



188, 14th Road, Noordwyk, Midrand, 1685  
Private Bag X10, Marshalltown, 2107  
**Tel:** +27 10 493 2500 (Switchboard)  
**E-mail:** enquiries@judiciary.org.za  
[www.judiciary.org.za](http://www.judiciary.org.za)

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## **Media Statement**

### **THE ARREST OF ADVOCATE TEFFO INSIDE A COURTROOM**

In an interview that Chief Justice Zondo had with the SABC last Thursday evening, he was asked for his comment on the arrest of Adv Teffo inside the court room in which he appeared as Defence Counsel representing four of the accused in the Senzo Meyiwa murder trial that afternoon. As the Chief Justice had not seen the footage of the incident and did not at that stage have information about the incident, he indicated that he was unable to comment on the matter.

Since then more information has emerged about the incident and the Chief Justice has seen footage of the arrest. The Chief Justice wishes to make it clear that the arrest of anybody, let alone a legal practitioner, inside a court room is completely unacceptable and should not have happened. In this regard it should be remembered that this was the same court room in which Adv Teffo appeared representing his clients. The Chief Justice said:

“There was no justifiable reason why the SAPS could not have waited for Adv Teffo to leave the Court room and the Court premises before they could arrest him. After all, as I understand the position, the warrant of arrest had been issued about two months earlier and waiting until Adv Teffo had left the Court premises would not have made any difference. Adv Teffo was not going to spend the evening in the Court room. The conduct of the SAPS in effecting the arrest inside the Court room and the manner in which the arrest was effected on a legal practitioner and, therefore, on an officer of the Court, was an assault on the dignity of the Court and the Judiciary. An officer of the Court was arrested in a manner that was totally unacceptable and showed disrespect for the Judiciary. Section 165(4) of the Constitution places an obligation on all organs of state, including the SAPS, through legislative and other measures, to “assist and protect the Courts to ensure the independence, impartiality, dignity, accessibility and effectiveness of the Courts.”



The Chief Justice wishes to make it clear that this statement is not about whether Adv Teffo should or not have been arrested. It is about the place where the arrest was effected and the manner in which it was done. The Chief Justice expressed the hope that the SAPS will make sure that there are no similar incidents in our courts in the future.

**Ends.**

**Media enquiries:**

Nathi Mncube

Spokesperson of the RSA Judiciary

C: 0848148364 E: [NMncube@judiciary.org.za](mailto:NMncube@judiciary.org.za)

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