



**LAW SOCIETY**  
OF SOUTH AFRICA

**PRESS RELEASE**

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**LAW SOCIETY WELCOMES ACQUITTAL OF ZIMBABWEAN HUMAN RIGHTS  
LAWYER, BEATRICE MTETWA**

The Law Society of South Africa (LSSA) welcomes the acquittal of Zimbabwean human rights lawyer, Beatrice Mtetwa, by a Harare court last week.

Ms Mtetwa, a former President of the Law Society of Zimbabwe, was arrested in March this year on allegations of obstructing or defeating the course of justice when she went to the assistance of her clients just before the elections in Zimbabwe.

As a result of her arrest, Ms Mtetwa was not able to travel to Cape Town in April 2013 to speak at the 18th Commonwealth Law Conference, where she had been invited to address and audience on over 1 000 lawyers from across the Commonwealth. In a letter read out on her behalf at the conference, Ms Mtetwa said:

‘My arrest in the course of the discharge of my duties ... is a blatant and unashamed interference with my internationally recognised fundamental right to practise law without undue hindrances and interference.’

We echo Ms Mtetwa’s words that ‘the observance and maintenance of the rule of law is an international principle that lawyers the world over should fight to observe together, without apology’.

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

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 21 700 attorneys and 5 800 candidate attorneys.