



21 June 2021

Comrade Josef Stanislaus Konjore, the Children and the Entire Bereaved Family and
Vaalgras Traditional Authority
#Gabes Karasburg East Constituency
//KHARAS REGION

On behalf of the Veterans of our National Liberation Struggle, the Nujoma family and indeed on my own behalf, allow me to extend our deep and profound condolences to the bereaved family as well as our sincere sympathies to the Vaalgras Community at large on the passing on of your beloved brother, uncle, father and grandfather, the Late Comrade Reverend Willem Konjore, at Lady Pohamba's Private Hospital in Windhoek, on Friday, 11 June 2021.

Indeed, the Late Comrade Reverend Konjore's life was one of sacrifice, selflessness and service – dedicated to the founding values of our Republic. He will be remembered for his unwavering belief in our constitution, which expresses our resolve to cherish and to protect the gains of our long struggle; promote the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Namibian nation and resolved to constitute the Republic of Namibia as a sovereign, secular, democratic and unitary State.

It was as a teacher and principal from 1968 when the first stirrings of political activism were awakened in him and he began to identify with the aspirations of the Liberation Movement under the banners of SWAPO in 1976 while serving as a deacon in the Roman Catholic Church.

Indeed, when the white minority South African legislation in 1968 and 1969 respectively, had prepared the ground for the full-scale implementation of apartheid in Namibia and its virtual incorporation into South Africa as a fifth province, this marked the escalation of the liberation struggle waged by SWAPO inside the country and on the international front.

It is against this background that the principal Namibian churches responded to the patriotic aspirations of their members by taking, for the first time, a public stand against the continued illegal occupation of Namibia by the white minority South African regime.

In this regard, the Late Bishop Auala of Ovambo-Kavango Evangelical Lutheran Church (E.L.O.K) and Moderator Gowaseb of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the South (E.L.K.), now called ELCIN and ELCRIN, respectively, on 30 June 1971, wrote an open letter to the Prime Minister of South Africa in which they declared their unequivocal support to the opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) which endorsed the revocation of the mandate of South Africa of Namibia by the Security Council and the General Assembly of the U.N. in 1966.

The pastoral letter was supported by the two major churches of the Anglican and Roman Catholic Church as well as other churches in the country. In this regard, I recall that in October 1976 four principal popular leaders in the South such as the Late Reverend Hendrik Witbooi from Gibeon, J. Stefanus from Vaalgras, S. Isaks from Keetmanshoop and H. Noeteb from Hoachanas issued a statement in support of SWAPO and rejecting the Turnhalle Alliance.

In 1987, Reverend Konjore, together with the Late Comrade Daniel Tjongarero, Reverend Bishop John Sindano and others, were part of the delegation that went to seek international solidarity against Bantu Education at the United Kingdom, Wales and Canada, sent by the Council of Churches in Namibia under the leadership of Dr. Abisai Sheyavali. This is how the churches in Namibia supported the liberation struggle waged by SWAPO and unflinchingly expounded a searing indictment of apartheid and re-affirmed their commitment to the independence of our country.

His entry into government began with the birth of our nation, when he was amongst the founding members of the Constituent Assembly and the first Parliament in the new democratic dispensation. He later became a Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly and a Cabinet Minister. He executed these roles with diligence, with excellence and with dedication and lent immense stature and gravity to these roles, especially as presiding officer in the National Assembly as he was impartial and had a deep tone.

The death of the Late Reverend Konjore has thus robbed our country of a dedicated freedom fighter, a respected politician of note and above all a dynamic religious leader whose good deeds will be emulated by future generations of Namibians as we draw guidance and inspiration from his exemplary life.

As he finds his final resting place, may the family and all those who are touched by his departure find comfort in his good memories as a teacher, a principal, a deacon, a founding member of the Namibian Constituent Assembly and Parliament, a Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly and a Cabinet Minister.

In the same vein, it is my wish that we may all find solace in the knowledge that he was conferred with the Most Brilliant Order of the Sun, Second Class and this State Funeral. This is a practical demonstration of the need to keep our history alive so that it is imparted to the younger generation.

To his brother, the children and the entire bereaved family, I wish you to find peace in your hearts as you go through this very difficult time. May the tears of your grief wash away your pain and sorrow and may we all be granted fortitude during this trying times.

May His Soul Rest In Eternal Peace!



Sam Nujoma
FOUNDING PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA