

## German Colonial Restitution Monitor (Status: 20 December 2024)

<https://dekolonial-erinnern.de/german-colonial-restitution-monitor/>

- > Collaborative work in progress, to be continuously updated.
- > Covers only material cultural heritage from colonial contexts.
- > Lists specific commitments by public institutions in Germany (date of decision); physical return or transfer of ownership still pending in some cases.
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Country of origin	Entities	German institution(s)	Status of restitution/return	Comments
<b>Australia 2023</b>	Four entities from Kurna indigenous community (spear, digging stick, club and net)	Ethnological Museum Dresden	Decision to return by State Government of Saxony as owner of the museum in recognition of identity-forming nature for Kurna community. Handed over to Kurna representatives on 16 August 2023 in Australia by staff of Dresden Museum. Return completed.	Entities sent to Germany in 1839 by missionaries of Lutheran Mission Dresden. German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock <a href="#">delivered speech</a> at ceremony on 3 May 2024 in Australia.
<b>Cameroon 2024</b>	28 royal entities such as throne stools, ceremonial fronds, swords from Nso' community.	Linden Museum Stuttgart	At the German-Cameroonian cultural dialogue on 16 January 2024 in Stuttgart, <a href="#">Minister of Science, Research and Arts Petra Olschowski announced decision</a> by State Government of Baden-Württemberg as co-owner of Linden Museum to return the 28 Nso' entities. Return has not happened yet.	As equal co-owner of Linden Museum, City of Stuttgart consented.
<b>Cameroon</b>	Royal beaded	Department of	In 2022, the <a href="#">Department decided to</a>	Entities looted by German colonial

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<b>2022</b>	bracelet and small bag with medicine from Nso' community.	Anthropology & African Studies at Mainz University	<a href="#">return</a> the two culturally sensitive entities. Return has not happened yet.	officer Hans Houben in 1902. First transferred to Linden Museum Stuttgart, in Mainz since 1971.
<b>Cameroon 2022</b>	Ngonnso'	Ethnological Museum Berlin	In June 2022, <a href="#">Board of Trustees of Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation</a> authorized President Parzinger to return Ngonnso'. Return has not happened yet.	The decision to return Ngonnso' to Cameroon was based on argument of unequal power relations and colonial violence. In addition, spiritual role of Ngonnso' as mother deity was recognised.
<b>Columbia 2023</b>	Two masks of Kogui indigenous community from Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, Columbia	Ethnological Museum Berlin	<a href="#">Entities presented to Colombian President Gustavo Petro</a> by German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier at ceremony on 16 June 2023 in President's Office Berlin. Handed over to community of <a href="#">Kogui on 28 June 2023</a> .	Entities brought to Berlin in 1915 by Konrad Theodor Preuss, curator of North American collections at Ethnological Museum. In preparation for return, masks were detoxified to remove contamination with biocides.
<b>Columbia 2024</b>	Three cultural belongings connected to masks listed above: staff, headpiece, basket	Ethnological Museum Berlin	After restitution of masks, the Kogui community asked for further belongings translocated by Konrad Theodor Preuss (see above). On 29 October 2024, <a href="#">Germany's Minister of Environment, Steffi Lemke, handed entities over to Colombian authorities</a> on the sidelines of United Nations	Announcing the decision, <a href="#">SPK President Herrmann Parzinger referred to United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples</a> (2007). In addition to the three entities, sound recordings made by Preuss at various locations in Colombia, including

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			Biodiversity Conference COP 16 in Cali/Columbia. Corresponding transfer of ownership was decided at Board meeting of Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation on 18 December 2024.	documentation, were presented to Colombian partners in digital form on 29 October 2024.
<b>Namibia 2024</b>	Cartridge belt of Kahimemua Nguvauva, leader of Ovambanderu community	Municipal Museum of Braunschweig (Brunswick)	City Council of Braunschweig voted unanimously in favour of restitution on <a href="#">11 June 2024</a> . Municipal administration will now consult with German authorities to whom the item will be returned.	Restitution supported by Government of Namibia and German Foreign Office.
<b>Namibia 2022</b>	23 entities (historical everyday objects, jewellery, tools and fashion)	Ethnological Museum Berlin	Returned as loan in 2022, followed by <a href="#">transfer of ownership</a> to Government of Namibia in 2024.	Entities were selected by Namibian expert group, including National Museum of Namibia, due to special historical, cultural and aesthetic significance.
<b>Namibia 2019</b>	<a href="#">Stone Cross</a>	German Historical Museum Berlin	Returned to Government of Namibia.	In 1486, Portuguese erected Stone Cross north of Swakopmund. In 1893 translocated to Berlin by German colonial authorities.
<b>Namibia 2018</b>	Family bible and riding whip of Nama leader Hendrik	Linden Museum Stuttgart	As co-owner of Linden Museum, <a href="#">State Government of Baden-Württemberg</a> decided in November	As equal co-owner of Linden Museum City of Stuttgart consented.

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	Witbooi		2018 to return entities to Government of Namibia.	
<b>Namibia 1996</b>	<a href="#">Witbooi Journals II and III</a>	Übersee-Museum Bremen	Two out of four journals kept by Nama leader Hendrik Witbooi. Returned to Government of Namibia.	Journals handed over to then Namibian President Sam Nujoma on state visit to Germany
<b>Nigeria 2022</b>	Benin Bronzes	<a href="#">As recorded by German Contact Point for Collections from Colonial Contexts</a> , 1.259 Benin Bronzes held by 18 German museums.	In July 2022, Nigeria and Germany signed Joint Declaration for unconditional transfer of ownership for all Benin Bronzes in Germany to National Commission for Museums and Monuments (NCMM).	<a href="#">On visit to Nigeria</a> in December 2022, Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock and Cultural Commissioner Claudia Roth handed over 22 Benin Bronzes to NCMM. Some Benin Bronzes to stay in German museums as loan.
<b>Samoa 2024</b>	Boat stem. In 1888, German warship "Adler" took possession of a Samoan war canoe. Commander Wilhelm Souchon received the stem, which he donated to Übersee-Museum in 1932.	Übersee-Museum Bremen (owner: City of Bremen)	On 8 April 2024, the Minister of Education and Culture of Samoa submitted return request to Mayor of Bremen on behalf of Samoan government. On <a href="#">18 June 2024</a> , <a href="#">Senate (City government) of Bremen decided on restitution</a> of stern to State of Samoa for ethical reasons. Costs of repatriation will be borne by Germany's Foreign Office	During her visit to Samoa in July 2024, <a href="#">State Minister Katja Keul of Germany's Foreign Office handed over the stern</a> to Government of Samoa. Stem will be on display at National University of Samoa from September 2024 in exhibition developed jointly with Übersee-Museum Bremen.

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<b>Tanzania 2022</b>	Unspecified entities	Ethnological Museum Berlin	In June 2022, <a href="#">Board of Trustees of Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation</a> authorized President Parzinger to return unspecified entities related to anti-colonial wars in German East Africa. Return has not happened yet.	Entities will be part of Tanzania Exhibition jointly curated by Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation, Foundation Humboldt Forum and National Museum of Tanzania, opening October 2024 at Humboldt Forum Berlin.
<b>USA (Hawai'i) 2023</b>	Seven burial artefacts (spear, calabashes, stone disk)	Ethnological Museum Berlin	At end of 2021, Board of Trustees of Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation decided to return entities together with ancestral remains held by Museum of Prehistory and Early History Berlin. <a href="#">Entities were handed over to Hui Iwi Kuamo'o</a> (organization of Hawaiian First Nations) representing the Office of Hawaiian Affairs in April 2023.	Entities were taken from burial sites by Eduard Arning around 1885.
<b>USA (South Dakota) 2021</b>	Shirt that belonged to Chief Daniel Hollow Horn Bear (Mato He Oklogeca) of the Teton Lakota indigenous community	Weltkulturen Museum (Frankfurt am Main)	As owner of the museum, <a href="#">Cultural Department of the City of Frankfurt</a> agreed to return. Entity handed over to <a href="#">Chief Daniel Hollow Horn Bear's great-grandson Chief Duane Hollow Horn Bear, 12 June 2021</a> in Rose Bud, South Dakota.	Museum acquired entity from American Museum of Natural History (New York) in 1908, which had received it as donation by James Graham Phelps Stokes. Further provenance details unknown. For 30 years on permanent loan to Offenbach Leather Museum.

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<b>USA (Alaska) 2018</b>	Nine burial artefacts from indigenous groups in Chugach region (Southwestern Alaska)	Ethnological Museum Berlin	Upon knowing that entities were from plundered grave, <a href="#">Board of Trustees of Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation</a> decided in December 2017 to return them after consulting with Chugach Alaska Corporation, to be handed over to indigenous communities. Formal restitution on 16 May 2018.	Grave goods brought to Berlin by Johan Adrian Jacobsen in the 1880s from a collecting expedition commissioned by Berlin's Royal Museum of Ethnology, precursor of today's Ethnological Museum.
<b>Zimbabwe 2003</b>	<a href="#">Soap stone bird from Great Zimbabwe era</a>	Ethnological Museum Berlin	Returned as permanent loan to President of Zimbabwe, later turned over to National Museums and Monuments Zimbabwe (NMMZ).	Legal option of permanent loan chosen to avoid formal procedures for restitution.