



**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY
DR. SAM NUJOMA, FOUNDING FATHER AND FIRST PRESIDENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA,
ON THE OCCASION OF THE OFFICIAL UNVEILING OF THE KING NEHALE
WARRIORS MEMORIAL STONE**

29 JANUARY 2022

NAMUTONI NATIONAL PARK,

OSHIKOTO REGION

*Check Against Delivery

Director of Proceedings;
Your Excellency Dr. Nangolo Mbumba, Vice President of our Republic;
Cabinet Ministers;
Honourable Penda Ya Ndakolo, Governor of Oshikoto Region and all other Governors present;
Tatekulu Fillemon Shuumbwa Nangolo, Omukwaniilwa gwelelo Iya Ndonga;
And other Aakwaniilwa, nOmalenga of different Traditional Authorities present;
Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps;
Comrade Members of the Ruling and Opposition Parties;
Distinguished Veterans of our National Liberation Struggle;
Distinguished Invited Guests;
Members of the Media;
Ladies and gentlemen:

I feel greatly honoured to have been invited by Tatekulu Fillemon Shuumbwa Nangolo, Omukwaniilwa of Ondonga Traditional Authority to this auspicious occasion, marking 118 years of the commemoration of the battle of Amutuni and the unveiling of the Memorial Monument in honour of Chief Nehale Iya Mpingana's warriors.

Indeed, 118 years ago, on the 28th of January 1904, the battle of Amutuni took place between the Ndonga warriors under Chief Nehale and the German imperial soldiers who were stationed at Amutuni fort. Today, we are gathered here to remember the heroic deeds of Chief Nehale's brave warriors called Omandengu gaNehale IyaMpingana at the battle of Amutuni IyoManenge now called Onamutoni such as Amupanda gwaShiponeni, Shivute shaNdjongolo, Uukule waMulungu, Namupala gwaAmoomo, Ekaku IyaNkende, Indongo yaShimana, to mention but just a few. This was one of the acts of early resistance to colonialism in Namibia.

The then Owambo area remained independent from German colonial administration and the establishment of Fort Namutoni, where the Germans erected a military station in Chief Nehale's territory constituted a violation of the sovereignty, peace and self-governing in the area. It disturbed Chief Nehale to note that the Germans have encroached upon the Ondonga area, as they planned to extend their influence in northern Namibia and link up with the Portuguese in Angola.

It is a well known fact that for far too long history was not properly recorded and thus not passed on to the younger generation. This has resulted in many, if not most, of our young people not knowing their history, and at the same time, not knowing where they come from. As it is often said, in order to know where you are going you must know where you came from, in other words, what your history is.

In addition to commemorating the brave deeds of Chief Nehale's warriors, the Memorial Stone will also teach us the virtues of patriotism, bravery and loyalty to our country as espoused by these brave warriors who are laid here to rest.

We once again must remain mindful of the saying: "those who do not know history are bound, if not doomed, to repeat it". My sincere hope is that we will choose to repeat only the positive aspects of that history, while learning from the mistakes of the past.

For instance, on 21 April 1885 Chief Kambonde kaMpingana sold some of his land to a trader called William Worthington Jordaan so that the Boers from Humpata could live there. They had originally approached the Herero king, but he had referred them to Chief Kambonde kaMpingana saying: "That place belongs to Chief Kambonde kaMpingana. Go and ask him." The land that was sold by Kambonde is in the region of the present-day Otavi and Grootfontein.

Jordaan named this land "the Republic of Upington". In November 1884, 25 families arrived in Upington from Humpata. William Jordaan (1849 – 1886) was born in Cape Town of an English father and mixed race mother, but was identified with the interests of the Boers and colonial government. Chief Nehale IyaMpingana plotted to kill Jordaan in 1886.

Nehale IyaMpingana installed himself as king of Eastern Ondonga during the reign of his brother Kambonde kaMpingana, effectively splitting the kingdom. He used this position to challenge the Germans at Namutoni in 1904, and generally opposed outsiders entering Owambo.

Indeed, the attack at Namutoni was a decisive move to prevent the extension of German colonialism to northern Namibia. The visionary Chief Nehale further intended to restore the boundaries of Ondonga territory and reclaim the copper mine at Tsumeb, which was unilaterally taken away by the Germans. The attack also served to teach the colonialists a lesson that Africans will not stand aside and become submissive to any foreign power.

Further, by attacking the Germans at Namutoni, Chief Nehale demonstrated solidarity to fellow Africans. It should be noted that by then the Herero uprising had started two weeks earlier and five days prior to the attack at Namutoni, an envoy came from Ovaherero to Chief Kambonde ka Mpingana at Okaloko, to solicit arms and support in the uprisings against the Germans. With the intervention of missionary Martti Rautanen, Chief Kambonde hesitated to participate in the uprising against the Germans. Meanwhile, his younger brother, the indomitable Chief Nehale went ahead, assembling his senior traditional counsellors like Amupanda gwa Shiponeni, Shivute sha Ndjongolo and Namupala gwa Amoomo, among others to inform them about his decision and dispatching senior traditional counsellor Mbolongondjo ya Nuunyango to carry out a resonance about Namutoni Fort.

Against this background, on 25 January, 1904, Chief Nehale marched off to go and attack the Namutoni Fort with an army of between 350 to 400 warriors. It was the intention of Chief Nehale that while he attacks Namutoni, his brother Chief Kambonde would simultaneously attack the Germans at Okaukweyo. Although Chief Kambonde declined to participate, one of his senior traditional counsellors, Ekaku Iya Keende joined the military expedition to Namutoni. This was a necessary reinforcement, as Ekaku Iya Keende joined other Senior Traditional Counsellors to provide leadership and moral boost to the warriors.

The battle of Amutuni was fought with bravery. At this occasion we pay tribute to the gallant warriors, like Chief Counsellor and battle Commander, Shivute sha Ndjongolo, who tactfully and skilfully provided leadership to the warriors during the fierce battle and fought relentlessly that at one stage, the Germans at the garrison thought of

blowing up themselves. Eventually they ran away from the fort at dusk. The defeat of the enemy resulted in the Aandonga warriors taking war booties to Ondonga, signifying the victory and changing the socio-economic conditions in Ondonga communities.

The warriors who sacrificed their lives at the battle of Namutoni are martyrs of resistance and independence. We should continue to honour them by remaining steadfast and unite the Namibian nation to resist any form of neo-colonialism and imperialists agenda. Unity is what Chief Nehale stood for that he did not only stop at Namutoni, but further sent warriors to reinforce Chief Maharero, who requested assistance after the notorious Extermination Order was issued by General Von Trotha against the Ovaherero and Nama people.

When Governor Lieutwein sent a message to the Chiefs in northern Namibia, through missionary Martti Rautanen, not to receive the Ovaherero refugees who were running away from the south during the Genocide war, Rautanen replied that: "To tell Nehale of the things that you have written would be daring and could mean death to all of us". Chief Nehale, therefore welcome the Ovaherero to Ondonga wholeheartedly. For this reason, we should continue to honour his legacy by shunning negative tendencies of tribalism and forge together in the spirit of One Namibia, One Nation.

Chief Nehale goes down in the Namibian history as one of the pioneers of early colonial resistance. It is for this reason that a symbolic grave in his honour is erected at the Heroes Acre, so that the future generation and historians can learn and appreciate his heroic deeds.

At this juncture, I would also like to state that it is important for the current generation of Namibian scholars to document historic events like the battle of Amutuni to correct the myths created in the biased Euro-centric history, which glorifies the Germans. For example, that history presents the Germans of garrison as having repulsed Chief Nehale's warriors, whereas the fact is that the Germans at the garrison fled and that Chief Nehale's warriors completely destroyed the fort, which was only reconstructed in the following year.

An old adage says, "until the lion tells his side of the story, the tale of the hunt will always glorify the hunter". We should therefore leave no stone unturned to put history in its correct perspective and dispel myths and falsified narrations. May this day serve to remind us, the contemporary and future generations, of our obligation to defend the gains of the Namibian revolution.

In conclusion it is essential to support the current Omukwaniilwa of Ondonga Traditional Authority to carry all his people on his back as he promised during his inauguration. At this stage I would just praise and applaud him for his consistent manner in which he upheld his oath of office and urge him to continue doing so.

I want to urge all traditional leaders to continue to be part of shaping the country and fighting the scourge of underdevelopment and call on them to rise and play their part in building this country, as developmental monarchs, as architects of progress, and as proud Namibians.

With these few words, it is my distinct honour and pleasure to be part of the official unveiling of this State-of-the-Art Memorial Stone at this site which has been declared a National Heritage Site by the National Heritage Council in Namibia.

Long live the spirit of resistance at the battle of Amutuni!
Long live the Republic of Namibia!
I thank you.