

**Rede von Staatsministerin Keul bei der  
Mangi Meli-Gedenkveranstaltung  
(02.03. 2024)**

Regional Commissioner,  
District Commissioner,  
Ladies and gentlemen,  
Relatives and descendants,  
Habari ya asubuhi (Guten Morgen)

Thank you for inviting me to speak to you today as a Deputy Foreign Minister from Germany.

I am deeply honoured and grateful for this opportunity.

It is by no means self-evident.

For it was here, at the foot of Mount Kilimanjaro, 124 years ago today, on March 2nd 1900, that 19 Chiefs of the Chagga and Meru peoples were brutally murdered by German colonial troops.

We still don't know the 19 victims by name.

But we know that many more died before and after the execution.

It is important to me that my country faces the truth about our past in Tanzania.

Today I am here to speak about that truth.

German colonial rule in Tanzania was inhumane and cruel.

There is much documented evidence:

In February 1891, the German colonist Wissmann arrived in Kilimanjaro, fought against Sina of Kibosho and killed 200 of his people.

In August of the same year, Carl Peters – the so-called founder of German East Africa – invaded the land of the Warombo, burnt down their houses and their plantations, and killed 140 people.

In June 1892, Peters' deputy von Bülow attacked Mangi Meli but Mangi Meli and his people defended themselves bravely and won this battle.

Only when the German colonists returned three months later under the command of Captain Kurt Johannes with more military power, was Mangi Meli forced to surrender.

When two missionaries were killed in Meru in 1896, Captain Johannes went on a punitive expedition and killed many Wameru and destroyed their villages and fields.

In January 1900, he again waged war against the Wameru and Waarusha.

He captured their Chiefs and took them to Moshi, among them Mangi Lobulu of Meru.

After that, he also arrested the Chagga Chiefs, including Mangi Meli of Moshi, Mangi Molelia of Kibosho and Mangi Ngalami of Kibognoto.

Shortly afterwards – on March 2nd, in this very area we are standing now, he had them executed.

Their families, including women and children, were forced to watch this atrocity.

And as if that wasn't terrible enough, their heads were separated from their bodies and most probably shipped to Germany.

With this barbaric act, the German colonists not only killed their adversaries.

They robbed families of the chance to bid farewell to their loved ones in a proper way.

Families and communities have been separated from their ancestors ever since.

The pain they feel is passed on to every new generation.

As a German, I am ashamed of what our ancestors did.

And I am deeply sorry.

I bow to Mangi Meli, and the other 18 Chiefs we are commemorating today.

I bow to all the other victims of German colonial rule in Tanzania.

As a representative of the German Government, I ask that I may tender a sincere apology for the suffering that the colonists brought upon you.

And as a descendant of the Peters family, I personally ask your forgiveness in the name of my family.

We cannot undo the wrong.

But there are pressing questions that await answers.

We want to look for the answers together with you.

Therefore, I am here to listen to you today.

Listen to how you feel.

Listen to what needs to be done to help heal the wounds.

Listen to what we can do to give your ancestors a proper burial in keeping with your traditions.

Ancestral remains are found in German museums, in universities, in research institutions or even in private collections.

This is unacceptable.

It is not where they belong.

The task of identification is difficult after so many years, and many documents were destroyed during two world wars.

But as German President Steinmeier said in Songea:

We will do our best to bring ancestral remains home to Tanzania!

Together with you and with our partners in the Tanzanian Government, we will work hard to identify as many as possible.

For the first time last year, we finally had a DNA match between descendants and remains in Germany.

They belong to Chagga leaders who were executed here, 124 years ago.

Unfortunately, we have not yet found the remains of Mangi Meli, and the truth is that we cannot be sure that we will ever succeed.

But we will continue to try our best!

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is also important to me to raise awareness in Germany of what happened here.

For far too long, we have ignored or forgotten about colonial crimes.

As a society.

As a government.

And as the Federal Foreign Office.

Although more and more experts and institutions are dealing intensively with colonialism, the broader public is still quite unaware of this part of Germany's history.

Therefore, educating people about Germany's colonial past is one of our Government's policy goals.

We must deal with this chapter of our history openly and honestly.

That's why later on today, I will be meeting with German and Tanzanian students to discuss the colonial past, to learn about their perspectives.

There will also be an exhibition, "History of Tanzania", which experts from the National Museum of Tanzania and the Humboldt Forum are planning together in the very heart of Berlin.

It will open in Berlin this October and will later be transferred to Tanzania.

I am looking forward to this exhibition, because if we know more about our common past – as painful as it is – we can build a better future.

In order to know where we are going, we need to know where we came from.

Allow me, again, to thank you for your generosity in granting me the opportunity to speak to you here today.

I feel honoured to be a part of this ceremony with representatives from the central and regional governments, the communities and the families to mourn Mangi Meli and the others who were executed here.

Thank you for opening this painful chapter of your families' histories to us, the descendants of the perpetrators.

It would be the most valuable gift if you allowed us to help heal the wounds of the past.

Please, let us build on this.