



**SPEECH**

**BY**

**THE PRESIDENT AND CHANCELLOR  
HIS EXCELLENCY, DR E.D. MNANGAGWA**

**AT THE  
BURIAL OF THE LATE NATIONAL HERO MAJOR GEN.  
(RTD) SIKHULILE SIMPSON NYATHI**

**13 JUNE 2022**

**NATIONAL HEROES ACRE**

We are gathered here again, to pay our last respects and lay to rest one of our gallant sons and a veteran of the national war of liberation, Major General (Rtd) Sikhulile Simpson Nyathi, who passed on, on Sunday the 5<sup>th</sup> of June 2022.

On behalf of the ZANU PF Party, Government and on my own behalf, I express my heartfelt condolences to the Nyathi Family on this sad loss. The loss weighs heavily on the nation as it comes when we have barely recovered from the pain and loss of the National Hero, Major General (Rtd) Godfrey Chanakira.

In Major General (Rtd) Simpson Nyathi, the nation has lost a committed revolutionary cadre whose life and career, before and after Independence, symbolises what it means to put one's people and country above all else. Intelligent, articulate, humble, jovial, warm and likeable, the late Major General Nyathi, was prepared to pay the ultimate sacrifice with regards the attainment of sovereignty, independence, nationhood and democracy.

The late Major General was born on 12 September 1960 at Mapate Village under Chief Mathe, Gwanda District in Matabeleland South Province. He did his primary education at Mapate School and proceeded to Manama School for his secondary education.

The repressive system put in place by the minority white settler regime led by Ian Smith frustrated Africans in all facets of life, especially the youth, through bottlenecks that created privileges for the white settlers. This system, which disempowered and treated the black majority as second class citizens, made us mere slave labourers in our country of birth. This drove many of our brave and courageous young Zimbabweans to leave the country to join the protracted armed struggle and fight for Independence

It is in this context that, mission schools and institutions of higher learning became fertile ground for the recruitment of cadres that joined the armed struggle. At the tender age of 17 years, while waiting for his Ordinary Level examination results, the then youthful Simpson Nyathi teamed up with other school

mates from Manama Mission, such as the late National Hero and our former Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Lieutenant General (Rtd) Sibusiso Moyo to join the Liberation Struggle.

The contingent of such brave young fighters received conduit and transit services from neighbouring countries such as Botswana, whilst Zambia, Mozambique and Tanzania offered rear bases that made it possible to house, train and infiltrate fighters into the country. We are grateful to these and other members of the Front Line State, the Liberation Committee of the then OAU, now African Union, among other friendly and progressive countries, for their solidarity and support.

The nation and in particular our young people must, therefore, emulate the spirit of supreme sacrifice and play a vanguard role in scaling up and accelerating efforts towards building a prosperous and united Zimbabwe, from Zambezi to Limpopo and from Plumtree to Mutare.

## **Fellow Mourners;**

The late Major General (Rtd) Simpson Nyathi received initial military training in January 1978, first in Zambia and thereafter, was among the few Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) cadres that were enrolled at the Higher Komsolomol Political Training School in Moscow in the then Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Upon successfully completing military and political training in the USSR, the late Major General returned to Zambia and was assigned to the ZIPRA Commissariat Department, operating from Freedom Camp in Chikumbi.

He worked in the ZAPU Publicity Department, producing liberation war material that raised the political consciousness of many of our people and mobilised cadres to support and join the armed Liberation Struggle. The late Major General (Rtd) Simpson Nyathi was among those caught up in the ruthless bombings at Freedom Camp by the racist Rhodesian soldiers in October 1978, which resulted in the death of hundreds of cadres and refugees. He

survived the barbaric attack and was later deployed to Mulungushi Training Camp as a Political Commissar in one of the ZIPRA battalions.

The enduring revolutionary war of liberation was a people's war which inculcated a political consciousness that endeared cadres to the cause.

This was the role that the sharp and articulate Major General (Rtd) Simpson Nyathi played, generating liberation content that galvanised cadres and the masses on the importance of sacrifice and participation in the war for national liberation.

The late National Hero, Major General Nyathi was later deployed to the Kavalamanja Unit, commanded by the late Brigadier Collins Moyo. The unit was subjected to an air raid by the Rhodesian Air Force in the Luangwa area adjacent to the Mbire District of Mashonaland Central Province.

The late Major General Nyathi sustained injuries that saw him being hospitalised in Luangwa. Upon recovery, he remained undeterred and re-joined his battalion,

which was now operating in the Northern Front around Kanyemba

He was again hospitalised at Makeni Hospital in Lusaka, following injuries sustained in a grenade attack in the period just before Ceasefire in 1979. Thereafter, he was deployed to the Gwayi River Assembly Point.

### **Fellow Mourners, Comrades and Friends;**

The experiences that Major General (Rtd) Nyathi went through, including witnessing some of his colleagues being killed in the war front, is testimony that the struggle for independence was not a stroll in the park. The strong urge to fight and resist the discriminatory conditions forced on his people is the heroism that we revere and honour him for today.

Together with other cadres, they did not allow themselves to be resigned and overwhelmed by the seemingly omnipotent settler rule. The individual and collective vision, perseverance and sacrifices by the

brave generation of our cadres, is personified in the exemplary life of Major General (Rtd) Simpson Nyathi.

Despite evading death by a whisker on several encounters with the Rhodesian forces, he chose to serve in the military and was attested into the Zimbabwe National Army in 1980.

I commend the security sector, including the Zimbabwe National Army, for dutifully executing their Constitutional mandate of guaranteeing the peaceful, secure and stable environment that we continue to enjoy as a country. The late National Hero contributed to the establishment of an agile, versatile and professional Zimbabwe National Army. His versatility and commitment to serve saw him leading complex training in logistics and other demanding assignments.

In recognition of his exemplary leadership and selfless dedication to serve the nation, he was awarded a number of medals for his outstanding achievements. These include the Liberation Medal; Independence Medal; Ten-Years' Service Medal; Long and Exemplary Service Medal; Mozambican Campaign Medal; Democratic Republic of Congo Campaign Medal and



the Grand Officer of the Zimbabwe Order of Merit Award.

The late Major General (Rtd) Nyathi was by no means an ordinary man, but a true revolutionary cadre who gave up everything to advance the cause of this nation. His life provides the unfolding experiences and episodes that we as Zimbabweans should always learn from and embrace.

He bequeaths to us an indelible lesson and mark in our country's history that it takes unity, supreme sacrifice, patriotism, loyalty and dedication to free and build a strong nation.

It is through these virtues and values of our national character that we continue to consolidate our independence and use our land, among other natural resource endowments, to advance our quest to become masters of our own destiny.

We are rising beyond the trials and tribulations of the current global shifts, illegal economic sanctions imposed on us effects of climate change and now COVID-19.

The spirit of commitment to our country and hard work that runs through the life of our heroes and heroines such as Major General (Rtd) Naythi should galvanise us to work for the prosperity of Zimbabwe. This is more pertinent and urgent as the National Development Strategy lays the sound roadmap for the accelerated attainment of an upper middle income society status by 2030. I, therefore, challenge Zimbabweans at home and abroad, and every stakeholder to be part of this roadmap so as to modernise, industrialise and grow our economy.

Meanwhile, my Government is seized with the implementation of mechanisms to reign in the current increases in prices. In this regard, I exhort business and other stakeholders across various sectors of the economy to assume a strong sense of national responsibility, and commit to the overall realisation of

sustainable socio-economic development and improved quality of life of our people. Speculative and unethical business behaviour will never be tolerated as this weighs on the projected growth performance of our economy.

### **Fellow Zimbabweans;**

The late National Hero Major General (Rtd) Nyathi will be forever remembered for his sacrifices in bringing about independence as well as defending the country during an exemplary career in the Zimbabwe Army.

Together with many other departed and living heroes and heroines, Major General (Rtd) Nyathi fought for the establishment of a Government from the people, for the people and by the people. Through devolution and decentralisation, and informed by our development philosophy **Nyika inovakwa nevene vayo**", my Government is leaving no one and no place behind by building roads, dams, clinics, schools and registry offices, among other development projects.

We should, therefore, honour and remember the sacrifices of our dear departed distinguished sons and daughters of the soil by defending the gains of independence and development by voting for ZANU PF during the 2023 Harmonised General Elections.

Furthermore, I call upon all Zimbabweans, civil society organisations and political parties to conduct themselves in a peaceful and non-violent manner. Violence must never be allowed in all our interaction.

Finally, to the late Major General Nyathi, I say, Go well our country's liberator, Go well Son of the Soil, Go well, Go well our National Hero, Zororai murugare Gamba remaGamba, rest in Eternal Peace our Commander. Lala ngokuthula Qhawe Lama Qhawe. As you join other cadres and luminaries long departed, we who remain, shall continue working hard for the defence and prosperity of our Motherland, Zimbabwe.

**God bless you.**

**God bless Zimbabwe.**

**I thank you.**