



TRIBUTE BY H.E. DR. SAM NUJOMA, FOUNDING
PRESIDENT AND FATHER OF THE NAMIBIAN NATION, ON
THE OCASSION OF THE OFFICIAL FUNERAL IN HONOUR
OF THE LATE RETIRED COLONEL JUSTUS SHIIMBASHIKE
ya HEITA

SATURDAY, 08 AUGUST 2020

ENHANA MEMORIAL SHRINE

OHANGWENA REGION

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Program Directors, Mr. Aron Shidhika and Ms. Merijam Hambuda;
The Widow, Meekulu Saima Nathanael, the Children and the entire Bereaved Family;
Your Excellency Dr. Hifikepunye Pohamba, Former President of the Republic of Namibia;
Air Marshall Martin Kambulu Pinehas, Chief of the Namibian Defence Force;
Honourable Penda Ya Ndakolo, Governor of Oshikoto Region;
Honourable Walde Ndevashiya, Governor of Ohangwena Region;
Honourable Regional and Local Authorities Councillors present;
Comrade Retired General Officer, Commissioner Ben Shikovelo Shikongo, President of the Namibia National Liberation Veterans Association (NNLVA);
Distinguished Veterans of our National Liberation Struggle;
Distinguished Reverend Paulus Heita and all Community and Spiritual Leaders present;
Members of the Media;
Fellow Mourners:

It is with heavy hearts that we gather here today to bid farewell to the Late Retired Colonel Justus Shiimbashike ya Heita, a Pioneering Veteran of our National Liberation Struggle, who passed on Tuesday, 28 July 2020, at Omuthiya District Hospital, in Oshikoto Region.

As we gather here we are consumed with grief, yet we are also here to celebrate a life of a gallant freedom fighter and a celebrated former Combatant of South West Africa Liberation Army (SWALA), later renamed the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) SWAPO's Military Wing, as well as a former Political Prisoner on Robben Island, who performed outstanding deeds in the service of our country and its people.

There is an overriding sentiment that the passing on of the Late Retired Colonel Justus Shiimbashike ya Heita marks the end of an era of a generation of relentless freedom fighters who embodied the pioneering and unwavering spirit of self-sacrifice in our nation.

It was just a few weeks ago that we laid to rest two of our Colonels and Veterans of our Liberation Struggle, the Late Colonel Nekwaya Hango and the Late Retired Colonel Lasarus Hashetu Shihepo Hamutele. To lose them all in such quick succession is indeed a heavy blow.

The Late Retired Colonel Justus Shiimbashike ya Heita was among the very first recruits of the South West Africa Liberation Army (SWALA), later renamed the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) SWAPO's Military Wing.

In this regard, I recall that in July 1962, SWAPO sent seven men to Egypt for military training in guerrilla warfare tactics, including parachuting, military topography and marine training. These were Comrades Tobias Hainyeko, John Otto Nankudhu, Vilho Haitembu, Titus Mwailepeni Shitilifa, Patrick Iyambo Lungada, Petrus Hambiya and Lazarus Sakaria.

When they finished their training in Egypt, we opened our military camp at Kongwa, Tanzania, on 27 May 1963 with those Comrades who had military training in Egypt, Algeria, Ghana, the People's Republic of China, the Soviet Union and North Korea.

The Late Comrade Tobias Hainyeko became the first Commander of the South West Africa Liberation Army (SWALA), deputized by Titus Mwailepeni, while Comrade Petrus Hambiya was the Military Secretary, after they had received further military training at the Nanjin Military Academy in the People's Republic of China.

After the International Court of Justice (ICJ) fiasco, when in 1966, by the President's casting vote, the Court found that Liberia and Ethiopia could not be considered to have established any legal right or interest in their claims against South-Africa illegal occupation of Namibia, SWAPO had already decided to send the first group of ten guerrilla fighters inside the country known as G1. This group was led by the Commander of the Commandos, the Late Comrade John Otto Nankudhu Koshihuanda.

The G1 group, armed only with two PPSH sub-machine guns and two TT-pistols I had obtained in 1963 from the Algerian Government, consisted of the Late Comrade Simeon Lineekela Shixungileni (Kambo) as deputy, the Late Comrade Patrick Israel Iyambo (Lungada) as reconnoiter and secretary, Comrade Messah Victory Namwandi (Shiuajanga), Chief of Reconnaissance, James Hamukuaja Angula (Shoonjeka) and Nelson Kavela (Sadrag).

After crossing the jungles of Tanzania and Zambia, the G1 group headed to the homestead of the Late Comrade Eliaser Tuhadeleni (Kaxumba Ka Ndola), at Endola, where they were joined by the Late Retired Colonel Justus Shiimbashike Heita.

In January 1966, at the meeting at Otamanzi in Ongandjera District, the Late Comrade John Nankudhu informed the G1 group that the next phase would be the military training of young local activists and the Late Retired Colonel Justus Shiimbashike ya Heita, was instrumental, together with the Late Comrade Isak Shoome, in identifying the site of Omugulugwombashe for the establishment of a military base.

In June 1966, the G1 group with their new recruits established a base at Omugulugwombashe and trained between eighty (80) and ninety (90) SWAPO activists. Among the first trainees were the Late Comrade Eliaser Tuhadeleni (Kahumba Ka Ndola), Immanuel Shifidi, Kornelius Shelungu, Isak Shoome, including the Late Retired Colonel Justus Shiimbashike ya Heita, among others.

These are the pioneers who shot the first bullets and lit the fire of our National Liberation Struggle on the 26 August 1966, at Omugulugwombashe, in Uukwaluudhi area of Omusati Region.

After the Omugulugwombashe battle, the PLAN guerrilla fighters regrouped and later attacked and burnt down Oshikango police station and an administrative building on the 27th September 1966. Unfortunately, with the exception of the Late Comrade Patrick Israel Iyambo (Lungada), the entire G1 group was captured and brought to trial in Pretoria.

After prolonged solitary confinement and torture, they were sentenced to life imprisonment on 22nd August 1969, and sent to Robben Island on the 2nd of

September 1969, where the Late Retired Colonel Justus Shiimbashike ya Heita served a prison term of 17 years.

The family deeply mourns their pillar of strength as it was them who suffered immensely during his 17 years imprisonment. We thank their spirit of resilience which saw the family through pain. We are also grateful for the faithfulness and support of his wife, Meekulu Saima Nathanael. Thus, in paying tribute to him this day we also pay tribute to his wife, Meekulu Saima Nathanael, the Children and the entire Bereaved Family for their sacrifices and endurance.

While history will place the Late Retired Colonel Justus Shiimbashike ya Heita in the annals of the history of the Pioneering Veterans of our nation, he will be remembered as a humble yet brave person with boundless optimism.

The Late Retired Colonel Justus Shiimbashike ya Heita will be missed but what he stood for will never be forgotten. It is now our solemn responsibility to strive together to build the future destiny of our country to which he dedicated his life.

So let us draw guidance and inspiration from his life. Let us honour his courage and his sacrifices by upholding the principles and ethical values of self sacrifice, unwavering spirit and boundless humanity for those who are suffering. As he did, let us place the needs and interests of our people as a priority.

As we bid the Late Retired Colonel Justus Shiimbashike ya Heita farewell at a time of the COVID 19 Pandemic, let us show our humanity and spirit of solidarity. Let this pandemic deepen our resolve to overcome this challenge.

As the Late Retired Colonel Justus Shiimbashike ya Heita takes a befitting rest, allow me on behalf of the Veterans of our National Liberation Struggle, the Nujoma Family and indeed on my own behalf, to convey our deepest condolences and heartfelt sympathy to the Widow, Meekulu Saima Nathanael, the Entire extended Bereaved Family and Comrades for his loss. May we all be granted fortitude during this difficult time of bereavement and sorrow.

May His Soul Rest In Eternal Peace!