



FELLOWSHIP OF CHRISTIAN COUNCILS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA (FOCCISA)

Statement of Solidarity on Xenophobia, Rising Hate Crimes and Hate Speech in the Continent

"For Christ himself has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility." (Ephesians 2:14)

The Fellowship of Christian Councils in Southern Africa (FOCCISA) expresses its profound concern and deep sorrow over the resurgence of xenophobic attacks, discrimination, and hostility directed against foreign migrants and refugees from other African countries living in the Republic of South Africa. We are equally alarmed by the increasing incidences of hate speech across our continent in response to these xenophobic attacks.

As a regional ecumenical body representing churches in Southern Africa, we unequivocally condemn all forms of xenophobia, hate crimes, and incitement to violence. These actions violate the sacred dignity of every human being, created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27), and undermine the African values of ubuntu our shared humanity and interconnectedness.

We acknowledge the genuine socio-economic challenges facing many communities in our region, including unemployment, poverty, inequality, and limited access to opportunities. However, such challenges must never be used to justify violence, scapegoating, discrimination, or the dehumanisation of fellow Africans who often migrate in search of safety, livelihood, and dignity. The pain of economic hardship cannot become a licence for hatred. We further affirm that lasting peace can not be built by scapegoating migrants while the structural injustice that perpetuates poverty, inequality and exclusion remains unaddressed.

Southern Africa's history reminds us that the struggle against colonialism, apartheid, and oppression was sustained by solidarity across borders. Many African nations opened their doors to South Africans during the liberation struggle, offering refuge, education, and support when it was most needed. To turn against one another now is to betray this shared history of sacrifice, hospitality, and mutual care.

The freedom, peace, and democratic gains enjoyed across much of our region today were secured through collective African solidarity. The sacrifices made by nations and

communities that welcomed exiles, freedom fighters and refugees during difficult periods of our history must continue to inspire our commitment to hospitality, mutual respect and regional unity.

FOCCISA therefore calls upon:

The Government of South Africa

- To ensure the protection of all persons within its borders regardless of nationality or immigration status.
- To investigate and prosecute perpetrators of xenophobic violence and hate crimes without fear or favour.
- To strengthen public education initiatives that promote social cohesion, peaceful coexistence, and constitutional values.

Governments across Africa

- To address the root causes of forced migration, including conflict, poor governance, economic injustice, climate-related displacement, and lack of opportunities.
- To uphold regional and international obligations relating to the protection of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers.

Churches and Faith Communities

- To proclaim and embody the Gospel of love, hospitality, reconciliation and justice through both word and action.
- To challenge xenophobic narratives and hate speech wherever they emerge, including within our congregations and communities.
- To create safe spaces for dialogue between host communities and migrant populations and to accompany those affected by violence through pastoral care and practical support.

Political, Traditional, and Community Leaders

- To refrain from inflammatory rhetoric that fuels fear and division.
- To use their influence to promote peaceful coexistence, responsible citizenship, and mutual respect.

The Media and Social Media Users

- To reject sensationalism, misinformation, and language that demonizes migrants.
- To promote responsible communication that affirms truth, dignity, and social cohesion.

At this critical moment, Africa must choose the path of compassion over hostility, solidarity over suspicion, and hope over fear. We cannot build prosperous and peaceful societies on the foundations of hatred and exclusion. The future of our

continent depends on our ability to recognise one another not as strangers or competitors, but as neighbours and members of one human family under God.

We therefore call upon all people of goodwill across Southern Africa and the continent to reject xenophobia in all its forms and to recommit themselves to the vision of an Africa marked by justice, hospitality, peace, and shared flourishing. Silence in the face of xenophobia is not neutrality; it is a failure of our shared moral responsibility. As followers of Christ, we are called to stand with the vulnerable, defend human dignity and build bridges where others erect walls.

May the God who gathers people from every nation, tribe, people, and language grant us the courage to overcome fear, the wisdom to pursue justice, and the grace to embrace one another as brothers and sisters.

"Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it." (Hebrews 13:2)

Issued by:

The Fellowship of Christian Councils in Southern Africa (FOCCISA)

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Date: June 2026

End.