

New Era

22.04.2009

Skulls Must Come with 'Body History' - Riruako - by Irene Hoaes

WINDHOEK - Chief Kuaima Riruako says the skulls of Namibians that are being held in a German museum must be accompanied by 'body history', the purpose of the research and findings of the research, for them to arrive on Namibian soil.

The skulls are those of indigenous Ovaherero and Nama victims of the uprising of the tribes against German colonial rule between 1904 and 1908.

Thousands of indigenous people perished as a result of an extermination order of the chief of the German colonial armed forces or Schutztruppe, General Lothar von Trotha.

The German scientist, Eugen Fischer, had requested skulls of the dead for research to support his theory of the superiority of the European brain over that of the African.

The relevant authorities such as the Ministry of Youth, National Service, Sport and Culture and the National Museum were instructed by Cabinet to start preparing for the repatriation of the skulls.

The authorities are, however, awaiting the decision of the different Nama and Ovaherero chiefs before the skulls can be repatriated.

The chiefs have to decide on how to handle the skulls, whether they want to perform some rituals, just bury the human remains or give them to the museum for display.

Chief Riruako, however, stated that they still have to meet with the museum authorities and descendants of the deceased before they can make a decision on the way forward.

According to the museum authorities, consultations with traditional authorities were earmarked for April.

Riruako could not, however, say when exactly the chiefs would meet the museum authorities.