



TRIBUTE BY H. E. DR. SAM NUJOMA, FOUNDING
PRESIDENT AND FATHER OF THE NAMIBIAN NATION, ON
THE OCCASION OF THE STATE FUNERAL IN HONOUR OF
THE LATE COMRADE JOSEPH NDESHIPANDA KASHEA
“JACOB HANNAI”

SATURDAY, 01ST MAY 2021

OMUGULUGWOMBASHE MEMORIAL SHRINE

OMUSATI REGION

Director of Ceremonies, Honourable Anna Shiweda, Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform;
The Widow, Meme Eunice Kashea and the Entire Bereaved Family;
Your Excellency Dr. Hage Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia, as represented here by His Excellency Dr. Nangolo Mbumba, Vice President of the Republic of Namibia;
Your Excellency Dr. Hifikepunye Pohamba, Former President of the Republic of Namibia and Madam Penexupifo Pohamba, Former First Lady;
Honourable Ministers and Deputy Ministers present; Honourable Members of Parliament present;
Air Marshall Martin Kambulu Pinehas, Chief of the Namibian Defence Force and others Service Chiefs present;
Omusimanekwa Tatekulu Josia Shikongo Taapopi of Uukwaluudhi Traditional Authority;
Omusimanekwa Tatekulu Oswin Mukulu, Chief of Ombalantu Traditional Authority and All Traditional Leaders present;
Your Excellency, Ambassador Anastas Kaboba Wa-Kimba, Dean of the Diplomatic Corps;
Honourable Erginus Endjala, Governor of Omusati Region and other Governors present;
Retired Brigadier-General James Auala;
Retired General Officer, Commissioner Ben Shikovelo Shikongo, President of the Namibia National Liberation Veterans Association and All Veterans of our National Liberation Struggle;
Distinguished Former Robben Island Political Prisoners present;
Bishop Emeritus Kleopas Dumeni;
Bishop Emeritus Josaphat Shanghala;
Fellow Mourners, allow me to stand by the protocol as established;

A great shadow has fallen and hangs heavy across this entire Region as Comrade Joseph Ndeshipanda Kashea, also known as “Jacob Hannai”, is no more.

It is a sad day, as we mourn the untimely passing and bid farewell to a Former Youth Activist and Robben Island Political Prisoner; A gallant and unwavering freedom fighter; A Diplomat and Public Servant.

To the Widow, Meme Eunice Kashea and the Entire Beavered Family, I express to you our profound gratitude for having shared your son, husband and father with us.

We know only too well that his commitment to the struggle of our people for freedom and genuine independence came at a great personal cost to the family life he so cherished.

Comrade Hannai’s life was one of sacrifice, selflessness and service – dedicated to achieving our freedom and genuine independence, and dedicated to nation building.

In this regard, we are gathered here to bid him farewell, but also to commemorate and acknowledge his immense contribution to our country.

For this reason, allow me first and foremost to thank our Government for conferring on Comrade Hannai a State Funeral and for his remains to be buried here at Omugulugwombashe Memorial Shrine, one of our National Heritage Sites.

Fellow Mourners;

It was as a young student, under teacher Mukwaita Shanyengana, who introduced him to politics, that he joined SWAPO at Ongwediva Secondary School in the late 1960s.

Thus, the beginnings of political activism were awakened in him and he began to identify with the aspirations of the liberation struggle under the banner of SWAPO.

It was a dark time. Apartheid was at its height and the student and labour movements were actively working underground to overthrow the colonial regime.

In response, the apartheid regime tried even more systematically to attack every level of the SWAPO leadership using the pass laws and mass raids to get Namibians sentenced for minor offences.

At the series of trials of SWAPO leaders arrested between August 1973 and February 1974, our leaders turned the proceedings into a trial of their accusers.

It is against this background, following the Owamboland election boycott, that our militant Youth League organized a rally on 12 August 1973, where for the first time, our youth leaders, including the Late Comrade Joseph Kashea, endorsed the armed struggle from the public platform.

This is how SWAPO Youth leaders such as Comrades Jerry Ekandjo and Martin Kapewasha and others were put on trial in November 1973 after the August Rally.

At that time, Comrade Hannai was the Acting Secretary of SWAPO Youth League and was detained on 24 April 1974.

Comrade Hannai was charged, in terms of the Terrorism Act, Act 83 of 1967, with inciting SWAPO to murder and was sentenced to five years imprisonment.

On Twenty Fifth April 1974, the Portuguese armed forces overthrew the fascist regime of Caetano and the liberation movements in Portuguese colonies began their final drive towards independence.

A few days after the fall of Caetano in Portugal, at a SWAPO rally in Katutura, more than one thousand five hundred Namibians greeted the fall of the fascist dictatorship with the slogan; '*Caetano yesterday, Vorster tomorrow*'.

In June and July, thousands of young Namibian men and women crossed the Angolan border to volunteer for the armed struggle and join PLAN, SWAPO's Military Wing.

For this reason, in my capacity as the then President of SWAPO, in my 1975 New Year message to the Namibian Youth, I said;

'The militant activity of the SWAPO Youth League towards the implementation of the party programme has been one of the most important strides made by our movement... This youth section of our movement has affirmed in the anti-colonial activity one of our party's concepts that the youth are blossoming flowers of the liberation struggle.'

After spending two weeks in the Windhoek Central Prison, Comrade Hannai was sent to Robben Island together with the Late Comrade Kamati Eino Ekandjo and many others.

Upon his release from prison, where he spent two years, he left for exile in December 1976 and received his basic military training in Zambia. He was later posted to the Eastern Front as a Political Commissar.

In fact, Comrade Hannai is the only ex-Robben Island Political Prisoner who went to the Front after his release from prison.

Among many memorable military operations in which Comrade Hannai participated, were the attacks on enemy bases at Singalamwe, Kamenga, Katima Mulilo and Mpacha Airbase.

He later spent few months as a Senior Commander at the Northern Front, after his advance training in Tanzania in 1979.

Finally, he was transferred to the North Western Front and stationed at the Regional Commanding Headquarters, where he spent two years and a half before he was transferred to the Defence Headquarters in Lubango.

As a matter of fact, Comrade Hannai used to report from the Front to Retired Brigadier-General James Auala, who was PLAN's Chief of Intelligence.

When there was a need to send someone to represent SWAPO at the anti-apartheid Office in London, it was Retired Brigadier-General James Auala who recommended the Late Comrade Kashea and proposed that he change his name to Jacob Hannai so that he disguises his real name.

In 1982, Comrade Hannai joined the Diplomatic field and was appointed to serve as the Deputy SWAPO's Chief Representative for Western Europe under Ambassador Shapwa Kaukungwa. He was based in London until his repatriation in 1989.

After independence, Comrade Hannai joined State House and worked in my Office together with Ambassador Eddy Amukongo, Ambassador Jerobeam Shaanika, Ambassador Kondja Kambala, Ambassador Nangula Kakena, the Late Ambassador Daniel Smith and the Special Advisor to the President, the Late Comrade Axel Johannes, among others. They set up the Office of the President from scratch, as there was no document to lay the basis of how State House should function.

He was also involved in many projects such as building the Heroes Acre, the Museum of the Liberation Struggle and the construction of the new State House.

I am therefore pleased that he will be buried at one of the National Heritage Sites, which are all testament to his hard work.

Needless to say, Comrade Hannai rose through the ranks and became the Under Secretary at State House and he lent immense importance and gravity to the role.

He later assumed duty at the Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration Control in June 2007, as a Deputy Permanent Secretary, until his retirement from the public service in 2013.

In recognition of his outstanding contribution to Namibia's Liberation Struggle, he received many Awards, including the Award of Honour by the Western Cape Ex-Political Prisoners Committee. He was also conferred with Namibia's Excellent Order of the Eagle in 2014, among others.

Fellow Mourners;

We must draw lessons from the life of our departed Comrade Hannai, who put the interests of the nation above his own. Let us return to the values upon which our movement and our nation were founded.

Let us remind ourselves – as he often did – that our society will never be truly free unless we are able to advance the cause of the poor and improve their condition.

We can only make progress when we are united as one nation and not divided into factionalism, tribalism, regionalism and other evils.

To the children of Comrade Hannai, I urge you to walk in the footsteps of your father as he left a lasting legacy and indelible marks on the Namibian landscape.

As Comrade Hannai takes a befitting seat amongst our heroes and heroines, here at Omugulugwombashe Memorial Shrine, one of our National Heritage Sites, allow me on behalf of the Veterans of our National Liberation Struggle, the Nujoma family and indeed on my own behalf, to convey our heartfelt condolences and deepest sympathies to the entire bereaved family and all comrades for this untimely loss.

He has left this mortal world, but his work and his legacy is all around us and will endure forever.

May His Soul Rest In Eternal Peace!