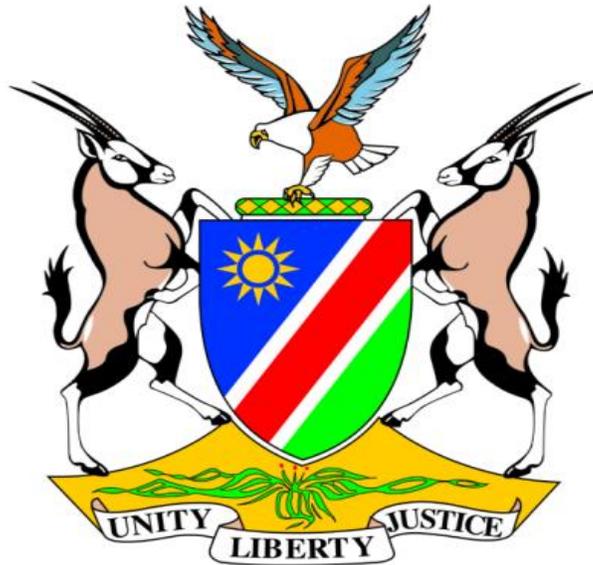


REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



PRESIDENT HAGE GEINGOB

**EULOGY AT THE MEMORIAL SERVICE OF THE LATE COMRADE
HERMAN ANDIMBA TOIVO YA TOIVO: A Life of distinguished
service**

JUNE 23, 2017

INDEPENDENCE STADIUM

WINDHOEK

Check against delivery

Directors of this memorial service;

Madam Vicky Erenstein Ya Toivo and

the rest of the bereaved family;

The Founding President and Father

of the Namibian Nation, Comrade Dr.

Sam Nujoma;

Second President of the Republic of

Namibia, Comrade Dr Hifikepunye

Pohamba and Madame Penexupifo

Pohamba;

**The Right Honourable Prime
Minister, Dr. Saara Kuugongelwa
Amadhila and Mr Amadhila;
Honourable Deputy Prime Minister
and Minister of International
Relations and Cooperation,
Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah and
Lieutenant General (Rtd) Denga
Ndaitwah;**

**Honourable Speaker of the National
Assembly, Prof. Peter Katjavivi and
Madam Jane Katjavivi;**

**Honourable Chairperson of the
National Council, Margaret Mensah-
Williams and Mr Williams;**

**Your Lordship, Chief Justice Peter
Shivute;**

**Honourable Ayanda Dlodlo, Minister
of Communications of the Republic**

**of South Africa and special
representative of President of the
Republic of South Africa, Comrade
Jacob Zuma;**

**Honourable Ministers and Deputy
Ministers;**

Honourable Members of Parliament;

Honourable Governors present;

**Comrade Nangolo Mbumba,
Secretary General of the SWAPO**

Party;

Members of the SWAPO Party

Political Bureau and Central

Committee;

Veterans of the Liberation Struggle

Honourable McHenry Venaani,

leader of the official opposition as

well as leaders of other political

parties;

Your Excellencies, Members of the

Diplomatic Corps;

Distinguished Service Chiefs;

Esteemed Religious, Traditional and

Community Leaders;

Members of the local and

international media

Fellow mourners;

Today, we mourn the passing of a giant. There is an old tale about life and death. In the tale, life asked death, 'Why do people love me but hate you?' Death responded, 'Because you are a beautiful lie and I am a painful truth.'

On June 9, 2017, we had to deal with a painful truth that we are all on borrowed time, the painful truth that there can be no life without death.

The ninth of June will forever be ingrained in our memory as the day we wept. The cries of anguish could be heard from Switzerland to South Africa, from Lusaka to Luanda, from Havana to Helsinki. We Wept. We wept for a man of the world, we wept for a son of the continent, we wept for a hero of the country. A distinguished freedom fighter, a patriot and a bearer of the ethos of Southern Africa's long and bitter struggle for Independence.

The grief remained but the tears made way for tributes. People from all walks of life, people from all over the world paid heartfelt tribute to Andimba. Over the past two weeks, many - here at home and abroad - have persuasively portrayed Comrade Ya Toivo as a loyal husband, a devoted father, a pioneering freedom fighter, a man ahead of his time. As different people spoke, the same Andimba emerged.

Stubborn, principled, fearless, selfless and he hated liars and thieves.

When thinking about Andimba's character, a Swahili Proverb comes to mind: "Wherever a man goes to dwell, his character goes with him." It is no surprise that Comrade Ya Toivo's character followed him all his life. Like a sweet and commanding fragrance, it permeated everything he touched.

With a clear vision of the way ahead, Andimba's compass was calibrated to seek fairness and justice. His prior life as a teacher, a farmworker, a railway police officer, a soldier in the Second World War gave him unique preparation for this difficult journey. Firstly, he could speak English. Not many black people in 1958 could speak English, never mind in a court of law. Now imagine an eloquent, fearless speaker and an excellent mobiliser who used his talents to inspire hope

to the oppressed and fear to the oppressors. Toivo is a Finnish name for hope and Andimba Toivo ya Toivo was indeed our beacon of hope.

“We are Namibians and not South Africans.” With those words, Andimba succeeded in putting the frustration and anger of the oppressed into words. He delegitimized the apartheid regime and articulated a rallying crying of the oppressed by saying, “The struggle will be long and bitter.”

Harassment, incarceration and exile did not break the spirit of Andimba nor silence his powerful voice, it simply made him louder.

Comrade Ya Toivo rose like a phoenix from the dusty sands of Omangundu. His selfless service to the Namibian people serving as a constant reminder of the renewal of mind and spirit required to drive Namibia to prosperity.

Fellow mourners, only a man of exceptional character can spearhead the genesis of a mass movement with a mandate to unite Namibians to fight a common enemy. Together with the likes of Emil Appolus, Fanuel Kozonguizi, Andreas Shipanga, Maxton Joseph Mutonguleme, Jacob Kuhangua, Solomon Mifima, Otilie Schimming Abrahams, Kenneth Abrahams and others, formed the Owamboland People's Congress (OPC) in Cape Town in 1957.

These individuals carved out a path from which there was no turning back. A path where there would be no compromise - a path where there were only two choices –death or freedom.

In 1959, the OPC was transformed into the Owamboland People's Organisation (OPO). After realizing that all Namibians were oppressed and suffered equally under Apartheid, SWA was added to PO, thereby leading to the birth of the

South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO). Comrade Ya Toivo, was instrumental in the birth of SWAPO and the birth of Namibia as a free and independent nation.

By now, we all know that in December 1958, Ya Toivo was given 72 hours to leave Cape Town after it was discovered he had sent a petition to the United Nations. He took a train back to northern Namibia but was arrested in Tsumeb before he could complete his

journey. I remember the day of his arrest clearly. I was seventeen years old and walking through the main street of Tsumeb when the late Godfrey Gaoseb noticed a familiar face. He recognized him from photos as Herman Ya Toivo. Out of excitement, we ran to confirm if this distinguished looking man was indeed our hero. The Late Gaoseb asked him whether he was Herman Ya Toivo and he responded in the affirmative.

We couldn't speak much English and satisfied we had met a great man, we shook hands and went on our way. Later that day, we heard he was arrested by the South African authorities for trespassing at the compound.

While I was a member by association, I formalized my membership of SWAPO in 1962 and left for exile in the same year via Botswana when I was twenty-one years of age.

In 1964, six years after our first encounter, I was appointed as the Swapo Party Chief Representative to the United Nations and Americas. I wrote a letter to Comrade Ya Toivo through Comrade Hishoono as Ya Toivo was the SWAPO Regional Secretary and, in my view, one of the spiritual Godfathers of SWAPO. In the letter, I sought guidance on the best way to perform my role and also requested an update on the situation in Namibia.

As many of you know, Andimba never gave short answers. He responded to my letter with his trademark long answer where he explained to me, in great detail, what he thought my role should be and gave me strong encouragement in carrying out my mandate. That was the Andimba we all know, inspirational, generous with his time and always willing to guide and mentor those who sought his wise counsel.

Comrade Ya Toivo's path is a shining example of triumph under difficult circumstances. His nerves of steel came to the fore during the infamous trial of *The state v. Tuhadeleni and 36 Others*, in June 1967, where he delivered a defiant statement in his resolute talking style. Deep in the apartheid headquarters of Pretoria, Comrade ya Toivo reminded the racist South African regime that: "We do not now, and will not in the future, recognize your right to govern us; to

make laws for us, in which we had no say; to treat our country as if it were your property and us as if you are our masters.” Comrade Ya Toivo delivered this stinging rebuke in the belly of the beast with the full knowledge that his captors had no reservations about killing those who displayed dissent or resistance. He was ready to face the most serious of repercussions. Just like another icon of the struggle against Apartheid, Comrade Nelson Mandela, who three years earlier, in

the Rivonia Trial in the same Court, had declared his willingness to die for the cause. Comrade Andimba was similarly inclined to sacrifice his life for the ideal of a better humanity. Like Mandela, Comrade Ya Toivo's words of defiance would land him in the notorious Robben Island prison.

Comrade Andimba's words transcended the arena of the courtroom and echoed beyond our continent, capturing the will and

resolve of the African people to free Africa from colonialism and the architecture of intolerance, racism, tribalism and underdevelopment. His words became a rallying point and clarion call for the people of Namibia to intensify the struggle for freedom. I remember working day and night with the Reverend Bill Johnston of the Episcopal Church for Southern Africa to put Comrade Ya Toivo's words in a pamphlet format so that we could promote Namibia's cause at the United Nations and

Americas. With Andimba's strength of his convictions and directness of his speech in enemy territory, I knew that we had won what the London Guardian later described as the 'Battle of Nerves'.

I recall with fondness, how we all impatiently waited for him at the airport in Lusaka, upon his release from prison in 1984. We were all at the airport, the leadership of SWAPO and students from the United Nations Institute for Namibia, to

await the arrival of a tall, well-built man who arrived with a big smile. Comrade Andimba demonstrated his love by playfully punching and lifting us up. Those playful punches were painful and we could only imagine the ferocity of the legendary punch that knocked out a prison warder on Robben Island who dared to disrespect Comrade Andimba.

**Ladies and gentlemen,
Comrades and friends, Fellow
mourners**

We have lost more than a hero of the Liberation Struggle, more than a revolutionary. We have lost a man who epitomises the core ideals that make us the nation we are today. The ideals and values, captured today in our Constitution. Ideals and values that coursed through Comrade Ya Toivo's veins for all of his 92 years on this earth. His durable principles and inexhaustible reservoir of compassion, forgiveness, patience and sense of justice allowed him to shun the

murky waters of greed and factionalism. The Latin American revolutionary, Che Guevara would remind us, "Everyday people straighten up their hair, why not the heart." May the passing of Ya Toivo be the moment we straighten our hearts and re-align our words and actions for the attainment of a Namibia that Ya Toivo would be proud of.

Ya Toivo straightened his heart and it was this heart that provided space for Comrade Ya Toivo to forgive. As Namibians, and mourners we shall draw from his power of forgiveness and unity. It was this straight heart that made him espouse the principles of unity and pulling in one direction. It was also this straight heart that would lead him to find his soulmate, the love of his life, Comrade Vicky ya Toivo. Vicky and Andimba were kindred spirits who were united by their activism.

Last year, on his 91st birthday, Vicky told my wife and I, that she had decided to throw a birthday party for Andimba every single year as each year was a blessing that needed to be celebrated. I remember being touched at her devotion and now that he has passed before his next birthday, I realise the wisdom of her decision to celebrate her husband. I often wondered how Vicky and Andimba managed to agree on anything because if truth be told, both Vicky and Andimba love a good

debate. I remember fondly when Andimba came to my 74th birthday party in August last year, I tried to assist him to his chair and he hit my hand away and said, "ethandje!, you did not bring me here." I thought perhaps Vicky, who did bring him would have better luck but her helping hand was also pushed away. He was never diplomatic but was always sincere. What was most endearing was that Andimba could disagree without being disagreeable.

Thank you, Vicky, for sharing Andimba with all of us and for looking after him so well.

Chinese Philosopher Lao Tzu who says, "Being deeply loved by someone gives you strength, while loving someone deeply gives you courage." These words perfectly capture the relationship between Comrade Andimba and yourself. Yours is a relationship of strength and courage.

The beauty of Andimba and Vicky's union is captured by their two beautiful daughters, Mutaleni and Nashikoto. The twins are a reflection of the extraordinary mosaic we are paying tribute to. Together with their adopted brothers Filemon and Isaak. The children raised by Ya Toivo exemplify his character and their strong devotion to him is testament of the deep love he had for them.

To Nestor and Ester, your brother is gone but his legacy will remain with us forever. True to its Finnish origin, the Ya Toivo name has indeed brought hope to a nation.

Fellow mourners, Namibians will honour this Hero of our Struggle. It is a sad truth we tend to honour our heroes only when they die. Let us be motivated to celebrate the lives of our heroes while they are amongst us.

Let us emulate his venerable character and fight for a fair and inclusive society where we honour and respect the living and the dead.

Andimba was a dignified, respectful and truthful man. Thank you to all of you who respected his legacy by paying tribute to him in a respectful, truthful and dignified manner.

It was also gratifying to see the memorial services in Ondangwa, Rundu and Keetmanshoop as that

was yet another reminder that Ya Toivo was a man for all the people.

We thank all our regional and international brothers and sisters, who have joined us in paying tribute to this great African. We like to say that Namibia is a child of international solidarity. We experienced that solidarity yet again and we are grateful. I must say a special word of thanks to our South African brothers and sisters.

We shared the common enemy of Apartheid and died for the same cause of freedom. We received the most messages and biggest delegation from South Africa and for that, we are grateful.

As Africans, we have a new common enemy of inequality, poverty and corruption. We are required to unite again to fight this common enemy to enable our people to enjoy the fruits of our hard won freedom.

In this year of rededication to our core values and ideals of building a better Namibia, let us remain united and continue to hold hands in order to solidify the foundations of our Namibian House. Let us do so to benefit the memory of Comrade Andimba, a towering figure in our journey for freedom and a better life for the majority.

In conclusion, I would like to call all Namibians to honour this hero of the struggle.

An appropriate way to honour him is through purposeful actions to improve the challenges we face as a nation. Let us emulate his exemplary character and fight tooth and nail to banish from our society, the counter revolutionary practises of the 'ism's- tribalism, racism and sexism.

Comrade Ya Toivo, you lived your life at the service of humanity with commendable distinction.

Your place is in the pantheon of giants. Go well Comrade, go well.

May the Soul of Comrade Andimba Toivo ya Toivo rest in eternal peace. May the flame of his memory burn in our hearts forever.

Patria O Muerte, Venceremos. A Luta Continua, Vitória É Certa.

May the soul of our dear Comrade Andimba Toivo Ya Toivo rest in eternal peace. May the flame of his memory burn in our hearts forever.

Rest in peace Andimba.