

1. Transnational Non-governmental Congress on the Ovaherero and Nama Genocide
RESTORATIVE JUSTICE AFTER GENOCIDE
Berlin, 14.-16.10.2016

Speech

Hon. Ida Hoffman

Master of Ceremonies & Everybody present here.
All protocol observed.

Here we are again! In Germany. Right here in this land of the conquerors. This land of the Kaisers. This land of the past imperialists. This land of the Chancellors. Yes, the German decision makers, whose decisions have done Namibia and Namibians damages. This land of the vast wealth. The land built on colonial gains.

And in Berlin, hallowed, revered, respected, home of the German people. Home of the refined nation. Home of the advanced people.

Berlin is advanced, illustrious. But to me, Berlin is disastrous. It is a dark city, with dark secrets of skulls, and other human remains hidden in its dark and secret basements, and laboratories, universities, institutions of higher learning and private homes.

And Berlin is a city which has deprived my country and my people from the famed Bundestag chambers, and the Bundesrat. This city has failed to answer the noble call of justice for genocide, and still causes my country continued and outrageous damages.

And we are here from Namibia. A country on the other side of this world. The country so deprived and underprivileged by the very actions of the German people against it now for over a century.

Namibia is reeling under the German colonial yoke, the pressures of which are building up. They are building up in the form of poverty, starvation, hunger, uncontrollable deceases.

And yet Namibia is called a friend of Germany. This impoverished land of Namibia by Germany. How can Germany call Namibia its friend, while all along it has been in the business of impoverishing Namibia and Namibians?

Germany has been impoverishing Namibia now for over a century. And yet, Germany still retains that audacity to call Namibia a friend. Two unequal people, one dominating, diminishing the other, killing the other, murdering and plundering the other, exterminating the other cannot call each other friends!

We are unequal. Namibia and Germany. Germany has made sure of that. And we are not friends. Not at this point in time. Namibia must be rebuilt and reach the point of a developed and sustainable country, the status Germany has taken away from it for over a century now. And then, and only then, can we be, after we have reached that point of equality, after we have truly reconciled our differences, call each other friends.

Our historical interest of the Namibian past, at this point in time, speaks distinctively to the extermination platforms that played themselves off during the German colonial occupation of Namibia, which platforms ended up in the notorious extermination orders, and German actions of extermination of the Nama and the Herero people. Those sordid and infamously disreputable

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actions and events of the German's that led to the extermination, disenfranchisement, and the dispossession of the Nama and the Herero victims, are the very same events of destruction that have brought us here to Germany to state our case.

This historical interest particularly zeroes in on specifically the events of 1904 – 1908. With a brief touch of the events that preceded that horrible time genocide, we will return to the most pivotal time that took a huge toll on our nation.

These unfortunate events have their beginning at the very entry of the German invaders in Namibia. Germans entered Namibia during 1884 most notable at Luderitz Bay. The Germans came to Namibia with deadly forces and intend to kill, and turned the ones peaceful land into an arena of destruction. Even though the war stopped the destruction remained for over a century, leaving dangers behind that have been destroying the people of the south relentlessly for over a hundred years, a century now.

The sordid unimaginable turn of events that first was prompted by the defeat the Germans suffered at the hands of the Nama warriors who stood up against the German intruders who invaded Namibia for their own greed filled desires, have laid waste of the south and its people. It was a dangerous time as of the invasion of the Germans, to be living in. The Nama believed in their right to bear arms and protect themselves. Each man, each leader, each woman had to make sure to keep their families and people under protection all the time. The Germans did not believe in the Namas to possess arms. Still the Nama believed in protecting themselves their liberty, and property. Property, liberty, security, and their land, were their reasons to wage those numerous battles against the German intruders.

Those irreconcilable differences between the Nama, the inhabitants of the south and the invaders from Germany precipitated ongoing conflicts, which prompted several wars between the Nama and the Germans.

Battles and wars broke out. One of the well-known wars in the early parts of the last century known as the German Nama war took place in the early parts of the last century was fought by the celebrated Abraham Morris. Abraham Morris was a celebrated Bondelswarts military commander. He served alongside Jacob Marengo the very well renowned leader also in the South. Disputes started to erupt between the invading German forces and the Nama people over several issues including land, the right to bear arms, and property being confiscated and simply just taken from the Nama by the Germans.

Continued skirmishes became the order of the day between the Germans and the Nama in the South. The Germans desperate to dispossess the Nama, and the Nama refusing to bow down to the demands of the Germans. Hendrik Witbooi, that undisputable anti-colonial warrior, resisting the German subjugation will forever be celebrate in Namibia for his courage and bravery that set the stage for colonial resistance. Today we offer salutes to him and other the fallen warriors Jacob Marengo, Abraham Morris,

Among the most notable warriors of this colonial resistance were Hendrik Witbooi, Abraham Morris. Abraham Morris was a celebrated, notable, and honored warrior. He fought together with another captain of note, Jacob Marengo. Abraham Morris and Jacob Marengo fought side by side in many known and unknown battles and wars in the south.

There were other battles in which the Germans sustained heavy humiliating losses. The Germans

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known for their superiority on the battle field the world over couldn't take that from the Nama and they retaliated with rage and destruction.

Enter the Extermination Order of 1905, following right at the heels of the Extermination of Order of 1904 against the Herero. And we all know that disreputable Extermination Order pronounced against the Nama stated that in essence after the equally infamous Lotha von Trotha is done with the Nama not a single Nama was to be left alive.

Shark Island was the scene of the notorious German destruction of the Namibian people after they the Germans have been dealt decisive defeats by the Namas in several decisive battles. Rape, murder, killings, hangings, lynchings; these atrocities have been committed. Land dispossession, disenfranchisement, deep cultural deprivation, property disenfranchisement were the order of the day. Nobody can be expected to just stand by idly while their livelihood and existence are being threatened. And that is exactly what the Nama did. They protected family, life, land, liberty and property. These sordid atrocities were committed against the Nama and the Herero, by von Trotha and his 14,000 soldiers. In the aftermath of which were killed over 110,000 Nama and Herero.

But today, what von Trotha and his 14,000 strong German troops, and Kaiser Wilhelm II, and company did not accomplish, Germany is achieving through denial of the genocide, land dispossession, conspiring with the enemies of genocide justice.

Namibia has appointed a Special Envoy, the Ambassador Dr. Zed. Ngavirue, to deal with the genocide issue and to drive it forward toward its logical conclusion. His appointed was heralded as the right step in the right direction. The Germans also on their part appointed their Special Envoy in the person of Ruprect Polenz. After our initial wait and see and cautious approach, it is now the right time to conclude that both appointments have come to be disappointments.

Refusal to pay reparations constitutes another genocide. Genocide by depriving the affected nations their rightful due. Refusing to do justice constitutes implementing genocide actively against the victims. This denial and deprivation is by intend. And this intend and plan are both coming from the Bundestag and the Government of the Republic of Namibia, and the Federal Government of the Germany. They go both against the UN Convention. You are in the lewd business of denial.

The UN Convention clearly, unequivocally and in load terms proclaims, and pronounces that genocide is an intentional, planned and organized action against a certain group of people. Refusal to implement genocide justice is a clear conspiracy against the victims and clear way to institute struggles and suffering through poverty of the Nama and the Herero.

As the latest uproar from the Namibian government and the German Federal Government raises, suppressing honesty and ushering in wheeling and dealing around the genocide issue, our condemnation of their unsavory actions also raises. And we want to register our condemnation against this underhandedness load and clear.

We in Namibia, we the victims, are living with damages. Damages upon damages. Endemic damages. Chronic injuries. A battery of hurts.

The Nama and the Herero are in a critical condition. An endangered people. Both these peoples

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existence revolved around their livestock and land.

The damages of poverty, hunger, and starvation have been incurred upon us by the Germans. We live with these damages on a daily bases. Unemployment is rife among the Nama, who at the time before the invasion by the Germans where self-employed people dealing in the trades of horsemanship, livestock, agriculture. The socio-economic situation of the Nama who have been the masters of their own lives since time immemorial, now has become dependable on others. Present day Nama are dysfunctional. Their culture washed away. They are an endangered people.

Our socio-economy as a people, our culture, our traditions, our way of life, and dare I say our future has been robbed from us. There is no development. There is no progress indeed no future in the south, for the Nama. That is what defines us a people at this point in time. Regaining our dignity. Regaining our future. Reclaiming our past. That is our charge.

Our historical interest of the Namibian past, at this point in time rests solely on the platform that played themselves off during the German colonial occupation of Namibia. Those sordid and infamously disreputable events that led to the extermination, disenfranchisement, and the dispossession of the victims of the Nama and the Herero people. The very same events of destruction that have brought us here to Germany to state our case.

Go to the south. Visit with the southern people. The Nama. Once proud industrious herders of their own livestock; herds upon herds of cattle, sheep and goat. And tilters of their own gardens, producing their own food. But now living from the dustbins. Living from begging. Living on charity. Pushed out of their own houses. Nowhere to go. Nowhere to sleep. Nowhere to receive proper education, proper social care, proper health care.

Where is the bilateral agreement for development that finances development in Namibian from the German government, if the Nama is till sleeping in the open? If the Nama is still unattended to.

The German and Namibia and governments blocking our justice activism by excluding us and our genocide justice work, is unacceptable. That's why we are here to look at the best possible course of action to clear this current stalemate, and to move forward for justice.

Restorative justice will never be complete without the primary principals of, apology, acknowledgement, the roundtable, repatriation, the repatriation, restoration, reconciliation.

Let me leave the house with this final thought.

It is a holy case! It is a sacred case! It is a noble case!

Master of Ceremonies

Activists!!!

Ladies and Gentlemen

I thank you. And God bless.