

Association for Homeschooling

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Vereniging vir Tuisonderwys



FROM :

Association for Homeschooling

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Email : contact@sahomeschoolers.org

27 July 2010

TO :

The Senior private Secretary to His Excellency the President

Private Bag 001

GABERONE

BOTSWANA

Fax: +26 7 390 2795

Dear Mr. President

The Association for Homeschooling has represented homeschooling parents in South Africa since 1992 and promotes the freedom of parents to choose the type of education that is in the best interest of their children, as this is expressed in art. 26(3) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations. This declaration states : "*Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.*"

During the period of apartheid, home education was illegal in South Africa. The parents Andre and Bokkie Meintjies were jailed in 1994, and their children were placed in an orphanage, because they educated their children at home.

Soon after this, home education was legalized in South Africa with the adoption of the new constitution in 1994. Since it was legalised, homeschooling has grown exponentially in South Africa.

Since homeschooling has recently also been growing in South Africa's neighbouring states, parents in these countries have been joining the Association for Homeschooling, and the association is therefore now representing homeschooling parents throughout Southern Africa.

Reports have been published on the families Modimoothata, Sibande and Mutale, residing in the village of Mahalapye, that have been ordered by a magistrate's court in Mahalapye to cease educating their children at home according to their own convictions and to send these children to schools instead.

In spite of notice of appeal being filed, the Botswana police are reported to have raided the homes of the families and have confiscated property in the form of learning and teaching materials. The families have also received visits from the Botswana secret police ("DIS" – Directorate of Intelligence and Security).

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The Association for Homeschooling hereby expresses its concern over these actions of the Botswana police and secret police, since these actions are violations of the universally accepted right of parents to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

It has also been reported that the actions by the Botswana government were the result of complaints brought against these families by a pastor and members of the Seventh Day Adventist Church in Mahalapye, due to a doctrinal difference between these families and the church. This creates the perception that the Botswana government uses its power to settle a religious dispute.

With this letter the Association for Homeschooling urges you to respect the rights of the parents in Mahalapye and refrain from using state power to promote specific religious doctrines.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several fluid, overlapping strokes that form a stylized name.

Bouwe van der Eems
(Chairman : Association for Homeschooling)