

Calls of South African unions and movements in respond to xenophobic attacks

Thursday 12 June 2008, by [Collective / Multiple signers](#) (Date first published: 21 May 2008).

See other articles in this section for more calls...

Contents

- [SANCO, Thokoza Branch: March](#)
 - [National Union of Metalworkers](#)
 - [National Union of Mineworkers](#)
 - [Treatment Action Campaign: \(...\)](#)
 - [National Education Health \(...\)](#)
-

SANCO, Thokoza Branch: March in Thokoza

The Thokoza branch of SANCO [South African National Civics Organisation], with allied community organisations, is inviting you to a press conference to announce its planned march to express disgust at inhuman xenophobic attacks on Africans from the North.

We are marching because these diabolic xenophobic attacks reverse all revolutionary gains we made since 1994. It reverses the internationalist role of, and impact of, our struggle against apartheid.

The Cubans in Cuito Cuinavale, Angola, laid down their lives for no economic gain but to express solidarity with South Africans, Angolans, Namibians and love for humanity. The South African revolution and our new democracy is the product of sacrifices by ordinary people of Lesotho, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Angola, Zambia and Tanzania. These countries were attacked by the South African apartheid army because South Africans stayed and lived amongst their people. Therefore we condemn the attacks on our African brothers and sisters merely because they are not South Africans.

As far back as the 1950s and 1960s, Africans from all these countries, including Malawi and Kenya, died in South African mines. Others went back to their countries sick and poor; while on the other hand our economy, though under apartheid, grew in leaps and bounds.

For more information please contact: Moloantoa Molaba 082 455 3070, or e-mail moloantoa_nehawu.org.za

Nzipho 084 880 4725

Bongani 083 352 6920

National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa: Stop the violence! Let's focus on the real problem!

As at today, May 20, more than 20 people are dead, hundreds have been injured and thousands are homeless after the latest xenophobic attacks in the Gauteng province. Those that attacked these people say they were getting rid of aliens and criminals who are stealing their jobs, their wives and their possessions.

But those that attacked

- * gave victims no chance to defend themselves

- * in some cases raped those they attacked

- * in some cases stole from those they attacked

- * burnt homes of those they attacked

- * killed South Africans as well as **aliens''**. **Let's ask ourselves, who are the real criminals in these attacks? Even if every so-called amakwerekwere''** left this country, we would still have unemployment. You just need to look at your workplace to see why. Capitalists are always trying to find ways of reducing their costs — they outsource certain jobs, they put people on short term contracts, they close down certain sections of the company. And sometimes the company can't compete anymore and it closes down, forcing everyone onto the streets. Fighting against our fellow workers is no way to change this. Only strong organisation can change the system that we currently live in.

First let's help the police root out criminals:

- * work with the police and your community policing forum to restore law and order

- * report criminals who cause instability

- * protect women and children from assault and rape

- * prevent armed gangs from looting and burning shops and homes.

And let's unite with our class, regardless of what language they speak or where they come from.

Let's unite against those who exploit us. We all want liberation from economic exploitation and a better life!

Stop the violence! Stop the looting!

Stop the raping! Stop the killing!

Build a caring society!

National Union of Mineworkers calls for serious state intervention on xenophobic attacks

The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) calls on the state to urgently intervene in the deteriorating and escalating levels of xenophobic attacks in the country.

The state should deploy the army to curb the terrible situation in which poor immigrants and local residents to some extent find themselves'', says Oupa Komane, the NUM's Deputy General Secretary. We believe the situation is characterized by high levels of criminality and hooliganism and therefore calls for the state to be high handed'', says Komane. Many members of the NUM come from neighboring countries such as Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Zambia, Swaziland and others. We therefore cannot allow the situation to be polarised further'', he says. The NUM is disturbed that immigrants continue to be attacked, their belongings looted with little action from the security authorities. The government must send a strong unambiguous message to the hooligans who perpetrate this action by deploying the army to deal with them. We cannot beat about the bush when foreigners find themselves between a rock and a hard place'', says Komane.

The NUM has already lost two members at ERPM in Primrose with three having been admitted in hospital. ``We fear that this situation will deteriorate into ethnic clashes as our local people from Venda have also received threats'', he says.

Oupa Komane (NUM Deputy General Secretary)- 082 883 7292

Lesiba Seshoka (NUM spokesperson) - 082 803 6719

Treatment Action Campaign: Government must take decisive action to stop violence

May 19, 2008

Issued by TAC National Council:

Treatment Action Campaign

<http://www.tac.org.za>

The Treatment Action Campaign condemns the wave of xenophobic violence sweeping through

communities in Gauteng. We call on Government to take action to halt the violence; to put in place a national strategy to protect the safety, health and well being of victims of xenophobic attacks and to take steps to prevent the violence from spreading further. With the violence now having spread to almost a dozen communities in and around Johannesburg and threats of violence issued elsewhere across the country, including Cape Town, we demand more effective action from Government to deal with the crisis.

Specifically we ask government to:

- * Call together all political parties, President Mbeki and all political party leaders to visit sites of violence and to condemn it in the strongest terms.
- * Draft contingency plans, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, to manage the violence and its after-effects should it spread to other areas of the country. While we sincerely hope that the violence will be contained and halted in Gauteng, we urge every municipality to put in place coherent strategies for dealing with possible outbreaks of xenophobic violence.
- * Designate and make available places of sanctuary for victims of xenophobic attacks. The current system whereby victims take shelter at police stations is unsustainable; Government must identify sites where large numbers of people can be comfortably accommodated and easily protected.
- * Distribute emergency social assistance packages to all displaced persons.
- * Initiate a sustained media campaign condemning the violence. We ask for our political leaders to be more visible and to go on radio and television condemning the attacks.

TAC reluctantly calls for the deployment of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) to assist the police services in curbing the violence. Although this brings back terrible memories of the Apartheid era, the police services do not have the capacity to stop the violence without the support of the SANDF. Ending violence and restoring dignity to refugees, immigrants and undocumented migrants is not only the task of government. All civil society organizations, charities, humanitarian bodies and NGOs must establish a unified and coordinated response to this national humanitarian emergency. TAC is working with the AIDS Law project, Lawyers for Human Rights, Legal Resources Centre, and other organisations to address the crisis.

Equal Treatment Issue 25 (June 2008) has been published. This edition of ET focuses specifically on the needs of refugees in South Africa, you can download an electronic copy at:

<http://www.tac.org.za/community/files/file/et25.pdf>

Xenophobia is rife in South Africa. However, repression of immigrants, refugees and undocumented people goes beyond naked violence in poor communities. Earlier this year, police raided the Central Methodist Church in Johannesburg, beating up and arresting immigrants, mainly from Zimbabwe. The state systematically abuses the rights of immigrants: health workers deny treatment, home affairs officials demand bribes and police assault immigrants regularly. Then there are institutions like Lindela, where people are incarcerated in ghastly conditions before being deported despite not having committed any crime. This all goes on while the South African government refuses to recognise that people fleeing from Zimbabwe are refugees.

This issue of Equal Treatment contains a special report on the systematic abuse of the rights of immigrants. We hope that it galvanises South Africans to stand up against xenophobia, both by the

state and in our communities.

National Education Health and Allied Workers Union: Condemn Xenophobic Attacks in South Africa

ONGOING XENOPHOBIC ATTACKS

Nehawu joins all progressive minded South Africans and ordinary people in expressing their disgust at the current attacks against African brothers and sisters from the North. What is happening in Alexandra is completely unjustifiable, immoral and short sighted.

POVERTY UNEMPLOYMENT AND SLOW SERVICE DELIVERY

More than 40% of South Africans are unemployed. With the rise of food prices, petrol and the unending waiting list for RDP houses, more and more South Africans, particularly the working poor, are getting frustrated and angry. Given this anger and frustration it is easy for both legal and illegal immigrants to be used as scapegoats to explain some of the problems in our local communities. What's happening in Alexandra, previously happened in Attredgville, Khayaletsha and some of the Eastern Cape Townships. Attacks on immigrants reflect the frustration and misdirected anger we have referred to.

INTERNATIONALISM AND NEW SOUTH AFRICA

South African liberation is primarily a product of struggles led by South Africans to liberate themselves from the Apartheid system. However, international solidarity is one central pillar in our victory against Apartheid. Cubans flew 1000s of kilometers from their home to contribute to the liberation of Namibia and South Africa. They contributed to defending Angola and Mozambique.

Chris Hani stayed in Lesotho at some point during struggle against Apartheid. ANC Head quarters and Umkhonto We Sizwe camps were in Tanzania, Zambia and Angola. Many cadres stayed and studied in almost all African countries, particularly in the Southern African Countries.

In a nutshell, the victory of South African liberation is owed to Cubans, Namibians Zimbabweans, Angolans, people from Lesotho, and other Africans. Therefore there is no way we can justify the current attacks of other Africans.

As we speak today we have more than 100 Cuban doctors working in South African rural areas where South African doctors are unwilling to serve. We have hundreds of South Africa students studying in Cuba.

We call on ANC Alliance and all democratic forces in Alexandra and other affected communities to go on a massive visible and urgent campaign to educate our people that their misery is in part caused by capitalism, the impact of neo-liberal GEAR and the growing inequalities in society — not Africans from the north. Our people must be made to understand sacrifices Cubans and other Africans made to our liberation. We unreservedly apologies to the victims of these xenophobic attacks and for the pain and damaged caused to their lives.

This statement was issued by the National Education Health and Allied Workers Union (NEHAWU)

Communications Department on 15 May 2008. For further information, visit NEHAWU website:
www.nehawu.org.za.