

Answer of the Federal Government to the minor interpellation tabled by the Members of the German Bundestag Niema Movassat, Sevim Dağdelen, Wolfgang Gehrcke, Katrin Werner, Christine Buchholz, Annette Groth, Heike Hänsel, Inge Höger, Andrej Hunko, Yvonne Ploetz, Kathrin Vogler and the Left Party parliamentary group

(Answers given by Dr. Emily Haber, secretary of state at the Federal Foreign Office)

– Bundestag Printed Paper 17/7741, 14 November 2011 (question) –

– Bundestag Printed Paper 17/8057, 1 December 2011 (answer) –

Circumstances surrounding the repatriation of the mortal remains of victims of German colonial crimes to Namibia, and the question of apology and reconciliation

Preliminary remarks by the questioners:

On 30 September 2011, 20 skulls pertaining to victims of the German war of extermination against the Herero, Nama and Damara ethnic groups in the former colony of German Southwest Africa were officially handed over to representatives of their descendants by the Charité University Hospital in Berlin. The ceremony was part of a visit from a Namibian delegation, which stayed in Berlin from 26 September to 3 October 2011. Most members of the delegation were representatives of the victimised Herero and Nama people. Headed by Kazenambo Kazenambo, Namibian Minister of Youth, National Service, Sport and Culture, the delegation included chiefs, members of parliament, government officials and the President of the Namibia Employers Federation.

Specialists in colonial history generally regard the war of extermination the German Empire waged against the Herero, Nama and Damara between 1904 and 1908 as the first genocide of the 20th century. The repatriation of stolen mortal remains of the dead from this era is therefore inextricably linked to the question of officially acknowledging the crime as genocide and an official apology on the part of the Federal Government, as the German Empire's legal successor, to the Herero, Nama and Damara for the pain and suffering inflicted upon them.

On 28 September 2011, eight NGOs organised a panel discussion entitled Witnesses of the German Genocide in Namibia at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin (www.africavenir.org/project-cooperations/restitution-namibian-skulls.html). The Namibian delegation was invited to participate, as were representatives of the German Federal Government and all parties represented in the German Bundestag. The Federal Government (Federal Foreign Office, Minister for Culture) and the coalition parties declined to take part in this discussion. Members of the Bundestag from the SPD, Alliance 90/The Greens and the Left Party, on the other hand, accepted the invitation.

Despite the fact that the Federal Government always emphasizes “Germany’s historical and moral responsibility” towards Namibia and the resulting special relationship between the two states,

neither the Namibian Minister of Culture nor the delegation were given an official welcome upon their arrival or at any time during their stay in Berlin. Nor did the Federal Government send a representative to take part in the memorial and reconciliation service conducted by Bishop Dr. Zephania Kameeta at St. Matthew's Church on 29 September 2011. The handover ceremony on 30 September 2011 was organised and carried out by the Charité University Hospital and not by the Federal Government. In response to this diplomatic faux pas, the representative of the Namibian Government, Minister of Culture Kazenambo, refused to receive the skulls from the hands of the Charité, a German federal state institute. In the end, it was the representative of the National Museum of Namibia who accepted the mortal remains.

It was only for the handover of the 20 skulls on 30 September 2011 that Minister of State Cornelia Pieper (Federal Foreign Office) appeared as a guest speaker representing the Federal Government (www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/Presse/Reden/2011/110930-StMPieper-Rede-HereroNama.html?nn=597086). In this speech, the Federal Government again missed the opportunity to name the committed atrocities as such and offer an official apology. Minister of State Cornelia Pieper did not stay to listen to the speeches that followed by the Namibian Minister of Culture and the chiefs of the Herero and the Nama, but disappeared through a back door as soon as she had finished speaking, provoking a scandal.

In this way, the Federal Government not only avoided but actively refused to enter into dialogue with the Namibian representatives. Even the urgent letter from Wolfgang Gehrcke, foreign affairs spokesperson of the Left Party parliamentary group, to Minister of State Dr Werner Hoyer following a meeting between members of the Namibian delegation and members of the Left Party parliamentary group on 29 September 2011 remained unanswered and had no effect. Now, retrospective efforts are being made to reinterpret the events and make the Namibian side responsible for the diplomatic debacle. For example, when the mortal remains arrived in Namibia, the German ambassador said: "There were private programmes organised by German civil society and minority parties in parliament who are in the opposition and you can not expect that the German government is represented there (...) if you want to have real reconciliation and cooperation, then the only way is working with the German government instead of working with those you think are your friends." (New Era, 5 October 2011: www.newera.com.na/article.php?articleid=40998).

On 3 November 2011, the Namibian Foreign Minister Utoni Nujoma rejected the statement repeated by the Federal Government on several occasions that the "Namibian Government (...) has never addressed the subject of reparations in the context of an official dialogue with the Federal Government," and that the "Namibian Government has failed to take ownership of the resolution passed by the Namibian parliament in October 2006 supporting the Hereros' demand for compensation from the Federal Government" (Answers to questions 3 on the Bundestag printed paper 17/6227 and 4 on Bundestag printed paper 17/6813). The Namibian press wrote: "The Namibian Government has not failed to take ownership of the demand for compensation for the 1904 to 1908 genocide (...) Nujoma said the matters of the genocide and reparations have been

discussed on several occasions during Speaker Theo-Ben Gurirab's visit to Germany in 2007 (...) Government has also met with consecutive German ambassadors to Namibia to pursue the inter-parliamentary dialogue forum, but to no avail. Nujoma said he himself has also on numerous occasions tried to raise the reparation issues on his visits to Germany. (...) 'The Namibian Government believes that national reconciliation can be hindered significantly if the issues are not addressed in the comprehensive manner. This is primarily because omitting this relevant chapter of our history may lead to future tensions between Namibians and German nationals as well as domestically with German-speaking Namibians', said Nujoma." (The Namibian, 3 November 2011: [www.namibian.com.na/index.php?id=28&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=89520&no_cache=1](http://www.namibian.com.na/index.php?id=28&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=89520&no_cache=1)). At the same time, the Federal Foreign Office also reiterated its contradictory statement: "The Federal Government and the Namibian Government agree that the repatriation of the skulls must not be politically and emotionally leveraged to support calls for the Federal Government to acknowledge a genocide and the corresponding demands for reparations." (Federal Foreign Office: "Status: Return of the Herero Skulls to Namibia", November 2011).

By way of further introduction we also refer to the preliminary remarks of the minor interpellations of 30 May 2011 and 3 August 2011 (Bundestag printed papers 17/6011 and 17/6754). The Federal Government's tendency to respond to specific questions in a generalised, evasive manner or to avoid the question completely is shown in the answer to the first minor interpellation (Bundestag printed paper 17/6011), and even more explicitly in answer to the second minor interpellation (Bundestag printed paper 17/6754). For this reason, the Parliamentary Secretary of the Left Party parliamentary group submitted a complaint to the Federal Foreign Office on 14 September 2011. The reply dated 29 November 2011 from Minister of State Cornelia Pieper was again unsatisfactory. We therefore now repeat our attempt to achieve clarity on this matter with this minor interpellation.

We address the following questions to the Federal Government:

- 1. In the opinion of the Federal Government, what is the specific qualitative difference that gives Germany a "special" historical and moral responsibility towards Namibia compared to other former German colonies like Togo and Ghana ("Togoland"), Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi ("German East Africa") and Cameroon?*

Please refer to the answer of the Federal Government to Question 3 of the minor interpellation of the Left Party parliamentary group of 17 August 2011 in Bundestag printed paper 17/6813¹.

¹ The Federal Government does not share this view. In its two resolutions adopted in 1989 and 2004, the German Bundestag rightly refers to Germany's special responsibility towards Namibia. The Federal Government sees no reason to criticize this. The special nature of this responsibility in qualitative terms derives from Germany's status as the former colonial power in German South West Africa and the resulting close historical ties between the two countries today. In accordance with the provisions of the resolution adopted by the German Bundestag in 2004, the Federal Government, mindful of its special historic and moral responsibility towards Namibia, recognises that it has an obligation to contribute to the development and maintenance of particularly close and trustful relations with Namibia and its people.

2. To what extent does the Federal Government agree with the following statements regarding the Armenian genocide, which are included in the unanimously approved resolution of 16 June 2005 (Minutes of plenary proceedings 15/181) submitted by the SPD, CDU/CSU, Alliance 90/The Greens and the FDP parliamentary groups, entitled “Remembering and Commemorating the Expulsion and Massacre of Armenians in 1915 – Germany must support the reconciliation process between Turks and Armenians”:

- a) **“Many independent historians, parliaments and international organisations describe the expulsion and massacre of Armenians as genocide. Against all factual evidence, the Republic of Turkey, the legal successor of the Ottoman Empire, still denies the planned character of the operation, or that the mass deaths that occurred during the resettlement marches and the perpetrated massacres were a deliberate policy of the Ottoman government.”?**
- b) **“This almost forgotten policy of expulsion pursued by the German Empire shows that this chapter of history has still not been properly dealt with in Germany.”?**

The Federal Government has noted the quoted statements of the resolution of the German Bundestag of 16 June 2005. It is of the opinion that the events of 1915/16 should primarily be researched by the two countries involved, Turkey and Armenia, and assessed by academics.

Concerning the historical research in Germany, the files of the Political Archive of the Federal Foreign Office on this subject are accessible to the public as sources and can be viewed without any restrictions just like all sources in the other archives of the Federal Republic of Germany. This option has been and continues to be frequently used. Furthermore, the Federal Government has made these files available on microfilm in the past few years, thus providing additional access options.

- 3. To what extent does the Federal Government agree or disagree that the expulsion and extermination of the Herero, Nama and Damara ethnic groups by German colonial forces were part of a planned operation, or that the mass deaths that occurred during the expulsions and in German concentration camps and the perpetrated massacres were intended by the government of the German Empire?**

This question is a matter of historical research on which the Federal Government does not take a position.

- 4. To what extent does the Federal Government share the opinion of many historians and international organisations who describe the events related to the expulsion and extermination of the Herero, Nama and Damara by German colonial forces as genocide, a term also used by former Federal Minister Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul in a speech delivered on 14 August 2004 in Namibia: “The atrocities that were perpetrated then amounted to what we now refer to as genocide”?**

As the Federal Government has explained on more than one occasion, the Convention on the

Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide was adopted on 9 December 1948 and entered into force on 12 January 1951. The Federal Republic of Germany has been bound by its provisions since 22 February 1955. It does not apply retrospectively. The Federal Government does not undertake retrospective evaluations of past events based on the application of international legal provisions which were not in force in the Federal Republic of Germany at the time these events occurred. Please refer to the answer of the Federal Government to Question 1 of the minor interpellation of the Left Party parliamentary group of 17 August 2011 in Bundestag printed paper 17/6813².

5. *Does the Federal Government share the different assessments of the German Bundestag of the atrocities committed by Ottoman-Turkish forces against the Armenians and the atrocities committed by German forces against the Herero, Nama and Damara, in that it describes and acknowledges the former as a case of genocide and so far refuses to describe or acknowledge the latter as genocide (see: rejection of the motion “Acknowledgement and Compensation for the German colonial crimes in former German Southwest Africa”, Bundestag printed paper 16/4649)? If so, why and for what reasons?*

The Federal Government does not take a position on evaluations of the German Bundestag.

6. *To what extent does the Federal Government share the opinion that the brutal and contemptuous colonial policies of the German Empire, much like the Armenian genocide, were part of an almost forgotten policy of expulsion pursued by the German Empire and its successor states, and that this chapter of history has not been satisfactorily dealt with to the present day?*

The Federal Government and the German Bundestag have repeatedly acknowledged Germany's historical and moral responsibility towards Namibia. Please refer to the answer to Question 3.

7. *Why did Minister of State Cornelia Pieper not voice an official apology on behalf of the Federal Government in her speech held on 30 September 2011 at the Berlin Charité for the atrocities committed by the German Empire between 1904 and 1908 in German Southwest Africa, crimes now generally referred to as genocide?*

The Federal Government has repeatedly acknowledged Germany's historical and moral responsibility towards Namibia.

8. *To what extent is the Federal Government's refusal to offer an official apology for the atrocities committed by German colonial forces against the Herero, Nama and Damara linked*

² The Federal Government has repeatedly acknowledged Germany's historic and moral responsibility towards Namibia. It did so, inter alia, with the words spoken by former Federal Minister Heidemarie Wiecek-Zeul. The German Bundestag has also reaffirmed this responsibility, inter alia in its resolutions of April 1989 and June 2004. The Federal Government is meeting this responsibility primarily through increased bilateral cooperation, which also involves development cooperation.

to possibly ensuing compensation claims and compensation obligations?

Please refer to the answer to Question 7. Germany has no obligations to pay compensation.

- 9. *Would the Federal Government consider offering an official apology for the crimes committed by Germans in the former colony of German Southwest Africa if the Namibian Government and the victimised Herero, Nama and Damara ethnic groups were to promise not to claim compensation from the Federal Republic of Germany, its institutions or from German companies?***

The Federal Government does not comment on hypothetical questions.

- 10. *Are the statements of the Namibian Foreign Minister Utoni Nujoma on 3 November 2011 true that the questions of what some historians refer to as genocide and of reparations were discussed on several occasions during National Assembly Speaker Theo-Ben Gurirab's visit to Germany in 2007 and that he himself tried on several occasions to raise the question of compensation during his visits to Germany? (see: *The Namibian*, 3 November 2011: [www.namibian.com.na/index.php?id=28&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=89520&no_cache=1](http://www.namibian.com.na/index.php?id=28&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=89520&no_cache=1))***

The Namibian Government has so far not raised the issue of reparations in the form of an official dialogue with the Federal Government. It has so far not pronounced the demands for reparations of the Herero, which were endorsed by the Namibian National Assembly in a resolution adopted on 26 October 2006, as its own towards the Federal Government. In fact, the Federal Government was only informed of this National Assembly resolution on 15 November 2007 by a letter of the Foreign Minister at the time, Marco Hausiku, to his German counterpart Federal Minister Dr Frank-Walter Steinmeier with the written comment "for your information" and with no statement by the Namibian Government on the issue of demands for reparations. A discussion or talks on this issue were not requested by the Namibian Government either before or at the time of delivery to the Federal Foreign Office. At a meeting between the German Ambassador at the time and the Foreign Minister at the time, Marco Hausiku, on 14 March 2008, the receipt of the letter by the Federal Foreign Minister was confirmed. A discussion about the demands did not take place on this occasion either.

The Federal Government does not know whether the resolution of the Namibian National Assembly was mentioned during the visit of the Namibian National Assembly Speaker Dr Theo-Ben Gurirab in 2007 with his interlocutors from the German Bundestag.

Foreign Minister Utoni Nujoma has not yet been to Germany during his mandate in this position and has not otherwise addressed the issue of reparations with representatives of the Federal Government either.

- 11. *How does the Federal Government explain the contradiction between these statements of the Namibian Foreign Minister Utoni Nujoma on 3 November 2011 and the Federal Government's repeated assertion that the "Namibian Government has not taken 'ownership'***

of the claims for reparations” and “has never addressed the subject of reparations in the context of an official dialogue with the Federal Government” (see answers to questions 3 in Bundestag printed paper 17/6227 and 4 in Bundestag printed paper 17/6813)?

- 12. On what occasions, at what meetings and at what times were the questions of genocide and reparations addressed or discussed with representatives of the Namibian Governments since 2004 by the Namibian or German governments, and what were the exact contents of these discussions, especially in view of the fact that the Federal Government claims to engage in “regular dialogue with the Namibian Government on all aspects of relations between Germany and Namibia.” (see answer to question 7 in Bundestag printed paper 17/6813)?*
- 13. What exactly was discussed with National Assembly Speaker Theo-Ben Gurirab on the subject of genocide and reparations during his visit to Germany in 2007 and what was the outcome of these discussions in view of the fact that the National Assembly of Namibia unanimously resolved in 2006 to demand that the atrocities be acknowledged as genocide and that negotiations for reparations should be taken up as part of an official dialogue between the two countries?*
- 14. What exactly was discussed on the question of genocide and reparations with the Namibian Foreign Minister Utoni Nujoma during his visits to Germany, on which dates and with what outcome?*

For Questions 11 to 14, please refer to the answer to Question 10.

- 15. Since the aforementioned resolution was passed by the National Assembly of Namibia in 2006, what exactly has been discussed by the German ambassadors and the Namibian Government regarding the continuation and intensification of the inter-parliamentary dialogue requested by the Namibian side, on which dates and with what outcome?*

As far as the Federal Government is aware, no talks on inter-parliamentary dialogue took place between October 2006 and October 2008. On his first visit to President Hifikepunye Pohamba on 6 November 2008, Ambassador Kochanke was asked about the status of the inter-parliamentary dialogue. He referred to the consultation of motions on this issue then pending in the German Bundestag. As far as the Federal Government is aware, there have been no further developments on this issue since the elections for the 17th German Bundestag in September 2009 and the elections for the Namibian National Assembly in November 2009. On its visit to Windhoek, Namibia, in July 2009, the SADC Parliamentary Friendship Group of the German Bundestag recommended that the issue be taken up again after the constituent meeting of the 17th Bundestag. In spring 2010, the SWAPO

parliamentary group chairman Prof. Peter Katjavivi made the suggestion to his National Assembly Speaker to found a bilateral Namibian-German parliamentary friendship group to seek dialogue with the German Bundestag. As far as the Federal Government is aware, this has not yet taken place.

16. On the occasion of the visit of the Namibian delegation led by Kazenambo Kazenambo, Namibian Minister for Youth, National Service, Sport and Culture, what reasons did the Federal Government have for,

- a) not providing an official reception with the Federal President, the Federal Chancellor, the Federal Foreign Minister or the Minister for Culture,***
- b) disregarding diplomatic etiquette by not staging an official state welcome and reception for the Namibian delegation between their arrival on 26 September 2011 and the handing over of the skulls on 30 September 2011, or inviting them to an open dialogue with the Federal Government?***

The Federal Government and the Namibian Government were agreed that the delegation travelled to Berlin on the invitation of the Namibian Government. It was the responsibility of the Namibian side to plan the visit and organise the programme of events. The Namibian Government did not request any appointments for the delegation at the Office of the Federal President, the Federal Chancellery, with the Minister of State for Culture, at the Federal Foreign Office or any other federal ministries. The invitations to the memorial service on 29 September 2011, which was scheduled at short notice, were only sent to the Federal Government in general and not personalised to representatives of the Federal Government. Nonetheless, the Federal Foreign Office was represented both at the panel discussion of 28 September 2011 organised by civil society groups and at the memorial service on 29 September 2011. The Federal Government was represented by Minister of State Cornelia Pieper at the handover ceremony on 30 September 2011. Together with the German-Namibian Society, the Federal Foreign Office had also invited the delegation to a reception on the evening of 30 September 2011 in the Federal Foreign Office. The delegation cancelled its attendance shortly beforehand.

17. What specific appointments did the Federal Chancellor, the Federal Foreign Minister, the Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development and the Minister for Culture have between 26 and 30 September 2011 that made it impossible for any of them to receive the Namibian Minister Kazenambo and the delegation in advance of the ceremony of 30 September 2011, or to participate in the panel discussion on 28 September 2011, the memorial service on 29 September 2011 or the official handover ceremony on 30 September 2011?

Planning the visit and organising the programme of events was the responsibility of the Namibian side. The Namibian Government did not request any appointments for the delegation at the Office of the Federal President, the Federal Chancellery, with the Minister of State for Culture, at the Federal

Foreign Office or any other federal ministries.

18. To what extent is the Federal Government of the opinion that it honours the often asserted and much emphasised historical burden, the ensuing moral and historical responsibility of Germany towards Namibia and the special relationship between the two states, as Minister of State Cornelia Pieper reiterated in her speech on 30 September 2011, given that

- a) only Minister of State Cornelia Pieper was available for the handover ceremony of the 20 skulls at the Berlin Charité rather than a minister of comparable rank to the Namibian Minister Kazenambo,***
- b) the official host of the handover ceremony of the mortal remains was the Berlin Charité hospital and not the Federal Government,***
- c) Minister of State Cornelia Pieper only had time to hold her speech at the handover ceremony on 30 September 2011 but did not have the time to listen to the speeches that followed by the Namibian Minister of Youth, National Service, Sport and Culture or the chiefs and spokespersons of the Herero and the Nama?***

On account of the division of responsibilities between the federal and state (*Länder*) governments and the diverse funding bodies of German universities and museums, the Federal Government cannot itself make decisions on the return of respective mortal remains. It is restricted to the role of a political supporter and mediator between the Namibian Government and German institutions that allegedly have skulls of Namibian origin in their possession. In its mediating role, the Federal Foreign Office helped to ensure a rapid identification and return of unequivocally identified skulls. The role of the Federal Foreign Office was agreed upon in advance of the visit with the Namibian Government, which wanted to assign both governments with the role of “witnesses” of the hand-over. As the former curator of the returned skulls, the Berlin Charité was host of the hand-over ceremony on 30 September 2011. The Federal Foreign Office was closely involved in the planning and preparation of the official hand-over ceremony, co-financed the ceremony and assisted the Charité in an advisory capacity throughout at its request.

At the official hand-over ceremony at the Charité on 30 September 2011, the Federal Government was represented by a high-ranking official, the Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office, Cornelia Pieper. The Federal Foreign Office Director-General for African Affairs, Ambassador Walter Lindner, also attended the entire event and was available for discussions with the delegation and the public.

Prior to this, the Federal Government had always emphasized that it considered it very important for the handover ceremony to be dignified and appropriate to the historical and spiritual significance of the event. The handover ceremony was planned by the Berlin Charité - in coordination with the Namibian Government and the Federal Foreign Office - as a public event, accessible also for the press and the media. Unfortunately, the ceremony was considerably disrupted by individual persons that did not belong to the Namibian delegation. Minister of State Cornelia Pieper was only able to finish her speech with difficulty due to numerous, loud interjections. On account of the incensed atmosphere and the general confrontational attitude of some participants, the security service of the Charité considered

it best to guide Minister of State Cornelia Pieper out of the room after her speech.

19. In what way did the Federal Government, in line with its often asserted readiness to cover costs (see answers to questions 8 on Bundestag printed paper 17/6227 and 13 on Bundestag printed paper 17/6813) and “Germany’s special historical and moral responsibility towards Namibia”, approach the Namibian Government and the victim groups of its own accord to offer coverage of the travel and transport expenses of the delegation and the 20 skulls?

Please refer to the answer of the Federal Government to Question 5 of the minor interpellation of the Alliance 90/ The Greens of 11 November 2011 in Bundestag printed paper 17/7562³.

20. What costs and tasks did the Federal Government cover for the visit of the Namibian delegation and the repatriation of the mortal remains, and more specifically, how much exactly did the Federal Government contribute to which specific costs relating to the visit of the delegation, the handover and repatriation of the 20 skulls to Namibia,

a) for visas, the journey to Germany, accommodation, food and drink, programme of events, the bus company, the two ceremonies (at St. Matthew’s Church and the Charité) etc. for the delegation members, and the transport costs of the mortal remains (please supply a complete list with the exact costs in euros, including packaging and transport costs etc.),

b) and for the necessary administrative procedures (e.g. the official forms and documents required for the repatriation and the processing costs etc.)?

Alongside the transport costs for the mortal remains, the Federal Foreign Office also paid for the organisation of the memorial service on 29 September 2011 and of the handover ceremony on 30 September 2011. The Federal Foreign Office also financed the cultural programme for the Namibian delegation lasting several days, which was organised by the visitor service of the Goethe Institute, and received a positive response from the delegation. In addition, the visas for the official delegation members were issued free of charge. Together with the German-Namibian Society, the Federal Foreign Office had also invited the delegation to a reception on the evening of 30 September 2011 in the Federal Foreign Office. The delegation cancelled its attendance shortly beforehand.

Federal Foreign Office paid a total of €11,195 for the delegation’s accompanying cultural programme, and a total of €6,675 for the memorial service and the handover ceremony including the musical programme for both events. Costs of €2,636 were paid for the transport of the skulls including the costs of drawing up the freight documents, delivery of the boxes, labelling and packaging material. The Federal Government also paid for the issue of a Schengen visa for 70 delegation members who had a Namibian passport or an official Namibian identity card, the costs of which are specified in Article 16 of Regulation (EC) No. 810/2009 of 13 July 2009 (OJ EC L 243/1). Four further delegation members were in the possession of diplomatic passports and did not require a visa to travel to Germany. The

³ <http://dipbt.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/17/075/1707562.pdf>

German Embassy in Windhoek acted in a service-oriented manner and the staff took a lot of time and effort to ensure that all delegation members received the visa they needed in time despite the fact that some of the applications were made at very short notice.

21. *If the Federal Government did not cover or only partially covered the costs and tasks related to the delegation's visit and the repatriation of the mortal remains to Namibia, who was responsible for what part of the return – i.e. who was responsible for which logistic and administrative parts of the process and who bore the associated costs?*

For the question concerning costs, please refer to the answers to Questions 19 and 20.

The Federal Government and the Namibian Government were agreed that the delegation was travelling to Berlin on the invitation of the Namibian Government. The Namibian Government was therefore primarily responsible for planning the visit, and organising the delegation and its programme of events (see answer to Question 16). The Federal Foreign Office continuously and constructively assisted in organising the programme of the visit and clarifying the technical and content-related questions that came up in advance, by means of several organisational preparatory meetings with the Namibian side, the last of which took place on 22 September 2011 with a technical advance delegation and on 23 September 2011 with the Namibian Ambassador and the Secretary of State of the Ministry for Youth, National Service, Sport and Culture of the Republic of Namibia, Dr Shipoh.

22. *To what extent does the Federal Government share the opinion that*

a) financially supporting the repatriation of the mortal remains and a dignified handover and burial ceremony is a generous gesture on the part of Germany towards Namibia and the descendants of the victims, despite the fact that the heads of the Herero, Nama and Damara murdered during the uprisings against the German colonists between 1904 and 1908 were brought to Germany by Germans and used for the purposes of racial research,

b) it should be a matter of course for the Federal Republic of Germany to cover the entire costs associated with the repatriation of the stolen mortal remains?

Please refer to the answers to Questions 18, 19 and 20.

23. *To what extent does the Federal Government share the opinion that the development cooperation funds Germany has provided to Namibia since its independence have largely been intended to appease and restrain Namibia to prevent the introduction of measures to redistribute the commercial farmland, 80 percent of which has been and remains in the hands of the white minority since colonial times?*

The Federal Government does not share this opinion. Concerning the German development cooperation with Namibia please refer to the answer of the Federal Government to Question 4 of the minor interpellation of the Left Party parliamentary group of 15 June 2011 in Bundestag printed paper

24. Does the Federal Government share the opinion that compensation for expropriation and genocide is something quite different from development cooperation, particularly since unlike development funds, which are subject to donor conditions and accountability, it is entirely up to the recipient to determine how payments from compensation claims are used, and the paying party solely has to ensure that the funds are used for the purpose determined by the recipient?

The Federal Government shares the opinion that development cooperation is something quite different to compensation payments. The Federal Government supports programmes of the partner government with its development cooperation. The use of the development cooperation funds is decided on together with the partner government on a contractual basis.

25. What knowledge does the Federal Government have about which German companies operated in the colony of German Southwest Africa in the era of colonial rule, and what cooperations existed between these companies, the German colonial administration and the German “protection forces” in the acquisition of land, the expropriation and expulsion of the indigenous population and the introduction, supervision and disciplining of native forced labourers in these German companies?

Please refer to the answer of the Federal Government to Question 9 of the minor interpellation of the Left Party parliamentary group of 17 August 2011 in Bundestag printed paper 17/6813⁵.

26. Does the Federal Government share the opinion that the statement that “the German colonial past has been and still is the subject of differentiated analysis in the historical science,” and there are thus “no plans to set up of a foundation or fund dedicated to the investigation of German colonial history that would be financed by the Federal Government and German companies...” (answer to question 23 on Bundestag printed paper 17/6813) contradicts the statement that the “Federal Government (...) has no independent information as to whether and to what extent German companies in former German Southwest Africa profited from forced labour and expropriations.” (Answer to question 9 on Bundestag printed paper 17/6813)?

The Federal Government does not share this opinion.

⁴ There are no plans to pay compensation or to establish funds for this purpose with contributions from the Federal Government and German companies. Instead, mindful of Germany’s special responsibility towards Namibia, the Federal Government focuses its development cooperation on sustainable poverty reduction processes which benefit all disadvantaged groups in Namibia. In accordance with the wishes of the Namibian Government, the Federal Government does not maintain special relations with individual ethnic groups.

⁵ The Federal Government has no information of its own available as to whether, and to what extent, German companies in the former German South West Africa profited from forced labour and expropriations.

27. What specific measures is the Federal Government considering to appropriately investigate the German colonial past, also on its own behalf, and thereby enable it to determine whether and to what extent German companies in former German Southwest Africa profited from forced labour and expropriation?

Please refer to the answer of the Federal Government to Question 23 of the minor interpellation of the Left Party parliamentary group of 17 August 2011 in Bundestag printed paper 17/6813⁶.

28. To what extent does the Federal Government share the opinion that the diplomatic scandal it caused and its failure to deliver an official apology fosters the opinions of white Namibians of German descent who dismiss Namibian efforts to repatriate the 20 skulls and the stories of the planned and largely successful extermination of the Herero, Nama and Damara as “vastly exaggerated and largely fictional” (see e.g. www.az.com.na/leserbrieife/andere-leben-am-existenzminimum.135336.php)?

29. To what extent does the Federal Government share the opinion that the failure to deliver a clear and unmistakable apology for the atrocities committed against the Herero, Nama and Damara is especially damaging to white Namibians of German descent still living in Namibia today as it greatly disturbs their relationship to the descendants of the victim groups and the reconciliation process in general, not least because their very presence is the result of the war of extermination and expropriation that took place under German colonial rule?

Concerning Questions 28 and 29, the Federal Government does not share the opinion of the questioner.

30. In what form precisely did the Federal Government participate in what Minister of State Cornelia Pieper referred to in her speech delivered on 30 September 2011 at the Berlin Charité as “gestures that make it clear that we Germans are serious in our request for reconciliation,” given that these gestures were entirely initiated by civil society groups, and in what way did it support “the renaming of streets with a colonial reference in several German cities and the rededication of the colonial monument in Bremen into an anti-colonial monument, or most recently in 2009 the ceremonial unveiling of the Namibian memorial stone in the garrison cemetery in Berlin-Neukölln” in financial, organisational or political terms?

The Federal Government welcomes the initiatives of the local civil society groups specified above. These initiatives did not receive any organisational or financial support. A representative of the Federal Foreign Office participated in the unveiling of the Namibian memorial stone in the garrison cemetery in Berlin-Neukölln together with the Namibian Ambassador and held a speech and thus expressed the political support of the Federal Government of this initiative.

⁶ The German colonial past is researched in many different ways by historians, and this research is supported by the taxpayer in some instances. There are no plans to establish a foundation or fund for the study of German colonial history with contributions from the Federal Government and German companies.

31. To what extent does the Federal Government see the above-mentioned Namibian memorial stone unveiled in 2009 in the garrison cemetery in Berlin-Neukölln,

- a) which pays tribute in a bland and trivialising way to the victims of the “colonial wars” in general, including the German colonial soldiers responsible for perpetrating the war of extermination against the Herero, Nama and Damara, as “a process of remembrance and reconciliation for the atrocities committed during the colonial era” and a sign that “we Germans are serious in our request for reconciliation” (see speech by Minister of State Cornelia Pieper on 30 September 2011)?**
- b) and the massive memorial stone immediately next to it commemorating Berlin’s fallen colonial soldiers who actively participated in the war of extermination in former German Southwest Africa, as a symbol of the skewed historical understanding of the German war of extermination against the Herero, Nama and Damara and a wrong weighting of the perpetrators and the victims?**

The Federal Government welcomes the Namibian memorial stone on the garrison cemetery of Berlin-Neukölln, which was erected in 2009 in the presence of the Namibian Ambassador, as a visible sign of the local understanding of the colonial history of Germany. The Federal Government does not share the opinion implied by the questioner that the memorial stone trivialises these events. The Federal Government makes no statement on the artistic design of the memorial stone.

32. To what extent does the Federal Government view its explicit intervention in 2009, which prevented the word “genocide” and the number of the murdered African men, women and children from being mentioned on the said Namibian memorial stone, as one of the “gestures that make it clear that we Germans are serious in our request for reconciliation” and as an appropriate part of the “process of remembrance and reconciliation for the atrocities committed during the colonial era”, as Minister of State Cornelia Pieper said in her speech on 30 September 2011?

The Federal Foreign Office was asked to give its advice in this case. In its statement given at that time it specified its well-known legal opinion. This cannot be classified as an intervention in any way.

33. To what extent does the Federal Government regard the (fallen) German colonial soldiers who participated in perpetrating crimes including expulsion, expropriation and massacres as “victims of war”?

On the occasion of the official handover ceremony at the Charité hospital on 30 September 2011, Minister of State Pieper again clearly expressed the position of the Federal Government. The words of the Minister of State were: “During the period of German colonial rule in Namibia there was a bloody repression of the uprisings in former German Southwest Africa by the Imperial troops which killed many members of the Namibian peoples. Surviving Herero, Nama and Damara were held prisoner in camps, were subjected to forced labour, the brutality of which many did not survive. On the occasion of today’s ceremonial act of return we remember the victims of war and imprisonment.” This extract clearly shows that she was only referring to the Namibian victims of war from 1904-1908.

34. To what extent is the Federal Government of the opinion that the statement delivered by Minister of State Cornelia Pieper: “At today’s ceremonial act of return we remember the victims of war and imprisonment” is

- a) *not only a questionable and undifferentiated remembrance of the victims and perpetrators of the German war of extermination in the former colony of German Southwest Africa, but also relativizes the crimes of the perpetrators against the victims,*
- b) *despite the voiced undifferentiated remembrance of the victims and the perpetrators of the German war of extinction, a request on the part of the Federal Government to the people of Namibia for reconciliation and a sign that Germany and the German people are aware of their past and advocate “the process of remembrance and reconciliation for the atrocities committed during the colonial era” and that “we Germans are serious in our request for reconciliation” (cf. speech by Minister of State Cornelia Pieper of 30 September 2011)?*

The Federal Government does not share the opinion that the words chosen by the Minister of State Cornelia Pieper relativise the historical events or express an “undifferentiated remembrance of the victims and perpetrators”. The Federal Government has repeatedly acknowledged the historical and moral responsibility of Germany towards Namibia.

35. What specific measures and initiatives has the Federal Government undertaken and supported to deal with the subject of the “colonial era” and the “colonial wars” in former German Southwest Africa, and what measures does it intend to pursue and support in the future to ensure that this chapter of history becomes “part of the German consciousness and a much-discussed part of contemporary political, social and historical debates”, (cf. speech by Minister of State Cornelia Pieper on 30 September 2011)?

The German colonial past has been and continues to be researched in a differentiated manner by historians and is also a topic of study in schools. It is also debated in and by civil society. The Federal Government does not see any need for a special state-sponsored scheme for researching the colonial past of Germany.

36. What exactly leads the Federal Government to assume that the “colonial era and the colonial war (...)” is “...part of the German consciousness and a much-discussed part of contemporary political, social and historical debates” (speech by Minister of State Cornelia Pieper on 30 September 2011)?

The Federal Government draws this conclusion from its observation of the current contemporary political, social and historical debates on this issue.

37. Are there plans for further repatriations of human remains of Namibian origin from German collections and archives to Namibia in the coming years? If so, from which collections and which archives, at what locations and on which precise or approximate dates, and to what

specific extent does the Federal Government intend to support the next and possibly further handovers financially, logistically, politically and personally?

Further repatriations of mortal remains of Namibian origin from the collections of the University of Freiburg and the Charité hospital are to be expected. As far as the Federal Government is aware, exact dates for repatriation have not yet been set. They depend on the progress made in identifying the skulls. The Federal Government will continue to accompany the repatriation process.

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