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PRESS STATEMENT

Elon Musk's Support for Right-Wing Parties in Europe, Comments on German Historical Accountability, and Irresponsible Jokes About Nazism

Introduction

Recent public statements and actions by Elon Musk, a globally influential figure due to his vast wealth and technological leadership, have raised significant concerns among communities who continue to suffer the consequences of historical atrocities such as the Holocaust and German colonial genocides. Musk's emerging support for right-wing parties in Europe, his comments advocating for Germany to abandon its historical guilt, and his repeated use of Nazi-related jokes are not just reckless but are perceived as dangerous affronts to global progress in confronting genocide, racism, and colonialism.

For those of us directly affected by the legacies of German colonial genocides, such as the Herero and Nama peoples, as well as the descendants of Holocaust survivors, these comments and actions undermine the ongoing struggle for justice, recognition, and accountability. Far from being harmless or humorous, Musk's rhetoric represents a serious threat to the moral progress enshrined in international instruments like the **United Nations Genocide Convention of 1948**, which, despite its limitations, symbolizes humanity's commitment to confronting and preventing acts of genocide.

This response seeks to articulate why Mr. Elon Musk's remarks and actions are not only profoundly irresponsible but also deeply regressive, as they reinforce harmful ideologies and contribute to the normalization of narratives that trivialize genocide, racism, and their enduring consequences. From the perspective of the Herero people, these statements are particularly troubling, as they appear to lend credence to genocide denialism—a significant impediment to the pursuit of justice for the victims and descendants of genocides. Such rhetoric undermines the painstaking efforts of communities and nations seeking recognition, accountability, and reparative justice for historical atrocities, thereby threatening to reverse the fragile progress made in addressing the legacies of these crimes.

While Mr. Musk's behavior may surprise the global community, it does not come as a shock to those of us in Southern Africa, where he was born and spent part of his early life. South Africa remains a stark reminder of a context where the legacy of colonialism and apartheid allowed white

individuals to evade meaningful accountability for centuries of crimes committed against black people. Nowhere else in the world has there been such a lack of responsibility for historical injustices, coupled with the continued enjoyment of privilege and wealth by those who benefited from these systems, as in South Africa. It is therefore unsurprising that an individual with a racist apartheid background, like Mr. Musk, who grew up in a society built on the oppression and exploitation of black people, might make the kind of irresponsible and provocative remarks now attributed to him. Instead of using his wealth, prominence, and influence to bring about healing and contribute to justice, Musk is using his global standing to shoot poisoned arrows that further muddy the already difficult existence of so many people in the world. His actions represent a tragically lost opportunity to foster reconciliation and progress in a world still grappling with the wounds of historical injustices.

Such utterances, which we regard as reckless, insensitive, and even morally reprehensible, trivialize the lived experiences of genocide survivors and perpetuate a culture of **impunity**—a condition where individuals or groups escape accountability for their actions, particularly serious violations like crimes against humanity, genocide, and systemic racism. Impunity denies justice to victims and emboldens perpetrators, creating a world where such crimes are normalized and remain unpunished.

White people benefited from impunity in Southern Africa, with glaring examples in Zimbabwe, South Africa, and Namibia. In South Africa, white people walked away from the atrocities of apartheid without facing justice, retaining wealth, privilege, and power, while black communities continue to suffer the legacy of those injustices. Similarly, in Zimbabwe, the systemic exploitation and dispossession of black people under colonial rule were never adequately addressed, leaving the wounds of those crimes open and festering. In Namibia, the Herero and Nama genocide of 1904–1908 remains a stark example of unchecked colonial violence. Germany’s acknowledgment of this atrocity has been superficial, with reparations dismissed and the descendants of victims sidelined, all while Germany continues to enjoy the benefits of colonial wealth and power.

Now, Musk, a product of that apartheid context, appears to want this culture of impunity for white and colonial crimes turned into a global golden standard. His irresponsible rhetoric and lack of accountability resemble the behavior of a "spoiled brat" who refuses to acknowledge responsibility while leveraging wealth and influence to rewrite the narrative. This not only undermines the global commitment to justice and reconciliation but also deepens the harm experienced by victims of historical atrocities. Such behavior is a direct affront to the hard-fought progress made toward addressing the wrongs of the past.

1. Musk’s Endorsement of Right-Wing Politics in Europe

Musk’s apparent support for right-wing parties in Europe, which often propagate anti-immigrant, anti-minority, and anti-democratic ideologies, is troubling. These parties frequently seek to downplay the horrors of colonialism, racism, and genocide, and to rewrite history in ways that absolve former imperial powers of their historical responsibilities.

This political alignment poses a threat to marginalized groups, particularly those descended from victims of European colonial atrocities. It legitimizes ideologies that foster division, xenophobia, and denialism—threatening not only the fragile progress made in addressing historical injustices but also the safety and dignity of minority communities today.

2. Comments on Germany's Historical Accountability

Musk's statements advocating for Germany to cease bearing its historical guilt are grossly insensitive and ignore the weight of Germany's role in three of history's most devastating genocides: the Holocaust, the Herero and Nama genocides of 1904–1908. These genocides were foundational in shaping international norms regarding accountability and remembrance, and Germany's continued acknowledgment of its culpability is a critical component of global reconciliation efforts. Calls to abandon this accountability are not neutral; they embolden perpetrators of revisionist histories and create fertile ground for the resurgence of racist ideologies. For communities still living with the intergenerational trauma of these atrocities, such remarks are not merely offensive—they are existentially threatening. They erode the fragile trust built through decades of advocacy and remembrance.

What Musk has said affects us profoundly and threatens our struggle for reparative justice directly. For descendants of genocide victims, the acknowledgment of responsibility by perpetrators and their descendants is not just symbolic—it is the foundation of our fight for justice and dignity. If perpetrators and their descendants are exempted from responsibility for historical crimes, what else do we have as a deterrent against the recurrence of such atrocities? Perhaps Elon Musk, with the "superbrain" that has earned him global prominence, could provide an answer to this critical question.

Then again, his statements make one question whether there is indeed any brain—super or otherwise—behind these reckless comments. It is incomprehensible that someone with his platform and influence would use it to undermine the hard-fought progress made in addressing historical injustices. Instead of contributing to healing and justice, Musk chooses to trivialize the suffering of millions and embolden dangerous ideologies. For us, his remarks represent not only an insult but a direct threat to the fragile global commitment to reconciliation and accountability.

3. Nazi Jokes: Dirty, Irresponsible, and Dangerous

Musk's casual use of Nazi-related humour trivializes one of humanity's darkest chapters. For those who lost their families in the Holocaust or whose ancestors suffered under German colonial rule, such remarks are not jokes—they are reminders of a history steeped in unimaginable suffering and death. Normalizing such discourse erases the pain of victims and survivors, dilutes the gravity of Nazi ideology, and risks emboldening neo-Nazi movements and other far-right extremists who interpret these comments as tacit approval.

In a time of rising anti-Semitism, racism, xenophobia, and denialism globally, Musk's platforming of these ideas is profoundly irresponsible and further legitimizes not just hate speech but **hate itself, along with bigotry, intolerance, and dehumanization**. Such remarks embolden individuals and groups who seek to rewrite history, justify violence, and marginalize already vulnerable communities. Musk's words are a direct affront to the efforts to build a world rooted in justice, equity, and human dignity, and they contribute to an environment where harmful ideologies thrive unchecked.

4. Repercussions of Musk's Actions: The Danger of Amplifying Harmful Narratives

Elon Musk's actions threaten to reverse decades of progress in addressing the legacies of genocide and injustice. The UN Genocide Convention of 1948 emerged from the ashes of the Holocaust with the promise of "Never Again." Yet, for many victims, particularly African communities who endured colonial genocides, this promise remains tragically unfulfilled. Reparations, recognition, and justice have been slow and insufficient. For the Herero and Nama peoples, for instance, the struggle for reparative justice continues as Germany's recent Joint Declaration with Namibia has failed to adequately address their needs or deliver true accountability. Musk's alignment with ideologies that trivialize these struggles only deepens the wounds of those affected, undermining global efforts toward justice and reconciliation.

As the wealthiest man in the world, Musk holds unparalleled sway over public opinion, and his statements are far from inconsequential. By using his influence to promote narratives that minimize or deny historical injustices, Musk normalizes dangerous ideologies and emboldens perpetrators of hate and discrimination. This is not merely a personal failing—it is a societal threat. His remarks represent a profound erosion of the values that have underpinned the global order since the end of the World Wars and the Cold War. Accountability, justice, and progress have been the pillars of western democracy, offering hope to oppressed peoples around the world. Musk's reckless trivialization of atrocities signals a collapse of these principles and raises the unsettling question of whether the "free world" as we know it can survive when its most prominent figures undermine its moral foundation.

This moment marks an irreparable turning point for Musk's legacy. Regardless of his wealth or political influence, he has lost the respect and admiration of those struggling for recognition, reparative justice, and equality. Rather than using his position of prominence to advocate for progress and healing, Musk has chosen to perpetuate harm, embolden revisionist histories, and trivialize the suffering of millions. His actions have cast a long shadow over his legacy, and history will not remember him as a figure of progress, but as one who actively undermined it. Wealth and power come with the responsibility to uplift, not to harm. Musk's failure to rise to this obligation represents a societal risk, not just an individual one, and a betrayal of the global commitment to justice and accountability.

Conclusion and Call to Action

Elon Musk’s remarks and actions epitomize a regressive and perilous trend that demands rigorous critique and concerted resistance. For communities carrying the profound and intergenerational burdens of colonial genocides and the Holocaust, his rhetoric transcends mere offense—it constitutes an egregious denial of historical pain, a repudiation of hard-won strides toward justice, and an existential threat to the global moral and legal frameworks underpinning accountability and reconciliation. Musk’s casual trivialization of genocide and his alignment with ideologies that embolden hate and denialism undermine the principles of justice and truth that are foundational to any equitable global order.

We call upon Musk to recognize the far-reaching harm inflicted by his comments and to recalibrate his platform toward the promotion of justice, historical accountability, and meaningful reconciliation. His actions and rhetoric must be held to the highest standard of moral responsibility commensurate with his immense influence. Furthermore, we call upon international communities—governments, academic institutions, civil society organizations, and global leadership structures—to collectively repudiate the normalization of discourse that minimizes historical atrocities, perpetuates denialism, and reinforces structures of inequality and oppression.

To borrow the incisive words of the World Council of Churches: *“Let us not speak of reconciliation without speaking of reparations and restoration.”* The deliberate erasure or distortion of history to serve the interests of the powerful is antithetical to the healing and justice required to address the wounds of historical atrocities. Instead, an unflinching confrontation with the past, accompanied by reparative actions, is essential to restoring dignity to survivors and their descendants and to safeguarding the future against the recurrence of such inhumanity.

For those of us directly impacted by the enduring legacies of genocide, Musk’s rhetoric is not an exercise in humor—it is a perpetuation of existential threats that jeopardize the integrity of global commitments to justice and human rights. We categorically reject such irresponsibility and reaffirm our unwavering commitment to truth, justice, and the common good. The struggle for reparative justice and historical accountability is neither optional nor negotiable; it is a moral imperative that transcends the provocations of individuals who wield influence without a commensurate sense of responsibility. History will vindicate those who labor for justice, not those who trivialize it.

-AUTHOR-

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