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KINGDOM OF ESWATINI

P.O. BOX 518, MBABANE H100
ESWATINI

OUR REFERENCE:

YOUR REFERENCE

06th February 2023

Dear Madam,

Your communication dated 24th January 2023 refers.

I have the honour to forward the official response from the Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini to the above. In this regard, please find attached a comprehensive response to the questions raised by Your Office for the attention of the Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini.

In addition to doing so, allow me to also express my grave disappointment at the insinuations contained in the communication. From the contents of the same, it appears as if there are preconceived notions on the part of the Co-authors of the communication and this is very concerning given that there is a presumption of impartiality on the part of Special Rapporteurs and the pivotal role that they play in the United Nations system.

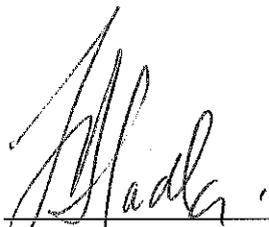
It is particularly disturbing that the Co-authors would place focus on a deliberate misquoting of His Majesty, King Mswati III for the basis of their concern, when the same remarks are widely available for their ready access and independent translation of the same can be sought.

We would also request that in official communications to the Kingdom of Eswatini, the proper salutations be used. In this regard, we would remind that the correct citation to be used is, "His Majesty, King Mswati III."

Notwithstanding the above, please be further informed that Government has instituted investigations into all the killings that have taken place recently. This is in line with our responsibility to ensure equal access to justice for all our citizens. These investigations shall be undertaken in an impartial and thorough manner as befitting the circumstances.

The Kingdom of Eswatini reiterates its commitment to the protection of promotion of human rights including the right to life, equality before the law, freedom of association and assembly as a guaranteed by the Bill of Rights in the Constitution Act of Eswatini.

Yours faithfully,



Thulisile Dladla (Senator)

THE KINGDOM OF ESWATINI'S RESPONSE TO THE JOINT COMMUNICATION FROM SPECIAL PROCEDURES DATED THE 24TH JANUARY 2023

Eswatini welcomes the communication sent by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights of defenders; Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; Special Rapporteur on the rights of freedom of peaceful assembly and of association and Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 43/16, 44/5,50/17 and 44/8.

Eswatini is concerned by the brutal killing of human rights defender and lawyer Mr Thulani Maseko, which is the first incident relating to a human rights defender but is not an isolated case in the context of the wave of unprecedented violence the country has witnessed recently, where criminality has been disguised as calls for democracy. These criminal activities consist of a spate of calculated and brutal killings of Emaswati including a Chief, members of the Security Forces, a leader of a political formation, private citizens and a human rights defender and lawyer.

These killings have been accompanied by a well-resourced and organised campaign of disinformation which is designed to promote hatred against the government and its authorities, undermine trust in public institutions, instill fear amongst the general populace and to create general disorder.

True to the disinformation, immediately after the murder of the Human rights lawyer, the proponents of the disinformation campaign on social media immediately sought to place the blame on the Government and its security forces without any evidence in this regard. Eswatini states that Mr. Maseko

Solidarity Forces" to the effect that [REDACTED]

Two police officers who were manning a roadblock in broad daylight were accosted by armed men in a car, made to lie on the ground, and shot in the back of the head. Two other police officers, one male and one female, were drawn out of the duty station to respond to a bogus distress call, were shot at when they arrived at the purported destination. The female officer died whilst the male survived.

There have been a number of other police officers who have been shot and killed, both in the line of duty but also whilst off duty, having been tracked to their places of residence. Similarly, there are also soldiers and correctional service officers who have been shot and killed in similar circumstances.

[REDACTED] was killed by members of the self-styled "Swaziland International Solidarity Forces". Before he was killed, he was forced to make a statement recorded on video, subsequently flighted by Swaziland News saying [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] He was thereafter shot and killed.

One of the violent extremist was killed by security forces after shooting and wounding an innocent, unarmed old man on his way to the Incwala ceremony. This was an unprovoked act and the man was shot purely because he was dressed in traditional regalia.

A leader of a breakaway political group was recently abducted from his home and thereafter shot and killed.

This is not an exhaustive list, but serves as an illustration of the nature of the violence that has taken place.

Alongside the killings, the Kingdom has also witnessed arson attacks that have led to millions of Emalangi in damages/losses on government, businesses and individual's infrastructure, resulting in a negative impact on the political and socioeconomic development of the country. These include the burning of [REDACTED] home, together with that of [REDACTED] as well as that of [REDACTED] because they were perceived to have been loyal to the Authorities. [REDACTED] home was also burnt to the ground, together with one of [REDACTED]. Schools, Royal Kraals and Tinkhundla Centres have been targeted for arson with varying degrees of success.

The above is not an exhaustive list of incidents that have occurred. It is merely an illustration of the security situation in the Country that has resulted in a climate of fear and a complete lack of ability for the expression of alternative thought and this cannot be equated with a legitimate call for democracy.

In conclusion, the Kingdom reiterates its commitment to the protection of promotion of human rights including the right to life, equality before the law, freedom of association and assembly as a guaranteed by the Bill of Rights in the Constitution Act of Eswatini.