

Thulani Maseko: Third Annual Commemoration
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The oppressed in all corners of the world along with all working-class communities, remember Thulani Maseko, for his revolutionary work in Swaziland, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and abroad. Maseko, the human right lawyer, was attacked by the Swaziland fascist regime.

In 2014, he was arrested with Bheki Makhubo, the editor of The National Magazine in Swaziland, on charges of scandalising the judiciary and in contempt of court following the publication of articles criticising the judicial system of Swaziland. He has been in the forefront of challenging the imperial monarch in Eswatini by arguing that it is unlawful for the king to announce the change of Swaziland to Eswatini without following the legislative process and without total meaningful participation of the Swaziland community.

Thulani Maseko the former secretary general of People's United Democratic Movement (PUDEMO) and the former chairperson of the multi-stakeholder forum. Maseko was also a human right lawyer, the founding member of the Lawyers for Human Rights Swaziland, a freedom fighter, an advocate for democratic reforms in Swaziland and he fought for justice for the Swaziland June 2021 unrest survivors. He was brutally murdered by unknown missionaries outside his house in Bhunya, Manzini region, on 24 January 2023, while his wife Tanele Maseko and children were around the house.

A few hours before Maseko was murdered King Mswati III delivered a public address that was widely interpreted as a threat against political dissidents. A day before Maseko's assassination during his televised address the king had said, I paraphrase, that those causing political trouble in the country should not cry about missionaries coming for them, and that those elements causing disharmony and disrespect in Eswatini will be eliminated.

Professor Frans Viljoen the director at the centre for human rights at the University of Pretoria on the eSwatini newspaper on 23 June 2023, five months after the passing of Maseko, spoke during the inaugural lecture of Thulani Maseko at Esibayeni Lodge, said many calls were made from all corners of the world that the killing be fully investigated and those responsible be identified, prosecuted and punished. But until today nothing had happened, there is still no justice for Thulani.

This year marks the 78th year since The Universal Declaration of Humans Rights was written, and it is also the third year of mourning and commemorating Thulani Maseko – His passing remains a demonstration for a long fight for human rights, justice, and equal egalitarian society.

The Thulani Maseko Foundation, Abahlali base Freedom Park and the Socialist Party of Azania had embarked on a liberatory program of remembering and reviving revolutionary spirits by hosting the Thulani Maseko 3rd Annual Commemoration, the theme being "No freedom, no social justice" in Freedom Park (Soweto). The session co-chair was Philile Mavuso, a former Deputy President of the Students Union but currently representing Thulani Maseko Foundation. The opening and welcome was led by Thami Hukwe, a leader of Abahlali base Freedom Park who stated that the global crisis that we meet under as attack on Palestine and Uganda continue, and how capitalism has reached a stage of decay.

This commemoration event become an eye opener of what really is the political hegemony in Swaziland and globally. One of the exiled, Mlungisi Makhanya, the President of PUDEMO, shared deeply hurting stories about Eswatini and the work Maseko played in the defending the oppressed people of Eswatini at all cost. He said when they were arrested with Maseko, many detainees and prisoners came to Maseko's cell for judicial advice and that really showed a revolutionary character in him to lead the struggle in Eswatini, so the attack by the eSwatini fascist regime was inevitable.

Other speakers that shared other Eswatini struggles like Bongane Kunene, one the June 2021 Eswatini unrest survivors, who is also in exile currently, shared a devastating narrative of unrest that cost him one of his legs. He further said that the shot directed at him by the police was deliberate, highlighted by the fact that they came close to him and left him bleeding. But he managed to get help from a comrade and he was then taken to hospital. In an interview with Kunene he said the primary reason for the June 2021 eSwatini unrest was the killing of student Thabang Nkomonye by police in May 2021.

We were honoured by the presence of one of the founding member of PUDEMO Mandla Hlatshwayo who shared a political history on how ubuKhosi (the monarchy) came to power. We were also honoured by the presence of the wife of Thulani Maseko, Tanele Maseko, and their children. This remembrance brought revolutionary praxis that sparked insurgence, and strengthened unity and black solidarity influenced by the black consciousness philosophy.

The Deputy of the Socialist Party of Azania Tower Phineas Malahlela spoke about uniting the community, students and workers in order to close the gap for the system infiltrating our revolutionary actions. Lastly Cde Veneshia Govender said that there is no struggle won without solidarity, and she strongly demanded the need to build a solidarity for ever campaigns.

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