

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



THE PRESIDENCY

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY HER EXCELLENCY DR.
NETUMBO NANDI-NDAITWAH, PRESIDENT OF
THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA AND COMMANDER-
IN-CHIEF OF THE NAMIBIAN DEFENCE FORCE,
ON THE OCASSION OF THE
35TH NAMIBIAN DEFENCE FORCE ANNIVERSARY,
GROOTFONTEIN,
OTJOZONDJUPA REGION**

2 June 2025

Director of Ceremonies;

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

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

**Honourable Natangwe Iithete, Deputy Prime Minister
and Minister of Industries, Mines and Energy;**

**Honourable Frans Kapofi, Minister of Defence and
Veterans Affairs;**

**Honourable Ministers and Members of Parliament
Present;**

**Mr. Benedictus Likando, Director General of the
Namibia Central Intelligence Service;**

**Air Marshal Martin Kambulu Pinehas, Chief of the
Namibian Defence Force;**

**Aviation General Altino Carlos Josê dos Santos, Chief of
the General Staff of the Angolan Armed Forces, Our
Guest of Honor;**

Your Excellencies, Members of Diplomatic Corps;

**The First Gentleman, Lt. Gen. (Rtd) Epaphras Denga
Ndaitwah;**

**Honourable John Julius //Khamuseb, Governor of the
Otjozondjupa Region;**

Her Worship Councillor Talitha NamatiGarises, Mayor of Grootfontein;

Distinguished Former Chiefs of the Namibian Defence Force;

Distinguished Service Chiefs;

Distinguished Service Commanders;

Former Service Commanders here Present;

All Generals, Marshals and Admirals;

Senior and Junior Officers;

Warrant Officers;

Other Ranks;

Members of the Media;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

As I stand here today in front of this impressive and colourful parade mounted by the Namibian Defence Force (NDF), I am taken back into memory lane when it was discussed whether there is need to have a defence force or just a paramilitary. The discussion was based on the narrative that, we were getting our independence at the end of the Cold War and that the global threats will be seen to have diminished.

Thankfully, in the final analysis and as a result of visionary political leaders and the leadership of our Founding President Comrade Sam Nujoma, a decision was made to establish a Namibian Defence Force. Subsequently, Chapter 15, Article 115 of the Namibian Constitution as amended, called for the establishment of

the NDF. I thank those who played an important role in establishing the Force, such as Lt General Dimo Hamaambo.

Today, I am therefore, honoured to address a fully-fledged NDF composed of its three Services, namely, the Army, the Air Force and the Navy. Equally, I am grateful to join you in celebrating and marking the 35'th anniversary of the existence of the NDF. Of significance today is that, I am addressing this colourful parade in my new role as President of the Republic of Namibia and in my capacity as Commander-In-Chief of the Namibian Defence Forces. It speaks to the importance I attach to our men and women in uniform and the role the NDF plays in guaranteeing our sovereignty, safety and security.

Accordingly, I thank Honourable Frans Kapofi and Hon. Charles Mubita in their respective capacities as Minister and Deputy Minister of Defence and Veterans Affairs, Air Marshal Martin Kambulu Pinehas, Chief of the NDF and their teams for the commendable preparation that has made this historic NDF Day a resounding success.

Director of Ceremonies,

It must be underscored that, all over the world, the Defence Forces are of very importance both at the national and international levels. While nationally their major role is to defend the territorial integrity of their respective countries, internationally they are an instrument in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Hence, their deployment in the areas of international conflict is inevitable. It is therefore, important that members of the NDF must be aware of their national and international obligations and must therefore, be ready anytime when they are called upon for any mission.

As an instrument of the state, the NDF will always serve as a fallback strategy at the disposal of the state. As such, a day like this one, that bring members together, is important and must serve to reflect and remind members of the Force of their responsibility, for them to recommit with dedication and determination to serve the nation.

Today, is also, a day to reflect on the journey travelled by our gallant men and women since the establishment of the NDF on the 2nd of June 1990. This journey reminds me of the famous ancient Chinese proverb, which states, "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." Indeed, from humble beginnings, the NDF has developed and transformed into a formidable and professional Force ready to withstand the challenges of the 21st century.

Today's celebration does not only aim to reflect on the successes and challenges of the NDF during the past 35 years, but also serves as a symbol of national unity. It is important to underline that the NDF was born out of the Policy of National Reconciliation that was adopted at independence by our visionary leader, Cde Sam Nujoma, Founding President, Father of the Namibian Nation and Leader of our Revolution.

Under the Policy of National Reconciliation, the former opposing forces, namely the combatants of the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) and South-West

Africa Territory Force (SWATF), were successfully integrated into a unified single command of NDF.

The successful integration came after years of the bloody battles between the two warring forces. Our appreciation goes to those who pioneered and practically made the integration possible at the time when there was no confidence between these forces.

The successful implementation of the Policy of National Reconciliation within the NDF epitomizes the late Founding President's vision of a brighter inclusive future for Namibia, as articulated in one of his famous statements when he once said,

"A people united, striving to achieve a common good for all the members of society, will always emerge victorious."

Against this backdrop, as Namibians, we have every reason to be proud and to celebrate this sterling and unique achievement, which will remain a deep-rooted story of the Land of the Brave.

Director of Ceremonies,

Furthermore, I am pleased to witness this colourful and professional parade mounted by brave men and women of the NDF. The level of professionalism displayed at this parade symbolizes our national pride. As a national force guided by the principle of inclusivity, which seeks to unite all Namibian citizens under the mantra of "One Namibia, One Nation", I understand all fourteen regions are represented at this parade. This parade is therefore, a true reflection of the unity in diversity of our Motherland. We should keep it like that at all times.

I want to assure you that, the Government of the Republic of Namibia remains committed to the values of national unity and common identity by ensuring that the strong foundation of the NDF must be maintained.

I strongly urge all members of the Force to always feel proud and to remain united for a common purpose. Unity of purpose must always serve as a pillar that glues us together in defending of our motherland as enshrined in our national Constitution. As the shield of our nation, members of the Force, you must therefore, stand as a guard to protect our democracy and the gains of our independence.

One underlining factor is that, as you stand in front of me, you are all here after you have joined the Force on your own free will. Having accepted to be members of the Force, you have also accepted to forfeit some of your rights on behalf of the nation. That means, as members of the Force, you are on duty twenty-four hours a day and throughout the year.

I must underlined that joining the Force is a serious commitment you have made to your nation. Among the commitments you have made is to operate under difficult circumstances and even to die for the defence of your country and its people.

Against this background, it is critical to emphasize that, as members of a professional force, all your activities and behaviours must always remain within the boundaries of your profession.

As your Commander-In-Chief, I am making it clear that I do not want members under my command to put the

country's security at risk. It is why I am saying that whatever you say can be used by opponents.

As members responsible for the defence of our motherland, who are well-trained for the mission and disciplined military personnel, you are therefore, obliged to always communicate through your established lines of command and structures.

Director of Ceremonies,

At this juncture, allow me to commend some of the major achievements by the NDF. Dating back to 1993, the NDF contributed to various United Nations and African Union peacekeeping missions around the world.

The first successful NDF contingent was deployed to the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia, within less than three years of its existence. That successful mission to Cambodia was followed by many more to countries such as Angola, Eritrea, Sudan, South Sudan, Liberia, Kosovo, and Côte d'Ivoire, amongst others. Our gallant soldiers have raised our national flag high and left their footprints. It is why Namibia is registered as one of the Troop Contributing Countries.

At the regional level, the NDF played a critical role in restoring peace and security in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) from 1998 to 2001, alongside Angola and Zimbabwe. Regrettably, DRC is currently experiencing conflict between security forces and militant groups led by M23. I call upon the two to find a common solution and an end to the war. Notably, the NDF has also contributed military personnel to the SADC Mission in the Republic of Mozambique.

Currently, the NDF maintains its presence in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan and the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei, where 80% of Namibian officers in those missions are females. I am glad to inform the nation that our female members are doing a commendable job, just like their male counterparts.

Furthermore, I commend the NDF for rendering humanitarian assistance to civilian authorities during national disasters and climate emergencies. Recently, the NDF, in collaboration with the Office of the Prime Minister provided much needed logistical support and services to flood-affected communities.

During the months of February/March 2025, the NDF under the political leadership of Honourable Kapofi and under the direct command of Air Marshal Pinehas made our nation proud when members of the Force, particularly the Air Force, transported the mortal remains of our late beloved Founding President and Father of the Namibian Nation, His Excellency Dr.Sam Shafiishuna Nujoma, to selected Regions of our country.

Transporting his remains to regions gave citizens to bid farewell to our Founding Father. It also gave our First Commander-In-Chief a befitting farewell before bestowing him with the final dignified national send off at the Heroes Acre.

In the area of capacity building and interoperability in anticipation of future peacekeeping and peace-support missions in the Region and beyond, the NDF continues to participate in joint planning, joint training and joint operations with other militaries in the SADC Region.

Such exercises are also part of the African Stand-by Force. The upcoming field training exercise between the NDF and the Botswana Defence Force, known as Exercise Tswaragano II serves to strengthen our military cooperation, good neighbourliness, and ensure preparedness for any regional or international specific mission as appropriate.

Generally, it is important to pursue military-to-military interaction and cooperation between the NDF and the sister defence forces in the Region. Such cooperation helps to build confidence and trust among SADC member states.

Director of Ceremonies,

As a national fallback strategy and instrument of the state, NDF must adopt short, medium and long-term strategies towards modernization and professionalization. Strategic undertakings must be tailor made and interpreted to enable the NDF to cope with contemporary missions for action.

Accordingly, I direct the following;

- 1. Discipline: Discipline as an artery of the Force must be maintained to a measurable professional standard.**
- 2. Welfare: The welfare of our service men and women should be enhanced and maintained at a higher standard.**
- 3. Training: Training, re-training, monitoring, evaluation, and validation of training must propel our motto of "train hard and fight easy".**

4. Technology: Digital learning and technology must be key factors aiming at keeping the Force current in a fast-changing world.

5. Recruitment: Rejuvenate the Force to ensure that there are no age, skill and professional gaps.

6. Fighting Capability: There is need to ensure contemporary fighting capability for both the Army, the Air Force and the Navy.

I want to see the Force focussed on these 6 areas.

Director of Ceremonies,

As I conclude, I urge that we must hold hands together as we continue to build on the strong foundation already established by those who came before us. The ultimate goal must be to steer the NDF and the nation towards a peaceful, united, resilient and prosperous Namibia.

I wish you all a happy 35th NDF Anniversary.

**Long Live the Namibian Defence Force!
Long Live the Republic of Namibia!**

I THANK YOU.