



Plenary sitting

B9-0137/2023

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))

Željana Zovko, Michael Gahler, Isabel Wiseler-Lima, David Lega, Eleni Stavrou, Vangelis Meimarakis, Michaela Šojdrová, Vladimír Bilčík, Ivan Štefanec, Krzysztof Hetman, Stelios Kypourouopoulos, Jiří Pospíšil, Eugen Tomac, Janina Ochojska
on behalf of the PPE 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 its previous Resolution of 21 May 2015 on Swaziland,
 - having regard to the statement made on 23 January 2023 by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk and on 26 January 2023 by the UN Special Rapporteurs and African Union,
 - having regard to the statement made on 22 January 2023 by the Diplomatic Service of the European Union,
 - having regard to the statement made on 23 January 2023 by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and on 25 January 2023 made by the Chairperson of the African Union Commission,
 - having regard to Rule 144 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas King Mswati III has [ruled the country since 1986](#); whereas he appoints the prime minister and a large portion of lawmakers, and has the power to dissolve Parliament;
- B. whereas on the night of 21 January 2023, Thulani Maseko was shot and killed in front of his family by unidentified gunmen in his home; whereas on the same day, the King made a public declaration threatening supporters of the nation's pro-democracy movement; whereas in 2014, Maseko was arbitrarily arrested, prosecuted and sentenced to two years in prison following a publication, during which he was subjected to cruel and inhumane treatment and placed in solitary confinement;
- C. whereas Maseko was a human rights lawyer and an outspoken critic of the absolute monarch system, the last in Africa, renowned for his efforts in advancing democracy, rule of law, good governance and human rights;
- D. whereas since 2021, protests began demanding democratic reforms and the King's government retaliated with excessive force, arbitrary arrests, detention, harassment, threats and abductions of journalists, human rights defenders and politicians; a shutdown of the internet and bans on protests;
1. Condemns the unlawful killing of Maseko; calls on the authorities of Eswatini to ensure an independent and impartial, internationally supported investigation in a prompt, thorough and transparent manner;
 2. urges the authorities to launch a comprehensive and inclusive dialogue as a matter of urgency and priority, facilitated by the Southern Africa Development Community, to work towards national reconciliation, respect for human rights and the rule of law and,

ultimately, lasting peace;

3. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Government and Parliament of Eswatini, the African Union and African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Commission, the Vice-President of the European Commission/ High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.