

**REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**



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

**OTJIWARONGO  
OTJOZONDJUPA REGION  
AUGUST 26, 2019**

*Check against delivery*

- **Directors of Proceedings;**
- **Comrade Nangolo Mbumba, Vice President of the Republic of Namibia and Madame Mbumba;**
- **Comrade Sam Shafiishuna Nujoma, First President of the Republic of Namibia and Founding Father of the Namibian Nation;**
- **Comrade Hifikepunye Lukas Pohamba, Second President of the Republic of Namibia;**
- **The Right Honourable Saara-Kuugongelwa Amadhila, Prime Minister of the Republic of Namibia and Mr. Amadhila;**
- **Honourable Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of International Relations and Cooperation and Lt. Gen. (Rtd) Ndaitwah;**
- **Honourable Speaker of the National Assembly, Prof. Peter Katjavivi and Madam Katjavivi;**
- **Honourable Chairperson of the National Council, Margaret Mensah-Williams and Mr. Williams;**
- **Your Lordship, Chief Justice Peter Shivute;**
- **Madame Monica Geingos, First Lady of the Republic of Namibia;**

- **Honourable Ministers and Deputy Ministers;**
- **Honourable Members of Parliament;**
- **Secretary General of the SWAPO Party, Comrade Sophia Shaningwa;**
- **Governor of the Otjozondjupa Region, Honourable Otto Ipinge;**
- **Other Honourable Governors present;**
- **Honourable Regional and Local Authority Councilors;**
- **Your Worship Bennes Haimbondi, the Mayor of Otjiwarongo;**
- **Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps; Distinguished Service Chiefs;**
- **Esteemed Veterans of the Liberation struggle;**
- **Esteemed Religious, Traditional and Community Leaders;**
- **Distinguished Invited Guests;**
- **Members of the Media;**
- **Fellow Namibians,**

**Today, we take time to remember and honour the sons and daughters of our soil, who made immense sacrifices for our freedom. Heroes Day is more than just a day to remember valiant heroes and heroines. It is also a day for us to celebrate the selfless feats of men and women and the legacy they have left behind.**

**Our Father of the Namibian Revolution, Comrade Sam Nujoma once said, "Their sacrifices must inspire all Namibians who were fortunate and privileged to witness the dawn of independence and indeed future generations, to build a better Namibia, where all her People can realize their fullest potential". Indeed, their heroic battles and sacrifices will continue to inspire us, as we build a more inclusive, united and prosperous Namibia.**

**As we celebrate this day, 26 August, Heroes Day, let us solemnly invoke the revolutionary spirit of Kaptein Hendrik Witbooi, Kaptein Jacob Marengo, Chief Hosea Kutako, Chief Kahimemua Nguvauva, Chief Samuel Maharero, Chief Nehale Iya Mpingana, Chief Mandume ya Ndemufayo, Chief Ipumbu ya Tshilongo, Hompa Nyangana WaMukuve, Hompa Kandjimi Hawanga,**

**Brendon Simbwaye and Mama Kakurukaze Mungunda. We recall all the battles at which Namibians perished, such as the battle at Hornkranz, the battle of Ohamakari, the battle of Namutoni, the battle of Lishora and the battle of Kamenga. We also recall those who lost their lives during the atrocity at the Old Location.**

**From the whistling echo of the first salvos fired at Omugulu-gwoMbashe, to the crossfires at Oshatotwa, to the cries of our daughters and children at Cassinga, the triumphant battle of Cuito Cuanavale and the final massacre at Ondeshifilwa. Our fight was just, our resolve unwavering and the price paid, high. The blood of our fighters, is the currency that bought our freedom. We should never forget. No one understands the level of sacrifice, the pain, the blood sweat and tears as much as our Veterans of the Liberation Struggle. On this occasion, as we commemorate 53 years after Omugulu-gwoMbashe battle, we salute those who were prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice; a debt we can never repay.**

**The shedding of human blood is never an easy decision, even in the pursuit of freedom. Conflict is not the first choice of engagement, and that is why, in the case of Namibia, we chose to pursue our struggle for freedom on three fronts. The first front was the political mobilization of our people, to unite and fight against apartheid colonialism. Following the German Empire's defeat in World War One, South Africa undertook administration of Namibia under a mandate agreement by the League of Nations Council. The mandate required that South Africa promote the economic and social progress of the people of Namibia in preparation of their eventual independence. Instead, the South African government totally violated the mandate and introduced the brutal and racist system of Apartheid.**

**South Africa's actions and subsequent refusal to convert its mandate into a United Nations trusteeship following the founding of the United Nations in 1945, legitimized our foray into the international arena to present our just cause for independence. A small group of brave and dedicated cadres, initiated this second phase of the struggle on the diplomatic front, through the process of petitioning, which eventually bared fruit.**

**In 1960, Ethiopia and Liberia, as member states of the Organization of African Unity and former members of the League of Nations, instituted legal proceedings against South Africa at the International Court of Justice, on behalf of Namibia. They argued that South Africa was in breach of its obligations under that Mandate, and that Namibia, being a mandated territory, was subject to the supervision of the United Nations.**

**Instead of justice, the International Court of Justice, caused a great injustice by throwing out Namibia's case due to a technicality. Thus, our hopes for peaceful resolution and international justice were dashed. We soon realized that the Independence of Namibia could not be attained through petition but by the bullet.**

**This turn of events prompted the late Comrade Peter Nanyemba, one of our gallant sons and erstwhile commanders of the People's Liberation Army of Namibia, to issue a clarion call that "we are our own liberators". Namibians had no choice therefore, but to take up arms and bring about their own liberation.**

**It is true to say that our fighters did not die in vain, because the Independence of Namibia and the subsequent peace, stability and unity we enjoy, was a prize worth dying for. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March, we were privileged to attend the Inaugural Commemoration of Southern Africa Liberation Day at Cuito Cuanavale, Angola. That special ceremony, at one of the hallowed grounds of the battle for the liberation of our people, is a poignant reminder of the horror, cost and pain of war.**

- To all Veterans of our Liberation Struggle who participated in the Battle of Omugulu-gwoMbashe, to the decisive battle of Cuito Cuanavale;**
- To all our survivors from the attack at Cassinga, Oshatotwa, Oshikuku, Oshakati and Ondeshifilwa - we extend our profound appreciation for the price you have paid to deliver a free and independent Namibia.**
- To all those that suffered atrocities at the Old Location and were forcefully removed, at gun-point, and taken to Katutura.**

**In the same vein, let me express our appreciation to our eternal allies; the Republics of Angola and Cuba, whose sons and daughters fought bravely, side by side with PLAN fighters, to secure the liberation of Namibia and Southern Africa, as a whole.**

**At the same time, we cannot forget the crucial role played by the Frontline States; the former Soviet Union; Socialist and Scandinavian countries, including the People's Republic of China.**

**Furthermore, we recognize the invaluable contribution of numerous civil society organisations, anti-apartheid movements and anti-colonial movements that equally supported our Cause.**

**Directors of proceedings,**

**The armed struggle for Namibia's independence lasted 23 long and bitter years. We faced an enemy with abundant manpower and superior military hardware. But not even the callous brutality of our enemy could withstand the endurance and courage of our fighters.**

**As we commemorate this Heroes Day, let us honour those who have fallen in the name of our freedom, by embracing the new narrative which we have started in Namibia, that which espouses unity, transparency and accountability. Where all Namibians join hands to fight the scourges of poverty and corruption while, pursuing the goal of shared prosperity.**

**As the President of the Republic of Namibia and Commander-in-Chief of the Namibian Defence Force, I not only share the pain of those who have sacrificed their lives in defense of our hard-won freedoms, but I urge our uniformed men and women to use the memory of our valiant heroes and heroines to invigorate your resolve to guard the sovereignty and integrity of Namibia, with utmost patriotism and vigilance.**

**On this Heroes Day, let us commit to hold hands and work together, to bring about economic transformation in Namibia. This is not only a day to commemorate the selfless acts of sacrifice, it is also a day for us to reaffirm our patriotism to foster a true sense of pride and duty towards our nation.**

**We must safeguard our hard-won freedom by rejecting all forms of hate speech, ethnicity, tribalism, racism and divisive language that incites violence. This is our country, the only country we can call home. Protecting Namibia for our future generations is a shared responsibility. We must ensure that under no circumstances will we throw away the beautiful gift that was given to our people by God; the beautiful gift for which thousands of Namibians fought and died for.**

**Fellow Namibians,**

**The bravery of our heroes ensured political independence, but heroism doesn't end with the hoisting a flag and a national anthem. It is up to us to pick up the baton and continue the race in order to deliver on the urgent promise of economic emancipation.**

**We are aware that at independence, Government inherited a country that was fractured along ethnic and racial lines. It is for this reason we adopted a policy of National Reconciliation, to heal the wounds caused by a past defined by a bitter struggle and to take the country down a new path of Nation Building.**

**We will continue to encourage Namibians to embrace each other and hold hands, to face the future together and to work for the achievement of a prosperous and peaceful future for all our people.**

**As I often state, countries go to war, when diplomacy fails. Through continuous dialogue, I believe we will always find common ground. I must admit, following my recent series of Town Hall meetings across all 14 regions of our country, the spirit of unity and patriotism is well entrenched within our society. I commend the many Namibians from all walks of life, who participated with maturity, tolerance and empathy for one another. Despite divergent views, we are holding hands to acknowledge our successes, face our challenges and pull in one direction towards a better future.**

**Directors of proceedings,**

**Those that ushered in the Liberation of Namibia have walked a path that subsequent generations will never know. Young men and women entered the arenas of battle to protect the freedoms of others, foregoing their own safety and wellbeing. Their valorous deeds on the field of battle have guaranteed our nationhood and**

**sovereignty. Their devotion to their people and country; their unwavering determination in the face of death; their willingness to make the greatest sacrifice of all, sets them apart, as giants among humankind.**

**Their exploits on the field of battle have made our achievements possible today. Their gallantry has laid the foundation for the Namibian House. Their sacrifice should serve as our inspiration to strive for peace and unity, to forge ahead with unwavering determination towards our developmental aspirations, in order to emerge victorious in the second phase of the struggle. In honour of Heroes Day, we say thank you to all, the living and the fallen, veterans, heroes and heroines of our Liberation Struggle.**

**Thank you Otjozondjupa, for providing a fitting tribute to the memory of our brave sons and daughters;**

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

**Long Live the Namibian Revolution!**

**Long Live the Republic of Namibia!**

**May God continue to bless the Republic of Namibia.**

**I thank you.**