

GOVERNMENT OF THE KINGDOM OF ESWATINI



ACTING PRIME MINISTER'S STATEMENT **ILLEGAL MASS PROTEST ACTION**

Government has been made aware of threats to put the country to a standstill through a mass protest action on Tuesday, 15 November 2022.

I do want to emphasise that His Majesty's Government does not take threats of this nature lightly as such threats have the potential to destroy lives, property and the economy, all of which require utmost protection. If such action is allowed, it will exacerbate issues of joblessness, poverty and will undermine social development.

On behalf of His Majesty's Government, I wish to categorically state that the envisaged protest action is illegal and has no basis whatsoever. We have heard reports that some of the protestors will be marching to "reclaim what was constitutionally stolen from them." Government wishes to make it known that there are processes to be followed whenever there are constitutional amendments to be made. We want to emphatically appeal to every

peace-loving liSwati to commit to the much cherished value of the rule of law.

We also note the unfortunate timing of this mass demonstration; which coincides with Form Five external examinations. We need to seriously think about the repercussions of disrupting such critical examinations. Children have a right to education and it is not in their interest to be disrupted from their school work. Government will do whatever it takes not to allow anyone to destroy the future of our children. They are the future.

We would like to urge parents to cooperate with us in this regard, by firmly supporting their children in their effort to acquire education, even during such hard economic times, where unemployment rates are high. Likewise, we wish to urge children to stand up and make every effort to write their examinations. This is the only chance they have for a future that will be bright. Education is very important, together we can help them.

I would also like to heartily thank teachers for going the extra mile in preparing students for their exams. We absolutely appreciate your commitment and guidance to our children and may you continue to do that. Your efforts will not go unnoticed.

To transport operators, we really appreciate your efforts in ensuring that the public is served properly. Without your contribution, we would not have any meaningful economy to speak of. Our request to you is to ensure that you continue to move the Nation and the economy around. As Government, we commit to supporting you as you do so with every resource that is available.

Eswatini is blessed with some of the most professional public servants in the region and we are thankful for their support, professionalism and commitment as they help society through delivering services. We count on them to continue with such commitment even tomorrow.

His Majesty's Government would like to once again send a strong warning to the perpetrators and propagators of violence and acts of terrorism in this country, that they should desist from sending the country into a state of anarchy and sowing fear among the populace. This is not in the best interest of emaSwati. On the contrary, this brings discord and makes lives unnecessarily difficult for all citizens, including businesses, ultimately disrupting the economy. Anarchy is often irreversible and hurts everyone.

Further, Government wishes to urge all peace-loving emaSwati to individually and collectively take a stand against the ongoing violence and acts of terrorism in this country. Let us not embrace the voices that are amplified particularly on social media platforms.

We need to all fiercely protect our lives and those of our loved ones, as well as our properties because we benefit nothing from the reign of terror unleashed on emaSwati.

Government will continue to play its role in the protection and safety of citizens and all residents of Eswatini, using every way possible. Our State security services have assured us that they will be spread out across the country to ensure peace and order.

We continue to assure the public at large as well as the business community that we will do all in our power, using all resources available, to provide the necessary protection. We have a very professional and committed security sector that has served this Nation well. I know that when faced with anger, aggression and provocation, they will remain calm while executing their duties professionally. Therefore, we urge emaSwati to go to work and children to go to school as tomorrow is a normal working day.

Thank you.

HON. THEMBA NHLANGANISO MASUKU

Acting Prime Minister

14 November 2022