



**LAW SOCIETY**  
OF SOUTH AFRICA

**PRESS RELEASE**

**31 October 2016: For immediate release**

**LAW SOCIETY WELCOMES WITHDRAWAL OF CHARGES  
AGAINST FINANCE MINISTER**

The Law Society of South Africa (LSSA) welcomes the rather belated decision by the National Director of Public Prosecutions (NDPP), Adv Shaun Abrahams, to withdraw charges against Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan, Oupa Magashula and Ivan Pillay. 'The LSSA, however, remains gravely disappointed that a matter of this magnitude and implications was decided clearly without first obtaining all the necessary information and that the charges were instituted in the first place. The action of bringing the charges and then dropping them appear to be consistent with the public perception that there is a politically motivated link,' say LSSA Co-Chairpersons Mvuzo Notyesi and Jan van Rensburg.

'The LSSA urges Mr Abrahams to consider his position in the light of the severe consequences his actions had on our economy,' say Mr Notyesi and Mr Van Rensburg.

They add: 'Furthermore, Mr Abrahams seems oblivious to and unrepentant for the damage – both at home and internationally – caused by the unsubstantiated charge of fraud brought against the country's sitting Minister of Finance by the country's prosecution services. Mr Abrahams himself announced the intention to institute charges at a public press conference. It would be fair to assume that the NDPP would have gone out of his way in this matter, but also in all matters - be they high profile or routine matters -- to ensure that all relevant information had been reviewed and that criminal intent had been established. However, when the charges relate to fraud or theft by a high profile individual such as the Minister of Finance, the NDPP should have made doubly certain of the facts before inflicting the trauma he has on the economy, the image of the country as well as on the public. Mr Abrahams made the public announcement, he should take responsibility for bringing the National Prosecuting Authority, the criminal justice system and the country into disrepute.'

The LSSA also calls on Parliament to initiate an investigation into the actions of the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation – The Hawks - in this matter as well as in other cases involving high-profile persons. Alternatively the President should consider a judicial commission on enquiry into the actions of the Hawks. Failing that, and as it stands, it is doubtful whether the Hawks, as an institution, have the public trust.

**ISSUED ON BEHALF OF THE CO-CHAIRPERSONS OF THE LAW SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA, MVUZO NOTYESI AND JAN VAN RENSBURG**

by the Law Society of South Africa Communication Department Tel: (012) 366 8800

Contact: Barbara Whittle, Communication Manager, barbara@LSSA.org.za (012) 366 8800 or 083 380 1307

Nomfundo Manyathi-Jele, Communications Officer, nomfundom@LSSA.org.za Tel: (012) 366 8800 or 072 402 6344.

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 24 300 attorneys and 5 000 candidate attorneys.