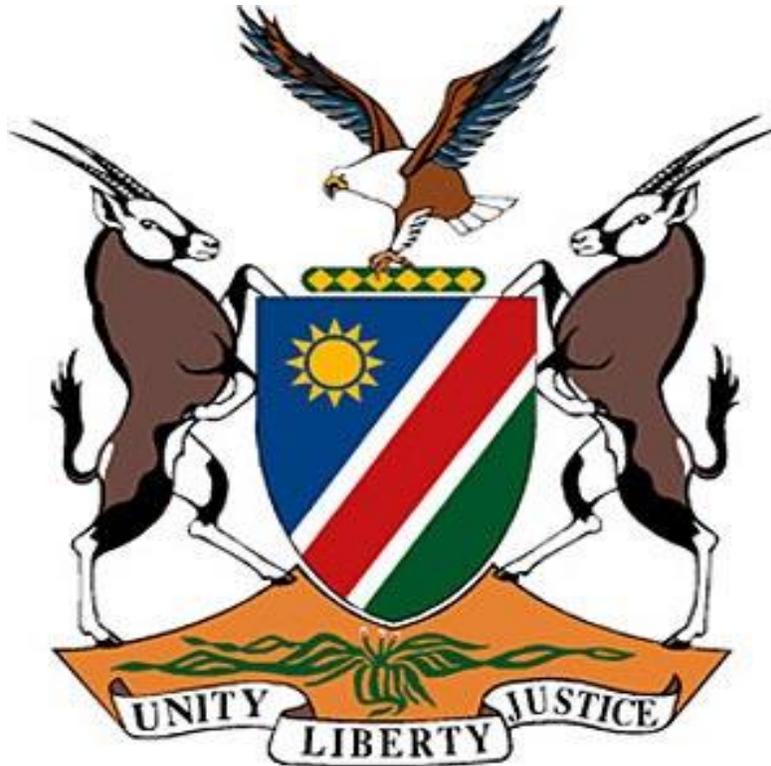


REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**REMARKS BY HONOURABLE FRANS KAPOFI, MINISTER OF
DEFENCE AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS, ON THE OCCASION OF THE
36TH INDEPENDENCE ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION**

21ST MARCH 2026

SAM NUJOMA STADIUM/KHOMAS REGION

Hon. Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila, Speaker of the National Assembly
His Lordship Peter Shivute, Chief Justice of the Republic of Namibia
Honourable Immanuel Nashinge, Leader of the Official Opposition
Honourable John Mutorwa, Former Deputy Prime Minister of the
Republic of Namibia,
Madame Monica Geingos, Former First Lady of the Republic of Namibia
Honourable Sophia Shaningwa, Secretary General of the SWAPO Party and all the
Leaders of Political Parties present
Honourable Ministers present
Honourable Members of Parliament
Honourable Regional and Local Authority Councillors
Honourable Stefanus Megameno Ndengu, Chairperson of the Khomas Regional Council
Your Worship, Councillor Sakaria Uunona, Mayor of the City of Windhoek
Gaos Jullianne Gawa!Nas, Chief of the /Khomani Traditional Authority
Veterans of the National Liberation Struggle
Members of the Diplomatic Corps
Executive Directors Present
Members of the Uniformed Services
Distinguished Captains of Industries
Distinguished guests,
Compatriots
Ladies and gentlemen,

Good Morning

It is my distinct honour and privilege to address you this morning as we commemorate a defining moment in our nation's history. On this day in 1990, Namibia emerged as a sovereign state—liberated through the courage and sacrifice of countless Namibians who fought tirelessly against colonial rule and oppressive laws. Today, we honour their bravery and sacrifice, which made our sovereignty possible.

Before we proceed, I kindly ask you all to rise and observe a moment of silence in memory of the heroes and heroines of our great nation, including our Founding President, Comrade Sam Shafiishuna Nujoma, and our third President, Comrade Hage Gottfried Geingob, whose lives and leadership shaped the destiny of Namibia. **(Moment of silence)** May their souls, and the souls of all who watered our freedom with their blood, rest in eternal peace.

Reflecting on our past, those of us who endured the brutality of colonial oppression remember vividly the denial of rights, the restrictions on movement, and the humiliation of being treated as strangers in our own land. We recall the indignity of exile, the pain of statelessness, and the resilience it demanded. Yet, from those trials emerged a spirit of determination that could not be extinguished. On 21 March 1990, as the Namibian flag was hoisted for the first time, our Founding President declared that the destiny of this country was now fully in our hands. That moment marked not only the end of oppression but also the beginning of a nationhood.

Our national identity is anchored in historical events and fundamental principles developed over centuries. Despite the fierce conflict that marked our fight for independence, which claimed many Namibian lives, it is fair to say that the unity and stability we enjoy today are admired by other nations. This should never be taken for granted; instead, we must safeguard them with the same dedication and vigour our forebears showed. Likewise, we have a healthy and vibrant multi-party democratic system respected by many nations. Let us continue to nurture it and respect ourselves despite our divergent political beliefs. Our political and ideological differences must never be allowed to become irreconcilable, as this could damage our country's commendable political and social ecosystem.

Many of us witnessed the leadership and vision of the late Dr Sam Shafiishuna Nujoma. Before the return of liberation fighters from exile, he offered clear guidance centred on reunification among Namibians, including those once seen as enemies. These values have been upheld by each of our Presidents: President Hifikepunye Pohamba, the late President Hage Gottfried Geingob, President Nangolo Mbumba, and now President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah.

Today, as we celebrate 36 years of independence and nation-building, we stand proud of freedoms once denied: the right to move across our land without restriction, to pursue education and careers

of our choice, to travel with our own passports, and to transact in our own currency. These are not abstract symbols; they are lived realities of independence. They remind us that the sacrifices of our forebears were not in vain, and they challenge us to honour their legacy through responsible stewardship of our nation.

We must also acknowledge our challenges: drought, constrained water resources, youth unemployment, and economic limitations. Prosperity is not automatic. Yet, we must appreciate the government's efforts to address these issues. Initiatives such as the Welwitschia Fund and the Youth Fund enhance resilience and equip young Namibians with opportunities for economic engagement and self-sufficiency.

At the same time, measures to support vulnerable populations, reinforce food security, and expand access to critical services to ensure that children learn in safe environments, communities uphold dignity, and our nation sustains confidence.

Dear compatriots,

The direction a nation takes is shaped by its leaders. One of Namibia's valued strengths is the steady predictability and stability consistently demonstrated by successive administrations. Her Excellency Dr Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, our fifth President and the first female to hold the position, brings extensive experience to the role. Having been part of the liberation movement and serving in every administration since independence, she has shown clear strategic vision and unwavering commitment to building on past achievements. Her humility, integrity, and dedication to the nation are evident. We extend our gratitude to you, Your Excellency.

In her Independence Day Anniversary address this morning, our President reiterated her administration's determination to prioritise the Sixth National Development Plan (NDP 6), with agriculture being chief among the priority areas. Moreover, the president reaffirmed the government's continued focus on the social sector, including healthcare, education, and programmes that support our wellbeing, in the 2026/2027 financial year.

Our President has spoken. The future of our nation does not depend on any single individual or group; it is shaped collectively by all citizens working together in support of the President and one another. Looking ahead, we must remember the timeless words of John F. Kennedy: “Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country.” If our freedom fighters had remained passive, independence would never have been achieved. Similarly, if we expect the government to do everything, development will stagnate, and poverty will persist. Instead, we must rise with innovative ideas, develop projects that uplift our communities, and drive progress ourselves. Prosperity is not built by passive expectation but through active participation.

While our political freedom remains secure, economic emancipation is still a work in progress. Systems designed to ensure fairness and efficiency, such as tendering and affirmative action, must be strengthened against misuse. Our resources are plentiful, and our resolve is firm, yet obstacles persist. Independence has removed the excuse of colonialism; now, responsibility lies squarely on our shoulders. As President Nandi-Ndaitwah has reminded us, “we are too few to be poor.” Each citizen must contribute, for prosperity is not solely the government’s task; it is the collective mission of all Namibians.

Unity is our shield. Our ethnic diversity, traditions, and cultures must never divide us; let us instead, turn them in a glue that binds us together. In a world where instability and conflict threaten many nations, Namibia must remain a beacon of peace. Our greatest defence is not only our security forces, but our unity as citizens. To echo the words of our Second President, His Excellency Hifikepunye Pohamba: *“Namibia is my country, Namibia is your country. Let each and every one of us make a positive contribution to the development of our beautiful country.”*

In conclusion, let us remember the wisdom of our Founding President: *“A people united, striving to achieve a common good for all the members of society, will always emerge victorious.”* As we celebrate 36 years of independence, let us renew our commitment to unity, prosperity, and the protection of our freedom. The future of Namibia remains in our hands; let us steer it with courage, wisdom, and steadfast love for our homeland.

Finally, I would be remiss to leave the podium without expressing my gratitude to all of you for being part of this important day in our history. I also extend heartfelt thanks to corporate leaders and the business community for their admirable contributions to the successful organisation of this

commemoration. Your commitment to our country is deeply appreciated, and we thank you for making this event truly memorable.

Happy 36th Independence Anniversary! Happy Birthday, Namibia.

I thank you!