



Plenary sitting

B9-0140/2023

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))

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on behalf of the ECR 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 on Eswatini, in particular that of 21 May 2015 on the case of human rights activists Thulani Maseko and Bheki Makhubu,
 - having regard to statement by the Spokesperson of the HR/VP Borrell on the situation in Eswatini of 22 January 2023,
 - having regard to the statement by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on the killing of Eswatini human rights lawyer of 23 January 2023,
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948,
 - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) of 1966,
 - having regard to the Cotonou Partnership Agreement,
 - having regard to Rule 144 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas on 21 January 2023, Thulani Rudolph Maseko, a human rights lawyer and Chairperson of the Multistakeholder Forum (MSF) was assassinated in front of his wife and two children at his home in Luyengo, Mbabane; whereas his murder came hours after King Mswati publicly stated that those causing political trouble in the country should not ‘cry about mercenaries coming after them’; whereas it is still not clear who killed Maseko and which motives the killer or killers had;
- B. whereas Maseko was a leading figure for human rights in the country and who sought to push Eswatini to transition into a multi-party democracy; whereas in 2021, Eswatini was engulfed in the worst riots in its post-colonial history; whereas ever since the situation in the country remains tense and fragile; whereas pro-democracy protests and work strikes still occur sporadically in the country, which are at times quelled with violence by the police and military;
- C. whereas Eswatini ranks very low on freedom according to Freedom House, ranking just 17 out of 100, labelling the country as “not free”; whereas the King exercises ultimate authority over all branches of the national government and effectively controls local governance through his influence over traditional chiefs; whereas political dissent and civic and labour activism are subject to harsh punishment; whereas additional human rights problems include impunity for security forces and discrimination against women and minorities;
1. Strongly condemns the assassination of Thulani Rudolph Maseko and expresses its

condolences to his family, friends and colleagues; calls for a prompt, independent, impartial and effective investigation into his murder and for those responsible to be held to account;

2. Calls on the Eswatini authorities to ensure the safety, security and human rights of all people in Eswatini, including human rights defenders, journalists and political activists; stresses that their freedom of expression and assembly must be respected at all times;
3. Reminds the Eswatini authorities that respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and providing space to civil society are important elements in the EU's relations with Eswatini;
4. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Kingdom of Eswatini, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Commission and the Council.