



ZIMBABWE

ADDRESS

BY

**THE PRESIDENT AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF
OF THE ZIMBABWE DEFENCE FORCES HIS
EXCELLENCY, CDE. E. D. MNANGAGWA**

AT

**THE 44th ANNIVERSARY OF THE ZIMBABWE
DEFENCE FORCES DAY**

RUFARO STADIUM

13th AUGUST, 2024



**THE PRESIDENT AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF
OF THE ZIMBABWE DEFENCE FORCES,
HIS EXCELLENCY
COMRADE EMMERSON DAMBUDZO MNANGAGWA.**

Director of Ceremonies;

First Lady, Amai A. Mnangagwa;

Vice President, Hon. Gen. (Rtd) Dr C. G. D. N. Chiwenga and Amai;

Vice President, Hon. Col. (Rtd) K. C. D. Mohadi;

Minister of Defence and Chairman of ZANU PF, Hon. O. C. Z. Muchinguri-Kashiri;

Minister of State for Provincial Affairs and Devolution, Harare Province, Hon. Sen. C. Z. Tavengwa;

Speaker of Parliament, Hon. Adv. J. F. N. Mudenda;

President of the Senate, Hon. Amai M. M. Chinomona;

Chief Justice, Hon. Justice L. Malaba;

President of the National Chief's Council, Chief
M. Khumalo;

Members of the Politburo and Central Committee;

Leaders of other Political Parties here present;

Honourable Ministers;

Chief Secretary to the President and Cabinet,
Dr M. Rushwaya;

Chairman of the Public Service Commission,
Dr V. Hungwe;

Commander Defence Forces, General P. V.
Sibanda;

Commander Zimbabwe National Army,
Lt. Gen. A. N. Sanyatwe;

Commander Air Force of Zimbabwe, Air Marshal
J. J. Nzvede;

Commissioner General Zimbabwe Republic
Police, Commissioner G. T. Matanga;

Commissioner General Zimbabwe Prisons and
Correctional Service, Commissioner M. Chihobvu;

Director General President's Department,
Ambassador I. Moyo;

Senior Government Officials;

Your Worship the Mayor of Harare, Councillor
J. Mafume;

Members of the Diplomatic Corps;

Invited Guests;

Comrades and Friends.

It is with a great sense of joy and pride that we
gather here at Rufaro Stadium to celebrate yet
another year of excellence by the Zimbabwe
Defence Forces. This year's theme: **“Zimbabwe**

Defence Forces: Guaranteeing a Conducive Environment for the Attainment of Vision 2030”, aptly captures the important contribution that the Zimbabwe Defence Forces must continue to make towards accelerating the realisation of our National Vision.

On behalf of the people and Government of Zimbabwe, my family and indeed on my own behalf, I congratulate the Zimbabwe Defence Forces for the achievements made in advancing the peace, unity and development of our beloved motherland, Zimbabwe. The nation further salutes you all, for your unflinching commitment and dedication to safeguarding the territorial integrity of our great country. We treasure the vigilance and manner in which our Defence Forces continue to diligently and professionally execute their mandate and duties. **Makorokoto, Amhlophe. Congratulations.**

As we commemorate this year's celebrations, the broader environment is characterised by glaring limitations in the international peace and security architecture. Further, among other new types of security threats, the world is witnessing an upsurge of terrorism and cross border crime, coupled with undue foreign interference in the internal affairs of countries, especially for us in the Global South and East. This brings to the fore, the need for robust military systems and Defence Forces that are continually evolving.

In this regard, there remains a strong need to enhance not only our domestic military systems but cross border military and security cooperation. As such, and in the context of the long-standing spirit of unity and oneness that forms the bedrock of the SADC Region, I extend a special and hearty welcome to the delegation of the Zambian Defence Forces, including their football team, which has joined us today.

By the same token, I also acknowledge the presence of representatives from the Malawian Defence Forces who are on a benchmarking visit.

The participation of members of the Defence Forces from Sister Republics at our national events is a strong statement of our unbreakable people to people bonds which transcend all spheres of our life, extending to the defence and military sector. Our ties are historic and were further strengthened during the fight for the liberation and independence of our respective countries. SADC is indivisible, united and one.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

The choice of Rufaro Stadium invokes sentimental memories. It was at these historic grounds, on the eve of 18 April 1980, when the Union Jack was lowered and the Zimbabwean Flag hoisted. That symbolic act marked the birth of an independent and free Zimbabwe; it ushered us into a journey of yet again charting our own course and destiny.

It was also in surrounding residential suburbs such as Mbare and Highfields where many of our citizens were brutalised for their resistance and rejection of the racist colonial administration. These neighbourhoods incubated and strengthened the resolve of many sons and daughters of Zimbabwe to wage the protracted liberation struggle for democracy, freedom and Independence.

Today's celebrations on these grounds, afford us the opportunity to once again reflect on the arduous journey that our nation has travelled to realise the rights and freedoms we so dearly cherish today.

Under the Second Republic, the spirit, hope, determination and zeal that engulfed many of our countrymen and women who gathered here, on that momentous day, is burning bright. Never again will we be under the shackles of foreign rule and subjugation, in whatever form.

I commend the Zimbabwe Defence Forces for keeping alive the rich liberation ethos as well as the intricate principles and values deployed at the establishment of a united security apparatus in 1980. Equally, your defence of our national interests as embodied in our national Constitution, over the years, has been exemplary and unflinching.

The formidability, reliability, dependability, professionalism and discipline of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces remain the guarantor of the peace and security necessary for the development, modernisation, industrialisation and prosperity of our nation. Despite the negative effects of illegal sanctions imposed by some Western countries, the ZDF stands firm. We thank you all officers, men and women for your loyalty and consistent service to Zimbabwe. **Tinokutendayi. Siyalibonga.**

Ladies and Gentlemen; Comrades and Friends; Zimbabwe is not spared from both emerging and traditional security threats that include

transnational organised crime, human trafficking, cyber security threats, drug trafficking and climate change-induced challenges, among others. We are not blind to these threats and the manner these affect the peace, safety and security of our people, while also undermining economic and national stability.

I, therefore, commend the Zimbabwe Defence Forces for their focus and commitment to dealing with all threats. This has included the broadening of capacity-building and training programmes. Such programmes will go a long way towards nurturing innovative and proactive approaches for the continued agility and adaptability of our country's defence institutions.

The ongoing participation of allied students in our training programmes is applauded for enhanced regional military cooperation, synergies and inter-force operability.

Beyond Africa, Zimbabwe is grateful for the longstanding support we are receiving from our fraternal friends and partners such as the People's Republic of China, Russian Federation, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Pakistan, in the form of training, exchange programmes as well as other forms of backing in defence and security spheres. They were with us in our quest to attain independence and freedom; they are with us today; they will remain our strong allies in the future.

Meanwhile, an array of strategies are under way to improve the welfare of members of our Defence Forces. Non-monetary incentives and benefits such as Civil Service Housing Loans and the Civil Service Vehicle Purchase schemes have been extended to members of the Defence Forces.

Further, my Government has expanded the transport fleet for the Defence Forces, through the procurement and delivery of an assortment of vehicles.

Over and above housing units that are ready for occupation, Government will soon be embarking on the construction of 3 000 housing units for members of the ZDF. This is part of the comprehensive programme by my Administration to increase affordable housing stock throughout the country.

Similarly, healthcare for members of the Defence Forces is of critical importance for their general upkeep. My Government is committed to make sure that all military hospitals and health institutions have requisite modern equipment and adequate medicines. The construction of the Defence Forces Referral Hospital at Manyame Air Force Base, is being accelerated.

Comrades and Friends;

In peace times, the Defence Forces remain a critical cog in our national development agenda. I, therefore, congratulate the Zimbabwe Defence Forces for living up to our national philosophy

that says ‘**Nyika inovakwa, inotongwa, inonamatigwa nevene vayo/ilizwe lakhiwa, libuswe, likhulekelwe ngabanikazi balo.**’

As part of ongoing civil-military relations, the ZDF is implementing several community development and assistance projects. The free health care being offered to communities at grassroots level is applauded and a testament that you remain a people’s army. **Well done.**

Modern school infrastructure are being constructed at Kuwadzana 2 High School in Harare; Tshino High School in Tsholotsho; Tsungai-Shumba Primary School in Nembudziya, Gokwe; St Charles Luwanga Secondary School in Chimanimani and Samanyika School in Nyanga, among others.

These projects complement my Government’s thrust of ensuring quality education and learning environments for all students, no matter where they live.

Additionally, I applaud the Zimbabwe Defence Forces for supporting the Zimbabwe Republic Police in combating illegal activities, along the country's borders and assisting the Civil Protection Unit in search and rescue operations.

In the case of memorialising our rich liberation heritage, it is commendable that the Ministry of Defence, in collaboration with other Ministries, Departments and Agencies as well as counterparts from the Mozambican Government, is constructing a monument and a health centre in the Massinga District of Inhambane Province in Mozambique. This is in memory and remembrance of our late National Hero, General Josiah Magama Tongogara.

In the same spirit, a Memorandum of Understanding with Angola will see the construction of a similar monument and the preservation of mass graves of our fallen heroes, whose remains lie in Angola.

Fellow Countrymen and Women;

Zimbabwe, under the Second Republic, is a “Friend to all and an enemy of none.” We firmly subscribe to diplomacy and dialogue as the sustainable route for the resolution of conflicts, disputes and differences.

We are committed and stand ready to play our part for the realisation of the African Union quest to ‘**Silence the Guns**’. Presently, the Zimbabwe Defence Forces has officers deployed to United Nations Missions and other peace support missions under the mandate of the African Union.

I congratulate these officers for raising our national flag high.

The commitment by the ZDF to promoting gender equity is evident by the implementation of the National Action Plan for Women in Peace and Security in line with the United Nations Security Council Resolution.

With regards to humanitarian efforts, obligations under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention are being honoured with the ongoing clearance of landmines and other explosive remnants of war. The work by the ZDF and its partners towards a mine free Zimbabwe by 2025 is noteworthy.

As I conclude, I once again congratulate the officers, men and women of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces for excelling in their constitutional mandate and function “of protecting Zimbabwe, its people, national security and interests as well as the territorial integrity of our beloved motherland. **We are also proud of your exploits in the region and beyond.**

Today as one united, Independent, peaceful and democratic country, from Plumtree to Mutare and Beitbridge to Chirundu; we celebrate and salute you, for your selfless, diligent and vigilant service. Thank you. **Tinotenda. Siyabonga.**

With these remarks, I wish all the members of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces, their families and the nation as a whole, happy and memorable celebrations of the 44th Zimbabwe Defence Forces Day.

Long live our Defence Forces.

Long Live Zimbabwe.

Long Live our Peace, Unity, Freedom and Sovereignty.

God bless us all.

God bless Zimbabwe.

I thank you.