



# PARKS & LOCAL PEOPLE

## RESOLVING THE CHITSA-PARKS LAND CONFLICT IN SOUTH- EASTERN ZIMBABWE

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# **PENDING ISSUE....**

## **❑ LAND CONFLICT**

- ✓ Chitsa people lost a territory and chieftainship during the colonial period.
- ✓ Headman Chitsa // Parks Authority but his kinsman, Chief Tshovani

## **❑ OBJECTIVES**

- ✓ Understand the key issues in the conflict,
- ✓ Find a workable solution,
- ✓ Disseminate research findings to key stakeholders and the wider readership.

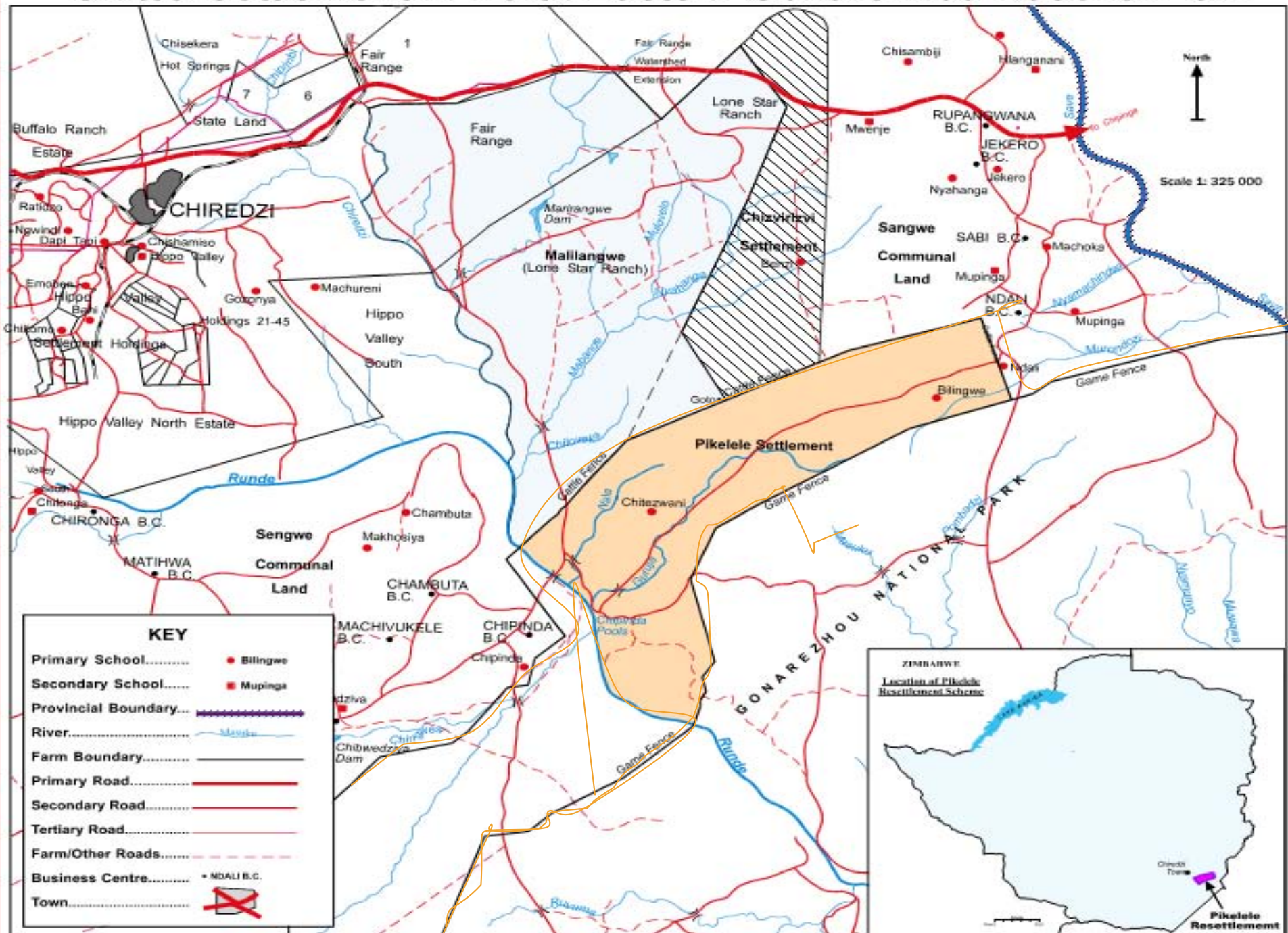


# OVERVIEW OF PRESENTATION

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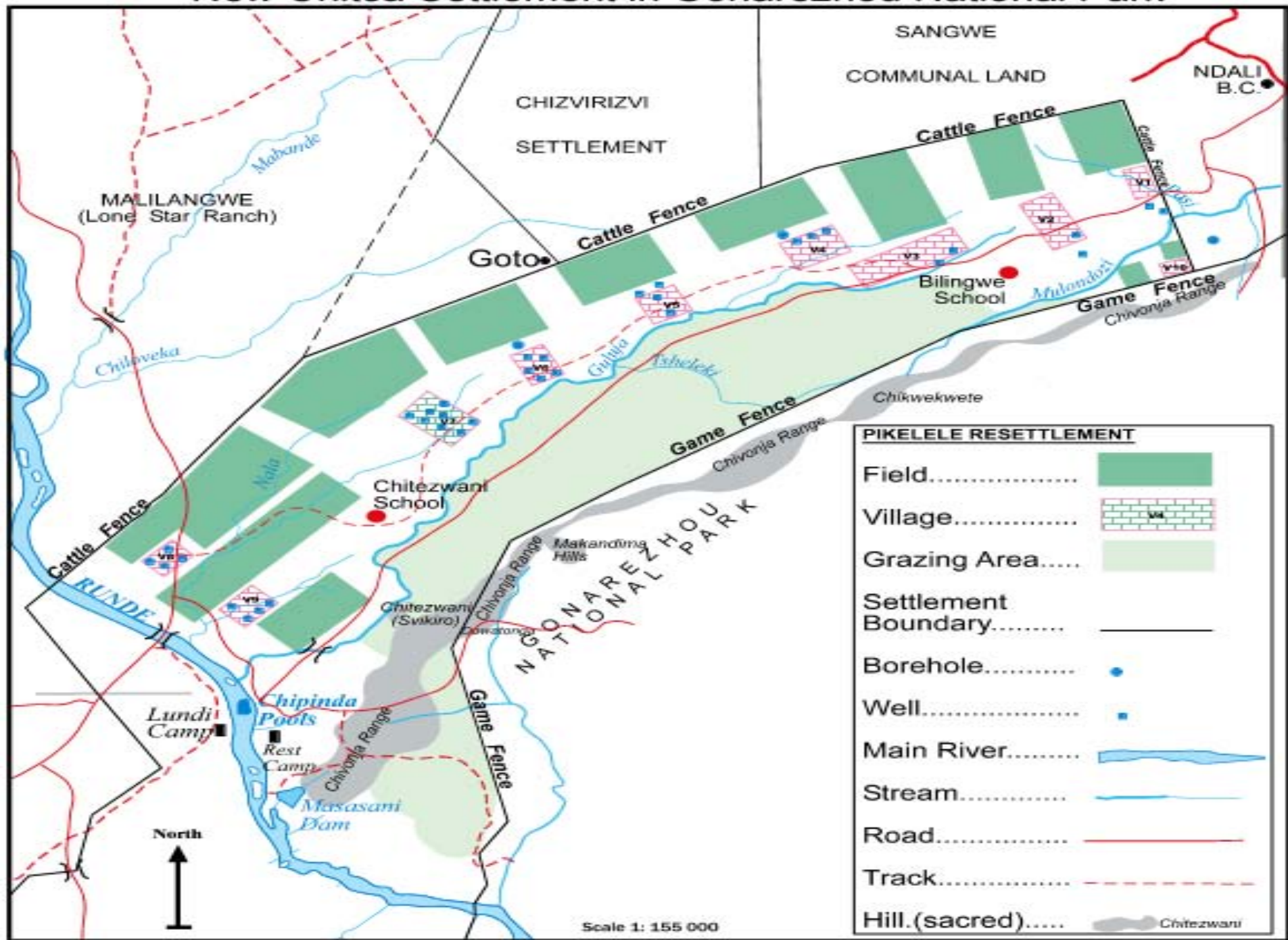
- ❑ Global, regional and national context
- ❑ Key issues in Chieftainship Conflict
- ❑ Institutional mechanisms and processes in conflict resolution.
- ❑ Lessons learned
- ❑ Recommendations.

## Chitsa Settlement in North Eastern Gonarezhou National Park





# New Chitsa Settlement in Gonarezhou National Park



# **GLOBAL, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL CONTEXT**

## **1. GLOBAL CONTEXT**

### **# IUCN categories of protected areas & GNP**

- ✓ Gonarezhou is a Category II protected area and is part of the GLTFP

### **# Convention on Biological Diversity (Zimbabwe is signatory)**

## **2. REGIONAL CONTEXT**

### **# The GLTFP Treaty & existing boundaries of GNP**

## **3. NATIONAL CONTEXT**

### **# Existing legislation (Parks & Wildlife Act, 1996: Chapter 20:14) prohibits occupation**

- ✓ Chitsa's strategy of reclaiming ancestral land and a chieftainship
- ✓ Chitsa's chieftainship claim pits him against Chief Tshovani

### **# Parks' commitments in the GLTFP**

### **# Chitsa's settlement setting precedence for other parks.**

# KEY ISSUES IN CHIEFTAINSHIP CONFLICT

## 1. PROXIMATE CAUSES

### # Conflict over lineage relations and the chieftainship

- ✓ Chitsa is the uncle (*sekuru*) and Tshovani is a nephew (*muzukuru*).

### # Displacement, identity and power.

- ✓ A product of pre-colonial population movements, colonial land expropriation, labour migration, liberation war and post-colonial organized resettlement >>>> demotion from chief to headman.

### # Conflicts over modernity and tradition

- ✓ 3 spirit mediums settled in Gonarezhou National Park (secret initiation rituals sites in Chitezwani hills)
- ✓ GNP: gain access to and benefit from transfrontier park projects

### # Conflicts over alliances and power

- ✓ Former Councillor and influential war veteran
- ✓ Former governor.



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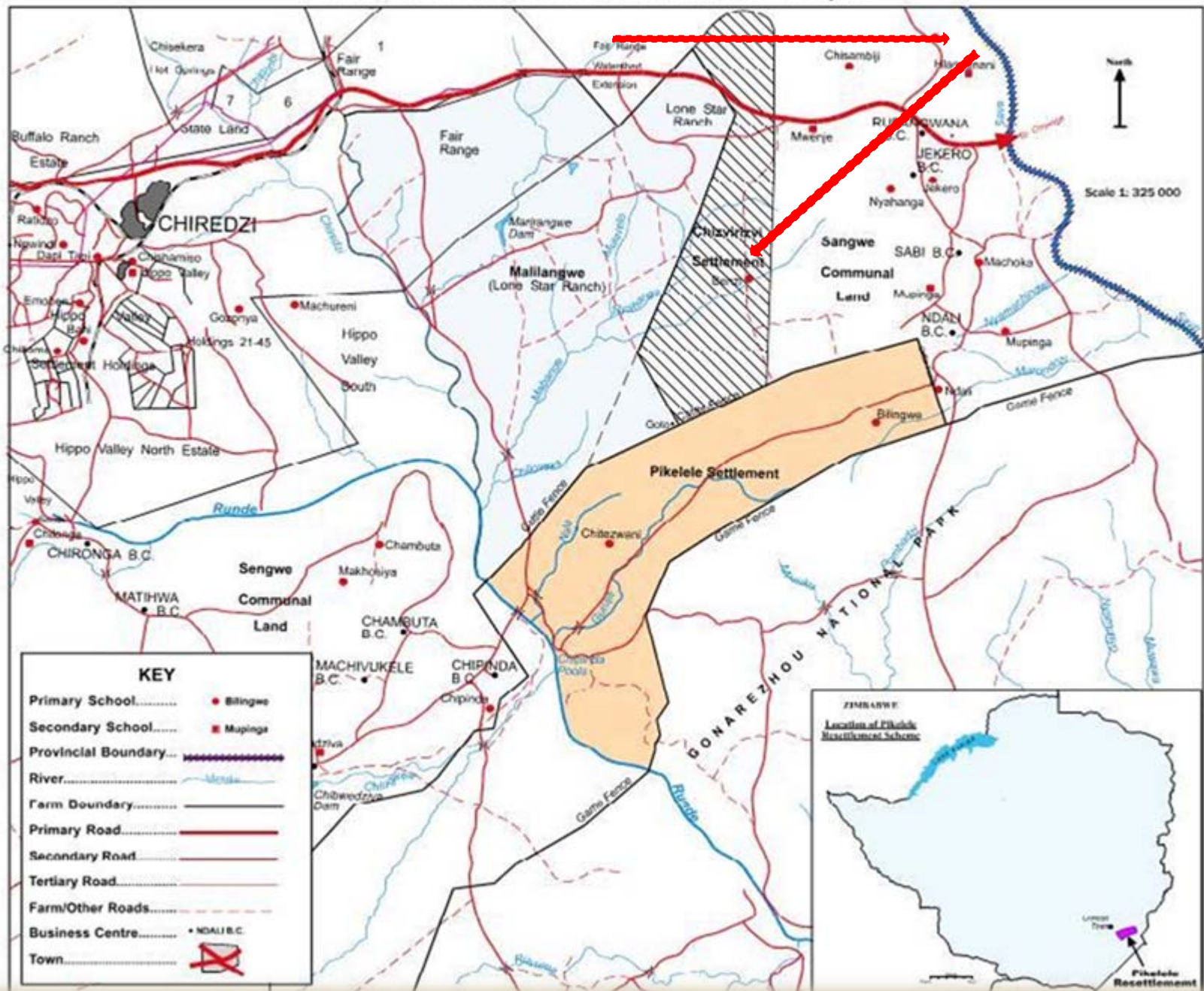
## **2. STRUCTURAL CAUSES**

**# Population increase and growing competition over natural resources**

**# Policies as sources of conflict**

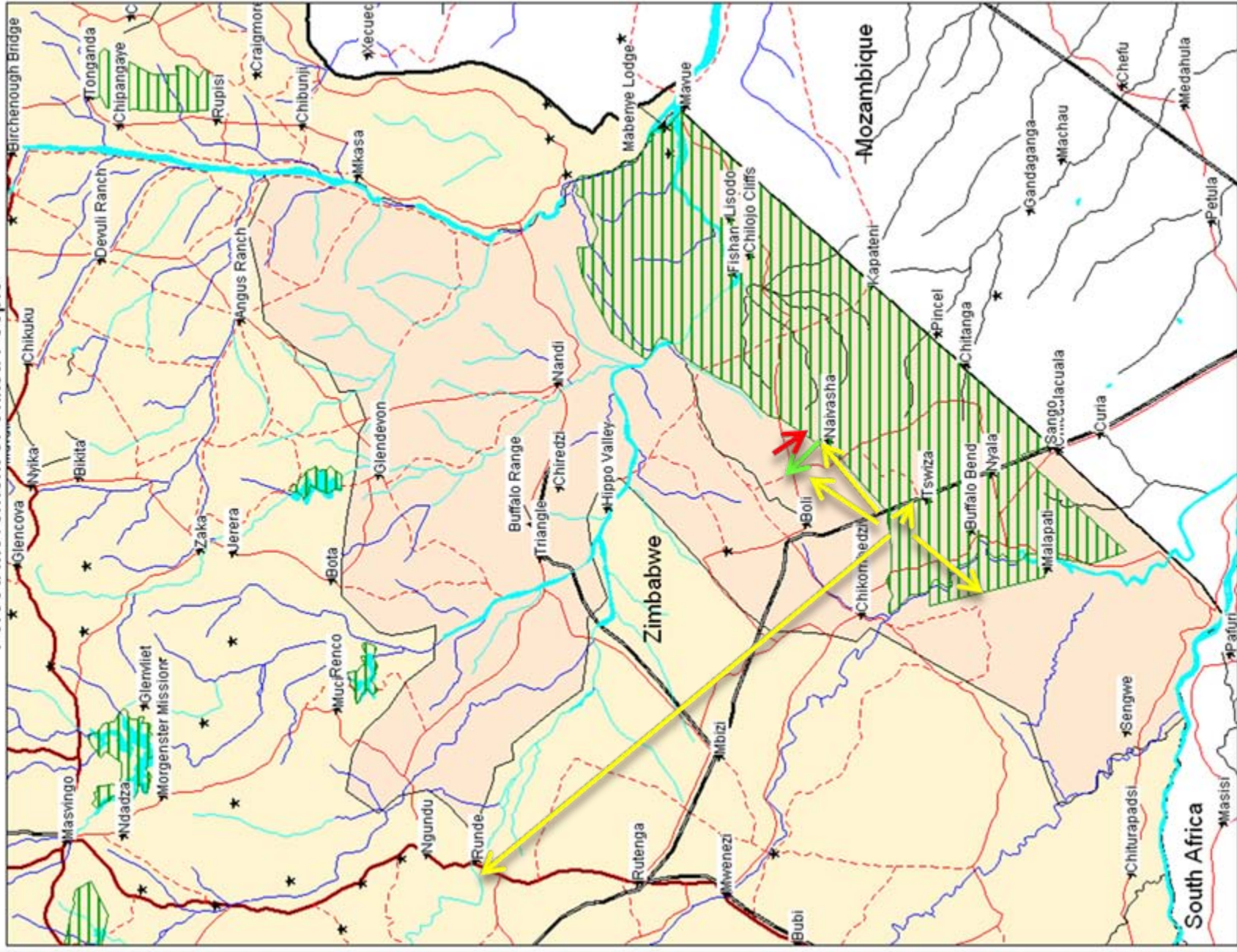


## Forced Movement of Chief Tshovani & People





## Forced Movement of Chitsa People





# INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS AND PROCESSES IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION

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## 1. INITIAL EFFORTS TO ADDRESS THE CONFLICT

### # IUCN/SAFIRE options for dealing with Chitsa settlers

- o Officially recognizing the settlement & redefining GNP boundaries
- o Returning settlers to original homes and negotiating co-management over contested area of park
- o Moving Chitsa's people out and providing them with irrigation facilities

## 2. CREATING A PLATFORM FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION >>> Mediation

### # Bio-Hub's assistance & the Chitsa Task Force >>> Soft landing

- ❖ Contested legitimacy of a government 'directive' to move Chitsa people out of the park
- ❖ Contested legitimacy of the 1975 boundary
- ❖ (Un)suitability of relocation
- ❖ Fears over dislocation of livelihoods

# INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS AND PROCESSES IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION CONTINUED

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## Mechanisms for conflict resolution

### **# Task Force meeting, >>> June 2006**

PWMA; Headman Chitsa and representatives of settlers in Gonarezhou; the private sector; provincial and local government officials; lands officials and Chief Tshovani.

### **# Entry into conflict situation & adaptation to local royal interests (SM)**

Applied research on traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution **BUT**

>> workshop were not culturally appropriate

>> a leading traditional authority as a mediator

>> to document the mediation process rather than directly influencing it

### **# Chilo Lodge agreement >>> October 2007**

A formal application requesting government to reinstate Headman Chitsa's chieftainship

### **# Scaling-up the mediation process >>> December 2007**

Two possible routes:

1: to submit the request to the National Chiefs Council

2: to follow the administrative hierarchy (district, province and central government)



# LESSONS LEARNED

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- The applied research process: *adapting to local interests; 'neutrality' and time*
- Differential meanings attached to land and natural resources
- Framing of conflicts and local dynamics (*Chitsa vs Task Force*)
- Efficacy of traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution
- Competing agricultural and conservation policies and local conflicts



# RECOMMENDATIONS



## 1. The Parks Authority

- ❖ IUCN/WWF principles & guidelines on PAs and local peoples (Beltran, 2000)
  - Recognizing local communities as equal partners in management of PAs.
  - Recognizing rights of Chitsa to disputed land and natural resources
  - Designing an access and benefit sharing regime with Chitsa and other stakeholders
- 1. Recognizing Chitsa's ancestral land rights
- 2. Linking Chitsa's elevation to Chief to his relocation outside GNP
- 3. Lobbying appropriate politicians to gain support for Chitsa's relocation
- 4. Developing alternative livelihoods outside the GNP
- 5. Avoiding forcible relocation of Chitsa's people outside the GNP
- 6. Allowing Chitsa to access sacred rituals sites

## 2. Bio-Hub

- 2.1 Helping Chitsa re-plan his area and developing alternative livelihoods outside park >>> EU PARSEL Project
- 2.2 Link Chitsa to private sector investors under partnership arrangements >>> EU PARSEL Project
- 2.3 Disseminating the Chitsa-Parks example in conflict resolution.



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**THANK YOU!!!**