



**08 November 2013**

**Give a Red Card to the Swazi Dictatorship!  
Boycott South Africa, Swaziland Unfriendly Soccer Match!**

The Swaziland Democracy Campaign-SDC unites with all progressive and democratic movements in calling for a cancellation of the upcoming football match between South Africa and Swaziland.

Swaziland is one of our continents most impoverished nations, and yet the ruling elite, centred on the dictatorial Royal Household enjoys outrageous opulence. The majorities of the people in Swaziland live in abject poverty and are denied the most basics of social, economic, political, human, people and civil rights. Soccer players and fans should check out the appalling human and people's rights record of the regime before committing themselves to the match.

The Royal Elite waste vast amounts of money on conspicuous consumption, typified by squads of King Mswati's wives and hangers on foraging around the exclusive shopping malls of the world. And how do they afford to do this? By shamelessly plundering the national treasury and this is the reason why Mswati is now known as the Designer Dictator?

Meanwhile, those courageous enough to raise their voices against institutionalised corruption in Swaziland, and who dare to organise others in defense of their living standards, are physically attacked by the security services, criminalised, systematically harassed, face trumped up charges, and some die in prisons. Many are incarcerated in appalling prison conditions on the flimsiest of 'evidence'. This is the reality of Swaziland today, a reality that the world must know and confront.

Football is the Peoples Game. All over the world, millions of players and fans turn to football for relaxation, excitement, and displays of great skill and expertise. It is a game capable of producing great passion and loyalties, but it is also a game that makes certain people extremely rich, and it can also provide a cover for those regimes that abuse their own people. This is the case in Swaziland.

Football and many other activities are promoted by the Royal Elite to give the impression that Swaziland is a 'normal' country. But this is not the truth. Swaziland is our continent's last absolute dictatorship. Its people are denied, by force, the right to enjoy even the most basic of democratic rights. For these reasons, footballers cannot escape their responsibility to humanity, to the millions who love the beautiful game.

Whether soccer fans and players like it or not, the Mswati regime will benefit politically and financially if the match goes ahead. The sports boycott was an important part of the anti-apartheid struggle, and can be today too, in the fight for a genuine democratic Swaziland.

The Swaziland Democracy Campaign therefore wholeheartedly supports the call of the Swaziland United Democratic Front (SUDF), COSATU and many others in calling for Bafana Bafana not to be used as a cover for human and people rights abuses in Swaziland.

It's time to give a Red Card to the Mswati's regime, and for the South African football community to say, we don't play with dictators!

**For more information please contact:**

**Stephen Faulkner, +27 82 817 5455**

**Philani Ndebele, +27 76 942 3565**