



## **President Zuma Drops Lawsuit against IPA Freedom to Publish Prize-winner**

**President Zuma has withdrawn his claim for compensation and an apology against cartoonist Jonathan Shapiro (“Zapiro”). The International Publishers Association (IPA) welcomes the withdrawal of the case and calls on all similar defamation cases breaching freedom of expression to be dropped to send a signal that the authorities fully respect freedom of expression.**

**Geneva – 1 November 2012**

**“Zapiro”, famous South African cartoonist, and his newspaper have been facing a lawsuit by South African President Zuma for the publication of a controversial political cartoon commenting on President Zuma’s handling of the Judiciary. In June 2012 at the IPA Congress in Cape Town “Zapiro” was awarded the IPA Freedom to Publish Prize for courage under difficult conditions. He has a statement for IPA and the world.**

In 2008, Jacob Zuma, later to become South Africa’s President, had sued Avusa Media, the publisher of *the Sunday Times*, the ex-editor of the newspaper, and Jonathan Shapiro over a September 2008 political cartoon by “Zapiro” depicting President Zuma about to rape “Lady Justice”. As South Africa’s President, Jacob Zuma was still pursuing this case, seeking R100,000 of compensation for defamation (down from R5 million initially<sup>1</sup>), and an apology, until withdrawing his claim for damages late last week. The first court hearing, before Johannesburg’s High Court, was due to take place on 25 October 2012.

In commenting President Zuma’s decision, Jonathan Shapiro said: “Although I have said for four years that I am ready and willing to go to court, it was a relief to hear that the charges have been dropped with no strings attached and that President Zuma’s side is paying costs. It is a comprehensive victory for *the Sunday Times*, for our superb legal team, for me as a cartoonist and for freedom of expression. I stand by the cartoon I drew in 2008 which said metaphorically that Zuma was bullying the justice system to get corruption charges against him dropped so that he could become president. It is disingenuous of President Zuma and his spokesman Mac Maharaj that in their statement about why they dropped the charges, they claim it is a magnanimous gesture for the good of the nation and for freedom of expression. It’s clear from the delaying tactics they used to prevent the case coming to court before the ANC’s end of year national conference that they dropped the charges for their own ends. What they also say in their

<sup>1</sup> i.e. from USD 574,875 to USD 11,500

## International Publishers Association

statement, and which we hope to hold them to, is that a sitting president should not be pursuing defamation cases such as this, no matter how offended he may be. I hope that in the light of this, President Zuma drops his other law suit against me (for R10 million) and all the other defamation cases he has pending against other media practitioners.”

Bjørn Smith-Simonsen, Chair of IPA's Freedom to Publish Committee, said: “I hope that the South African Government will soon understand that critics are a small price to pay to be a true democracy.

We commend President Zuma's move to withdraw his claim for compensation against Jonathan Shapiro in the “Lady Justice” case and urge him to withdraw similar defamation claims against Shapiro and others to send a signal that the authorities fully respect freedom of expression. In 2006, Mr Zuma sued Zapiro for R15 million over 3 cartoons done during Mr Zuma's rape trial (Mr Zuma was acquitted). The amount demanded has been reduced, but the lawsuit has not been withdrawn.”

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**ADDENDUM:**

**1. More about the IPA Freedom to Publish Prize:**

IPA created the IPA Freedom to Publish Prize in 2005. It is awarded for exemplary courage in upholding freedom of expression and freedom to publish. The Prize is intended to honour a person, organisation or institution that has made a recent notable contribution to the defence and promotion of freedom to publish anywhere in the world. The Prize is from now on awarded every two years at the IPA Congress. The next IPA Freedom to Publish Prize will thus be awarded during the 30th IPA Congress to be held in Bangkok on 25–27 March 2014. For more about the IPA Freedom to Publish Prize, please see: [www.internationalpublishers.org/index.php/freedom-to-publish/ipa-freedom-to-publish-prize](http://www.internationalpublishers.org/index.php/freedom-to-publish/ipa-freedom-to-publish-prize) And: [www.ipa2014bangkok.com/](http://www.ipa2014bangkok.com/)

**2. More about the 29<sup>th</sup> IPA Congress (hosted in Cape Town on 12-14 June 2012 by the Publishers Association of South Africa, PASA):**

Please see:

[www.internationalpublishers.org/images/stories/CAPETOWN/ipa%20pr%20resolutions.pdf](http://www.internationalpublishers.org/images/stories/CAPETOWN/ipa%20pr%20resolutions.pdf)

**3. More about Jonathan Shapiro, recipient of the 2012 IPA Freedom to Publish Prize:**

Born in 1958 in Cape Town, Shapiro is South Africa's best known and possibly most successful cartoonist. After attending the University of Cape Town, he was conscripted into the South African Army, where he chose not to bear arms and, while still in the military, became a participant in the End Conscription Campaign, designing its logo. In 1983, Shapiro became active in the newly-formed United Democratic Front (UDF), an anti-apartheid organisation. His involvement in the UDF led to his arrest under the Illegal Gatherings Act, and he was subsequently monitored by military intelligence. In 1987, Shapiro started as an editorial cartoonist for *South* newspaper. The following year, he was detained without trial as a political activist by security police shortly before leaving on a Fulbright Scholarship to the School of Visual Arts in New York.

Since his return to South Africa in 1991, Shapiro has drawn educational comics on subjects such as AIDS, democracy and child abuse prevention. His work has been featured in both solo and group cartoon exhibitions in South Africa and internationally, and he regularly speaks and offers workshops on cartooning. Since 1996, he has published 17 annual cartoon collections. In 2008, he published an additional collection entitled *The Mandela Files*, a collection of cartoons featuring Nelson Mandela, in tribute to the former President. From 2003 to 2006, he attended the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, Switzerland, as one of a group of invited cartoonists, and he is involved in the Cartooning for Peace initiative, a project started in October 2006 following the “Unlearning Intolerance” conference at the UN Headquarters in New York. He also continues to draw cartoons for many highly-regarded South African newspapers, including *The Mail & Guardian*, *The Sunday Times* and *The Times*.

**4. More about IPA:**

The International Publishers Association (IPA) is an international industry federation representing all aspects of book and journal publishing. Established in 1896, IPA's mission is to promote and protect publishing and to raise awareness for publishing as a force for economic, cultural and political development. Around the world IPA actively fights against censorship and promotes copyright, literacy and freedom to publish. IPA is a trade association with a human rights mandate.