

## **Press statement: LHR welcomes the Report of the Special Reference Group on Migration and Community Integration in KZN**

Lawyers for Human Rights (LHR) cordially welcomes the [Report](#) by the Special Reference Group (SRG) on Migration and Community Integration on the xenophobic attacks that took place in Durban during March to May 2015. LHR commends the manner in which the Special Reference Group undertook to investigate this matter, bringing together different stakeholders and taking seriously the inputs presented to them.

The SRG was primarily mandated to identify the causes of the violence and the consequences resulting from the outbreak and to advise on potential solutions and programmes that could contribute towards relieving the causal dynamics and averting the recurrence of such violence.

Here are some of the findings made by the SRG:

- The immediate cause of the 2015 outbreak of violence against foreign nationals was as a result of deliberate efforts of select individuals, some of whom had interests in the informal trading sector, to drive away competition by foreign national-owned businesses.
- Foreign nationals are vulnerable members of the KZN society irrespective of their immigration status. These vulnerabilities manifest through structural, institutional and societal dimensions
- The majority of allegations against foreign national traders, in respect of business practices, have been found to be perceptions not based on facts.
- The is lack of effective and impartial policing throughout the province which affects excessively affects foreign nationals
- Unfounded rumours, misinformation, fake videos and images, and exaggerated headlines spread through social media and some traditional media worsened anxieties throughout the province.
- Inflammatory public statements by individuals in leadership positions may have contributed to the prevailing atmosphere of fear throughout communities in the province.

SRG made the following recommendations:

- Innovative solutions to reduce tensions in the small informal trading sectors and a need for education based campaigns that will promote more cohesive and sustainable community relations
- Developing and enhancing national policies on migration;
- Sensitizing and educating civil servants on the rights and documentation of foreign nationals
- Documenting lessons learnt from the government responses and disaster management processes
- Strengthening the capacities of and resources for institutions managing migrants, refugees and asylum seekers this including the upgrading the physical structural of the KZN borders
- Provincial audit on intelligence structures and early alert systems
- Leaders need to exercise to greater care with their public remarks, they must consider the impact of what they say in public.

LHR would like to also use this opportunity to in the strongest possible terms, condemn King Zwelithini's unwillingness to cooperate with the SRG, this is not only unfortunate but shows the little remorse King Zwelithini has for his words that played a contributing role to the xenophobic attacks that took place in Durban.

LHR calls on all parties involved to honour the recommendations in the report in a meaningful way. This report goes a long way in not only facilitating national debates around continued xenophobic violence, but also

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contributes immensely to solutions that can be undertaken to combat recurrent xenophobic attacks happening around the country.

LHR recognizes that the causes of xenophobia are complex and cannot be singled out. It is important that as we grapple with this issue as a nation, robust debates are had and that the conversation remains ongoing. LHR calls for social cohesion and mutual understanding between host communities and refugees and migrants.

**For interviews contact LHR's Patricia Erasmus, head of the Refugee and Migrant Rights Programme, on 082 261 9157**