

REMARKS BY HONOURABLE PREMIER ES MCHUNU ON THE OCASSION OF
IMBIZO CONVENED BY HIS MAJESTY TO DEAL WITH VIOLENCE DIRECTED AT
FOREIGN NATIONALS ON 20TH APRIL 2015, MOSES MABHIDA STADIUM

His Majesty, Isilo Samabandla,
Amakhosi and Izinduna,
Minister of Police,
Minister of State Security,
Minister of Home Affairs,
His Worship the Mayor of eThekwini,
Fellow Colleagues in the Provincial Executive Council,
Leaders of Government,
Leaders of Political Parties,
Leaders of Business and Civil Society,

We are gathering here today after a challenging few days in our Province and the entire country, wherein we witnessed barbaric acts of violence against other fellow human beings simply because of the origins of their countries of birth.

We nonetheless, gather today with a sense of appreciation on the progress we have made in arresting the developing situation, and restoring calm in our Province of KwaZulu-Natal. This has been recorded over the last four days since the remarkable march by all peace loving South Africans from all walks of life, who voted with their feet against violence directed at foreign nationals.

The current climate of relative calm is as a result of a week-long programme of action involving government, His Majesty, civil society and security agencies. This plan of action involved engagements with African diplomats, visiting hotspots, engaging with community and business leaders, religious leaders and traditional institutions. We thank all South Africans of goodwill who have in their small but significant way, also stepped in to assist those affected. In particular, we thank security forces and emergency services, who moved with speed in restoring stability and for protecting further losses of human life.

We have witnessed gruesome pictures on front pages of newspapers, Television footages, and various pages of social media over the last few days. They have sent shockwaves not only in our country but the whole world. These acts do not represent who we are and what we stand for. They undermine our national security and puts the authority of the state to test.

We must be clear about one thing! State security, is always a top priority of government in every country irrespective of size and its level of development in the world. No government and absolutely no country can survive without serious attention to its security. Nor can any country develop economically and socially without security, peace and stability.

It is a given that there would always be externally and internally generated factors that determine state security at any given period.

On both these instances above points, the citizens of a country are critical, not only because it is their security that is often at stake, but because they are the best defence for their country. It is their country and because they are assumed to love their country, they are expected to stand up in defending its values and image. This they ought to do, because they do not have any other country as their home.

If their country is portrayed as murderous and violent, they stand up to defend it. If it is portrayed as a country full of hatred for other people, they defend it. And if it is portrayed as criminal wanting to steal from and dispossess foreigners of their personal belongings, they defend it.

If foreigners come to South Africa and do all the above in South Africa, nationals must rise and defend the integrity of their country. Equally, when some of us damage the reputation of our country, by indulging in the above, which are acts that are contrary to our values as a country, as citizens we must defend it against those bent on causing harm to our standing among nations of the world.

In the past two weeks, we have been called and continue to be called to take a stand against xenophobia and most particularly Afrophobia as this does not define who we are as South Africans. It is an antithesis of our DNA and all those values that for centuries, shaped our own struggle for a peaceful country that co-exist with other nations of the world.

In this period, we have seen developments that damaged our standing among the family of African countries. These developments have left no less than 6 people dead mostly here in KwaZulu-Natal including our own nationals.

When citizens experience problems and whatever those problems can be, as a nation you do not destroy your country. However, you resolve those problems in a constructive way. You do not kill, as such acts, kill the country.

We appreciate this effort today. It is a single contribution by His Majesty to the country at a time when the country and the whole continent of Africa, yearn to hear him speak the message of peace. Going forward, government will then move to do what it is tasked by the people of our country to do in its efforts to better the lives of South Africans.

We call upon all South Africans to join hands with government in addressing all those issue of concern as we build a united and prosperous nation. Let us always remember that there can be no development without peace and stability. The cycle of violence must end as it is not good for anyone.

Thank You.