

# Twitter threats to litigants in Zimbabwean Exemption Permit court case

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Global South Against Xenophobia urges police to act.



Litigants in the court case to stop the scrapping of the Zimbabwean Exemption Permit (ZEP) have received threats on Twitter.  
Archive photo: Tariro Washinyira / GroundUp

The director of the Helen Suzman Foundation (HSF), Nicole Fritz, and her family received threats on Twitter the day before the foundation's court action to stop the scrapping of the Zimbabwean Exemption Permit (ZEP).

On 10 April, Twitter user Freeman Bhengu (@zibuseman) wrote, "We are watching her and we know where she stays, her daughter and their closed offices in Parktown, we will deal with her tomorrow @Nicole Fritz".

“ We are watching her and we know where she stays, her daughter and their closed offices in Parktown, we will deal with her tomorrow [@Nicole\\_Fritz](#)— Freeman Bhengu (@zibuseman) [April 10, 2023](#) ”

The HSF, along with the Zimbabwe Immigration Federation and the Zimbabwean Exemption Permit Holders, [are challenging](#) in court the decision by the Department of Home Affairs to scrap the ZEP, which would affect more than 170,000 permit holders. The hearing started in the Pretoria High Court on 11 April.

Fritz says that these threats are “enormously disturbing” and that those working in social justice or human rights should not experience such harassment. She says other litigants are also receiving threats.

Global South Against Xenophobia (GSAX) has called on the South African Police Service (SAPS) and South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) to act. In a statement, the GSAX called for SAPS to protect Fritz during the duration of the court hearings or until the perpetrators are arrested and to investigate all the threats.

“We urge all our people to stand up against xenophobia and perpetrators of other corruptions and to defend the space for activists and civil society actors,” said GSAX.

This isn’t the first time Fritz has been threatened. She says the same person has emailed her in the past telling her that she is being watched.

Fritz says Twitter has suspended him in the past. But this time, under new ownership, they didn’t, as according to Twitter, this doesn’t violate their rules.

She says that she understands that people might disagree with the court action, but “the idea that going to court could earn you death threats is gravely concerning”.

Fritz says that she’s grateful for the support she has received but would not want the threats to detract from a focus on the ZEP issue.

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