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NAMIBIAN HUMAN REMAINS DISCOVERED AT THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY RELATED TO THE GERMAN GENOCIDE OF 1904-1908

New York, NY— September 13, 2017 —The Association of the Ovaherrero Genocide In the USA Inc. (“the Association”), in conjunction with the Ovaherero Paramount Chief Adv. Vekuii Rukoro and Chief David Frederick, Chairman of the Nama Traditional Authorities Association, confirmed today that the American Museum of Natural History (“AMNH”) is in possession of Namibian human remains, some of which appear to be related to the German genocide of the Ovaherero and Nama peoples during the period from German occupation of what was then South West Africa (now Namibia) from approximately 1885 to 1915.

The Namibian human remains were originally collected by Professor Felix von Luschan, a German anthropologist and ethnologist at the Museum for Ethnology in Berlin from 1885-1910. He was also a member of the German Society for Racial Hygiene. Over the span of many years, von Luschan built up two large collections containing thousands of specimens: one for the Berlin museum and one in his own private possession. Both collections contained skulls and skeletons of Namibians that had been shipped from Namibia to Berlin during the German colonial period in Namibia.

According to Dr. Holger Stoecker, a historian at Humboldt University in Berlin familiar with the collection, after von Luschan’s death in 1924, his widow sold his private collection to the AMNH in New York. It is believed that Felix Warburg, the German-born New York banker, donated the money for the transfer of the collection from Berlin to New York.

Barnabas Veraa Katuuo, a co-founder of the Association and a plaintiff in the federal class action lawsuit pending against Germany in the United States District Court for the Southern

District of New York relating to the Genocide of the Ovaherero and Nama peoples by German colonial forces, stated that he reviewed the human remains at the American Museum of Natural History on September 12, 2017, and that of the eight human remains from Namibia at least two are likely genocide victims, including one from Shark Island, the notorious German concentration camp located at Luderitz Bay, and one from Windhoek, where the German colonial authorities also maintained a concentration camp for the Ovaherero and Nama prisoners.

According to Mr. Katuuo, “the discovery of Namibian and Ovaherero remains at the Museum is a highly significant event, in that it shows that the Genocide of the Ovaherero and Nama peoples in Namibia in the early part of the 20th Century involved not only the mass killing of Ovaherero and Nama men, women and children, and the confiscation of their lands and livestock, but also involved the desecration of their remains when literally hundreds of skulls and skeletons were carted off to Berlin by German scientists and researchers. It is likely that these remains were then used extensively in pseudo-scientific experiments to support racist theories regarding the inferiority of the African races and the superiority of the German peoples.”

Kenneth F. McCallion, the attorney for the Association and the Namibian leadership of the Ovaherero and Nama peoples in their federal class action commented: “The discovery of Namibian human remains at the American Museum of Natural History highlights the fact that the Genocide of the Ovaherero and Nama peoples continues to have repercussions not only in Namibia, but also in places such as New York and the rest of the U.S., where many of the descendants of survivors of the Genocide have settled and still maintain their vibrant cultural and ethnic identities, despite the effort by the German imperial forces to wipe them out.”

In addition to seeking compensation from Germany for the Genocide, the federal Complaint alleges that the leadership of the Ovaherero and Nama peoples have been unfairly

excluded from ongoing negotiations between Germany and Namibia regarding the settlement of claims relating to the Genocide. The Complaint states that both Germany and Namibia are parties to the September 13, 2007 U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which provides that indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves ...”

As set forth in the Complaint, the Ovaherero and Nama indigenous people were robbed, during the German colonial occupation period, of virtually all of the grazing lands that provided the economic basis for their communities and cultural heritage. As a result, the surviving members of the Ovaherero and Nama indigenous communities have been condemned for generations to perpetual and institutionalized poverty, requiring as a matter of fundamental justice that their lawful representatives be included in the negotiations with Germany.

Paramount Chief Rukoro, Chief Frederick, and other Ovaherero and Nama leaders and representatives from Namibia and around the globe will view the remains at the Museum on October 13, 2017, which is also the date of the next scheduled court appearance before Judge Laura Taylor Swain in federal court in downtown Manhattan.

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