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*Plenary sitting*

**B9-0124/2023**

14.2.2023

## **MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION**

with request for inclusion in the agenda for a debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 144 of the Rules of Procedure

on the situation of human rights defenders in Eswatini, notably the murder of Thulani Maseko  
(2023/2551(RSP))

**Marisa Matias, Nikolaj Villumsen**  
on behalf of The Left Group

**B9-0124/2023**

**European Parliament resolution on the situation of human rights defenders in Eswatini, notably the murder of Thulani Maseko (2023/2551(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its Rule 144
- A. Whereas on 21 January 2023, Thulani Maseko, a human rights and trade union lawyer and political activist in Eswatini, was shot dead in front of his family by gunmen;
- B. whereas he was Chairman of the Eswatini Multiparty Forum for Democratisation, a coalition working for democratic reform through dialogue, and a member of Lawyers for Human Rights in Swaziland; whereas from 2012 to 2015 he defended the rights of the Trade Union Congress of Eswatini (TUCOSWA) after its removal by the government and since then he was providing legal advice to the Eswatini trade unions;
- C. Whereas Eswatini is the last absolute monarchy in Africa and political violence is widespread; whereas since the student demonstration in June 2021, more than 80 people have reportedly been killed by the security forces; whereas allegations of hiring mercenaries, mainly white Afrikaners from South Africa, to help security forces to repress growing opposition;
- D. Whereas on 13 and 14 December 2022 the unions called a strike to demand improved working conditions and the release of two imprisoned members of the Eswatini Parliament since 2021, Mduduzi Bacede Mabuza and Mthandeni Dube; whereas following these events Sticks Nkambule, General Secretary of the Swaziland Transport and Communication Workers Union (SWATCAWU) being sought by the police for alleged criminal acts; whereas his family has been harassed;
- E. whereas these events are part of a long campaign of harassment by the Eswatini government against trade unions and democracy;
- 1. Stresses that according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights; supports the people of Eswatini in their struggle for democracy and demands respect for and protection of human rights, including workers' rights, the right to life, the rights to freedom of expression, assembly and association and the rule of law;
- 2. Strongly condemns the killing of Thelani Maseko; calls for an independent, rapid, official investigation into this murder and the conviction of its perpetrators; stresses that since the judiciary is not independent in the country, this investigation should be placed under the supervision of the UN in order to guarantee its impartiality;
- 3. condemns the widespread violations of human rights in the country, calls for the immediate release of all political prisoners - including the two members of the Parliament imprisoned since 2021- and an immediate end to the harassment, violence

and pressure exercised against human rights;

4. Condemns the trade union repression in the country and stresses that the authorities must respect the ILO principles on freedom of association and ensure that trade union rights are exercised under normal conditions, with respect for fundamental human rights and in a climate free of violence, pressure, harassment or threats;
5. Instructs its President to forward this resolution