



TRIBUTE BY HIS EXCELLENCY
DR. SAM NUJOMA, FOUNDING PRESIDENT AND
FATHER OF THE NAMIBIAN NATION,
ON THE OCCASION OF THE MEMORIAL AND STATE
FUNERAL
OF COMRADE GERSON HITJEVI VEII

24 FEBRUARY 2015

PARLIAMENT GARDENS

KHOMAS REGION

**Check Against Delivery*

Directors of the Programme;
The Widow, Adelheid Veii, the children, grandchildren and the bereaved Family;
Your Excellency, Dr. Hifikepunye Pohamba, President of the Republic of Namibia and First Lady, Madam Penexupifo Pohamba;
Right Honourable Dr. Hage Geingob, Prime Minister and President-Elect of the Republic of Namibia and Madam Geingos;
Honourable Dr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, Speaker of the National Assembly and Madam Guriras;
Honourable Asser Kapere, Chairperson of the National Council and Rev. Kapere;
Honourable Peter Shivute, Chief Justice and Madam Shivute;
Honourable Ministers and Deputy Ministers;
Honourable Members of Parliament;
Honourable Regional Governors;
Your Worship, the Mayors;
Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps;
Your Grace, Bishop Dr. Zephania Kameeta;
Distinguished Service Chiefs;
Esteemed Chairperson of the Council of Traditional Leaders;
Distinguished Veterans of the Liberation Struggle;
Members of the Media,
Fellow Mourners;

On Saturday, 14 February 2015, we have learnt with great sadness the painful news of the passing on of the Former Robben Island Prisoner and a Veteran of the Liberation Struggle, Comrade Gerson Hitjevi Veii, after he experienced heart failure on his way to the Roman Catholic Hospital.

We are therefore gathered here to pay our last respect and celebrate the life of a distinguished Namibian Hero and indeed a fearless and relentless freedom fighter.

Many things were already said in the eulogy and by the previous speakers. On my part, I simply wish to recognize his unparalleled contribution to Namibia's freedom and independence.

Indeed, due to his foresight and ability to understand the socio-political climate prevailing in the country at that time, he became one of the veterans who spearheaded Namibia's modern struggle against colonial oppression.

The late Comrade Veii was very active in politics since the early days. First, as a founding member of the South West Africa Progressive Association (SWAPA) in 1955 and secondly, when together with others; they founded Namibia's first student association which was known as the South West Africa Student Body (SWASB) in 1959.

The late Comrade Veii was later elected as the Deputy Secretary General of SWANU in 1960 and suffered harassment, intimidation and arrest for his political activities.

It is against this background that he was sentenced to solitary confinement in Pretoria. He was again sentenced for sabotage in May 1967, to Robben Island, where he spent four years together with other political prisoner such as Comrade Andimba Toivo Ya Toivo and many others.

It was during his incarceration that his mind was shaped and inculcated with political consciousness that defined his identity as a freedom fighter.

We also admire his quest for knowledge that propelled him to study Public Administration while in prison and was elected in absentia as the President of SWANU while in prison in 1968 and served in that position until 1982.

It was also in prison where the late Comrade Veii endured untold hardship inflicted upon him by the apartheid colonial regime of South Africa. As a result, since his release from prison in 1972, his health deteriorated over the years due to the torture and brutality of the notorious apartheid regime but he never gave up on the ideals of freedom and independence.

I particularly recall when SWAPO, on 16 September 1974, rejected the invitation to the so-called multi-racial talks on Namibia's constitutional future; we were supported by the late Comrade Veii as President of SWANU.

After the attainment of our independence, Comrade Veii worked tirelessly toward the upliftment of the living standards of his people, and the Namibian society at large, especially when he served as first Governor of Kunene Region under my administration.

Thus, the passing on of Comrade Veii has robbed Namibia of a nationalist and a true embodiment of a patriot. He will be remembered for his immense contribution to the struggle for freedom and independence of our country.

As we lay him to rest, we are strengthened by the knowledge that he lived a purposeful life dedicated to the independence of our country. Similarly, we are consoled by the fact that he lived to see the birth of our Nation on the 21st March 1990.

On behalf of the Nujoma family, and indeed on my own behalf, I would therefore like to extend our most sincere sympathies and heartfelt condolences to the Namibian nation and indeed to Omuserekaze Adelheid Veii, the children, grandchildren and the entire bereaved family at the loss of the late Comrade Gerson Hitjevi Veii.

It is our sincere wish that you may all be granted fortitude during this difficult time of bereavement.

May His Soul Rest in Everlasting Peace.

I thank you.