



NAMA AND OVAHERERO LEADERS PUT GERMAN GOVERNMENT ON TERMS

Namibia's victim communities have given terms through lawyers in London and New York, imploring the German Government to respond by 1st May 2016 or face litigation through the International Tribunal in the Hague. Bob Kandetu, spokesperson for the Ovaherero Traditional Authority (OTA) revealed this in Windhoek on Tuesday 17th May 2016.

Kandetu stated that leaders of the victim communities have after long contemplation, resolved to take the bull by the horns. He recalled that Paramount Chief Vekuii Rukoro had during 2014 given 2nd October 2015 as ultimatum by which Germany should respond on that country's stance with regard to the Nama and Ovaherero Genocide and Reparations drive. On the 4th October 2015 Rukoro addressed an International media event in Otjinene, at which he took stock of the situation and alerted the International community to watch the space.

Suddenly there were some rumblings from the Bundestag in Germany to the effect that the president of that parliament had made public that what had happened in South West Africa of 1904-1908 Vis a Vis the Namas and Ovaherero was Genocide.

On 11 December 2015 President Geingob summoned the Nama Technical Committee on Genocide and the Ovaherero/Ovambanderu Genocide Foundation (OGF) to State House and informed them of the appointment of Zedekia Ngavirue as special envoy to lead negotiations with the German Government, excluding the victim communities. On 22nd January a delegation of the victim communities met Vice President Nickey Iyambo along with the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister to seek clarity on the

Government's envisaged approach. Iyambo stood firm that the victim communities were outside the confines of the envisaged negotiations save for peripheral consultations.

"Evidently this process is in direct contravention of the resolution of Namibia's National Assembly of October 2006 which states that what had happened to our people in 1904-1908 was a brutal act of Genocide sanctioned by the German Government, that our people are entitled to demand reparations, that dialogue had to be convened between the German Government on one hand; the Namibian Government and representatives of the victim communities on the other hand. It further states that Namibia's Government must be an interested party to resolving the matter amicably." Kandetu further referred to the statement of Minister of Foreign Affairs, Utoni Nuyoma in parliament on 19th September 2011 which stated that: "We see the role of the Namibian Government as a mediator between the German Government and the affected communities and we do wish to facilitate a process of reconciliation. I would also like to reiterate that the Namibian Government cannot work against the interest of its people." To the contrary, Namibia's Government has now exclusively entered negotiations with the German Government.

In attempts to diffuse the impasse Nama and Ovaherero leaders vainly wrote President Geingob on 25th January 2016, requesting audience to clarify matters. On 9th February they vainly submitted a letter to the presidency, followed by a media conference to substantiate their position.

"In the light of these prevarications and contraventions the victim communities had unsuccessfully petitioned the German Government for direct talks. It is against this backdrop that they then resolved to put the German Government on terms." Kandetu said.

The German Government has ignored all peaceful gestures of Ovaherero and Nama Traditional Leaders to resolve the genocide and reparations issues through direct talks. Germany must now face the real prospect of a long drawn out arbitration proceeding at the international level, with the potential of being declared an international pariah state, guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

"To this effect, the Nama and Ovaherero will stop at nothing to prove every element of Germany's crimes." Kandetu concluded.

ISSUED: Bob Kandetu

Chief Information Officer

Ovaherero Traditional Authority

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