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ITUC-AFRICA STATEMENT ON THE XENOPHOBIC ATTACKS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Once again, xenophobic attacks have recurred in South Africa. The chilling effect we get as workers seeing clips of clearly avoidable violence on people in the guise of ridding a country of foreigners is a harrowing and discomfoting one. It was the same feeling of revulsion and disbelief we felt when the 2008 xenophobic attacks broke out in South Africa. These latest attacks on foreigners are unacceptable and must stop!

ITUC-Africa strongly condemns these xenophobic attacks that were sparked off in Durban following the remarks of the Zulu King, and menacingly look like sweeping through other cities and towns in South Africa. We reject in the strongest terms the situation where migrants and their families are used as scapegoats to express frustration at the economic and social deprivation that nationals feel. The sweeping labeling of foreigners as criminals and the scaremongering against migrants on the bases of some instances where foreigners have been arrested for crimes is grossly misleading and unjust.

Economic migrants should be seen as contributors to economic growth and not as criminals. We hold it as self-evident that migration is part of our African history, and that it has positively shaped our societies and impacted on our shared aspirations.

We welcome the South African government's strong condemnation of these attacks and call on the government to further investigate these attacks on foreigners with a view to prosecuting the perpetrators and compensating the victims. This will help to uphold accountability and effectively check impunity.

Our hearts and condolences go to the families who have lost their loved ones in these mindless attacks. We call on the international community to join the South African government in providing humanitarian and protection assistance to the victims.

We express appreciation for the city march by Durban residents against xenophobia and solidarity with our South African affiliates who have loudly condemned these attacks and have asked their members to continue to take actions to defeat xenophobic attacks and to protect migrants. We are confident that through such initiatives there can be

effective mobilization of the entire people of South Africa against the attacks for the restoration of normalcy.

ITUC-Africa also calls on our African governments in Zimbabwe, Malawi, Zambia, Nigeria, Kenya, Somalia, Mozambique, Ghana and elsewhere to take urgent and adequate measures to prevent reprisal attacks in their territories. We must strive to strengthen and deepen the bonds that unite us as Africans as well as continue to work together to show the relevance of our communal co-existence and culture of hospitality.

Finally, we would like to remind our governments in Africa that the issues of economic and social malaise such as endemic poverty, huge unemployment, inadequate public services, widening inequality, are ultimately the sources of anger and frustration such as the xenophobia attacks in South Africa show and that our governments need to do more in addressing these problems that face our people to secure the harmony that our societies crave for.

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