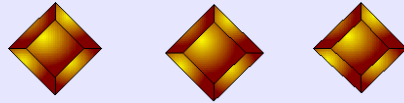


## NAMA TRADITIONAL LEADERS ASSOCIATION



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**A Tribute to Paramount Chief Advocate Vekuii Rukoro  
By Gaob Johannes Isaack  
On Behalf of the Nama Traditional Leaders Association  
16 July 2021, Keetmanshoop**

The Namibian nation is in mourning. We are embattled by a destructive disease, and our very existence is threatened, in every sense of the word. In these difficult times, we are assured by the Lord, our Creator with the following words in Psalm 46 verse 10: “Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted on the earth”.

We, as the Nama Leaders, worked very closely with Paramount Chief Advocate Vekuii Rukoro in order to protect and promote the interest of our peoples, using a well-established relationship, initiated by our forebearers, and matured over the years. Our current organizations, the Nama Traditional Leaders Association (NTLA) and Ovaherero Traditional Authority (OTA) together with their respective Technical Committees will continue to challenge vigorously the status quo and the malevolent influences of relevant authorities against Nama and Ovaherero peoples.

Paramount Chief Vekuii Rukoro always reminded us of the forgotten history of today’s Namibia, he retold us heartily as our forbearers did, to reflect on our dignity, ancestral land and coexistence. For our ancestors, accommodating a fellow human being in our indigenous territorial spaces and coexisting with others was normal. At the same time, it was simply unacceptable for our ancestors that an accommodated settler wants to establish control over the indigenous people in their own space. Thus,

colonization was wholeheartedly barred by our ancestors irrespective of whatever the consequences may be. PC Rukoro followed in the footsteps of his mothers and fathers, and for this reason rejected the reconciliation and reconstruction agreement signed between the two governments of Namibia and Germany no matter what the consequences might be. He had two final assignments which he has entrusted to us. We shall fight tooth and nail to nourish the bond between the Nama and Ovaherero people. Equally we shall fight the continued salient genocide today committed against these two nations. This I promise to the world. I may not see the final freedom of our people, just as PC Rukoro did not see it, but our children and grandchildren shall hold the torch, for it is a long walk to freedom.

The inalienable right of self-determination and self-representation for which PC Rukoro stood, must be protected. Today we observe that the neo colonial powers threaten these principles. In yesteryears, it became essential for those Nama tribes crossing from Small Namaqualand to apply their experience and rekindle a process to prevent and/or stop colonization. All Nama Leaders of Great Namaqualand signed the Hoachanas Treaty on January 09, 1858, to preserve principles and reflections of our forebearers. Both the Ovaherero Royal House and Griqua Royal House were represented during the proceedings in Hoachanas.

In 1876, special commissioner William Coates Palgrave of the British government in Cape Colony tried to colonize Great Namaqualand and Hereroland but he failed. From November 1884 to February 1885, the notorious Berlin Conference was held in Germany and the participating European nations decided that today's Namibia, including Hereroland and Great Namaqualand, had to be colonized by Germany. But the Ovaherero and Nama peoples had no intention to surrender their sovereignty, and this led to the very first crime of genocide committed against our ancestors in modern history.

I want to remind the Namibian nation that most of the fundamental infrastructure enjoyed by our nation today was built by Nama and Ovaherero survivors of genocide. In fact, Tinten Palast which hosts the Parliament of Namibia, both National Assembly and National Council, was built by our ancestors. It is indeed very sad and ironic that the Prime Minister of Republic

of Namibia tried to announce a so-called conclusion of negotiations on genocide after excluding NTLA and OTA, the authentic representatives of victims of the genocide in the very Tinten Palast built on the blood and sweat of genocide survivors.

I want to remind Namibia on this day when we prepare to lay to rest my brother and colleague, that the question of genocide, reparations and legal responsibility will not be separated and sugar coated into an act of benevolence in order to sooth the egos of a former colonial master and its obedient servant. Engaging NTLA and OTA in all negotiations of genocide is a national imperative because such inclusion is crucial to unravelling structural discrimination, and to harnessing the reconciliation process which is central to establishing restorative justice as a groundwork for a sustainable and peaceful future for our country, Namibia. Signing a bilateral development aid agreement in the name of the blood of our people, will effectively divide this would be nation.

We take note of the fact that the Prime Minister deliberately omitted to talk about the meeting held at Statehouse in February of 2017 and in doing so, she misled the National Assembly; and misrepresented the position of OTA and NTLA on genocide, apology, and reparations during her address on Tuesday, 8 June 2021.

Let me put the record straight for those who have been misled. In 2015, the new President of Namibia insisted on his appointed Envoy to speak on behalf of the victim communities, in a bilateral type of negotiations process between Namibia and Germany. The NTLA and OTA refused to participate in a bilateral discussion, and instead insisted on a tripartite discussion in line with the 2006 Parliamentary resolution. President Geingob refused this solution and insisted that OTA and NTLA join the discussions as advisors to the government team. In 2017 he held a meeting with OTA and NTLA in which he agreed to a tripartite arrangement. A follow-up meeting was to be held two weeks after. As nothing happened, the NTLA and OTA wrote again a letter to the President in 2019 to resume discussions on the issue. This letter was ignored. In 2021 the Prime Minister announced that NTLA and OTA refused to participate.

I remember with pride the outstanding performance of PC Advocate Vekuii Rukoro and Gaob David Frederick at this meeting. Their cool, calm and

collected approach and conduct was remarkable and everyone was satisfied with the outcome. It is very unfortunate that President Geingob's Administration was acting in bad faith and never executed the Administration's commitments. PC Rukoro has now joined Gaob David Frederick, and together they lament the Geingob Administration's concerted effort to ignore and undermine the will of the Ovaherero and Nama peoples.

But alas, the Ovaherero and Nama people through their authorized representatives, the late PC Rukoro of OTA and Gaob PSM Kooper of NTLA had signed the !Hoaxa!nâs Declaration on Saturday, June 12, 2021, only 6 days before PC Rukoro passed away. Our Holy Father has a purpose for everything. Nothing is a coincidence. Saturday June 12, 2021 was written long before we knew. The reaffirmation and renewed commitment of our peoples to stand together until the end, is our heritage which we shall jealously guard as a sacred responsibility.

We salute Ombara Otjitambi Advocate Vekuii Rukoro for the time well spent on planet earth, we shall never forget you, and may your soul rest in peace! Your children shall rise for justice. Rest well my brother and colleague.

I thank you.

Gaob Isaack  
Nama Traditional Leaders Association