

STATEMENT ISSUED BY THE SOCIETY OF ADVOCATES OF NAMIBIA ON THE
CURRENT SITUATION IN ZIMBABWE

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The Society of Advocates of Namibia ("the Society") has noted recent alarming reports by the Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (www.zlhr.org.zw) concerning the situation in Zimbabwe, including of a marked increase in human rights violations; acts of torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment of civilians (involving human rights defenders, political activists and ordinary citizens); abductions and the targeting of human rights lawyers. The Society condemns any such conduct.

Such reports should be of great concern to any country, such as the Republic of Namibia, established as a sovereign, secular, democratic and unitary State founded upon the principles of democracy, the rule of law and justice for all.

On 06 August 2020, the Namibian Government's Ministry of International Relations and Cooperation published a document titled "Statement on the Situation in Zimbabwe". It was nothing of the sort. Instead, the document noted that Namibia "respects the established SADC institutions" and that Namibia "will respect and abide by those SADC protocols". The document reflects a disappointing deflection by the Namibian Government to "SADC institutions".

During 2008, the Society publicly spoke out against human rights abuses in Zimbabwe and then already lamented the Namibian Government's silence and the absence of an express and outright public condemnation of events in Zimbabwe. The alarming reports demand that the Namibian Government urgently and properly inform itself of the current situation in Zimbabwe and thereafter adopt a public and principled standpoint, consistent with the democratic values and respect for human rights forming the cornerstone of the Namibian Constitution.

The Society reiterates that the Republic of Namibia is established as a State founded upon the principles of democracy, the rule of law and justice for all. These fundamental principles should inform and permeate regional diplomacy.

Adv. G Narib

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