



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 RETIRED COLONEL  
FILLIPUS AMUTENYA NANDENGA “COMMANDER ZULU”

SATURDAY, 24<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2021

EENHANA SHRINE  
NATIONAL HERITAGE SITE  
OHANGWENA REGION

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Director of Ceremonies; Honourable Hilma Nikanor, Deputy Minister of Defence and Veterans Affairs;  
The Widow, Meme Maria Ndesihafela Nandenga 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;  
Honourable Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of International Relations and Cooperation and Retired Lieutenant General Epaphras Denga Ndaitwah;  
Honourable Professor Peter Katjavivi, Speaker of the National Assembly;  
Air Marshall Martin Kambulu Pinehas, Chief of the Namibian Defence Force;  
Meekulu Martha Mwadinomho wa Kristian ya Nelumbu of Oukwanyama Traditional Authority;  
Chief Immanuel Gaseb, Acting Chairperson of the Council of Traditional Leaders and All Traditional Leaders present;  
Your Excellency, Ambassador Anastas Kaboba Wa-Kimba, Dean of the Diplomatic Corps;  
Honourable Walde Ndevashiya, Governor of Ohangwena Region and other Governors present;  
Retired Lieutenant General Martin Shalli;  
Retired General Officer, Commissioner Ben Shikovelo Shikongo, President of the Namibia National Liberation Veterans Association (NNLVA) and All Veterans of our National Liberation Struggle;  
Colonel Hosea Hamwaama, Chief Chaplain of the Namibian Defence Force;  
Fellow Mourners;

It is with profound sorrow that we are gathered here to bid farewell to a veteran of our National Liberation Struggle and pay tribute to one of our finest field Commanders and Political Commissar SWAPO has ever produced, Retired Colonel Phillipus Amutenya Nandenga, affectionately known by his combat name as "Commander Zulu".  
Accordingly, allow me to thank our Government for conferring on Commander Zulu a State Funeral, especially under these difficult circumstances of the devastating COVID-19 pandemic.

Indeed, in the midst of the global challenges posed by this pandemic, Commander Zulu, as an astute Political Commissar and skillful motivational speaker, would have boosted our morale by encouraging us not to lose hope.

Fellow Mourners;

I recall that in my capacity as the then President of SWAPO and Commander-In-Chief of the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN), SWAPO's Military Wing, I once said; "*The names of our heroes and heroines will be written in golden letters in the annals of history of an independent Namibia*".

Today, we are once again fulfilling that solemn promise as the name of Commander Zulu is being written in golden letters in the annals of history of an independent Namibia and his remains are going to be buried here at Eenhana Shrine, one of our National Heritage Sites.

Commander Zulu's obituary bares testimony to the fact that the history of our Armed Liberation Struggle is filled with his valuable contributions when he joined the Ovamboland People's Organisation (OPO) in 1958 in Walvisbay and subsequently became a member of SWAPO in 1960.

We heard from his eulogy that he left the country in 1963 and arrived in Tanzania in 1964, at Kongwa Training Center where he received his basic military training, specializing in Infantry. The same year, he went to Egypt to do a course in Guerilla and Revolutionary Warfare.

The next year, in 1965, he went to North Korea for further military training and upon his return in 1967, he was assigned as Commander of Group A, while the Late Comrade Mbulunganga was assigned as Commander of Group B.

At that time, our guerrilla fighters were operating in the form of small-scale guerrilla warfare equipped with light arms they could carry on foot in highly mobile fighting units.

In 1970, Commander Zulu returned to Zambia after the Tanga Consultative Congress, which took place between 26 December 1969 and 02 January 1970, to help re-organise the South West Africa Liberation Army (SWALA), later renamed, in 1973, the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN), SWAPO's Military Wing.

That same year, a decision was made to assign a Combat group on a mission of no return, under the Late Commander Mathias Ndakolo Mbulunganga with Commander Zulu as a Political Commissar, to establish a forward presence in Southern Angola and mobilise the masses to join PLAN.

Indeed, it was SWAPO's Policy to integrate the military and the political mobilization strategies of the struggle in the war zone in order to train armed political militants, as PLAN was a disciplined Military Wing of SWAPO rooted in the strategy and tactics of the struggle.

The Combat group left Zambia in December 1973 comprising of fearless PLAN fighters such as Comrades Elise Hauliyondjaba who was the Special Military Advisor, Aron Embashu (Shongambe) a Veteran of the Second World War (II WW), Wilbard Tashiya (Nakada Shikololo), Isaac Shikongo (Pondo), Ismael Kamati ka Shimuna (Ngiringiri), John Hamukoto (Kalola), Erickson Hauwanga (Kapanya), Jonas Katalonga (Katengela), Linus Hamwele (Mawila), Sakeus Kapulwa (Kapuleko), John Karahani, Uno Shaanika Kanana, to mention just a few.

One of the memorable military operations in which Commander Zulu participated was the battle in 1973 together with some of our best PLAN fighters when they attacked and destroyed an enemy military base at Kamenga and successfully engaged the enemy forces at other places such as Luyana and Xamavera as well as in the areas of Bwabwata.

Another outstanding military operation engineered by the Late Commander Mbulunganga and Commander Zulu together with other leaders such as Hanghome and Haiduwa, was the battle that took place on April the 20<sup>th</sup>, 1973 which became known in SWAPO circles as "**Olugodhi lo ma mbongolo**".

On that occasion, our combatants, under the command of the Late Comrade Peter Sheehama Tshirumbu and his second in command, Comrade Elise Hauliyondjaba, equipped with AK-47, RPG-7 (bazookas), RPK machine guns, 82mm and 62mm mortars, hand-grenades, and anti-tank mines, laid a perfect ambush and inflicted heavy casualties on a platoon of about 37 enemy soldiers.

They seized war materials which were showcased to the world at the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the forerunner of the AU, in Addis Ababa-Ethiopia. As a matter of fact, there is a popular song in SWAPO about this specific battle.

Fellow Mourners;

By the start of the 1970s, out of the new beginnings which characterized the 1960s, SWAPO has emerged battle-tested with undaunted commitment to liberation and clearly formulated strategy which irrevocably propelled the liberation struggle into a higher phase.

When the apartheid regime tried to incorporate our country into South Africa as a fifth Province in 1968 and implement Bantustan policies in Namibia, our people boycotted the Owamboland election held in August 1973.

The next year, on 25<sup>th</sup> April 1974, the Portuguese armed forces overthrew the fascist regime of Caetano and the edifice of colonialism in Southern Africa was beginning visibly to crumble before the expanding armed liberation movements which began their final drive towards independence.

In June and July 1974, thousands of young Namibian men and women crossed the Angolan border to volunteer for the armed struggle and reinforce the fighting capabilities of the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN), SWAPO's Military Wing.

Commander Zulu was skillful in mobilizing our masses and was well known for his motivational speeches as a Political Commissar and most of the youth who joined the struggle between 1974 and 1979 went through his political education and mentorship.

As diplomatic offensives by SWAPO intensified, under the able stewardship of the best Namibian Diplomat, the Late Comrade Dr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, the Combatants of the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) also intensified their military campaigns against the apartheid forces.

For this reason, at its meeting at Efitu in January 1977, as part of the strategy to effectively engage and defeat the enemy forces, the Military Council decided to restructure PLAN and demarcate its activities into four Operational Regions, later known as Fronts.

The Late Commander Matias Ndakolo (Mbulunganga) was appointed as the Commander of the North-Eastern Front, with Comrade Charles Namholo (Ho Chi Mini) as the Regional Chief of Staff and Comrade Martin Shalli as the Regional Chief of Air Defence and later as the Regional Chief of Operations, while the Late Commander Nabot Helao Nafidi was the Regional Political Commissar.

Commander Zulu was appointed as the Commander of the Northern Front, with now High Commissioner John Veicco Nghiwete as his Regional Political Commissar, while Commander Hamunyela wa Shalali took over the Eastern Front.

On his part, the Late Commander Wilbard Tashiya (Nakada Shikololo) was appointed as the Commander of the North-Western Front with Comrade David Mbango as the Regional Political Commissar.

When the Late Commander Nakada Shikololo died on the battlefield, on the 4<sup>th</sup> of May 1978, he was replaced by the Late Commander Uno Shaanika Kanana and later by Commander Erastus Negonga.

Commander Zulu was a brilliant military tactician and strategist, as well as a rapid thinker, capable of taking quick action. The very fact that he formed part of the Military Council, as the highest decision making body of the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN), is in itself a towering monument to his fearlessness and brilliance as a Commander.

In addition, Commander Zulu was recognized for his outstanding military exploits when he commanded the successful battle at Eenghono and when our PLAN fighters, under his able leadership, captured at the base outside Elundu, Johan van der Mescht, a white South African soldier and prisoner of war, on the night of February 18-19 in 1978.

In recognition of his contribution to Namibia's Liberation Struggle, Commander Zulu was conferred with the Most Distinguished Order of Namibia First Class on 26 August 2007. It is now our solemn responsibility to strive together to build the future destiny of our country to which the Late Commander Zulu dedicated his life.

Fellow Mourners;

Through the life journey of Commander Zulu we are reminded that the independence we are enjoying today was not handed to us on a silver platter but came through many rivers of blood of brave sons and daughters of Namibia.

The struggle for the total independence of Namibia was long and bitter and many did not live to see the dawn of independence because they shed their precious blood and demonstrated the highest measure of patriotism and selfless sacrifice.

For this reason, their deeds will forever be imprinted in the hearts and minds of our people and their devotion should forever be a light on our journey of nation building.

At this juncture, allow me to thank the Widow, Meme Maria Ndesihafela Nandenga, because of her tenacity and unwavering spirit not only as the wife who stood by Commander Zulu but also in her own right as a Veteran of the Liberation Struggle, known by her combat name as "Valombweleni".

As Commander Zulu takes a befitting seat amongst our heroes and heroines, 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 great loss.

May the sacrifices of Commander Zulu be venerated as an example worthy of our imitation.

May His Soul Rest In Eternal Peace!