

***Man on Ground* movie, campaign launched to combat xenophobia**

Director and producer [Akin Omotoso](#) and fellow producers Rosie Motene and Fabian Lojede have launched a film called *Man on Ground*, which commemorates the death of Earnesto Nhamuavhe, a Mozambican known to the world as the 'The burning man' in an effort to combat xenophobia in South Africa.



[click to enlarge](#)

It forms part of the campaign against xenophobia, entitled *Man on Ground: We Are From Here*.

In May 2008, a gang of young men in Johannesburg's Alexandra Township forced their way into a hostel and initiated a merciless attack on residents they deemed to be foreigners. From this sparked the murder, rape and looting directed at the bodies and belongings of non-South Africans and spread within days from Alexandra to informal settlements in Diepsloot and the East Rand. A Mozambican man, Earnesto Nhamuavhe was burnt alive while bystanders laughed.

Strong appeal for healing

The incidence inspired Omotoso to write the film as his strong appeal for healing. He said, "The film primarily focuses on xenophobia and, although sparked by the horrific incidence in the midst of xenophobic upheaval, it addresses issues of stigmatization towards immigrants in any country across the world."

The film was selected to premier in the Toronto Film Festival and Dubai Film Festival in 2011, selected for the Berlin Film Festival and won best Movie Award in the Jozi Film Festival in 2012.

"The response to the film has been great but we have not yet aired the movie in South Africa because we would like to take it to communities through a community film festival. The aim of the festival is to educate citizens in South Africa about the impact of xenophobia, in light of recent xenophobic acts and to deal with the issue of stigmatization. We, as the producers of this film, believe that it is vital to live as 'one people' as we hail from 'one earth'," added Lojede.

Sponsorship, Facebook campaign

In February 2012, a number of shops owned by foreigners, mainly Bangladeshis, were broken into, set alight and looted in Thabong, Welkom. The underlying issues have not been dealt with and struggles like this continue on an everyday basis. Corporates that contribute or sponsor in order to take this film on a tour would help in positioning South Africa in a positive light.

South Africans can speak out by joining the campaign on [Facebook](#) and potential sponsors can email manongroundsponsorship@hotmail.com.