatment of this group (Good 1999, 191–92; 2003, 15–20; 2005, 41). Although Botswana regularly held

elections, Good emphasized the limits to the country's democracy (1996, 48; 2003, 5–8). He characterized Botswana's seemingly democratic political system as "authoritarian liberalism" and was particularly disturbed by the excessive concentration of power in the hands of the president (1996, 29–31; 2003, 9–10).

Good was by no means blind to Botswana's achievements. He observed that the country's first two presidents were "notable for their honesty, pragmatism, and common sense" (1992, 74) and he highlighted the fact that state intervention generally avoided "prestige, non-productive projects" (1992, 94). When I interviewed him in Gaborone for a research project in 2004, upon hearing my line of questioning on Botswana's relative success in avoiding or mitigating the "resource curse," he immediately referred me to an official in the Botswana government who he felt made the best positive case for Botswana so I would hear that argument. He acknowledged that the rule of law prevailed in Botswana and that the government's authoritarian powers were generally held in reserve and used only on a sporadic basis (1996, 29; 2003, 14). Still, for a government used to hearing its praises sung widely, it is not difficult to see how Good's persistent critiques could anger those in power.

Unfortunately, though, we may never know the exact reason behind President Mogae's decision to declare Good a Prohibited Immigrant. Under Botswana's Immigration Law, the president does not have to explain the reasoning behind any such declaration. At various times, the 72 year-old Good was described as "a threat to national security." Yet, neither the president, his press secretary, nor the country's foreign minister would elaborate on why someone who had taught political science at the country's national university for 15 years was suddenly being deported.

In the absence of a detailed explana-

tion from the Botswana authorities, speculation has primarily centered on two possibilities. The first concerns Good's links with the British non-governmental organization Survival International (SI) and his criticisms of Botswana's diamonds for development campaign. Attempting to distance itself from consumer concerns over "conflict" diamonds from countries like Angola and Sierra Leone, Botswana began promoting its diamonds as positive engines of development. SI turned this campaign around by initiating public protests at Botswana embassies to draw attention to the country's ill-treatment of its indigenous San/Basarwa community, which it linked to the search for new diamond mines in the Central Kalahari Game Reserve (Taylor and Mokhawa 2003). Given the importance of diamonds to Botswana's economy, this is a plausible speculation in that Ken Good's scholarship (2003; 2005) cited a number of SI sources and one of his publications (2003) featured a series of official Geological Surveys Department maps with additional shading on them by SI. This explanation cannot, however, account for the specific timing of the deportation order. It is also problematic in that Good's critiques long predated SI's interest in Botswana and it is difficult to see how deporting him will adversely affect their campaign on behalf of the San.

A second explanation which can perhaps account for the timing of his deportation centers on a co-authored paper that Good wrote with his former UB colleague Ian Taylor. Good was scheduled to present this paper, titled "Presidential Succession in Botswana: No Model for Africa," to a seminar at UB on February 23, 2005. He began circulating advance copies of the paper 8–10 days before the presentation. The deportation order thus came after copies of the paper began circulating and its 48-hour deadline to leave the country would have prevented Good from

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presenting it on February 23. As it turned out, Good was granted an interim order enabling him to challenge his deportation in court on February 21. The seminar presentation went ahead as scheduled, after having to be moved twice to larger rooms to accommodate the hundreds of people who turned out after Good's deportation became front-page news in Botswana.

Although the full version of "Presidential Succession in Botswana: No Model for Africa" has not yet been published in an academic journal, it is possible to summarize the main arguments in the paper based on excerpts from it which have appeared in newspapers (Good and Taylor 2005; *Mmegi* 2005). The paper begins by arguing that Botswana's democracy is highly elitist, power is excessively centralized in the presidency, secrecy and non-accountability in government are pervasive, and there is growing autocracy in Botswana. Much of this builds upon or further develops lines of argument that each author had already pursued individually (Good 1996; Taylor 2003).

Where the paper arguably breaks the most sensitive new ground is in its specific focus on the presidential succession process in Botswana. Good and Taylor argue that the country's two previous presidential transitions in 1980 and 1998 both took place without reference to the wishes of the people and resulted in successors who had no popular constituencies whatsoever. They point out that the country's first president, Seretse Khama, did not enjoy the "rough and tumble" of constituency politics so the constitution was changed in 1972 to allow for the indirect election of the president. Khama's vice president and chosen successor, Ketumile Masire, lost elections in his Kanye constituency in 1969 and 1974 and was re-appointed to parliament by the president. The requirement that the vice president should be an elected member of parliament was abolished, thus opening the way for Masire to succeed Khama without having won an election. The current president, Festus Mogae, was also appointed, not elected to parliament. A constitutional amendment in 1988 provided for the automatic succession of the vice president on the retirement of the president, which is how Mogae took office in 1998. The paper also looks forward to the anticipated transition in 2008 when current Vice President Ian Khama (Seretse's son) is scheduled to take over. It points out that during the October 2004 elections President Mogae publicly announced three times that, if parliament rejected his re-nomination of Ian Khama as his vice president and thus heir apparent, he would dissolve parliament. Good and Taylor portray this as a

Timeline of Events in the Deportation of Professor Kenneth Good

1990—Professor Kenneth Good joins the department of political and administrative studies at the University of Botswana.

mid-February 2005—Good circulates advance copies of a co-authored paper entitled "Presidential Succession in Botswana: No Model for Africa" which he intends to present at a seminar at the University of Botswana (UB).

Feb. 18, 2005—At about 5 PM, Good is served with notice that he has been declared a Prohibited Immigrant by the president and that he has 48 hours to leave the country.

Feb. 19, 2005—Good wins an interim stay of execution to challenge his deportation.

Feb. 21, 2005—UB academic staff demand that the vice chancellor address staff regarding Good's deportation and state UB's position on academic freedom. Good is granted an interim order against deportation by the Lobatse High Court.

Feb. 22, 2005—The acting vice chancellor of UB, B. S. Mguni, sends an email circular to staff announcing that he did not come as invited to an earlier meeting to address Good's deportation because he had a previously scheduled commitment. He states that UB management cannot comment on the expulsion. No reference is made to the request to clarify UB's position on academic freedom.

Feb. 23, 2005—Good "receives a hero's welcome" as he presents his paper "Presidential Succession in Botswana: No Model for Africa" to a packed audience at UB.

Feb. 28, 2005—The High Court rules that Good can stay in the country while his lawyers appeal. The High Court also rules that immigration officials cannot execute the presidential decree until its constitutional validity has been proven.

May 31, 2005—The High Court rules against Good on the grounds that the constitution grants the president the authority to declare someone a Prohibited Immigrant and does not require him to explain his reasons for doing so. Good declares that his deportation symbolizes "the death of democracy" in Botswana. He is hustled away from the court without a chance to speak to his lawyers, held in a police cell for two hours, given 30 minutes to pack, and put on a flight to Johannesburg, South Africa.

president without any popular constituency threatening to dismiss a popularly elected legislature. They also worry about Khama's authoritarian tendencies.

The paper concludes by arguing that permanency of tenure and a severe reluctance to leave office are striking features of African politics. Nearly 30% of Africa's rulers have been in power for 15 or more years and a fifth have been in power for 20 or more years. Encouraging Africa's Big Men to relinquish power is imperative, Good and Taylor argue, but if Botswana offers lessons, they are of a very restricted and limited nature. Australian, Botswanan, British, and South African media sources have all speculated that this paper was the spark that led to

President Mogae's decision to declare Ken Good a Prohibited Immigrant. Rumors in Gaborone have also highlighted the paper's criticism of Seretse Khama, "the father of the nation," as being the specific component that most angered government authorities.

What lessons or conclusions can we draw from Ken Good's deportation? There are, I would argue, at least four. First, Ken Good's principled courage should inspire all political scientists just as his expulsion diminishes all of us. Many political scientists employ the rhetoric of "speaking truth to power" but actually live pretty safe and comfortable lives. Ken Good knew the risks he was running. Almost a decade earlier he criticized Botswana's Immigration Act which "allows the president to declare a

visitor or foreign resident of Botswana a prohibited immigrant. A person so declared has no right to be heard by a court either before or after the decision, nor the right to demand information as to the grounds of the decision" (1996, 33). Ken Good spoke truth to power and paid a heavy price for doing so. Second, his deportation painfully confirms the validity of many of his arguments about the nature of democracy in Botswana. As the South African publication *Business Day* (2005) noted, "The ruling may have been in accordance with the law, which gives the president the right to declare a foreign resident a prohibited immigrant without having to give reasons. But it cannot possibly be seen to comply with the spirit of the country's constitution or the government's repeated commitment to uphold the right of freedom of expression." Third, the complete and utter failure of the University of Botswana to defend one of its professors or academic freedom more generally indicates that one of the answers to Marijke Breuning's (2005, 161) question about the internationalization of the American Political Science Association, "Why and for Whom?", must be to benefit political scientists in non- or partially-democratic countries whose governments do not respect the concept of academic freedom that many APSA members take for granted. Finally, those of us engaged in the study of African politics need to heed Good and Taylor's (2005) admonition that the time has come for academics "to abandon their uncritical stance towards Botswana and wake up to what is going on there."

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APSA Response to Good Deportation

June 27, 2005

His Excellency Mr. Festus Gontebanye Mogae
 President of The Republic of Botswana
 Office of the President
 Private Bag 001
 Gaborone
 BOTSWANA
 Email: op.registry@gov.bw

Dear Mr. President:

I write to you on behalf of the 15,000 U.S. and international professors and students of political science. As the largest scholarly body representing the study of politics, a growing number of our members specialize in international relations and comparative politics, including a focus on Africa. We have a strong hope for the promise of a flourishing scholarship of politics on the African continent, and the contributions that it can make to building democracy. It was particularly noteworthy to us that President Bush saw your conversations in Washington, D.C. as "highlighting the value that the United States places on their support for democracy in Africa."

The Republic of Botswana's reputation for leadership among African democratic states made the recent deportation of Australian-born political science professor Kenneth Good as an unwanted immigrant after nearly twenty years as a resident and lecturer at the University of Botswana all the more surprising. In their role as educators, sometimes critics, individuals such as Professor Good depend upon the protection of international agreements such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Articles 13 and 19(1), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 19), and The Human Rights Defenders Declaration (Articles 6a, 6b and 6c). The latter is particularly pertinent in declaring that "everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, as provided for in human rights and other applicable international instruments, freely to publish, impart or disseminate to others views, information and knowledge on all human rights and fundamental freedoms."

Both of our countries are signatories to the above covenants. Protecting the rights of scholars such as Professor Good to freely criticize is one of the hallmarks that the world looks to from democratically-motivated governments. Professor Good appears to have been singled out for practicing what we would regard as basic principles of academic freedom that one would expect to find in a university setting. It is, then, with both sadness and chagrin that I see his case as being so out-of-step with your Republic's reputation.

I, along with my other political science colleagues, fervently hope you and your government will rectify what appears to be a patent injustice, will restore Professor Good to his position, and thereby reclaim the international progressive reputation of the Republic of Botswana.

Sincerely,

Margaret Levi, President
 The American Political Science Association

Upcoming International Events

2005

November 16–20: Association for Canadian Studies in the U.S., 18th Biennial Conference, St. Louis, Missouri, www.acsus.org.

November 17–20: African Studies Association Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C., www.africanstudies.org/.

November 19: International Studies Association-Northeast and Northeast American Political Science Association, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, www.american.edu/isa-ne/papers.html.

November 19–22: Middle East Studies Association 39th Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C., w3fp.arizona.edu/mesassoc/.

November 30–December 1: Intellectuals and the Nation State, Dublin, Ireland, www.ucd.ie/amerstud.

December 2–3: Conference on the Human Dimensions of Global Environmental Change—Global Governance Project, Berlin, Germany, www.fu-berlin.de/ffu/akumwelt/bc2005/index.html.

2006

March 28–29: Association for the Study of Ethnicity and Nationalism Annual Conference—Nations and their Pasts: Representing the Past, Building the Future, London School of Economics and Political Science, www.lse.ac.uk/collections/ASEN/conference2006.htm.

April 4–6: Political Studies Association of the United Kingdom, Annual Conference, University of Reading, UK, http://www.psa.ac.uk/con_and_app/psaconf.htm.

April 6–9: Association for Asian Studies, Annual Meeting, San Francisco, California, <http://www.aasianst.org/annmtg.htm>.

May 27–June 1: Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences, The City: A Festival of Knowledge, York University, Toronto, Canada, www.fedcan.ca/congress2006/letter.htm.

July 9–14: International Political Science Association, 20th World Congress, Fukuoka, Japan, www.fukuoka2006.com.

July 13–16: Poetry and Politics, University of Stirling, Scotland, www.poetryandpolitics.stir.ac.uk/.

July 24–29: 10th Conference of the International Society for the Study of European Ideas (ISSEI), The European Mind: Narrative and Identity, University of Malta, <http://issei2006.haifa.ac.il/>.

September 7–9: European Consortium for Political Research, First ECPR Graduate Conference, University of Essex, UK, <http://www.essex.ac.uk/ECPR/events/graduateconference/index.asp>.

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Netherlands	54
Israel	45
Australia	44
Sweden	43
France	39
Mexico	38
Italy	37
Switzerland	36
Norway	34
Taiwan	31
Denmark	29
Belgium	26
Brazil	25
Ireland	24
Spain	21
Turkey	20
New Zealand	16
Singapore	16
Austria	14
Chile	13
Greece	12
Portugal	12
Hong Kong, China	11
Thailand	9
Nigeria	9
Finland	9
Scotland	8
Egypt	7
China	7
Ukraine	7
Argentina	6
Russia	6
India	6
Romania	6
Lebanon	5
Philippines	5
Poland	5
Bulgaria	5
Venezuela	4
Colombia	4
Peru	4
Hungary	4
Czech Republic	4
United Arab Emirates	4
S. Africa, Armenia, N. Ireland,	
Saudi Arabia, Pakistan	3
Costa Rica, Croatia, Ghana, Bahrain,	
Cyprus	2
Jamaica, Serbia, Kyrgyzstan, Luxembourg,	
Indonesia, El Salvador, Trinidad & Tobago,	
Paraguay, Andorra, Cameroon, Latvia,	
Uganda, Macedonia, Slovak Republic, Ta-	
jikistan, Malta, Estonia, Jordan, Lithuania,	
Yugoslavia	1
TOTAL	1,890