



TRIBUTE BY HIS EXCELLENCY, DR. SAM NUJOMA,
FOUNDING PRESIDENT AND FATHER OF THE NAMIBIAN
NATION, ON THE OCCASION OF THE HERO'S MEMORIAL
AND FUNERAL SERVICES IN HONOUR OF THE LATE
COMRADE ANDIMBA HERMAN TOIVO YA TOIVO

23 JUNE 2017

INDEPENDENCE STADIUM

WINDHOEK

*Check Against Delivery

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Directors of Ceremonies Honourable Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah,
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of International Relations and
Cooperation;

The widow, Comrade Vicky Ya Toivo, the Children, Grandchildren,
and the Entire Bereaved Family;

Your Excellency, Dr. Hage Geingob, President of the Republic of
Namibia and Madam Monica Geingos, First Lady;

Your Excellency, Dr. Nickey Iyambo, Vice President of the Republic
of Namibia;

Your Excellency Dr. Hifikepunye Pohamba, Former President of the
Republic of Namibia and Madam Pohamba, Former First Lady;

Right Honourable Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila, Prime Minister of
the Republic of Namibia and Comrade Amadhila;

Honourable Professor Peter Katjavivi, Speaker of the National
Assembly and Madam Jane Katjavivi;

Honourable Margareth Mensah-Williams, Chairperson of the National
Council and Comrade Williams;

Honourable Peter Shivute, Chief Justice and Madam Judge Shivute;

Honourable Ministers;

Honourable Members of Parliament;

Retired Bishop Honourable Dr. Zephania Kameeta, Minister of
Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare;

Honourable Nangolo Mbumba, Secretary General of the SWAPO
Party;

Honourable Mc Henry Veenani, Leader of the Official opposition;

Honourable Laura McLeod-Katjirua, Deputy Secretary General of SWAPO Party and Governor of Khomas Region and all Governors present;

Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps;

Distinguished Service Chiefs;

Comrades Former Namibian Robben Island Political Prisoners;

Comrades Veterans of the Namibian Liberation Struggle;

Esteemed Traditional, Spiritual and Community Leaders;

Members of the Media;

Fellow Mourners:

We are gathered here today to pay our last respects to the memory of one of Namibia's gallant Hero and a pioneering veteran of our Liberation Struggle, the Late Comrade Herman Andimba Toivo Ya Toivo.

Indeed, I was deeply saddened to learn of the passing on of Comrade Andimba Toivo Ya Toivo, a SWAPO stalwart who made an immense contribution to Namibia's national liberation struggle and the attainment of our freedom and genuine independence on the 21st March 1990.

I know a lot was said in the eulogy and by the previous speakers; I will simply concentrate on how I know the Late Comrade Andimba Toivo Ya Toivo.

As we are all aware the Late Comrade Andimba Toivo Ya Toivo, together with others such as the late Jacob Kuhangua were the founding members of the Ovamboland People's Congress (OPC), on the 2nd of August 1957 in Cape Town, South Africa with the main aim and objective to terminate the inhumane contract labour system under which our people were forced to work for meagre wages.

In 1958, the Late Comrade Andimba Toivo Ya Toivo sent a message to the United Nations (UN) through Comrade Mburumba Kerina who was then a student at Lincoln University in the United States of America and one of the first Namibian petitioners at the United Nations, together with the Late Reverend Michael Scott.

For security reasons, Comrade Andimba Toivo Ya Toivo sent a tape-recorded message and a letter. The tape was concealed in a copy of the book *Treasure Island* by Robert Louis Stephenson.

The letter arrived first at the United Nations and was read by Comrade Kerina to the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly to petition the United Nations to force the apartheid regime of South Africa to relinquish the then South West Africa to the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations.

Comrade Andimba Toivo Ya Toivo was expelled from Cape Town shortly after his petition made headlines in the New York Times and was deported on the 4th of December 1958 to Windhoek and then to Ondangwa by the apartheid regime, under the pretext that he was working with leading progressive anti-apartheid movements such as the African National Congress (ANC), the South African Communist Party and individuals such as Professor Jack Simons and his wife Ray Alexander, as well as with liberals like Patrick Duncan and Randolph Vigne.

At the same time his compatriot Late Comrade Jariretundu Kozonguizi was also deported back to Windhoek.

I recall that in 1959, while still working with Carsten Veld in Windhoek, I received a letter from Comrade Andimba Toivo Ya Toivo informing me that he had been threatened with deportation to Angola. I learnt that Comrade Andimba Toivo Ya Toivo was under inhuman conditions and suffering immensely as he was kept under chains by the puppet tribal authorities under the chieftaincy of Johannes Kambonde at Okaloko. The racist South African and the Portuguese colonial regimes collaborated across the borders and I knew that deporting Comrade Andimba Toivo Ya Toivo to Angola was a tactic to eventually get rid of him.

I immediately sent a telegram to the United Nations, which I got to know about through working with the Late Chief Hosea Kutako Katjikururume, urging the United Nations to stop such deportation.

This led to a visit at my workplace by the newly commissioned Chief of the Special Branch by the name of Blaauw, accompanied by a native policeman by the name of Martin Nangombe, threatening me with arrest because of the telegram I sent to the United Nations.

Despite all these distractions, our focus was firmly on freeing ourselves from the yoke of the inhumane contract labour system and the draconian pass law system and how we can obtain our freedom and independence through the assistance of the United Nations.

On 19th April 1959, together with Comrade Louis Nelengani and one of the Ovamboland People's Congress (OPC) founding member, Comrade Jacob Kuhangua and others, we formed the Ovamboland People's Organisation (OPO) and adapted a copy of the OPC Constitution with slight changes to suit the political conditions in the then South West Africa. I personally typed it out on a second-hand typewriter I had bought from an old German lady in Windhoek.

I was elected as Ovamboland Peoples Organisation (OPO) first President, deputised by the Late Comrade Louis Nelengani with Comrade Jacob Kuhangua serving as OPO Secretary General. We were able to recruit members in large numbers in spite of the difficulties involved in moving around the country, compounded by the pass law. Nevertheless, the formation of OPO allowed us to consolidate our resolve and petition under one umbrella henceforth.

In fostering this initiative, from August 1959, I travelled extensively, although clandestinely, between Windhoek, Walvis Bay, Tsumeb and Northern Namibia in mobilizing and setting up branch structures for OPO.

Although we communicated through letters and other means, Comrade Andimba Toivo Ya Toivo and I have never met face to face during this time. The closest we got to each other was when the train I travelled on crossed a train he was travelling on at the Jakkalsdraai Railway siding south of Tsumeb during August 1959.

On the 29th of February 1960 I jumped bail and left the then South West Africa to pursue the Namibian liberation struggle from outside the country as OPO President. However, after meeting leaders from independent African countries and various international solidarity organisations, the need for the formation of a true national liberation movement was espoused. I then communicated to the OPO leadership back home to transform OPO into a national liberation movement, which heralded the formation of the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO) on the 19th of April 1960. It was at this formation that I was elected as SWAPO's President in absentia.

The failure of meaningful results from our various diplomatic efforts in petitioning the United Nations and other international organisations, the mockery of the International Court of Justice at The Hague Judgment and the continued repression of the Namibian people by the apartheid South African colonial regime left SWAPO with no other alternative but to take up arms and launched the armed liberation struggle on the 26th of August 1966 at Omugulu-Gwombashe.

During the planning and preparation of the launch of the armed liberation struggle, the SWAPO freedom fighters were strictly ordered to report to the SWAPO leadership inside the country, amongst them were Comrade Eliaser Tuhadeleni Kaxumba Kandola and Comrade Andimba Toivo Ya Toivo.

Comrade Andimba Toivo Ya Toivo and other SWAPO leaders were also able to facilitate the logistics that led to the establishment of SWAPO military bases inside the country, including OmuguluGwombashe, which led to Comrade Andimba Toivo Ya Toivo's arrest. Subsequently, he was trialed and sentenced in Pretoria, South Africa and was incarcerated at Robben Island together with other Namibian political prisoners for many years.

Your Excellency;
Fellow Mourners;

We are bidding farewell to an exceptionally dedicated and principled compatriot and freedom fighter. His statement during their treason trial in Pretoria in 1967 was of great inspiration for the Namibian struggle in defiance of the illegal occupation of Namibia by racist South Africa and reads as follow:

“We are Namibians, and not South Africans. We do not now, and will not in the future, recognize your right to govern us; to make laws for us, in which we had no say; to treat our country as if it was your property and us as if you are our masters. We have always regarded South Africa as an intruder in our country. This is how we have always felt and this is how we feel now and it is on this basis that we have faced this trial”.

Comrade Andimba Toivo Ya Toivo also stated the following prophetic words:

“I know that the struggle will be longer and bitter, but I too know that my people will wage that struggle to the end”.

After he was released from Robben Island on the 1st of March 1984, he joined us in exile and became SWAPO’s Secretary General until we attained our freedom and genuine independence on 21st March 1990.

As we were forming an independent Namibia’s first SWAPO government, I appointed the Late Comrade Andimba Toivo Ya Toivo as our first Minister of Mines and Energy, then as Minister of Labour and later as Minister of Prisons and Correctional Services until his retirement from active politics.

Comrade Andimba Toivo Ya Toivo has contributed immensely to the liberation struggle and to the consolidation of SWAPO Party Government. It is therefore commendable that the Government of the Republic of Namibia accorded him a Hero’s Funeral as an acknowledgement for his heroic deeds and sacrifices.

Although his body ceased to move, his spirit lives on and his name will be entered into annals of Namibia's history books as one of the fearless freedom fighters Namibia has produced. Indeed, even if Comrade Andimba Toivo Ya Toivo will be dearly missed by the entire Namibian nation and in particular by his family, sorrow should not subdue us, because his legacy is the peaceful Namibia we see today.

The most befitting way to honour his memory is to protect that peace at all cost. Let us therefore continue to celebrate his life and pick up the mantle and the torch where he left off.

As we prepare to lay our Comrade to rest and join his fellow fallen heroes and heroines, allow me, therefore, on behalf of the Veterans of our National Liberation Struggle, the Nujoma Family and indeed on my own behalf, to convey our deep felt sympathies and sincere condolences to the widow, Comrade Vicky Ya Toivo, the children, grandchildren and the entire bereaved family and comrades on the loss of Comrade Andimba Toivo Ya Toivo. His contribution to the attainment of Namibia's freedom and genuine independence will be remembered by the present and future generations of Namibia.

May we all be comforted and granted fortitude during this difficult time of mourning.

May His Soul Rest In Eternal Peace!