



**Press Statement
12 August 2011**

In the Wake of the Bail-Out Scandal: Swazi Regime Dismisses Basic Rights under Law with Impunity

Earlier today, Justice Thomas Masuku, the outspoken Swazi judge who is fighting his dismissal for refusing to comply with the irregular judicial practices of the Swazi regime came back to the High Court in Swaziland, to hear the response to preliminary applications he had submitted. The applications were intended to ensure that his upcoming 'disciplinary' hearing was fair and legitimate. The SDC has not been surprised at the outcome. The requests have all been denied.

The Judge had sought the following:

1. That the Chief Justice recuses himself from the hearing.
2. That he be granted an open public hearing-the hearing is being held behind closed doors in the High Court library.
3. That the charges brought be reviewed.

As it stands, the Chief Justice is expected to chair the "disciplinary" proceedings, and will in effect be the judge and jury in a chronically distorted process, held 'in camera, and subjected to no accountability whatsoever.

The dismissal of all three of these perfectly reasonable requests illustrates the extent to which the Swazi Regime is prepared to 'doctor' even the workings of the High Court to prevent the Swazi public from being able to observe for themselves the so-called independent High Court. If an example was needed of how the regime manipulates the organs of the State to safeguard its narrow and selfish interests, then here it is!

This is taking place not one whole week after it was announced that a bail out of billions of rands is in the process of being handed over to the regime from the South African Government. Here is further evidence of how the regime is incapable of changing the way it operates, even when being scrutinised by the world. Judge Thomas Masuku is to be applauded for challenging the regime, but we must not forget those who are less fortunate than the Judge, and who are currently being held in appalling prison conditions and who are denied their most fundamental rights.

The Break the Chains Campaign launched for their release is long overdue and deserves all of our support in the coming period.

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