

07 November 2024

The Widow, Meme Selma Shooya,  
the Children, the Entire Bereaved Shooya Family and the Community of Uukolonkadhi  
Traditional Authority  
Oshika Village, Onesi Constituency  
**OMUSATI REGION**

Dear Widow, Meme Selma Shooya, the Children, the Entire Bereaved Shooya Family and the  
Community of Uukolonkadhi Traditional Authority

It is with heavy hearts that we learnt of the passing of your beloved husband, grandfather,  
father, uncle and brother, the Late Omusimanekwa Elenga Enene Tatekulu Daniel Shooya, of  
Uukolonkadhi Traditional Authority, on Thursday, 31<sup>st</sup> October 2024.

Even though we feel the weight of the Late Tatekulu Shooya's passing upon us, when a dark  
cloud of sadness has descended upon the Uukolonkadhi community and on the entire Namibia  
nation, the news of his passing did not come as a shock to us, as we are consoled by the fact  
that he was blessed with unparalleled longevity and lived up to the ripe age of 99 years old.

We are therefore not only mourning but also celebrating a life well spent in the service of his  
people for nearly four decades as well as the contributions he made to our country in general.

Last time I met the Late Tatekulu Shooya was when I paid him a courtesy visit at Oshika  
Village, on the 21<sup>st</sup> of April 2022. It was a joyful occasion as the Late Tatekulu Shooya, his  
family and members of the community extended a warm welcome to me and my delegation  
and hosted us to a sumptuous delicious meal.

The Late Tatekulu Shooya's passing is a reminder that our life on this earth is but temporary.  
Let us therefore appreciate the good moments in life and find comfort in difficult times. Most  
importantly, we should spend our time wisely, in performing good deeds, and in being of  
service to others, as he did.

Apart from his servant leadership, the Late Tatekulu Shooya was a walking encyclopaedia.  
The saying "When an elder dies, a library burns down" is an African proverb that means when  
a knowledgeable older person passes away, a wealth of knowledge is lost.

Against this background, the family has lost their pillar of strength and the Uukolonkadhi  
Traditional Authority and the nation at large have lost a fountain of wisdom whose void will be  
difficult to fill.

Indeed, our traditional leaders are the repository, guardians, keepers, custodians, promoters  
and protectors of our collective history, customs, languages and culture. They are the great  
umbilical link that connects us to our past, keeps us rooted to our present and guides us to our  
future.

Our elders are the bridge between the older and younger generations. Let us therefore not emulate the example of three youngsters who arrived at the river with strong currents but did not ask the elders for help on how to cross to the other side.

When the youngsters saw the three old men crossing the river with ease, they thought that by being young and energetic, they too could easily cross to the other side. When they attempted to cross, they were swept away by the strong currents in a rapid flow of water in the river.

Meanwhile, the elders who had crossed earlier were standing on the other side of the river looking at the youngsters being swept away by the strong currents and saying to each other “if only these youngsters had asked us where we had put the stepping stones, during the dry season, to cross on the other side.”

That is why it is said in Africa that our traditions and values are the foundation upon which we stand and as I like to say; “a nation without culture, is like a tree without roots.”

Against this background, the Widow has lost a loving husband, the Shooya family has lost a caring father, brother and a friend. As a nation, we have lost a respected traditional leader who was a pillar of the community.

Our traditional leaders produced gallant warriors who fought land dispossession, mistreatment, humiliation, imprisonment and the slaughter of innocent Namibian people, whose only sin was having a different skin colour and defending what was rightfully theirs.

In this regard, I was informed that Omusimanekwa Tatekulu Daniel Shooya followed in the footsteps of his ancestors and was an excellent rifleman. Indeed, the role of our traditional leaders in resisting colonialism inspired generations of freedom fighters who eventually led this country to freedom and democracy on the 21<sup>st</sup> March 1990.

The Late Tatekulu Daniel Shooya is Omukusiinda koshoto (paternal clan) and Omukwanangombe kelugo (matrilineal clan). He ascended the throne in 1985. Thirty four years ago, he was one of the traditional authorities to be recognised in the democratic era as part of our effort to restore traditional leadership after it was undermined and ravaged by colonial rule. This was a great moment, to reconstitute ourselves as a people, to reclaim our humanity, our cultures, traditions and belief systems, and our very soul as a nation.

Uukolonkadhi is the western-most of the eight Aawambo communities in Northern Namibia, surrounded by one of Africa’s iconic, gracious and majestic baobab trees, which are thought to be the homes of spirits par excellence as they signify the wisdom and resilience of Africa’s ancient arks of the baobab trees biodiversity that have migrated across the landscape, enduring for millennia, as symbolised in the Uukolonkadhi Traditional Authority’s emblem.

The steadfast and rooted baobab trees, with their cavernous and bloated trunks and short, spindly and lofty branches, scrape the sky in supplication, towering even up to 28 metres above the surrounding landscape and can live up to 2000 years, like the one in Ombalantu, also known as Omukwa waaMbalantu, with a diameter of 26.5 metres and estimated to be 800 years old.

Like other Aawambo communities, Uukolonkadhi is situated in the seasonally inundated watercourses pans, locally known as iishana. This is a prominent feature of central and western Owambo in the Cuvelai basin, situated in the catchment areas of the Cuvelai River. Major seasonal floods, locally known as efundja, are a lifeline to the people of Owambo.

Efundja occurs when above-average rains fall in the southern Angolan highlands inundating vast areas as the water slowly spills into depressions and pans in the catchment areas of the Mui and Cuvelai rivers.

In this regard, during his reign of 39 years, only short of 44 years of Omukwaniilwa Kauluma Elifas of Ondonga Traditional Authority and 43 years of Omukwaniilwa Shaanika shaNashilongo of Ongandjera Traditional Authority, the Late Tatekulu Shooya distinguished himself in various ways, especially when it comes to agricultural projects in his area in collaboration with government, such as the establishment of Etunda Irrigation Project.

Similarly, among some of the important projects found in his area are the asparagus vegetable project and the grape project, when the Uukolonkadhi Traditional Authority, under his leadership, provided land to government to establish these projects.

Furthermore, the Uukolonkadhi Traditional Authority donated a piece of Land to me, which I handed over to SWAPO Party Women's Council to develop, and thereby assist women in the area.

The SWAPO Party Women's Council later called in the Centre for Resource and Transformation (CERET) (Pty) Ltd (Namibia), to develop the piece of land and they transformed it into Onjombo Lodge, sitting on a prime land overlooking the placid and scenic forest and all set in a pristine natural environment, together with other 28 income-generating projects developed by CERET.

The Late Tatekulu Shooya also provided the Etaka (Olushandja) area for agricultural purposes for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). This attests to his visionary leadership as all these projects created the necessary employment opportunities for our people, apart from contributing to food security in the country.

The Uukolonkadhi community has throughout its history distinguished itself as a home and a refuge for many groups fleeing persecution. The Late Tatekulu Daniel Shooya, like his forebears, believed that among the duties of our Traditional Authorities was to promote inclusivity through culture, languages and customs.

He further believed that none of the above should be used as a means of exclusion, but that Uukolonkadhi should become a citadel of unity in diversity. The history of Uukolonkadhi bears witness to the acceptance and embrace of other groups in the region, united by a common language and heritage.

For this reason, together with the Late Omukwaniilwa Kauluma Elifas of Ondonga Traditional Authority, the Late Elenga Enene Tatekulu Daniel Shooya received our people from exile and provided a portion of land at Onandjandja and Oshihau where they were resettled. With this progressive view, he was following in the footsteps of his illustrious predecessors.

He also believed in the protection, promotion and preservation of our culture, and would regularly send young girls to Olufuko Cultural Festival while others were calling for the abolition of the initiation and rite of passage of girls to adulthood.

He understood too well the enduring impact of the bitter legacy of colonialism and apartheid on the consciousness of some of our people. We need to continue to carve our sons and daughters a safe passage to manhood and womanhood. This country needs more leaders like him; leaders who care about the welfare of the people first and foremost.

To the Widow, Meme Selma Shooya, the ten Children and Grandchildren, the Entire Bereaved Shooya Family and the Uukolonkadhi Traditional Authority, it may well be that all our words and speeches since his passing may be fruitless attempts to comfort you from a grief of a loss so overwhelming.

Nevertheless, let your sadness be tempered by the comforting and sure knowledge that the Late Elenga Enene Tatekulu Daniel Shooya's life was not wasted and spent fruitlessly but well lived in the service of others.

May you be comforted by all the words of honour that have been ascribed to your beloved husband, brother, uncle, father, grandfather and leader of Uukolonkadhi Traditional Authority, the Late Elenga Enene Tatekulu Daniel Shooya.

It is our wish that the pain and anguish of your bereavement may be assuaged, softened, appeased, alleviated and eased to leave you only with the cherished memories of your beloved husband, father, grandfather, brother and leader.

Be comforted in the knowledge and pride that the Late Omusimanekwa Elenga Enene Tatekulu Daniel Shooya of Uukolonkadhi Traditional Authority may have passed on to the next life but the example he set on the meaning of leadership will be imparted beyond his time on earth.

As you lay him to rest, allow me, on behalf of the Veterans of our National Liberation Struggle, my family and indeed on my own behalf, to convey our deep-felt sympathy and sincere condolences to the entire bereaved family and the Uukolonkadhi Traditional Authority and community for this irreparable loss.

May we all be granted fortitude during this time of bereavement and sorrow.

May the Soul of the Late Omusimanekwa Elenga Enene Tatekulu Daniel Shooya Rest Peacefully, waiting for the rising sun from the East.



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