

# International police union petitions PM

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**BABANE – Prime Minister Thembisa Dlamini is currently under enormous pressure to recognise the newly formed Swaziland Police Union (SWAPU).**

The PM, in his capacity as Minister of Police, has been petitioned by the International Council of Police Representative Association (ICPRA) to ensure that the local police union has a right to democratically associate and advocate for better working conditions.

ICPRA Chairman Greg O'Connor, in a letter addressed to the premier, says: "We hope you understand that police officers need a guardian and an advocate to allow them to carry out their public service responsibly, safely and with sufficient reward."

In the petition, O'Connor tells the premier that other police associations from other countries have undergone considerable struggles to gain the right to associate and organise police officers "as often such development is viewed with suspicion and resistance".

The chairperson, in the letter dated July 3, 2007, argued that the right to bargain collectively for and on behalf of police officers had led to a police industrial relations atmosphere, which was largely without dispute.

"We therefore ask that you recognise the value of this in ensuring that police officers are not greatly distracted from their difficult and often dangerous work on behalf of the communities they serve," O'Connor wrote.

Buhle Dlamini, the SWAPU President, hoped that the premier would treat the letter with the seriousness and urgency it deserves.

Dlamini said they were looking forward to a positive response from the PM with regards to the recognition agreement and registration of the union. He said they were empowered by the constitution to form a union. The issue of the registration of the union is currently pending at the High Court.

Police PRO Superintendent Vusie Masuku said the office of the premier would be in a better position to comment on the letter by ICPRA, when he was contacted on Friday.