



PRESS STATEMENT

5 SEPTEMBER 2019

For immediate release:

Xenophobia has plagued our country for too long. It has been over a decade since the horrific xenophobic riots of 2008, yet violence and hate directed towards foreign nationals continues to be a daily reality in South Africa.

The Hate Crimes Working Group (HCWG) condemns the latest wave of killings, destruction of property and discrimination directed against foreign nationals. We implore political and community leaders to use their platforms responsibly and ensure that their language does not fuel the current violence and bigotry, and instead calms tensions and brings communities together.

The HCWG has repeatedly spoken out on the problem of xenophobia and engaged with government and civil society on this issue, including a submission to the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) at their public hearings in February 2018. We support the SAHRC recommendations on xenophobia, particularly for all living in South Africa to respect the constitutional values of equality, human dignity and freedom, irrespective of social or ethnic origin.

We call on the government to strongly condemn the recent incidents as unlawful acts as xenophobia. We also urge action on implementing Hate Crimes legislation to effectively monitor, prosecute and combat xenophobia and other forms of hate crimes facing our country.

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The HCWG is a multi-sectoral network of civil society organizations set up to spearhead advocacy and reform initiatives pertaining to hate crimes in South Africa and the region. Members of the network work in diverse sectors, namely in LGBTI rights; migrants, refugees and asylum seekers rights; gender-based entities and broader human rights organizations. They all share a common concern on the impact of hate crimes in South Africa from the perspective of the victims or from a legal, service provision, research-based or advocacy perspective.