

Berlin Postkolonial, NGO alliance „No Amnesty on Genocide!“

Press release

11.10.2016

## Herero and Nama from all over the world meet in Berlin

### Transnational congress on genocide in Berlin. German government refuses open discussion with communities affected by colonial crimes and genocide

By Thursday, October 13, 2016, over 50 Herero and Nama delegates from three continents will have arrived in Berlin. The descendants of the victims of genocide in the former colony of “Deutsch-Südwestafrika” are arriving not only from present-day Namibia, but also from South Africa, Botswana, the United States, Canada, Britain and Germany. From October 14-15, 2016, they will come together with activists from Black and African organisations based in Germany and others critical of colonialism in the Centre Français, Müllerstraße 74, for the civil society **congress “Restorative Justice after Genocide”**.

The congress on genocide has been occasioned by the Global Reparation Day on October 12 (Columbus Day). This congress of solidarity is being held as part of the U.N. Decade for People of African Descent. The objective is to promote an intense, open dialogue among the descendants of colonised people and colonialists as well as networking with the civil society initiatives.

Other joint events will be held alongside the congress. A symbolic renaming of the colonial **Lüderitzstraße** in Berlin Mitte (Wedding) will be held at 6.30 pm on October 12, 2016. The next day, a rally will be held at 6 pm to protest the opening of a special exhibition entitled “German Colonialism. Fragments Past and Present” (*Deutscher Kolonialismus: Fragmente seiner Geschichte und Gegenwart*) outside the Deutschen Historischen Museum in Berlin.

Delegates at the congress criticise the ongoing exclusion of the descendants of colonised people in reference to issues in African-German history. Not only has DHM drawn up the concept of the exhibition largely without the involvement of African and Black experts, the museum has also refused to invite one of the Herero and Nama representatives in Berlin to deliver a speech at the opening of the exhibition.

The protest targets primarily the exclusive German-Namibian government negotiations. The talks on addressing genocide have been underway since 2014 excluding the affected Herero and Nama. They have demanded appropriate **reparations** for land stolen by the former Deutsches Reich and given to German settlers. Ruprecht Polenz (CDU), who is leading the negotiations on behalf of the German government, has been invited to the genocide congress. However, Polenz has also refused to take part in the panel discussion with the Herero and Nama delegates.

Prior to the congress, a **press conference**, organised by Niema Movassat, MdB (Die LINKE) will be held on October 14, 2016 at 10 am in the German Bundestag and with the Herero and Nama delegates in Berlin. After the congress on October 16, 2016 at 10.30 am, the delegates will **march in protest and solidarity** from Kunsthaus KuLe, Auguststraße 10 to the **Humboldt Forum**. The Berlin castle, reconstructed at a cost of around EUR 600 million, was the residence of Emperor Wilhelm II, who counts among those mainly responsible for the strategy of annihilation towards the Herero and Nama.

**Contact:** Israel Kaunatjike, Bündnis „Völkermord verjährt nicht!“, 0173-1035605 & Christian Kopp, Berlin Postkolonial, 0179-9100 976, buero[at]berlin-postkolonial.de

**Attachment:** Overview of visit and schedule

**More information on :** <http://www.berlin-postkolonial.de> & <http://www.genocide-namibia.net>