



**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY DR SAM
NUJOMA, FOUNDING PRESIDENT AND FATHER
OF THE NAMIBIAN NATION, ON THE
OCCASSION OF THE MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR
THE LATE COMRADE HONOURABLE REVEREND
KAPTEIN HENDRIK WITBOOI**

PARLIAMENT GARDENS

WINDHOEK

23 OCTOBER 2009

**Director of Ceremonies;
Comrade Johanna Sophia Witbooi, the Widow, Children and the Entire
Family;
Your Excellency,
Comrade Hifikepunye Pohamba,
President of the Republic of Namibia;
Honourable Ministers;
Honourable Members of Parliament;
Your Excellencies; Members of the Diplomatic Corps;
Fellow Mourners:**

**We are gathered here to pay our last respect and tribute to one of
Namibian's heroes and heroines, a dedicated Teacher, Pastor, a
Revolutionary and fearless freedom fighter, Traditional Leader,
Acting Vice President of SWAPO, First Minister of Labour and
Manpower Development, Vice President of SWAPO Party and First
Deputy Prime Minister.**

**He distinguished himself as a selfless and fearless dedicated freedom
fighter who devoted his entire youthful and adult life to the just cause of
our genuine Freedom and Independence.**

**He followed in the footsteps of his great grand father, the legendary
Namibian Hero, Kaptein Hendrik Witbooi who fought heroically
against German colonial oppressors. Kaptein Hendrik Witbooi
defeated the German colonialists at Vaalgras and captured weapons
and ammunition. He later died in action at Khoichas near
Keetmanshoop on 29 May 1905 against the German colonial troops.
However, the struggle did not stop there. Jacob Marenga continued the
struggle. He held a press conference at Prieska in South Africa where
he undertook to continue fighting the German colonialists wherever he
will encounter them within the borders of South West Africa. The
struggle did not stop there either.**

**The Late Comrade Rev. Hendrik Witbooi whom we are mourning
today, continued with the struggle. At the peak of the liberation
struggle, many PLAN combatants were tasked to operate clandestinely
in the central and southern parts of our country.**

PLAN combatants were accommodated and operated in disguise as contractors at his house in Gibeon, but they had a clear mission to carry out military operations against the enemy. Among them were the Late Comrade John Pandeni, the then Minister of Regional, Local Government, Housing and Rural Development and Comrade Hon Peter Ilonga, Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Services. These Comrades were successful in carrying out military attacks against enemy infrastructures including blowing up bridges, telecommunication networks as well as training other comrades inside the country, including the Late Comrade Reverend Hendrik Witbooi himself, Comrade Willem Biwa and many others.

These PLAN military operations were successful because of his determination and visionary leadership. The Late Comrade Reverend Hendrik Witbooi intensified his mass political mobilization across the length and breadth of our country. In the early 1970s, he held several political rallies in various towns, including the formerly war zone at Oluno where he was teargassed by the South African minority white apartheid security forces.

In protest of Bantu education and colonial system of divide and rule, he established the African Methodist Episcopal Private School (AME) at Gibeon with a clear purpose of providing basic services to his community because the minority white apartheid regime of South Africa denied our people basic services such as health, education, and other basic public amenities. He also established a clinic with medical ambulances serving the rural areas in the southern parts of our country.

The AME accommodated teachers and student leaders who were expelled from government schools because of their dedication to the liberation struggle.

Due to the demands of the struggle which intensified especially from the 1970s, the Late Comrade Hendrik Witbooi decided to work full time for SWAPO combining both his pastoral work and his responsibilities at the AME private school with mass political mobilization campaign. Thousands of Namibians in the southern parts of our country joined SWAPO.

Today, SWAPO enjoys overwhelming support in the Hardap and Karas regions because of his mobilization work and a solid foundation that he has laid. Because of his unwavering and able leadership, he was elected

Acting Vice President of SWAPO in 1983, the position he held until 1997, when he was elected Vice President of SWAPO Party until 2002.

At independence on 21st March 1990, I appointed him as our first Minister of Labour and Manpower Development, the position he held until 1997, when he became the First Deputy Prime Minister until 2005, when he retired from active politics.

Indeed, the struggle has been long and bitter, at times very difficult if not impossible for those who resisted colonialism and apartheid, but Comrade Reverend Hendrik Witbooi stood firm and never wavered despite deceptive maneuvers by the enemy. He was on several occasions arrested by the enemy and imprisoned at Osire. He never betrayed the revolution until the final victory was achieved on 21st March 1990.

Director of Ceremonies;

The Late Comrade Reverend Hendrik Witbooi was a true and dedicated leader who served our country and his people with love and devotion. Indeed, the lion of the Karas Region is no more. However, his legacy leaves on forever.

We must therefore emulate his exemplary deeds of bravery in our march towards the attainment of our genuine economic independence.

We must take cognizance that our enemy today is not colonialism, but neo-colonialism which manifests itself in various forms of maneuvers by imperialists who are now busy cunningly initiating agreements with African countries that are aimed exploiting our natural resources for their own benefit at the expense of our peoples.

We should remain vigilant and united so that we continue to defend our territorial integrity and sovereignty, we must carry out and continued the struggle where the late Comrade Hendrik Witbooi left us with vigour and determination. This is the only way that we will truly honour the spirit and legacy of our heroes and heroines of which the Late Comrade Honourable Dr Reverend Hendrik Witbooi had stood for.

On behalf of Nujoma Family and indeed on my own behalf, I extend my heartfelt condolences and sympathies to the Widow, Comrade Johanna Sofia Witbooi, the entire family, relatives and friends, and all peace loving citizens of our country for the loss of our hero and a dedicated freedom fighter. May His Soul Rest In Eternal Peace.