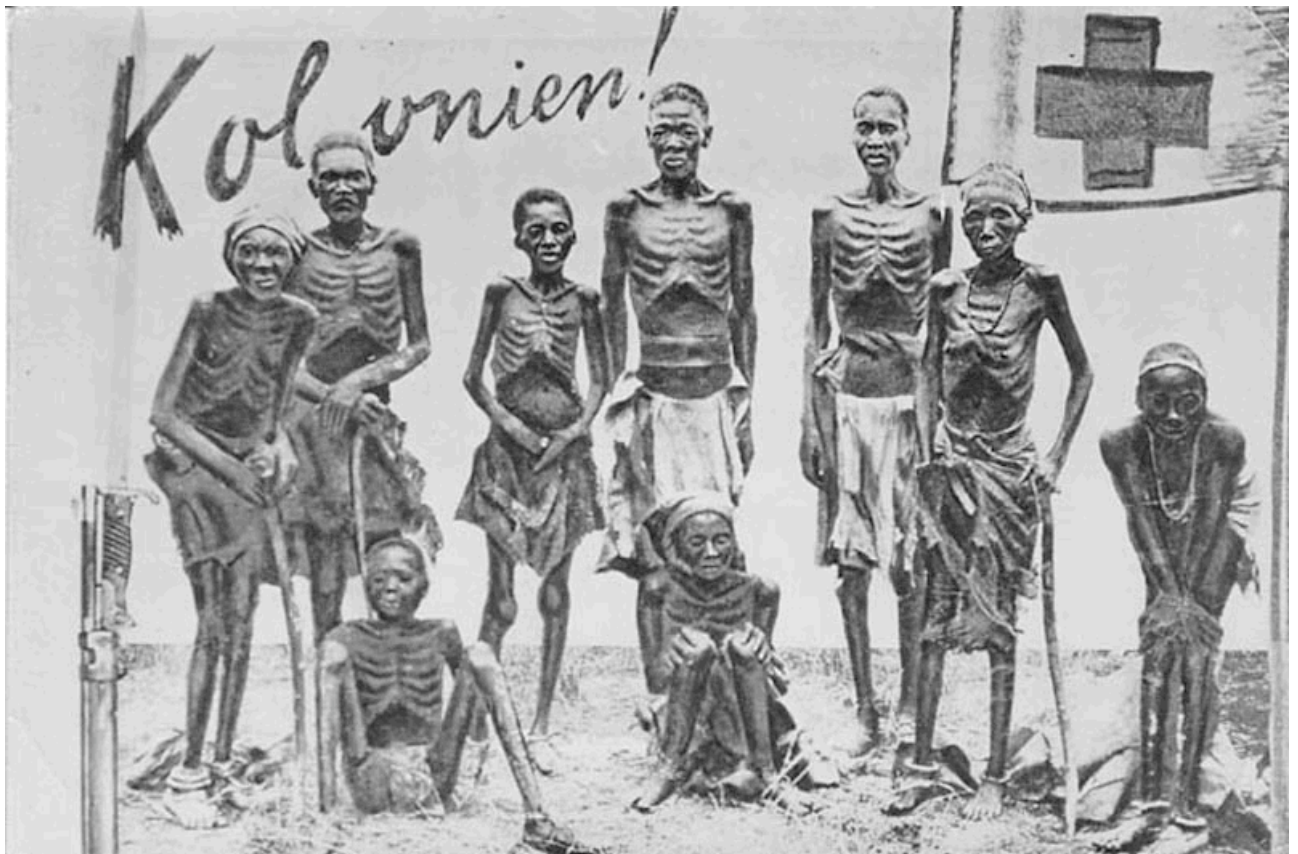


**JOINT POSITION PAPER FROM THE NAMA AND THE
OVAHERERO PEOPLE ON THE ISSUE OF GENOCIDE
AND REPARATION**



We Shall Never Rest

FROM: THE NAMA AND OVAHERERO TRADITIONAL LEADERS

TO :

1. THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA
2. THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA
3. THE GOVERNMENT OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY
4. THE BUNDESTAG OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

SUBJECT: JOINT POSITION PAPER FROM THE NAMA AND THE OVAHERERO PEOPLE ON THE ISSUE OF GENOCIDE AND REPARATION

PREAMBLE

We, the undersigned Nama and Ovaherero Traditional Leaders, and in our capacity as the descendants of the surviving victims of the 1904 – 1908 war of resistance against the German Colonialism in our country, then called “ Deutch Süd West Afrika”;

Vividly recalling The Extermination Order (02 October 1904) against the Ovaherero, issued by General von Trotha, which read as follows:

“I the Great general of the German soldiers, address this letter to Herero people. The Herero are no longer considered German subjects. They have murdered, stolen, cut of ears, noses and other parts from wounded soldiers, and now refuse to fight on out of cowardice. Have this to say to them: Whoever turns over one of the captains to one of my garrisons as a prisoner will receive 1000 Marks and he who hands over Samuel Maharero will be entitled to a reward of 5000 Marks. The Herero people will have to leave this country. Otherwise I shall force them to do so by means of guns. Within the German boundaries, every Herero, whether found armed or unarmed, with or without cattle, will be shot. I shall not accept any more women and children. I shall drive them back to their people; otherwise I shall order shots to be fired at them. These are my words to the Herero people.”;

Painfully reflecting on the similar Extermination Order (22 April 1905), against the Namas, signed by the same Lt.-General von Trotha, which reads:

"The powerful, great German Kaiser wants to grant clemency to those of the Hottentot [Nama] people who surrender themselves voluntarily. They will be presented with life. Only those who at the beginning of the rebellion have committed murder against whites or have commanded that whites be murdered, have by law forfeited their lives. This I declare publicly and state further that of the few who have not been defeated, it will fare with them, just as it fared with the Hereros, who in their blindness also believed that they could make successful war against the powerful German Kaiser and the great German people.

I ask you, where are the Hereros today, where are their chiefs? Samuel Maherero, who at one time styled himself the ruler of thousands of children, has, hunted like a wild animal, fled across the English border. He has become as poor as the poorest field Herero and now owns nothing. Just so has it fared with the other Herero people, most of whom have lost their lives - some having died of hunger and thirst in the Sandfeld, some having been killed by German Reiters....

*No harm will befall the Hottentot people as soon as they voluntarily appear and turn over their weapons. You should come with a white cloth on a stick along with your entire household and nothing will happen to you. You will be given work and receive food until after the conclusion of the war when the great German Kaiser will present new rules governing the affairs of the protectorate. He who after this chooses not to make an application for mercy must emigrate, **because where he allows himself to be seen in the German area, he will be shot until all are exterminated.***

For the surrender of the murderous culprits, whether dead or alive, I offer the following rewards: for Hendrik Witbooi, 5,000 marks; Stuurman, 3,000 marks; Cornelius 3,000 marks; and all the remaining guilty leaders, 1,000 marks."

Remembering that by 1907 approximately sixty (60%) percent of the Namas and eighty (80%) of the Ovaherero were exterminated by the German Imperial war machinery.

Recalling that the occupation of the land of our ancestors by German settlers, our people were alienated from their traditional land, robbed of their livestock, and dispossessed of their property;

Also taking note of our Cabinet decision to formally convey the contents of the motion that was tabled by the Paramount Chief of the Ovaherero, Chief Kuaima Riruako, and as adopted by our Parliament to the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany;

Taking into account the burning desire of our people to get redress for the wrongs of the past we have therefore, resolved to state our position and demands for reparation for the crime of genocide committed against our ancestors by the Imperial German Government of Kaiser Wilhelm II in 1904 -1908, as follows:

- We start from the position that what had happened during that dark period in the history of our country and to our people was genocide against them for no other crime by them except for refusing to be colonized and for which they decided to wage a just war of resistance to colonialism.

- The issue of genocide was already well emphasized, underlined and admitted by the German Minister of Economic Co-operation and Development, Ms Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul, when, on 14 August 2004, Okakarara, Namibia, she said, inter alia:
- “When the Herero ... resisted, General von Trotha’s troops embarked on a war of extermination against them”.

She further stated –

“The atrocities committed at that time would today be termed genocide – and nowadays a General von Trotha would be prosecuted and convicted.”

- Although she was saying these words whilst she was addressing an all-Ovaherero audience, we hold the view that the ‘atrocities committed at that time’, which she said, ‘would be termed genocide’ would equally apply to the Namas as well, by virtue of their Extermination Order.
- We wish, from the outset, to draw the attention of the two Governments and the two parliaments that she was speaking in her capacity (to quote from her maiden speech) “...as the German Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development and as a representative of the German Government and the German parliament”.
- We take that to be true, authoritative and binding on the conscience of the German Government and Parliament.
- The Extermination Orders issued by General von Trotha were the official decrees in terms of which the Ovaherero and the Namas were to be “exterminated” or “annihilated”; it was accepted, endorsed, authorized and budgeted for by the German Parliament and Government. All that constituted an intent and Von Trotha brutally and ruthlessly carried out this mandate, after which he was happily decorated with the highest German Imperial medal of honour, the “Pour le Merite”, and then congratulated by Kaiser Wilhelm II himself in these words:-

“I hereby readily state that you fully justified my confidence in your insight and warfare which prompted me to appoint you Commander of the Schutztruppe for South West Africa in difficult times. I wish to confirm my Imperial gratitude and my warm appreciation for your outstanding achievements by awarding you the Order pour le Mérite.”

The decoration of the highest medal of honour and the appreciative words of the Kaiser must be understood against the background of the atrocities of General von Trotha against our ancestors. Our ancestors were:-

- murdered brutally;
- exterminated;
- annihilated;
- imprisoned in concentration camps;
- used as slave labourers;
- tortured;

- women and young girls raped and left with German off-springs fathered by German soldiers;
- their properties destroyed and confiscated without any compensation whatsoever;
- subjected to other inhumane acts; e.g. experiments by Dr. Eugene Fischer;
- deported and/or forced to flee to other countries (Cameroon, Togo, Botswana, South Africa and Angola, etc);
- decapitated;
- subjected to all kinds of conditions of hardships, e.g. Poisoning of waterholes, public hangings, driven into the Kalahari Desert where many died of hunger and thirst. etc

It was these atrocities that the German Kaiser praised as 'outstanding achievements', which to us meant genocide.

We say that all these acts constituted, in terms of international law, a crime of genocide, for which we demand a just reparation.

Since genocide was already admitted by the German Minister, and also in view of the fact that the Namibian National Assembly has unanimously adopted the Paramount Chief Riruako's motion on the issue of genocide and reparation, we hold the view that the next logical step that should be taken is to organize an urgent dialogue between the affected groups and the representatives of the Government of Republic of Namibia and the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany.

We are fully aware of the idea that was mooted out, from some quarters that the German Government will not talk to the affected individuals or groups but only to the Namibian Government. We are also aware of the German Governments desire to divert the attention from the issue of genocide and reparation to the hastily organized so-called "Special Initiative".

We furthermore heard that the issue of genocide and reparation is envisaged to be discussed between the parliaments of the two countries, which we think will be unfortunate, because we do not accept that we have initially raised the issue and now it should be **about us** and yet **without us**.

This brings to mind what had happened during the Berlin Conference of 1884 – 1885, when the European Powers, led by Germany, discussed how to divide Africa amongst themselves. It was about Africa without the Africans, whilst countries like the United States, Sweden, Russia, Norway, etc., which had no colonies in Africa, were privileged with an observer status – but not the Africans.

We would like to caution and advise that all these misdirected efforts would not heal the wounds inflicted upon our ancestors during the German Colonial time."

We now declare to the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Bundestag of the Federal Republic of Germany and to our own Government of the

Republic of Namibia and the Namibian National Assembly, and indeed to the rest of the international community, that we, the affected descendants of the surviving victims of the genocide war of 1904 – 1908 against our ancestors, demand from the German Government a just reparation to us as bona fide descendant beneficiaries.

As a result of that war, our ancestors lost not only their lives, but also their only means of livelihood in the form of:-

- land and its natural wealth
- livestock
- other forms of properties and all without any compensation whatsoever.

In this regard, the reparation package that we now put forward for the German Government consideration include, inter alia, the following aspects:

1. The purchase of land on which to settle or resettle our displaced and disinherited people here in Namibia and/or elsewhere (in the Diaspora);
2. The building of:
 - 2.1 educational institutions in designated areas
 - 2.2 health centres in designated areas
 - 2.3 these institutions to be fully equipped, suitably staffed and made fully functional upon handing over to the beneficiaries i.e., the Namas and Ovaherero, or to the Government of Namibia, if the bona fide beneficiaries should so decide “for the benefit of all the Namibian people”.
3. Infra-structural developments in the designated areas, e.g., roads, telecommunication systems, community cultural centres, transport system, agricultural schemes, etc.
4. Capacity-building of our people in various appropriate technologies through special funding, scholarships/bursaries, to enable them to acquire technical knowledge in fields like engineering, architecture, avionics, medicine (doctors and nurses), law, surveying, climatology, environmental studies, agricultural sciences, marine biological sciences, just to mention but a few.
5. Creation of Substantive Fund that will sustain the above-stated aspects. Such a Fund will be invested in various portfolios in order to build a steady flow of income to be used for the continuous repair and maintenance of those institutions and to empower our people.

The list can go-on-and-on but we think that those few areas should suffice in order to give a reasonable idea of what we have in mind when we talk of reparation, and thereafter reconciliation and forgiveness.

The Governments of the two countries should realize that we are not asking for a confrontation with the Government of the Federal Republic or people at all; we are, however, seeking redress for the wrongs of the past in order for the wounds to heal and for resultant genuine reconciliation and peaceful co-existence amongst the Nama/Ovaherero

and the German people in our country and for a lasting friendly bilateral relations between the two countries.

To ignore that and to try to evade coming to terms with our just demands or to wish that our demands will one day wither away is a wishful thinking, which will always be a vexatious thorn in the flesh of our good and friendly bilateral relations, as we, the affected people, will never give up our just demands for reparation until justice is done.

Having said that, we now reiterate our request for an urgent dialogue as referred above.

It is only during such a dialogue that we shall be able to go deeper into the quantifications and the specifics of the reparation package.

We are looking forward to a positive consideration of our demand for a dialogue and that, before long, all the stakeholders will sit together to design the agenda for the dialogue.

Signed at Mariental, this 14th day of December 2007 by the representatives of Traditional Leaders of both the Nama and Ovaherero communities.

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Paramount Chief Kuaima Riruako

.....
Chief David Frederick

Witnesses:

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