

Urgent Action Office 3-1992 Yonge Street Toronto ON M4S 1Z7 Phone: (416) 363-9933 Fax: (416) 363-3103 urgentaction@amnesty.ca
Second UA: 113/21 Index: AFR 55/6515/2023 Eswatini of March 06, 2023

ESWATINI DETAINED MPS MUST BE RELEASED IMMEDIATELY

Members of Eswatini Parliament, Mduduzi Bacede Mabuza and Mthandeni Dube have been arbitrarily detained since July 25, 2021. They have been slapped with trumped-up charges, including those under the Suppression of Terrorism Act. While in detention, they have been beaten and denied access to their lawyer and medical care.

Their prosecution stems from the peaceful exercise of their right to free speech. Their trial concluded on January 31, with judgment reserved indefinitely. They face 10 years in prison should they be found guilty. The politically motivated charges against them must be dropped and they be immediately released.

Write to the Prime Minister of Eswatini urging him to:

- Immediately and unconditionally release MP Bacede Mabuza and MP Mthandeni Dube and drop all charges against them as their prosecution stems from the exercise of their human rights.
- Pending their release, order a prompt, impartial, independent, and effective investigation into the attack carried out against them and the other prisoners on September 22, 2022, ensuring those responsible are held to account.

Write to:

His Excellency Honorable Prime Minister
Cleopas Siphon Dlamini
P.O Box 395, Mbabane, Kingdom of Eswatini
Email: csdlamini@gmail.com

Please be sure to send copies to the Prime Minister's secretary: clerktoparl@swazi.net

Salutation: *Your Excellency,*

And Copy:

Embassy of the Kingdom of Eswatini
1712 New Hampshire Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C., DC 20009
United States of America
Tel: (202) 234-5002
Email: embassy@swaziland-usa.com

The authorities can also be reached on social media.

Prime Minister – Cleopas Dlamini

- Twitter @eswatinigovernment1
- Facebook – Eswatini Government

Minister of Justice- Mrs Pholile Shakantu

- Twitter @PholileShakantu

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Political activism has been suppressed for years in the Kingdom of Eswatini, where King Mswati III rules as Africa's last absolute monarch. Eswatini has a history of journalists, human rights defenders and political activists being jailed under repressive laws, including the 1938 Sedition and Subversive Activities Act (SSA Act) and the 2008 Suppression of Terrorism Act (STA), simply for speaking out against the repression of dissent.

Not only are certain provisions in the Suppression of Terrorism Act of 2008 threatening to human rights and inherently repressive – they also breach Eswatini's obligations under international and regional human rights law and the Constitution of Eswatini. This is directly in violation of the rights of freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly. Activism, be it political or otherwise, should be possible in Eswatini without fear of reprisal. Despite political differences, respect for human rights law should be adhered to.

In July 2021, Eswatini saw one of its bloodiest protest repression. Amnesty International documented over 80 deaths from the protests, with the recent reports recording over 100 deaths. What started as a call for political reforms, through the delivery of petitions to members of parliament in their respective constituencies, was met with excessive use of force by law enforcement at the instruction of the country's leadership. Firstly, the Speaker of Parliament suggested it was 'unSwazi' to have petitions delivered. The then-acting Prime Minister ordered a stop to all petitions and unleashed the armed forces on the citizens.

Please take action at your earliest convenience!