

# GENERAL PV SIBANDA

**A legacy of  
Exemplary  
Service**



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*Guaranteeing Peace And Stability For  
The Attainment Of Vision 2030*







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# INSIDE THIS MAGAZINE

2. A Lifetime of Service: Reflections on General Sibanda's Military Journey
3. CDF's Farewell Message
4. Portrait of a Commander
6. Early Years and the Liberation Struggle
8. United Nations Missions – A Commitment to Regional Peace and Stability
10. Operation Sovereign Legitimacy: Intervention for Regional
12. A Commitment to Excellence
14. Events and Ceremonies
16. Leadership and Diplomacy
18. Commitment to Social Responsibility and Development

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# A Lifetime of Service:

## Reflections on General Sibanda's Military Journey

**A**s General Philip Valerio Sibanda retires from the Zimbabwe Defence Forces after a distinguished 51-year service, the occasion provides an opportunity to reflect on a life dedicated to service, beginning as a freedom fighter in the 70s, through the post-independence era, and subsequently into the Second Republic. These reflections honour a leader whose dedication and commitment has significantly shaped the development and professionalism of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces.

The General's role in securing Zimbabwe's hard-won independence through his sacrifices during the liberation struggle is commendable. After independence, he served in numerous key positions, including as Colonel Quartermaster Staff (1981), Commandant of the Battalion Battle School (now All Arms Battle School) in Nyanga (1984), Commandant of the Zimbabwe Staff College (1985 and 1990), Commander 4 Infantry Brigade, Chief of Staff Administration and Quartermaster Staff (1992), Chief of Staff General Staff (1996), Force Commander of United Nations Verification Mission in Angola (UNAVEM III) (1995), Force Commander of the United Nations Mission in Angola (MONUA) (1997), Force Commander of SADC



Allied Forces in the Democratic Republic of Congo (2000), Commander Zimbabwe National Army (2004), and finally, Commander Zimbabwe Defence Forces (2017).

As Commander 4 Infantry Brigade, he was among the pioneering formation commanders who helped shape the young organisation's foundation. As Commandant of both the Battalion Battle School and Zimbabwe Staff College, he contributed to the development of the Forces' training doctrine during its critical formative years. His international recognition as a Major General was cemented through his appointment as Force Commander during UN peacekeeping missions in Angola,

UNAVEM III (1995) and MONUA (1997), where his leadership earned global acclaim.

As Chief of Staff, General Sibanda supervised the operational capabilities of the Zimbabwe National Army, demonstrated during the force's successful performance in Operation Sovereign Legitimacy in the Democratic Republic of Congo. His visionary leadership led to the stabilisation of the region. His tenure as Commander of the Zimbabwe National Army also saw significant improvements in the organisation's operational doctrine.

In his role as Commander Zimbabwe Defence Forces, General Sibanda oversaw the transition into the Second Republic and contributed to laying the groundwork for the ZDF's continued support of the national development agenda, particularly in facilitating the realisation of Vision 2030. His leadership has been instrumental in strengthening the professionalism, operational effectiveness, and regional cooperation of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces.

This booklet celebrates a remarkable legacy, grounded in sacrifice, exceptional leadership, and dedication to the nation and the region. It is a tribute to a life dedicated to service and to the enduring principles that continue to inspire the Zimbabwe Defence Forces.



## General Sibanda Bids Farewell, Urges Continued Vigilance and Legacy Building

**T**he Outgoing Commander Zimbabwe Defence Forces (ZDF), General Philip Valerio Sibanda, conducted his farewell addresses across the country from 03 to 17 November 2025, emphasising the building of legacy, patriotism, and vigilance amid evolving threats.

General Sibanda visited various ZDF formations and bases, namely Harare District, Manyame Air Force Base, Presidential Guard Brigade, Mechanised Brigade, Artillery Brigade, Parachute Regiment, 2 Infantry Brigade, Jason Ziyaphapha Moyo Air Force Base, 5 Infantry Brigade, Josiah Tungamirai Air Force Base, Zimbabwe Military Academy, 1 Infantry Brigade, Bulawayo District, 4 Infantry Brigade, 3 Infantry Brigade and Zimbabwe National Defence University.

During the address, General Sibanda reflected on his decades

of service, acknowledging the contributions of compatriots and commanders such as the late Nikita Mangena, Lookout Masuku and others. He underscored the significance of building enduring legacies, personal, family, and organisational.

“I am bidding farewell to you and the military after 51 years of service, 45 in the ZDF and six as a liberation fighter. I want to thank you for the support that you have given me during the time I have held command positions in the ZDF to the time I have been the CDF.

“I have had the privilege of working under the tutelage, mentorship and astute stewardship of His Excellency, the President and Commander-In-Chief of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces and forebearers in the mould of the late Generals Solomon Tapfumaneyi Mujuru, Vitalis Musungwa Gava Zvinavashe and

General retired Dr Constantino Guvheya Nyikadzino Chiwenga from whom I took over command of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces. Before then I worked with the late Alfred Nikita Mangena and Lookout Masuku and others who gave me a good grounding for my career in the military, he said.

Addressing emerging security concerns, General Sibanda highlighted the realities of threats facing Zimbabwe, including terrorism, insurgency, and potential incursions. “The possibility and potential of threats from some regions being transported into Zimbabwe are very real. There are also possibilities of a home-grown insurgency,” he cautioned.

The commander also addressed non-traditional threats such as climate change, highlighting a newly established department for climate change and disaster management in response to events like Cyclone Idai. He lamented the persistence of sanctions that hamper economic and security efforts. He also highlighted misinformation especially by social media, illegal immigration, poaching, smuggling, corruption at borders, and drug abuse as challenges requiring concerted efforts to address.

General Sibanda drew a stark analogy about drug abuse, likening incapacitated soldiers to trapped birds, emphasising the destructive impact of substance abuse on military readiness and national security.

In his heartfelt farewell speech, General Sibanda expressed gratitude for the support received during his tenure and urged those remaining in the force to uphold the integrity and stability of the nation's defence. He stressed that stability is the foundation for development, warning



against complacency and urging continuous vigilance.

“We need to ensure that those remaining behind understand that they also owe it to us to continue to hold firmly this baton that we are passing on to them. It is important for generations because we want perpetual stability in our country, if our country is to develop the way we want it to develop. No development happens in a space where there is instability.

“The defence force belong to the people of Zimbabwe. Each and every one of us and indeed all Zimbabweans must make an effort to ensure that the defence forces are properly equipped to be able to execute their duties as provided for in the constitution,” he said.

Closing his address, General Sibanda invoked the biblical allusion, “I have run my race and I have kept the faith, and called on members of the ZDF to support his successor the same way as they have done to him.

“There is always a beginning and an end to everything. For me my journey in uniform which commenced 51 years ago has come to an end I have done my bit in these years and it is now time for me to take a deserved rest. I leave the military with my head held high as I have given my country my best. Like Paul in



the Bible says, I have run my race and I have kept the faith. Thank you all for the support during my tenure not only as the CDF but at the various levels of command that I have held. I want to urge

you to give my successor the same level of support that you have given me. Remember team work is the essence on which military organisations are built and thrive on,” he said.



# Early years and the liberation struggle

**T**he period of the liberation struggle is a pivotal era in Zimbabwe's history. It is an era marked by courage, resilience, and dedication to the country's liberation. It represents the foundational period of General Sibanda's military journey.

Leaders such as Joshua Mqhabuko Nyongolo Nkomo and Jason Ziyaphapha Moyo reflect the

collective effort and sacrifice that paved the way for Zimbabwe's independence in 1980.

This formative chapter of the liberation struggle signifies the spirit of determination and strategic vision that would define General Sibanda's future leadership. The period mirrors General Sibanda's legacy and the indelible contributions of all who fought for Zimbabwe's freedom.



*ZIPRA Commander-in-Chief Joshua Nkomo with his lieutenants addressing combatants*



*Cadres in a bayonet charge exercise in 1978.*



*Jason Ziyaphapha Moyo, ZAPU second Vice President heading the External Wing in Zambia until his death in 1977.*





*General Philip Valerio Sibanda during the United Nations Verification Mission in Angola (UNAVEM III).*

## United Nations Missions – A commitment to regional peace and stability

**T**hroughout his distinguished career, General Philip Valerio Sibanda exemplified a steadfast commitment to peace and stability beyond Zimbabwe's borders.

His leadership as Force Commander for the United Nations Verification Mission in Angola (UNAVEM) and the United Nations Mission in Angola (MONUA) showcased his strategic vision, diplomatic tact, and dedication to promoting lasting peace in a complex and challenging environment.

These missions underscored his ability to guide multinational forces with professionalism and integrity in pursuit of regional stability.

As we reflect on this pivotal chapter of General Sibanda's service, we honour his contribution to global peacekeeping initiatives, which remains an integral part of his enduring legacy.



*General Philip Valerio Sibanda giving medals to members of the Zimbabwean Contingent Commander to the United Nations Verification Mission in Angola (UNAVEM III).*



*General Philip Valerio Sibanda was the Zimbabwean Contingent Commander for the United Nations Verification Mission in Angola (UNAVEM III).*





# Operation Sovereign Legitimacy: Intervention for regional peace

**T**hroughout his distinguished career, General Philip Valerio Sibanda exemplified a steadfast commitment to peace and stability beyond Zimbabwe's borders.

General Sibanda played a pivotal role as Force Commander of the SADC Allied Forces during Operation Sovereign Legitimacy in the Democratic Republic of Congo (1998-2002).

His leadership and the dedication of Zimbabwean and Allied troops played a crucial part in repelling rebel forces intent on overthrowing President Laurent Kabila's government. Their efforts not only contributed significantly to restoring stability in the DRC but also exemplified strategic leadership and steadfast commitment to peace.







*King Mswati III of Eswatini handing over a shield and certificate to General Sibanda and Secretary for Defence, Cde Aaron Nhepera at ZITF 2023.*

## A Commitment to Excellence

**G**eneral Sibanda's engagement in a wide range of Army activities, reflected his commitment to excellence and operational readiness.

From overseeing training programmes and addressing troops to inspecting troops during exercises and executing his routine duties as commander, his leadership was instrumental in shaping a disciplined and prepared force.



*Commander Defence Forces General Philip Valerio Sibanda arriving at the live firing ceremony in Muzarabani during the exercise Rout II.*



General PV Sibanda being shown spare parts by the Director ZNA Research and Development, Colonel Moyo at Masasa Base Workshop in June 2023.



*The President of the Republic of Zimbabwe Cde Dr. ED Mnangagwa inspecting the Parade at his inauguration at the National Sports stadium in September 2023.*

## Events and Ceremonies

**G**eneral Sibanda's active participation in a variety of national events and ceremonies symbolise Zimbabwe's unity, heritage, and commitment to peace.

From the Opening of Parliament and the Burial of National Heroes to Independence Day and Defence Forces Day celebrations, as well as his role in Guards of Honour, his presence and leadership have been integral to these communal moments of national significance.





*Commander Defence Forces General PV Sibanda taking an oath of allegiance to the President during Inauguration at the National Sports Stadium in September 2023.*





# Leadership and Diplomacy

Historic moments of military and civilian delegations paying courtesy calls on General Sibanda symbolise and reflect the respect and recognition he has earned both within the armed forces and across the region as well as his dedication, leadership, and the enduring relationships he has fostered in pursuit of peace and stability.







Commander ZDF officially opening Tongogara Poly Clinic in Shurugwi in August 2023

# Commitment to Social Responsibility and Development

**G**eneral Sibanda showed an unwavering commitment to uplifting communities and development through his active participation in social responsibility initiatives.

From spearheading community assistance projects and engaging in the Executive Interaction Initiative to supporting Army charities, his leadership exemplified a deep dedication to service beyond the battlefield. These efforts reflected his enduring legacy of strategic vision, compassion, and commitment to a peaceful and prosperous nation.









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