



MEDIA STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – 1 AUGUST 2025

AFT CONDEMNS THE MURDER OF PROSECUTOR TRACY BROWN AN ATTACK ON JUSTICE, DEMOCRACY AND THE RULE OF LAW

INTRODUCTION

Advocates for Transformation (AFT) expresses its deepest sorrow and strongest condemnation following the assassination of Regional Court Prosecutor Ms Tracy Brown, who was gunned down outside her home in Gqeberha on 31 July 2025, in full view of her partner and young child.

Her murder is not simply a private tragedy – it is a direct and calculated assault on the Rule of Law, on constitutional democracy, and on the safety and dignity of those who defend and uphold justice in our country.

THE TARGETING OF JUSTICE DEFENDERS

The murder of Ms Brown is not an isolated incident. It follows the brutal killing of Mr Elona Sombulula, a prosecutor from the Engcobo Magistrates Court, earlier this year. It also comes amid a concerning rise in threats and violence directed at members of the legal profession – both in public service and private practice.

We recall the reported attempted assassination of Advocate Coreth Naudé SC in 2024, a private legal practitioner allegedly targeted due to her involvement in a high-profile matter. In addition, we also note the assassination of two state witnesses who were killed inside a court room in Cape Town. These attacks illustrate the growing danger faced by those who uphold the law and challenge criminal impunity. It shows a clear pattern to interfere with the administration of justice by eliminating those who have the potential to bring criminal suspects to justice.

A REGIONAL AND GLOBAL CRISIS

This growing pattern of violence aligns with warnings from the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers, who has documented a surge in targeted attacks against lawyers, prosecutors, and judges globally. These assaults are not just criminal acts – they are attacks on institutions, on public trust, and on the very idea of justice.

We must also acknowledge the disturbing parallels with the attacks on journalists in South Africa and across the continent. Journalists, like legal professionals, serve the public interest by holding power to account. When either is silenced, democratic governance is imperiled.

THE RULE OF LAW IS ESSENTIAL TO DEVELOPMENT

South Africa cannot attract meaningful investment, pursue economic recovery, or realise the goals of transformation while

the legal system is under siege. The United Nations Guidelines on the Role of Prosecutors (1990), the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981), and the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development (2008) all affirm that the Rule of Law and judicial independence are foundational to peace, stability, and economic justice.

The murder of Ms Brown, on the eve of Women's Month, is also a stark reminder of how gender-based violence continues to rob women of their safety – even in professions meant to protect others.

AFT CALLS FOR URGENT ACTION

In light of these grave developments, AFT will formally approach the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development to jointly convene a National Dialogue on the Protection of Legal Professionals and the Rule of Law. The dialogue will bring together government, legal institutions, civil society, regional bodies, and international partners.

We further call for:

- Urgent security reforms to protect prosecutors, judges, and advocates – whether in public or private practice;
- Regional coordination within SADC and the African Union to investigate and prevent transnational threats to legal actors;
- Swift prosecution of those responsible for the murders of Ms Brown, Mr Sombulula, and others who have been targeted;
- Integrated legal and policy mechanisms to safeguard legal professionals and journalists alike;
- A gender-responsive approach to protecting women in the justice system and ending GBV, in line with the SADC Protocol.

CONCLUSION

We stand in solidarity with the National Prosecuting Authority, the judiciary, the legal profession, and the families of the fallen.

May the memory of Tracy Brown and others galvanise this nation into action. Their lives must not be extinguished in vain.

Let this be a turning point – where silence gives way to resolve, and fear gives way to justice.

*Issued by Adv Myron Dewrance SC on behalf of
Advocates for Transformation (AFT)*



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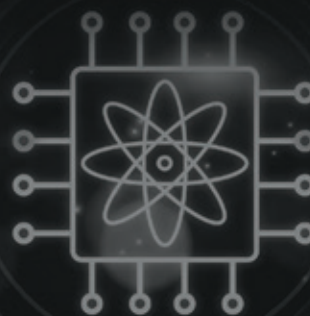
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