



**SPEECH**

**BY**

**THE PRESIDENT, HIS EXCELLENCY**

**DR.E.D.MNANGAGWA**

**AT THE MEMORIAL SERVICE OF THE LATE CDE DR. J. B. MATIZA**

**HARARE**

**16 DECEMBER 2021**

It is my distinct privilege to join you as we honour, remember and celebrate the life of the late National Hero and Minister of Transport and Infrastructure Development, Dr Joel Biggie Matiza, who passed-on, on 22 January 2021. This occasion follows similar events held in memory of the late National Heroes, Cde Subisiso Busi Moyo and Cde Paradzai Willings Zimondi. It is most befitting that the three exemplary and outstanding cadres of our great nation, who were interred on the same day, are equally being remembered during the same period.

On behalf of the Government and people of Zimbabwe, our Party ZANU PF and indeed on my own behalf; I want to thank the Matiza family for inviting us to be part of this family congregation remembering and celebrating the life and sacrifices of Cde Joel Biggie Matiza.

As already highlighted by earlier speakers, Cde Matiza has a rich and multi-faceted legacy which will be engrained in the history of our country. He was a loyal and dedicated revolutionary cadre as well as a reliable and dependable professional architect, who left an indelible mark in an array of projects, throughout the country. The footprints he left behind are indeed still etched in the ongoing construction, rehabilitation and maintenance of our national infrastructure, particularly roads and ports of entry.

As one philosopher put it, ‘the life given to us by nature is short, but the memory of a life well-spent, is eternal’. His service to both the Party and Government towards building, modernising and transforming our country’s socio-economic landscape will forever be cherished.

You will recall that, sadly, due to the restrictions induced by the COVID-19 pandemic, the late Cde J. B Matiza’s body could not lie in state at his rural home. Neither did many from his home area of Murehwa, Mashonaland East Province and the country at large, physically attend the burial proceedings at the Heroes Acre, as per our usual tradition.

Such was the solemn period that characterised those dark days during the second wave of the pandemic. It is therefore most opportune that we have been accorded this time to gather today, to collectively remember this gallant son of the soil.

**Fellow Comrades, Family and Friends;**

As you may be aware, the late Cde Joel Biggie Matiza was born on 17 August 1960 in Murehwa, Mashonaland East Province. He attended various primary schools, including Nyamutumbu, Kambarami and Monte Casino between 1966 and 1972.

After noticing the increasing oppression of the ordinary masses by the brutal colonial regime, the late National Hero, decided to join the liberation struggle at the tender age of 15 years.

Abandoning his education, he left for Zambia to join groups of other brave young cadres, driven by their revolutionary consciousness and the need to liberate their motherland from the oppressive yoke of white settler minority colonialism. It was then that he assumed his Chimurenga name, “Cde Destroyer Ndlovu”.

While in Zambia, he suffered injuries during the callous, brutal and indiscriminate bombing of Freedom Camp by the Rhodesian Forces. He was hospitalised in Lusaka and later sent to study in Nigeria, where he completed his Ordinary and Advanced levels. Thereafter, he enrolled at Amadu Bello University and graduated with a Bachelor of Architecture Degree.

The late Cde Matiza was a constantly learning individual, always broadening his qualifications. This saw him attain a Master of Science Degree in Strategic Management at the University of Derby.

Most recently, he was posthumously awarded his Doctorate Degree in Business Administration from Binary University of Malaysia, in collaboration with Chinhoyi University of Technology.

Following Cde J.B. Matiza's return to independent Zimbabwe in 1985, he served briefly in the private sector. After which, he joined Government's Urban Development Corporation. He then left to establish his own architectural firm, Mutupa Matiza Architects.

The man whose life we celebrate today was a firm believer in black empowerment. A humble, soft spoken and hardworking professional, the late National Hero was also a versatile coordinator with great foresight. As such, Cde Matiza was always available and ready to deploy his competencies and skill-set for the benefit of our beloved country. Taking a leaf from the life of Cde Matiza, I challenge our people at all levels, both locally and abroad, to be available for deployment and to use their skills and experiences to accelerate the sustainable development agenda of our country. Zimbabweans are known to be a hard working people. However, in keeping with our mantra '**Nyika inovakwa nevene vayo**'; this hard work ethic must be expressed towards building our own country. Zimbabweans have the primary obligation to build Zimbabwe, their mother land.

Despite his unique professional competencies, Cde Matiza remained an active member of our Party, ZANU PF, rising to the position of Provincial Chairman of Mashonaland East Province. This should serve as a testimony to all that our Party ZANU PF has room for everyone. Regardless of your professions and backgrounds, you are all welcome in ZANU PF. We are a mass revolutionary Party; a People's Party.

### **Distinguished Guests;**

The late National Hero, Cde J. B. Matiza rose through the Party structures, ultimately serving as District Chairman of Musami District in Murehwa from 1997 to 2000. It was during this period that he was elected as Member of Parliament for Murehwa South Constituency.

His sound revolutionary grounding and commitment to serve in both our Party and Government saw him elected as Provincial Secretary for Finance for Mashonaland East as well as my Deputy Minister, in the Ministry of Rural Housing and Social Amenities in 2005. It was during his tenure as Deputy Minister of Rural Housing and Social Amenities that he conceptualised and developed, the “model rural home”. This resulted in the construction of the model homes for some of our traditional leaders.

In 2008, our late National Hero was nominated into the ZANU PF Central Committee. This was in recognition of the late Cde Matiza’s astute leadership and unwavering consistency, persistency, patriotism and loyalty to the Party ideology, principles and ethos. That same year, he was again re-elected as Murehwa South Constituency Member of Parliament. He was thus, a well grounded Party cadre, who went through the mill, always touring the correct Party Line. He demonstrated unflinching loyalty.

During his tenure as Minister of State for Provincial Affairs and the ZANU PF Chairman for Mashonaland East Province, the late Cde J B Matiza was instrumental in entrenching unity and driving people centred development within the province. Always tactful and consistent, he crafted and relentlessly coordinated the implementation of programmes which improve the quality of life of grassroots communities. This saw the Party maintain its long standing political dominance in Mashonaland East Province.

Us who remain, must persist on our collective quest to build of our great country, brick by brick, stone upon stone. We all have a collective obligation to honour him and other fallen heroes by working hard for the realisation of Vision 2030.

**Fellow Comrades, Family and Friends;**

The late Cde J.B. Matiza was painfully taken away from us during one of the peak periods of his political and professional career. As Minister of Transport and Infrastructure Development, his able stewardship and clarity of purpose; saw him skillfully coordinate the modernisation and construction of key national infrastructure.

Notable among these is the widening and upgrading of the Beitbridge-Harare Highway as well as the ongoing Emergency Road Rehabilitation Programme which commenced under his watch. These now constitute part of his rich legacy.

The late National Hero understood and believed in the “none but ourselves” model of development, which is a key tenet of the Second Republic. Cde Matiza was thus, an advocate and believer in the professional competencies and abilities of Zimbabweans, with regards to undertaking complex national projects, benchmarked with world class standards.

To our local companies, I assure you that my Government will continue to entrust you with greater responsibility in nation building, across all sectors of the economy. Continue with the good work that you have shown to date. As I have promised, hard honest work, professionalism, skills and talent will be rewarded by my Administration.

Meanwhile, I call upon various contractors to speedily complete the ongoing infrastructure projects. The tradition of needless complaining, finger pointing, and excuses is not part of the culture of the Second Republic.

My Government is about results, action and progressive dialogue which advance the national interests. Forward ever backwards never. This was the tradition and ethos that the late Cde J. B Matiza upheld.



## **Comrades, Family and Friends;**

As we celebrate and remember the life of our dearly departed National Hero, the reality of the menacing COVID-19 pandemic is glaring before us. Let us therefore remain on our guard. On its part, my Government will keep monitoring the trend in order to make timely and requisite decisions to protect lives and livelihoods.

In memory of the gallant fallen heroes of our great country, such as the late Cde J. B Matiza, the cardinal principles of unity, peace, patriotism, loyalty, hard-honest work, love and harmony must be jealously guarded. More so, as we approach the 2022 by-elections and ultimately the 2023 Harmonised General Elections.

Violence and criminal acts of any kind, will not be tolerated.

Finally, the late National Hero and Minister of Transport and Infrastructure Development, Cde Joel Biggie Matiza undoubtedly left us with a rich collective memory. His contribution, before and after the independence of our beloved motherland Zimbabwe, shall forever be cherished.

Continue to rest in eternal peace, Son of the Soil. Rambai, **muchi zorora murugare, Gamba rema Gamba.** Lala ngokuthula Qhawe lama Qhawe.

**God bless you all.**

**God bless Zimbabwe.**

**I thank you.**