



## Africa Film Special – "New films from North and South Africa"

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### GUEST FROM JOHANNESBURG ARRIVES IN COLOGNE

#### DESPITE HARASSMENT BY GERMAN EMBASSY

After a total flight time of more than 20 hours, South African director **Ntshaveni Wa-Luruli** arrived in Cologne yesterday from Johannesburg. He will stay in the city until Monday and will present his feature film **Elelwani** on Saturday (21.9., 7:30 pm) in Filmforum in Museum Ludwig. This film opened South Africa's largest film festival in Durban in 2012. It tells the story of a young university graduate whose parents have organised an arranged marriage to a village dignitary who paid for her studies. (Interview requests to be sent to [mail@filminitiativ.de](mailto:mail@filminitiativ.de) or Karl Rössel, mobile: 015202613586)

**Ntshaveni Wa-Luruli** also unveiled his film in February at the Berlinale, which he has already been invited to many times. However, he encountered great difficulties at the German embassy in South Africa in obtaining a visa for his trip to the Cologne film event. After a long delay, the visa was finally issued for precisely the five (!) days he will be in Cologne.

African filmmakers always have to deal with being victimised by German embassies in order to be able to take part in the Cologne film festivals and series, despite these being subsidised with city, state and federal public funding, and the 2012 festival was additionally supported by funds from the foreign office's "Africa campaign". Despite FilmInitiativ guaranteeing that an invitation has been offered and providing original documents to prove that it is to assume all costs of flights and accommodation and that the guests will receive payment for their appearance and be insured, German embassies still make their lives extremely difficult when it comes to the issuing of visas. The Algerian guest present in Cologne for the current film series, Anis Djaad, only received his visa for Cologne after a two-month wait and only two days (!) before his departure from Algiers last week. After he inquired as to why the issuing of visas is such an inflexible process – as his return train journey or flight could be delayed – the embassy staff in Algiers explained to him that they would only have granted him a visa "for one day" if he had only been invited to Cologne for one day.

FilmInitiativ Köln e.V. objects to the disrespectful treatment of African filmmakers by German embassies and requests that the Foreign Office grants visas for guests of cultural events in Germany without any issues.

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