



LAW SOCIETY
OF SOUTH AFRICA

PRESS RELEASE

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**LAW SOCIETY SHOCKED AND DISGUSTED AT SAPS BRUTALITY IN
FICKSBURG**

The Law Society of South Africa (LSSA) expresses shock and disgust at the brutal attack on and killing of Andries Tatane in Ficksburg this past Wednesday by the South African Police Service (SAPS). 'By all accounts Mr Tatane, who was part of a group protesting against the lack of service delivery in the town, posed no threat to the police. The violence meted out to him is shocking, unjustified and disproportionate,' say LSSA Co-Chairpersons Nano Matlala and Praveen Sham.

The LSSA offers its condolences to Mr Tatane's family and undertakes to assist the family to explore all their legal remedies, including instituting a claim against the Minister of Police.

'The LSSA calls on the Independent Complaints Directorate, the Minister and the Ficksburg local authority to investigate the incident speedily, including the holding of an inquest. No stone must be let unturned in bringing the perpetrators to book,' say Mr Matlala and Mr Sham.

They add: 'As long as previously marginalised and dispossessed communities continue to live in dire poverty, the increasing disillusionment with regard to poor or non-existent service delivery will, inevitably, lead to protests. The Minister of Police and the National Commissioner must ensure that police officers are properly trained and briefed to handle protest situations. If not, the potential exists that more innocent people will be hurt or even killed by the application of violent and disproportionate force by the SAPS in these situations.'

The LSSA urges the SAPS to exercise appropriate restraint and use force only as a last resort. It must also be proportionate to the threat facing the SAPS,' say the Co-Chairpersons.

In regard to the SAPS, the LSSA also raises its serious concern at the alleged inaction by the SAPS when an attorney was harassed by bystanders outside the Johannesburg High Court earlier this week in full view of police office, with the latter doing nothing to come to her assistance. 'Attorneys must be able to perform their professional functions, including representing their clients in court, without intimidation, hindrance, harassment

or improper interference. The Government, including the SAPS, have a duty to ensure this,' say Mr Matlala and Mr Sham.

ISSUED ON BEHALF OF THE CO-CHAIRPERSONS OF THE LAW SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA, NANO MATLALA AND PRAVEEN SHAM

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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 20 000 attorneys and 5 000 candidate attorneys.