

Zimbabwe - Doma

Profile

Doma live primarily in north-central Zimbabwe. Though the government does not keep official statistics on the populations of indigenous peoples, it is estimated that there are around 1,250 Doma in Zimbabwe, but current information on Doma is very limited. Due to the relatively high prevalence of ectrodactyly (also known as split-hand/split-foot malformation or SHFM) within the community, Doma face severe discrimination as well as a lack of access to social services. Their separation from the rest of Zimbabwean society has led to the reinforcement of negative stereotypes regarding the group.

Historical Context

Doma are traditionally hunter-gatherers. They have resided in the Mwanzanutanda Mountains for centuries.

Current Issues

In recent years, many religious groups have moved into Doma communities in order to proselytize, a process which threatens traditional Doma culture and practices. Due to their geographical and social isolation, many Doma lack access to essential services such as water, sanitation and health facilities.

Legislation such as the Land Acquisition Act allows for the Zimbabwean government to expropriate any rural land that it wishes to use for other purposes. The government has seized land inhabited by Doma to establish the Chewore National Park and Dande Safari Area, prohibiting hunting in these areas. Doma communities rely heavily on hunting as a source of food and many in the area are at risk of starvation.

Updated April 2018.