



Oromo
Advocacy
Alliance



October 3, 2019

Hon. Cyril Ramaphosa
President of the Republic of South
Africa Union Buildings
Private Bag X1000
Pretoria, South Africa 0001

Dear President Ramaphosa,

We write to you as US-based educators; human rights and legal advocates; social justice activists; and longtime allies of African struggles for self-determination. In direct and urgent appeal to center respect of all human dignity, rights and social progress, we call for intentionality in addressing the current iteration of violence.

Many of us were very active during the anti-Apartheid struggle from here in the United States.

It in this spirit, that we join the Africa Union Commission and civil society leaders (internationally) in urging you to respond to this current cycle of xenophobic attacks throughout South African communities. To date, there have been an alarming number of lootings, burned shops, an attack on a mosque and a number of reported *foreigners* killed who have been living productively in their communities. The ongoing and escalating attacks are a consequence of, among other things, years of impunity, the failure of South Africa's criminal justice system to uphold the rule of law, corruption which deprives job to a large number of citizens and likely unaddressed anger from the apartheid era. Consequently, *foreigners* are increasingly exposed and unprotected.

We want to highlight that this is not the first time migrants in South Africa have experienced this cycle of violence. Dozens of people were killed in anti-foreigner riots in 2008 and 2015. But this current outbreak of violence highlights the dangerous and inflammatory rhetoric being spread by South African politicians. Some of these politicians have blamed migrants for supposedly taking jobs from South Africans and committing crimes. To date, it is evident in the cyclical pattern of violence, that there is a clear failure to address past xenophobic, violent outbreaks across the country, instead often continuing to scapegoat foreign nationals for high levels of crime, putting a strain on government services, and operating illegal businesses. Unfortunately, this has led to reprisals against innocent South Africans and the country's interests in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Zambia, and Nigeria.

We raise the tone against xenophobia with all our energy and condemn these attacks in the strongest terms possible, as they defeat the spirit and potentialities of pan Africanism. Moreover, this cyclical violence deters developments that includes African Continental Free Trade agreements which protect freedom of movement of the people as well as the right to the security of person as protected under the constitution of South Africa; the African Charter on Human and People's Rights; and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which South African is signatory to.

We demand:

1. An immediate and intentional stop to fueling xenophobia and build a country that is rooted in respect for human rights and the rule of law;
2. A recognition of the concerns of marginalized South Africans, improved job security and mechanisms to address the economic disparity;
3. That a security plan is established, with necessary operational mechanisms to ensure the safety of all foreign nationals including, but not limited to business men and women, professional workers, refugees and migrants; and
4. To hold perpetrators of past and present xenophobic and related crimes/violence accountable.
5. That the South African government compensates the victims of past and present xenophobia attacks.

This is an opportunity for South Africa to lean forward and become a welcoming country that we believe it aspires to be. With our demands, we pledge our collective personal and professional support to work to break this cycle of impunity and degradation of human dignity.

We thank you for your attention.

CC:

- Commissioner, African Commission on Human and People's Rights, African Union
- South Africa Ambassador to USA

- Congresswoman Karen Bass, Chair of Subcommittee on Africa/ United States House of Representatives
- H.E. Dr. Arikana Chihombori Quao, Permanent Representative of the African Union to the United States of America

Organizational Signatories:

- Amnesty International
- African faith and Justice Network
- Eritrean Community for Human Rights and Refugee Protection
- Helping Hand for Survivors
- Watch Democracy Grow
- TASSC International
- Friends of Angola
- Oromo Advocacy Alliance
- Sons and Daughters of Africa
- Jah Kente International
- African Catholics Association of DMV
- Center for Human Rights Defenders of Zimbabwe

Individual Signatories:

First Name	Last Name	State
Sophia	Djane	
Anita	Fung	
Wendy	Ebersberger	VA
Dunia	Tegegn	
Steve	Overton	
Juliet	Nyamao	MD
Alexia	Kelley	DC
Emira	Woods	MD
Makau	Niko	MI
Djenebou	Sidibe	
ANNA	OBADA	
Louis	Tony Okot	
Euginius	Canete	
Taye	Doherty	CA
Sanou	Michel	
Teresa	Okure, SHCJ	
Ntama	Bahati	MD

Stephen	Oren	IL
Jeanette	Stang	OH
Stephen	Settimi	WV
Margaret	Kennedy	CA
Efi	Tembon	MN
gail	lerner	NY
Jose	Effiong	FL
Nelson	Adjei Bediako, SMA	MD
Rocco	Puopolo	MA
Marie	Mehaffey	MD
Geneal	Kramer	NM
Emmanuel	Tredou	
JEAN MARIE ARNOLD	MVUMBI PHONGO	VA
Isaaca	Kaly	DC
Judith	Bonini, IHM	MI
Lanam	Kijange	IL
Sr Patricia	Cataldi	KY
Margarita	Rose	PA
Virginia	Douglas	OH
Sr Marie	Lucey	MD
Paul Peter	Rom	MN
Nora	Pfeiffer	
Christopher	Promis	IL
Rosemarie	Abate	MI
Teresa	Holt	WA
Ronald	Pagnucco	MN
Commey	Raymond Tetteh	MD
RENe M.	SEGBENOU	DC
Jason	Miller	VA
James	Stormes	MA
Kwame	Frimpong	MD
Victoria	Caulker	DC

***Unedited Comments by some of the signatories of the petition to Fight Against
Xenophobia in South Africa***

“We are in support of the content of the letter “ - **Comrade Nnanna**

“The leaders and people of South Africa need to meditate and commit to the vision stated in these word of the African Union's Anthem: 'Let us make Africa the Tree of Life, Let us all unite and toil together, To give the best we have to Africa, The cradle of mankind and fount of culture, Our pride and hope at break of dawn.” -**Ntama Bahati**

“I was in South Africa in 2008. It was a horrible time. I had been trying to assist a few refugees with small needs. Then a reign of terror was unleashed on innocent, harmless people who had been fleeing violence elsewhere in Africa. When South Africans were resisting Apartheid and had to flee RSA for their safety, many peoples of African countries welcomed, received and assisted them. But many South Africans saw refugees and other needy people who came to South Africa seeking a better life as enemies, as rivals -- they sometimes robbed them of what little they had and they were even ready to kill them. Horrible, tragic and satanic.” - **John Converset**

“Xenophobia has no place in politics and in regard to human dignity!” -**Christopher Promis**

“Many of us address immigrant and refugee issues here in the U.S. but little attention is paid to this tragic situation in South Africa. Thank you for making us more aware.” -**Sr Marie Lucey**

“The situation is truly tragic. Is this the lurking unsavory fruit of the evil of apartheid on the SA citizens? The situation calls for in-depth study. How can this type of inhuman behavior happen among citizens of a continent that is renowned for its hospitality and its spirit of Ubuntu? Perhaps work on dismantling apartheid in depths and to the roots is yet to be undertaken. Let the immigrants also take part in this work of dismantling apartheid and restoring a people to its humanity and dignity in God's image and likeness. The South Africans and the entire world will benefit from it. Evil open or secret is not a friend of any human being whatever their nationality. May God have mercy and give all concerned the grace of true repentance.” --**Sr Teresa Okure SHCJ**

“Let every human being be wherever s/he chooses to live without any hindrance whatsoever!!! God bless Africa, God bless all!” -**Nelson Adjei Bediako, SMA**

“Stop the Violence! This is an absolute disgrace! South Africa should know better especially after apartheid.” -**Marie Mehaffey**

“I was a foreigner in South Africa for five years in the 90's. I never had a real fear for my life and was treated with respect and treated others with respect. I hope people from other countries will once again feel safe in your lovely land.” –**Geneal Kramer**

“I do not understand how you can go backward as a government and take your country into such inhumane actions. All the efforts of the leaders who risked everything to bring you out of the white inhumanity of the past are being destroyed by you. Every human being had the same red blood and the same right to an adequate means of providing for themselves and their children.” --**Sister Janice Thome**

“Xenophobic violence (especially against Africans) is a violation of Human Rights Laws/Conventions, South Africa's Liberal Constitution, crime against humanity, negation of the Frontline States' & Africans' support (with blood & treasures) of the Anti-Apartheid Struggle, etc. The solutions to Xenophobic Violence must include concrete, actionable policies that are also ENFORCED; not only fine speeches at various venues. If need be, deploy both the Military and the Police to honor the Memories of, among many others, Steve Biko, Nelson Mandela, et al.” – **Levi Zangai**

“The World is our home. Let freedom reign without any discrimination. Discrimination of any kind is an act of cowardice.” –**Paul Peter Rom**

“This is so unjust and heart breaking to hear.” - **Dianne Nixon**

“I am ashamed of this beautiful country. Have you forgot the countries who helped you in the past?” --**Cora Richardson**

“Xenophobia is a crime.” –**Juliet Nyamao**

“Not happy of what has happen... We are all brothers and sisters created and loved by the same God of Jesus.” –**Louis Tony Okot**

“I am here in the Philippines and deeply concerned about this Xenophobic Violence.” – **Euginius Canete**

“What they are doing is a disgrace to the black nation. The African Union should take action against SA.” –**Taye Doherty**

“Dear Mr. President, please do not follow the same path our incredibly ignorant president does in our country. Stand ahead of the pack and show leadership here.” – **Stephen Settimi**

“Nelson Mandela did not teach South Africans to kill other nations.” –**George Adinuba**

“I am shocked that in the country made famous by the moral leadership of Nelson Mandela such injustices are occurring without accountability by the authorities. Please take steps to address this terrible situation.” - **Michael Carroll**

“Stop this madness.” –**John Reed**

“Thanks for the initiative. We hope more people sign the petition. We cannot sit back and watch this evil grow!” –**Efi Tembon**

“All kinds of killings and disturbances must stopped, cause God so love the world that he gave us is beloved son that anyone who believes in name shall have everlasting life, and God has shown us example that we should love each other's as ourselves. Do unto others what we want others to do unto us. We do not create any human beings so therefore we shall not lay hands in killing or destroy any one.” –**Bernadette Okonji**

“End Afro- Phobia now. Foreigners are not the problems of SA.” –**Jose Effiong**

“NO TO XENOPHOBIA IN AFRICA. UBUNTU SHOULD PREVAIL IN SOUTH AFRICA” –**Emmanuel Tredou**

“Please stop the xenophobic violence.” –**Judith Bonini, IHM**

“We worked in solidarity with the anti-apartheid movement. South Africa can rise above this too.” –**Ronald Pagnucco**

“I support the petition” –**Commey Raymond**

“The South African populations should not forget the solidarity played by so many African countries to help them fight apartheid.” – **RENE M. Segbenou**

“It is time for all Africans to realize that the only way for economic independence is Pan Africanism.” –**Kwame Frimpong**

“The president of South Africa is cutting diplomatic ties with Israel what he described as crimes commuted against Palestinians and he is doing nothing to stop xenophobic attacks in his country. I think he should deal with the skeleton in his own cupboard and stop innocent migrants from being killed in his country.” –**Victoria Caulker**

“RSA must respect the human rights of all people including refugees and migrants!” –**Jo'Ann De Quattro**

“I lived in east and Southern Africa for 24 years. I know the tribal and racial violence and hatred first hand.” –**Max Langenderfer**

“They should stop violence, they have a very short memory, during apartheid, all africans countries were helping them, they should remember also that foreigners are not the one having industries in SA, they have no brain...” –**Alain Bouhon**