

Letter to Prof. Makgoba regarding Ashwin Desai from
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Professor M.W. Makgoba
Howard College Campus
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Durban
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Dear Vice-Chancellor Professor Makgoba:

I was very disturbed to hear that you have barred Ashwin Desai from seeking a research position at the University of Kwazulu Natal. I am writing to express my concern and request you to reconsider your decision.

I came to know Ashwin Desai through his book *We are the Poors* published by Monthly Review Press. Later, I had the opportunity to meet him personally in Durban. Ashwin symbolizes for many a committed African intellectual a towering example of not only a good academic researcher and writer but also a passionate fighter for the cause, and in the interest of the oppressed, the disadvantaged, and the exploited of Africa. In an era, when the neo-liberal dogma has enchanted many of our politicians and intelligentsia, Ashwin sticks to his bearing - the bearing set by the interests of the downtrodden. It is their struggle and resistance that Ashwin has untiringly participated in and documented. I would have thought such an intellectual activist would have an unchallenged place in an African university, particularly, a South African university.

As an African intellectual who has closely followed the struggle of the South African people against the inhuman apartheid system and now against a misguided neo-liberal agenda, it pains me to see that our university administrations place so little value on the commitment of an intellectual.

Yours sincerely,

Issa G. Shivji
Professor of Law