

29 March 2023

The Widow, Meme Hilma Nailoke Shipoke and the Entire Bereaved Family Members  
Ondobe-yeno Village  
**OHANGWENA REGION**

Dear Meme Hilma Nailoke Shipoke and the entire Bereaved Family

It is with profound sadness that I have learned of the passing of your beloved husband, father, brother, uncle, grandfather and a Veteran of our National Liberation Struggle, Comrade Retired Colonel Nghipangelwa John Shipoke, on 19 March 2023, at Okongo, Ohangwena Region.

While knowing that words alone cannot say how deeply we feel with the entire bereaved family in this time of bereavement, we nevertheless wish that you find solace in the knowledge that we share in your grief.

Yet we also celebrate a veteran of our National Liberation Struggle whose political career started in 1974 when he was mobilizing fellow Namibians to join the liberation struggle.

Indeed, I recall that in June 1971, the International Court of Justice (ICJ), following an application by an Ad Hoc Sub-Committee of the UN Security Council, reversed its stance on Namibia and declared that the White Minority South African regime's occupation was 'illegal'.

The International Court of Justice's (ICJ) decision helped to catalyse mobilisation against the white minority South African presence in Namibia, particularly among the youth. Hundreds of students were expelled from their schools after taking part in protest marches at Ongwediva in the north. This movement was led by the Late Comrade Helao Nafidi, Ndaxu Charles Namoloh, David Shikomba, Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, and many others.

It is also worth recalling here that in the aftermath of the Portuguese coup of 1974 and the violence after the boycotted Ovamboland Bantustan elections of 1973, a large number of young Namibians joined us in exile. A significant proportion of these young political activists were matriculants who could not continue their studies because they had been involved in some of the student and high school protests in previous years.

Most importantly, many of these educated Namibians who came to join us in exile were SWAPO Youth League (SYL) activists who were instrumental in the operations of the internal wing of SWAPO.

It is against this background that the Late Retired Colonel Nghipangelwa John Shipoke joined us in exile in 1974 together with his Comrades such Lt. Gen. (Rtd) Denga Ndaitwah, Francis Nailenge Nauyoma, Ambassador Veiccoh Nghiwete, Festus Nehale, Paulus Dumeni, amongst others when they took a trip by bus to Huambo in Angola to reinforce the fighting capabilities of the People's Army Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN), SWAPO's Military Wing and started with their military training at Huambo.

After the military training, Retired Colonel Shipoke was sent with other fellow Comrades to the battle field, starting from Luso, between the Zambian-Angola border, and many other battles. They later went to Oshatotwa, where they were met by SWAPO leaders such as Maxton Josef Mutongolume and were introduced to basic Infantry training.

In 1975, the Late Comrade Retired Colonel Shipoke was sent for further training at Kongwa in Tanzania where he specialized in Infantry. On completion of his Training at Kongwa, he was deployed at Cassinga in 1976 and later went to the North Eastern Front.

In 1978, he joined the Artillery Battery at Omahati in Southern Angola under Commander Retired Brig. Gen. Shivute and was nominated for further Artillery Training in the former Soviet Union in 1979 and was deployed at Alpha Battalion as an Artillery Battalion Secretary.

Beginning of 1982, he was deployed at the Tobias Hainyeko Training Center, where he was appointed Chief of Artillery.

After independence, the Late Retired Colonel Shipoke joined the Namibia Defence Force at its inception in 1990 as a Mortar Platoon Commander with the Rank of Lieutenant and rose through the ranks until he became a full Colonel and Operation Officer at 21 Motorised Infantry Brigade in Windhoek.

In 2014, he was transferred to Army Headquarters in Grootfontein and was appointed as a Senior Staff Officer Legal (SSO), the position he held until his retirement from active service in 2017.

This is the glorious legacy and brilliant exploits by the gallant and heroic sons and daughters of Namibia that we must preserve for future generations.

It is therefore with heavy hearts that we join the nation in bidding farewell to one of our formidable freedom fighters, whose remarkable legacy will endure for generations to come.

May the exemplary deeds of the Late Retired Colonel Shipoke serve as a permanent source of inspiration as we continue with nation building and chart the future destiny of our country.

To his family, our hearts go out to you as you go through the grief of a loss so overwhelming. As you walk through these difficult times, it is our wish that you are consoled by the knowledge that the legacy of your husband, father, brother, uncle, grandfather and a Veteran of our National Liberation Struggle lives on. To the Widow and the children, may the tears of your grief wash away your pain and sorrow.

As you carry him to his final resting place, please allow me, on behalf of the Veterans of our National Liberation Struggle, the Nujoma family and indeed on my own behalf, to once again extend our heartfelt condolences and deepest sympathies to the entire bereaved family members for the loss of the Late Retired Colonel Nghipangelwa John Shipoke.

May we all be granted fortitude during these trying times.

May His Soul Rest In Eternal Peace!



Sam Nujoma  
**FOUNDING PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**

**FOUNDER**  
The Sam Nujoma Foundation