



PRESS STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – 15 APRIL 2015

XENOPHOBIA CONDEMNS SOUTH AFRICA

The reoccurrence of brutal xenophobic violence in South Africa is deeply disturbing and shamefully embarrassing for the people of South Africa and betrays the whole African continent.

The savagery demonstrated is nothing but blatant criminal activity.

The statements concerning foreigners by King Goodwill Zwelithini issued a few weeks ago, even if misinterpreted by those who heard them, have contributed to widespread violence against foreigners in Kwa-Zulu Natal. This violence has since spread to other parts of the country. The King, by failing to correct any misunderstanding on behalf of his subjects and those influenced by his remarks, has morally compromised himself. His silence is deafening. The mandate given to the National House of Traditional Leaders Act (22 of 2009) under section 11 is to cooperate with the Provincial Houses of Traditional Leaders in building up our nation, preserving the moral fibre, contributing to the regeneration of society and the social well-being and welfare of communities. Such legislation sees Traditional Leaders to be a force for good in our country. The King has missed an opportunity to promote the common good.

We call on those who are committing these murderous acts to cease immediately.

We call on those who make sweeping inaccurate statements about foreign nationals and their effects on local communities (e.g. stealing our resources) to refrain from this. The facts do not support your claims!

We call on Government to deal decisively with the issue of xenophobia nationally. This should have been done after the 2008 attacks. The fact that these attacks have reoccurred means that Government has failed to adequately address this scourge through education, dialogue, and other methods of outreach.

We call on all people of goodwill to reach out to all those who have been affected by this senseless violence.

We call on the leadership of faith communities to speak out against this and find ways of addressing this endemic problem in the country in their various communities. Faith communities have the power to influence and must use this influence to condemn this behaviour. The perpetrators of this violence are people who worship in our faith communities. Welcome and hospitality are key concepts throughout the Scriptures. The Book of Deuteronomy says “You shall love the stranger as you were strangers in Egypt” (10:19). The Book of Leviticus (19:34) makes it even clearer: “The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself.” Believers cannot be involved in such violence: it is sinful!

We call on corporate South Africa to do your part; many South African companies employ foreign nationals across the continent.

The Jesuit Institute commits itself to action, with our partners and through our network, to disseminating information and promoting awareness campaigns. We commit ourselves to collaborating with all people of goodwill to create a society in which all people are treated with dignity and feel welcome.

Xenophobia does not only affect those who have been attacked, it condemns South Africa.

ENDS

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