

NGO-Alliance *No Amnesty on Genocide!*

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Acknowledgment of Genocide in Namibia: What Needs to Follow is an Official Apology and Direct Negotiations with the OvaHerero and Nama

On the centenary of the end of German colonial rule in present-day Namibia, the Speaker of the German parliament, Dr Norbert Lammert, at last called the genocide against the OvaHerero and Nama “genocide” as well as an inhuman “race-war”. Lammert’s statement was a reaction to the growing pressure from the civil society and politics in Namibia and Germany, to finally make a contribution to reconciliation with the OvaHerero and Nama. Until present day, the communities affected by the genocide have not received any compensation for the losses of their cattle and land, which in fact still remains largely in the hands of white settlers.

On 06 July, the petition ***Genocide is Genocide!*** was handed over in the presence of a high-ranking OvaHerero and Nama delegation, at the Office of the Federal President. More than 150 prominent first signatories from academia, politics, the churches and cultural life, the Black Community, and almost 50 NGOs as well as networks across Germany call on the German President, Parliament, and Government, to finally acknowledge, and officially apologize for the genocide against the OvaHerero and Nama. In the petition, the signatories also demand the return of numerous human remains stolen from Africa for racist research and the direct involvement of the OvaHerero and Nama in the negotiations with the Namibian government about appropriate actions towards reconciliation – a step long-overdue. At the beginning of July, the Left Party and the Greens tabled motions to this effect.

Lammert, however, does not take up these demands, but takes the position of the German government: They do not recognize the directly affected communities as negotiation partners and do not wish to discuss reparations separately from official development cooperation. When the NGO-alliance *No Amnesty on Genocide!* handed over the petition ***Genocide is Genocide!*** on 06 July in the presence of a high-ranking Namibian delegation – under the leadership of the OvaHerero Paramount Chief Adv. Rukoro and Ms Ida Hoffmann, Member of Parliament and Nama representative, who specifically travelled here on the occasion – they were not received at the German President’s office, despite advance notification. Neither did representatives of the German government attend the memorial event on 07 July – where the Namibian representatives and the NGO alliance laid flowers for the victims of genocide – nor the evening event, where they informed about the genocide of 1904-08, and its serious consequences for the lives of the affected communities to date.

Israel Kaunatjike of the NGO-alliance *No Amnesty on Genocide!*, himself OvaHerero residing in Berlin, states: “We demand that Germany at last officially acknowledges the genocide, return the stolen human remains of our ancestors, and officially ask the OvaHerero and Nama for forgiveness. Then we can start to negotiate with the Namibian and German governments the conditions under which we, the affected OvaHerero and Nama communities, will accept this apology. Development cooperation has nothing to do with this at all.”

Petition, Government Response, Opposition Motions, etc.: <http://genocide-namibia.net/>

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