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Media Statement

Parliament, 13 August 2008

Parliament voices its view on the closure of temporary shelters for foreign nationals

Parliament's multi party task team which probed violence and attacks on foreign nationals during the prevalence of the attacks in May this year, met today ahead of the expected announcement of the closure of the temporary shelters on Friday, 15 August 2008. The meeting was aimed at recommending Parliament's role as the representative of the people and the arm that passes laws, scrutinises and oversees the actions of the executive.

The task team concluded that the closure must be put on hold until there is further engagement with communities, non governmental organisations and refugee camps' leaders for clear communication of immigration policies and development of a re - integration plan.

The Task Team expressed its view that the current issues on the ground should be taken into account, as it clear that there are some elements of defiance with regards to re-integration. Further engagement with communities and foreign nationals that still remain at the refugee camps is required in order to listen to their concerns, task team said.

Parliament will develop a community outreach programme through public meetings which will provide guidance on re-integration and ensure that it is endorsed by all stakeholders including communities and foreign nationals.

The Parliamentary task team led by Mr Obed Bapela comprised of Members of Parliament from various political parties whose constituencies the attacks had occurred. It was formed following a motion that was brought in the National Assembly on 13 May 2008 concerning the attacks on foreign nationals. The team was task to investigate the attacks and present its finding in Parliament. A report on the attacks was debated in a Joint sitting of Parliament on 19 June 2008.