

BANABANS

Life today...



The Banaban people like their homeland has now been left forgotten, while the people still suffer greatly from one of the world's greatest environment and human rights injustices. The phosphate rich deposits of Banaba and the bones of their ancestors are now dust scattered across the farms of Australia, New Zealand and Great Britain.

Over the 80 years of mining Banaba, the governments of United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and many other countries reaped billions from the farming benefits and the sale of the phosphate soil taken from their homeland, yet the Banabans have been left with nothing.

On Rabi and Banaba islands today with no assistance or proper infrastructure for future development, daily Banaban life is a constant struggle for survival, where the basic human rights of health care and education are considered luxuries. The abandonment of both remote communities only has added further to the forlorn isolation and depression of the Banaban community.

The Banabans only real legacy from the destruction of their homeland by phosphate mining are the obstacles left by the governments involved that would further ensure the repression and inhibit any further action to seek justice.

Banabans find themselves a forgotten minority community submerged in two Third World developing countries.

Today the Banabans face one of their greatest challenges—the very survival of the Banaban people. For them the struggle for justice is far from over.

- AIMS OF ABARA BANABA -

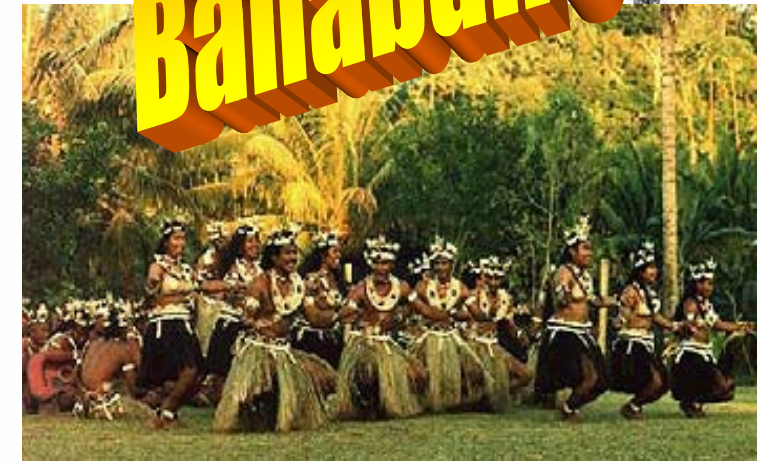
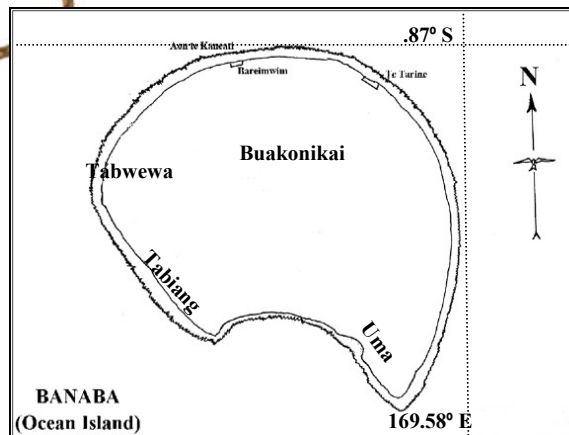
Our Homeland Banaba

Is a lobby group acting as a voice for the Banabans—a minority people living within Third World Nations. ABARA BANABA is made up of Banabans, led by the Rabi Council of Leaders and appointed spokespersons. We encourage and welcome public participation in the quest to:

- Seek justice and build a better future for the Banaban people
- Environmental rehabilitation of Banaba and sustainable development of Rabi island
- Uphold equality and unity for all Banabans
- To uphold Banaban cultural heritage and preserve ethnic identity
- To provide a global voice for Banabans and encourage participation

ABARA BANABA aims in assisting the Banabans in their endeavors. It is the responsibility of each and every one of us to see that the basic human rights we all hold so dear, are not denied the Banabans. This is their story which needs to be told. Please assist them by ensuring that they no longer remain—

The Forgotten People of the Pacific



the forgotten people of the Pacific...



ABARA BANABA

"Keiaki Waaki"
Strive to prosper...

Our Homeland Banaba

PO Box 6 Runaway Bay Q 4216 Australia

Phone: 0475 288385

Email: admin@banaban.com

www.banaban.com

BANABANS

Their story....



The Banabans are an Oceanic people from a South Pacific island called Banaba or Ocean island. In 1900 Banaba was discovered to be made of pure phosphate. This fateful discovery would see the beginning of eighty years of phosphate mining by the governments of United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand and the virtual destruction of the Banaban's homeland.

During World War II the Japanese Imperial forces invaded Banaba with the aim of taking over the mining operation. They murdered one-fifth of the Banaban population and removed the rest to other Pacific islands, where they were forced into labour.

After the War was over the surviving Banabans were gathered together by the British Colonial government and told they could not return to their homeland. The Colonial government used Japan's invasion as an excuse to dispose of the Banabans who stood in the way of their plans to continue the phosphate mining of their homeland.

The Banabans were then relocated to Rabi island over 2,000 miles away in the Fiji Group arriving without supplies and support on 15 December 1945. Any future plans to visit or see their homeland could only be done after obtaining approval from the British Colonial government.

In 1965 Banabans began legal proceedings against the Colonial government in the British High Court. This expensive and long fought legal battle would end up becoming one of the



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longest civil cases in history resulting in the judge stating that even though they had been wronged, he was powerless to award damages against the British government. It was not until 1981 that the Banabans received any type of compensation, however menial.

At the same time as their court proceedings, the Banabans further extended their fight for justice petitioning the British government to grant independence. Once again the British government washed their hands of the Banaban issue and left it up to the Governor of the Colony and the newly formed Council of Ministers. Again their hopes were dashed as the Council opposed independence for Banaba now or in the future.

By November 1979 the last shipment of phosphate left Banaba's shores and the Banabans found their homeland under the control of the newly formed Republic of Kiribati, former Gilbert Islands, a nation remote in custom and location. The majority of the Banaban community were left forgotten and struggling for survival far away from their homeland in Fiji on Rabi Island, where they still remain today.

Banaba will always remain their homeland.

The BANABANS...

And why the governments of Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain and Japan prefer the Banaban Story—remain 'Forgotten'

Originally in 1900 the mining of Banaba was carried out by a privately owned British company. But in 1920 this company was brought out by the British, Australian and New Zealand governments who joined forces and formed a consortium known as the British Phosphate Commission. These three governments mined Banaba relentlessly until 1981 and made no attempt—in spite of earlier promises—to rehabilitate the devastated island or to make it a liveable Banaban homeland once more.

In today's society the story of the Banabans and the maltreatment they received at the hands of four powerful nations is hard to believe.

Today we have the benefit of hindsight and modern technology allowing global networking and communications at a level never before imagined. Today also makes each and every one of us aware of just how small Planet Earth is and of our moral responsibilities to our global neighbours. In our era of increasing and complex globalisation, it is easy for the international community and, especially, the countries responsible for this humanitarian and environmental catastrophe to lose sight of *their* moral responsibilities to assist the Banabans to overcome the obstacles remaining as an unjust legacy of their now abandoned and once highly profitable mining exploitation of the Banaban homeland.

These are the facts—these governments do not want you to hear, for them the Banabans should remain—

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