

**For Immediate Release**

**July 24, 2013**

**Public Statement**

**The Law Society of Upper Canada Expresses Deep Concern Over  
Arrest of Prominent Human Rights Lawyer Arnold Tsunga**

**Toronto** – The Law Society of Upper Canada\* expresses its deep concern over the arrest of prominent human rights lawyer Arnold Tsunga in Zimbabwe.

Over the years, the Law Society has followed Arnold Tsunga's career. Mr. Tsunga was the recipient of the Human Rights Watch award in 2006. In March 2007, the Law Society invited Arnold Tsunga, then executive director of the Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights and acting executive secretary of the Law Society of Zimbabwe, to make a presentation at the Law Society on the rule of law in Zimbabwe. Mr. Tsunga met with the directors of the Law Society. The Law Society agreed to collaborate with the Law Society of Zimbabwe to assist it in strengthening its self-regulation capabilities and the independence of the legal profession in Zimbabwe.



Reliable sources report that Zimbabwean police arrested Arnold Tsunga on or about July 20, 2013. He is running for the Movement for Democratic Change of Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai in the eastern city of Mutare. He was detained at Danganvura police station together with his campaign team for allegedly holding an unauthorised rally. Police have stated their intention to transfer Mr. Tsunga and his colleagues to Mutare Central Police Station. The Law Society of Zimbabwe has also reported that another Movement for Democratic Change activist and lawyer, Jacob Mafume, was barred from holding a campaign rally in a Harare suburb.

International human rights instruments, including the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* and the *United Nations Basic Principles on the Independence of the Judiciary*, state that judicial independence and respect for humans rights are essential to advancing the rule of law.

The Law Society urges the Zimbabwean authorities to:

- a. release and guarantee in all circumstances the physical and psychological security and integrity of Arnold Tsunga and his campaign team;
- b. put an end to all acts of harassment and persecution against human rights lawyers and other human rights defenders in Zimbabwe;
- c. ensure that all lawyers can carry out their peaceful and legitimate activities without fear of physical violence or other human rights violations;
- d. conform in all circumstances with the provisions of the *United Nations Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers* and the *Declaration on Human Rights Defenders*; and
- e. ensure in all circumstances respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with international human rights standards and international instruments ratified by Zimbabwe.

*\* The Law Society urges the legal community to intervene in support of members of the legal profession in their effort to advance the respect of human rights and to promote the rule of law.*

*The Law Society of Upper Canada is the governing body for some 45,800 lawyers and 5,100 paralegals in the Province of Ontario, Canada, and the Treasurer is the head of the Law Society. The mandate of the Law Society is to govern the legal profession in the public interest by upholding the independence, integrity and honour of the legal profession for the purpose of advancing the cause of justice and the rule of law.*

- 30 -

**For more information, please contact Lisa Hall at 416-947-7625 or [lhall@lsuc.on.ca](mailto:lhall@lsuc.on.ca).**