

## Free Maxwell Dlamini

Maxwell Dlamini is President of the Swaziland National Union of Students (SNUS). He was arrested and detained in Swaziland ahead of protests for democracy and rights and against cuts on 12-13 April 2011. He has allegedly been tortured, has been denied bail and no date has been set for his trial.

NUS and Action for Southern Africa (ACTSA) are supporting SNUS in their campaign to free Maxwell Dlamini. We believe that students should have the right to campaign for their rights without fear of arrest and harassment.

The situation in Swaziland is overlooked by much of the world; Swazi students need your support to bring their situation to the world's attention.

The Swazi government are keen to hide Maxwell's detention from the rest of the world. You can make Maxwell Dlamini an honorary president of your union to highlight his case and put pressure on the Swazi government to release him. You should be able to do this by voting on enclosed model motion at your next union council or general meeting. Your solidarity will give strength to members of SNUS that they are not alone in their struggle.

This briefing includes a model motion which you can adapt and submit to your union council or general meeting, a model letter so you can write to the Swazi government and media to let them know about your action. We've also included information about Maxwell's case and about the situation in Swaziland.

If you would like any more information visit [www.actsa.org](http://www.actsa.org) or email [campaigns@actsa.org](mailto:campaigns@actsa.org)

Please do let us know how you get on with the campaign so we can let SNUS know about your efforts. Thanks for your support, we know it will make a massive difference.



Danielle Grufferty  
Vice President  
Society & Citizenship



Kanja Sesay  
Black Students Officer



Mark Beacon  
Campaigns Manager  
ACTSA



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## **Model motion**

### **Free Maxwell Dlamini**

#### **Council believes**

- Maxwell Dlamini, President of the Swaziland National Union of Students, is a political prisoner.
- He has been incarcerated in appalling conditions since 12 April 2011, tortured and forced to sign a confession saying that he was in possession of explosives, simply for speaking out against the Swazi government.
- He has repeatedly been denied bail by the authorities and no date has been set for his trial.
- Student protests in Swaziland have been brutally crushed by the security sector.
- Students in Swaziland are denied the fundamental right to freedom of association and assembly.
- The Swaziland government have cut scholarships, admissions and funding for education in Swaziland.

#### **Council resolves**

- To make Maxwell Dlamini an honorary president of this union.
- To write to the Swaziland High Commissioner and the Times of Swaziland newspaper to explain this decision.
- To call on the Swazi government to allow student unionists in Swaziland to carry out their legal campaigning activities without fear of arrest or harassment.
- To work with Action for Southern Africa (ACTSA) and the National Union of Students (NUS) to actively campaign for the release of Maxwell Dlamini and all political prisoners in Swaziland.



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## Model letter to the Swaziland High Commission

HE Mrs Dumsile T Sukati  
High Commissioner  
Swaziland High Commission  
20 Buckingham Gate  
London  
SW1E 6LB

Dear High Commissioner,

I am writing to inform you that *Fibchester* Students' Union Council has elected Maxwell Dlamini, President of the Swaziland National Union of Students (SNUS), as an honorary president of *Fibchester* Students' Union, in recognition of his work for education and student rights in Swaziland. I ask your government to pass on my congratulations to Maxwell Dlamini on receiving this award.

*Fibchester* Students' Union is gravely concerned about the arrest of Maxwell Dlamini ahead of protests on 12-14 April 2011, and reports that he was tortured by police in order to make him sign a confession. We understand that he has repeatedly been denied bail and no date has been set for his trial.

I ask you to pass on our calls to your government to:

- Unconditionally release Maxwell Dlamini and all other political prisoners in Swaziland;
- Conduct a prompt, full and independent investigation into the allegations that Maxwell Dlamini was tortured and ill-treated in custody;
- Condemn any use of torture and ensure that the United Nations Convention Against Torture in 2004, which Swaziland has ratified, is fully implemented.

*Fibchester* Students' Union is also extremely concerned about the repeated denial of the right of students to freedom of assembly and association. I ask you to urge your government to allow student unionists in Swaziland to carry out their legitimate activities without fear of arrest or harassment and listen to and act on their legitimate calls for democracy and rights for the people of Swaziland.

Yours sincerely,

S. Student  
President

CC. The Editor, Times of Swaziland [editor@times.co.sz](mailto:editor@times.co.sz)



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## **About Swaziland**

Swaziland is Africa's only absolute monarchy; it is currently going through a political, economic and judicial crisis. King Mswati III rules a population of just over one million people by authoritarian means; political parties are banned and those who speak out are threatened, tortured and imprisoned. Swaziland has been under a state of emergency since 1973 and there is less political freedom than in Zimbabwe. The King has a personal fortune of over US \$200 million whilst two thirds of the people live below the poverty line. Swaziland has the highest HIV/AIDS prevalence rate in the world, currently 26.1 per cent and one of the lowest life expectancy rates.

For more information about Swaziland visit [www.actsa.org/page-1223-Swaziland.html](http://www.actsa.org/page-1223-Swaziland.html)

## **About Maxwell Dlamini and SNUS**

The Swaziland National Union of Students (SNUS) was formed in 1984 as an umbrella organisation of all Student Representative Councils (SRCs) under the motto, "We are members of the community before we are students." Relunched four years ago, it has become a formidable and vocal force for the rights of students.

SNUS has been a key part of the wider campaign for democracy and rights in Swaziland and as such has endured immense levels of intimidation and harassment by the state.

As President of SNUS, Maxwell Dlamini has been particularly vocal. In April 2011 he was arrested by the police under the Suppression of Terrorism Act, ahead of planned national protests on 12-13 April. With no grounds to detain him, Maxwell was released but later arrested along with Musa Ngubeni and charged with possessing explosives under sections 4 and 9 of the Explosives Act 4 of 1961. The charges have been described as preposterous by pro democracy campaigners in Swaziland and across the world.

Maxwell Dlamini was allegedly tortured and was forced to sign a statement admitting possession of explosives. His lawyer has repeatedly been obstructed and he and Musa have been denied the right to apply for bail on several occasions. No date has been set for their trial and no date is likely to be set for the foreseeable future as Swaziland goes through a judicial crisis. The Swazi regime has a record of detaining people for long periods of time on spurious charges, before their cases go to court. In 2009 Mario Masuku, president of the banned political party PUDEMO, was also arrested under the repressive Suppression of Terrorism Act, a piece of legislation commonly used to declare anyone who opposes the government as terrorist. He spent 340 days behind bars before he faced trial. When he appeared before the judge, his case was laughed out of court within hours.



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**ACTSA**

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SNUS continues to be a strong voice for students, despite its leader being behind bars. Students have continued to call for Maxwell's release and for democracy and rights. In recent months the government has made massive cuts to student scholarships and allowances, and the University of Swaziland was forced to open a month late due the lack of funding. The Swazi government continue to brutally suppress any attempts by students to protest. Recent protests have been met with teargas, water cannons, batons and bullets, but despite this, Swazi students continue to stand up for their rights.



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