



THE PRESIDENCY

MEDIA RELEASE

(FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE)

28 MARCH 2019

WINDHOEK

ALL MEDIA

News articles in the Namibian Newspaper (22 March 2019 “Nujoma double-dips on Housing Benefit, and 27 March 2019, “Nujoma’s House Cost 43 million”) regarding the cost of upgrading the house of the Father of the Namibian Nation, Dr. Sam Nujoma deserve clarification

Whereas this matter of the upgrades of the residence of the Founding Father could have been interrogated from an administrative perspective, centrifugal forces, who prefer to operate behind the safety of anonymity in an attempt to use this matter to drive a wedge between the Founding Father and President Hage G. Geingob, have clandestinely started a campaign of causing disunity in the Namibian political landscape. Without providing facts or quoting any particular sources, the Namibian newspaper alleges, “This transaction has divided opinions among Geingob and Nujoma supporters. Nujoma's close allies are accusing Geingob's camp of using the former president's name when it suits them. Geingob's camp, however, believes that a lot of palms appear to have been greased in this transaction, and that Nujoma should pay back the money he received when he retired to avoid having the same situation for future presidents when they retire. Nujoma's supporters believe that it is all political. They claim that Nujoma's decision not to back Geingob at the 2017 Swapo elective congress is backfiring, and he is being “victimised”.

All of the above is fictitious and without any substantive basis. The issue of the “Nujoma-Geingob camps and supporters” is a figment of the imagination of those few remnants whose minds and emotions are still languishing in the aftermath of their defeat at the 2017 SWAPO Party Extra Ordinary Congress. His Excellency, Dr. Geingob, has always received unconditional support from the Founding Father, who as his political mentor recommended and appointed him in several capacities, including First SWAPO Chief Representative to the Americas; Director of United Nations Institute for Namibia (UNIN); mandated to lead the first group of Senior SWAPO Leaders and Namibians to return to Namibia from exile; Director of Elections of the SWAPO Elections Campaign; Chairperson of the Constituent Assembly, 1989; and Founding Prime Minister. Also, when President Geingob was leaving to take up the post of Executive Director at the Global Coalition for Africa in 2002, President Nujoma wished him well and expressed confidence in his ability to serve the people of Africa with distinction.

President Geingob served the Founding President in all these designations well before the advent of the new so called “loyalists”, and sycophants. President Geingob has always been with the Founding Father, in the first line of defense, as a “bodyguard”. This was at a time when the Founding Father did not have a coterie of bodyguards. What we have is a situation where a matter that should have been easily solved through the attainment of readily available facts has descended into political hearsay and gossip.

The President has been aware for a long time, that certain individuals have been insistent and resolute in their determination to use each and every contentious issue as a springboard to try to build a wedge between the Founding President and President Geingob. This is bound to fail, just as it has always failed in the past. Let us recall that it was the same cohort of rabble rousers who once asserted that President Geingob was intending to hand over Comrade Nujoma to the International Criminal Court (ICC). Therefore, the notion that President Geingob, who is a mainstay in the leadership of SWAPO, would want to hand over Comrade Nujoma to the ICC is an argument that defies any logic. That lie did not wash. What these misinformed individuals failed to understand is the fact that it was only President Geingob and the late Comrade Theo-Ben Gurirab who in defense of the Founding Father addressed the issue of spies and dungeons in Parliament. Those, whose aim is to cause division and conflict within the Ruling Party, have never been perturbed by their chronic lack of reasoning. These were the same individuals who even claimed that the Presidency had forgotten about the Founding Father by not providing him with accommodation saying that, "Sam Nujoma is in the streets." The facts speak for themselves.

When President Geingob was informed that the Founding President was without a place of residency in Windhoek, he went to the Founding President, and offered one of the fully equipped Presidential Guest Houses at Statehouse. This was conceded to, however, another offer had already being made, free of charge by Mrs. Martha Namundjebo-Tilahun, which the Founding Father and Former First Lady, Madam Kovambo Nujoma had accepted. This would have no financial implications except water, electricity and telephone usage. Therefore, it came as a surprise when the Presidency was invoiced to the tune of N\$3, 760, 660. 61 by Mrs. Namundjebo-Tilahun for the "rental" of the Founding Father, which was refuted by the Presidency.

President Geingob found the issue of the renovation and upgrading of the house of the Founding Father in process and at an advanced stage, even before he became Prime Minister in December 2012. On 14 February 2014, the Cabinet Committee on Defense, Security and International Relations, of which President Geingob was not a member when he was Prime Minister, took the decision to "conduct a feasibility study for major renovations, upgrading of the entire residence for the Founding President." The cost of the upgrades and renovations amounts to N\$ 42, 790, 565. 18. On 16 February 2015, a provisional security clearance was provided to the construction companies that were to execute the work. It should be stated that this transpired before President Geingob assumed duties as Head of State on 21 March 2015.

In 2005 Parliament enacted Act 16 of 2005, The Conferment of Status of Founding Father of the Namibian Nation Act. The Namibian people through that Act took cognizance of the extraordinary contributions made by the Founding Father to the attainment of independence and the socio-economic development

of an independent Namibia. Additionally, the Former Presidents Pension and Other Benefits Act of 2004 as amended in 2012, provides for specific benefits, including a house. The Founding President by virtue of the Founding Father of the Namibian Nation Act is accorded special status as an extraordinary personality, and the benefits accrued are considered in that light. Premised on this explanation, the matter of the upgrades and renovations of the house of the Founding President should be considered as closed.

To conclude, the Government of the Republic of Namibia had planned to organize in May 2019 the 90th birthday celebrations for the Founding President, H.E Dr. Sam Nujoma. But due to the Founding President's sense of frugality, the Founding President indicated that in light of the prevailing economic conditions and the drought, it would be best not to spend government resources for a birthday celebration. It is a demonstration of the duty of care the Founding President has for the Namibian people.

The truth will always prevail; the Namibian people shall not be misled and shall triumph against the centrifugal forces of disunity.

/End

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