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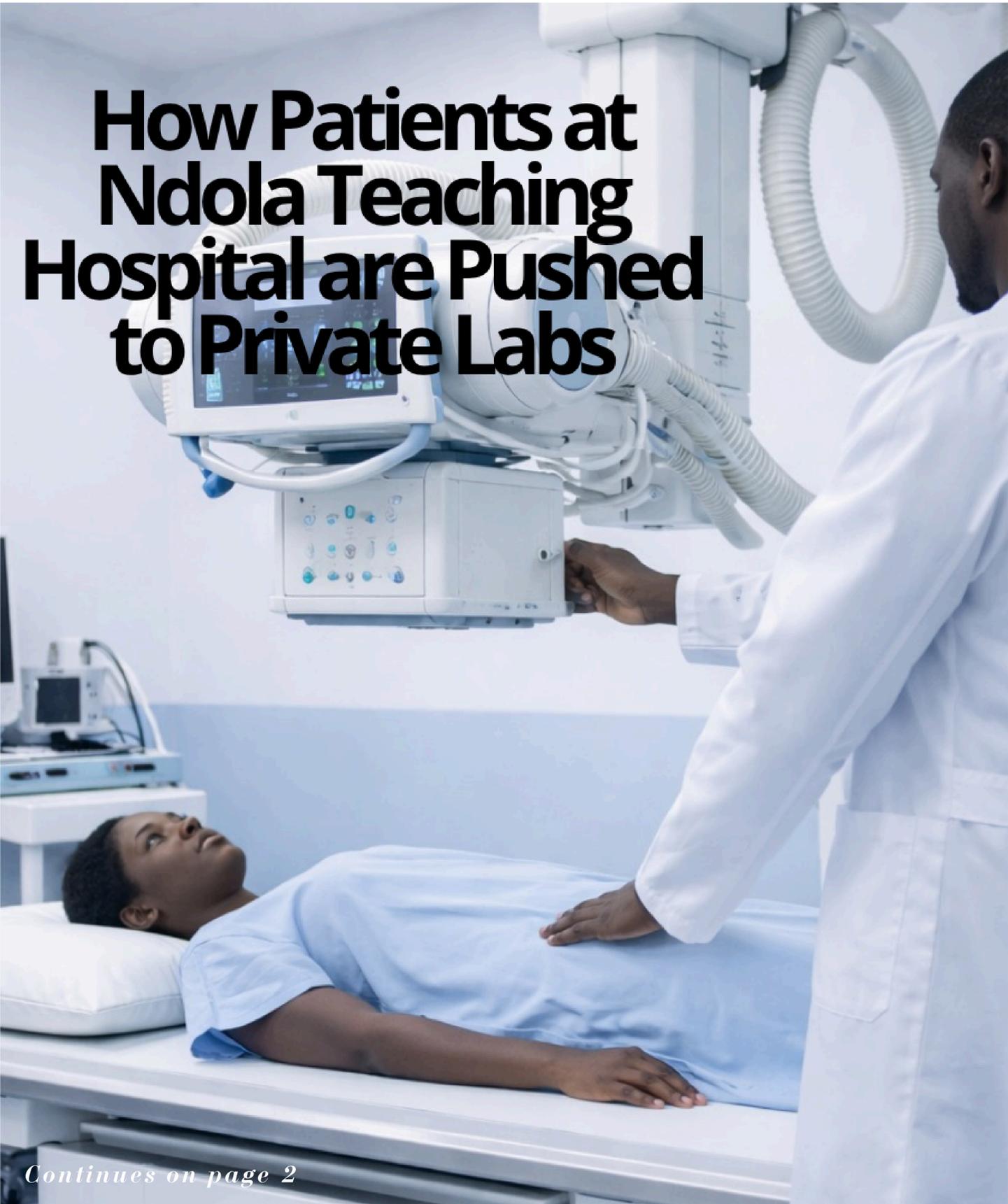
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Ben Mwiinga Water Project: Promises run dry

Custodians of household water listen attentively to the debate at Lusumpuko Hall, Mazabuka.

By Gift N'gandu

Mazabuka's three million Kwacha water project meant to deliver clean and reliable water under the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) is raising increased alarm.

Residents are warning that the water being supplied is putting lives at risk.

A public debate held at Lusumpuko Hall – organised by Mazabuka Community Radio and the MakanDay Centre for Investigative Journalism, heard how the Ben Mwiinga Ward Water Project exists more on paper than in reality.

Despite official claims that the project is over 90% complete, residents say they are still receiving dirty, inconsistent water – if any at all.

“We are being told the project is almost done, but that is not what we are seeing,” said one resident, Brain. “It is not okay to give people dirty water. This is dangerous.”

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How Patients at Ndola Teaching Hospital are Pushed to Private Labs

From page 1

By Valentine Mukuka | Ndola

At Ndola Teaching Hospital on the Copperbelt, one of Zambia's major public referral facilities, patients are routinely directed to private laboratories located just outside its gates—raising questions about whether capacity constraints alone explain the practice, or whether deeper systemic and ethical concerns are at play.

For Chungu Kapema, a Ndola resident, the experience was frustrating. “You go to a big hospital expecting everything to be done there. But they tell you to go to a private lab. If you don't have money, your treatment just stops,” Kapema remarked.

Just outside the hospital along Nkana Road, a cluster of private laboratories operates within a short walking distance of the hospital—some only a few metres from the main gate.

This raises questions about why patients are being referred outside for services expected at a public referral hospital.

Patients told Radio Icengelo that these referrals increase medical costs, delay treatment, and in some cases force families to abandon care altogether.

Health workers and officials blame it on capacity constraints, such as shortages of reagents, frequent equipment breakdowns, and a lack of specialised staff.

But insiders say capacity alone does not explain the scale of the problem.

“Yes, sometimes capacity is an issue. But there are cases where equipment is available and still not used. Some referrals raise serious questions,” said one of the workers in the hospital.

Patients and health workers say tests that cost less than fifty kwacha at public facilities can cost four times more at private laboratories.

“I did a test at Ndola Teaching Hospital costing K50 but again I was referred to do the same test at a private facility and it costs K700. I was forced to start searching for a cheaper facility because I didn't have the K700,” said Maluba Sitali, a patient.

Beyond the financial burden, referrals also create delays, as patients must return to the hospital with results for interpretation, slowing treatment further.

The issue of referrals to private laboratories is not new.

In November 2022, then Minister of Health Sylvia Masebo acknowledged that some public hospitals were referring patients to private labs due to personal interests of health workers.

She directed that private laboratories should not operate within public hospital premises, warning that conflicts of interest were undermining public health services.

Nearly three years later, patients say the practice continues.

Veteran clinician David Mulendema, who worked in various public hospitals in the country for more than 30 years, says conflicts of interest in referrals have long existed.

“Sometimes health workers refer patients to facilities where they work part-time. That is unethical. Public service must benefit patients, not individuals.”

While Radio Icengelo could not independently verify allegations of kickbacks, experts warn that weak oversight and unclear referral systems leave room for abuse.

Ndola Teaching Hospital did not respond to questions on referral protocols, equipment availability, or enforcement of the 2022 directive, at the time of publication.

However, Copperbelt Provincial Health Director Dr. Charles Mwinuna confirmed that Ndola Teaching Hospital

refers patients to private laboratories but dismissed claims that the practice has become widespread.

Ministry of Health Permanent Secretary Dr. Kennedy Lishimpi said the government is working to build capacity in public health facilities so they can provide services currently outsourced to private laboratories and pharmacies.

Immediate past Health Minister Dr. Elijah Muchima had warned that it is against ministry of health's policy for health workers to refer patients to private laboratories or pharmacies when public facilities have the capacity to offer those services.

Health policy experts caution that unchecked referrals to private providers undermine Zambia's commitment to universal health coverage.

They say when public hospitals fail to deliver essential services, patients pay twice—first through taxes, and again through out-of-pocket medical costs.

(This story was produced by Radio Icengelo and fact-checked by Makanday Centre for Investigative Journalism)

Opinion | Why Zambia's Creative Economy Is Failing Its Own People

From page 1

There is something deeply unsettling about a country that funds art but fails to protect the artists behind it.

The allegations emerging from the production of Ifyapachalo—a television drama reportedly funded with over K1 million in public resources, are not just about unpaid actors and editors. They point to something deeper: a systemic failure where public money circulates, but those who create value remain trapped in insecurity and instability.

This is not merely a story about a struggling film industry. It is a story about governance, accountability, and the widening gap between policy and practice.

At the centre of the controversy is a troubling pattern: contracts are signed, work is delivered, yet payments are delayed or never made. For many actors and crew members, the justification offered was “exposure”.

While often romanticised in creative spaces, exposure becomes exploitative when it replaces actual pay. It reduces skilled labour to a favour, undermines professionalism, and erodes the foundation of a sustainable industry. In any serious economy, exposure does not pay rent, buy food, or sustain livelihoods.

The irony is that Zambia already has a clear development framework that recognises the importance of sectors like the creative industry. The Seventh National Development Plan (7NDP) sets out a vision of a diversified and resilient economy driven by job creation, reduced inequalities, and improved governance. It emphasises the need for decent employment, stronger accountability systems, and inclusive participation in economic growth.

The creative sector fits squarely within this vision. It is labour-intensive, youth-driven, and capable of generating both income and cultural value. It has the potential to absorb thousands of young people who struggle to access formal employment and can contribute to diversifying the economy beyond mining. Yet, as the Ifyapachalo case demonstrates, this potential is being undermined by informality and weak enforcement.

Testimonies from actors and crew members suggest a sector operating without adequate safeguards. Contracts carry little weight, payment timelines are ignored, and workers have limited avenues for redress.

Opinion | Why Zambia's Creative Economy Is Failing Its Own People Cont..

This is precisely the kind of informality Zambia seeks to reduce. When workers cannot rely on basic protections, the industry cannot grow. Instead, it remains fragmented, unreliable, and unattractive to serious investment.

Equally concerning is the role of public funding. When a state-owned institution such as ZNBC disburses over K1 million for content production, there is an expectation that the investment will generate both public value and fair economic outcomes. That includes ensuring that those who contributed to the production are paid and that funds are managed transparently.

When workers remain unpaid despite funds being released, it raises serious questions about oversight and enforcement. These concerns go beyond the film industry. They speak to how public resources are governed more broadly. If accountability mechanisms cannot function effectively in a relatively small sector like television production, it casts doubt on their effectiveness in larger, more complex sectors.

There are signs of progress. The National Association of Media Arts has rejected "exposure" as payment, and efforts to establish a National Film Commission could introduce much-needed regulation. But these steps must move beyond intention. Zambia needs enforceable standards, binding contracts, and accessible mechanisms for resolving disputes. Without these, exploitation will continue under the guise of opportunity.

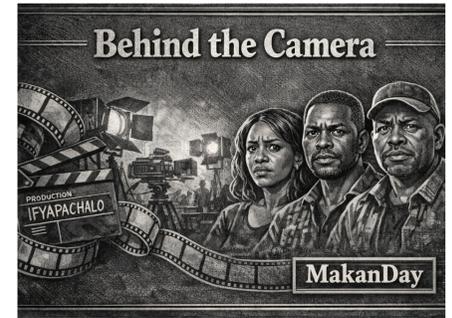
The stakes are especially high for young people. Zambia's youthful population presents an opportunity for growth, but only if jobs are real and livelihoods are secure. When young creatives are asked to work for free or wait indefinitely for payment, that opportunity is lost. Instead of building a generation of professionals, the system risks producing frustration and disengagement.

Ultimately, the Ifyapachalo controversy is more than an isolated dispute. It reflects broader weaknesses in Zambia's development model.

It exposes the disconnect between national aspirations and lived realities, and highlights the urgent need to align public investment with fair labour practices.

Zambia's development agenda speaks of inclusivity, resilience, and shared prosperity. But these ideals cannot be realised if entire sectors operate on unpaid labour. A truly inclusive economy is one where every contribution is recognised, valued, and fairly rewarded.

The solution is not complicated. It begins with accountability. It requires enforcement. And above all, it rests on a simple principle: people must be paid for their work.



Discrepancies in the mop-up documentation

Insiders revealed that contracts under the "mop-up" procurement exercise were inflated and tampered with, with discrepancies between the publicly stated K700 million and the internal figure of K685 million.

MakanDay interviewed current and former employees, including past Director Generals (DGs), who described systemic failures marked by corruption, document tampering, and procurement irregularities.

Political pressure and the mop-up defence

Sources said ZAMMSA operates under intense political pressure, with senior authorities often dictating which companies receive contracts, regardless of capacity or track record, undermining the DG's independence and weakening institutional integrity.

The mop-up exercise in 2023, introduced to address medicine shortages following disputes over Egypt-sourced drugs, illustrates how political pressure continues to influence procurement decisions. Although it was officially presented as part of efforts to achieve the government's 80% national stock availability target, insiders say it masked inefficiency and entrenched political interference within the medical supply system.

A ZAMMSA official told MakanDay that the forensic audit commissioned by President Hakainde Hichilema, following reports of medicine theft, unfairly singled out the mop-up exercise while overlooking the broader context in which the 80% availability rate was achieved.

He explained that the figure was attained through four parallel interventions, a government-to-government agreement with Egypt, UN system support, the mop-up procurement, and direct purchases from Mission Pharma, which was re-engaged in 2021 despite earlier payment disputes.

The source added that the mop-up became necessary after local pharmaceutical firms protested Egypt's involvement, reducing the value of Egypt-sourced medicines from K65 million to K24 million. To bridge the shortfall, the Ministry of Health launched the mop-up, with ZAMMSA's role limited to implementation, not initiation.

MakanDay established that then DG Billy Mweetwa coordinated the exercise under instructions from the Ministry of Health, with limited authority over major decisions.

Leadership tensions and political control

Another source said former DG Victor Nyasulu lacked technical expertise in pharmaceuticals and relied on the Director of Supply Planning, who worked closely with the Ministry. Despite this, Nyasulu was frequently engaged by the then Minister of Health and two presidential advisors, whose "confidence" in him, according to the source, may have come with an expectation of compliance. When he began questioning directives, he was allegedly seen as uncooperative.

The same source claimed that competent companies were sidelined for having links to the previous administration. For example, International Drug Company Limited (IDC) saw its contract

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Drugs, Deals, and Dismissals: How Politics Poisoned Zambia's Drug Supply Chain

From page 1

Part II of MakanDay's investigation reveals the fallout from the controversial "mop-up" exercise, a tale of political interference, secret deals, and internal rivalries. Insiders describe how procurement contracts were quietly altered, investigations manipulated, and how one Director General's refusal to yield to political pressure ultimately cost him his job.

By Charles Mafa | *MakanDay Investigates*

At stake is far more than leadership — it's the credibility of Zambia's entire public health supply system.

President Hakainde Hichilema recently announced plans to make the theft of medicines a non-bailable offence, a move he said would help curb abuse in the sector. But MakanDay's findings suggest the crisis at the Zambia Medicines and Medical Supplies Agency (ZAMMSA) runs much deeper, one that cannot be fixed by tougher laws alone.

Drugs, Deals, and Dismissals: How Politics Poisoned Zambia's Drug Supply Chain Cont..

slashed from K195 million to K34 million during the mop-up review.

In another case, the Ministry ordered health centre kits to be split, 60% to Mission Pharma and 40% to local suppliers. However, after Mission Pharma executives reportedly met “the Boss” at State House, instructions were issued to award the entire contract to Mission Pharma, sidelining local firms.

The source said such politically driven decisions ultimately led to Nyasulu’s dismissal.

The 61-truck scandal

The same source linked the 61 trucks stranded at Chirundu Border — first exposed by MakaanDay, to a scheme aimed at discrediting and removing then Director General Victor Nyasulu.

In a radio interview earlier in the year, Nyasulu revealed that during his tenure, ZAMMSA faced severe financial strain despite increased government allocations for drug procurement. While funds for medicines were readily available, administrative costs such as salaries, clearing fees, and logistics remained underfunded.

To address this, ZAMMSA requested 8% of drug funds for administration, a model similar to the National Road Fund Agency. The Ministry of Finance approved the request in December 2023, but the Minister of Health objected, calling it an attempt by officials to “pay themselves huge salaries”, the source said. The Treasury later withdrew approval, leaving ZAMMSA without operational funds.

When the truck crisis erupted in July 2024, ZAMMSA reportedly needed only K220,000 to clear the first 23 containers but lacked funds. The consignment, sourced from Egypt’s EGYCOPP, piled up as the agency couldn’t pay clearing agents or hire storage space.

A Ministry insider said K50 million had been released for the clearance but was never authorised for use by the Minister. The delay led to ZAMMSA accumulating a K23 million debt to J&J Transport, a case still unresolved.

Audit, dismissals, and unanswered questions

Multiple government agencies, including the Zambia Medicines Regulatory Authority (ZAMRA), the Drug Enforcement Commission (DEC), and the Zambia Police, investigated the incident. The President later commissioned a forensic audit by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), yet so far, the only tangible outcome has been the dismissal of Victor Nyasulu and his team.

A sixth source, a former ZAMMSA DG, questioned the ongoing leadership vacuum, saying: “It’s been a year, and there’s still no board. Are you telling us Zambia can’t find seven qualified people to serve?”

He alleged that ZAMMSA has become the new hub for financial deals and kickbacks, replacing the Ministry of Health as the centre of procurement influence.

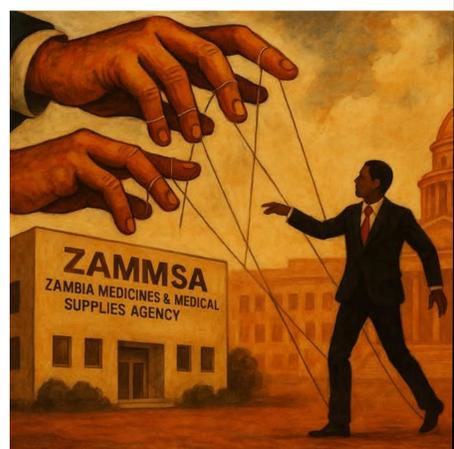
“If ZAMMSA is now a failed project,” he added, “then just change the law and take procurement back to the Ministry, that’s what some people want anyway.”

The Ministry has since advertised the DG’s position, a move critics say is illegal, as only a duly appointed ZAMMSA Board can make such appointments.

Governance experts warn that the prolonged absence of a ZAMMSA board weakens oversight, erodes donor confidence, and stalls crucial procurement decisions needed to ensure a steady supply of medicines and equipment.

You can also read Part I of this investigation: [Power, Politics and Procurement: How ZAMMSA Lost Its Independence: https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1Cs52icJtQ/](https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1Cs52icJtQ/)

This story was first published on October 09 2025



Actors Claim They Were Never Paid on ZNBC-Funded Production

From page 1

Allegations of exploitation rock Zambia’s local film industry, implicating PF politician

By Gibson Zulu

When film editor Moses Malupande completed editing 26 episodes of the television drama Ifyapachalo, he expected to be paid K13,000 for his work. Instead, he says he received only K1,000.

He is not alone.

A MakaanDay investigation has found that several actors, editors and production crew members claim they were never paid for work completed on multiple local film productions over the past four years, including the drama series Ifyapachalo.

Yet documents reviewed by MakaanDay show that the production received more than K1 million in funding from the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC).

The drama series was produced by Zed Entertainment Television, a company said to be run by businessman and Patriotic Front (PF) councillor for Kapwepwe Ward in Matero, Patrick Mwamba Salubusa. However, a [search on the Patents and Companies Registration Agency \(PACRA\) database](#) shows that while the company was registered in 2013, its status currently appears as inactive. As a result, it is difficult to establish the full ownership structure of the company or identify its other shareholders.

Interviews with actors and crew members suggest a pattern of alleged non-payment across several productions linked to the company, raising questions about how production funds were managed and whether workers involved in the projects were fairly compensated.

ZNBC funding for Ifyapachalo

Ifyapachalo was produced by Zed Entertainment TV, with Salubusa serving as writer, producer and director.

According to a letter from ZNBC Acting Director General Reuben Kajokoto responding to MakaanDay’s questions, the state-owned broadcaster has so far disbursed K1 million to Zed Entertainment TV towards the exclusive broadcasting licence for the series.

The payments were made between 16 May 2023 and 14 April 2025.

The broadcaster still owes K300,000, bringing the total contract value for the licence of 104 episodes to K1.3 million over a three-year period.

Editors claim non-payment

Despite these payments, some editors who worked on the series say they were never fully paid.

Malupande told MakaanDay he was contracted to edit 26 episodes of Ifyapachalo at a cost of K13,000 but received only K1,000.

Another editor, Future Mangoti, also alleged non-payment despite completing the work.

“I was contracted to edit 26 episodes. My contract was valued at K13,000. I got paid nothing,” Mangoti said.

Contract documents reviewed by MakaanDay show that on 31 August 2022, both editors signed contracts with Zed Entertainment TV in conjunction with Komboni Talent Hub.

The contract states that: “The editor shall edit 26 episodes for four weeks and shall be paid not more than 60 days upon completion of the job to the satisfaction of the client.”

Zed Entertainment

These are the top 32 entities that match this search

All Local Companies Business Names Foreign Companies

ZED ENTERTAINMENT TELEVISION
320130208959 - Registered on 11/04/2013
Creative, arts and entertainment activities

Actors Claim They Were Never Paid on ZNBC-Funded Production Cont...

Both editors say the payments were never made within the agreed timeframe.

Another editor who later joined the production after some crew members reportedly withdrew over payment disputes alleged that he edited episodes 64 to 104, valued at more than K12,000, but was never paid.

The editor told MakaanDay that he had a verbal agreement to be paid K300 per episode.

Actors and crew raise similar allegations

Several actors and crew members interviewed by MakaanDay also raised concerns about alleged underpayment or non-payment.

One actor who appeared in Ifyapachalo and also worked as a camera operator said he was only partially paid.

“My acting contract was valued at K4,000, but I was paid only K2,000,” he said.

He further claimed that although he filmed many scenes as a camera operator, the contract was never revised to reflect the additional role.

Another cast member, Gertrude Zimba, who both acted in the series and worked in the catering department, said she was also not fully paid.

“I was paid only K200 out of a total of K8,000,” Zimba told MakaanDay.

She said she signed two separate contracts, one for acting and another for catering services.

According to Zimba, she worked alone preparing meals for the entire production team.

“For over a month I worked sleepless nights to make sure everyone was fed and the dishes were cleaned,” she said.

However, she said she has struggled for years to reach the producer to follow up on the outstanding payments.

Salubusa respond’s

When contacted, Salubusa denied owing Zimba.

“Gertrude was engaged as an actress and is among those already paid,” he told MakaanDay.

However, Salubusa declined to provide proof of payment, citing confidentiality.

He also disputed claims that Zimba worked in the catering department and advised her to submit documentation to Zed TV for verification.

Allegations extend to other productions

Several confidential sources told MakaanDay that similar disputes arose in other productions linked to Salubusa, including Zamkombi, Faith and Paradise: The Junkie is Born.

Some of these productions were reportedly aired or premiered commercially, including screenings at NuMetro Cinema.

One actor who appeared in multiple productions said he was never paid.

“I featured in more than one film, yet I was paid nothing,” the source said.

The “Faith” production

The drama series Faith, produced between 2022 and 2023, was another production cited by actors raising payment concerns.

However, TopStar Communications Company Limited told MakaanDay that the company did not fund or purchase the production.

In a letter to MakaanDay, TopStar Public Relations Officer Joy Chula explained that TopStar entered into a barter agreement with Zed TV.

Under the agreement, Zed TV provided content to TopStar in exchange for the waiver of carriage fees for broadcasting Zed TV on the TopStar platform.

TopStar said it had no involvement in the contracts between Zed TV and actors involved in the production.

Production halted after payment disputes

One actor involved in the series told MakaanDay that production reportedly stopped after the first season when cast members withdrew participation due to payment disputes.

“He kept promising contracts and payments, but nothing materialised,” the actor said.

Another source said the film had been produced on the expectation that a funder or buyer would eventually come on board.

“Exposure instead of payment”

Some actors claim they were told their participation would provide “exposure” rather than immediate payment.

“For some of us, acting in Ifyapachalo was presented as a film class exercise,” one actor said.

“He told us, ‘I am giving you exposure.’ That is how we were exploited.”

Some actors also said they attended free film classes offered by Salubusa but claimed the programme ended without certificates being issued.

Zed TV’s position

Salubusa told MakaanDay that all actors were paid according to their agreements.

“As at 31 December 2025, all actors were paid in accordance with their agreements,” he said.

He also said Zed TV was not aware of any actors with outstanding balances.

Salubusa attributed delays in settling some payments to administrative issues involving an authorised company signatory who had reportedly been out of the country for medical reasons.

“Now that he is back, we will enable faster facilitation,” he said.

NAMA calls for fair pay in the film industry

The National Association of Media Arts (NAMA) says actors should never be expected to work without pay.

“NAMA rejects ‘exposure’ as payment for actors,” said NAMA President Morgan M’bulu.

M’bulu said the association encourages formal contracts and fair compensation in the film industry.

He added that the sector is currently working toward establishing a National Film Commission, which is expected to introduce regulatory standards, strengthen contract enforcement, and professionalise the industry.

The association also assists actors who raise concerns about alleged exploitation by advising them on mediation or legal options where necessary.

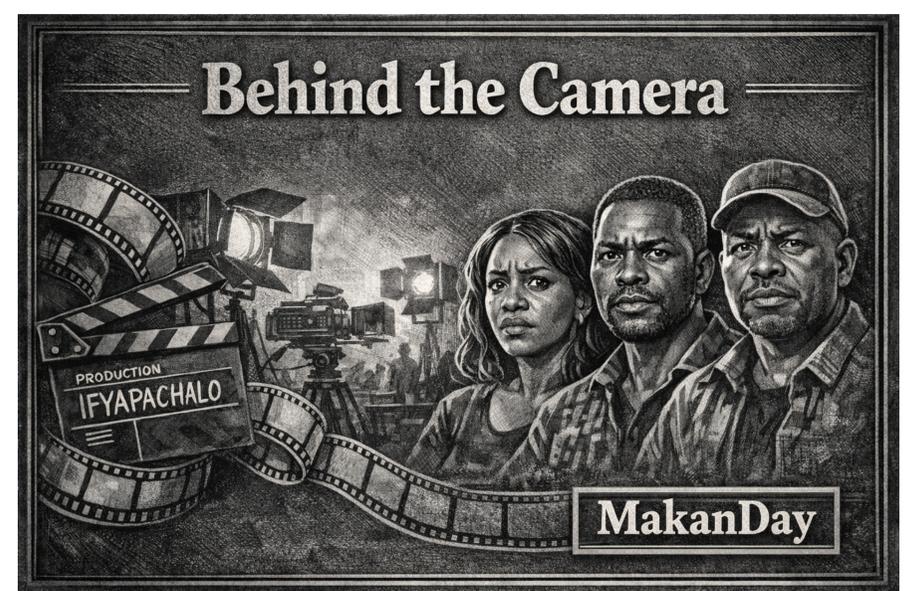
Unresolved disputes

Meanwhile, Salubusa says any crew members with outstanding claims should engage him directly to resolve the matter.

But for some actors and crew members, the dispute has already stretched for years.

Several told MakaanDay they are still waiting to be paid.

Gibson is an intern at MakaanDay under the Free Press Initiative (FPI)’s Journalism Graduate Internship Programme, which aims to promote excellence in journalism.



The image used is AI-generated and is intended for illustrative purposes only. It does not depict the actual events or individuals described in the story.

Ben Mwiinga Water Project: Promises run dry Cont..

From page 1

Dirty, Unreliable Water Raises Health Risks

Multiple residents reported that water supplied through Southern Water and Sewerage Company (SWASCO) is often discoloured and only flows once a week, leaving households exposed and desperate.

“The whole ward can go a week without water, and when it finally comes, it is dirty,” said Sylvester Luyaba. “We don’t even know the source. Yet money was allocated for this project.”

Health concerns are already mounting. Residents warned that the situation could trigger disease outbreaks, particularly during the rainy season when waterborne illnesses such as cholera are more prevalent.

“We are likely to see cholera if this continues,” one participant warned. “People are already getting sick.”

Tests Reveal Water ‘Unfit for Consumption’

Those fears are backed by independent testing. Christopher Manyepa, Director of the Centre for the Protection of Human Rights and Advancement of Democracy (CEPHRAD), revealed that water samples collected from the area failed safety standards.

“The water is not fit for human consumption,” Manyepa said. “This is a violation of people’s right to safe water.”

Transparency Questions and Missing Accountability

Beyond quality concerns, residents are also questioning the transparency of the project itself. Many say they have received no clear updates, inspections, or explanations despite repeated claims of near-completion.

“When they say 90% complete, what exactly has been done?” asked one resident. “We should be connected to clean water by now. Instead, there is silence.”

The debate brought together a panel that included representatives from the Centre for the Protection of Human Rights and Advancement of Democracy (CEPHRAD), a Ward Development Committee member from Ben

Mwiinga Ward and community representatives.

Critically, both Mazabuka Municipal Council and SWASCO – key institutions responsible for implementing the project – failed to attend the public forum, despite their invitations, raising further questions about transparency and accountability.

SWASCO cited lack of internal authorisation, while the council requested a postponement to prepare – requests that left residents without answers.

Access Inequality Leaves Some Behind

Even where infrastructure exists, access remains uneven. Ward Development Committee member Wiseman Mayaba said entire sections of the community, particularly those in higher-lying areas, are effectively excluded.

“People in elevated areas cannot even connect because the system cannot reach them,” he said. “So who exactly is this project serving?”

The project, intended to address chronic water shortages in areas such as Highlanders, where over 1,000 residents previously depended on just two boreholes, was expected to transform sanitation and public health outcomes.

Residents Say Expectations Not Met Instead, frustration is growing.

“Our expectation was clean, treated water that improves health,” said community member Florence Mulungu. “But what we have now is far from that.”

Officials Defend Project Progress

Officials, however, insist the project is still underway. Chris Liwoyo, a member of the Mazabuka Central CDF Committee, said approximately K2.9 million has been allocated to SWASCO to connect four boreholes, with most materials already procured.

“The project is over 90% complete,” Liwoyo said. “If people are still complaining after completion, then we can hold SWASCO accountable. For now, it is still in progress.”

But that explanation has done little to reassure residents who say the lived reality contradicts official progress reports.

Public Funds, Public Questions

With nearly K3 million in public funds committed under the CDF – resources governed by law and subject to audit – the stakes are high.



For residents of Ben Mwiinga Ward, the issue is no longer about project timelines or procurement processes. It is about something more basic: access to safe water.

Until that is delivered, they say, the promises of development will remain exactly that – promises.

This report is the product of the Town Hall Debate by Mazabuka Community Radio & the MakaanDay Centre for Investigative Journalism convened in Mazabuka.

This week in the Bulletin & Record

Colonial district maps: Blurring Notions of Authenticity

From page 1

By Liz Haines*

Today, as in the past, we look to maps to provide reliable information about society. We use them to chart scientifically produced demographic information and to register legally binding property boundaries. For those involved in the complex question of land rights in contemporary Zambia, the colonial records offer the possibility of establishing precedents.

Working through archived correspondence from Mazabuka, along with the newly digitised maps and District Notebooks at the National Archives in Lusaka shows just how fragile the ‘evidence’ of these documents is. What can be seen though, are the changes in the way that the British government saw the relationship between its African subjects and the land. From the colonialist point of view, the value, and the significance of chiefly authority changed in the twentieth century. As a result, so did the ways in which local patterns of land rights were marked in their records.

Provisional lines

It is unsurprising that early records are ambiguous because the arrival of the British colonialists into what

became Zambia was no clean-cut affair. The reports from Livingstone, and other 19th Century expeditions give a clear picture of how personal and temporary alliances were between European visitors and the different ethnic and cultural groups.

Individual settlers and missionaries negotiated (whether respectfully or by force) their own contracts with local chiefs regarding their rights to travel, trade in, or farm different areas of land. These contracts were often taken up and elaborated by the first British administrators in the region.

Although decisions about international boundaries in Africa were notoriously arbitrary, the internal divisions within colonised territories were often formed in response to existing patterns of land use and land rights. The outlines of provinces, districts and the siting of bomas often reflect colonial understandings of how the land was being occupied at the moment that the British decided to stake their claim.

The first District Officers in Mazabuka had very little opportunity to use maps to run their district. The maps that were available covered vast

Colonial district maps: Blurring Notions of Authenticity Cont...

tracts of land on small sheets, with few details. For navigation, they relied entirely on District Messengers. Their tours generally followed one of a small number of routes and these journeys were recorded as simple lists noting the names of villages passed, and the time taken to travel between them. Any information that was required about the population (say, for taxes) was also recorded in list form, rather than in a graphic format.

Some of the officials aspired to a little more, and would sketch specific features into the Notebooks. Sometimes this included an attempt to map customary land ownership. The example here, from the Mazabuka District Notebook is (I believe from the handwriting) by Taylor, Native Commissioner in 1919. The words are carefully added, and the lines carefully drawn, but the only physical feature that can be identified on the sketch is the line of the railway. It seems to be an artistic, rather than a scientific effort. Throughout the 'boundaries' correspondence for Mazabuka District the geographical region of a single chief's authority changes fairly regularly. There are several examples where family groups moved between the areas of influence of different Chiefs, and whole tribes moved to new areas of cultivation.

The opinion of the District Officer was sometimes requested to resolve situations where these moves had caused friction. The officers' decisions often resulted in agreed practices on the ground but rarely in any kind of formal documentation. A boundary might be cut or burned into the bush, or an area might be declared to be reserved for just one group. These agreements were recognised as provisional, sometimes lasting just one season, and often dealt with areas of land that were too small to be observable on existing maps.

This was complicated further by the fact that even in the 1930s and 1940s the District Officers didn't necessarily have a very clear idea of the physical geography of their district. A letter of 1936 from the District Commissioner of Namwala reveals the level of

confusion that reigned: 'I have to inform you that I think the Julwe Lagoon is in your District. I have not visited this part of the country myself, but messengers tell me that this... was transferred to Magoye. I think this was about the year 1915 or 1916.'

It seems that letters were sent from bomas across Northern Rhodesia to the Survey Department on a regular basis with repeated requests for more up-to-date maps. There was very little coordination of information across the different levels of administration, and where the District Officers noticed errors on published maps, or provided new detail, their observations were not always coordinated into the Survey Department records.

Finally, setting local boundaries required balancing several competing factors. The local officers in Mazabuka knew that in their district there was not, as could be seen amongst the Lozi or the Bemba, a strongly defined hierarchy. The federations of chiefs in Mazabuka District and the surrounds were not always founded on tradition, but instead on strategic and temporary alliances. The Native Authority Ordinance in 1929 ordered that the district boundaries should be redefined to 'allow of a tribe now divided by a boundary being reunited.'

The problem of 'reuniting' tribes provoked more than a decade's worth of correspondence. Complying with the ordinance meant dealing with several problems at once. The first of these was that the preferences and intentions of the Chiefs didn't necessarily meet the cartographic ideal of clean lines. One solution in 1937 suggested establishing an 'enclave' along the district boundary so that Kalomo could remain in Mazabuka.

Efforts were made, with varying degrees of success, to persuade villages to change location, so that the British could create groupings that would more rationally fit their administrative resources and habits. (Was it possible, for example, to find an unmarried officer who could remain in the more isolated bomas for a

long enough period of the year?) What became recorded as authentic tribal groupings, in the offices of the British Empire was an entanglement of all these different criteria, pulled together and signed off according to time-scales dictated from on high.

Cartographic resolution

It is irrefutable that there were advantages for the British administration in not keeping too close a record of customary land rights. In the earlier years the British relied heavily on the cooperation of the local population. It didn't matter if people shifted slightly from place to place, as long as the structures that politically supported them remained stable. A soft-focused view allowed officials to support claims as 'traditional' if they bolstered colonial authority, and others to be irrelevant. In addition, tribal rights were at a disadvantage against the crisp, detailed documentation of land that had been alienated and entered into the registry of deeds.

In the later years of the colonial period this changed. The drive from the London for active 'development' required more attention to be paid to land-use. Scientific agricultural improvements often came hand in hand with the need to designate specific responsibility for areas of land. Chiefs were often engaged in leading these schemes.

By the 1940s they were being pursued with more vigour, and this is reflected in the way that different practices are described and documented. 'Settlements' were encouraged; 'squatting' was discouraged; the word 'plot' replaces the word 'garden' to describe smallholdings. Information of all kinds became more systematically centralised, including the geographic work of the District Officers. The result was more regularised maps of African farming and tribal boundaries.

Equally, the benefits of documentation hadn't gone unnoticed by the Chiefs themselves. The power of clearly drawn lines was called on by Chief Mapanza in 1949, when in a dispute with Chief Muchila he asked the District Commissioner to 'send a Map here and

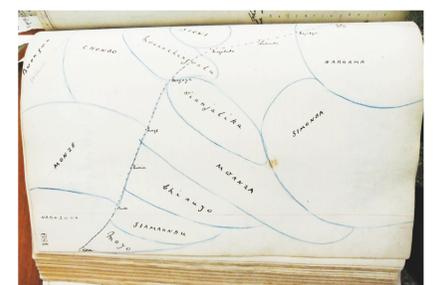
an Officer' so that they could 'make out the proper boundary'. The District officials obliged, drew their decision 'ABXY' on to a sketch map in the Mazabuka records and then set out to 'blaze it'. Mapanza's opponent, Chief Muchila, still dissatisfied, went to consult a solicitor in Livingstone. Turning this dispute into a legal case before the Provincial magistrate would take the boundary well beyond the District Notebook and make it visible at a national scale.

The documents in the archive form a record that is complex for a host of reasons. Those who are looking to right colonial, and post-colonial misrulings have to do more than look for the true and the false. These maps and letters show that the process of drawing boundary lines involved negotiations that blur notions of authenticity.

For most of the colonial period, land rights were demarcated over rivers, and hills that were often approximately sited at best. Each document represents an attempt to stabilise forces that were continually in motion, to make a temporary regime permanent. They suggest that it was the success of the negotiations, rather than the accuracy of the evidence, which meant the land rights would persist.

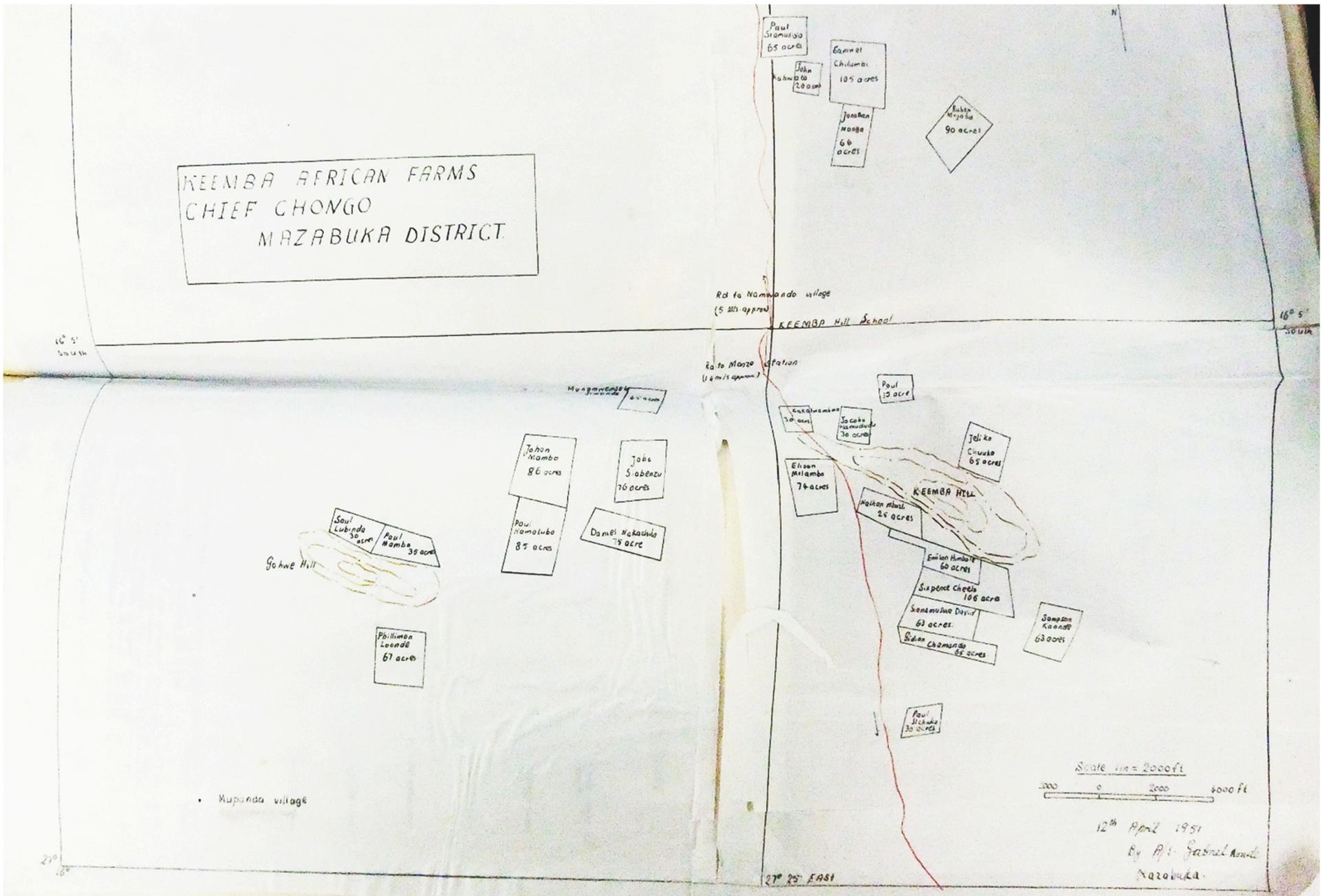
This should be taken into account, when considering how justice can prevail in current land disputes. Observing the roles maps play at this local level in the colonial archive reminds us to be critical about the ways maps are used to produce 'facts'.

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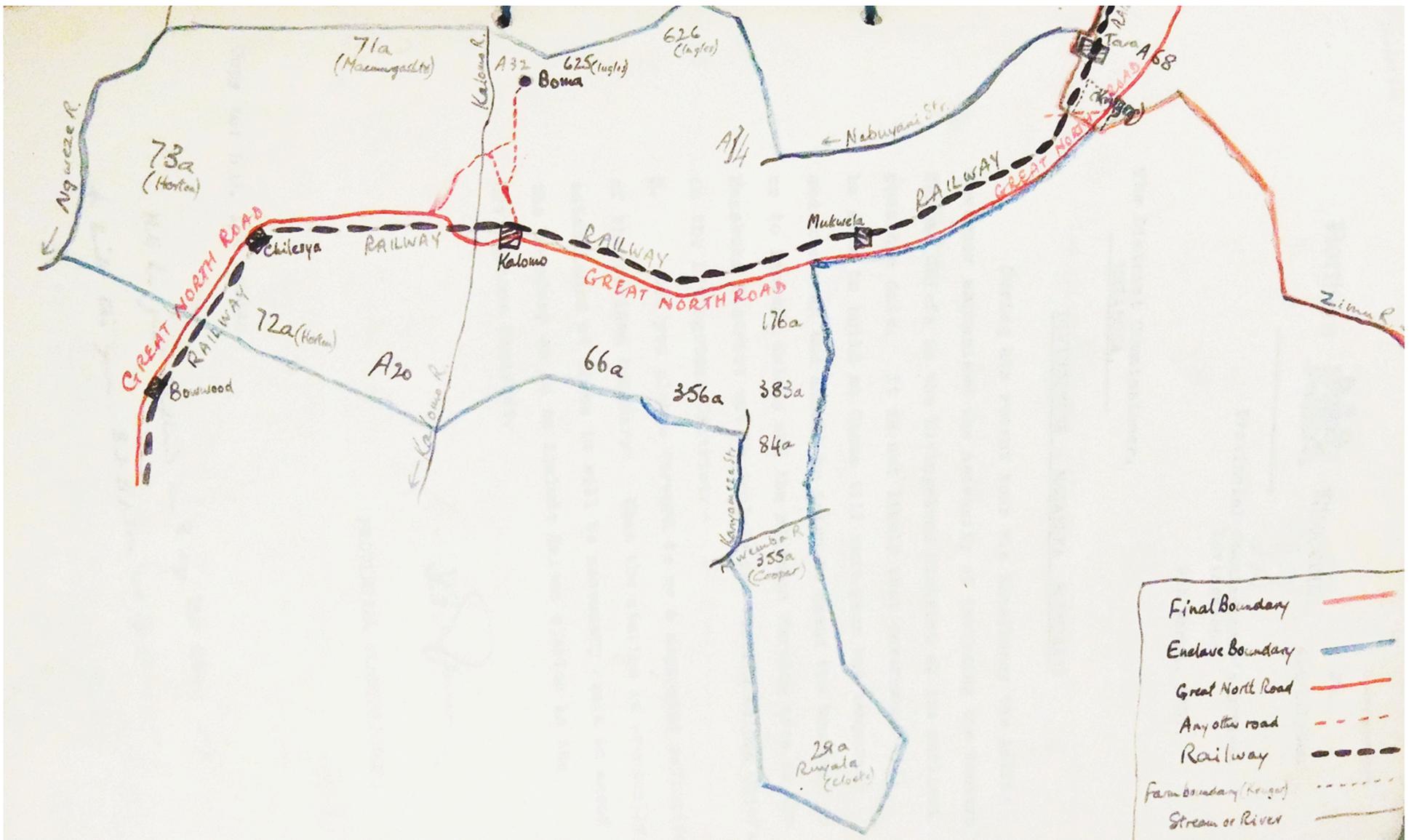


Untitled (customary land holdings of Mazabuka), probably by Taylor, Native Commissioner, 1919, District Notebook, Mazabuka (Vol I, p189).

Colonial district maps: Blurring Notions of Authenticity Cont...



2- Administrative-Agricultural survey of African farming in the Keemba Hill area, Chief Chongo, 12th April, 1951, A.A. Surveyor, Gabriel Monde. District Notebook for Mazabuka (Vol II p301).



3- Sketch map, from letter 13th April 1937, Provincial Commissioner to Chief Secretary, National Archives of Zambia, SP4/12/10.