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STATEMENT BY MARIE HARF, DEPUTY SPOKESPERSON

Detention of Human Rights Lawyer and Journalist in Swaziland

The United States is deeply concerned by the continued detention of human rights lawyer Thulani Maseko and journalist Bheki Makhubu in the Kingdom of Swaziland. Maseko and Makhubu were first arrested in March and are being held on charges of contempt of court for publishing an article critical of the High Court of Swaziland.

The United States urges the judiciary of the Kingdom of Swaziland to recognize its obligation to uphold the rule of law and provisions regarding the protection and promotion of fundamental rights and freedoms enshrined in the Constitution of the Kingdom of Swaziland. We call upon the Government of Swaziland to swiftly resolve the cases of Maseko and Makhubu in accordance with the law, including international obligations entitling them to trial within a reasonable time or release and setting forth the minimum requirements for a fair trial without undue delay.