

ADDRESS OF CHIEF FREDERICKS AT HANDOVER OF SKULLS  
30 SEPTEMBER 2011

Mr Director of Ceremonies, respected members of this gathering and members of the Press, I wish to extend my appreciation for this opportunity to share the following with you.

Roughly a month ago I was called out by members of my community to Luderitz to witness the exposed remains of mass graves. The Roads Authority had unearthed these remains while excavating for a train track construction. I have witnessed numerous remains which were sticking out of the sand. It was clear that these remains were from the victims of the extermination campaign of the Germans. I issued orders and made arrangement orders for the safe storage of the said remains. Members of my community and the police proceeded to secure the remains and store it in 24 bags.

Hardly a month later we had to come to Germany to bring back skulls of my ancestors \_ victims of the same extermination campaign - to our fatherland.

I wish to emphasise that I am not a leader leading my people in contentment and welfare. I lead them in their sorrow and poverty. This is the cross I must bear and which I shall bear as a God given duty imposed upon myself.

We have observed with deep dismay that the German Government has no interest in these Namibian People's skulls affair from the day that we have arrived in this country and we hold the opinion that the German Government is withholding the truth from us, or is shy or afraid to face the reality.

On 1 st December 1905, King Manase iNoreseb (Gamab) of the Kai-IKhaun (Red Nation) of Hoachanas died in action against the German Schuztruppe in the battle of Gubuoms (the present day Arninuis) where he was beheaded on the spot and his head taken to Germany. The same happended to Gaob Cornelius Fredericks of the Amari People of Bethany on the Shark Island and we have heard from a reliable source that his head was found in one of the universities in this country.

That is why I with heavy heart must express my deepest and bitter disappointment that the German State still refuses to admit their inhuman actions against my people and refuses to take responsibility for these skulls in Germany and to hand it officially over to ourselves including the mass graves in Namibia.

I understood before I had come to Germany that the German Government would officially hand over the skulls to ourselves. It was thus with severe shock that I learned that a private instance should make such a handover.

I understand this newest deed as a further renunciation of the human existence of the Nama and the Herero. I say so because I understand this conduct as that the German State still regard ourselves as sub-humans and commodities which were brought from Deutsch Sud West Afrika by private persons for enrichment and souvenirs.

We further understand this conduct as a message from this State that it would not take any responsibility for any misdeed it had committed against the Nama and the Herero.

We can give you the assurance that we shall continue without any fear to demand from the German State to that which we are entitled to. We request the assistance and support of the German People in our struggle for justice and for legitimate restitution.

Despite this deep disappointment, we receive the remains of our ancestors with mixed feelings. On the one hand it is with grief that we take them into our possession. On the other hand we feel great happiness that we may take them to a place where they will not be further enfolded in humiliation and contempt.

Where we are taking them they will be enveloped and embraced in respect and love.

We continue with our demand that;

- a) The German Government accept the blame for the atrocities that were committed against our people.
- b) The German Government apologize for the wrongs.
- c) The German Government be willing to come to the negotiating table for dialogue.
- d) The German State be willing to compensate these groups that are directly affected, the Nama and the Herero.

I greet you with respect,

Chief Fredericks.

