



**REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA
THE PRESIDENCY**

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY
HER EXCELLENCY, DR. NETUMBO NANDI-
NDAITWAH, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF
NAMIBIA
ON THE OCCASION OF THE
59TH HEROES DAY COMMEMORATION**

**26 AUGUST 2025
KATIMA MULILO, ZAMBEZI REGION**

Director of Ceremonies;

Your Excellency Comrade Lucia Witbooi, Vice-President of the Republic of Namibia;

Your Excellency Dr. Nangolo Mbumba, Fourth President of the Republic of Namibia;

Right Honourable Dr. Elijah Ngurare, Prime Minister of the Republic of Namibia;

Honourable Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila, Speaker of the National Assembly;

Your Lordship Petrus Shivute, Chief Justice and Madame Shivute;

Honourable Lukas Sinimbo Muha, Chairperson of the National Council;

Honourable Natangwe Ithete, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Industry, Mines and Energy;

Honourable Comrade Sophia Shaningwa, Member of Parliament and Secretary General of SWAPO Party;

Lt. Gen. (Rtd.) Denga Ndaitwah, First Gentleman of the Republic of Namibia;

Esteemed Ministers and Deputy Ministers;

Honourable Immanuel Nashinge, Member of Parliament and Leader of the Official Opposition;

Esteemed Honourable Members of Parliament;

Ambassador Emilia Mkusa, Secretary to the Cabinet;

Gaob Immanuel /Gaseb, Chairperson of the Council of Traditional Authorities and other Traditional Leaders;
The Chiefs of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Namibia;
Honourable Dorothy Kabula, Governor of Zambezi Region, and all other Regional Governors here present;
Honourable Matengu Simushi, Chairperson of Zambezi Regional Council;
Members of the Central Committee and the Political Bureau of SWAPO Party;
Commissioner (Rtd.) Ben Shikongo, President of the Namibian National Liberation Veterans Association;
Regional Councillors and Local Authorities;
The Veterans of the National Liberation Struggle;
The Chiefs of the Four Traditional Authorities of the Zambezi Region: Masubia, Mafwe, Mayeyi & Mashi;
Members of the Diplomatic Corps;
Distinguished Invited Guests;
Members of the Media;
Fellow Namibians.

This is the first time in our history marking the Heroes Day, 26 August, without His Excellency Comrade Dr. Shafiishuna Sam Daniel Nujoma, the Commander-In-Chief of the People 's Liberation Army of Namibia

(PLAN), Leader of our Revolution, Founding President and Father of the Nation. His seat is now empty forever. May we stand and observe a moment of silence in his honour and pay homage to the heroes and heroines of Namibia.

May his legacy continue to guide us in carrying out our national responsibilities and let their blood continue to water our freedom for prosperity.

Fellow Namibians,

As we remember the Heroes Day, it is important to recognise the immense contributions made by our former Presidents in securing a peaceful, stable and proud nation for the past 35 years; and honour their legacies as pillars of our democracy.

While our Founding President H.E Cde Sam Shafiishuna Nujoma and third President Hage Geingob have left us, their teachings continue to guide us. However, we are honoured and blessed that we continue to benefit from the wisdom of our second and fourth Presidents, their Excellencies Comrades Hifikepunye Pohamba and Nangolo Mbumba, respectively. Their guidance and

leadership have propelled Namibians to be united into One Namibia-One Nation. May their legacies continue to guide us today and for generations to come.

Today we are here at Katima Mulilo in the Zambezi Region the birthplace of our hero Brenden Simbwaye, a birth place of a highly respected SWAPO Political Commissar Comrade Greenwell Matongo, and the likes of Richard Kabadjani Kapelwa, Fridrick Matongo and many others. Zambezi is also the final destination of Commander Tobias Hainyeko. Their sacrifices remind us to uphold the values of unity, peace, inclusivity and progress. Among the living pioneers who hailed from this Region include Col Patrick Mwinga, comrades Lucas Kulandata "Situation" among others.

At this point, let me inform the Namibia nation that our government has decided to designate symbolic graves at the Heroes Acre in remembrance of Comrades Simbwaye and Hainyeko.

Fellow Namibians,

August 26, is a revered day for Namibia and her people. On this special day every year, Namibians gather to remember the exceptional bravery that ignited the flame

of resistance against colonial subjugation and to end the illegal occupation of the South African Racist Regime in our country. The gallant sons and daughters of our Land of the Brave resolved with unwavering commitment, to exercise their undeniable right to self-determination, freedom and independence. On this day, we pay homage to the gallant sons and daughters of our motherland who decided to confront, albeit, with limited weaponry, one of the most formidable militaries in Africa at the time.

The aim was freedom and independence, if not for them, then certainly for the generations that would come after them. The brave sons and daughters of Namibia-rose up and took arms to liberate the motherland, after having pursued all peaceful means to secure peace, freedom and independence for all Namibians.

Today, we are here walking tall alongside the nations of the world as a free and independent people in the Land of the Brave. Glory to their bravery!

Fellow Namibians,

The theme of the 59th Heroes Day Commemoration is; "Built on bravery, bound for a prosperous future", captures the spirit of resilience that defined Namibia's

journey toward freedom from the days of resistance to independence on the 21st March 1990.

The logo accompanying the theme, is more than a symbol of remembrance. It embodies our collective identity and aspirations for a united, prosperous Namibia. As we can see its core is the image of a saluting soldier, symbolising eternal respect, remembrance and the eternal flame, signifying the continued legacy of the country's heroes and heroines. Surrounding the central image are elements representing our national aspirations: economic growth, creative industries, health, sports, academia, agriculture, and decent living, which are all reflective of the priorities of our government.

As we reflect on the unwavering courage of our heroes and heroines that have characterised the courage that we share as a nation today. We must look back with admiration to the Namibian people's determination to pursue an armed liberation struggle for justice, sovereignty, and independence at all costs.

Against that background, it is befitting for all of us with deepest appreciation and gratitude to pay special homage to the unit of South West Africa Liberation Army

(SWALA) combatants, the forerunner of the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) SWAPO's military wing. This SWALA unit was led by Comrade John Ya-Otto Nankudhu. Some of his compatriots include Simeon Linekela 'Kambo' Shixungileni, Patric Ísrael 'Lungada' Iyambo, Victor Mensah, James Hamukuaya Angula, and Nelson Kavela. This is a generation that ignited the first spark of flame at Omugulugwombashe in the Omusati Region, followed by many battles and Zambezi then Caprivi became the main operation area for SWAPO freedom fighters in the early days of our armed struggle. To the point that places such as Kamenga have become household names for SWAPO fighters.

It was not easy, to open all the fronts for military operations, however, their heroic sacrifices became the foundation of the free, democratic and sovereign Namibia we cherish today. We should therefore, honour and respect them now and forever, as they have succeeded under very difficult conditions.

In this context, it is appropriate to quote late Comrade Toivo ya Toivo, one of our revered Liberation Stalwarts and Heroes, who said, "I know the struggle will be long and bitter. I also know that my people will wage that

struggle, whatever the cost. Only when we are granted our independence will the struggle stop.”

Indeed, the struggle was long and bitter. Many people were displaced, some forced into exile, precious lives lost, and some people left disabled, while others carried the scars of the war, both physical, mental and psychological. Yet, the resolve of our people could not be extinguished. Today, our country is free and independent and our present and future is on our own hands.

Fellow Namibians,

Namibia has indeed come of age. Since independence, under the guidance of SWAPO Party, we have made remarkable strides in socio-economic development, transforming lives and building a foundation for prosperity. Development is a process, just imagine, at independence, it was not easy to reach Katima Mulilo.

Today from the border with South Africa to Katima Mulilo you are on tarred road. Zambezi Region is today connected with good road network to its neighboring Botswana and Zambia. While not all the challenges facing our people are addressed, no doubt there are

significant improvements in different social and economic sectors such as increased schools, clinics, water points, electricity and economic infrastructures among others.

The 8th Administration is guided by the SWAPO Party principles, we are therefore, resolute in accelerating our national developmental agenda, through targeted interventions as articulated in our Country's Sixth National Development Plan (NDP6), that is informed by the 2024 SWAPO Party Election Manifesto and its Implementation Plan.

As Government, we are committed to empowering the youth in our country, advancing industrialization, promoting the beneficiation of our natural resources, creating employment opportunities, and intensifying our fight against corruption. These efforts are the greatest tribute we can offer to those who paid the ultimate price and whom we are honouring for our freedom today.

As part of youth empowerment, job creation and economic advancement, the Youth Development Fund will be operational soon and I want to appeal to the first beneficiaries not to let the nation down but to ensure the success of the program. For those who will be

responsible for the implementation, please consider the projects that makes economic sense and not those presented by the people you know even if you can see the project is not viable.

Fellow Namibians,

As we reflect on our past, let us continue to build the Namibia we want a just and shared prosperity. We must continue to engage so that we build trust among ourselves. Trust is the heart of our democracy; without it, despair can breed actions that threaten the very fabric of our society.

I therefore, call upon all leaders at every level and across the entire political divide, traditional, religious, community, business and civic to renew their commitment to the maintenance of peace, justice and sustainable development. This will ensure that the fruits of freedom translate into shared prosperity for every Namibian in all our 14 political Regions. On my way here, I received a message from Honourable McHenry Venaani, extending his best wishes as we mark this Heroes Day Commemoration. Due to ill health, he was unable to join us today.

As your leader, your President, I am very much concerned that if we are not changing, as a nation we are on a crusade for self-destruction. We are failing to lift each other's up, and push forward together for the common good for all in society. It troubles me deeply that, we are too much at each other's throats in all institutions of our society, be it in families, traditional authorities, religious institutions and politics. We are all one.

I urge citizens to resolve our differences with respect, tolerance, and sensitivity by peaceful means and not resort to violence. For those who have not seen or have no knowledge of what it took to liberate our country, I appeal to you, treasure the peace, liberty and justice we are able to enjoy today, for it was paid for in blood and through untold sacrifices.

Today, you are witnessing/seeing the impact of wars on our television sets, on social and print media, the suffering, destruction, and killings in many parts of the world. War is the worst situation to live in, it mostly negatively affects innocent victims in society, particularly women and children. As a nation, we must preserve our peace at all cost.

Fellow Namibians,

As we look to the future, our resolve must be to protect our hard-won political freedom, while recognising that the battle to gain economic independence and prosperity for all, has not yet been won. The struggle to uplift the living conditions of all our people require our collective commitment to overcome the vagaries of poverty, hunger, unemployment and gender-based violence, drugs and alcohol abuse. It requires us to fight the evils of abuse of power, corruption and mismanagement of public resources. With the natural resources at our disposal we must make a commitment to ensure that every Namibian is living a decent life.

Towards this end, the government will be on the side of those leading the charge against corruption in all its manifestations that threatens our development.

I have said it before and will say it again, corruption is the betrayal of trust, as it takes away resources meant for the people. Corruption must therefore, be treated as treason. Let all of us commit to quality service delivery at all levels and all times, be it in public or private sectors and even in our families, the basic unit of our society, as per our National Constitution. I said “we are too few to

be poor” and with one heart and one mind we can make Namibia a best place for all of us.

Together, we must nurture the dreams of those who fought for our freedom, ensuring that liberty, justice and independence endure for future generations as their blood waters our freedom. No doubt unity is the key to success. I am highly encouraged by the four Traditional Authorities in Zambezi region when I see all of them together attending each other’s events. The classic example is when they all attend the coronation of the Chief of Masubia and their attendance at the Mayeyi Annual Cultural Festival. If our leaders are united why not us their subjects. Let us follow their good example.

Fellow Namibians,

Our story must be told from generation to generation. Our story, is a tale of courage, sacrifice, and the unyielding spirit of our people. Let us carry this narrative forward, inspiring hope and resilience in our country.

As Namibians, we extend our deepest appreciation and gratitude to the nations and peoples of the world who stood in solidarity with us during our national liberation struggle. The resilient people of Angola, Zambia,

Tanzania, Botswana, Cuba, and many others in Africa and beyond that provided our national liberation waged under the banner of SWAPO, their unwavering support; militarily, diplomatically and politically. Indeed, their contributions must remain a cherished chapter in our nation's history. Therefore, I welcome the delegation from the Republics of Botswana and Zambia attending this event. Together, we should collaborate to ensure development for the people of Africa.

Our history for liberation is still new and most if not all our heroes and heroines for now could be those from the struggle. However, we must know as time goes on, we will have heroes and heroines from different sectors of our economy and society, this may include scientists, innovators, discoverers among others. They will have to be recognized and respected as national heroes and heroines. That is to say in our day-to-day life heroic deeds are being made and we can all be participants.

Before I conclude, let me inform the nation that as we commemorate the Heroes Day this year, we are mourning the recent passing of one of our liberation heroes, who was one of the top leaders of PLAN and the second Chief of the Defence Forces in an independent Namibia, Lieutenant General Salomon Dumeni Hawala,

who will be laid to rest on the 6th September 2025 as a national hero.

On behalf of the government and the people of Namibia, I sent our sincere condolences to his family, friends and comrades. May his soul rest in eternal peace.

Fellow Namibians,

On this 59th Anniversary of the Heroes Day let us renew our commitment to the vision of our heroes and heroines.

Let us build a Namibia that reflects their dreams of inclusivity, equity, and prosperity for all as their blood waters our freedom.

One Namibia! One Nation!

Long Live the Republic of Namibia!

Happy Heroes Day!

I thank you.