

# REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**THE PRESIDENCY**

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**All Media**

## STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY DR. HAGE. GEINGOB, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA, ON THE OCCASION OF THE COMMEMORATION OF CASSINGA DAY

Fellow Namibians,

The path to freedom often comes with great loss and high costs. On this day, 42 years ago, Namibians experienced one of the most agonizing episodes in the struggle for liberation when innocent lives were lost, and horrific injuries inflicted after the military forces of Apartheid South Africa attacked the Cassinga settlement in southern Angola on the morning of May 4, 1978. The Cassinga settlement, of which the majority of inhabitants consisted of unarmed women and children, served as a reception camp for Namibians who fled from Namibia into Angola in resistance of the illegal occupation of their Motherland.

The callous massacre of women and children at Cassinga was a deliberate act by the South African military to reinforce and validate its propaganda that it had broken the backbone of the People's Liberation Movement, SWAPO. This desperate act of barbarism was carried out in the hope of instilling fear and to discourage Namibians from pursuing the path of armed struggle. As history proved, our belief and spirit never wavered.

The Cassinga Massacre intensified our people's resolve to unite and fight for the liberation of our country.

Quoting from Comrade Andimba Toivo ya Toivo's statement that he delivered during his trial in South Africa in 1968, he said: "*I know that the struggle will be long and bitter. I also know that my people will wage that struggle, whatever the cost.*" The struggle was indeed long and bitter. Many sacrifices were made, blood was shed and many lives were lost during the protracted war for the liberation of Namibia.

The incident at Cassinga left survivors with permanent scars and harrowing memories. Today, we remember and pay tribute to those heroes and heroines whose lives were cut short. We remember the survivors of the brutal attack on that fateful day. We remember and honour those who gave their lives for the freedom and independence of our country so that we can build a united and inclusive Namibia, free of discrimination, tribalism and racism.

We owe it to the martyrs, heroes and heroines who sacrificed their lives, to build a nation that restores the dignity of all Namibians, promotes equality and equity, and most importantly ensures that all have access to basic amenities and services such as clean drinking water, electricity, education, health care and other basic amenities and services.

I have no doubt that the same unity and determination that inspired Namibians from all parts of the country to join hands in the fight against colonialism will inspire us today to fight and overcome the challenges facing our nation, including COVID-19.

I thank you.  
Long live the Republic of Namibia.

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**ISSUED BY: THE PRESIDENCY OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**

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