

Programme

On the eve of Swaziland's 20th of September election, SALO presents a range of South African and Swazi perspectives in the interests of building regional and international consensus on the Swazi crisis.

Thursday 12 September 2013

Burgers Park Hotel, 424 Lilian Ngoyi St (Van der Walt Street), Pretoria
9:30am to 12:30pm (followed by lunch)

First Session - SA Perspectives

CHAIR: Molly Dlamini - SALO Researcher, Member of the ANC International Affairs Sub-Committee, and former IR Coordinator: National Union Of Mineworkers.

Rebone Tau - SALO, Senior Programme Advisor, and Chairperson of the ANC Youth League, International Relations subcommittee.

Bongani Masuku - International Relations Secretary, COSATU

Second Session - Swazi Perspectives

CHAIR: Muzi Masuku - OSISA Swaziland Programme Manager

Sam Magagula - International Secretary, The Ngwane National Liberatory Congress (NNLC)

Cde Mlungisi Makhanya - Political Commissar, People's United Democratic Movement (PUDEMO)

Cde Vincent Ncongwane - Secretary General, Trade Union Congress of Swaziland (TUCOSWA)

Lomcebo Dlamini - First Deputy Chairperson, Swaziland Coalition of Concerned Civic Organisation (SCCCO)

Wandile Dlodlu - Project Coordinator, Swaziland United Democratic Front (SUDF)

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Building International, Regional and National Consensus

Policy Dialogue Report No. 20:

Swaziland 12 September 2013

First Session – SA Perspectives



Molly Dlamini introduced the speakers for the First Session, starting with **Bongani Masuku**, International Relations Secretary of COSATU, who has a history in the Swazi struggles since his youth years. Mr Masuku shared some reflections from COSATU's perspective on the Swazi struggle.

He identified Swaziland's *Tinkhundla*¹ system, as a product of a particular historical, political, social and economic configuration of power. The royal aristocracy emerged from British colonialism as a new force accommodating colonial interests in an attempt to

entrench itself as a hegemonic power throughout all spheres of Swazi society. What used to be called *Lefafa*, now *Tibiyo TakaNgwane*, shored up the capitalization of the royal aristocracy into becoming, not just a political, but also an economic power.

Mr Masuku briefly outlined the evolution of the Swazi electoral system from the time the royal aristocracy assumed power, to inroads made by the opposition party, the Ngwane National Liberatory Congress (NLLC) in the 1972 elections. This led to the proclamation of the 1973 decree that was drawn up with the active participation of the Afrikaner Broederbond, Swaziland's participation in the Constellation of Southern African States (CONSAS) in 1979 and the joint operations between the South African Defense Force and the Swazi Royal Army, the emergence of the Umbutfo Swaziland Defence Force in 1974, and the coming into being of the electoral colleges in 1978 guaranteeing the consistent reproduction of royal power.



The constitutional review process – the result of efforts particularly by the students, the trade union movement, and other progressive social forces consolidating in the birth of PUDEMO in 1983, and culminating in the 1990 treason trial – itself allowed small concessions, but with the power levers remaining the same. The electoral colleges were abolished, but the result was the current *Tinkhundla* dispensation accompanied by massive arrests of activists such as Bheki Dlamini, a student activist.

Mr Masuku noted that COSATU, supported by their international comrades and friends, strongly condemned the assault on Swaziland's TUCOSWA, the arrest and deportation of its leaders and activists, and disruption of its activities.

¹ Refers to the 55 administrative units with representation in both upper and lower house of the Swazi parliaments



The next speaker, **Rebhone Tau**, stated that the ANC Youth League was highly concerned by what is happening in Swaziland, and with the recent arrest of Jay Naidoo, a former Minister in the South African government. The Youth League continued to support the struggle of the Swazi people, and called for a dialogue between the King and the progressive forces in Swaziland to find common ground on how to resolve some of the issues moving forward. She also stated that they support a form of a constitutional monarchy. She reiterated that the Youth League would continue to engage, to ensure that the conditions attached to a loan from South Africa to Swaziland would remain. It welcomed the more detailed policy positions on Swaziland that came out of the Mangaung conference. The League would also continue engaging with the

ANC around the political prisoners, particularly South Africa's Amos Mbedzi who was sentenced to twenty-five years last year, immediately after the ANC's policy conference. Lastly, in addition to working with the Alliance, the League would work with the ANC/Swaziland Task Team convened by Ambassador Lindiwe Zulu.

Commentators to the First Session included, among others: **Braam Hanekom of PASSOP** who asked in what ways South Africa can encourage an environment that enables the people of Swaziland to step up; **Anne Macro, from the British High Commission in Pretoria and also Deputy High Commissioner to Swaziland** who stated that the British government has made it clear that they want to see reforms in Swaziland, including a multi-party democracy; **Brian Ntshangase from SDP**, who advised caution in accepting the alleged love of the people for their King as fact and therefore as the reason why there has not been more progress; **Kwezi Mabasa from SASCO** who posed the questions of what can be done to build consciousness amongst youth particularly in institutions of higher learning, and of building international solidarity campaigning on the issue of Swaziland that extends beyond South Africa; and **Reverend Shabalala from the Constituent Assembly of Civil Society in Swaziland (CA)**, who asked whether there was any strategy and planning on how the ANC planned to engage the Swazi government and on how to prepare the people in different groups for dialogue.

Second Session – Swazi Perspectives



Muzi Masuku introduced the five speakers for the Second Session, starting with **Sam Magagula**. Referring to the First Session's discussions, Mr Magagula explained that there is no disunity among progressives in Swaziland but only slow movement. And given the suppression and surveillance in the country amongst other factors, what "we need therefore in Swaziland, even though we may look to be inactive, is capacitation." Areas in which greater capacitation was needed included leadership training and support for youth, civic and political education about democracy as well as the rule of law.

The NNLC was formed in 1963 and banned by the King in 1973, when they managed to get three MPs in the 1972 elections. In 1997, they unbanned themselves, and in 1998, they took a resolution that they would not take part in the elections since the 1973 decree was still in existence.

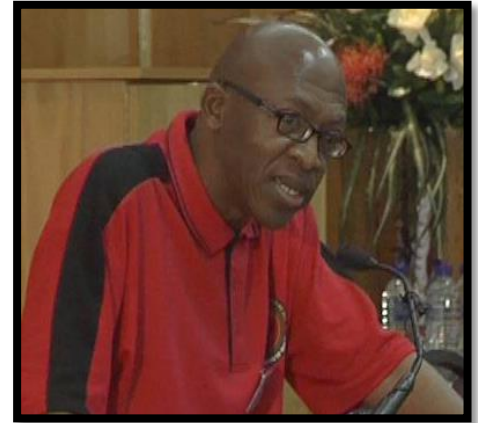
"It is unfortunate therefore that our SADC, AU and whoever you can call, see Swaziland as democratic. They forget the international protocols that have been signed by Swaziland which define how elections that are done democratically are conducted, but all the same they say that Swaziland is democratic. We cannot be part of that system."





The next speaker **Mlungisi Makanya** criticised the international community's indifference to or tolerance of the "royal supremacy" in Swaziland, and challenged the misconception that Swazis love the monarchy. Mr Makanya raised the issue regarding the absence of unity among the progressives in Swaziland as demonstrated by the silence from some of the organisations in moments of crisis or when extra pressure must be exerted on the system.

Vincent Ncongwane stated that what was at issue was not the number of political parties, which would be perceived to constitute multi-partyism, but whether there was a law that prevents political parties from participating and contesting for political power. He stated that it is a perpetuated falsity that the majority of Swazis do not want political parties. The Swazi government has also been very clear that it does not want a united labour organisation. He spoke about the government's delay tactics in registering TUCOSWA, and the events leading up to the Global Enquiry meeting, which was blocked by the authorities and accompanied by Jay Naidoo's arrest.



...our authorities have got two types of audience: there is the local audience and there is the international audience. To the international audience, they want to appear as if they are trying to reform, but they know that they show their true face to the local audience . . . we believe that the attention that *you* are going to give Swaziland is going to make Swaziland stop lying, whether to the ILO or to the international community in general. And that is what we are here to say: comrades, help us; help us democratise Swaziland.



Lomcebo Dlamini explained that the thousands seen at many traditional ceremonies do not attest to the voracity of the narrative that 'Swazis love the King', but rather to the degree of coercion by way of sanctions that can be meted out to one's homestead and family.

So it's not a question of 'loving' the King. The institution of the monarchy, Swazis do accept, respect . . . in terms of the institution as a unifying force. They have problems of course with the current person who is in power, because the argument says that he has actually led to a perversion of the traditional system.

Over the past decade there has been a maturing of the pro-democracy movement in Swaziland, and "the realities of the Swazi struggle is that you are not going to come at it in a one-dimensional way. Whatever approaches are used, they have to be multi-faceted, they have to be multi-layered." She identified the economy as critical, particularly because there is a huge participation of royalty and royal investment companies in up to sixty percent of the economy.

More could be done by external players to support civic education and mobilisation, capacity building and movement building, and to support human rights defenders.

You are dealing with a population that has been deliberately de-politicized. The fear has been inculcated. It is part and parcel of how the system runs its affairs . . . So we have to invest in removing these psychological bars from people, so they can begin to understand themselves as citizens who have rights and responsibilities to engage on the governance stage. Because if we are saying the Swazi people are going to do it for themselves, that's not going to happen on its own. It needs deliberate investment.

Ms Dlamini stated that South Africa is a critical player, and it cannot avoid the responsibility of speaking to this issue at SADC or the AU by alluding to Swaziland's sovereignty. Many, in the diplomatic community and inter-governmental organisations are speaking out, and though it may seem negligible to people on the outside, it is significant for Swazis. So, the support that is needed is not only in terms of resources but also the moral one.

The last speaker for the day was **Wandile Dlodlu**, who laid out the six common demands that emerged from the convening of political parties and civil society including NGOs, faith-based organisations, and youth:

1. *an all-inclusive political dialogue is urgently needed in Swaziland;*
2. *a total unbanning of all political parties to ensure political freedom and activity in that country;*
3. *there must be some form of a legitimate transitional authority;*
4. *that authority must be tasked with the responsibility of addressing, first and foremost, a democratic new constitution;*
5. *a multi-party democratic dispensation is needed; and*
6. *monarchy under a democratic constitution that all are subjected to, notwithstanding social, economic or political standing in society.*



Currently, there was a Coalition of Concerned Civil Society, a multi-party campaign for the restoration of multi-partyism to run for the next twenty-four months. Mr. Dlodlu requested the international community to support the struggle in Swaziland, and the activists whose rights are continuously violated without the regime being held accountable.

Comments from contributors in the audience followed, including an appeal for assistance for the Swazi media, and the day's sessions ended.

The analysis and recommendations included in this Policy Dialogue Report do not necessarily reflect the view of SALO or any of the donors or conference participants, but rather draw upon the major strands of discussion put forward at the event. Participants neither reviewed nor approved this document. The contents of the report are the sole responsibility of SALO, and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the donors who provided financial assistance for this policy dialogue session.

About the Southern African Liaison Office:

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