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SOUTH AFRICA HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER'S LIFE IS IN DANGER

Nomsa Sizani, a former General Secretary of Abahlali baseMjondolo (AbM) and human rights defender, is currently facing severe threats to her life. These threats began the day after she reportedly questioned government officials about a local development project during their visit to the community on March 17. Since March 23, the threats have intensified, forcing Sizani to go into hiding due to fears for her safety. This situation is part of a broader pattern of harassment, intimidation, and violence against members and leaders of AbM. It is crucial for the South African authorities to conduct a prompt, thorough, independent, impartial, transparent, and effective investigation into the threats against Sizani and take all necessary measures to ensure her safety and security.

Write to the South African President urging him to:

- Take concrete and effective measures to promptly, thoroughly, independently, impartially, transparently and effectively investigate the death threats against Nomsa Sizani and to ensure her safety and security.
- Ensure that anyone suspected of being responsible for the threats is identified and brought to justice in a fair trial.
- Protect and ensure respect for the human rights of human rights defender and to initiate a process to develop legislation for the effective protection of the human rights of human rights defenders in South Africa.

Write to:

President Cyril Ramaphosa
Private Bag X463
Pretoria, 0001
South Africa
Email: president@presidency.gov.za
Copies to: presidentrsa@presidency.gov.za
Salutation: Dear President Ramaphosa,

And copy:

His Excellency Rieaz Shaik
High Commissioner
High Commission for the Republic of South Africa
15 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, ON K1M 1M8
Tel: (613) 744-0330 (24h) Fax: (613) 741-1639
Email: rsafrica@southafrica-canada.ca

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Nomsa Sizani, a 52-year-old human rights defender, is the former General Secretary of Abahlali baseMjondolo (AbM). She is a mother to four children. Tragically, her son Samuel Hloele was reportedly killed by the eThekweni Anti-Land Invasion Unit. He is one of the 25 AbM members killed since 2009.

AbM activists work tirelessly to improve living conditions for impoverished communities. They advocate for basic human rights such as adequate housing, water, and sanitation. Their efforts include exposing local government corruption and establishing community projects like a political school, farm, communal kitchen, and shop. However, instead of support, they face harassment, intimidation, threats, violence, and even murder. Their homes have also been targeted and damaged.

The persistent threats and violence against Nomsa Sizani and AbM members reflect a broader issue of violence against human rights defenders in South Africa. The country's deep-rooted poverty, unemployment, and inequality contribute to social, political, and economic unrest. Human rights defenders, who risk their lives to fight corruption and advocate for change, often meet hostility from state actors, with little done to protect them or hold perpetrators accountable.

Nomsa operates in KZN, a region notorious for political violence. From 2000 to 2021, 418 politically motivated murders were recorded in South Africa, with 118 occurring in KZN. Local political competition, especially for councillor positions, often leads to corruption and violence. Defenders like Nomsa who expose government malpractices face significant risks.

The ongoing harassment and killing of human rights defenders is a direct assault on civil society. It is a systemic effort to intimidate and silence activists, undermining movements like AbM and discouraging others from advocating for human rights.

In 2023, Amnesty International included another AbM leader, [Thapelo Mohapi](#), in its annual Write for Rights Campaign. Thapelo also had to hide due to death threats, highlighting the dangers faced by activists in South Africa.

Please take action as soon as possible until June 11, 2024! The UA will be duly updated should there be the need for further action.