



**LAW SOCIETY**  
OF SOUTH AFRICA  
**PRESS RELEASE**

***11 December 2018: For immediate release***

**LAW SOCIETY CONDEMNS ATTACK ON JOHANNESBURG ADVOCATE BY  
MEMBERS OF BLF**

'We join our colleagues from the Johannesburg Bar Council and the National Association of Democratic Lawyers in condemning, in the strongest possible terms, the violent attack on an advocate by members of Black First Land First (BLF) movement at the Johannesburg High Court last week. Although we accept the right of political entities and members of the public to protest, violence and destruction can never be condoned,' say Law Society of South Africa (LSSA) Co-Chairpersons, Mvuzo Notyesi and Ettienne Barnard.

They add: 'The attack involving the woman advocate is doubly unacceptable having taken place during the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence. Assault is a criminal offence and we urge the authorities to investigate the matter urgently and bring the perpetrators to book. Justice must be done and seen to be done. In addition, we call on the leadership of BLF to condemn the actions of its members. There can be no justification or encouragement for such mob violence.'

The LSSA is deeply concerned at the increasing criminal behaviour in and around court buildings and against legal practitioners. We urge the Office of the Chief Justice to look into the aspect of negotiating upgraded security with the authorities so that members of the public, legal practitioners and judicial officers are safe within court precincts.

Attorneys and advocates are officers of the court. They must be able to practise freely without fear of intimidation, assault or fear for their lives. Legal practitioners must be able to consult freely with their clients and to represent their clients in court to provide effective legal representation. This is a right enshrined in our Constitution. Unwarranted attacks on legal practitioners are unacceptable and threaten our justice system and the rule of law. The United Nations Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers, which guarantee the right of all persons to be assisted by a lawyer to protect their rights and to defend them in all stages of criminal proceedings, state that where the security of lawyers is threatened as a result of discharging their functions, they shall be adequately safeguarded by the authorities. The Principles also stress that legal practitioners shall not be identified with their clients or their clients' causes as a result of discharging their functions.

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

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Editor's note:

The Law Society of South Africa brings together its constituent members – the Black Lawyers Association, the National Association of Democratic Lawyers and the provincial attorneys' associations – in representing South Africa's 26 700 attorneys and 6 600 candidate attorneys.