



BACKGROUND OF BOGALAND



History

The country of Bogaland has a history of ethnic, religious and cultural violence which goes back to medieval times, and the struggles between the Kingdoms of Mida and Kasura. The Kingdom of Bogaland was established in 1250 when Erik Boga the Great, a liberal ethnic Kasurian warlord, managed to defeat large Midian forces outside Enköping. Today, this is known as the Battle of Hummelsta. After the battle a peace agreement was signed, and during negotiations Erik Boga the Great managed to lay his hands on a large piece of land. He proclaimed it a “free state” for both Midians and Kasurians, to show that both ethnic groups could be united and live together. He named the country ‘Bogaland’ and made Strängnäs its capital.

A period of peace and reconciliation replaced the ethnic conflicts that had defined the medieval times. When Erik Boga the Great died in 1301, the throne was inherited by his son Markus Boga the Second.

At this time the Mida Kingdom was in close alliance with the Swelandia Kingdom. The trade bonds and opportunity for Midians to study at Swelandia's Universities had a strong influence on Mida's culture and religion. The early kings of Mida favoured Echo-Christianity, which became and still remains the dominant religion within Mida, now with a fundamentalist interpretation of the Gospel. The head of the Echo Christian church, the Archbishop, was seated in Linköping. Örebro and Strängnäs became important to Echo-Christians, because of the destination for the yearly pilgrimage.

As long as Swelandia did not have anything to win in a war between Mida and Kasura, the Kasura Kingdom received support from the Swelandia Kingdom. This also influenced the culture of Kasura through trade and the opportunity to study in Swelandia's Universities. In Kasura, Delta Christianity became the dominant religion. Delta Christianity has evolved in a way that nowadays, and for most Kasurians, makes it compatible with a secular lifestyle. To the minority of Kasurians who still are traditionalist or fundamentalist Delta Christians, the towns of Västerås and Strängnäs are of great importance.

The first real ethnic violence started in Örebro in 1589. At this time, most people living in Örebro were Midians. Echo Christians burned a Delta Christian church and killed the principal chaplain. The event was thought to be revenge for what happened to Midians at the battle of Hummelsta in 1250. In Kasura this was seen as a direct threat against the Kasurian population in Bogaland, and a war starts between Mida and Kasura.

The war was a failure for Kasura, and large parts of Kasurian territory were lost and incorporated into Mida. Conquered Kasurian people were forced to convert to Echo Christianity, and many of those who refused to convert were killed. This was the start of a period that is known as the time of enlightenment by the ethnic Midians and the time of darkness by the Kasurians.

Bogaland was able to stay out of this war. However, radical Kasurian groups claim that Kasurians must stand up against the cruelties that took place in Örebro. At the same time, the last member of the Boga dynasty died and there was no one left to inherit the crown. As a consequence, a political vacuum arose in Bogaland. One of the radical Kasurian groups took advantage of this political situation and took over power in the country, and the Kingdom of Kasura seized the opportunity to strengthen Kasurian power in the area. By the year of 1590, without any battle taking place, they occupied the Bogaland cantons of Uppsala and Stockholm. In Mida this was seen as a great threat against Mida interests in Bogaland and they immediately attacked Bogaland from the west. One big battle was fought outside Kungsör in 1591 where Bogaland, with some support from Kasura, lost the cantons of Norrköping and Örebro to Mida. In the areas that were now occupied by Mida, people were forced to convert to Echo Christianity.

The period of darkness, or enlightenment lasted until 1845, when the discovery of gold in Västerås county prompted a 40 year long gold rush that lasted until 1885, when a state owned company, Bogaland Mining Company (BMC), took control over all major gold mines in the northern part of Bogaland. At the same time, Mida and Kasura showed their interest in the natural resources, and in 1893, Bogaland was forced into a union with Kasura. Most of the income from the gold industry went to Kasura and the Bogaland aristocracy for luxury instead of building up the infrastructure in Bogaland.

The Bogaland leaders felt abandoned and after World War I, the union between Kasura and Bogaland broke down. The Kingdom of Bogaland had already begun to show cracks during the union, and after the Boga dynasty disappeared, Bogaland became independent from Kasura. There was nothing left from the former Kingdom to build the new Bogaland on; instead the Republic of Bogaland was established in 1919. The Bogaland Red Cross Society was founded the same year.

After the independence of Bogaland, both Mida and Kasura tried to increase their political and economic influence over the Republic of Bogaland. A period of substantial economic development took place between World War I and World War II, particularly in the north and east counties, where the conditions for industrial growth were more favourable. In the western and southern counties, development was slower.

At the beginning of WWII, the Bogaland Armed Forces were in a weak condition and the government was not strong enough to control the country. Mida saw a window of opportunity and occupied Bogaland during the initial part of the war.

During the war a resistance movement was created within the country under the name of the Bogaland Freedom Forces (BFF). With some support from Kasura they defeated Mida in 1945 and the second Bogaland Republic was established. The new regime allowed no opposition, and the Bogaland People's Party (BPP) was declared the only legitimate authority, with Eskilstuna as the new capital. The relocation of the capital city marked Bogaland as a new country, moving on from its history.

During this time, the present border line was also established, and two years later in 1947, the Bogaland National army (BNA) was created. The regime also decided to nationalize all natural resources during this year. The former core of BFF became an elite and it was compulsory to be a member of BPP to get official appointments. The core of BFF at that time had the ethnicity of Bogaland-Kasurians and the Bogaland-Midians became a minority in the Parliament.

At the end of the 1940s, the Constitution of the Republic of Bogaland was changed. The new electoral system made the number of seats in parliament dependent on the size of the population in the province. The previous system gave each of the counties 20 seats in the parliament, and the chairman of the parliament the absolute vote in case of a 50-50 situation. The change was made possible by the now large economic inequality between the counties. The Bogaland-Kasurians achieved a strong position in political institutions by controlling Bogaland's media and using economic power, which was transformed into support from Bogaland-Midians. The new system resulted in a 70-30 ratio in favour of the northern counties, which were predominantly Bogaland-Kasurians. Out of 12 ministers, only three were of ethnic Bogaland-Midian ethnicity.

In 1949, Bogaland became a member of the United Nations and signed the Declaration of Human Rights in New York.

A couple of years later in 1955, the mineral Coltan was found in Bogaland. The parliament decided in 1958 that the multinational Western Electronic Company (WEC) was to receive a 99 year contract over the Coltan industry in Katrineholm County. A lot of inhabitants felt neglected and dissatisfied with the situation in Bogaland, and an outbreak of student unrests in Katrineholm and Eskilstuna began in 1968. Similar student movements were spread all over Europe.

Students with Midian ethnicity demanded equal influence in the Parliament of Bogaland, free elections, a multi-party system and an improved social system. The rallies were brutally suppressed by the BNA.

In order to start a social welfare program the Government of Bogaland used only a small part of the profit that was generated from selling natural resource contracts.

The social welfare program, which covered medical, social and dental care, was introduced in the 1970s. The welfare program favoured mainly Bogaland-Kasurians in the northern counties. This resulted in grievance among Bogaland-Midians, expressed in large demonstrations and protests, especially in the ethnically mixed areas around Lake Mälaren.

The new Bogaland school reform was introduced 22 years ago. A key change was the prohibition of teaching Echo Christianity in schools. This caused several demonstrations and riots in the ethnically mixed areas and in the south west part of Bogaland (the Midian part).

The president since 1945 and the former leader of BFF, Borka died 22 years ago. After his death, various Bogaland national parties (e.g The North Freedom Movement Party [NFMP] and The South Freedom Fighters Party [SFFP]) engaged in a power struggle. During the next ten years, presidents and parliaments changes a number of times.

The unemployment rate rose to 21 %, causing national investments in infrastructure, health and education to be postponed. Due to national economic strain, the Government of Bogaland decided to sell state owned Coltan mines in Enköping and Bålsta counties to private companies 18 years ago. Bogaland's economic crisis continued to worsen, and government employees did not receive their salaries.

17 years ago, major demonstrations over bad working conditions and unpaid salaries took place in the Government owned mines. The work stopped for two months. The workers demanded that Bogaland authorities privatise the state owned mining industry. In the multinational Western Electronic Company (WEC) mines, and other privately owned industries, the working conditions were quite good in comparison to the Government owned mines. The demonstration finally ended when the leaders of the demonstration were taken into custody and sentenced to severe prison terms. During the following years the North Freedom Movement (NFM), demanded that the Bogaland authorities have open contests for contracts; open, free, and transparent elections; and social development. The leaders of NFM were pursued by Bogaland authorities and many of the leaders were imprisoned or disappeared.

The group 'South Freedom Fighters' (SFF) was established at the same time with similar demands against the Government of Bogaland as NFM. This caused nationalistic ideas to flourish. Both the NFM and the SFF generated a lot of supporters within a couple of years. The majority of NFM supporters are formed of Kasurian ethnicity, and the majority of SFF supporters are formed of Midian ethnicity. The parties and their supporters started to show the President and the Parliament their dissatisfaction through manifestations.

Between 11 and 14 years ago there were frequent attacks against the BNA and Bogaland National Police (BNP), seemingly initiated by both NFM and SFF. 10 years ago, in May, a car bomb destroyed a BNA compound in Västerås, killing 100 and wounding 80 BNA soldiers. One week after the car bomb in Västerås, members of NFM, mainly consisting of unemployed former miners, took control over a state owned gold mine in Skultuna. BNA attempted to take control of the situation, but failed when they met armed response. During widespread fighting between BNA and NFM forces in Hallstahammar and Västerås County, the NFM forces worked tactically and successfully took control over the national and private mining industries in both counties.

Soon after NFM took control over national and private mining industries, the South Freedom Fighters (SFF) encouraged by NFM success against BNA, attacked BNA and BNP installations in Katrineholm County. The BNA was unable to engage the armed opposition in both the northern and the southern areas of Bogaland, and began to withdraw slowly. A great number of BNA soldiers defected, and allied themselves with the NFM or SFF.

Due to the conflict in Bogaland, the humanitarian situation for civilians became severe. As a result of the desperate fighting, many fled and became internal displaced persons (IDP) and refugees. Both the NFM and the SFF forces recruited women and children to their forces during this period. UN Agencies such as UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP were established in Bogaland due to the severity of the situation. The International Committee of the Red Cross was also established in Bogaland.

7 years ago, the NFM took control of Håbo County and the SFF took control of Katrineholm and Stjärnhov County. 2 years later the NFM took control over Strängnäs County. 3 years ago, the SFF was in control of Flen County. WEC installations were left untouched by SFF forces.

One year ago.

The NFM controlled the areas consisting of Hallstahammar, Västerås, Enköping, Håbo and Strängnäs counties.

The SFF on the other hand, controlled the areas consisting of Katrineholm, Flen and Stjärnhov counties.

Bogaland authorities controlled the areas of Eskilstuna, Malmköping and Gnesta counties, which make up the rest of the former republic of Bogaland.

After more than ten years of fighting there is still an open conflict in Bogaland. The humanitarian situation is poor and there is a desperate need of humanitarian aid in Bogaland.

