

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**MESSAGE BY HIS EXCELLENCY DR. HAGE G. GEINGOB,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA, AT THE
MEMORIAL SERVICE OF THE LATE MEEKULU AUGUSTE
MUKWAHEPO IMMANUEL**

A COURAGEOUS HEROINE OF OUR ARMED STRUGGLE

JUNE 8, 2018

EENHANA SPORTS STADIUM

OHANGWENA REGION

Check against delivery

Directors of Ceremonies,

- 1. Comrade Frans Kapofi – Minister of Home Affairs and Immigration;**
- 2. Comrade Hilmar Nicanor – Deputy Minister of Veterans Affairs;**

The Bereaved Family of the late Meekulu Auguste Mukwahepo Immanuel;

Comrade Nangolo Mbumba – Vice President of the Republic of Namibia;

The Right Honourable Dr. Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila – Prime Minister of the Republic of Namibia;

Comrade Hifikepunye Pohamba – Former President of the Republic of Namibia;

Honourable Netumbo Nandi Ndaitwah – Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of International Relations and Cooperation;

**Honourable Professor Peter Katjavivi,
Speaker of the National Assembly;**

**Your Lordship Petrus Damaseb, Deputy
Chief Justice of the Republic of Namibia;**

**Honourable Cabinet Ministers, Deputy
Ministers and Members of Parliament;**

Members of the Diplomatic Corps;

**Madam Monica Geingos, First Lady of the
Republic of Namibia;**

**Comrade Sophia Shaningwa – Secretary
General of the SWAPO Party;**

**Honourable Usko Nghaamwa, Governor of
the Ohangwena Region and other Regional
Governors present;**

**Your Worship Cllr Amos Nangolo – Mayor of
Eenhana and mayors of other towns in
Namibia present;**

**Honourable Regional and Local Authority
Councillors;**

Meekulu Ohamba yOvaKwanyama Martha

Mwadinomho Kristian yaNelumbu;

**All leaders of the Traditional Authorities
present;**

Senior Government Officials,

Service Chiefs,

Members of the media,

Comrades and Friends

We are gathered here at this solemn occasion, to pay our respects and remember the life of an extraordinary individual, a pioneer and a heroine of our armed struggle. I use the word heroine to refer to its common definition, which is that of “a woman admired for her courage, outstanding achievements, or noble qualities.”

Comrade Auguste Mukwahepo Immanuel was a heroine in the truest sense, and in more ways than one. To the family we are joining in mourning today, she was a Meekulu, and a loving mother. To the liberation movement SWAPO, she was a pioneer and trailblazer by becoming the first woman to undergo military training under

the Southwest Africa Liberation Army (SWALA). That singular achievement, at a time when the military was a men's domain, qualifies her to carry the title of Heroine of our Armed Struggle.

Comrade Mukwahepo is no ordinary freedom fighter and no ordinary mother. She was and is extraordinary by breaking through barriers and stigma regarding women and their involvement in military combat. In 1964, at the age of 27, this brave Comrade left behind her fellow Namibians to continue their struggle on the home front while she joined other Namibians in exile with the intent of fighting for a free Namibia. As one the first Namibian women to go into exile during that period, we can

only imagine that it was a daunting task and no mean feat. She ventured alone into the unknown, as the only woman amongst men.

I had the good fortune of meeting Comrade Mukwahepo in person. During the first half of 1964 I had travelled to Léopoldville-Congo from Botswana, and after joining up with our representative at that time, Mr Andreas Shipanga, who introduced me to her.

The world she left behind in her motherland makes her achievement extraordinary. She left the country where raising children was primarily seen as the responsibility of women. While many women her age were undertaking the tasks of raising children

and taking care of household needs, she decided to chart a new course in her life journey. In doing so, she opened the doors for many other gallant daughters of Namibia, who later took the same decision to go into exile in order to fight for Namibia's freedom. She demonstrated to others, that it is possible to be woman, and take up arms for a cause that goes beyond gender.

This valiant daughter of the Namibian soil - this fearless girl from Onengali had a big heart. She put her life at risk and placed her trust in the belief that, no matter what it took, no matter how many souls would perish, Namibia was going to become a free nation. The Argentine revolutionary and

military theorist, Ernesto "Che" Guevara captures the extraordinary courage of beloved Comrade Mukwahepo when he says, "We cannot be sure of having something to live for unless we are willing to die for it." Our dear Comrade Mukwahepo understood that for Namibians to live as free and independent people, they had to be willing to die for that independence.

Even as a tough and fearless soldier, Comrade Mukwahepo always exuded the innate qualities of motherhood. She was selfless and caring. The additional responsibility of nursing the children of fellow freedom fighters who were fighting at the front and some who had gone further

afield to pursue their studies, attests to her outstanding generosity.

The fundamental nature and morality of a person can be judged by how a person treats children and the weak. Meekulu Mukwahepo's altruistic nature and higher canon of morals was forged during her upbringing, matured during the struggle and blossomed during her later years as the provider of her household. While many complain about the financial burden of raising children, Meekulu used her monthly war veterans' grant to take care of fifteen children of her deceased relatives, send them to school and take care of the household.

As we remember the heroic feats of our beloved trailblazing icon, let us adopt her never say die spirit; let us adopt her selflessness and moral fortitude; let us lend a hand to those in need, even with the little that we have. These are the characteristics that define this iconic daughter of our Land. These characteristics should define all Namibians in an independent Namibia. Comrade Mukwahepo and her peers fought for an exemplary Namibian. We should emulate this outstanding heroine of our Movement and our Armed Struggle.

May the soul of Comrade Meekulu Auguste Mukwahepo Immanuel, rest in eternal peace.