

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY DR. HAGE G. GEINGOB, PRESIDENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA, AT THE COMMEMORATION OF HEROES DAY,
DURING THE STATE VISIT TO THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA**

OCTOBER 20, 2018

NAIROBI

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

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His Excellency Uhuru Muigai Kenyatta, President of the Republic of Kenya;

Madam Margaret Kenyatta – First Lady of the Republic of Kenya;

Distinguished guests;

The fraternal people of the Republic of Kenya;

It is an honour and privilege to have been invited by my brother Uhuru, to deliver a speech on this special day - Mashujaa Day – a day where we remember and acknowledge the bravery and exceptional character of Kenya’s heroes and heroines. It was on this day, 66 years ago, when one of the founding fathers of Africa’s struggle for liberation, Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, the first President of the Republic of Kenya, together with Bildad Kaggai, Kung’u Karumba, Fred Kubai, Paul Ngei and Achieng’ Oneko, were arrested by the colonial government and came to be known as the Kapenguria Six. I salute these brave sons of the Kenyan soil!

The unbreakable bond of blood connects the people of Africa. It is this bond which our founding fathers used to ignite the flame of the spirit of Pan Africanism. It is in this spirit that I have travelled to Kenya and it is in this spirit that I join in celebrating not merely the heroes of Kenya, but the heroes of Africa because their fight was for the total liberation of Africa!

Namibia’s freedom was attained due to the Pan African bond we share with our brothers and sisters in Kenya. We are children of Pan African and international solidarity. When Namibians were victims of Apartheid aggression, the people of Kenya stretched out the hand of solidarity. In 1989, the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) was deployed to monitor the peace process and elections in Namibia.

Even after our birth, Kenya was there to assist us until we became steady on our feet. When the rest of the UNTAG force departed, our Founding Father, Comrade Sam Nujoma, made a brotherly appeal to President Daniel Arap Moi, for the Kenyan Blue Helmet Contingent, under the leadership of Lieutenant General (rtd) Daniel Ishmael Opande, to remain behind for three months, to help maintain stability, at the cost of the Kenyan Government. For this reason, the Namibian Government has decided to award this brave son of Kenya with the second highest honour, which he will receive at an appropriate time. Namibia shall always be indebted to the fraternal people of Kenya for their unwavering solidarity.

We are grateful for leaders such as Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Ahmed Sékou Touré of Guinea, Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, Jomo "Mzee" Kenyatta of Kenya, Ferhat Abbas of Algeria, Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia and Augustinho Neto of Angola. These outstanding luminaries belong in the category of "Founding Fathers" and represent the first wave of postcolonial African leaders. Supported by a cohort of fearless men and women, ready to die for freedom, these extraordinary personalities helped turn the dream of a free Africa into a reality. The heroic feats of these extraordinary personalities inspired leaders in the settler colonies of Zimbabwe, South Africa and Namibia to follow suit and pursue their own desire for independence. Thereby, the Founding Fathers of Pan Africanism helped mold the likes of Robert Mugabe, Nelson Mandela and Sam Nujoma.

The people of Kenya fought a decisive battle against tyranny, subjugation and racial oppression. The intense nature of this fight is best captured by a former Mau Mau Fighter who said, "We went on and on and on; we did not want to leave the struggle until the British came to understand that this country belongs to the Kenyan Africans." This unwavering determination, to go on and on, in the face of violence and death - this conviction to make the oppressor understand that this land belongs to Kenyan Africans, represents the essence and character of Kenya's heroes and heroines. Many of us were inspired by the bravery of the Mau Mau. The fierce flame of resistance against colonial

oppression galvanized us in the Southern African settler colonies, to form our own liberation armies, such as ZANLA, Umkhonto we Sizwe and PLAN.

As we honour the memory of those brave sons and daughters who fought for Kenya's independence, let us also remember, all those who have fallen post-independence, in the service of this nation – all those who put the nation first and who have died for patriotism and for the love of their motherland.

We should not only pay tribute to these heroic individuals through songs and speeches but we should try by all means to emulate their heroic deeds by sacrificing our own personal interests in pursuit of the second phase of the struggle for economic emancipation. Let us honour their sacrifices by leaving behind to the succeeding generations, a legacy of peace, unity and prosperity. It is my sincere hope that as we come together to honor our heroes and celebrate their extraordinary achievements and love of country, we must be inspired to embody the ideals and values that they stood for.

The past century was a tumultuous one for Africa and its people. Against all odds, our heroes and heroines prevailed and defeated the scourge of colonialism. This century is one of promise. It is a century of great potential. It is a century in which we, as free Africans, have outlined our vision for the new *Africa we Want*, through our Agenda 2063. It is our duty to assume the mantle and embark upon the second phase of the struggle, the struggle for socio-economic transformation, as we strive to improve the standard of living of our people and bring about total economic independence.

We should draw inspiration from the words of Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, who said, "Where there has been racial hatred, it must be ended. Where there has been tribal animosity, it will be finished. Let us not dwell upon the bitterness of the past. I would rather look to the future, to the good new Kenya, not to the bad old days. If we can create this sense of national direction and identity, we shall have gone a long way to solving our

economic problems.” I therefore call upon the younger generation to assume their historic mission, to continue to defend the liberty of Kenya and that of Africa.

Mzee was a great Pan- Africanist, and although these words were directed to the people of Kenya, they are words that resonate in the heart of every African across the length and breadth of our continent. We can only move forward if we end racial hatred and end tribal animosity. We should all hold hands and embrace the spirit of Harambee by pulling as one Kenya, one Namibia, one Africa, with a sense of direction and identity, towards economic emancipation.

Our struggle for independence enabled us to define our own governance architecture, through the establishment of transparent and fair processes, sound systems and independent institutions, which buttress our democracy. This governance architecture is reflected in our African Union, through which we have established multilateral institutions and procedures, to enable us to collectively examine questions of peace, stability and democracy, and to attain sustainable economic development.

The key message is that Africans are their own liberators – a message that was fundamental for the success of our Revolution and a message we ought to inculcate in all African people. It is under this conviction that Kenya, Namibia and the rest of the African continent have committed themselves to the eradication of poverty and underdevelopment.

We must be the authors of our own history, and the navigators of our own destiny. This should inspire us to collectively achieve great milestones. Together we must hold the future in our own hands. For the people of Kenya, Namibia, Africa and for all of humanity, in order to guarantee peace, development and prosperity for all.

As we wish our brothers and sisters in Kenya a Happy Mashujaa day, let us recall those famous words of Mzee Kenyatta, delivered on Jamhuri Day, December 12, 1963. "Treat this day with joy. Treat it also with reverence. For this is the day for which our martyrs died. Let us stand in silence and remember all those who suffered that our land might be free, but did not live to see its fulfilment. Let us remember their great faith, their abiding knowledge that the victory would be won."

Namibia salutes the martyrs of Kenya's fight for independence. I stand in silence, on behalf of all Namibians in remembering all those who suffered so that Kenya and Africa might be free. We remember their great faith and their abiding knowledge, which brought victory. May the souls of these brave sons and daughters of Kenya, rest in eternal peace.

I thank you.