

To the  
Member of Parliament  
Mr Niema Movassat  
Platz der republic 1  
11011 Berlin

**Dr Emily Haber**  
Secretary of State in the Foreign Office

Berlin, 30th December 2011

**Written Question for the Month of December 2011 – Question N° 12-378**

Dear Member of Parliament,

Your Question:

*To what extent should the Federal Government's answers to Question 4 of the Minor Interpellation tabled by the Left Party parliamentary group in Bundestag printed paper 17/8057 and Question 1 of the Minor Interpellation tabled by the Left Party parliamentary group in Bundestag printed paper 17/6813 be understood as meaning that the current Federal Government's position regarding the war of extermination waged by the government of the German Empire against the Herero, Nama and Damara from 1904 to 1908 is identical to the view expressed by former federal minister Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul in 2004 that the "atrocities committed at that time would today be termed genocide"? To what extent should her statement at the time "I ask you (...) to forgive us our trespasses" be seen as an official apology by the Federal Government by which the current Federal Government continues to stand? And to what extent does the Federal Government see these statements or the reactions of the Herero as the concrete justification for the claim made by the Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office, Dr Hoyer, that the "problem was dealt with in an appropriate form at that time" and that "the issue of reparations was hereby terminated" (see his response to the supplementary question posed by Hartwig Fischer, Member of the Bundestag, following Oral Question 13 posed by Niema Movassat, Member of the Bundestag, in the minutes of plenary proceedings 17/145, 30 November 2011; [English translation: <http://dokumente.linksfraktion.net/mdb/42021470.pdf>])?*

My answer is the following:

The Federal Government does not undertake retrospective evaluations of past events based on the application of international legal provisions which were not in force at the time these events occurred. 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 has repeatedly acknowledged Germany's historical and moral responsibility towards Namibia, including in the statements made by former federal minister Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul.

Germany and Namibia agreed on a "Special Initiative" in 2007. It has 20 million Euros in funding and supports projects in the area inhabited by the ethnic groups which were particularly affected in the colonial war. Individual compensation payments to representatives of the ethnic groups affected have, however, been ruled out by the Federal Government. The Federal Government therefore sees no cause for further debate concerning compensation payments.