The South Africa Government’s response to the recent attacks of foreign national

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The South African Government’s response to the recent scourge of xenophobic attacks

During the past week we have witnessed shocking and unacceptable incidents of violence directed at foreign nationals in some parts of KwaZulu-Natal, which has now spread to some parts of Gauteng. Similar incidents had taken place in Soweto in January.

We must emphasise the point that not all South Africans are involved in these acts of violence.

South African citizens at all levels - from the President to citizens - have condemned the violent attacks on foreign nationals in our country. We must all Play our Part to stop these attacks.

Citizens from the continent spared no effort in supporting our fight for freedom and liberation. We cannot forget their immense sacrifices in even hosting our people who were seeking safety and refuge.

Government will work together with all stakeholders to develop and implement a comprehensive response to address the attacks against foreign nationals.

South Africa belongs to all who live in it

Question What is South Africa Government’s position on the xenophobic attacks?

Answer South Africa condemns the violence in the strongest possible terms. No amount of frustration or anger can ever justify the attacks on foreign nationals and the looting of their shops.

We appeal for calm, an end to the violence and restraint. Criminal elements should not be allowed to take advantage of the concerns of citizens to sow mayhem and destruction.

Any problems or issues of concern to South African citizens must be resolved peacefully and through dialogue. The police have been directed to work round the clock to protect both foreign nationals and citizens and to arrest looters and those committing acts of violence.

The attacks are contrary to South African values

Question Government’s appeal to South Africans

Answer We urge communities to assist the police by providing information on the incidents that have taken place in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal so that the perpetrators can be brought to justice. While we strongly condemn the attacks, we are aware of, and are sympathetic to some of the issues that have been raised by affected South African citizens.
We appeal to our people to support and protect refugees and asylum seekers. We urge all of you to exercise calm and restraint. We also urge those who use social media, to refrain from fanning the flames of violence on Facebook, twitter and other platforms. We all have a responsibility to promote social cohesion, peaceful co-existence and good relations in the country.

Foreign nationals help us to develop a cosmopolitan atmosphere and we welcome their presence. We also want to see an increase in tourism figures from countries in the continent and to share a lot of business opportunities as part of promoting sustainable economic development in the continent.

Appeal in isiZulu:
Bakwethu, siyakhuza sithi asehliseni imimoya.
Ukuhlaselwa kwabantu bokufika kulelizwe akwemukelealeleke neze.
Sathola usizo emazweni amaningi ngesikhathi silwela inkululeko.
Abazange basixoshe noma basihlukumeze.

Siyazizwa izinkinga ezibekwayo njengokuthi abanye abangabokufika abanamvume yokuba seNingizimu Africa.

Kubuye kukhalwe nangobugebengu ebenziwa ngabanye bokufika kanye nokuthatha amathuba okuhweba nemisebenzi.

Njengohulumeni siyayisebenza indaba yokuqinisa ezokuphepha emingceleni ukuze abantu bangangeni ngokungekho emthethweni ezweni. Sesitshale namasosha ukuze asize umnyango wezasekhaya, kuloludaba.

Fellow South Africans, help your fellow African brothers and sisters

Question What are the values that South Africa stands for?
Answer The attacks violate all the values that South Africa embodies, especially the respect for human life, human rights, human dignity and Ubuntu. Our country stands firmly against all intolerances such as racism, xenophobia, homophobia and sexism.
We reiterate our view that South Africans are generally not xenophobic. If they were, we would not have such a high number of foreign nationals who have been successfully integrated into communities all over our country, in towns, cities and villages.

Miseducation about foreign nationals living in South Africa

Question Addressing misconceptions about foreign nationals

Answer It is misleading and wrong to label or regard all foreign nationals as being involved in crime in the country. Many foreign nationals are in the country legally and contribute to the economy and social development of the country. Many bring skills that are scarce that help us to develop the economy and are most welcome to live our country.

Others came to South Africa as refugees having run away from conflict or wars in their countries of origin, in the same way that many South Africans left this country at some point and lived in other countries in the continent and beyond.

We were treated with generosity, dignity and respect by our brothers and sisters from the rest of the continent. We will never forget that hospitality and solidarity.

In this regard, government will continue to play its part and fulfil our responsibilities and obligations as members of the African Union and the United Nations.

Refugees and asylum seekers will be accorded support in line with international law and protocols, with the support of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Immigration issues in South Africa

Question What is South Africa’s position on immigration into the country?

Answer South Africa is committed to the free movement of people, goods and services within the continent. This free movement will enable the transfer of skills and contribute to the development and economic growth of countries within Africa and therefore the continent as a whole.
The South African government acknowledges that most immigrants in our country, particularly the African immigrants who are currently the subject of our attention, enter South Africa properly as regular migrants with documents and therefore in this country legally.

Plans are afoot to establish the Border Management Agency (BMA) which will guard and protect our country's land, sea and air borders, working in partnership with other state agencies. The BMA's specialised capacity will be of great import towards creating credibility for our border management mechanisms.

Working with foreign national to improve South Africa

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**Question**    What is the value of Foreign Nationals to South Africa?

**Answer** It should be explicitly noted that the government of South Africa acknowledge that most foreign nationals in the country make a very positive contribution to our society and economy.

1. **Immigrants contribute to South Africa’s Economic Development and Pay their Taxes**

   Immigrants contribute towards our country’s economic development by investing in the economy, supplying critical skills including in our health facilities, teaching our children and youth in schools and universities and thus transferring their knowledge and skills to them.

   Accordingly, these people pay tax which contributes towards expanding the national fiscus whilst many still have to send remittances back to their families in the countries of origin and yet still sustain themselves and their livelihoods in South Africa.

   Furthermore, many nationals of our neighbouring countries travel to South Africa daily, weekly or monthly to buy their groceries or purchase goods from our retail shops to go sell in their countries, paying toll fees on our roads and thus contributing towards revenue generation that has been so vital towards increased both social as well as economic expenditure to benefit South Africans.

2. **Foreign Nationals Contribute to enhancing South Africa’s national security**

   By entering our country through our designated ports of entry as regular migrants, and by complying with both our immigration and other
legislation, most foreign nationals contribute towards enhancing South Africa’s national security and ensure that we can manage the visitors in our midst, whilst we can protect both these visitors in our country as well as South Africans.

Recently, we have enhanced our legislation and regulations in order the more effectively to protect South Africa by managing and minimising the risks to our country arising out of the processes and phenomenon of international migration.

3. Immigrants contribute towards South Africa’s diversity and nation building

Immigrants in our country contribute towards nation-building and enhance our social cohesion by bringing more diversity to our nation and creating more understanding of the diverse nature, not only of Africans of Africa but also of the peoples of the world.

By having new groups of immigrants in South Africa in the recent years, we have become a more cosmopolitan country and our understanding of who we are as a nation has been deepened, based on the new complex dynamics that have enriched our nation.

4. Immigrants have helped South Africa integrate into the global community

Immigrants have integrated South Africa into the global community and African immigrants in particular have made South Africa an integral part of the African continent that we rightfully are.

Every country on the continent can find its nationals on our shores; and, in some instances we now have South Africans of descent in fellow African countries.

South Africans are better and more human than we have ever been because of these fellow Africans and peoples of elsewhere in the world that have chosen voluntarily, and mostly through regular means, to live amongst us and make South Africa their permanent home.

The children of these people do not know the countries of origin of their parents and will only relate to them as Indian and white South Africans relate to India or Europe - the countries of ancestry of their forebears; but their home is now and in the future, South Africa.
The South African Government has put measures in place to address the attacks

**Question**  
Actions taken by the South African Government to address the violence?

**Answer**  
President Jacob Zuma deployed the Ministers of Police, State Security and Home Affairs to work with the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial government to quell the violence and bring the situation to normality. The problem requires a much more comprehensive and sustainable long-term intervention.

President Jacob Zuma has also mandated the entire Justice Crime Prevention and Security Cluster to work on this issue intensively, joined by the Ministers of Social Development, Trade and Industry and Small Business Development.

The security cluster and economic departments had already begun working on this matter, following the Soweto incidents in January.

The President has directed Ministers to work faster and to engage affected communities, organisations representing foreign nationals, business, non-governmental organisations and other stakeholders to attend to the concerns raised on both sides.

The objective is to avoid future incidents by improving relations and promoting peaceful co-existence between citizens and our brothers and sisters within the continent, as well as other foreign nationals.

South Africa will also be seeking cooperation and support from the affected foreign missions based in South Africa. The Minister of Home Affairs met with African Heads of Missions last week. The Minister of International Relations and Cooperation met with African Heads of Missions on 17\textsuperscript{th} of April.