



**LAW SOCIETY**  
OF SOUTH AFRICA

**PRESS RELEASE**

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**LAW SOCIETY ECHOES CONCERN AT INAPPROPRIATE CRITICISM OF  
JUDGE THOKOZILE MASIPA**

The Law Society of South Africa (LSSA) aligns itself with serious concern raised by a number of legal organisations regarding the threats and personal attacks that have been made against Judge Thokozile Masipa as a result of her judgment in the Oscar Pistorius trial last week.

‘As the attorneys’ profession, we join our colleagues at the Legal Resources Centre, Section 27 and the Centre for Child Law in condemning the personal and inappropriate comments made regarding the judge’s race and gender, as well as alleged threats against her security,’ say LSSA Co-Chairpersons, Max Boqwana and Ettienne Barnard.

They add: ‘Judicial officers – judges and magistrates – and legal practitioners must be allowed to perform their duties without fear of attacks on their persons, safety or work environment, as has been case also by the recent spate of shootings in courts.’

‘As our colleagues have noted, the *Pistorius* matter was a high-profile case that played itself out in the glare of the local and international media, and people are free to disagree with the judgment. Judgments by our courts are not above scrutiny; but judgments of the court must be respected and scrutiny must be informed, constructive and based on sound legal principles. For that reason we have an appeal procedure in our courts which allows parties – who are of the view that a different judge or court may come to a different conclusion – to apply for leave to appeal. However, personal attacks on the judicial officer and the legal practitioners are not acceptable or appropriate in a country where the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary and of the legal profession are paramount,’ say Mr Boqwana and Mr Barnard.

***ISSUED ON BEHALF OF THE CO-CHAIRPERSONS OF THE LAW SOCIETY OF SOUTH  
AFRICA, MAX BOQWANA AND ETTIENNE BARNARD***

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 22 400 attorneys and 5 600 candidate attorneys.