



LAW SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA

PRESS RELEASE

Date: 29 March 2007
For immediate release

LAW SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA CALLS ON ZIMBABWEAN AUTHORITIES TO RESPECT THE RULE OF LAW AND LAWYERS' RIGHT TO DEFEND THEIR CLIENTS

At its annual general meeting in Cape Town this week, the Law Society of South Africa (LSSA) expressed its grave concern over the repression by the Zimbabwean government of its citizens' right to legitimate and peaceful protest.

'We call on the government of Zimbabwe to uphold the rule of law, to respect the decisions of its courts and the right of its citizens to assemble and protest peacefully and lawfully,' say newly appointed LSSA Co-Chairpersons David Gush and Henry Msimang.

The LSSA urges the Zimbabwe government to safeguard the right of legal practitioners to practise freely without fear of intimidation, arrest or assault. 'Lawyers must be able to consult freely with their clients to provide effective representation. They must have proper and unfettered access to their clients – also those in hospitals and police facilities – and the lawyer/client relationship must be protected,' say the LSSA Co-Chairpersons.

Mr Gush and Mr Msimang stress that the government of Zimbabwe must, at all times, uphold the independence of the judiciary and of legal practitioners.

The LSSA has aligned itself with the statement issued earlier this month by the Gabarone-based SADC Lawyers Association (SADCLA) in which SADCLA President,

Harare lawyer Stenford Moyo, condemns the conduct of Zimbabwean authorities, urges the government of Zimbabwe to respect the fundamental rights of its people and lawyers, and to ensure that those responsible for criminal activities are brought to justice. (SADC Lawyers Association statement attached).

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 16 600 attorneys and 4 500 candidate attorneys.

In Afrikaans items, please refer to the LSSA as Prokureursorde van Suid-Afrika.

ISSUED ON BEHALF OF THE LSSA BY: Barbara Whittle

Communication Manager, Law Society of South Africa

Tel: (012) 362 1729 or 083 380 1307

E-mail: barbara@lssa.org.za

Website: www.lssa.org.za