

In order to let the experts voices speak on the German Genocide Question in Namibia, I have interviewed Ueriuka Tjikuua – Active civic member on the national Namibian delegation in the Commission for the Genocide’s Question during colonial German occupation.

The interview took place after his visit in Hamburg and Berlin in 2016.

Tania Mancheno

UERIUKA TJIKUUA (UT) ANSWERS – 20 JULY 2016:

TM: Regarding the process of negotiation between Namibia and Germany concerning the question of Genocide, *can you give us a short resume of the events that have taken place in Namibia after your visit in Germany in June 2016?*

UT:

- The Namibian Technical Committee of the Cabinet Committee on the Genocide, Apology and Reparation finalized and approved the Namibian negotiation position paper for the German Special Envoy delegation.
- The German Special Envoy Mr Ruprecht Polenz arrived in Namibia. A delegation in which I was involved accompanied him and his delegation for a site visit to Luderitz where he visited Shark Island, a former concentration camp where the victims of 1904 and 1908 Genocide perished as prisoners.
- From Luderitz, a delegation accompanied Mr Polenz to Gibeon, where his delegation visited the historical sites of Kaptein Witbooi Authority.
- The two Special Envoys held discussions in Windhoek where our position paper for negotiation was handed over to the German delegation to take home for consideration and to reciprocate on the similar basis.

TM: *In your opinion, have there been any developments or important changes in the position of Germany in the last months?*

UT: The significant developments in the position of Germany is the official recognition that extermination of our people during the period 1904 to 1908 by the German forces of colonial occupation was indeed a Genocide that deserve official and acceptable apology. However, there is a growing facial expression of displeasure among some Namibians concerning the new journey of the German Special Envoy of negotiations through the media sidelining the set procedures, and contacts to the leaders of some affected communities who are not officially recognised under the Traditional Authorities Act, Act 25 of 2000.

TM: *If yes, how are those changes being received by the Namibian population? For example, is the media informing on a regular basis on the issue?*

UT: The change of position by the German Government was pleasant to the Namibian people as it was long overdue. The media is informing the public on any new developments as they are unfolding regularly, but with some biases. Thus, some sections of the media do not inform the public objectively because they have their own corrupt agendas.

TM: *In your opinion, what is the most important burden faced by the question of recognition?*

UT: The burden that recognition faces is to align itself with an acceptable Apology and acceptable and lasting Reparation (there is even a German word for that: *Wiedergutmachung*) with which the descendants of the victims of the 1904 to 1908 Genocide can live with, taking cognizant of the reality that descendants are divided on the issue of traditional leadership differences.