

# Leaders to Submit Request for Skulls



Prime Minister Nahas Angula.

## By Kuvée Kanguēhi

**WINDHOEK** – Traditional leaders from the Nama and Herero-speaking communities are expected to submit a formal letter to Prime Minister Nahas Angula in which they request the Namibian Government to ask for the repatriation of 47 remains of Namibians that are in a German museum.

By yesterday afternoon, the two traditional leaders Chief Kuaiima Riruako and Chief Dawid Fredericks representing the Ovaherero and !Aman clan respectively, had signed the letter

and were ready to deliver it to the Office of the Prime Minister.

Riruako, who led the delegation to meet the Prime Minister in August on the issue, said they could not submit the letter earlier because they needed to consult their communities and the process took longer than envisaged.

Speaking to *New Era* yesterday, Angula confirmed that he was awaiting the letter from the traditional leaders in order to table the request before Cabinet.

Angula said Cabinet will then assign a

**SKULLS on Page 2**

## Skulls

From Page 1

ministry to approach the German government and oversee the repatriation of the remains.

Angula, however, noted that the process will not only involve the repatriation of the remains but said the matter should be understood in the context that the remains belong to war victims and the German government must account for the lives of these people.

"They abused these people and their studies that were conducted on the brains of these victims fuelled the holocaust and the Second World War."

The Premier demanded that the Germans must

also provide full documentation so that the Namibian people can know exactly where these people were taken from.

"These are the people that sacrificed their lives for Namibia and their blood waters our freedom."

The German government has been quiet since information about the presence of 'skulls' in their museum emerged and only reacted through their embassy that they would return the 'skulls' once a formal request has been made by the Namibian Government.

Information emerged this year that there are 47 'skulls' stored at the Medical History Museum at the Charite Hospital in Berlin.

The remains belong

to Namibians who lived in the southern part of the country and at Swakopmund.

It is suspected that the remains from the southern part of the country belong to Nama-speaking people, while those from Swakopmund are from Hereros, Damaras and Namas as well.

The Herero people began an uprising against the German colonial rulers in January 1904, with warriors incensed by German settlers stealing their land, cattle and women – massacring about 200 German civilians over several days.

The German colonial rulers responded ruthlessly, defeating the Herero in a decisive battle north-east of Windhoek later that year.

*The Namibian, Sept. 17, 2008, p. 3*

## Genocide victims want skulls back

• BRIGITTE WEIDLICH

MEMBERS of a joint initiative of Herero and Nama-speaking Namibians to repatriate the skulls of their ancestors – sent to Germany 100 years ago for 'research' – were to deliver an official request to the Office of the Prime Minister late

yesterday 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 (today)," Arnold Tjhuiko, a member of the joint preparation

committee, told The Namibian yesterday afternoon.

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.

page 1  
page 2