



ADDRESS

BY

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

AT

**THE 45th ANNIVERSARY OF THE ZIMBABWE
DEFENCE FORCES DAY**

RUFARO STADIUM

12th AUGUST 2025



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

Director of Ceremonies;

The First Lady, Dr. A. Mnangagwa;

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

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 Harare Metropolitan Province, Hon. C. Z. Tawengwa;

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

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

Chief Justice, Hon. L. Malaba;

Honourable Ministers;

Members of the Politburo and Central Committee;

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. E. Matatu;

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

Commissioner General, Zimbabwe Republic
Police, Commissioner S. Mutamba;

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

Director General, President's Department,
Dr. F. Mangwanya;

Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps;

Traditional Leaders, here present;

Senior Government Officials;

Veterans of the Liberation Struggle;

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

Invited Guests;

Comrades and Friends.

It is with a great sense of pride and honour that I address you on this occasion marking the 45th Zimbabwe Defence Forces Day. This event comes after our Heroes Day Commemorations, held yesterday in honour of the gallant sons and daughters who helped liberate our motherland, Zimbabwe, from the yoke of colonialism.

On this occasion, we salute and celebrate the Zimbabwe Defence Forces for their commendable work of safeguarding and protecting the Independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of our great motherland, Zimbabwe.

Further, we acknowledge and remember the men and women who formed the nucleus of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces in 1980, who were largely drawn from the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) and the Zimbabwe Peoples' Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA).

The past 45 years, have seen officers, men and women, emerging, many of whom, were born after our Independence. Meanwhile, our national security apparatus continues to change and adapt. This is also in response to the contemporary national and global security demands, along with the changing social and economic aspirations of our people. The Defence Force is indeed in a new epoch.

As we look into the future, you, the officers, men and women who now constitute the Zimbabwe Defence Forces, must never forget that journey to Independence, sovereignty, peace and unity, which we are enjoying.

The agonising suffering inflicted by the brutal racist colonial regime and protracted war of liberation is etched in our national memory. The people of our country were subjected to oppression, segregation and displacement from our land.

Likewise, nationalists and freedom fighters endured treacherous environments and situations, including fighting many battles, detention, imprisonment and restrictions. Many died in the ruthless massacres, while others lie in marked and unmarked graves, here at home and in the region.

Our rich liberation war heritage must, therefore, embolden you, as the current crop of the Defence Forces, to remain a formidable, dependable and

disciplined force. You remain beacons of our nation's peace, security and socio-economic development. This is well stated in this year's commemoration's theme, which says, and I quote **“Zimbabwe Defence Forces: Guaranteeing Peace and Stability for the Attainment of Vision 2030.”** End quote.

Comrades and Friends;

The fast-paced and multi-pronged, global developments require that the Zimbabwe Defence Forces spreads beyond the traditional role of defending our national sovereignty and territorial integrity from external military threats.

I, therefore, challenge the Defence Forces to continue increasing their capabilities around a wider range of threats, that relate to economic instability, climate change, cyber-attacks, pandemics and terrorism.

In this spirit, I applaud the various initiatives being undertaken by our Forces to provide Military Aid to Civil Power. This includes, activities with regards to border control and the combating of drug and substance abuse.

The role of the ZDF in addressing climate change, and disaster preparedness, is worth commendation. During the last rainy season, the involvement of our Forces in search and rescue operations to assist villagers affected by floods brought speedy relief, to affected communities.

These included in areas such as ARDA-Sanyati, Sebakwe in Gokwe, Ngomakurira Mountain in Domboshava, and at the confluence of Runde-Tokwe rivers, in Tokwe-Mukosi.

The logistical support in the air lifting of stranded persons as well as the distribution of grain to affected communities, ensures that no individual or family dies from hunger. **Well done.**

My Fellow Citizens;

“Zimbabwe is a friend to all and an enemy of none”. However, as an independent and sovereign country, we will never sacrifice our legitimate rights and interests or our peace and security. Colonial oppression and the liberation struggle exposed us to brutality and suffering that can result from war and conflict. Zimbabwe’s commitment to national, regional and continental peace, as well as to a peaceful international order, anchored on the equality of nations is, therefore, unshakeable.

We continue to work for the peaceful resolution of international disputes and to support the SADC, African Union and United Nations initiatives, in this regard.

To date, members of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces are deployed for Peace Support Operations under the auspices of SADC, the African Union and the United Nations, in various international peace and security initiatives. These are stationed

at the UN Headquarters in New York as well as at the United Nations Missions in South Sudan; Abyei, Central African Republic; the Democratic Republic of Congo and Ethiopia.

To be able to effectively execute its roles, both internally and with regards to international obligations, it is critically important that the ZDF maintains robust training and capacity building programmes. In this regard, Zimbabwe remains ready to expand mutually beneficial relations in the field of military and defence cooperation, in keeping with our Engagement and Re-engagement Policy.

It is commendable that ongoing Training Exchange Programmes are widening and deepening the skill sets within the Zimbabwe Defence Forces, towards enhanced organisational proficiency, regional inter-operability, combat efficiency and exposure to varied equipment and technology.

Zimbabwe appreciates the bilateral defence and security cooperation with the People's Republic of China; Russian Federation; Pakistan, India, Greece, Malaysia, Egypt, Nigeria, Tanzania, South Africa, Namibia, Kenya, Mozambique, Zambia, Botswana, Malawi, Eswatini and Lesotho, among others. The Zimbabwe Defence Forces has also hosted a number of foreign military student delegations on study tours.

Additionally, the Zimbabwe Defence Forces is set to host the SADC Peace Support Operations Field Training Exercise, SADC Maritime Exercise, as well as the SADC Aviation Exercise. All these attest to the growing ties and strong solidarity between the Zimbabwe Defence Forces and other friendly Forces, across the globe.

The Zimbabwe National Defence University has become one of the centres of excellence in Defence and Security studies in the SADC region. Members of the public are welcome to enrol for programmes offered by the University.

We have made significant strides towards becoming a mine-free country as only 4% of the original 850km of minefields remain infested. The most recent milestone being the completion of the Rusitu to Muzite Mission minefield, in December 2024. This has made Manicaland Province a mine-free territory. I congratulate the Zimbabwe Defence Forces for a job well done. **Makorokoto. Amhlophe.**

My gratitude is also extended to development partners and international humanitarian demining organisations, for the financial and material support extended to the programme. On its part, Government will continue to capacitate the Zimbabwe Defence Force's National Mine Clearance Unit.

Comrades and Friends;

Government's improvement of the conditions of service for members of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces is ongoing. The Defence Forces Service

Commission is engaged in a process to rationalise the inter-rank salary differentials. This is being done in tandem with efforts to finalise implementation of the Military Salary Concept.

In the area of health delivery, my Administration is accelerating the completion of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces Referral Hospital at Manyame Air Force Base. Refurbishment, upgrading and modernisation projects of other medical facilities in cantonment areas, throughout the country are being supported and speeded up.

Innovative financing models employed by Government are resolving the perennial shortage of institutional accommodation for serving members of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces. The need to address the transport challenges besetting the Defence Forces, has become a key priority. A phased programme is in place to add an assortment of vehicles for various ZDF operational requirements, including a fleet of buses to transport members.

With regards to memorialising and immortalising our rich liberation heritage, the Ministry of Defence, in liaison with other Departments and Agencies as well as the Government of the Republic of Mozambique, is constructing a monument and health centre in Massinga District, Inhambane Province.

This is in honour and memory of our late War-Time Commander and National Hero, General Josiah Magama Tongogara.

Similar processes will also establish monuments at former ZIPRA bases in Angola, where freedom fighters lie in mass graves. We thank the Governments and peoples of Mozambique, Zambia and Angola, for their support and cooperation in these matters.

Fellow Countrymen and Women;

“Nyika inovakwa, inotongwa, inonamatirwa nevene vayo/ Ilizwe lakhiwa, libuswe, likhu-le-ke-lwe ngabanikazi balo.”

All of us have a role to play in building our motherland, Zimbabwe, including the Defence Forces and members of the Security Sector, as a whole. It is exemplary that our Defence Forces continues to undertake Social Responsibility projects which are having a transformational impact on our people at the community level.

The 2025 Zimbabwe Defence Forces Community Assistance Week, which preceded these commemorations saw the hand-over of various community projects undertaken by the Defence Forces, throughout the country. Others are at various stages of completion, including twenty-nine projects in the education sector and four clinics in the health sector, respectively.

Ministries, Departments and Agencies, are also receiving support of the Defence Forces in several other construction works such as the Registry offices in Buhera, a Veterinary Services office block in Binga, infrastructure for a communal

dairy in Mutasa, and traditional courts for chiefs, among others. I extend my Governments' gratitude to the business community and other well-wishers, whose generous support is ensuring the success of these projects.

As I conclude, I once again salute the Zimbabwe Defence Forces for their selfless commitment to safeguarding our national Independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and national interests. I, equally, congratulate you for the milestone achievements the ZDF continues to realise towards peace, security and unity in our country.

The Zimbabwe Defence Forces remains a disciplined and trusted People's Army. As Commander in Chief, I thank you all, the officers, men and women of our Defence Forces, for the resilience, loyalty, professionalism, discipline and unflinching patriotism you are displaying in your selfless service to our great

motherland, Zimbabwe. **Ndinoti kwamuri mose, tinokutendayi; Siyalibonga lonke. Nyika yedu yose yeZimbabwe inokutendayi; Liyabongwa yilizwe lonke.** Our nation salutes and thank you all.

With these remarks, I say; Happy 45th Zimbabwe Defence Forces Day.

I wish you and your families, as well as the entire nation, enjoyable and safe commemorations.

Long live our Defence Forces.

Long live our Peace, Unity, Independence, Freedom and Sovereignty.

God bless you.

God bless Zimbabwe.

I thank you.