

## Speech

# Paramount Chief Advocate Vekuii Rukoro

## Ovaherero Traditional Authority

### ***1. Why should the question of restoration of justice after the Ovaherero and Nama genocides of 1904-1908 ever arise?***

The genocides were intentional and premeditated actions of the sovereign State of Germany carried out as collective punishment against our People in violation of then applicable customary international law principles. The end result was the commission of massive crimes against humanity;

The genocides culminated in our ancestors being deprived of everything they ever owned before, namely: LAND (close to 60% of what constitutes Namibia today - gone forever) and LIVESTOCK (their means of livelihood and the inalienable inheritance of future generations of whom we are one!); CULTURE and TRADITIONS (their identity as a people - our people in both Botswana and South Africa can't speak their mother tongue - ongoing effects of "Cultural Genocide"); SOVEREIGNTY and DIGNITY; and finally, their very God-given LIVES in which 80% of the OVAHERERO and 50% of the NAMA were systematically murdered - 110,000 by Germany's own conservative estimates!

It is to these unprecedented human tragedy and 1st ever genocide of the 20th Century that Mrs Angela Merkel is saying Germany is now, after 112 years considering to offer a carefully worded apology, but the victims of that genocide (OVAHERERO AND NAMA) must forget about any form of compensation!!!

We say, with respect, Lady you must have looked too long in the "Jägermeister" bottle!!! Surely such a position is the greatest insult not only to the victims involved to civilized humanity everywhere! Surely, this will go down in the annals of history as the most insensitive political statement by a world power and an aggressor Nation towards the Genocided Victims to whom the diplomatically crafted apology (which is totally devoid of any human meaning and significance) is supposedly offered! Well, Lady, guess what, you can keep that apology to yourself until you get Real!!!

To the International Jewry Germany apologized with tears in their eyes and paid billions of Euro in reparations; to us as Black Africans we must only do with a computerized apology and get on with our lives of Generational Poverty of 112 years induced by the genocides!!! Our firm response: NEIN, ALUTA CONTINUA, UNTIL JUSTICE IS DONE!!!

### ***2. Who should be the beneficiaries of such restorative justice?***

The two Extermination Orders were very specific in identifying the targeted victim communities for total elimination, namely Namas and Ovaherero, and the execution was indeed restricted to members of the two identified communities.

It therefore goes without saying that any serious effort at making good the damage resulting from that genocide must necessarily be directed to the descendants of the victims of those genocides, who themselves continue to be victims of the same genocides.

### **3. What form should the agreed reparations/compensation/Wiedergutmachung take?**

Again, here we are appalled by the paternalistic attitude of the German Government where even before the start of the inter-Governmental negotiations, it is already prescribing that (a) no reparations will be payable; (b) only "development aid" will be given to the Namibian Government for the purpose of developing Namibia as a whole. As you have heard so far, Germany's development assistance to Namibia since independence 26 years ago, has largely benefitted areas not traditionally and currently inhabited by the victims of their genocides.

What makes them think the new type of development aid flowing from the inter-Governmental genocide negotiations will be treated any differently?

It is against that background that we, the victim communities demand that the reparations package be the subject of mature negotiations between ourselves and Germany. We don't have to invent the wheel; Germany has sufficient experience in this regard and we expect the same humane considerations to be extended to our people. No more, no less!

***Continued delaying tactics, prevarication, vacillation and playing for time, will only serve to worsen attitudes towards the german government and make the terms of settlement progressively worse for Germany.***