

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT BY HON. FRANS
KAPOFI, MINISTER OF PRESIDENTIAL AFFAIRS ON
THE LETTER WRITTEN TO THE MEDIA BY MR.
HEWAT BEUKES ON THE BATTLE OF SAM KHUBIS
CENTENARY CELEBRATION.**

09 JULY 2015

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY,
WINDHOEK**

Deputy
Honorable Speaker,
Honorable Members,

1. I rise to speak about an issue which stands at the heart of the ongoing process of nation building, peace and stability, and the realization of our vision to create a society where no Namibian is left out. I am talking about the imperative of promoting the spirit of the Policy of National Reconciliation. This Policy was conceptualized and is still being vigorously pursued to ensure that from the date of independence onward, our people would embrace one another as compatriots, as brothers and sisters, focused on building a ^{new} united nation, a safe Namibian house for all who live in it.
2. By its very nature, National Reconciliation requires an ongoing, robust, serious and mature discourse aimed at promoting mutual respect, acceptance, tolerance and understanding amongst all Namibians. During the month of May this year, as the Baster Community was preparing for the Centenary Commemoration of the historic Battle of Sam /Khubis, the leader of the Workers Revolutionary Party, Mr. Hewat Beukes ~~and his wife~~ wrote a letter to the media denigrating the SWAPO Party and casting aspersions on our President, Dr. Hage Geingob.

3. The letter was totally disrespectful and therefore unacceptable. Its tone and content showed utter disregard and disdain towards the Presidency as a constitutional national institution and, indeed to the person occupying that high office. Mr. Beukes misguidedly appropriated himself the authority to purportedly bar the Head of State from attending the Centenary Commemorations of the Battle of Sam Khubis.
4. Yes, it is true that our supreme law guarantees all Namibians the freedom of expression and other fundamental rights. That is why it is celebrated as one of the most enlightened national constitutions in the world. However, we also know that those rights must be exercised in a responsible manner at all times. It is such common sense that is to be expected from a person such as Mr. Beukes, who calls himself a leader.

Honourable Speaker,

5. Dr. Geingob was democratically and overwhelmingly elected as President for all Namibians. He is the embodiment of our sovereignty, which no patriot should find fit to besmirch. In fact, he is the mirror that reflects Namibia here at home and outside the country.

6. Like other citizens, the President is free to go anywhere in the country and attend any event he so wishes. The same held true for the Sam /Khubis Festival.

Honourable Speaker,

7. The insinuations by Mr. Beukes should be seen for what they are: attempts to take us back to the past of Bantustans. Back to segregation. However, this truth is self-evident: Namibia was founded as a unitary state. One unit. Article 1 Sub-Article 1 of our Constitution is very clear on that score. Namibia is no longer, and will never again be divided along racial and tribal lines, as it was before independence. Our constitution has done away with and roundly rejected the ethos of Apartheid. It has done away with “Homelands”, with “Bantustans” and with “Gebiets”. We will never go back to that ugly past. We are now, One Namibia, One Nation. The results of democratic elections since independence underscore the desire of Namibian nationhood overwhelmingly.
8. I would like to ask: Despite his protestations and aspersions, was Mr. Beukes disingenuous with his missive to the media? Why did he not attend the Sam /Khubis commemorations?

9. It should be pointed out that after the Sam /Khubis Centenary Commemorations, the organizers of the Festival, led by the Chairperson of the Festival Committee, visited President Geingob at State House. They came in the spirit of National Reconciliation, in the spirit of One Namibia, One Nation. They also apologized to the President for the unfortunate and misguided utterances made by Mr. Hewat Beukes.
 10. The Policy of National Reconciliation, which was introduced by SWAPO Party opened a new chapter. This was needed for healing and forgiving as we started to build a new nation, which was scarred by many years of a bitter struggle for independence.
 11. This Policy set the tone for peace and stability. It remains the bedrock for the continuing task of nation building, today and tomorrow.
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8. At independence, measures such as the *Amnesty Proclamation No. 13 of 1989*, were put in place to grant amnesty from prosecution to people of Namibian birth, their children and spouses, who lived outside Namibia immediately prior to 6 June 1989 and who subsequently returned to the country through designated entry points. This Proclamation was intended to remove any fear that the

returning freedom fighters, would be prosecuted for their actions taken during the liberation struggle.

9. Furthermore, under the *Amnesty Proclamation No. 16 of 1989*, amnesty was granted to members of the South African Police, the South West African Police, the South African Defense Force, and the South West African Territorial Force, for their acts which amounted to criminal offences. Even members of the notorious “Koevoet” were not prosecuted for their crimes against the Namibian people.
12. In the spirit of National Reconciliation, the segregated civil service was unified after independence. In the spirit of National Reconciliation, the former adversaries who fought on the opposite sides were integrated to form one national defence force, one national police force, and one correctional service. This visionary decision to unite our country has served Namibia well. No one, including Mr. Beukes, should be allowed to reverse the progress we have achieved over the past 25 years.
13. We are at a historical juncture in our democracy, where we have declared an all-out war against poverty. Our people should not seek to derail this process by making incendiary statements, which may undermine National Reconciliation and the other goals we aim to achieve.

14. As a country, we have had 25 years of peace and stability. The making of inflammatory statements and accusations are not in the best interest of our country and her people. They are not helpful. They will only whip up unnecessary emotions and reopen the healing wounds inflicted on our nation by the tyranny of apartheid.

15. For some people, peace seems to be boring, however, we must all be aware that the cost of instability and social unrest can be unfathomable.

16. Those that sow the wind, will reap the storm.

I thank you.

