

Press Statement on the brutal murder of prominent Swati human rights activist, Adv. Thulani Maseko

Jan 23, 2023

The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (Commission) has learnt of the tragic murder of renowned Swati human rights lawyer and political activist, Adv. Thulani Maseko on 21 January 2023, in the Kingdom of Eswatini.

Based on various news sources, Adv. Maseko was gunned down in cold blood by unidentified gunmen at his residence in Luyengo, Eswatini. The Commission unequivocally condemns the brutal murder of Adv. Maseko, which is against the right to life protected for by article 4 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (African Charter).

The Commission reiterates its calls to State Parties to the African Charter in its **Resolution ACHPR/69(XXXV) 04** on the Protection of Human Rights Defenders in Africa; **Resolution ACHPR/Res.119 (XXXII) 07**; **Resolution ACHPR/Res.196 (L) 11**; **Resolution ACHPR/Res.230 (LII) 2012** ; and **Resolution ACHPR/Res. 376 (LX) 2017**; on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders in Africa; to take all necessary measures to initiate independent investigations on cases of violations of the rights of human rights defenders, so as to prosecute and judge the perpetrators.

Under no circumstances should intimidations, threats, actual violence or the killing of any activist, or human rights defender be ignored by State authorities.

Consequently, the Commission urges the Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini to set up an independent inquiry to investigate the murder of Adv. Maseko with a view to apprehending, prosecuting, and punishing those found responsible for his death.

The Commission further calls on the Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini to take legislative or other measures (institutional, administrative, policy, public awareness etc.), in accordance with Article 1 of the African Charter, to ensure that human rights defenders are guaranteed the right to live a life free from the threat of violent attacks, that fundamentally negates the right to life under Article 4 of the African Charter, which enshrines the absolute prohibition of the arbitrary deprivation of life.

The Commission extends its deepest condolences to the family of Adv. Maseko.

Hon. Rémy Ngoy Lumbu

Chairperson of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders and Focal Point on Reprisals in Africa

Hon. Dr. Litha Musyimi-Ogana

Country Rapporteur for the Kingdom of Eswatini