

Monday, 26 July 2010

Xenophobia is a direct violation of our human rights

The Sedibeng District Municipality calls to all members of the community to work together with government agencies and community based organisations in the fight against Xenophobia. Sedibeng, which is known as the Cradle of Human Rights Struggles, so named by the father of the Rainbow Nation, Former State President Nelson Mandela. A cradle, is by definition, a safe habitat. To that end, I challenge the entire community of Sedibeng, to provide a safe habitat to all our brothers, sisters and communities from the African Continent.

For a community that has just commemorated fifty years of the Sharpeville Massacre, 18 years of the Boipatong Massacre, 18 years of the Nangalembe Massacre, the community of Sedibeng knows very well the pain and suffering of those that are persecuted. We need to stand up as one, in the same manner that we did in 1960, in front of Saracens, willing the police to shoot, to say that we will not stand by to see our African brothers and sisters being molted and maimed by faceless criminals.

Nelson Mandela, in his wisdom, in honour of all things great and wonderful coming out of Sedibeng, gave us the South African Constitutional Square by signing into law our Constitution. Let us honour him by being the first community to lead the charge against xenophobia. We have led this country through our struggles in the past, we will do it again. The fight against xenophobia calls us to action.

The circumstances in which many of our fellow Africans and other nationals find themselves in is heartbreaking. Desperate for a better life for themselves and their loved ones, many of them made their way on foot to our country. As people who practice the culture of Ubuntu, we should avail ourselves and our hearts to others, welcome others with open arms and as brothers and sisters, we should all be treated with dignity and respect. These are the values that delivered our democracy and led us to freedom.

There is no excuse for attacking non South Africans. As Sedibeng we understand that the current socio-economic conditions have you at distress, however we as a community cannot continue to develop our lives without peace and stability. We call on all the youth formations in particular and the youth in general to be vigilant for those who through the cover of darkness may attempt to give our communities a bad name.

Sedibeng must remain safe for all who live in it. Lawlessness and violence are an unacceptable way to solve problems. Let us join together and put a stop to these evil deeds. We appeal to the community of Sedibeng to heed to the call for peace, law and order. In the words of our great



leader Nelson Mandela, “Never, never and never again shall it be that this beautiful land will again experience the oppression of one by another”

Motho ke motho ka batho.

Some things you can do regarding Xenophobia:

1. Speak to your local Councillor, individually or in a group, and ensure that s/he calls a ward meeting to condemn any form of violence;
2. Start conversations with family members, friends, neighbours, and the community around you about Xenophobia and make a public stance against it;
3. Ensure that your Community Police Forum (CPF) acts to protect foreign nationals in your area;
4. Report demonstrations or threats against foreign nationals or to the police;
5. Do not let racists and xenophobic comments go unchallenged.
6. Set up block committees in your wards to deal with any attempts at fostering violence against our African brothers.

Ends

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