

Saara Kuukongelwa-Amadhila Parliamentary Statement on German-Namibian Negotiations

Opinion Piece

By

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Part I

Background and Disclaimer

In this first section of my statement, I provide a critical appraisal of the parliamentary statement on the “outcome” or “progress” on the genocide and reparations negotiations between the Namibian and German governments that Prime Minister Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila recently presented in the Namibian parliament.

In addition to my critical perspective on the Kuukongelwa-Amadhila parliamentary statement, I am also providing a critique on these issues within the broader historical and political context in which the German-Namibian reparations negotiations are taking place.

My inclusion of the largely successful Jewish-German reparations negotiations in this discussion, especially in Part II of my statement, is mainly focused on the effective strategies that the Jewish negotiators used to get Germany to agree to pay reparations for the genocide that it committed against the victims of the Nazi regime within a few months of negotiations in 1952.

Therefore, my disclaimer is that this inclusion of the historical and international precedents of Jewish-German negotiations on genocide and reparations in my statement has nothing to do with my support or lack thereof for the current Israeli policies towards Palestine and other related issues in the Middle East.

The Kuukongelwa-Amadhila Statement and the German-Namibia Negotiations

Based on the research data that I have collected and analyzed on SWAPO’s governance of the country over the last 30 years, this parliamentary statement by Geingob’s Prime Minister Kuugongelwa-Amadhila is not surprising.

In the research that I have conducted over the last three decades on the Ovaherero and Nama genocide and reparations from the German government, I concluded that, over this long period of SWAPO in power, Namibian President Hage Geingob, and his predecessors Sam Nujoma and Hifikepunje Pohamba, have miserably failed to achieve positive results in genocide and reparations negotiations due to the incompetent way that they have dealt with the German government and its “negotiators” on this issue.

The SWAPO government officials under the country’s first three presidents have engaged in obstructionist maneuvers regarding the genocide and reparations issue since independence in 1990. They have also constantly made misleading statements such as “the genocide in Namibia is a national issue” and because of that, they have made false claims as follows: the German genocide in Namibia did not only involve the Nama and Ovaherero and other people were also killed (Katjavivi); Chief Riruako’s demands for reparations from the German government represent an increase in tribalism in Namibia (Geingob); Paramount Chief Vekuii Rukoro is not the alfa and omega (Ngavirue); and genocide negotiations are only conducted between sovereign states and cannot include the affected communities who are non state-actors (Geingob).

Some of the SWAPO leaders have claimed that the King Nehale battle with the Schutztruppe at the Namutoni fort on January 28, 1904 was a combined effort of a warrior force from all the Ovambo kingdoms and not just the Ondonga people. Also, some SWAPO leaders have tried to use the Nehale incident at Namutoni to “prove” that the German colonial army also committed genocide in Ovamboland.

Further, in their attempts to argue that genocide in Namibia was a “national issue,” the SWAPO leaders have used divide and conquer tactics to include groups in the German genocide, like those from the northern regions of Namibia who were not targeted by the Germans in the war of genocide and whose lands were not confiscated in the genocide which the German Schutztruppe committed in what is called the Police Zone.

Some of the SWAPO leaders and authors like Ngarikutuke Tjiriange have claimed that the northern groups like “Ondonga, Ukwanyama, and Ombadja” lost land during the German colonialism or genocide, when they fell under the northern region that was outside the Police Zone, and that, therefore, did not come under German colonial rule. As usual, and like other SWAPO leaders, Tjiriange does not cite sources when making such claims.

The poorly written and contradictory statement of Kuugongelwa-Amadhila shows that Geingob, who has been involved in this issue as Prime Minister since independence in 1990, i.e., before he became the president of the country, will come to the end of his presidency having failed to obtain any meaningful results in genocide and reparations negotiations with the German government officials.

Members of the affected Nama and Ovaherero groups and other Namibians may want to keep hoping that Geingob and his administration will be able to obtain reparations from the German government in the remaining three to four years of his presidency. However, as the Kuukongelwa-Amadhila statement shows and based on SWAPO and Geingob’s track record of the incompetent handling of the genocide and reparations issue, these hopes will be dashed when his second term as president comes to an end in early 2025.

Contrary to what Kuugongelwa-Amadhila is claiming in her parliamentary statement, the issues that we are dealing with in Namibia under SWAPO’s rule such as corruption, marginalization and exclusion of minority groups, and its dereliction of duty to competently demand reparations from Germany for the affected Nama and Ovaherero communities are not merely negotiations problems of the last five years. These are problems of 30 years of incompetent and corrupt governing of the country by SWAPO in many areas of the economy and politics.

Overall, the issue that Kuugongelwa-Amadhila discusses in her statement about the German negotiation position are not new. Many German officials, especially its ambassadors in Namibia like Christian Matthias Schlaga, Egon Konchanke, and Ruprecht Polenz, have already discussed in public these issues especially their so-called dislike for the use of the word reparations on the basis that they allegedly did not commit genocide in what they called German South-West Africa for which they have to pay reparations.

Further, German officials have made several public comments over the last three decades that they intend to offer as little funds as possible for so-called projects and not for reparations because, as the

so-called highest per capita aid donors to Namibia, up to now, they have contributed millions of development funds to Namibia, and, therefore, payment for reparations is not necessary.

This is indeed strange reasoning on the part of the German leaders because, among all the countries represented in Namibia, Germany should be the highest per capita contributor of foreign aid to Namibia. Germany is the country that committed genocide against the Nama and Ovaherero people in the war of genocide. The people were not only killed in thousands, but their land worth billions of dollars was taken away from them and this has contributed to the landlessness and abject poverty in which many people from these communities find themselves today. In that regard, Germany should not boast about being the highest contributor of foreign aid to Namibia.

The German leaders deliberately overlook the fact that their German colonial government through its Schutztruppe did not destroy projects of the Ovaherero and Nama people that they need to repair, but exterminated (killed) over half of the Ovaherero and Nama people who lived in Namibia before the war of genocide of 1904 – 1907 began, and also confiscated their land and cattle.

Before and after independence, Geingob has been one of the top leaders of SWAPO who have contributed to the misrule and political and economic mess that Namibia finds itself. Therefore, in this regard, the Kuugongelwa-Amadhila statement reveals the inability of the Geingob administration to engage competently in reparations negotiations with their German counterparts and achieve positive outcomes over five years of negotiations. But as pointed out above, this is not only the failure of the Geingob administration but also all the previous SWAPO administrations over the last three decades since independence in 1990.

What Kuugongelwa-Amadhila discussed in parliament is nothing other than the inability of SWAPO officials in the negotiations due to lack of skills and other factors to demand a reparation payment for the victims of German genocide. It is questionable that the SWAPO officials would allegedly negotiate around the main “three pillars” of apology, reparations, and genocide and then, after five years of inconclusive negotiations, come back to parliament with something different than those “pillars” that doesn’t make sense.

After five years of negotiations, how does the pillar of reparations becomes a pillar of “healing the wounds”? On top of this, Kuugongelwa-Amadhila states that the German government representatives have refused to accept the term reparations, and that the Namibia government negotiators somehow agree with this and plan to discuss further with the Germans “alternative terms” to the word reparations such as Reconciliation and Reconstruction. Further, Kuugongelwa-Amadhila indicates that more years of negotiations are needed to reach some agreement on this so-called issue of finding alternative terminology for the word reparations with the German negotiators. This is just preposterous.

Contrary to Kuugongelwa-Amadhila’s explanation, the phrase “healing the wounds” is not inadequate but is a mockery of what Germany with its Schutztruppe did to the Ovaherero and Nama people of committing the serious crime of genocide against them and now refusing to use the word genocide. This is also a form of denial of Ovaherero and Nama genocide which the German leaders accept for the Ovaherero and Nama people but don’t accept in the case of the Jewish holocaust in Germany itself.

Germany did not only, figuratively or literally, inflict wounds against the Ovaherero and Nama people that now needs to be healed as the German ambassador Schlaga and his colleagues have been claiming

in public statements in Namibia. The German Schutztruppe committed genocide against these two groups based on the German army's policies and war practice of annihilation of the enemy as stated in two Extermination Orders that the Commander of the Schutztruppe, General Lothar von Trotha, issued in 1904 (Ovaherero) and 1905 (Nama), and that resulted in the drastic reduction of the populations of the two groups at the end of the war of genocide of 1904-1907.

About a combined 100,000 Ovaherero and Nama people were exterminated by the end of that genocide war. In that regard, the German term of "healing of the wounds" cannot and should not be considered to be a serious negotiation item concerning restorative justice for the genocide that Germany committed against the Ovaherero and Nama people.

Geingob and members of his SWAPO administration cannot convince us that Reconstruction, Reconciliation, and colonial atrocities are alternative terms for the genocide that Germany committed against the Nama and Ovaherero people and for which they have to pay the reparations. If the terms of Reconciliation and Reconstruction are acceptable replacement for the term reparations, then, what is Germany and Namibia reconciling about and what is the reconstruction for? What did Germany destroy that it is now helping Namibia to reconstruct, *wiedergutmachen*? This is just sheer madness on the part of both German and Namibian negotiators on this issue.

It seems that Kuugongelwa-Amadhila is implying that the Namibian negotiators will accept the "alternative terms" of Reconciliation and Reconstruction of the German government if it provides sufficient amount of funds "meaningful for reparations." How can the funds be for development projects, and then, at the same time, also be for "meaningful reparations" especially when the German leaders claim that they did not commit genocide but colonial atrocities in Namibia?

Critical Questions that Should Be Asked

Kuugongelwa-Amadhila tells us that the Namibian position in the negotiations with German officials is that Germany "should render an unconditional apology and pay reparations." But how can this be possible when it is also stated that Namibia is negotiating for "alternative terms" to reparations?

What will Germany apologize for having done wrong to the Nama and Ovaherero people? Will Germany be required to apologize for having inflicted wounds on the Nama and Ovaherero that need to be healed and that cannot be considered to be genocide? How can Germany render an unconditional apology, delivered at the so-called highest level to the Namibian Government and people, in particular the affected communities, when the Namibian government itself pursues divide and conquer policies in dealing with members of the affected communities, and when many of them are excluded from participation and having any input in the negotiations? How should Germany acknowledge to have committed genocide in Namibia during the period 1904-1907 when the Namibian government negotiators are willing to agree with their German counterparts that the issue under negotiations is not genocide and reparations but Reconciliation and Reconstruction for development projects?

Again, these above-mentioned questions refer to the unresolved issues that indicate that the Namibian officials are contradicting themselves and don't know how to competently conduct the genocide and reparations negotiations with their German government counterparts.

So-Called Milestones Reached So Far in the Negotiations

The section with the above-mentioned title in the Kuugongelwa-Amadhila statement in parliament is the most telling. Among other things, it shows that overall the negotiators of the Geingob administration failed to reach any meaningful agreements on the issues that they negotiated with their German counterparts. As I explain below, the title for this section of the Kuukongelwa-Amadhila statement should be changed to “Failures in the Negotiations” and not written as “Milestones Reached So Far in the Negotiations.”

The subsections under Item 5 don’t mention any milestones that were reached after five years of negotiations. Here Kuukongelwa-Amadhila merely refers to the government's plans for achieving agreements on those mentioned issues in the next rounds of negotiations in the future, which means in the remaining three to four years of the Geingob’s second term as president of the country. Under Item 6, there is also no milestone discussed in it that was achieved in the negotiations.

Finally, I would like to point out that my critical comments in this first part of my opinion piece focused on the points that Kuukongelwa-Amadhila presented in her parliamentary statement on the five years negotiations between the Namibian and German governments on the genocide and reparations negotiations.

Part II

It is not surprising that the SWAPO negotiators failed to achieve meaningful agreements with representatives of the German government and obtain positive outcomes on the genocide and reparations negotiations.

For those of us who conduct ongoing research on the German position on genocide and reparations in Namibia for the Nama and Ovaherero people, there is nothing new about the positions of the two governments on this matter that Kuukongelwa-Amadhila presented in her parliamentary statement.

Approach and Tactics of German Leaders

The German leaders, like their ambassadors Christian Matthias Schlaga, Egon Konchanke, and Ruprecht Polenz, have already made public their positions on the issues of genocide and reparations in Namibia while these negotiations were in progress. Before the negotiations began, other German leaders also have made similar public statements on the issue of genocide and reparations involving the Nama and Ovaherero people. As such, those German perspectives should not be some of the issues that Kuukongelwa-Amadhila should inform us about unless there is a specific reason for telling us that the German negotiators deliberately repeated those issues over a five-years period as a filibustering tactic to stall the negotiations.

Over the last 30 years, several leaders, activists, analysts, and writers from our communities and others such as Paramount Chief Vekuii Rukoro, Bob Kandetu, Sima Luipert, Dr. Mutjinde Katjiua, Festus

Muundjua, the late Mandela Kapere, Dr. Esther Muinjangu, Ida Hoffmann, Kazenambo Kazenambo, Bernadus Swartbooi, and Uahimisa Kaapehi, to name but a few, have criticized the series of questionable statements that the German leaders in Namibia have made in public on genocide and reparations that are demanded of the German government by the affected communities of Nama and Ovaherero people.

The statements by the German leaders in Namibia have essentially included belligerent, insensitive, and often disrespectful and paternalistic public claims that border on racism to members of the affected communities.

Some of the comments and claims of the German leaders have included the following: Germany is not interested in genocide but atrocities; there will be no German reparations and that the admission of genocide has no legal consequences; Germany did not commit genocide against the Ovaherero and Nama people but only committed colonial atrocities; the Nama and Ovaherero should not claim that Germany committed genocide against them because, unlike the case of the Jewish people, only a few of them were killed by Germany; the German genocide (which they insist is atrocities) against the Nama and Ovaherero was justified because the government acted in self-defense; the people of Namibia and their government officials and German officials should find together a common language that avoids the use of the terms genocide and reparations; and members of the affected Nama and Ovaherero communities do not deserve to be involved in negotiations because such deliberations only take place between sovereign states who have legal status under international law.

Put together, many of these public statements by the German leaders in Namibia have reflected a Neo-Nazi type of denial of the German genocide against the Ovaherero and Nama people. However, few of the SWAPO leaders who are involved in the negotiations, including Dr. Zed Ngavirue, have consistently taken a strong position by reacting and informing their German counterparts to refrain from making such outrageous and insensitive public comments while the so-called confidential negotiations between the two governments were in progress.

Contradictions and Inconsistencies of SWAPO Leaders

The ambivalence, contradictions, and vacillations of SWAPO leaders and negotiators concerning the genocide and reparations from the German government for the Nama and Ovaherero are also reflected in the Kuukongelwa-Amadhila parliamentary statement. Over the last three decades, the SWAPO leaders like the president of the country, Hage Geingob, have reflected these contradictions and vacillations in the way that they have poorly handled the genocide, reparations and other related issues. Also, the vacillations and contradictions on the part of the SWAPO leaders in dealing with this issue have emboldened the German leaders in their resolve to manipulate and insult members of the affected communities and the Namibian government officials themselves who are involved in the negotiations on this issue.

One of the main contradictions of Geingob involves the way he justifies his ill-informed view that a national identity overrides or is more important than what he calls the tribal identity. Geingob does not understand that how he and his party have handled the genocide and reparations issue enhances tribal and not a national identity. This approach does not positively contribute to the development of national identity among minority groups.

For example, a case in point is how Geingob refuses to attend the Damara festivals at Okombahe by claiming that they are tribal. Then, he finds ways to justify attending similar ethnic festivals in the northern regions of the country because in his view the ethnic festivals in those areas somehow promote a national identity. Geingob doesn't realize that these contradictory political tactics that he uses are counter-productive and that he will never effectively promote a national identity with such contradictory approaches.

At times Geingob and his colleagues have seemed to talk boldly against the German officials on this issue of genocide and reparations. However, for the most part, Geingob and his SWAPO colleagues have capitulated and have gone along with the German demands and policies to exclude members of the affected communities, including those living in the diaspora, from participation in the negotiations under the false and historically inaccurate view that such negotiations only take place between sovereign states.

Contrary to the claims of the SWAPO and German government officials, there are many examples in history where victims of genocide and such calamities have participated in reparations negotiations, including the Jewish Claims Conference (that consisted of 23 Jewish international organizations), along with the state of Israel, in the reparations negotiations with the same German government at Wassenaar, Holland in 1952 following the Nazi genocide against the Jewish people.

Japanese-Americans Internment in Concentration Camps and Its Relevance to Namibia

The case of the Japanese-Americans incarceration by the US government in concentration camps during WWII is relevant to our Namibian case of German genocide and reparations. This is due to the fact that this serves as another example of the involvement and lobbying of private organizations, i.e., non-state actors, in securing reparations from a government that violated the human rights and contributed to the loss of property of Japanese-Americans while they were held in US concentration camps during the war.

There are several books on the Japanese-American internment camps during WWII in the western states of the United States such as Washington, Oregon, California, and Arizona. These books chronicle the ways that the Japanese-Americans and their organizations waged the struggle and participated in negotiations with the US government to have the Civil Liberties Act pass in the US Congress that paved the way for reparations for their people.

Two of the Japanese American organizations that were involved are the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) and the National Council for Japanese Americans Redress (NCJAR). The JACL was formed in 1929 and the NCJAR was formed in 1979 when some of its key leaders broke off from the JACL in Seattle and relocated the organization to Chicago where its leader Minoru Hohri lived.

Formed 92 years ago, the JACL is one of the oldest and largest civil rights organization of Japanese-Americans which led the campaign to lobby lawmakers in the US Congress for redress to obtain reparations for the violations of humans rights and loss of property that Japanese-Americans suffered in western United States during WWII. Initially the JACL focused on what is called the US government Study Commission Approach, but later it also got involved in the lobbying of lawmakers in the US

Congress on reparations for Japanese-Americans internees of the US government concentration camps during the war.

The NCJAR was formed for the sole purpose of lobbying government lawmakers in the US Congress as well to achieve its redress goal and finally obtain reparations through lobbying for the Japanese-Americans who were victimized by the US government's policies of removal, incarceration, and exclusion in military controlled concentration camps and loss of property during WWII as was authorized by President Franklin D. Roosevelt with Executive Order 9066. Following its formation, the NCJAR was involved in filing lawsuits against the US government for reparations for the interned Japanese-Americans in the US concentration camps.

After many years of lobbying, in 1988, the campaigns of the JAACL and NCJAR contributed to the passage of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 that was legally signed into law by US President Ronald Reagan who previously was opposed to signing any legislation that would increase any federal spending. JAACL President Harry Kajihara attended the ceremony for the signing of this act into law with the senators that his organization lobbied to get the act passed in the US Congress.

As these Japanese-American organizations lobbied for, the 1988 Civil Liberties Act required that the following: 1) the US government to apologize for the injustice caused by the evacuation, relocation, and interment of Japanese-American citizens and permanent residents; 2) acknowledgment of the violation of fundamental human rights of the Japanese-Americans during the war due to interment, 3) funding of educational programs on the Japanese-American incarceration in concentrations due to racial prejudice to ensure that such discriminatory actions won't recur in US society, and 4) a US government promise and commitment to restitution to the interned Japanese-Americans.

The Civil Liberty Act required the US government to pay each Japanese-American concentration camp survivor the amount of \$20,000 in compensation that was the equivalent of \$38,000 in 2019. The payment began on October 9, 1990 at a ceremony with nine elderly *Issei* (first generation Japanese immigrants) who each received \$20,000. This was then later followed by a total of 82,219 former Japanese concentration camp internees who received redress checks and a formal apology signed by then President George H. W. Bush.

These by all means were not reparations amounts that were commensurate with the suffering and loss of property during the US government incarceration of Japanese-Americans in concentration camps. But in some way, the Japanese-American lobbying organizations managed to obtain an apology and compensation for the emotional and material losses that Japanese-Americans suffered during their interment in US military camps during the war.

Lesson to Learned from the Japanese-American Reparations

As pointed out above, this is one example involving a precedent where the struggles and efforts to obtain reparations for victims of injustice have not always involved negotiations only between states as the German officials and Namibian leaders like Geingob claim. These Japanese-American reparations from the US government was achieved by the organizing and lobbying efforts through legislation by the, non-state, leaders of the JAACL and NCJAR as well as the US congressional lawmakers who supported their cause.

Further, over the last three decades, some of the SWAPO leaders themselves have also made public denials of the Ovaherero and Nama genocide. For example, some of the SWAPO leaders have done this through their unsubstantiated claim that the German colonial government did not only commit genocide against the Ovaherero and Nama people, but against all Namibian citizens, and, therefore, reparations is supposedly a national issue.

The German leaders have gone along with this false claim of SWAPO because it enables both government officials to divide and conquer the Namibian ethnic groups and foment national hostility of other groups against the Nama and Ovaherero over the genocide and reparations issue. However, despite this approach and claims of SWAPO, the German leaders know quite well which groups its colonial government did and did not target during the war of genocide of 1904-1907.

Therefore, also it is not surprising to note Kuukongelwa-Amadhila contradictory statements that the Namibian government negotiators told Germany to apologize for the genocide and pay reparations. Then, in the same statement, she says that the Namibian government negotiators are willing to meet again with their German counterparts to find an “alternative term” for the word reparations “as a way of moving away and not be bogged down by the reparations quantum.”

Historical Relevance of the Jewish-German Genocide and Reparations Negotiations

Those of us who are familiar with the way Germany has historically dealt with reparations negotiations (involving war or non- in non-war reparations cases) are aware of their tendency to demand high sums of reparations money from others and their reluctance to negotiate in good faith and pay reparations when such reparations are demanded of them by others.

I am here referring to how the German leaders like Otto von Bismarck and his negotiators behaved concerning their demand for high reparations funds from France to bankrupt the French nation at the end of the 1871 Franco-Prussian war. Bismarck and his government deliberately demanded a high amount of reparations from France to the tune of 1 billion thalers. When the French leaders offered to pay 1.5 billion francs because it could not afford to pay Germany 5 billion francs, Bismarck responded by saying that his Prussian Army will occupy a part of France and "we will see if *we* can get 5 billion francs from it."

According to Bismarck, "France being the richest country in Europe, nothing could keep her quiet but effectually to empty her pockets." Bismarck did occupy France until it paid the 5 billion francs reparations that he demanded. France managed to pay Germany the last indemnity in early September 1873, two years ahead of schedule. Then, Germany withdrew its army from the French territory in mid-September of the same year.

Also, note that, in his demand, Bismarck was taking some kind of revenge and made the reparations amount that he demanded of France to be equivalent to the amount of reparations that Napoleon Bonaparte demanded of Prussia to pay France at the end of the 1807 war that France won against Prussia.

Then, after WWI, when Germany was demanded to pay reparations, its officials complained about how Germany was not economically able to afford to pay the reparations that it was required to pay according to the Treaty of Versailles that was adopted and signed on June 28, 1919. Germany made similar complaints as France that it could not afford to pay the reparations that it was required to pay. Also, Germany claimed that the reparations it was required to pay according to that treaty were meant to bankrupt its nation.

Further, I am also referring to how the German government officials tried to play games and repeatedly made claims about the so-called economic inability of Germany to pay reparations to the Jewish victims of Nazi Germany at the 1952 Wassenaar, Holland reparations negotiations with the leaders of Israel and the Jewish Claims Conference.

The SWAPO Leaders and the Precedent of Jewish-German Reparations Negotiations

The Kuukongelwa-Amadhila parliamentary statement reveals that since WWI, the tactics and manipulative methods of the German officials in negotiations on genocide and reparations have not changed in any significant ways. Further, the Kuukongelwa-Amadhila statement also reveals that the SWAPO negotiators are not familiar with the German history of genocide and reparations negotiations. This is the reason why they are unable to competently deal with and bring to an end the German approach of playing with words and engaging in manipulative maneuvers without agreeing to anything in negotiations over five years.

If the SWAPO negotiators were familiar with the German history of playing with words and tactics to avoid paying reparations for genocide and reparations in negotiations, they would have drawn heavily on the precedent of the leaders of Israel and the Jewish Claims Conference under the leadership of their, non-state, but high capable leader Dr. Nahum Goldmann.

Unlike SWAPO leaders, the Jewish leaders went prepared to the reparations negotiations with their German counterparts knowing that the key to making progress and achieve agreements on the reparations for the affected Jewish victims of Nazi Germany centered around four main areas, namely, 1) unity among the Jewish leaders of the Claims Conference and the State of Israel to negotiate together as a unified unit regardless of the difficulties encountered in the negotiations, 2) securing of a commitment and sense of sincerity on the part of the German leader Chancellor Dr. Konrad Adenauer, to pay reparations to Jewish victims of Nazi genocide against them, 3) demand of huge sums of money (in billions) that are commensurate with the Jewish human loss involved and their properties that the Nazis confiscated from them during the genocide; and 4) the adoption and application of strategies to ensure serious reparations negotiations on the part of German negotiators that centered on the main issues to be agreed upon.

In particular, the last point was important to the Jewish negotiators, and they ensured that the German negotiators did not deviate from the task at hand in the meetings so that they could drive the negotiations in the direction of endless game playing around terminologies and endless economic bargaining involving the offering of low sums of money for the reparations payments demanded of them by the Jewish negotiators.

Since Namibian independence in 1990, and now with this latest statement in parliament by Kuukongelwa-Amadhila, it is clear that the SWAPO government leaders and officials have not considered and applied the strategies of the Jewish leaders in the way that they approached the same issue of genocide and reparations in negotiations with the officials of the same German government.

The Namibian genocide and reparations issue is not drastically different from that of the Jewish people because it is about negotiations with the same German government on the same issues of genocide and reparations. It is about finding effective strategies to use in reparations negotiations with the German government officials to achieve positive outcomes instead of wasting five years in inconclusive negotiations without tangible results as the Kuukongelwa-Amadhila statement in parliament shows.

Breakdown of the First Round of the Jewish-German Negotiations at Wassenaar

In the case of the Jewish leaders, as soon as the German leaders at the Wassenaar negotiations began to play with words and tried to offer unrealistic and insignificant, actually ridiculously low amounts of money for the genocide that they committed against the Jewish people, the negotiations reached an impasse.

Also, it became clear to the Jewish leaders that the German negotiators did not have authority to make any binding decisions, but used the meetings merely to gather information on the position of the Jewish leaders on the negotiation issues. Then, the Israeli leaders, along with their Claims Conference colleagues, broke off the negotiations. The Jewish leaders realized that they could not proceed with the negotiations until the German negotiators came to the negotiations with a concrete proposal from their government on the key issues of genocide and reparations to be discussed and agreed upon.

Then, Dr. Goldmann, who initially purposefully did not directly participate in the Jewish delegation at Wassenaar negotiations, was available to intervene and provide assistance. He renegotiated with the German leaders for an agreement on new reparations negotiations. During this time, Dr. Goldmann secretly met some of the German leaders such as Konrad Adenauer himself and the leader of his delegation Franz Boehm as a way to jump-start the second round of reparations negotiations.

At the meeting with Adenauer, Dr. Goldmann told the German Chancellor of the need for his group of German negotiators to come to the negotiations with a concrete proposal, and that the Jewish leaders will not return to the negotiations without a concrete German proposal. Adenauer promised Dr. Goldmann that the concrete proposal for negotiations for his team of negotiators will be made available as soon as possible, but that was not forthcoming for some time.

Dr. Goldmann informed the German leaders that the second round of negotiations was going to be about concrete points on reparations to be discussed and agreed on, and not about playing with words and engagement in endless methods of economic bargaining to offer ridiculously low reparations payments.

Dr. Goldmann explained to the German leaders that the second reparations negotiations were going to be a serious endeavor to agree on what was supposed to be agreed on, namely the need for Germany to agree to pay significant amounts of reparations (in billions) for the Jewish people that Nazi Germany exterminated and their loss of property during the holocaust.

Also, Dr. Goldman informed the German leaders that nothing short of what was going to be acceptable amounts of funds for reparations will be accepted because the leaders of Israel and the Jewish organizations that he represented already received death threats and strong opposition from conservatives in Israel and elsewhere who were opposed to negotiations on what they viewed as German blood money for Jewish genocide.

Resumption of Jewish-German Reparations Negotiations at Wassenaar in June 1952

Dr. Goldmann and his Jewish colleagues succeeded in getting the negotiations on track. The second round of reparations negotiations took place at Wassenaar from June 22 – August 22, 1952. The negotiations focused on Germany's agreement to pay reparations of such magnitude as to present a sincere endeavor to show remorse for the genocide it committed and the Jewish material losses during the genocide.

Unlike the Namibian-German negotiations that took five years, the Jewish leaders spent only nine months in 1952 in negotiations and completed the signing of the agreements for them in September 1952 in Luxembourg. The main meetings of the negotiations were conducted in two stages as follows: First Stage March 21 - April 10 and the Second Stage (June 22 – August 22) and the negotiators adopted two main agreements that were presented in two protocols. The agreements were signed in Luxembourg at a final ceremony by German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and the leader of the Israeli delegation Moshe Sharett on September 10, 1952.

Contrary to what we are being told in the Kuukongelwa-Amadhila parliamentary statement about the five years of SWAPO's inconclusive negotiations with the German government negotiators, the Jewish leaders conducted the reparations negotiations with the German negotiators and reached an agreement under less than one full year in 1952. The actual negotiations were carried out over nine months from March to September 1952.

In the end, the Jewish leaders succeeded in reaching a final reparations agreement for Germany to pay reparations to Israel and the Claim Conference involving two protocols as noted above as follows: Protocol Number 1 and Protocol Number 2. Under Protocol Number 1, the German Federal Republic agreed to pay Israel the sum of 3 billion DM to purchase commodities and services for the rehabilitation and resettlement of Nazi victims in Israel.

Under Protocol Number 2, the German Federal Republic agreed to a global payment to the Claims Conference. It was stated in the protocol that the German Federal Republic undertook to pay Israel 450 million DM for the Claims Conference. This protocol's funds were to be used for aid, rehabilitation, and resettlement of Nazi victims living outside Israel.

As pointed out above, all this does not mean that there were no difficulties encountered during the negotiations between the Jewish and German negotiators in deliberations that involved give and take exchanges and compromises. It means that, unlike the SWAPO negotiators, as noted above, the Jewish leaders developed and applied strategies to reach their goals of getting the German officials to agree on the payment of reparations.

They Jewish leaders also used other tactics such as first securing a public apology and an expression of a strong commitment and dedication to pay reparations from the German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer. In 1951, the German leader made a public announcement in the Bundestag and promised to pay reparations to Nazi victims as a way to show remorse and atone for the crime of Nazi genocide against the Jewish people.

Most importantly, throughout the negotiations, the Jewish leaders maintained unity among members of their organizations and the state of Israel. The Jewish leaders who participated in the reparations negotiations with Germany were skillful, experienced, and knowledgeable individuals about the German history of negotiations on genocide and reparations negotiations.

Last but not least, the Jewish leaders relied on their strategy of keeping the German negotiators on the task at hand that denied them the opportunity to avoid agreement on key issues and engage in endless game playing without agreeing to anything in the negotiations as they have done historically.

Finally, suffice it to say that I did not include a discussion in my statement about the Jewish-German genocide reparations negotiations for the sake of doing so, but because of the relevant international precedents that were established in that case. The precedents involved in the Jewish case include the key elements of success in such negotiations with the representatives of the German government that overall have been ignored by the SWAPO leaders.

Relevant International Precedents Reached in the Jewish-German Negotiations

At the conclusion of the of the Jewish-German reparations negotiations, many Jewish authors and leaders such as David Ben Gurion, the first Prime Minister of Israel, have reflected on the main accomplishments of the Jewish negotiators and the historical international precedents that they achieved in reaching the goal of getting Germany to pay reparations as shown below.

The international precedents of Jewish-German reparations negotiations include the key elements of success that are involved in such negotiations that the SWAPO negotiators should keep in mind at all times and apply in negotiations with the German government negotiators, and not try to argue them away and ignore them. The following key elements that led to the achievement of the Jewish precedents in the reparations negotiations include the following:

- 1) For the first time, a state paid reparations to those who suffered at the hands of its predecessor through mainly organizing skills, knowledge of history, and application of moral pressure.
- 2) As requested by Dr. Goldmann of the Jewish Claims Conference, in September 1951, before the beginning of the reparations negotiations, the Chancellor of Germany, Dr. Konrad Adenauer made a public statement in the Bundestag that the Federal Republic of Germany has decided to assume a heavy burden and, on its own volition, accepted the responsibility for Nazi crimes and committed itself to paying reparations to its Jewish genocide victims. There was no coercion involved on the part of the super powers like the United States or an element of force on the part of any conqueror of Germany.
- 3) In his public statement in the Bundestag, German Chancellor Adenauer, as Dr. Goldmann advised him, stated the need to commit Germany to reparations payments to Israel and Jewish victims of

German genocide. He also indicated that the reparations negotiations would involve both Israel and the non-state Jewish international organizations.

4) Under the leadership of Chancellor Adenauer, the Federal Republic of Germany paid reparations to German genocide victims, not to its conqueror in a war, but genocide reparations to a state (Israel) and a non-state organization of the Jewish Claims Conference. Then, the final reparations agreements were signed by the German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, the state of Israel, and the non-state representatives of the Claims Conference having no sovereignty and legal status in international law qualifying it to sign such agreements.

6) Unlike SWAPO leaders who have excluded members of the affected Nama and Ovaherero communities, from within Namibia and the diaspora, from the negotiations, the Jewish leaders of Israel worked as a unified team with Jewish leaders of the Claims Conference and included them in the negotiations with the representatives of the German government. The two Jewish groups presented that unity to Germany and the rest of the world throughout the difficult reparations negotiations that were, at times, controversial and involving death threats and an attempted assassination of German Chancellor Adenauer.

7) Last but not least, Dr. Goldmann, the main leader who played the crucial role in securing German reparations for the Jewish victims of Nazi Germany was a non-state leader of Jewish international organizations of the Claims Conference. In private and public, Dr. Goldmann, the non-state Jewish leader, was the one who negotiated with the German Chancellor Adenauer and his key government negotiators and got the negotiations going and on track when they broke down and reached an impasse in April 1952 as pointed out above.

Conclusion

To conclude, let me quote from an outstanding comment on this issue by Bob Kandetu to the German ambassador to Namibia, Christian Matthias Schlaga, when he said the following: “Let me assure you, Your Excellency, that the future will not be what it has been all along.” I not only agree with Kandetu, but I would also suggest that his comment applies to both the German and Namibian officials about the issue of genocide and reparations for the Ovaherero and Nama genocide and reparations.

The genocide and reparations issue for the affected Nama and Ovaherero people is not going to be what it has been up to now. Therefore, whatever the degree to which the Namibian and German governments try to be secretive in handling this issue, the truth will always come to light.

The Kuukongelwa-Amadhila parliamentary statement at least made the first truth clear to us that the SWAPO government leaders and negotiators are incapable of engaging competently in high-level genocide and reparations negotiations with their German counterparts. This is the reason why they essentially returned to parliament empty-handed after five useless years in inconclusive negotiations that represent a failure to achieve reparations from Germany.

The Kuukongelwa-Amadhila parliamentary statement says little about the sums of money that Germany is willing to pay and specifically whether this is for genocide reparations or atrocities and

development projects as the German officials have insisted all these years even while the so-called confidential reparations negotiations were in progress.

As we have insisted all these years, sooner or later the whole truth will be known about the positions that the SWAPO negotiators took in the negotiations on the main “pillars” of apology, genocide, and reparations that we are not told in details in the Kuukongelwa-Amadhila statement.

In the meantime, I am afraid that with this low-level negotiation skills, confusion, contradictions, lack of knowledge on the history of German negotiations on these issues, and the general incompetence of the SWAPO leaders and their negotiators on the issue of genocide and reparations, as president of Namibia, Geingob will come to the end of his second term as having failed miserably to obtain reparations from the German government that has been represented in Namibia by several German leaders who have repeatedly expressed genocide denial and paternalistic and condescending Neo-Nazi views on the Nama and Ovaherero genocide and reparations.