



INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF JURISTS

Commission internationale de juristes - Comisión Internacional de Juristas

"Dedicated since 1952 to the primacy, coherence and implementation of international law and principles that advance human rights"

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PRESS RELEASE

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David Cote to observe the trial in the Case of The State versus Farai Maguwu in Zimbabwe

The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) is pleased to announce that **David Cote**, head of the strategic litigation unit at the leading human rights organization **Lawyers for Human Rights, South Africa** will observe the bail application in the matter of *The State versus Farai Maguwu* in the High Court of Zimbabwe from **16-17th June 2010**.

Mr. Farai Maguwu, a respected human rights defender was arrested soon after a confidential meeting held on 25 May 2010 with the **Kimberley Process Monitor** for Zimbabwe, **Mr. Abbey Chikane**, to discuss human rights abuses and the rampant smuggling of Marange diamonds. The ICJ is gravely concerned at the strong link being made between **Farai Maguwu's** meeting with **Mr Chikane** and the subsequent and ongoing persecution of the respected human rights defender and his immediate family.

The ICJ notes that Zimbabwe is a signatory to various international human rights standards that guarantee the right of human rights defenders to do their work in an environment free from threats, attacks and acts of intimidation. Zimbabwe has also guaranteed the right to a fair trial in a number of international instruments that it has signed and ratified including in its own constitution. It is against this backdrop that the ICJ is concerned at reports that **Farai Maguwu** has been denied unimpeded access to his lawyers, family and his doctors. The ICJ therefore urges the authorities to ensure that **Farai Maguwu** is accorded all his constitutionally and internationally guaranteed human rights as this matter is resolved.

"The bail application of **Farai Maguwu** is significant as he is a leading human rights defender who works in a dangerous but extremely important area of diamond extraction and sell. If governed and managed in full compliance with the requirements of the rule of law, the diamond industry is key to Zimbabwe's economic recovery and will contribute significantly to Zimbabwe complying with its obligations to allow for Zimbabweans to realize their socio-economic rights and to once again live in dignity and harmony" said **Martin Masiga** the senior legal adviser at the ICJ Africa Programme.

"**David Cote's** experience will therefore be invaluable in assisting the ICJ to come to a conclusion on the fairness or otherwise of the judicial proceedings against **Mr. Farai Maguwu**" added **Martin Masiga**

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***Martin O. Masiga**, Senior Legal Officer of the Africa Programme ICJ*

The ICJ is an international non-governmental organisation comprising sixty of the world's most eminent jurists and has a worldwide network of national sections and affiliated organisations

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