

# JOHANNESBURG SOCIETY OF ADVOCATES

JOHANNESBURG BAR COUNCIL



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## JSA STATEMENT ON ARREST AND DETENTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYERS IN ZIMBABWE

The Johannesburg Society of Advocates (JSA) condemns the arrest, detention, intimidation, and harassment of human rights lawyers in Zimbabwe, as recently reported in the press and by international human rights organisations.

In a statement issued this month, Amnesty International recorded the following events:

*“On 4 September 2023, human rights lawyers Doug Coltart and Tapiwa Muchineripi of Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR) who are representing two Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC) members, who had been abducted and were receiving treatment at a hospital in Harare, were arrested and charged with obstructing the course of justice. The two lawyers were arrested for advising the police that the two political opposition members were in a bad state and were under medical care. They were denied bail by the police. Their clients, Womberaishe Nhende, the elected Councilor for Glen Norah Ward 27 in Harare, and Sonele Mukhuhlani, were abducted and tortured before being dumped on the outskirts of Harare on 2 September 2023.”*

In August 2020, the JSA spoke out against similar targeting of lawyers in Zimbabwe. Such attacks on lawyers are a severe breach of the independence of the legal profession and the international law rights to access to justice and a fair trial.

We reiterate the commitments we have previously made to our Zimbabwean colleagues: the JSA stands in solidarity with you and salutes your courage in pursuing the highest standards and traditions of our profession without fear, favour or prejudice.

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