



TRIBUTE BY HIS EXCELLENCY, DR. SAM NUJOMA, FOUNDING
PRESIDENT AND FATHER OF THE NAMIBIAN NATION, ON THE
OCCASION OF THE OFFICIAL STATE FUNERAL IN HONOUR OF
THE LATE COMRADE MUKWANANGOBE AGUSTE MWALIMUSHII
YA IMMANUEL (MUKWAHEPO)

EENHANA

OHANGWENA REGION

8 JUNE 2018

***Check Against Delivery**

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(Reg No 8208)

Directors of Ceremonies;
The Entire Bereaved Family;
Your Excellency, Comrade Dr. Hage Geingob President of the Republic of Namibia and Madam Monica Geingos, First Lady;
Your Excellency, Comrade Dr. Hifikepunye Pohamba, Former President of the Republic of Namibia and Madam Penhupifo Pohamba, Former First Lady;
Your Excellency, Comrade Dr. Nangolo Mbumba, Vice President of the Republic of Namibia and Madam Sustjie Mbumba;
Your Excellency, Comrade Dr Nickey Iyambo, Former Vice President of the Republic of Namibia and Madam Iyambo;
Right Honourable, Comrade Dr Saara Kuugongelwa –Amadhila, Prime Minister of the Republic of Namibia and Comrade Amadhila;
Honourable Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of International Relations and Cooperation and Retired Lieutenant General Ndaitwah;
Honourable Professor Peter Katjavivi, Speaker of the National Assembly and Madam Katjavivi;
Honourable Margaret Mensah-Williams, Chairperson of the National Council and Mr Williams;
Honourable Peter Shivute, Chief Justice and Judge Shivute;
Honourable Ministers;
Honourable Members of Parliament;
Comrade Sofia Shaningwa, Secretary General of SWAPO Party;
Honourable Usko Nghaamwa, Governor of Ohangwena Region and all Governors present;
Honourable Regional and Local Authorities Councillors present;
Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps;
Distinguished Service Chiefs;
Omusimanekwa Meekulu Martha Mwadinomho ya Kristian Nelumbu, Ohamba yo Shilongo sha Uukwanyama and all Esteemed Leaders of Traditional Authorities present here:
Esteemed Spiritual and Community Leaders;
Distinguished Veterans of the National Liberation Struggle;
Members of the Media;
Fellow Mourners:

Our country has produced men and women of distinction who have provided leadership during trying times and kept the torch of freedom alive both at home and abroad during the most difficult times of our National Liberation Struggle.

One such person was Meekulu Mukwanangobe Auguste Mwalimushii ya Immanuel, affectionately known as Mukwahepo, a veteran of Namibia's liberation struggle and the first woman combatant of the South West Africa Liberation Army (SWALA), later renamed the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN), SWAPO's Military Wing.

Comrade Meekulu Mukwahepo journeyed into exile to join the struggle under the banner of SWAPO in 1963 and met other Comrades such as Former President, Comrade Hifikepunye Pohamba, Tobias Hainyeko, Peter Nanyemba, Peter Mweshihange, Simon Mzee Kaukungwa, Peter Katjavivi, Eliander Mwatale, Mosé Tjitendero, Vinia Ndadi, Nickey Iyambo, Putuse Appollus, Libertine Amathila, Nangolo Iithete, Homateni Kalwenya, Edwald Katjivena, Josephat Kahimise, among others.

She became the first woman to be trained with SWAPO at Kongwa Military Training Camp in Tanzania together with other Comrades by the likes of Comrade Augustus Nghaamwa popularly known by his combat name as McNamara and Julius Shilongo known by his combat name as Kashuku.

You can imagine how hard and difficult it was for Meekulu Mukwahepo as the first and only woman among men at Kongwa Military Training Camp in 1965, where she remained for 9 years until 1974.

She witnessed when the first group known as the G1 group of the Commandos led by the Late Commander John ya Otto Nankudhu crossed back into Namibia in 1965 and engaged the South African occupation forces on the 26 of August 1966 at Omugulu gwoMbashe in Uukwaluudhi – Omusati Region.

Others in that group were Comrades Simeon Linekela Shixungileni (Kambo), Patrick Israel Iyambo (Lungada) Messah Victory Namuandi (Shiuajanga), James Hamukuaya Angula (Shoonyeka) and Nelson Kavela (Sadrag).

Comrade Meekulu Mkwahepo also spent time in Mbeya Transit Camp to receive SWAPO fighters who had been trained and were on their way to Zambia, to cross into Namibia and engage the enemy occupation forces.

In addition, she was there when the group known as the “volunteers” went to establish the Northern Front in Angola.

This group consisted of Commanders such as Dimo Amaambo, Matias Ndakolo (Mbulunganga), Paulus Nandenga (Zulu), Wilbard Tashiya (Nakada-Shikololo), Elise Hauliyondjaba, John Hamukoto (kalola), Jonas Kataleonga (Katengela), Erickson Hauwanga (Kapanya), Jonas Kapapu (Mumbwela Weemhadi), Linus Hamwele (Mawila), Sackeus Kapulwa (Kapuleko) Ismael Kamati (Ngiringiri), among others.

I first met Meekulu Mukwahepo in 1964 at Leopoldville present day Kinshasa in the then Congo now known as the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and facilitated her transit to the then Tanganyika now Tanzania through our SWAPO’s Representative in Congo and Comrade Hifikepunye Pohamba who was at that time our SWAPO’s Representative in Northern Rhodesia, now Zambia.

From Zambia her group proceeded to Lilongwe in Nyasaland now Known as Malawi and then to Mbeya in Tanzania where they were received by Comrade Peter Katjavivi and the Late Comrade Eliander Muatale after a long journey to Tanzania from Namibia, through Angola, the DRC, Zambia and Malawi.

In this regard, I remember when I launched the book, titled ‘Mukwahepo – Woman, Soldier, Mother’ on 17 October, 2013, which tells the story of Meekulu Mukwahepo. The book is written by Comrade Dr. Ellen Ndeshi Namhila who was a librarian at the University of Namibia (UNAM) and now serves as its Pro-Vice Chancellor for Administration, Finance and Resource Mobilization.

As I was reading the life story of Comrade Meekulu Mukwahepo, it reminded me how the Namibian women have shown resilience in the face of enormous challenges and how they sacrificed so much for our freedom and genuine independence.

On the occasion of the launching of her book, I therefore said to her, “Thank you Meekulu Mukwahepo for sharing your life story – the ordeals and triumphs of a true heroine of our struggle”.

The difficulties Meekulu Mukwahepo encountered reflect the difficulties we faced in those days. As you can imagine, it was not easy to launch the Armed Liberation Struggle from Tanzania.

But the difficulties were accepted. It was part of the challenge. This did not deter Meekulu Mukwahepo or other fellow compatriots from getting on with the struggle for National Liberation.

Initially, women were not allowed at the front, and it was part of SWAPO's mission to advance the fact that women had an important role to play, and our male comrades were sensitized to the fact that we had to open up and allow the women to fully participate in the war of liberation. This took quite a while but eventually it became part of the culture of SWAPO and women played their part in the armed liberation struggle, along with their male combatants.

The Late Meekulu Mukwahepo was not only the first woman to be trained as a combatant of the then SWALA at Kongwa in Tanzania but also later committed her life to looking after the children of the Liberation Struggle, a task she carried out admirably well.

For this reason, she became known as 'Meekulu' Mukwahepo, the mother and grandmother of those without mothers and the caretaker of SWAPO's children in Zambia and later in Angola.

When Namibians in exile were repatriated in 1989, in the pre-election period that led to the country's independence, Meekulu Mukwahepo went home with the children she took care of.

We thus mourn the passing on of a brave Comrade, a gallant freedom fighter and one of the foremost pioneers of our People Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN), SWAPO's Military Wing, who has served the Namibian people with distinction and tenacity.

She dedicated her youthful and adult life to the struggle for the liberation of Namibia and endured hardship but never wavered. For this reason, her exemplary deeds shall be remembered by the present and future generations.

As we bid her farewell, let us recall the values for which the Late Meekulu Mukwahepo stood for and honour her by committing ourselves together to build a united, democratic and prosperous Namibia.

In 1995 I conferred on her a medal at Omugulu-gwoMbashe in recognition of her heroism and contributions to the liberation of our motherland and was given a house as a Veteran of the Liberation Struggle by Former President Pohamba while Former Prime Minister Nahas Angula brought her sofas for her sitting room. We are indeed consoled that she departs as a decorated Veteran of our Liberation Struggle.

In closing, may I ask you to join me in paying a fitting tribute, with honour and reverence; to a gallant freedom fighter and an unwavering patriot.

On behalf of the Nujoma family, and indeed, on my own behalf, we convey our deepest condolences and heartfelt sympathy to the entire bereaved family and comrades on the loss of the Late Meekulu Mukwanangobe Auguste ya Immanuel.

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

May Her Soul Rest In Eternal Peace.