

Speech presented by Author/ Reparation Activist Mr. Jephta Nguherimo at the 1<sup>st</sup> session of the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent. December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Geneva, United Nations.

Good afternoon, esteemed members of the United Nations Permanent Forum on People of African Descent.

I am Jephta Nguherimo. I am from Namibia, but I am currently based in the USA. I am here to speak to you on the issue of Reparatory Justice in the context of Namibia. First, I am a Namibian of Herero descent. I mention my heritage because my people experienced the first genocide of the twentieth century by the German colonial government.

In 1904-1908, the German Imperial government wiped out about 80-85% of the OvaHerero people. Those remaining were placed in concentration camps, where many of them died. The Germans confiscated most of our ancestral land in central Namibia. This genocide is not widely known or written about in history books. However, the German people are aware of the genocide they committed in Namibia. Not only did they commit genocide against the OvaHerero people but against the Nama people of Namibia as well. They did this simply because the OvaHerero and Nama people *refused* to be subjects of the German colonial government.

The German colonial government issued a proclamation order, the *Vernichtung befel, an Extermination Order*, targeted at the OvaHerero and Nama people. This order was sanctioned by the German colonial state, and it stated clearly that the Herero tribe must be exterminated including the confiscation of their properties including their land.

For years we have been demanding that the German government Apologize, Restore and Repair the communities that were affected by the genocide. Sadly, our own government is circumventing our struggle against the German government - simply because the German government is the largest donor to the country's economic bilateral aid.

We took the German government to the US courts without the support of our government.

We are Alone in our struggle.

Not even the SADC, the Southern African Development Community, the African Union and the United Nations has lent support to our cause.

We have been fighting our struggle without a Reparatory Justice template. It is the struggle we have been waging because we believe it is morally *Right* and *Just*.

We are asking this Forum to establish a Global Reparatory Justice framework to help guide the work of those seeking justice in their quest for the return of stolen artifacts, human remains and economic compensation, including the return of their ancestral land.

We demand accountability and repair for the genocide of the OvaHerero and Nama people, so that the people can Restore their dignity and Repair what was destroyed.

On behalf of the OvaHerero and Nama people, I thank you and the Open Society Institute for the opportunity to speak here!

*Submitted on December 7th, 2022: pfpad@un.org*