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*Plenary sitting*

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**B9-0125/2023**

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))

**Pierrette Herzberger-Fofana, Michèle Rivasi, Francisco Guerreiro, Alice Kuhnke, Hannah Neumann, Jordi Solé, Erik Marquardt, Caroline Roose**  
on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

**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 Rule 144 of its Rules of Procedure;
- A. whereas Eswatini is the last absolute monarchy in Africa, facing significant deterioration in the respect of human rights, rule of law and living standards since King Mswati III took power in 1986;
- B. whereas on 21 January, Thulani Maseko human rights lawyer and Chairperson of the Multistakeholder Forum, was shot dead at his house in front of his family, shortly after the King made a public threat against members of the country's pro-democracy movement;
- C. whereas UN Special rapporteurs expressed concern that Thulani Maseko may have been directly targeted in reprisal for his work as human rights and pro-democracy advocate;
- D. whereas Maseko's murder occurred in a context of attacks on human rights defenders and pro-democracy activists in Eswatini, which have increased since May 2021, with the start of pro-democracy protests;
- E. whereas authorities of Eswatini responded to these protests with excessive use of force, arbitrary arrests and detention, internet shutdowns and a ban on demonstrations;
- 1. Strongly condemns the killing of Thulani Maseko;
- 2. Strongly condemns the continuous incriminating of human rights defenders, political activists, civil society organisations and trade Union in Eswatini;
- 3. Calls for the immediate release of all political prisoners and to free persons arbitrarily detained;
- 4. Considers attacks on human right defenders and pro-democracy activists and the banning of trade unions to contravene commitments of Eswatini under the Cotonou Agreement to respect democracy, the rule of law and human rights principles;
- 5. Calls for an independent, impartial, and transparent investigations into the killing of Maseko, and the ongoing repression, and alleged recruitment of mercenaries from South Africa to help security forces repress opposition, and to bring those responsible to justice in fair trials;
- 6. Underlines that since the judiciary is not independent in Eswatini, these investigations should be placed under UN supervision to ensure impartiality;

7. Recalls that in November 2021, King Mswati III agreed on the establishment of the national dialogue facilitated by the SADC but has until now delayed its launch; urges the authorities in Eswatini to initiate without delay an all-inclusive multi-stakeholder dialogue to restore the respect and protection of human rights, the rule of law and democracy;
8. Calls on the EU to suspend budget support programmes to Eswatini where funds risk being diverted for activities which may abet human rights abuses and target pro-democracy and human right advocates, and to consider opening a procedure under Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement in this respect;
9. Calls for the EU to impose sanctions against perpetrators of human rights violations in Eswatini through the Global Human Rights Sanction Mechanism;
10. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Government of Eswatini, the African Union, the South African Development Community, the ACP-EU Council of Ministers and Joint Parliamentary Assembly, the Pan-African Parliament, the International Labour Organisation, and the United Nations Secretary-General.