



LAW SOCIETY
OF SOUTH AFRICA
PRESS RELEASE

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Law Society stresses the right and duty of lawyers to practise freely and without threat

The Day of the Endangered Lawyers takes place tomorrow, Friday 22 January 2016, this year in The Hague, Netherlands. The purpose of the Day of the Endangered Lawyer is a call for attention on that day to threatened human rights lawyers with special attention to one designated country. This year's call comes to aid the severely endangered state of advocacy in Honduras.

The aim is to highlight the ongoing wave of violence directed at lawyers and other law professionals in Honduras. The situation facing lawyers in Honduras is dire, where between 2010 and March 2015 the Inter-American Human Rights Commission (IAHRC) recorded 91 deaths of lawyers as a result of targeted killings. More information: <http://dayoftheendangeredlawyer.eu/activities/>

In South Africa our lawyers deserve the respect of society and the Government to ensure they can carry out their duties independently. Although our lawyers are not under direct threat, unwarranted personal attacks on judges and lawyers are unacceptable as judges and lawyers must be in a position to practise freely without fear of intimidation, arrest or assault. Lawyers must be able to consult freely with their clients to provide effective representation. They have a professional responsibility to do so,' say LSSA Co-Chairpersons, Busani Mabunda and Richard Scott.

They add: 'On our own doorstep in Lesotho, we as Co-Chairpersons attended the Maseru High Court on 2 December 2015 to support our colleagues in Lesotho who were

being subjected to threats to themselves and their families; court orders had been ignored and judges intimidated. Lawyers were also being denied access to their clients.'

As the LSSA we reiterate the United Nations Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers, which state that: 'Governments shall ensure that lawyers are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference and that lawyers shall not suffer, or be threatened with, prosecution or administrative, economic or other sanctions for any action taken in accordance with recognised professional duties, standards and ethics'.

The goal of the foundation for The Day of the Endangered Lawyer's is to promote the unobstructed practise of the lawyers' profession anywhere in the world who, under repressive regimes come to the defence or support of clients whose human rights are at stake.

ISSUED ON BEHALF OF THE CO-CHAIRPERSONS OF THE LAW SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA, BUSANI MABUNDA AND RICHARD SCOTT

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Editor's note:

The Law Society of South Africa brings together its six constituent members – the Cape Law Society, the KwaZulu-Natal Law Society, the Law Society of the Free State, the Law Society of the Northern Provinces, the Black Lawyers Association and the National Association of Democratic Lawyers – in representing South Africa's 23 600 attorneys and 5 400 candidate attorneys.