

# The Namibian

## Full Story

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### **Genocide victims ask Govt to get skulls back from Germany**

By: BRIGITTE WEIDLICH

**MEMBERS of a joint initiative of Herero and Nama-speaking Namibians to repatriate the skulls of their ancestors, which were sent to Germany 100 years ago for 'research', were to deliver an official request to the Office of the Prime Minister last week asking Government to formally approach Berlin to return the skulls to Namibia.**

"The letter is ready and we are set to deliver the letter to Prime Minister Nahas Angula before 17h00 otherwise it will be done early Wednesday (last week)," Arnold Tjihuike, a member of the joint reparation committee, told The Namibian.

A recently televised documentary in Germany on the rediscovery of the forgotten skulls in two university archives provoked strong interest from print media and the public in Germany and France.

It also opened up old wounds among the descendants of the dead, who want their loved ones to have a proper burial in Namibian soil.

After the 1904 Herero uprising against colonial Germany, which was followed by the Nama in October 1905, men, women and children of these two language groups were rounded up and dumped in prison camps, the most notorious being those at Swakopmund and on Shark Island at Luederitz, where thousands perished due to the harsh weather and malnourishment.

About 50 skulls of dead prisoners from Shark Island were sent to German scientific institutes for measurements and tests in order to "prove the superiority of the white race".

Officials from the German embassy in Windhoek said after the television broadcast that a formal request would have to come from the Namibian Government to Berlin in order to have the skulls returned.

"We have drafted this letter jointly this week to the Namibian Government so that it can formally approach Berlin on the matter," Swapo MP Ida Hoffmann told The Namibian last Tuesday.

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