The Ambassador of Malawi

Ms A Mussa Fax: 012 342 0147 770 Government Ave, Arcadia Pretoria 0083

19 May 2010

Dear High Commissioner

Free Steven Monjeza and Tiwonge Chimbalanga

We have come here today to express our horror at the conviction yesterday of Steven Monjeza and Tiwonge Chimbalanga. These two men have been found guilty of gross indecency and unnatural acts merely because they love each other. We insist that your government instructs that Steven and Tiwonge be released immediately.

The Malawian Constitution states the "dignity of all persons shall be inviolable." Section 20 says, "Discrimination of persons in any form is prohibited and all persons are, under any law, guaranteed equal and effective protection against discrimination on grounds of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, nationality, ethnic or social origin, disability, property, birth or other status." Section 21 of the Constitution guarantees the right to privacy.

This is an enlightened Constitution that we support.

Many of us have visited Malawi and found it to be a magnificent country with friendly people. Malawi runs one of the best HIV treatment and care programmes on the continent. We are therefore saddened at this turn of events. Only a homophobic, archaic and unjust court relying on colonial laws and spurred by unenlightened politicians and a prejudiced mob mentality, could have convicted Steven and Tiwonge.

We assure you that we and hundreds of organisations and tens of thousands of individuals across the world will carry out a sustained campaign for the release of Steven and Tiwonge. We intend to hold further and ongoing demonstrations at your Embassy, sign petitions and ensure that the United Nations and countries of the world, particularly ours, apply pressure to Malawi until Steven and Tiwonge are released.

We plead with the Malawian government to please avoid this, to restore our confidence in the Malawian state, its institutions and the supremacy of the Malawian Constitution. We

ask you to:

- 1. Free Steven Monjeza and Tiwonge Chimbalanga;
- 2. Issue a statement to the world confirming your commitment to protect all people's dignity, equality and freedom; and
- 3. Provide leadership in Malawi and the continent to combat prejudice and homophobia.

We would be happy to meet with you to discuss the contents of this demand.

Yours sincerely

Adila Hassim

DIRECTOR OF LITIGATION AND LEGAL SERVICES

SECTION27 INCORPORATING THE AIDS LAW PROJECT