



**LAW SOCIETY**  
OF SOUTH AFRICA

**PRESS RELEASE**

**21 March 2013: For immediate release**

**LAW SOCIETY URGES SADC, PRESIDENT ZUMA AND SA GOVERNMENT TO INTERCEDE IN DETENTION OF ZIMBABWEAN LAWYER BEATRICE MTETWA**

The Law Society of South Africa (LSSA) repeats its serious alarm and concern at the arrest and ongoing detention of prominent Zimbabwean human rights lawyer Beatrice Mtetwa.

The LSSA urges the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to intercede urgently with the Zimbabwean authorities on this matter.

'In addition, we urge President Zuma to add his voice at an official level to the concern that various legal bodies – including regional and international bodies such as the SADC Lawyers Association, the Pan African Lawyers Union, the International Bar Association and Commonwealth Lawyers Association – have expressed at the arrest of Ms Mtetwa and her colleagues in Harare earlier this week, and their ongoing detention,' say LSSA Co-Chairpersons Krish Govender and Jan Stemmett.

They add: 'We also call on the South African Government, as a champion of the Rule of Law on our continent, to express support for the release of Ms Mtetwa on bail as a matter of urgency.'

From court documents, it is clear that Ms Mtetwa was simply carrying out her responsibilities as a lawyer. 'If we are to uphold our belief in the independence of the profession, the Rule of Law and the right of lawyers to represent their clients without fear of persecution and harassment, we need to be seen to be proactive in matters such as these,' say Mr Govender and Mr Stemmett.

**ISSUED ON BEHALF OF THE CO-CHAIRPERSONS OF THE LAW SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA, KRISH GOVENDER AND JAN STEMMETT**

by Barbara Whittle

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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 21 400 attorneys and 5 800 candidate attorneys.

The LSSA is a member of the SADC Lawyers Association, the Commonwealth Lawyers Association and the International Bar Association.