

For Immediate Release

21 July, 2021

To the Government of Eswatini and the international community:

We, the undersigned 69 civil society organisations, are deeply concerned about the eruption of state violence in Eswatini. We stand in solidarity with the people of Eswatini in condemning the government's violent repression of mass protests demanding democracy and economic justice.

We support the UN Human Rights Commissioner's [call](#) urging the authorities to fully adhere to human rights principles and reminding them that peaceful protests are protected under international human rights law. We call on the Government of Eswatini to immediately cease its brutal crackdown against civilians, restore and maintain internet access, and engage in inclusive dialogue with pro-democracy groups and politicians.

We call on the international community, including the United Nations, African Union, Southern African Development Community, and individual governments, to demand that the Government of Eswatini respect human rights, allow a thorough, independent investigation of who authorised violence against protesters, including shoot to kill orders, and support a peaceful transition to a democratic form of government.

Reports out of Eswatini [indicate](#) that, since late June, the army and police forces have killed dozens of unarmed civilians and injured around 1,000 people, including [by shooting](#) indiscriminately at and wounding protesters. The government has [reportedly](#) imprisoned hundreds of people, many of them young people, and shut down internet access across the country for several weeks, which Amnesty International [calls](#) "a brazen violation of the rights to freedom of expression and information." Reports further indicate that security forces have [sought to](#) intimidate human rights defenders and activists with unlawful surveillance, imposed a curfew, and restricted public gatherings and petition deliveries to the government. This political crisis caused by state-sponsored violence [risks creating](#) a humanitarian crisis, as hospitals struggle to treat the influx of people injured by security forces, food and fuel supplies become limited, and people's movement and ability to conduct basic commerce is restricted.

Specifically, we lend our support to the [demands](#) of civil society organisations, political organisations, and people's movements within Eswatini calling for a long-term resolution to the current political crisis through an inclusive political dialogue, the total unbanning of political parties, a transitional authority, new democratic Constitution, and a multiparty democratic dispensation.

In the immediate term, we join democracy defenders in Eswatini in the following demands, calling for action from the Government of Eswatini to cease violence, restore and maintain communications services, and provide urgently needed humanitarian support:

- The immediate cessation of the killing of civilians and the return of the army to the barracks;
- The immediate restoration of civic services such as the rapid issuing of death certificates for those killed in the past days;
- Mandatory independent pathologists to conduct post-mortems on the deceased;
- Urgent humanitarian support to the affected families, workers and citizens who need basic necessities such as food, sanitary towels, baby food, etc.
- The provision of direct financial support to resuscitate affected small and medium enterprises;
- The full and permanent restoration of internet and communication services and peoples' right to freedom of expression; and
- The urgent availability of vaccines to all emaSwati and the end of unnecessary lockdowns.

As the Government of Eswatini, Africa's only remaining absolute monarchy, violates the human rights of residents, suppresses freedom of speech and assembly, and jails young people for demanding a brighter future, the international community cannot remain silent. We call on partners in international civil society, regional governmental bodies, and diplomats to join us in amplifying the demands of the Eswatini people and seeking the protection of people's human rights.

Sincerely,

AbibiNsroma Foundation
Africa Coal Network
Africa Institute for Energy Governance
African Climate Reality Project
Andy Gheorghiu Consulting
Aotearoa New Zealand Human Rights
Foundation
Center for International Environmental Law

Centre for Applied Legal Studies, University
of Witwatersrand
Centre for Citizens for Citizens Conserving
(CECIC)
CIVICUS
Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre
(CISLAC)
Clean Energy Action
Climate Action Network International

Corporate Accountability And Public Participation Africa (CAPPA)
DITSHWANELO - The Botswana Centre for Human Rights
Earth Ethics, Inc.
Earthlife Africa
Earthworks
Economic and Social Justice Trust
Environment Governance Institute
ETC Group
Empower our Future - Colorado
Fair Finance International
Food and Water Watch, USA
Foundation for Environmental Management and Campaign Against Poverty (FEMAPO)
Fridays For Future
Fridays For Future Czech
Fridays For Future Digital
Fridays For Future MAPA
Fridays For Future Sweden
Fridays For Future Windhoek
Friends of the Earth Africa
Friends of the Earth US
Fundación Quantum
The Gaia Foundation
GASP - Grand(m)others Act to Save the Planet
Generation Zero
Global Initiative for Food Security and Ecosystem Preservation (GIFSEP)
GoBio Waste Management and Renewable Energy
GPAN
groundWork
Health of Mother Earth Foundation
The Human Rights Institute of South Africa (HURISA)

Institute for Ecology and Natural Resources Africa
Institute for Policy Studies Climate Policy Program
International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
Jeunes Verts Togo
Justiça Ambiental JA! - Friends of the Earth Mozambique
KAIROS Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives
Keep a Cool World
Lekeh Development Foundation
Oil Change International
Oilwatch Africa
People's Justice Council
Power Shift Africa
Rainforest Action Network
South Durban Community Environmental Alliance
Southern Africa Human Rights Defenders Network
Southern Africa Litigation Centre
The United Church of Canada - Church in Mission
Urgewald
We the People
WoMin African Alliance
Youth Advocates for Climate Action - Philippines
Youth For Climate Turkey
Youth for Environment and Sustainable Development (YSD)
Youth for Green Communities
350 Ghana Reducing Our Carbon (350G-ROC)
350.org