Our experience of the Windhoek uprising on 10 December 1959 taught us a lesson: that to be an effective force against brutal apartheid South Africa, we must not only be able to fend ourselves against these barbaric attacks, but we should also be in position to retaliate against the enemy. It was against this background that the SWAPO Central Committee decided to pursue simultaneously its three-pronged strategy, namely:

1. to carry out an effective mass political mobilisation inside the country,
2. to carry out an effective international political and diplomatic campaign, including petitioning the UN, aimed at isolating apartheid South Africa, and
3. to carry out military training of SWAPO cadres to effectively engage the enemy on all fronts, while simultaneously sending some of the cadres for further education.

The decision to complement the political mass mobilisation and diplomatic campaign with an armed liberation struggle was, as I have related already, inevitable. It was supported internationally, and also strongly supported by our people back home. Our SWAPO leaders — such as Comrades Elia-ser Tuhadeleni (Kosmiba Kandola), Reverend Hendrik Witbooi, David Meroro, Andimba Toivo Ya Toivo, John Ya Otto, Nathaniel Maxowili, Dr Thomas Nhanuva, Simon Kau-kunguwa, Aaron Mushimba, Jerry Ekandjo, Aaron Hamu-tenya, and Gabriel Mbidi, to mention but a few — played a vital role, particularly in politically mobilizing the people inside the country to join the armed liberation struggle.

In this regard, they were also assisted and encouraged by the return of Comrades Lukas Hifikepunye Pohamba and Elidier Muutaale to South West Africa in 1962, who carried out an effective mass politic campaign until they returned to exile in 1963 and 1964 respectively, taking many cadres with them. At this stage, there was no chance of working underground at home, like Lukas Hifikepunye Pohamba or, in 1964 Elidier Muutaale, who later sacrificed his life in the battle.

The South African plan which had been laid out in the manufacture of military combat armoured vehicles to be deployed against SWAPO. This trend was further demonstrated by the Australian Judge Spener at the International Court of Justice who also voted in favour of South Africa. On the other hand, as I have related, we were encouraged by Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, President of the United Republic of Tanzania (formerly Tanganyika), who provided SWAPO and other liberation movements with logistics and a military training camp at Kongwa, near Dodoma, about 300 miles inland from Dar-es-Salam.

In January 1963, Comrades Tobias Hai$njeko and Titus Mwailepeni were joined by four cadres including Elidier Muutaale, while some of them proceeded to the Nanking Military Academy in the People’s Republic of China where they were trained until April 1964. On 27 May 1963, we opened our military camp at Kongwa in Tanzania, with those Comrades who had received military training in Egypt, Algeria, Ghana, China, the Soviet Union and North Korea. Comrade Tobias Hai$njeko thus became the first Commander of the South West Africa Liberation Army (SWALA), with Comrade Petrus Hambija as Military Secretary and Titus Mwailepeni as Deputy Military Secretary of SWALA. Two weeks later, in June 1963, a group led by Comrade Dimo Hamasombo, (first) Chief of Defence Force in the Namibian Defence Force, arrived from Algeria. Comrade Hamasombo was, incidentally, one of the very few Namibians who had been to Europe at that time. He had been a stayaway on a merchant ship in the early 1950s, and had served a short sentence in Brixton prison in London before he was sent back by plane to South West Africa. As time went by, we were joined at Kongwa by more SWAPO men-bers from inside the country via British Bechuanaland. We trained them, together with recruits from Mozambique, led by the late Eduardo Mondlane, the first President of the Frelimo Party of Mozambique, and the MPLA led by the late Dr. Antonio Augustino Neto, first President of the People’s Republic of Angola, and by ZANU and ZAPU of Zimbabwe, as well as the ANC and PAC of South Africa. I was in constant contact with Commander Tobias Hai$njeko and the Military Council, and I regularly visited the training camp at Kongwa, but the day-to-day decisions regarding training and tactics were carried out by the Military Council of which I was the Chairman. The decision had been taken, even before the International Court of Justice fi-nanced, to send the first group of