

Motion

Tabled by the Members of the Bundestag Tom Koenigs, Uwe Kekeritz, Kordula Schulz-Asche, Özcan Mutlu, Omid Nouripour, Ulle Schauws, Cem Özdemir, Claudia Roth, Annalena Baerbock, Marieluise Beck, Dr Franziska Brantner, Agnieszka Brugger, Kai Gehring, Dr Tobias Lindner, Manuel Sarrazin, Dr Frithjof Schmidt, Jürgen Trittin, Doris Wagner, Luise Amtsberg, Katja Dörner, Tabea Rößner, Elisabeth Scharfenberg, Hans-Christian Ströbele, Beate Walter-Rosenheimer and the Alliance 90/The Greens parliamentary group

Strengthening relations between Germany and Namibia and living up to Germany's historical responsibility

The Bundestag is requested to adopt the following motion:

- I. The German Bundestag notes:
 1. The German Bundestag acknowledges the heavy burden of guilt carried by the German colonial forces as a result of their crimes against the Herero, Nama, Damara and San, and emphasizes, as historians have long since proved, that the war of extermination in Namibia between 1904 and 1908 was a war crime and genocide.
 2. The German Bundestag apologises to the descendants of the victims for the injustice and suffering inflicted upon their ancestors in Germany's name.
 3. The German Bundestag emphasises the continuing historical and moral responsibility borne by Germany for the future of Namibia and for the ethnic groups affected by the genocide. The Bundestag previously declared this responsibility in its resolutions of April 1989 and June 2004.
 4. The German Bundestag supports initiatives to deal with Germany's colonial past.
 5. The German Bundestag fundamentally supports the dialogue process initiated in 2014 between the Government of the Republic of Namibia and the German Federal Government and points out that this must take place with the involvement of the affected sections of the population and civil society.
 6. The German Bundestag pays tribute in particular to the many regional and local civil society initiatives related to coping and dealing with colonialism and genocide in Namibia and German.

II. The German Bundestag resolves

1. to support, promote and step up the dialogue between the parliaments and civil society organisations of Germany and Namibia which already exists in the form of individual initiatives to mutually deal with the past – with the aim of reconciliation and developing shared prospects for the future. The associations and organisations representing the descendants of the victims directly affected by the genocide must be involved in this;
2. to elevate the dialogue process between the two parliaments to a formal level and, to this end, to make the offer to the Namibian National Assembly of establishing a joint German-Namibian parliamentary friendship group in order to do justice to the special role of Namibia resulting from Germany's historical and moral responsibility and the special relationship between the two countries that goes hand in hand with this.

III. The Bundestag calls on the Federal Government

1. to assume the historical and moral responsibility for the genocide of the OvaHerero and Nama;
2. with the aim of reconciliation, to continue the dialogue process initiated between the Federal Government and the Government of the Republic of Namibia in June 2014 in an open way which does not exclude the affected ethnic groups and to intensify it as a comprehensive and structured dialogue which also includes the associations and organisations representing the descendants of the victims especially affected by the genocide (trilogue);
3. on the basis of the findings of the evaluation currently being conducted on the "reconciliation initiative" launched in 2004 by the federal government in power at the time, to analyse implementation successes and challenges and in tandem with the Namibian partners to decide on new aims and measures for a possible continuation of such an initiative. In doing so it must be ensured that
 - a) the affected population, civil society and the national parliaments be appropriately included in the planning and implementation,
 - b) the necessary resources and appropriate advisory support be made available,
 - c) an examination of why the promotion of land reforms and purchase of land has stagnated;
4. to take steps to ensure sustainable development cooperation and economic cooperation with Namibia geared towards the needs of the Namibian people and which continues to attribute special importance to combatting poverty and inequality;
5. to take steps to ensure that all mortal remains in Germany that were brought to Germany from former German South-West Africa are returned to Namibia in dignified circumstances;
6. to make sure that the cultural property pillaged during the colonial age in former German South-West Africa and which is currently stored in German archives and stocks is also identified and offered for return;

7. to support efforts to deal with Germany's colonial past by examining the possibility of initiating the establishment of a foundation at federal level dedicated to this topic;
8. to set up a documentation and meeting centre to encourage people to think about and face up to Germany's colonial past;
9. to take steps to ensure that Germany's colonial past be made a firm and permanent feature of curricula at German schools and be included in the training and further training of teachers;
10. to advocate and work towards the relevant UN institutions and instruments to prevent genocide being bolstered and to elevate the status of the "focal point" at the Federal Foreign Office that deals with responsibility to protect issues.

Berlin, 30 June 2015

Katrin Göring-Eckardt, Dr Anton Hofreiter and the Alliance 90/The Greens parliamentary group

Explanatory memorandum:

100 years ago, German colonial rule in "South-West Africa", today's Namibia, came to an end with the surrender of the German "Schutztruppe" (literally "protection force") to the Union of South Africa.

It was 111 years ago that General Trotha issued his extermination order commanding the bloody repression by the imperial colonial armed forces of the rebellion by the Herero, Nama, Damara and San at the beginning of the 20th century. The memory of the bloody quashing of the Herero, Nama, Damara and San uprising at the start of the 20th century is present in the historical consciousness of the people of Namibia to this very day. For the Namibian people, it is a far more important part of their own history than is the case in Germany to date.

Tens of thousands of people died when the uprising was crushed. The aim of the German colonial forces, as historians write, was to "annihilate the enemy". Almost the entire Herero population was murdered during the war and after. The people – not just soldiers but also women, children and the elderly – who were driven into the Omaheke desert after the Battle of Waterberg out of revenge, bloodlust and racial hatred, died miserably of starvation and thirst. Anyone who tried to escape the desert and in their emaciated state surrendered to the Germans was beaten to death, hanged or locked away in camps. The conditions in these camps were appalling and in thousands of cases meant a tortuous death. A second extermination order against the Nama who rose up in rebellion as a result followed on 22 April 1905. The ethnic groups of the Damara and San were hit similarly harshly during the course of the war by German belligerence. The San were victims of systematic "bushman hunts" as they were called.

The murders committed by the German groups meet the criteria applicable today to be termed genocide, as defined in the 1948 United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, and must therefore also be recognised as such by the German Government.

The Federal Government took this shared history and the commemorative events marking the 100th anniversary of the crimes perpetrated against the affected ethnic groups in Namibia in 2004 as an opportunity to send the then Federal Minister of Development Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul to Namibia as its representative. In a speech to descendants of the Herero, Nama and Damara she emphasised, "We Germans accept our historical, political, moral and ethical responsibility and the guilt incurred by Germans at that time. The atrocities committed at that time would today be termed genocide – and nowadays a General von Trotha would be prosecuted and convicted". She also emphasised that she asked the descendants "in the words of the Lord's Prayer that we share, to forgive us our trespasses".

After this visit, the Federal Government decided to launch a "special initiative" or "reconciliation initiative" unilaterally and without consulting the Namibian side. An initial sum of EUR 20 million was made available for this and in 2012 at the request of the Namibian government, a further EUR 11 million was added. The aim of the

initiative carried out through German financial development cooperation was above all to promote projects at municipal level in the regions inhabited by the descendants of the ethnic groups who suffered particularly under the genocide. This initiative was criticised by civil society due to its one-sidedness and its failure to involve the affected sections of the population. At the beginning the initiative was implemented only very hesitantly with the result that by 30 July 2012 only EUR 4,494,402.68 of the EUR 20 million available at that point had been used. The Federal Government however now expects the total funds of EUR 31 million to be fully used by the end of 2015. From June to August 2015, Namibian experts will be conducting an evaluation of the special initiative. This evaluation has been commissioned by the Namibian government and financed by programme funds. Afterwards, it will be key for the findings to be analysed constructively and in a dialogue, including with the affected sections of the population, civil society and with the involvement of the national parliaments and to plan, finance and implement new initiatives on this basis.

It will also be important to clarify the reasons for the past programmes, discussions and dialogues and the cultural exchange not having developed as hoped and why evidently little or nothing has come of the promotion of land reforms and the purchase of land. The problems and difficulties which have arisen must be brought to light, discussed and borne in mind when planning new initiatives and projects.

A first indication that the Federal Government now also recognises the need to act was the visit to Namibia by the Federal Foreign Office's Director-General for African Affairs, Walter Lindner, in February 2012. This, incidentally, had also become necessary due to the Federal Government's failure in September 2011 to demonstrate the slightest esteem, respect or recognition towards a Namibian delegation staying in Germany for the repatriation of the mortal remains of their ancestors, which were returned to them at the Berlin Charité hospital. The behaviour of the Federal Government towards the delegation was criticised at the time both in Germany and in Namibia. In 2014, the Federal Government started a process of dialogue with the Government of Namibia; but this needs to be expanded and stepped up if it is actually to be effective.

The task of the Bundestag and the Federal Government must therefore be to find suitable ways and means, first, to live up to Germany's historical responsibility towards Namibia and, second, to ensure that both countries work on a common future. In addition to a closely coordinated dialogue between the governments, this also includes developing relations between the members of the parliaments of both countries, after a group of parliamentarians from Namibia said during their last visit to Germany that in Namibia members of parliament have already been selected for a parliamentary friendship group.