

Mazeingo paints Germany's decision as 'racist'

The chairperson of the Ovaherero genocide foundation Nandi Mazeingo says the genocide community rejects the apology the German government is yet to tender to Namibia.

Mazeingo's comments come as the German government on Friday rejected demands to re-negotiate a new reparation deal over the Namibian genocide.

Last year Germany virtually apologised for its role in the slaughter of the Herero and Nama people in Namibia more than a century ago and officially described the massacre as genocide for the first time, as it agreed to fund projects worth over a billion euros.

This deal was signed in May and accepted to pay Namibia €1.1bn (N\$18 billion) as reparation for the genocide committed during the colonial era.

The reparation was to be in the form of financial support for Namibia's development through a program over 30 years through spending on infrastructure, healthcare, and training programs benefiting the impacted communities.

"The apology that they are said to be coming over to Namibia to offer is not going to be accepted. It is rejected before it even arrives, that is our position," said Mazeingo.

The foundation chair said the decision taken by Germany is racist and that it comes as no surprise to them as Germany has long adopted that posture in dealing with the question of Ovaherero and Nama Genocide..

"It is a racist position but we are not surprised. It's how they have've long dealt with this question....By the way, we have not asked for renegotiations of JD, we have rather asked for fresh start to all of these talks..for it makes no sense to continue working on the basis of a flawed framework..," he said.

"Someone is said to be coming to Namibia to apologize, I don't know to whom and for what when they practically continue to deny the crime and elect to belittle it to other things evading legal culpabilities, we are not interested because it is not a genuine apology. We reject all of it," he stressed.

During his state of the nation address, President Hage Geingob lashed out that he has done his part in the genocide negotiations and that officials from Germany will come to Namibia to tender that apology.

However, Mazeingo said the manner in which the talks were held are flawed and that the deal is not in the name of the community affected by the crime.

“The basis and or framework is flawed And so naturally, the outcome of these talks would be flawed as well. We were not involved to speak for ourselves, and if justice is for us it naturally must be defined by us. So Germany can talk to whoever they want using the arrogance of their power, they can talk to the Namibian government and sign off their sham settlement deal but it is not in our name. It is development aid and so has nothing to do with reparation which is the defined penalty for the crime they committed against us,” he adds.

NO GIVING UP

He also stamped that if the community is forced into a corner, it will not surrender, will not compromise its struggle, adding that the green party and partners are not in government forever.

“Governments come and go, we will not be rushed into half-baked deals by any government of the day. For they may be the government today but won’t be there forever. The foundation will continue to advocate for a genuine resolution to this question and will continue to reject these sham exercises from these governments and the next hundred governments until true justice is delivered to our people.”

He reiterated that the joint declaration is an insult and the community is not party to it.

“We are not going to have any government speak for us, and moreso a government that has never sought and secured a mandate from us to speak for us on these issues. The governing Swapo majority has contested many elections since independence, have they ever talked about genocide and reparations in their manifesto? Never..Their political program does not include anything on this question,” said the Ovaherero genocide foundation.

Meanwhile, member of Parliament Joseph Kauandenge also maintains that it comes as no surprise that Germany rejected a renegotiation.

“We are really surprised that they don’t want to renegotiate because obviously if you sit on the table and negotiate on behalf of people that are still alive and exclude those communities that have been affected by the genocide. What do you expect at the end of the day?” he questioned.

“For us, it is the Germans treating us as blacks. We are perhaps inferior. We have anticipated this to be the case.”

However, Kauandenge said the community will continue to call on the German government to renegotiate.

“Even if it is not now, future generations will still hold them accountable for what they did to the Namibian people,” he said.

When asked whether the Namibian government and the affected community not being on the same page played a role in Germany's decision, he said the country used this to its advantage.

“When you fragment and divide on this issue obviously Germany will take it and use it to their advantage. This is what we have been calling for saying that we cannot appear to be divided because once we do that and Germany recognises that even these people are divided they will also use that to their advantage. The division has a lot to do with perhaps the change in heart of Germans because they are not united even in the affected communities.”