



# PARLIAMENT

OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



## DRAFT REPORT

DEBATE ON THE PROBING OF THE VIOLENCE  
AND ATTACKS ON FOREIGN NATIONALS

STAKEHOLDERS' MEETING  
19 JUNE 2008

Parliament  
New Wing Building, Room E249  
12:00 – 13:30



## PROGRAMME DIRECTOR

Mr Lechesa Tsenoli, Member of Parliament

## DRAFT AGENDA

1. Arrival
2. Opening, Welcome and Introductions – Programme Director
3. Purpose of Meeting – Speaker Baleka Mbete
4. Input by Civil Society
5. Input by BUSA
6. Adoption of Declaration

## MAIN POINTS AND DECISIONS

- The meeting unequivocally denounced the attacks on foreign nationals as unacceptable.
- Several stakeholders echoed the sentiment that the crisis has not passed, and should be dealt with decisively.
- One of the most important consequences of these attacks has been the loss of trust in both the South African public, as well as the South African Government's ability to guarantee the safety of foreign nationals in this country.



### ROOT CAUSES:

- **Socio-economic situation which South Africans live in.**

It was noted that the socio-economic situation in informal settlements and townships are such that resources and opportunities are scarce, and thus competition for these resources is high. Foreign nationals are seen to have unfair access to these opportunities, and are resented for this.

- **Xenophobic feelings towards foreign nationals specifically of African origin.**

There is a general ignorance with regards to foreign nationals of African origin, and there's a desperate need to educate South Africans, especially those living in the townships, about Africans from the rest of the continent. It was noted that there is a general mistreatment of African foreign nationals not just by communities but by government officials [e.g. The police, traffic officials, home affairs officials].

- **Issues of competition for unskilled labour needs to be dealt with.**

It has been reported in some instances that competition between the local labour force and foreign nationals is exploited by unscrupulous business people, and this should be looked at.

### CONSEQUENCES:

- Trauma for those affected by the violence, and also those fearing attacks.
- Humanitarian crisis with many foreign nationals being displaced and needing food, shelter and other basic needs.



### OPTIONS FOR FOREIGN NATIONALS CURRENTLY:

- Reintegration into the communities from which they fled.
- Return to their country of origin.
- Relocation to a third country.

### INVOLVEMENT OF UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL [UNHRC]

- South Africa is inexperienced in working with these issues, and should let the UNHRC assist with finding solutions for foreign nationals.

### RESPONSE TO THE ATTACKS:

- Although the security response was swift, the post violence response has not been coordinated. However Civil Society has done an exemplary job with the limited resources at their disposal.
- Camps have been set up for those who were displaced by the violence.

### ISSUES ARISING:

- **Depleted resources**  
Government needs to take over where civil society cannot provide for.
- **Dependency issues**  
many in the camps are depressed and need assistance reintegrating into communities. Skills training will also be necessary to help foreign nationals rebuild their lives.
- **Lack of dialogue**  
Issues around the logistics of running refugee camps, as well as the exit strategy [reintegration/ return to country of origin], need to be discussed and agreed upon.



## ACTION POINTS

- Parliament should assist in attaining clarity and communicate the Home Affairs Department's official deportation policy and the rights of foreign nationals, as well as clarity on processes in attaining documentation.
- A disaster management mechanism should be put in place to better deal with situations like these.
- The Department of Home Affairs should put the moratorium on documentation for foreign nationals.
- It will be necessary to put in place a mechanism to guarantee the safety of those who are reintegrated into the communities they come from.
- Apart from reintegration issues, efforts also need to be made to reunite displaced people with their families.
- Thus far workshops on dealing with xenophobia have been ad hoc, there needs to be a more coordinated effort at educating all South Africans on issues of social integration.
- It should be noted that resources are stretched thin within civil society organizations assisting foreign national, and this may cause a cycle of hostility by communities who are in need.
- For a more coordinated response, government needs to partner with civil society and business to deal with the causes and consequences of these attacks.
- There has been a lot of documentation of what has happened over the past weeks, and through this the stories of all those affected by the violence can be told – it was suggested that perhaps a documentary be made.
- Another meeting/ workshop needs to be arranged for a more in-depth discussion on the short term and long term interventions that need to be put in place to make sure this tragedy does not repeat itself. That forum would discuss how Departments, Parliament, and Civil Society would work together towards concrete solutions to address xenophobia within South African society.