



**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY, DR. SAM NUJOMA,  
FOUNDING PRESIDENT AND FATHER OF THE NAMIBIAN  
NATION, ON THE OCCASION OF THE INAUGURATION  
CEREMONY OF THE RENAMING OF ONDANGWA  
AIRPORT TO ANDIMBA TOIVO YA TOIVO AIRPORT**

**THURSDAY, 22 AUGUST 2019**

**ONDANGWA**

**OSHANA REGION**

\*Check Against Delivery

Private Bag 13220, Windhoek, Namibia, Tel: +264 61 377700, Fax: +264 61 253098, Email: [jnauta@iway.na](mailto:jnauta@iway.na), website: [www.samnujomafoundation.org](http://www.samnujomafoundation.org)

Founder: H.E. Dr Sam Nujoma  
Board of Trustees: Hon. Nahas Angula (Chairperson), Hon. Pendukeni Iivula-Ithana,  
Hon. Dr. Albert Kawana, Hon. Erkki Nghimtina, Ms. Febronia Nelago Shapaka  
(Reg No 8208)

Director of Ceremonies, Honourable Christine //Hoebes, Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation;  
Your Excellency, Dr. Nangolo Mbumba, Vice-President of the Republic of Namibia;  
Your Excellency Dr. Hifikepunye Pohamba, Second President of the Republic of Namibia;  
Right Honourable Dr. Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila, Prime Minister and Mr Amadhila;  
Comrade Vicky Ya Toivo, the Children Mutaleni and Nashikoto Ya Toivo and the Entire Family;  
Your Lordship Peter Shivute, Chief Justice;  
Right Honourable Nahas Angula, Former Prime Minister of the Republic of Namibia;  
Honourable John Mutorwa, Minister of Works and Transport; and other Cabinet Ministers and Deputy Ministers present;  
Honourable Elia Irimari, Governor of Oshana Region and other Governors present;  
Omusimanekwa Tatekulu Omukwaniilwa Fillemon Shuumbwa of Ondonga Traditional Authority;  
Your Worship the Mayor of Ondangwa Town Council; Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps;  
Distinguished Dr. Leake Hangala, Chairperson of the Namibia Airports Company (NAC);  
Distinguished Comrade Bisey /Uirab, Chief Executive Officer of the Namibia Airports Company;  
Esteemed Dr. Shekutamba Nambala, Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia and other Members of the Clergy;  
Comrades Former Namibian Robben Island Political Prisoners and Veterans of our National Liberation Struggle;  
Members of the Media;  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am delighted to have been invited here today and stand before you in order to honour one of Namibia's gallant Heroes and a pioneering veteran of our National Liberation Struggle who made an immense contribution to Namibia's freedom and genuine independence, the Late Comrade Herman Andimba Toivo Ya Toivo. Had the Late Comrade Ya Toivo been alive, today we would have gathered here to wish him a very happy birthday. However, we have gathered here to rename the Ondangwa Airport to Andimba Toivo ya Toivo Airport in his honour.

For fear of repeating what was said by the previous speakers, I will simply concentrate my presentation on how I know the Late Comrade Ya Toivo.

Indeed, the Late Comrade Ya Toivo together with other Comrades such as the Late Jacob Kuhangua and many others founded the Ovamboland People's Congress (OPC) on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of August 1957 in Cape Town, South Africa, which sought to fight for the contract workers, some of whom had defected from the South West African Native Labour Association (SWANLA), and terminate their inhumane labour system under which they were forced to work for meagre wages.

In this regard, I recall that in 1958 the Late Comrade Ya Toivo sent a message to the United Nations (UN), through Comrade Mburumba Kerina, who was then a student at Lincoln University in the United States of America and one of the Namibian petitioners at the United Nations, together with the Late Reverend Michael Scott.

For security reasons, Comrade Ya Toivo sent a tape-recorded message and a letter. The letter arrived first at United Nations and was read by Comrade Kerina to the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly to petition the United Nations to force the white minority apartheid regime of South Africa to relinquish the then South West Africa to the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations.

Consequently, shortly after his petition made headlines in the New York Times, under the pretext that he was working with leading progressive anti-apartheid movements, he was deported by the white minority apartheid regime of South Africa on the 4th of December 1958, first to Keetmanshoop and Windhoek and later to Ovamboland, where he was placed under house arrest at his home village at Okaloko.

While still working with Carsten Veld in Windhoek in 1959, I received a letter from the Late Comrade Ya Toivo informing me that he had been threatened with deportation to Angola. I also learnt that the Late Comrade Ya Toivo was under inhuman conditions and suffering immensely as he was kept in chains by the tribal authorities under the chieftaincy of the Late Omukwaniilwa Johannes Kambonde.

The white minority South African regime and the Caetano colonial Portuguese regime collaborated across the borders and I knew that deporting the Late Comrade Ya Toivo to Angola was a tactic to eventually get rid of him. I therefore immediately sent a telegram to the United Nations, which I got to know about through working with the Late Chief Hosea Katjikururume Kutako, urging the United Nations to stop such deportation.

This led to a visit at my workplace by the newly commissioned Chief of the Special Branch of the white minority South African regime by the name of Blaauw, accompanied by a native policeman by the name of Martin Nangombe, threatening me with arrest because of the telegram I sent to the United Nations.

Despite all these harassments, our focus was firmly on freeing ourselves from the yoke of the inhumane contract labour and the draconian pass law systems and how we can obtain our freedom and independence through the assistance of the United Nations.

Against this background, on 19<sup>th</sup> April 1959, together with the founding member of the Ovamboland People's Congress (OPC), the late Comrade Jacob Kuhangua and others, we formed the Ovamboland People's Organisation (OPO).

We adapted a copy of the OPC Constitution with slight changes to suit the political conditions in the then South West Africa. I personally typed it out on a second-hand typewriter I had bought from an old German lady in Windhoek. We were able to recruit members in large numbers in spite of the difficulties involved in moving around the country, compounded by the pass law.

Thus, although we communicated through letters and other means, Comrade Ya Toivo and I have never met face to face during this time. The closest we got to each other was when our trains crossed at the Jakkalsdraai Railway siding, south of Tsumeb during August 1959. On the 29<sup>th</sup> of February 1960 I jumped bail and left the then South West Africa to go and petition the United Nations as OPO President, the forerunner of SWAPO.

Director of Ceremonies;

The mockery of the International Court of Justice at The Hague Judgment and the continued repression of the Namibian people by the apartheid white South African colonial regime left SWAPO with no other alternative but to take up arms. In this regard, together with Comrade Pohamba and other SWAPO leaders we adopted a three-pronged strategy of mass political mobilisation, the international isolation of the white minority regime of South Africa and the armed liberation struggle.

During the planning and preparation of the launch of the armed liberation struggle, the SWAPO freedom fighters were strictly ordered to report to the SWAPO leadership inside the country, amongst them Comrade Eliaser Tuhadeleni Kaxumba Kandola and Comrade Ya Toivo, who played a central role with regard to each of these pillars of our struggle.

For this reason, Comrade Ya Toivo and other SWAPO leaders were able to facilitate the logistics that led to the establishment of the SWAPO military bases inside the country, including the launching of the armed liberation struggle on the 26<sup>th</sup> of August 1966 at Omugulu-Gwombashe, in Omusati region.

Subsequently, this led to his arrest and he was tried in August 1967, in the Case of Tuhadeleni and 36 others, and appeared as accused Number 21. They were tried in Pretoria, South Africa, under the Terrorism Act of 21 June 1967, which was applied retroactively to convict them.

The speech he made from the dock made headlines and became an internationally circulated document to rally support for the Namibian Liberation Struggle and greatly inspired our people in defiance of the illegal occupation of our country by the white minority regime of South Africa. He was then held in solitary confinement in Pretoria for more than a year before he was sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment and was incarcerated at the notorious Robben Island.

Later during his prison term, the Late Comrade Ya Toivo was transferred to Section D where he met other anti-apartheid activists, including the Late Comrade Nelson Mandela, the first President of a Democratic South Africa.

Having served 16 of his 20 years term, he was released from prison on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March 1984 and joined us in exile where he became SWAPO's Secretary General until we attained our freedom and genuine independence on 21<sup>st</sup> March 1990.

I appointed him as our first Minister of Mines and Energy and later served as Minister of Labour and Minister of Prisons and Correctional Services, respectively, until his retirement from active politics in 2006.

It is therefore commendable and befitting that the Government of the Republic of Namibia accorded him a Hero's Status and now we are witnessing the renaming of Ondangwa Airport to Andimba Toivo Ya Toivo Airport, here in Ondangwa where he was arrested and where was operating a shop. We do this in acknowledgement of his heroic deeds and immense sacrifices.

However, the greatest honour we can bestow on him is to continue in his footsteps and to bring about the unity and national identity of One Namibia One Nation.

Similarly, the most befitting way to honour his memory is to protect at all cost the freedom and independence as well as the peace that he cherished and fought for. I call upon schools in our country to continue teaching the present and future generations of students about the exemplary life and sterling patriotism of the late Cde Andimba Toivo Ya Toivo.

I am therefore glad that with this befitting inaugural ceremony of the Andimba Toivo Ya Toivo Airport, his contribution to the achievement of Namibia's freedom and genuine Independence will forever remain engraved in our memories and will be remembered by the present and future generations of Namibians.

*As I always say: a people united, striving to achieve common good for all members of the society, will always emerge victorious!*

Long Live the Republic of Namibia!

I thank you!