

**PRESS STATEMENT FROM THE OVAHERERO (OTA) AND THE NAMA TRADITIONAL  
AUTHORITIES ASSOCIATION**

**Date:** 17 June 2015

**Venue:** Ovaherero Commando, Cnr of Clemence Kapuuo & Efraim Hei Street, Katutura, Windhoek, Namibia

**Presented by:** Advocate Vekuii Rukoro, Paramount Chief: Ovaherero people

We have invited you this morning so that, through you, we express our unconditional support and whole-hearted appreciation for the: **“Petition: Genocide is Genocide”**, signed recently by a good many well-meaning and prominent German citizens and others – academicians, intellectuals, researchers, politicians, etc.

The issue of the Genocide of the Ovaherero and Nama People has been very much in the mouths of so many people and, at times, has also been the kicking ball between the German and the Namibian governments but without any meaningful results, as both, in our view, have never given it the priority status that it deserves.

To us, the people who are currently signing the Petition referred to above, added a new dimension to it, in that they have no hidden agenda other than just expressing their belated but welcome and sincere concern for the noble cause of fellow human beings who had suffered, and still continue to suffer, the legacy of the German Colonial “Mis-Rule” of their country.

Yes, we say, **“new dimension”**, because, just by looking at the titles in front of the names of the majority of them, they are not rogues collected from the streets of the Federal Republic of Germany but evidently people of repute and high standing with titles like “Dr.” and “Prof.” and hailing from institutions or reputability.

**Ladies and Gentlemen of the Media-**

Since we refer to their Petition, that we support whole-heartedly, it is our feeling that you may wish to know what they have said in it and for that reason, and with your indulgence, may I quickly read it to you (since it is only a one page petition) – I quote:-

And by the way! At the end of this media conference, we shall avail this Petition to you so that you inform your readership on what these highly respectable people are saying about the Ovaherero and Nama Genocide.

What they are saying is in fact no different and nothing new to what had been said before by us, by our own government and National Assembly or by some political parties in the German Parliament.

We, the Herero and Nama People, raised the issue of genocide; our National Assembly, at the urging of the late Paramount Chief Kuaima Riruako, debated the issue and unanimously adopted a Resolution which provided for the inclusion of the Descendants of the victims in any dialogue between the German and the Namibian governments; and twice the issue was tabled before the German Parliament by the Left Party, The Greens and the Social Democrats.

This Petition – perhaps by coincidence – is a reiteration of what we have been saying and for that reason we would like to publicly endorse it *in toto*, especially their demand from the German President, the German Parliament and the German Government “to declare Germany’s unconditional willingness to participate in an open dialogue with the descendants of the victims, as well as with the Namibian government concerning measures which can be taken to achieve reconciliation.”

### **Ladies and Gentlemen-**

All this is congruent with the Namibian National Assembly’s Resolution of 26 October 2006.

We would, however, like to add that such “measures” should in the end aim at putting the Ovaherero and the Nama Descendants in a situation in which they would have been, had it not been for the Genocide that imposed on them a legacy of permanent abject poverty as a result of the illegal expropriation of the land and livestock of their ancestors. This is indeed no different from the German notion of “Wiedergutmachung fur den Volkemord 1904-1908.”

For us – the Descendants of the victims of the Genocide of 1904 – 1908, we hold the view that the German Government has taken comfort in the low priority status accorded to the Genocide and Reparations issue by our own Government over the years, arguing that as long as Germany keeps on providing Namibia with generous development assistance, the issue will not be raised on any official agenda between the two Governments – except for the joint press releases. This explains the fact that for almost **9 years** since the late Paramount Chief Riruako’s Motion was adopted, nothing substantial or of any significance has come off the ground in this regard!

In this Petition, we are told that (and I quote) “Speakers of all fractions of the German government recognized the genocide of the Armenians”. We demand that, by the same token, the same fractions of the German government recognize the Ovaherero and the Nama Genocide committed in the then “German South West Africa” by the German

Emperor's Troops, and all done in the name of Germany for German Imperialism and Expansionism.

There should be no unequal treatment, as the Petition states, for the African victims of genocide or for their descendants and those of European descent, as this would be tantamount to a blatant racism.

We advise the German Chancellor, the German President, the German Government and the German Parliament to emulate the example of the First German Chancellor after the Second World War, Dr Konrad Adenauer, who said on September 27, 1951 in the German Parliament (and I quote):-

“In our name, unspeakable crimes have been committed and demand compensation and restitution, both moral and material for persons and properties of Jews who have been so seriously harmed.”

We say the same in respect of the Ovaherero and Nama Genocide. Those words should equally apply to our situation, and should be viewed as a befitting precedent for the German Government and Parliament to deal with the Herero and Nama Genocide.

### **Finally, Ladies and Gentlemen-**

For your information, convenience and ease of reference, we have attached hereunto our statement, a copy of the Petition and its signatories, so that you can judge for yourselves the calibre of the petitioners.

We thank you for having put your time at our disposal.

Any questions?

Issued jointly by:

- ✓ **Chief Dawid Fredericks on behalf of the Nama People**
- ✓ **Paramount Chief Adv. Vekuii Rukoro on behalf of the Ovaherero people**