

President Mario has fallen terribly ill due to horrible prison conditions

The People's United Democratic Movement's (PUDEMO) President Mario Masuku has fallen critically ill at His Majesty's Correctional Services at the Zakhele Remand Centre. He is suffering from pneumonia due to a combination of various horrible conditions he has been exposed to. He has grown physically weak, pale, lost weight and has lost part of his eyesight.

Having to be subjected to a poor diet of porridge, beans and the occasional poorly cooked cabbage has contributed to his deteriorated condition.

Zakhele remand centre has refused to put President Masuku in a cell well secured in terms of cold and bad weather conditions since his arrest on the 1st of May 2014. He has been further denied warm clothes and access to his private medical practitioner. Visitors who come to check on him have been made to wait for nothing less than five hours, including refusal of his own son to consult him in his capacity as a lawyer. The latter has been classified as a normal visitor, much against the law itself.

Some of his comrades have been banned from visiting him. The ban was constituted after they brought him and Maxwell Dlamini newspapers deemed too political by warders. The reading material included nation magazine which is a Swazi monthly publication that is normally critical of the authorities, city press and Sowetan which are both South African newspapers.

Maxwell Dlamini still in academic limbo

Maxwell Dlamini, the Secretary General of Swaziland Youth Congress (SWAYOCO), who was arrested alongside Masuku, continues to be denied the right to sit for his examinations at the University of Swaziland where he is doing his fourth year in Commerce. Much against the dictates of the laws of the country Justice Mpendulo Simelane overturned his own judgement that Dlamini should write his examinations. In what appears to be two shades of Justice, a convicted fraudster, a known king's praise singer Chawe Mamba is allowed to further his studies while the 23 years old Dlamini's future has been abruptly curtailed.

As the Commander in Chief of the Correctional Services, PUDEMO holds Mswati III responsible for the abuse perpetrated on both President Mario Masuku and Maxwell Dlamini. It will also hold him answerable in the eventuality that the condition of the President worsens to the point of death.

PUDEMO demands that Mzuthini Ntshangase as head of the prisons should personally attend to this matter as soon as possible because it has become clear that his subordinates have not even the least regard for the law. As an awaiting trial detainee President Mario Masuku remains innocent until proven to the contrary. He should get fair treatment as per his health condition. His son should be allowed to consult him like any other lawyer. He must be allowed visitations and his visitors must not be intimidated with harassment and banning.

PUDEMO demands that Maxwell Dlamini should be immediately allowed his right to education by being allowed to write his examination.

PUDEMO remains deeply touched by the levels of cruelty and inhuman conditions that these prisoners of conscious are daily subjected to.

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