

Genocide is Genocide!

Germany must now finally officially recognise the genocide of the OvaHerero and Nama.

July 9th 2015 will mark the 100th anniversary of the end of German colonial rule in present-day Namibia. This foreign dominance was based on deception, violence, exploitation and a colonial-racist view of the world. The OvaHerero and the Nama were particularly resolute in their rebellion against this. Their resistance was met by the Kaiser's "Schutztruppe" (protection force) with the first genocide of the 20th century. Both of the infamous execution orders, which were issued by General von Trotha in 1904 and 1905 in the name of the German Kaiser, are clear in their genocidal intent.

Following the massacre at Waterberg, a great majority of the OvaHerero were driven into the Omaheke desert, where most of them died of thirst and exhaustion. The survivors were held in concentration camps with captured Nama and were subjected to forced labour, starvation, harsh weather conditions and disease. The human remains of those who were murdered were sent to Germany and used in racist research. According to expert opinion, up to 80 percent of the OvaHerero and 50 percent of the Nama were murdered as a direct result of the actions of German colonialists.

Those who survived the genocide lost all of their property to the German colonialists, were locked up in reservations and forced to work for the colonial system. Until today, the OvaHerero and Nama lack their former means of subsistence due to the plundering of land and livestock that took place during colonial times. Other victims also include the Damara and the San.

Speakers of all fractions of the German government recognized the genocide of the Armenians at the hands of the Young Turks on April 24th 2015 and appealed to Turkey's sense of historical responsibility. The German President Gauck stressed that the descendants of the victims had a right to expect "the recognition of historical facts and with this a historical debt" and that "without truth, no reconciliation" can take place.

In a similar way, Germany must also finally face the truth and recognise its own historical responsibility for the genocide of the OvaHerero and Nama: there should be no unequal treatment for African victims of genocide or their descendants!

On July 9th 2015, the 100th anniversary of the end of German colonial rule in present day Namibia, we demand from the German president, the German parliament and the German government

- to officially recognize the genocide against the OvaHerero and Nama – an action which is long overdue
- to formally ask the descendants of the victims of genocide for forgiveness
- to commit to identifying and returning all of the human remains deported from Namibia and other German colonies to Germany
- to declare Germany's unconditional willingness to participate in an open dialogue with the descendants of the victims, as well as with the Namibian government concerning measures which can be taken to achieve reconciliation.