



TRIBUTE BY H.E. DR. SAM NUJOMA, FOUNDING
PRESIDENT AND FATHER OF THE NAMIBIAN NATION, ON
THE OCCASION OF THE STATE FUNERAL AT HEROES'
ACRE IN HONOUR OF THE LATE HONOURABLE PETRUS
NANGOLO ILONGA 'EKANDA'

21-22 DECEMBER 2018

PARLIAMENT GARDEN

KHOMAS REGION

Program Directors;

The Widow, Comrade Paulina Anna Ilonga, the Children, the Siblings and the Entire Bereaved Family of the Late Honourable Petrus Nangolo Ilonga “Ekanda”;

Your Excellency Dr. Hage Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia and Madam Monica Geingos, First Lady;

Your Excellency Dr. Hifikepunye Pohamba, Former President of the Republic of Namibia and Madam Penexupifo Pohamba, Former First Lady;

Your Excellency Dr. Nangolo Mbumba, Vice President and Madam Mbumba;

Right Honourable, Dr. Saara Kuugongelwa–Amadhila, Prime Minister and Comrade Amadhila;

Honourable Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of International Relations and Cooperation and Retired Lieutenant General Ndaitwah;

Honourable Professor Peter Katjavivi, Speaker of the National Assembly and Madam Katjavivi;

Your Honour the Chief Justice, Peter Shivute and Judge Shivute;

Comrade Sophia Shaningwa, Secretary General of the SWAPO Party;

Honourable McHenry Venaani, Leader of the Official Opposition;

Honourable Ministers and Deputy Ministers;

Honourable Members of Parliament;

Distinguished Service Chiefs;

Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps;

Honourable Governor of Khomas Region;

Your Worship the Mayor of the City of Windhoek;

Esteemed Traditional, Community and Spiritual Leaders;

Distinguished Veterans of the National Liberation Struggle;

Members of the Media;

Fellow Mourners:

It is indeed a sad day as we mourn the untimely passing on of a tested and tried combatant of the People’s Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN), SWAPO’s Military Wing, a former Robben Island Political Prisoner, a dedicated Trade Unionist, a former Member of Parliament, a former Deputy Minister and above all a hero of our National Liberation Struggle, the Late Honourable Petrus Nangolo Ilonga, affectionately known as “Ekanda”.

For this reason, we gather here today to pay our final respects to a true revolutionary as well as to bid farewell, commemorate and acknowledge his immense contribution to the attainment of our freedom and genuine independence.

The life of the Late Honourable Ilonga was one of sacrifice and service dedicated to the struggling masses of our people. He will be remembered for his unwavering belief in forging a society based on the values of freedom, justice and solidarity for all.

He was a man of courage and, above all, of principle. These are the qualities he displayed from his early years, and which guided him throughout his life. The Late Honourable Ilonga was the embodiment of an idea that one’s purpose in life is to serve others.

He was a down to earth man who had no need for glory and recognition. Little wonder he always lived among his people in Katutura even when he was appointed as a Member of Parliament and subsequently as a Deputy Minister.

He formed part of a remarkable generation of freedom fighters that endured the hardship of exile and prison, a generation that led our National Liberation Struggle to its successful conclusion.

The Late Honourable Ilonga joined our National Liberation Struggle on the 31st of July 1974 and went for training at Oshatotwa in Zambia. He later went to Kongwa in Tanzania in November 1974/75 where he specialised in military engineering. He was then sent to the Soviet Union for further military training.

Upon completion of his training, he was deployed at the Front under Commander Mbulunganga. He later participated in many battles in the area of Oshitumba.

At the end of 1977, the Late Honourable Ilonga was called by Commander Mbulunganga who sent him, together with the Late Comrade John Pandeni, on a clandestine "Mission of No Return" as Commandos in Civilian inside the country in 1978.

They first went to a village called Omalambo and then to Omuntele where they were assisted by patriotic Namibians. From Omuntele they went to Otjiwarongo and later on to Gibeon where they were received by the then Vice President of SWAPO, the Late Reverend Hendrik Witbooi.

During their stay in Gibeon, the Late Comrade Ilonga together with the Late Comrade Pandeni did underground operations, including in the surrounding areas, under the guise of being construction workers.

Unfortunately, they were later arrested by the enemy on the 4th of July 1978 and sentenced for eighteen years to Robben Island.

They spent close to eight years as Political Prisoners at Robben Island and the enemy thought that by imprisoning them they could silence them but they were wrong.

The enemy also expected them to return from Prison broken and defeated. Instead, they emerged from prison emboldened in their determination to free our country.

In this regard, upon his release from prison in 1985, the Late Honourable Ilonga was instrumental in the establishment of the National Union of Namibia's Workers (NUNW) and its affiliates. He also served as the Secretary General of Namibia Public Workers' Union (NAPWU) from 1986 to 2000.

As a Trade Unionist, the Late Honourable Ilonga felt compelled to speak when others were rendered silent and had the best interest of workers at heart as he always lobbied for them to be treated fairly.

He served as a Member of Parliament from 1995 and I appointed him as Deputy Minister of Environment and Tourism in 2000. He also served as the Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Welfare as well as Deputy Minister of Agriculture,

Water and Forestry and finally as Deputy Minister of Defense. He executed his role as Deputy Minister with diligence and dedication.

As a Member of Parliament he argued with great conviction and always wanted a nation that would eradicate the inequality and injustices of the past. He wanted our people to share in the country's wealth. Let us therefore honour his memory by uniting in common purpose and fight against hunger, disease and ignorance.

It is precisely at moments such as these that we need citizens of the calibre of the Late Honourable Ilonga. We need people like him who are selfless in their service. We need people like him with honesty and integrity.

We must therefore seek to build consensus on issues affecting our society. We must focus on creating employment opportunities for all our people and fight against poverty. This is what the Late Honourable Ilonga would have wanted.

The family, like all of us, assume a great responsibility to carry forward his legacy and I therefore commend and celebrate his life lived in the service of others.

As we bid the Late Honourable Ilonga farewell, allow me on behalf of the Veterans of our National Liberation Struggle, the Nujoma family and indeed on my own behalf, to extend our deepest condolences to the Widow, Comrade Paulina Anna Ilonga, the Children, the Siblings and the Entire Bereaved Family.

Similarly, allow me to convey our heartfelt sympathy to all his comrades for the sad loss of a husband, a father, a grandfather, a Trade Unionist, a Member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of SWAPO Party, a Former Member of Parliament and Deputy Minister, the Late Honourable Petrus Nangolo Ilonga "Ekanda".

May we all be granted fortitude during this time of bereavement and sorrow.

May His Soul Rest In Eternal Peace!