

Hon. Pholile Dlamini-Shakantu
Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs
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Your Excellency,

I am writing to bring to your attention the unlawful killing of Thulani Maseko, a human rights lawyer, activist and former prisoner of conscience. On 21 January, Thulani Maseko was shot by unidentified assailants through an open window of his living room, in front of his wife. He succumbed to three shots fired, one to the head and two to the torso through the curtains, by people outside his home.

Although the motive behind his killing remains unclear, Amnesty International has reason to believe that he was attacked in relation to his work as a human rights lawyer and defender as he regularly stood up against the state's abuse of power, including what many see as the mismanagement of the country's resources, and called for the authorities to prioritize national development. Prior to his death, he chaired the Multi-Stakeholders Forum, a group of political parties and civil society groups calling for democratic reform in the country. He has previously been targeted by the state for demanding justice and criticizing the country's judiciary.

The day before Thulani Maseko was killed, King Mswati III reportedly said in a public address that those who are calling for democratic reform in the country would be "dealt with".

I urge you as the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs to ensure that the unlawful killing of Thulani Maseko is promptly, thoroughly, impartially, independently, transparently and effectively investigated and that anyone suspected to be responsible is brought to justice in a fair trial. I also urge you to ensure that the victim and his family are provided with access to justice and effective remedies. The authorities in Eswatini must respect, protect, promote and fulfil the human rights of everyone, including to freedom of expression, association, and peaceful assembly even if they hold opposing views.

Yours sincerely,