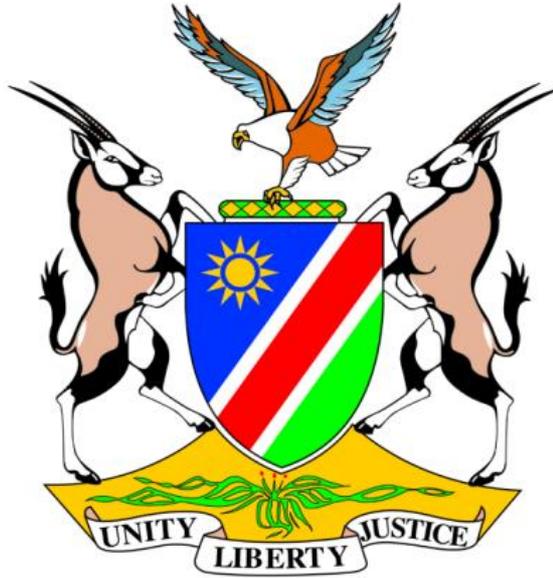


REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY
HIS EXCELLENCY DR HAGE G. GEINGOB,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA
ON THE COMMEMORATION OF HEROES DAY

OSHAKATI

OSHANA REGION

AUGUST 26, 2017

Check against delivery

**Directors of Ceremonies, Honourable Sophia
Shaningwa - Minister of Urban and Rural
Development and Honourable Tjekero Tweya
– Minister of Information and
Communication Technology;
Comrade Dr. Nickey Iyambo, Vice President
of the Republic of Namibia;
Comrade Sam Shafiishuna Nujoma, First
President of the Republic and the Founding
Father of the Namibian Nation;
Comrade Hifikepunye Pohamba, Second
President of the Republic of Namibia;**

**The Right Honourable Saara-Kuugongelwa
Amadhila, Prime Minister of the Republic of
Namibia;**

**Honourable Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah,
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of
International Relations and Cooperation;**

**Honourable Speaker of the National
Assembly, Prof. Peter Katjavivi;**

**Honourable Chairperson of the National
Council, Margaret Mensah-Williams;**

Your Honour, Chief Justice Peter Shivute;

**Madam Monica Geingos, First Lady of the
Republic of Namibia;**

Honourable Ministers and Deputy Ministers;

Honourable Members of Parliament;

**Governor of the Oshana Region, Honourable
Clemens Kashuupulwa;**

**Honourable Governors present and a special
word of welcome for Retired General Kundi
Paihama, the Governor of the Cunene
Province in Angola and a dear comrade;**

**Honourable Regional and Local Authority
Councilors;**

Your Worship, the Mayor of Oshakati;

**Secretary General of the SWAPO Party,
Comrade Nangolo Mbumba;**

**McHenry Venaani, leader of the official
opposition and leaders of other political
parties;**

**Your Excellencies, Members of the
Diplomatic Corps;**

Distinguished Service Chiefs;

**Esteemed Religious, Traditional and
Community Leaders;**

**Esteemed Veterans of the Liberation
struggle;**

Distinguished Invited Guests;

Members of the Media;

Fellow Namibians;

In the life of every human being, there is a time to submit and there is a time to fight. That time came on July 18, 1966 when the International Court of Justice failed to rule against the illegality of Apartheid South Africa's occupation of Namibia. Not long thereafter, Peter Ndilimani Nanyemba proclaimed that, "*We have to cross many rivers of blood before we can achieve our freedom.*" With these prophetic words from one of our valiant sons, the era of peaceful remonstrance came to an end. It was time to fight. The first shots signifying the start of the armed struggle were fired on August 26,

1966. This is the day we now celebrate as Hero's Day in recognition of all our heroes and heroines throughout our history.

The bravery of the Namibian people against oppressors can be traced back to the 1800's and was characterized by bravery and sacrifice. This resistance was best summarized by Kaptein Hendrik Witbooi's words of, "Let us die fighting." This fighting graduated from regional and ethnic conflict to nationalistic consciousness, which endured through the early 1900's and was eloquently articulated through the likes of

Hosea Kutako who spoke of the unity and freedom of Namibia and culminated in the resistance against Apartheid South Africa. This was spearheaded under the revolutionary and unwavering leadership of Comrade Nujoma when our gallant commander, John Ya Otto Nankudhu, and his men were attacked at Omu-gulu-gwombashe by racist South African soldiers.

As the air of oppression thickened, the streams of blood started to flow from the south, east, west and gathered into a raging river which swept through Northern Namibia

and Southern Angola. We remember the bravery of these heroic patriots whose blood waters our freedom. We remember a nation that united to fight a common enemy. We remember the Kasspers, the helicopters, the racism and we say, NEVER AGAIN.

Our Founding Father understood the only way to heal was to implement the policy of National Reconciliation. In 1999, at the conferment of his Honorary Doctorate of Law at the University of Zimbabwe, Comrade Nujoma reminded us that “prior to our Independence we were a divided nation that

was engulfed by prejudice and mistrust. Today, we all admit that we have transcended that division and are conscious of the fact that we need one another.” At his inaugural speech on the 21st of March 2005, our Former President, Pohamba, reminded us that we have a common destiny. In his words, he warned us that, “now more than ever, we must be united. Just as unity was vital in the liberation struggle, it is just as important in the implementation of our common objectives. ”

I quote my predecessors as my belief in the need for the unity of our nation is as strong as my love for this nation. This love turns to pain when I see, hear and feel the sounds, words and acts of division. We say no more. We say never again. No more oceans of anguish, no more rivers of blood, no more pools of tears.

The example of how our nation must act, think and speak must come from our leaders.

There is a disturbing trend of indefensible and untruthful public statements gaining

traction in Namibia. This trend is an antithesis to One Namibia, One Nation, which Government has sought to inculcate within our people at each and every opportunity since independence.

It appears that as a society, we are starting to accept that the defamation, degradation and disrespect of others is normal. It appears we are starting to normalize the actions of those who have been persistent, since independence, in pushing for conflict by disregarding the blanket amnesty applied to both the South African forces and SWAPO.

This amnesty followed a cease fire between SWAPO fighters and apartheid South African forces to facilitate the peace we enjoy today. This is the foundation of the policy of national reconciliation. The wounds of the struggle will never go away, we have simply learnt to live with them. We have learnt to live with one another, regardless of the role played during the struggle. We will never be convinced that entertaining the demands of former Koevoet soldiers to be recognized as war veterans is constructive. They were paid by those who hired them and will not receive compensation from Government. Similarly,

we will never be convinced that the selective calls to re-open the so-called SWAPO dungeons is in favour of nation building. The policy of national reconciliation is there for a reason and trying to selectively open that painful chapter will open the floodgates of anger. The individualistic pursuits of a few should never be allowed to undermine the peace that Namibians have enjoyed since independence.

Fellow Namibians,

On this Heroes Day, let us commit to taking Namibia forward in an inclusive manner. Let us find the will and the way to ensure that our pursuit of One Namibia, One Nation includes the dismantling of structural poverty and inequality.

Fellow Namibians, Are we properly honouring the sacrifices of our heroes and heroines? Are we ready to come together as a united people in the spirit of Harambee to move forward towards Vision 2030 as One Namibia, One Nation? Let us thoroughly examine our hearts and remember that we

must bring the struggle to its logical conclusion of political, social and economic inclusivity.

Let us arm ourselves with the necessary armour and weaponry to ensure victory in this second phase of our struggle. Let us arm ourselves with altruism, patriotism, Pan Africanism and nationalism. These are the only isms we should practice. If we buttress them with the principles of equality and equity, there will be no river too wide to cross and no mountain too high to climb in the pursuit of these noble ideals.

Fellow Namibians,

Although we honour the memory of heroes and heroines who are no longer with us, let us also take cognizance of the fact that many present are living legends. We are Blessed to have the likes of Our Founding President, Comrade Sam Nujoma and Former President Comrade Hifikepunye Pohamba in our midst. Let us learn from these and other stalwarts of our Liberation Struggle and inculcate in our children, their spirit of hard work, selflessness, nationhood, unity and bravery.

Namibia is also full of everyday heroes whose selfless sacrifice is inspired by a love for their fellow Namibians and not a desire for accolades. As we celebrate these ordinary Namibians who do extra ordinary things for their communities, I wish to remember, awaken and invoke the names of some of those who passed on but remain vigilant in watching over us:

I say to Hanganee Katjipuka Kavezeri, your bravery lives on;

To Andimba Toivo ya Toivo; the wounds of your passing are still fresh but your memory is everlasting;

To Jason Ndadi, your fighting spirit continues;

To Nataniel Maxuilili, your determination is our guiding light;

To Greenwell Matongo, we embrace your heroism;

To Moses Garoeb, we salute you.

To Hosea Kutako;
Dimo Hamaambo;
Maxton Joseph;
Mose Tjitendero;
Richard Kapelwa Kabajani;
John Pandeni;
Peter Tsheehama;
John ya Otta Nankudhu;
Frederick Matongo;
Andrew Intamba;
Gerson Veii;
Mzee Kaukungwa;
Hidipo Hamutenya;
Niko Bessinger;

David Meroro;

Peter Nanyemba;

Homateni Kalyuena;

To Isak "Pondo" Shikongo;

Natalia Mavulu;

Augustus MacNamara Nghaamwa;

Putuse Apollus;

Lineekela Kalenga

**Kakurukaze Mungunda and many others, we
say to you today, your sacrifices were not in
vain;**

**Long Live the Heroes and Heroines of
Namibia!**

Long Live the Namibian Revolution!

Long Live the Republic of Namibia!

**Oshana region, thank you for a fitting Heroes
day celebration;**

I thank you!