COUNCIL FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONSTITUTION

CASAC Media Statement

11 July 2014

Arrest of health service protestors in the Free State

The SA Police Service is mandated in terms of the Constitution to fight crime, to uphold the law, to protect people and maintain public order. The actions of police in the Free State in dealing with a peaceful protest by community health workers and activists must be condemned in the strongest terms. Over 150 protesters have been arrested in the last 36hrs protesting against the failures of the public health sector in the Free State.

CASAC Executive Secretary, Lawson Naidoo says:

"The aggressive and violent response of the Police cannot be justified. This has alarming signals of the police acting with impunity at the behest of the MEC for Health. SAPS must serve to protect all the people in South Africa and must not act to protect the interests of a political office bearer."

CASAC calls for the immediate release of all those arrested. It is of particular concern that this heavy-handed response by SAPS suggests that they have not taken heed of the recommendations of the Human Rights Commission's Report on the killing of Andries Tatane in that province, specifically that further training in public order policing is needed.

The Minster of Police must intervene urgently to ensure that the SAPS in the Free State acts in accordance with the Constitution and the law

Lawson Naidoo
073 158 5736