

URGENT ACTION

BHEKI MAKHUBU AND THULANI MASEKO RELEASED

Bhekithemba Makhubu, editor of Swaziland's monthly news magazine *The Nation* and human rights lawyer Thulani Maseko were released on 30 June after spending over 15 months in detention.

Bhekithemba Makhubu, editor of Swaziland's monthly news magazine *The Nation* and human rights lawyer Thulani Maseko were released on 30 June after the State conceded, at their appeal before the Swaziland Supreme Court, that it had no case against them. The sentence against *The Nation* magazine was also overturned.

The two men had been in prison since March 2014 serving a two year sentence for contempt of court, imposed after an unfair trial. They were sentenced in connection with two articles published in *The Nation* magazine in February 2014 in which they raised concerns about the lack of judicial independence and impartiality in Swaziland.

There was a clear conflict of interest at their trial, as the presiding judge, Mpendulo Simelane, had been named in one of the articles. Also, before the judgment being handed down in court, the then Minister of Justice may have had a meeting with the judge in his chambers.

Amnesty International had been calling for the men's release since March 2014, and had campaigned against previous politically motivated charges brought against them.

Thank you to everyone who campaigned for Bhekithemba Makhubu and Thulani Maseko's release, and who sent solidarity messages to the two men and their families. Thousands of messages were received. Both families expressed their thanks to Amnesty International members for remembering them during their darkest days.

No further action is requested of the UA network. Many thanks to those who sent appeals.

This is the third update of UA 86/14. Further information: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr55/004/2014/en/>

