

## **Joint Media Statement by The Forum of Institutions Supporting Democracy**

**For immediate release: Friday, 17 April 2015**

**Attention: Editors, Reporters, Journalists and News Desks**

### **Forum of Institutions Supporting Democracy in South Africa Unequivocally Condemns Attacks on Foreign Nationals**

We, the Chairpersons of the Commission for Gender Equality (CGE), South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC), Financial and Fiscal Commission (FFC), Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities (CRL Commission), Office of the Public Service Commission (OPSC), Office of the Public Protector (OPP), Pan South African Language Board (PANSALB), Public Service Commission (PSC), and the Auditor-General (AG) of South Africa, wish to categorically express our utter dismay and condemnation of the widespread violent attacks, including the killing, of foreign nationals currently residing in our country.

The Forum of Institutions Supporting Democracy (FISD) is strongly opposed to any form of violence, whether from organized entities or ordinary members of our communities from any part of the country. The Forum also calls upon the government and all law enforcement bodies, particularly the South African Police, our community leaders, religious leaders, traditional leaders and political leaders at national, provincial and local community levels to not only condemn this scourge of xenophobia, but also to mobilize our country's collective moral and other resources to ensure that no one's human rights are violated on South African soil, irrespective of the reasons.

We, on behalf of all the Constitutional Bodies, wish to state unequivocally that South Africa's Constitution was founded on recognition of the sanctity of life and the right of everyone, whether South African or not, to enjoy the basic Human Rights contained in our Constitution. This is violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) where member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in cooperation with the United Nations, promotion of the universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Not only is what is happening in violation of the Bill of Rights in South Africa's Constitution it is a violation of pertinent articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

Article 3: everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person

Article 5: no one shall be subjected to torture, or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

Article 13 (1) everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state

Article 13(2) everyone has the right to leave any country, including his /her own and to return to his country

We therefore call upon fellow South Africans to respect and uphold these Human Rights at all times. We also call upon South Africans, All spheres of Government, Private Sector and Constitutional Bodies to do and support the following actions:

- Criminal Justice Organs should investigate, and arrest and prosecute all perpetrators
- Need to support and provide information to Judge Pillay Head of the Task Team appointed by the Premier of KwaZulu-Natal to investigate the underlying causes of the xenophobic attacks in KZN.
- Call upon all leaders to desist from uttering provocative remarks
- National summit should be convened by the Department of Home Affairs and Department of Arts and Culture to deal with xenophobic attacks and social cohesion and
- Call upon media institutions and use of social media in a responsive manner instead of inciting violence as some of them seem to be doing.

Issued jointly by the Forum of Institutions Supporting Democracy

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