



**LAW SOCIETY**  
OF SOUTH AFRICA

**PRESS RELEASE**

***13 November 2013: For immediate release***

**LAW SOCIETY EXPRESSES CONCERN AT DENIAL OF ENTRY TO SRI LANKA  
FOR LAWYERS' DELEGATION AHEAD OF CHOGM 2013**

The Law Society of South Africa (LSSA) expresses its grave concern that members of an International Bar Association Human Rights Institute (IBAHRI) high-level delegation have been denied entry into Sri Lanka during this week's Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Colombo. The delegation included the United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers, Gabriela Knaul, and the first UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers, Param Cumaraswamy. Entry for the delegates to attend a meeting was denied in spite of visas having been granted and in accordance with normal procedures.

The LSSA adds its voice to those of the International Bar Association, the Commonwealth Lawyers Association (CLA) and a number of human rights NGOs in support of the Bar Association of Sri Lanka in seeking to restore the rule of law, the independence of the judiciary and the right of members of the legal profession to pursue their profession without fear of harassment.

President Jacob Zuma will lead a South African delegation to CHOGM in Colombo from 15 to 17 November 2013.

Earlier this year the LSSA supported a CLA resolution calling on the Members of the Commonwealth to suspend Sri Lanka from the Councils of the Commonwealth for serious and persistent violations of the Commonwealth fundamental values, including breaches of the rule of law and human rights, as well as the erosion of the independence of the judiciary and the legal profession. The LSSA also called on President Zuma and the South African Government to consider boycotting the CHOGM, as other countries have done.

[Click here](#) for the International Bar Association statement: 'Sri Lanka bans human rights delegates from major Commonwealth meeting'.

[Click here](#) for the Commonwealth Lawyers Association statement: 'Statement on Denied Entry to IBAHRI Delegation in Advance of the CHOGM Sri Lanka'

[Click here](#) to read the Sri Lanka resolution adopted by the Commonwealth Lawyers Association, the Commonwealth Legal Education Association and the Commonwealth Magistrates' and Judges' Association in Cape Town on 17 April 2013.

[Click here](#) for the LSSA press release: 'LSSA supports the call made last week by the Commonwealth Lawyers Association for the suspension of Sri Lanka from the Commonwealth' (23 April 2013)

[Click here](#) for the LSSA press release: 'LSSA expresses grave concern at impeachment of Chief Justice of Sri Lanka; calls on SA Government to take a stand' (17 January 2013).

***ISSUED ON BEHALF OF THE CO-CHAIRPERSONS OF THE LAW SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA, KATHLEEN MATOLO-DLEPU AND DAVID BEKKER***

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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 21 700 attorneys and 5 800 candidate attorneys.