

NELSON MANDELA DAY AUSTRALIA INC. A0091585K

STATEMENT ON XENOPHOBIA AND AFROPHOBIA 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's speech, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa, 2003.*

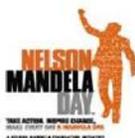
Deploring the emergent traces of xenophobia in South Africa in his 1995 address, Nelson Mandela said: "It saddens and angers me to see the rising hatred of foreigners". The recent reported violent attacks on fellow Africans and other nationalities and the looting of their belongings are a violation of the lofty objective of the African Union (AU) of striving "towards a peaceful, prosperous and integrated Africa". Significantly, they are also a betrayal of Nelson Mandela's values that the freedom the black South Africans enjoy, which was secured with the political and material support from the African countries is just more than casting off the chains of apartheid but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of fellow Africans. The idea of South African exceptionalism is an apartheid induced belief.

The NMDA Inc. 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 and related intolerance represent the very opposite of the purposes of the United Nations". Afrophobia is a manifestation of the violent antagonism by disillusioned black South Africans towards fellow Africans.

South Africans 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: "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. In his own words Nelson Mandela reminds us that "safety and security don't just happen: they are the result of collective consensus and public investment. We owe our children – the most vulnerable in any society – a life free from violence and fear. In order to ensure this, we must become tireless in our efforts not only to attain peace, justice and prosperity for countries, but also for communities and members of the same family. We must address the roots of violence".

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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