



LAW SOCIETY
OF SOUTH AFRICA

PRESS RELEASE

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LAW SOCIETY GRAVELY CONCERNED AT THREATS AGAINST PUBLIC PROTECTOR

The Law Society of South Africa notes with grave concern the threats of arrest against the Public Protector, Adv Thuli Madonsela. 'If, as the Public Protector claims, the allegations against her are baseless, without truth, malicious and mischievous, the threats of arrest can be perceived as being intimidatory, following the "raid" on her offices earlier this year,' say LSSA Co-Chairpersons Praveen Sham and Nano Matlala.

As the LSSA did earlier this year, it again calls on the National Police Commissioner and the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development, Jeff Radebe, to investigate the latest incident speedily and to report transparently to the Public Protector and to the South African public. It also notes with concern that the Public Protector has yet to receive a report from the National Commissioner on the earlier 'raid' on her offices.

In addition, the timing of the arrest threats also raises concern, as they come on the eve of the Public Protector finalising her report on the lease contracts entered into by the SAPS and also soon after her recent acknowledgement that the plundering of State coffers during the apartheid era warranted investigation.

'Like all other State agencies, both the South African Police Service (SAPS) and the Public Protector must carry out their duties in order to protect and promote our constitutional democracy and the rule of law; the SAPS to uphold the law and prosecute crime, and the Public Protector to act without fear of reprisal or without favour. The Law Society notes that, according to the Public Protector, neither the National Police Commissioner, nor the Justice or Police Ministers had any knowledge of her pending arrest. Given the status of the Public Protector as an Ombud for the country, such a state of affairs causes grave concern. Such actions will weaken the public's confidence in the Office of the Public Protector and other Chapter 9 institutions,' say Mr Matlala and Mr Sham.

'The Law Society of South Africa stresses its call for a quick and transparent investigation into the latest incident, and repeats its support for the Office of the Public Protector in her endeavours to serve as the bastion between the public and Government authority,' say the Co-Chairpersons.

ISSUED ON BEHALF OF THE CO-CHAIRPERSONS OF THE LAW SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA, PRAVEEN SHAM AND NANO MATLALA

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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 20 000 attorneys and 5 000 candidate attorneys.