

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY

HIS EXCELLENCY DR HAGE G. GEINGOB,

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

ON THE 40TH COMMEMORATION OF THE CASSINGA DAY

MASSACRE

MAY 4, 2018

HEROES ACRE

KHOMAS REGION

Check against delivery

Directors of Ceremonies, Honourable Martin

Andjaba – Minister of Presidential Affairs;

Your Excellency João Manuel Gonçalves

Lourenço, President of the Republic of

Angola;

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 Ana Afonso Dias Lourenço, First
Lady of the Republic of Angola;**

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

**Honourable Ministers from Angola and
Namibia;**

Honourable Members of Parliament;

**Governor of the Khomas Region, Honourable
Laura Mcleod-Katjirua;**

Honourable Governors;

**Honourable Regional and Local Authority
Councilors;**

**Your Worship, the Mayor of Windhoek, Cllr
Mueseke Kazapua;**

**Secretary General of the SWAPO Party,
Comrade Sophia Shaningwa;**

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

Distinguished Service Chiefs;

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

**Esteemed Veterans of the Liberation
struggle and Survivors of the Cassinga
Massacre;**

Distinguished Invited Guests;

Members of the Media;

Fellow Namibians;

We are gathered here today, to remember and pay respect to those who bled for the liberation of Namibia and those who were massacred in the quest for freedom and independence. It is befitting that we can mark the Quadragennial Anniversary of Cassinga Day in the presence of our brothers and sisters from Angola, a country that stood shoulder to shoulder with Namibia, through the darkest days of our struggle for independence. I thank Your Excellency and Dear Brother, João Manuel Gonçalves

Lourenço for joining us here today. We are honoured and privileged by your presence. I am moved by the ceremony and the performance that I've just witnessed, I can imagine the pain and emotion those of you who went through event may feel at this point in time.

"We have to remember and respect the blood of those who died fighting for the liberation of Namibia...." These are the poignant words of one of our sisters of the soil, Lavinia Tuyeimo Muleka, who survived

the horrific events that transpired at Cassinga on May 4, 1978.

The sons and daughters of the Land of the Brave have traversed an arduous and torturous path towards independence. It is a journey which lasted over a century, which saw our people enduring hardships and death at the hand of the malevolence of colonialism.

Following the Berlin Conference of 1884, European colonizers sought to erode all forms of autonomy across the entire

continent and Namibia was no exception. Our people, under the leadership of valiant heroes such as the likes of Kaptein Hendrik Witbooi and Paramount Chief Samuel Maharero, soon felt the brunt and brutality of colonial forces, when they resisted occupation and subjugation. The commissioner of the imperial colonial army of Germany in Namibia, Curt von Francois pronounced that, "Only unrelenting brutality will lead to victory." The callous and barbaric mentality expressed through these words, encapsulates the malignant psyche of those forces who sought to occupy

Namibia; from the German forces and later, the Apartheid South African Defence Force.

The destructive nature of colonialism and Apartheid has cost the lives of many heroes and heroines, some of them who lie in peace, on these hallowed grounds. Many others were victims of the “win at all costs mentality” displayed by the colonizers, who pursued their violent and racist agendas through purges, mass murders and massacres. From the VaGciriku-Lishora Massacre, the 1904 genocide, to the battle of Omongwa, up to the incidents at

Oshatotwa, Oshikuku and others, Namibians have bled and died in the name of freedom. This brutality continued on that fateful day of May 4, 1978, when our sons and daughters came face to face with the enemy, who had no conscience or heart, in his pursuit of a fleeting yet destructive period of occupation.

The advent of the SWAPO Party in 1960 galvanized Namibia's quest for independence and freedom. Namibians established a mass movement, representative of all tribes and ethnic

groups, which became the vanguard of Namibia's resistance against Apartheid South Africa. SWAPO's objective was clear right from the beginning. It was to ensure the liberation of Namibia and all Namibian people, in the words of Brother Malcom X, "By Any Means Necessary". Those means were political, diplomatic and military in nature. SWAPO took the first steps towards making the case for Namibia's independence, through petitioning at the United Nations. Following the farcical situation, when on July 18, 1966, the International Court of Justice failed to rule

on the legality of Apartheid South Africa's occupation of Namibia, due to a technicality, one of our valiant sons declared, "We will cross many rivers of blood before we can achieve our freedom". The armed struggle was subsequently launched on August 26, 1966.

In order to fight the Apartheid Regime, many Namibians sought safe passage into exile via Botswana, which acted as a gateway to Zambia, Tanzania and beyond, where military and academic training could be attained. After events that transpired in

1975, the landscape of Namibia's fight for independence was transformed, and the struggle shifted into another gear. In that year, Angola attained its independence from Portugal and thereby provided the first opportunity for SWAPO and its military wing, the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN), to launch an effective armed struggle against Apartheid South Africa.

The People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), which prevailed in the ensuing civil war after Angola's

independence, set the scene for modern organized armed struggle by bringing together key role players, who united to oppose the Apartheid Regime's nefarious agenda. Angola's First Prime Minister, Lopo do Nascimento's visit to the Soviet Union in May, 1976, guaranteed broad Soviet-Angolan cooperation in the diplomatic, economic, technical, and security spheres. This proved instrumental with regards to the arming and training of PLAN combatants by Soviet military advisors.

Angola's first President Dr Agostino Neto left no doubt about the Angolan people's will to spearhead the fight against colonialism in Southern Africa when he said, "Angola shall be on its own will, a revolutionary trench in Africa to Namibia, Zimbabwe and South Africa in the continuation of our struggle". Indeed, the brave brothers and sisters from Angola, turned their nation into a revolutionary trench and a bulwark against the racist Apartheid Regime, which forced the South African Defence forces into ever more desperate courses of action, in their

failed attempts to maintain ascendancy in the war.

Our struggle for independence was further buttressed, when the iconic leader of the Cuban Revolution, Comandante En Jefe Fidel Castro, sent 30,000 Cuban internationalist fighters to Angola, with the belief that the liberation of the oppressed should never be for economic gain, but only to gain in conscience. Thereby the scene was set; Namibia through PLAN, Angola through FAPLA and Cuba through its revolutionary internationalist forces, formed an

unshakeable military tripartite against the SADF of Apartheid South Africa and its clandestine allies.

As the enemy began to feel the heat, they resorted to ever brutal acts of desperation. One such act was at Cassinga when the SADF turned a peaceful morning into a macabre theater of violence and horror. Hundreds of Namibian senior citizens, women and children, who had taken refuge at a transient refugee camp in the Angolan village of Cassinga, were mercilessly attacked, resulting in a bloody massacre.

The physical and psychological scars left by this hellish attack, continue to haunt us to this day. They also haunt our brothers and sisters from Angola and Cuba, whose brave fighters were among the first to respond to the attack on Cassinga, many losing their lives in the process.

The unwavering solidarity in the face of adversity, shared between Namibia, Angola and Cuba during those dark and bloody days, is on display again today, as we have our Guest of Honour Comrade Lourenço

joining us. Our brothers and sisters in Cuba will also be observing Cassinga Day and we have sent a delegation led by the Vice President Comrade Nangolo Mbumba, to be present there. We are also honoured to be joined by the survivors of the Cassinga Massacre, who will also be travelling to Angola to commemorate this tragic day. The tripartite therefore continues.

Namibia is pleased that through the commemoration of Cassinga Day, we are able to reinforce the historic and long lasting relationship we share with Angola,

as we proceed with the second phase of the struggle. There were many that criticised the currency exchange between our countries, which was initiated in the interest of our economic aspirations. I am pleased to announce that Banco Nacional De Angola has honoured its commitments in terms of repaying the settlements of its obligations as agreed with the Bank of Namibia. Only an amount of U\$D 51, 182.329 outstanding and payable on June 25, 2018. I thank you Comrade Lourenço, for this gesture, which has come at the right time, as we are

currently recovering from an economic downturn.

Angola and Namibia are fraternal neighbours, united by culture and blood. We have emerged from the deep trenches of war with our relations intact, stronger than ever. There is no greater friend in the world than a friend who is willing to pay the cost for the sake of friendship. This sentiment is captured by the words of the former President of Angola, His Excellency Eng. José Eduardo dos Santos who said, "In spite of our sacrifices, we will continue to support

SWAPO and the Namibian people for their rights and sovereignty to be respected and to achieve their total and complete independence.”

Angola paid the ultimate sacrifice, Cuba paid the ultimate sacrifice and Namibia paid the ultimate sacrifice. Today, as we remember those who died during our fight for freedom, we thank our most faithful friends for their support, which has resulted in the attainment of our rights and sovereignty, and the achievement of total and complete independence.

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

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

Long Live the Heroes and Heroines of Cuba!

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

Aluta Continua, Victoria Acerta!

I thank you! Obrigado!