

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

Press release

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## **First congress focusing on the genocides of the Ovaherero and Nama in Berlin: Reconciliation requires readiness for dialogue and respect**

**Moving reception for Ovaherero and Nama delegates to the Berlin congress on their arrival in Windhoek, Namibia. A joint resolution of the congress delegates demands direct participation of the Ovaherero and Nama's representatives in all negotiations with Germany on the genocide committed against their communities and global recognition of the first genocide of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.**

Many exuberant supporters welcomed home Ovaherero and Nama delegates Tuesday (October 18, 2016) to Windhoek after the first transnational congress in Berlin under the theme “RESTORATIVE JUSTICE AFTER GENOCIDE“ highlighting the genocides committed between 1904-08. More than 50 Ovaherero and Nama delegates from Namibia, the United States, Canada, and Britain had come together in Berlin on the invitation of Berlin Postkolonial, AfricAvenir and the NGO alliance “Völkermord verjährt nicht!/No Amnesty on genocide!“. The Ovaherero Traditional Authority, Paramount Chief Adv. Vekuii Rukoro, invited all the Ovaherero to Okahandja this coming Sunday to report on the Berlin congress of last weekend.

During several addresses at the congress, two impressive rallies in central Berlin, a press conference organised by Niema Movassat, MP for DIE LINKE, and a work meeting with Bündnis 90/Die Grünen in the German parliament or Bundestag, representatives of the Ovaherero and Nama associations made absolutely clear that **reconciliation can only be achieved provided they are directly and without any preconditions involved in the negotiations about the issue of genocide against their communities** between the Namibian and German governments underway since 2014. They have emphasized that the two governments must recognise the relevant Namibian Parliament's Resolution of 26th October, 2006, as the only valid and sound basis for the negotiations that must restart afresh, as well as guarantee the rights of the victim communities under international law.

In close co-operation with African, black and Germany-based non-governmental organisations critical of colonialism, Ovaherero and Nama delegates drew up a joint **congress resolution which declares critical debate about the genocides a global task and a subject for society as a whole**. Apart from the main demands for an official recognition of the genocides, a sincere apology by the German parliament and government and negotiations on reparations with the Ovaherero and Nama representatives from Namibia and their diaspora, calls were also made for critical observation of the demanded dialogue by non-government organisations (NGO).

**Companies** such as Deutsche Bank, Wecke & Voigts and Woermann that directly profited from the genocides and the forced labour of Ovaherero and Nama are urged to participate in compensating the affected communities who were entirely expropriated and forced to leave its lands. The congress resolution calls on the world's nation states, the African Union, the United Nations and Christian churches, partly entangled in the genocides, to take the occasion of the ongoing **UN Decade for People of African Descent** and officially recognise the Ovaherero and Nama genocides and to support the victims' just struggle for an apology and direct participation in the exclusive government negotiations.

During the next days, the congress resolution will be sent to the German and Namibian governments, to the U.N., to political parties, involved companies and to the Christian churches.

According to the Berlin-based Ovaherero **Israel Kaunatjike** of the alliance „No Amnesty on Genocide!“ the congress is a “key step towards expanding the decades-long fight for justice”.

During last year’s allied campaign, “Genocide is Genocide!”, over 50 NGO and 150 prominent figures in politics and academia in Germany had already lent their support to the demands of the Ovaherero and Nama for direct participation in the negotiations on the genocide issue.

**Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul (SPD)**, the former Development Minister, sent a greeting with a call for “moral and financial compensation” of the Ovaherero and Nama to the congress in Berlin. **Ruprecht Polenz (CDU)**, the German government’s special representative, was invited to the congress but declined to take part in a panel discussion with the Ovaherero and Nama representatives or to meet the delegation during their stay in Berlin.

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**Attachments:** Congress resolution and photos of the reception awaiting the delegates on their arrival in Windhoek

**Photos of:**

J. Nguherimo (congress on 14./15.10. in Berlin’s Centre Francais de Berlin):  
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/namibdesert/sets/72157671857378894/>

O. Feldhaus (March on 16.10.):  
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/petshoppetshop/sets/72157673973860422>

J. Zeller (March on 16.10.): <https://www.flickr.com/photos/148332649@N03/>

B. Sauer-Diete (13.10. Protest outside DHM & March on 16.10.):  
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/basspunk/30115685750/>

**More information on:** <http://genocide-namibia.net/>