Namibia Wants Skulls Returned

BERLIN – Former Namibian ambassador to Berlin and current Director General of the National Planning Commission, Dr Peter Katjivivi, has demanded that German universities return dozens of human skulls – remains of the colonial-era Herero massacre that are held in their archives.

Public broadcaster ARD (Arbeitsgemeinschaft der öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunksender) said it had reported last Monday that the skulls were spirited away from Germany in the years after the 1904 killings for “scientific research” aimed at proving the racial superiority of whites to blacks.

It said 47 skulls are still stored at the Medical History Museum at the Charite teaching hospital in Berlin and at least a dozen more at Freiburg University in southwestern Germany.

“According to a UNESCO convention, these things must be repatriated to their country of origin,” Katjivivi told ARD.

“We have institutions in Namibia that would be prepared to undertake that important assignment,” Katjivivi said the remains were deeply important to Namibians.

“It is a question of regaining our dignity, it is a question of regaining our history. And it is a question of finally bringing those skulls to have a proper burial,” he said.