

CONTRIBUTION BY MR SEBATIAAN KARUPU ON THE MOTION OF THE GENOCIDE MEMORIAL MUSEUM MOVED BY HONOURABLE JOSEF KAUANDENGE ON 28-02-2023 IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF NAMIBIA

Honourable Speaker,

Honourable Members,

I rise to add my voice to the debate on the floor, on the Motion of Genocide Memorial Museum, moved by Hon. Josef Kauandenge on the 28-02-2023 in this august House.

Allow me Honourable Members to commence my contribution by thanking the mover, Honourable Kauandenge for trying to be inclusive in narrating the history of this country. I thank you for acknowledging and recognising the role played by many Namibians during the German imperial rule. I want to agree with you Honourable Kauandenge on General Lothar Von Trotha's extermination orders that they were exclusively issued to the Ovaherero and Nama communities in this country. This is indeed a historic fact that is widely documented in Namibia and elsewhere in the world. We all are aware that the first extermination order in Namibia was issued on the 2nd of October 1904 to the Ovaherero community, while the second extermination order was issued on the 22nd of April 1905 to the Nama community.

We also know that the negotiations between the Government of the Republic of Namibia led by one of the Namibia's distinguished scholar, Dr Zed Ngavirue, may his soul continues to rest in peace. The negotiation was a result of the Motion moved by the late Honourable Chief Kuaima Riruako, may his soul continuous to rest in peace. Hon Riruako's motion mainly focused on demand for Germans to give unconditional apology, pay reparations and restitution for the brutal killings of the Ovaherero and Nama communities on the order by General Lothar Von Trotha. Chief Riruako described the killings as an act of '**Genocide**'.

Honourable Speaker,

Honourable Members,

We all are aware of the battle of Ohamakari that took place on 11 August 1904 at Waterberg. In this battle many Ovaherero Namibians suffered casualty resulted in many of them flee the country to the neighboring Botswana. On their

journey to Botswana for their safety, many died of thirst and hunger in the Kalahari Desert.

Chief Hosea Katjukururume Komombumbi Kutako was a commander and prison of war. During the battle of Ohamakari, Chief Kutako was shot through the cheek. He was among those who escorted Chief Samuel Maharero to the safety of Bechuanaland. In 1990 the government of the Republic of Namibia honoured Chief Kutako as a national hero in which he was named after the country's International Airport, replacing its colonial name J.G.Strijdom.

Honourable Speaker,

History also has it that Kaptein Hendrik Witbooi was killed in action on 29 October 1905 in the village of Vaalgras. Kaptein Witbooi is recognized by the government of this country as one of the heroes of Namibia whose face is portrayed on all the N\$50, N\$100 and N\$200 Namibian Dollars Banknotes.

It is also well documented in the history of this country that the German imperial Government was in Namibia from 1884 to 1919, before the country was declared as a **League of Nations Class C Mandate territory under the Treaty of Versailles**, with the Union of South Africa responsible for the administration of then South West Africa. During the 35 years of the German rule, many Namibian natives all over this country were terrified and brutality killed by the regime. Hundreds of Namibian natives died in battles against the German troops, even before General Von Trotha issued extermination orders to the Herero and Nama communities.

Zacharias Lewala was a Namibian worker, considered to be the first German employee who had picked up the first diamond in the area of Luderitz on the 14 April 1908. His discovery led to his boss started to carryout mining activities in the area and made thousands of Deutsche Mark. While the discoverer, Mr Lewala received zero cent from the proceeds of that mineral he discovered.

Honourable Speaker,

Honourable Members,

In his motivation speech, Honourable Kauandenge informed this august House that, "We often hear that other tribes died as well during this period at the hands of the Germans. I am not disputing that, yes, indeed, that is true they all died in cross fire." The mover further argued that, "Did the Germans know how

they can distinguish between a Herero, a Nama, San, perhaps because of their complexion and Damaras, probably not.”

Honourable Kauandenge also revealed in his motivation speech the following, “The Kavangos, the Caprivians, the Damaras and even the Rehoboth Basters at Sam Khubis on 8 May 1915, they fought the colonial forces of Germany, they took a stand and said here we will die, it is our last stand, they fought until the night, only for the Germans to retreat after losing many soldiers.”

I agree with Hon Kauandenge and I once again comment him for his well-researched paper, I also agree with his quotes that includes, “History is the story of who we are, where we come from, and can potentially reveal where we are heading.”

Honourable Speaker, the mover’s balanced presentation prompted me to expand on his research work by reading a bit of our history during the German colonial rule. In my preparation of my contribution I have decided to consolidate the mover’s findings, Yes, I agree with the Honourable Kauandenge that the people of Kavango did fought some battles against the Germans and they really engaged in fierce battles.

Some of the well documented sad events in the life of the Kavango people during the German South West Africa colony, particularly in the Vagciriku community was the **Lishora Massacre** in which all abled bodied men were shot and killed at a close range by the German hired and armed men of Kgosi Sekgoma. This massacre which qualifies to be a genocide on its own merit was carefully and secretly organized by then German imperial Authority in the then German South West Africa. The Germans threatened Kgosi Sekgoma to avail his men to be trained to go and face Homba Nyangana’s men. Failing to agree to the German’s proposal, Kgosi Sekgoma could be held accountable for the death of the two European traders. To prevent any consequences that may results from his refusal to the German’s proposals, Kgosi Sekgoma availed his men to be trained and armed with the then modern European weapons and ammunitions to go and face Homba Nyangana’s men who were accused of killing a German trader by the name of Phillip Wiessel and an English trader by the name of Robert Arthur Farady in 1892.

However, two years before the German authority reached out to Kgosi Sekgoma, a senior German military officer, Major Curt Von Francois visited the Eastern Kavango and proceeded to Bechuanaland in early 1890. It was during

that period the officer discovered about the military strength of Hompa Nyangana and his cordial relationship with Kgosi Sekgoma of Ngamiland in Bechuanaland. By that time Hompa Nyangana was already known as the butcher of the white explorers (a person who kills white explorers indiscriminately).

The Germans took advantage of the cordial relationship of Hompa Nyangana and Kgosi Sekgoma and prepared a trap for Hompa Nyangana by demanding from Kgosi Sekgoma to avail his men to be trained and go to fight Hompa Nyangana's men. Kgosi Sekgoma knowing Hompa Nyangana's military strength, he has to devise a strategy in which he send message to Hompa Nyangana suggesting to visit him and offer him and his soldiers a ritual treatment known among the Vagciriku community as '**Peku**'. The treatment of Peku as per the Vagciriku and Bechuana customs and believe then, was said to empower all members of the army in that community to become bullet-proof.

Kgosi Sekgoma came with a large number of trained and armed men with wagons full of European weapons and ammunition. Sekgoma informed his best friend Hompa Nyangana that he was heading to Shambyu to fight Prince Kanyetu and he will only conduct the treatment upon his return from Prince Kanyetu.

On his return from Shambyu, Sekgoma found all able bodied men of the Vagciriku gathered at Malyo in the present Southern Angola. This is because, before the arrival of Europeans, about 120 kilometres of the area south of the present Angola was inhabited by the Vagciriku community. That is why you still find the Hompa and Fumu on the southern Angola from east to western part are members of the Hambukushu, Vagciriku, Vashambyu, and Vakwangali royal families to who are ruling both sides of the Kavango river.

The condition set by Chief Sekgoma to Hompa Nyangana for the treatment to be effective was that no men of Hompa Nyangana must be in position any weapon during the ritual treatment. It was in that manner the Germans managed to get hold of the Vagciriku warriors and they were all shoot and killed at a close range. This intentionally organised massacre known as the **Malyo-Lishora Massacre** took place on April 1893. Hompa Nyangan with his son Clemence Mbambo and many girls who were members of the royal family were captured and were tasked to drive hundreds of cattle and horses to Ngamiland (Bechuanaland).

One historian in the Vagciriku community in the name of Honourable John Mutorwa in his thesis for his Masters' Degree in Social Sciences (1996, p.11) urged the upcoming scholars to research more on Lishora Massacre.

Mutorwa who came across the narratives of Lishora Massacre from some members of the Vagciriku community during his research, urged the upcoming researchers on history to get deep into the history of the Vagciriku community, he himself focus more on the arrival and the role of the missionaries in that area.

Another historian who imaged from that same community, Mr Romanus Shampapi Shiremo took up the challenge to respond to his former history teacher's call to embark upon the detailed research on the Vagciriku history with reference to Hompa Nyangana's life and leadership style. It is during this research work that Shiremo came across Hompa Nyangana and other Hompas in Kavango's encounters with the German imperial rulers in Namibia. Shiremo went as far as Botswana where he has collected more evidence on the Lishora Massacre from the National Archive of Botswana. Like his former history teacher, Shiremo undertook this research for his Masters' Degree in Social Sciences.

Honourable Speaker,

Honourable Members,

Another encounter between the Kavango and Germans among others was the one known as the Kavangongo uprising of 1903 against the German colonial rule. According to Beris's publication of 1996, page 209, Hompa Himarwa Ithete's resistance attitude and action in 1903, led to the Catholic Missionaries whom he refused to settle in his territory to declare him an enemy (*persona non grata*) of the Germany imperial government.

The German-Vakwangali skirmish of July 16, 1903 is remembered in the collective memory of the Vakwangali and the Vambunza as "Yita yaKatautau," (the War of Katautau). The Germans attacked Hompa Ithete, killed many of his men and put his palace on fire. Hon Speaker, because of time let me conclude my intervention on this historic debate by briefly narrate the last battle fought against the Germans by another bravery traditional leader of Namibia.

On January 28, 1904, about 500 men under the command of Omukwaneilwa Nehale IyaMpingana attacked imperial German's *schutztruppe* at Ford

Namutoni. The 7 defenders of the fort fled under the cover of night. Mpingana and his men confiscated horses and cattle and destroyed the outpost.

All these battles happened because the kingdoms in this country, like any kingdoms in the rest of Africa were on the periphery of the expanding territorial claims of the Germans and other Europeans which resulted from the 1884-1885 Berlin Conference, known as the 'Crumble for Africa' which is to divide Africa among the European powers.

Finally, in his motivation speech Hon Kauandenge made reference to the 'Rwanda Genocide'. The Genocide in Rwanda is known as the **Kigali Genocide Memorial**. In the 6th Parliament, I was privileged to lead a delegation from the Standing Committee on Constitutional and Legal Affairs on a benchmark study on the Motion of a Genocide Remembrance Day, moved by Hon Usutuaije Maamberua on April 26, 2016 in this very honourable House.

When we asked those who made presentations to the delegation as to why didn't they name the centre to a Tutsi Genocide Memorial as the minority Tutsis were the once that were targeted by their fellow country men and women, the Hutus? We were impressed by their reply to our question in which they told the delegation as follow, *"We have taken a deliberate move to call this centre as **Kigali Genocide Memorial** to avoid further divisions among ourselves and to encourage ourselves to forgive each-others, to reconcile, to close the old chapter and to open a new chapter and move forward as a united nation."*

Honourable Speaker,

Honourable Members,

Hon. Kauandenge among other questions he asked in his motivation speech are, "CAN WE CHANGE THE HISTORY OF KING MANDUME YA NDEMUFAYO, THAT HE WAS BEHEADED AND HIS HEAD NOT EVEN BURIED AT THE PLACE OF THE EXECUTION AND WAS RATHER TRANSPORTED HUNDREDS OF KILOMETERS AWAY? THE ANSWER IS AN EMPHATIC NO! CAN WE CHANGE HISTORY THAT ON 4 MAY 1978 THE SOUTH AFRICAN DEFENCE (SADF) TOOK LESS THEN FOUR HOURS TO KILL MORE THEN 800 INNOCENT NAMIBIANS AT A REFUGEE CAMP IN CASSINGA? THE ANSWER IS AN EMPHATIC NO".

Having said the above and having quoted the mover of this motion under discussion, allow me Honourable Speaker to end my intervention on this debate

by submitting to this august House and to the entire Namibian nation, that when resource permits for us to build a Genocide Museum, this museum should have a national identity.

The museum must house all the pictures and writings of historical events that are related to the battles and killings of the Namibian natives by the German imperial rulers in every part of Namibia, include the events that happened in the areas that Namibia might have lost to the neighbouring countries as a results of the European artificial borders that were imposed on us Africans.

Honourable Speaker, I disagree with those who claim that the inclusion of other battles fought by other chiefs and hompas who are not members of the two communities to which the extermination orders were issued will weaken the country's position to demand for reparation and restitution from the German government. If the argument is about who should benefit and who should not benefit from the quantum the German government is to give, we all are pretty aware that the motion that led to the negotiation of such a quantum mainly focused on Von Trotha's extermination orders issued to the Ovaherero and Nama communities. The mover spoke about Cassinga Day, and I heard some Members of this House saying that about ninety percent (90%) of the Namibian that died in Cassinga were Oshiwambo speaking, yet the day is being commemorated as a national day.

What harm will it cause to this nation if we have the Genocide Museum as a national museum? It is in this view that I submit to this august House and to the Namibian nation that if a genocide museum is to be build, it should be a national museum, housing all documented history related to the German rule in this country.

I so submit Honourable Speaker and I thank you for the opportunity.