



LAW SOCIETY
OF SOUTH AFRICA

PRESS RELEASE

20 March 2014: For immediate release

**LAW SOCIETY GRAVELY CONCERNED AT ARBITRARY ARREST OF SWAZI
HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYER AND EDITOR**

The Law Society of South Africa (LSSA) expresses its grave concern at the recent irregular and arbitrary arrest of Swazi human rights lawyer Thulani Maseko and Editor of news magazine *The Nation*, Bheki Makhubu.

The LSSA has, on previous occasions, publically raised its concern in media statements and with our President, regarding the subversion of legal proceedings and of internationally accepted legal and human rights principles by Swaziland's Chief Justice Michael Ramodibedi.

We understand that Mr Maseko and Mr Makhubu were denied access to legal representation when arrested, remanded in custody after closed proceedings and denied the opportunity to apply for bail. Not only do these actions demonstrate the Swazi authorities' intolerance of freedom of speech, they also show an ongoing contempt for the rule of law and a flouting of the fundamental principles of justice and fairness.

Such actions reflect negatively not only on the Swazi authorities and justice system, but also on the SADC region as a whole.

The LSSA reaffirms the South African attorneys' professions' support for its colleagues in Swaziland.

The LSSA aligns itself with the SADC Lawyers Association (in the attached press statement) in calling on the Swazi authorities to respect the rights of Messrs Maseko and Makhubu to a fair trial and to be represented by a lawyer of their choice. The LSSA and the SADCLA also call on the Swazi authorities to ensure that the due process of the law is respected in this matter without subjecting the accused to any form of abuse of their rights and/or discrimination in the manner in which their trial is held.

**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 22 250 attorneys and 5 780 candidate attorneys.

The LSSA is a member of the SADC Lawyers Association.