

Key messages regarding recent developments in South Africa

Government condemns violent attacks on foreign nationals in the strongest possible terms. For many decades, South Africans in many parts of the country have lived side by side with people from other countries with no acts of violence. - as such we cannot allow a few individuals to reverse and undermine our historical achievements.

1. Indeed South Africa itself has been forged through the unification of people from many different backgrounds and places including different areas of what is now one country. We take pride in our unity in diversity and in having transformed from a symbol of division and conflict into an example of tolerance and peaceful coexistence.
2. Government condemns violent attacks on foreign nationals - nothing can justify them. South Africa is a signatory to the Geneva Protocol on Refugees and will fulfill its obligation to protect all foreign nationals.
3. The 1951 Geneva Refugee Convention ensures the basic human rights of vulnerable persons and that refugees will not be returned involuntarily to a country where they face persecution. Providing them with food, shelter and other material assistance is the first step toward their long-term protection and rehabilitation.
4. As a signatory to this protocol, and as a country that cherishes human rights, we have to protect the basic rights of every human being within our borders, including foreign nationals.
5. Government will do everything within the law to ensure safety of all citizens and foreign nationals irrespective of their status. Government calls on all communities and organisations to ensure that all people in South Africa, including foreign nationals, are protected from any form of violence.
6. All communities are encouraged to actively oppose any violence and to report any such acts to relevant authorities.
7. Organisations (NGOs, CBOs, FBOs, organised labour) are encouraged to use every opportunity to educate South Africans about the need to co-exist with foreign nationals. This includes improving refugees' access to fundamental rights, enhancing refugees' means of self reliance and expanding opportunities for durable solutions

8. Government calls on communities to be vigilant and to avoid being manipulated by provocateurs who seek to exploit people's fears and concerns. Government is committed to ensuring that all those who live in our country irrespective of their nationality are safe and enjoy all the rights in our constitution.
9. Government has set up an Inter-departmental Task Team to investigate all the possible causes of xenophobic attacks and to make recommendations about action that needs to be taken to prevent the recurrence of this negative tendency.
10. This task team will be convened by the Department of Home Affairs and will include departments of Safety and Security, Social Development, Health, Education and The Presidency.
11. All law enforcement agencies will use the full might of the law to ensure that no further violence takes place, and ensure that those who engage in, actively encouraging and inciting communities to attack foreign nationals are brought to justice.

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