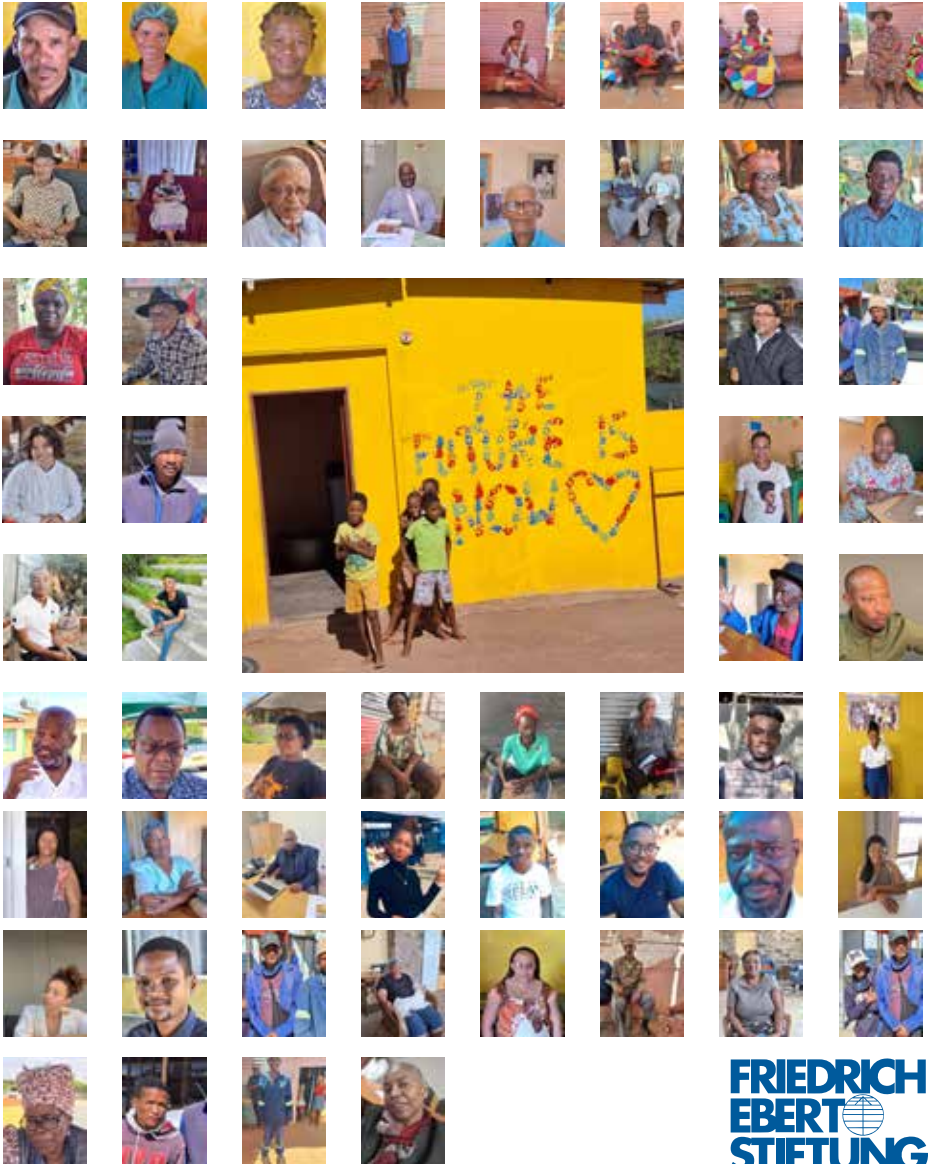


Nama Voices

Pains of the Past, Hopes for the Future



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CONTENTS

PREFACE	2
1 INTRODUCTION	4
1.1 Why this book?	4
1.2 Objections and reservations	4
2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION	7
2.1 The Nama people in Namibia and their colonial history	7
2.2 Namibia after German colonialism	9
2.3 Selected statistics about land ownership in Namibia	10
2.4 The reconciliation process between Namibia and Germany	11
2.5 Controversy regarding the Joint Declaration	15
3 INTERVIEWS	18
3.1 Interviews with elders	18
3.2 Interviews with middle-aged people	45
3.3 Interviews with the youth	80
ANNEXES	99
Annex 1: 2021 German and Namibian Joint Declaration	99
Annex 2: General Von Trotha's Proclamation to the Nama, 21 April 1905	105
Annex 3: United Nations Definition of Genocide	106
Annex 4: The Peace Treaty of Hoachanas (1858)	107
Annex 5: Teaching of German Colonialism (Subject: History) at Namibian State Schools	110
Annex 6: Stories from Hoachanas	111

PREFACE



On 26 September 2006, Paramount Chief Kuaima Riruako presented a motion in the Namibian National Assembly regarding the 1904–1908 genocide of Ovaherero and Nama people. This motion was unanimously adopted as a resolution in the legislative house. The National Assembly recommended that the Government of the Republic of Namibia engage in discussions with the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany with a view to finding an acceptable solution to address the ongoing effects of the 1904–1908 genocide on the descendants of Ovaherero and Nama victims.

In 2015, the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany responded to the Government of the Republic of Namibia’s motion by informing them of their intention to enter into negotiations on the genocide committed during the dark period of German colonialism in Namibia.

These bilateral negotiations have gradually gained momentum and special attention at national, regional, and international levels. Thanks to the commitment and political will of both governments, substantial progress was made, and in May 2021, the Namibian and German special envoys initialled the *Joint Declaration by the Federal Republic of Germany and the Republic of Namibia*, with the sub-heading “United in Remembrance of Our Colonial Past, United in Our Will to Reconcile, United in Our Vision of the Future”. This provides a framework for guiding the process of acknowledging that a genocide took place and the rendering of an apology by the Federal Republic of Germany. Since 2021, both governments have been discussing the *Joint Declaration*, but due to opposing views and pressure from some of the affected communities to reject the *Joint Declaration* as it stands, it has not yet been ratified.

In light of these developments, the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) in Namibia has had the privilege of organising a series of discussions with its esteemed partners on a range of topics related to Namibia’s colonial past, the *Joint Declaration*, and the ongoing reconciliation process between Namibia and Germany.

In order to provide a voice to the Nama descendants and the affected communities and to ensure that their painful past of the 1904–1908 genocide is documented, the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung commissioned a study with the title “Nama Voices – Pains of the Past, Hopes for the Future”. The study, which was compiled by the esteemed author Erika von Wietersheim, was conducted in the Khomas, Erongo, and Hardap regions through a series of more than 70 interviews with Nama descendants.

The narratives of the Nama descendants, who hail from a variety of backgrounds, offer multifaceted and thought-provoking insights into the challenging experiences of the colonial era in Namibia. It also offers a variety of perspectives on matters related to the reconciliation process, as well as a number of potential avenues for shaping a promising future for the Nama community.

For anyone who wishes to gain a deeper understanding of Namibia’s colonial history and the 1904–1908 genocide, this publication is essential reading.

FES Namibia would like to thank Erika von Wietersheim and all interviewers, translators, and coordinators for their sensitive, people-centred and respectful approach to this important topic, which is a key issue in Namibian society. Above all, FES Namibia would like to thank all the respondents for their cooperation and willingness to speak openly about all facets of their lives, including the deep wounds that the genocide continues to inflict on them, and about their hopes for the future.

Hajo Lanz

Resident Representative
Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Namibia

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Why this book?

With the exception of a brief historical overview, this publication is not a book **about** the Nama people of Namibia. Rather, it provides a platform for Nama people to speak for themselves about their past, their pains, and their hopes during a time when their past has come very much to the fore in the consciousness of all Namibians. The negotiations between the governments of Germany and Namibia concerning the genocide committed between 1904 and 1908 during the German colonial period against the Ovaherero and Nama people have featured prominently in the news, social media, and public discussions. Politicians, activists and traditional leaders have voiced very strong opinions in favour of or against the current negotiations and proposed resolutions, but one has seldom heard the voices of the people on the ground, those who are supposed to benefit from these negotiations through the acceptance of historical responsibility and a subsequent apology by the German government, and compensation payments.

This publication focuses on the Nama people: their present lives, and the economic, social and political challenges and obstacles that they face. It also sheds light on their knowledge and views of the colonial past as it affected them, especially during the period of German colonialism in what was then called German South West Africa. It furthermore sheds light on some of their expectations around a negotiated settlement between Namibia and Germany.

For this publication, various interviewers and assistants talked to more than 70 Nama and some Damara people in Windhoek, on farms and settlements around Windhoek, and in Okahandja, Usakos, Kalkrand, Mariental, Maltahöhe, and Keetmanshoop. We typically visited them at their homes, explained the objective of the book, and, if permitted, recorded their responses and photographed them. Most people in the villages and towns and on farms were willing to speak openly and share their views, and appreciated the opportunity to be heard.

1.2 Objections and reservations

It must be mentioned, however, that some people did express reservations when I, a German-speaking Namibian acting as coordinator for the book, consulted them before commencing with the interviews. The questions

put to me by one young Nama man included: How will the Nama people benefit from this book? Who continues “to privilege from our pain”? Does such a book, commissioned by a German NGO and becoming its intellectual property, led by a White German-speaking Namibian, not perpetuate the dehumanisation of the Nama people?

Another person also drew attention to the fact that most of the history and experiences of the Nama people have been documented by persons from outside the Nama community. He had hoped that initiatives like this would involve the Nama people themselves much more in the conceptualisation and conducting phases. This, he maintained, could have avoided the perpetuation of the experience that most of their stories have been told by others, and not from perspectives of the Namas themselves. He hoped that this would be considered for future interventions.

I understand the reservations expressed above and I regret that this project may have exacerbated the pain felt by some Nama people, as they again feel left out and exploited. All I could do is to include their voices, as they are important signposts for planning future projects of this kind.

I furthermore responded by clarifying a few aspects:

This work, commissioned by the FES, is in line with their objective of giving the Namibian people on the ground a voice and learning from them with respect and openness.

The copyright will be with FES, but the book is not a profit-making publication; it will be distributed free of charge to all interested persons and communities. The book is not ascribed to a single author but is published as a book by a collective of interviewers and consultants.

The interviews stand for themselves. They have not been commented on, analysed, or interpreted.

Respondents were selected with a view to having elderly, middle-aged and young people represented more or less equally, as well as people on farms and in various villages, smaller towns, and the capital city, Windhoek. Most interview partners were approached through personal contacts and not in accordance with scientific statistical principles. Some interviews were lengthy, while others were brief. In Keetmanshoop, we approached some young men on the streets, who were very eager to talk about their lives, though not about politics. The interviews were conducted in Nama,

Afrikaans, or English.

Interviewers, consultants, translators, and coordinators were (in alphabetical order of surnames):

Charmaine IlGamxamûs, Windhoek

IssaBrown Garises, Keetmanshoop

Freddy Shimonene, Windhoek

Pastor Neels Simon, Maltahöhe

Mariechen !Uiras, Usakos

Riaan !Uri#khob, Windhoek/Kalkrand

Ivette Windstaan, Kalkrand

Erika von Wietersheim, Windhoek

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 The Nama people in Namibia and their colonial history

The Nama are one of more than 12 ethnic/cultural/language groups in Namibia. They traditionally speak the Nama language and Afrikaans.¹ Today, they constitute about 5% of the Namibian population.² There are also smaller Nama groups in northern South Africa and Botswana.

Today, Nama people live all over Namibia, with the largest number being in the southern and central parts. The Topnaar clan lives along the Kuiseb River and near or in Sesfontein. Socially and politically, they are organised in different clans, which are led by traditional authorities, headed by a chief or kaptein, and a traditional council. Most Nama traditional authorities are organised under the Nama Traditional Leaders Association. Most of them are situated in southern Namibia, mainly in and around the former homeland known at the time as Namaland. For a variety of reasons, some traditional authorities have not been recognised by the Namibian Government.

The Nama people are one of the oldest population groups in Namibia. They were traditionally pastoralists, occupying large areas in the south and centre of present-day Namibia. They have a long and varied history, but the most decisive events, the impacts of which are still felt today, occurred during German colonial occupation (1884–1915), when the Nama and Ovaherero lost large areas of land, and the numbers of the Nama were reduced by about half in the genocidal war between German colonial troops and indigenous Nama communities (1904–1908) and its aftermath.

The history of the Nama people in Namibia is described by different historians and Nama people in different ways. As it is beyond the scope of this publication to analyse and assess differing historical viewpoints, the account given in the 2021 *Joint Declaration by the Federal Republic of*

¹ According to the *Namibia 2011 Population and Housing Census Main Report*, 11.3% of the population indicated that the main language spoken in their households was “Nama/Damara”. However, people in Namibia speak either Nama or Damara (both languages falling within the Khoekhoegowab continuum). Nama and Damara are similar languages, both with click sounds, but both Nama and Damara stress that they are distinct, just as the Damara and Nama are different population groups in terms of culture, historical narratives, communal land, and political organisation.

² worldatlas.com/ (No exact figures are currently available.)

*Germany and the Republic of Namibia*³ is quoted here verbatim to outline this history:

1. In 1904, Germany waged a war, which annihilated large parts of indigenous communities that were residing in what is now Namibia. The German forces adopted and implemented policies to exterminate clearly identified communities. These measures also affected other communities of what today is Namibia.
2. In this context, Lieutenant General Lothar von Trotha issued an Order on 2nd October 1904 which led to the death and suffering of thousands of Ovaherero, including women and children. This Order was rescinded by the German Government on 8th December 1904, but by then, many thousands of Ovaherero had been killed and perished.
3. Notwithstanding the revocation of the first Order by Germany, Lieutenant General von Trotha issued a second Order on 22nd April 1905. This was directed against the Nama and also threatened them with a similar fate to that of the Ovaherero unless they surrendered.⁴ These threats were later carried out, resulting in the further substantial annihilation of the Nama communities.
4. In 1905, German authorities created concentration camps, notably at Swakopmund, Shark Island [Lüderitz] and Windhoek (Alte Feste), in which the internees were enslaved and forced to work under inhumane conditions, resulting in the death of thousands of people from hunger, disease and forced labour. Some of the Nama fighters and their families were banished to Togo and Cameroon.
5. The severity of the conditions and the bleakness of life prospects in these camps were such that many internees were doomed to die. By the time these camps were finally closed in 1908, thousands of people had died from hunger, disease and exhaustion from forced labour.

³ See Annex 1 for the full text.

⁴ See the original text of von Trotha's order targeting the Nama in Annex 2.

6. In the aftermath of the war, large swathes of territory, constituting ancestral land historically inhabited by and belonging to indigenous communities, were seized and occupied by the German State. These actions led to the expulsion and displacement of indigenous communities from their ancestral lands. In some cases, communities were forced out of what today is Namibia itself and have remained uprooted to this day.
7. Furthermore, human remains of members of indigenous communities were removed unlawfully and shipped to Germany for pseudo-scientific racial purity and eugenic 'research' without respect for human dignity, cultural and religious beliefs and practices. The shipments also included cultural artifacts of these communities.
8. Overall, tens of thousands of men, women and children were subjected to the orders and associated German policies. They were shot, hanged, burned, starved, experimented on, enslaved, worked to death, abused, raped and dispossessed, not only of their land, property and livestock, but also of their rights and dignity.
9. As a consequence, a substantial number of Ovaherero and Nama communities were exterminated through the actions of the German State. A large number of the Damara and San communities were also exterminated.

While record-keeping from the period makes it difficult to quantify the total loss of life, it is estimated by historians that 50% of the Nama population perished. Nama genocide descendants remain among the poorest and most marginalised people in Namibia.

2.2 Namibia after German colonialism

In 1915, after the beginning of the First World War, South African troops defeated the colonial German *Schutztruppe* ("Protection Force"). German South West Africa ceased to exist as a German colony, and South Africa took over its administration.⁵ Hopes ran high among the Ovaherero and

⁵ The Union of South Africa was then a self-governing dominion within the British Empire. It was self-governing, but Britain controlled its international relations.

Nama that under the new British/South African administration at least some land would be returned to those who had lost it to the German colonists. But White-governed South Africa would deprive the indigenous population of even more land in favour of poor White settlers from South Africa. Between 1920 and 1940, 32 million hectares of land were allocated to Afrikaner settlers, and another major giveaway scheme was instituted after the Second World War. South Africa maintained apartheid-style control over Namibia until Namibian independence was won in 1990 after an extended and brutal conflict.

Before independence, ethnically based, so-called “homelands” had been created by South Africa, and the majority of the population depended on this communally held land for their livelihoods. On the attainment of independence in 1990, Namibia decided to retain these former homelands as communal areas, owned by the state and administered by traditional authorities.

In 1991, one year after independence, the First National Land Conference was held. To the disappointment of many Nama and Ovaherero, it was decided that no land claims by Namibians who had lost land during the times of colonialism and apartheid would be recognised. Land redistribution to the status quo before colonialism would not play a role, partly because no fixed point in history could be used for the restoration of ancestral land rights. Instead, the government would institute different land reform strategies to return land to the formerly dispossessed.

At the Second National Land Conference in 2018, the restitution of ancestral land rights featured more prominently and became a separate discussion topic. The conference resolved that the government would appoint a Commission on Ancestral Land to identify communities who had lost land, and ascertain the extent of such losses. The report of the Commission was released in 2021.⁶ Along with several recommendations made to the government on ancestral land rights and restitution claims, the Commission drafted an Ancestral Land Rights and Restitution Bill.

2.3 Selected statistics about land ownership in Namibia

In Namibia, of the total landmass:

about 42–46% of the land mass is private freehold or **commercial land**,

⁶ See the summary of this report in *This land is my land*, FES

owned by private individuals or businesses;

18–23% is **state land**; and

35–37% is **communal land**.⁷

Of the commercial land, about 70% is still owned by White (previously advantaged) citizens.

The number of farms in the hands of German-speaking Namibians today is unknown. According to a source from 1984, a total of 1 423 farms were owned by “ethnic Germans” at that time.⁸

Today, German-speaking Namibians constitute less than 1% of the total population, while Whites in Namibia constitute about 5–7%.⁹

2.4 The reconciliation process between Namibia and Germany

On 26 September 2006, Paramount Chief Kuaima Riruako of the Ovaherero tabled a motion in the Namibian National Assembly which was unanimously adopted. The resolution initiated and became the basis for negotiations between the Namibian and German governments on the genocide of the Ovaherero and the Nama people. It stated that:

- what happened to the Nama and Ovaherero during 1904–1908 was a brutal act of genocide,¹⁰ sanctioned by the German government of the day;
- the Nama and Ovaherero people are entitled to demand reparations from the German government;
- the Namibian government should be an interested party in any

7 Namibia Statistics Agency. (2018). Namibia land statistics booklet September 2018. http://dna.nust.na/landconference/submissions_2018/.pdf

8 Ibid.; Swalurama. (1973.) *SWA Farmer, farmadressbuch*; Fieldwork by author, 1984; Weigend, G.G. (1985, April.) German Settlement Patterns in Namibia. *Geographical Review*, 75(2), 156–169. American Geographical Society. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/214466>

9 www.worldatlas.com/articles/tribes-and-ethnic-groups-of-namibia.html

10 See the UN definition of genocide in Annex 3.

discussions between its nationals and the German government on the issue of reparations; and

- dialogue should be entered into between the Namibian government and representatives of the victim communities, on the one hand, and the German government, on the other, to try to resolve this matter amicably and thereby strengthen and solidify the excellent current relationship between the two countries.¹¹

As a result, in 2015, the governments of Germany and Namibia entered into negotiations. The bilateral negotiations were, on the Namibian side, supported by the so-called Technical Committee, composed of Namibian experts on economics, history and research, and representatives of the affected communities. The Special Political Cabinet Committee on Genocide, Apology, and Reparations, representing the Namibian government, also included the Chiefs Forum, composed of traditional leaders, whose role is to provide the Cabinet Committee with feedback on the negotiation, make inputs, and advise it on the negotiation strategy.

The two countries each appointed a special envoy who would lead the negotiations for their respective governments. Namibia appointed former diplomat, historian, and descendant of the victims of the 1904–1908 genocide, the late Dr Zed Ngavirue.

After many years of intensive and often protracted negotiations, in May 2021, the special envoys of the two governments initialled a Joint Declaration, titled “United in Remembrance of our Colonial Past, United in our Will to Reconcile, United in our Vision of the Future”.

This Joint Declaration provides, in short,¹² that:

- the German Government acknowledges that the atrocities committed during the colonial war would, from today’s perspective, be called genocide;
- the German Government recognizes Germany’s moral responsibility for the historic developments that led to the genocidal conditions between 1904 and 1908;

11 See ogfnamibia.org.

12 See the full text of the Joint Declaration in Annex 1.

- Germany accepts a moral, historical and political obligation to tender an apology for this genocide and subsequently provide the necessary means for reconciliation and reconstruction;
- Germany apologises and bows before the descendants of the victims and asks for forgiveness for the sins of their forefathers;
- the Namibian Government and people accept Germany's apology and believe that it paves the way to a lasting mutual understanding and the consolidation of a special relationship between the two nations and heals the wounds of the past;
- a separate and unique reconstruction and development support programme will be set up by both governments to assist the development of descendants of the particularly affected communities, in line with their identified needs. Representatives of these communities will participate in this process in a decisive capacity;
- under this programme, projects will be implemented in the following seven regions:
 - Erongo
 - Hardap,
 - IlKharas
 - Khomas
 - Kunene
 - Omaheke
 - Otjozondjupa;
- the projects will include the following sectors:
 - land reform, in particular land acquisition, within the framework of the Namibian Constitution;
 - land development, agriculture, rural livelihoods and infrastructure; and
 - natural resources, energy and water supply/technical and vocational education and training;

- both governments will promote and support reconciliation between the people of Namibia and Germany through preserving the memory of the colonial era, in particular, the period between 1904 and 1908, for future generations by, inter alia:
 - finding appropriate ways of preserving memory and enacting remembrance;
 - supporting research and education, and cultural and linguistic issues; and
 - encouraging meetings of and exchange between all generations, in particular the youth;
- both governments further decide to jointly develop and put into place separate legal structures (i.e. joint trusts or funds) to select and fund projects that aim to improve reconciliation; both programmes will operate based on:
 - principles of equal partnership and joint decision-taking;
 - good governance and transparency;
 - affected community participation; and
 - monitoring of implementation, including audits and periodic comprehensive impact assessments at agreed intervals;

the financial amount for projects and reconciliation will be a total of 1.1 billion Euros (N\$20–22 billion), as a grant to implement the projects over a period of 30 years;¹³ and

- both governments understand that the above amounts settle all financial aspects of the issues relating to the past addressed in this Joint Declaration.

¹³ The amount of €1.1 billion, which Germany was to make available over a period of thirty years for reconstruction and development support programmes to assist the descendants of the communities most affected by the genocide and for projects on reconciliation, remembrance, research, and education was roughly the same amount German development cooperation had spent in the country in the thirty years since Namibia's independence in 1990.

2.5 Controversy regarding the Joint Declaration

In June 2021, the German and Namibian governments published the results of their negotiations and the Joint Declaration was presented to the Namibian National Assembly by the Namibian government. The publication of the Joint Declaration elicited strongly expressed and widely differing reactions from members of the National Assembly and the affected communities, as well as from the general civilian population in Namibia; the leaders of the various Nama and Ovaherero traditional authorities are also deeply divided on this issue.

Representatives of several Nama and Ovaherero communities argue that the communities affected by the genocide, including those living in the diaspora, were not adequately involved in the negotiations leading to the Joint Declaration. This, they claim, was inconsistent with the parliamentary resolution of 2006 that required that negotiations should take place between the affected communities and the perpetrator government of Germany, with the Namibian government acting only as “an interested party”. Consequently, Germany should also not direct its apology to the Namibian state, which did not exist at the time of the genocide and had no mandate to speak to Germany on behalf of traditional Ovaherero and Nama authorities.

They are also highly critical of the phrase “genocide from today’s perspective” in the Joint Declaration as it implies that Germany does not recognise the genocide in terms of international law with consequent legal obligations, but only in “moral, historical, and political” terms. Payments, as agreed in the Joint Declaration, are thus not a form of reparation to the descendants of the victim communities but are merely a form of “donor aid” to the Namibian government.

The communities also argue that the issue of land ownership was not addressed in the Joint Declaration, noting that it contains no mention of ancestral land taken by German forces being returned to its rightful owners. Rather, it merely refers to “Land Reform, in particular Land Acquisition, within the framework of the Namibian Constitution”.

They also criticise the quantum of 1.1 billion Euros as being too small and the time period of 30 years as being too long.

They therefore reject the initialled Joint Declaration of 2021 and demand that the negotiation process be recommenced, with the inclusion of the

directly affected communities. On 19 January 2023, acting on behalf of the Ovaherero Traditional Authority and eleven Nama traditional authorities, Namibian lawyer Patrick Kauta filed an application with the Namibian High Court to review and set aside the 2021 Joint Declaration between the German and Namibian governments and to have the Joint Declaration declared to be unlawful.

Other traditional chiefs and communities are basically in agreement with the manner in which the government dealt with the genocide negotiations and feel adequately represented through the Technical Committee, the Chiefs Forum, and their government. Although they would like to see it improved through further negotiations, and many also see the monetary compensation as being insufficient to make up for the sorrow, pain, and losses experienced, they feel that the process of reconstruction should start as soon as possible so that the affected communities will benefit and improve their socioeconomic circumstances.

For ten weeks, members of Parliament debated the motion. In December 2021, the Speaker of the National Assembly noted the debates without taking a vote. The Namibian Executive promised to further engage with the German government, and since then, negotiations have been underway to make an Addendum to the Joint Declaration. This Addendum addresses issues such as a reduction in the time period of 30 years and an increase in the quantum, the inclusion of Nama and Ovaherero people living in the diaspora in the reconciliation process, financial and technical issues, and agreement on concrete terms of implementation.

In July 2024, as a result of further discussions, Germany agreed to change the term “genocide from today’s perspective”, and the German Embassy confirmed to *The Namibian* newspaper that the German government now “calls the atrocities committed by German troops against the Ovaherero and Nama for what they are – a genocide.”¹⁴

In addition, the issue of the quantum of 1.1 billion Euros has been addressed in the Addendum to the Joint Declaration. It stipulates that Germany agrees that additional funding will be provided for the implementation

14 Petersen, S. & Ngatjiheue, C. (2024, July 3). Germany admits to genocide for the first time in 120 years. *The Namibian*. <https://dialogue-on-namibias-past.org/namibian-germany-admits-to-genocide-for-the-first-time-in-120-years>

of the reconstruction and reconciliation programmes for the affected communities, although the amount of this increase is still under discussion.¹⁵

The draft agreement, though not yet ratified, represents one of the first times that a formal reconciliation agreement has been negotiated between a former colonial power and a former colony on a state-to-state level, and it is thus without precedent.

The following chapter turns to Nama people on the ground and what they have to say about their history, how it has been conveyed from generation to generation, their pains of the past, and their hopes for the future.

¹⁵ Petersen, S. & Ngatjiheue, C. (2024, July 1). 'Uncapped' N\$ 21,4b deal negotiated. *The Namibian*. <https://www.namibian.com.na/uncapped-n214b-genocide-deal-negotiated/>

3. INTERVIEWS

3.1 Interviews with elders



Willem Swartbooi

Maltahöhe, member of the Witbooi Traditional Authority (councillor)

The interview was conducted in Nama by Pastor Neels Simon and Erika von Wietersheim and translated by Pastor Simon.

I never went to school, so, about the German colonial time, I will only tell what I heard from the elders. I grew up on German farms together with my parents. About the war of the Germans against the Nama and the Herero, I remember one name: von Trotha. And I heard that during this war our people lost many things – their land, their livelihood and also many lives.

Also, some time ago, many books arrived here which I also have here, which are about that German war and how the people were killed, and how they were treated. And then I became totally disgusted and angry. I felt their pain – that is how I feel. The book I'm talking about is *Die Keiservoël oor Namaland*.¹⁶ They were given to us at the Witbooi festival, they were distributed there. It was read and explained to us, and I also saw some pictures. And I saw how badly the people were treated and how they were suffering during the German colonial time.

As I hear people talking about the Genocide Declaration, my own view is that all other people should get out of the discussion so that we, the Nama and Herero, can have a direct talk with the Germans. And from what I'm reading and from what I heard on the radio news and people talking, I realise now that we have lost a big part of our livelihood during that war and in the past.

If this reparation deal happens, then my personal wish is that it should not be given to a group. It is the loss of my ancestors and predecessors – it should come directly to me. I need to get it as a person so that at least I feel that I have regained something from what my ancestors lost. If we can

16 Marais, K. (2016). *Die Keiservoël oor Namaland*. Cordis Trust.

get some land and livestock from the reparation money and maybe better houses for us, our children and grandchildren, then we can at least enjoy a piece of what we lost.

Katrina Swartbooi

Maltahöhe, 67-year-old wife of Willem Swartbooi

The interview was conducted in Nama by Pastor Neels Simon and Erika von Wietersheim and translated by Pastor Simon.

I grew up in the Namib, and I only went to school when I was 11. In 1968, when I was 11, we were moved to Uibes because of the Odendaal Plan. This Plan was not during the German colonial time but during the South African apartheid time. We were just picked up from our lives and dumped at Uibes, here near Maltahöhe, in the so-called Nama homeland. We still experience poverty because of German colonialism and South African apartheid.

I just want to say again that the reparation from the Germans should come directly to me, because as a Nama person, I have lost so much. It should not be support for the masses. All those other people who are now trying to be involved in this should be kept out of it – the negotiations and talks about the reparation should be with the Namas and Hereros. As we are sitting here, you can see the condition we are living in, in a shack. There is no extra income, and there are no sons and daughters who can support us. The old-age pension is the only support and income that we get from the government.



Cornelius Freyh

Maltahöhe, 82 years old

The interview was conducted in Nama by Erika von Wietersheim and Pastor Neels Simon, who also made inputs and translated into English.

My great-grandfather was born in Hornkranz in the Khomas Hochland, where there was a big fight between the Namas and the Germans in 1893.¹⁷ And my father told me how his mother *abbad* him (carried him on her back) and fled

17 In 1893, German colonial forces attacked Nama Captain Hendrik Witbooi at his village at Hornkranz, killing eighty people, many of them women and children.

from that place. And the genocide, I heard about it on the radio and TV. I also listened to people like Ida Hoffmann¹⁸ and Kaptein David Frederick of the !Aman Traditional Authority from Bethanie talking about what was going on during the genocide. And I also read about it in the book *Die Keiservoël oor Namaland*.¹⁹ My Oupa also often told the elderly people that in the beginning of the war, von Trotha gave an order that the Nama must be annihilated, and he spoke about what went on between the Namas and the Germans. Von Trotha has this “von” in front of his name, so he came from a noble family in Germany.

Erika von Wietersheim: There are still von Trotha families in Germany and I talked to some of them, and they felt bad about their name and did not want to come to Namibia. They then invited Chief Alphons Maharero to Germany so that at least the von Trotha and the Maharero families could reconcile in a way.²⁰

Cornelius Freyh: You see, we Nama people, our parents and grandparents (“*ons grootmense*”), they raised us the Christian way and we are not strange (“*snaakse*”) people; when we hear somebody is a von Trotha, we will not stand against that person. We will not.

Pastor Simon: Yes, I agree. At the time of the genocide order, they were not there, they were only born later, much later than when this genocide happened. This is how we Nama people are seeing them. Yes, your ancestor did this and that and we will tell you what your ancestors did to our ancestors and about the pain that we are carrying inside us – but we don’t tell you this because your name is von Trotha.

Cornelius Freyh: Although some people perhaps do not see it like this. When I was young, I worked for a short time for White people. One White employer paid me for my work from Monday to Saturday six-Rand-fifty (equivalent to N\$6.50). But then a White woman also started working for him, also from Monday to Saturday, and she showed me the money that she received, she got seventy Rand. So, I left that work. I then worked for a man in Lüderitz, transporting milk from Bethanie to Lüderitz, and one day there was a terrible wind and we got stuck in the wind that was blowing all over us and also the sand was all over us, and when we arrived in Lüderitz,

18 Ida Hoffmann is a former SWAPO MP and was the chairperson of the Nama Genocide Technical Committee until 2017.

19 Marais, K. Ibid.

20 The von Trotha family invited Chief Alphons Maharero to Germany in 2004. In 2007, Chief Maharero invited the von Trotha family to Namibia.

the man saw that the windscreen was damaged, and he said, "You Hotnot and Kaffir, you are so stupid, why did you not use a bag or something to protect the windscreen?" So I left and no longer worked for Whites.

We suffered under apartheid – and if one speaks of apartheid, then this began with the order of von Trotha. His order showed that the Nama meant nothing. And when the von Trotha time had passed and the next racist government took over, they were told that they must never let a Nama work in their offices, not even to wipe their office desks, otherwise that Nama would know your very last office file.

The government that took over from the Germans was also informed in such a way that if a Nama goes from his place of work to your farm, you must make sure and see which way he is going. If he comes along the footpath, then make sure that he never leaves that footpath. And if he comes along the road, then don't allow him to leave that road; he must come on the road and go back on that road. He must not come this way with the road and return on the footpath. This was the sort of apartheid that we Nama people and our ancestors experienced. We were just used on the farms like a wheelbarrow, or a spade, or a rake, or a pick – this was the only area where we could be used. And that was apartheid! And this curse of apartheid and these oppressive conditions under which our parents and also ourselves have suffered have caused that today, it looks like we are fish on dry ground, without water. Because the past still presses down on us today.

This is why we are without parents, without a mother and a father and an *ouma* and an *oupa* (grandmother and grandfather) – it is because we have dried up. They died because there was nothing for them, everything was taken away from them. When our ancestors died, they died with nothing, they had no advantages, and they had no livelihood because they lived in an oppressed and deprived way. If I die, I also have nothing – there is no one to say, "Take this little bit and live."

If we, who are now fathers and *oupas*, had in our lives something small that we could give our grandchildren, we could have got some form of respect from them. But as you know, we have nothing, we are naked, is that not true? And so, as we are, we get no respect.

Pastor Simon: We feel stripped, bare – and now these genocide talks are also muddled up and postponed, so that when we die, we cannot leave

something behind – a small house, a small plot, a small farm. You are hungry, there is nothing on the table for the children. All this was caused by the German colonial time and the South African apartheid system – they humiliated us, we were used as inferiors, and we were not seen by these systems as owners of the land and as humans. Our ancestors were rich people, they had land and possessions and free movement when these systems were not there, but when they came, they took everything away.

Cornelius Freyh: We now only see these from a long way away – goats, sheep, cattle. And with independence, it looks to me like it has remained the same. There is nothing for us that can improve our lives a little bit. We do not need big money, just something to make life a little more comfortable.

Pastor Simon: This is why we want the German government to take us by our hand and strengthen our arms a little so that the fire can start burning. When the fire is burning, then we can live, but if the fire is not burning – how can we live?

Cornelius Frey: So, at least, the Germans must help us. We just want to live comfortably; we don't want to be rich. If we speak about this, inside there are tears.



Stefanus Sylvester Swartbooie

Keetmanshoop, 70-years old, from the IlHai-IlKhaua clan in Berseba

The interview was coordinated by Keetmanshoop resident Issa Garises and conducted by Erika von Wietersheim in English.

As a child, I grew up in a place called Gainachab in the Berseba district, and we always overheard the conversations of our elders about the German presence, so I heard these stories when I was still very young. Then, one day, I was taken to one of our cattle posts and there were two graves that were somehow mysterious because they were said to be German graves. As a child, I did not understand what this meant, but later I learned that Germans had been in this area and people were talking about their ghosts.

I later attended secondary school in Tses and completed my schooling there. It was a missionary school with German missionaries; they also

talked about the past, but more about the South African past. From the books I could also see that the South Africans did not want the Germans to look great – they wanted to look better than them. I picked up some history about the German presence in the school history books, although in a very distorted form. In our history lessons at school, the Ovaherero and Nama were somehow depicted as culturally lower – it was a twisted version of our history.

I also remember that not far from us there was a German farm. At that time the Germans had a lot of farms in this area; later some of them were relocated and bought off through the Odendaal Plan in the 1960s. I remember that my uncle sent me to the farm store on that farm to buy some things and the German woman was friendly to me, but then a car came, and inside was a Boer, and I was hidden away, I was not to be seen. She only gave me my goods when the car was gone, and I had to run back fast that I wouldn't be seen by other people. This German lady talked badly of the Boers. So as a child, I thought the Germans must be much better people than the Boers.

With the political awareness of 1975/76 and the student uprisings, I left Namibia in 1976 and spent almost 13 years in exile. I first underwent military training, then studied at the United Nations Institute for Namibia, UNIN, in Zambia, and in 1981 I was sent to Angola to teach at the SWAPO Educational Centre. At that time, there was an influx of many young people from Namibia into Angola, so the Cuban government offered us school facilities in Cuba, and I was assigned to take 500 pupils to Cuba.

After 18 months I was recalled by Nahas Angula, who later became Minister of Education in independent Namibia, under the pretext that I had received a scholarship offer from the German Democratic Republic, and I was happy to go. But when I arrived in Angola, I was told that the next day I had to take a plane to Lubango and that I had no more rights to ask any questions. I knew about the infiltration of spies into SWAPO at that time, but I was not concerned because I was not part of it. In July 1983, the process of interrogation and torture started, and I had no choice but to make a full confession. I spent six years in the Lubango dungeons.

In 1989, I finally returned home, thanks to our Lord, and UN Resolution 435. Coming back, the only qualification I had was the UNIN training, so I could not find a job as a teacher, and I worked for different NGOs – it was a shaky situation.

What do you think about the present negotiations between Namibia and Germany, and the Joint Declaration that is on the table?

I am from the I Hai-Khaua Traditional Authority in the Berseba area, one of the Nama clans. I used to be very active in the present genocide issue but now have slowed down, also because I do not have the resources to travel a lot. In my opinion, some of us were very militant in the past. People fight when they are angry, but anger is something we need to manage. As time goes by, you slow down and look at the situation from a different perspective. To critique the Joint Declaration, I need to fully understand its shortcomings and I need to read and study it. My attitude is: I do not praise or condemn things that I have not thoroughly studied.

As to the Joint Declaration, I must confess, I did not study it thoroughly, and that is why I am not eager to speak loudly against it. In principle, I don't like the idea of just rejecting something – I must first understand, and based on my understanding, I must articulate objections to it.

In general, few people, including the intellectuals, have a comprehensive understanding of the German colonial presence that culminated in genocide and its impact on the livelihoods of the affected communities. My suggestion is to introduce the topic of genocide as a special module in the Faculty of History.

Our problem is that the government sometimes recognizes a traditional authority and gazettes it. But then, when the traditional authority doesn't agree with the government's ABC approaches to the genocide, the government replaces it with some people whom they had never recognised and gazetted before. Someone else is elevated to the level of representing the Nama people at the negotiating table. As Nama people, we know the suffering and the subsequent trauma that we underwent, and it is us, who should speak with authority about our suffering and not stand back. They cannot talk about the genocide and its aftermath without us.

What are your views about the distribution of the funds as specified in the Joint Declaration?

I am actually more concerned about the relationship between the Nama and the Germans. When Sima Luipert²¹ and other people travelled to

²¹ Sima Luipert is an activist and a member of the Nama Traditional Leaders Association Technical Committee on Genocide, and the great-granddaughter of a Shark Island concentration camp survivor.

Germany, they met with Germans, and after every meeting, they were approached by people who said, we didn't know about that genocide, and we distance ourselves from that past. We are very sorry – and what can we do to address the pain that you have suffered? Then Sima told me of one German woman, who came to her and told her, "Sima, I am a German woman with adult children, and after listening to you, I decided to find a way to take my children to Namibia and find a space where I can meet with Nama people so that I, as a person on the ground, can express my sorrow and apologise." I liked this. I would like the relationship between us, the Nama and the Germans, to be sound, rather than talking about money.

For me, it is more important that the two of us have this face-to-face contact. So, I am looking for a situation where the Nama and the Germans can sit around the fire and talk about the past. One problem is that sometimes our people will see a German, and they don't say, "It is not **you** who did that, it was your great-great-grandfather." But our history should not divide us, we must rather find a way to meet.

But isn't the money very important for the very poor Nama people in our country?

This is a good question. Before the talks between Germany and Namibia, some German people came and talked about how development aid should be channelled in the interest of the Nama people, and the Namibian government objected to that. They said that there is already a bilateral relationship between our two countries, so any support they want to render must go through the bilateral agreement, we do not need special channels. I think it's about who controls this money, and I think, we should be controlling what is happening. For example, I saw how goat rams were given to communities here – and you could see the happiness, that injection of quality into their lives. One way to develop the livelihood of the Namas is farming, and if any support is given to them to improve their livelihood – this is what we should do.

There was also a Namibian-German special programme for building infrastructure here and there, but somehow the largest chunk of the money ended in administration and payments to the so-called consultants, and only a very tiny amount trickled down to satisfy the communities' needs. As Nama people, I want to see that our Nama children are assisted education-wise, to restore the dignity of the people through education. It's all a matter of control – what are the priorities – and the money must go into people's hands and not into the administration.

I see the Joint Declaration as an effort to address the German>Nama/Herero challenge. But there is no way that we can exclude the Herero and Nama from being alongside our government. I also welcomed the recent visit of the German President, who was here for the funeral of late President Hage Geingob. He also consulted with the Nama leaders. He talked to the recognised leaders, but he also called the others in. He had two separate meetings.

And maybe a question that you did not ask: I'm a supporter of meaningful dialogue between the Namibian Germans and us. We don't need to go to Berlin to meet Germans; Germans are here also, but we don't meet! Namibians are not meeting like the two of us now. You know me better than someone in Berlin. I know there might be differences among the German Namibians here because some see themselves as being blamed. I met one person in Aus – an American researcher wanted to engage him on our history, and he was not very happy about it and said, we are now the scapegoats for everything. But despite that, the relationship between us must be much closer because we are the ones who must know each other. After all, we live in the same country.

But of course, there is our pain, we are angry. When I went to conduct interviews with Chief David Hanse of Amperbo, he showed me a tree and said, the traditional leaders of our tribe used to meet under that tree, but today, because this area was dispossessed, it is a private farm, and we are not able to access it. But we know it is one of our sites. Because of the loss of our land, we need the farmer's permission to go to that tree where our traditional leaders were meeting. These things are the pain that we have. But I'm not an advocate for violent repossession because today we must treat each other as Namibians with full rights. My appeal is to also show the views of the German Namibians and to find the time to meet our fellow German citizens.

Some people were irritated or even angry when I started these interviews with the Nama people – angry about me, a German-speaking Namibian, doing these interviews – why not a Nama person?

Having been part of the liberation struggle and knowing who supported us, I'm colourblind when it comes to truth. I would not say that years ago, but now I would. In Kwanza Sul, in Angola, there were two people from Germany, and one day, one of us became drunk and said, these Germans were the ones who killed our people, and I said to him: "You know that these people are supporting us; they are Germans who have already

distanced themselves from the past and what happened to us. They are now on our side.” So, I’m somehow colourblind in this. I am thankful for this engagement, and more should come.



Mattheus Gabriel Antonius !Goraseb

Groot-Aub (a village about 50 km south of Windhoek), 79 years old, member of the !Gowanin clan and originally from Gobabis, former Afrikaans and Nama teacher and translator (B.A. Hons. in Afrikaans), married to Elriena !Gorases from Groot-Aub

The interview was coordinated by Clara Baitsewe and conducted in Afrikaans by Erika von Wietersheim.

The Namas had their first contact with Germans in the time when the missionaries came here long ago, during the 19th century. They brought the Christian faith to the areas south of the Sahara and changed the centuries-old knowledge of the Nama people. That is how the contact began. At that time, the Namas were people who, when they believed, would do so with heart and soul. So, these changes from the heathen beliefs in things like the moon and the stars to the Christian faith affected them strongly. This faith that the missionaries brought implied that you had to respect and honour someone who was above you. This included the headmen, but, as they interpreted the Christian faith, also those who were then in control.

The hopes and expectations of the Namas were that their lives would change with the White man, with the Germans, who brought the faith. But what they then found out was that with their new faith, the German missionaries paved the way for later colonisation. The farms and the land were taken over, and on our land, there were now White farms. The names are still there – all the old names of the farms are still there, but they were taken over by the colonisers. So that was the physical change in the life of the Nama. They gave us the Christian faith, but they took away our land. And then came the third thing: genocide. So first, they brought the faith, then they took the land, then came the killing. We still have that faith, but the land is gone, and our people were killed.

When the German colonisers came into the country, in 1884, there were Namas that already had weapons, and the colonisers tried to disarm them. History tells me that during this disarmament action, the headman of

the Nama of Bethany questioned this. So, the plan of the Germans was as follows: Come let us have a church service, and everyone went into the church because they were religious people. And while they were in church, the Germans went to the houses of the people and asked, where are the weapons? One old woman, the headman's wife, still tried to keep the weapons away, but what could she do? Where did the Namas get weapons? They got them from South Africa via Walvis Bay. When the Germans found out, they tried to block the import routes. From 1903 to 1908 the Nama made war against the Germans. The Hereros began and then the Namas came in. So that is how it was.

I heard about what is happening today. I heard about the Joint Declaration of Namibia and Germany and the 20 billion Namibia dollars. You see, in the south, the country has become very dry. The people used to be nomadic farmers, and what can Germany now do to keep people alive, what can we do for the people? Also, for the Herero, there is no rain, and no water – they are cattle herders there, what can be done? For young people, education is important. On the one side, we need education for young people. But farming must also be promoted. The money is now available. How can we use it? We must support the resettlement; people need a place to live. And we must also include the Damara – Nama and Damara cannot be separated, they are mixed people. There are also Nama women who had children with Germans, but the German fathers went back and there are still those children's children, you can recognise them from their looks. We must build a new kind of trust.



Elriena !Gorases

Groot-Aub, pensioner, wife of Mattheus !Goraseb, member of the Afrikaner (Oorlam) community (Hoa !Ara !Aixa !Aes clan)

The interview was conducted by Erika von Wietersheim in Afrikaans.

How do you feel about this money?

I think, because we Nama people are so behind with education, there must be education so that the Nama can revitalise their Nama culture, make traditional clothes, and learn what they can do with their hands so that they can sell things and make a living. Joblessness is the worst thing that brings this country down. We do educate our children, we send them to school, but then we do not

have the money to send them further. So, if there are young people who want to study further, they could be assisted with this money.

Also, today, even if you are educated and you have this paper, you often do not get employment. We thought that with independence we would lead an independent life, but the economy is going backwards. Some bad things of today were not there in the past, and now our children have no vision. But maybe if they are educated in their own culture, they will be able to do something.

This morning, we also talked about our language, Khoekhoegowab, that will maybe die out. The children's education about Khoekhoegowab is not going on. Here in Groot-Aub sits my husband, who is a linguist – he wrote prescribed books for the schools, but now he is old, and it seems that people today are not able to properly train teachers. This is something which we should do – it is very important for us.

How do the people live in Groot-Aub?

Many people like us from the older generation grew up during colonial apartheid times and we worked for ourselves, even if we only had Standard 6 (Grade 8). But today there is no work, and you need a paper for everything and a testimonial. Many women who live here work in Omeya (a Golf Estate 30 km south of Windhoek) or Windhoek, and so do the men and the boys. But the salaries are very low – about 3 000 dollars, of which about 1 400 is used for transport. I also worked like that for 28 years as a cleaner at a school in Windhoek. I got up at 4 a.m. and came home at 7 p.m. Many children running around here have left school, and there are so many shebeens and drug dealers coming in, and this is what draws children away from school. Life makes us depressed – there are suicides, and women start drinking. It's hopelessness because of unemployment.



Daniel Schmid

Maltahöhe, 77-year-old member of the Witbooi clan

The interview was conducted by Pastor Neels Simon and Erika von Wietersheim in English.

Apart from what we learned at school in the History lessons, I heard the whole story of German colonialism from my grandparents, and then after

that from my parents, who stayed in Gibeon. At school, we were only told shorter stories, and more about the apartheid system.

Usually, we heard how our people worked with German people on the farms, under very harsh conditions. On the other hand, you would also gain something out of these harsh conditions – you could learn, for example, to be strict about doing something, that you should finish and not leave it for tomorrow, because tomorrow comes with other responsibilities. But the conditions were harsh, very harsh, the conditions under which the people were working for such a small reward ... It's a pity they had to work for a pitiful salary – or can we even call it a salary?

They also told us about the war, and how the German soldiers waged war against the Nama people. They had to flee and stay in the mountains or the riverbeds. Those who did not want to flee just stayed there and got caught, that's what they told us. I did not hear much about the concentration camp in Lüderitz, but I read about it in a book.

What do you know about the Joint Declaration between Namibia and Germany?

I heard about the Joint Declaration, and I read about it in the newspapers. Some say this, and others say that. For me, it's not so problematic because the German government has acknowledged the genocide of our people, and now reparations can come. I know that some people would rather have direct conversation, with the German government speaking directly with the Namas and Hereros. And it would be a good thing to be involved directly. Therefore, one thing I want to ask is: Hasn't the German government got any influence on the Namibian government, to ask them to just be an outsider? Give it a try, stay out for a little while, just to make a start and see how these groups are acting and reacting. Can't they use their influence and try to do this?

But how can we go on? Where is the ball now? It's complicated. Some of our older people will soon be no more, and the youngsters will point to our graves and say: "Why are you in the grave and why did you not act a little faster?" Even if it is not perfect, even if it starts all over again, it must go on. Let the young ones press on. It must happen, we cannot leave it at that, because the German government has already accepted it. I am very thankful that you came.



Samuel Nero

Kalkrand, 64-year-old pensioner

The interview was conducted by Riaan !Uriṯkhob, Ivette Windstaan and Erika von Wietersheim in Nama/Afrikaans.

As to the money from Germany – people are so poor that some money must be given directly to us so that we can build a proper house, buy sheets, and make a floor. As I look, I have a home problem, an erf problem. We can buy materials, bricks, sand, cement, and corrugated iron plates, and with the other half of the money we must start a little business, and so on. And then, the money can also go to projects.

And even if we have a school, then there is still money that we must pay. After all, it was my people who died in the war, so, if money is given for this, I must get the money in my hands, to do what is important for me. If it goes to the Council, then it's again something different – it will be in the hands of those people. If the people themselves will get the money, from one place to the next, they must first make a list and get the names of the people, go from house to house, and also get the people together.

But who is a Nama or not a Nama?

How will we decide? The people right here will find out. The community, the people, they know. Look, you came to this house, and the people here are clearly Nama people. Then you go to another house, and then it's Ovambo people, and in this way, you are asked, are you an Ovambo or a Nama? And people will tell you and get the money. There will always be someone to know because they are living together. Somebody will know.



Salomon Gertze

Kalkrand, 67-year-old pensioner

The interview was conducted by Riaan !Uriǃkhob, Ivette Windstaan and Erika von Wietersheim in Nama/Afrikaans.

I also want to tell you something that the elders told us about the Germans, about the war between the Namas and the Germans. When it started in the Fish River at Kub (20 km east of Kalkrand) in 1904, the Germans lay on the other side of the river and the Nama men under Hendrik Witbooi were approaching. From where they were lying, the Nama started to shoot from a sort of hiding place, they came out to shoot at the Germans. That is what I was told by the elders.



Paulina Lambert

Kalkrand, 67-year-old pensioner

The interview was conducted by Riaan !Uriǃkhob, Ivette Windstaan and Erika von Wietersheim in Afrikaans.

I did not go to school, like many of us older people, but my *ouma* (grandmother) also told me about the war between the Nama and the *Duitsers* (Germans) and the fighting at Kub. The Nama moved away from there after they had been attacked by the Germans and they took their hats, these Nama hats, and they placed them in the trees and bushes. These old men were so clever because the Germans were shooting at the hats, while the Namas crept away. The Germans came on horses – they did not come in cars, that's what my *ouma* said, and they shot those hats from the trees! That's what the war was like. Then the Nama shot from the other side, while the Germans moved in the wrong direction. I do not know much about history, but my *ouma* told me this about Kub. There was really a big war, and many people were shot dead and there are many graves on that side. At that time, many people died, so my *ouma* always told me.

One Herero woman also told me that she does not like church because one day, people were told to go to church on a hill and pray, and while they were praying, they heard shots, and they were shot dead. It was very cruel.

My thoughts are now that money must come. Something must be done, like a Vocational Training Centre – these are my thoughts – needlework, or something like that. And there are many other things I am thinking about, like gardens and farming.

When it rains, I can't sleep under my roof that is dripping. When that money comes, I will be able to buy materials to build my house. I don't have work and I am really struggling, I have no income, that is the problem – I have no husband or man, and I am just alone with the kids – that is the problem. I want to go farming, so I just need a small piece of land where I can farm.



Jonas !Garoëb

Kalkrand, pensioner of about 70

The interview was conducted by Riaan !Uriḽkhob, Ivette Windstaan and Erika von Wietersheim in Nama/Afrikaans.

I heard about our history in school. There I heard about Hendrik Witbooi, that old Hendrik, who is on the money notes. But we did not go deep into the history. We had these history books; they gave them to us, but then they took them back.

The history – about half I learned in school and half I learned from the elders, from the *groot mense*. They talked about the Germans and the Namas, and about how there was war. The Boers only came later. I learned a bit here and there. Now we must do something that is alive, something *lewendig* (alive). A living thing is something that is moving, and you know it. Even if you get just two or three goats, your farming will go on. Dead work will not bring anything – you only move forward with a living thing. If you will be assisted with a living thing, then you know it will go on.



Appollus Eichab

Maltahöhe, 64-year-old officially recognised veteran

The interview was conducted by Pastor Neels Simon and Erika von Wietersheim in Afrikaans.

What did the Germans do and what do we know about it? We only grew up after all those things had happened. We were born in the 60s and those things were around 1904. At the time when we grew up, all this was already past, and that's why we cannot say so much about the things that happened very long ago. My deceased *oupa* talked about the time when he was a transport driver from Bethany and Grootfontein with the cattle herds and how he transported goods. But he did not tell me about the time of the war, so of that, I cannot talk a lot.

We also heard nothing in school – at that time the Black people were below and the others on top, we were just workers. Now that we have become cleverer, and we've heard about the heads that were removed from the dead Nama and sent to Germany, and about the skulls that were returned to Namibia – we heard and saw that on TV.

I am a member of the Lutheran Church, and about two years ago, people visited from Germany. They came to ask for reconciliation. They were here with us in the church, and they asked for forgiveness, and we truly forgave them for all things that their forefathers did, and they bowed. They also asked us questions, and we talked about it. This was good, and I appreciate it. Not all of us were there at that time – they were our ancestors, but the children of those German ancestors, they now came, they saw that there was pain. This was good and right because forgiveness is in the Bible. That is why we forgive each other, and they said they will go back to Germany and tell other people about all of this. But what is past, is past – and war has no rules.

As to the money that might come from Germany – you see, it will be good even if we only receive a little – but if you get nothing, what do you have then? I will be happy with anything little that will come. Otherwise, you just die with nothing. I don't know what I will get, but if I get something, I will be happy if I can at least buy some animals. From my side, I will be happy if these negotiations happen a bit faster – we have been waiting

already such a long time. We will be happy, if we, who heard about that thing, see that something happens before we die, that we can at least taste a little of it.



Fredrika Eichab

Maltahöhe, 59-year-old wife of Appollus Eichab

The interview was conducted by Pastor Neels Simon and Erika von Wietersheim in Afrikaans.

We were not there at that time, but our forefathers were there. And now we are the children of those forefathers, and we have heard how serious it was, this war. My parents told me how it was and how people were killed and what they lost, and they also lost their land so that today we *sukkel* (struggle) so much to get our land back,

we struggle.

Our forefathers had their land where they farmed, they had their own place. But then came the war, everything was muddled up and they lost everything, and today, we, the children who are living now, we have nothing. We *sukkel*, we have nothing. If we can do some farming ... because out of farming you can get something, you have animals, you sell them, then you have more, just the drought here in the south, that is a problem.



Alexandrine Higoam

Usakos, 83-year-old Damara woman, retired matron

The interview was coordinated by Pastor Mariechen !Uiras and conducted by Erika von Wietersheim in Afrikaans.

What I know from my mother is that they were born in Karibib, just like me, and my parents grew up there on a farm of the Hälbich family, just south of Karibib, named !Kubus. They worked for Germans. When they grew up, my grandfather was taken by the Germans – his name was Heinrich Taniseb. And when they had captured him, they said, “You are not right in your head, you are crazy.” Maybe my grandfather was a man who saw what was wrong

and wanted to make things right, but the Germans said, “*Du bist ganz verrückt*” (“You are completely crazy”), and that they would take him away to South Africa or Germany. We never saw our grandfather again – there is no grave here in Namibia. That is what I heard from my mother. We always said, “*Ag, as ons tog onse oupa gesien het,*” (“Oh, if only we had seen our *oupa*”) – all children have seen their *oupa*, but today we still don’t know where his grave is. When the skulls came back from Germany in 2018, it was said, these are just Nama and Herero skulls. And I thought, “What about our *oupa* whom they took away?” *Das ist bisschen furchtbar, nicht wahr?* (That’s awful, isn’t it?).

As to the reconciliation agreement, the Nama and Damara people cannot be separated. You see, if different birds are sitting somewhere close together, nobody can say, a rifle will only kill certain birds. So, it cannot be true that some tribal people were killed, and others were not touched – for me, this is impossible.

The money that will come must be concentrated on the young people, because the older people will soon be gone. It must be used to improve their work circumstances, create job opportunities and projects that keep young people busy, and also for self-help projects to bring bread to the table. For the young girls – they could learn how to sew clothes with sewing machines, and have institutions where girls could learn how to cook, and things like that. And for the boys, they can learn craftsmanship to become electricians, builders, and so on, to keep them busy. We need places where young people are loved and cared for. I worked as a matron in a hostel for many years, at Okambahe. A hostel is where you build your future, you learn for life. There I saw how we can educate children as our own children – we stayed with them for five years, from Grade 8 to 12, and you saw them growing up. We were there. There was love among us. I still dream about that time.



Emmanuel IOchurub

Usakos, 68-year-old Damara man, retired police officer

The interview was coordinated by Pastor Mariechen !Uiras and conducted by Erika von Wietersheim in Afrikaans.

I grew up near Okambahe. My parents come from the Khomas Hochland; they were removed under the Odendaal Commission to here. As to

colonial times, I heard about fights between the Namas, the Damaras, and the Germans. And I heard about a Damara man who lived in the veld. He had three dogs with which he hunted, and he was a danger to the German troops who at that time built a railway line. He killed many Germans. But then the Germans hired Namas, and when he came back from his mission he was ambushed and shot dead.

I also heard that some Hereros fled from Waterberg to the west because they thought there was a lot of water in the west. They thought sea water was drinkable, but it was salt water. So, they went back, and on the way their cattle died. I also heard that in Khomas there was a place where the Namas chased the Damaras into a cave, and when they came out, they hit them on the backs of their heads. This is what the Namas did to the Damaras.

I also heard from my mother that during the German war, the people fled and lived in caves, and while they were there, the German troops came. Her brother was also there, and they took him and went away. We never saw him again. We heard he was in Germany, but we don't know. There are also Nama people who were shot in the war by the Germans and thrown into a cave. I saw their bones myself; I know these things that people told me.

During the colonial war, I think the Germans sometimes mixed up the Damaras and the Hereros. There are graves in the Waterberg area that are Damara. But the Germans sometimes spoke of "Tamaras" instead of Damaras, but there are no "Tamaras" in the country. So, I assume that there are also Damara soldiers who were killed there.

If money will come, we must address the crime situation. Not because I'm a retired policeman, but what breaks this country down are criminal activities, and we don't give enough attention to that. If I am a headman and I don't know my own customary laws, what am I doing? My headmanship means nothing. Headmen have to work with their communities. Here are children in the location who are unknowingly involved in crime. There will be complaints, and then the police go out and arrest those who are guilty. If this child could have been warned beforehand by the headman, it could have been prevented. Here are farmers, with 20 sheep, and the whole kraal is stolen, and nobody pays attention, and this promotes poverty. So, let us look at the crime situation and try to improve the situation when there is money.



Michael Joseph IUirab

Usakos, 62-year-old Damara man and retired teacher

The interview was coordinated by Pastor Mariechen IUiras and conducted by Erika von Wietersheim in Afrikaans and English.

Most things I will relate about our past come from my grandparents from the Otjimbingue area. My uncle was born in 1919, so he was born shortly after the war of 1904–08, just before the Treaty of Versailles was signed in 1919, and his wife was born in 1917.

He was always saying, not everything the Germans did here was wrong. He could also speak German, so this is a clear sign that they interacted in one way or another, like with the schools and kindergartens in the later years. He had a very balanced view of the Germans, they built schools and hostels, were hard-working, got up early in the morning, made a place nice and beautiful – even a shack had to be nice and tidy.

He said that when they came, the Germans tried to win the trust of the people. At that time, most Namibians were Christian people, and they believed the missionaries when they arrived; they easily became attached to the gospel. But when the Germans started trading, everything absolutely went wrong because there was competition. My uncle told me that there were very powerful Damara guys. When the railway line was built by the Germans and they started with hard labour and the mistreatment of people, one of them, called IKhai-hab (Grey Horse), positioned himself there to attack the Germans – he ambushed the Germans, all on his own.

People are now differentiating between the Namas and the Damaras and the Hereros and saying that they were treated differently during colonial times. But my uncle said the Germans could not differentiate between them. When the Namas and Damaras were on one side and the Germans stood on the other side, the Germans would not say, let the Damaras stand on one side so that we can attack and shoot only the Namas. This is something which made my uncle very angry. How could the Germans tell the difference? Sometimes the Nama and Damara were close, sometimes they were not. So, how is it possible that the German people, not knowing much about the tribes at that stage, could tell the difference the moment they wanted to shoot them?

Also, where did the war take place? If you take that part of the land, you can ask, was it just specific tribes that lived there? The colonial borders divided the country and the tribes into Damaraland, Namaland, and so on, but you would never find exclusively Damaras, Hereros, or Namas there. And there were also intermarriages. Never in this country, today or in the past, will you find a situation where there were and are exclusively only Namas or Damaras. My uncle died at the age of 102 years, and he always said, the war that the Germans waged here was across the tribal lines.

Some Damaras have Nama in-laws, and then they feel uncomfortable speaking about the Nama war. One of my own in-laws is a Nama. Only if you are of one tribe sitting around the fire, you can talk and say, the Germans treated us in such and such a way. Intermarriages play a role in that we do not talk about this genocide issue in some households.

I know many things about our past because I was a child of those people who sat around the fire. Our whole life centred around the fire. Only recently TV arrived and robbed the children of the chance to get background information from their elders and ancestors. The fireplace was the place where now the TV is, where the cell phone is – everything was around the fire, and you developed your self-identity by hearing these stories. Today, our youngsters are completely out of touch – they don't know their history, they don't have time for that.

As to the negotiations between Namibia and Germany and the Joint Declaration, we have somehow been excluded from the recent talks. This is because some of our leaders did not stand up and advocate and articulate the involvement of the Damara people in the process. And when the headman is silent, there is nothing that the majority of people can do. We can't talk above his head and tell our story; all stories have to be told via him, otherwise you take power away from him and later there is a conflict. We have headmen and a *gaob* (king), Justus IGaroëb, just like the Namas.

As to the reconciliation funds that might be coming: Look, even the latest census underlined the fact that in Namibia, young people are in the majority. The government alone cannot provide enough jobs for all of them. So, funds must be invested in projects for young people. But which projects? Firstly, we don't have big enterprises that can absorb so many people. So, projects in the rural areas must be geared towards people doing something for themselves. After receiving training and a qualification, they must put their initiative into action. Vocational training must focus on enabling young people to feed and sustain themselves. Don't feed them fish but teach

them fishing. Let young people get into the institutions, free of charge, cater for their meals, transport, et cetera, get the skills, and empower them to establish their own business with the banks providing a loan, facilitated by the government and to be paid back later. Otherwise, so many young unemployed people are a danger to the country. If they continue to be frustrated, what could happen one day?



Rosina IlGaroës

Farm Krumhuk (near to Windhoek), 72-year-old pensioner

The interview was conducted by Erika von Wietersheim in Afrikaans.

From my elders, I heard that we lost the place where they lived. We heard from them that we no longer had our own place to live. I have worked on this farm all my life, and my father also worked here. I heard that he had a German grandfather. All our family has lived here, but it is not our place, although I can stay here until the end of my life. Also, our children grew up here but when they were adults, they had to leave this place. But God is good, and this year, one of my sons was allowed to stay and work here, thank you, Lord. Let us go forward and maybe, if he behaves well, he can also one day keep some chicken or goats. I am old. Farming is very important – to have some sheep and goats and to have a place to stay, especially when you are old, you need a place to live. It is the farm of all of us. I grew old on this farm, and they gave me a place and I will stay here until I die. Where else should I go? I don't have money and I am weak.



Martha Kock

Windhoek, elderly Nama woman

The interview was conducted by Riaan !Uriǃkhob in Nama/Damara.

My husband told me that where I was working, near the Naukluft, there was a flat place, and next to it a stone was erected, and it was near here that the Nama and the Germans were fighting. That place was called *areta*, meaning "that flat place". That's all that I was told. And my employer, where

I was working, said that ghosts would appear if I slept there at night. But I said, if I sleep there, there is nothing, but if **you** sleep there, there are these ghosts.



Justus Kapuka

Windhoek (Damara Location), 61-year-old Nama man from his mother's side, member of the Topnaar clan

The interview was conducted by Freddy Shimonene in English.

About the colonial times in Namibia, I know that when I was young, my mother told me the whole story of my fathers who were ill-treated by Germans at that time. The Nama and their conversation with Germany, this is very good. I was also learning about Germany. I heard about it on the radio and also from the school. But the Nama leaders should tell us more about it. I also heard about Hendrik Witbooi, the great Nama leader at that time. I want to know where Hendrik Witbooi is buried.

We must start working together. Namibia and Germany must stand together, and it is all about education. We must join together, that past is gone, we must help each other, we must do what is good, and we must not point fingers. We must start to talk and negotiate.



Lena Bokstaan

Maltahöhe, Nama woman, 62-year-old teacher

The interview was conducted by Pastor Neels Simon and Erika von Wietersheim in Afrikaans.

I am a teacher, but I only went to school, when I was already 11 years old. Before that, I was a cattle herder. From cattle herder to school teacher!

As to the money from Germany, the money comes *mos* through the government. And therefore, we will never, never in our life taste it. Maybe a little stick is given here, and another one will get some peanut butter so that he keeps quiet, but the

majority will not get anything. Just one or half a percent is what people will get!

The Nama and Ovaherero people in Namibia are very few, and therefore, if these people get money directly, then this would be good. I'll give you an example: A few years back, Germany gave us some millions of money, I don't know how much. And with this money goats were bought and had to be distributed. But the goats came with names – these are Maria's goats, these are Piet's, and these are Jan's. But others were excluded. Why? All families should have got some goats. Okay, there was a committee – but just the families of the committee got something. If it is now the government – kaput! If you are not well known, you will get nothing. It depends all on which family you are from.

I am not looking for riches, I am just looking for restfulness (*rustigheid*). My children must one day say, "Oh, my ancestors, we at least got something."

My sister, the people first look after their families and the politics. Our people, they don't understand the word "politics" – we politicise instead of understanding each other.

These negotiations must come to an end – people have already died, our ancestors have died, our parents have died, so do we also have to die before this comes to an end? We also want to at least taste the jam. And our grandchildren must at least say, "Ja, thank you, thank you!"



Paul Skrywer

Windhoek, elderly Damara man

The interview was conducted by Riaan !Uriꞑkhob in Nama/Damara.

From our history, I know that when the war started, the Germans came with their ships and landed at Walvis Bay. The first people they saw were the San and the Damara people, the people who were here first; there were no Ovambo and Herero people. And then the Germans were confronted by the son of a Damara chief. His name was IKhai-hab which means "Grey Horse". When he saw the Germans, he went back to his people and informed them: "White people are here now."

So, he prepared his soldiers, but they were weak because they only used bows and arrows, while the Germans had modern rifles and ammunition. But the Chief kept riding around in his area on his grey horse and with his bow. Many Damara men and women were captured by the Germans, and one day, some Damaras were taken by the Germans to a place surrounded by a wooden fence, and they locked them inside a house. Even the Chief was taken but he dug a hole underneath the house and escaped. And he again attacked the German soldiers and killed between 12 and 20 in one day with his two dogs.

He was always riding around and fighting the Germans because he knew where they were and where they had come from. The Germans were wondering about this Damara man who was so fast and clever, because the moment they arrived, the numbers of their soldiers were decreasing – for example, from five soldiers you would only see two the next morning. He was causing a headache for the Germans. And he kept informing all the Damara people that they should fight because there were White people, and they wanted our country.

When IKhai-hab and his people had to flee, he was always looking for higher ground. When they got to the mountains, they watched the enemy from above. And they used to roll down stones from high up to attack the Germans. That is where the name Gariseb comes from – “gari” means “roll something” and “seb” is for a male.

At that time the Nama people also came. These Nama only spoke Afrikaans, which is why their surnames are often Afrikaans, like Skrywer and Windstaan – those surnames came from the Boers. The Nama people also had rifles which they got by trading with sheep and goats. The Germans also gave the Namas tobacco, tea and sugar, and wanted to keep them calm in this way.

So, the Nama men were relaxed, and the Germans decided to use the Nama people to get Grey Horse, because he remained a problem. But Grey Horse was always here and there. He did not sleep at home but in the bush. He always lay down for one hour and then disappeared into the night. He was always on his horse, together with his two dogs and his bow and arrows. He trusted his dogs. They always informed him when there was danger, and so he was always restless and kept his distance. In this way, he kept fighting the Germans, often alone. He again asked his people to help him, but the Damara people were scared and did not really help him much.

But one day, he was caught and killed. That was in 1903. This happened because the Germans had hired Nama soldiers from the Nama chief Hendrik Witbooi to catch him. The Nama men wore dresses and arrived at his house. The dogs saw them and thought they were just Damara women. Grey Horse thought there was no danger, and he was caught and killed by the Nama men and handed over to the Germans. The Germans wondered what kind of man he was, he, who could kill more than 50 German soldiers on his own. They wanted to examine his head and took his skull to Germany. They wanted to find out about his knowledge and wisdom.

And from there, everyone just split up and separated – some went to Gobabis in the East, some to the south, some to Okahandja, and some to Otavi. There was no leader anymore. Many Damaras also died in the big war against the Germans.

3.2 Interviews with middle-aged people

Anne-Marie IssaBrown Garises

Keetmanshoop, member of the Aman/Bethany clan, curator of the Keetmanshoop Museum

The interview was conducted by Erika von Wietersheim in English.

As a child, what did you learn about the history of the Nama?

As children, we heard about this mythical person !Nanseb (Hendrik Witbooi), who is a kind of hero for the Nama people. But my mum would also recall how her aunt told her about the Aman, our traditional clan, that lost vast areas of the land to this guy called Lüderitz.²² My mum also told us about the passes they had to carry with them,²³ and she would say to us, “You guys, you just don’t realise the freedom you are enjoying today,” because she and all her siblings had to carry those passes, and every week, they had to renew them. This was during German and South African times.

During my studies in Ecotourism and Wildlife Management, I did not learn anything about the Nama culture, but during my internship at the Museums Association of Namibia in Windhoek, I learned about our different cultures and our Nama culture. And then I read a book by the Namibian historian Brigitte Lau (1955–1996), *Namibia in Jonker Afrikaner’s Time*, about the Nama chief Jonker Afrikaner – and it fascinated me because the Namas in this book were portrayed in such a different way – they had a lot of livestock and were a dominant tribe back then. And now it’s totally the opposite. So, it was the elders, my own studies, and my job that taught me more about Nama history.

The Joint Declaration between the governments of Namibia and Germany presented in 2021 in Namibia elicited many different reactions in Namibia. Some accept it as something positive, others totally reject it. What is your stand?

22 In 1883, the merchant Adolf Lüderitz from Bremen, Germany, acquired large pieces of land around Angra Pequena (Lüderitz Bay) from the Nama chief Joseph Fredericks through fraudulent means.

23 German colonial police officers had to execute the so-called “Native Regulations” of 1907 (Eingeborenen-Verordnungen), which regulated the carrying of official passes by Afrikaners.

I also don't support it, if I'm honest, because it seems more like an aid or grant programme by the German government, not reparation. I understand why the Namibian government would want it, but I don't see how it would directly benefit the affected communities – even if it claims it will benefit only certain regions where Nama and Ovaherero people are living. But in Namibia, we have different tribes living everywhere. Even in the South, you have the dominant culture of other tribes, and you have SWAPO governing bodies everywhere. So, I don't know how it will directly benefit the affected communities. I don't have that trust.

During my many interviews with people on the ground, those without much education and who are very, very poor, they have also heard about the Joint Declaration on the radio or social media, and those people say, "We don't mind about politics, we are poor, if we get a little money, for a wall in our house, for a cement floor where there is only sand, we want it." Also, the elderly people said, "I hope I won't die before I get anything out of it."

I don't think all Nama will have the same perspective on the Joint Declaration – some members of the community will agree with it and then others, like most of us, are opposed to it, at least I would like to think so.

What would you like to happen between Germany and Namibia?

I think the biggest issue is the acknowledgment in the Joint Declaration, which has nothing to do with reparations. It only acknowledges the "atrocities" committed during that time, the word used by the German government. But we are also talking about the displacement of people. Some of our people were taken to Togo and Cameroon, and others were chased into Botswana, and all that should be acknowledged. Also, the taking of our skulls to Germany and the fact that some of our people did not get dignified burials. So, it's not about saying, "Yes, okay, here we jointly declare that atrocities took place" – even if you issue an apology to someone, you have to be specific about the things you are apologising for, because that would make it more sincere.

We are still today feeling the effects of what happened in the past, and our own government is kind of discriminating against us through its policies, projects, and employment processes. The population size of we Nama people was drastically reduced at that time. We were supposed to be exterminated; that didn't happen, but our numbers today are so small that we cannot effectively partake in the economy and the democracy of

our country. We are also divorced from our own language, our culture, our stories – all that is lost, and so, we feel that the extermination order is still in place. We first want acknowledgment of all that, and then the rest will follow.

At the moment, a kind of Nama Renaissance is taking place. The chiefs are trying to enact certain practices and rites of passage during cultural festivals to inform the younger generation about the customs of the Nama people and to demonstrate to Namibia: The Nama are people with their own culture, which is very different from the culture of the Damara people, as everyone would have it. We have our own distinct culture and language; we have our own stories. Many people claim that our language is Khoekhoegowab, but this is rather a dialect of the Damara people.

If the Joint Declaration gets through via the Namibian government, what would be the most important areas in which to use this money?

I would say – land. Not necessarily only for farming. There is a lot one can do with land, for example, for cultural tourism or to build a cultural village. I would do that! And if somehow the Namibia Tourism Board can market it for me, in that way I could not only teach my fellow Namibians about our culture, but also foreigners. So, for me, I would like to have a piece of land to establish a cultural village. Another pressing need for the Nama people is training and education. We are somehow excluded from even tertiary and vocational education – we are not represented there, so there could be a targeted effort to train Nama people, for example in trades like shoemaking or producing something.

As to the Green Hydrogen plans of the government, they look good on paper, but I don't see how they are going to benefit the Nama community. For example, the scholarships that have come with it – again, other regions have benefitted from them. Ethnocentric politics is involved here as well, because a certain tribe is in the majority in the governing bodies, so obviously they want their people to benefit from these new projects. They have the power because of their numbers.

As to the question of whether the German government can reconcile with the Namibian government – or the German people with the Nama people: I think, as Nama people, we have always been hospitable, we have been embracing towards the German people. I think now the German people, or the German government, should first reconcile with their own people with their own history, and then come out and say, "Those were dark times,

and this is how our government acted during that time.” Germany did it beautifully with the Jewish people – they have museums and education, for example, to say, “Okay, this is what happened during that time, but now as humanity, how can we reconcile?” It’s too much of a burden to place the responsibility for the reconciliation process on the victims, while the perpetrators do not even want to admit that anything wrong was done.

Some of the descendants of the former colonialists are living in Africa, and today, we have a lot of German-speaking Namibians walking around with the burden of knowing their forefathers committed these atrocities against their fellow Namibians. So, if Germany were to agree to reparations and admit to the atrocities – wouldn’t that also be taking the burden away from their descendants?

The sentiments are that, because we are Black and because we are natives, our suffering does not really amount to the suffering of the Palestinians and the Jewish people. But atrocities were also committed against us, and we are also human beings, we also have feelings. But in society we have hierarchies, and we are at the bottom. Yes, this is how it’s being structured.

I noticed that in the central park in Keetmanshoop, there is a colonial monument for the soldiers of the Schutztruppe during the colonial time in Namibia. Why is it still there?

You see, our politicians don’t want to take everything away that’s colonial. You might have noticed that in and around our central park, there is this sort of contrast – the plaque for the German *Schutztruppe* soldiers, then, not far from it, the monument of Hendrik Tseib (the founder of #Nu#Goaes /Keetmanshoop), and on the other side of the street, the monument of a man with a karakul sheep. This triangle shows the actual history of Keetmanshoop – the colonial aspect, the aspect of the indigenous people and the karakul sheep representing agriculture.

But is the colonial monument not hurtful for the Namas?

Yes, it is – but maybe our politicians want to remind us that we were colonised. Also, we have a lot of German descendants in Namibia, and it is part of their history. I think, most Germans also take pride in what their forefathers did, and it is important for their history – they also had losses, they say. But most of German history in our country is characterised by an imperialist, imposing presence, so if we were to take away colonial monuments, it just seems to me that would be like wiping away most of German history.

Monuments in Keetmanshoop



Monument of Hendrik Tseib, founder of Keetmanshoop



Monument for German soldiers during colonial wars



Farmer with a karakul ram



Charles Eiseb

Windhoek, from the Vaalgras Oorlam community in the IlKaras region, a group that descends from the Ovaherero, Nama and other groups; his great-great-grandfather was a German; he is a lecturer and Head of Department in the Social Sciences Department, Faculty of Human Sciences, Commerce and Education of the Namibia University of Science and Technology, and also a team leader of the Technical Committee at the negotiation table between Namibia and Germany, representing traditional communities.

The interview was conducted by Erika von Wietersheim in English.

About our history: I attended a private school, but “private” not in today’s sense. It was a “school of resistance” in Gibeon which taught history from a different point of view than that in the South African syllabus. At that time the colonial war was not called genocide, but I learned about the resistance by Hendrik Witbooi and Jakob Marengo, and others. From that time, I already had embedded knowledge about our past. Subsequently, with the liberation struggle advancing, I was in the student movement, I was an activist and founding member of NANSO (the Namibia National Students Organisation, founded in 1984). Eventually, I heard about the genocide, when in the early 90s, the late Kaima Riruako (Paramount Chief of the Ovaherero people until 2014) was talking about it, and I could put into context what I had heard about the history and what he was talking about. That was 25 or more years ago.

What is the biggest pain of the Nama people today with respect to the past?

Let me start with a personal story. Vaalgras, where I come from, borders with some commercial farms. My father had a cattle post which he used during a drought near this border. When I herded the cattle near this border, I could see the luxury on the other side high up on a hill. As a young boy of about 17, I didn’t understand things, I just thought, that’s for Whites, that’s supreme, and you wouldn’t dare to come closer to the fence because you would fear being brutalized or even killed as you were seen as a thief. At that time, I did not know there was something historical to my existence, that our land had been expropriated.

A few years back, after independence, the farm was ultimately bought by a cousin of ours, and one day, my father and I went there, and my father said, "Let me show you something." He took me to a well and said, "This well was dug by your grandfather." This moved me so much – as I had seen this well as something foreign for so many years!

Historically, the Nama were violently dispossessed of large tracts of land, and that is painful. Because, and I quote one of our former ministers, "Instant dispossession of land pushes you into immediate poverty." This is what happened, and it's generational – we still carry it over to our kids. The poverty is predominantly due to the dispossession of land and property. That is the painful part of our history.

The negotiations around the Joint Declaration mention land and the acquisition of land as one of many points – will that help to really give enough land back to Nama and Ovaherero people, or will it just be a continuation of the current land reform programme?

Now how did we go about this question? During negotiations, the question of the quantum came up, and what to do with the money. And then we said, "We derive our mandate from the people, from the communities – it is a democratic process, so let's go back to the communities." And the first thing mentioned in each meeting was land and land acquisition.

However, it is no use just to buy land for the sake of buying land. We want the local leaders to identify the needs of their community and the productivity of the land so that we maintain the production level of a given farm that is acquired. Because most resettlement farms that people have acquired until now through the land reform programme have brought down the level of production, and we don't want to see that. There must be proper research done and training for the people to be ready.

The second component of land is the development of communal areas. There are large parts of the communal areas that are not optimally utilised because of the lack of water and electricity – sometimes there is grazing, but people are not living there. You have the land, but you don't have the means to make it productive. So, in some areas, we need to get water and electricity.

I talked to people in the South and met people who were very critical of the Joint Declaration. Also, Chief Johannes Isaack of the !Hai-!Khaua Traditional Authority said that he doesn't accept the apology in the Joint Declaration

as an apology at all, because it is an apology "from today's perspective". What would you reply to that?

Let me start with the recent statement of the German president, when he was here in Namibia for the funeral of our late president, and when he said he is prepared to come back soon to tender an apology. This is based on what we have negotiated in the Joint Declaration where Germany explicitly expresses an apology, bows before the descendants of the victims, and asks for forgiveness for the sins of their forefathers. That is for me very sincere. I have been with the German counterparts for about eight years now and for me, there is great sincerity from the side of the Germans.

About the phrase "from today's perspective": The motion (in the Parliament in 2006) talks about a Namibia-Germany dialogue. For me, this dialogue is based on moral, political, and historical settings, and we negotiated by those standards and values; we were not guided by legal values. Go to the script of Parliament, it talks about dialogue, and dialogue is negotiation. The law does not make provision for the retrospective application of anything. For me, the statement that "from today's perspective" is wrong is not consistent with this. For me, this is not a general legal document – it is based on moral, political, and historical principles.

Also, people have said, let's start all over. All over what? Where do we start? We have been walking with this process for more than eight years. Even though the motion was tabled in 2006, negotiations only started in 2015, so to start this process all over will set us back more than ten years at least. We succeeded in getting the acknowledgement, the apology, and N\$18–N\$22 billion (1.1 billion Euros) in reparations. What do you think of us as human beings having to start all over again? Twenty-eight traditional authorities and groups are behind this. We are not part and parcel of the government, we are separate, but we are jointly doing things.

The leaders who are claiming that they were not included were invited by the late Dr Nicky Iyambo, because the responsibility was delegated to the vice-president's office to liaise with the communities, the traditional authorities, et cetera. They were invited, I know that, as I myself was sitting at these meetings, but instead, they chose to go to the courts in the USA. And when they failed there, they came back and wanted to hijack what we had achieved. It may be small from some perspectives, but we have achieved a lot that could transform the livelihood of our people.

It could, for example, improve education. When you are educated, you are competitive. We could also provide psychological treatment because we have gone through so many generations of oppression and suppression, starting from the time of Jan van Riebeeck in the Cape, where people were dispossessed of their land, then the Germans who came here, and finally 70 years of apartheid. There is generationally passed-on trauma.

Another argument is mistrust in the government. They say, it looks fine, but the money will never reach us, it will stay with government officials, and they are adamant that they will not see a cent of it.

This money will be managed by the people themselves. We are busy completing a framework that will establish an independent and separate implementation entity. No money will go into government coffers. For regulatory purposes, it will first go to the Bank of Namibia for clearing, and then it will go to a commercial bank of the choice of the implementing entity. The projects will be implemented in seven regions where Ovahereros and Namas predominantly live today, with the aim of transforming the livelihoods of the rural poor.

The approach that we are developing is a bottom-up one. The communities will sit down and identify their needs, like water, bursaries, desalination of water, land, et cetera, because every community has different needs. They will sit down at the regional level and in their constituencies or with their traditional authorities, identify their needs, and communicate them to the central level and say, "These are the needs that we want to have addressed in the first, second, third years," and so on. Then the central body will dispense the money accordingly. The same will happen in all seven regions.

So that is the concept that we have. There will be a board of directors or trustees, obviously one representative from the Namibian government and one from the Federal Republic of Germany, and then seven representatives of the seven regions. We purposefully agreed to this so that the representatives of the seven regions will always be in the majority as strategy decision-makers.

This Joint Declaration has divided especially the Nama and Ovaherero people, which is very sad. So, what can you say to the Nama and Ovaherero people who so vehemently oppose this opportunity to address the past?

If I can use a practical example: When I joined the negotiations, my kids were still underage; today they are grown up, and I have a first grandson. What I want to say is this: We are in dispute and a new generation of my blood is here. Did we achieve something? We create hostility and unnecessary fights, saying the money will go to government coffers. People are basing their decisions and opinions on misinformation; they are banking on what others, also outsiders, are saying, and they are saying these things to denigrate the importance and essence of what we have achieved.

The Vice President travelled to the south and engaged the Nama Traditional Leaders Association for a full day, inviting them on just one agenda, the genocide. And then last year we saw them going to the High Court in Namibia. But what more can you do? The second-highest political leader (then Vice-President Mbumba) comes to you, and all efforts are made to have our brothers and sisters on board. But the door is still open, it will never be too late. When this document (the Joint Declaration) came to light, so many criticisms and complaints came out, so the Executive said, "Let us discuss and make corrections," and we corrected it through an Addendum. The two documents (the Joint Declaration and the Addendum) will be joined together with a prelude that will cross-reference the two documents.

In 2021, it was like a done deal, but we are now busy with this Addendum because the critique came concerning the payment period of 30 years, the affected communities in the diaspora, et cetera. So, we are rectifying that with an Addendum.



Franciska Talita Bangarah

Gibeon and Okahandja, 59-year-old member of the IKhowsese/Witbooi Nation, oral historian and activist

This interview was submitted in writing in English.

From the colonial past, I know that the Nama were the first people to be targeted by the Germans to get hold of their land and livestock. The Namas were driven off their land, raped, and abused, and their livestock were confiscated. This led to the war of resistance, followed by General von Trotha's extermination order. What stands out is that the Germans intentionally committed the first genocide of the 20th century against innocent inhabitants on their own

land. This was the first mass murder of our people, and it was followed by the placing of our people in concentration camps. The Germans learned much about how human beings reacted to the horrors of being in concentration camps and were able to perfect it here with our people; this led to people being gassed in concentration camps in Germany during World War II. My great-grandmother and grandmother informed us about that around the fireplace. My elders and extended family members also educated us on what happened. My grandmother's birth is the result of that war.

In which way do the Nama people still experience the results of German colonialism in their lives?

Based upon the obvious, the modern state has altered our natural progression, and it has placed us at an acute disadvantage through the exploitation and oppression of our people. We have lost our land via theft and genocide, including the loss of our livestock to the Germans. The position that we are in is a direct result of Germany's genocide programme, which was intentional, thus leaving us as a minority tribe in Namibia. It was orchestrated and supported by the Germans' order, delivered via von Trotha, a German military commander who had earned a fierce reputation, to wipe us out and place bounties on the heads of the Namas, San, Damaras and Hereros. We are impoverished because of the German invasion programme and genocide planned at the Berlin Conference.

Namibia and Germany have entered a reconciliation process in 2015. What do you know about it?

The governments of Namibia and Germany came to their own conclusion without us, the affected communities in Namibia, who are the direct victims of the German genocide, with many of us forced to live in the diaspora. This is by no means reparation when considering what the Namibian Government has been doing to the indigenous people in accordance with a foreign system that has been learned and adapted. According to Antonio Gramsci,²⁴ such a system is based upon lies, theft, and deceit. The system is Eurocentric, and it's hardly the best means to address the crime of genocide insofar as equity is concerned.

²⁴ Antonio Gramsci is known for his theory of cultural hegemony, which describes how the state and ruling capitalist class use cultural institutions to maintain wealth and power in capitalist societies.

I heard about this reconciliation process from the newspapers and the recognised traditional leaders. But there are lackeys/puppets of the highest order who are in bed with the puppeteers who have bought them off. Their behaviour certainly does not represent the will of the people, and so there is a rejection of the puppeteer's offer of 1.1 billion Euros over 30 years.

Our representatives are our traditional leaders. All traditional leaders are elected by their communities; therefore, irrespective of whether they are recognised by the government or not, they should be part of the process. Our stolen land should be returned to us as the rightful owners, especially from those who are still occupying it. There is nothing that you can do without land. Full reparation should take place where we, the victims, set the standard, as was the case with the Jews.

For us, it's not about money, as many are thinking. It's about acknowledgement of what was done to us, which needs to take the form of reparations. Germany and the settler communities should come together to apologise specifically to the affected communities. There was a written, official extermination order to wipe out the Hereros and Namas, and this in itself is sufficient to satisfy all standards of guilt. Of course, other Namibians should also be compensated, particularly for colonialism that has altered their lives and natural progression. The administrators of the funds should be nominated in collaboration with our traditional leaders and the German government's consultants for the sake of transparency.

As to reconciliation between Germany and Namibia: the Germans in Germany, from my experience and knowledge, are certainly different from those here in Namibia. On the whole, they show much sympathy concerning the wrongs committed against the indigenous people of Namibia and tend to be more remorseful and interested in addressing reparations related to the Namas and Hereros. The Namibian Germans, on the other hand, remain steadfastly arrogant and cold when it comes to the crimes of the past and the genocide of which they are predominantly the beneficiaries, alongside the Afrikaans community; they are the weakest link in addressing the historical wrongs of which they alone selfishly are enjoying the benefits. Sadly, they remain very much stuck, and are romantically still living in the apartheid state mindset. The Germans in Germany need to start reaching out more to our local German community by re-educating them so that they can start to build meaningful bridges with the indigenous communities on moral high ground.



Pastor Neels Simon

Maltahöhe, 57, Pastor in the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, member of the Witbooi clan

The interview was conducted by Erika von Wietersheim in English.

We heard about our colonial past from our elders and church leaders, and as a young person, I picked up information here and there. Later, when I became one of the leaders in the church, I got more involved, I was in the AME church right from the beginning.

Hendrik Witbooi, the one on the money note, was the one who started the war against the Germans. That's why the honour was bestowed on him to be on that note because he was the man who was physically fighting the colonial people.

There are two periods: the German colonial period and the South African period of apartheid, during which we lost our rights as humans and as people were ill-treated and lost our property, our dignity, our wealth. We were deprived of opportunities that we should have been entitled to enjoy as people of this country. All this pains me as a person – I could have been a better educated man today. I could have had land; I could have enjoyed the wealth of the country. How the people were killed and mistreated affected the colonial past and still affects my life today.

Our late President Geingob recently said South African apartheid was much worse than German colonialism – and many people got upset about it, especially the Nama and Ovaherero.

What President Geingob might have referred to was perhaps that during the South African time, Namibians were forced to leave their country because of the situation – that was worse because you were separated from your families, from your children, you were chased out of your own country by the situation – to fight or to get a better education. This was all caused by the South African regime. Maybe Hage Geingob referred to that. Also, the timeframe of the South African occupation was much longer than the German colonial period.²⁵

25 German colonial period in Namibia: 1884–1915; South African occupation of Namibia. 1915–1990.

I know about the Joint Declaration of Namibia and Germany through the radio and TV media, and I could also pick it up through the statements of traditional leaders. I read their press statements, and I was also at general meetings, for example in Gibeon, where the Nama people were called together so that they could be informed about developments.

I do not really feel well informed – you could just read between the lines if you had enough education to follow it – what does this mean, or that? But for the grassroots people, it was a little difficult to follow, so the information shared with the people was not good enough, also not about the amount of money involved, they were not involved in the process.

Why are some people for and some people against these negotiations?

It's just politics whether people are for or against it. Some see the benefit and others don't. Someone might agree but don't have a broader view. Usually, if something takes place like the Joint Declaration, politics is spearheading everything rather than coming down to the persons whose ancestors have experienced that pain in their lives. I did not experience the genocide myself; I only experience it due to the backlog in my life. It's because of colonisation or because of apartheid that we have this backlog as Namas.

But to me, if they can just negotiate instead of just rejecting it. Let us accept this because our ancestors died, and others died without any privileges. Today we are privileged because we are now independent. And now a Declaration has come, a possible solution has come – so negotiate instead of rejecting it. We have to grab that opportunity to reach something positive for the people on the ground. It is not about me, who perhaps had better opportunities, but for the people totally on the ground.

Let us leave the politics out of this thing, let us go for the Joint Declaration, for reconciliation, for reparation, so that, how little it might be, the people can at least taste the fruit of what our ancestors stood for. Go for a further negotiation with Germany and tell her, okay, although we can accept this, let's go to a continuum thing from time to time to bring in more projects from which the people can benefit. You can build hospitals and schools, let us open up this for the Ovaherero and Nama kids because their parents don't have the means to send them to universities, to send them to colleges, so if we can go that route, leave out the politics, let political party politics not be part of the negotiation and the declaration. With these 20 billion Namibia Dollars we can do something for the Namibian people

whose ancestors suffered mostly in the colonial setup, more than during apartheid.

We should look at developing something for the future – schools and hospitals in these regions will benefit my grandchildren. Cash must not just be paid out just like that – then we would not have created anything with that money. We must not only think of today but also of the future because we are not living only for ourselves, we are also living for our children and grandchildren, so that they can also benefit. As to the administration of the money – the Ovaherero and Nama must be part of it, they must be in an administrating position. But we cannot exclude the government, because, through governmentsupportandassistance, we have come to this declaration and reconciliation payment of 22 billion Namibia Dollars. Germany is a government and Namibia is a government. The important thing is that the livelihood of the people will be changed. Leave out politics and focus on development.



Simon Anton

Maltahöhe, history teacher

The interview was conducted by Pastor Neels Simon and Erika von Wietersheim in English.

As a history teacher, what have you taught your students about the German colonial history in Namibia?

In general, when we teach the colonial history of Namibia and the national wars of resistance, we first cover the Nama and Herero wars against the German people and the areas where they took place, the impact they had on the Nama and Herero people, and how the numbers of the Herero and Nama people were substantially reduced. And then we also talk about how the people were removed from their different areas because the Germans were afraid that the groups would cooperate and help each other, so it was more or less a system of divide and rule. When focusing on the Nama and the Germans, we spoke especially about Hendrik Witbooi, the battle of Hornkranz, and also the battle of Waterberg involving the Hereros and how they fled into the Omaheke desert and then into Botswana. That is what we are concentrating on concerning German colonisation in Grade 8 and 9. In Grade 11 we concentrate on the South African apartheid regime.

How did your Nama students react to learning about the colonial history in their country?

Because we are living in Maltahöhe, they already know some of these facts. But the reaction that we also get from the kids is: "Wow! Is it really true that these things happened like that?" And they ask more questions. As we continue with the stories, some kids talk with their parents and grandparents – and then they come back and tell us that, for example, somewhere in their family line there is German blood. They come back with these things, so it has an impact on them. They are taking it seriously and they reflect on it. They also say, okay, we have to accept what happened and then move forward. We cannot change the past; we cannot do anything about it. But they like to listen to it.

I can also see that, when writing a test about that part of history, the kids score much higher than in other parts of the syllabus, and they also like to read more on that part – and they remember well, also because of the stories they are hearing from their grannies and other people. They do indeed get better marks if I compare it with the tests about the apartheid regime. For example, if you talk about the battle in the Naukluft, some kids come from farms in that area. Also, when you talk about the events involving the Namas that took place around the Maltahöhe area, some come from these areas, so they more easily identify with that history than with other parts of the syllabus.

Did you also inform them about the Joint Declaration?

Yes, we talked about it, it was in 2021, and I like to initiate discussions. It turned out that most of them said, "Money! Money will only cause problems, so why not rather build facilities for the coming generation to make sure there is something that is standing there for everybody, because money just comes and goes."

I was also at one of the meetings with the people who informed the communities about it and the possible things that could be done for Namibia. It was the Technical Committee of the government, they were here, and they moved around to find out what the people wanted. So, I talked about it with the learners, how we can get something out of it, and they said again that they would like to see more institutions in the south that would help them to have a better future.



Deon Kooper

47-year-old Nama man from Mariental, working at Desert Green farming project (near Windhoek)

The interview was conducted by Erika von Wietersheim in Afrikaans.

I don't belong to a specific Nama group – there are many groups, but my father did not tell me where we belong, and it's not so important to me. I am originally from Mariental, from the Koopers, the Skrywers, and others. Originally, we are all from Haribes – I grew up on Farm Haribes and also went to school there, to a farm school, up to Grade 4. As children we had a good time there, there was the Schumann family, and they raised us very well – as children we had a good time.

What do I know about the history? I learned about it at school in Gibeon, History was a compulsory subject, and we had a lesson almost every day. It was the time when Namibia was still under South Africa, and in school, we only learned about South African history and a bit about colonial times. But there was one good teacher, he gave us a lesson on Namibian history every day, and history was my best subject. I passed Grade 11 in 1996. Later I followed history on the radio and in the news.

I know about the NTLA, the Nama Traditional Leaders' Association. Yes, they are a group of *gaob* (leaders) – I didn't know they are involved in what is going on now, but I will now follow them.

I know of the negotiations between Namibia and Germany about the genocide. We love to listen to the radio. We are following it. The government has to decide what to do with the Namas. I have not heard much more about it in recent times, but the government will decide, and we don't know how the money will be spent. Many Namas died during the genocide, and so we struggle. And therefore, the Namas must be helped with money. But as I understand it, it is the government that decides, it wants to be involved. The Namas and Hereros are under the government, but it is the Nama and Herero people who died in the war.

We now have independence – and there is still no work, we have no place to farm, we *sukkel* (struggle). Many Namas need help with the money, but it is the government that is involved in that story.

The most important thing for us is, what will the money given by Germany be spent on? The most important thing is education for our children, and support for the elderly, and we need land to farm, keep animals, and make gardens. I wish the Namas would be given land so that we can farm with animals or make a garden, it would be good if the government would buy land so that we can make a life for ourselves – we suffer a lot in the south.

Furthermore, it would be good to provide employment for the Namas, to build schools, or to develop the vocational training centre in Gibeon. Our situation is like this: if Ovambo people who work in the town get old, they can go back to the north and live on the land of their families. The Namas who live and work in town cannot do that – they cannot go back to the land like the Ovambos because we don't have land, we cannot return to the land after we have worked and are old.



Fritz Dirkse

Keetmanshoop, 50-year-old Nama language teacher and promoter of the Nama language

The interview was coordinated by Issa Garises and conducted by Erika von Wietersheim in English.

When we were children, in those primary school days, my grandmother, Willemina Dirkse from the Bondelswart community, used to tell us stories about the war. She was a genocide survivor herself. But for us kids, they were just like any other story – we didn't know it was reality. For us, it was just as if she was spicing up the story to put herself in it.

My father also told us stories, for example, how one day, the German soldiers were faster than the Nama people on the run because it was a group of elderly women, pregnant women, and children. The German soldiers could move faster and reach the water points first. They waited in the mountains and as they approached, they started to shoot. Then two brave young men were called by their leaders and instructed to keep on shooting back, because it was a mountainous area, and the gunshots were echoing, and you could not determine exactly from which direction the shots came. These were the stories. But only with these current talks about the genocide have we realised that these stories were real.

When was the time that you linked them to reality?

When I was in high school in Grade 9, at J.A. Nel in Keetmanshoop, the history book had a part on Nama history. And there was the story of Hendrik Witbooi, before the story of Sam Nujoma, and I was so intrigued by it, I even cut out the picture of Hendrik Witbooi from the schoolbook, I made a frame and I put this picture in the frame. I was beaten for it! And then, when I visited my aunt's house, I also saw a pencil sketch of Hendrik Witbooi in a frame.

I also went once to Hoachanas, and there was a commemoration of the death of Hendrik Witbooi, who fell in action in 1905. Hendrik Witbooi had written a letter stating that the Nama should rise against the Germans, and Chief Manase !Noreseb of the Red Nation sent one messenger to Rehoboth on horseback – they had to borrow the horse from a nearby farmer – and in the letter, they declared war against Germany ... and then the councillor was sent to the missionaries and told them, as was the Nama custom, "Two bulls cannot fight." He told them to collect all the White farmers in his territories, and the messenger returned, and after drinking, the horse died.²⁶ In 1995, I went to the Gibeon festival and that was even more dynamic, the war, the horses running, everything was so alive, it literally gave me goosebumps.

What about the negotiations between Namibia and Germany? It is a new step, and something is happening, but people are not happy. What would be a good conclusion for you?

This is a question that has a long answer. First of all, the question is, why were both the German and the Namibian governments quiet on the topic for all these years after independence? There was silence.

.....

Unfortunately, the recording of the interview with Fritz Dirkse was partially damaged. Therefore, a 2021 report in The Namibian newspaper dealing with reactions to the Joint Declaration is quoted here:²⁷

Community member Fritz Dirkse denounced the claimed achievements of the government, noting that the published

26 See Annex 6 ("Stories from Hoachanas").

27 The Namibian. 2021, October 18. *People will die without benefiting.*

document of the genocide deal does not mention the word genocide, but 'acts of atrocities committed'. It also does not mention reparations but 'development aid'.

Dirkse said therefore communities cannot accept this deal. He also maintained that not all traditional authorities were included, such as the !Aman Traditional Authority of Bethanie.

Besides noting that N\$18 billion is too low an amount, he took issue with the fact that the money paid by Germany will go towards development projects and not directly to the descendants of the affected communities.

" ... Why is there no direct benefit for the descendants of the genocide? Roads and housing are already the responsibility of the government," said Dirkse.

Fritz Dirkse also talked about his engagement in the teaching of and research into the Nama language. He explained that the Nama language is spoken on both sides of the Orange River, albeit more widely in Namibia. He also helped with South African teaching materials in Nama. For him, Nama is not the same as Khoekhoegowab, which is a sort of artificial language construct. He also said that, although similar, Nama and Damara are different languages and are associated with different cultures.

The following short interviews were conducted in Afrikaans on the streets of Keetmanshoop.



Beties Plaaitjie, 45

I have no permanent work, so sometimes I have some money, and sometimes there is nothing. Some of my family live on a resettlement farm near Keetmanshoop, but there is also no work there for us young men. We don't mind from where money is coming; all we want is proper work with money at the end of the month. Our life is a struggle, every day.



Stefanus Adams, 38

I did not go to school, and life is very hard, we look for work, but the work is too little. We go to bed hungry. In old times, life was better, so we hear, because people had land. Then the land was taken away. Maybe they can give us some of the land back so that we have our own place to stay. But we also need some sheep or goats or chickens. If there is money, let the government give us something of that money. Even if we only have money for one week, it is better than nothing.



Henry Hendriks, 37

I have no work, every day is a struggle. Some people live on farms, but for us, there is no place – what must we do? Why did I go to school up to Grade 9? For nothing.



Chris Skyer, 41 (left)

All I want is some small work, I don't mind what the bosses up there are talking about.

Elrico Cloete, 35 (right)

I have no work. If you don't have work and go to bed hungry, what can you say? Give us work, we don't mind where the money comes from. If you don't have work and go to bed hungry, what can you say?



Margret Garises

Kalkrand, 57-year-old woman, unemployed

The interview was conducted by Riaan !Uriþkhob, Ivette Windstaan and Erika von Wietersheim in Afrikaans.

I don't know the big history, but there was a *groot ou tannie* (important old aunt) who told us that one day, while the children and people were still in the classrooms and the clinic, the Germans began shooting, early in the morning, and the people ran away and crept away in the *kranse* (cliffs/mountains). We often heard this story. And we also heard about the concentration camps.

Many of us are jobless, especially many young people, and also the women suffer. If we could get some money from these negotiations to do some projects, to do something ... I suggest half cash and the other half put into projects. It all sounds good because in Kalkrand we sit with nothing after 34 years of independence. Zero by zero.

But I do not believe in this money which will come. The man who sits on top, he always eats the most. If the money goes to the council or people up there, we will see nothing of it! We here in Kalkrand, we are looking for land, we do not seek food, not maize meal or anything, we are looking for land so that we can start farming with our own things. We do not seek townland, we seek farmland. As to food, it may come, but it will only come by half. This big money that might come to Kalkrand, it will go to one man's house, and it is finished. Because the maize meal goes into one house and not to another house.



Elsie Windstaan

Kalkrand, 40 years old

The interview was conducted by Riaan !Uriþkhob, Ivette Windstaan and Erika von Wietersheim in Afrikaans.

I was born in Omamas (part of Rehoboth constituency). My *ouma* and *oupa* were Nama, the *ouma* from Hoachanas, and the *oupa* from Maltahöhe, but Omamas was more Afrikaans. In

school, we only spoke Afrikaans. My *ouma* and mum did not speak about the Nama history. I have now only been in Kalkrand for three years, so I don't really know about the history of the Namas.

We, who are living in corrugated iron shacks, without floors, we will be happy if we can get something to build a house and buy some furniture. And some money for our children who are in school, because we are still paying for school, we must buy books and the school fees must be paid.



Clara Baitsewe

Groot-Aub, 60 km south of Windhoek, a Setswana woman; her father was a great-grandson of Kurt Streitwolf, an officer in the German Schutztruppe in German Southwest Africa. She grew up in South Africa with her grandfather, Adolf Streitwolf. She moved permanently to Groot-Aub and is the manager of Clara's Happy Family Home, a children's home for 30 children.

The interview was conducted by Erika von Wietersheim in English.

You live here in Groot Aub among Nama people – what do you know about their history?

I don't know anything. I'm a born Namibian, but I grew up in South Africa with my granddad, Adolf Streitwolf. I know more about the South African culture. In the beginning, it was strange to stay among the Nama people. They are proud Namas, and they stay within their groups and there is resistance to foreign people. This land belongs to their families, they say, they were the first people who came to Groot-Aub, they were born here, and it used to be only Nama people who were staying in this area.

Today, there are probably more Ovambos than Nama people here. They have farms here and do business and many have houses. Many rich guys from Windhoek have very luxurious houses here. But the poor people here are so many, here is poverty at its lowest.

What do you know about the Namibian-German reconciliation agreement because of the genocide?

I heard about it, and a friend of mine talked about it, but I don't want to talk about it because I have a German background. My granddad was maybe part of that genocide, but I am not, and how can I be kept accountable for what my forefather did? People feel, when they talk about the Germans, I will turn away because of my bloodline. My friend always wants to talk about it and how we can get the money. But how much money did Germany already pump into Namibia with us benefitting from that?

Let us ask: Who will benefit from the genocide money? They said women were also raped and killed, but the rape victims' children's children – will they benefit from that? So, what is the use of having all that money – and the people who are supposed to benefit will not benefit from the money? Only the government will benefit, but they were not part of that genocide. Those people died a long time ago. Also, in government there are not a lot of Nama and Ovaherero, if they can say, okay, let us do something for the Nama people – if my children can benefit, I would say, yes, let's go for it, but it will only benefit people living their luxury life.

We encourage our children to take Nama classes. To develop the Nama language would be good, to know their language. Also, if they would put up a hospital in Groot-Aub. The clinic here is so bad that people are dying while waiting for the doctor.



Jacoline Vleermuis

38-year-old member of the Kai-Iikhaun/Red Nation/Rooinasie clan of Hoachanas, working as a general farmworker at Desert Green farming project (near Windhoek)

The interview was conducted by Erika von Wietersheim in Afrikaans.

I know that during German colonial times, there was a war, and they fought, and killed many Namas, and other people were also killed. There was also a fight in Gibeon, and Hendrik Witbooi was killed by the Germans near Vaalgras, and every year they have a festival in Gibeon in October to celebrate the life of Hendrik Witbooi and the battles, and also in Hoachanas on the 1st of December. I hear things on the radio, and the

elders are talking about it and telling stories. And also in school in the History lessons.

I also heard about the reconciliation process between Namibia and Germany on the radio last year, that the Germans will give money, but I don't know how it went further. I was not really informed well, we are *buite* (outside), and we only hear stuff if people make speeches in Parliament. Sometimes people speak on the radio and then we listen, but we only hear things on the radio and don't get enough information. We should hold meetings. And if the money comes, who benefits from the money? Many people have a hard life, they don't have land ... all must benefit, there are so many people who have a hard life. Where can we farm, where can we make a garden? Not only certain people must benefit.

The people fought. Those people whose ancestors fought must get something or at least a plot or a small farm. We need land or a small plot to grow something and to start a life. *Ons kry baie swaar* (We suffer a lot), we must get development so that we see something is done. But I'm afraid nothing will end up with us, nothing will arrive where we are.

You are writing this book – this is a good thing.



Mariechen !Uiras

Usakos, 54-year-old pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia

The interview was conducted by Erika von Wietersheim in Afrikaans.

Our big people did not tell us much about the past, they rather talked about our family ties, from which people you descend, and which *ouma* was there, so there was no time to hear about wars. We are very young. We cannot say much about the war, we are young and in our time, people are mixing, we are in a *mengelmoes* (mishmash). We only heard later about the time when we were not yet born.

I was born in 1979 in Okahandja, a place with mainly Herero people. There were also Namas and Damaras and Coloureds, but the majority were Hereros. The Hereros have a place where they have their commemorations

and old graves, so we grew up with them, and what we saw made us think, this was a Herero place with Herero festivals and we saw these red and khaki colours, and we dressed like them because we only knew those festivals. There are Damaras who speak Otjiherero fluently and Herero people who speak Damara fluently, and also Ovambo people today who live here in Usakos, speak Damara fluently. So, we are together and united.



Cecilia Mborero

Windhoek, middle-aged Herero woman

The interview was conducted by Riaan !Uriǀkhob in Afrikaans.

The Hereros and the Germans fought against each other, and the Germans killed the Hereros, but the Hereros kept fighting. And when the Germans saw the Hereros, they said, “What kind of people are these?”

And so, they sent their soldiers to cut off the heads of the Hereros, they took the skulls so that they could study what kind of people the Hereros are, and they gave them to the women of the Hereros to shave off the hair. So just imagine – your husband was killed and they give you his head to shave off the hair.

And the other time, there was a place near Otjinene where they fought, and there were waterholes for the animals, and the Germans threw poison into the water and many Hereros who drank that water died.

There were also babies and women, and they fought and fought, and they took a baby and began throwing it around, and they had to catch it just like a stone and caught it with a spear.

And there was that thing near Ovitoto, they also fought there, the Hereros who were sent to war. There was a chief and then one of the commanders of that group shot at the Germans, but they missed and then the chief said, give me the rifle and the rifle was hot, and he took the rifle and threw water into the rifle and the water began boiling. And so this rifle killed many of the German soldiers.

Deon Hochobeb

Damara Location (Windhoek), 40-year-old member of the I!Khowese //Aes/Witbooi clan

The interview was conducted by Freddy Shimonene in English.

As to the German colonial time, I know that the German people wanted to convince the Nama leader Hendrik Witbooi to join the German fighters, but he disagreed with that and started to protect his people. About the reconciliation process that Namibia and Germany entered into in 2015, I don't know much about it. I read a book in Khoekhoegowab, and that is where I learned something. And I would like to know: Where is Hendrik Witbooi buried?

This Joint Declaration of Namibia and Germany two years ago, I know that it was discussed in the National Assembly and the media, but all I know is that the German people admitted the genocide in Namibia, and after that, I heard that the Germans paid money. What I want to know is this: What happened to the genocide money? I think the Nama traditional leaders should inform people about it. I want to feel free as a Namibian and I want more jobs to be offered. I want Germany and Namibia to make peace, so that there is no apartheid, and that we treat each other the same.



Justina Stephanus

Vaalgras, 54-year-old Nama woman living in Windhoek

The interview was conducted by Erika von Wietersheim in English.

I was born in Vaalgras, a small place in the south with Nama/Herero people. I have a farm outside Vaalgras where I am farming with cattle and goats, and fortunately, we have a solar pump for water. I am an Oorlam, a Nama-speaking Herero, so I am proud.

We are Herero people, but because of the wars, some Herero groups moved south, and when the South Africans moved Herero people in the south back to the Herero reserves, my grandparents were left in the South, and we stayed behind. We are tall and big, and we are black like Hereros, not like the Nama. And our bodies – you can see, we are heavyset.

The big pain that we have today is that we lost our language – we can only speak Nama, not Otjiherero. If we receive Herero people, they call us the Black Namas, and if we are together with Nama people, they say, “You are Herero, but you cannot speak your own language.” This is very painful.

Most of the time we have been farming with goats, cattle, and the Swakara karakul sheep, the black sheep. Our pride was the Swakara and the cattle, but most of the farmers lost their cattle during the drought. We are also struggling with water; the rain is scarce, and the water holes are getting dry. We are under stress, but we remain proud.

I grew up in our culture and with our history and German colonialism from day one. My great-grandfather was part of the war. He was a soldier – they rode on horses – and even my mother’s uncle was part of the war, around 1905–1908.

I’m following the talks about the past between Germany and Namibia through the media and the Declaration that was presented. The problem is: We know that the SWAPO government is paying money to the war veterans of the liberation struggle, those who mostly fought outside the country, every month they get pay-outs. But my mother was also a freedom fighter, she stayed in the country and helped people to hide at her place, she worked underground, but she was a Nama, she was not Oshivambo-speaking, and she did not qualify. You needed to have connections; you are supposed to be an Oshivambo speaker.

So, if Germany gives that money to the Namibian government, that money must go to us, to the South, and to the Herero people, because SWAPO was not part of that colonial war. We don’t want the government to get that money, not the SWAPO people. If the money goes to the government, there is a lot of corruption and we will lose again, and the southern people will be left behind. Just go to Keetmanshoop, the so-called capital of the south – it is a poor town. And then go to Oshakati, and you see the big difference. We do not want the money to go to the SWAPO government.

Even if the money goes into a trust – which trust will it be? Under what leadership? It must be under Nama/Herero leadership. We need to develop ourselves; our people are very poor. Many people don’t have water, and even on the farms, the animals must walk long distances, 10 to 20 kilometres, to get water. Every household should have water.

What would help us also are projects like vegetable gardens to produce our own food. Or producing cattle and having butcheries. And vocational colleges. We also need financial support to send our children to school. Many children only complete Grade 7, and after that, they don't go on, because the parents don't have money, and they stay at home. There is no help for them.



Susanna Alcock

Windhoek, member of the Oorlam Nama community in Gobabis (in eastern Namibia), 47-year-old bookkeeper and supervisor at the Desert Green farming project (near Windhoek)

The interview was conducted by Erika von Wietersheim in Afrikaans.

I went to school in Gobabis. We feel together, and we must share. I will stay with my nation, and we share everything.

Our life as Namas is hard. In the north, people have their fields and their land, but the Namas, where are their fields? Also in Windhoek, the Namas stay in zinc houses, they have no water and toilets, and no income. Most Nama women have no work and must resort to prostitution and lie with someone they don't want to lie with just for their children. This leads to drunkenness – it is very bad.

In Gobabis there are mainly San and Hereros. In Epako there are the Namas – they are very poor, there is no work, no food for the children – the life there is very bad.

Also, when you hand in a CV and your surname is a Nama name, then you are sorted out and they will take a name like Shilongo, but a name like Hochobes will be turned away. The Nama are ignored or even thrown away. The children don't have school uniforms and food, and go a long way to work.

I know that there was a war – the Namas fought a war against the Germans. We learned about it at school, not from our families. There were a lot of wars where the Namas fought so much against the Germans. That time I took History at school, and it was there where I learned about it. It was the time of Samuel Maharero and Hendrik Witbooi. Today, many things have

changed. Now it's a memory, we don't have war any longer in our country, it is something of the past, we don't fight against each other. There is a bit of apartheid between Namas and Hereros, but we are past it, we don't fight against each other anymore.

I am conscious of the reconciliation process between Germany and Namibia, but not 100%, I heard about it on the radio, TV, and from Minister Katrina Hanse-Himarwa – she was in Germany, and she is a former Minister of Education (2015–2019). I liked her a lot and read about her. And Venaani (MP and Leader of the Official Opposition) also talked a lot about it.

I don't think, we were well informed about that process, we were excluded. Venaani, he is Herero, but he is very interested and concerned about the people in the informal settlements, he feels with the people – Venaani informed us, he provided taps for people in Rehoboth, and he stayed in Katutura to get a feeling for the living conditions of the people. We learned a lot from him.

In general, I am not informed. I would like to ask: What happened? What were the reasons? For what reasons must peace be made? There is a lot of money involved – it must be distributed justly – will they get the money? Nobody must be left out.

The most important thing is: If there is really money, a decent living place with water and toilets is the priority, and then the support of women who are without work, so that they can live a decent life.

Who should administer the money? If we talk about the big heads, I will say: Venaani. He really cares, even if he is a Herero, he is concerned about all people. He is somebody who goes to the people and wants to see how the people eat and sit at the fire, and things like that.

But you can't live in the past; you must make peace. Without reconciliation, people cannot live in peace – we must walk forward. Also, the Bible says, we must forgive so that we can move on. You must forgive so that your road is clear. So, I think we can reconcile, so that the children who have grown up can have that peace.



Naomi Rooinasie

Krumhuk (near Windhoek), 43-year-old preschool teacher, originally from Gibeon

The interview was conducted by Erika von Wietersheim in Afrikaans.

I am a Nama, and I am very proud of being a Nama. I originally come from Gibeon. For us, land is very important. I would always go and live on a piece of land if there was an opportunity. There are also those young people who were born and grew up on farms who would also like to farm, because in towns, with that unemployment, you can't have a life.

If some money will come from Germany, and if I could get a place, also for my mother and father, who are still alive, it would be good, because I cannot get a place through my own means. Before they die, I could do something for them, some farming with chickens or some sheep.

You see, our parents were deprived of their rights because during the time of the Germans, and at that time of the White people, they did not go to school, they just worked on German farms. And then later, when they had grown up, they gave us, their children, the opportunity to go to school. But there was no money for more than that, no money for further studies, and our parents could not help us because they had nothing. They feel that we, who were given schooling, must go forward, but we are unable to do that because there are no opportunities. Even when you have work, the pay is little, and our parents suffer. So, if we get opportunities through these projects from Germany, we can give this grace to our parents and provide something for them before they die. Because, when they die, we can also not bury them decently if we do not have work. If my mother dies, I must ask other people to help because I do not have enough strength. So, if now some projects might be coming, it would be good if we could do something for our parents before they die and bury them with dignity. Because most people don't even have enough to live, and there is no money for a decent burial.

For us Namas, it is hard to live on this earth – every week, we hear about somebody committing suicide, and if you find out about the reason, you will hear that it was because life was too hard, especially for young persons.

I would be so happy if we could be given some small place to build our lives with the money. We could then build something of our own, and when we make mistakes, they are our own mistakes.

You stay on a farm. How do you feel about this farm – is it also your farm, or is it the farm of the owners?

I am a young person and therefore I work here on Krumhuk, but I am under other people, and I am not permanent, I am a contract worker on this farm, and I cannot say, I will always stay here – you don't know what might change, and when the thoughts of the owners will change. And when their thoughts change, then things will change. The people can say, "No Naomi, you can't stay here any longer," and then I don't have the power to go against them. So, I am under people. If I say so, I think of this other land, there, where my ancestors were born. If we still had that land, then I could say that this is our place, and I will never leave it. But on land on which I am just working, I cannot say, this is my place. So, I am just here for work. But I don't say this is bad, because I have work and get something for myself and my children and my parents, and I am very glad to have this.

That old time was good when my people lived on the land – we long for a place where we are not under other people, where we are the owners – so that we can also teach our children the old ways. Because, as our ancestors lost their land, we were deprived of learning everything about traditional medicines and plants, and now in the next generation we are also depriving our children of learning this because we have to stay in villages and towns – and here they cannot go forward, and our parents cannot support us because they have nothing.



Maria IlGaroës

Krumhuk (near Windhoek), 43-year-old daughter of Rosina IlGaroës (see interview above)

I wish I could have a place for our children so that they can have some donkeys, horses, a donkey cart – we long for those things because as things are now, there is no work and everything is expensive, so it will be good to have something of your own where you can do something with your hands.



Francis Gaingos

Windhoek, 47-year-old Nama woman, working at Desert Green farming project

The interview was conducted by Erika von Wietersheim in Afrikaans.

Did your parents or grandparents talk to you about the history of the Nama people?

My mother talked with me about the old times, about the time when it was so difficult to raise us kids, they had to see that we went to school, to the hostel, without any toiletries. The priest in Mariental, at Witkrans school, he felt sorry for us, and he gave us some stuff. But my mother did not talk about the colonial history, also my *ouma* did not talk about it.

As to the negotiations between Namibia and Germany – no, we don't really talk about it. I heard about the bones of Namas and Hereros which came back from Germany, and then only the Ovambos talked, only Ovambos were in the story – we were not there, the people involved were excluded. They brought the bones, but the Nama were not allowed, only the Ovambos were allowed to say something.

What would be your priorities for the Nama if there is some form of compensation?

The Nama people who are jobless like those I see in Gobabis, they are drunk because they don't have food and they also give alcohol to their children, they cannot provide for their children, and the way they live – in the location there is no electricity, the streets are dark in the night and people get murdered. The worst thing is the unemployment. Namas like me, they are often drunk, even if they have small children, they also give their children alcohol because there is no food. And the housing is so bad, there is no electricity, there is crime all over, and the housing is so expensive, you have to pay rent up to N\$2 000 for a room and nothing is left for buying groceries and for the children. And they say, there is free education, but education is not free. If you don't pay, your child will not be taken into school, or he or she will be suspended. And the old people who will now look after the old people and the sick people?

When old Hendrik Witbooi was still alive, life was still okay and the money had some value, but now the money has no value anymore, and people sit without money. We think back to the time of Hendrik Witbooi – he was a great leader, and that time was all right. One colleague of mine, who also worked here, she is now drinking a lot because of hunger, and she also gives her children some of the alcohol. And there is money that is given for orphans, but the parents, they take the money, and the money does not go to the children.



Ezekiel Swartbooi

Windhoek (Damara Location), 40-year-old member of the Kai-IKhaun/Rooinasie clan, Hoachanas

The interview was conducted by Freddy Shimonene in English.

As to the colonial past, I know that the Nama tribe is one of the oldest tribes of Namibia and was part of the struggle during colonial times.

The Nama people still suffer as a result – many Namas were killed and some of us lost our heritage. Many times, we are so scattered that we have lost our origin. Farm workers are still ill-treated. Land, cattle, and farms were also lost.

As to the reconciliation process between Namibia and Germany, I do not really know much, but I have heard about it in the media, especially newspapers. I am not well informed, but I would like to learn more to also let others know.

I have heard about helping to eradicate poverty and empower Nama people – but who is benefitting? What procedure is followed when deciding who can be part of the process?

I also don't know much about the Joint Declaration of Namibia and Germany, but I hear that the genocide process between Germany and Nama/Herero tribes is meant to help the affected tribes and try to come to terms with how to reconcile. That's all.

I would like to hear how we can be part of this. I also would like to be empowered and give myself and the youth a chance to enjoy these benefits.

I would also like the Nama chiefs to call a gathering and inform everyone clearly. We need land and houses; these are our biggest problems. We need farming and better education and financial help to help us forge a better future for our children. Work must be generated here in Namibia for the Namas, and the south of Namibia must also be developed, and poverty eradication processes must be put in place. Bursaries must be offered to the youth.

Germany must hold direct talks with the Nama, not through the government. They must deal directly with the tribe and their leaders, and any help must be distributed equally among the respective Nama groups.

Let us have peace, forgiveness, healing, and empowerment. And let us respect and accept each other as equal human beings – with no superior race and no one inferior. Treat each other as humans. Also, Nama people and German people must come to terms with forgiving each other, taking hands, helping each other with exchange programmes, and helping our children with foster parents to go to Germany and receive a better education and training to change the past. Youth programmes must be established. Nama people should also receive citizenship of Germany and must study, live and work freely in Germany.

3.3 Interviews with the youth



Shaquitita Sacos Gamaxas

Groot-Aub, 16-year-old Nama girl in Grade 9, living in Clara's Happy Family Home (run by Clara Baitsewe – see interview above)

The interview was conducted by Erika von Wietersheim in English.

My mother tongue is Nama, I am a Nama girl, and I want to be a paramedic one day. I grew up in Groot-Aub and went to Aris Primary School.

I am doing Nama classes and like it a lot. I don't know anything about Nama history yet, but I want to learn about it in school. In school, we will learn about it later. At the moment we are busy with the topic of the Windhoek massacre in 1959.



Lloyd Bock

Windhoek (Katutura), 26-year-old Nama/Ovaherero young man; youth activist and chairperson of the Radical Emancipation and Leadership Development Club, which focuses on men and boys, victims of violence, school dropouts, unemployed youth, and children. It also runs childcare programmes, including soup kitchens, fun days, and homework classes.

The interview was conducted by Erika von Wietersheim in English.

What I learned about our history was how the Nama lived in Namibia before German colonialism and the genocide. My elders explained to me their lifestyles at that time – agriculture, the way they cooked and baked bread, the different traditions of the weddings, handling the young ladies when they went into menstruation, and the way funerals were conducted. Many of these cultural traditions we don't practise anymore.

About the genocide, I learned in history lessons and from history books, and I also did my own research on how the genocide took place. I also heard about it from my family, but not in much detail. Through my engagements

and networking, I also got to know the Nama chiefs of the different clans, who also related to us the stories of what happened to the Nama people, and they made me understand what was going on and about our current situation.

For me, the issue of paternalism in Namibia is important. In the south, the social system was more matriarchal and not like the patriarchal system in the north. Also, in my family, my grandmother is the authority, she has the last say, and everyone comes to my grandmother. Many in my community look up to female leaders. Of course, there are clans with male leaders and father figures, but, for example, when the whip and the Bible of Hendrik Witbooi were returned from Germany to Namibia, it was the ladies who received them.

While there is a good deal of women's empowerment, our men have somehow remained behind and traumatised; they have a lot to work through, and a lot of healing needs to take place for them to become active working citizens who support their families. Of course, the issues of the boy child are multi-faceted, but gender-based violence is also a result of what happened during the genocide and apartheid time, for example through the way the boy child grew up and saw himself, even the military way in which they were raised as children – you always had to be prepared to defend yourself. And then, after apartheid came independence, and still nobody was speaking about what happened in the past and there were no counselling services. We, the next generation, were raised by parents who did not know how to deal with their trauma. They just had to survive, they had to find jobs, and their parenting style was not that good, even if they had positive intentions. Somehow parents pass on the pain of the past to their children and end up being violent towards their children.

I am aware of the negotiations between Namibia and Germany about the genocide. I feel that the committee and the chiefs that negotiate with the German government are only a small section representing a larger group, and their intentions may not coincide with the youth on the ground. I want to look at the future, at Vision 2030, and I want to understand precisely what we want from the German government. We feel that as the Nama youth, we are not well informed, we don't participate in these negotiations, and we don't ask questions about them. We are not empowered about this topic, not in such a way that we can take a stand and say, this is our opinion.

When an authority figure says, this is what we as the Nama people want, we will just go along with it because we have not been well informed. A lot of the youth are concerned about fighting unemployment, and we could work together with the German government to alleviate unemployment and poverty. It's not a matter of us taking sides – it's just that those decisions affect us. And we can either benefit, or lose out on this initiative. So, we need to be properly involved. Even Nama and Ovaherero children should be informed in schools, the history teachers should inform the learners about what is currently happening in the county.

A lot of my clan has suffered – healing needs to take place, and we need proper restoration. And there needs to be forgiveness – but how can it take place? We need to put the different options on the table and find a credible solution, otherwise, we will be waiting for another 100 years. We should look for peace and not create more reasons not to forgive each other. We have been waiting so long, and my parents are going into old age while they have been waiting. We want something to happen.

Our priorities: let's fight youth unemployment in all sectors! This might even alleviate crime. But let's first do a needs assessment and proper research on the ground so as not to mismatch priorities. We have to look at the resources, the available capacities, and projects that relate to the Nama people. For example, many Nama people are gifted in art, so let them learn to do something they are passionate about, for example, in the arts and entertainment sector. We are losing a lot of talent because it is not furthered in the right way, but a person is pushed into something where his talent is not strong.

People like the Ovaherero, for example, could enhance the agricultural sector – they are very good at that. A cow is an investment for them. For the youth in the south, we have to look into how to enhance their innate abilities. Every group has different talents, and the billions coming from Germany can be utilised in the affected regions to capacitate young people in different ways. Another portion of the funds could be used to acquire land for the dispossessed in either urban or rural areas, especially for farm workers evicted from farms and now living on the side of the road.



Charmaine IlGamxamûs

Windhoek, 27-year-old writer and poet with a BSc in Nuclear Medicine Technology, member of the 2022–2023 Doek Collective

The interview was conducted by Erika von Wietersheim in English.

I am of Damara heritage but there is an overlap with the Nama, and I think the effects of the past have affected everyone.

From my side, most of what I learned about the history of the Nama people was from history books and History lessons in high school. I also took a great interest in the history of the Damara people and their migration from west/central Africa down into Namibia. I wanted to understand how it was that they lost their language and assimilated with the Nama tribe. I looked it up online because I had such a sense of wanting to understand myself and my heritage and where I come from.

I learned about the genocide and the war of 1904–1908 through my History lessons at high school. I also did an exchange programme in Germany in the 10th grade for about two months, and I found it very fascinating that in the German schools, they did not know that Namibia used to be a colony of Germany. This was quite jarring for me because of Germany's great history of enforcing the teaching about the holocaust at all schools. Fair enough, it was a really big tragedy, but the fact that many Germans don't even know that Namibia was a colony and about the atrocities that happened there ... In my opinion, if they had taken up the racial segregation and the genocide that took place in the colonies, the holocaust would perhaps not have occurred as it did.

I learnt a few bits and pieces about our traditions, how you respect elders in the community, et cetera, I think I just learned through growing up in my community, interacting with elders, growing up in a church home, and how my parents shaped my personality and moulded my being to respect elders and to know and understand my language.

As to the current negotiations between Namibia and Germany about the genocide, from my side, I think the history of continued colonialism after the genocide cannot be seen separately to understand its effects. We cannot just look at the genocide itself, we have to look at the continued history

and legacy of colonisation after the First World War when South Africa's administration of South West Africa started. The continued colonialism of South Africa, after German colonialism ended, cannot be separated because many Germans remained as settlers here in Namibia and new white settlers came from South Africa, so the history continued. In my opinion, the changes brought about by colonialism in the self-perception of the people, their liberty to live and move and have their being, have affected us until today from generation to generation.

The effects of intergenerational trauma have not yet been well-researched and understood. I read some books about it with studies of holocaust survivors. This good research can help us to understand the effects of the genocide more than a hundred years ago on the Namibian people, the intergenerational effects thereof, and how the reconciliation programmes could help and empower people to understand themselves and their behaviour, their psyche, how they think about themselves and others and their place in their world.

How can you create an understanding amongst people of the effects of the genocide? How can they understand they were systematically victimised, but move forward from that, and how are they empowered? So, I think socioeconomic programmes would be good, but psychological programmes are also needed. As an artist, I believe poetry and music can help create avenues for those expressions and spark initiation for healing and dialogues about the effects of intergenerational trauma.

There is a book that I read called "It Didn't Start With You" by Mark Wolynn,²⁸ and he explores the idea that when, for example, my grandmother was pregnant with my mother, I was already in my mother – so being in that same somatic space as my grandmother, the subconscious effects on her life would still affect me and how I will raise my children, because it also affected my parents and how they raised me.

So, understanding the effects of those traumas would be a very crucial task to tackle. I am very passionate about this as I'm on a journey of healing. So, how can you have an intergenerational conversation to say, we have lost our traditional ways of doing things, we lived through those times, we used to have our land where we had our life, where we lived together and interacted? And with the disruption that came, where is the inner reconciliation for all of that, as individuals but also within a community on

28 Wolynn, M. (2017, April 25). It didn't start with you: How inherited family trauma shapes who we are and how to end the cycle. Penguin Publishing Group.

a macro level? So, I think this is important to address.

People are very uncomfortable talking about trauma, even in our poetry spaces. It would not be the everyday person to do so, perhaps rather somebody with more sensitivity, or who is more introspective. How do you have a conversation with people who don't want to talk about it?

I think Germany did very well in that they educated people about what happened during the holocaust – it is in the school curriculum. So, how can we also create programmes as Namibians to understand the effects of genocide and colonialism and intergenerational trauma – these are some questions that I have.

I agree that the reconciliation process between Namibia and Germany is a good step, but I am also doubtful because of the history of mismanagement and negligence. How do we know it is in good hands, where are the accountability and checkpoints that could help? I share the same scepticism with Mervin²⁹ – how do we know that it will be implemented in such a way that it does not only benefit the elite? How do you reach someone in Gibeon, in the under-served south, the forgotten land of this country? Those are the questions I have within myself.



Queen Pieter

22-year-old receptionist at Keetmanshoop Municipality from the I!Hhaboben/Blouwes Nama traditional community about 50km to the east of Keetmanshoop

The interview was coordinated by Issa Garises and conducted by Erika von Wietersheim in English.

I'm a Nama child, and I'd usually sit at the feet of my Nama elders, and they would narrate the stories of the Nama people.

About our history, the very first thing that you think of is the Nama/Herero genocide. Significant atrocities occurred in what was then known as German Southwest Africa, now Namibia, during the early 20th century. It was the first genocide, where about 80% of the Herero and 60% of the Nama people died, and 80% of the land was dispossessed. This genocide

²⁹ Mervin Claasen – see interview below.

occurred between 1904 and 1908. It is now morally and politically recognised by Germany; however, not in legal terms. One of the long-lasting effects of the genocide is that we are facing issues such as land dispossession, economic marginalisation, and social inequity in Namibia. And it continues to impact our communities even today.

In 2021, the governments of Germany and Namibia issued a Joint Declaration in which Germany formally recognised its colonial atrocities in Namibia as genocide, and we can say it was a significant step towards reconciliation between the two countries. It aims to address the legacy of the Herero and Nama genocide. It also emphasises the importance of continued dialogue and cooperation between Germany and Namibia and of fostering reconciliation between the two nations and the affected communities.

However, we also saw that the LPM (Landless People's Movement), the NTLA (Nama Traditional Leaders Association), and the OTA (Ovaherero Traditional Authority) took the government to the High Court because they felt that the Nama and the Herero people were not part of the Joint Declaration and these discussions. And you cannot have reconciliation discussions without having the descendants of the Nama and the Herero people being part of them. This is where people manifested their dissatisfaction with the Joint Declaration, with the process, and how the Namibian and the German governments went about it.

Young people want to see from this Declaration a sincere acknowledgment by Germany of its colonial atrocities, including the Nama and Herero genocide, and that it is being tangibly addressed. This includes financial compensation as well as investments in infrastructure, education, economic development, and empowerment of the affected communities. This could include projects funded by the agreement benefitting those most impacted by historical injustices.

Now, beyond the financial reparations, there is hope among young Namibians for many sustainable reconciliation efforts that address the root causes of historical injustices, laying the groundwork for a more just and equitable future for all and for an ongoing process that requires active engagement, dialogue, and commitment from both nations and the affected descendants.

In this, the traditional authorities are important to young people because we see them as the custodians of our cultural identity and history. They

are wells of wisdom, and they serve as mediators. However, most young people are divorced from their cultural heritage due to modernisation and urbanisation. The significance of Nama traditional authorities to young people is a complex and nuanced issue that is influenced by a variety of factors, including cultural heritage, socioeconomic conditions, and individual beliefs.

Beethoven Vleermuys

Windhoek (Damara Location), 19 years old

The interview was conducted by Freddy Shimonene in English.

I don't belong to a specific Nama group, not that I know of. I was brought up in Windhoek and my ancestral roots are not really clear to me. As to our colonial past, I know that during colonial times, especially when the Germans first came to the land, they went on a widespread genocide of the Nama people which impacted their numbers and their development for the future, which has hindered them to the present day. I heard from my elders or ancestors about my roots, and then my education was primarily through my school. In my own life, I don't really feel the aftermath of colonialism – I feel that currently, our society is developing with every passing day.

As to the reconciliation process since 2015 between Namibia and Germany, what I know is that they have a settlement deal in place by giving a certain amount of money to the Herero people who faced genocide, but they may have excluded the Nama people, which is just discouraging, really. I was informed about it to an extent, yes, but I can't say I have been informed of everything, as you know in history some details get lost and some details get blurred or changed to suit a certain audience. My question is: What would the Germans want to do to improve the lives of the Nama people? Because they took our livestock and land, everything the Nama people had, and left them in ruins.

As to the Joint Declaration of Namibia and Germany which became public in 2021 and was discussed in the National Assembly and the media, all I heard was that money was sent to Namibia by the German government to buy land for the Herero and some Nama people but mostly for the Herero people as they thought the Nama were not really affected, even though this is not the truth.

I would like to know what **will** be done to support the Nama community? Someone with a strong standing position should come out and support

the Nama community in this matter – even someone from another tribe. It would show unity in the country, regardless of the different tribes.

As a priority, specifically for the Nama people, I would like to create more efficient access to resources in the rural areas. Also, why can't Germany give bursaries to Nama and Herero students and other Namibians to build a proper relationship of unity between the two countries, since they already have a good relationship with respect to trade? I also feel that, in general, Black people should be given more opportunities at different levels of education. White people have access to more types of education like woodwork and other crafts to develop themselves and their skills, while Black people are forced mainly into the academic field, and then they don't find work. It would also be good to have Nama-speaking and German-speaking Namibians coming together, to have a meeting between the two cultures and discuss how they were affected by the happenings of the past. As a last comment, I would say that Germany has done well in accepting the fact that they have harmed the Namibian community and are trying to make up for it.



Mervin Claasen

Windhoek, 37-year-old musician (traditional Damara Punch), actor, writer, and acting coach, B.A. in Drama/Industrial Psychology

The interview was coordinated by Charmaine IlGamxamûs and conducted by Erika von Wietersheim and Charmaine IlGamxamûs.

On my mother's side, you find the Namas who came from the south and were known to be nomadic pastoralists, moving around and looking for better grazing areas with their cattle and horses; and from my father's side, they came from the mountains in Damaraland, and then there is also a great-grandmother in our family who was a German woman.

What I know about the history of the Nama people I learned at school, and that shaped our understanding and behaviour. It started with school, where you needed to know some facts.

If you talk about the history of the Nama people, the first idea that comes

to my mind is Hendrik Witbooi, because he was the *Omeb* (Uncle) who led the Nama people. He was known to be a very skilled horseman and was also very skilled in terms of handling ammunition, because he and his men were the first guys who stood up against colonial oppression. He was known to be the gentleman who realised that there was power in unity, so he would reach out to all the other traditional leaders and chiefs to unite and fight against German colonialism.

I also know that between 1904 and 1908 there was war. The chiefs came together and stood firmly against the Germans, the Herero Chief Samuel Maharero and Hendrik Witbooi. About 80% of the Herero were eliminated and more than half of the Nama people also died. Some were killed in the war, others died of hunger, and others were chased into the desert. It was an atrocity that is not easy to think of. But it is history, and we understand that history means that people tell **their** stories, **his** story, and **her** story, and whose story ... But many stories have been told in the same way for many moons, so we know that the Nama and Herero lost a lot of people, and this still has a big effect on the current situation – it created a long-lasting trauma of the affected people.

The negotiations between Namibia and Germany are a step forward in recognising what was done by the German colonial system. If we look at the colonial history of other countries like Angola or Tanzania – these countries haven't been compensated for the damage that was caused in their countries. I know that some foreign countries are even claiming that their former African colonies need to pay **them** for the infrastructure that they had built over the years. So, the fact that Germany sits down and recognises the atrocities committed in Namibia is a step towards peaceful negotiations between the two countries and towards eliminating any grievances that may be there in the future.

However, I need to be honest: As much as Namibia needs these finances, Namibia is a country with a history of negligence. When we became independent, we were in a very good position to put the lives of all Namibians in a good position – we have the ocean, we have the land, we have the mineral resources. However, I know that the people who took power, the elites, instead of creating wealth for everyone, the finances, resources, and some of the land that was recovered were channelled within their families and to people that they know. So, a lot of people are still disadvantaged until today. So how are we going to channel this money? I understand that with this money, programmes will also be initiated, because development for the people is what we want. The most important thing is to invest in people so that they change their mindsets, to invest in communities to

uplift them. For me, I am grateful for the fact that 20-22 billion Namibia Dollars will be invested within Namibia because of what was done. But who will be the facilitators? Will they be honest and give a fair chance to all Namibians, to the Namas, to the Hereros?

For me, land is the greatest wealth that you can have in a country. Namibians are still landless – and are we looking at how we can channel some of the land that we have lost in the past back to the people? Is this part of the process? Will they get land where they can go back to, places that they can call their home, instead of being scattered all over? Who still owns the land? I believe that the Germans and the Boers from South Africa who took over from the Germans have the nicest land. So, how do we redistribute land? And again, with the land distribution, will the responsible people be fair in terms of giving the land back to people who really need it rather than to their family members? Leadership has failed Namibians to the extent that we question everything because of the experiences we have had.

Around 22 billion Namibia Dollars can change a lot of things. Although, if you look at the years that the Germans colonised Namibia, it can never be enough, it's actually small. But it could achieve a lot depending on how it is handled, and the mindset of the leaders and skilled people who will handle the projects.

I said we can never remunerate people for that which we have lost. Let me give you an example. When an elder dies in our community, we say we have lost a library. For example, traditionally, medicine was very important – people would not go to pharmacies, but would get something out of the ground, mix plants, give it to you and you would feel much better. Many of our people who were killed could have passed on all this valuable information to the next generation, but they died, and their libraries were lost. They left with all that information. Today, we go to the pharmacy to get a painkiller or a morning-after pill when you had sex and don't want to fall pregnant – in the old times, they had recipes for all these kinds of problems. But because so much information was lost through these atrocities, today we must go to the pharmacy and pay for medicines not produced in our country, and that money goes out of the country to companies outside Africa. In this way, we are still under colonialism, because organisations like the World Health Organization and other countries dictate to us what to use and buy. Foreign countries are still implementing rules for our countries. These effects cost us financially every day because our knowledgeable people left us.

Charmaine³⁰ mentioned the psychological impact on our behaviour, on our consciousness, but also our pre-consciousness and sub-consciousness, things we do not always understand. Maybe some programmes could be implemented to help us understand ourselves, things that go back many moons ago. Will we use these finances to address these problems? Will we use them for dry places like Gibeon? Maybe a research programme could be initiated so that people can have a better life by generating funds from their own environment, so that they can then say: Gibeon is well. All this is giving me a headache!



Geraldo Levi

Windhoek (Nama Location), 18-year-old Nama youth

The interview was conducted by Freddy Shimonene in English.

About our past, I know that the Nama people were workers of the German people on the land of the Nama people. And I know that the land of the Nama was taken.

I heard about the reconciliation process between Namibia and Germany in school and from documentary videos shown to us, but I don't think we were well enough informed about it because some information was altered. I also would like to know who in Germany wanted the Joint Declaration to be established. All I was told was that Germany offered help to Namibia for any assistance they wanted help with. I would want young Nama people to have a voice in political issues. It would be good if Germany and Namibia gave scholarships to disadvantaged youths who have completed school.



Valentino Garoëb

Kalkrand, 18-year-old Nama youth

The interview was conducted by Riaan !Uriǃkhob, Ivette Windstaan and Erika von Wietersheim in Afrikaans.

I went to school in Windhoek and what I remember from History is the story about Hendrik Witbooi. I

30 Charmaine //Gamxamûs – see interview above.

know that he fought in the liberation struggle, and he freed our land. So, as Namas, we are now free and independent because also a Nama fought in this war. I can't remember what we learned about German colonialism.

In Kalkrand, there is unemployment and drug abuse, the people are fighting, and people use their little money on drugs, because drugs are cheaper than healthy things. If there is a job, people just give it to family members, and only later do you find out that there was a job available.

If there is money from Germany, the absolute priority is to create jobs and do something for the homeless kids. Land is also important so that we can produce food and keep animals – it's important to have land. But the creation of jobs is the most important thing for young people, to let their dreams become a reality.



Imelda Vries

Mix Settlement (near Windhoek), 23-year-old member of the Topnaar Nama clan

The interview was conducted by Freddy Shimonene in English.

As to the German colonial past, I know that the Germans took away the land of the Namas and also took their lives.

And with respect to the reconciliation process between Namibia and Germany, I know that Germany acknowledged the crimes against the Herero and Nama. I heard about it in the media, but I am not well informed about it. For example, why can't the Germans hand over the land, especially the farms in the southern parts of Namibia?

I think the Joint Declaration of Namibia and Germany is there to unite people and remember the colonial times and make peace between the two countries. What I would like to know is: Did Germany ask for forgiveness for the sins of their forefathers? The media should inform the Nama people about this.

It would be good if more jobs were given to the youth – and can't Germany give bursaries to Nama and Herero students?

Anonymous

No specific Nama clan, 25-year-old poet and writer

The interview was coordinated and conducted by Charmaine IlGamxamûs and Erika von Wietersheim.

Learning about our history was a journey. We learned about it from a young age, usually during story times. And I like stories! Then came school and we got some glimpses of Nama history in History lessons. For me, this was a bit easier than for others because I could understand this history from a personal perspective; some of us could relate what we learned in school to our family history. Later I began to read books such as the diaries of Hendrik Witbooi. It was a bit difficult to consume, because I did not have an understanding of all the specific situations.

Then I read books like *The Kaiser's Holocaust: Germany's Forgotten Genocide*, I actually read it twice. And one thing that stood out was that Hendrik Witbooi was our big grandfather with his ideas of nation-building, of being concerned about children and the elders and about culture and tradition. In some stories, you can see that he was not only speaking to Nama chiefs but to different leaders in the country, and he would send letters to different chiefs explaining to them the current situation of the land and the alliances – he was not only looking at it from a Nama situation. Carrying these ideas with you as you grow older has created an identity.

With respect to reconciliation between Germany and Namibia, I think it is quite a complex issue because we have experienced, for example, intergenerational trauma. I think what has happened to the Nama people still influences our current behaviour – we are quite disempowered people. Where we come from, how we look and how we behave – all that is influenced by these past events. I think, getting to understand my history allows me to make peace with my identity – you are this, you speak like this. For some of us, one of the strong languages at home was English. My parents prioritised English, so when I go back to the villages, I usually speak English.

I also think that most of us, outside politics, might not really understand the complexities around the funds that will be made available. Even if the funds come, how are we to distribute them? Where do we start, how are we going to empower ourselves with that money? It is quite tricky. I am not necessarily sceptical, but it will be challenging for us to understand the context of the compensation that is coming from Germany. I am not sure if

money will lighten the burden of our history. Is it only a matter of money, and then we are done once and for all? Or will there be a programme in place? Because colonialism was also a programme, it lasted for a certain period of time. With just a moment of giving a chunk of money, we might not know what to do with it and how to go about it.



Riaan !Uri#khob

Windhoek, 25-year-old Nama/Damara poet

The interview was conducted by Erika von Wietersheim in English.

The colonial history of the Nama and Damara people, according to my school History lessons – I was very much interested in history to gain some knowledge of what happened in the past – that history was very brutal and intrusive because the Germans came and took the land, the livestock and the lives of the people. That was sad, and today we are here, and the pain still lingers. To accept that someone just came from outside and took your goods and your lifestyle at that time ... I know that the Nama and the Damara fought for the country, and we are all affected by this, also the Hereros. And now we are looking to the future – what can we do, what implementations are there from the side of Germany to show some pity about what was done?

I know that the genocide is an ongoing story, that there is still no conclusion. I didn't get much information about the Joint Declaration between Namibia and Germany anywhere, but when the word "genocide" came up, I did some research and I got a glimpse of what was going on, also about some skulls of the Nama, Herero, and Damara ancestors coming back from Germany, I saw that. This is good, to have them back in their country of origin.

As to possible implementations with the genocide money, we all know, the main question in our country is employment. School education is there, but for someone who cannot go further to college, and so on, the government should introduce other kinds of training to keep the youth off the streets and keep them busy. Not everyone is made for tertiary education, so I would suggest that more vocational training centres be created for young people. They are the future leaders, and we have to start somewhere, and through vocational training we could create jobs.

And one thing I would also include is land. We really need land; this is our country, and everyone should have their own space. We need land to do farming or to start our own business, also in Windhoek, then that is how you make your own money without waiting to get a degree. We need land because that is what we lost a very long time ago, so that we can start over in a free country.

As to German-speaking Namibians today: What happened, happened, and we were hurt, obviously, but we cannot resist the German Namibians in our country for what their ancestors did. They bring in money through tourism and employment, and they sponsor Namibians with training and scholarships, so they are playing their part and doing something good for Namibia.

Anonymous

Mariental, 32-year-old female Nama

The interview was conducted by Erika von Wietersheim in English.

I know my history from my grandmother – she hated the Germans because they killed her family. She survived because she and her mother were hiding in a cave when the Germans came. Today we don't have land because the Germans took our farms and they still live there, and then also the Boers came from South Africa and took more farms.

I don't know much about what is going on between Namibia and Germany, we are not informed and the little I heard over the radio, I don't really understand. But we will not see much of the money anyway, because the big heads will keep it for themselves, we know that.

If there is money, all we need are jobs for the people so that they don't have to live in the streets and are able to care for themselves and their families. The German president must come here and explain to us and everyone, what they think should be done with the money, and they must also see to it that the money goes to those people who were affected by the genocide. The people who are affected must be directly involved; they know what they need. Also, the Nama Traditional Authority should not be involved – they are rich people and are only interested in their political agenda.



Rogeleo Nanueb

Windhoek (Ovambo Location), member of the Veldskoendraers Nama clan

The interview was conducted by Freddy Shimonene in English.

As to the German colonial times in Namibia, I know that the Nama people were dispossessed and deprived of their rights. And as to the reconciliation process between Namibia and Germany, I know that Germany paid reparations for what they did in Namibia. I heard about it in school in the subject of History and through the media. I do not think the information given to me is enough because some information might be omitted. Who was there to record the events that occurred? What made the Germans sign the Joint Declaration? I think it was drawn up and established with corruption involved.



Ellerie Riet

Windhoek (Soweto, Katutura), 28-year-old Nama woman from the Witvlei area

The interview was conducted by Erika von Wietersheim in English.

From our history, I know that before colonisation, the Nama people used to live on their own land, they used to farm with goats, cattle, and sheep, and they moved around from one area to another looking for grazing.

I learned this at school. Then the Germans came and took the land, and they colonised the people. Then there was war, and they took away the land and they separated the family tribes – some moved to the south, others to the north.

Later, more people were killed, also women and children. This was much later when the South Africans came in. South Africa continued to colonise the Namibian people. They say many bad things about the German people, but the Germans were here for just a short period of time.

Now Germany acknowledges what happened and I heard they are going to give money to the people who were colonised – I read this in the news. People are not talking much about it, they are just quiet and waiting, they don't have enough information, they just heard, "Oh, the Germans are going to pay you for what happened," but it is not really something people talk about in public.

Maybe with the money, we can buy food for the people or undertake projects so that we can produce our own food. For me, it's like some of us who come from poor backgrounds, we need funds for further studies, or maybe something to go into a project where people can farm or do gardening and sell vegetables. It must benefit everyone, not only single persons.

Angelo Afrikaner

Windhoek (Nama Location), 23-year-old member of the Bondelswarts Nama clan

The interview was conducted by Freddy Shimonene in English.

As to the colonial times in Namibia, all I was told and know is that the Nama people fought for their rights and land. I think the reconciliation process between Germany and Namibia is a good deal or process, as the German people need to be informed about what their grandparents did. I heard about it on the radio, but I don't think I was well informed. I know that Germany sent money to Namibia as a token of peace. That is all I know. For example, I would like to know: Was the land of the Nama taken by force, or bought, or traded?

I would also like to know how much was sent from Germany to the Nama/Herero people. Was it distributed equally? I would like the Nama people to be compensated equally and fairly. As to Germany, I acknowledge and thank them for recognising their ancestors' mistakes.

I believe that many Nama people often forgave and moved on, as the process of reconciliation is an act of acknowledgment. As a last comment, I would like to thank the Namibian government for putting our ancestor Hendrik Witbooi on the Namibia Dollar money. It is an act of recognition and a large thanks to the Nama people.

Defney !Gowases

Mix settlement (near Windhoek), 20-year-old member of the Swartbooi Nama clan

The interview was conducted by Freddy Shimonene in English.

As to our past, I know that the Germans refused to pay reparations and the Nama people did not have any say concerning their human rights. As to how we still experience the aftermath of our past, it happens that if you work at White people's houses, you don't eat with them or drink from the same cups.

About the reconciliation process between Namibia and Germany, I know that there is an agreement that acknowledges that Germany committed genocide against the Nama and Herero people in Namibia. The Joint Declaration between Germany and Namibia is pledging to unite and reconcile in remembrance of the colonial past. I heard about this in the media, but I don't think that I am well informed about it. And I have one question: Why do Germans in Namibia still own farms, especially in the southern and eastern parts, while Namas and Hereros struggle with land and still work for them? I also want to know if the Germans apologised to the descendants of the victims. And who should inform the Nama about it? At least the media should inform us. As to any recommendations for the process of reconciliation between Namibia and Germany, I think the learning of the German language should be compulsory, especially in the eastern and southern parts of Namibia.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: 2021 German and Namibian Joint Declaration

JOINT DECLARATION BY THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY AND THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

“United in Remembrance of our Colonial Past, United in our Will to Reconcile, United in our Vision of the Future”

Introduction

The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Government of the Republic of Namibia, as democratically elected by the people of Germany and Namibia respectively,

- *Responding* to the Resolution of the National Assembly of the Republic of Namibia of 2006 and the Resolutions of the German Bundestag of 1989 and 2004,

- *Mindful* of the deep wounds inflicted on particular communities and other peoples of Namibia by the atrocities perpetrated during German colonial rule between 1904 and 1908, which echo down and through time and are still felt by Namibians today,

- *Recognizing* the need for development in order to address the lasting economic, social and psychological hardship of the communities most affected,

- *Underlining* the special nature of German–Namibian relations as stressed by Resolutions of the German Bundestag in 1989 and 2004 confirming a special historical and moral responsibility towards Namibia,

- *Recalling* the Motion of the National Assembly of the Republic of Namibia of 2006 calling for an amicable solution to the outstanding questions of the past,

- *Considering* the previous efforts by the German and Namibian Governments, as well as by churches and civil society to address the injustice of the past and strive for reconciliation,

- *Mindful* of the strong and cordial relations between their countries since the independence of the Republic of Namibia that include a very close network of contacts between citizens from all walks of life in both countries,

- *Recalling* the support for Namibia's independence, in particular the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 435 (1978) from the two states in Germany in the long Namibian struggle for independence, and from the united Germany to the development of Namibia thereafter,

- *Acknowledging* that the two Governments have enjoyed strong and cordial relations since the independence of the Republic of Namibia and wish to improve upon this relationship further,

- *Affirming* their firm resolve to maintain and strengthen their excellent bilateral relations and the need to urgently redress a dark past in order to build a better future,

Jointly declare the following:

I.

1. In 1904, Germany waged a war, which annihilated large parts of indigenous communities that were residing in what is now Namibia. The German forces adopted and implemented policies to exterminate clearly identified communities. These measures also affected other communities of what today is Namibia.

2. In this context, Lieutenant General Lothar von Trotha issued an Order on 2nd October 1904 which led to the death and suffering of thousands of Ovaherero, including women and children. This Order was rescinded by the German Government on 8th December 1904, but by then, many thousands of Ovaherero had been killed and perished.

3. Notwithstanding the revocation of the first Order by Germany, Lieutenant General von Trotha issued a second Order on 22nd April 1905. This was directed against the Nama and also threatened them with a similar fate to that of the Ovaherero unless they surrendered. These threats were later carried out, resulting in the further substantial annihilation of the Nama communities.

4. In 1905, German authorities created concentration camps, notably at Swakopmund, Shark Island and Windhoek (Alte Feste), in which the internees were enslaved and forced to work under inhumane conditions, resulting in the death of thousands of people from hunger, disease and forced labour. Some of the Nama fighters and their families were banished to Togo and Cameroon.

5. The severity of the conditions and the bleakness of life prospects in these camps were such that many internees were doomed to die. By the time these camps were finally closed in 1908, thousands of people had died from hunger, disease and exhaustion from forced labour.

6. In the aftermath of the war, large swathes of territory, constituting ancestral land historically inhabited by and belonging to indigenous communities, were seized and occupied by the German State. These actions led to the expulsion and displacement of indigenous communities from their ancestral lands. In some cases, communities were forced out of what today is Namibia itself and have remained uprooted to this day.

7. Furthermore, human remains of members of indigenous communities were removed unlawfully and shipped to Germany for pseudo-scientific racial purity and eugenic 'research' without respect for human dignity, cultural and religious beliefs and practices. The shipments also included cultural artifacts of these communities.

8. Overall, tens of thousands of men, women and children were subjected to the orders and associated German policies. They were shot, hanged, burned, starved, experimented on, enslaved, worked to death, abused, raped and dispossessed, not only of their land, property and livestock, but also of their rights and dignity.

9. As a consequence, a substantial number of Ovaherero and Nama communities were exterminated through the actions of the German State. A large number of the Damara and San communities were also exterminated.

II.

10. Both Governments affirm that the Preamble to the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948) "recognises that at all periods of history genocide has inflicted great losses on humanity". The German Government acknowledges that the abominable atrocities committed during periods of the colonial

war culminated in events that, from today's perspective, would be called genocide.

III.

11. On the basis of this acknowledgement, the German Government recognizes Germany's moral responsibility for the colonization of Namibia and for the historic developments that led to the genocidal conditions between 1904 and 1908, as described above, with its gross human rights violations and human sufferings thereof. On the same basis, Germany accepts a moral, historical and political obligation to tender an apology for this genocide and subsequently provide the necessary means for reconciliation and reconstruction.

12. The German Government further acknowledges the grave guilt incurred by individuals in positions of military and political responsibility at the material time and Germany's superordinate responsibility for their actions, particularly with regard to Ovaherero and Nama communities.

13. Germany apologizes and bows before the descendants of the victims. Today, more than 100 years later, Germany asks for forgiveness for the sins of their forefathers. It is not possible to undo what has been done. But the suffering, inhumanity and pain inflicted on the tens of thousands of innocent men, women and children by Germany during the war in what is today Namibia must not be forgotten. It must serve as a warning against racism and genocide.

IV.

14. The Namibian Government and people accept Germany's apology and believe that it paves the way to a lasting mutual understanding and the consolidation of a special relationship between the two nations as affirmed by the two Bundestag Resolutions of 1989 and 2004, respectively. This shall close the painful chapter of the past and mark a new dawn in the relationship between our two countries and peoples. This relationship will be characterized by a much more thorough and meaningful process of reconciliation and reconstruction, an appropriate culture of remembrance, as well as a new level of political, economic and cultural partnership.

The Namibian Government deeply appreciates its friendly relationship with Germany, which also extends to numerous partnerships and initiatives launched from all walks of life.

V.

15. In view of the acknowledgment provided in Chapter II, and pursuant to the apology in Chapter III of this Declaration, the two Governments jointly decided to embark upon measures to heal the wounds of the past and create a lasting partnership for the future. Both Governments further decided on the need for a forward-looking special relationship framework that gives meaning to the letter and spirit of this Declaration and the resolutions unanimously adopted by the Bundestag and Namibian National Assembly.

16. A separate and unique reconstruction and development support programme will be set up by both Governments to assist the development of descendants of the particularly affected communities, in line with their identified needs. Representatives of these communities will participate in this process in a decisive capacity. Under this programme, projects will be implemented in the following regions: Erongo, Hardap, IlKharas, Khomas, Kunene, Omaheke, and Otjozondjupa. The projects will include the following sectors: Land Reform, in particular Land Acquisition, within the framework of the Namibian Constitution, and Land Development, Agriculture, Rural Livelihoods and Natural Resources, Rural Infrastructure, Energy and Water Supply, Technical and Vocational Education and Training.

17. Both Governments decide to promote and support reconciliation between the people of Namibia and Germany through preserving the memory of the colonial era, in particular the period between 1904 to 1908, for future generations by, inter alia, finding appropriate ways of memory and remembrance, supporting research and education, cultural and linguistic issues, as well as by encouraging meetings of and exchange between all generations, in particular the youth. Both Governments further decide to jointly develop and put into place a separate legal structure, i.e. a joint trust or fund in order to select and fund projects which aim to improve reconciliation.

18. The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany will make available the amount of 1100 (one thousand one hundred) Million Euros, as a grant to implement the envisaged projects within the framework of the above-mentioned programmes. Germany commits herself to allocate this amount over a period of 30 years.

Of this, the amount of 1050 (one thousand fifty) Million Euros will be dedicated to the reconstruction and development support programme for

the benefit of the descendants of the particularly affected communities. 50 (fifty) Million Euros will be dedicated to the projects on reconciliation, remembrance, research and education.

19. The governing and implementation structures for both programmes will operate on the basis of the principles of equal partnership, joint decision taking, good governance and transparency as well as affected community participation. Provision will be made for monitoring of implementation, including audits and periodic comprehensive impact assessment at agreed intervals.

20. Both Governments share the understanding that these amounts mentioned above settle all financial aspects of the issues relating to the past addressed in this Joint Declaration.

21. Both Governments decide on the establishment of a Bi-National Commission, as a forward looking and lasting political framework for the consolidation of this special relationship between Germany and Namibia.

22. The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany renews her commitment to continue the bilateral development cooperation at an adequate level within the framework of the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development to contribute to the development of Namibia, as a whole and to the benefit of all Namibians.

(www.parliament.na/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/joint-declaration-document-genocide-rt.pdf)

Annex 2: General Von Trotha's Proclamation to the Nama, 21 April 1905

"The mighty and powerful German Emperor will grant mercy to the Hottentot people and will spare the lives of those who voluntarily surrender. Only those who at the beginning of the uprising murdered whites or who ordered others to do so will forfeit their lives in accordance with the law. I announce this to you and further say that those few who do not submit will suffer the same fate as the Hereros, who in their blindness believed that they could carry on successful war with the mighty German Emperor and the great German people.

I ask you where are all the Hereros today, where are their chiefs? Samuel Maharero, who once called thousands of head of cattle his own, is now harried like a wild beast and driven over the border into English territory. He has become as poor as the poorest field Herero and possesses nothing. It is the same with the other chiefs, the majority of whom have lost their lives, and the Herero people too have been annihilated - part of them dying of hunger and thirst on the desert, part killed by German soldiers, part murdered by the Owambos.

The Hottentots will suffer the same fate if they do not surrender and give up their weapons. You should come with a white piece of cloth on a stick together with your whole village and nothing will happen to you. You will get work and receive food until the war ends at which time the Great German Kaiser will regulate anew the conditions in this territory.

He who believes that mercy will not be extended to him should leave the land for as long as he lives on German soil he will be shot - this policy will go on until all such Hottentots have been killed. For the following men, living or dead, I set the following price: Hendrik Witbooi - 5 000 Marks; Stürmann, the "Witbooi prophet" (also called Shepperd Stuurman) - 3 000; Cornelius - 3 000; for the other guilty leaders - 1 000 each."

(<https://quaggabooks.co.za/product/the-hendrik-witbooi-papers-heywood-anne-maasdorp-eben-transl/>)

Annex 3: United Nations Definition of Genocide

The word “genocide” was first coined by the Polish lawyer Raphaël Lemkin in 1944. The Greek prefix *genos* means race or tribe, and the Latin suffix *cide* means killing. Lemkin developed the term partly in response to the Nazi policies of systematic murder of Jewish people during the Holocaust.

Genocide was codified as a crime in the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (the Genocide Convention). The Convention has been ratified by 153 States (as of April 2022).

In Article II, genocide is defined as follows:

In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

Killing members of the group;

Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;

Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;

Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;

Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

In Article I, the Genocide Convention establishes that the crime of genocide may take place in the context of an armed conflict, international or non-international, but also in the context of a peaceful situation. The latter is less common but still possible. The same article establishes the obligation of the contracting parties to prevent and punish the crime of genocide.

(<https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/Genocide%20Convention-FactSheet-ENG.pdf>)

Annex 4: The Peace Treaty of Hoachanas (1858)

As the Peace Treaty of Hoachanas is not generally well known but very important for the history of the Nama people, it is inserted here in full³¹. It is one of the earliest written documents by the Nama to maintain some form of control over the changing situation with the advent of European and South African missionaries and traders, even though the treaty did not last for long. It was signed by local leaders of the southern and central parts of the Namibian territory, including the most powerful single Herero leader at this time, Maharero.

PEACE TREATY OF HOACHANAS

9 January 1858

In the name of the Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, we the undersigned have resolved to unite in the following treaty:

Article 1: No chief with his people will have the right, should a dispute arise between him and another chief of standing, to pursue his own vindication, but shall be pledged to bring the cause before an impartial court.

Article 2: When the case has been examined by the impartial chiefs, the guilty party shall be punished or a fine shall be imposed on him. Should he be unwilling to comply with the judgment, and should he attempt to dispute the issue by force of arms, then shall all the treaty chiefs be pledged jointly to take arms and punish him.

Article 3: No chief is permitted to send or allow to be sent a raiding party against the Herero unless the Herero have given legally valid cause for so doing. Should a chief's man disobey and launch such a raid, should he attempt to punish them and pass sentence but find them unwilling to submit themselves thereto, and should he lack the means to enforce the punishment, then shall the neighboring chief come to his aid to ensure the sentence is carried out.

Article 4: No chief may allow a sub-chief or official, or the son of a chief, to dispose of important matters without the chief informed thereof. No one shall have the right himself to take back arbitrarily something owed to him.

³¹ The Treaty was published in a typed and photocopied hand-out on the occasion of the celebration of Heroes' Day, 1-3 December 1989, at Hoachanas. It is reproduced verbatim.

Article 5: No chief may permit copper being mined in his territory without the knowledge and agreement of all other chiefs, or to sell a farm or site within his territory to a white person from the Cape Colony. Whoever despite this makes such a sale shall be heavily fined, and the purchaser himself will have to bear the cost if he has been acquainted with the law beforehand.

Article 6: We resolve also to close our bond and treaty with all Griqua chiefs. Should they need us in any major war which may befall their country, then we are ready to come to their assistance.

Article 7: We the undersigned resolve further that fugitives from Griqualand who enter our country in order to hide will be handed over by the chief in whose territory they are found, should the Griqua chief request this. The same responsibility will rest with the Griqua chief.

Article 8: No chief shall allow himself solely on account of rumours to become mistrustful and be prepared to take up arms without getting written proof thereof. Should this provision nevertheless be broken, the chief responsible will be heavily fined by the other chiefs.

Article 9: No chief shall have the right to settle murder cases alone and to judge and execute the guilty party. The trial must be held in the presence of two or three important chiefs, who together will have the responsibility of passing sentence and carrying it out.

Article 10: It is also resolved that each year a day and date will be agreed to consult together for the welfare of the land and the people.

Article 11: Any citizen, on appearing before his chief, whether on account of his own misdeed or of a complaint which he brings before his chief or government, has the right, should he see or believe that he has been done an injustice, to set his case before other Treaty chiefs. These will thereupon examine the reasons for his dissatisfaction, and if the impartial chiefs determine that he has been unjustly treated, then he shall be given justice. But if his case is not substantiated, he shall accept the verdict.

Article 12: Should a chief or chiefs ill-treat a citizen or unlawfully use force against his property or act unjustly towards him in any other manner, then that citizen has the right to take his complaint before the court of the Treaty chiefs. His case shall thereupon be investigated. If it is established as a result of the inquiry that the said chief is guilty, then that chief shall be punished after Treaty chiefs have declared their verdict upon his guilt.

Discussed, approved, and unanimously adopted by us the undersigned chiefs:

Cornelius Ooasib	≠ Karab
Willem Swartbooi	≠Huiseb
Jager Aimab	!Nanib
Hendrik Hendrikes	≠Garib
Piet Kooper	/Gamab
Kido Witbooi	≠A-lleib
Amraal	≠Gai-Inub
Jonker Afrikaner	!ltara-m^ub
David Christian	!INaichab
Paul Goliath	≠Hobechab

Tjamuaha*

*Represented by his two sons (Jan and Piet Koppervoet)

Also present:

Andries van Rooi (Verhandlungsleiter – a Griqua, formerly Commandant of Andries Waterboer and elected chairman of the Conference.)

Maharero

Annex 5: Teaching of German Colonialism (Subject: History) at Namibian State Schools

For Namibian government schools, History is a compulsory promotional subject for grades 8 and 9.

It is not compulsory for grades 10 to 12 and is not offered at all schools as an elective subject.

In grades 8 and 9, the History syllabus is divided into three parts: Namibian History, African History, and World History.

In Grade 8, the Namibian History part deals in four out of five themes in detail with the German colonial history of Namibia under the topics of

- Formal Colonisation
- Resistance and Social Dynamics
- The War of National Resistance 1904–1908, and
- German and South African Rule 1909–1945.

In **Grade 9**, Namibian History comprises mainly the developments from 1945 to independence. Under World History, it also briefly covers Nazism in Germany.

The History syllabus for **grades 10 and 11** for the National Senior Secondary Certificate Ordinary Level (**NSSCO**) also includes as a topic *Namibia – Resistance to foreign rule*, which includes a chapter on *Resistance to German rule*, including the genocide, and *Resistance to South African Rule*.

It also includes a chapter on Germany 1918–1945.

The history syllabus of the **Namibia Senior Secondary Certificate** (NSSC) includes a chapter that includes learning achievements such as:

- understand the achievement of Namibian independence (1884–1989)
- discuss the factors that enabled genocide and its impact on the Namibian people

(www.nied.edu.na)

Annex 6: Stories from Hoachanas

The following text (reproduced verbatim), which describes historical events from 1600 to 1989 from the point of view of the Hoachanas people, was published in a typed and photocopied hand-out on the occasion of the celebration of Heroes' Day (1–3 December, 1989) at Hoachanas:

Background history of HOACHANAS 1600–1989

The Rooinasie-Nama are believed to have come from the northeastern part of Namibia. According to the legends of our forebearers the water fountain of Hoachanas was discovered by the Rooinasie-Nama hunters through their hunting dogs in approximately the middle of the 17th century (1600) under the chieftainship of Captain #Hab. It was thus through the discovery of the historic fountain and not through war or military conquest or by political chicanery or any other cunningly devised scheme that the Rooinasie Nama became the rightful owners of the historic settlement Hoachanas.

The period 1600-1899, under the ruthless German regime, was characterized by a combination of rivalries and alliances of which the Hoachanas Peace Treaty (1858) (see full text Appendix 2) was the most important. Signed by almost all Nama captains it marked the first step towards consultation and negotiation amongst Namibian leaders to set their differences.

During the occupation of the German colonialists, the Rooinasie Nama was one of the Nama groups who revolted against the German occupiers and usurpers of our land, during 1904-07. In 1902, the German colonial Government officially proclaimed Hoachanas as an inalienable property reserve of the Rooinasie Namas. The proclamation reads as follows:

„Das nächste reservat ward in Hoachanas, den haupt orte der Roten Nation, gebildet. Dort würde 1902 der platz selbst mit einem pflachen inhalt von 50 000 ha als unveräußerliches eigentum des stammes erklärt.' (The next reserve was created in Hoachanas, the main location of the Red Nation. There, in 1902, the location was proclaimed with an area of 50 000 ha as inalienable property of the tribe.)

In 1905, before going out to the battlefield against the German troops, Captain Manasse !Noreseb of the Rooinasie Namas in consultation with his traditional councilors decided that he will spare the lives, as well as their material property, of those German citizens with whom he and his tribe had lived in peace within the boundaries of Hoachanas, over which he had jurisdiction.

This decision was promptly carried out. The German government was informed of this decision. Men were sent out and they collected all the German farmers and brought them to Hoachanas from where they were speedily taken to Windhoek via Rehoboth by ox wagon and safely handed over to the German authorities. The Captain did this in order thereby to make sure that the survivors of the Rooinasie Namas and their descendants would, even if he is defeated in the war, return to Hoachanas and live at it as their property as before.

In return for this magnanimous gesture by Captain Manasse !Noroseb the German colonial government, on its part, decided that it will not expropriate the land of the Rooinasie Namas and that the war prisoners of the Rooinasie Namas will not be taken into captivity to other African countries, in the West Coast of Africa, as will be done to other partners in the revolts.

This decision of the German colonial government was announced to the Rooinasie survivors of the war at Hoachanas by a German officer in 1907 who came to Hoachanas to collect them and brought them to Windhoek where they served their term as war prisoners. The German officer told the Rooinasie survivors at Hoachanas that they will serve their term of punishment at Windhoek and that after the expiration of their punishment, the German government will itself bring them back to Hoachanas.

The German government did precisely as it told the survivors. If that was not the case, we, descendants of the Rooinasie Namas, wouldn't be at Hoachanas today.

Scarcely three years after she succeeded the German colonial government the South African colonial government demanded the Rooinasie Namas to move to Aminuis reserve. This was in the year 1923. They were left with no other alternative but to flatly reject the notorious idea whereby they were expected to move from their lawful heritage to make room for white settlers from South Africa. The rejection to move by the Rooinasie exceedingly angered the very first South African Administrator who came personally to Hoachanas to induce us to move so much so that he there-and-then pronounced our punishment in the following words:

“Julle hardkoppige Rooinasie hottentots. Ek sal julle so omhein dat julle verplig sal wees om aan hierdie kant kalkklippe van Hoachanas van waar julle nie wil beweeg te kou en as julle a.g.v. die omheining swaarkry en vir my vra om julle te help sal ek beide my oe en ore vir julle toemaak”. (*You*

stubborn Rooinasie Hottentots, I will fence you in, in such a way that you will be obliged to chew this side on these chalky stones from Hoachanas, from where you do not want to move and as a result of this fence you will suffer and ask me to help you, but I will close both my eyes and ears to you.)

It was so said and done. Within a matter of a very short time, Hoachanas was fenced in to such an extent that out of the 50,000 ha of land with which the German colonial government had officially proclaimed the settlement in 1902 as an inalienable property of the Rooinasie Namas the South African government confiscated 26,000 ha of the very best part of the 50,000 ha and left the Rooinasies with a tiny stony part of only 14,000 ha. Thus, the stage of what we are going through to this very day at Hoachanas was set in 1923.

The surrounding white farmers whom the South African government had settled on our confiscated 26,00 ha of land had committed themselves to do any and everything in their power to see to it sooner or later that we will forfeit whatever little right we may think of possessing at Hoachanas and that they will ultimately push us out of this ancestral heritage.

The period 50's – 70's was marked by harassment and threats from the racist S.-A. regime's puppet representatives locally, to move the people from Hoachanas. The people, however, stood strong and resisted this by all means. The leaders never followed a line of: "If you can't beat them, join them." This resulted in the appointment of captains for the Rooinasies, by the Administration for Namas. The latter was never recognized by the people.

In 1976, realizing the importance of united action, the Rooinasie Nama together with other Nama groups joined the national liberation movement, SWAPO: "Today we have arrived at this crossroad and our choice is clear. We join unconditionally in the genuine nationalist platform of SWAPO created by our fellow countrymen and not Turnhalle, the platform created by our enemy, the South African Government.

This step frustrated the Regime even more and they applied their well-known policy of divide-and-rule. Their agents infiltrated the community in a very cunning fashion and planted seeds of division amongst the people. Because of the money involved, some of our people fell prey to this scheme, which caused disunity amongst the people, especially during the late 70's and early 80's.

The community leaders, however, never sat back and worked relentlessly to regain unity amongst the people. To such an extent that today it can be said with ultimate certainty that at least 80% of the Rooinasie Namas had put their cross at the right place. (The mighty SWAPO)

It was a long and bitter struggle, for each and every black Namibian; innocent lives had been lost and immeasurable injuries inflicted, but we believe that a new era has dawned, an era marked by justice, freedom and solidarity.

To all peace-loving Namibians, a call to reconcile and unite to build a prosperous future Namibia as ONE NATION, RECONCILE AND UNITE FOR A PROSPEROUS FUTURE NAMIBIA!!! WE BUILD A NATION!!! VIVA PEOPLE'S GOVERNMENT: VIVA! VIVA THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA VIVA!!!"



This publication presents the voices of Nama and several Damara people in Namibia through more than 70 interviews with young, middle-aged, and elderly men and women from various backgrounds and areas.

It offers multifaceted and thought-provoking insights into how the colonial past of the Nama, Damara and Herero people is remembered, how the genocide that took place between 1904 and 1908 during the German colonial period still affects them today, both physically and emotionally, and whether benefits from a negotiated settlement between Namibia and Germany are likely to flow to them, and if so, along what avenues this should occur.

An introductory chapter also provides valuable background information on the history of the Nama people, the ongoing reconciliation process between Namibia and Germany since 2006, and the Joint Declaration issued in 2021 by the Namibian and German governments.