

## **CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE FORCE CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR MESSAGE**

The year 2017 has come to an end, and the year 2018 is close-by, and we are about to celebrate the Christmas and the New Year respectively. In view of these two important events, I wish to extend my well wishes to you men and women of the Namibian Defence Force (NDF) as well as to our civilian component serving with NDF Formations and Units. It is during this time, of the year that we celebrate and re-unite with our beloved ones, relatives and friends.

As we are preparing for holidays with great expectations and joy, we look forward to disengage from stressful work environment. I would like to take this opportunity to sound a word of caution as a reminder to all men and women in uniform. It is exactly this time of the year that, our country does experience highest death rates on our national roads because of vehicle accidents. I join hands with NAMPOL and Traffic Officers in calling all drivers to respect the traffic regulations. Loss of lives on roads through drunken driving or unnecessary speeding is a tragic waste. The selfishness and lawlessness that lead to such anti-social behaviors and all other criminal activities are direct contradiction of the Christmas and New Year spirit that we hold yearly. So be vigilant at all times, behave responsibly and above all, display the highest standard of professionalism in your daily interactions with other members of our society. Refrain from irresponsible actions and be exemplary in everything you do, you are the defenders, savers and protectors of this beautiful

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country, the “land of the brave”. If you are called for duty be the first to report when necessary.

The year 2017 is coming to an end, leaving us with lasting memories, we shall remember it with so many events that transpired, some have direct impact on our daily lives whereas some indirectly influence us in one way or the other. I am proud to announce that although the year 2017 was one of the most challenging, I would like to congratulate the Namibian Defence Force’s men and women for the impressive achievements in professionalizing the Defence Force, though under very difficult conditions and circumstances where resources are scarce due to budget constraints.

This year, we had successfully carried out our plans and objectives we have set for ourselves, among others, the Defence Force had played its peacetime role in professionalizing the force by conducting training as part of our Human Resource Development Strategy and capacity building. Many students have concluded their foreign and local courses, whilst many continue to pursue their studies in various fields of specialization.

The NDF achieved a milestone by hosting and conducting the SADC Air Force Humanitarian Exercise Code named: “Exercise Blue Kunene” where some of our Honorable Ministers had witnessed the practice on multinational joint planning, execution of humanitarian aid reliefs, and natural disaster. This is a commendable job well-done that demonstrates that we are ready to defend our hard won independence at all times.

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During the period under review, the Defence Force has also played its secondary role in providing aid to civil power, civil authorities and communities, particularly during the periods of drought relief distribution where the Defence Force had assisted in distributing food to the affected areas and communities. We are participating in anti-poaching operation to prevent poaching of protected wild animals such as Elephants and Rhinos. In fulfilling our regional and international obligations to world peace and security, Namibia has deployed Military Observers and Staff Officers on a rotational basis in South Sudan, Abyei, Sudan Darfur under the UN mandate, and in the Kingdom of Lesotho under the SADC extended oversight committee.

In the area of bilateral cooperation, I am happy to report that Namibia enjoys good relations with all its neighboring state and the security situation along our common borders remained normal and stable. We note with appreciations the excellent relations persisting between our Defence Force and other Defence Forces in the region. Annually, NDF hold Joint Commissions on Defence and Security to promote multilateral and bilateral cooperation and do exchange visits and training programmes which are mutual beneficially to our Defence Forces.

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Despite our success, we have also experienced some challenges. The Defence Force is hard hit by the increase cases of TB, Malaria, HIV/AIDS and non-communicable diseases especially at Formations and Units. The contributing factors to some of these conditions could be attributed to poor hygienic and alcohol abuse. As we bid fare -well to the year 2017, we should pay homage to those comrades who lost their lives during the course of the year. This year, NDF has indeed recorded a big number of deaths. May their soul rest in eternal peace!

As we embark upon the holiday seasons, I urge you to take care and prepare physically and mentally for yet another demanding year and ensure delivery with freshness and vigor.

In conclusion, I call upon Commanders and Managers at all levels to ensure manning of their respective work stations with 70% of manpower throughout the festive season. Finally, let me again wish you and your families a Merry Christmas and a prosperous and productive 2018.

**J MUTWA**

**CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE FORCE: LT GEN**