

Inheemse Spoor

Celebrating Khoi-Khoi Indigenous Knowledge

Uitgawe 17

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PHOTO: ZENZILE KHOISAN

Tuiskoms van voorouers se beendere

ZENZILE KHOISAN

Die herbegrafnis van 63 Khoi- en San-voorouers by Kinderlê, net buite Steinkopf in die Noord-Kaap op 23 Maart, was 'n historiese oomblik van die herstel van geregtigheid en waardigheid.

Ná eeue van onreg, waarin hul oorskot oneties opgegrawe en vir wetenskaplike studie gebruik is, kan hierdie voorouers uiteindelik in vrede rus.

Die roerende herbegrafnis-seremonie is bygewoon deur Khoi- en San-leiers, regeringsverteenwoordigers en gemeenskappe uit die Noord en Wes-Kaap.

Baie het hul dankbaarheid uitgespreek dat die voorouers se waardigheid uiteindelik herstel is.

President Cyril Ramaphosa, die hoofspreek, het die herbegrafnis beskryf as 'n noodsaaklike stap om historiese onregte reg te stel.

Hy het erken dat die Nama, Griekwa, San, Kaapse Khoi en Korana-volke van hul grond, kultuur en menswaardigheid ontnem is tydens die koloniale tydperk en 'n era van wetenskaplike rassisme.

"Selfs ná hul dood is hulle nie gespaar nie, want hul oorskot is as studie-objekte behandel," het die president gesê.

"Tydens 'n donker tydperk van wetenskaplike rassisme in die laat 18de en 19de eeu is baie van ons mense gedwing om Suider-Afrika na Europa te verlaat, waar hul fisiese eienskappe hulle eksotiese voorwerpe vir uitstalling, studie en uitbuiting gemaak het," het Pres. Ramaphosa gesê.

Hy het beklemtoon dat hierdie praktyke gewortel was in rassistiese ideologieë wat Europese oorheersing wou regverdig.

Die beendere is oorspronklik uit grafte in die Noord- en Wes-Kaap verwyder en onder meer by die Suid-Afrikaanse Museum (nou Iziko Museums) en die Hunterian Museum aan die Universiteit van Glasgow gehuisves.

Die repatriasie van die oorskot is die resultaat van 'n lang en samewerkende proses tussen die regering, instellings soos Iziko en SAHRA, en internasionale vennote soos die Universiteit van Glasgow.

Hierdie spesifieke terugkeer uit Skotland het in 2022 begin en het gelei tot die terugbring van ses individue se oorskot, saam met artefakte wat uit grafte geneem is.

Maar lank voor 2022, sowat 25 jaar gelede, is die wiede aan die rol gesit vir die terugreis van die inheemse voorouers se beendere.

Dié belangrike mylpaal was bereik in Maart 2001, toe 'n resoluë oor die terugkeer van voorouerlike oorskot eenparig aanvaar is tydens die Nasionale KhoiSan Konsultatiewe Konferensie in Oudtshoorn.

Hier is 'n resoluë oor die terugkeer van voorouerlike oorskot voorgelê en is eenparig aanvaar deur meer as 600 afgevaardigdes tydens die konferensie.

Cecil le Fleur, voorsitter van die Nasionale Khoi-San-Raad, was een van die hoofrolspelers wat oor dekades heen aan die voerpunt was van onderhandelinge oor die repatriasie van menslike oorskot met die regering en ander instellings.

By die nagwaak in die Steinkopf-gemeenskapsaal, die Sondagaand voor die herbegrafnis, en terwyl Le Fleur oor die kiste van die voorouers, bedek met die tradisionele Nama-materiaal uitgekyk het, het hy sy toespraak begin deur te sê dat diegene wat by hierdie historiese geleentheid teenwoordig was, gekom het om 'n universele waarheid te aanskou, 'n wysheid diep verweef in baie Afrika-kulture.

Die wysheid lui dat " 'n volk wat sy voorouers eer, ook sy eie waardigheid eer en sodoende sy toekoms as volk verseker."

Le Fleur het die diepe betekenis van die gebeurtenis beklemtoon. Hy het dit beskryf as 'n heilige oomblik van herinnering en geregtigheid, en gewys op die belangrikheid daarvan om voorouers te eer as deel van 'n volk se identiteit en toekoms.

"Vanaand staan ons saam in 'n oomblik wat diep betekenis dra vir al die Khoi- en San-inheemse volke van Suider-Afrika. Dit is 'n oomblik van herinnering, 'n diep heilige oomblik, 'n oomblik van geregtigheid."

Hy het ook krities besin oor die verlede en gevra of genoeg gedoen is om die onregte reg te stel.

"Het ons genoeg gedoen, of moet ons verantwoordelikheid aanvaar vir ons nalatigheid, ons versuim om die gevoellose grafskenders van die koloniale tyd tot orde te roep en hulle aanspreeklik te hou vir hul dade?" wou Le Fleur weet.

Vervolg op 2



Beendere van voorouers ter ruste gelê



Premier van die Noord-Kaap, Zamane Saul (middel) met Petrus Vaalbooi (regs) en Bryan Minnies (links), lede van die Herbegravnis Taakspan, plaas 'n ruiker op die grafte by die herbegravnis op Steinkopf.

FOTO'S IFN MEDIA



Vervolg van bl.

Hy het beklemtoon dat hierdie voorouers mense was, ouers, kinders, leiers en genesers, wat 'n diep verbintenis met hul land en kultuur gehad het.

“Hoe kan ons ooit vergeet dat gevoellose, roekelose vreemdelinge hul oorskot uit daardie grond verwyder het in die naam van akademie en allerlei ander doelwitte?

“Hul terugkeer na die grond van Namakwaland bring nie net afsluiting nie, maar herstel ook 'n belangrike deel van hul menswaardigheid,” het Le Fleur gesê.

James Mapanka, voorsitter van die Noord-Kaapse Herbegravnis Taakspan, wat gevorm is om die beendere terug te bring, het gesê, “Ons staan vandag saam op 'n diep heilige oomblik in ons land se geskiedenis – hier by Kinderlê, 'n plek wat nie net 'n begraafplaas word nie, maar ook 'n ruimte van herstel, herinnering en geestelike herverbinding.

“Vir meer as 'n eeu is hierdie voorouers weggeneem van hul land, hul mense en hul geestelike rusplek. Hulle verwydering was nie net 'n fisiese daad nie, dit was 'n skending van waardigheid, identiteit en die heilige band tussen 'n volk en hul voorouers.

“Vandag stel ons daardie onreg reg. Vandag bring ons hulle huis toe,” het Mapanka gesê.

Hy het voorgestaan deur te sê, “wanneer ons sien hoe die kiste in die aarde neergelaat word, word ons daaraan herinner dat dit nie bloot 'n begrafnis is nie, dit is die herstel van waardigheid wat lank ontken is.

“Dit is 'n herbevestiging dat die Khoen- en San-mense, as die Eerste Volke van hierdie land, 'n blywende teenwoordigheid het, 'n ongebroke gees en 'n regmatige plek in die verhaal van hierdie nasie het.”

Nog 'n lid van die taakspan, Bryan Minnies, het gesê, “sedert die middel van die 17de eeu is die Khoen- en San-mense, die grondleggers van hierdie land, onderwerp aan 'n sistematiese onteiening, nie net van hul grond nie, maar ook geestelik en liggaamlik.

“Ons het nie net ons voorvaderlike grond verloor nie; ons het ons soewereiniteit, ons erfenis, ons tale en uiteindelik selfs die heiligheid van ons sterflike oorskot verloor,” het hy gesê.

“Vandag verklaar ons: die geskiedenis word reggestel! Ons het hulle ontmoet op die Hoë Pad van Herstellende Geregtheid! Ons voorouers het as gevangenes op die skepe van die koloniste vertrek, maar ons het hulle teruggebring op die vlerke van die wind! Ons het hulle huis toe gebring op die asem van ons voorouers!” het Minnies gesê.

Barend van Wyk, ook lid van die taakspan, het in sy boodskap gesê vir baie jare was die stelsels in Suid-Afrika, sedert die koloniale tyd, onder die indruk dat die Khoen en die San uitgesterf het.

“Maar ons is nie uitgesterf nie, ons was bedreig. Wanneer 'n mens kyk na die beendere wat opgegrawe is, besef jy dat ons mense bedreig was. Maar hulle was ook 'n krag om mee rekening te hou, want baie wetenskaplikes wou weet: wie en wat is die Khoen en San van Suid-Afrika?

“Dawid verklaar egter: ons meetsnoere het vir ons op lieflike plekke geval. As ons kyk na die grense van die Noord-Kaap, sien ons dat die koloniste ons wou onderdruk. Tog het Koningin Victoria erken dat die Namas in Namakwaland woon, die Griekwas in Griekwaland-Wes, en dat daar 'n Boesmanland en 'n Korannaland is.

“En Dawid sê: hierdie gebiede het vir ons op lieflike plekke geval, ja, ons erfenis is vir ons mooi. Ek wil 'n beroep doen op ons jong mense, dié wat die fakkel verder moet dra, om hierdie erfenis te koester.”

Petrus Vaalbooi, Boesman-leier van die Kalahari en ook lid van die taakspan, het mense bedank wat in hul duisende gekom het om die beendere van die voorvaders te herbegrawe.

“Nou kan ek in vrede rus, my mense is terug. Dankie dat julle gekom het!”

Tydens die seremonie is daar ook 'n versoeningsverdrag onderteken deur leiers namens die Namas, Boesmans, Koranas, Kaapse Khoen en die Griekwas as 'n verbintenis en verpligting dat hierdie groepe saam hul tale, kultuur, tradisies en geskiedenis sal bevorder.

Die herbegravnis by Kinderlê simboliseer die voltooiing van 'n pynlike geskiedenis, maar ook die begin van voortgesette erkenning, geneesing en geregtigheid vir die eerste nasie van Suid-Afrika.

Restoration

On 23 March, a deeply moving reburial ceremony at Kinderlê near Steinkopf marked a significant moment of restoration and dignity for 63 Khoen and San ancestors. Indigenous leaders, government officials, and community members from the Northern and Western Cape and beyond gathered to honour lives that had long been denied respect, both in life and in death. For many present, the ceremony represented a long-awaited moment of closure, with a shared sentiment that the ancestors could “finally rest in peace”.

These remains belonged to Khoen and San individuals whose graves were desecrated during the colonial era. Their bodies were removed without consent and sent to local and international institutions for scientific study, often under the guise of research rooted in racial prejudice.

Many of the remains were kept at the South African Museum (now Iziko Museums) from as early as 1920, while others were sent abroad, including to the University of Glasgow's Hunterian Museum in Scotland.

Delivering the keynote address, Pres. Cyril Ramaphosa described the reburial as both an honour and a moral obligation. He acknowledged the profound injustices suffered by South Africa's first peoples – the Nama, Cape Khoen, Korana, Griqua, and San – who were dispossessed of their land, stripped of their identity, and subjected to extreme violence under colonial rule.

He highlighted how, during the 18th and 19th centuries, so-called “scientific racism” led to the exploitation of indigenous people, whose bodies were treated as objects for study to support theories of European superiority. Even in death, they were denied dignity.

The repatriation of the remains was the result of collaborative efforts between South African institutions and international partners such as the University of Glasgow.

This process, initiated in 2022, culminated in the return of human remains along with associated artefacts. However, the broader journey toward repatriation spans nearly 25 years, beginning with a resolution adopted at the National KhoenSan Consultative Conference in Oudtshoorn in 2001.

Cecil le Fleur, chairperson of the NKC delivered a powerful address during the wake preceding the reburial. Reflecting on the significance of the moment, he emphasised the importance of honouring ancestors as a foundation for preserving dignity and securing the future of a people.



James Mapanka, chairman of the Reburial Task Team.

Homecoming of ancestors bones



‘Rest now, you are home’

Remarks by the Chairperson of the Reburial Task Team, **JAMES MAPANKA**, at the reburial site at Kinderlê, outside Steinkopf, and at Iziko Museums at the handover of the bones.

We stand together at a profoundly sacred moment in our nation’s history – here at Kinderlê, a place that now become not only a burial site, but a site of restoration, memory, and spiritual reconnection.

In accordance with this solemn programme – marked by prayer, the placing of the coffins, burial rites, and the lowering of our ancestors into the earth – we are called upon to reflect deeply, not only on the past, but on the meaning of this moment for generations to come.

For more than a century, these ancestors were taken away from their land, their people, and their spiritual resting place. Their removal was not only a physical act – it was a violation of dignity, of identity, and of the sacred relationship between a people and their ancestors.

Today, we correct that injustice. Today, we bring them home. As we witness the placing of the coffins into the earth, we are reminded that this is not merely a burial – it is a restoration of dignity long denied.

It is a reaffirmation that the Khoe and San people, as the First Peoples of this land, have an enduring presence, an unbroken spirit, and a rightful place in the story of this nation.

This moment speaks to the very theme of this commemoration – “The Bill of Rights at 30: Making Human Dignity Real.” Today, dignity is not just spoken of – it is being restored in action.

As the Reburial Task Team, we have carried this responsibility with humility and reverence. We recognise that this process has required not only coordination and engagement, but deep cultural sensitivity, consultation, and respect for the spiritual practices of the Khoe and

San communities.

We wish to acknowledge the collective effort that has made this moment possible. In particular, we extend our appreciation to the CRL Rights Commission, whose constitutional mandate is to promote and protect the rights of cultural, religious and linguistic communities. In fulfilling this mandate, the Commission has played a critical role in supporting communities to reclaim and develop their historically diminished heritage.

This reburial stands as a living example of that mandate in action, where heritage is not merely preserved in institutions, but restored to the people to whom it belongs. It affirms that the dignity of communities is inseparable from their history, their culture, and their ancestral connections.

As we proceed with the burial rites, and as the coffins are lowered, accompanied by prayer and song, we are reminded of the spiritual significance of this act. And as each member of the community comes forward to place soil upon the coffins symbolising unity and shared identity, we participate in a collective act of healing.

This act binds us together – across communities, across generations, and across histories. It signals reconciliation not only among the living, but between the living and the departed.

Let this moment also serve as a call to action. The return of our ancestors must not be the end of the journey – it must be the beginning of a renewed commitment to recognition, restoration, and justice for the Khoe and San communities. We must continue to ensure that their languages are preserved, their cultural practices are respected, and their rightful place in the history and future of this country is fully acknowledged.

As we entrust our ancestors to the earth, may we do so with a sense of peace, knowing that they are no longer strangers in distant lands, but are finally reunited with their home, their people, and their spirit.

May the earth receive them with gentleness. May their spirits find eternal rest. And may their return strengthen our resolve to uphold dignity, justice, and unity for all. Rest now, our ancestors. You are home.

Remarks at the beginning of the journey at Iziko Museums

Dr Bongani Ndhlovu, we accept with humility these remains of our forebears, and with it we also accept the forgiveness you asked.

To forgive is to set people free – you set yourself free as well as your opponents.

We are also humbled to have walked this journey with you, and for the way in which you accepted us as the Community Task team.

You put us at ease and made us feel welcome so that we, as Bryan Minnies said, feel we are part of the furniture now.

Beyond this reburial, we will still be friends, we will still be a phone call away if you want to ask for advice, because as you told me: this is the beginning of a process that is long overdue – a process that will continue into the other provinces.

So we say, thank you very much.

As we embark on this journey, may this reburial of our ancestors be a catalyst for healing, not just for the KhoiSan community, but for our nation as a whole.

May it remind us of the importance of respecting and honouring the indigenous cultures such as this.

Let us strive to create a society that values and celebrates diversity, where all the voices are heard and all stories are told.

May the spirit of our ancestors guide us towards a brighter future, one that is rooted in the principal of ubuntu, humanity, compassion and respect for all.

As we embark on this journey let us pray for one another and let’s respect one another. And as we take them back to Namaqualand where they belong, let’s be mindful that we are in the hands of our lord.

This not the time to fight, this is not the time to blame. This is a time to embrace everybody that wants to get rid of the terrible past.

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Beendere van voorouers ter ruste gelê

Cecil le Fleur, voorsitter van die NKR, en Chantal Revell, Wes-Kaapse verteenwoordiger van die NKR.



‘Voorouers terug na aarde van Namakwaland waaruit hulle gevorm is’

Toespraak deur **CECIL LE FLEUR**, voorsitter van die Nasionale Khoi-San Raad tydens die nagwaak-byeenkoms by die 63 inheemse voorouers se beendere in Steinkopf.

Khoi-San gemeenskappe wat 'n diep verbintenis met die grond gehad het.

'n Volk wat geleef het met respek vir die natuur, vir mekaar en vir die geeste van die voorouers. Hulle was uit die aarde van Namakwaland en groter Suid-Afrika gevorm en is so op waardige en respekvolle wyse daarin terug besorg.

Hoe kan ons ooit vergeet dat ongevoelige, roekelose vreemdelinge hulle oorskotte uit daardie aarde verwyder het in die naam van die akademie en allerlei ander doelwitte?

Vir die Khoi-Khoi is die band tussen die lewendes, die gestorwenes en die grond waaruit hulle gebore was, 'n heilige en spirituele band wat niemand mag verbreek nie. Die grond waarop ons loop, die sterre wat op ons skyn en die wind wat oor die vlaktes waai en op hul wieke die stories van ons mense aandra, is so eie aan ons bestaan.

Wanneer 'n voorouer weggeruk word van sy land en sy volk, en weggevoer word na vreemde bestemmings, word daardie heilige band op

wrede wyse verbreek.

Wat geneem is, was dus nie net bene nie. Wat geneem is, was 'n deel van ons geskiedenis, 'n deel van ons waardigheid, en 'n deel van die geestelike band tussen volk en voorouer.

Maar vandag begin ons om daardie band te herstel. Die terugkeer van hierdie oorskotte is meer as 'n simboliese daad. Dit is 'n erkenning van 'n onreg wat vir te lank ontken is. Dit is 'n stap na waarheid, na respek en na genesing. Dit is 'n bevestiging dat die Nama en die Khoi-San volk, ondanks die pyn van die verlede, steeds hier staan, met trots, met veerkragtigheid en met 'n diep liefde vir ons onontkenbare inheemse geskiedenis.

Wanneer ons hierdie voorouers huis toe bring, bring ons hulle terug na die land wat hulle gevorm het, waar hul naelstringe begrawe lê.

Ons bring hulle terug na die grond van Afrika en Suid-Afrika: Ons bring hulle in liggaam en gees terug na die mense wat hulle nog altyd onthou het.

Vandag sê ons vir hulle: Julle is nie

vergete nie. Julle het altyd aan ons behoort en julle sal altyd aan ons behoort tot in die eindloos ewigheid.

Mag hierdie terugkeer nie net 'n einde wees nie, maar ook 'n begin, 'n begin van groter erkenning, groter respek en groter geregtigheid vir inheemse volke die wêreld oor.

Mag ons voorouers uiteindelik rus vind, hier waar hulle nog altyd moes gewees het, tussen hul mense, op hul gelofte land, en in die hart van hul geskiedenis, want 'n volk wat sy voorouers terugbring huis toe, bring ook sy eie waardigheid en trots terug.

Mag ons stryd vir ons eie identiteit en die erkenning van ons inheemse regte deur hierdie seremonie, harde klokke in die skynbaar dowe regering, se binnekamers laat lui.

Ons durf nie nou die stryd gewonne gee nie. Ons mag die strydbyle nie nou begrawe voordat ons nie volle oorwinning behaal het nie.

Ons móét steeds uitroep: *Aluta continua* – die stryd duur voort.

Daar is 'n ou waarheid in baie Afrika-kulture wat sê " 'n volk wat sy voorouers eer, eer ook sy eie menswaardigheid en verseker so sy volk se toekoms." Vanaand staan ons hier om daardie waarheid te bevestig.

Ons staan vanaand saam in 'n oomblik wat diepe betekenis dra vir al die Khoi-San, inheemse volke van Suidelike Afrika.

Dit is 'n oomblik van herinnering. 'n Diep gewyde oomblik, maar ook 'n oomblik van geregtigheid.

Vir my is dit ook 'n oomblik waar ek introspeksie doen en myself afvra: Is die siele van hierdie voorouers wat vanaand hier lê; s hulle gelukkig met dit wat ons tot dusver gedoen het om die onreg wat teenoor hulle en andere gepleeg was, reg te stel?

Het ons genoeg gedoen of moet ons vanaand boete doen vir ons nalatigheid: vir ons traagheid om die gevoellose koloniale grafskenders tot tot orde te roep en hulle aan boetedoening te onderwerp.

Gedurende die koloniale tyd is die oorblyfsels van ons voorouers uit hul gemeenskappe geneem, sonder toestemming, sonder respek, sonder erkenning van hul menswaardigheid.

Hulle is weggevoer na verre museums en akademiese instellings, waar hulle as voorwerpe behandel is vir navorsing en uitstallings.

Maar ons weet: hulle was nooit voorwerpe nie. Hulle was mense. Hulle was moeders en vaders, kinders en leiers, genesers en draers van wysheid.

Hulle was deel van die Nama en





Bringing home bones of ancestors

Honour to be part of repatriation of remains

Remarks by **STANLEY PETERSON**, member of the Northern Cape Reburial Task Team.

I was privileged, as the Griqua leader of the Northern Cape, to serve on the Reburial task team and to lead a delegation transferring the ancestral remains from Iziko Museums of South Africa to their final resting place in Steinkopf.

The delegation journeyed to Garies, where the Cape Khoi conducted a ceremonial handover of the caskets to the Northern Cape Task Team. The remains were then transported to Steinkopf, where a night vigil was held in the community hall, followed by a traditional burial ceremony the following day.

The reburial initiative is rooted in a long history, but gained momentum in 2022 when the Hunterian Museum and Iziko Museums (who recently celebrated their 200 year anniversary) engaged Khoi and San leadership regarding ancestral remains held in their collections, including at the University of Glasgow.

These remains had historically been removed and studied under the pretext of scientific research.

After decades of pressure on the museums they approached the Khoi and San with the intent to release the remains to the communities where they were removed.

Five of the remains of our ancestors were at the Glasgow University, where they were studied and researched. Everything was done in the name of research. Our pain started in the name of research.

I was directly involved throughout the process, including documentation of the remains, casket preparations, and associated rituals.

The remains included individuals identified from various groups, including Griqua, Nama (from Steinkopf and Henkries), and others categorised more broadly.

We can specifically trace the removal of our ancestors back to the case of Klaas and Trooi Pienaar, as was clearly explained by historian Professor Siraj Rassool whose work details how Klaas and Trooi Pienaar were taken from the Northern Cape, near the area of Kuruman in the early 1900s.

Their graves were dug up, and their remains were stolen, desecrated, placed in crates and shipped to Vienna.

The researches were specifically interest-

ed in the longevity of our forefathers, and whether they were really human being.

In 2022 a formal process began to repatriate the bones of our ancestors from the Hunterian Museum in Glasgow, as also the other remains that were held at Iziko Museums.

This process involved public participation every month for two years within our communities to establish how and where our people wanted the human remains of our ancestors to be buried.

The process involved recognised community leadership and followed all required legal and cultural protocols. There are some leaders who have raised issues concerning these remains but I believe they have misrepresented the issues.

They were not part of the broader journey; the many years of negotiating to get the remains back, or all the required formalities of getting the necessary papers to bury our people with dignity.

I was personally present at every stage of the process and documented every aspect of this process, including all the caskets and what was recorded.

As part of the reburial preparations the remains were draped in springbok skins, and rituals were performed while this happened.

Four remains originated from the Cape; two were described as women of South Africa.

Seventeen of the remains were from Steinkopf and Henkries in the Northern Cape, while a large number of the remains were detailed as from Griqua origin.

Despite the diversity of the remains, Khoi and San leaders collectively agreed to a unified burial at Kinderlê, a monument outside Steinkopf.

This decision reflected a commitment to unity among the Nama, Griqua, Korana, Cape Khoi, and San communities.

Kinderlê was also specifically chosen as the reburial site so that it could serve as a platform for reconciliation.

Recognised leaders signed a formal pledge committing to peace and mutual respect, affirming that intergroup conflict would not be repeated.

The reburial initiative also generated local economic benefits, particularly for women in Steinkopf, who provided catering and accommodation services during the ceremonies.



STANLEY PETERSON, TASK TEAM MEMBER

From the Editor's Pen: **ZENZILE KHOISAN**

A long, dedicated fight for justice



The fight to repatriate and bury with dignity our ancestors has been a taxing struggle.

Now, finally, with a major breakthrough, there is now hope that South Africa's Khoi and San descendants are being heard.

This is long overdue acknowledgement for the Khoi and San.

Over many decades I have borne witness to the call for the human remains of South Africa's first indigenous peoples to be treated with dignity and respect.

This is the demand that our ancestors be removed from the cupboards, laboratories, vaults and display cases of universities, museums and other institutions and be laid to rest with dignity.

This call was for all institutions associated with the barbaric practice of treating our ancestors as mere objects of study or display, to give these remains to their communities to be buried with their humanity restored.

This was one of the 12 resolutions adopted in Oudtshoorn when the National KhoiSan Consultative Conference was convened from in March 2001.

It was here that 600 KhoiSan leaders from across South Africa drew a line in the sand. They demanded the return and the dignified burial, with full cultural protocol of all our ancestors, whose humanity was desecrated.

Now, 25 years since that watershed event, we have begun to see the results of that great and intrepid struggle – with a significant breakthrough manifested in the repatriation of 63 of our

ancestors from the Hunterian Museum in Glasgow Scotland and the Iziko Museum in Cape Town, and, with high level ceremony, their laying to rest at Kinderlê in Steinkopf in the Northern Cape.

That was realisation, on a major scale of luminaries such as Prof. Jatti Bredekamp, Dr William Langeveldt, King Josiah Katz, Chief Harleen Sassman, Kaptein Minnie Barendse, Kaptein Johannes Kraalshoek, Chief Okkie Lewies, Griqua Volks President Anthony le Fleur, and the Lion of the Kalahari, great San leader Dawid Kruiper, and the great San linguist and medicine woman Ouma !Una Rooi.

For those who only recently been involved with this issue there may well be questions about process or about procedure or about one or other aspect of the repatriation and reburial of our ancestors or there may differences of opinion or position on how things should have been done.

Without being too rash, I would simply ask everyone to introspect into how long it has taken to get there and what it has taken to ensure that our ancestors are now actually, after all the unnecessary rancour, finally laid to rest.

They are laid to rest because there is now understanding, goodwill and a more receptive ear from those to who we have made impassioned pleas for decades.

It is time, mostly, to give thanks, to Almighty God and to those who could not be there to witness the realisation of their life's work.

Bringing home bones of ancestors



DISTINGUISHED GUESTS: From left: Edward Kieswetter (SARS commissioner), Alvin Botes (Deputy Minister Arts and Culture), Alinda Beukes (Executive Mayor of Namakwa District), James Mapanka (chairman Task team), Northern Cape Premier Zamane Sauls, Pres. Ramaphosa, Min. Gayton. McKenzie and Queen Katrina.

Restoring the dignity of ancestors denied in life and death

Remarks by **PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA (right)** at the reburial of ancestral Khoi and San human remains at Kinderlê, Steinkopf.

It is an honour to be here today as we lay our ancestors to rest. A dignified burial is but the least we can do as the democratic government to honour these, our countrymen and countrywomen, who were victims of a terrible past.

The Nama, Khoi, Korana, Griqua and San people bore the brunt of European conquest of southern Africa. They were dispossessed of their lands, and unimaginable violence was unleashed upon them. In life, they were robbed of their names, their culture, and their very humanity.

During a dark period of scientific racism in the late 18th and 19th century, many of our people were coerced to leave southern Africa for Europe; where their physical features made them exotic specimens for exhibition, study and exploitation.

Not even death would spare them from indignity. Their remains were dug up from graves and sold to museums and medical institutions in Europe. The sale of human remains of indigenous peoples for study in Europe was rooted in racism and used to advance theories of European racial superiority.

Others, like Sara Baartman, died sick and alone in these faraway lands.

Today, as their remains are finally returned to the land from which they were taken, we restore the dignity that was so cruelly denied to them in life and even in death.

It is a culmination of a long journey and a collaborative partnership between government and various stakeholders. They include the Iziko Museum, formerly the South African Museum, the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA), and the Hunterian Museum at the University of Glasgow in Scotland.

I would like to welcome the representatives from the Hunterian Museum who are with us today. Following discussions that began in 2022, last year we successfully repatriated the remains of five individuals, together with two plaster face-casts and a smoking pipe that was excavated from a burial ground.

These remains were unethically exhumed between 1868 and 1924 from graves in the Northern Cape and were donated to the university. The other remains that will be buried today had been housed at the Iziko Museum since the 1920's.

The return of our ancestors to their descendant communities is a vital act of restoration and restitution that goes beyond acknowledging the colonial legacy, it is also a manifestation of ubuntu – a recognition of our common humani-



ty. Today, we accompany them to their final rest here at Kinderlê, a place with a tragic history. It was here, in 1867 that 32 Nama children were murdered while their parents were at a church service.

The Northern Cape Reburial Task Team has chosen this site as an act of reconciliation, and as a reminder that despite the deep divisions in our past, we are one people.

The greater tragedy of the erasure of the indigenous peoples of southern Africa is that much of it went unacknowledged. It was only in the late 20th century that European countries began to seriously confront their colonial legacies, and even then, it has only been some of them.

Even amidst the emergence of serious critiques on the part of these European powers in the late 1970's, many have avoided a deeper reckoning. Some of them have apologised for specific atrocities, but in the main they have fallen short of full, unqualified apologies for colonialism as a whole.

As South Africa, we do not linger in the shadow of unspoken apologies or deferred reckonings. We will restore dignity, on our own terms.

This year marks thirty years since our democratic Constitution was signed into law.

The preamble of the Constitution calls on us to heal

the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights.

Our Constitution obliges us to advance restitution for all those who were the victims of colonial and apartheid atrocities.

Since 1994 we have actively implemented legislative and policy reforms to address the historical exclusion of our indigenous communities. We have done this through land restitution and redress, legal recognition of leadership structures, and support for cultural revival and language preservation.

Through the National Policy on Repatriation of Human Remains and Heritage Objects we will continue to forge partnerships with institutions and individuals across the world to recover ancestral human remains that were illegally taken from South Africa.

I would like to thank the Ministry of Sports, Arts and Culture, the Northern Cape Reburial Task Team, the Iziko Museums of South Africa and the South African Heritage Resources Agency for their ongoing work in this regard.

We thank the traditional leadership who are with us today for being part of this important act of redress that we hope will bring a measure of closure to the affected communities.

Human dignity is not dependent on who you are, what language you speak, what colour your skin is, where you were born or how much or how little you have. Human dignity is inherent. It cannot be deferred. And it cannot be erased.

The illegal exhumation of our ancestors for sale in faraway lands exposed the depths of depravity to which human beings could descend.

They were dug up and turned into commodities and specimens, displayed under the cold gaze of pseudoscience.

Their restless spirits were left to wander here in the Northern Cape, the land where they once lived. Today we welcome their mortal remains, that they may at last be reunited with their spirits.

They were not nobodies. They came from communities. They had families. Each and every one of their lives had meaning and purpose. They were our people. They came from this land, to which we now return them. And we have brought them home to be buried here alongside the children of Kinderlê.

In the words of our great legend Diana Ferrus: *"I have come to take you home, where the ancient mountains shout your name. I have made your bed at the foot of the hill. Your blankets are covered in buchu and mint. The proteas stand in yellow and white.*

I have come to take you home where I will sing for you, for you have brought me peace. For you have brought us peace."

We honour you. We remember your precious lives. We pray that you may finally rest in peace.





Bringing home bones of ancestors

‘A profound moment for Iziko Museums’

Remarks by the acting CEO of Iziko **DR BOGANI DHLOVU (pictured right)** at the handing over of the ancestral bones before the long journey to the Northern Cape.



Today is a profound moment in the life of the Iziko Museums.

In this Human Rights Month, we stand together, not only to reflect on our country’s history, but to act to restore dignity, to recognize the harm that was done and to walk the path of healing alongside the communities whose ancestors were taken by this museum and many other museums, violently and against their will.

Our ancestors whom we honour today we once collected and held within this institution at a time when their dignity was not recognized. They were treated as specimens rather than as human beings to be respected.

Standing here as the custodians of the institution that committed that history, we name this truth, openly and in naming it we begin a process of cleansing.

This museum was part of a process that decided that it was worth to study the other, however today we recognise that role.

Over the past months and years, Iziko museum has committed itself to ethical rehumanisation, resettling the humanity of our ancestors and returning them to the care of communities that love them.

We recognise the fact that their dignity will be restored and their humanity will be respected. This museum therefore has reflect on the manner in which it has treated our ancestors, and now, having worked with communities and other leadership of the task team, we seem them, we’ve seen them preparing them, we’ve seen them doing the necessary rituals linked to the

process of return.

Having honoured them through prayer, ritual and reflection we arrive at the moment of hand-over today. It is a symbolic and deeply human act.

As the acting CEO of Iziko Museums with a full heart to say we return your ancestors to you. We return them with respect, we return them with sorrow for what was taken violently. We return them with gratitude for your leadership, patience and trust.

We return them with a commitment that this institution would continue trusting in itself so that such histories are never, never repeated again.

Today we formally place your ancestors in your care; in the care of those who love them; In the care of those who fought for them; in the care of those who worked with us; in the care of those who guided us.

We are placing them to where they belong. From this moment they begin their journey home, carried by the love, strength and ceremony of their descendants.

May this handover bring healing to families and communities, may it bring integrity to our institution and may it honour the humanity of our ancestors which now stands at the centre of everything we do.

On behalf of Iziko Museums of South Africa, we now say that we are sorry. We know that these words will never be enough. We thank you for walking this path with us and we wish our ancestors that are under your care a safe journey.

Committed to return human remains with dignity, care

Professor Steph Scholten, Director of The Hunterian Museum in Scotland, stated that “the repatriation of the ancestral remains of six individuals from The Hunterian to South Africa is a small step towards addressing the historical injustices caused by unethical colonial-era practices.”

He added that the institution remains committed to working “in an equitable way, returning human remains and culturally significant items to their rightful communities with dignity and care”.



Professor Steph Scholten, Director of The Hunterian Museum

This statement reflects a broader shift within museum and heritage practice towards critical engagement with the colonial histories that have shaped institutional collections.

Increasingly, such institutions are called upon to confront the ethical implications of past acquisition practices, particularly those conducted within contexts of unequal power relations where Indigenous voices were excluded or disregarded.

In this light, repatriation is not merely an act, but an ethical intervention that seeks to restore dignity to individuals and acknowledge the enduring cultural and spiritual connections maintained by descendant communities.

Led by Iziko Museums of South Africa, the reburial process has been guided by extensive consultation with affected communities and First Indigenous Khoi and San leaders to ensure their voices remain central in decision-making.

The reburial acknowledges the historical injustices of colonialism and apartheid, which led to the removal, desecration, and exploitation of the ancestors’ remains without consent or respect.

As such, it represents an important step in an ongoing process of recognition, restitution, and healing, both for the communities directly affected and for the institutions seeking to address their historical responsibilities.



ALL PROTOCOLS OBSERVED: A delegation of Cape Khoi indigenous leaders, with officials from Namaqualand, at Iziko Museums during a preparatory event two days before the reburial of ancestral bones. **PIC: IFN MEDIA**



Laying to rest the bones of ancestors

SNAPSHOTS OF THE EVENTS





Bringing home bones of ancestors





Beendere van voorouers ter ruste gelê

‘Meetsnoere het vir ons op lieflike plekke geval’

Boodskap van **BAREND VAN WYK**, lid van Herbegrafnis Taakspan, by die Hebegrafnis seremonie by Kinderlê.

Vir baie jare, sedert die koloniale tydperk, was die stelsels in Suid-Afrika onder die indruk dat die Khoi en die San uitgesterf het. Maar ons het nie uitgesterf nie, ons was wel bedreig. As mens kyk na die beendere wat uitgehaal is, dan vind jy ons mense was bedreig. Hulle was bedreig en was ook ’n krag waarmee rekening gehou moes word, want baie van die wetenskaplikes wou geweet het wie en wat is ’n Khoi en San.

Maar Dawid sê ons meedsnoere het op lifelike plekke geval. As ons kyk na die grense van die Nord-Kaap, waar die koloniste ons wou onderdruk, het die destydse Queen Victoria erken dat die Nama in Namakwaland woon; die Griekwas in Griekwaland-Wes, en dat die Boesman in Boesmanland woon.

Dit is die inheemse gebedsareas van inheemse mense van Suid-Afrika, en Dawid sê, hierdie gebiede het vir ons op lifelike plekke geval – ja ons se erfenis is vir ons mooi.

Ek wil ’n beroep doen op ons jong mense – hulle wat nog die fakkel verder moet vat – om die erfenis te koester.

Die Here het ’n plan met alles. Die Here het hierdie 63 kiste met menselike oorskot Noord-Kaap toe gebring om weer eens vir u en ek te sê: mense wees trots op julle nalatenskap en erfenis.

Nou lyk dit of ons ideur ’n spieël kyk na ’n raaisel, maar die Here is die Here.

Ons sal nie sterwe voordat ons die heiligdom en heerlikheid van ons se mense gesien het nie.

Maar ons moet die skrif verstaan, Dawid was ’n skaapwagter, maar hy skryf die meedsnoere is vir my lieflik...

Jy kan nie help om trots te wees om te kan praat hier vandag nie.

Aan die politieke leierskap in die Noord-Kaap, julle is die pioniere van die herstel van die Khoi-San mense in Suid-Afrika.

Dit is die Noord-Kaap wat die leiding gegee het aan die herstelprogram van die Khoi en San. Aan mnr. Alvin Botes, adjunk-minister van Kuns, Kultuur en Sport, jy kom van ’n ryk geskiedenis.

Aan premier Zamane Saul, jy het manne van kaliber in die Noord-Kaap. Aan die jongmense, julle meedsnoere het vir julle in lifelike plekke geval, ons erfenis is vir ons mooi.



BAREND VAN WYK



TASK TEAM MEMBERS: Barend van Wyk (left) and Bryan Minnies.



Dismantling a world order that rendered us invisible

REMARKS BY BRYAN MINNIES TASK TEAM MEMBER

Since the mid-17th century, the Khoi and San, foundational architects of this soil, have been subjected to a systematic dispossession that was not merely terrestrial, but spiritual and corporeal.

We did not only lose our ancestral lands; we lost our sovereignty, our heritage, our languages, and eventually, the very sanctity of our mortal remains. For three centuries, this city of Cape Town served as the Gateway of the Taking – a colonial port where our ancestors were transformed from human beings into "ethnographic specimens," crated like common merchandise, and shipped across the dark, indifferent waters of the Atlantic to satisfy the morbid curiosities of the Northern Hemisphere.

Our journey to this point was not paved with certainty. It began on a sunny morning on the 6th of November 2024, in Uptington. When the Task Team first gathered, we walked an uncertain path.

We have since travelled vast, scenic, and painful distances: from the shifting red dunes of the Kalahari, through the ancient, dust-laden history of Campbell, into the industrial scars of Kimberley, and finally through the rugged, granite heart of Namaqualand.

We crossed the oceans to the University of Glasgow. I remember vividly sitting for lunch in a place where, for 360 years, a person of my lineage – of Khoi and San blood – would have been barred from entry, let alone invited to break bread as an equal.

As I sat there, I felt the metaphysical weight of the world pressing upon my chest. I felt the thousands of ancestors who were never invited to the table, who were instead measured by calipers and judged by the "notorious" pseudo-sciences of a bygone era. In that moment of profound irony, I realised that we were not just there to collect remains; we were there to dismantle a world order that had rendered us invisible.

The Scots have a haunting ballad that echoed through the stone corridors of the Hunterian Museum: *"You'll take the high road, and I'll take the low road, and I'll be in Scotland afore ye; but me and my true love will never meet again on the bonnie, bonnie banks..."*

For 360 years, our people were condemned to the Low Road, the road of the subaltern, the road of the grave-robbed, the road of the museum basement and the cold, numbered drawer.

That song is the cry of a spirit separated from its body. Our ancestors believed they would never meet us again on the banks of the !Garieab or the

plains of the Camdeboo. They believed their exile was eternal. But today, we declare a Correction of History! We have met them on the High Road of Restorative Justice!

Our ancestors went away as captives on the ships of Empire, but we have brought them back on the back of the winds! We have brought them home on the breath of the ancestors!

This monumental task of Repatriation was not achieved in isolation. It required an unprecedented Transatlantic Collaboration.

We extend our deepest academic and personal gratitude to Dr Andrew Mills and Prof Steph Scholten from the Hunterian Museum. You have demonstrated what true ethical stewardship looks like in the 21st century. Our partnership will continue within the European Union as we research and identify the whereabouts of our remaining kin who are still scattered across foreign institutions.

We thank the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) for their rigorous technical and legal guidance. We thank the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture (DSAC) – at National, Provincial, and Local levels – for providing the political will to fuel this engine of justice.

To Iziko Museums, you have become a Second home to us. We have haunted these halls for so long that we are now officially part of the furniture! Thank you for allowing this museum to transition from a place of "collection" to a place of "connection."

To my fellow Task Team members: you have been the vanguard of this struggle. You refused to let the fire go out.

But let my voice carry a warning: The journey is not yet done. This is the course of our lives.

My heart breaks today because I know that in the cold, sterile rooms of London, Paris, Berlin, and Vienna, our brothers and sisters are still trapped. They are still walking that Low Road. They are still crying out from the "Valley of Dry Bones," waiting for the wind of the South to find them.

We will not rest until every bone is returned. This is our sacred mandate. We move now from the Gates of Loss to the Throne of Sovereign Peace.

We are no longer individual tribes: Nama, Griqua, Korana, Khoi or San battling for crumbs of recognition. We are the Nation at Large! We are the First People, and we are reclaiming our seat at the Throne of National Memory.

To the 63 souls we carry today: The sun of the Namaqualand is rising. The red dust is waiting to embrace you.

You are home. You are free. You are Sovereign.



Beendere van voorouers ter ruste gelê

Inheemse leiers teken Vredesverdrag, belowe om nooit weer te baklei

Die Kinderlê Monument by Steinkopf, waar 32 Nama-kinders in 1867 deur Boesmans vermoor is terwyl hul ouers in die kerk was.



Bryan Minnies (regs), Noord-Kaapse Taakspanlid, lees die bepalinge waaronder die Vredesverdrag geteken word. FOTO'S IFN MEDIA



Vredesverdrag

Vredesooreenkoms onderteken deur die Namas, Boesmans, Griekwas, Khoi en die Koranas.

Die verdrag lees as volg:

Versoeningsverdrag onderteken op 23 Maart 2026 by Kinderlê Museum, tydens die begrafnis en herbegrafnis van 63 voorvaders.

Die verdrag dui aan dat ons nie weer met mekaar gaan baklei nie; dat ons die vrede wat ons hier vandag sien, te behou. So ons sal opstaan, ons sal saam die pad stap hiervandaan verder.

Hierdie versoeningsooreenkoms word geteken as gevolg van die gebeurtenis tussen die Nama en die San by Kinderlê in 1867.

Hierdie ooreenkoms is 'n verbintenis en verpligting om saam ons taal, kultuur, tradisies en geskiedenis te bevorder. Dit word geteken namens die Namas, die Boesmans, die Koranas, die Khoi en die Griekwa.

Die leiers het namens die volk hierdie verdrag geteken – in Engels en Afrikaans – sodat die Huntarian Museum in Skotland ook 'n afskrif kan kry.



Gert Links teken namens die Namas.



Stanley Peterson teken as getuie vir die Griekwas.



Zenzile Khoisan en Chantal Revell teken namens die Kaapse Khoi.



Johannes Waterboer teken namens die Griekwa.



Petrus Vaalbooi teken namens die Boesmans.



Beendere van voorouers ter ruste gelê

Kaapse Khoi oorhandig die oorskot op Garies aan die Noord-Kaapse taakspan

Die stoet met die oorskot van 63 voorouers doen by Garies aan waar die Kaapse Khoi die beendere aan die Noord-Kaap oorhandig met inheemse rituele.





Laying to rest the bones of ancestors

Repatriation, victory of human rights

Remarks made by **ZAMANE SAUL**, Premier of the Northern Cape at the reburial ceremony at Kinderlê near Steinkopf in the Northern Cape.

It is a bittersweet moment for me to stand here, on behalf of the provincial government and the people of the Northern Cape.

We are here in Steinkopf to close yet another painful chapter in our country's history of colonialism, racial subjugation and oppression.

As a country we are not sitting with scars of colonial oppression, but raw and wide-open wounds of colonial oppression. The impact of the brutal history of colonialism still resonates today.

After more than a century of displacement and the indignity of being

treated as specimens in foreign lands, our Khoi and San ancestors have finally returned to their land.

Their repatriation is a victory of human rights and restoring dignity to our people.

On 17 October 2025, together with Minister Gayton McKenzie and MEC Mangaliso Matika, we received the remains of six bodies, from the Hunterian Museum in Scotland, five of which were from the Northern Cape.

The illegal removal of these remains inflicted profound pain on the descendants of the Khoi and the San. Their reburial today marks a significant milestone in confronting our traumatic past.

The story of the Khoi and San is the story of South Africa, the story of Africa and the story of humanity.

As a province, our journey of repatriating our ancestral remains began in 2012, when we repatriated from Austria the remains of Klaas and his wife

Trooi Pienaar, who were of KhoiSan descent.

The couple were buried in a veld on a farm near Kuruman, at the instruction of the employer. Their bodies were later exhumed by an Austrian scientist who took them illegally to Austria.

We remain grateful that the Natural History Museum of Austria returned the remains of Klaas and Trooi Pienaar to South Africa.

On 26 November 2023, the sacred remains of nine descendants of the Khoi and San, collectively known as the Sutherland 9 were finally laid to rest in the historic cemetery of Sutherland, these individuals were:

- Cornelius Abraham (30–45 year old man);
- Klaas Stuurman (40–60 year old man);
- Jannetjie (45–60 year old woman)
- Saartje (30–45 year old woman)
- Totje (25–30 year old man)
- Voetje (over 44 year old man)
- IGui (30–50 year old man), and two children, named
- Glae (4–6 year old boy, a name given by the National San Council)
- Saa (6–8 year old girl, a name given by the National San Council)

These individuals were buried with dignity six years after their skeletal remains were rediscovered through the 2017 audit.

That audit revealed that their remains had been unethically removed and taken to the University of Cape Town in the 1920s by a medical student, reflecting a painful legacy of exploitation and disregard for indigenous communities.

Their reburial marked a significant



PREMIER ZAMANE SAUL

moment of restoration, remembrance and respect for Khoi and San people.

Their reburial enabled their spirits to return home, after nearly a century of displacement.

Right here in Steinkopf, nine years ago, we also reburied the remains of Ouma Geheis, whose head was kept in a science laboratory as an object of centuries of research.

We are also gathered in the same place that was the site of a holocaust faced by the Nama indigenous people.

The remains of the 63 people here were transported to Scotland and kept there, fulfilling the vile will of colonial powers, who were not satisfied with the conquest of land but also embarked on a campaign to break our spiritual connection to our ancestors.

Their bodies were taken abroad and used in academic institutions for display and research.

This was done without regard to their dignity. This shows how savage colonialism and its twin sister apartheid were.

For our communities, this reburial will strengthen their spiritual connection to their ancestors.



‘Still thousands of artefacts, bones overseas’

IFN MEDIA REPORT

The intense journey of bringing the ancestral remains of Khoi and San ancestors full circle, from the injustice of illegal exhumation and undignified treatment at the hands of museums and academic institutions could not have been possible without the critical work of the department of Arts, Culture and Sport, headed by Minister Gayton McKenzie.

McKenzie, who introduced keynote speaker President Cyril Ramaphosa at the reburial event gave insights into how the process had unfolded, recognising numerous role-players now and in the past whose work had facilitated this process, eventually resulting in the successful reburial of ancestral bones.

The minister cautioned institutions which still held human remains and cultural belonging of South Africa's first indigenous peoples to do the right thing by returning these cultural belongings to the rightful custodians.

He expressed his gratitude to his predecessors on whose watch the repatria-

tion process had begun, stating that “I want to thank the Ministers before me who started the work. It is not Gayton McKenzie who started the work, I found the work already halfway. I want to thank Zizi Kodwa and Nathi Mthethwa, they started the work, and I just continued it.

The Arts, Culture and Sport minister then expressed gratitude to Ramaphosa and stated that when he had requested permission to go to Scotland, the state president had asked him to explain what he sought to achieve with the trip.

“I explained that wanted to go to Scotland to negotiate for the return of our ancestral bones and he told me I must go.

“The president then asked who would accompany me on this journey and I told me that I want to take our leaders with me, those who had done the work and we all went together to Scotland,” he stated.

Minister Mckenzie then specifically expressed his gratitude to the governments and institutions which had acted to correct the historical injustice com-

mitted against the Khoi and San peoples and facilitated the handover of specific cultural belongings, specifically Hunterian Museum of Glasgow University, the government of Scotland and the government of the United Kingdom.

The minister then issued a call to others that held custody over ancestral remains and cultural objects that had been wrongly placed in their care, noting that “if you inherit stolen artefacts, stolen bones, it is not your fault, but if you refuse to return it, then it is your fault and there are 3 000 artefacts of the Khoi and the San in museums across the world.”

Also present at the reburial event and at several of the events preceding this sentinel ritual were a delegation that had travel from Scotland to attend.

“I specifically want to thank the representatives of the Hunterian Museum who treated us like royalty. They even told us that it is unfair that we were paying for all of the leaders and said that they would pay for half of the leaders,” Minister McKenzie stated.



MIN. GAYTON MCKENZIE







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Reg. No: IT001858/2019/(C)

Vacancy (Part time)

ADMINISTRATIVE EXECUTIVE

This is a part time position for a Chief Administrative Executive who will work under direction of the board of Trustees of the Khoi-Khoi Peoples Rooibos Biodiversity Trust in ensuring that the objectives for which the Trust was created are implemented. This position is based in Cape Town.

The Khoikhoi Peoples Rooibos Biodiversity Trust was established to ensure access and benefit sharing for peoples historically connected to Rooibos and other endemic South African plants, in the Cederberg Belt district, and other Communities associated with the Griqua, Nama, Koranna and Cape Khoi have been identified as beneficiaries.

The ideal candidate for the administrative executive position shall:

- Possess an appropriate Degree in Public Administration, Finance or Project management from a reputable institution of higher learning
- Must not be directly associated with any Khoi structure or the National Khoi and San Council but must be significantly acquainted with Khoi customs, culture and history, specifically as it relates to the Griqua, Korana, Nama and Cape Khoi structures
- Be able to work respectfully with a wide spectrum of stake-holders, including historically endorsed cultural leadership, organic knowledge holders and professionals in government, academic institutions and the private sector
- Because the primary communities served by the Trust are Afrikaans speaking, the candidate should ideally be competent in Afrikaans
- For transparency and accountability the candidate must be well versed in the spirit and letter of the Public Finance Management Act

Work with the indigenous Trust leadership in its campaigns to empower, restore and restitute Khoi communities and descendants.

Please submit a CV and short cover letter to Chantal Revell and Johannes Maarman by email to:
Khoikhoibiodiversity@gmail.com
Closing date for applications is 15 April 2026

Vakature (Deeltyds)

ADMINISTRATIEWE BEAMPTE

Hierdie is ’n deeltydse pos vir ’n Hoof-uitvoerende administratiewe beampte wat onder die direksie van die Raad van Trustees van die Khoi-Khoi Peoples Rooibos Biodiversity Trust, die Trust sal bystaan om te verseker dat die doelwitte waarvoor die Trust geskep is, ingestel word. Hierdie vakature bestaan slegs in Kaapstad.

Die Khoi-Khoi Peoples Rooibos Biodiversity Trust is gestig om te verseker dat mense wat histories aan Rooibos en ander endemiese Suid-Afrikaanse plantegroei verbind is, in die Cederberg-Strook Distrik, en ander Gemeenskappe toegang en voordeel-verdeling ontvang. Veral gemeenskappe wat geassosieer word met die Griekwa, Nama, Koranna en Kaapse Khoi, wat geïdentifiseer is as begunstigdes.

Voornemende kandidaat vir die pos moet:

- In besit wees van ’n gepaste Graad in Openbare Administrasie, Finansies of Projek-bestuur van ’n betroubare hoër onderwys-instelling
- Nie direk gekoppel wees aan die Nasionale Khoi en San Raad of enige ander Khoi-struktuur nie, maar moet oor uitgebreide kennis besit van Khoi kultuur, geskiedenis en gebruike, veral wat die Griekwa, Koranna, Nama en Kaapse Khoi strukture betref
- In staat wees om respekvol met mense op verskillende vlakke te werk, veral histories bekrachtigde leierskap; organiese kennishouers, en professionele mense in die regering, akademiese instellings, en private sektor
- Verkieslik vaardig wees in Afrikaans, omdat die primêre gemeenskappe wat deur die Trust gedien word, Afrikaanssprekend is
- Goed vertrouwd wees met die letter en gees van die Wet op Openbare Finansiële Bestuur
- Saamwerk met die inheemse leierskap van die Trust in die veldtogte om die Khoikhoi-gemeenskappe en hul afstammelinge te bemagtig, te herstel en restitusie te bring.

Stuur asseblief ’n kort dekbrief, asook CV aan Chantal Revell en Johannes Maarman per epos aan: Khoikhoibiodiversity@gmail.com
Sluitingsdatum vir aansoeke is 15 April 2026

NKSC

NATIONAL KHOI SAN COUNCIL

OPEN LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT OF SOUTH AFRICA, CYRIL RAMAPHOSA

Date: 2 April 2026

From:
F. Kraalshoek
Secretary General
National Khoi San Council (NKC)

To:
His Excellency Mr. Cyril Ramaphosa
President of the Republic of South Africa
Union Buildings
Pretoria

Subject: *Formal Request for Constitutional Recognition of the National Khoi San Council under Section 235 of the Constitution*

Your Excellency,

The National Khoi San Council (NKC) writes to you at a moment of profound historical resonance – the return of Khoi San human remains to Steinkopf in March 2026. This repatriation is not merely an act of moral redress.

It is irrefutable, embodied evidence: evidence of continuous ancestral presence across millennia; evidence of dispossession codified under colonial and apartheid law; and evidence – now physically restored to our soil – of the deep, unbroken connection between KhoiSan people and the land of the Northern Cape, the Western Cape, and beyond.

This milestone stands upon decades of disciplined, constitutionally grounded work initiated by the NKC – the *only* body in South Africa mandated by Khoi San communities to pursue recognition under **Section 235** of the Constitution. That mandate was affirmed in the twelve foundational resolutions adopted upon the establishment of the National Khoi San Consultative Council in 2001 – resolutions that placed the restoration of human dignity, beginning with the repatriation of remains, at their very core.

We recall with solemn gratitude your late predecessor, President Nelson Mandela, who – following his own DNA confirmation – publicly acknowledged the Khoi San as the First Peoples of South Africa and affirmed their enduring resistance. We also recall the landmark return of Sarah Baartman’s remains in 2002 — a campaign spearheaded by the NKC, supported by Prof. J. Breidenkamp and Mr. Cevil le Fleur, and recognised by the Human Rights Commission as a pivotal test of post-apartheid justice. Subsequent milestones further cemented our constitutional role:

- The founding of SAFIRO, directly emerging from the NKC’s 2003 resolutions;
- The World Summit of Indige-

nous Peoples held in Kimberley – the first major national platform convened by the NKC to assert Khoi San rights within South Africa’s democratic framework;

And now, the Steinkopf repatriation –a culmination of sustained advocacy, bearing legal weight: these remains confirm historical occupation and substantiate land rights claims under international and domestic customary law.

Yet, despite this unbroken record of leadership and legitimacy, the NKC continues to be systematically excluded from processes central to our constitutional identity and rights:

- 1. History Curriculum Reform:** As government rewrites national history textbooks, Khoi San communities – the First Peoples – are neither consulted nor represented in content development. Our histories, languages, and epistemologies remain marginalised.
- 2. Land Governance:** The Department of Rural Development and Land Reform has established Community Property Associations (CPAs) on ancestral Khoi San land *without consultation or consent* from the NKC –undermining Section 25(6) and (7) of the Constitution, and violating the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).
- 3. Cultural Governance:** Political interference in cultural affairs persists, while statutory recognition of the NKC – as required under Section 235 – remains deferred. This exclusion contradicts both the spirit and letter of Chapter 2 (Bill of Rights) and Chapter 12 (Traditional Leadership and Governance) of the Constitution.

In light of the above, and in accordance with the constitutional imperative set out in **Section 235**, which affirms “the right of self-determination of any community sharing a common cultural and language heritage”, we formally request that Your Excellency:

- Issue a Presidential Proclamation recognising the National Khoi San Council as the legitimate, democratically mandated representative body of the Khoi San people of South Africa;
- Direct all relevant departments – including Basic Education, Rural Development and Land Reform, and Sports, Arts and Culture – to consult the NKC.

Sincerely,

F. KRAALSHOEK
SECRETARY-GENERAL
NATIONAL KHOI SAN COUNCIL



Beendere van voorouers ter ruste gelê

Inheemse vaarwel aan voorouers



Laying to rest the bones of ancestors

Van heinde en ver om afskeid te neem

