

## GCB calls for effective action against Boko Haram

**E**ARLIER THIS year the General Council of the Bar (GCB) expressed its concern at what it described as mounting evidence of serious crimes against humanity – including mass murder, rape and persecution – committed by the armed group Boko Haram in north east Nigeria.

The GCB also called for the international community urgently to take action to ensure that those responsible were brought to justice and to curb the rise in such atrocities.

In a Press statement issued in mid-January, GCB Chairman Jeremy Muller SC said:

‘The first weeks of 2015 have seen a disturbing escalation of Boko Haram’s increasing onslaught against civilian populations, with several towns and villages in north and north eastern Nigeria being attacked by Boko Haram and razed to the ground. The attacks since the start of the year have resulted in the deaths of an estimated 2 000 civilians including children, women and elderly people, with thousands more fleeing to seek refuge in neighbouring countries.

‘The slaughter of unarmed civilians, last year’s mass abduction of young schoolgirls and the systematic at-

tacks on schools by Boko Haram constitute serious violations of Article 7 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and grave breaches of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The response of the Nigerian government to these events has been muted.

‘While recent terrorist incidents in France and other European centres by fundamentalist militants have elicited wide-spread reaction, little has been said and even less done about these ongoing acts of violence in Nigeria. The GCB welcomes the statement by the South African Government issued on 9 January 2015, in which it condemned in the strongest terms the inhumane and barbaric attacks by Boko Haram and confirmed that South Africa will continue to support regional and international efforts to address the scourge of terrorism in all its forms, but the situation calls for more concrete action.

‘The GCB therefore calls upon the government of Nigeria, all the member states of the African Union, and the international community as a whole, urgently to take effective steps to ensure that those responsible for committing these violent crimes are brought to justice, and to curb the rise in these atrocities.’ **A**



## GCB Deputy chair appointed to senior International Bar position

**M**CCAPS MOTIMELE SC, deputy chairman of the General Council of the Bar of South Africa (GCB), has been appointed Co-vice chair of the International Bar Association’s (IBA) Forum for Barristers and Advocates.

He was congratulated on his appointment in December last year by Adrian Colton QC, the forum’s co-chair. The GCB was admitted at The Hague on 21 August 1948 as a full member of the IBA. **A**



## IBA welcomes Sri Lanka presidential promises on rule of law

**T**HE INTERNATIONAL Bar Association’s Human Rights Institute (IBAHRI) earlier this year welcomed the then recently elected Sri Lankan President Maithripala Siresena’s public statements that he would work to strengthen the rule of law and support the independence of the judiciary in Sri Lanka.

IBAHRI Co-Chair Baroness Helena Kennedy QC commented ‘We are delighted that President Siresena has publicly stated his intention to strengthen the rule of law the independence of the judiciary.’ **A**