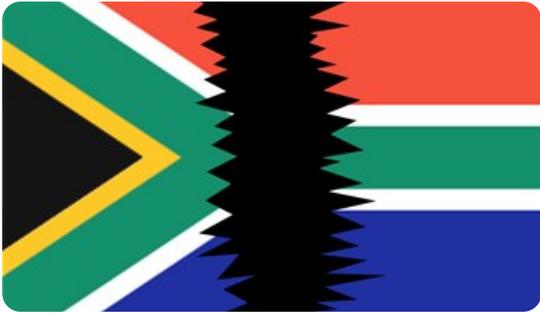


Attacks on foreign nationals have hurt SA, says Trade DM

Attacks on foreign nationals have been regrettable and sad and have also resulted in a loss of export foreign revenue, Trade and Industry Deputy Minister Mzwandile Masina said yesterday...

"Since the start of the attacks, our country has lost billions of rands in export foreign revenue," Masina said.

While he could not quantify the impact of the attacks, Masina said the effect was negative.



The xenophobia that has torn through some parts of SA and has seen a number of people attacked and in some cases killed has the potential to jeopardise our trade with Africa, on which hundreds of thousands of South African jobs rely.

"This situation has become untenable," he said, adding that South Africa is a small country compared to the continent of 1 billion people.

Masina was addressing a dialogue on attacks on foreign nationals held at the Germiston Civic Centre. He reminded those attending the dialogue that the continent had opened its doors to South Africans during the apartheid years and that if the attacks on foreign nationals do not stop, the goal of intra-African trade will collapse.

The attacks, Masina said, were embarrassing for the country. He urged South Africans to take a stand against attacks on foreigners.

"As South Africans, we must take a stand against activities that are happening in our communities. We must say no, not in our name."

Masina said the attacks on foreign nationals are a threat to the country's historic achievements.

The dialogue, which was attended by various sectors of society, was held to acknowledge the damage caused by the attacks and the negative picture they have portrayed of South Africa.

The dialogue sought to also find a solution to the challenge and to reintegrate foreign nationals back into communities.

"We are here to find a solution. All of us care about a united South Africa," said the Deputy Minister.



Trade and Industry Deputy
Minister Mzwandile Masina.
(Image: GCIS)

Masina said that since attaining democracy in 1994, the country had signed several treaties and legislation making it a part of the world. He said the country should not forget where it comes from.

"We express our condolences and apology to the continent," said the Deputy Minister.

Street committees will be formed to look at the safety of foreigners and the welfare of all citizens, he said.

"We view the attacks as a criminal offence that will not be tolerated by government... No one has the right to take the law in their own hands," said Masina.

He called on all foreign nationals to meet all the legislative and regulatory requirements as prescribed in the country's immigration laws.

Ekurhuleni Executive Mayor Mondli Gungubele said the dialogue comes at a time when the world is looking at South Africa with great concern.

"We are faced with a huge human challenge," he said.

Mayor Gungubele said people need to understand the value of other human beings.

Masina and Mayor Gungubele also signed a pledge which commits to advance social cohesion and to stop attacks on foreigners.

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