

# New Era

02.10.2009

## 'Skulls' to go on display – by Irene Hoaes

WINDHOEK - Nama and Herero chiefs decided not to bury the remains of their forefathers who were killed during the two tribes' uprising in 1904-08, against the German colonial forces.

The chiefs and their people have decided that the remains be put in a museum and not buried at the Heroes Acre or any other place.

The decision was revealed during the signing of a joint document, which contained the chiefs' decision concerning the issue of the skulls.

The document will be handed over to the Ministry of Youth, National Service, Sport and Culture for submission to Cabinet.

"Our history cannot be buried, they were beheaded in public, and thus we have to retain them in public," were the sentiments of Chief Kuaima Riruako of the Herero Traditional Authority.

The two tribes want the skulls to be returned on May 28, 2010 because it is on this date in 1908 that prisoners who were kept in concentration camps by the German forces were released.

"This will signify the freedom and liberation of our deceased ones," Utjiua Muinjangué, a member of the technical committee, assisting the chiefs said.

Members of the two tribes will go to Germany to perform rituals on the remains of their forefathers, before bringing them back to Namibia.

According to the Nama and Herero chiefs, the remains should be accompanied by all the relevant information, such as how many Namas, Hereros, children, adults, their ages, male and female were taken.

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

Riruako at an earlier stage demanded that the findings of the German researcher accompany the skulls when they are returned to Namibia.

"We realise that every concern of ours might not be satisfied in one go and for that reason we have requested that a technical committee of our two groups meet with the National Heritage Council," Muinjangué added.

Government plans to build an N\$8 million Memorial Museum, next to the Alte Feste, where the Reiter Gedenkmal Monument was situated.

The museum will visualise documentation of Namibian history, starting from the early resistance until the liberation struggle, including student politics.

The German Embassy requested a copy of the document and was to be presented with a copy by the chiefs.