

The Black Lawyers Association Condemns the brutal Murder of Thulani Maseko

1. The Black Lawyers Association (BLA) is a civil society organisation dedicated to the promotion of the rule of law and the building of a non-racial, non-sexist and the democratic South Africa. To that end, the BLA strives to promote a transformed legal profession, the judiciary and the broader society.
2. The judiciary has noted the brutal murder of Thulani Maseko, a lawyer, at his home in Mbabane, Eswatini recently. We are aware that Mr Maseko was part of the civil society organisations fighting for democratic reforms in Eswatini. We thus hold the view that those who committed this brutal assassination are clearly those who have positioned on the opposite side of the democratic forces fighting for the democracy in Eswatini, including the government of Eswatini.
3. When the apartheid government sunk to its worst moral levels of existence, it started by recruiting assassins to murder its opponents. Lawyers became targets since they discovered that even under the difficult days of apartheid, it remained possible to take advantage of even the apartheid laws to extract advantages on behalf of their client. It was always for doing their work that lawyers made themselves enemies of the murderous apartheid regime.
4. We see this sorry situation replicating itself in Eswatini. Clearly a government of Eswatini is now reading from the scripture written many years ago by the apartheid government in South Africa. The result of that episode in the case of South Africa was brutal murder and maiming of anti-apartheid activists. Griffiths and Victoria Mxenge, Neil Aggett, Ahmed Timol and many others who fell victims to this brutal tendency committed in defending a system that was never destined to survive anyway.
5. The BLA condemns in the strongest possible terms the tendency of the Eswatini Government to eliminate its opponents instead of listening to them

and thus fashion a new path for the country shaped according to the aspirations of its people.

6. We further call on the South African government to do all in its power to ensure that in the interest of the rule of law in Eswatini, civil society activists and lawyers are not eliminated for demanding a universal right to live in democracy, freedom and security. The South African government must do this by first condemning the government of Eswatini for the murder of Mr Maseko and other activists that have fallen prey to this insidious tendency.
7. We also call upon the progressive lawyer associations in the region and beyond to join hands in solidarity with the lawyers and civil society organisations to prevent the Eswatini regime from committing crimes against humanity.

Issued by

President of the Black Lawyers Association