



SPEECH

BY

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

AT THE

**GRADUATION CEREMONY OF THE JOINT
COMMAND AND STAFF COURSE NUMBER
37- ZIMBABWE STAFF COLLEGE**

HARARE

29 NOVEMBER 2024

Director of Ceremonies;

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

Minister of State for Harare Metropolitan Province, Hon. C. Z. Tawengwa;

Honourable Ministers here present;

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

Chairman of the Public and Defence Forces Service Commissions, Dr V. Hungwe;

Secretary for Defence, Cde A. D. T. Nhepera;

Commander Zimbabwe Defence Forces, General P. V. Sibanda;

Commander Zimbabwe National Army, Lieutenant General A. N. Sanyatwe;

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

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

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

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

Your Excellences, Members of the Diplomatic *Corps* here present;

Commandant of the Zimbabwe Staff College, Brigadier General Dr J. Muzvidziwa;

General and Air Officers;

Senior Officers and Members of the Directing Staff;

Families of the Graduands;

Comrades and Friends.

It is my distinct honour and privilege to be officiating at this 37th Graduation Ceremony of the Joint Command and Staff Course, here at one of our country's premier military institutions, the Zimbabwe Staff College.

This graduation ceremony is occurring against a backdrop when our region and the continent are

re-examining the approaches to peace and security in Africa.

In the past, the security and defence infrastructure, were central cogs in the liberation struggles against colonial and racist regimes. Today, this strategic sector is of fundamental importance, in the maintenance of national sovereignty and territorial integrity. It is equally integral in advancing sustainable economic and social development, not only in our beloved motherland, Zimbabwe, but within the SADC region and African Continent as a whole.

Presently, our broader security environment in the region is characterised by armed conflicts, terrorism as well as the proliferation and illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. There is an increase in organised, transnational crime; drug trafficking; money laundering and human trafficking. The growing frequency of climate change induced natural disasters remains a core concern.

Meanwhile, technology advancements have resulted in greater discoveries of additional rich natural resources within our country and on the Continent. Regrettably, this has entailed greater interests from those who would want to rob from us our God given wealth, by seeking to manipulate, coerce, infiltrate and even over-throw our governments.

All these, among many others, call for defence and security training, skills and manpower development that speak to the challenges of this contemporary and diverse security environment. Additionally, there are various forms of asymmetrical warfare, undue interference in the internal affairs of our countries, monopolisation and manipulation of the global media space.

It is your weighty duty and obligation, as members of the defence forces of Zimbabwe, SADC and Africa, to continually enhance the capacity to prevent the subversion of our respective and collective constitutional order and national sovereignties.

Our mantra, “African solutions to African problems,” must remain true for posterity. A country is built and must be defended by its own people. The responsibility to proffer and implement solutions to propel the peace, security, development, modernisation and prosperity of our country, the SADC region and African Continent lies with all of us; including you in our defence and security sector. This duty and weighty obligation should never be taken for granted.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Turning specifically to today’s event, I commend the Zimbabwe Defence Forces, for the success milestones realised with regards to the demands of skills development. Similarly, it is pleasing to note that the Defence Forces have continued fostering and cementing relations in the sub-region by enrolling students within the African Union. Such wide enrolment and interaction promotes solidarity and facilitates the cross-pollination

of ideas and experiences. The student representation from East Africa is, thus, a welcome development.

As you are aware, seamless defence and security infrastructure go a long way towards ending conflict on the African continent. I applaud the fact that this graduating class had the occasion to embark on external Study Tours to Cote d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Tanzania and Uganda, as part of their geo-political studies. This is also consistent with the principles of regional integration, solidarity and cooperation. I hope that the lessons from the tours broadened the students' appreciation of the key drivers of regional security and statecraft.

May I thank the various host governments for their kind support and facilitation that made these excursions a resounding success.

The participation of the Zimbabwe Staff College, for the seventh year running, in the Combined Joint African

Exercise UHURU in September 2024, along with Colleges from Angola, Botswana, Malawi, South Africa, and Zambia is a reflection of Zimbabwe's commitment to play its part in consolidating and sharpening the requisite skills to plan and conduct Peace Support Operations.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

May I once again emphasise that Africa and our SADC region should scale up multi-pronged strategies to “Silence The Guns” on our continent. The astronomical cost of wars and conflicts deprive our people, of the much needed development and prosperity.

The SADC Mutual Defence Pact as well as the United Nation's Charter enjoin States to pursue the settlement of international disputes by peaceful means.

We have a duty to do so in a manner that regional and international peace, security and justice are enhanced.

In this spirit, I, direct the Staff College and other defence and security institutions, within our country, to diversify the various content of your programmes. To this end, due attention must be given to equip officers with the essential know-how to promote the peaceful settlement of disputes through negotiation, conciliation, mediation or arbitration, for the benefit of our peoples.

Further, in view of the growing negative impact of climate change, it is critically important that the relevant members of our defence forces constantly enhance capabilities around disaster management. The efficient and timely co-ordination of both internal and regional humanitarian assistance in the aftermath of natural disasters, should also be improved.

The Zimbabwe Defence Forces is, thus, exhorted to approach manpower development gaps, training and skills programmes from a whole new paradigm.

Finally, I am confident that the Joint Command and Staff Course has equipped the graduates with the necessary

skills to proficiently carry out their constitutional mandate as both commanders and staff.

Allow me to thank the People's Republic of China for their continued support to Zimbabwe in general and to the Zimbabwe Defence Forces in particular, through the secondment of Military Instructors to the Zimbabwe Staff College and the Zimbabwe National Defence University.

The Ministry of Defence, the Commander Defence Forces and the Service Commanders are congratulated for persistently and consistently responding to the manpower development needs of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces.

By the same token, gratitude is extended to Members of the Diplomatic *Corps*, accredited to Zimbabwe, speakers from the academia, Government, civic society, industry and commerce, who tirelessly contributed towards the success of the Joint Command and Staff Course 37, that is graduating today. The Commandant Zimbabwe Staff

College, Brigadier General, Dr Muzvidziwa and your team, we value your contribution.

To the graduates, I say **congratulations, makorokoto, amhlophe**, for the success milestones you have achieved today. The award of your certificates is the beginning of a long and demanding professional journey that lies ahead. Evidence of gained knowledge must be demonstrated in the quality of your outputs and results at the various stations where you will be deployed. I am confident that you are up to the task.

Keep in mind that **‘Nyika inovakwa, inotongwa inonamatirwa, inodzivirirwa, nevene vayo. Ilizwe lakhiwa, libuswe, likhulekelwe, livikelwe ngabanikazi balo’**

As your Commander in Chief, I am proud of you and wish you the very best in your careers. Congratulations.

To the families, spouses and friends of the graduands, we thank you sincerely for giving to our beloved motherland, Zimbabwe, these officers to sacrificially serve in defence of our great country. We honour you, **tinokutendai, siyalibonga.**

With these remarks, I once again congratulate the Joint Command and Staff Course Number 37 graduating class. **Amhlophe, Makorokoto.**

God bless you all.

God bless Zimbabwe.

I thank you.