

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY DR. HAGE G. GEINGOB,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA,
ON THE OCCASION OF THE BURIAL SERVICE OF THE LATE NOMZAMO
WINIFRED ZANYIWE MADIKIZELA-MANDELA**

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ORLANDO STADIUM

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“To those who oppose us, we say, 'Strike the woman, and you strike the rock’.”

These telling words capture the heart and soul of this icon, mother, wife, sister, daughter comrade and friend. The enemy struck the woman, but was defeated by the rock.

**The bereaved Mandela Family and the bereaved South African Nation;
Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government;
Honorable Ministers;
Honourable members of Parliament;
Fellow mourners;
Comrades and friends.**

We have come from all over, from near and from far to join this huge gathering. United in solidarity, we have come here to mourn and to celebrate. To celebrate a life of a Daughter of the African Soil who did not choose to be larger than life, but through her selfless actions, became a towering figure in the milieu of the liberation struggle.

Many of us, who have endured and persevered through the fight against brutal Apartheid aggression, are still struggling to come to terms with the fact that we will no longer laugh and discuss politics with our sister and comrade. She was a woman who was the epitome of black female resistance against oppression, racism and imperialism.

The Namibian people and the SWAPO Party stand hand in hand with our brothers and sisters of the African National Congress and the Madikizela Family as we pay our final respects to this stalwart of our struggle.

It is not surprising that one runs out of superlatives when describing this Rock of Soweto, this strong and fearless African woman. She exemplified the majesty of motherhood; on one hand, she was a staunch anti-apartheid activist and on the other hand, a solid rock of her family while her then husband, Comrade Nelson Mandela, was serving time on Robben Island.

What distinguished her from her peers was that Comrade Winnie never elevated herself above the people. In her own words, she said "I am the product of the masses of my country and the product of my enemy". She remained rooted to the people of South Africa, even when she assumed higher responsibilities. Despite the hardships of the struggle, she emerged ever defiant and brimming with more determination to bring about change in the lives of her brothers and sisters.

We must honour one another when we are still alive. Last year, I decided to honour Comrade Winnie with the highest honour of Namibia but unfortunately she could not go and receive it. I am therefore inviting my sisters to Namibia to receive this honour so that Namibia can pay a befitting honour on her.

South Africa, the Southern African region, Africa, and indeed the world, have lost a once in a generation heroine.

As a comrade, she leaves behind a legacy of sacrifice, dedication and commitment. As a role model, she leaves behind a template of stellar character, which the youth of the day can apply in the pursuit of their dreams. Her legacy is established and firmly rooted among our people. Her burning flame of passion shall continue to illuminate our lives, as we continue our struggle into its second phase - that of economic emancipation.

Farewell to the mighty rock of Soweto, farewell to a brave freedom fighter, farwell to an iconic mother, daughter and compatriot. Go well Mama Winnie.

May the Almighty God grant the soul of Comrade Winnie, eternal rest and peace.

Long Live the memory of Comrade Winnie Mandela;

Long Live the sons and daughters of our Liberation Struggle;

Long Live the people of Africa;

Amandla!