



STATEMENT BY THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE PAN AFRICAN BAR ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA

PABASA notes with great concern the recent reports of death threats made to Adv Muzi Sikhakhane SC arising from Adv Sikhakhane's representation of former President Jacob Zuma before the Commission of Inquiry into State Capture. PABASA condemns, in the strongest terms, any threats of violence against legal practitioners, particularly on the basis of who their clients are.

Advocates are independent legal practitioners who are ethically bound to represent their clients to the best of their abilities and to maintain the highest levels of integrity and professionalism as officers of the Court. They advocate their client's case on the instructions of the client. The criminal justice system would not function as required by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa without the involvement of independent legal practitioners. Lawyers provide an essential service for truth finding in courts, commissions of inquiry and other dispute resolution tribunals. Every person or party that is participating in such proceedings has a right to be heard. Advocates play a central role in giving effect to the constitutionally entrenched right of access to justice. It is their task to protect the interests of their client and insist on the application of the law and rules of any tribunal fairly.

Attacks on lawyers, threats and attempts to intimidate them when discharging their professional duties are therefore also an attack on our democracy and the rule of law.



PABASA calls upon society in general, all professional bodies in the legal field, the judiciary and the executive in particular, to condemn this deplorable conduct in the strongest terms.

We trust that law enforcement authorities will investigate this matter fully.

PABASA National Executive Committee

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