



**TRIBUTE BY H. E. DR. SAM NUJOMA, FOUNDING
PRESIDENT AND FATHER OF THE NAMIBIAN NATION, ON
THE OCCASION OF THE MEMORIAL SERVICE IN HONOUR
OF EL COMANDANTE FIDEL CASTRO RUZ, LEADER AND
FOUNDER OF THE CUBAN REVOLUTION**

06 DECEMBER 2016

PARLIAMENT GARDEN

WINDHOEK

***Check Against Delivery**

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Directors of Ceremonies; Honourable Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of International Relations and Cooperation and Comrade Helmut Angula, SWAPO Party Secretary for Mobilization;
Your Excellency, Dr. Hage G. Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia and Madame Geingos, First Lady;
Your Excellency, Dr. Nickey Iyambo, Vice-President;
Right Honourable Dr. Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila, Prime Minister;
Your Excellency, Comrade Giraldo Mazola, Ambassador of the Republic of Cuba to Namibia and Madame Yolanda Ayuso;
Honourable Professor Peter Katjavivi, Speaker of the National Assembly and Madame Katjavivi;
Honourable Margaret Mensah Williams, Chairperson of the National Council;
Honourable Peter Shivute, Chief Justice and Madame Shivute;
Honourable Ministers and Deputy Ministers;
Honourable Members of Parliament;
Honourable Nangolo Mbumba, Secretary General of SWAPO Party;
Honourable Laura McLeod-Katjirua, Governor of the Khomas Region and all Governors Present;
Your Worship, the Mayor of the City of Windhoek;
Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps;
Comrade Andimba Toivo Ya Toivo, Chairperson of the Namibia-Cuba Friendship Association;
Retired Lt. Gen. Martin Shalli, on behalf of the Veterans of the Liberation Struggle;
Lt. Gen. Sebastian Ndeitunga, Inspector General of the Namibian Police, on behalf of students who studied in Cuba;
Lt. Col. Reverend Nangula Kathindi, NDF Chief Chaplain;
Members of the Media;
Fellow Mourners:
We are gathered here today to pay our last respects to the legendary leader and founder of the Cuban Revolution, El Comandante Fidel Castro Ruz, who ended an illustrious life as one of the epic figures of the 20th century.

Volumes have been written and many words have been said about the life of El Comandante Fidel Castro from his childhood to his subsequent rise as Cuba's greatest revolutionary leader.

El Comandante Fidel Castro Ruz was a vanguard of African liberation and an intellectual towering figure as well as a tenacious and relentless fighter for freedom and social justice.

El Comandante Fidel Castro was indeed an inspirational revolutionary leader who defiantly charted an independent revolutionary path not only for the Cuban people but also for many of the world's oppressed and struggling peoples.

El Comandante Fidel Castro's passing on came after I paid him a courtesy call at his residence on 29 September 2016 during my official visit to the Republic of Cuba.

I consider his departure as a great loss to humanity and therefore personally, and on behalf of the Namibian people, joined the entire progressive world to pay my tribute to a fallen hero and farsighted revolutionary leader of our time.

El Comandante Fidel Castro was highly admired and respected by friends and foes alike and thus earned his place in modern history by his strong stance against imperialism and exceptional resilience against colonialism and social injustices.

Lest we forget, El Comandante Fidel Castro Ruz came to power in an era defined by the brutal exercise of dominance over the region by the United States of America who made Cuba their backyard playground.

Brilliant, engaged and completely self-aware, El Comandante Fidel Castro Ruz restored dignity and self-respect to his people whilst defying the posturing of an imperialist super power right at his doorsteps, 90 miles away. We salute him for his determination against all odds.

His goals for social equality were strongly represented in his policies of universal health care and education.

The significant strides El Comandante Fidel Castro Ruz made toward healthcare and education of the Cuban people as well as the training of thousands medical doctors are remarkable achievements.

The Republic of Cuba currently has more medical personnel working abroad on medical cooperation missions than all of the developed nations combined. That is an impressive record.

In addition, the revolutionary and tireless efforts of El Comandante Fidel Castro Ruz for emergency medical relief to victims of natural disasters is a testimony to his commitment to human dignity and has left indelible marks which will be difficult to match.

For the Namibian people under the leadership of SWAPO, El Comandante Fidel Castro Ruz and the revolutionary people of Cuba have played a defining role towards our freedom.

We shared trenches and sacrificed together in pursuit of freedom and genuine independence for the oppressed people of Namibia.

In this regard, we shall forever remain grateful for the selfless all-round political, diplomatic and material support rendered to the liberation movements in Africa, including the struggling people of Namibia by the revolutionary people of Cuba.

The children who survived the barbaric Cassinga massacre, perpetrated by the white minority regime of South Africa on the 4th of May 1978, were taken to the Republic of Cuba and two secondary schools were established at the Island of Youth where thousands of young Namibians were educated at the Hendrik Witbooi and Hosea Kutako as well as other institutions of high learning in the Republic of Cuba.

We also recall that it was because of the combination of the military strategic superiority of El Comandante Fidel Castro Ruz and the bravery of the Cuban air and ground forces in Southern Angola supporting the FAPLA Forces at the invitation of the Angolan government which marked the beginning of the end of the apartheid military superiority in Southern Africa.

It is thus historically accurate to say that El Comandante Fidel Castro Ruz played a key role for the total liberation of Southern Africa when the white minority apartheid regime of South Africa was defeated at Cuito Cuanavale and forced to the negotiation table by the combined Angolan FAPLA Forces, the Cuban Internationalist Forces and the Combatants of the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) SWAPO's Military Wing.

For this reason, the decisive and historic battle of Cuito Cuanavale led to the Independence of Namibia on the 21st March 1990 and the relinquish of power to the majority government of the ANC in South Africa in April 1994.

Against this background, I call upon Namibians from all walks of life, especially our youth, to emulate the exemplarly life of El Comandante Fidel Castro Ruz.

Though deeply aggrieved by the passing on of El Comandante Fidel Castro, we salute his life dedicated to the generous service of his people and humanity at large.

On behalf of the Nujoma family and indeed on my own behalf, allow me to express our deepest sympathy and heartfelt condolences to His Excellency the President of the Councils of State and Ministers of the Republic of Cuba, my Dear Brother, Army General Raúl Castro.

We also express our heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family members and the entire revolutionary people of Cuba as well as the progressive forces around the world for the irreparable loss of El Comandante Fidel Castro Ruz.

It is my wish that we may all remember the clarion call of the revolutionary people of Cuba that says, "*Towards Victory, Always!*"

May The Soul of El Comandante Fidel Castro Ruz Rest In Eternal Peace!