



## Lawyers' Bodies Hit Out Against Zimbabwe Crackdown

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THE Law Society of Namibia and the Society of Advocates of Namibia have called on Government to urgently take up the latest round of political oppression in Zimbabwe with the Zimbabwean government, "in the interests of peace and the protection of human rights and democratic values in our region".

The Zimbabwe government has committed "brutal violations of human rights and the rule of law" that cannot be conveniently ignored by other governments in the region, the two lawyers' organisations state in a media statement that was released yesterday in reaction to the arrest, detention, beatings and torture of opposition party leaders and supporters in Zimbabwe on Sunday.

"The right to peaceful assembly, freedom of speech and political activity as well as to human dignity are part and parcel of a constitutional democracy," the two organisations said in a statement on Wednesday.

"The violation of these fundamental rights and freedoms as well as the rule of law on Sunday, resulted in unwarranted violence and widespread detentions of Zimbabwean citizens.

The abuse of political, church and community leaders and ordinary citizens by the authorities in Zimbabwe follow upon previous human rights abuses and disrespect for the rule of law in that country.

These abuses are compounded by the detentions taking place without access to legal representations.

These events are disturbing to those in the region concerned with the protection of human rights and the rule of law.

They also serve to seriously undermine those values in the region and cannot conveniently be ignored by Governments in the region," the organisations commented.

They further stated: "We call upon the Namibian Government to take up this issue as a matter of urgency with the Zimbabwean Government in the interests of peace and the protection of human rights and democratic values in our region.

We call upon the Zimbabwean Government to respect the human rights of its citizens as well as the rule of law."