



OVAHERERO GENOCIDE FOUNDATION

Ehi retu, Ombindu yetu, Ozongombe zetu

Headquarters

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**Tribute to the late Ombara Otjitambu Jovaherero Adv Vekuii Rukoro
By
Nandiasora Mazeingo, Chairperson of Ovaherero Genocide Foundation (OGF)
July 16th, 2021, Windhoek, Namibia**

Distinguished Directors of Proceedings, glorious Ovaherero People in Namibia and the diaspora, the indestructible Leadership of our people embodied by the Chiefs Council and it's supporting 7 member Transitional Committee executing the mandate of the now vacant Ombara Otjitambi's Office, the Rukoro and Kuhanga clans, my own mother, the widow Dinah Jorokee Rukoro, the children, Leaders of the Nama Traditional Leaders Association, the wider restorative justice movement at home and abroad, our political friends from formations represented here and elsewhere...

Fellow mourners, it truly pains me that as perhaps one of the last recruits of the late PC Rukoro, I would address this mass global audience only on this very somber occasion where we send-home a true leader of our cause and fervent soldier in whom we had absolute confidence.. Indeed a man taken from us at the worst possible time.. perhaps giving meaning to the old Ovaherero wisdom of "tona omurise ozo^ndu zepandjare" but then we must resist and say for so long as we are here, our cause remains on track, our journey remains focused on the end goal...which is real and genuine justice for our people.....

Dear friends, with the passing on of our Leader, our people are at crossroads, our struggle is challenged but our resolve is ever more entrenched. Like at all times in history and all junctures of crisis moments, from the ashes of a perilous event such as this most untimely departure of a generation-defining leader emerges a people led by men and women knee-deep-rooted in their convictions and duty to match across the field carrying the torch for true liberation and justice to its conclusive end...

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As front-most students of this generation who owes our entry into Ovaherero politics to the inspirational leadership and persona of PC Rukoro, celebrating his purposeful life lived well, under the umbrella of Ovaherero Genocide Foundation and joined by millions many not only in the sister Nama nation but chiefly across the many fields of southern Africa where Ovaherero children finds themselves as temporary residents longing for a return to the land once known as Hereroland, I commit my generation anew to the Kuaima Riruako's teachings on the universality of the inalienable rights of all persons subjected to the crime of Genocide to the internationally settled penalty of Reparations; I reiterate the Mutuurunge Kapuu's unifying message of Ovaherero indivisibility and oneness echoed in the years preceding his untimely departure; I affirm the Pan-Africanist posture of Komombumbi Kutako which laid the basis for the rise of Namibian Nationalism and Statehood AND I unyieldingly, without apology, fear and or contradiction, in the solemnity the sacred remains of my departed Leader requires, rededicate myself and my generation to the life and times of Vekuii Rukoro..

Pursuing the undoing of the expressed desire of the ultra-colonialist Lothar von Trotha who once swore to annihilate my people from the face of the earth, I further reaffirm the vision of a self-sufficient Ovaherero people with dignity returned to every child, mother, man and household..

Dear mourners, PC Rukoro wanted very many things and many of us who'd worked closely with him would retell tales of his vision, steadfastness and acumen around tough situations here and beyond his final resting day but I think there were few such moments, particularly in his last days, that were starker, more pronounced and galvanizing of our people than his stance on issues of our restorative justice...And I come along at perhaps the pinnacle of his days in that struggle...and so had the privilege

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of sitting in the room where it all happened.!. And I just want to briefly relive them....

PC Rukoro chiefly demanded that Ovaherero and Namas, as communities targeted by the German Extermination Orders of 1904 and 1905 respectively and it's execution which resulted in the first Genocide of the 20th century, speak directly with the state of Germany. ...he particularly rejected and abhorred the idea of absolutist representation adopted by the Namibian government which essentially posits itself as elected into Office to represent the wider citizenry on all matters heavens and earth, including those for which it has not expressly sought a representation mandate ...PC Rukoro reminded us that Swapo, the governing majority in Namibia for the last 30 years, through at least six electoral contests had at no point sought and secured a mandate from Ovaherero and Nama people to speak on their behalf on any matter Genocide ..this essentially was the premise for his opposition to the current scenario wherein the state of Namibia wholly appropriates the right to negotiate on our behalf to itself ..and to our exclusion AND to reverse this situation he persistently called for a Referendum to establish the non-existence of such a mandate.....

He therefore particularly rejected proxies on the payroll of Government projected as representatives of our people..And as our leader and Teacher he'd schooled us to reject all past, present and future such characters imposed on our cause without our participation in their selection AND we thus, holding his teachings sacred, say whomever they maybe, they must know that without our active participation in their elevation to any role purported to be representative of us, they are swiftly and roundly rejected.....rebotling old tombo into new bottles as we hear is happening now is no pathway forward, PC Rukoro had schooled us to reject that AND certainly we do!.....

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PC Rukoro also rejected the lie of a Germany that does not talk to non-state entities and he was quick to remind Germany that there only difference between us as Ovaherero and Namas of Namibia and the World AND the Jews of Israel and The World on the other side ... specifically our very Jewish friends with whom Germany signed reparations protocol One and Two respectivelyis that we are black Africans and they are fellow Caucasians of European descent...thus kith and kin of Germans.....and that's the text book definition of racism and or separate treatment on the basis of race, skin color and the rest.. best known in this region as Apartheid!..

Further, PC Rukoro had taught us to strife ONLY for an unambiguous and unequivocal admission of guilt to the crime of Genocide by Germany...and he was unrelenting in emphasizing that the guilt admission we seek is ONLY to Genocide as a Crime under International law, as understood by all civilized nations (and not just Germany alone) AND not guilt to Genocide as a political and moral construct to which Germany then, as reportedly a good friend of Namibia, attaches self-promoting gestures of development aid as we recently learnt from those who claims to have represented or rather mis-miseprented us.. ..Taking cue from PC Rukoro we only seek admission to the crime of Genocide and in case Germany did not internalize what PC Rukoro stressed on numerous occasions, the duty to educate falls on us and so I now assert that the 1948 UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the crime of Genocide has long settled and accepted language on what Genocide and it's penalty is and that's clearly defined as Reparations....and that's we seek!

PC Rukoro reminded us to out-richtly reject the fallacy of the non-retroactive applicability of that Convention to crimes against humanity before the date of its adoption in 1948 as the German state under then Chancellor Conrad Adenauer saw it fit

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and proper to apply it to German crimes of the Third Reich under Adolf Hitler who massacred Jews in the Holocaust between 1938 and 1945 and so he argued non-retroactive applicability does not hold... To him, and us, it is critically important that through our own direct engagement with our erstwhile assailant- Germany- we first have a joint understanding of the horrors unleashed on our society by Germany , that Germany therefore openly regrets the many irrevocable lives and opportunities it took away from our society and consequently condemned our people to conditions of squalor and deprivation...And that with such understanding in place, in direct conversation with us, a commensurate and workable reparations package, in proportionality to the loss incurred, is arrived at through a negotiated mode.. ..

These are the ideals, times and indelible footprints of the indomitable PC Rukoro and as OGF in our collective, as leader of that collective, I commit firmly and unrelentingly to this cause and say to those who seeks to take us and this mission forward, in furtherance of the agenda of our people, OGF is your partner of choice and most ardent soldier. To those opportunist elements, in the employment of our detractors' who perhaps, seeing an opening in the departure of PC Rukoro, now reckons it's possible to wrestle this struggle away from us and derail it, I say consider us your most ferocious adversaries *for* because of this agenda, in the service of this agenda, we will fight you and we will defeat you for we understand perfectly well that this is a trans generational heritage we must guard jealously and that no amount of imported power and influence must be permitted to have one generation ruin this cause for another and indeed a whole people...

For those seeking discord and division amongst our people, as students of the generation of Vekuii Rukoro, we remind you that our people survived open hostilities

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with our great neighbors and erstwhile adversaries, the Namas of Great Namaqualand, we survived pandemics...including the cattle rinderpest which struck at the very core of our economy and livelihood, we survived a Genocide executed through an expressed public policy of a European power, so we will counter you, we will fight and defeat you because failure to us is no option ..

Our most solemn duty is to achieve this mission for restorative justice in our lifetime but even sacrosanct is the responsibility that should conditions not permit for a successful execution of this task in our lifetime, we must fully bequeath it to those to come after us...As the collective of OGF we pledge to doing just that, as leader of OGF I intend to do only that...

Go well my leader, until we meet again, your unfinished business remains our business, so long my leader, so long!..

Kaende nawa muhona wandje, Mitiri yandje!