

# **REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**



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

**HEROES ACRE NATIONAL MONUMENT  
WINDHOEK**

**AUGUST 26, 2015**

***Check against delivery***

**Director of Ceremonies;**

**Your Excellency, Edgar Chagwa Lungu, President of the Republic of Zambia and our Guest of Honour;**

**Comrade Sam Shafiishuna Nujoma, Founding President and Father of the Nation;**

**Comrade Dr. Nickey Iyambo, Vice President of the Republic of Namibia; Right Honourable Prime Minister, Saara Kuugongelwa- Amadhila;**

**Honourable Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah;**

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

**Honourable Chairperson of the  
National Council, Asser Kapere;**

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

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

**Honourable Ministers and Deputy  
Ministers;**

**Honourable Members of Parliament;**

**Governor of the Khomas Region,**

**Honourable Laura Mcleod-Katjirua;**

**Honourable Governors,**

**Honourable Regional and Local  
Authority Councillors;**

**Your Worship, the Mayor of  
Windhoek;**

**Distinguished Leaders of Political  
Parties;**

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

**Distinguished Service Chiefs;**

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

**Heroes and Heroines of the  
Liberation Struggle;**

**Distinguished Invited Guests;**

**Members of the Media;**

**Fellow Namibians;**

**I am honoured and humbled to be standing here today, to deliver my first Heroes Day Speech as President of the Republic of Namibia.**

**We mark this solemn occasion by remembering and paying tribute to the valiant sons and daughters of our soil, whose blood waters our freedom.**

**There is an African proverb which says, *"Tomorrow belongs to the people who prepare for it today."***

**Several decades ago, brave Namibians made the choice to take a leap of faith and join the struggle for the liberation of our beloved country.**

**These are the heroes and heroines who prepared us for the peace and tranquility we enjoy today. There is a time in human suffering, when one is forced to make a choice whether to submit or to fight, even if it means paying the ultimate price.**

**In 1966, when the International Court of Justice failed to assist our cause for self-determination in farcical circumstances, a turning point came to SWAPO. This prompted one of our stalwarts and heroes Peter Ndilimani Nanyemba to say, "*We will cross many rivers of blood before we can achieve our freedom.*"**

**Following this clarion call, the SWAPO Central Committee, under the leadership of Comrade Sam Nujoma, resolved that we must fight in order to become our own**

**liberators. To this end, the first bullets which marked the beginning of the armed struggle were fired at Ongulumbashe on 26 August 1966.**

**Today, the three heroes we are honouring as well as all our other heroes and heroines, are a testament to that statement made by Comrade Nanyemba and the resolve of Comrade Nujoma, for indeed they crossed many rivers of blood so that we can be a free and independent people rather than an oppressed people.**

**It is due to their sacrifices that we can dream of prosperity rather than fear the nightmare of torture and subjugation.**

**These were people who chose to forego their own personal concerns. They forgot their individual ambitions when they were confronted with events that affected not just them, but their countrymen and women.**

**They found themselves at a crossroads and chose to make the ultimate sacrifice.**

**They could have chosen to remain focused on their private battles, disregarding what was going on around them, but instead they chose a path walked by few. There was no promise of glory, honour, medals or remembrances.**

**They were fully aware that going against the powers that be, would bring nothing but trouble.**

**Despite this fact they did not waver.  
These are our heroes who broke  
down the walls of the last bastion of  
colonial rule on the African  
continent.**

**Director of Ceremonies,**

**War is never a good thing. We are  
neither war mongers nor people who  
glorify war.**

**However, we should be aware that there are always enemies who are willing to push one's tolerance and patience and leave you with no choice but to resist in violent fashion. The South African Apartheid Regime was one such enemy.**

**An enemy so violent in nature that armed struggle was the only language it understood.**

**Our cause to fight was just, and as reflected by the words of our Founding Father Comrade Sam Nujoma in the book titled SWAPO:**

***A Lion Against Apartheid, “We had gained greater international support, and given that we did not see any interest on the part of South Africa or its main allies, Germany and England, in reaching a peaceful solution, the only road left to us was armed struggle.”***

**The heroes that we are honouring today and many of those buried here at Heroes Acre paid the ultimate price during this armed struggle. They were brutalized, tortured, imprisoned and assassinated, all in the name of freedom.**

**They are exemplars of the selfless spirit and valour that only the bravest of souls possess.**

**Their sacrifice poured life into the soil which has given rise to the Land of the Brave.**

**Director of Ceremonies,**

**Let us also take the opportunity to remember the single greatest weapon in our arsenal which we used to fight against colonial rule –  
UNITY.**

**Whether we talk of national unity or the greater African unity, those of us in the struggle espoused to the ideals of heroes like Kwame Nkrumah who said, “*Africa is one continent, one people one nation.*” Similarly, Namibia is one country; one Namibia, one nation.**

**Let us therefore not take our freedom for granted, the peace that our brave sons and daughters fought so valiantly for, not lull us into a sense of complacency. Let peace not become boring.**

**Yes, there are those who say that peace and stability has not brought them any jobs or wealth, but take heed to the words of Julius Nyerere who said, *"Unity will not make us rich, but it can make it difficult for Africa and the African peoples to be disregarded and humiliated. And it will, therefore, increase the effectiveness of the decisions we make and try to implement for our development."***

***My generation led Africa to political freedom. The current generation of leaders and peoples of Africa must pick up the flickering torch of African freedom, refuel it with their enthusiasm and determination, and carry it forward.”***

**Let these powerful words by one of Africa’s foremost heroes against colonial rule serve as a reminder to our youth. A reminder that only half the battle is won. The second phase of the struggle will require the same sacrifice and selflessness that the first struggle demanded.**

**Independence was not handed to us on a silver platter, it was earned, and the currency was blood. Economic emancipation will also require our countrymen and women to forget about selfish ambitions and instant wealth accumulation.**

**Become the economic heroes and heroines of Namibia, by following in the selfless footsteps of those that we honour here today, so that future generations of Namibians can bestow on you the honour which we bestow on those who bled for your freedom.**

**Director of Ceremonies,**

**As a Child of Pan African and International Solidarity, Namibia shall never tire of paying tribute and giving thanks to those who supported and sacrificed their well-being for the freedom of our country. As Africans we always give thanks, it is a constituent of our core values.**

**We give thanks to the brave people of Cuba, led by *El Jefe Comandante***

***Fidel Castro*, whose sons and daughters fought alongside our own. They did not fight for diamonds, gold or uranium. The only consolation was to return their fallen heroes and heroines back to their motherland.**

**We give thanks to the brave people of Angola, under the leadership of *Comrades Agostinho Neto* and *José Eduardo Dos Santos*, our brothers and sisters from the North. You provided us with refuge, solace, training and support.**

**You were and will always be a friend in need and a true friend indeed.**

**In the same vein, let me pay tribute to the brave people of Tanzania and Zambia, under the leadership of *Comrades Julius Nyerere* and *Kenneth Kaunda*. You carried the torch of the Pan Africanist spirit which guided us forwards in our darkest ours. We are therefore honoured today, to have in our midst, a son of Zambia and a brother of mine, His Excellency Edgar Chagwa Lungu.**

**Thank you for gracing this occasion  
Your Excellency and may you and**

**your delegation feel at home in the land which you helped free.**

**We pay tribute to the people of all the other front line states and Nigeria, as well as to our friends in the West, who defied their Governments by supporting our cause for independence.**

**We further thank China and former socialist countries for their invaluable support which enabled us to execute our armed struggle.**

**Director of Ceremonies,**

**As a nation which benefitted from International Solidarity, we cannot forget our friends on the continent and in the international community who are still seized with their battle for freedom. As we remember those who never wavered in the quest for our freedom, we reaffirm our solidarity with the people of Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic and the people of Palestine whose heroes and heroines continue to pay the ultimate sacrifice to this day.**

**Your cause is just and we stand by you in your quest for freedom and self-determination.**

**On the home front, let us pay tribute to our brave men and women of the armed forces. You are the gatekeepers of the peace we so greatly cherish. We salute your bravery and sacrifice.**

**I would also like to take this moment to recognize the pain, suffering and sacrifice of the families and loved ones of all our fallen comrades,**

**including the families represented here today.**

**Director of Ceremonies,**

**I would now like to pay tribute to three heroes of our liberation struggle. They symbolize the spirit of our nation and the concept of the Namibian House.**

**They originated from different backgrounds, but they were united by a common cause, a cause which knows no tribe, no colour, no social**

**status and no age. It is a human cause that only has one common language and that language is freedom.**

**They are:**

- 1. Comrade Peter Mweshihange, Former Secretary for Defence of the Peoples Liberation Army of Namibia and later the Secretary for Defence and Namibia's first Minister of Defence.**
- 2. Comrade Moses //Garoëb, Former member of the SWAPO Party Politburo and Central Committee and Administrative**

**Secretary of SWAPO who later became the Minister of Labour,**

**3. Comrade Anton Lubowski, SWAPO Party member, Human Rights Lawyer, Trade Unionist and anti-apartheid activist.**

**Here at Heroes Acre, they have found a final resting place, befitting to their stature as national heroes. They can now rest amongst their peers.**

**They fought the good fight, the selfless fight and have attained immortality in the annals of history.**

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

**Long Live the Namibian Revolution!**

**Long Live the Republic of Namibia!**

**I thank you!**