

**TO: ALL DISPLACED PERSONS IN THE WESTERN CAPE**

**FROM: CIVIL SOCIETY AGAINST XENOPHOBIC VIOLENCE**

**26 May 2008**

More than 20 000 people have been displaced across the Western Cape by xenophobic violence. As civil society organisations working on health and human rights for all people living in South Africa, we are saddened and outraged by such violence. We stand by you and will endeavour to help you in every way we can. We believe that it is your right to seek employment, health services, protection and refuge in South Africa.

We believe that you have contributed to South Africa and must continue to contribute. We want you to be part of all our communities in South Africa.

Since this crisis started, about 40 relief centres and shelters have been set up in the areas surrounding Cape Town. We have been doing all we can to supply people with shelter, transport, food, water, blankets, and sanitary supplies. We will continue to make sure you get help.

The City of Cape Town has set up four relief camps for displaced persons: They are Silverstroom in Atlantis, Soetwater in Kommetjie, Harmony Park in Strand, and Youngsfield Military Base near Kenilworth. Together the camps can accommodate about 8000 people. We understand that these camps will be full very shortly.

According to the City of Cape Town the camps have been set up in order to coordinate the relief response better. However, if you are safe where you are in a shelter or relief centre, then you should not be forced by anyone to go to these camps.

We hope that very soon you will be able to return to your homes and schools and back to work. We will use all of our resources to help you do this safely and properly.

If you have lost any documentation, papers or permits then we will assist you to get them re-issued. If you never had any papers issued to you we will assist you to get the relevant papers. You can call the UCT Law Clinic **021 650 3551** to get assistance with papers and documentation.

Please also note that we asked the Minister of Home Affairs to give an undertaking that there will be no deportations during this crisis period. She has now agreed to do so. No one can force you to go back to your country of origin – only you can decide to go back. We suggest that you ask for a counsellor to speak to when you make such a decision.

You should know that volunteer doctors and medical students are helping us to identify your medical needs. Please tell them if you need any chronic medication (medicines that you have to take regularly).

We are willing to help you at any time. Please call us **021 422 1490** at any time of the day or night if you need help. If you have a medical emergency and cannot get medical care where you are, then you can also call **10177** or ask the person running the shelter or camp where you are based to make the call on your behalf.

If you are being harassed or threatened please also let us know and we will let the SAPS and South African Human Rights Commission know about it.

**WE UNDERTAKE TO FIGHT FOR AND PROTECT YOUR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS IN SOUTH AFRICA.**