

NELSON MANDELA DAY COMMEMORATIVE COMMITTEE AUSTRALIA INC. A0091585K

STATEMENT ON AFROPHOBIC ATTACKS ON AFRICANS IN SOUTH AFRICA

"For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others." – Nelson Mandela, from his essay, "Working Towards Peace." -*Speech at the University of the Witwatersrand South Africa, 2003.*

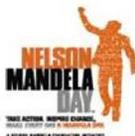
The recent attacks on African migrants in South Africa stand unreservedly condemned. They are not only shameful but criminal acts. Whatever reasons advanced, there can be no justification for the violent Afrophobia against Malawians, Nigerians, Ethiopians, Zimbabweans. Indeed, as the Malawian High Commission argues the attacks are criminally-motivated. These acts are not only a violation of the lofty objective of the African Union of striving "towards a peaceful, prosperous and integrated Africa", but also represent a rejection of Nelson Mandela's values that the freedom that black South Africans now enjoy at the expense of huge moral, political and material support from Africa is just more than casting off the chains of Apartheid but to respect and enhance the freedom of their fellow Africans.

The NMDCC reminds black South Africans and their leaders of the words of the September 2018 UN General Assembly Declaration of 2019-2029 "Nelson Mandela Decade of Peace" that for the success of the promotion of peaceful, just, inclusive and non-discriminatory societies, "racism, xenophobia [Afrophobia] and related intolerance represent the very opposite of the purposes of the United Nations".

The Mayor of Durban where recent Afrophobia attacks occurred, asserted correctly that "No African is a foreigner in Africa". The Mayor's expressed commitment to "working tirelessly" to integrate "foreign" nationals and warned politicians about making populist statements to garner votes in the upcoming election. The Mayor's determination to forge mentorship programs with the highly skilled artisans for skills transfer to the unemployed youth is commendable. South African politicians need to invoke the shared values of Ubuntu that find expression at the personal, professional and political levels as the only guarantors of mutual respect, collaboration and securing of sustainable social justice for all. Human dignity is inherent in the very essence of being human. Empathy is the expression of the essence of Ubuntu – the "I am because you are!" Ubuntu enables you to see me in you and to feel my pain as well as share my joy. We then become consciously connected as fellow human beings and fellow Africans.

The violation of the human dignity of others violates the self and undermines the establishment of a just society. South Africans are reminded to "walk the talk" of Nelson Mandela's words: "We fought injustice wherever we found it, no matter how large, or how small, and we fought injustice to preserve our own humanity." – *Nelson Mandela, Long Walk to Freedom: Autobiography of Nelson Mandela, 1995.*

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RACISM. IT STOPS WITH ME. #EmbraceDiversity